

A proposal for print–online hybrid publishing system

Khaled Moustafa¹

Received: 15 March 2016
© Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, Hungary 2016

Some journals reject many worthwhile manuscripts on the basis of “lack of space”. Beyond the irrationality of such an argument, assimilating journals to a means of transport whose places would be reserved in advance, new publishing systems could be developed to improve the publishing efficiency and reduce such rejection biases, particularly in traditional print journals. Here, I propose a print–online hybrid publishing system in which print and online formats can coexist for the same journal so that traditional print journals arguing on ‘lack of space or ‘space pressure’ can accept more worthwhile articles for online publications format only (for e.g., as iArticle, eArticle, ePaper, iPaper, eLetter, eComment, eReview or eResearch papers, or simply eArticle for any type of scientific contribution that will be published online only.) after the quota for print versions is full. Doing so, the rejection biases related to ‘space limitations’ would be considerably reduced or even disappeared as the online space is almost limitless. Potentially interesting and scientifically sounding articles can thus be accepted and published in online formats only rather than to be rejected on the fallacy of ‘limited space’ arguments. Such a hybrid model would offer important advantages for targeted print journals and for authors alike, as it should allow to: (1) satisfy more authors while saving their time from wasting in series of repetitive submissions and journal shopping with “lack of space” or “space pressure” rejection arguments, (2) increase the publishing power of targeted journals as the number of published papers will increase substantially. From a technical viewpoint, a hybrid print–online publishing model is easy to implement as there is a lot of examples of journals operating fully online.

However, to avoid any discrepancy between online and print versions, articles selected for inclusion either in print or online formats should follow the same publishing criteria; both types (online and print papers) should be indexable, citable, and ‘DOIable’ (assignable to Digital Object Identifier, if the journals in question use DOI anyway). The same

✉ Khaled Moustafa
khaled.moustafa@gmail.com

¹ Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, Paris, France

rule for accessing online and print versions should also be applied on both formats. In other words, no differences should exist between online and print formats except the support (online vs. print) and the citation format (for e.g., DOI or web links for online papers versus volume and issue in print versions). A print–online hybrid publishing system alongside an equal peer-review system (Moustafa 2015b) would allow reducing the rejection biases significantly, particularly those relating to ‘space pressure’ and/or editorial biases (García et al. 2015; Moustafa 2015a), if ‘space pressure’ is really the true reason of rejections in some snobbish journals.

References

- García, J. A., Rodríguez-Sánchez, R., & Fdez-Valdivia, J. (2015). The author–editor game. *Scientometrics*, 104(1), 361–380.
- Moustafa, K. (2015a). Is there bias in editorial choice? Yes. *Scientometrics*, 105(3), 2249–2251.
- Moustafa, K. (2015b). A proposal for an ‘equal peer-review’ statement. *Trends in Pharmacological Sciences*, 36(8), 494–495.