

New journal “Nature ONE” launched today

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It’s very unusual for me to post two blog posts in a single day, and even more so when both posts are based on press releases by the same organization. But this is important news for everybody interested in scholarly publishing.

In a press release earlier today, the Nature Publishing Group announced a new journal that

- is covering biology, chemistry, earth sciences and physics,
- is an open access journal, giving the authors the choice of two Creative Commons non-commercial licenses,
- will publish all papers that are judged to be technically valid and original, and
- uses article-level metrics to put the emphasis on the individual article rather than the journal as a whole.

The new journal is called Scientific Reports, and obviously resembles PLoS ONE in many ways, down to the article-processing charges which are \$1350 for both journals (but will go up to \$1700 for Scientific Reports in 2012). The journal is open for submissions and will publish the first papers this summer. With Nature, Nature Communications (also see my interview with Chief Editor Lesley Anson) and Scientific Reports the Nature Publishing Group now publishes three journals covering all areas of the natural sciences.

The launch of Scientific Reports is a good sign that PLoS ONE is doing something right. It will be interesting to watch whether the two journals will only be competitive – they are aiming for the same manuscript submissions – or will also collaborate on projects such as article-level metrics.

“Scholarly communication has always, will always, and should always be served by a mix of models.”

In another press release today, David Hoole explains the position of the Nature Publishing Group on open access publishing. He argues that journals such as Nature with a 90% rejection rates are better served by a subscription model, and that he feels that journal submission fees (as discussed in a recent report) are not an attractive option. The press release also mentions that 40% of the content of the hybrid journal Nature Communications is currently open access.

Although I can follow the arguments made in the press release, I disagree that we need different “tiers” of journals. The Scientific Reports FAQ makes it clear that the journal doesn’t expect authors to submit their best works, but rather papers that require “speed of publication”, promise “no conceptual advance in the field” and show “negative results”. Let’s see how authors will respond to this and whether it will be possible 10 years from now to distinguish papers published in Nature, Nature Communications and Scientific Reports.