

From the Editorial Board



This is the year when the Uspekhi Fizicheskikh Nauk (UFN) [Physics—Uspekhi in English Edition] journal celebrates the 95th anniversary of the publication of its first issue. The objectives of the journal have remained unchanged all these years: the dissemination of information, first and foremost about the latest achievements in physics and in those fields of science that are closely related to physics. Our most important consideration has always been to take good care of our readers. We adhere to the opinion that the path that our journal should steer must not only meet the demand of mature physicists who wish to learn of the latest developments in their expert and related fields. We are convinced that UFN should be accessible to young scientists—

senior year and PhD students—and all those who are just starting their careers in science or are new to a field they wish to work in. This is why we request authors of even monographic reviews written for specialists to begin their paper with a popularizing introduction which would enable any physicist to understand what the review is about, and to end it with a conclusion giving a brief exposition of the results and the prospects of the field. We ask the authors to explain all notations, even those widely accepted in special literature. They are also requested not to assume that all readers are familiar with the history of their specific issue and that they are also aware of the contribution by Russian authors. In view of this, we consider a brief historical overview as very welcome. Of course, Vitalii Lazarevich Ginzburg (a UFN author between 1938 and 2010, member of UFN Editorial Board from 1964 till 2009, and UFN Editor-in-Chief from 1998 until 2009) used to repeat: “Leave well alone!” Accordingly, these wishes are fairly fuzzy. We only ask our authors to reflect on what has been said and to correctly understand the comments of reviewers and members of the editorial board and of the editorial staff, who strive to do their jobs in the best possible way.

We also need to emphasize the cardinal difference between UFN-type journals and journals publishing original research papers. UFN cannot and will not publish papers, even very good ones, if they are too narrowly specialized or are devoted to technical issues or to problems that the journal has already outlined in sufficient detail earlier. UFN is not a place for the publication of original results or fundamental theories and ideas that have not passed the test of time and scrutiny: these should go to specialized journals.

Neither do we welcome ‘self-reviews’ or papers in which the bibliographic list is dominated by references to its authors’ publications.

Our authors should be aware that the selection of manuscripts for publication in UFN operates on a competitive basis. The competition depends on the number of papers currently in the editorial ‘portfolio’. For this reason, reproaches like “the contents of the paper have not been fully studied or fairly evaluated” can not be taken as grounds for reviewing the decision of the editorial board.

UFN cannot offer its pages for materials relevant to long-lasting discussions among several authors. Our “discussion” format is as follows: a comment on the published paper plus the author’s response. After this, the editorial staff closes the discussion on the pages of the journal. UFN also exercises great caution in printing material on natural sciences contiguous to physics. Material of this sort, prepared by

well-known experts in a specific field, must be of exceptionally high interest to physicists. Such off-profile papers pass through editing by both physicists and specialists in the field involved. Interesting materials of this sort can also be uploaded to the UFN web site.

UFN publishes articles discussing the history of physics and philosophy, but only in exceptional cases. Nevertheless, such materials of great interest to a large number of our readers can be published on the UFN web site. The same is true for some other matters which, not constituting products of research effort, are nevertheless of interest to our physics community. What we mean here are Personalia, book reviews, reports on seminars and conferences, and brief information on references, news, etc. that would be useful for the readers of UFN and visitors to our web site (www.ufn.ru).

We are grateful to all our readers for visiting our UFN web site more than 125 million times in total, and for 20 million visits annually in 2011 and 2012. In the process, readers have copied more than two million documents. Obviously, we are very thankful to all our authors whose papers attract so much interest from our readers. These statistics lead us to believe that the editorial policy of selecting papers for UFN (which has remained essentially unchanged all these 95 years) has proved fully justified and useful to all physicists. The format of presenting the material on the pages of UFN has no doubt been improving all the time — we try hard ‘to move with the times’. Suffice it to remind the readers that the UFN journal was one of the first in the world to create its electronic document version, as early as 1994. In 1995, UFN started to print “Physics News on the Internet”. On V L Ginzburg’s initiative, in 2000 the UFN web site incorporated a section, “UFN’s Tribune”, where UFN authors and readers could discuss issues significant for the physics community. In 1999, the journal started to post archived papers on its web site, and by 2005 we completed uploading the entire archive of our journal in Russian (from 1918 onwards). In 2002, it became possible to include full-color illustrations in the electronic version of the journal, and in 2004, video appendices to papers also appeared. On the 90th anniversary of the UFN journal (in 2008), personal pages of UFN authors were created on the web site, to which authors (should they so wish) can upload any information they consider interesting and useful to their readers. Photographs of many authors and interviews with the authors of the most cited papers in UFN were thus added. In 2007, UFN, was the first Russian journal to become a member of the Publishers International Linking Association (PILA) doing business as CrossRef, and being assigned DOI (Digital Object Index) to Russian-language versions of the papers in UFN. We now have the option to attach to each paper published online in UFN a list of publications that cited the given paper. Obviously, only citations from journals within the CrossRef system can be automatically taken into account. In 2012, we sent UFN authors a recommendation to accompany their reviews with a video annotation (video presentation) for the electronic version of UFN. We are especially grateful to those authors who responded to our request and provided wonderful video presentations of their papers.

Clearly, these ‘technological’ innovations also aim at the execution of our primary objectives — to take good care of our readers and to provide them with materials not only of high scientific quality but also presented in the most convenient and convincing format. Of course, much remains to be improved, and we ask the readers and authors to help the editorial board in our endeavor. Many thanks to all our readers and authors for their critical comments and suggestions: we will try to take them into account.

*Please, do write to us — every improvement in the UFN journal
is in the common interest of all physicists!*