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EDITORIAL

Not for the first time at an SRS AGM the question of taking *Swiss Express* into a digital format was raised, and a wide-ranging discussion ensued. The Committee have considered this issue previously and with the subscription renewal request last year we asked if a digital magazine would be of interest to the general membership. Just some 16% responded that you might be interested in seeing the magazine in such a format. This confirmed that a printed magazine was still preferable to the majority of our members. Those who choose to live their lives through a computer screen see going digital as 'the way forward' but it is a move that is fraught with potential problems and unintended consequences. The US journal *Newsweek* stopped printing and went on line, suffering a massive fall in circulation, headed towards bankruptcy, and is now reverting to print. With hindsight, this was hardly surprising for once a publication is available on-line, even only by subscription, it can be copied and freely circulated to others who pay nothing towards its compilation and publication. This produces readers who become 'free' subscribers, gaining the benefit of the publication without any financial input. Some people will always want print copies to keep, pass on and refer back to, but the fewer copies printed the higher the unit costs of these will be. Our printers distribute *Swiss Express* - once they mail-out over 1000 copies we gain a substantial discount on our postage bill. If just 20% of our members opted for only a digital copy we would lose this discount and the cost to all other members would rise. Another issue is that of the author's, photographer's and the Society's Copyright. With a printed journal this is relatively easy to control, once it goes on-line there is no control. Suffice to say you can expect *Swiss Express* to remain a printed publication for the foreseeable future. 

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For a Society Prospectus you can either write to
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or email him at membership@swissrailsoc.org.uk

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