

EDITORIAL

Neoplasia has enjoyed tremendous success during this past year. The success I speak of is not in terms of monetary reward or some kind of prestige, but rather in the realization of the founding principle that motivated the board members to commit to this endeavor at its inception two years ago - that *Neoplasia* would provide a platform for fair minded, constructive and prompt criticism of manuscripts for the rapid dissemination of information to advance the fields of basic and clinical cancer research. I, like many of our readers, am an experimentalist and this past year I have had the pleasure of spending much time at the bench conducting experiments. It is with this first-hand knowledge that I realize that each publication submitted to *Neoplasia* has been the result of many months and sometimes years and countless hours of effort. It is the duty and responsibility of *Neoplasia* to provide the forum, not the bottleneck, for the dissemination of these important contributions.

When we at the editorial office sat down over two years ago, we asked ourselves the following question. What do we dislike the most about the peer review system and how can we approach this process differently to significantly improve upon the dusty, time-honored approach yet still retain the much needed benefits? What we focused upon was our distain for the excruciating long and drawn out peer-review process where an author would have to wait sometimes four to six months before the journal would provide any feedback except for the manuscript number which could be used to "bother" the editorial office to learn that no information can be provided prior to the final editorial decision.

Thus began a great experiment! We felt that the time had come to take a "risky" approach, since as many researchers have found, some of the most far-fetched ideas have yielded the greatest rewards. The idea was relatively simple yet profoundly different that had been used in the publishing arena, that of having the entire editorial process be as open and transparent to the submitting author as possible. The approach we took was to provide a web-based peer review system which provided real-time data to the author relating all pertinent information of the status of the submitted manuscript including posting the reviewers comments as they came in and prior to an editorial decision. It was felt that providing all information in the timeliest way possible would facilitate and accelerate the manuscript modification and revision process. In over two years of providing rapid feedback on papers using this web-based approach, we have not had a single author complain about this process but rather have received numerous complements such as "...this is the way all journals should conduct peer review". In addition, the *Neoplasia* website <http://www.Neoplasia.org> is automatically updated daily with the timeliness of our peer-review statistics which have consistently averaged under one month from submission to final decision.

The next great experiment! As is typically the case in scientific endeavors, experiments usually provide the foundation on which to plan more experiments to further improve ones knowledge. This brings me to announce the beginning of our next great experiment! We will soon release a new version of our web-based peer-review software JournalSoft™ which will provide authors with the ability to type responses to the reviewers comments directly into the on-line database. An option will be provided in which the author can "click" and send these responses back to the reviewer through the computer server providing the authors with the opportunity to debate the issues with the reviewer with the reviewer retaining their anonymity. We believe that scientific exchange of this type not only strengthens the manuscripts that are eventually accepted for publication in *Neoplasia* but also facilitates the exchange of ideas and information between scientists.

Finally, I wish to thank all of you for using *Neoplasia* to disseminate your cutting-edge research and for being willing to be a participant in this great experiment to initiate change to the peer-review process. It is your work and inspiration which makes these pages stimulating and engaging reading. On behalf of myself and the Editorial Board, we appreciate the opportunity to serve the scientific community.

Brian D. Ross