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Group Therapy/ Serials Claiming

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Group Therapy

Column Editor, Rosann Bazirjian (Syracuse University)
Hey y'all out there! Do you have any gripes or what?
So... everything perfect? If so, tell us about it.
Try LIBRVS@SUVM.bitnet or FAX (315) 443-9510.

GRIPES:

Submitted by Susan Klimeley,
Librarian, Lamont-Doherty Geological
Observatory of Columbia University.

I am concerned with several issues as they relate to serials claiming. My
main gripe is that the window of opportunity for claiming issues that have not
been received is too restrictive. Libraries receive large numbers of irregular
serials, some of which even come out of order, cannot be expected to
keep such close tabs on the publishing schedules of all their journals. Some
libraries are only able to review and claim titles once a year, due to the
types of serials they are receiving. All too often we receive the following
response to a claim from a serial vendor: “too late to claim!” That type of
response is frustrating and makes it appear as if both vendor and publisher
are inflexible and not responsive to their clients needs. What can be done
about this?

VENDOR RESPONSE:

Submitted by Diane Appleton
(National Service Manager, Faxon)

Publishers recognize that a certain
percentage of the issues they mail will
go astray. Replacing issues missed due
to non-receipt is an essential part of
their client services, and they both
expect and plan to do a certain amount
of it. Replacing issues is costly how-
ever, and publishers do not want to
replace issues that are missing from a
library’s collection for reasons other
than non-receipt. Setting time limits
on claims is one way that a publisher
has to ensure that they are only
replacing issues that were never
received. They know that most libraries
check-in their journals as issues arrive,
and expect that non-receipt will be
noted and acted upon fairly quickly.
Claims that are received long after the
publication date are viewed with sus-
picion. At times publishers suspect that
they are being asked to replace issues
that were lost or stolen after receipt by
the library.

Faxon recently reviewed the time
limits set by a sample of large journal
publishers. Of those who have stated
policies, the most commonly used time
limits are three months and six months.
Enforcement of the time limits varies
widely among publishers, but in recent
years publishers have had to be more
stringent. The high cost of storing
issues has meant that publishers can
no longer afford to warehouse back
issues. Their print runs have been
lowered accordingly, and even publish-
ers willing to honor claims well
after publication may not have the
issues available to do so. Libraries who
wait to claim run the risk that they will
not be able to obtain the issues at all.

Vendors such as Faxon work both
with publishers and their clients to
ensure resolution of claims for missing
issues. Adhering to publisher policies
is an important part of a vendor’s
relationship with publishers, and
ultimately benefits the vendor’s clients.
However, we frequently negotiate with
publishers for resolution of claims that
are made beyond time limits when there
are circumstances that warrant it. We
will also work with publishers to
change their policies when they are
unworkable. Vendors can and do track
publication schedules, and take these
into account when claiming for their
clients. They can offer a great deal of
assistance to their clients, but to take
full advantage of that assistance,
libraries should not wait to claim.

PUBLISHER RESPONSE:

Submitted by Caroline B. Tucker

(Promotions, American Mathematical
Society)

At the American Mathematical
Society, claims for missing journal
issues are considered when they are
submitted within six months of the date
of issue. This is our written policy,
though we generally consider claims
on a case-by-case basis. Several factors
persuade us to honor a claim submitted
after six months.

For example, issues are occasionally
mailed out of order. The AMS is
extensively involved in publishing
English translations of Russian works.
At times the translations are issued in
a different order than the originals.
We recognize this as a situation having
potential for confusion. Therefore, we
honor claims even after the six months
have passed.

A similar situation exists with
journals we distribute from other pub-
lishests, usually foreign societies. Oc-
casionally, the journals come out late
because of production problems the
publisher may encounter. When this
happens, and publishing schedules are
altered, we consider all claims.

We do suggest that libraries review
and claim journal issues more fre-
quently than once a year. It is difficult
and time consuming for the publisher
to research a claim for an issue mailed
eleven months back. Such claims may
be returned marked “too late to claim”
when the issue was mailed on schedule
as expected.

However, in certain cases, such as
where the journal issue was not mailed
on schedule, or translations are issued
out of order, we do recognize our
responsibility to the library community
and honor late claims whenever
possible. We do encourage libraries
to submit claims as frequently as possible.
This will ensure efficiency for all of us
— library, vendor and publisher.
Furthermore, it will ensure that
complete collections are on the shelves
for library patrons!®