

MAR13-2012-020239

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the MAR13 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

Physical Review: a family of journals

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The expansion of research in physics in the last 100 years has been reflected in the expansion of the Physical Review(PR). Reviews of Modern Physics was the first “new” journal, starting in 1929. Physical Review Letters commenced in 1958, and was the first “letters” type of journal for important new results in all fields. By 1970 the Physical Review itself had grown so large that it was necessary to separate it by field into manageable volumes: PRA, PRB, PRC and PRD, and subsequently PRE, which was split off from PRA. More recently, two Special Topics journals for accelerator physics and physics education were pioneers of the open access business model, and the newest member of the family, Physical Review X, continues this trend. PRX is broad scope and very selective, setting it well above many of the new open access journals with a review standard of “not incorrect.” Some possible future directions for the Physical Review journals will be discussed.