

# EDITORIAL

## EJN in the digital age: introducing the 'EJN blog'

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While neuroscience journals were published in print only, their visibility depended, in part, on their availability in institutional libraries. Scientists were unlikely to publish in journals that they did not have access to via their institutional subscriptions. In contrast, online journals are now almost universally accessible to most neuroscientists, ensuring widespread and equal visibility. However, the almost exclusively online presence of scientific journals, combined with changing literature-searching and reading habits, comes with the considerable risk of journals losing aspects of their identity. On PubMed or any other search engine, all articles and all journals look pretty much the same. Of course, everybody maintains a list of journal rankings in their mind, often determined by the impact factor and subjective perception of the journal's significance. However, what gets lost is awareness of a journal's individual identity. The identity of EJN is based on the quality of its editorial board and the staff of the editorial office, our commitment to providing substantial and balanced reviews, and the role of EJN in supporting, philosophically and with hard currency, the scientific community. Furthermore, EJN publishes original articles and reviews with discernible mechanistic insights into the structure and function of the nervous system, across a broad range of research areas in neuroscience, spanning from molecular neuroscience to human cognition and computational models.

One may ask, do we still need journals, and what are the advantages of journals having distinct identities? Should we simply deposit our manuscripts on the web, and let the scientific community judge their significance over time, on the basis of the number of citations? At first glance, this may appear to be the most democratic and perhaps most economical approach. However, given the increasingly specialized subfields in our rapidly maturing science, the number of scientists who are capable of judging the merits of a particular paper is exceedingly small. Therefore, when you read a paper outside your primary field of expertise, you trust that the journal ensures a level of scientific quality, making it worthwhile for you to read this paper and to stay informed about the larger neuroscience. More importantly, scientists already have a lot on their plate, and cannot afford to review the methods of each article that they read to judge whether the data are scientifically sound. A shared peer-reviewing system thus remains critical, and this can only be accomplished if journals have the proper staff and editorial boards. Finally, established publishers guarantee the archiving of our published data.

Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, we believe that the role of journals will increase as electronic publishing further evolves. In the future, digital media will be available for every article; text and figures will contain dynamic features that link to databases and animated materials. These contents will need to be reviewed and organized and, very importantly, will need to remain accessible in the long term. The task of journals and their publishers will change as the character of published materials develops beyond mere text files. The role of editors in organizing and reviewing these increasingly diverse and complex materials will become even more significant. Furthermore, as the amount of published data grows nearly exponentially, journals will have to develop new approaches to help identify the most relevant information and to keep track of the scientific record.

At EJN, we are developing online tools to accommodate the new online materials that are part of this new generation of submissions. As EJN embraces new publication instruments and processes, maintaining and developing the journal's identity is an essential objective. We would also like to provide an asset of services that is not currently available. For this reason, we are introducing, with the support from our publisher, Wiley-Blackwell, the EJN blog (<http://www.ejnblog.org>). This blog is readily accessible from any computer, iPad, or iPhone, thereby creating a virtual community of neuroscientists. EJN will fuel the debate with commentaries and highlights of recently published articles, as well as present podcasts, interviews, videos, technical tips and more, to promote live scientific interactions and support scientific literacy. The EJN blog will provide information related to EJN articles and the EJN community, such as good publication practice, funding tips, and career planning, as well as a vast array of resources relevant to the daily life of the scientist, notably technical notes and protocol sharing.

To ensure optimal access to the EJN blog, the EJN iPad/iPhone App takes you right there and gives you access to the full content of EJN, provided that you are a registered member of a FENS society or of the Society for Neuroscience, or have institutional access to EJN. The EJN blog is yours, it will grow thanks to your input and contributions, and it will play a key role in promoting your research articles and reviews published by EJN.

The blog is one of the numerous ways employed by EJN to maintain and grow the community of neuroscientists. We are looking forward to meeting you there.