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# ACM Publications Finances for 2020

WE PROVIDE HERE an annual update on ACM Publications finances, following up on our initial report published in the May 2020 issue of *Communications of the ACM* (p. 53).<sup>a</sup> This report summarizes income and expenses for the 2020 calendar year. Specific notes explain significant changes between 2019 and 2020.

There are several key themes that cut across the various categories:

► **The COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences.** 2020 is an outlier year (and 2021 will continue to be an outlier) due to the effects of the global pandemic. A significant number of ACM conferences were cancelled. ACM Headquarters shifted to remote operation and instituted a hiring freeze. And travel (for sales, development of new content, and governance) was nearly eliminated during the pandemic period. Most of these deviations are temporary, though we are still working through changes in travel

to understand how much in-person events will be replaced by videoconferencing in the longer term.


► **Digital Library development.** 2020 shows ongoing investment into our new digital library platform. It is the first full year of operation for our new platform (with all the associated vendor expenses) and is a year with substantial ongoing development expenses. Within the scope of “digital library” we include the full range of production systems, including substantial investments (and ongoing costs) for accessibility and mobile device compatibility of published articles. These changes will continue into 2021; ACM chartered

<sup>a</sup> <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3389687>

a new Digital Library Board that will prioritize and oversee continued improvements in the author and reader experience.

► **ACM Open.** In 2020, ACM committed to a path toward open access based on institutional publish-and-read agreements (referred to as “transformative agreements”). The ACM Open model offers institutions a subscription fee based on the historical number of articles published by its authors, and in return makes those articles open. Combined with author-choice OA, ACM published 8.9% of its articles open access in 2020.

► **Transition to ACM Open is a five-year effort (and may take longer due to the COVID-19 pandemic).** We will provide an update on the initiative in a future issue of *Communications*.

► **Improved Financial Reporting.** As we noted last year, part of the challenge of reporting on publications finances came from the fact that these figures combine hundreds of sources and thousands of transactions, not all of which are completely attributable to publications. As we complete this second-year report, we have been able to improve the attribution of expenses and income, and we expect to continue to do so for at least one more year. 

## ACM Publications Financials For Calendar Year 2020

Income	
Digital Library: Consortia, Corporates, & Govt Licenses	20,233,851
Digital Library: ACM Open Licenses	516,000
Digital Library: Articles Pay Per View	56,800
Institutional Membership Dues	318,504
Subscription Income (including SIGs); à la Carte Subscriptions	810,994
SIG Print Magazine Subscriptions (Interactions/Inroads)	153,841
Digital SIG Master Package	148,845
Advertising, including SIGs	934,732
ICPS Proceedings: Non-ACM Conference Publication Fees	349,675
Open Access Income (APCs)	88,400
All Other Publications Income: ACM Books, etc.	473,433
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>24,085,075</b>

## 2020 High-Level ACM Publications Financials

Income	2020	2019	Favorable/ (Unfavorable)
Subscriptions & Advertising	23,569,075	23,992,725	(423,650)
Digital Library: Open Access Licenses	516,000	N/A	516,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>24,085,075</b>	<b>23,992,725</b>	<b>92,350</b>
Expenses			
<b>Journals</b>	3,896,143	4,091,846	195,703
<b>Magazines</b>	5,313,187	5,519,977	206,790
<b>Proceedings</b>	5,468,671	5,631,759	163,088
<b>Digital Library</b>	5,888,960	5,098,667	(790,293)
<b>Agents/Sales</b>	2,848,053	2,747,357	(100,696)
<b>Publications Board</b>	60,025	211,615	151,590
<b>Publishing Program, net</b>	<b>610,037</b>	<b>691,505</b>	<b>(81,468)</b>

### Notes:

#### 1. Total income.

Total publications income remained essentially flat from 2019, even though overall Digital Library income increased by \$480K due to the introduction of ACM Open in January 2020. However, this increase was offset by a \$300K decline in advertising income, which is primarily income generated by job postings on jobs.acm.org. 2020 ACM Open income comes from approximately 35 institutions in Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, the U.K., and the U.S.

#### 2. Journals Expenses.

An overall decrease of \$195K in journal-related expenses, which is attributable to (1) decreased print and distribution related expenses because of the pandemic; (2) increased use of ACM's new XML-based production system; and (3) reduced staff costs due to ACM HQ hiring freeze and unfilled positions.

#### 3. Magazines Expenses.

An overall decrease of \$206K, which is attributable to (1) decreased print and distribution related expenses as a result of the pandemic; (2) reduced staffing costs due to ACM HQ hiring freeze and unfilled positions; and (3) lower staff and volunteer-related travel costs due to the pandemic.

#### 4. Proceedings Expenses.

An overall decrease of \$163K, which is attributable to reduced costs because of a reduced volume of papers (approximately 1,600 fewer than 2019) due to conference cancellations caused by the pandemic. It is expected that volume and related expenses will increase in future years.

#### 5. Digital Library Expenses.

A significant increase of \$790K in overall Digital Library related expenses, which is attributable to (1) increased expenses related to the implementation of ACM's XML-based production system (TAPS); (2) increased expenses related to Digital Library platform development; and (3) increased expenses related to data-quality improvements, such as improved meta-data and publications-related data needed for ACM Open reporting. It is expected that Digital Library expenses will decline over time.

#### 6. Publications Board Expenses.

A decrease of \$151K in travel-related expenses, which is attributable to the elimination of face-to-face meetings. These expenses are expected to remain lower for 2021, and then to gradually increase when it is appropriate to transition to a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting schedule.