Guest Editor Profile

Thomas Wirth

Date of birth:	August 4, 1964
Position:	Professor of Organic Chemistry
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Education:	1984–1990 Studies of chemistry, University of Bonn 1989–1992 Ph.D. thesis under supervision of Prof. Siegfried Blechert, Technical University of Berlin 1992–1993 Post-doctoral studies as a scholar of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) under supervision of Prof. Kaoru Fuji, University of Kyoto 1994–1998 Habilitation, University of Basel 02/1999 Nomination as a Privatdozent, University of Basel since 2000 Professor of Organic Chemistry, Cardiff University
Awards:	Werner Prize (New Swiss Chemical Society), Wolfson Research Merit Award (Royal Society), Elected Fellow of The Learned Society of Wales, Bader Award (Royal Society of Chemistry)
Current research interests:	Stereoselective electrophilic reactions, oxidative transformations with hypervalent iodine reagents including mechanistic investigations and organic synthesis performed in microreactors.

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Is your current research mainly curiosity-driven (fundamental) or rather applied?

My current research is now often syringe-pump-driven as these pumps assist molecules to be squeezed through capillaries and reactors. Nowadays, we frequently add a pinch of electrons. Adding electrons in electrochemical processes leads to very clean and environmentally friendly protocols because waste production is decreased. Such reactions also give fundamental mechanistic insights when synthesizing useful molecules for further applications.

What was your main motivation to go into this area of research?

To ban the hectic rotation of stirring bars from the lab. We take advantage that the generation and use of reactive intermediates can be performed in flow reactions. Not only is it much safer than reactions with hazardous compounds run on a large scale in a flask, it also opens up completely new routes through selective reactions with these reactive intermediates, which were unthinkable before.

What advice do you give to your students?

They have a very good environment to undertake research. My students should make use of this excellent platform to be creative in the design of reactions, flexible with the analysis and open-minded for new results.