

Journal of Nanophotonics

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Editorial: Qui payes?

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Editor-in-Chief

Much, but not all, research today is financially supported by governments. In democratic dispensations, that means that a significant portion of research is funded by the taxpayers. Since the taxpayers have paid for the research upfront, should they not receive the research results for free? This argument underlies the concept of open-access publication of research results that is being increasingly demanded by governments and public-interest groups.

The publication of research results is, however, a commercial activity. Leave aside peer review, which is largely done *pro bono*. Manuscripts have to be copyedited and then published in archival forms. Whether commercial or non-profit, publishers have therefore to be compensated financially for publishing, storing, and disseminating research papers.

Who will pay the publishers? The taxpayers through additional research subsidies? The research institutions through overhead charges they levy on research sponsors?

A substantial number of research papers emerge from unsponsored research. Should the authors themselves pay for open-access publication? Why not have the readers of the journals continue to pay instead, as they have been doing for more than two centuries?

SPIE has confronted these and related issues for several years, and decided in favor of a flexible approach. Therefore, the *Journal of Nanophotonics* (JNP) has a new benefit for authors who support the journal through payment of voluntary page charges. Starting in January 2013, research articles for which such page charges are paid will be open access at publication. Open access will enable anyone to read a paper online at no charge and should lead to more awareness of its authors' research and may result in more citations.

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