

*Press release approved by the Executive Committee of the Florida Entomological Society,
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SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY EXPERIMENTS WITH IMMEDIATE FREE WEB ACCESS TO ALL ARTICLES IN ITS JOURNAL

The Florida Entomological Society (FES) has published its refereed journal, *Florida Entomologist* (*An International Journal for the Americas*), since 1917. It continues to publish its journal in paper, but in 1994, as an experiment, it began making the entire journal immediately and freely accessible on the Internet. It did this by making Portable Document Format (PDF) files of all articles and posting the files on a Gopher server. [This was before browsers made the World Wide Web popular.] The PDF files could then be downloaded from the Internet with (free) Gopher client software. The downloaded PDF files were viewed or printed with the aid of the (free) Adobe Acrobat reader. Copies of articles printed from their PDF files were equivalent to high-quality photocopies of the original article.

Because authors and members liked the new service and its costs were minimal, FES continued its policy of giving immediate free Web access to all articles in its journal.

In 1995 it made its PDF files accessible to World Wide Web browsers.

In 1996, to facilitate indexing and searching, it started posting articles in minimal HTML format as well as in PDF.

In 1997 it started selling "InfoLinks" to authors who wanted additional, unlimited data or illustrations linked to the online listing of their articles.

In 1999 it completed its "back-issue project" by making all articles ever published in *Florida Entomologist* (1917 to date) freely Web-accessible. This involved scanning and OCRing 20,000 pages of back issues and assembling the images into PDF files.

When FES started its free-Web-access experiment, it expected its revenues from library subscriptions to decline. Many library patrons who wanted to read or copy an article from *Florida Entomologist* or to browse an issue's contents would be able to do so in their own work areas and, in any case, would no longer depend on their library owning paper issues. Because the serials budgets of libraries were not increasing as rapidly as the prices of journal subscriptions, libraries were having to choose which journal subscriptions to drop. A journal that was free on the Internet would seem a likely one to cut. Consequently, FES has closely monitored the numbers of library subscriptions to *Florida Entomologist*. The results have been surprising:

Even though the *Florida Entomologist* was freely accessible on the Internet, library subscriptions declined only 4.9% during 1994 to 2000, well below the more than 20% declines of four entomological journals selected for comparison.

Revenues from library subscriptions to *Florida Entomologist* have actually increased. Between 1994 and 2000, FES raised the price of library subscriptions by 25%, but the effect of this was partly negated by the decline in subscriptions and by a 16% increase in the Consumer Price Index. The overall effect was a 2.5% increase, in constant dollars, in FES's revenues from library subscriptions.

Notes

Details of the electronic publication project of the Florida Entomological Society are accessible from the home page of the *Florida Entomologist* (<http://www.fcla.edu/FlaEnt/>).

If revenues from library subscriptions decline significantly, FES may try to regain the lost revenues by charging authors for immediately posting their articles on PubMed Central (<http://csssrvr.entnem.ufl.edu/~walker/fewww/sep99rpt.htm>).

The *Florida Entomologist* was the first long-published, refereed, natural science journal to be posted on the Internet and was the first life science journal to put all current and back issues on the Web with free access.

The Florida Center for Library Automation, which is charged with library automation for the libraries of the State University System of Florida, has provided server space for the *Florida Entomologist* since 1994. It also provided programming for completion of the back-issue project.

Details of the back-issue project are at <http://csssrvr.entnem.ufl.edu/~walker/fewww/backissu.html>.

Authors who list their publications on their home pages can make *Florida Entomologist* entries “clickable” by linking to the PDF files of their articles on the Florida Library of Automation server or by downloading the PDF files and posting them on their own or other servers.

Journal articles that are freely accessible on the Web are more conveniently found and accessed than are those in bound volumes of back issues on the shelves of research libraries. Furthermore, there are remarkable savings in library operating expenses associated with online versions of journals:

One way to analyze library operating costs is to take a library's annual budget, subtract what is spent on acquiring books and journals, and divide by the number of volumes held. This gives the operating costs per volume per year. This figure does not include the capital cost of providing shelf space (ca. \$18 per volume) nor operating costs that may not be included in the library budget (cooling and heating perhaps). When this formula was applied to six representative university libraries in the eastern United States, the average annual operating cost per volume was \$3.20 (data from the Association of Research Libraries). The *one-time* cost of putting the 20,000 pages of back issues of *Florida Entomologist* on the Web (<\$12,000) was less than the *annual* cost of keeping the same number of pages on the shelves of 100 research libraries in 67 300-page volumes ($67 \times \$3 \times 100 = \$20,000$).

FES hopes to have all its articles “hot-linked” in *Current Contents Connect*, published on the Web by The Institute of Scientific Information and a leading means for researchers to stay current with their fields. FES made this proposal to ISI in May 2000 and as of 28 Sep 2000, ISI had not reached a decision..

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