

The Society for Computer Applications in Radiology

MANY OF THE MEMBERS of the Society for Computer Applications in Radiology (SCAR) have developed computer applications that other members would find useful. These applications cover a wide spectrum. They include information management systems, document retrieval, image processing, pattern recognition, teleradiology, and interactive teaching modules. The problem for most of us is to learn of the existence of such software and then to arrange to acquire it for our use. Attendance at the SCAR and RSNA meetings are excellent ways to learn of the existence of available useful computer software. These meetings provide the opportunity for acquiring copies of the software. It is reasonable to ask if SCAR could help its members with identifying existing software and how it may be acquired.

Each of us knows someone who has written and implemented a computer application. These authors are enthusiastic and excited about their work. They are always delighted to demonstrate their software at any time and help to install it on other computers. Typically, the authors of computer-application software are always changing it and adding new features. These authors are proud of their work and want to share it with others. We know that many of these authors would be pleased to have their software listed together with how it might be obtained. However, keeping up with the revisions and new versions of the software is a difficult task.

Several SCAR members have spoken of the need to publish developed software. Part of the motivation is that a successful computer application requires as much creativity and effort as does publishing a peer-reviewed article. Young faculty members developing computer applications do not receive credit for their work since it does

not result in a peer-reviewed published article. Yet, the resources and time required to provide a peer review of submitted software applications is difficult to accomplish. The marketplace for selling developed software applications has not proven a satisfactory method for transferring useful computer software for radiology applications.

The officers of SCAR are seeking methods by which members can share their application software. A number of suggestions have been offered. It has been proposed that a list of available application software, as submitted by the author, be printed several times a year and mailed to each SCAR member. This list would contain the information needed to identify the software, its purpose, the hardware required for its operation, and how it may be obtained. Implementation of this suggestion could be accomplished by mailing each member of SCAR a simple form for listing software to be shared. Transferring this software could be accomplished in a number of ways.

Suggestions have been offered regarding a review method of submitted software. Implementation of this suggestion requires resources that are not available to SCAR. Our editor, Dr Roger Bauman, has encouraged authors of manuscripts dealing with application software to provide reader information as to how the software might be obtained.

We believe that SCAR could provide a useful service to its members regarding the availability of software applications. We need your ideas as to how SCAR can help.

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