

Moving to Online-only Publication

A Case Study

Denis Baskin

Executive Editor

Journal of Histochemistry and Cytochemistry

The Histochemical Society

baskindg@u.washington.edu

Council of Science Editors Meeting

Vancouver, BC.

May 18, 2008





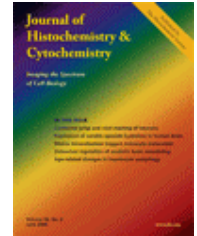
The Histochemical Society

- Founded in 1953 by cell biologists and pathologists
- Cellular biochemistry using microscopes and staining techniques
- Small but active membership
- Annual meetings
- Journal of Histochemistry & Cytochemistry



Journal of Histochemistry and Cytochemistry

JHC



- Published monthly since 1953
- Self-publishing for over 20 years
- Multidisciplinary cell biology content
- Microscopy, biochemistry and molecular biology
- Long citation half-life (>10 yrs)
- International subscriber and author base





Journal of Histochemistry and Cytochemistry Online

- Online with HWP in 1997
- Online JHC is version of record
- Originally unbundled (Print \$ > Online \$)
- Subscription model now based on on-line access
- Print as been included at no extra cost



First Steps to Online Only

- Rationale: Cost savings, Open Access
- Considerations for moving to online only
 - High activation level among subscribers
 - **JHC: 94% institutional activation level**
 - Membership does not read print
 - **HCS members prefer on-line access**
 - Low ad revenue
 - **JHC: No paid advertising**
- 2006: HCS Council directed business office to investigate dropping print





Some Considerations

- Potential savings of not printing overestimated
- Still have costs of peer review
- Still need to pay for redactory services
- Some members and institutions want print
- Print subscriptions in China (OL not activated)
- Loss of subscriptions a risk with OLO
- What to do?





Print on Demand

- Instead of eliminating print, JHC opted for print on demand
- Early times - few publishers do this now
- Eliminate traditional print run
- POD copies not off the traditional presses
- Digital printing is done entirely from PDFs
- High flexibility for subscribers and customers
- Quality of images is no problem





Abandoning Print - Well, Almost

- JHC will cease traditional print runs beginning in 2009
- No longer print and mail paper issues
- No change in on-line journal price
- Offer print on demand as an extra
- POD copies add ~50% to cost of subscription
- Perpetual access guaranteed
- Flexibility for purchasers is unique





Take Home Message

- Not as much net cost saving as we initially thought it would be.
- Works for HCS and JHC because of
 - Basic research base (not clinical)
 - Online readership well established
 - Readers and editors enthusiastic
 - No advertising revenue to lose
- May not be appropriate model for other publishers.
- Work in progress.....

