

**Committee to Examine the Future of *Systematic Botany Monographs*
(and to a limited extent *Systematic Botany*)**

Charge: To examine issues that affect the future of *Systematic Botany Monographs* (SBM) including, but not limited to, the following questions/topics:

Should ASPT bundle SBM with *Systematic Botany* (SB) for a single price? Should a bundled package be an option that members can select if they wish?

Should ASPT members be able to purchase SBM via online access (e-copy) instead of print (also something we need to look at again for SB in the near future)?

Should the finances for SBM be moved to the ASPT Business office?

How should SBM prepare for the ever changing world of e-publishing especially if the demand for books diminishes? For instance, do we want to consider “print-on-demand” and pdfs entirely?

We spoke with Chris Anderson about her current system for SBM editing and business management. We then spoke with Steve Musser with Sheridan Group to discuss pricing for SBM production as well as the other aspects of SBM business, including options for bundling SB and SBM and alternative media (e-copy) and printing models (e.g., print on demand, POD).

Options:

1. Bundle S.B. and S.B.M. through Sheridan Press with SBM as a standing order that is invoiced separately as SBM volumes are published. Pros: consolidates some aspects of paperwork, hopefully leads to increased sales of standing orders. Cons: irregular frequency and variable pricing of SBM does not provide members and especially subscribers with predictable pricing for budget planning.

2. Regularize SBM pricing and frequency as much as possible and establish SB-SBM bundle with a fixed price. Pros: helps libraries budget subscription costs and hopefully encourage greater numbers of standing orders. Cons: if frequency and cost cannot be regularized it will be difficult to calculate fair standard price due to variation in frequency and volume cost.

Under either option there would still be single copy orders for new SBM volumes, which could be filled by Sheridan Press. Need to establish system for handling sales of current and back issues.

Purchase of e-copy instead of paper copy of monographs is possible. We would need to decide who would handle those sales. We would also need to calculate an appropriate price for this

product, and also assess how sales of e-copy might impact sales of hard copies and the resulting implications for pricing hard copy production.

Notes:

Our discussions have not touched on the question of finding a new editor for SBM when the time comes to replace Chris. Clearly thought needs to be devoted to this sooner rather than later. This discussion should also consider possibilities for a different staffing structure, specifically hiring a copy editor and/or managing editor to handle some aspects of the editing work that Chris does now.

Chris reports that the time commitment for non-editing functions varies from 1-5 hours/week to 5-10 hours/week when processing orders for a new volume.

Business duties must be moved to others so editor (or editors) can focus on manuscript review and editing.

Some bookkeeping duties not handled by the printer will need to be picked up by someone.

Back records held by Chris Anderson need to be digitized.

One of the hurdles in creating a bundle with Systematic Botany for a set price is the irregular nature of Systematic Botany Monographs and its variable pricing. In recent years the number of volumes has varied from 2 to 5 and the volume price has ranged from \$10 to \$73. Averages for number and price for the past several years could be calculated and used to establish a bundle price, but there is the risk that subscribers could still feel cheated in years with fewer than average numbers of volumes published.

SBM does not have separate member and library pricing. Not sure that this should be changed, but it should be noted.

Sales of back issues is a significant activity for SBM. Sheridan Press is able to warehouse back stock and fill orders as received if we wish to pay for this service. Someone must handle the receipt and processing of such orders.

The print run for SBM is typically 400 (plus author reprint order). This number of copies usually lasts for quite a few years. An alternative to printing quantities that will last for many years is to print an adequate number to meet demand for the first year or so (depending on demand pattern, which we do not know now) and then use "print on demand" (POD) for subsequent orders. See note below from Steve Musser at Sheridan Group regarding this "hybrid" approach to POD.

Sheridan Press has prepared pricing quotes for a couple sample volumes of SBM. Their pricing is comparable to what Chris has been paying through her vendors for composition and production. I have not compared the quotes and prices in detail because some services are packaged a bit differently between Sheridan and the Ann Arbor companies and we will need new

quotes with a standardized structure to sort out price comparisons. The quotes we have would suggest that Sheridan's pricing should be competitive. Steve Musser did indicate that their pricing for composition is not the cheapest in the market and if we were to use the current company for composition services that would not be a problem.

Note on print on demand from Steve Musser at Sheridan:

Good speaking with you again about the monograph series. With regard to your inquiry about print-on-demand applications I wanted to highlight just a couple of points:

- POD is a great idea but there are limitations to the types of materials that can be used in manufacturing – i.e. only certain text stock and paper covers can be produced. We do not have an option for hardcover production.
- Our quantities for POD are a minimum of 25 copies – however, I expect that we will be doing single copies within the next year.
- I have two clients who are currently doing a “hybrid” POD model. In these cases the initial production (typically a couple of hundred copies) of the journal is produced as offset printing where the paper and cover treatments are more flexible.
- When the initial supply is exhausted and the demand has slowed down, they have used our POD to produce “fulfillment copies”, which do not exactly match the original materials but can be reproduced efficiently within the POD limitations, and then warehouse minimum quantities of these issues.
- The idea is the early orders will be the most critical and they can avoid having large quantities of the journal sitting in boxes gathering dust.

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