

Development and ‘open access’

From this issue onwards, you may notice that some papers have been released for immediate free access on the *Development* website. This is the result of a new ‘open access’ initiative by The Company of Biologists that allows authors (for a fee) to make their papers available free of charge throughout the world. Previously, authors’ papers were only accessible to institutions or individuals with a subscription to the journal, although all papers were made freely available at the end of the calendar year. This new scheme ensures that your work will be available immediately to anyone anywhere in the world.

We should emphasise at once that the new initiative is optional! Authors will not be asked whether they want to participate in the scheme until their paper is accepted; if they prefer not to pay, their work will be published in the normal way and (under another new proposal) will be made freely available six months after publication.

This hybrid scheme is being introduced as an experiment; The Company of Biologists is a small not-for-profit publisher and it is important that *Development* maintains its subscription revenue in order to cover its publishing costs and to fulfil the Company’s charitable remit. We therefore need a way to test the community’s interest in an open access scheme without introducing too many financial risks. The hybrid scheme should be viewed as a first step towards exploring the publication of *Development* as a full open access journal.

What other changes to the journal are accompanying this new initiative? We are also replacing copyright transfer with an exclusive licence agreement. This will allow authors to retain ownership of their work while providing *Development* with the exclusive rights to publish it. And, as mentioned above, we are improving the availability of our back content,

which will now be released on a rolling six-monthly basis, rather than at the end of every year.

But not everything is changing at the journal. *Development* will still provide free colour reproduction of all figures and has no plans to introduce page charges. We will continue to acknowledge the work of our much-valued referees by paying them for their time and effort. And The Company of Biologists will carry on using as much of its income as possible to maintain its support of biology, through sponsorship of societies and meetings and by awards of travelling fellowships and grants. We view the introduction of open access, therefore, as another way in which we might respond to and support the needs of the developmental biology community.

Where do we go from here? We plan, in the first instance, to run this scheme for a year, during which time we shall monitor its uptake by the community. After this trial period we shall approach you – our authors, readers and subscribers – to find out what you think. If the response is positive, we will explore how we might convert exclusively to open access. Two important issues to address are how the Company might recover its publishing costs if we do move to full open access and how much publication fees will have to increase to achieve this. In this regard it is good news that several funding bodies are receptive to the idea of providing publication costs as a specified component of the grants they award.

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Editor in Chief

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Editorial changes

Readers of *Development* will notice that a familiar name is missing from the list of Editors of the journal. After 10 years loyal service and hard work, Mike Levine is standing down as an Editor with effect from the end of 2003. As Editor in Chief, I am enormously grateful to Mike for all his efforts for the journal. He was a careful and meticulous editor, who always

did his best to ensure that every paper he handled was as good as it could possibly be. As Mike says, *Development* is a journal for, of and by scientists; no-one exemplified this view better than he. Thanks for everything, Mike!

Jim Smith

Editor in Chief

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