Editorial

Newsweek

Recently, it was in the news that the American magazine Newsweek had been sold for just one dollar, because the buyers would be taking on a debt of 50 million dollars. This magazine's survival difficulties were attributed to competition from the internet.

For journals that provide updates, i.e. journals for which there ceases to be any reason for storing them, not long after they have been read, the internet is an enemy. The way in which texts are stored and retrieved on the internet is much faster, more efficient and less costly than these processes are for printed material.

As the editor of our journal, I am concerned about its future. Will we shortly evolve into an electronic form, or will we maintain the printed form, as the traditionalists that we are? Would there be any intermediate form? Should the information in original studies and case reports be published in web form, while review articles (which after all are like small passages from books) remain in printed form?

I cannot envision what will happen to books, because these are eternal and can be reread, stored and given as gifts, and there is a playful element in handling and transporting them. I cannot imagine someone reading a novel on a journey or in the bathroom, on their computer.

Original studies and case reports contain important pieces of information and therefore can easily be stored in electronic form. Readers can quickly and easily retrieve the information of interest to them, with the aid of search systems, which are so well developed today. The graphic production, commercialization and delivery through the postal system of a journal like the RBO depend on great efforts by the SBOT and considerable expenditure for it.

- graphic printing production becomes progressively more expensive when we need good-quality images;
- commercialization of advertisements is becoming increasingly difficult, because our partners prefer other forms of media to publicize their products, such as congresses and specific courses;
- delivery through the postal system to the members of a society of national nature is very costly, as can easily be imagined.

Review articles have a philosophical nature and represent compilations of what is up-to-date at that moment, and they can be kept and consulted for some time. As an example, there is the AAOS journal, which deals with specific updating topics and has been a great editorial success. If we take into consideration the scientific production from our committees, we would have an inexhaustible supply of updating material, complied by specialists for general information purposes.

If we look at the international scenario, we observe that most updating journals still maintain their printed form and feed their published papers onto the internet, i.e. in the same way as done by the RBO.

Thus, both these other journals and the RBO have joined together the habit of handling the printed journal with the facility of electronic search systems.

Through monitoring the number of visits to the RBO on the internet over the coming months, we will gain an overview and will be able to maintain and improve our printed edition or evolve to an electronic system for scientific publication, thereby avoiding a situation in which the printed RBO will become worth one real.

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