

2001: A Publishing Odyssey

Moderator:

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Stanford, California

Panelists:

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Canadian Medical Association Journal
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John Sack opened this session by describing the array of publishing models that the Internet has made possible. These include early online posting of articles that will eventually appear in print, simultaneous publication of online articles with shorter versions in print, and online-only publication of selected articles. Such models allow journals to please authors by reducing publication times, to publish more papers without increasing printing and mailing costs, or to

attract readers by offering different versions of a given article to suit different needs.

Kent Anderson described an online-only publishing experiment that began while he was at *Pediatrics*. This journal publishes 20 online-only articles each month in addition to the regular print lineup, allowing *Pediatrics* to publish 800 to 1000 extra pages per year. In a 1999 study, Anderson's group found that articles appearing both online and in print received two to four more citations each than articles appearing online only; the discrepancy increased to four to seven more citations in a 2000 study. They also found that authors of online-only articles would prefer to have future articles published both in print and online, but they were more amenable to online-only publishing than expected.

Sandra Goldbeck-Wood said that the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* has begun simultaneous publication of the definitive version of articles online and a shorter, more education-oriented version in print; the system is called ELPS (electronic long, paper short). The short versions are typically 1000 to 2000 words and the long versions up to 3000 words. *BMJ* currently "ELPSes" about 50% of articles and plans to publish all papers this way eventually. The model doubles the technical editing that goes into each article. An epidemiologist makes the decision about which material will be retained for the shorter print version. Goldbeck-Wood noted that the system pleases both readers and researchers, who traditionally have had divergent interests.

David Gillikin reported on *Science Express*. Selected *Science* papers are published in PDF format within 2 weeks of acceptance, typically 4 to 6 weeks before they appear in print. The articles published in *Science Express* have not undergone final copyediting. The *Science Express* version of a paper and the final online version are linked via a digital object identifier (DOI). *Science Express* was launched in January 2001 as

a benefit of membership in the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In May 2001, an average of four *Science Express* papers were posted per week; Gillikin expected this to rise to eight or 10 articles per week by the fall of 2001.

According to Nancy Rodnan and Jennifer Borchardt, *The FASEB Journal* set up *FJ Express* to eliminate a backlog of manuscripts, to publish more good-quality manuscripts in a timely manner, and to stay within page budget. Each *FJ Express* article is published online with a DOI within weeks of acceptance. It is the version of record and is indexed in MEDLINE. *FJ Express* articles are edited and stylized according to *The FASEB Journal* standards and posted in one-column and two-column PDF documents. A three-page print summary written by the author is published in the *The FASEB Journal* 2 months after the full-length article is posted online. *FJ Express* has allowed the journal to double the number of manuscripts it publishes; Rodnan said that it remains to be seen what effect the increased volume will have on the journal's impact factor.

Barbara Gordon reported on the *Journal of Biological Chemistry's* system of publishing papers online as soon as they are accepted, called "Papers in Press". The journal posts PDFs of the raw manuscripts (that is, before they go through copyediting and layout). It has published over 3500 Papers in Press since March 2000. The online publication date establishes publication priority, and the articles can be cited by using the DOI. The system saves 12 weeks in the publication cycle. For any journal considering this type of model, Gordon recommended reminding authors that their papers will be posted immediately after acceptance and that they will not be able to make any changes until they receive the proofs of the paper version. 🗨️