Editorial: Outgoing Editor-in-Chief

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EDITORIAL

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As this is my last issue as Editor-in-Chief of Physiological Measurement, I would like to reflect on the past six years and look ahead to the bright future for this publication. There have been many changes to this journal in recent years. We have gone from a quarterly publication to one that appears monthly, and our annual number of published pages has almost tripled. The number of manuscripts received and papers published has seen a similar growth, but more importantly, these manuscripts are coming from all over the world. Physiological Measurement has become a truly international journal. Our mode of publishing has also undergone major changes: the Internet is bringing our content to a wider audience, and the number of downloads is an ever increasing quantity. Although ‘old-timers’ such as myself still prefer the green book that comes every month, there is no denying that the electronic distribution of our content is reaching a far wider readership than the ‘hard copy’, and it will continue to be a major dissemination route for scientific and engineering work.

But the numbers of pages and papers are not the best measure of the contribution and importance of a journal. A publication’s impact on its field is difficult to quantify. Some have tried to do this with indices such as Impact Factor but this is only a one-dimensional measure of a multidimensional concept. The problem is really the same problem that we have in physiological measurements. We frequently try to find a single measurable variable to fully characterize a complex physiological system, and this is usually not possible. Even so, we at Physiological Measurement are proud that our Impact Factor has steadily increased over the last five years, indicating that this publication has definitely grown in stature even if we cannot be entirely quantitative.

What is the ‘take home’ message here? Clearly, issues of how we measure and characterize physiological systems remain an important area of medical physics and biomedical engineering, and Physiological Measurement is an excellent medium for publishing these techniques. Our success would not have been possible without the support and dedication of our Editorial Board, our staff in Bristol and many of you, our colleagues, who have reviewed so many manuscripts over the years. To all of you I give my sincere thanks for jobs well done.

Next month a new name will appear on the masthead. Richard Bayford takes over as Editor-in-Chief, and he will guide this journal as it continues to grow and contribute to advancements in medical physics and biomedical engineering. I know that Physiological Measurement will be in good hands.

Michael R Neuman