NAR launches new Advance Access publication model

With issue 14, *Nucleic Acids Research* launches a new rapid ‘online publication ahead of print’ model which we refer to as ‘Advance Access’. Once papers have been copyedited, typeset and corrected, they will be published online on the journal’s Advance Access page, prior to pagination and appearance in an issue of the journal. This will enable us to offer authors rapid publication online three weeks after acceptance just as we do at present, with papers then appearing in an issue of the journal shortly afterwards. However, Advance Access will also bring greater flexibility for authors and readers than the previous continuous publication model. For example, it will enable us to publish individual papers for special issues, including the Web Server and Database issues, online as soon as they are ready, whereas at present these papers cannot be made available online (and therefore cannot be read or cited) until the entire issue of which they are part is ready for publication. Based on feedback from users, we will also provide readers with the option of viewing Advance Access articles either by date published (most recent first) or by subject category.

In contrast to the continuous publication model, the launch of Advance Access means that, for the short time before their publication in an issue, papers will be citable by a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) rather than page numbers. Across the publishing community, an automatically generated DOI is already attached to each article once it is accepted for publication, providing both a unique means of identification and a persistent link to its location on the internet. Indeed DOIs already appear on every version of an *NAR* article, including the final versions in print and online, and reprints. Importantly an article’s DOI remains the same even if different versions of recognisably the same article appear successively. The DOI will always point to the latest version of the article; previous versions will be available via the latest version, along with information about how the versions differ. The online version of *NAR* is highly used and is increasingly considered the definitive version of the journal. Currently on average the journal web site attracts over 460,000 full-text downloads per month. In an online world we foresee traditional print page numbers becoming increasingly less relevant, while other means of identifying and citing articles, such as the DOI, become the norm. Of course, while we continue to publish a print version of the journal, we will also paginate papers when compiling them for an issue. At this time, a significant number of libraries still subscribe to the print version of *NAR* and while there remains a desire within the community for a printed version of the journal to be available, we want to continue to provide this option.

To clarify, papers published in *NAR* Advance Access will be citable using the DOI, e.g.

Jovanovic, M. and Dynan, W.S. (2006). Terminal DNA structure and ATP influence binding parameters of the DNA-dependent protein kinase at an early step prior to DNA synapsis. *Nucleic Acids Res.*, doi:10.1093/nar/gkj504.

The same paper when published in an issue can be cited as follows:

Jovanovic, M. and Dynan, W.S. (2006). Terminal DNA structure and ATP influence binding parameters of the DNA-dependent protein kinase at an early step prior to DNA synapsis. *Nucleic Acids Res.*, **34**, 1112–1120.

The adoption of Advance Access is the latest development made by *NAR* with the aim of better serving our authors and readers. We are proud of *NAR*’s history of experimenting with new models and functionality. For example, in 1999 we launched an innovative online-only Methods section which today has high impact and is popular with authors. More recently, experimentation with the Database and Web Server issues in 2004 led us to adopt a full open access model in 2005. Many of our readers and authors are aware that feedback from the journal’s community has been as vital as our experimentation in informing how *NAR* moves forward. We encourage all of you to contact us, with comments on any aspect of the journal, including the new Advance Access model, our open access initiative, or with suggestions for online functionality that you would find useful. As you and your colleagues have done in the past, tell us how you use the journal, and how it could better serve your needs, and we will take these into account as we plan *NAR*’s path for the future.

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