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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.
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GRIBE:

Submitted by **Susan Klimley**,
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 that 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 however, 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 suspicion. 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 publishers 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 publishers, usually foreign societies. Occasionally, 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 frequently 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!☺