

eActa

Our main aim in publishing *Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica* is to communicate good orthopedic research. To optimize this aim, *Acta's* Editorial Board and our publisher, Taylor and Francis, have decided to publish *Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica* also electronically, starting this year. Manuscripts in final form will be made immediately available to the authors on our homepage (<http://home.pi.se/actaorthopscand/>). A few weeks before printing the paper edition, the articles will also be made electronically available to all subscribers via the publisher's platform. However, this is service solely to our 5,000 subscribers. To make *Acta* accessible to an even wider audience, the electronic edition will be free to everybody via PubMed (<http://www4.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed/>) 6 months after publication of the printed edition. This experiment will continue for 2 years, but we really hope to reduce or entirely avoid this delay so that eActa will become available free on the web to all those interested in our journal at the time that the printed version is published. We now plan to let developing countries have immediate access to the electronic edition of *Acta* (see Godlee F et al. Global information flow. *BMJ* 2000; 321: 776–7).

Unrestricted web access to scientific journals is important not only to readers, but also in the interest of the authors who hope for “research impact”—i.e., attention from other researchers. It is therefore important for authors to know that scientific articles have a greater impact and will be cited more often if they are immediately free on the web (see Harnad, *Nature* 2001; 410: 1024–5).

Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica is a non-profit journal owned by the Nordic Orthopedic Federation; it is the official publication of the national orthopedic associations in Scandinavia and The Netherlands. Although most editorial and refereeing work is done free of charge, *Acta* is dependent on revenues from subscribers to cover the costs of secretarial work, production and distribution. Nobody knows whether the availability of scientific journals free on the web will result in the loss of many previous subscribers. If so, the loss of income must be compensated. One way to do this is by charging a fee per printed page as many journals already do. However, authors already invest a considerable amount of money in reading and publication; readers/authors pay for subscriptions, printing of color illustrations (not in *Acta!*) and reprints. These costs can amount to 10% of an institution's research budget, but will be reduced by the provision of free electronic editions.

There is a lively debate on the future of scientific journals—e.g., on the above-mentioned issues, see *Nature* (www.nature.com/nature/debates/e-access/) and Public Library of Science (www.publiclibraryofscience.org).

We are confident about the electronic future of *Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica* and are proud to present *Acta* free on the web as one of the first major orthopedic journals.

The Editors