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Editorial

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These are exciting times for biology. A tremendous burst of energy is evident both in the research community and among the public in response to the numerous genome projects - including the Human Genome Project - aimed at sequencing the entire genomes of microbes, plants, invertebrates and vertebrates. Sequencing efforts have turned some academic laboratories into factories and some biotechnology start-up companies into big businesses. Financiers, politicians and the news media are more interested in biology than at any time since Darwin. And, indeed, the changes genomics brings to the way research is done in biological laboratories promise to be as profound as those triggered by the advent of recombinant DNA technology in the 1970s. It is in recognition of these changes that *Genome Biology* is named, as a standard-bearer for all the biology that is emerging from genomics and from 'post-genomic' and 'functional genomic' studies.

The ways in which scientific information is exchanged and distributed are also changing profoundly. Desktop internet access is widespread, and there is a strong feeling in the scientific community that publishers should move back to being the servants of science rather than posing expensive obstacles in the way of publishing original research. This feeling was voiced clearly last year by then National Institutes of Health Director, Harold Varmus, when he proposed "a community-based effort to establish an electronic publishing ... system that would make results from the world's life sciences research community freely available on the Internet". The proposal has now become a reality: a pilot PubMed Central [<http://pubmedcentral.nih.gov/>] website and repository are available and several high-profile journals have signed up to place their research papers in it. *Genome Biology* is proud to be the first journal that, from its inception, will place all research articles in full in PubMed Central without delay, to allow immediate free access. In this, we share the goals of our affiliate publisher BioMed Central [<http://biomedcentral.com>], which is at the forefront of the publishing revolution.

How can a scientific publication respond to the twin revolutions, in biology and in publishing, in a way that makes sense for its readers? We believe our role is to provide the services that readers and authors want, and to use the best available technology - including exploiting the internet to the full. We will provide two key services. First, we will systematically sift, review, report, highlight and assess the significance of the most important findings in post-genomic biology as they occur, so as to provide an insightful and authoritative guide to the changing face of biology; and second, we will facilitate and expedite the peer-review and publication of original research. We plan to deliver a customized, personalized service to each reader, initially sorting articles by subject and by type, to provide listings of the content each reader most wants to read. We are also developing more sophisticated ways of personalizing our service, for example by suggesting relevant related articles and routes through our website, with a view to endowing the reading of articles from the web with some of the traditional aspects of journal browsing. And, although you need not be a subscriber to publish or read original research articles, we will charge a subscription for our reviewing and alerting service, and will provide a monthly print issue to subscribers.

In publishing original research, our sole aim is to facilitate the peer-review and distribution (via the web) of all sound science - not to set barriers of article length or interest level at the point of publication, but to publish all good science. We encourage authors to post large datasets in full, with appropriate detail and annotation, so that articles can be more complete and self-contained than when written for publication primarily in print. We are committed to promoting and helping to develop the highest standards of access, nomenclature and practice within the new biology, and to asking probing questions, both about the practice of science and the results it generates, and about the process of scientific publishing. Our central service to you is providing an interesting and topical mix of reading. But the

printed journal in your hand should serve only as a taster and a reminder to look at the website for more timely and complete coverage, for example of peer-reviewed Research articles. If immediate coverage of breaking research is important to you, take a look at [Research news](#). The [Reports](#) section provides more detailed, structured coverage of research reported at meetings or published in journals, and of websites and databases. For the most insightful analysis and opinion about post-genomic biology, see the [Comment](#) section. In this issue, Gregory Petsko writes on the importance of deciding exactly what goals each community wishes to reach, and Andrew Murray takes a penetrating look at the future of genomics. [Minireviews and Reviews](#) include both comprehensive surveys of mature fields and more immediate coverage of emerging areas. The Review by Thornton and colleagues on proteins that bind DNA (in this issue) sets the scene for a forthcoming series that will help readers navigate through the increasing numbers of structural and functional protein families revealed by genome projects.

Genome **Biology** is designed to evolve in response to the changes in biology and in our readers' requirements. We want to provide what you, the busy research scientist, need - and we can only do that with your support and input. So, tell us what you think of the website and this printed extract of it, and what you want to see next. The future is in your hands.

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