
EDITORIAL

PACS '82

In mid-1975, the Physics and Astronomy Classification Scheme—PACS for short—was introduced to the public. The result of extensive international discussion and eventual agreement, the Scheme was adopted (apart from some interdisciplinary sections) by the organizations concerned with the publication and indexing of the vast majority of the world's physics literature, including, in particular, the American Institute of Physics (AIP). The American Physical Society, as the largest component of the AIP, had had considerable input into the Scheme, and immediately began using it for indexing the Society's journals.

It was recognized at the outset that changes would be needed as time passed: The Scheme was admittedly imperfect, and the fields of physics and astronomy change with time. Accordingly, mechanisms were established by which changes could be considered by the various organizations involved and, given agreement, incorporated into the Scheme. The first revision appeared within a year; a second revision, PACS '77, was issued near the end of 1976 and has been in use ever since. During these five years, the inadequacy of certain sections of the Scheme has grown. Particularly in the realm of particles and fields, new developments have crowded some categories and shown the need for new ones.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible as yet to achieve full international agreement on a set of changes. However, for various reasons, usage of the Scheme has not continued to be as universal as had originally been expected. Consequently, the AIP has decided to adopt some changes unilaterally; many of them are also being adopted by INSPEC, the British organization responsible for the publication of *Physics Abstracts*. The changes at this time are limited to Section 10, Physics of Elementary Particles and Fields. Negotiations are under way for a more complete revision, internationally agreed upon, to become effective in 1983.

Meanwhile, The American Physical Society has decided to make use of the partial revision. Beginning with this issue, it is being used to assign the PACS numbers that appear at the end of the abstract of each Letter. We have therefore included a centerfold in this issue, in which the *entire* Scheme is reprinted, with the revision incorporated. We urge our readers to remove it from the issue and keep it in a place where it can be readily referred to, and use it in suggesting index categories for new papers as they are submitted.

The utility and success of PACS depend on reader cooperation. Thus, as in the past, we encourage comments and suggestions on the Scheme.

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