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Two-way traffic

It used to be that the career path between science and industry was a one-way street. If you left academia for the corporate research bench, you simply couldn't get back. This is now no longer true, and many industrial scientists have found a way to return to their academic roots (see *Nature* 430, 706–707; 2004). But what of those who quit not only academia, but also the lab? The times, it seems, are changing for them as well.

Take scientific publishing. There are, I am sure, one or two disgruntled authors, suffering rejection of their work, who might claim that journal editors would no longer be able to cut it in the lab. But in fact some editors continue to conduct research, independently of their publishing jobs. And a few even tread the path back to full-time research.

The rule seems to apply to scientists at many different career stages. For example, an intern who recently completed a stint as an editor on *Nature Structural & Molecular Biology* has accepted a post in a lab, where she hopes to put her freshly honed communication skills to good use (see page 612). She is not alone. A quick, informal survey of people who have left *Nature* in recent years reveals that, as might be expected, many moved on to jobs at other journals, magazines, newspapers or even on television. But a surprisingly high number took positions at leading labs and prominent institutions. The posts range from postdoc to senior administrator. And at least one continues to pursue an active research programme while carrying a full-time editorial load.

Nature is not an anomaly; other scientific journals can tell similar stories. For a researcher who wants to experience something outside the lab environment, scientific publishing is a good career option. Whatever stage in your career you are at, the job market's increasing flexibility should allow you to travel in any direction.

Paul Smaglik
Naturejobs editor



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