
Editorial

Exploitation of science and technology

A short while ago, a colleague in this office whose interest is in gold as a monetary asset brought a newspaper article to my attention. Titled "Gold joins cancer battle", it referred to a recent New Scientist report on research in Australian and New Zealand Universities to develop gold-based compounds for anti-cancer drugs. "Is this true?" he asked. "Yes," I replied "and *Gold Bulletin* has reported on these and other medical developments over the last 2 years."

I also told him that gold catalysis is another promising area that we have highlighted. "But do not expect these innovations to be commercially exploited this year," I informed him; "it takes a surprisingly long time to transfer the science from the laboratory bench and develop it into technology that can be commercially exploited and benefit mankind." This conversation caused me to reflect on what influence *Gold Bulletin* has in acting as a focussed conduit of information on gold science and technology and thus stimulating its exploitation. Do we reach the right audience? Do we present the message clearly?

It also made me reflect on my personal experiences of the problems involved in taking basic science and developing it into commercially exploitable technology. The first major one is convincing non-technical, commercial colleagues that the project is worth backing. How to sell the project is something that the successful scientist has to learn quickly. What matters to the potential backers is not whether you have done 10 or 1000 experiments or that the results fit the latest theories, but how you can demonstrate the potential of these results in terms of what benefit they could bring the company and mankind – usually quantified in financial terms – and the risk involved, *ie* the chance of success. The higher the benefit, the higher the risk they are prepared to take. The most exciting research, from a technical standpoint, may not be the most



commercially attractive. And we scientists may not always see where the technology can be best exploited

Communication

This all boils down to effective communication. Understanding what your audience wants to know and presenting the information in a form that he or she can understand and use. That is what we try and do with *Gold Bulletin*. But whether we get it right or not depends on you telling us what you want. Your feedback is essential. If

we don't hear, we assume that you are happy.

One of the features that you tell us you want is reports on topical conferences and we are pleased to publish another conference report in this issue on gold and silver in medicine. But we cannot attend every relevant conference, so we do rely on you, our readers, to help us and send in your reports for publication.

Again, we publish some interesting articles, including some results of new research. This issue has more of a metallurgical bias compared to the previous ones. This will please some more than others, I know! Anyway, whatever your bias, I hope you enjoy this issue and find something to interest you.

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