

Organic Process Research & Development

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Editorial

The "Bookworm" Has Turned ...

As readers will probably have gathered from the book reviews at the end of each issue of OPRD, I do read a lot of scientific and technical books (and journals as well), but it is books which I want to discuss in this editorial. The authors and editors of these books do a fantastic job for the reader and the publisher—and usually for the prestige, rather than for any financial reward. More and more, these days, the author not only has to do the text but also has to produce the diagrams and schemes and get the permission to reproduce diagrams and other material which is copyrighted.

But what about the publisher? Surely in this day and age, the publisher should be able to convert a finished manuscript into a printed volume in a matter of weeks rather than the months or even years it usually takes. The number of books I have read recently where the latest reference is to a 2001 paper is quite large, and I do not believe that this can be the author's fault. When science is moving forward at a fast pace, it is important to make sure that published monograph and multiauthor compilations reach the reader as soon as possible after the author has submitted his manuscript.

Publishers of books should take note of the shortened times from receipt of manuscript to printed version that journal publishers such as the American Chemical Society have achieved over the past few years by improving the efficiency of their working practices. Why cannot book publishers do the same?

The other moan that I have concerning scientific and technical books is the very poor quality of the index in many of the volumes I have reviewed. Surely it should be possible

for a reader, having read an interesting page on one day, to be able to find that piece of information the following day via the index, without having to thumb through every page of the book to locate it again. I find that indexes are far too small, have lots of omissions, and often have significant errors. Given the high price of books (at a time when printing costs have never been lower), the poor quality of indexes is unacceptable.

No doubt I will receive plenty of correspondence from book publishers after this tirade. Good! I welcome the chance to expand on my views. Criticism should be regarded as useful feedback for any industry which serves the public and helps the industry to improve. Perhaps one or two publishers could use a good consultant?

Finally, just as a reminder—the deadlines for submitting articles for our next two special issues are as follows:

Issue 3, 2004: New Technologies in Process Research - deadline 30th November 2003 - guest editor Dr. Ulf Tilstam, Eli Lilly

Issue 6, 2004: Software for Application in Chemical Development and Scale-Up - deadline 31st May 2004 - guest editor Dr. David Lathbury, AstraZeneca

Please submit your articles for peer review to our editorial office in the usual way but preferably on-line at: <http://pubs.acs.org/oprd>.

Trevor Laird
Editor

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