

# in the final analysis

*“When I’m on the couch, I usually have the TV on and my MacBook Air nearby. And sometimes, when my ADD is really kicking in, I have my iPad too. And my iPhone. And a magazine that I haven’t gotten to. And a book under the pillow to my left.”*

— Aubrey Plaza

Print or digital, we love to read, but the way that we read has changed a lot over the 37 years since I was hired by TMS to work on the *Journal of Metals*. A lot about *JOM* has changed as well . . . we had a name change, we migrated from analog to digital production, we designed a content-rich website for the journal and then modernized, re-modernized, and re-modernized that site, we ceased in-house publishing and partnered with Springer to put every issue of *JOM* within a few-clicks of every corner of the planet, and we went from monthly mailings of issues with an average of 72 pages to issues with an average of a few hundred pages. *JOM* has gone from a feature-rich newsstand magazine format to a predominantly scholarly journal format. This shift of focus over time is partially attributable to our partnership with Springer, to the growing necessity in the professional community to publish, to the hard work of countless volunteer editorial advisors to grow quality, and to the efforts of a seasoned staff editorial team.

*JOM* has evolved into a very desirable journal in which to publish. It brings both prestige and revenue to TMS, but I grant that the heavy shift to a focus on technical papers means that *JOM* may not have as much flavor, eccentricity, engageability, or *je ne sais quoi* as it used to. Volunteer leadership and staff see an opportunity to continue *JOM*’s evolution. So, starting with next month’s July 2021 issue, we will begin a six-month transition in publishing formats designed to help us retain the benefits of the current publication while providing members a “touch of TMS” via a revamped publication format and delivery model. We believe that members will find the changes both practical and engaging. There are two “scoops” to this story.

Scoop One: As of next month’s issue, we are no longer printing and mailing copies of *JOM* as a member benefit. Wow! That sounds like big news, but it is not. Really. Only about 23% of TMS members eligible to have *JOM* mailed to them are actually receiving print copies. The great majority of members are “opting out” of receiving the print mailing with the vast majority of accesses to *JOM* being either through SpringerLink access or through the TMS website. Why the diminishing interest in print? Lots of reasons, notably we are becoming a community of e-readers and downloaders. Compound that with *JOM*’s tendency to land in mailboxes with the heft and subtlety of a cement block. The average issue has about 40 technical papers. Printing and mailing these issues is neither reader nor carbon friendly. Objectively, papers are available earlier online than in print, are searchable as PDFs, and are easy to find via the SpringerLink search box. Subjectively, hundreds of pages of technical papers also mean that the 40 or so pages of compelling TMS member news and features contained within the “Magazine” section are easy to overlook. So, . . .

Scoop Two: While the full *JOM* (the “Magazine” and the “Journal”) will continue to be presented in its monthly entirety on SpringerLink, in January 2022 we will start print delivery to all professional members of *JOM*: The Magazine. This excerpt from the larger journal will continue to showcase Society news, activities, and members while providing features on how materials are advancing and improving our world. I believe that TMS members will find the *JOM*: The Magazine mailing to be properly sized and engagingly crafted. Most importantly, it will help keep members connected and involved with our unique TMS membership network and culture. We are much more than a series of impact factors and transactions.

Is printing and mailing *JOM*: The Magazine a retro move? I don’t think so. I sense that actress Aubrey Plaza has it right by characterizing herself, and us by extension, as media omnivores. There’s a place for *JOM* on the couch via your tablet, your laptop, your phone, and as a magazine sitting on your cushion waiting to be opened. There is no favored solution, only every solution.

# JOM

Volume 73

Number 6

June 2021



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