



# Open Access

Donald E. McClure

The American Mathematical Society (AMS) is currently considering a proposal to start two new open access research journals. The proposal has been presented to the Committee on Publications, the Long Range Planning Committee, the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees (ECBT), and the Council. At its November 17 meeting, the ECBT recommended that the president appoint an ad hoc committee to advise the Council, Board of Trustees, and the executive director about the proposal and other open access alternatives. The committee members are Matthew Ando, John Ewing, Eric Friedlander, David Goss, Robert Guralnick, Bryna Kra, Donald McClure, and Ronald Stern.

The committee welcomes comments, questions, and suggestions about the proposal, which is described in this article. Comments sent to [OpenAccess@ams.org](mailto:OpenAccess@ams.org) will be shared with the committee. The committee plans to report to the Council and Board of Trustees in mid-March, about a month before the April 20 Council meeting.

## Background

The proposal to expand the options for open access publishing in AMS research journals is motivated by AMS publication policy, open access mandates from research sponsors, encouragement from research libraries, and the need to create a path for the future of AMS publishing.

**AMS Publication Policy.** At the January 2012 Council meeting in Boston, the following statement of AMS policy was adopted:

*The American Mathematical Society strongly endorses and adheres to the principle that a paper in the mathematical sciences should have an opportunity to be evaluated and possibly published without regard to the financial circumstances of its authors.*

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The policy simply states that the AMS will not discriminate against any author because of his or her financial circumstances.

Currently, the AMS does not have a method of accommodating an author who wishes to publish under an open access model that makes the *version of record* of an article freely available. This constraint will be explained more fully below, but to provide an example: if an author happens to be required by their funding agency or institution to give preference to publishing in an open access journal or if he or she simply wants their paper to be freely available in its final published form immediately upon publication, the AMS has no way to address that author's needs or wishes.

**Community Pressures.** The movement toward open access publishing is rapidly shifting beneath our feet. Funding agencies and academic institutions are taking steps to promote open access publishing of research. The Research Councils UK and the European Commission made major policy announcements in July 2012. For some time, U.S. funding agencies, Congress, and the Executive Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) have been formulating plans for an open access mandate for public access to federally sponsored research.

**Government Mandates.** On July 16, 2012, Research Councils UK (RCUK) announced that, starting in April 2013, all publicly funded "research outputs", including refereed articles in journals and conference proceedings, must be published under one of two acceptable open access models.<sup>1</sup> (1) Under the "gold" open access model, a journal provides immediate unrestricted access to the publisher's final version of the paper (the version of record) and allows immediate deposit of the version of record in other repositories. RCUK also established a mechanism for supporting payment to the publisher of an Article Processing Charge (APC), recognizing that there are costs of publication. (2) Under the "green" open access model, publishers must allow an author's final peer-reviewed manuscript to be deposited in an online repository within six months of publication (twelve months for arts, humanities, and social sciences). While all of the AMS research journals

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/RCUK%20Policy\\_on\\_Access\\_to\\_Research\\_Outputs.pdf](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/RCUK%20Policy_on_Access_to_Research_Outputs.pdf)

already offer green open access,<sup>2</sup> the UK Government explicitly expressed a preference for the “gold” over the “green” model.

One day later, on July 17, the European Commission (EC) announced a similar policy for all research outputs sponsored under a program funded at US\$98 billion over the years 2014 to 2020.<sup>3</sup>

Over the four-year period 2006–2009, 40 percent of the articles published in *Transactions* and 36 percent of the articles published in *Proceedings* had a corresponding author who was domiciled in Europe. These percentages both exceed the percentages of corresponding authors domiciled in the United States.

**Increased Commitment of Academic Institutions to Open Access.** In the gold open access model, it is generally assumed that an Article Processing Charge will be paid **by a funding agency or by the author's institution.** APCs are not expected to be paid by the author personally.

In an organized effort to support a transition of scholarly publishing to open access, more than thirty institutions have established funds to support APCs on behalf of their affiliated authors. Seventeen institutions have signed a *Compact for Open-Access Publishing Equity*<sup>4</sup> to establish “durable mechanisms for underwriting reasonable publication charges.”

In particular, institutional payment of APCs is restricted to truly open access journals and will not be paid to a so-called *hybrid* journal that enables an isolated article to be made open access by payment of a fee.

We anticipate that the proposed new journals will be welcomed by the library community.

**The need for society publishers to publish more.** Society publishers and other non-commercial publishers are not keeping up with *commercial* publishers in terms of market share. In the ten-year period 2000–2009, the number of research articles in the mathematical sciences grew by 37 percent. Over the same period, the proportion of articles published by commercial publishers grew from 44 percent in 2000 to 56 percent in 2009.

The research and library communities would be better served if society publishers could publish more of the high-quality literature in low-cost journals. This cannot be achieved solely with subscription journals. Open access provides an opportunity for society publishers to publish more.

**Laying the Foundation for the Future of AMS Publishing.** Proponents of open access publishing predict phenomenal growth for open access and the eventual demise of subscription journals. Even if such predictions are exaggerated, the move to open access publishing forces us to think carefully about adapting

<sup>2</sup><http://www.ams.org/publications/journals/AMS-Views-on-Journal-Publishing>

<sup>3</sup>[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-12-790\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-790_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup><http://www.oacompact.org/compact/>

to the change. The proposal below starts to pave a path, if it is necessary, toward the partial replacement of the subscription model by open access.

## Proposal

It is proposed that the AMS establish two new open access journals to start publication in 2014 or 2015. The journals would be managed editorially as *companion journals* of *Proceedings of the AMS* (PAMS) and of *Transactions of the AMS* (TAMS). I shall refer to the new journals as

*Proceedings of the American Mathematical Society, Series B*, and

*Transactions of the American Mathematical Society, Series B*,

or by the short names *Proceedings B* and *Transactions B*. Both of the journals would be supported by Article Processing Charges. The APCs would be designed to cover the Society's costs of publication.

1. The new journals will have distinct ISSN's (International Standard Serial Numbers). Each one will be distinct from its companion. The proposed model avoids the pitfalls of a hybrid journal; see, for example, item 6.

2. The *Series B* journals will be electronic-only and will be freely available online.

3. PAMS and its companion, *Proceedings B*, would have a common editorial board. The same would hold for TAMS and *Transactions B*. This will assure the high editorial standard of each new journal. The editorial boards will be expanded as necessary.

4. Editorial decisions will be independent of “business” decisions. The editor handling a paper will not need to know whether a paper is intended for the open access journal or its subscription counterpart.

5. Upon acceptance of a paper, the author(s) will choose which of the two companion journals would publish it; the decision can well be postponed that long. Publication in *Series B* of either companion pair would be dependent on payment of the APC by a research sponsor or the author's home institution.

6. The two subscription journals will not change their respective budgeted number of pages, and they will continue to publish all of the budgeted pages. Thus the value received by a subscriber will not be diminished.

7. In the first years of publication, we would plan for a modest number of pages for both of the *Series B* journals. The creation of the new journals does enable the AMS to work toward the goal of publishing more.

The new journals will also enable the AMS to adapt gracefully to shifts toward open access publishing in the future. This is a huge benefit of establishing the new journals as companions of our primary research journals.