

17 September 2008

Dear Colleague,

I am delighted to be writing this, my first letter to our customers as Nature Publishing Group's (NPG) Managing Director. As the first anniversary of my tenure at NPG approaches, it seems an appropriate time to reflect on some of 2008's achievements and to share with you our plans for 2009. I will also outline our site license pricing through to 2012.

Our vision for the future of NPG is as not just a publisher, but as a partner of the scientific community; a scientific communication business. Science communication is not confined to the outputs of research but is integral to the process of scientific discovery, and this communication increasingly happens online. NPG is committed to providing tools, services and functionality that help at every stage – from finding collaborators via *Nature Network*, bookmarking references using *Connotea*, sharing preliminary findings on *Nature Precedings*, through to publishing in our journals and bringing the research to a global audience. These are the services we can offer the global science community already, so we were honored this year when nature.com was recognized as Best Science Website of 2008 in the 12th Annual Webby Awards, the 'Oscars of the Internet'.

Independent measures are useful benchmarks, which is why we continue to monitor our Impact Factors in the annual *Journal Citation Report (JCR)*, Thomson Reuters). We also follow alternative measures such as the Eigenfactor, usage factors and MESUR (MEtrics from Scholarly Usage of Resources) from the Los Alamos National Laboratory. As Philip Campbell, *Nature's* Editor-in-Chief wrote recently in an article for the journal *Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics*, "Although the current system may be effective at measuring merit on national and institutional scales, the most effective and fair analysis of a person's contribution derives from a direct assessment of individual papers, regardless of where they were published".

We all recognize the limitations of using one metric to evaluate journals, but the Impact Factor remains a means for libraries to quickly rank journals. According to the 2007 *JCR*, NPG publishes eight of the top 20 science journals - more than any other publisher - and we can report strong performances both from our long-established journals and our newest titles. *Nature* is once again the top weekly multidisciplinary journal, with an Impact Factor of 28.751, up from 26.681 last year. Nine NPG journals are number one in their fields, and 32 NPG titles are amongst the top five journals in 24 *JCR* categories.

The success of NPG's physical science journals, despite their relative youth, is evidence of strong demand for high-quality independent journals in both established and emerging fields. *Nature Geoscience* has consistently attracted and published exceptional content since its launch in January 2008. Our latest title, *Nature Chemistry*, will have even greater impact. Ahead of its April 2009 launch, the pre-launch website is publishing three Research Highlights a week and the journal is already attracting submissions. We are also launching another journal, *Nature Climate Change*, in October 2009. A first for a *Nature*-branded journal, *Nature Climate Change* will extend into socio-economic research as well as the natural sciences, with the aim of putting the research it publishes into a wider scientific, economic and political context. *Nature Climate Change* continues NPG's policy of only launching new journal titles where we will add genuine value to the literature.

Earlier this year, NPG began publishing *SciBX: Science-Business eXchange* in partnership with BioCentury. Our first bio-business publication, *SciBX* bridges the gap between academic research and commercial opportunities by providing accurate, timely analysis and an independent perspective. In response to demand from academic librarians,

in November we will introduce an HTML-based product and a site license model.

During 2009, the *Nature Clinical Practice* portfolio will become more closely aligned with the *Nature Reviews* publishing program. Elsewhere, NPG's society publishing program continues to flourish. Our society-owned journals once again achieved excellent Impact Factors. From January 2009 NPG will publish *American Journal of Gastroenterology*, the top clinical journal in gastroenterology, for the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG). NPG has agreed five new publishing partnerships for 2009 in the Asia-Pacific region. In China, NPG will co-publish *APS (Acta Pharmacologica Sinica)* and the *Asian Journal of Andrology*. In Japan NPG Nature Asia-Pacific has finalized agreements with the Japan Antibiotics Research Association to publish the *Journal of Antibiotics*, with the Japan Society for Human Genetics to publish the *Journal of Human Genetics* and with the Japan Society of Hypertension to publish *Hypertension Research*.

Our vision of NPG as a partner to the community has catalyzed two new services. In June 2008, we launched *NPG Language Editing*, providing a premium quality, English language editing service for researchers preparing manuscripts for publication in international scientific or medical journals. More recently, we established our Manuscript Deposition Service, which helps authors to fulfill funder mandates by depositing manuscripts in repositories like PubMed Central on their behalf.

Our library customers remain an intrinsic part of NPG's continued ability to serve the scientific community. The transition to our site-license business model has boosted access and usage to levels unimaginable ten years ago. Business models continue to evolve, and most publishers continue to experiment. We realize a key priority for our customers is the ability to forecast costs and budget accurately. Therefore, I am now committing NPG to price increases capped at 7% in all four major currencies (GB£, US\$, Euro, Yen) for three years. This applies to all NPG-owned journals and begins with 2009 list prices.

We are proud to support those individuals who foster the development of young scientists through the *Nature Awards for Mentoring in Science* – focused on Germany in 2008. Also this year, we have formally partnered with INASP, making more than 65 NPG journals available in over 20 developing countries and complementing our long-standing partnerships with AGORA, HINARI and OARE that help us to achieve the widest possible reach for the research we publish.

NPG, like all successful organizations, thrives because of the strength of our products, the talent of our employees and the loyalty of our customers. We thank you for your support, and look forward to another exciting year, during which time I hope to meet as many of you personally as possible. In the meantime, I hope that you will contact me directly if you have feedback or concerns – please write to me at exec@nature.com.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Inchcoombe
Managing Director
Nature Publishing Group