

What's Up, Doc?

Most of you, hopefully, take the content and quality of *Operative Dentistry* for granted. You may not even notice changes that occur over time, but simply rely on the fact that your journal contains laboratory and clinical research, pertinent literature reviews and clinical techniques that provide you with usable, evidence-based information. With that in mind, it would be very easy for a group, such as ours, to become complacent when things are running smoothly and stick with the "if it's not broken, don't fix it" paradigm. However, our goal, as an editorial team, has been to constantly re-evaluate and improve this publication and do it as seamlessly as possible. We meet regularly to discuss what we can do to provide greater value to our readers and where we want to take the journal during the coming year. We just finished one of these meetings and were reminiscing about the changes we had instituted during the last nine years and what we had accomplished with a very small nucleus of personnel. In fact, from comments and requests that we receive, I truly believe that our readership and authors think that there are a lot more of us putting out the journal than there really are. We actually number only seven...myself, our managing editor, two associate editors (all of us unpaid), and three paid staff with numerous job descriptions and titles (more on that later) who carry the brunt of the tremendous work load associated with this publication. It should be noted that most of us also have full-time jobs and families. Anyway, that discussion prompted this editorial...what has happened and is happening with *Operative Dentistry*.

In 1999, when we began the transition of the journal from Seattle, we had a Microsoft Excel file with all the subscribers names and addresses as well as a subscription history, several boxes full of published original manuscripts starting from 1976, an electric typewriter and a fax machine.

In 2009, we have several specialized software programs tracking subscribers' names, subscription terms, and journal finances, four high-end personal computers that electronically store all of the journal files, as well as the *Journal of the American Academy of Gold Foil Operators* (the precursor to *Operative Dentistry*). The old typewriter is still in the office holding the desk

down, but it is sitting next to four high-speed duplexing toner printers and a new generation solid ink printer; the fax machine has been upgraded and has a big brother that acts as a fifth high-speed printer that also faxes, e-mails, copies, creates pdfs and even staples. We even have a server from which we can access our e-mail, our applications and data worldwide.

Now, the only thing that this is meant to show is the complexity that has crept into the world of publishing. This is a time of swiftly changing demands, ever shortening submission to press times, print-on-demand expectations, as well as the challenge of staying at the top of our field. Because of this complexity and some recent changes it has prompted, we would like to introduce some of the innovations that we have made, or will be making shortly.

Many of you will already have noticed the alterations in our subscription options and prices. Now that we believe we have all of the bugs out of our online journal, we are pleased to be able to offer the journal as a stand-alone subscription option. We have had many requests for the journal online only over the years and are already seeing a strong demand for it, since it became available. To further enhance this aspect of our journal, we will shortly be transferring over to a new online system called Pinnacle. This new system should have an error-free and unnoticeable transfer in the first quarter of '09. That being said, we apologize in advance for any inconvenience this change may cause, since we all know how these things go. The new system will permit our institutional subscribers to modify their own IP addresses so they can stay current, it will also allow us to offer some amazing options to non-subscribers who need access to individual papers or to blocks of articles on a particular subject, etc. The new system should also provide our individual subscribers a chance to customize their own username and password, making access much easier.

There are some journals in our field that take two-to-three years to go from submission to print. We believe that this is unacceptable to our readers, who require current information, and our authors, who spend an enormous amount of time and effort creating manuscripts that may be out-of-date if publication is delayed.

We currently are running at about 10-11 months from submission to publication and, with our new online submission system, we hope to reduce that number to four-to-six months.

In order to make this a success, we are making a plea to you, our readers (as well as to all the manuscript authors who may be among our readership). We need additional reviewers to join our Editorial Board to help us with our increased workload. It turns out that, the faster we publish, the higher our submission rate. In five years, we have doubled our submission rate and expect that number to double again in the next 18 months. If you would like to become a reviewer for *Operative Dentistry*, please drop us an e-mail (editor@jopdent.org) with your CV attached, so that the Editor can determine if your qualifications match our specific needs. The position of Editorial Board Member is an unpaid one, but it does give you the opportunity to peruse current dental research in our field, as well as allow you to sharpen your own writing and editing skills.

Print-on-demand is the concept that we can print an issue, a volume, an article or even a group of articles on a single topic when a subscriber needs or wants it. This is not a reality yet, but we have gotten close with our phalanx of printers, and we churn out about four-to-five volumes a month for various orders. These are all acid-free and of archival quality. Our normal print journal meets these same standards, as well as being certified "green" by the Forest Stewardship Council. We are proud of the efforts that are made by our staff to reuse, recycle and reduce.

Staying at the top of our field is quite challenging. Therefore, we are extremely pleased to be able to announce the successful recognition of *Operative Dentistry, Inc* as an ADA CERP provider. We will now be offering our reviewers two units of continuing education credit for a completed review. We will also begin offering our authors, when they receive final print acceptance from the Editor, 10 units of continuing education credit for the corresponding author and two credits for each of the co-authors of a paper. We have formed a joint sponsorship with one of our parent academies, The American Academy of Gold Foil Operators, to provide continuing education support for their annual meeting, as well as for some of their individual study clubs. We are excited to be one of the first journals to be able to provide this kind of support to its readership.

Our online submission process is state-of-the-art and has been very successful to date. We started the process over a year ago and went live in early September '08.

Although we are still working out the bugs, and there have been occasional hiccups, it has become an invaluable tool to us. As mentioned earlier, online submissions have cut our manuscript processing time considerably and, we expect, as we become more expert in its use, that the time it takes from submission to acceptance may well be counted in weeks, not months, in the near future.

The list goes on and on and is too extensive to cover in its entirety, but many of these innovations and advances have come because of requests and inquiries from you, our subscribers. Please continue to e-mail us and let us know what you would like to see from us and provide us with constructive criticism, when needed, so that we can continue to serve you the best that we can.

Finally, that brings me back to the size of our staff.

Karen Wilczewski is our Editorial Associate. She handles all of our page setting, proof correction and communication with our printer, Allen Press. This is a monumental task for one person and she does it with professionalism, skill and dedication. The look and feel of this journal is due to her efforts and artistry. If there are any mistakes or errors in an issue, they are mine not hers.

Joan and Kevin Matis (with occasional help from other family members) are the backbone, innovation and inspiration for all the wonderful accomplishments listed above. They work harder than anyone to make this publication something to be proud of, and they have succeeded beyond my wildest dreams. Since we are a not-for-profit and I can't begin to pay them what they are worth, I have rewarded them with a plethora of titles so that they won't miss the income...these include but are not limited to: Subscription Manager-Bookkeeper-Editorial Assistant-Technology Director-Sales Manager-Permissions Editor-Director of CE-Administrative Assistant-Travel Manager-Office Manager-International Sales/Distributor Supervisor-Assistant Managing Editor-Purchasing Officer-Mail Room Supervisor-Corresponding Secretary-Executive Secretary-Creative Director-Claims Supervisor-Director of Archive Content-Director of Human Resources-Payroll Clerk-Customer Relations Director & Review Coordinator.

The point is, if you ever feel that an inquiry or request in not answered promptly enough or a problem is not resolved as quickly as you would like, please be patient...there often is just not enough of us to go around.

Michael A Cochran, Editor