Editorial

A Second Look Back

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This issue opens the fifth volume of *Neuroinformatics,* which is a good time to look at how the journal is doing, as it has evolved quite a bit as I wrote a similar editorial for the second volume (De Schutter, 2004). What has not changed is that we are very proud about our editorial work. Our impact factor is excellent for a journal with a strong emphasis on informatics and methods, we started at 3.0 for 2004 and are now at 3.9. This puts us heads and shoulders above all computational neuroscience, machine learning, and neuroscience methods' journals. We rank in the top-half of neuroscience journals, better than many classic neuroscience titles, and do even better in informatics in which we are ranked fourth in interdisciplinary computer science.

This high impact factor is supported by two trends, a positive and a negative one. Rather negative is that we publish relatively few articles, in fact, the third and fourth volumes contained a quarter less articles than the first two. This helps of course with the impact factor but also reflects a rather low article submission rate. We expect that the good impact factor will help to solve this problem but will also make sure that a higher influx of manuscripts will not lead to a lowering of the quality of the journal.

Nevertheless, this volume will still include only four issues, the increase to six volumes has been postponed till we get a permanent increase in article submission.

The positive trend is that our high impact factor is supported by the multidisciplinary nature of the journal. In fact, the current issue is quite representative for the majority of our articles: we have three articles fitting within the category of anatomy and morphology, a category that traditionally has slow citation leading to low impact factors, and three articles from the neuroimaging field, which tend to generate high-impact factors. The good news is also that the latter category is on the rise, the proportion of neuroimaging-related articles we published has almost doubled during the last 2 yr, whereas the proportions of articles in the anatomy and modeling categories remained constant. The rise of neuroimaging is mirrored by the complete disappearance of clinical neuroinformatics articles. We were initially enthusiastic to receive manuscripts in this very relevant category (De Schutter, 2004), but unfortunately most of them were not of very high quality and we can only surmise that the high-quality clinical neuroinformatics articles get published elsewhere.

Of course, the high-impact factor also reflects the quality of the articles we publish. For that we need to thank the contributing authors but also our reviewers. In fact, the journal has acquired a strong reputation for high quality, detailed review of submitted manuscripts, which is something the authors highly appreciate as it helps them to improve their articles in a positive way.

Another trend we are proud of is the large increase in analysis and informatics methods' articles, which went from less than a third to almost half of the articles during the last 2 yr. We strongly believe that besides describing new software and database products, the journal has a strong mission in offering a high-impact platform to publish methods. In fact, this was one of the main recommendations of Greg Wilson's American Scientist article (Wilson, 2005), which has had a big impact in the "bio-IT" blogosphere (Baxter et al., 2006): "we urgently need more journals willing to publish descriptions of how scientists develop software, and how that software functions." At least in the field of neuroscience Neuroinformatics has made a big step forward in this direction.

References

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