

Things In Motion

All things are in motion and nothing is at rest ... you cannot go into the same (river) twice. *—Heraclitus (540? – 480?) B.C.*

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WHAT IS IT?

MOST OF US will remember that story about the blind men who checked out an elephant—and how certain each one was that he could describe the beast. There may be some similarity between that elephant and an e-journal, and there may be some similarity between those blind men and the ones who would describe what an e-journal is—or maybe what it is not. I would ask AAPA members to judge for themselves what an e-journal is and not depend upon the description of someone else. Let's consider some of the alleged pros and cons of this shadowy entity that hangs by the fingernails on the periphery of AAPA.

Is it a journal? I have read comments by our most revered and respected members who say that according to the AAPA Constitution, an e-journal is not really a journal at all—it does not meet the criteria required by our rules, which stipulate that a journal must be a printed document; something that you can hold in your hand and fold (or frame) as you wish. With all due respect to the framers of the AAPA Constitution, I don't believe e-journals existed when the rules were originally written, and therefore simply could not have been considered at that time in our history. Likewise, those statesmen

who drafted the Constitution of the United States could not have been concerned with law as it might apply to space travel or colonization of the moon. Decades of technological advances have brought the necessity for change to our original concepts. Policies that existed at the time of George Washington's presidency are not suitable in 2007. Look at an e-journal—it can be printed and held in the hand, or folded or framed, kept or discarded or stored on a CD just like an original hardcopy journal. Use your common sense: is an e-journal a journal? Of course it is!

Should e-journals be recognized by AAPA?

Again, some of AAPA's elder statesmen have expressed concern that the recognition and acceptance of e-journals will seriously threaten the continuance of the monthly bundle, which is the lifeblood of the organization. I have never been able to see the logic in that assumption, however I think there is some fear that if e-journals become too popular, every member will publish electronically and there will be no hard copies for the bundle. Here's my position on that: there is absolutely no doubt that computers will become as common to every household as the telephone, and e-mail will become the most used method of communication. Virtually everyone will learn to use computers, printers, and accessories of an electronic nature. The fact is that those who refuse to use computers will be left behind in a large percentage of everyday life. Furthermore, the world is not going to delay the use of our modern technology just because it does not appeal to a small segment of the population. We in AAPA can lead the way in developing an electronic bundle so that if and when hardcopy bundles become extinct, there is still a bundle to be read and enjoyed by amateur journalists. Therefore, should e-journals become a recognized part of AAPA? Absolutely; the sooner the better!

I hope there is discussion about this at the next convention. It's time to pull our heads out of the sand and plan for the future. Winds of change are blowing; if we don't bend with the wind, we can bid farewell to AAPA, a tragedy that need not happen. #