

LETTER TO THE LIBRARY COMMUNITY FROM THE TREASURER/PUBLISHER

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PHYSICAL REVIEW, PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS, PHYSICS, PHYSICAL REVIEW SPECIAL TOPICS,
PHYSICAL REVIEW ONLINE ARCHIVE, AND REVIEWS OF MODERN PHYSICS



INTRODUCTION

The journals of the American Physical Society embody the objective of the Society: “the advancement and diffusion of the knowledge of physics.” We strive to produce journals of the highest quality, and at the same time, to keep our journals accessible to researchers and students at institutions of all types and sizes, everywhere in the world, through ongoing efforts to reduce production costs and through policies such as tiered pricing and reduced-price or free subscriptions for institutions in developing countries.

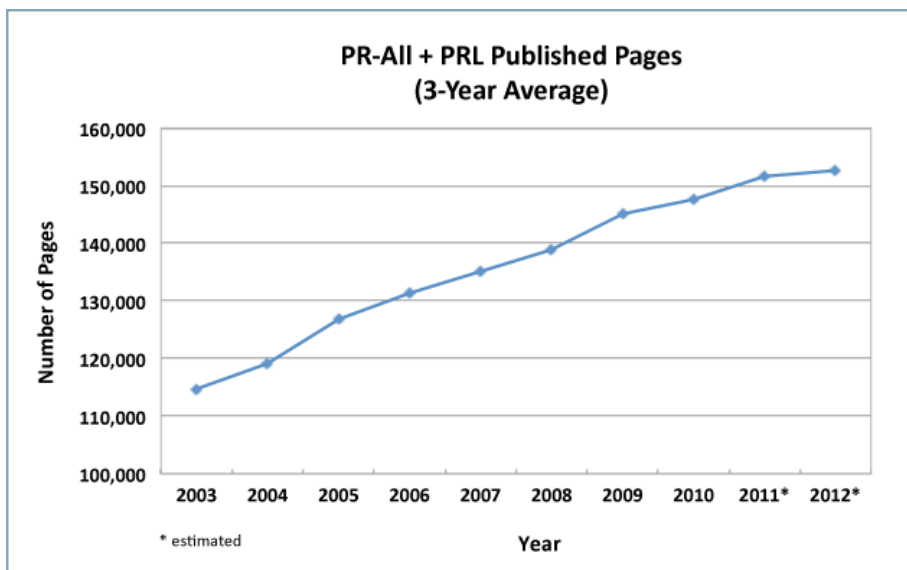
In response to requests for public access from readers outside the traditional research community, we now provide free access to all APS publications for public libraries and high schools in the United States, and we provide a low-cost article rental option through DeepDyve.

APS ONLINE JOURNALS IN 2012

The online journals are the definitive versions of the APS publications described here. Subscriptions to an individual APS journal provide access back to the first issue of that journal, thus eliminating rolling back files and clarifying COUNTER statistics. We continue to improve our journal websites, including our Librarian Portal, and we appreciate suggestions and requests from our librarian colleagues and our readers. The unified APS platform at <http://publish.aps.org/> will allow us to offer additional personalized services for readers, authors, and referees.

We set prices for the online journals to cover the costs of peer review, production of the electronic content, secure archiving, and electronic distribution, along with associated subscriber services (such as search engines, reference linking, RSS feeds, etc.), plus a small net return. Due to increasing numbers and quality of submissions, particularly from Asia and the Pacific Rim, the total number of articles and pages published by APS journals has continued to grow, as shown in the first of the accompanying figures, displaying the annual number of papers published in *Physical Review* and *Physical Review Letters* since 2003, including our projections for 2011 and 2012 (with the actual figures averaged over three years to eliminate misleading fluctuations due to occasional end-of-year production backlogs). I want to emphasize that the overall growth in the number of articles published in APS journals does not reflect a lowering of standards. In fact the standards for acceptance in *Physical Review Letters* have been very deliberately raised. Instead our journals grow because they receive more and more papers that meet our standards for publication, and because we never reject papers simply because they are not about a currently “hot” topic.

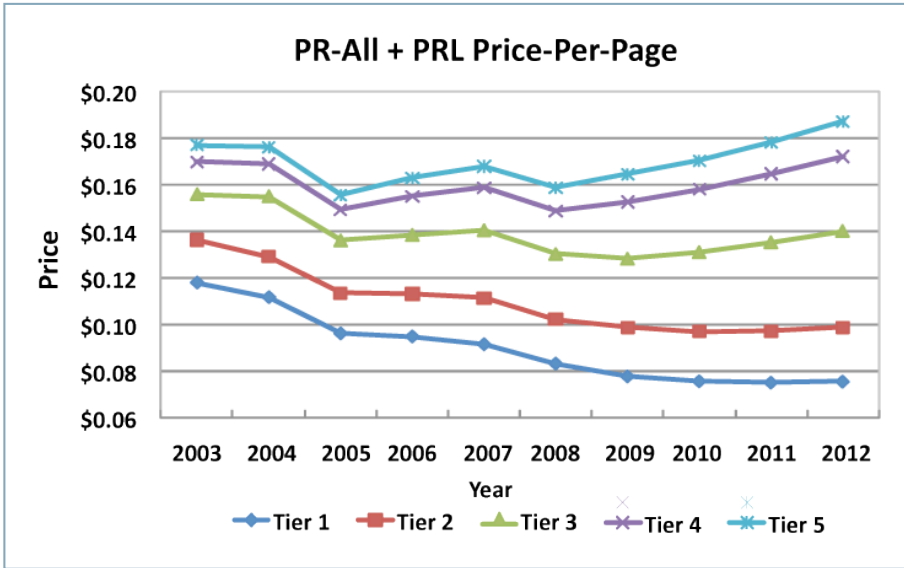
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Most of our publication costs grow in proportion to the size of our journals, and so the growth in published pages drives increases in our prices, even without background inflation. The second figure gives the actual and projected price-per-page for each Tier over 2003-2012. Although the projected price-per-page for all Tiers will increase in 2012, the actual price-per-page in 2010 was lower than in 2003 for every Tier (without correcting for inflation), and for all but the two highest Tiers the projected price-per-page in 2012 will still be lower than in 2003. For comparison the Consumer Price Index-Urban (CPI-U) increased by 18.5% between 2003 and 2010, and the tuition of most private US colleges and universities increased significantly faster than the CPI. We have continued to widen the price differences across Tiers, because while our prices for Tier 5 versus Tier 1 currently differ by only a factor of approximately 2.5, the typical usage by institutions in these Tiers differs by several orders of magnitude, and their financial resources are similarly disparate.

We encourage all subscribers to consider the APS-All package, which remains our most cost-effective subscription option. A full listing of 2012 Prices can be found at: <http://librarians.aps.org/institutional.html>

We strive to guarantee the archival integrity of our online journals. In addition to the primary source at our editorial offices on Long Island, we maintain three complete and continuously updated mirror sites for all of our content, distributed widely across the country, and we have also deposited the full APS content with Portico. We want to assure the library community that we share its deep concern with this issue. The archive of APS journals is a priceless record of our subject, stretching from the present back to 1893, and is heavily used by active scientists, students, and historians. We are committed to its preservation and to enhancing its usefulness.



ONLINE-PLUS-PRINT IN 2012

Although over 70% of subscriptions to APS journals are now online only, in 2012 we will continue to offer the option of augmenting standard online subscriptions with traditional printed copies. Our goal is to set the additional subscription prices for the printed journals to cover the expenses for printing and distribution, with a small cushion against a larger than predicted decrease of print subscriptions. Because printing and shipping involve large set-up and management costs, independent of the number of copies printed, with a consistently decreasing number of print subscribers the incremental prices of the printed journals must rise significantly faster than the online-only prices.

CONCLUSION

The elected Council of the APS sets the prices of the journals after advice from its Publications Oversight Committee and the APS publications staff. Two representatives of the library community, appointed in consultation with the Physics, Astronomy, and Mathematics Division (PAM) of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) attend the Committee meetings as advisers. On behalf of the Committee and the APS, I thank the past year's advisers, Dana L. Roth of California Institute of Technology and A. Ben Wagner of the State University of New York at Buffalo. We have benefited greatly from their contributions and we value their wisdom and their friendship, particularly in these challenging times for both libraries and society publishers.

Joseph W. Serene

Treasurer/Publisher
American Physical Society