

Editorial: PRX Takes on a New Role

The American Physical Society (APS) launched *Physical Review X* (PRX) three years ago, as a new member of the APS journal family. What is its role in the family?

To answer this question, it may be instructive to look briefly at how the APS journal family, with its current make-up, serves the needs and interests of the physics community. The APS journal family offers authors a variety of venues for their articles. Researchers can choose between *Physical Review Letters* (PRL), our large, selective, broad-scope, letter-format journal that is the most cited in physics, and the other *Physical Review* journals that publish new and significant results in different fields of physics. True to the APS mission to advance physics and serve the global physics community, our journals belong, not to a for-profit corporation, but to physicists all over the world who work hard for the journals as authors, reviewers, and editorial board members. The decision of which articles to publish is based on their scientific merit, rather than on what is “newsworthy” or “hot,” and on their sound scholarly presentation rather than “hype.”

In recent years, however, we have seen a strong need of some researchers to have their best scientific contributions published in highly selective and small journals that can disseminate those contributions broadly and offer them high visibility. We have also clearly heard a desire expressed by many in the global physics community that such a journal be published in the nonprofit and science-first APS publishing tradition. Now, with PRX, APS can offer such a venue to the community.

Recently, an external committee, consisting of a diverse group of physicists, including junior and senior scientists from many different fields and from different regions of the world, reviewed PRX. The committee lauded PRX for its careful review process and adherence to high scientific standards, and for the reputation it has already gained as a journal of high visibility and broad dissemination. They recommended that PRX continue on its upward trajectory and take on the new role by staying small, about 250 papers/year, and becoming much more selective than it already is now. We have enthusiastically accepted that firm recommendation. We also demand that PRX remain true to the mission and the best publishing practices of all of the APS journals. The committee also recommended that PRX and PRL work together to improve the profile of both journals.

PRX and PRL will now complement each other, as different choices for authors. PRX does not aim to track the full arc of important developments within each field as does PRL, but will select only key individual articles from established fields as well as emerging and interdisciplinary areas of physics. PRX’s flexibility toward article length allows authors to present their research with both sufficient clarity and context to reach a general audience, and enough detail to serve as a resource for specialists. As an open-access, online journal, PRX provides broad dissemination of highly significant research results to all readers without a subscription barrier. This feature should be particularly beneficial to those communities of science, medicine, and industrial research as well as scientific communities in developing countries that may not have access to our other journals through subscription.

We are excited to have PRX take on its new role in our family of journals. At the same time APS will strongly support PRL so that it will continue to be the journal with the greatest impact in physics. We now have two journals for papers of the highest quality and trust authors to judiciously choose which they think is the most appropriate venue for their top work. Whether it is PRL (<http://journals.aps.org/prl/>) that tracks the full arc of physics or PRX (<http://journals.aps.org/prx/>) that selects a small number of articles across all areas where physicists are engaged in research, your choice will give support to the nonprofit and science-first principles of the APS journals, and ultimately benefit the global physics community and its research.

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