From the Editor

Since the "ink-on-paper" days of my first graphic arts course, the technology of publication has fascinated me. I had the good fortune of learning "hot type" by sweating over the composing stick to eek out a few sentences, as had been the custom for a full five centuries. I took enough interest to build a half-scale wooden printing press and trot about the countryside studying the surviving wooden presses in America.

Soon after its introduction, "cold type" (i.e. phototypesetting) rendered hot type obsolete. In 1980, when I assumed my current position of employment, I wasted no time in ridding my graphic communication lab of hot type. But within two years of taking possession of a "state-of-the-art" phototypesetter, generously donated by the Compugraphic Corporation, it too became obsolete. Macintosh and laser printers (low-cost "imagesetters") brought WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) typesetting to my lab for *a very small fraction* of the retail value of that phototypesetter. I'll not forget the day an entrepreneur from Texas packed it up and loaded it on a truck bound for his home state.

From its inception, the *Journal of Technology Education* has taken full advantage of electrostatic "typesetting." Employing neither hot nor cold type, the JTE has benefitted from full electronic pagination and electrostatic image-setting available in a university mainframe computing environment. Dodging the tedium of paste-up is singularly responsible for our ability to publish the JTE in-house at Virginia Tech. It simply would not have been feasible otherwise.

Now "electrostatic type" is giving way to total electronic publication. Should we call it "quasi-type" or "pseudo-type" or simply "e-type"? No one really knows what to call it. Unlike it's predecessors, there is no physical artifact in electronic publication. It is simply digital storage of text and images laying in wait for end-user retrieval, without the need for hard copy to *clutter* the process. It is ironic to think of hard copy as clutter, but we'd be kidding ourselves to think otherwise. Those who use e-mail regularly already see "snail mail" (the kind with a stamp on it) as vastly inferior. Can it be long before publications are perceived in the same vein? (It takes about a month longer to produce and distribute the hard copy of the JTE than it does the electronic version).

In any event, the electronic version of the JTE is my way of playing with the current technology. It fascinates me the same way hot type fascinated me two decades ago. With the support of the Scholarly Communications Project here at Virginia Tech, we are producing one of the very first electronic refereed

journals. We have electronic subscribers around the world; more, in fact, than we have hard-copy subscribers. A number of university libraries are using the electronic version of the JTE to test the concept of electronic subscription and distribution. There are many questions to be answered in the academic community with regard to "e-journals" and the leading libraries in the world are currently wrestling with those questions. It's fun to be a part of the experiment.

We are nearing completion on an archival electronic version of the *entire Journal of Technology Education*, beginning with Volume 1, #1. The advantages of complete electronic versions of academic journals are obvious. Again, the JTE is perhaps the first refereed journal to boast a complete electronic archive. We are also experimenting with a Postscript version of the JTE. The Postscript version allows electronic subscribers to output hard copy that will *exceed* the quality of the printed version that regular subscribers receive! And the JTE is now available on an FTP server, providing virtually unlimited access to the *Journal* (see the "Electronic Access to the JTE" section at the end of the *Journal* for FTP instructions).

We plan to keep playing at this end, and hope you will do the same...

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