

Continued publishing model: An author and journal perspective

Traditionally, the journals followed a regular volume wise publishing model in which journals accumulated the accepted papers and published them in the forthcoming issues. In such scenarios, authors have to wait to get the published copy of their article even after the paper is accepted. The waiting period may vary depending upon the frequency of issues a journal releases in a year. For example, if a journal releases four issues in a year, the author has to wait up to three months; and if a journal releases a single issue in a year, the author has to wait for a year to get the published copy of their research paper. This model was implemented because, in earlier times, when the internet was not available, journals had to release the printed issue. It is then not possible to follow a continuous publishing model.

In the continued publishing model, the journal uploads the final print of the manuscript online as soon as it is accepted for publication. In the continued publishing model, the author did not have to wait until after his paper was accepted. After the paper has been accepted by the journal for publication, the journal sends the final proof to the authors. After the authors finalize the proof, the paper is uploaded immediately on the journal website within a few hours or days. With technological advancements, almost every journal now becomes online. There are also journals that are exclusively online only and do not release any printed issues.

Publishing online offers several advantages, including wide reach, low financial cost, and ease of maintenance. Printed journals have limited reach, while online articles have a worldwide reach. A high reach of articles leads to high citations, which improves the impact factor of the journal. Printing of papers offers a high financial liability, and journals have to charge a high publication fee to authors. The online model leads to cost-cutting for both journals and authors. Moreover, it is easy to maintain the current issues, archives, and other supporting information on an online platform. Advanced web-based applications made the submission, reviewing, and publication process easy.

If we look at the author's perspective, it seems unfair to make the author wait for their published copy after the paper is accepted for publication. Sometimes information needs to be spread quickly, as in times of covid pandemic. At the time of covid, every journal accelerated the review and publishing process of covid specific papers. In such a scenario, only the continued publishing model is successful. Also, certain epidemiological data needs to be published at a fast pace as, with the passing of time; it loses its relevance.

If we take the perspective of a journal, there are many hurdles in implementing the continued publishing model. A journal must keep the copy-editing team ready for a full year in case it wants to go for a continued publishing model. Sometimes the flow of papers is not regular in all months, so some issues may get significant papers while others do not. There are also regulations that have to be followed towards adopting a continued publishing model. The end product of the whole process is the published paper which is important for both authors and journals. Authors may lose interest in journals if it takes too much time to publish the paper after acceptance. Authors always have concerns that someone else will publish the paper on the same topic, which will reduce the relevance of their paper. Long waits for publishing also harm the journal as journals are going to lose many good research papers due to a lack of interest in authors and potential citations in the waiting time.

To mark a place in the publishing industry, it is necessary for a journal to adopt a continued publishing model. By doing so, both the author and the journal will be mutually benefited. An author will be happy as their paper is published soon after acceptance, and a journal will get more good papers and high citations.

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