

New happenings at *Nature Methods*

It's been a busy start to 2022 in the editorial offices of *Nature Methods*. We summarize several developments here: new content types, editorial initiatives, travel and outreach, and recent Focus issues.

New content types

This month we are delighted to introduce a new column, **Lab & Life**, written by our resident journalist Vivien Marx. [This month's column](#) gives readers a snapshot of what life is currently like working as a scientist in Ukraine under war conditions. Each month will feature a different theme, highlighting how scientists from diverse fields and at different career stages tackle a particular task or manage personal or societal challenges as they navigate their working lives. Just as there is joy and pain in developing and using methods to pursue a scientific question of interest, this column will offer an open-minded, sometimes joyous, sometimes painful view of scientists' life experiences around the world. Reading about these experiences will perhaps inspire and enrich the lives of other scientists.

Following in the footsteps of other Nature Portfolio journals, we have recently published our first **Research Briefings**, and several are included in this month's issue. This new format provides our authors the opportunity to write a brief, general summary highlighting the main points of their *Nature Methods* research paper: the new methodological development, comparative analysis or resource; the motivation for and potential implications of the work; and a glimpse into the work behind the paper. The handling editor and expert reviewers also provide statements giving their perspectives on the paper. We hope that busy scientists will find this easily digestible format to be a useful tool for keeping up with the literature.

A few months ago we [announced](#) that we are now publishing comparative analyses of methods or tools as **Registered Reports**, an article type that provides authors with expert peer feedback on a proposed study and a potential 'accepted-in-principle' editorial decision, before any data collection. We have been overwhelmed by the interest from authors and the positive response from the broader scientific community. We announced our first accepted-in-principle Stage 1 Registered Report back in February, describing a quantitative assessment of near-infrared fluorescent proteins. Now, we are happy to announce our second accepted-in-principle

Stage 1 report, representing a broad performance comparison of tools for transcript identification and quantification from long-read sequencing data, from a competition organized by the [LRGASP Consortium](#). These proposals are publicly accessible via our [Figshare](#) site.

Editorial initiatives

We recently updated our [Aims & Scope page](#), a process that was long overdue, to reflect the current areas of method and tool developments that we are particularly interested in publishing. We encourage potential authors to familiarize themselves with our scope and areas of interest; we are always happy to take [presubmission inquiries](#) from authors who are unsure whether the topic of their manuscript will fit our journal's scope.

Though we are known as a methods journal, we do not publish only methods development papers. In addition to Articles, Brief Communications, Analyses and Registered Reports, we publish **Resource** papers. Though historically we haven't published large numbers of Resources, we welcome such submissions. Resources may describe computational platforms such as [MISpheroID](#), collections of experimental constructs such as genetic manipulation [tools for marine protists](#), or high-value and large-scale datasets such as [LIVECell](#) or a pan-tissue [DNA methylation atlas](#). We encourage authors with questions about whether their study might be appropriate for this format to reach out to the editors with presubmission inquiries.

An editorial goal we hold near and dear is increasing the [transparency](#) of the editorial and peer review process. Thus, along with several other Nature Portfolio journals, we are proud to offer our authors '[transparent peer review](#)', which means that reviewer reports and editorial decision letters are published as a supplementary file to the paper, called the 'peer review file'. We strongly believe that this practice is one way that journals can support open science. Though we encourage all authors to consider this option, it is not mandatory. Reviewers, however, are notified when they are invited to review a paper that they must agree to having their comments potentially

published with the paper; if a reviewer feels uncomfortable with this process then they should decline to review. Reviewers may choose to reveal their identities or remain anonymous.

Travel and outreach

Following two years of largely working virtually due to COVID-19, we are all looking forward to getting out into our scientific communities once again via travel to conferences and various institutes. Of course, different parts of the world are affected differently by COVID-19 at any given time, and so we expect that travel for our international team will continue to be disrupted over the course of 2022. We plan to attend a mix of in-person and virtual conferences this year. We also welcome opportunities to virtually travel to visit institutes all over the world and interact with researchers one-on-one via [video chat](#).

One particularly exciting aspect of being an editor is that we also have the opportunity to help organize scientific conferences via our Nature Conferences program. This year, Chief Editor Allison Doerr is excited to be part of the cross-journal team of editors developing the [Frontiers in Electron Microscopy for Physical and Life Sciences](#) conference, to be held in person at Princeton University in late September.

Focus issues

Finally, we are keeping busy developing special Focus issues, which allow us to shine a spotlight on diverse research techniques and areas that we find particularly timely, important and in need of more methods development. Beginning in January this year, we featured protein structure prediction as our [Method of the Year 2021](#). Last month we featured [methods that have been instrumental for studying COVID-19](#). All of our Focus issues (and more) may be found on our [Collections](#) site. We are excited to share a few more special Focus issues with you before the close of 2022, so stay tuned! □

Published online: 11 May 2022
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41592-022-01499-y>