

## EDITORIAL

### Dual Publication of Scientific Information

Earlier this year an author published the same data almost simultaneously in the *Transactions* and in another journal. For every such case we miss, several are caught in the review process. I do not know if attempts at dual publication in primary journals are more prevalent now than formerly, but any such attempt is contrary to our policies, which are published annually in the "Guide for Authors." Whether the motive is naive or self-serving, cynical or well-meaning, dual publication has the same result: few gain but many lose.

Not many people recognize the full expense of scientific publishing. The cost of each two pages in the *Transactions*, incurred from rough draft to library shelf, is nearly \$1,000, to which is added the cost of putting information into literature-retrieval systems and the price of getting it back out. Directly or indirectly, the public pays for all this; funding is finite and money diverted to dual publication is unavailable for original contributions. There is a loss of scientific creativity and productivity when editors, reviewers, and users must process and reconcile duplicate information. Dual publication distorts the principle of fair recognition for original work and, when journals have budgetary constraints (as this one has), it can delay the appearance of a more deserving paper. Should copyright laws be violated, journals could be driven to expensive litigation, to the benefit of no one.

Because of our recent experiences, it seems necessary to reiterate and expand our policies concerning dual publication.

(1) *Authors sending manuscripts to the Transactions must state that ideas, data, and conclusions purported therein to be original are neither under*

*simultaneous consideration by another publisher nor previously published.*

Although we formerly trusted authors who neglected to put such a statement in their covering letters, we no longer will forward a manuscript for review without one. For purposes of this policy, an article is considered published (except as noted later) if it appears in a journal regularly abstracted by *Biological Abstracts*, *Chemical Abstracts*, *Engineering Index*, *Bibliography of Agriculture, Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts*, or *Oceanic Index*, or in a book produced in more than 500 copies.

(2) *All papers—whether published, in press, or under review—that are closely related to a Transactions manuscript should be documented in the manuscript or in correspondence to the editor. Reprints or preprints should be made available on request.*

Few policies in the fluid world of publishing are absolute, and we qualify ours in several respects:

(1) Because we encourage submission of scientific information to the peer-reviewed literature, we may accept data or conclusions previously given to governmental or private publications or to small non-English journals as part of a contractual obligation, even if these are covered by the abstracting services mentioned above. Full details of these circumstances should be given to the editor in advance.

(2) Dissertations and theses are eligible for journal publication, even if they have been filmed and abstracted by commercial firms. The same is true for papers given at meetings, workshops and symposia, if these only have been photocopied and informally circulated (sepa-

rately or together) to participants and close colleagues.

(3) We do not restrict subsequent use of published data in the contexts of new interpretations, comparative analyses, or literature reviews, so long as their origin is attributed.

(4) We will not penalize authors who use scientific data in interpretative articles for lay audiences either before or (preferably) after their technical publication.

(5) Republication of articles as "collected papers in . . ." books usually are commercial ventures with some benefits for university teaching. We do not feel this intrudes on scientific processes or that it violates the intent of our policies.

These guidelines represent a fair and flexible balance of principle and practicality. In the future, I shall feel obliged to publicize cases in which they are disregarded.

Some people feel that dual publication has merit, the literature being so vast and scientists so specialized that only in this way can everyone

be reached who "ought to know." Apart from my suspicion that authors may not be the best judges of who ought to know their results, I am not convinced by this argument. Many scientists read more than one journal and many journals have interdisciplinary scope. The number of services providing abstracts or computerized literature searches grows almost monthly, and there is plenty of access to information for those who need to know. If it is indulged, the urge to display original data to more than one technical audience can only make things worse. It is easy to subdivide audiences, and any inventive author can find many to target. We know from experience that author restraint is not a reliable feature of scientific publishing. If journals release all constraints on dual publication, bibliographies will grow much faster than knowledge—and a new form of vanity press will be upon us.

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