

EDITORIAL

Dedicated special issues and special sections in American Meteorological Society (AMS) journals have proven to be a very popular vehicle for publishing together papers that have a common theme. Indeed, the number of special-issue pages has increased from 2% to 12% of the total number of published pages from 2004 to 2006. Although this growth is arguably a very positive sign of the quality and popularity of AMS special issues, it does present a number of production-related challenges. Most serious is that these challenges almost invariably result in publication delays relative to what could have been achieved if the papers had been published individually in a regular issue of the journal, because the final publication date is tied to the slowest paper to make it through the production cycle.

To avoid this bottleneck in production and to publish these special-issue articles as quickly as possible, the AMS will henceforth make possible the publication of special-issue articles individually in print as they are accepted—that is, alongside “regular” papers in the normal production chain. In the printed journal, the special-issue articles will have a graphic logo on their title page that identifies them with a particular special issue, and they will also be identified as a special-issue paper in the table of contents. In the AMS Journals Online Web site maintained by Allen Press, all of the articles composing a special issue will be gathered and presented together. When all of the special-issue papers have been published, the editors will have the option to print a limited number of hard-copy versions of all of the papers in a dedicated bound volume (assuming the necessary funding is provided), making it truly a “special” issue.

The benefits of processing special issues in this way will include a smoother production work flow, faster publication times, and more flexibility to produce a unique final product. We expect that most editors will opt for organizing special issues using this new approach and that single-issue special issues will dwindle as this new process is established. Questions and comments are welcome and may be directed to Ken Heideman, AMS Director of Publications, or Mike Friedman, AMS Journals Production Manager.

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