
American Mathematical Society
Committee on Publications (CPub)
September 12-13, 2014
Summary Report

A meeting of the AMS Committee on Publications (CPub) was held on Friday and Saturday, September 12-13, 2014, at the Hilton O'Hare Airport, Chicago, IL. CPub chair Charles A. Weibel presided over the meeting and all members were present.

Discussion Topic: MathJax

Dr. Peter Krautzberger, Manager of the MathJax Consortium, presented an overview and discussion on the basic features of MathJax, its relationship to existing web and publishing standards and its role for mathematical publications and other activities on the web. Slides for Dr. Krautzberger's presentation are available to view online at: <http://pkra.github.io/slides-cpub>.

Updates on 2013 Actions

No actions resulting from the 2013 meeting required approval by Council. CPub's 2013 annual report was filed in the AMS Committee Report Book as Committee Report Number 131118-010 and is also available on the Committee's homepage at <http://www.ams.org/ams/cpub-home.html>.

Per the Committee's recommendation, copies of the 2013 Report of the Subcommittee Reviewing the AMS Member Journals (Attachment 5, 2013 CPub agenda) were forwarded to the Chief Editors of the *Notices* and *Bulletin* by CPub chair David Marker in October 2013.

AMS Translation Committees

The Committee endorsed the Publisher's proposal to dissolve all existing editorial committees and subcommittees for translated books published by AMS and establish a new committee, the Translations of Mathematical Monographs Editorial Committee. The proposal and a draft charge for the new committee will be submitted with CPub's recommendation for approval to the January 2015 Council.

Revisions to Certain Editorial Committee Charges

The Committee endorsed the following changes to certain editorial committee charges for Council approval:

- **History of Mathematics Editorial Committee Charge:**
 - Delete number 2 under the "Principal Activities" section.
- **Mathematical Surveys and Monographs Editorial Committee Charge:**
 - Change the number of members from "four" to "four or five".
 - Delete the paragraph of text which appears after "General Description" and before "Principal Activities".
- **Mathematics of Computation Editorial Committee Charge**

CPub endorsed a new version of the Mathematics of Computation (MCOM) Editorial Committee charge, which was developed by the Editorial Division in cooperation with MCOM

Managing Editor Susanne Brenner, to better outline the role of all editors on the committee. The MCOM committee is unique in that its Associate Editors and full Editors perform the same duties relating to articles submitted for peer review; however, its current charge doesn't include information about the participation of current or past Associate Editors. It was noted that since all members of the MCOM committee have historically been eligible to receive reimbursement for travel to annual meetings, the revision to the charge will not have any budgetary impacts.

Report on Journal Backlogs

In an attempt to address increasing concerns about the backlogs, the May 2014 ECBT approved page increases for *Proceedings*, *Transactions*, and *Memoirs* beginning in 2015 and asked CPub to consider and advise on the possible reason(s) behind the backlogs. The Committee engaged in lengthy discussion on factors contributing to the backlogs such as page budgets, submission rates, acceptance rates, editorial committee procedures, and staffing limitations. The backlogs were discussed further as part of the CPub subcommittee's Report on the Review of the AMS Primary Journals.

Review of AMS Primary Journals

Charles Weibel, chair of the CPub subcommittee that conducted the 2014 review, presented an overview of the 2014 Report of the Subcommittee Reviewing the AMS Primary Journals.

The subcommittee's findings are summarized below:

- *Journal of the AMS* (JAMS) is in very good health, and no concerns were identified. The journal has become one of the top mathematical journals in the world, and AMS should be proud.
- *Mathematics of Computation* (MCOM) is meeting its objectives and operating efficiently; however, a recent backlog problem has arisen. It was also noted that a small increase in the diversity of articles published outside of number theory and numerical analysis would be beneficial.
- *Proceedings of the AMS* (PAMS) and *Transactions of the AMS* (TAMS) are both doing a good job of providing representative coverage in all areas of mathematics and are of suitable quality; however, both journals have significant backlog issues.
- Editors contributed several good suggestions for improvements to EditFlow, the Society's manuscript tracking system, and reported less operating problems than in 2010.

Based on its review, the subcommittee made the following recommendations:

- AMS staff should attempt to implement editor's suggestions for improvements to EditFlow.
- Accepted articles should be posted online more quickly (within the industry standard of 3 to 4 months)
- AMS should consider launching a new journal, similar to TAMS but intermediate between TAMS and JAMS.

Additionally, the Committee made the following unanimous recommendation to Council:

AMS should increase the capacity of its research journals in order to better serve the mathematical community.

It was further suggested by CPub that one such way to increase the capacity of its research journals would be for AMS to launch an intermediate-level journal to better reach the target audiences of *Journal of the AMS*, *Proceedings*, and *Transactions*.

Procedure for New Publication Proposals

CPub was asked earlier in the year to establish a process for soliciting, processing, and responding to proposals to launch new AMS journals. A subcommittee was subsequently formed for this purpose and presented draft procedures and guidelines to the full committee. After some discussion, it was determined that the guidelines as drafted should apply only to proposals received for new specialty journals, and some amendments were made to the draft.

The approved Guidelines read:

CPub Guidelines for Reviewing Proposals to Launch a New Topical Journal

We expect that proposals will be submitted to the AMS at times that are convenient for the proposers, yet they must be reviewed carefully within the AMS calendar. For proposals submitted by April 1 of each year, recommendations should be finalized at the fall CPub meeting and presented to the AMS Council at the annual January meeting.

The considerations below provide guidelines on how to process and review individual proposals to launch a new topical journal; i.e., a journal specializing in some area of mathematics.

- A. Possible reasons to start a new journal include, among others, the following:**
- To provide a home for papers in a new or expanding area of pure or applied mathematics, where no dedicated publication already exists.**
 - To provide an additional publication venue for papers in an active field of mathematics or for papers of a particular type or quality.**
 - To provide a new home for an existing journal that wants to change publisher (due to various problems, such as policy disagreements between the editorial board and the publisher).**
- B. A proposal to launch a new journal should include the following material:**
- Description of the journal, its scope, intended readership, etc.**
 - Information about the main competitors; how do they differ.**
 - Data clarifying the potential pool of authors (obtained, for example, using Math Reviews data).**
 - Data about the potential audience. This includes: the pool of potential readers (although this might be difficult to obtain); names of relevant leading academic and research institutions in which these readers are based.**
 - Information about key meetings and conferences in the field.**
 - Opinion from independent reviewers about the quality/importance and viability of the proposed journal.**
 - Suggestions about how the work of the editorial board may be organized: how many (managing) editors, their specialty, what the role of the other editors will be (will they be corresponding editors or reviewers).**
 - Suggestions for the possible composition of the editorial board**
 - Suggestions on the frequency/size of the journal and type of articles to be published (research, survey, short notes).**

- **Suggestions on the delivery media (print vs electronic vs hybrid); suggestions on whether it should be an open access journal.**
 - **When available, information about funding of relevant research by NSF and other agencies.**
- C. When reviewing a proposal the following factors are among the most crucial:**
- **Whether the proposed journal is important/useful for the general mathematical community or to a significant portion of this community.**
 - **Whether the pools of authors and readers are substantial and stable enough to support a journal.**
 - **Whether other publication venues already exist that adequately support the target mathematical community.**

Proposal to Launch a New Electronic Journal

Earlier this year, CPub submitted a report to Council on its assessment of AMS' proposal to launch a new journal titled *Journal of Applied and Computational Topology* (JACT) and Council later referred the proposal back to CPub for further discussion and consideration. The Committee was asked to make a recommendation to Council on an updated proposal to launch JACT, which included the reports of four independent reviewers and the initiative group's response to these reviews.

The Committee engaged in lengthy discussion on the updated proposal in which mixed opinions were expressed. Concerns were raised about the composition, breadth, and structure of the proposed editorial board as well as the scope of the journal and the overall strength of the proposal. Due to time constraints, CPub continued its discussion following the meeting and conducted a vote on the proposal via email.

As a result of post-meeting discussion the following proposal was submitted for a vote, which was conducted from October 8-14, 2014, using the online survey service SurveyMonkey:

CPub recommends that the AMS Council approve the proposal to launch the Journal of Applied and Computational Topology, provided that its Editorial Board consists of six Editors, one of which serves as the Managing Editor.

Since the mathematical and scientific breadth of the journal are extremely important, CPub recommends that the Council advise the Editorial Boards Committee to give serious consideration to the breadth and experience of the Editors it selects.

Of the 13 voting CPub members, 5 voted to in favor of the proposed recommendation, and 8 voted against it. The decision of CPub, as reached by majority vote, is to recommend against approval by Council of the proposal to launch *Journal of Applied and Computational Topology*.

Update on Publishing Strategy Development

The Committee received a written report on the current status of strategic planning for the publication program and MathSciNet and was informed that Publishing Trustee Liaisons Mark Green and William Jaco have actively participated in PSG discussions, continuing the collaborative approach to developing AMS' Publishing Strategic Plan.

Report on AMS Open Access Journals

The Committee received a written report on the current status of the AMS Open Access Journals provided by Associate Executive Director, Publishing Robert Harington.

Report on Mathematical Reviews

The Committee receives updated information about Mathematical Reviews (MR) annually from the MR Executive Editor, who is invited to attend all CPub meetings. Time constraints did not allow the Committee to receive a report at the time of the meeting. Newly appointed MR Executive Editor Edward Dunne distributed a written report to CPub via email following the meeting.

Next Meeting

The 2015 CPub meeting will be held Friday and Saturday, September 18-19, 2015, at the Chicago Hilton O'Hare in Chicago, IL. Professor Charles A. Weibel will continue in his current capacity as CPub chair through January 31, 2016.

In accordance with its annual review schedule, CPub will conduct an evaluation of AMS' electronic-only, translation, and distributed journals in 2015. A subcommittee will be assembled to complete the review, which will be presented at CPub's 2015 meeting.

Sergei Gelfand, *Publisher*
October 22, 2014