

Pythagoras goes Open Access at www.pythagoras.org.za

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The publication of this issue of *Pythagoras* finally realises the goals I envisaged for *Pythagoras* in my 2008 editorial, titled "Pythagoras is going places ..." (Olivier, 2008): *Pythagoras* is now formally an Open Access journal, freely accessible online for anyone to read, download and distribute.

What I anticipated then was a do-it-yourself job where we would upload *Pythagoras* articles on our own do-it-yourself website (the so-called 'green route'), because the increased costs of outsourcing the production of *Pythagoras* to a professional publishing house (the so called 'golden route') (Harnard et al., 2008) would make it impossible for AMESA (Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa) to continue offering print-issues of *Pythagoras* as a 'free' benefit to members. However, we soon realised that *real* open access was only really possible with a professional publisher. So we went out and found the money and the publisher – *Pythagoras* is now formally published by African Online Scientific Information Systems (AOSIS) OpenJournals Publishing, and the print edition is still free to members.

If you are reading the print-issue, I hope that you will agree that it looks much more professional than before! If you are reading this online, I trust that you appreciate the many other benefits of the website (searching, indexing, etc.). And if you are an author, I trust that you will soon reap the benefits of being read more widely and cited more often.

The golden route to Open Access

The primary purpose of *Pythagoras* as an AMESA research journal is as a service to the scholarly community to support them to get their research published and available to the wide community.

Merely posting an article on the Internet does not mean that many people are going to find it and read it. However, by publishing through the AOSIS OpenJournals platform, articles in *Pythagoras* become much more *discoverable*, because the publisher has links to Google Scholar, Crossref, Directory of Open Access Journals, et cetera. That means that when somebody searches for a key word, the probability that relevant Pythagoras articles are listed and accessed is now much higher.

The golden route Open Access model therefore first and foremost means better support for our authors, making their research universally accessible and discoverable, so their work is available to a larger audience, more people can read their work, so they can make a bigger impact in the research community, Africa and internationally, and they may be cited more often.

Another benefit of the golden route is that only publishers may assign a so-called *digital object identifier* (DOI) to each article. The DOI for a document is permanent, whilst a uniform research locator (URL) may not be, therefore referring to an online document by its DOI provides more stable linking than simply referring to it by its URL.

Using the 'rolling publication' model, an article is published online the moment it is finished, before it is later compiled with other articles into an issue and printed. It means that one's research is made available more quickly.

Furthermore, the whole submission-review-edit-publish cycle is handled online through a manuscript management system and is supported by professional AOSIS administrative staff. This frees the editor to concentrate on his academic role of engaging with authors and reviewers about the substance of submitted manuscripts. This is the way it should be!

Open Access is *not* free

Open Access means that it is free to the reader. Authors retain copyright through a Creative Commons Attribution License, so there are no legal barriers. However, golden route Open Access is not free to publish, free to maintain or free to print! This change in publishing model has serious

financial implications for AMESA. AMESA is carrying the full costs in 2011, but will introduce a publishing fee in 2012, where the authors (meaning their institutions) will pay 50% of the publishing costs. We believe such a business model will make our Open Access publishing economically feasible and robust.

Forward

It has been a long and arduous road from deciding to go Open Access, to researching different options, negotiating a contract, securing funding, developing the website, getting to know the manuscript management system, supporting authors and reviewers to handle the manuscript management system, et cetera. But it has been worthwhile! I would like to thank the AMESA Council and the *Pythagoras* Editorial Board for their support in following this route.

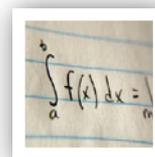
Now that we have established a sound infra-structure for *Pythagoras*, we can address other means of support, that is, to support our authors in the writing process. Our editorial team and reviewers are already playing an important role in helping authors to improve their manuscripts to get it publishable. We have now started a project in terms of supporting authors and reviewers through writing workshops at AMESA congresses, as well as helping authors and reviewers with different aspects of the writing and reviewing process.

I believe that through its support for authors and reviewers, *Pythagoras* can play a role in the professional development of our mathematics education community, and I look forward to developing this role in the next few years.

References

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