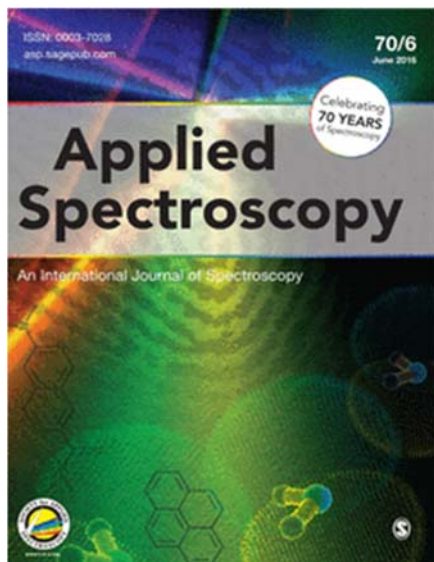




## VI-E-Journal Editor-in-Chief-SciX 2017



### Journal Report to the SAS Executive, EAB and Publications Committee—September 5, 2017

Submitted by Michael Blades (Editor-in-Chief), Sergei Kazarian (Editor) and Kristin MacDonald (Managing Editor)

Thanks to Louisa Strain (SAGE) and Sophie North (SAGE) for providing some content.

*Applied Spectroscopy* is one of the world's leading spectroscopy journals, publishing high-quality articles, both fundamental and applied, covering all aspects of spectroscopy. Established in 1951, the journal is owned by the Society for Applied Spectroscopy and is published monthly. The journal is dedicated to fulfilling the mission of the Society to "...advance and disseminate knowledge and information concerning the art and science of spectroscopy and other allied sciences." All manuscripts are rigorously peer-reviewed.

The journal publishes high-impact reviews, original research papers, and technical notes. In keeping with the society mandate, review papers are made freely available to download. This means that the articles will be accessible at the time of publication to scientists, students, and the general public worldwide.



## Applied Spectroscopy Editors, Associate Editors and Editorial Advisory Board - 2017

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Editor	Sergei G. Kazarian	Imperial College London, UK
Managing Editor	Kristin S. MacDonald	The University of British Columbia, Canada

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 Sophie North, Associate Editor – Second editorial contact [Sophie.north@SAGEpub.co.uk](mailto:Sophie.north@SAGEpub.co.uk)

### Changes to the EAB for effective January 1, 2018:

People leaving the EAB are Yuki Ozaki, Kai Peiponen, and Bruce Chase.

### Additions to the board:

Young Mee Jung, Kangwon University, Korea (Associate Editor)  
 Bin Ren, Xiamen University, China (Associate Editor)  
 Bayden Wood, Monash University, Australia.  
 Ian Lewis, Kaiser Optical Systems, USA  
 Amy Bauer, TSI Incorporated, USA

Professor Meiping Zhao will move from the Associate Editor position and serve on the Editorial Advisory Board.



## Overview and initiatives for 2017/18

### Editor Change - Sergei Kazarian takes over from Peter Griffiths as Editor

At the 2016 SciX meeting Peter Griffiths indicated his intent to step down as Editor for Applied Spectroscopy effective March 31, 2017. Accordingly, the Publications Committee, with assistance from the Executive Director, initiated a search for a “replacement” Editor. A total of three applicants responded to the advertisement for the position of Editor and each candidate provided a package of information relevant to the position. Each of the candidates were highly qualified for the position and the decision was very difficult. The candidates were vetted by a group that included Michael Blades, Peter Griffiths, Kristin MacDonald and John Wasyluk. Based on the submitted packages and direct communication with the candidates, it was decided that Professor Sergei Kazarian be recommended for the position of Editor. The recommendation was approved by the Executive Committee Meeting of the Society for Applied Spectroscopy which met at Pittcon 2017. Professor Kazarian is a Professor of Physical Chemistry, Department of Chemical Engineering, Imperial College London, UK. Sergei has served as Associate Editor of Applied Spectroscopy since 2012. Recently, he has visited EIC office in Vancouver prior to the ICAVS conference in Victoria and also visited SAGE to meet their team for discussions on current issues and future initiatives of the journal.

Fortunately, Peter Griffiths will continue to be affiliated with the Journal as an Associate Editor.

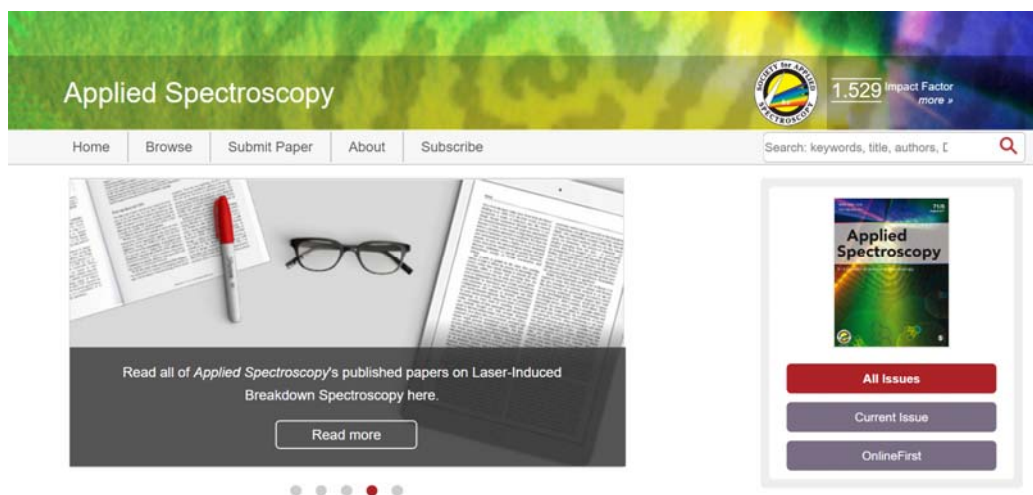
### Content Hosting

Starting 2017 SAGE moved the Journal to a new hosting system - Atypon Literatum. Literatum includes website development tools, content targeting, rapid product creation, subscription modeling, eCommerce, and analytics. Over 200 publishers host 10,000 journals on the Literatum platform. If you haven't had a chance yet please have a look at the new website at: <http://journals.SAGEpub.com/home/asp>

According to SAGE, the move to Atypon's Literatum platform provides many benefits, including the following:

- A technology upgrade for *SAGE Journals*, giving us greater flexibility and control, including enhanced self-service tools for journal site updates, as well as a truly dedicated product management team.
- An improved product for our expanding portfolio and evolving development needs.
- Enhanced marketing and reporting tools, including platform analytics, as well as advanced search and information discovery, access control, and ecommerce.
- The web-site allows virtual collections, for example on LIBS and Focal Point articles.

Authors will benefit as a result of the improvements offered by Literatum. For example, on the home page there are tabs for “Most Read” and “Most Cited” which are updated regularly. In addition, the site provides information on article downloads and cites for all articles.





For example the screen shot below is the result of clicking on article metrics for the article “Inorganic Arsenic ...”. Current metrics available for authors are the number of downloads and article citations (through CrossRef) as well as social media impact.

## Inorganic Arsenic Determination in Food: A Review of Analytical Proposals and Quality Assessment Over the Last Six Years

Toni Llorente-Mirandes, Roser Rubio, José Fermín López-Sánchez

First Published December 30, 2016 | Research Article

Download PDF

Article information

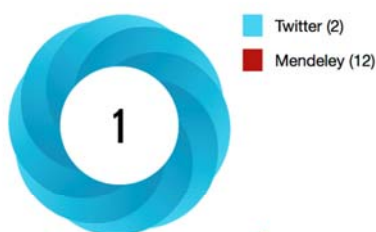
Altmetric

1



### Article Metrics

#### Altmetric



See the impact this article is making through the number of times it's been read, and the Altmetric Score.

What's an Altmetric Score? [Find out more.](#)

#### Article Usage

Total downloads: 870

Article usage since 1 December 2016.

#### Article Citations

CrossRef 1

See citations available for this article by clicking the linked number of citations.

### Cover to Cover PDF

The new website allows for a full cover to cover PDF of the issue to be hosted on the site. SAGE is working with Atypon to ensure this appears as a link on the right hand menu on the homepage to encourage greater access. As an example see the August issue here:

[http://journals.SAGEpub.com/doi/suppl/10.1177/ASPC\\_71\\_8/suppl\\_file/ASP\\_2017\\_71\\_8\\_suppl.pdf](http://journals.SAGEpub.com/doi/suppl/10.1177/ASPC_71_8/suppl_file/ASP_2017_71_8_suppl.pdf)

### Express Publication

Starting May 2017 *Applied Spectroscopy* started publishing all accepted articles as “Express” articles within days of acceptance. *Applied Spectroscopy* now makes articles that have been accepted following peer review available immediately on the Journal website, before they have gone through the production process at SAGE. These accepted manuscripts are published within the Online First programme on SAGE Journals Online upon peer review acceptance for publication and before copyediting, typesetting and other value added by the Editorial staff SAGE. Express publication provides immediate exposure for accepted papers.

As an example of the turn-around, this article, “Vibrational Spectroscopy for the Determination of Ionizable Group Content in Ionomer Materials”, by Carol Korzeniewski, Ying Liang, Pei Zhang, Iqbal Sharif, Jay Kitt, Joel Harris, Steven J. Hamrock, Stephen E. Creager, Darryl D. DesMarteau was **accepted** on Wednesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> and **available for download** at the SAGE website on Monday August 7<sup>th</sup> and was indexed by PubMed and Google a day or two after that.



### Increased page count for 2017

Applied Spectroscopy will publish a record, 2711 pages (articles + A-pages) in the 2017 volume. The page count for articles is expected to be about 2520 pages. This represents a significant increase over our historical numbers which have averaged about 1500 article pages per volume (table top of Page 5). The reasons for this quite dramatic increase are discussed on Pages 9-11.

### Improved decision times

Average days from submission to a first decision has been reduced to 34 days. This is a significant improvement over previous decision times (see page 7 for more details).

### The Journal is reaching many more readers

For 2017 *Applied Spectroscopy* has joined the SAGE Premier package selling into ~**3,500 libraries** and an additional over 5,000 libraries in the developing world through philanthropic packages. The table below summarizes the number of institutions with access, to *Applied Spectroscopy* through their “big deal” package. This is an increase of over 10 times relative to the access available in 2015 and prior.

Region	2016
Asia-Pacific	375
EMEA	1,282
North & South America	1,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,457</b>
Global Philanthropic Deals	5,000
<b>Grand Total Access*</b>	<b>8,457</b>

\*There may be some overlap between institutions

Total downloads are up substantially for 2016 and 2017 relative to the historical average (see page 14).

### Impact factor

Unfortunately, the Impact factor has fallen to 1.53 for 2016, the lowest in five years. There is a full discussion and analysis on Pages 10-12.



## Manuscripts Received - Summary

The table below summarizes the submission and publication statistics for the past eight years.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Original manuscripts submitted	382	371	356	394	471	395	469	445
Revised manuscripts submitted	260	262	208	255	289	201	290	246
Manuscripts accepted without revision	7	7	14	13	8	9	15	6
Revisions Required(Minor and Major)	201	223	206	227	227	183	250	198
Rejected	123	124	109	137	184	196	208	241
Rejected with review	66	86	80	82	83	90	N/A	151
Rejected without review	57	38	29	55	101	106	N/A	90
Rejected after revision	9	15	9	15	12	13	N/A	N/A
Rejection Rate (%)	32.2%	33.4%	30.6%	34.8%	39.1%	49.6%	46.1%	54.2%
Manuscripts accepted after revision	224	224	179	220	243	180	N/A	N/A
Manuscripts withdrawn	23	13	13	38	36	14	18	-
Total Manuscripts Accepted	208	218	180	195	215	175	234	172
Total manuscripts submitted (original & revision)	642	633	564	649	760	596	759	691
Total papers published (Excluding Corrections/Letters)	195	197	180	177	182	169	164	180
Total papers published (Including Corrections/Letters)	198	198	180	177	188	171	168	183
Total Accepted minus Total Published (Backlog)	10	20	0	18	27	4	66	-11
<b>Paper Type</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Focal Point Reviews	3	2	9	10	8	5	3	5
Articles	192	195	171	167	174	164	161	175
Letters					3			2
Corrections	3	1			3	2	4	1
Total article pages published	1442	1452	1440	1491	1484	1420	1513	1777
Av. # of pages per article (Excluding Corrections/Letters)	7.4	7.4	8.0	8.4	8.2	8.4	9.2	9.9

### Notes:

- For 2015, the data in the table includes both Allen Press and SAGE submissions. The Allen Press submission portal was closed on September 30, 2015 and the SAGE submission portal was initiated on October 1, 2015. We have received a total of 864 original manuscripts and 1301 total manuscripts (original + revisions) through the SAGE submission system since it was initiated.
- A total of 183 manuscripts and a total of 1777 article pages, were published in the 2016 volume, the largest number of pages for eight years. For 2017 we are expecting to publish about 2520 article pages. This is primarily due to our efforts to publish all of the manuscripts that were remaining in Allen Track and to work on clearing out a growing backlog of papers so that we could improve the time from acceptance to publication. More on this later in this report.
- The number of original manuscripts submitted in 2016 (445) was well above the seven-year average (410). Up to August 27, for 2017, we have received 314 manuscripts.
- The rejection rate for 2016 was 54.2%, the highest rejection rate in the eight years covered.\*

\* The rejection rate for the table above is not totally accurate because it does not include all of the manuscripts declined by the EIC without review. We have started to track this number and a more detailed overview is provided below for 2016-7. Including manuscripts declined because they were outside the Aims and Scope or for other reasons, the rejection rate for 2016 was 58.8%. For 2017, to date, the Rejection rate is 60.8%





### Summary of numbers for manuscripts decided in 2016-17

The table below is a detailed summary of decided manuscripts for 2016 and 2017. Importantly, in 2017, to the end of August we published 59 more manuscripts than we accepted reducing the inventory of accepted papers by this number. This is now allowing us to achieve faster turnaround from acceptance to publication.

Manuscripts Decided									
2016	Accept	Major Revision	Minor Revision	Reject	Reject Inappropriate	Total Decisions	Rejection Rate (%)	Number Published	# Accepted minus Number Published
January	12	9	2	10	1	34	47.8	16	-4
February	11	16	6	17	5	55	66.7	13	-2
March	20	12	5	14	4	55	47.4	14	6
April	11	14	6	11	6	48	60.7	14	-3
May	11	11	6	12	10	50	66.7	22	-11
June	15	14	8	20	18	75	71.7	14	1
July	14	14	6	11	8	53	57.6	16	-2
August	16	21	7	9	7	60	50.0	13	3
September	4	8	10	17	6	45	85.2	19	-15
October	21	13	9	13	5	61	46.2	17	4
November	21	21	12	12	9	75	50.0	13	8
December	16	15	9	11	9	60	55.6	9	7
Total (2016)	172	168	86	157	88	671	58.8	180	-8
Average/month	14.3	14.0	7.2	13.1	7.3	55.9	58.8	15	
2017	Accept	Major Revision	Minor Revision	Reject	Reject Inappropriate	Total Decisions	Rejection Rate	Number Published	# Accepted minus Number Published
January	22	17	11	17	10	77	55.1	10	12
February	15	11	10	11	7	54	54.5	14	1
March	8	15	6	21	17	67	82.6	15	-7
April	21	11	10	12	6	60	46.2	19	2
May	16	16	6	12	3	53	48.4	29	-13
June	7	15	8	10	9	49	73.1	30	-23
July	18	18	5	7	8	56	45.5	29	-11
August	10	16	10	24	19	79	81.1	30	-20
September								17	
October									
November									
December									
Total (2017)	117	119	66	114	79	495	60.8	193	-59
Average/month	14.6	14.9	8.3	14.3	9.9	61.9	60.8	21	



### Original manuscripts submitted and decisions by country (October 1, 2016 – August 8, 2017)

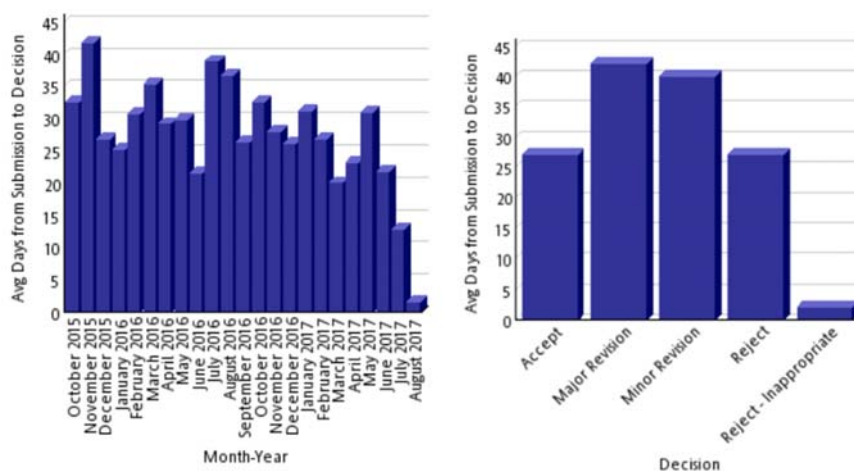
Rank	Country of Submitting Author	# Manuscripts	Submissions	Accept	Reject	Accept Rate
			%			%
1	China	242	29.1	49	176	21.8
2	United States	157	18.8	101	29	77.7
3	India	43	5.2	4	39	9.3
4	Brazil	41	4.9	17	22	43.6
5	Japan	24	2.9	13	8	61.9
6	Iran	21	2.5	1	19	5.0
7	Italy	20	2.4	13	4	76.5
8	Germany	17	2.0	7	10	41.2
9	Egypt	16	1.9	1	15	6.3
10	Pakistan	16	1.9	4	10	28.6
11	Russian Federation	16	1.9	5	8	38.5
12	Turkey	16	1.9	1	15	6.3
13	Canada	15	1.8	5	6	45.5
14	France	14	1.7	9	3	75.0
15	Spain	14	1.7	7	6	53.8
16	United Kingdom	13	1.6	4	5	44.4
17	Austria	12	1.4	4	3	57.1
18	Poland	11	1.3	1	8	11.1
19	Korea (the Republic of)	8	1.0	3	5	37.5
20	Mexico	7	0.8	3	3	50.0

### Decision Timelines

Authors often tell us that the two of the most important factors for their manuscript are the decision times and the time from acceptance to publication. We have been working to improve each of these. I believe that the shift to SAGE and adoption of ScholarOne has helped reduce the decision time relative to the numbers we had for Allen Track.

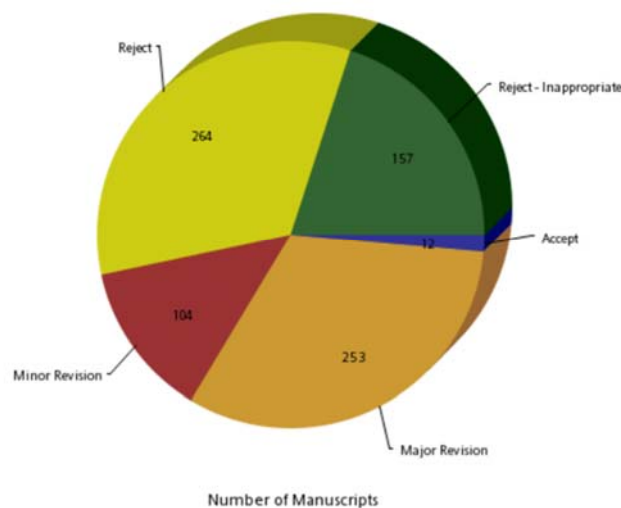
The graphs below summarize the decision time data for October 2015 to July 2017. The single most important factor is the speed of response by the reviewers. We typically send two reminders at weekly intervals from the date of acceptance and after three weeks, the EIC writes directly to the reviewer.

Average Days from Submission to a First Decision by submission month and by decision category.



The average for the period included above, excluding immediate decisions, is 34 days. To provide some perspective on the above data the diagram below is a breakdown of first decisions by category for the same time period.

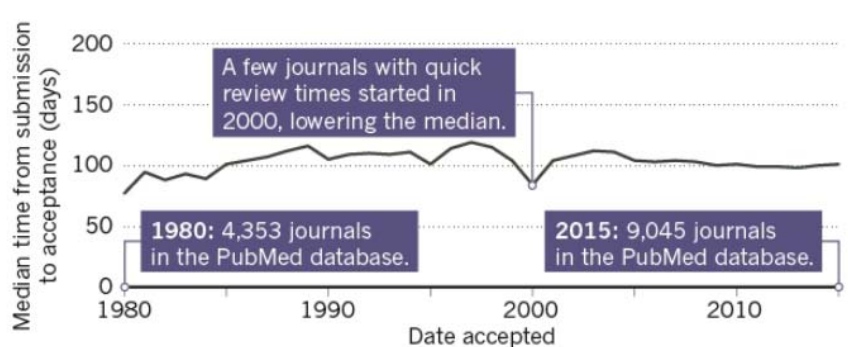




Reviewer tardiness and fatigue is a growing problem for journals. In 2015, Chris Hartgerink, a behavioural-sciences graduate student at Tilburg University in the Netherlands, ran an analysis of the Public Library of Science (PLOS) family of journals. He found that the mean review time had roughly doubled in the past decade, from 50–130 days to 150–250 days, depending on the journal.

#### Background: The median time from submission to acceptance

For Applied Spectroscopy, the median time from submission to acceptance for 2016 was 84 days. The plot below is from “Does it take too long to publish research?” Nature, Volume 530, Issue 7589 (2016). In this news report it stated that, “Daniel Himmelstein, a computational-biology graduate student at the University of California, San Francisco, analysed all the papers indexed in the PubMed database that had listed submission and acceptance dates. His study, done for Nature, found no evidence for lengthening delays: the median review time — the time between submission and acceptance of a paper — has hovered at around 100 days for more than 30 years”. For this statistic, Applied Spectroscopy is doing well compared with other journals.



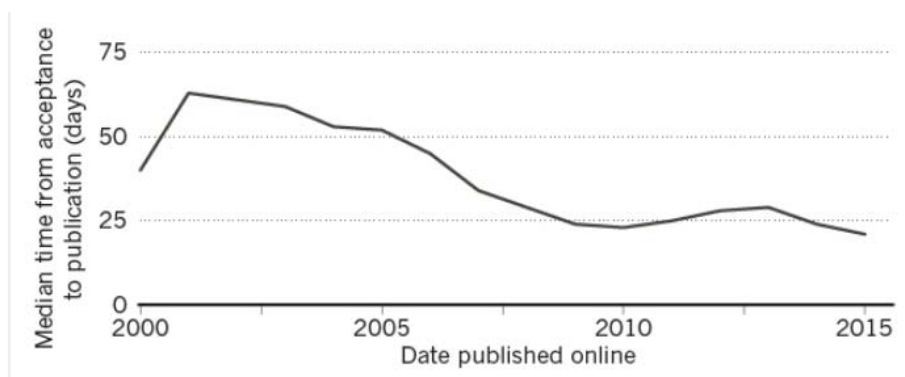
Source: (<http://www.nature.com/news/does-it-take-too-long-to-publish-research-1.19320>)

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#### Time to Publication

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One of the most pressing issues for the Journal is the time from acceptance to publication. For 2016 the speed to publication for Applied Spectroscopy was an average of 41 days. The plot below, taken from the nature article, shows that the Applied Spectroscopy is significantly above the median time for Publication in this case means publication as an OnLine First (<http://journals.SAGEpub.com/toc/asp/0/0>) article.



Source: (<http://www.nature.com/news/does-it-take-too-long-to-publish-research-1.19320>)

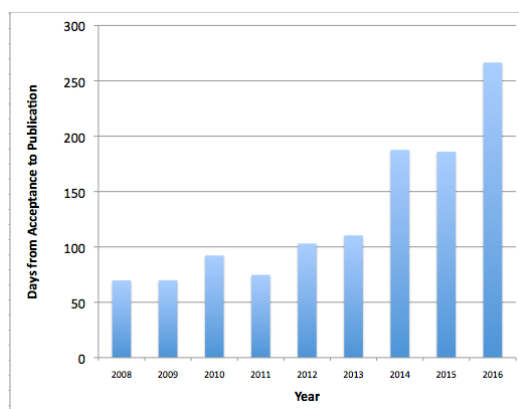
More seriously, over the past few years we have developed a backlog of papers. In mid-February there were about 110 papers not assigned to an issue. In the March 2017 Editors report we noted that if we keep accepting 14-15 articles a month and publish 15 articles a month (the 2016 average) we will never solve the backlog problem. We will always have a backlog of 110 papers and every time we publish a special issue, or accept more than 15 articles in a given month it will get worse. A backlog of 110 articles means about a publication delay of about 7 months or about 210 days from acceptance to publication. This is unacceptable and we have taken steps to address the problem.

### Background

The figure below is a graph showing the time from acceptance to publication for Applied Spectroscopy from 2008 to 2016. To make this plot we looked at the January (and for some the February) issues of each year following the year in the plot and calculated the time to publication for all the articles. [So for the bar for 2010 we looked at the publication time to the January 2011 issue]. I feel it is probably roughly representative of the time periods. You can see there has been a somewhat steady increase that started in roughly 2013. Since then it has gotten progressively longer. Please keep in mind is that starting in 2016 we have had OnLine First (<http://journals.SAGEpub.com/toc/asp/0/0>) which is currently running between 40 and 70 days so authors work was certainly being made available in a reasonable time, about the same as in the past. Online First articles are indexed by Google and are cited.

Regardless, authors want to see their papers in an edition quickly and want to see them in a printed edition so that they will be indexed by Web of Science.

### Histogram Showing the time from article acceptance to IN-PRINT publication for the time period 2008-2016.



This is a VERY troubling trend. How did it happen? The table below helps to explain the trend. There are a lot of numbers in the table so I will try to explain what I think is significant. There is the caveat that I have done my best to ensure the numbers are accurate but there is some fuzziness about certain things, for example the stage at which manuscripts were withdrawn (e.g. before or after acceptance)



The 2nd row is the total number of original manuscripts submitted per year. **I have marked in red the years that have had higher than the average (410.4).** This is the most critical row. Row 10 is the rejection rate. Row 12 is the total number of manuscripts accepted by year. Row 16 is the total number of manuscripts published. Row 17 is the difference between the number of manuscripts published and the number of manuscripts accepted by year. This number represents the paper surplus (creating the backlog). You can see that in 2012 we had a surplus of 18 articles that caused the publication time in 2013 to increase because we didn't increase the number of pages per issue to compensate. In 2013, a year in which we had a record number of submissions, we had a surplus of 27 papers that added to the 18 from the previous year. In 2014, the time to publication grew slightly because of this. It was in 2015 where we really ran into trouble. Another year of large numbers of submissions, well above the average, where we had a record low number of published papers (168) and a record number of papers accepted (primarily because of the high number of submissions). 2015 was also the year that we were accepting manuscripts for 2 special issues that were published in 2016. The combination of these three factors caused the surplus to inflate drastically in 2015 (with an excess of 66 articles).

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Totals (2009-2016)
Original manuscripts submitted	382	371	356	394	471	395	469	445	3283
Revised manuscripts submitted	260	262	208	255	289	201	290	246	2011
Manuscripts accepted without revision	7	7	14	13	8	9	15	6	79
Revisions Required(Minor and Major)	201	223	206	227	227	183	250	198	1715
Rejected	123	124	109	137	184	196	208	241	1322
Rejected with review	66	86	80	82	83	90	N/A	151	638
Rejected without review	57	38	29	55	101	106	N/A	90	476
Rejected after revision	9	15	9	15	12	13	N/A	N/A	73
Rejection Rate (%)	32.2%	33.4%	30.6%	34.8%	39.1%	49.6%	46.1%	54.2%	
Manuscripts accepted after revision	224	224	179	220	243	180	N/A	N/A	1270
Manuscripts withdrawn	23	13	13	38	36	14	18	-	155
Total Manuscripts Accepted	208	218	180	195	215	175	234	172	1597
Total manuscripts submitted (original & revision)	642	633	564	649	760	596	759	691	5294
Total papers published (Excluding Corrections/Letters)	195	197	180	177	182	169	164	180	1444
Total papers published (Including Corrections/Letters)	198	198	180	177	188	171	168	183	1463
Total Accepted minus Total Published (Backlog)	10	20	0	18	27	4	66	-11	134
<b>Paper Type</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	
Focal Point Reviews	3	2	9	10	8	5	3	5	
Articles	192	195	171	167	174	164	161	175	
Letters					3			2	
Corrections	3	1			3	2	4	1	
Total article pages published	1442	1452	1440	1491	1484	1420	1513	1777	
Av. # of pages per article (Excluding Corrections/Letters)	7.4	7.4	8.0	8.4	8.2	8.4	9.2	9.9	

The cumulative effect started to have a dramatic impact on time to publication in 2015 and 2016. We should have recognized that we were having manuscript flow issues and adjusted in 2015. However, we waited until 2016 when we requested a budget increase from the EC for an additional 500 pages for the 2016 Volume. The society paid an invoice, dated 11/29/2016 for 500 extra pages (\$8,281) and ADVERTISING colour costs (\$3,000). In 2016 we published 1753 article pages and about 253 A-pages for a total of about 2006. At the end of 2016 we actually only published an extra 264 article pages over the number from 2015. This seems to have had some positive effect because 2016 was the first year that we since 2009 that we published more papers than we accepted!

In March 2017 we recognized that we needed to publish at least an additional 800 pages in 2017, about 80 manuscripts, to get us back to some reasonable time to publication time frame.

The Editor-in-Chief accepts responsibility for all this. We should have studied the numbers more carefully especially in 2014 when it was noticed, and reported to the EC, that there was a large increase in the number of submissions in 2013. We should have increased the page budget at that time but we did not.

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 the SAS EC approved the budget expenditure for an extra 800 pages for 2017.

As a result, starting with the May issue we have been publishing "fat" issues. A summary table is provided on page 6.

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## Impact Factor

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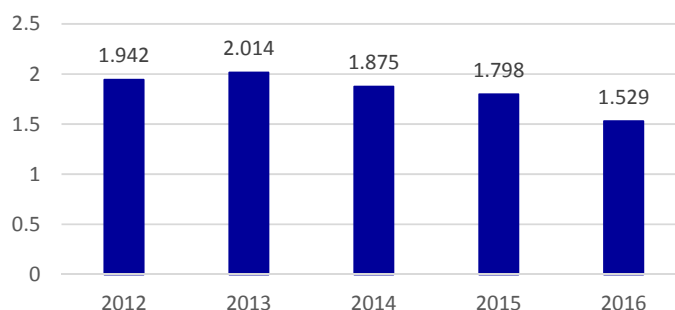


For the past decade it has become apparent that to some extent a journals fate is strongly linked to the JCR (Journal Citation Reports) Impact Factor. It is a topic that comes up regularly and a source of concern for the journal because of the slavish focus on metrics in the publishing world and in the academic community. The five-year trend for our two-year Impact Factor is in the graph below (Source: Journal Citation Reports).

### 2016 Impact Factor:

The 2016 Impact Factor for **ASP** was **1.529**, calculated as follows:

Cites in 2016 to <b>ASP</b> articles published in	2015	=	233	Number of articles published in <b>ASP</b> in	2015	=	164
	2014	=	276		2014	=	169
	Total	=	509		Total	=	333
Cites to articles	=	509	=	<b>1.529</b>			
Number of articles	=	333					



After cracking 2.0 in 2013 we have fallen back to the sub-2.0 zone for the past few years. 2016 is particularly disappointing and concerning.

As I have reported repeatedly in past reports, we continue to experience the problem that, on average, about 35% of our published papers are not cited in the first two years of their publication. We are doing fine in terms of submission numbers but, in general, the high impact content is mainly Focal Points and a relatively small number of submitted papers.

We are struggling with a problem typical of “smaller journals” that publish relatively small numbers of papers whose impact factors tend to be heavily influenced by a relatively small percentage of the total number of papers published.

*“While many scholars and editors eschew the notion of attributing the success of individual articles by the prominence of the journal, scientific authors continue to place great importance on the Journal Impact Factor in their decisions on where to submit their manuscripts. Open access authors are no different. Many institutions around the world have adopted a direct compensation model that reward authors based on the Impact Factor of the journal in which they publish, an incentive that locks many of the world’s authors into this unidimensional measure of journal performance.”*  
(<http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2013/06/20/the-rise-and-fall-of-plos-ones-impact-factor-2012-3-730/>)

As long as our impact factor stays relatively low we are going to struggle to attract the numbers of high quality submitted papers that are required to boost it.

*“In smaller journals that base acceptance in part on novelty and significance, a downward spiral can be thwarted by concerted efforts of the editors to attract high-impact articles and reviews and by preventing perceived low-impact articles from being accepted.”*  
(<http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2013/06/20/the-rise-and-fall-of-plos-ones-impact-factor-2012-3-730/>)

Attracting high-impact Focal Point reviews is what we have been attempting to accomplish in the past 6 years.



The data presented in table below is a summary of the link between citations to Focal Point Reviews and the Impact Factor. The table shows the Impact factor and an "Impact Factor without Focal Points" that excludes the effect of Focal Point Reviews on the calculation of impact factor.

Year	# Pubs	Cites to papers this year to papers published 2 years previous	Impact Factor	Focal Point (FP) Reviews in publication year	Cites to FP Reviews published in the 2 years before	Cites per Focal Point Article	Fraction of cites that are to Focal Points	Impact factor without Focal Points
2004	219			4				
2005	201			6				
2006	208	789	1.88	5	27	3	3.4	1.86
2007	197	778	1.90	3	30	3	3.9	1.88
2008	207	835	2.06	6	32	4	3.8	2.02
2009	195	632	1.56	3	14	2	2.2	1.56
2010	197	695	1.73	2	28	3	4.0	1.70
2011	180	652	1.66	9	23	5	3.5	1.63
2012	177	732	1.94	10	97	9	13.3	1.73
2013	182	719	2.01	8	233	12	32.4	1.44
2014	169	688	1.88	5	224	12	32.6	1.36
2015	164	631	1.80	3	101	7.8	16.0	1.57
2016	180	509	1.53	5	39	4.9	7.7	1.45
2017		303			16		5.3	
Numbers in Yellow are incomplete for the year based on WoS August 8, 2017)								

It's difficult to identify the "cause" but average citation rates to submitted papers are dropping. The table points out how important Focal Point articles are when it comes to contributing to the Impact Factor. We are "stemming the tide" with some highly cited Focal Points but 2014-2016 were relatively lean years for Focal Points published.

I don't think it helps us to obsess too much about IF and cites but the trend is a big concern for us. At the heart of the matter is that in order for the two-year IF to be higher, the papers published in the journal need to be cited more. The only way to **ensure** that is to increase the number of Focal Point articles being published going forward because, on average, they are cited at a higher rate than submitted papers. The good news is that, to date, in 2017 we have published eight Focal Point articles and at least a further three will be published, the which will set a record for Focal Points published in a single year.

One final comment regarding the IF. Because of the way in which IP is calculated, it is very probable that the large number of papers published in 2017 will lead to a decrease the IF for 2018 and 2019 although this is impossible to predict with any certainty.

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#### Focal Point articles published and to be published in 2017 (Volume 71) [Download data as of August 27, 2017]

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Inorganic Arsenic Determination in Food: A Review of Analytical Proposals and Quality Assessment Over the Last Six Years, Toni Llorente-Mirandes, Roser Rubio, José Fermín López-Sánchez, Applied Spectroscopy, vol. 71, 1: pp. 25-69. , First Published December 30, 2016. [Total downloads : 870]

Advanced Laser-Based Techniques for Gas-Phase Diagnostics in Combustion and Aerospace Engineering Andreas Ehn, Jiajian Zhu, Xuesong Li, Johannes Kiefer, Applied Spectroscopy, vol. 71, 3: pp. 341-366. , First Published February 3, 2017. [Total downloads: 345]

Photonic and Plasmonic Nanotweezing of Nano- and Microscale Particles Donato Conteduca<sup>1</sup>, Francesco Dell'Olio, Thomas F. Krauss, Caterina Ciminelli, Applied Spectroscopy, vol. 71, 3: pp. 367-390. , First Published March 13, 2017. [Total downloads: 231]

Novel Applications of Laser-Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy, Amy J. Ray Bauer, Steven G. Buckley, Applied Spectroscopy, vol. 71, 4: pp. 553-566. , First Published February 15, 2017. [Total downloads: 571]





Raman Spectroscopy of Blood and Blood Components, Chad G. Atkins, Kevin Buckley, Michael W. Blades, Robin F.B. Turner, Applied Spectroscopy, vol. 71, 5: pp. 767-793. , First Published April 11, 2017. [Total downloads: 712]

Applications of Raman Spectroscopy in Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing: A Short Review, Kevin Buckley, Alan G. Ryder, Applied Spectroscopy, vol. 71, 6: pp. 1085-1116. , First Published May 23, 2017. [Total downloads: 617]

A Review of the Principles and Applications of Near-Infrared Spectroscopy to Characterize Meat, Fat, and Meat Products, Nuria Prieto, Olga Pawluczyk, Michael Edward Russell Dugan, Jennifer Lynn Aalhus, Applied Spectroscopy, vol. 71, 7: pp. 1403-1426. , First Published May 23, 2017. [Total downloads: 164]

Sum Frequency Generation Vibrational Spectroscopy for Characterization of Buried Polymer Interfaces, Chi Zhang, Applied Spectroscopy, vol. 71, 8: pp. 1717-1749. , First Published June 6, 2017. [Total downloads: 133]

How to Design a Spectrometer, Alexander Scheeline, First Published July 17, 2017 [Total downloads: 22]

Through a Window, Brightly: A Review of Selected Nanofabricated Thin-Film Platforms for Spectroscopy, Imaging, and Detection, Jason R. Dwyer, Maher Harb, First Published July 17, 2017 [Total downloads: 60]

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### Special Focus Issues

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Since 2014 we have been working on Special Focus Issues in order to encourage high impact submissions. As an example, the Special Issue on Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy published in September 2014 contained 16 LIBS papers. These papers garnered 38 cites in 2015 and 41 cites in 2016 (an average of 5 cites per paper). The following is a list of Special issues in 2016 and 2017 and planned special issues.

#### 2016

Volume 70, Issue 1, January 2016: Special Issue: Application of Spectroscopy in Art and Archaeology  
Guest Editors: Peter Vandenabeele (Ghent University) and Mary Kate Donais (Saint Anselm College)

Volume 70, Issue 5, Special Issue: Portable Handheld Spectrometry  
Guest Editors: Richard A. Crocombe (Perkin Elmer) and Mark A. Druy (Galvanic Applied Sciences)

#### 2017

Volume 71, Issue 5, Special Issue: Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy  
Guest Editor: Dr. Amy Bauer (TSI Inc.)

#### 2017/2018

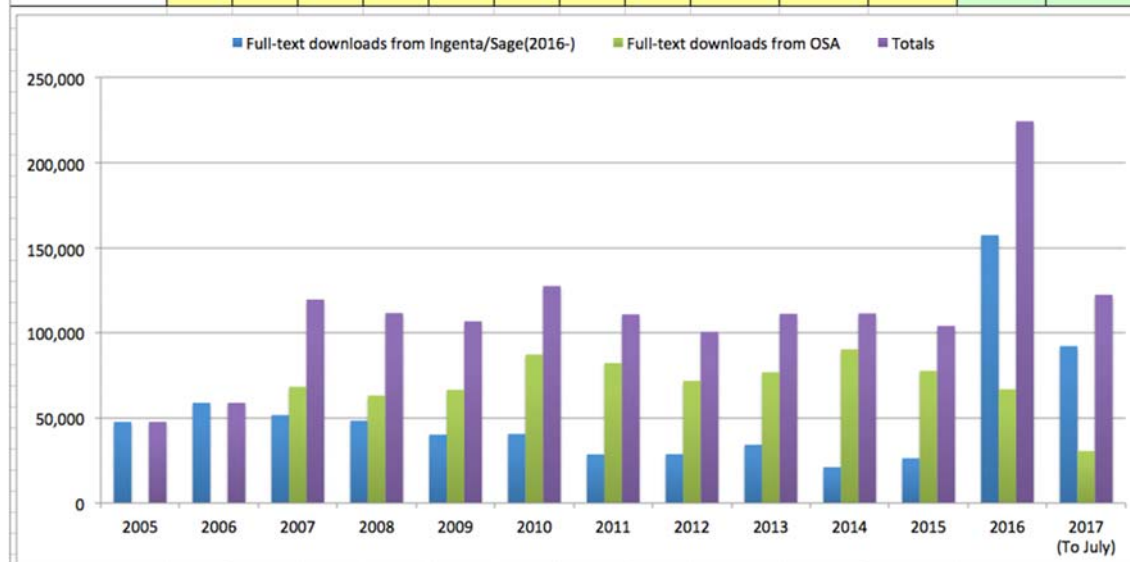
Special Issue: Chemometrics and Spectroscopy,  
Guest Editor: Barry Lavine (Oklahoma State University)



### Download Statistics (2005-2017)

The table below is download data for the years 2005-2017. Downloads are up significantly for 2016 and 2017.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (To July)
Full-text downloads from Ingenta/Sage(2016-)	47,672	58,843	51,673	48,370	40,167	40,608	28,583	28,755	34,267	21,102	26,324	157,684	92,151
Full-text downloads from OSA			68,248	63,148	66,502	87,236	82,197	71,734	76,857	90,234	77,641	66,797	30,571
Totals	47,672	58,843	119,921	111,518	106,669	127,844	110,780	100,489	111,124	111,336	103,965	224,481	122,722



#### Notes:

The Journal is accessible either from Optical Society of America (OSA) or through the SAGE website.

The number of downloads was exceptionally high for Q1 2016 because the content was freely available to download from the months of January – March, 2016.

Total downloads are up substantially in 2017 relative to the historical average. At the current download rate we can expect a total in excess of 200,000 for 2017. This is most likely due to the wider accessibility of the journal through the SAGE Premier package.



## Top Downloads for 2017

Twenty **Applied Spectroscopy** articles downloaded most frequently between 1<sup>st</sup> January – 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

Article Title	OSA PDF	SAGE PDF	SAGE HTML	TOTAL PDF	Article Type
Laser-Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (LIBS), Part II: Review of Instrumental and Methodological Approaches to Material Analysis and Applications to Different Fields	259	501	199	760	Focal Point
Review of Super-Resolution Fluorescence Microscopy for Biology	90	400	-	490	Focal Point
Quantum Dots in Bioanalysis: A Review of Applications Across Various Platforms for Fluorescence Spectroscopy and Imaging	105	348	103	453	Focal Point
Inorganic Arsenic Determination in Food: A Review of Analytical Proposals and Quality Assessment Over the Last Six Years	27	382	365	409	Focal Point
Raman Spectroscopy of Blood and Blood Components	50	311	282	361	Focal Point
Novel Applications of Laser-Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy	48	278	221	326	Focal Point
AFM-IR: Combining Atomic Force Microscopy and Infrared Spectroscopy for Nanoscale Chemical Characterization	78	216	46	294	Focal Point
Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS) for Quantitative Analysis in Environmental and Life Sciences: A Review of Challenges, Solutions, and Trends	60	218	40	278	Focal Point
Advanced Laser-Based Techniques for Gas-Phase Diagnostics in Combustion and Aerospace Engineering	50	204	114	254	Focal Point
Applications of Raman Spectroscopy in Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing: A Short Review	31	216	252	247	Focal Point
Contact Pin-Printing onto Porous Silicon for Creating Microarrays with High Chemical Diversity	11	231	77	242	
On the Identification of Rayon/Viscose as a Major Fraction of Microplastics in the Marine Environment: Discrimination between Natural and Manmade Cellulosic Fibers Using Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy	24	170	209	194	Open Access Article
Time-Resolved Resonance Raman Spectroscopy: Exploring Reactive Intermediates	179	-	-	179	Focal Point
Application of Spectroscopic Ellipsometry and Mueller Ellipsometry to Optical Characterization	24	144	61	168	Focal Point
"Paintings Fade Like Flowers": Pigment Analysis and Digital Reconstruction of a Faded Pink Lake Pigment in Vincent van Gogh's Undergrowth with Two Figures	9	151	191	160	Featured Article
Terahertz Time-Domain and Low-Frequency Raman Spectroscopy of Organic Materials	14	145	51	159	Focal Point
Photonic and Plasmonic Nanotweezing of Nano- and Microscale Particles	65	92	106	157	Focal Point
Far-Ultraviolet Spectroscopy in the Solid and Liquid States: A Review	120	-	-	120	Focal Point
A Review of the Theory and Application of Coherent Anti-Stokes Raman Spectroscopy (CARS)	118	-	-	118	Focal Point
Laser-Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (LIBS), Part I: Review of Basic Diagnostics and Plasma-Particle Interactions: Still-Challenging Issues Within the Analytical Plasma Community	103	-	-	103	Focal Point



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## Publons – Acknowledging Reviewers

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SAGE recently announced a partnership with [Publons](#) a new company working with reviewers, publishers, universities and funding agencies to turn peer review into a measureable research output. Publons, established in 2013, seeks to speed up science by making peer review faster, more efficient and more effective. Collecting peer review information from reviewers and publishers, Publons produces comprehensive reviewer profiles with publisher-verified peer review contributions that researchers can add to their resume. In 2015, SAGE and Publons began working together as part of a pilot program to better assess reviewer services.



*Applied Spectroscopy* is part of the SAGE partnership with Publons. Reviewers are informed about Publons via the submission site in the following ways:

- Details are provided in their invitation to review email from SAGE Track and they are invited to sign-up
- At the point of submitting their review, they are given the option to opt-in to receive recognition for their review on Publons
- On completion of review, if a reviewer opted-in at stage #2, an email is sent from Publons inviting them to claim their review on the Publons platform
- On completion of the review, a reminder that the reviewer can sign up for Publons is included in their 'thank you' email sent by SAGE Track
- Upon publication of the article, an email is sent from Publons letting them know the article is now online, including a link and the Altmetric score for the paper. This is sent regardless of whether the reviewer accepted or rejected the article

Publons is a way for reviewers to be recognised for the very important work that they are doing!

Other Publons partners include Springer Nature, Wiley, The Royal Society and Taylor and Francis and

*Applied Spectroscopy* currently has 17 reviewers registered on the site and 40 reviews submitted.