

## **Springer Nature to lower journal prices, a prerequisite for agreement with the consortium.**

After 21 months of negotiations, the consortium Couperin.org and the publisher Springer Nature have reached an agreement. The negotiators from the consortium were tasked to obtain an offer that would take into account Article Processing Charges paid by each establishment, in an effort to move away from the kind of double payment measures that have come to characterize hybrid reviews. Moreover, the worldwide increase in the number of open-access articles published, in exchange for the payment of publication costs, provides further justification for the consortium's request to lower tariffs.

Over the last few months, member establishments of the consortium were consulted regularly and overwhelmingly rejected successive proposals from the publisher, who didn't take adequate account of the case for lowering tariffs. Over the full course of the negotiations, Springer Nature expressed their wish to keep access to journals open, and strove to find common ground.

Drawn up at the end of September, the publisher's final offer pertains to the contents of 1121 journals, a slightly smaller scope than that prescribed by the prior agreement, due to the fact that non-significant papers for French research have been withdrawn from the offer. Proprietorship of all papers by all members, as well as the agreement to transfer the content to the national platform PANIST has been renewed. The agreement therefore spells out a long-term acquisition, though the term generally used is 'subscription'. This evolution in the system of tariffs entails several options, all of which revolve around lowering tariffs: one option being a 6.5% reduction in 2018, followed by a rise of 0.5% and 0.75% in 2019 and 2020, another option calling for a progressive reduction over 3 years of 2.5%, 3% and 3.5%. Specific measures have been drawn up for those establishments who choose not to renew their subscription from 2019 onwards.

The 3-year agreement will translate – at its conclusion – into a rate reduction of 5.33% for Option 1 and 8.74% for Option 2. This is a reduction, compared with a 3-year constant cost offer, of 5.95% and 5.55% for Options 1 and 2 respectively.

As with the collection of resources negotiated, the member establishments of the consortium are free to choose one of the options or to opt out of renewing their subscription. On 10 October, nearly 80 establishments renewed their subscriptions, choosing one of the options proposed. Ten or so chose not to do this, and thirty or so have yet to make their final decision.

This agreement inaugurates an era of decline in costs and constitutes a stage which will have to go hand in hand with reflection among higher learning and research institutions, on the one hand, and between the consortium and the publisher, on the other, to create models for the diffusion of scientific information which take into account both the demands of open science and the agreement of establishments to pay to gain access to the content produced by researchers and commercialized by publishers. The veritable editorial services provided must be charged at a fair rate. Resources economized through price reduction or unsubscription should – in full or in part, depending on the choice of the establishments – be reinvested in the development of tools for open science, including the national fund for open science announced by the minister, Frédérique Vidal, on 4 July.

Paris, 16 October 2018.

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