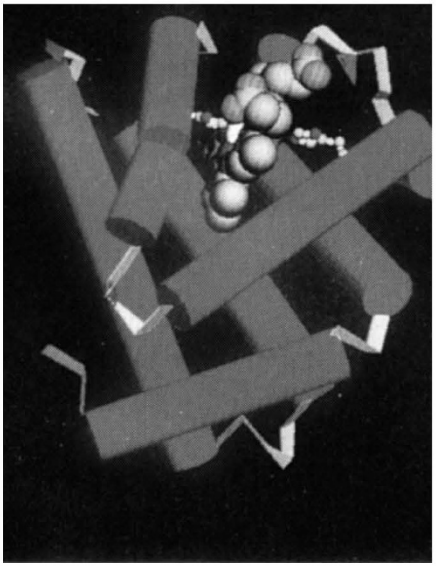
papers of record that lack emphasis on the biological significance of the work. *Structure* avoids both extremes, and each article includes a section entitled "Biological Implications", appropriately printed in bold type.

Colleagues who have published in *Structure* have been pleased by the mechanism of handling papers. Submission of manuscripts *and* pictures in computer-readable form is encouraged, and refereeing is prompt, with papers appearing quickly after acceptance. (Of the eight research articles in the 15 May 1994 issue, six were accepted in March and two in April.) There are no page charges, and reproduction of colour illustrations, where justified, is free.

The editors have declared their aim to produce a journal containing papers of high quality and interest, and they have succeeded in this ambition. It does not detract from their success to point out that they are fishing in a well-stocked stream. Indeed, the increased scale of production of good work that has justified the expansion and creation of journals is carrying the seeds of their destruction: first because there is more good work coming out than can fit in a reasonable number of journals of the classical type, and second because it is essential to have access to new structures in computer-readable form.

Structure should therefore be seen in the context of the innovative set of publishing projects of Current Biology. The company's *Current Opinion* journals collect review articles on selected topics; *Macromolecular Structures*, which shares an editor with *Structure*, is an archival atlas; and *Biobase* is a bibliographical database in computer-readable form. These publications, including *Structure*, will be available on the Internet as part of a new service called BioMedNet. Full texts of the articles in *Structure*, including all figures and tables, will be accompanied by animated graphics.



Arthur Lesk/SPL

Structure of myoglobin as discovered by M. Perutz and J. Kendrew in 1962.

At present, a nucleus of classical paper journals is surrounded by a sea of electronic databases, newsgroups and other publications (see M. E. Lesk, *Analyt. Chem.* **66**, 747A–755A; 1994). We know by analogy to the periodic table that there are limits to how large the nucleus can get before it falls apart. *Structure* may be one of the last and finest experiments of the *ancien régime.* □

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Yellow Pages for proteins

Roy G. Burns

Protein Profiles. Editor Peter Sheterline. *Academic Press. 10/yr. Europe £200, elsewhere $360; any 5 of 10 issues, £120, $215; individual issues, £25, $45.*

PROTEIN PROFILES describes itself as a "new kind of journal" that "brings together all available information from sequence and bibliographic data bases in a concise, standardized format". It is more of a review series than a journal, using a common format to tackle specific protein families. Annual revisions of each issue are promised, at least until the authors tire of doing the work for little credit.

Five protein families have had the treatment so far (actin, transcription factors (bZIP proteins), GTP-binding proteins (heterotrimeric G proteins), calcium-binding proteins (EF-hands) and extracellular matrix (fibril-forming collagens)). Each issue has a comparatively brief text, detailed tables that collate the known properties of the proteins, fold-out sequence comparisons and an extensive reference list. How useful are these detailed collations? *Protein Profiles* are like the *Yellow Pages*: both are good for finding out certain specific information, such as the address of a local plumber or whether there is a mutant of a specific amino-acid residue. But just as the *Yellow Pages* does not tell one the name of the best plumber, so *Protein Profiles* does little to evaluate the quality of the reported information. The extensive list of references in each issue (6,854 of them in the issue on calcium-binding proteins) highlights the fact that *Protein Profiles* is a source of raw information that does little to distinguish, unlike most other reviews, between the good, the mediocre and the awful. It will be loved by students who hanker after lists of references that they should — but probably never will — read.

Much of the more specific information is not readily available from specialist reviews or electronic databases. *Protein Profiles* will be an invaluable source of hard-to-find information on, for example, specific amino-acid mutants or measured ligand-binding constants. The authors should be congratulated for collating the information and for consenting to prepare the annual updates. It is unfortunate that the journal relies on print technology; many potential users would like to have access to the collated data on their computer screens. It is also a pity that the "concise, standardized format" does not always extend to giving complete GenBank – EMBL – Swissprot accession numbers or release dates for all quoted sequences, and that the reference lists lack any details about which databases, keywords or cut-off dates were used in searching the literature. *Protein Profiles* is likely to find a place in most libraries, with experienced workers learning to be careful about how they use the collated information. □

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Microbiological agglomeration

John Postgate

Trends in Microbiology. Editor Caroline Ash. *Elsevier. 12/yr. USA and Canada $490, elsewhere £318 (institutional); USA and Canada $110, elsewhere £69 (personal); USA and Canada $55, elsewhere £34 (student).*

Medical Microbiology Letters. Editor-in-chief A. von Graevenitz. *Birkhäuser. 8/yr. SFr248, DM288, £172.*

Microbiology Europe. Editor Andrea J. Sharpe. *VCH. 6/yr. SFr106, DM105, $75, £46 (institutional); free to working microbiologists.*

Microbiology. Editor John H. Freer. *Society for General Microbiology. 12/yr. USA, Canada and Mexico $780, Japan £440, elsewhere £420.*

WE need a Trades Descriptions Act regarding the titles of scientific books and journals. *Trends in Microbiology* is the fourth misleading title to come my way for review in some 18 months. Its scope is limited to "virulence, infection and pathogenesis" (the subtitle on its cover), but the publicity material gives no hint of this restriction and at least one innocent microbiologist parted with a year's subscription expecting coverage of general microbiology. *Trends in Microbial Patho-*