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The Times They Are A' Changing

Stephen J. Langendorfer, Editor

Bowling Green State University

It is with somewhat mixed feelings that I composed this editorial to the readership of the *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education* about some imminent changes that *IJARE* is going to experience. As many regular readers are aware, *IJARE* is in its 9th consecutive year (and volume) of publication as a quarterly scholarly journal with both print and online versions and a mission to disseminate research and professional papers in all areas of noncompetitive aquatics. Despite a regular and faithful readership and a growing number and quality of papers and authors in aquatics, *IJARE* simply has not generated enough individual or library subscriptions to come close to breaking even. We also have been unable to get indexed in PubMed or receive an ISI journal impact factor which has inhibited some young scholars from submitting their best work to us.

Several months ago, representatives from our publisher, Human Kinetics, contacted me to present these facts and to let me know that they could no longer publish the journal. This was the “bad news.” The “good news” is that they promised to finish publishing all issues in the 9th volume and, importantly, offered to help us find another publisher and to facilitate the change from publication by Human Kinetics to another publisher.

As it turned out, “another publisher” (more accurately, another publishing platform) was located a mere 300 meters from my faculty office and only 800 meters from my home office (where I do most of my editorial work)! Bowling Green State University, my “day job,” has an agreement with a publishing entity associated with the University of California at Berkeley known as Berkeley Press, or more commonly, bepress. Like ScholarOne, the owners of Manuscript Central, *IJARE*'s publishing platform the past 9 years, bepress has a publishing platform known as ScholarWorks. The University Libraries at BGSU has an ongoing agreement to manage ScholarWorks for a variety of local purposes including publishing online open access journals. When I contacted colleagues at BGSU's University Libraries, they were absolutely thrilled to host another journal, especially an established international journal such as *IJARE*.

So, what does this change in publishing platform mean for the *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, its authors, readers, and other interested parties? In fact, it has several very important, and for the most part, very positive implications. Some things, however, will *not* change. For example, we are maintaining our mission as an international scholarly journal that uses a rigorous double-blind peer review process. We will continue to publish on a quarterly basis. We will maintain (and probably expand) our Editorial Board to represent as many countries and areas of aquatic expertise as possible. Human Kinetics is allowing us to move all the previous issues published by Human Kinetics to the ScholarWorks site so that the entire journal is housed in a single location.

What will change is that we will no longer publish a print version of each issue, but only an online version. The set up and printing costs were one of the main expenses incurred by Human Kinetics over the past 9 years and was a major factor along with the low number of subscriptions that led to their decision not to continue publishing *IJARE*. Beginning with the next volume in 2016, instead of requiring a subscription to obtain and read issues of *IJARE* and its editorials, articles, and media reviews, *IJARE* will become an open access online publication that will be available to any and all persons. This will include access to all prior issues. My library colleagues assure me that the result of this shift from a proprietary publisher like Human Kinetics, who required a subscription, to an online open access publication will be a dramatic increase in readership of the journal and its published articles. Through the ScholarWorks site, we will be able to monitor the number of direct accesses to the site and perhaps individual items.

Another change that initially had me most worried was the prospect that my editorship responsibilities would dramatically increase from being in charge of the scholarly review process to also becoming the managing editor (a role that Kathleen Bernard now plays through her employment at Human Kinetics). I got a very nice and completely unexpected surprise when my recently retired librarian wife, Jeanne, stepped forward and volunteered her services as managing editor. She explained to me that for years she had wanted to be involved with the journal, but with a full-time job as a serials librarian she simply could not. Retirement last fall gave her that option. How lucky could the journal and I get to have a professional librarian who dealt with online journals on a daily basis become the managing editor?!

This change in platform from Manuscript Central to ScholarWorks obviously will require all of us authors, reviewers, and readers to learn some new procedures. I simply ask for your patience. It will not automatically “solve” the issue of still not having a journal impact factor (see my 2011 editorial in Volume 5, issue 4, pp. 372–375). As I stated in that editorial, I am a firm believer that rating each article rather than the journal is a more direct, valid, and robust way to evaluate scholarly publications. With our shift to online open access, I will strongly encourage authors to create their own personal “impact factor” for each article based upon the number of accesses and citations each receives in the literature rather than rely on a less reliable general journal impact factor.

Over the next several months, my wonderful spouse, Jeanne, and I, along with our BGSU Library colleagues, will be hard at work getting the ScholarWorks site set up and operational for your submissions. We will move manuscripts currently under review from Manuscript Central to ScholarWorks as soon as I figure out how to do that. For the time being, I advise authors to continue to access the Manuscript Central site for *IJARE* (http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/HK_IJARE) and submit your manuscripts. We will put a notice on Manuscript Central to let authors know when and how to change their submissions to ScholarWorks. In the next issue, I will provide additional technical information (e.g., URL for the *IJARE* ScholarWorks site) for authors, reviewers, and readers.

Please accept my thanks in advance for your patience as we move forward with this important and, I believe, very positive change in the *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*. Feel free to contact me (slangen@bgsu.edu) with questions or concerns about these changes.

Steve Langendorfer
Editor