

## **Grace periods for electronic journals subscription renewals**

The ASA is calling on all publishers to grace their electronic journals for the first two months of the year in an effort to prevent customers being denied access to paid content on January 1st each year. The ASA believes keeping access open for the first two months of the subscription year would greatly reduce the number of claims and enquiries to publishers' help desks, and significantly improve overall customer service. To help in this, the ASA has drafted a Code of Good Practice, which we hope will be useful as a guideline to publishers. We are also happy to list any publishers who grace their electronic journals on this website.

## **The Renewal and Gracing of Electronic Journal Subscriptions: Code of Good Practice**

### **1. Renewals**

- Subscribers and subscription agents should renew subscriptions for electronic journals and electronic/print combination subscriptions in a timely manner before the end of the subscription period and by automated means wherever possible.
- Renewals should, unless other arrangements have been made, be prepaid with orders being placed together or on specified dates which are satisfactory to both publisher and agent. To assist in this, we ask publishers to produce pricing information by Aug 31 each year and to avoid subsequent price changes.

### **2. Order processing**

- Publishers should process orders promptly so that subscriptions can be entered before the end of the subscription period and in time to ensure continuity. However it is recognised that there are a large number of orders going through the system at this time, and it may not always be possible to complete all the order processing before the cut off deadline. Publishers are therefore urged to implement step 3 below.

### **3. Access**

- In order to ensure that all subscribers continue to enjoy uninterrupted access to electronic journals, publishers should, wherever possible, permit access to electronic journals for a further 'grace' period of at least two months (i.e. as oppose to automatically terminating access on the last day of the subscription period).
- The ASA believes that a policy of gracing the first two months of electronic journal subscriptions will be very effective in reducing the number of claims and queries relating to the renewal of electronic journals, conferring significant savings in administration, and improvements in customer service.

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