
Editorial

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Editorial

As my first 3-year term as Editor of *Journal of the Royal Society Interface* comes to an end, it is appropriate to assess the progress of the journal and look forward to the next 3 years. *J. R. Soc. Interface* is the first new title to be launched by the Royal Society since the mid-nineteenth century. Our aim is to act as a forum for research which spans the traditional boundary between the physical and life sciences. It has been encouraging to all involved in this venture that the need for such a publication has been demonstrated by the healthy inflow of papers. Indeed, in the past year submissions have risen by over 50%.

However, what is even more satisfying is the scope and quality of submissions across the areas of interest. As examples, from the field of mathematical biology, we have published distinctive papers by Neil Ferguson (Ferguson *et al.* 2005) and from Bryan Grenfell's group (Howat *et al.* 2006). Frank Doyle III (Doyle III & Stelling 2006) and Douglas Kell (Shen *et al.* 2006) have contributed perceptive articles on systems biology, while authoritative reviews on biomaterials have been written by two pioneers in the subject, Ioannis Yannas (2005) and Yoshito Ikada (2006). We have also published some leading edge articles in the areas of bionanotechnology (Curtis *et al.* 2006), biomimetics (Vincent *et al.* 2006) and biomechanics (Federle *et al.* 2006).

One particular development we have introduced, and are keen to expand, is the inclusion of themed supplements in the journal. Earlier this year, a supplement was organized by Tom McLeish on *Statistical mechanics of molecular and cellular biological systems*. Two more themes are presently in progress—*Molecular and mechanistic aspects of self-healing polymers* and *Sources of variation in infectious disease dynamics: from genes to ecosystems*. The latter subject has joined systems/synthetic biology, biomaterials and chemical biology as a core area of interest for the journal. Infectious disease dynamics has emerged as a significant topic in recent years. After a call for papers this summer, we were pleased to find considerable interest in submitting to *J. R. Soc. Interface* from those working in this area.

As an author myself, I am well aware of the need to combine rigorous refereeing with rapid publication. Consequently, I am very pleased with our ability to secure three or more substantial and constructive reports on each paper and, at the same time, to produce publication times from receipt to online publication of the order of 60 days. This process has been empowered by the dedication and competence of Tim Holt as Publishing Editor and Matthew Llewellyn as Journal Production Manager. The publication time to the hard-copy issue will be enhanced in 2007 by a 25% increase in the number of pages.

Another recent development has been the introduction of the Royal Society's EXiS Open Choice initiative. This is an author pays model that operates alongside the established subscription model. Submission of an article remains without change. If accepted for publication, the author is given the choice to pay a fee to have their article made freely available. The first EXiS Open Choice paper has just been published in *J. R. Soc. Interface* and it will be interesting to monitor take up of this option.

With this progress I am looking forward to my second 3-year term as Editor of *J. R. Soc. Interface* with optimism. Your suggestions as a reader and/or author would always be welcomed.

William Bonfield

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