

## FAREWELL AND HELLO EDITORIAL

### Farewell ...

For the past eight years it has been my privilege to edit this journal, helping to guide it through its tween and teenage years. During that time, it has undergone an adolescent growth spurt in size (number of issues and pages per year increasing by 50%) and appetite (submissions nearly doubling), but also in discriminating taste (acceptance rate halving) and consequent status (impact factor doubling). But now, on the threshold of the journal's next stage of life, I am happy to pass the joys and responsibilities on to our new editor, Ezequiel Di Paolo.

At the same time, looking back, I would like to thank all of the people who have made this task enjoyable and rewarding: my excellent team of associate editors, our prestigious editorial board, all the folks at Sage who have put so much work into making the journal the fine professional vehicle that it is, John Hallam and the rest of the leadership of ISAB, and most importantly, the hundreds of authors and reviewers who have filled the journal issues with their thoughts and ideas.

A few years ago, as we entered *Adaptive Behavior*'s teenagehood, I urged everyone involved to engage in more rebellious adolescent (research) behavior, forming interdisciplinary relationships with characters of dubious repute from other fields, taking risks with topics and methods, and persistently questioning the status quo. And despite the increasing maturity of the journal and the field, there's no reason to stop now.

Peter M. Todd  
Former Editor-in-Chief  
Bloomington, Indiana,  
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### ... and Hello

In his first editorial for *Adaptive Behavior*, Peter Todd remarked that, as an adaptive system in itself, the journal was open to new opportunities including that of "expanding its reach as the premier journal of interdisciplinary research on modeling organisms, agents, and artifacts acting in their environments." Time has shown him to be right. The past few years have seen an increased maturity in content, style, and impact as well as a bolder exploration of formats and topics, the cause of which reveals not only the resilience and adaptive power of the journal and its community, but very often Peter's own active interventions, open and friendly working style, and vision, building on the foundations established by our first editor, Jean-Arcady Meyer. New traditions can only be started by rebels. My hope is to follow the tradition they started.

A lot of what is good about *Adaptive Behavior* will remain unchanged. But there are things to improve and I would like to encourage a process of active participation from readers and editors in bringing about changes whenever these are necessary. A few changes are already being implemented. As Peter mentioned, the journal has grown in size—as of 2009 it will appear in 6 annual issues of 96 pages (instead of 4 issues of 64 pages). A new electronic submission system will start working in early 2009. This will speed up the reviewing process as well as make it easier for authors, reviewers, and editors to keep track of the progress of submissions along different stages. The functioning of the system will thus be more transparent. There are new members of the Editorial Board and new Associate Editors reflecting the changes in the field both in topics and demographics. (Peter isn't quite a free man yet, he is an AE now!) Some of the projected changes under discussion at the moment include: opening the

possibility for authors to submit supplementary data for their work (in an effort to encourage good practice, facilitate the replication of computational models, and help authors communicate results better), the possibility of open archives, and getting the journal to be listed in PubMed.

The journal has been quite successful with the normal article format, but we intend to explore the use of other formats as they may suit specific needs. For instance, commissioned review articles can provide a snapshot of the state of the art in one particular area and help take stock of progress as well as unresolved challenges. A format that can generate a large number of citations and has been tried a couple of times already is that of a target article followed by open commentary and response. This is a format suitable for the treatment of hot and controversial issues and it can also provide readers with a good reference point to track the development of ideas in the field (they are also often fun to read!). Two new issues with articles in this format are already planned. Short communications will also be encouraged—the new page volume and frequency of issues make this format better suited for the rapid dissemination of important and groundbreaking results than it has been so far.

As before, special issues will continue to be an important part of the journal. This is common to many scientific journals, but a bit of reflection as to why this is particularly important in our case is in order. As a journal, *Adaptive Behavior* has an unusual dual purpose. It is on the one hand the journal of a community. There is some continuity across the wide set of questions and methods presented in this journal. Among the commonalities that can be found in most of our published contributions we could easily list the importance given to the role of modeling adaptive systems as integrated entities in interaction with their environment, the use of computer and robotic models to generate novel explanations of biological and cognitive phenomena, as well as the inspiration obtained from the biological and psychological sciences to design novel forms of adaptive artifacts. These are common interests that define a community (together with other factors, of course). On the other hand, the journal is by nature interdisciplinary. This is to be found not just in

the variety of topics that appear in its pages but also, very often, in single contributions themselves—sometimes glancing at the list of authors is enough to realize this fact.

Both these aspects are part and parcel of what makes *Adaptive Behavior* a special forum for a style of research that did not quite exist as such two decades ago. But these aspects—a role in community forming and maintenance, and its openness to contributions linking several disciplines—are not without tension. To sustain a community we must look into what is already done and build upon the successes of the past. To seriously explore the interdisciplinary interfaces, we must submit to standards that sometimes are different from our community standards—for example, if our work is to contribute to behavioral ecology, it should meet standards of other publications in behavioral ecology. The combination of these “inward” and “outward” demands does not always make life easy. I believe that such tensions can be revealed and resolved by carefully planned special issues exploring specific regional boundaries and effectively becoming a space to open up the dialogue *across* disciplines, and not merely at the interface between them. I have started some conversations encouraging the planning of special issues where the guest editors themselves would lie at different points across the disciplinary boundaries as one possible route to address this tension. Of course, readers and editors will propose others.

This is (like many) an evolving journal. There is always room for improvement and I count on readers to be active participants in this process. I hope that during this tenure *Adaptive Behavior* will continue to grow in depth and outreach, and that the work presented here will start novel lines of enquiry and set the highest standards that will serve both as a reflection and as instruments of the development of our research community.

May the rebellious spirit live on.

Ezequiel Di Paolo  
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