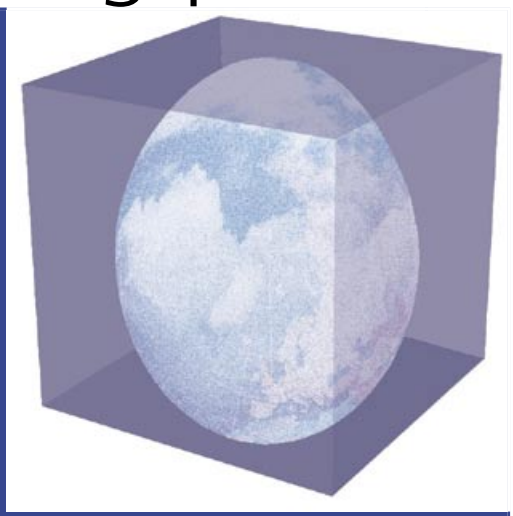
FONTIS WORKS

Submission - Peer reviewing - Editorial administration - Production

Integrate your entire manuscript handling process



Editorial Office Solution

FONTIS MEDIA

Contents

1 The concept 2
1.1 Conceived by Publishing Professionals 2
1.2 Simplicity for efficiency's sake 2
2 Functionality 3
2.1 The homepage environment 3
2.2 Submission of the contribution by the author 4
2.2.1 Electronic Submission 4
2.2.2 Traditional Manuscript Submission 5
3 Details of Author Tools: 6
3.1 Template Download Area: 6
3.2 Submission Data Revision and Manuscript Status 6
3.3 Resubmission Form: 7
3.4 Submission of Graphics (and other special file types) 7
4 The Editorial Office 8
4.1 Behind the Scenes: 8
4.2 Conversion of the article into PDF format 8
4.3 Transfer of the article to the appropriate editorial interface 8
4.4 E-mail notification of the editors and administrators 8
4.5 Editorial Office: Basic Operation 9
4.6 The Referee Database 10
4.7 Interaction with the referees 10
4.8 Alternative Refereeing Configurations 11
4.9 The electronic invitation 11
4.10 Traditional Referee Workflow 11
4.11 Deadline-based Functionality 11
5 FontisWorks: Outside the Electronic Workflow 12
5.1 Introduction 12
5.2 Author Submission of Manuscript 12
5.3 "Print and Process"—backup functionality for communication outside the electronic workflow: 12
5.4 Reply of referees: 12
6 The editorial decision 13
6.1 Introduction 13
6.2 Referee list modifications. 13
6.3 The final editorial decision. 13
6.4 Delivery to the Publisher. 13
7 Technical Aspects of FontisWorks 14
7.1 System architecture: 14
7.2 File Conversion 14
7.3 Security 14
7.4 Comfort 14
7.5 Graphical Design 14
8 Maintenance Concept and Support 15
8.1 Introduction 15
8.2 Help desk and support 15
8.3 Reporting 15
8.4 Communication of reports 15
8.5 Level (1) Helpdesk 16
8.6 Manuals, documentation and training 16
9 Conclusions 16

FontisWorks
Editorial Office Solution

1 The concept

FontisWorks is a server-based system that provides an integrated solution to the basic tasks of modern STM publishing: author submission, editorial handling, referee evaluation and editorial office administration. All the processes, from the author's first contact with the submission form to the delivery of the validated document to the production department of the Publisher are managed via the access to a dedicated database. The information is available in real time to all the parties involved, and in particular to the publications administrator and to the editor who handles the evaluation process of the manuscript. The data is accessed via a collection of Graphical User Interfaces that have been designed to permit each person access to the information needed for his role.
Although the accent is on electronic communication, via the use of web-enabled technology and e-mail, FontisWorks includes a full set of "proxy functions" that will allow the editors and administrators to leave the electronic environment when necessary. FontisWorks continues to track the progress of the paper even if one or all of the associated processes does not take place electronically.

1.1 Conceived by Publishing Professionals

FontisWorks is a powerful, flexible solution because it was constructed by publishing professionals, with long experience in programming, editorial production and project management. The entire application was built within FontisMedia, which allows us to offer rapid response during the implementation and operation of FontisWorks inside your Company's publication workflow.

1.2 Simplicity for efficiency's sake

FontisWorks has been designed with the idea that those involved in the editorial process, and in particular those who work outside the editorial office, require a simple visual and intuitive environment to carry out their job efficiently. The Graphical User Interfaces of FontisWorks have been built (and continue to be developed) with the following goals in mind:

- to give each person access to a list of the specific tasks required of his role
- to allow him to query the appropriate areas of the database for the needed information
- to offer him a channel of communication with the others involved in the editorial process
- to store a record of his correspondence, decisions and new data back into the system database

2 Functionality

The functionality of FontisWorks is modular. In this section, we will introduce you to the basic steps of the editorial process through the eyes of the people directly involved: the authors, editors, referees and system administrators.

2.1 The homepage environment

When a FontisWorks user access the homepage of the journal, he will find all the information he needs a mouse click away. He will follow the appropriate link to find the GUI that corresponds to his role. And authors using this interface for the first time, there is a convenient set of frequently asked questions that will help him or her get started.

2.2. Submission of the contribution by the author

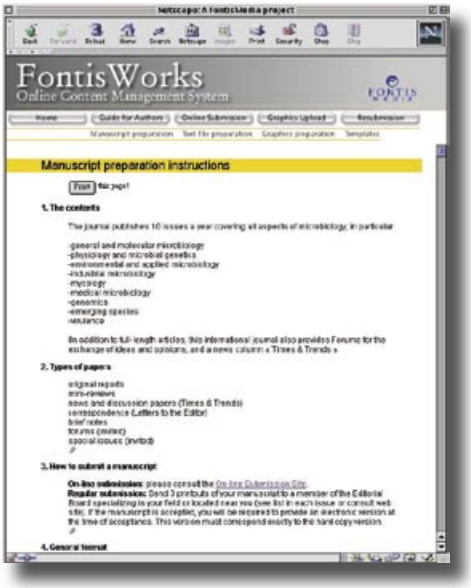
An author with an article to submit will follow the link to the manuscript submission page. The author will find here:

- A clear set of instructions, with specific guidelines for every step of the submission process (See Figure 1)
- A simple electronic form allowing the author to enter his personal data and to upload his contribution to a FontisMedia server.
- A graphics submission module to supply high-quality versions of the figures

2.2.1 Electronic Submission

FontisWorks makes the electronic submission process particularly simple for the authors. Reception of the submission at our server will set off a series of activities:

- The author will receive confirmation of his submission with a MS number
- An appropriate entry in the database will be created for this new information
- An batch process will convert the manuscript within 24 hours into a PDF file. All current formats are accepted by the system.
- An e-mail is automatically sent to the editor, informing him or her that a new submission is ready for his attention
- If desired, an e-mail will be sent to the publications administrator



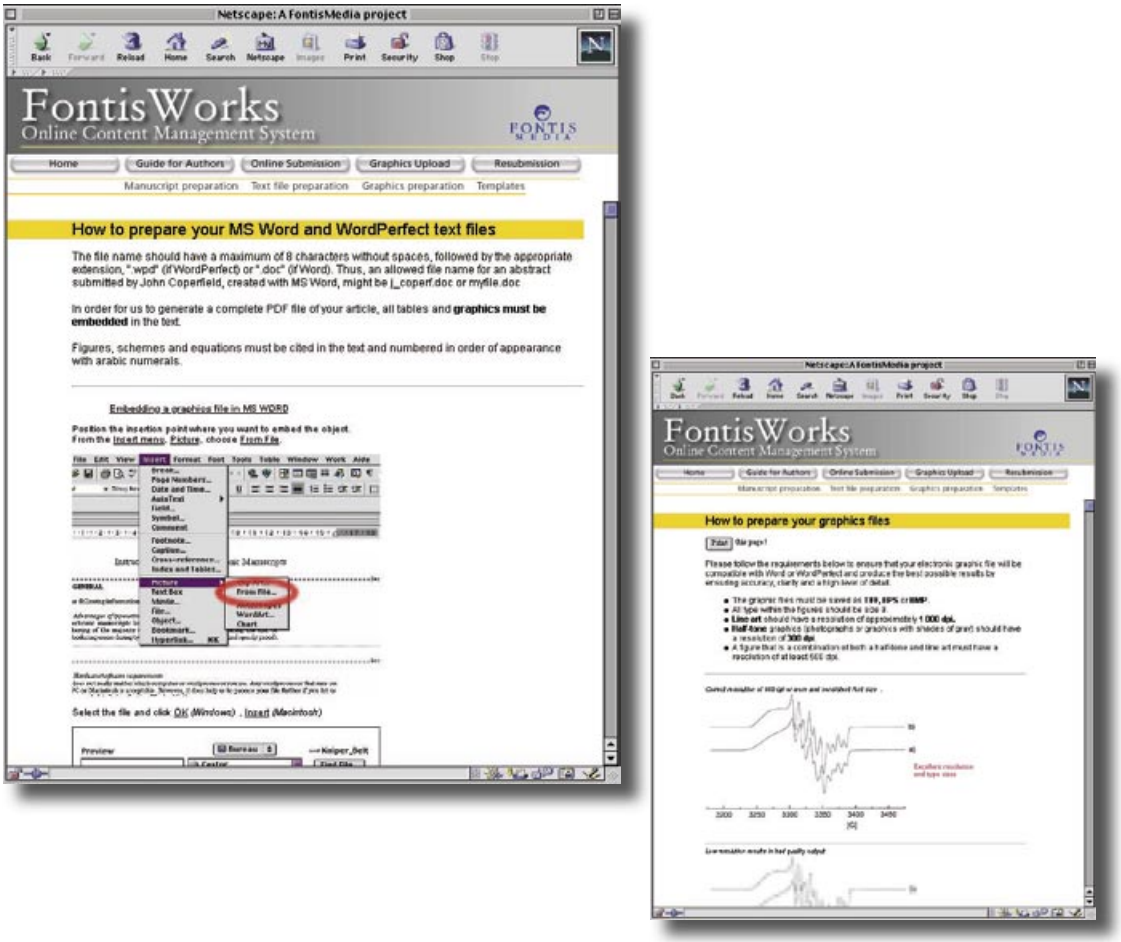
2.2.2 Traditional Manuscript Submission

The evolution towards a fully electronic workflow for journal content management has begun, but it will still be many years before all authors will submit the manuscript via the Internet. FontisWorks has been built to facilitate the management of this transition period.

FontisWorks includes a set of "proxy functions" that allow papers submitted via the traditional route (i.e., the post) to be fully accounted for in the tracking system.

If a diskette with a useable electronic file has been included with the submission, the editor or editorial assistant will have the possibility of using the proxy author submission form to enter the metadata and manuscript file into the FontisWorks system. From this point on, the system will function as if the author himself had submitted the MS using the graphical user interface.

If no electronic file is available, the tracking functions of FontisWorks are still fully functional. Author metadata is logged into the system, and the manuscript number is assigned by the system. A special symbol will identify the fact that there is no electronic manuscript file in the system for this particular paper. The author metadata will be subsequently available to all system users for the preparation of correspondence, etc.



3 Details of Author Tools:

Although it might appear that this first step involving the electronic transfer of the manuscript from the author to the editor is simple, there are several complications that must be taken into account.

The manuscript may contain high-resolution graphics or other information in non-standard file types; in addition, the author may need to revise and resubmit the contribution several times before the paper is acceptable to the referees.

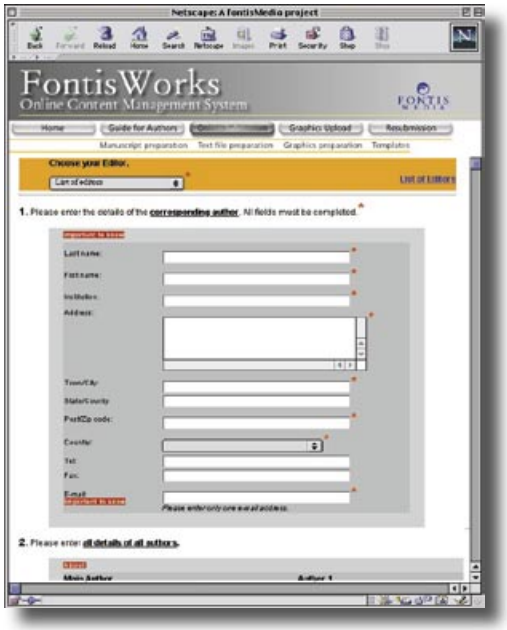
The following author tools provide the functionality that is required for even the most complex of STM workflows.

3.1 Template Download Area:

For certain projects, the use of templates is required. This is the case, for example, for journals that publish manuscripts in camera-ready format. FontisMedia will put a matrix of templates at the disposition of the authors in a number of commonly used word processing programmes. The Publisher supplies the exact layout and specifications for these templates.

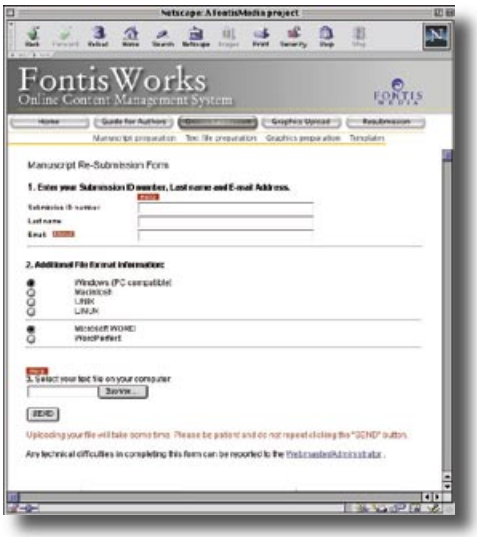
3.2 Submission Data Revision and Manuscript Status

FontisWorks provides a password-protected area where authors can obtain the current status of the review process, where they can view the PDF version of their submitted article, and where they can update or modify the metadata fields associated with the paper. This is useful, for example, if one of the contributors changes address during the review process.



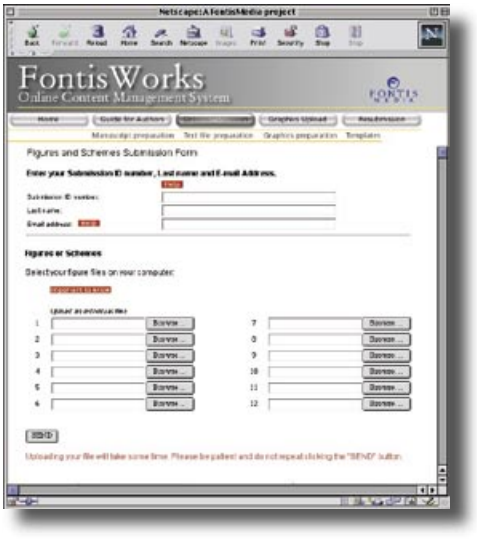
3.3 Resubmission Form:

FontisWorks provides a separate interface for authors who are submitting a revised manuscript. This facilitates the tracking and provides the necessary version control in the workflow.



3.4 Submission of Graphics (and other special file types)

FontisWorks allows the facile handling of high-resolution graphics in the Publisher's electronic workflow. The author can be asked to imbed all graphic files into the electronic version of his manuscript, but at low-resolution. The high-resolution original figures are then submitted in a second step via a dedicated interface.
This same procedure can be modified to accommodate the transfer of other special file types to the server. For example, it is becoming increasingly important in the chemistry publishing area to obtain the ChemDraw files for all the structures within an article. This can be carried out with the implementation of a similar interface to the database.



4 The Editorial Office

4.1 Behind the Scenes: The preliminary steps.

Let us assume that a manuscript has just been submitted. Before it is directed toward the appropriate editor, a number of processes must occur:

4.2 Conversion of the article into PDF format

The document of reference in the FontisWorks system is the PDF file of the manuscript. This file can be created either in batch mode or "on the fly." The appropriate PDF conversion tool is selected based on project parameters.

4.3 Transfer of the article to the appropriate editorial interface

If a journal has a team of editors that handle papers, the system will use information provided by the author to direct the submission automatically to the right person. Only those with system administrator status will see every submission.

4.4 E-mail notification of the editors and administrators

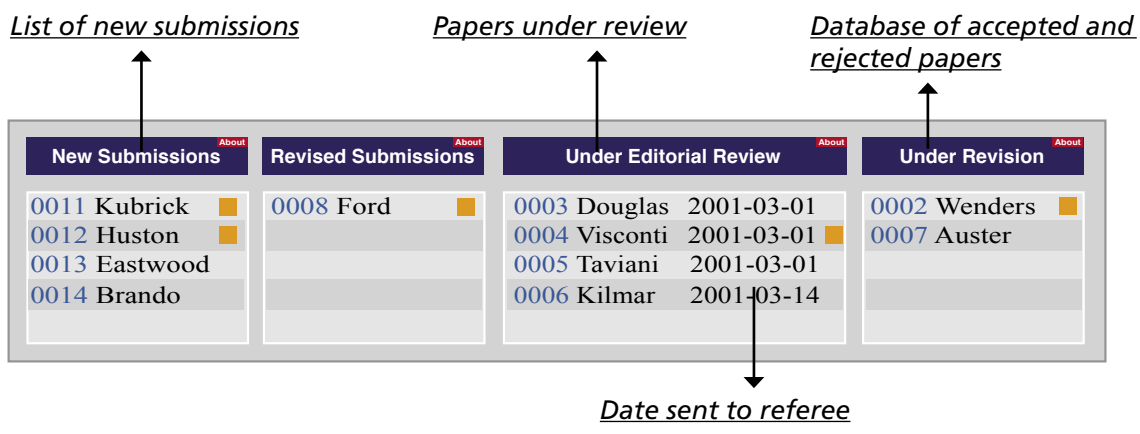
If desired, the system can be configured to send an alerting e-mail to editors and administrators with each submission

4.5 Editorial Office: Basic Operation

When the editor logs onto FontisWorks via his Graphical User Interface (GUI), he sees at a glance the state of the project, i.e., the number and status of all the manuscripts currently under his management.
For each newly submitted manuscript, he will open a link (seen in the above figure as the manuscript tracking number in the left-hand column) that will lead him to the electronic tracking form for the submission. The decisions that the editor makes are automatically taken into account by the system, moving the manuscript record into the appropriate new column. Final Accept / Reject decisions move the article off the field into another database that is maintained for archiving purposes.

- With the tracking form open, he has all the information and resources needed to begin the referee process. He will find:
- The personal data of the submitting author
- A link to a view of the PDF file of the article
- A roll-down menu link to his referee database
- The standard message that he has selected in a window, already open for modification or amendments (if required)
- A list of all the accepted and rejected articles under his management

The editor then selects the referees that he feels are best qualified to assess the contribution. If he would like to use a referee that is not yet in his database (for example, if the author himself has suggested a good possibility), he may immediately add the name to his list. The GUI knows the identity of the editor, so the decision can be made whether referee information will be shared among editors, or whether this information will remain private.



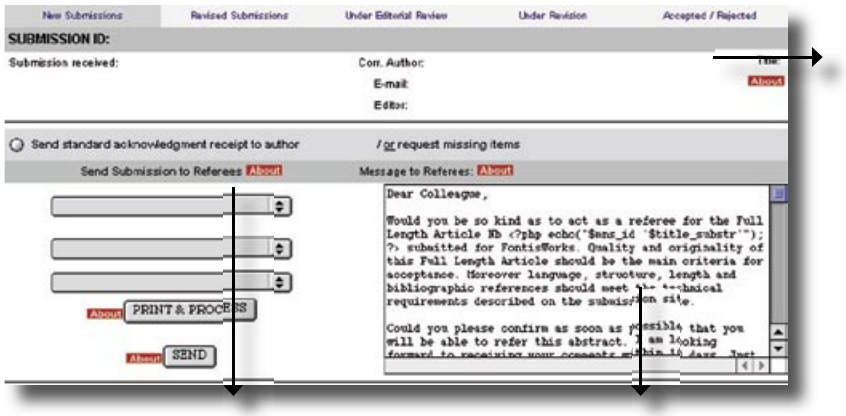
4.6 The Referee Database

The names and addresses of the referees are stored in a dedicated table. The management of this data has been made particularly simple in FontisWorks—the editor will have access to an interface that will allow him to add, remove or modify entries in a matter of seconds. In addition, FontisMedia will work with each of the editors at the beginning of the project to import the list of established referees.

4.7 Interaction with the referees

The PDF file of the manuscript is sent as an e-mail attachment to the referees selected by the editor. The parameters of the PDF file generation are selected to keep the file size within an acceptable limit. Upon receiving the message, the referee may take one of several actions:

- He may decide to review the article. In this case he would print out the PDF file and create a list of comments and suggestions pertaining to the manuscript
- He may then return his comments to the editor by e-mail. In the case of major corrections that have been noted directly on the MS, he may use FAX or the post.
- He may decide that he does not have the time or the expertise to review the article. In this case, he will return an e-mail with this information.
- The FontisMedia development team also provides a graphical user interface for use by referees. This will allow referees to download articles and to return the essential comments and recommendations related to their review. This information will be registered directly into the database for administrative evaluation of manuscript flow and editorial performance.



Link to PDF file of the paper

Easy access to referee database

Editable standad message to referees

4.8 Alternative Refereeing Configurations

The above procedure, in which the manuscript is attached to an e-mail message to a selected referee, is just one of many possible workflows. FontisMedia can tailor-construct a peer-review process according to the Publisher's needs. Two examples are described below:

4.9 The electronic invitation

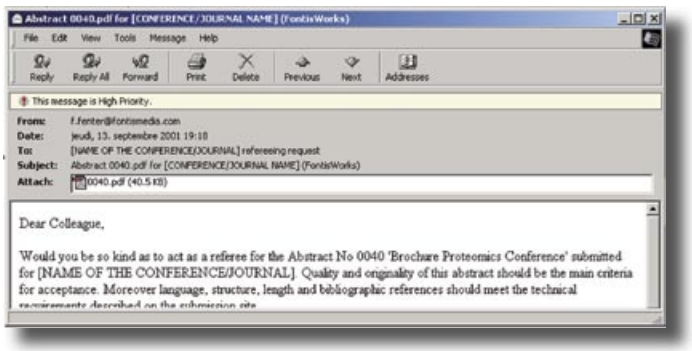
FontisWorks can be configured so that the selected referees receive only an invitation to review the contribution with the abstract of the article attached to the message. The referee would then reply to the invitation by e-mail. If he accepts, he would indicate whether he agrees to do the reviewing electronically. In this case, he would be given access codes to view the referee interface shown on a previous page to access the article and to organise his review. If he prefers to receive directly a paper copy of the manuscript, this would be indicated in his message as an instruction for the editorial office.

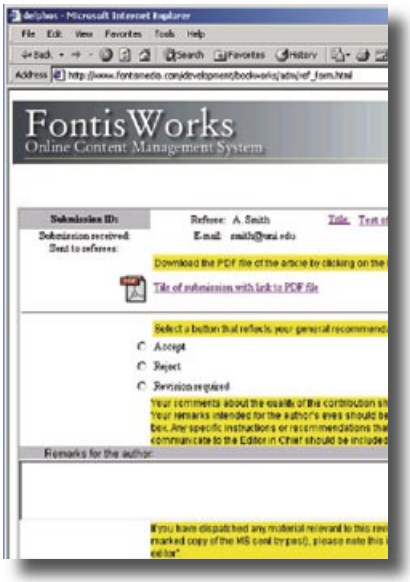
4.10 Traditional Referee Workflow

As described later in this document, FontisWorks provides the "Print and Process" functionality that can take the preparation of the referee letter outside the electronic workflow.

4.11 Deadline-based Functionality

Deadline alerts have been built into the FontisWorks functionality to facilitate the organisation of tasks during the routine operation of the journal. Deadline alerts, coupled with direct links to the appropriate action records and one-click preparation of reminder correspondence, are an important time-saving feature of the application.





5 FontisWorks Outside the Electronic Workflow

5.1 Introduction

The previous discussion focussed on the electronic workflow. It is important to stress that FontisWorks also operates for the traditional peer review process. In particular, when the participants have no access to the database via Internet, each step in the process can be managed without the use of the Graphical User Interfaces or e-mail. The passage of any individual manuscript through the FontisWorks system may be a mix of the electronic and traditional communication paths.

5.2 Author Submission of Manuscript

FontisWorks provides a proxy form for author submission for use by the editorial office. Any MS received by the office with an electronic version on diskette or e-mail attachment can be loaded into the system by proxy. This submission is tracked in the control panel without any distinction from the on-line submitted contributions. For manuscripts that arrive without an electronic version, FontisWorks offers a second form that the editorial office can use to load only the author metadata. The manuscript record appears in the task columns of the control panel, but a symbol is printed next to the link to indicate that there is no electronic file in the system associated with the record.

FontisMedia will manage every submission that arrives to your editorial office.

5.3 "Print and Process"—backup functionality for communication outside the electronic workflow:

For those situations when external participants must be contacted by letter, FontisMedia provides the "Print and Process" command for each of the standard messages. This would be used, for example, when referees insist on having a paper copy of the manuscript mailed to them for review. The standard test in the message window is merged with the journal-specific and referee-specific information from the database to create a RTF file, which is copied to the hard disk. Letters may also be printed for any step in the process, including confirmations.

5.4 Reply of referees:

If a referee does not enter his reply via the Graphical User Interface prepared for this purpose, the editor can register his recommendation with a click on the "final decision" form. A proxy form for the loading of the review and recommendations has been developed for use by the editorial office.
The flexibility of this structure is particularly appreciated during the transition from an older management system or during the evolution of a workflow from an entirely traditional structure to one that is fully electronic.

6 The editorial decision

6.1 Introduction

As the referee responses arrive, the editor will use a second graphical user interface to access the database and to manage the manuscript.

6.2 Referee list modifications.

A referee list must be modified in the following situations:

- One or more referees have refused to review the contribution
- The mixed opinions require the selection of additional referees

In this case, the editor will use the FontisWorks "referee loop", which sends the contribution back to the earlier step in the process, but with all the pertinent data fully retained in the database. In fact, with the referee loop, FontisWorks is able to handle editorial processes of any complexity.

6.3 The final editorial decision.

When the editor has reached his verdict concerning the manuscript (publish, revise or reject), he needs only to click the appropriate button on the field. Again, standard accept / reject messages for the authors are incorporated into the interface to speed communication. "Print and Process" functionality permits letters to be prepared for authors who prefer not to use e-mail.

6.4 Delivery to the Publisher.

In the case of accepted papers, FontisMedia can deliver the files of the contribution directly to production according to the instructions of the publisher. Certain services, such as immediate Web publication (pre-print server module), are available.

7 Technical Aspects of FontisWorks

7.1 System architecture:

Behind FontisWorks is a server-hosted MySQL database, assembled using the PHP / PERL programming language. The connection between the database and the graphical user interface is carried out by using powerful scripting languages. The FontisWorks applications are run on a RedHat LINUX platform that is installed on Sun Solaris servers.

7.2 File Conversion

Conversion of submitted manuscripts to the PDF file that is used for the referee cycle is carried out in batch mode, typically twice per working day. Batch mode conversion offers maximal security and avoids uncomfortable situations (multiple submissions to editors; prank submission; etc.). We are able to handle all commonly used electronic document types, including MS-Word, WordPerfect, PDF, TIFF, EPS, BMP and Latex PS.

7.3 Security

Hosting your application on one of FontisMedia's Solaris servers allows you to benefit from our secure computing environment. Regular back-ups of the database are critical to ensure the smooth and profitable operation of your publishing activities.

7.4 Comfort

The FontisWorks application allows a team of editors and an international pool of authors to work with your publishing company through access to the same dedicated database. The only technical requirement is that each person involved in the process use a computer installed with a recent Web browser (MS Explorer 5.0; Netscape 6.0 or higher) and Acrobat Reader. There is no other software to install on local computers—this is the strength of the server-based application.

7.5 Graphical Design

Your clients (authors and editors) will not be aware that FontisMedia is providing the solution to your editorial management needs. A professional graphical design is included with each project to create an environment that is specific to the Publisher.

8 Maintenance Concept and Support

8.1 Introduction

FontisMedia follows each system installation with a program of regular maintenance and support. In the earliest phases of the project (implementation and the first 6 months of operation) special attention is focussed on the editors and system administrators to ensure the smooth transition to the electronic workflow.

8.2 Help desk and support

The maintenance of the FontisWorks system may include a number of activities to be defined through discussions between the two parties, but in general these can be broadly defined as help desk support and technical maintenance. Specifically, one or more of the following may be relevant:

- Help desk (level 2)
- Analysis of the system performance
- Consulting on the suitability of the current configuration
- Design and implementation of new functionality
- Changes or additions of graphical elements

The services included under the maintenance scheme are available within a maximum response time of 24 hours, during working days (from 8:00 to 18:00).

8.3 Reporting

Administrative access already provides an excellent view of the state of the project, thanks to the graphical nature of the FontisWorks task lists. In addition, the statistics of usage, publication and turnaround times, and other performances, by both editors and authors, will be made available in activity reports. The exact nature of these reports will be determined in a discussion with the Publisher's administrators and production staff.
The kinds of specific reports that can be envisioned include: Manuscript status report, including a chronological list of all actions, tasks and contacts; and manuscript list reports per journal or per journal cluster.

8.4 Communication of reports

FontisWork will give the editorial office the possibility to communicate the contents of a report to the others in the editorial team. The same dual functionality of traditional (document merge and print) and electronic (e-mail / e-mail attachment)) communication channels will be available.

8.5 Level (1) Helpdesk

The use of FontisMedia for the external users of the system is simple and visually intuitive. We find that most of the questions that arise from the referees, authors and (to a lesser extent) editors fall into well-established categories. FontisMedia will propose a held-desk solution that will cover the needs of your journal or journal cluster.

8.6 Manuals, documentation and training

One of the advantages of the FontisWorks application is its intuitive structure. All the users, including authors, editors, referees and administrators, are guided through their tasks in an open, dynamic, visual environment. Limited training is required for staff and clients.
Expert staff of FontisMedia might assist the preparation and installation of a FontisWorks application through the following steps:

(1) By holding a series of seminars.

(2) By providing training documentation to each editor and administrator as an interactive guide on CD-ROM. In addition, a fully updated user's manual is available at all times through the Internet.

(3) By providing specific training (if deemed necessary) to personnel of the Editorial Office in regard to Level (1) helpdesk and other applications, such as the handling of the address management and report generation.

(4) By offering unlimited help-desk support during the initial stages of the project without any additional charges.

9 Conclusions

A partnership with FontisMedia guarantees a technologically flexible application for the on-line management of your journals programme. We are prepared to do the additional work of adapting the system to your specifications and workflow; the result is a powerful and cost effective solution that will evolve with the needs of your portfolio.