Contents

The *Journal of biomedical semantics* will devote a yearly issue to the publication of papers describing ontologies relevant for biological and biomedical research. The first JBMS Ontology Issue will be published in July 2013 as part of the JBMS Thematic Series "Biomedical ontologies". The "JBMS Ontology Issue" will contain manuscripts describing ontologies that formalize and describe biomedical domain knowledge at different representation levels, including genomic, proteomic, tissue, organ and organism levels, as well as organisational structures such as systems, topologies and functional relatedness. Ontologies applicable in multiple domains with relevance to biological and biomedical research will also be considered. The aim of the yearly JBMS Ontology Issue is to provide a comprehensive collection of manuscript describing ontologies for use in biological and biomedical research.

Submission

Authors wishing to submit manuscripts for the 2013 Biomedical Ontology Issue **MUST** read and follow these instructions.

- Authors must contact the organizers at bmontol@jbiomedsem.com to check the suitability of their proposed submission by **15 February, 2013** at the latest. Proposals sent in before **15 January 2012** will not be reviewed until after that date. A maximum one page summary should be submitted for this purpose, outline the content of the ontology and its applications in biological and biomedical research. Following acceptance of the proposal, the submission of the full manuscripts to the JBMS Ontology Issue will be via the JBMS website by **31 March, 2013**.

- We will accept two types of manuscript: *Ontology Descriptions* and *Ontology Updates*.

    - An ontology description can be used to describe an ontology that has not previously been published in a significant journal.

    - An ontology update describes the recent development and changes to an ontology. Ontology updates are useful when an ontology has already been published, and the authors wish to make the research community aware of improvement, changes and further development of the ontology. The authors should point out the improvements and advancements that have been made since the latest publication of the ontology (e.g., number of additional terms, improvements in formal or textual term definitions, extension of the ontology scope, novel applications).

- Ontologies published in the JBMS Ontology Issue **must** be freely available at the time of submission. The proposal and the manuscripts **must** contain a description of the restrictions on the use of the ontology, e.g., a statement such as "This ontology is free and open to all users." We will consider manuscripts describing ontologies that are free for academic use only, in which case the conditions of use must be described in detail. We will not consider ontologies that are not available at the time of submission, or which require the payment of a fee. If in doubt, please contact the organizers at bmontol@jbiomedsem.com.

- All proposals and articles **must** contain a link to a website at which the ontology is available, the names, affiliations, and email addresses of all authors.

- All proposals and articles **must** contain a description of the actual or intended use of the ontology for biological or biomedical research.

- If applicable, the one page summary **must** provide complete citations for previous publications of the ontology.

- All proposals **must** provide two to four keywords which describe the content and intended use of the ontology.

- The following types of proposals are discouraged:

    - ontologies that have not been, and are not intended to be, applied to biological or biomedical research at least in a small community,

- ontologies which are exclusively developed using non-English labels and definitions,

- submissions that are mainly devoted to ontology development or the theory behind an ontology instead of its application to biological or biomedical research.

For ontologies, or essentially similar ontologies, that have been the subject of a previous publication, including publication in journals other than JBMS, there is a **minimum two-year interval before re-publication** in the JBMS Ontology Issue can be achieved. Exceptions are possible for significant updates and changes to an ontology. Please contact the organizers if you wish to submit your ontology to the JBMS Ontology Issue in two consecutive years.

Manuscripts

For proposals given approval, the manuscript submission deadline will be at **31 March, 2013** at the latest.

- Authors should submit their manuscript electronically through the JBMS Manuscripts submission site (www.jbiomedsem.com).

- The manuscript **must** be uploaded as a .doc, .rtf, or .tex file. PDF format cannot be accepted.

- Authors should supply the names, institutes and email addresses of **four suggested referees**. They should be scientists working independently (i.e., not recent collaborators) who have relevant expertise or who would be likely users of the ontology.

- Authors should try to use the name(s) of the ontology as the first word(s) in the title of the article and should include within the abstract a valid URL from which the ontology can be accessed. *JBMS* is available in full-text form on the web (www.jbiomedsem.com), and each article will contain a link to its ontology URL.

- All manuscripts should include a description of the ontology including the coverage of the domain, the actual or intended application of the ontology in research. Submissions should typically be 4-5 printed journal pages in length.

- The online version of the Biomedical Ontology Issue will offer the opportunity to the authors to provide supplementary data if appropriate. Such material could include a description of the formal logic representation. A recommended way to organize any supplementary data is to include, within the main text of the printed article, a short table of its contents (one line per item). Each topic could then be expanded as appropriate within the supplement. Authors are encouraged to be innovative in their use of such supplementary data, taking advantage of the fact that electronic material, unlike printed material, need not be static. All supplementary data must be available at the time of submission, for editorial review, and the final material will be archived on the *JBMS* web site.

- It must be possible to open the ontology using freely available tools such as Protege or OBO-Edit. If specialized tools are required to access the ontology content, these must be freely available at the time of submission and must be described in the manuscript. Reviewers should not be expected to debug the loading of the ontology.

- For formatting instructions, please consult the Instructions to Authors.

To help authors evaluate their manuscripts, **the instructions to reviewers** are included below:

When reviewing papers for the 2013 *JBMS* Ontology Issue, please be aware of the following points:

- The purpose of this ontology issue is to provide a single location at which potential users of ontologies can find ontologies that are available for their research, and which are free or free for academic use.

  - If the ontology has been described in prior publications, or significantly overlaps in content with another ontology, the changes and differences to prior work have to be clearly specified. Ideally, the impact of the changes in research applications has been demonstrated in the manuscript. The contributions from prior publications should not be repeated.

- A key consideration for acceptability is whether the ontology described in the manuscript is useful for research applications. It is important that the potential or actual applications of the ontology are described clearly in the manuscript and are understandable to researchers who are not necessarily experts in ontology development. Please ensure that the ontology is accessible and contains the content that has been described in the manuscript.

- The ontology should provide a representation of biological or biomedical interest. An ontology that is primarily developed for research purposes without potential applications to biological or biomedical research, should not be accepted.

For further information please contact Dr Robert Hoehndorf or Dr Dietrich Rebholz-Schuhmann at bmontol@jbiomedsem.com.