

Letter to the Editor

A New Journal is Born!

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Received: June 02, 2014; **Accepted:** June 03, 2014;

Published: June 05, 2014

Dear Editor of Austin Journal of Hydrology,

Please accept our best wishes for the launch of the new journal!

We also express our appreciation for the effort of Austin Publishing Group to extend the coverage of its products to the field of Hydrology.

We know that it is rather surprising to find a letter to the editor in the opening issue of a journal, but we are confident that the Editor will be patient enough to listen the ideas which motivated us in writing this brief communication. Indeed, our aim is to present some seminal ideas for a discussion about the mission that a newly-constituted journal should nowadays to accomplish. And we would be extremely satisfied if our thoughts may stimulate some constructive debate within the journal's readers.

Research community becomes day by day more and more widespread and connected, also due to the increasing opportunities offered by new communication technologies. As far as the publication opportunities are concerned, researchers know that the number of scientific journals in most of knowledge fields is quickly increasing. Within such a competitive context, journals have to extend their traditional coverage in order to exploit all the potentialities offered by this global network, by considering, for instance, article diffusion also through social networking platforms. This is a challenging task for publishers who want to assure high visibility and readership to their products. Our firm conviction is that in this context the Journal Editor, together with the Editorial Board, has a key mission: guarantee an excellent quality level for journal contents, so that it may represent an authoritative and respectable voice in a more and more populated choir. These two sets of actions concur to a unique ultimate objective: make the journal more and more attractive for researchers all over the world.

Every researcher knows what makes a journal attractive: a qualified and fair review process, a reliable editorial support and effective product impact and visibility. As far as this latter point is concerned, in our opinion the most valuable improvement is represented by the indexing of a journal in world-wide leading

abstract and citation databases. We therefore strongly suggest the Editorial Board to consider this as a major milestone, to be sought for and hopefully reached as soon as possible: it is an ambitious goal, but we believe that it could be worth the effort.

We believe that ambition and innovation should be the main guidelines for the successful development of a new journal. This motivates the second issue we want to point out: may a journal focusing on hydrology represent even more than an authoritative and respectable voice? In other words, is there any other way in which an innovative journal may serve a worldwide scientific community, in addition to publishing research articles? We think that this question has a positive answer: and this answer can be found by considering some features of the specific topic addressed by this journal.

The processes addressed by hydrology are, almost without exception, global ones: processes like climate change, flash floods, water scarcity are ubiquitous in the world. A reported test case from USA may provide a benchmark for a model developed in Europe, and so on. The audience of a journal about Hydrology is therefore worldwide by nature.

To fully take advantage from this extremely wide audience, a quality journal could consider to act as a catalyst for the scientific community working in the field of Hydrology, rather than being "simply" a repository for published papers. Many initiatives could be taken to translate this principle into practical actions, and we would like to indicate just few of them to provide a seminal suggestion.

- Report about international conferences and meetings focusing the topics covered by the Journal. Produce thematic and special issues collecting selected (and peer-reviewed) papers from specialty conferences.
- Inform readers about the opportunities of action groups and funding opportunities, and promote the implementation of joint research action.
- Promote and advance self-consciousness of the research community involved with Hydrology by publishing at least an invited "vision paper" a year.
- Help researchers to know about job vacancies by employing traditional and innovative communication tools (e.g. social networks).

By looking at the Editorial Board of the Austin Journal of Hydrology we made us firmly convinced that there is room to successfully accomplish this challenging task: about fifty researchers from all over the worlds, mostly young and motivated, represent a huge potential and an opportunity to build a vivid and active research network in the field of Hydrology.