Dear Colleague,

I write to you once again with news of developments at Nature Publishing Group (NPG). I hope you agree we are living in a defining period in publishing history. The rate of change within the information community continues to accelerate. Publishing and broadcasting technology is becoming more accessible to a much broader range of users. Blogs and podcasts now enable any individual to reach a global audience. Delivering real value in such times is challenging. Web 2.0 is about inclusion, participation and self-expression. User behaviour is changing rapidly; most notably, users of online information are becoming ever more mobile.

Mobile access to e-mail and the internet is now the norm. The phone, the laptop, the TV, and the personal stereo are all converging in your pocket. The future is interactive education, research and entertainment on the move. With such a paradigm shift, many print scholarly journals, and the shelves on which they are stored, will become relics from the past. Students today may never read a journal in print or search the stacks of a research library. Accordingly, both publishers and libraries are rethinking the publications and services they provide.

It is no coincidence that the debate about access to the scholarly literature continues while these larger cultural changes are occurring around us. With many research funders mandating self-archiving, and increasing numbers of universities requesting copyright to facilitate the development of institutional repositories, the balance of rights has shifted away from publishers, with a clear focus on the self-archiving of publicly funded research.

In this environment, NPG remains committed to innovation, internationalism, experimentation and value. Products such as the award winning Signaling Gateway and Connotea have set a high standard. New database services such as the Cell Migration Gateway, the Neuroscience Gateway, and Nature Protocols all provide relevant, high-quality content and extensive community participation. The Nature Podcast, launched in the autumn of 2005, has been a spectacular success, with up to 40,000 downloads per week. Blogs have allowed us to offer more informal, up-to-the-minute reports and commentary. Community sites, such as Nature Network Boston, have allowed us to focus locally, while we communicate with an evermore global audience. In recognition of the importance of emerging markets, we have opened new offices in India and South America, and expanded our Japanese office and our presence in China. And our fulfilment services are now organised to operate in a truly global market place.
As you would expect, our new journals are conceived primarily as web publications. They continue to perform well in the Thomson ISI Journal Citation Reports (JCR), delivering huge impact for authors. *Nature Materials* saw an increase of more than two points in its impact factor, to 15.941, and *Nature Reviews Microbiology* increased nearly five points to 13.989. Those titles are already numbers one and two in their respective JCR subject categories. *Nature Methods* has a first impact factor of 6.741, much higher than any similar titles. Other NPG journals have also shown significant increases, including *Bone Marrow Transplantation*, *European Journal of Human Genetics*, *Eye*, *International Journal of Obesity* and *Molecular Psychiatry*.

In the past year, NPG has made a definitive move into the physical sciences, following the success of *Nature Materials*. *Nature Physics* was launched in October 2005, and is performing well. Top quality papers are being submitted in large numbers, and the journal has been quickly adopted by the physics community. For 2007, we are launching *Nature Photonics* and *Nature Nanotechnology*. The titles reflect the importance of these growing areas of research and development, and editors are based in Japan, as so much of the relevant research and industry is in Asia. The combination of a global reach, while still reflecting local research strengths and priorities, embodies our approach.

Despite all the technological and cultural change, journal pricing has remained a contentious issue. The situation has been complicated by combined print and online bundles, consortia, interlibrary loan, perpetual access, and preservation issues. We have now gained valuable experience, while protecting the financial stability of the group. Our analysis suggests that NPG has consistently offered great value in terms of price per article download. We now offer NPG-owned publications separately as print subscriptions or site licenses for web access. We have established a fair post-cancellation access policy, and this year we will be publishing site license prices for the first time on the Librarian Gateway (www.nature.com/libraries). Henceforth, we envision a period of more stable site license pricing. For licenses commencing in 2007, the increases on 2006 list prices will be in the range of 5-10%.

NPG is now preparing for a new era of publishing. The long expected transition of print to electronic distribution is near complete. But now the wealth of opportunities offered by the web is becoming clear. Of course, some print magazines, including *Nature*, will continue to prosper. But scholarly communication is now primarily online, and we have only just begun to glimpse the potential.

Yours sincerely

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