

The JCB 2003: progress, policies, and procedures

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With this issue of *The Journal of Cell Biology*, we unveil a dramatically revised version of our Instructions to Authors to reflect recent changes to journal policies and procedures. Here, I will highlight the major changes, and I will also take this opportunity to announce two significant additions to our website.

Additions to www.jcb.org

Back content. We have added pdf versions of all papers published in the *JCB* since 1975 (HTML content begins in January, 1997). The full text is searchable, and the papers are available free of charge. Remember that all *JCB* papers are made available for free six months after the publication date.

We have begun to digitize the remaining *JCB* content back to its origin as *The Journal of Biophysical and Biochemical Cytology* in 1955, and we hope to post this content within the next year. We are proud of the distinguished history of the *JCB*, and we are pleased to serve the community by making the complete content of the journal available electronically.

Search features. The full content of the Medline Index is now searchable through the *JCB* search page. A Medline search through this site can include a search of the full text of all content hosted by HighWire Press. On the search results page, you can choose to display the "Keyword in Context," similar to the results display of a Google™ search.

Policies

Image acquisition and manipulation.

In October, 2002, we presented our policy on image manipulation (<http://www.jcb.org/cgi/content/full/158/7/1151>). To promote experimental

reproducibility, we have now added requirements for disclosure of information about image acquisition. These policies are now included in the Instructions to Authors, and they are reprinted below for emphasis.

The following information must be provided about the acquisition and processing of images:

- (1) *Make and model of microscope.*
- (2) *Type, magnification, and numerical aperture of the objective lenses.*
- (3) *Temperature.*
- (4) *Imaging medium.*
- (5) *Fluorochromes.*
- (6) *Camera make and model.*
- (7) *Acquisition software.*
- (8) *Any subsequent software used for image processing, with details about types of operations involved (e.g., type of deconvolution, 3D reconstructions, surface or volume rendering, gamma adjustments, etc.).*

No specific feature within an image may be enhanced or moved. The grouping of images from different gels, fields, or exposures must be made explicit by the arrangement of the figure and in the text of the figure legend. Adjustments of brightness, contrast, or color balance are acceptable, if they are applied to the whole image. Nonlinear adjustments (e.g., gamma settings) must be disclosed in the figure legend.

All digital images in manuscripts accepted for publication will be scrutinized by our production department for any indication of improper manipulation. Questions raised by the production department will be referred to the Editors, who will request the original data from the authors for comparison to the prepared figures. Cases of deliberate misrepresentation of data will be reported to the corresponding author's home institution or funding agency.

Since instituting this policy, we have detected several cases of improper manipulation of data. In the majority of these cases, the authors were simply asked to remake the figure(s) using the original data. In a few cases, the manuscripts have been withdrawn from consideration at the *JCB*. Note that these are papers that had made it successfully through the editorial process. Once again, I urge principal investigators to scrutinize digital images before they are submitted for publication. I also urge other journal Managing Editors to institute a similar policy of image examination.

Copyright. The Rockefeller University Press retains copyright of all material published in the *JCB*, including online supplemental material. By doing so, we continue to uphold our responsibility to protect authors from misrepresentation or inappropriate commercial exploitation of their work. However, *JCB* authors are allowed and encouraged to freely distribute the published pdf versions of their articles by posting them on their own websites immediately after publication. It is my opinion that moves by our colleagues at other journals to have authors retain the copyright of their own material are misguided attempts at public relations, allowing them to shirk an important responsibility that publishers bear on behalf of authors.

Source code. As with all other materials published in the *JCB*, authors are now required to make all source code for computational methods freely available to their colleagues.

Procedures

Manuscript submission. The *JCB* no longer invites submission of paper

manuscripts. We will not refuse paper submissions, but all of the Instructions to Authors are now geared toward electronic submission.

Figure files. We now offer a “Digital Expert” service for authors to check whether their figure files conform to the formatting standards required for publication in the *JCB* (i.e., resolution, file format, etc.). This service allows authors to upload their figures to a

third party website to check them before submitting them through the *JCB* website.

Length guidelines. Authors can no longer request to have their papers exceed the length guidelines outlined in the instructions. These guidelines will be strictly enforced.

Supplemental material. We now offer guidelines for the sort of information that can be included as Supplemental

Material and what must remain in the main text of a manuscript.

We will continue to update our policies and procedures as the methodology of cell biology and the electronic publishing environment evolve. Thank you for your continuing interest in the *JCB* and your help in making it the preeminent journal in cell biology today.