

Open letter to the Society for Neuroscience

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This is an open letter concerning the recent launch of the new open access journal, *eNeuro*.

We welcome the diversification of journal choices for authors looking for open access venues, as well as the willingness of *eNeuro* to accept negative results and study replications, its membership in the [Neuroscience Peer Review Consortium](#), the publication of peer review syntheses alongside articles, and the requirement that molecular data be publicly available.

As strong supporters of open access, we welcome the commitment of the Society to making the works it publishes freely and openly available. However, we are concerned with several aspects of the specific approach, and outline herein a number of suggestions that would allow *eNeuro* to provide the full benefits of open access to the communities the journal aims to serve.

Our first concern relates to the specific choice of license. The purpose of open access is to promote not just access to published content, but, equally important, its reuse. The default use of a CC BY-NC license places unreasonable restrictions on the reuse of articles published in *eNeuro*, and is incompatible with the standards of open access as set out by the [Budapest Open Access Initiative](#) (BOAI). NC restrictions have significant negative impact, limiting the ability to reuse material for educational purposes and advocacy to the detriment of scholarly communication. NC-encumbered materials, for example, cannot be used on Wikipedia or easily incorporated into Open Educational Resources. The NC clause also creates ambiguities and uncertainties (see for example, [NC Licenses Considered Harmful](#)) and there is little evidence on benefits of the clause to justify its use. In contrast, the value of the CC BY license is outlined in detail by the [Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association](#). How will authors or the broader community benefit from restrictions on the commercial reuse of *eNeuro* content? The *eNeuro* fees policy acknowledges CC BY-NC is incompatible with the requirement of funders such as [Research Councils UK](#) and [Wellcome Trust](#), and offers their authors the solution to upgrade to CC BY for a \$500 surcharge. This penalizes authors funded by such agencies, as well others who choose to adhere to BOAI principles. We believe that the only way for *eNeuro* to deliver on its open access commitment is to make all articles CC-BY, and to set the fees to an appropriate level to support this choice.

Aponte, Nazeefa Fatima, Nitika Pant Pai, Elizabeth Silva, Björn Brems, Gerard Ridgway, Pietro Gatti-Lafranconi, Xianwen Chen, Jacinto Dávila, Benjamin de Bivort, Stephen Beckett, Mythili Menon, Adam Choraziak, Graham Triggs, Guillaume Dumas, Jeffrey W. Hollister, Célya Gruson-Daniel, Gary S. McDowell, Pierre-Alexandre Klein, Julien Laroche, Alex Thome, Nicolas Guyon, Sibebe Fausto, Nonie Finlayson, Dalmeet Singh Chawla, John Wilbanks, David Carroll, Noelia Martínez-Molina, Maximilian Sloan, Stephen Eglén, Joseph R. Hancock, Open letter to the Society for Neuroscience, *The Winnower* 2:e140865.54468, 2014, DOI: 10.15200/winn.140865.54468

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Our second concern relates to data access. We commend the journal's requirement that all molecular data be publicly available, but we believe the policy on sharing other types of data should be improved. The current language does not guarantee data will be made available, does not speak to the terms of data licensing, nor describes a course of action if a request for data is not fulfilled. The criterion of "appropriate scientific use" is also vague: Would reuse of data for educational purposes, for example, meet that criterion, and who would make that decision? Open data aids in verification and replication of results, creation of new analysis tools, and can "fuel new discoveries". The value of open data has been recognized by the [Allen Institute for Brain Science](#), the [BRAIN Initiative](#), and the [Human Brain Project](#). Immediate sharing of all data types in an open repository (preferably under [CC0](#)) should be a requirement, unless prohibited by law (e.g., privacy laws). Several flexible outlets, such as [Figshare](#) and [DataDryad](#), are available that make this easy and cost-effective.

Finally, while we commend *eNeuro's* commitment to transparent peer review, we worry that only publishing a synthesis may sacrifice the richness inherent to the review process. We believe the neuroscience community would be better-served by having access to the complete reports from reviewers, as offered by [PeerJ](#), several [Biomed Central journals](#), and others. Reviews should also be licensed [CC BY](#) to allow for reuse in teaching materials, for example. Reviewers can be provided a mechanism to communicate confidentially with editors, removing the risk associated with making the full reviews publicly available. Reviewers should also be given the opportunity to sign their reviews for added transparency and to receive due credit for their work (e.g., through [Publons](#)).

Based on the above points, we recommend that *eNeuro*:

1. Makes [CC BY](#) the default license and provides equal pricing for all [CC](#) licenses;
2. Provides a transparent calculation of its article processing charges based on the publishing practices of the Society for Neuroscience and explains how additional value created by the journal will measure against the prices paid by the authors;
3. Considers offering full waivers to authors, especially those from low-income countries, who are unable to afford any publication fees;
4. Requires authors to deposit their data in a public repository (preferably under [CC0](#)), unless there are legal or ethical reasons not to do so;
5. Publishes full individual reviewer reports ([CC BY](#) licensed) alongside each article.

We hope the Society for Neuroscience will collaborate with the academic community to facilitate the dissemination of scientific knowledge through a journal committed to fully embracing the principles of open access.

We kindly request that you allow your response(s) to be made public along with this letter, and look forward to hearing your response soon.

(Please note that the views expressed here represent those of the individuals and not the institutions or organization with which they are affiliated)

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