

The Publishing Policy of the European Physical Journal A

The publishing of scientific work has seen dramatic changes in the last decade through the invention of the World Wide Web. One such change is the establishment of electronic servers providing extremely fast and very accessible dissemination of papers. However, the price we pay for this change is the disappearance of peer reviewing for publications on electronic servers. This has the consequence of inflating the already immense volume of published material and leads to a division of physics into smaller and smaller communities who communicate their unreviewed work via the Web. Therefore, the role of the traditional peer-reviewed journals remains, and has even increased as a consequence of the Web revolution.

Of course, the Web has changed the way the traditional journals operate, for instance the production of a publication with the computer allows for electronic submission and handling of all aspects of the editorial and production process. In this Editorial, we want to update the publishing policy of the European Physical Journal A “Hadrons and Nuclei” (EPJ A), now that the changes associated with the Web have stabilised. This summary emphasises the advantages of publishing in EPJ A and describes what EPJ A can offer.

Since a few years EPJ A comprises two parts: the traditional printed one called simply EPJ A and an “electronic only” part called EPJ A direct incorporating essentially all aspects of an electronic server plus the advantages of peer reviewing. The basic concepts of both parts are the same. However, EPJ A direct uses solely the medium “electronic storage” providing all possibilities of the printed one plus several additional ones as will be outlined below. At the present time the two parts coexist and it is left to the taste of the author to choose. It is our conviction that in the long run the electronic publishing will prevail.

The common qualities of EPJ A and EPJ A direct are:

1. Peer review directed by personally known editors of outstanding international scientific stature. This review process can significantly improve the readability and reliability of published articles. The editors can also act as neutral mediators to resolve the occasional strong differences of opinion between authors and referees. Also, although referees usually operate anonymously, they may choose to reveal their identities.
2. Fast processing of the papers with an average delay of 10 weeks for the refereeing and editorial work due to the loyal relation between the editors and the referees of EPJ A. The subsequent appearance in print depends largely on the delay of the proofreading by the authors. In addition, all articles of both, EPJ A and EPJ A direct, can be ac-

cessed at Springer’s Web server SpringerLink (URL: <http://www.springerlink.com/journals/epja>) within 10 days after submission of the final proofread paper to the publisher. From this moment on, all articles are citable using the Digital Object Identifier (DOI), an internationally agreed citation method uniquely identifying all published work worldwide and guaranteeing copyright protection for the article. This service is available via the “Online First” button of the EPJ A homepage.

3. All papers are published in the renowned compact and pleasant style of EPJ. A style file with convenient macros available to prepare papers with \LaTeX can be downloaded from the EPJ A web site. But also papers in other formats are accepted and transposed into the EPJ style. This style provides economically dense printing, an aspect which is more and more appreciated in view of the ever increasing prices of some competing scientific journals.

Due to the new medium of electronic storage EPJ A direct offers some features which are still unfamiliar to many. The number of pages is within reasonable limits no constraint anymore. This allows, among other advantages, the inclusion of great volumes of data until now frequently lost or the publishing of detailed, extensive calculations that make their verification and understanding easier. Also, the full possibilities of electronic media as e.g. CAD drawings, coloured or animated figures or even sound and short movies are possible.

The subfields of “Hadrons and Nuclei” are given in the section “Aims & Scope”, again accessible via the home page of EPJ A. The kind of articles EPJ A accepts are classified in the following subsections:

1. Letters
“Letters” will in the future replace the “Short Notes” in order to make the actual intention of this section more obvious. Manuscripts submitted as Letters should comprise important topical results deserving fast publication. They will get special attention of the responsible editor and priority in the production, without proofreading if the authors consent. Their length will be limited to four pages, normally including all figures and tables.
2. Papers
“Papers” are normally limited to about 20 pages. Exceeding this limit will need a special justification since we can now publish large volumes of experimental or calculational results in EPJ A direct with almost no limitations.

3. Topical Reports

“Topical Reports” are review articles on a topical subject. They can be submitted as normal papers on one’s own initiative, or are invited by the Editors.

The type of articles EPJ A direct accepts are the same as those of EPJ A plus the following:

4. Scientific Notes

“Scientific Notes” are papers on intermediate results of simulations, detectors, analyses, etc. intended to help the communication of the progress of lengthy experiments and simulations needing long preparations or running time. This should help particularly young physicists to produce refereed and citable publications during the long phase of the realization of a major set-up or investigation. We should like to point out that excellent thesis (master, laurea, diploma, doctoral, etc.) may qualify for this section. But also appropriately prepared accounts of more technical nature may be published here. In special cases notes in other languages than English may be accepted for this section.

5. Topical Volumes

The Proceedings of Conferences can be included in EPJ A direct as “Topical Volumes”, if they meet the

same quality standards as normal papers in EPJ A. They will be reviewed and revisions or rejection may be recommended. Depending on the negotiations with the publisher, the Conference Proceedings published in EPJ A direct can be accessed free of charge or can be ordered by the conference organisers in printed form. The printed volume may also contain conference contributions not accepted for publication in EPJ A direct.

All manuscripts for EPJ A and EPJ A direct have to be submitted following the procedure accessible via the EPJ A home page. The abstracts of all articles published in EPJ A direct appear also in EPJ A. This together with the fact that the very same editorial board handles both parts of EPJ A shows the close relationship between the traditional EPJ A and the electronic only EPJ A direct.

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