Podcast interview: Randy Schekman

RS: Scientific literature is changing dramatically, and readers are changing dramatically. I remember as a graduate student being anxious to receive the issue and leafing through the table of contents. But that was a previous generation and times have changed. Very few people read the hard copy of any journal. Students and post-docs that I know of read the papers online.

RS: PNAS Plus is our venture in electronic publication. Now, of course, PNAS has been online for many years. I felt that we need to offer authors an option of having their paper exclusively online. Papers will be as long as 10 pages—very often authors find that their article is much longer than the six page limit—and we will no longer have color charges for figures. But the review process and the standards that we have will be maintained.

RS: PNAS Plus is not a separate journal. It’s just another classification of articles. I thought it would be useful for authors to write a one to two page summary statement for a scientific audience, something that people outside their discipline could understand. And that would be in print and online and it would serve to allow all of our readers to at least sample the broad range of science that we cover.

RS: In time, I anticipate that more and more authors will opt for PNAS Plus and we hope as people become aware of this they’ll see the advantage.