



Letters

To the Editor:

I was most interested in the excellent study of microfilm technology by Susan Cady in the July issue of *College & Research Libraries*. She makes the point that (for scholarly research, publishing, and libraries) the revolution that was expected as a result of the introduction of microfilm did not come about, in part, because of the reluctance of scholars to accept widespread use of the medium. Her emphasis here is primarily on *reading* materials on microfilm.

In a recent review of attempts to find alternatives to the scientific journal,¹ I emphasized the fact that scientists and other scholars have also been reluctant to *publish* in formats other than the printed journal. For example, the Geological Society of America abandoned a synopsis-plus-microfiche publishing format for its *Bulletin* because: "Most authors didn't want to write for microfiche, and most readers didn't want to read articles in that format. As a result, the *Bulletin* rapidly decreased in size and deteriorated as resistant authors sent their articles elsewhere for publication."² A similar reluctance has been found in experiments with electronic journals. Susan Cady is right to state that: "The history of microfilm provides some cautionary guidance as to the way in which the profession should approach the era of electronic documentation."

ANNE B. PITERNICK

Professor, The University of British Columbia

REFERENCES

1. Anne B. Piternick, "Attempts to Find Alternatives to the Scientific Journal: A Brief Review," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 15:260-66 (Nov. 1989).
2. H. R. Gould, "GSA—A Legacy and a New Era," *Geological Society of America Bulletin* 93:2 (Jan. 1982).