

From the RVC

In commenting on my last two columns, J.B. Sipherd, of Paso del Norte Mensa, brings up an important point: what about those members who do not have computers and thus cannot easily access on-line information? This question is very timely, as the American Mensa Committee faces an increasing number of proposals to replace paper publications with electronic ones. So far, the consensus seems to be that if information is to be distributed primarily by electronic means, a paper version must be made available to those who request it, but there is no guarantee that a future AMC might not decide that electronic-only publication is adequate.

Those members who rely primarily on computers, PDAs, smart phones, and such-like for their daily ration of information believe that there is really no reason, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, to actually print and mail anything to anyone. Anything that anyone wants can be e-mailed or downloaded from a website, right? And surely Mensans, being more intelligent than the majority of the population, must all be at the leading edge of the electronic revolution. Consequently, it seems only reasonable that we should quit wasting money on paper and postage and go to all-electronic communication.

But wait – what about J. B. and other members without computers? Yes, they can probably go to the public library and get the information via a shared computer, but is it reasonable for us to expect them to do that? Surely it's not reasonable to expect them to go out and buy a computer of some kind just to communicate with Mensa. My position has always been that as long as there are members who want their publications on paper, we should make them available in that format, but realistically, how long can we justify that extra effort and expense? If there were only one Mensan out of 60,000 who wanted paper documents, would they have a right to expect us to comply? What if there were 10? What about 100? Where do we draw the line?

If you have any ideas to contribute to this discussion, please let me hear from you. You can e-mail me at [rvc6@us.mensa.org](mailto:rvc6@us.mensa.org), or if you don't do e-mail, write to me at 9920 Ridgehaven Drive, Dallas, TX 75238.