

There's an app for most things

Robert J. Isaacson

I am wedded to a ritual of reading the paper with my morning coffee. The reality is, however, that print editions of all media (including scientific journals) have far less appeal to the majority of the upcoming generations. The result is an ongoing trend toward printed information becoming accessed more and more in a digital format and less and less in the traditional paper format.

As we move into the digital media, many newspapers have followed a policy of free digital distribution of all or much of their digital versions with a continued policy of charging for the paper editions. This was essentially the policy adopted by The Angle Orthodontist about ten years ago.

Our local paper, The Star Tribune, recently announced a modification of their policy of how they will deal with distribution of their information on digital devices to now include your mobile devices with an iPad app and iPhone and Android apps. Like most other papers they had a policy of free access with digital devices. This change follows the model adopted by others such as The New York Times, Boston Globe, and Dallas Morning News, who also began with free digital access and have moved or are moving to pay programs for access on digital devices.

This new model fundamentally deals with the problem of declining paper income and increased digital use by instituting a charge for digital access. This model gives free digital access to printed paper subscribers. Non-subscribers, however, will be able to access 20 articles per month free, but after that they must purchase digital access for \$1.99 per week.

The issue here is, of course, an economic question. How does a print media journal put out their material in digital format while deriving enough income to cover the expenses? The loss of the paper edition and its distribution costs surprisingly are relatively lesser matters. The material still has to be put into digital

format, edited, and converted to a platform acceptable format etc. Now there are also more people involved in the creation and maintenance of the web site.

In the scientific journal world, the cost of publishing articles averages close to \$3000 per article in digital or paper versions. The Angle Orthodontist puts out over 175 articles per year and these fixed costs must be met.

As a subscription base shrinks, the revenue also shrinks and there is today's challenge. The www.angle.org/ web site pop up requesting you to consider donating to the Angle Heritage fund is a part of our effort to establish an endowment fund where the interest will contribute to the costs of keeping our site free and open access. Our site provides complete access to all 82 years of our journal's content. We wanted to give our many readers world-wide the opportunity to participate and give back to orthodontics. Rick McLaughlin has done a fantastic job leading the Heritage Drive and is already working well into the second million dollars of donations to this fund. The vast majority of these contributions have come from the members of the Angle Society that sponsors the Angle Foundation, our publisher. The Angle Society is not well known, but consists of about 500 dedicated international members who recognize that they have received so much from those who went before them and thus derive a great satisfaction from doing their part to move the discipline's information forward during their watch.

There is no app yet for raising revenue, but we will be offering an app for your mobile device, iPad and iPhone or Android mobile device early in 2012. This will allow you to refer to or read the Angle Orthodontist no matter where you are and will be a nice complement to our pace-setting web site. Continue to enjoy the Angle Orthodontist whether on your computer or mobile device. But remember what past generations did for you and consider what your responsibility is to future generations.