
FROM THE EDITOR

“Nought may endure but Mutability.”

“Mutability” by P. B. Shelley.

Change is not always comfortable. In science, however, it is unavoidable. A discipline that refuses to examine itself, to test its methods, and to listen to developments around it does not protect its tradition. It slowly weakens it.

The same is true of a journal. A journal cannot remain alive simply by preserving its name, its history, or its habits. It remains alive by continuing to serve the field for which it was created, while also allowing that field to grow.

It is with this understanding that we are taking important steps for the future of the Journal of Forensic Document Examination.

For many years, the Journal has had a meaningful relationship with the International Graphonomics Society (IGS). This relationship is not accidental. The work of the IGS has contributed substantially to the scientific study of handwriting, writing processes, motor control, cognition, movement, pattern production, and the wider study of written traces. These subjects are not distant from forensic document examination. On the contrary, they concern the very material with which our profession works every day.

Forensic document examination does not exist in isolation. It is a forensic discipline, but it is also a discipline that must remain in contact with research, measurement, observation, and careful methodology. It serves Justice, and for that reason, it cannot afford intellectual laziness. Our conclusions, our methods, and our professional discussions must be as serious as the responsibility placed upon us.

For this reason, we have decided to strengthen the Journal’s collaboration with the IGS. We believe that closer contact with graphonomics and related scientific fields can only enrich the Journal. It will bring new questions, new approaches, and a broader scientific conversation. But this should not be misunderstood. The Journal is not moving away from forensic document examiners. It is moving forward for them.

The practical examiner remains at the center of our mission. The daily work of forensic document examination — casework, comparison, methodology,

report writing, courtroom experience, technical problems, professional judgment, and the realities of practice — will continue to be our focus. A journal in this field must not become detached from the people who actually do the work. If it does, it loses its purpose.

At the same time, practice must be supported by the best available thinking. Experience and science should not be treated as enemies. They need each other. Good research without practical understanding becomes remote. Practice without serious intellectual support risks becoming repetitive and defensive. The Journal must help hold these two worlds together.

To further deepen our commitment with scientific research and development in the field of Forensic Document Examination, the Journal is now open access. Hence, the Journal’s content is now accessible to those who wish to use it: examiners, researchers, students, laboratories, institutions, and courts. Access increases visibility, but it also increases responsibility. When work is easier to find, it is easier to read, easier to question, easier to use, and easier to build upon.

Free publication and open access will allow the Journal to reach a wider international audience. It will give authors greater visibility. It will make the Journal more useful to practitioners who may not have institutional access. It will also strengthen the connections between upcoming and experienced researchers and professionals.

These changes are not a departure from the Journal’s identity. They are a continuation of it under present conditions. The world of forensic science is changing. Handwriting itself is changing in an age of digital communication, electronic signatures, and new forms of written evidence. The questions placed before forensic document examiners are also changing. A serious journal must be willing to face this reality directly.

Our purpose remains clear: to support forensic document examination as a practical, scientific, and responsible discipline. We will continue to welcome work that is useful to examiners, grounded in method, open to scrutiny, and relevant to the administration of justice. To further strengthen this, organizational changes have been implemented. In this context, the Editor in Chief, Michael Pertsinakis, will be assisted by two Associate Editors in Chief, Carina Fernandes

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and Antonio Parziale. The new structure, along with a renewed Editorial Board, will allow the optimization of the submission and peer review processes, providing a faster and high quality feedback to authors.

The field moves. Science moves. The Journal must move as well.

And so we move — carefully, deliberately, and with confidence in what this Journal can still become.

Michael Pertsinakis

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