



## Editorial

# A step in the right direction: With an eye on readers' preference

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Received : 27 August 2022

Accepted : 29 August 2022

Published : 23 September 2022

### DOI

10.25259/SNI\_785\_2022

### Quick Response Code:



Several decades ago, when the internet was still in its early stages, the smartphones have not been invented and the open access concept was a futuristic proposal, the predecessor of this journal, the “original” *Surgical Neurology* was ahead of its times and focused on what’s important to its readers. Not affiliated with any societies, this peer reviewed journal was founded by Dr. Paul Bucy in the early 1970-s and edited for the last 16 years of its existence by the senior author. It deeply cared about critical thinking and became remarkably popular among practicing neurosurgeons worldwide for its frank editorials and open discussion of controversial topics.

But, the editorials were not the only unique feature of the journal. When we informally surveyed our readership about the way they read the articles, it turned out that only few of them read the journal cover to cover. Many glanced through the table of contents and picked few papers of interest. Almost everyone read the front editorial that described the papers of interest and the other one on a controversial topic at the end. But importantly, when it came to actually reading the articles, it turned out that many looked at the abstract, but even more started by reading the comments at the end of each paper. These comments were provided by the paper reviewers and the section editors, they focused on the strong points the paper was making and mentioned its subtle weaknesses.

During the peer review process, the reviewers were invited to submit their thoughtful comments, and almost all used this opportunity to express their honest opinions about the submission they reviewed.

Since that time, the publication world has changed tremendously. Not only “open access” became commonplace, but the discussion forums and ability to add comments to the published papers are now widely used features of many journals. Judging from our experience with *Surgical Neurology International*, these features definitely attract attention of our readers and make the reading process much more interactive.

But although unsolicited comments from the readers add to the real-world perception of the published material, they do not substitute true expert opinions that come from reviewers and editors. In addition, when the actual papers are downloaded, the online discussions are rarely taken with them. So, to provide this extra insight, we will start including the invited comments with the papers as they get published. These comments will show up not only on your screen

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at the end of the commented on paper, but also in the downloadable PDF file so they will always be available to the interested reader.

We do plan to implement more additional features over time; ultimately, *SNI Digital* will provide a unique interactive experience for practicing neurosurgeons, from conference

coverage to practical solutions to forums and web-based events. Adding comments to the paper is just a small step in the right direction.

**How to cite this article:** Slavin KV, Epstein NE, Ausman JI. A step in the right direction: With an eye on readers' preference. *Surg Neurol Int* 2022;13:429.