

Editorial

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The year 2003 was a historic one for the Open Access movement. It saw the debut of Public Library of Science as a publisher, with the much-heralded launch of *PLoS Biology*, and declarations of support from funding bodies in numerous countries around the world. In the United Kingdom, the charitable Wellcome Trust joined the funding council for universities and the National Health Service in making a commitment to support and promote Open Access for the research it sponsors. Similarly, elsewhere in Europe, the Max-Planck Society led the way and was joined by most major funders of research in Germany, France and beyond in signing the 'Berlin Declaration' on Open Access.

The last year also saw increasing numbers of authors voting — in the way that counts, with the submission of their precious research articles — to support Open Access. BioMed Central, the publisher of *Journal of Biology*, now publishes more than 100 Open Access journals, and to date these have considered more than 8,000 articles and published more than 4,000. But different journals within the BioMed Central stable have different editorial policies and standards. *Journal of Biology*, which completed its first full year of publication in 2003, was the first fully Open Access journal publishing articles of exceptional interest and importance from the full spectrum of biology; since launch it has received over 250 submissions and has

accepted fewer than 5% of them for publication. We are committed to ensuring that *Journal of Biology* is a prestigious place to publish, and this means exercising a high degree of selectivity in deciding what is published in the journal.

Some readers and potential authors have asked whether the journal isn't rather too selective, and why it doesn't simply publish more articles, even if some must be of a lower standard. One answer to this question is that we are convinced that the best way to ensure the optimum respect, visibility and status for the articles we do publish is to ensure that all of them reach the highest possible standards of science, significance and interest level, rather than publishing some that fall below this threshold. In assessing articles in this way, we are indebted to the unflagging aid of anonymous peer-reviewers as well as advisors such as those on our Editorial Board. And in bringing the significance of each published article to the attention of a wide readership, the work of the professional writers and scientists who have provided the accompanying Research news and Minireviews is similarly invaluable.

A second answer to the question of why *Journal of Biology* has not published more articles is a pragmatic one. Despite the dramatically increasing awareness of the importance of Open Access to the research community, there is still work to be done in per-

suading individual authors that if their research is published in a new journal it will be accorded as much kudos, and it will be as beneficial for their career, as if it appears in one of the older, more established titles that do not provide Open Access. With each new important article that appears under Open Access, however, we move a step nearer to this goal.

A final question that we are often asked is whether there is some subset of biological disciplines that this journal views with particular interest. The short answer is no. The articles published to date in *Journal of Biology* cover a broad range of biology — from cell biology and microbiology to evolution and genomics, and from bioinformatics to cell signalling and development. If we have not yet covered a particular area of biology, it is because we have not yet received an article of a sufficient standard in that field. We trust that the articles to be published over the coming months will reassure readers and potential authors that the aim implicit in the journal's name is being met, as we do indeed plan to cover all of biology.

And finally, we have a question for all readers of this article. Will 2004 be the year you join the revolution in scientific publishing and submit your next exciting piece of research to the journal?

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