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Impact Factor's Impact

Scientific publishers are different. While this statement may be challenged at many occasions, one thing is for sure: As a scientific publisher you have the joy of receiving a second Christmas present, right in the middle of the calendar year. Every year in June, we as editors become nervous—what may we get this year? You may try to guess or estimate what will be in for you this time, but when the ISI (Institute of Scientific Information) finally releases its numbers, it is still a surprise for many of us—eagerly waited for like the sound of the Christmas bell in your childhood days.

However, not every Christmas wish came true, and also your journal's Impact Factor might not have developed as you may have expected—or you were gifted with an extra surprise that you never dared to hope for. And, just as you realize that it is not really Santa Claus who buys the presents, when you look a bit closer into these Impact Factor numbers, you realize that they do not just fall from heaven above. They are man-made, results of database programming, source selection, data input and data analysis. This means, they can be wrong sometimes – certainly something ISI is not talking too loud about. Just to give you one example, the current Impact Factor of our sister journal "Journal of Polymer Science – Polymer Physics" has just been corrected to 3.803 – from 2.548. So, the calculation was wrong by a wowing 49%!

I hope this gives another warning to all these scientists and science managers who believe in journal Impact Factors as the sole criteria of scientific relevance and evaluation. In some parts of the scientific community you feel a quasi-religious exaltation of this one number. I strongly doubt that such strong belief in just one measure is beneficial for the progress of science. And I say that although *Advanced Functional Materials* (AFM) could again celebrate its highest Impact Factor ever, 10.439.

Our IF grew by 7%, and it is now above 10 for the second time in the journal's history. And more or less immediately we started to notice the impact this new Impact Factor had. All of a sudden, the submissions to AFM grew by more than 20% compared to 2013—in the first half of the year we saw moderate growth of 5%. With a journal like AFM this means ca. 800 more manuscripts to handle annually. Isn't that great—more and more manuscripts to choose from and to publish? However, when we have a more detailed look, it seems that the growth is mainly due to higher submissions from regions where publication in high-impact journals is a key factor for progressing your scientific career. Unfortunately, quite many of these papers are unsuitable for the journal and the authors would have been better off submitting it to a journal with less harsh selection criteria. Furthermore, an increasing number of submissions also carry a certain history with them. They were previously submitted to *Adv. Materials*, *Adv. Energy Materials*, or *Angewandte Chemie* (some of them even to all three of them...), got rejected and now they try their luck a bit further down the "IF ladder". As we can only publish ca. 15% of all submissions we receive, you can imagine that a manuscript which received a negative assessment from our editorial colleagues before and then was resubmitted without any further explanation or revisions (or even against the editorial suggestion of resubmission to a different sister journal) will have a very minor chance of being published. Important to note that such behavior is nearly exclusively seen by authors from countries and institutions that make publications in high-IF journals more or less the only measure in assessing the quality of their scientist's work.

How do we manage this situation of increased popularity? First of all, I am happy to have two new Deputy Editors on board, who will help to further increase the editorial quality you will experience when submitting to AFM. Mary Farrell was Deputy Editor for our sister journal *Small* for several years, and still is Editor of our other sister journal *Particle and Particle Systems Characterization*. Yan Li strengthens our bonds to the Chinese materials science community, as he is based in Beijing, where he has been working on several journals of the *Advanced* family, including *Small*. Together with our other editorial colleagues from locations in the US, Germany and Beijing we will need to be even more strict on selecting papers that are going to appear in AFM. This said, we are happy to be able increase the amount of published papers and pages by ca. 10% in 2015—enabling us to carry on publishing the best Full Papers in materials science also next year. In addition, we will have to convince an increasing number of authors to transfer their papers from AFM to one of our many successful sister journals. This way we help them to publish in journals directly linked to the *Advanced Materials* brand and not losing time by resubmitting to new editorial systems at other places.

To make such transfers even more attractive in the future, our *Advanced* family will receive two new additions in 2015, with *Advanced Electronic Materials* and *Advanced Science*, our youngest siblings, being launched. They will be edited in the proven *Advanced* fashion, and while *Advanced Electronic Materials* aims to become the top interdisciplinary forum for peer-reviewed high-quality high-impact research in the fields of materials science, physics, and engineering of

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electronic and magnetic materials, *Advanced Science* is our new open access journal publishing research from all areas of science. More information can be found online at http://www.advelectronicmat.com and http://www.advancedscience.com, respectively. Make sure you direct your librarian to our complimentary access opt-in web page at wileyonlinelibrary.com/newjournals-optin for free access to *Advanced Electronic Materials* for your institution in 2015 and 2016.

The success and prosperity our journals have reaped in 2014 would not have been possible without the continued support of our Editorial Advisory Board members, our authors, reviewers, and readers. At *Advanced Functional Materials*, we are happy and thankful for the privilege and challenge of picking the best of the best for publication. I hope to see your next high-quality and high-impact manuscript amongst them!

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