

iVIEW

EDITOR'S PAGE



## JACC: Cardiovascular Imaging 2.0

### The Next Decade in Digital



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Heracleitus is quoted as saying “There is nothing permanent except change,” (1) and nothing is changing itself faster in the second decade of this century than “information sharing.” Journals, whose primary currency is information, thus also need to evolve with the speed of information. If the first decade of *iJACC* was text and print, the second decade will be all digital and media: starting in March 2018, your favorite journal will become online only; you will not see a monthly issue in your snail mail box, but you can still continue to access and download your favorite papers or the entire issue as you desire, at <http://imaging.onlinejacc.org>. Over the course of the next many months, you will also see a plethora of exciting online features, including better author and reader experience, enriched content, and some practical elements of the “digital article of the future” that will, we hope, make the journal even more attractive. *iJACC* has always taken to heart Henry R. Luce’s proclamation in his 1936 prospectus for *Life* magazine: “to see and take pleasure in seeing; to see and be amazed; to see and be instructed,” (2) and the digital medium best allows us to fulfill that aspiration in substantial measure.

#### WHY CHANGE AND WHY NOW?

This change is driven by a culmination of many factors. We have long believed that the field of imaging,

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with rapidly moving images and 3-dimensional data, was ill suited to the “dimensionally flat” print medium. Moreover, our online presence, optimized for a dynamic field such as imaging, was growing rapidly, creating a noticeable gap between our digital and print product. Finally, our readership indicated a different set of preferences—90% of our readers accessed *iJACC* using online devices—so the interest in accessing the print version was clearly declining.

Although we are very proud of our print edition, it was time to question what unique functions print served and whether the resources sustaining it could be better used more productively. Some things were obvious: print provided a portable collection of that month’s features for leisurely reading at convenience. It provided familiarity in hand: the glossy feel of the latest issue, and tangible ownership of important papers that we could notate and file away within reach. There was an element of nostalgia for this medium, as one would have with, say, a vinyl record (3). For authors, the print edition allowed that their papers had reached a guaranteed audience (instead of wondering who had downloaded it and who had read it), along with “product placement” through repetitive exposure to the journal copy in various venues.

Print had many disadvantages too: it was costly and heavily dependent on subsidizing through advertising, something that is becoming increasingly scarce for print media. It had limited pages and could not be updated quickly. Authors, frontline clinicians, the research community, and society explicitly want research to reach their intended audience expeditiously, but *iJACC*, like all major periodicals, faced an uncomfortable bottleneck; articles could quickly be

disseminated on the online platform (online before print) right after acceptance but took many months to find a place in a print issue. Authors and readers had already accessed the articles online and used them for months before they received the print edition containing these papers. Finally, print was not a good medium for a journal such as *iJACC*, because it could not harness the advantages of moving images and dynamic content.

Digital formats are the future and are bulldozing traditional print-only mediums across many industries. Although science and technology publications are a bit protected compared with the tsunami in the newspaper (4) and mass market magazine (5) arenas, it seemed time to transition because of the intrinsic advantages of the digital medium. Digital contents are accessible 24/7, easy to share, keep up with emerging technologies, and allow personalized content. Web 2.0 technologies were still developing in the first decade of *iJACC*, which made print our default medium; some of these technologies have matured sufficiently at the start of this second decade, making it the right time to wade into them cautiously yet optimistically.

#### WHERE IS THE PUBLICATION UNIVERSE HEADING?

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In the past decade, nearly all major journals have developed a strong online presence (6). Online-only models, however, were very rare and created some consternation initially, as when the American Chemical Society transitioned some of its journals (7), but these moves might have been prescient. Few journals have completely forsaken print editions as yet, but the writing seems to be on the wall. Changes in reading habits and how we access content as well as declining interest in costly print editions among institutional entities will very likely make this the norm in the future. Some journals will be forced into online-only formats for economic reasons, some will do it for competitive reasons, and still others will adopt the format for the intrinsic advantages of this medium. We want *iJACC* to be at the forefront of this change for its intrinsic benefits, and it will be in the vanguard to see how this transition affects our ability

to better deliver our mission with the *JACC* family of journals.

#### POSSIBLE UNCERTAINTIES AND UNKNOWNNS

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Although we are enthusiastic about the advantages of investing more in our online portfolio, we are also cognizant of some possible uncertainties. Some of our readers may not like this change, missing the familiar ritual of looking forward to each month's issue of *iJACC*. However, we believe that there will be sufficient new content and features that will assuage any such misgivings. Some would miss the serendipitous discovery of information while browsing through a print issue. Not leafing through an issue and relying on search algorithms may make our readers more focused on their own particular fields and modalities, parochial in what they access and read. We hope our enhanced multimodality offerings might mitigate this to some extent. The chaotic Web can often become a blender that homogenizes content: search engines will tell you what is important on the basis of a black box of metrics, everyone uses the same predictive analytic engines and end up publishing largely similar content. We remain extremely vigilant in avoiding this kind of "regression to the mean" in ideas. This is also where we believe that our editorial team can best show their true value to the field and the readership: we continuously strive not only to showcase quality content across modalities but also to make sure we provide expert opinion on what it means, placing every paper in context with what is known and to be known. That process will continue even more vigorously in our new format.

*iJACC* has a very definite mission: identify, collect, curate, and disseminate the highest quality research information in imaging sciences, and that will not change one bit with this evolution. We strongly believe that this transition to a digital avatar is quite timely and will better address the "looking up" and "keeping up" needs of our readership. We eagerly look forward to your feedback and suggestions.

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