Hasta la vista hardcopy: APESM bids adieu to soft-bound paper issues and says ciao to on-line screen-read e-issues

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To the Editor,

The Board of the Australasian College of Physical Scientists and Engineers in Medicine along with the APESM editorial team and in consultation with Springer Nature (our publisher) have decided to cease producing the journal in hard copy and from 2019 produce the on-line form of the journal only. (Fact check: not quite true as College members can still opt-in to be sent the hard copy.)

Why? Well it is a lot cheaper than printing, packaging and posting hard copies. Articles get published on-line sooner; issues get delivered on-line on time; articles can be arranged into as many or as few issues per year as desired; the publication cost won't increase as issues get thicker or get published more frequently; colour figures don't cost any extra; doesn't take up any bookshelf space; issues don't mess up the desk by lying around on it; they can't get lost; they don't deteriorate or get damaged; electronically published articles with a DOI are available unchanged *for-EVER*; they are always arranged in the correct order; every subscriber always has the complete set of all back issues; articles can be transferred electronically from place A to place B quicker than you can snap your fingers; you can access your copy anywhere that has electricity, wi-fi and a device with a screen; you can read it in the dark; trees don't get chipped to make the paper; and subscribers kept asking us to. People prefer PDF. .pdf files can be rapidly searched for the required text. From 2010, when APESM joined Springer, our articles published in .pdf form and viewed on the screen have had embedded magic: click on the "blue number" to jump to the page where that figure or equation is displayed; to jump to the reference list from the in-text citation; click on the web-link from the reference to "go to" that article and read it; click to find the author's ORCID web page.

Arraigned against this irresistible tsunami of the benefits of electronic copy are the countering arguments of: losing the hard copy's advertising revenue; the need to remember a password and "but I like to hold the book while I read". The latter is a strong argument and I am a proponent of it. However we have to move with the times and we have decided that the time is from 2019.

Besides, everybody else is doing it. Scientists from all over the planet's terra firma are downloading APESM articles from the website in portable document format (.pdf files). In fact, the number of downloads, at 6 articles per hour in 2017 (1 every 10 min) have been growing exponentially ($R^2 = 0.93$). When you publish in APESM you will be sent an email inviting you to "Download Your e-Offprint (PDF file)". This is in lieu of ordering hardcopy "offprints" of your article to post (via letter) to whoever requested one (we used to do this last century). Now you can just email the pdf file to anyone who requests it. Better still, after your APESM article is published online, you will be sent a "Springer Nature Sharing" email with a shareable link such as: <http://rdcu.be/FqZR> [1]. Share or send this link to a colleague and when they download your article, the download tally metric for your article (available on the APESM website) will tick up by one. This may be useful for assessing the impact of your article.

Walking to the library to find a paper copy on the shelf and then to the photocopier to make another paper copy, has been replaced by standing at your online interface and reading the new issue alert (get your alerts emailed by registering your address here: <http://www.springer.com/biomed/journal/13246>). From your table of contents alert [so-called TOC alerts] simply click on the link to dispatch electrons to do the searching and fetching. And electrons outnumber trees by a vigintillion to one. Observing the reflected light from a printed journal page has also become obsolete. Instead, looking at the lumens emitted from the pixels of your LCD screen is the hip way of staying abreast of the literature.

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Sempliciano Why bother with compiling separate issues at all now that hard copies have been abandoned? Publish the article's date of acceptance and just number the article pages sequentially according to when the article was accepted? (Issues pages are already numbered sequentially,

a subsequent issue follows on the numbering of the previous one - Ed.)

Devil's avocado An intriguing thought! However, using issues allows the grouping of articles into categories of scientific paper, technical paper etc. which allows articles on a similar topic to be aggregated. Fits the status quo of announcing a new batch of articles at regular intervals via table of contents alert. Habit: Libraries used to bind all the issues of a volume into one bound book. Easier (?) to find an article if articles are aggregated into designated sections.

Sempliciano Will this move improve our Impact Factor to above even the staggeringly large number of this year?

Devil's avocado Don't get me started on the ***ck*** Impact Factor [2]....

Note: Words from six languages have been used in this piece. If you can name the languages, the editor will post out to you any two hard copies of back issue that you desire (limited time, while stocks last, ex stock only, conditions apply, residents of South Australia are eligible to get the two hard copies even without entering the competition, each email entry is free but costs may be higher from mobile phones).

References

1. Bibbo G (2017) Shielding of medical imaging X-ray facilities: a simple and practical method. *Australas Phys Eng Sci Med* 40(4):925–930
2. Caon M (2017) Gaming the impact factor: where who cites what, whom and when. *Australas Phys Eng Sci Med* 40(2): 273–276. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13246-017-0547-1>. <http://rdcu.be/qFgI>