

The *Bulletin's* new look

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We start 2002 with a new-look *Bulletin*. The new design while being visually more attractive gives us more information to the printed page, faster production time, and cost savings we can channel into the work of ensuring the quality and accuracy of the information we print. Another improvement is that with the table of contents now all in one place on the outside back cover, it is easier to see at a glance what each issue is about.

With the new design come updated guidelines for contributors (see pp. 85–86). We will now be following closely the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals (URMSBJ, available from <http://www.icmje.org/index.html>). These are commonly known as the Vancouver Guidelines, after the group of journal editors who met there in 1978 to draw up the first version. The resulting guidelines are now followed by several hundred biomedical journals throughout the world, thereby facilitating the work of authors in preparing their manuscripts.

Changes have also been made to the online version of the journal (www.who.int/bulletin). An important development is the arrangement we have made with SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online, www.scielo.br), a project administered by the BIREME centre (www.bireme.br) of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Originally conceived to provide free online access to leading Latin American journals, BIREME has now started to run thematic sites. The first of these sites is concerned with public health and the *Bulletin* is now hosted on it at <http://www.scielosp.org/bwho> where the full text and figures of *Bulletin* articles can be consulted in both PDF and HTML formats. SciELO is linked to MEDLINE/PubMed, so

anyone searching those databases who retrieves an abstract or title of a *Bulletin* article can click on the “Go to Publisher Site” icon to obtain free access to the full text of the relevant article. We will be working further with SciELO to increase the *Bulletin's* visibility and distribution, and are in discussions with the US National Library of Medicine about including the *Bulletin* in the PubMed Central database.

Another development is a CD-ROM containing the entire text of issues from the beginning of 1999 to the end of 2001. This is in the final stages of production and will be distributed early this year. It will be fully searchable, facilitating rapid retrieval of articles by means of any name or term in the text.

In the same spirit we are installing a new manuscript tracking system which, when fully operational, will let authors submit manuscripts online. They will receive a password which will enable them to follow the progress of their manuscripts through the review and production processes. The system will also facilitate online peer-reviewing, which should reduce the time taken to accept or reject manuscripts.

During the last year the *Bulletin* has managed to maintain high quality and is regularly covered by the leading abstracting services. It is currently among the highly cited journals on public health. According to Journal Citation Reports for 2000 by the Institute for Scientific Information (JCR-ISI), the impact factor of the *Bulletin* was 1.937 and the total citations to the journal were 3733.

There is a movement to give authors greater control over the intellectual property rights of their work, including the self-archiving of preprints and post-publication of articles on their own or their institution's computer servers. We are sensitive to these

concerns and are amending the *Bulletin's* copyright forms to give authors who wish for it the right to self-archive their articles.

The replies to our readers' survey have arrived and are in the final stages of collation. The large and enthusiastic response will provide much useful information to guide the future direction of the journal. We will be publishing a full analysis of the results in a future issue of the *Bulletin*.

The theme issues have continued to be a valuable means of bringing together some of the latest and most authoritative information available on a given subject. Last year we did five — on blindness (March), public–private partnerships (August), globalization (September), noncommunicable diseases (October) and HIV/AIDS (December). To leave space for a large amount of unsolicited articles, we have planned only three theme issues for this year: macroeconomics (February), tuberculosis (June) and international law (December); but we may be able to add one or two more themes as the year progresses.

Finally, a journal depends on its authors, and we take this opportunity to thank them all for contributing so effectively to the *Bulletin's* continued progress. Our advice to them and their colleagues for an even more successful future is: send your best papers to the *Bulletin*, with its rigorous and well-tryed peer review system and its readers in 191 countries. Warm thanks are also due to the many scientists and other specialists who have reviewed manuscripts for us during the past year (see pp. 83–84), often with admirably meticulous care, and to our readers for your support and feedback. We look forward to a year of lively debate and outstanding research. ■

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