Welcome *to the* New SFI Bulletin

THE *SFI BULLETIN* BEGAN 27 YEARS AGO as a mimeographed review of people and events contributing to SFI science. Since then it has transformed several times, ranging from a quasi journal containing scholarly review articles to an accessible magazine for SFI's diverse audience.

Today, with this issue, the *SFI Bulletin* is changing again. We now present the publication in three ways: as a tablet magazine and as an online publication, with a few printed copies found primarily at the Institute. We will publish three issues a year rather than one. Instead of surveying a half dozen research themes, each issue now covers a single scientific theme. And, to offer the greatest possible relevance to our audience of scientists and nonscientists, we offer several perspectives, asking our scholars to present their work in their own words.

You might ask why we are making these changes. Our audience has always been an international one, and with the ever-expanding reach of the Internet we are striving to make the Institute's research available even more broadly. We're also taking advantage of the capabilities of digital media, including videos and interactive illustrations, for richer insights. In keeping with SFI's green initiative, we are taking a big step toward a paperless publication.

In this first issue of the new *SFI Bulletin*, Institute scientists involved in the "Emergence of Complex Societies" project, sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation, ask why states formed in six regions of the world independently. SFI Omidyar Fellow Scott Ortman proffers his thoughts on how metaphors, and the human capacity for conceptualization, help us imagine new, more complex societal structures. And SFI Professor Sam Bowles outlines why it is so improbable for *Homo sapiens* to have become the "global villagers" we are today. In whatever form you are experiencing this issue, I hope you find these questions as fascinating as I do.

Regards,

Jerry Sabloff

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