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*Factorization Techniques for Numerical Semigroup Rings.*

Given a ring,  $(R, +, \cdot)$ , and a semigroup,  $(S, +)$ , one can construct a new ring,  $R[S]$ , called the semigroup ring. This ring generalizes the standard polynomial ring  $R[X]$ . Semigroup rings have been studied extensively, especially in the case where  $R$  is the integers or a field. The semigroup ring, in an intuitive sense, carries some of the factorization structure of  $S$ , but due to the interaction with  $R$ , one often gets new behavior for factorization. We will be concerned with the particular case where  $S$  is a numerical monoid. In this case, the factorization properties of the semigroup ring can be viewed as a combination of the factorization properties of the numerical monoid  $S$  and those of another monoid  $B$ , the block monoid over a particular abelian group. We will discuss the utility of this viewpoint, by considering how longest factorizations of elements can be estimated in terms of factorizations performed within  $B$  and  $S$  separately. (Received September 21, 2010)