

Transitioning to a Paperless Workflow

Moderator:

Betsy Garman

American Association for Clinical Chemistry
Washington, DC

Speakers:

Betsy Garman

American Association for Clinical Chemistry
Washington, DC

Mike Hepp

Dartmouth Journal Services/
Sheridan Press
Waterbury, Vermont

Amy McPherson

Botanical Society of America
St Louis, Missouri

Tanda Jaipean

The Histochemical Society
Seattle, Washington

Reporter:

Dana M Compton

National Academy of Sciences
Washington, DC

Publishers constantly seek ways to streamline workflow and improve efficiency to reduce both publication schedules and costs. "Paperless" workflow has become more common as a means to those ends. In recent years, many journals have introduced electronic content or have made their electronic versions the versions of record. Likewise, publishers have started managing submissions with online systems and the flow of manuscripts with online production-tracking systems. Five case studies were presented: four from publishers' points of view and one from a service provider's perspective.

Betsy Garman, of the American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC), related the transitions that the American Society of Clinical Oncology

(ASCO) and AACC have undergone over the last several years. ASCO realized both cost and time savings by transitioning its flagship journal, *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, to the BenchPress online submission system offered by HighWire Press. It made several other changes to help in converting both its journals to a mostly paperless workflow. The staff (and the authors) now use Adobe Acrobat for author proof markup and return, and they have purchased iPens to "write" electronically on PDFs. They also replaced their fax machines with a fax server, so faxes are delivered directly via e-mail. Garman indicated that although ASCO spent money on PDF creation, hardware such as the iPens, and software licenses, it was able to save more money in the long run by transitioning to the new workflow. The organization did encounter some difficulties during the changeover period, as is to be expected, but the benefits have certainly outweighed the costs.

Garman also spoke about the AACC publication program. Its flagship journal, *Clinical Chemistry*, has been paperless since 2001 and is also on the BenchPress online submission system. Likewise, *Laboratory Medicine Practice Guidelines* operates on a paperless basis. These journals are edited in Word and published only online with a print-on-demand option.

Amy McPherson, of the Botanical Society of America, reported on the transition that the *American Journal of Botany* has been undergoing since 2003. The most rapid period of change has been since 2007. Although there was not a specific need for transition or a particular aspect of the program that wasn't working, McPherson says that the society made these changes "because it could"—that is, because advances in technology had made it possible. It uses technologies offered by Sheridan Press.

Similarly, Tanda Jaipean, of The Histochemical Society, spoke about the *Journal of Histochemistry and Cytochemistry*

(JHC), in which the online transition has been evolving for 8 years. Jaipean spoke of the importance of vendor partnerships—JHC is on the BenchPress and HighWire Press platforms, and Dartmouth Journal Services provides production services—and of developing business continuity plans. Both McPherson's and Jaipean's presentations made it clear that such a major transition doesn't happen overnight but is a constantly evolving process.

Coming from the service-provider industry, Mike Hepp, of Dartmouth Journal Services/Sheridan Press, gave an overview of the Sheridan Press facilities and new technologies that vendors offer to help publishers eliminate paper-based processes throughout production. Hepp described paperless workflows as a byproduct of automated workflows. He gave recommendations as to the qualities that a publisher should have to be a good fit for such a transition: small to medium size, remote staff or telecommuters, receptivity to change and flexibility in processes, and good communication systems. Hepp also presented a list of tips for publishers in making such a change and challenges that they might encounter. Finally, he described some of Dartmouth Journal Services' technologies, such as eXtyle, Digital Expert, eProofing and eReturn, Prinerly, and Virtual Digital Bluelines.

In the end, the message was clear: Each publisher needs to weigh the potential costs and benefits of a transition to a paperless (and automated) workflow and consider the transition carefully before leaping in. It may be a long process, but many publishers have found success! 🔥