

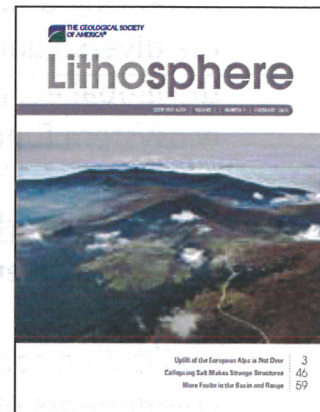
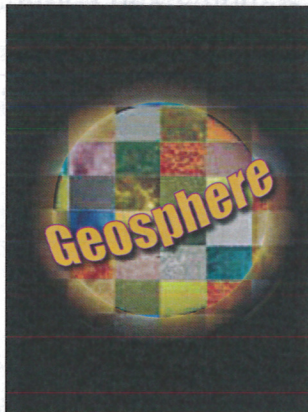
OPEN ACCESS

GSA JOURNALS ARE COMING

2017



2018



2019



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Abstract

Beginning in 2017 and phased in over the following three years, all GSA journals will be freely available online, i.e., open access. GSA journals will retain their high quality; there will be no change in current editorial or peer-review policies and procedures. The major impact of this change for GSA will be a loss of subscription revenues that currently underwrite many GSA programs. To offset these losses, a publication fee will be instituted along with the designation of some strategic funds to assist authors who lack resources to pay these fees. GSA leadership is reviewing all existing programs to find savings by modification or elimination of non-mission critical activities and seeking other financial options for the transition. In addition, annual membership dues will modestly increase and Council will restrict new strategic initiatives until the implementation process is completed. The GSA Foundation will increase its activity in support of GSA programs.

GSA Council in October 2014 voted to move all GSA journals (*GSA Bulletin*, *Geology*, *Geosphere*, and *Lithosphere*) to open access, phased in over a three-year period beginning in 2017. Phasing in open access over three years will permit GSA's professional publications staff and editors to manage the transition smoothly and to allow GSA to make the necessary financial arrangements to accommodate the significant decline in revenues now generated by journal subscriptions.

THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE COUNCIL'S DECISION ARE:

- GSA journal articles will be immediately accessible online, by anyone, at any time, anywhere in the world, with no required subscription. The present implementation model has this occurring in a phased manner as follows:
 - 2017: *Geology* becomes open access
 - 2018: *Geosphere* and *Lithosphere* become open access
 - 2019: *GSA Bulletin* becomes open access
- With implementation of open access, the page charges as well as color charges for photos and illustrations that exist with printed journals will cease, but an article publication fee will be charged.
- For authors unable to pay this fee, GSA will develop a process for the provision of full or partial subventions from strategic funds or other sources.
- The quality of GSA journal publications will remain as they are now since there will be no changes in editorial policies, peer review procedures, or article acceptance standards.
- The Society is actively reviewing its current business practices in order to absorb the anticipated declines in journal-derived revenue. This will include some changes in or elimination of existing GSA programs determined no longer to be effective or central to GSA's mission. In addition, annual membership dues will be modestly increased to offset some revenue losses.
- Effective January 2017, all GSA journal content, including full access to the journal archives, will be freely available online to GSA members.

WHY IS GSA MOVING TO OPEN ACCESS NOW?

In 2015, the publishing paradigm is changing. The opportunity to publish the results of research online means that no researcher anywhere in the world need be denied immediate access to the latest

scientific findings—and no author is prevented from having her research read by anyone interested in the results. This fulfills the intent of our founders in a manner they could not have imagined or anticipated.

Open access will strengthen and expand the reach of our science, but only if societies such as GSA willingly embrace this change and find the means to assure that the quality of Society-sponsored online scientific publishing is indistinguishable from the quality of its publications under our traditional model.

GSA Council has determined that geoscience research will best prosper when immediate access to refereed publications is no longer restricted to the few who pay for subscriptions or have convenient access to a research library. Council has proactively embraced the philosophical position that the Society's intent "to be the premier geological society supporting the global community in scientific discovery, communication, and application of geoscience knowledge" (GSA Vision Statement, 2013) is assured and enhanced by the promulgation of the best science to the maximum number of scientists, practitioners, and members of the general public.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF OPEN ACCESS?

Open access forces a profound shift in how scientific publications are financed. In simplest terms, this is a shift from the "reader pays" to the "producer pays." Since there have always been many more "readers," i.e., subscribers, than authors, this is a shift in the net funds supporting scientific publication. And, of course, traditional sources of funding for such things as page or color charges must now be reassigned to publication fees.

Consequences include:

- Savings in publication costs (printing, mailing, handling, storage, and subscription fulfillment), but no savings in such areas as editorial oversight, peer review, or publication formatting. In addition, the costs associated with electronic hosting of journals and archives are significant and continuing.
- Additional financial burden to authors in the form of publication fees, though these are likely to be the same order of magnitude of page or color charges.
- Significant benefit to authors, including up to three-fold increases in citations for open-access publications and more interactivity and use to readers.
- Loss of subscription revenues to the Society, requiring GSA leadership to review all current activities with the goal of seeking and implementing real cost savings.
- Modest increase in annual membership dues so that GSA can continue to support the important programs that members have asked for and that, in the past, were supported by journal subscriptions.
- GSA Foundation Board of Trustees has embraced the transition to open access and will work tirelessly over the next few years to obtain new resources to support ongoing programs at GSA, thus freeing up more GSA resources to help with the transition.

In the view of GSA's leadership, our mission is to assure that our members are able to 1) be confident that their published scientific findings can reach the entire "universe" of interested scholars and practitioners without traditional barriers that have, frankly, become obsolete in the digital age, and 2) be able to access GSA publications online as a benefit of membership in both GSA and the geoscience community as a whole.