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## Liquid Crystals

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### Editorial

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## Editorial

All new journals have similar reasons for coming into existence. Of these, the growth of activity in a particular area of research and the needs of the scientific community to share its ideas, are dominant. We shall not, therefore, enumerate the *raison d'être* of *Liquid Crystals* other than to assert their existence, although it is of interest to recapitulate some of the recent history of the field leading to this point.

The past 25 years have seen a dramatic increase in both the quantity and the breadth of liquid crystal research. This now includes detailed experimental studies at the molecular level of liquid-crystalline behaviour and their interpretation using computer modelling techniques. The design and synthesis of new materials have been stimulated by the requirements of the device engineer and have resulted in the discovery of new mesophases. Anisotropic fluids now encompass low molar mass compounds and polymeric liquid crystals as well as peripheral systems such as monolayers and microemulsions. The divisions between lyotropic and thermotropic liquid crystals are rapidly disappearing. At the same time there is a growing awareness of the important implications of anisotropic fluids in the fields of biology, surface and interfacial science, condensed matter physics, materials science, non-linear optics and displays.

In other words, this is a burgeoning field of interdisciplinary endeavour and now is an exciting time to be involved in liquid crystal research.

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