

JCS online - HighWire Press, free access and non-profit publishing

The online version of JCS will now be produced in collaboration with HighWire Press (HWP), the internet imprint of the Stanford University Libraries. By collaborating with HWP, we will be able to offer new benefits, such as seamless inter-journal linking with related titles, including *Science*, *Journal of Cell Biology*, *Molecular Biology of the Cell* and *Journal of Biological Chemistry*. This feature will grant readers free access to any article in the HWP archive that is cited in JCS - regardless of whether they have a subscription to the journal in which it appears. Collaboration with HWP also allows JCS to participate in initiatives such as the Signal Transduction Knowledge Environment (STKE), where relevant JCS content is now freely available. Moreover, we hope that, through HWP, JCS and the other participating non-profit journals will be able to use our combined might to provide the maximum possible free access to our content and pursue such worthy goals as free access for third-world countries.

In this respect, the arrival of JCS on the HWP archive comes at a time of much debate about the future of

scientific publishing, in particular the extent to which back issues should be made freely available and where they are archived. This is evident in recent letters to *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and *Science* in which Rich Roberts and colleagues have advocated 'free and unrestricted distribution of scientific literature 6 months after publication' and urged scientists to boycott journals that do not release content after six months and place it on PubMed Central (PMC) and similar online public resources (*Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 98, 381-382; *Science* 291, 2318-2319). We believe that such a sentiment is admirable given the domination of life-science publishing by commercial, for-profit publishers, and this is reflected in our new policy on free access to JCS back content. On January 1st of each year, the entire previous year's content will be made available free on the HWP archive. Thus material will become available without subscription between 3 days and 12 months after it is published - on average **less** than six months after publication (since more articles are published in the latter half of the year).

The second aspect of the Roberts et al. proposal is that free content be placed on PMC and similar online public resources. We favour locating our free back content in the HWP archive, where

we retain quality control over online JCS content, it is placed in the context of all of JCS (rather than only that material more than six months old) and it is safe from re-packaging by commercial, for-profit organizations that may come to threaten non-profit/society publishers. The HWP archive currently contains approx. 250,000 free articles, from some 250 journals, and is unmatched not only in size but also in the degree of searching, inter-journal linking and technical reliability it provides. Furthermore, we hope to collaborate with HWP to develop multi-location approaches to archiving JCS content and increase free access. Note that, since all JCS abstracts will continue to be accessible through Medline, the full-text of each JCS article will still be accessible from PubMed by a single mouse click.

It is our hope that these changes to JCS online will maximize the free availability of JCS content but ensure the continued survival of the journal and the charitable activities of our publisher, the Company of Biologists Ltd. With this new policy, we believe that we are adhering to the spirit of the proposal made by Roberts et al. We welcome feedback from readers, authors and referees.

Fiona Watt (Editor-in-Chief) and Richard Sever (Executive Editor)

Publisher's policy statement

The Company of Biologists Ltd, a not-for-profit organization, is run by a Board of Directors, largely of biologists, who give their time free in the interests of biology. It owns and publishes *Journal of Cell Science*, *Development* and *The Journal of Experimental Biology*.

•The electronic version of the preceding year of each journal will be placed free on the Web to all, as soon as the first issue of the new year is published.

Since more articles are published in the latter part of the year, this amounts to an average delay of less than six months before material is free to all.

•The full text of each journal from early 1992 to 2000 is already freely available on the Web (as PDF files).

•The present facilities will henceforth be hosted by HighWire Press.

The full text of each new article will be available as PDF and also HTML files with high-resolution illustrations.

•Free colour reproduction is offered by all three journals. This saves authors in the region of US\$1,000,000 per year.

•No page or handling charges are made.

•Token payments are made to every referee returning his/her report within two weeks. This encourages rapid reviewing.

•Librarians can copy journal articles free of charge if copies are to be used for educational purposes.

•5.5% of company turnover is spent on charitable activities. Examples: Travelling Fellowships, sponsorship of workshops, lectures, etc.

Professor Sir John B. Gurdon (Chairman)
The Company of Biologists Ltd