One of the down sides of signing up for a journal’s updates
is that you get put on the publishing company’s mailing list. The
publishing company then proceeds to email you opportunities
to publish in a multitude of their other publications, regardless
of the topics. Thank you, but no, I do not have an interest
in learning more about publishing in the *Journal of Livestock
Breeding* or *Annals of Early Renaissance Politics.*

One important aspect of any journal is the access that the
public will receive to the content. Many high level journals
with solar system type impact factors are published by huge
publishing companies that require subscriptions to read the
content. This can cost institutions thousands of dollars for
one company’s content. Keep in mind that there are more
publication companies than can be imagined. I am lucky
enough to work at an institution that has access to many
journals via subscription and can get almost anything through
inter-library loan free of cost to me. Of course, the individual
practitioner does not have this advantage, and when they try to
access many journal articles, an exorbitant fee is demanded. I
have seen fees range from $30-45 for a single article. It is hard
to justify, in my mind, paying these fees, especially if you are
not sure if it is worth reading.

Another important aspect of a journal, especially to the
author, is the cost involved in publishing. Yes, I said cost
involved in publishing. Many journals are considered open-
access; their content is open for everyone to read immediately.
In theory, this is great for the public sector. The ability to get
information to the masses is so important. But, as an author,
reading the fine print is necessary before submitting an article.
The following is an example of an email I received recently
asking me to consider submitting an article for publication.

Dear Dr. Taub,

I am writing to invite you to submit an article to the
Ophthalmology subject area of XXX, which is a peer-reviewed,
open access journal that publishes original research articles as
well as review articles covering a wide range of subjects in the life
sciences and environmental sciences.

XXX is published using an open access publication model,
meaning that all interested readers are able to freely access the
journal online at XXX without the need for a subscription, and
authors retain the copyright of their work. Moreover, all published
articles will be made available on PubMed Central and indexed
in PubMed at the time of publication.

The journal has a distinguished Editorial Board with extensive
academic qualifications, ensuring that the journal maintains high
scientific standards and has a broad international coverage. A
current list of the journal’s editors can be found at XXX.

Before submission, please review the journal’s Author
Guidelines, which are located at XXX. Manuscripts should be
submitted online to the journal at XXX. Once a manuscript has
been accepted for publication, it will undergo language copyediting,
typesetting, and reference validation in order to provide the highest
publication quality possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions
about the journal.

Best regards,

The following was included in a different email as to why
I should publish in a specific journal.

- Rigorous peer review of your research
- Prompt publishing
- Guaranteed targeted, multidisciplinary audience
- All manuscripts deposited to PubMed Central and
appear in PubMed
- Average time from submission to first decision: 37
days

Both make publishing in the respective journals seem like
dream come true. Here is the problem though: both charge
the authors to publish their materials in these respected
publications. The first company charges upwards of $900 for
a basic article, and if you want colored photos/images, they
add $300 per image. The second company does not charge
for publishing in their journal but charges $3000 to make
the article available as open access. Hopefully, these dollar
amounts made you scratch your head and do a double take
at the same time.

Besides the cost involved to the author, the fact that there
is a charge to publish brings up ethical concerns. Nothing
against the editor or editorial board members involved with
these publications, but how unbiased can the peer review really be in these cases? Does the demand for new content influence the decision making process? While I do not have proof to the contrary, I was taught that if something walks, sounds, and looks like a duck, well…you know the rest.

I am proud to say that I am the Editor-In-Chief of Optometry & Visual Performance, an open access journal that charges authors nothing to publish their work. I am honored to work with a great editorial team that includes Dr. Pam Schnell as Managing Editor, Drs. Sarah Hinkley, James Kundart, and Steve Gallop as Associate Editors, Mary Averill as the Graphic Design and Production guru, and the 34 members, from seven countries, of the Review Board. We are supported and funded by the two finest organizations in the arena of behavioral optometry, the Optometric Extension Program Foundation and the Australasian College of Behavioural Optometry, without whose desire to produce the highest quality and most widely read journal, Optometry & Visual Performance would not exist.

On behalf of the editorial team at Optometry & Visual Performance, we thank you all for your support and look forward to 2015.

Good luck and good health always.

Marc B. Taub, OD, MS
Editor-In-Chief

Correspondence regarding this editorial should be emailed to Marc B. Taub, OD, MS at mtaub@sco.edu. All statements are the author’s personal opinions and may not reflect the opinions of the representative organizations, ACBO or OEPF, Optometry & Visual Performance, or any institution or organization with which the author may be affiliated. Permission to use reprints of this article must be obtained from the editor. Copyright 2014 Optometric Extension Program Foundation. Online access is available at www.acbo.org.au, www.oepf.org, and www.ovpjournal.org.

Taub MB. Buyer beware: not all journals are created equal. Optom Vis Perf 2014;2(6):266-7.