Letter to the Editor

Comments from a Former *Journal of Virology* Editor

In July, I left the ranks of *Journal of Virology* editors to move back to the ranks of JVI reviewers. I realized there were two things that I felt strongly about expressing as I marked this change. First, I want to express my gratitude to all of you who have served as reviewers when I approached you with this request for uncompensated work. The JVI editorial board has moved largely to a “contribution-based” system over the last few years now that the number of reviews by each reviewer can be tracked in the database. Active reviewers are easily identified and invited to be part of the editorial board, while inactive or unresponsive reviewers over time are removed. However, there is a subset of editorial board members who make a remarkable contribution to the journal in terms of their willingness to do a large number of reviews. I wish journals would identify their top 10 (or more) reviewers each year, as this is a measure of the value your editor colleagues place on your judgment. For those of you who have received more than your share of requests to review from me, a special thanks. Your intellectual blood runs thick through the veins of the *Journal of Virology*.

The second item that deserves comment is about the change that is under way in scientific publishing. There are two very different competing models. The old model is where the journal’s income comes from subscriptions and the journal must have content (its papers) good enough to make you want to subscribe. The new model is open access, where the author pays most of the cost up front and the publisher expects no

income based on subscriptions or archived content, with no intrinsic limit on the number of journals or the number of papers. JVI has searched for a middle ground where there is a modest subscription cost, a modest author cost, and relatively rapid open access. While I don’t have any special insight into these issues, it is clear that we, as a community, define how we value individual journals in our choice of where we send our own work and in our perception of significance when we review. As the number of online open-access journals grows, we collectively will sort out their value, with the review process playing an expanded role in defining journal quality. Conversely, subscription-based publishers need to be pushed to make content available sooner and more widely as our expectations are influenced by open access. I published my first paper in the *Journal of Virology*, and I will be happy to publish my last paper there (in the distant future). I believe that as a society-based journal, JVI will continue to be guided by the needs of the community it serves; for that reason, we would be wise to keep it as a valued entity in this rapidly changing world.

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