

The evolution of *The Angle Orthodontist*

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Edward Hartley Angle died in 1930. In that same year 22 members of the former Edward H. Angle Society of Orthodontia met in Chicago and created *The Angle Orthodontist* with Mrs Angle as Editor-in-Chief. The purpose of the journal was to publish and preserve the papers delivered by the members of this small group. Until relatively recently the belief persisted that publishing in *The Angle Orthodontist* was restricted to members of the Angle Society. The full early history of the journal is beautifully documented at www.angle.org. Just click on SOCIETY and History. The data here was carefully collected and assembled by Dr Sheldon Peck.

The journal went many years with only minimal or cosmetic changes, but a most significant change was made when Editor David Turpin instituted peer review in the 1990s. Previously the journal often contained much opinion and essay type papers, but with peer review modern science emerged. This development fortuitously occurred during the digital revolution and the form of today's *Angle Orthodontist* began to take shape. Beginning in 2000 all our past issues were placed online and the journal is open access—freely available to everyone everywhere.

We adopted digital submission and review of manuscripts in 2003 with 2004 as the first complete calendar year. One amazing feature of the digital age is the capacity of the system to store and recall data. A comparison of the 2004 data and 2010 shows a consistent growth of *The Angle Orthodontist* (Figure 1, Table 1).

In 2004 we were able to accept 56% of the manuscripts submitted. In 2010 this number decreased to 22%. This does not mean that the manuscripts we did not accept were bad—only that we were able to accept the ones that we considered best and of most interest to our readers.

In recognition of the fact that space limitations cause us to not accept some good manuscripts, we increased the size of our journal to over 1000 pages per year. Its current size is over twice what it was in recent years and several fold larger that it was when I first became a subscriber. The limitations are in productions costs. Currently it costs the journal well over \$2000 to publish an article and this cost increases every year. Still, our costs are very much below the

industry average. You might normally expect that going to an all-electronic journal would be much less costly. However, in today's publishing world the review and preparation that an article must undergo is much the same process for either paper or digital transmission. The only significant economy is in the cost of paper, printing, and mailing.

Science uses what is basically a free market system. The authors determine where they want to publish their work based on their concept of where it will best be seen and what the best journal is for their purposes. Journals accept articles based on their concept of its value for the purposes of their journal. If the journal opts to not accept an article, the author will send the article to their second choice in journals, but this must be done sequentially. The same article should not be sent to two journals at the same time. That could only lead to legal issues.

From this system evolves an ever changing priority list of preferred journals in the minds of authors and a priority list of the parameters that rank an article in the minds of reviewers and journal editors.

Where are all of these manuscripts coming from? Submissions came from a total of 42 countries in 2004 and 58 countries in 2010. Here is the number submitted by the top 5 contributors in these years:

Number of Submissions			
2004		2010	
Turkey	86	Brazil	134
US	44	India	95
Japan	34	US	70
Brazil	31	Turkey	59
Italy	26	China	37

One obvious fact is the international character of the journal and its readers, clearly accelerated by the digital information age phenomena. Not surprisingly, the emerging nations are the most active and past leaders are relatively declining.

In order to take advantage of the speed of information transfer, we have focused on speedy management of manuscripts as they arrive. The mean number of days between receipt of a manuscript and a

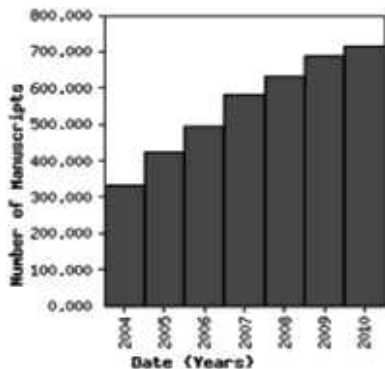


Figure 1. New manuscripts received (2004 to 2010) and calendar years.

final decision was 70 days in 2004. By 2010 this number had decreased to 50 days. This is largely due to the superb efforts of our reviewers. Reviewer opinions largely determine the quality of the content of our journal. Thus the selection of reviewers is a key step in our quality control and development.

Table 1.

Date (Years)	Number of Manuscripts
2004	332
2005	422
2006	496
2007	582
2008	632
2009	688
2010	714

The future? We all know the folly in trying to forecast the future. It is clear that that orthodontics has moved out of the guru era and evolved into a more science based field. Information collected in a scientific manner can be preserved and built upon reducing the unknowns as we go forward with improved patient care. This will serve us well. Orthodontics cannot be anything close to a perfect science in the foreseeable future, but we must use the good information we have and continue to add new information. To paraphrase Edward Hartley Angle, "It is the latest and the best way."