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Editorial

Strive for barrier-free and fast information dissemination of environmental research

Yifeng Wang

Sandia National Laboratories, P.O. Box 5800, Mail Stop 0779, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87185, USA;
Email: ywang@sandia.gov

Thanks to the editorial board members, the managing team and the contributing authors, we are now putting forth the first issue of AIMS Environmental Science, a significant milestone accomplished for this newly launched open-access journal. When I was invited to serve as the editor of this journal about five months ago, I started to ask myself: Since there are already a few journals in this area, why do we bother to launch another one? In other words, what makes this new journal unique and differentiated from others? First of all, AIMS Environmental Science is an open-access journal. Here I would like to share a bit of my personal experience with open access publications. About a year ago, I had one paper published in an open-access book. To my surprise, the number of downloads of the paper over the last twelve months is well beyond what I can anticipate from any non-open access publications. Accessibility is an important factor affecting information dissemination in environmental research. I strongly believe that barrier-free information dissemination to both the scientific community and the public is critical for environmental research, because one noble goal of our research is to inform the public and to help them to reach their own objective decisions and opinions about specific environmental issues. In this sense, open-access publishing certainly has its own merit.

Secondly, addressing environmental issues we are currently facing, such as global climate changes, requires our holistic understanding of complex systems involved, in which our human society is often an important component to be considered. The existing publications in environmental research are rather segmented and scattered, often leading to a situation of nine blind men and an elephant when referred to a specific issue. From the very beginning, this journal is intended to provide a needed platform for effective information dissemination across existing and extremely diverse knowledge domains in environmental research. We have intentionally made the scope of this journal as inclusive as possible:

- Global climate change & adaption
- Air-water-biota-rock interfaces

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- Environmental epidemiology & ecology
 - Pollution control & mitigation
 - Environmental materials
 - Natural resource management
 - Waste management
 - Geo-hazards
 - Environmental risk analysis
 - Air & water quality

We encourage the submission of work across multiple disciplines. To leverage the strength of the founding organization of this journal—American Institute of Mathematical Sciences—we specifically encourage contributions in the area of system analysis. I hope that this journal will provide a comfortable home for researchers in areas such as environmental system dynamics analysis, environmental system performance assessments (e.g., uncertainty quantification) and environmental risk analysis.

Finally, the editorial board places paramount importance on the peer-review process to ensure the high quality of papers published. At the same time, we will try to streamline the whole review process to speed up the publication cycle. A manuscript will be judged based on its scientific validity rather than on its potential impact. Personally, I believe that the impact of a paper should be judged by readers after publication.

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