

Neuroinformatics

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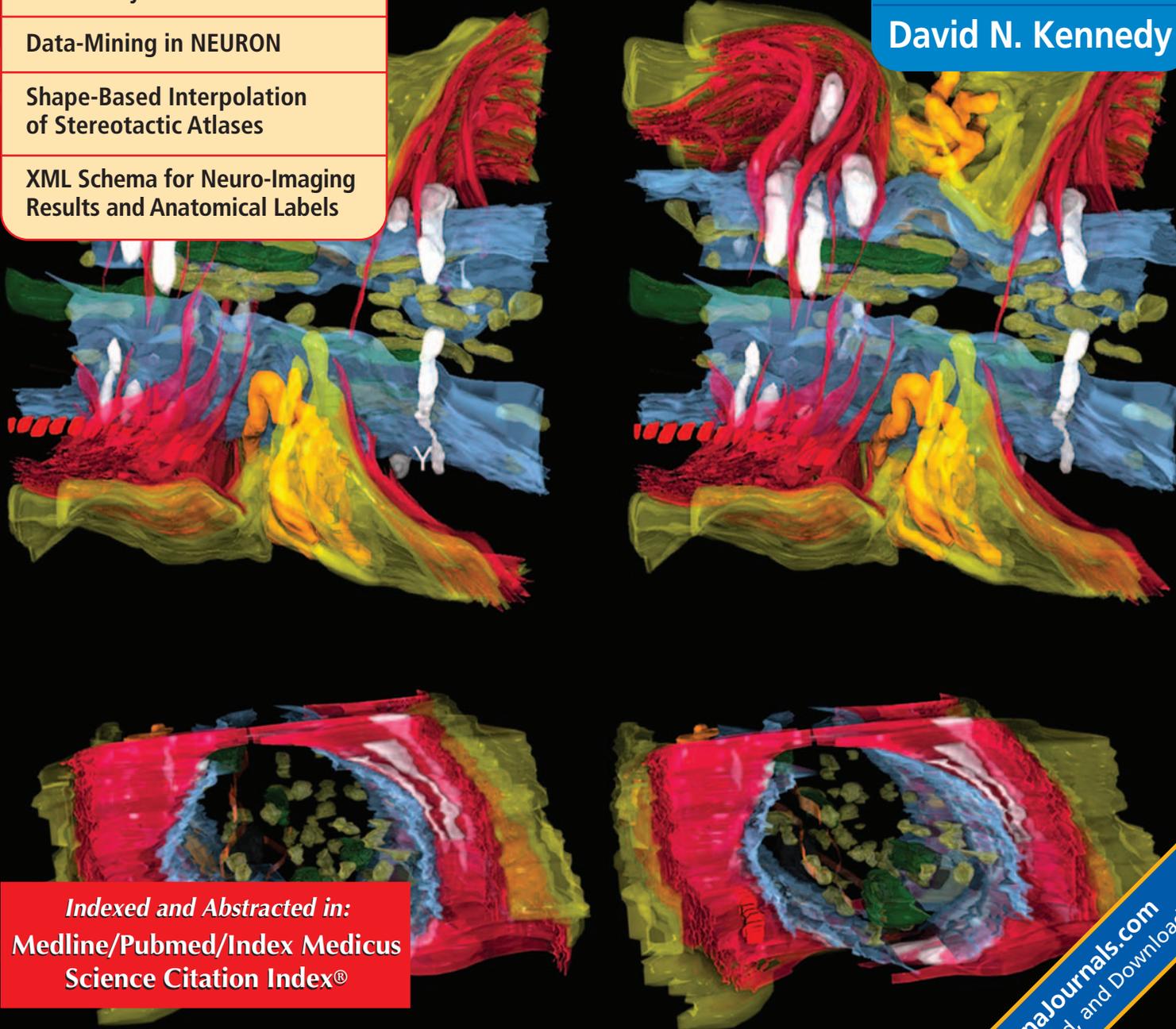
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Editorial

On the Future of the Human Brain Project

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This editorial appears around the time of the first Human Brain Project (HBP) meeting after the closure of the HBP Program Announcements. This closure in September last year came as a surprise to many in the community. Although the News Item in this issue by three National Institute of Health representatives from our editorial board (Huerta et al., 2006) outlines several other funding opportunities at NIH, it is with sadness that we see the HBP program go. The HBP was seminal to the early development of the community that this journal serves (De Schutter, 2005).

But the HBP was, and in fact remains, more than just a Program Announcement. Important research is still funded under HBP for several years to come, and much of the neuroinformatics progress and resources already attained under this Program will continue to yield “HBP-derived” results. Therefore the HBP was, and remains, a lens, focusing broad efforts on tools, databases, computational methods, information science, and knowledge management in the service of neuroscience. It

is a melting pot of diverse approaches and an incubator of efforts that fosters and supports a new cadre of investigators, skilled in new methods. The HBP led to excellent dialogue, (for e.g., via the Annual Meeting, and outreach programs at the Society for Neuroscience Meetings), fostered a sensitive and balanced neuroinformatics NIH study section, and seeded the development of national and international neuroinformatics resources. All of these positive achievements need to be sustained and maintained, lest we, as a community, move backwards relative to these advancements.

Fortunately new players have come forward who can provide the visionary drive to maintain—accelerate, even—the momentum and exert, if needed, pressure to keep the necessary funding and evaluation mechanisms going. Most important of these will be the Society of Neuroscience Neuroinformatics Committee that has received strong support from (and counts among its current members) past and future presidents of the society and is well connected with the HBP community. Second, as the

USA was one of the first countries to join the International Neuroinformatics Coordination Facility (INCF) (De Schutter, 2005), it seems likely that in return the INCF will provide positive feedback to neuroinformatics efforts in the USA. Finally, this journal and its editorial board will of course fan the burning flame of research and discovery by publishing the high quality research performed in the neuroinformatics field and, if necessary, critical opinions and

reviews on the state of affairs at the funding and coordination level. We will keep you posted.

References

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- Huerta, M. F., Liu, Y., and Glanzman, D. L. (2006) A view of the digital landscape for Neuroscience at NIH. *Neuroinformatics* **4**, 131–138.