

Scenario 2: Printing and/or Print-on-demand

Consider the following case history

The Society for Entomological Ophthalmology (SEO) publishes one high impact monthly journal within its well defined niche. Print quality is important in the acquisition and retention of authors as the field is highly visual. Certain commercial competitors in particular are doing a poor job with their printing -- it is rumored because they are intent on cutting print production costs by at least 10% per year – and they consider that online only must happen soon.

The journal has been typeset and printed for 12 years by the same well-known and established printing company, but the Publications Committee made up of Society members is asking for a full appraisal of current typesetting and printing options and whether “print-on-demand” would be more appropriate for the journal given that its print run has fallen below 1,000 per month.

At the recent SSP meeting the Publications Manager spent some time talking to a range of groups who provide printing (and other) services some of whom were talking most positively about “print-on-demand” options that are now possible. However, he is daunted by the prospect of starting the process and needs advice and support.

In discussion with your group please answer the following points based on your and your group’s combined experiences:

1. What information and questions must the Publications Manager acquire from each supplier in assessing the suitability of each group as the future typesetter and printer of this societies’ journal?
2. Should the society develop a Request for Proposals before awarding the contract to complete this work?
3. What other considerations besides cost-savings should enter into this decision?
4. In your experience would print-on-demand be a sound solution for this journal?
5. How would you judge the success of this outsourced solution 12 months after it was implemented?