

## **Orthodonticinformation.com**

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Predicting the future is always a risky adventure, and this is especially true when there is something important to lose if you are wrong. The ready availability of scientific orthodontic information is too important to lose.

In January 2000, I became editor of the *Angle Orthodontist*, and the Foundation Board agreed that all signals indicated that the future of information technology was becoming increasingly digital. Timing is everything—jump too soon or too late, and you can be right and still lose.

The Board decided to go digital, and I can offer you some data now that suggest that digital information is indeed the way of the future (Table 1). The first thrust was to put current issues of the journal online for all to read without charge. This resulted in 90,000 hits on the Web site in 2001, which was more than we ever imagined and was consistent with the rising tsunami of the open access movement. This is a subject unto itself. Where are all of these people who want to read esoteric orthodontic information? Immediately thereafter, the hits more than doubled, and the number of manuscripts submitted doubled. We published more pages, and the acceptance rate dropped sharply (suggesting quality was improving).

In 2003, we put all issues from 1931 to the present online. The use of the Web site exploded in 2004 with 1.6 million hits. The hits have increased every year, with 3.2 million hits in 2006.

The number of submitted manuscripts kept increasing each year. Despite the fact that we now publish more than twice as many pages as we did in 2000, the percentage of accepted manuscripts keeps dropping, and last year, we could publish only 3 of every 10 manuscripts submitted. The other 7 clearly were

not all bad science. They simply did not get a high enough priority from our peer review process, and most will be published in some other journal.

We now publish three times as many articles as in 2000, and these are selected from six times as many articles submitted. This results in a selection process that is more than twice as rigorous as it was in 2000. The rate of future increases will have to decrease if for no other reason than the base has grown so large.

All of this has happened alongside newspapers and other printed publications experiencing decreased circulation and revenues. When viewing Table 1, think of the traditional approach to the communication of scientific information: the past is a poor predictor of the future. The paper circulation chugs on as it has in the past, but the electronic readership is off the charts! We are seeing the arrival of a new generation that is comfortable with—indeed demands—speed and electronic scientific information. Now readers tell me they do not mind subscribing and supporting the paper copy, but keep the paper and save the trees. The digital age of orthodontic information has arrived.

Of course, the long-term answer is in the economics of the situation. Someone has to pay, and the EH Angle Education and Research Foundation has been your angel thus far. They are the publisher of the *Angle Orthodontist*, and their vision has made this all possible.

Clearly, as the paper world shrinks, we will need to find ways to finance the digital world and still retain free and open access to scientific information for everyone. The Angle Foundation has initiated an endowment, the Angle Heritage Fund, to create a core of investments in which only the interest is used to support the Web site. This will ensure future open access. We invite all friends of orthodontics to participate in and support this campaign. If you have found open access helpful and you believe that science should be available to everyone everywhere, please support the Heritage Fund by sending a gift/pledge to the Heritage Campaign Manager:

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**Table 1.** Growth of the *Angle Orthodontist*, 2000–2006

	Hits on Web Site	Manu- scripts Submitted	Manu- scripts Published	% Published	Total Pages/Year
2000		90	59	65	489
2001	90,664	122	63	52	526
2002	232,951	178	75	42	598
2003	486,144	251	99	39	788
2004	1,645,796	342	129	38	858
2005	2,781,006	461	159	37	1083
2006	3,196,156	538	160	30	1084

or to

Dr Phillip M. Campbell, Treasurer  
EH Angle Education and  
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*The Heritage Fund has already received pledges of more than \$700,000, and if you believe scientific information should be freely available to everyone, your support is needed. Orthodontics has been very good to us all, and it is time to return the gift.*