

Engineering & Science welcomes letters. Send correspondence to Douglas L. Smith, editor, *E&S* magazine, Caltech mail code 1-71, Pasadena, CA 91125, or e-mail dsmith@caltech.edu. We reserve the right to edit any letters selected for publication for length, content, and clarity.

LETTERS

About *E&S* being online-only:

A year ago I would've said "no way, I wouldn't read *E&S* online!" But in February Dell had a sale and I got a Mini 9 netbook for \$225. Now I read the *Boston Globe*, the *WSJ*, the *NYT*, the *Economist*, *Education Week*, and lots of other stuff on my little netbook. So I say "Go For It!" . . .

Online will open you up to audio and video components to articles, dynamic links, and reader forums. So I think on balance it is a good thing (and be assured I am a late adopter who lives in a house groaning under the weight of bookshelves lining every available wall).

Joshua Roth [MS '91, PhD '94]

I do have a Kindle, and have been surprised at how much I enjoy reading novels on it. But magazines are different; the larger format and extensive full-color pages cannot be duplicated on a Kindle-type device yet.

Ole Eichhorn [BS '79]

I for one am all for going digital-only, and really making it a full-featured, interactive Web publication. What I would *really* like to see is a relatively open Caltech blogging forum . . . bringing together all the different content streams that Caltech produces. Infrequent but in-depth features like we have in *E&S*, student news and concerns like we have gotten from the *Tech* and the GSC newsletter, and more frequent blog-like commentary from researchers all over campus . . . all of this with relatively open participation from the Caltech community, and commentary allowed from the public.

Zane A. Selvans [BS '98]

I completely understand the position you find yourself in. However, when *E&S* stops printing, it will become yet another of those periodicals that shows up in my in-box and I click Delete. When I go through my e-mail is simply not when I wish to read a magazine. Regarding the 500-year-old technology of printing, drinking water from a cup is a good deal older technology, and I have no plans to abandon that practice any time soon.

Bob Burket [BS '65]

Here's how I make use of online and print magazines (I subscribe to several that offer both, e.g., *Newsweek*, *New Scientist*, and others):

Web: online lookup of an occasional headline or past article;

Print: everything else. . . .

I've never had the battery die on a print magazine; I've never been required to pay \$15 at an airport to connect my eyes to the words on the screen for a magazine I already own. Can't quite say the same about a Web mag. . . . The value of *E&S* to me is everywhere and everywhen BUT when I'm connected to the Internet.

Robert J. Lang [BS '82, PhD '86]

Having the content available on a website will be extremely useful, and creating a presence on sites like Facebook or whatever comes next in social networking makes it easier to share the great articles with people outside the Caltech community.

Bill Craven [BS '87]

I can read a good article in the time it takes my computer to boot up, and I don't have more than a few moments here and there.

Rich Alvidrez [JPL]

Reading *E&S* on my computer screen would be like eating Christmas dinner on paper plates while standing. The quality is there, but it's just not the same. I already spend too much time looking at my monitor. I want my quality reading to be hand-held so I can savor it where and when I want.

Walter Goeddel [MS '51]

I have recently been catching up on back issues as my son has gotten older and I will miss reading it at the table while he gets around to eating. And that is the problem. Until there is a technology which I can take anywhere and spill things on with impunity, I am very unlikely to read any publication online.

Jen Trotter [BS '95]

If I want to take a copy of *E&S* with me to the pool or the beach, it's ready to go. If I get a little sand in the magazine at the beach, no problem. If I drop the magazine, it still works.

I bring the magazine home with me and leave it out. My wife likes reading it. My son (who is not close to being college age) loves skimming through it. If I leave it out at work, people invariably pick it up, flip through it, and often ask to borrow it for a while.

Related to this is another problem with getting rid of the hard-copy version of *E&S*: the foreclosure of the "happy accident," the experience of stumbling across a fantastic new article on a cool subject that you knew nothing about. . . . This quality of surprise and delight—embodied by the ability to find a copy of *E&S* all over campus—is what makes being on campus at Caltech an inspiring place.

Bob Gutzman [Caltech neighbor]