Editorial

Hypothesis-driven research and the resulting papers are, and will remain, the mainstay of publications in the radiology literature. This is certainly true of the majority of manuscripts submitted to the *Journal of Digital Imaging*. However, there is much in radiological informatics that is as important to the nonacademic practitioner as to the radiologist-scientist and radiologist-engineer. Some of this work falls outside the scope of hypothesis-driven research. A facility implementing a new information system may have developed much insight into the process through real experience with problems and solutions. A radiologist may be using a software package on a personal computer in a novel way and finds that the method saves time or makes a task simpler. These subjects also deserve an audience among the medical imaging community, but there is little outlet for them in the peer-reviewed literature.

Together with the JDI Editorial Board and Associate Editors, we have decided to invite authors to submit manuscripts that fit two new categories of papers for the Journal. The first of these is the "experience report." We have actually published such papers in the past, but they were not identified as such. These papers are designed to provide a vehicle for a group or institution to describe experiences with new systems, or a novel use of a system that results in a change in the way work is done. These papers do not have to contain the usual sections of hypothesis-driven research papers, but they should have an abstract, a section describing the system implemented, the reasons why such a

system was chosen, any difficulties encountered or benefits documented, and a discussion with conclusions. References should also be included as appropriate, and figures are encouraged. If there is quantitative data, it should be presented, and any comparisons made with pre-system data should be subjected to at least some statistical analysis. These papers will be peer-reviewed, and review criteria will fit the nature of the manuscript. The title may contain the phrase "experience report," but in any case, the authors should indicate that this is the category of paper they are submitting. If the title does not readily reflect that the paper is an "experience report," the table of contents for the Journal will indicate this parenthetically.

The second type of paper has also been published in the Journal. These papers, which take the form of a "technical note," "technical tip," or "technical tutorial," are intended to be expositions of how the authors accomplish a particular task in a novel way or by using established software or equipment in a manner that has not been previously described. As for experience reports, these papers need not follow the usual scientific paper structure. They should, however, have an abstract, a discussion of the background of the method and software or equipment used, and a discussion of the ways in which their method is superior to existing methods. References should be provided and figures illustrating concepts or procedures are required (note that, for software, illustrations may be "screen shots" showing the program in operation). All particulars of the system, program, or hardware, should be thoroughly de-

scribed. Such descriptions should include (but are not restricted to) software version, description of the equipment on which the software runs, any special hardware or software needed to make the system run, and (if the authors create new software or plug-ins for existing programs) three copies of the software should be included with the manuscript submission. Reviewers of this category of manuscript will also have review instructions different from those for scientific papers and may wish to try the authors' method or run the software. Reviewers will be instructed not to retain or distribute any software provided by the authors. Authors should indicate when submitting the manuscript that it is of the "technical note" category. As for experience reports, if the title does not reflect the nature of the submission, it will be noted parenthetically in the table of contents.

Authors should not feel that the description of their papers as experience reports or technical notes in any way detracts from them; the manuscripts will be subjected to the same thorough, expert review as scientific papers. The

designation will help the readers of the Journal find these articles quickly (some of our readership has indicated that they would read these papers first, either in the Journal or on-line).

A major review criterion for either of these new paper types will be whether the manuscript would be interesting or helpful for the JDI readership. Potential authors who have thought, "We would like to make others aware of what we have done" are welcome to write up their experiences or describe their technical innovations and submit them to the Journal. As the JDI grows with SCAR in circulation, and as medical imaging continues to push technology and science, it is likely we will add yet other paper categories to the Journal.

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