

Editorial

When *Genome Biology* was launched in 2000, it was specifically set up to evolve continually in response to changes in biology and emerging new technologies as well as in response to its readers' requirements. At that time, some of our readers needed a monthly printed journal in their hands to serve as a taster and regular reminder to visit the website, where more complete and up-to-date coverage would be available. Research articles, in particular, were never printed in full but were reproduced in summary form - a concept that seemed readily accepted by the research community. We couldn't tell how long it would be before the print issue seemed unnecessary.

Almost six years later the time seems ripe: from January 2006 *Genome Biology* will be published online only and will no longer be distributed in print. The journal will still be published as a monthly issue online (with immediate publication of each article as soon as it becomes available) and laid-out PDF versions of all articles will continue to be available for downloading from the website. As the vast majority of our readers already access articles through the website and make use of the many benefits offered by publication over the web, in particular free access to all our research articles, we don't expect many readers to miss print.

One of the benefits of barrier-free open access to research articles online is the increased visibility. *Genome Biology's* publisher BioMed Central recently introduced a new feature that labels articles as 'highly accessed' (see <http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/about/mostviewed/>). Many of *Genome Biology's* articles have achieved this 'highly accessed' label and authors can make reference to this designation, for example, when listing their publications in grant applications. Some funding agencies are likely to respond to this favorably, and some already strongly encourage open access publication, including the Wellcome Trust, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and the US National Institutes for Health, and an increasing number of agencies allow the use of income from grants to cover the costs of publishing in journals, such as BioMed Central's journals, that are supported by article-processing charges.

We expect that the year 2006 will bring some exciting changes for *Genome Biology*: its citations have been tracked by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) since the beginning of 2003 and the first impact factor is due to be published in June 2006. Other plans for the next

year include a number of changes to the *Genome Biology* website that will make navigation much clearer and simpler. And we will start publishing each research article immediately on acceptance as a provisional PDF, which will be replaced by a copy-edited and laid-out version within a few weeks.

We are particularly pleased to note that the journal is receiving an increasing number of submissions of research using proteomic and systems biology approaches. *Genome Biology* has always aimed at covering all of molecular, cellular, organismal or population biology studied using genomic or other high-throughput approaches - we hope that the trend in submissions from the proteomics and systems biology fields will continue in 2006. For the journal to be able to respond to emerging trends, we rely not only on your submissions but also on your feedback. So, we look forward to your comments.

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