

A Publisher with an Open Heart

Tim Hunt and O. Claire Moulton

It's always exciting launching a new journal, and it's even better when you feel that it can genuinely benefit the community. That's how we feel about the launch of *Biology Open* (BiO).

Discussions among the Directors of The Company of Biologists have focused in recent years on the 'pain to publish' experienced by authors – and from these discussions grew the idea of a journal that could lessen that pain. So last year, the Company conducted a survey of authors in the communities associated with its three established journals: *Development*, *Journal of Cell Science* and *The Journal of Experimental Biology*. Not only did the results confirm the challenges faced by authors in finding a home for their papers, but they also told us what our new journal would need to offer to make a difference.

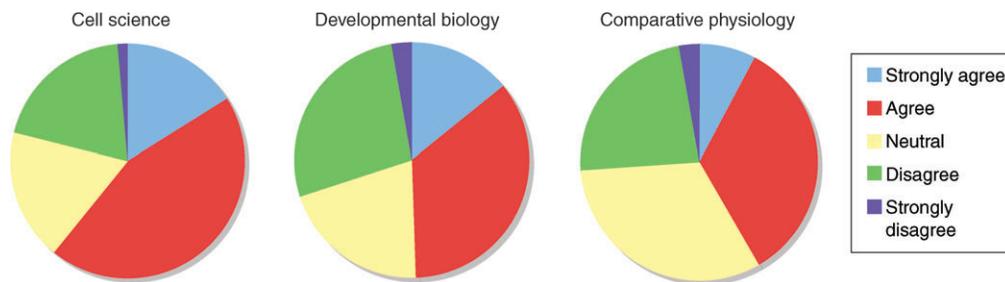


Fig. 1. Authors in my field face significant challenges finding a home for their papers:

The new journal will publish good quality, sound papers that have been accepted on the basis that they are technically sound and their conclusions are supported by the data shown – rather than on the perceived importance of the findings. We believe this will help the author community by providing a welcoming home for their papers and helping them avoid additional rounds of submission and review.

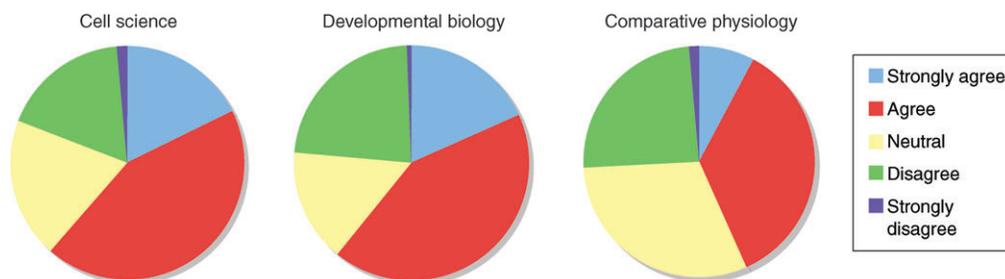


Fig. 2. The delays involved in reformatting and resubmitting a paper rejected by one journal is harmful to its eventual publication and impact:

Authors of papers rejected following consideration by one of the Company's other journals will be offered the option of transferring their papers to *Biology Open*. In this case, a simple transfer is managed by the Company and no reformatting of the paper is required.

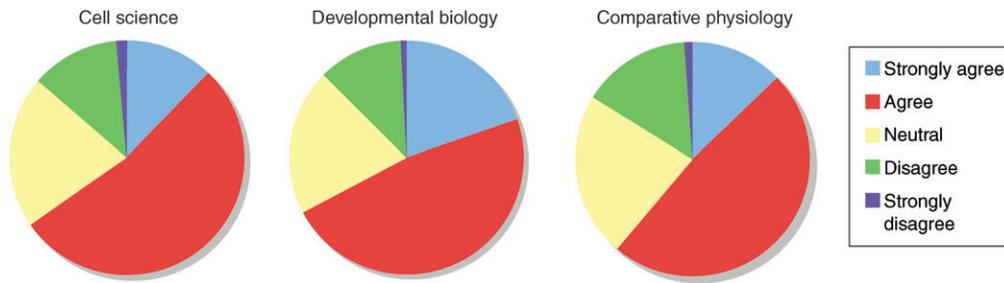


Fig. 3. Following rejection from one publication, the speed with which my paper can be reviewed and published by a second title has a major influence on where I send it next:

Biology Open will offer a rapid publication decision, aiming at 10 days from receipt to decision. The journal is presenting its current average decision times online so that authors can see that the journal is serious about this commitment.

Once accepted, papers follow a rapid route to online publication in both full text and enhanced PDF format.

A not-for-profit publisher with a strong history

Established in 1925 through the inspiration of G.P. Bidder, The Company of Biologists initially focused on *The British Journal of Experimental Biology* (now simply *The Journal of Experimental Biology*). Such was its success that, in 1946, the *Quarterly Journal of Microscopical Science* was gifted to the Company, and was later relaunched as *Journal of Cell Science*. In 1953, the Company accepted the gift of a third journal, the *Journal of Embryology and Experimental Morphology*, and this was relaunched in 1987 as *Development*.

More recently, the Company launched *Disease Models & Mechanisms*, aspiring to promote interactions between basic researchers, translational researchers and clinicians. Now we are delighted to be launching a new type of journal in *Biology Open* (BiO) that aims to support authors and reviewers as well as providing Open Access for readers.

Quality journals with author- and reader-friendly policies

The Company of Biologists is a not-for-profit publisher and has a strong tradition of publishing journals with author- and reader-friendly policies. Our established journals – *Development*, *Journal of Cell Science* and *The Journal of Experimental Biology* – have no page or colour charges and were early adopters of the principle that authors should retain copyright in their own work. Journal content is freely available (with no subscription access barrier) from only 6 months after publication, and authors wanting immediate free access for their papers can select our Open Access option. The journals are also part of the United Nation's HINARI and OARE initiatives, making online content freely available to readers in developing countries.

Our two newer journals – *Disease Models & Mechanisms* and now *Biology Open* – are published with a full Open Access model (using a Creative Commons licence), meaning that authors are asked to pay a publication fee. All articles are made freely available immediately upon publication and all articles will be deposited into PubMed Central for immediate release.

The Company's Directors – unpaid trustees who are active scientists, librarians and information scientists – are actively involved in shaping publishing policies and ensuring that we continue to provide a valuable and worthwhile service to the international biology community. So, we truly are a Company 'run by biologists, for biologists'.

We are proud to see *Biology Open* joining our stable of journals. The Company's objectives cover all branches of biology and our new journal will support authors, reviewers and readers working in all areas of the biological sciences.

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Charitable activities

The Company of Biologists is a registered UK charity whose objectives are the advancement and promotion of research in all branches of biology. Through the successful running of its journals and a careful policy of investment, the Company is able to donate considerable funds towards the wider support of the research community. The Company has donated in excess of £6.5 million to charitable works.

The Company's charitable support includes:

- Regular funding for three societies: British Society of Cell Biology (BSCB), British Society of Developmental Biology (BSDB) and Society of Experimental Biology (SEB). Part of the funding is used to support Company of Biologists travel grants managed by the three societies for young scientists attending meetings.
- Travelling Fellowships from many of our journals to support young scientists' collaborative visits to other research laboratories.
- Grants for scientific meetings, including workshops and summer schools, and often funding plenary or keynote speakers.
- Grants for young scientists, including selected educational initiatives and prizes for conference presentations by young scientists.
- Funding for special projects, such as those that educate and excite the public about biology.

For more information on our charitable activities or to apply for funding, please see our website at www.biologists.com.

The Company of Biologists Workshops

True to the company's dedication to intercommunity support, this series of three-day workshops held in informal retreat surroundings is designed to inspire innovation and collaborations between scientists. Launched 2010, the Workshops provide leading experts and students from a diverse range of scientific backgrounds with a stimulating environment for the cross fertilization of interdisciplinary ideas.

Upcoming Workshops include: New Technologies and Applications for Genome Engineering (March 2012); Epigenetic Memory (June 2012); and Imaging in Cell Biology (Oct 2012).

For more details or to propose a future Workshop theme, please see our website at workshops.biologists.com.

Supporting our new journal, *Biology Open*

Biology Open is a journal for the whole of the biological community. We thank you for your support of the new journal as authors, reviewers and/or readers. We hope that it really will make a difference to the publishing experience of authors, reduce the burden of repetitive review and provide a freely accessible collection of good quality, sound articles.

Tim Hunt (Chair, Company of Biologists)
O. Claire Moulton (Publisher)

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The Company seal features two Egyptian symbols that also appear in the Company's more modern logo. The Ankh is well-known as the Egyptian hieroglyph for life – an appropriate symbol for an organisation dedicated to supporting the life sciences. The feather represents the goddess Maat, who weighed souls against her feather to determine whether they would reach the paradise of the afterlife. The feather is generally seen as the symbol for truth, balance and order.