Monthly Labor Review
July 2013

The Monthly Labor Review gets a new look

This article, which introduces readers to the redesign of the Monthly Labor Review, includes a brief history of the journal as well as a guide to the redesigned homepage. Also included is information about article presentation, the publication schedule, the newly-expanded archives, and changes to MLR departments. The article concludes with a brief discussion of ongoing BLS efforts designed to best meet the needs of MLR readers.

Emily Lloyd Liddel
liddel.emily@bls.gov

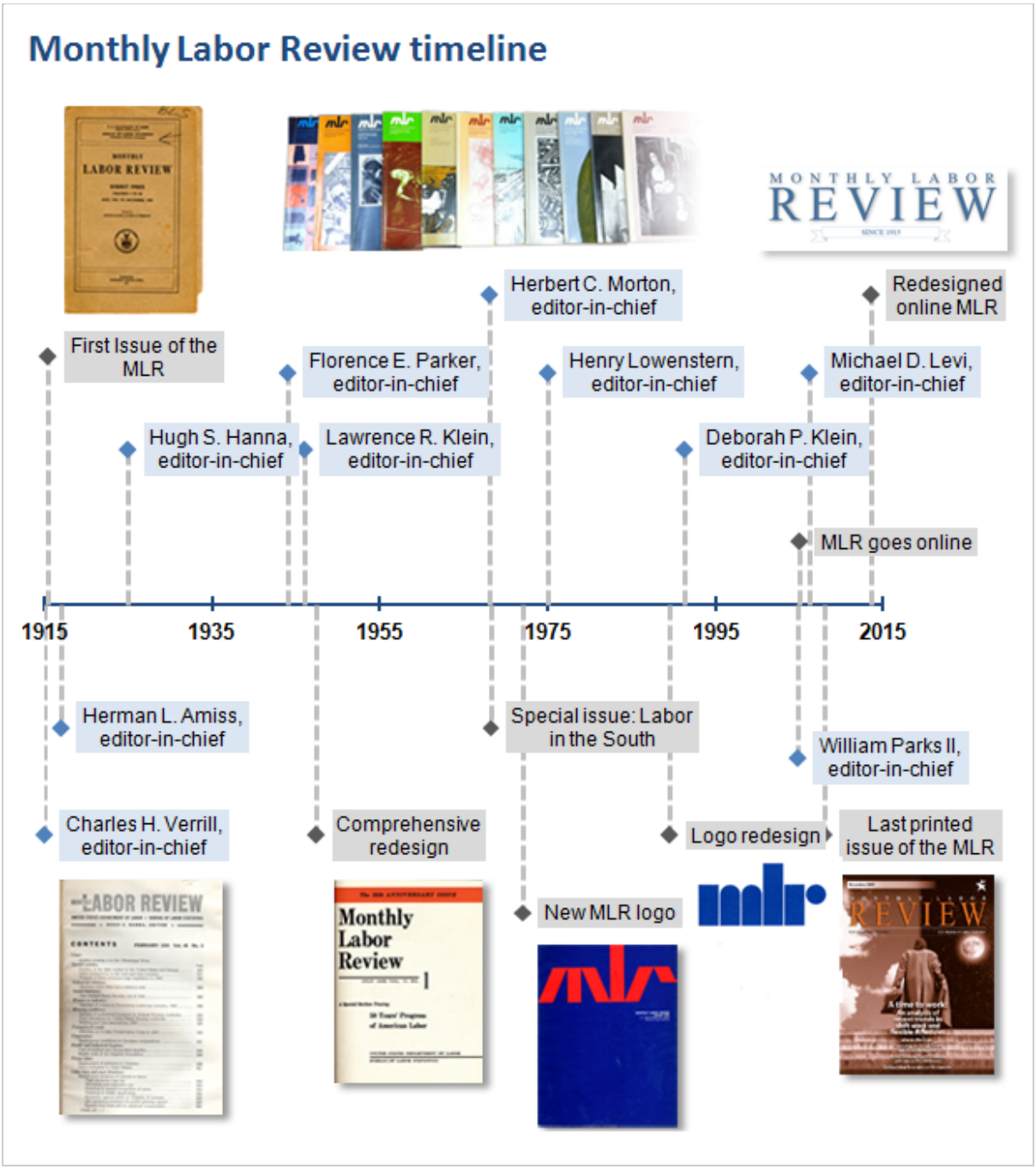
Emily Lloyd Liddel is executive editor of the *Monthly Labor Review,* which is published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Welcome to first edition of the redesigned *Monthly Labor Review (MLR).* This design journey has been 2 years in the making. We hope you enjoy the new look. This article will present an abbreviated history of some of the changes that this journal has undergone over the years, discuss the changes that have been implemented with the redesign, explain some of the thought that went into these changes, and lastly, identify some ongoing work.

A brief history of the *MLR*

Established in 1915, the *Monthly Labor Review* is the principal journal of fact, analysis, and research from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, the Bureau). Over the years, the *MLR* has undergone various changes to both its content and appearance. (See figure 1.) The very first issue of the publication—called the *Monthly Review* until 1918—was approximately a 6- by 9-inch pamphlet. The most popular topics in that first volume were labor–management relations, working conditions, and food prices.

Figure 1



The July 1947 issue “marks the first change in format in the 32 years of publication,” according to then- editor-in-chief Lawrence R. Klein. He further noted, “The change was motivated by a desire to create greater clarity and readability and to facilitate in the presentation of both graphic and tabular materials.” The publication grew to standard magazine size and the interior design was originated by Charles Pollock (the less famous of the Pollock brothers, both American abstract expressionist painters).[1]

As tensions regarding race relations were climaxing, the *MLR* dedicated its March 1968 issue to “Labor in the South.” This special issue was the first time the cover of the *MLR* appeared in full color. This still is one of the most requested archival issues of the *MLR*.

Under the direction of Herbert C. Morton, the January 1972 issue featured a new logo and nameplate for the *MLR,* and the covers from this point forward were in full color. (See figure 1.)

In 1995, a design change to the *MLR* incorporated another new nameplate for the cover as well as color throughout the publication. The addition of color, particularly in the charts, helped pave the way for more complex charts and the ability to convey more information in a chart.

In 2005, the *MLR* made its first appearance online. However, at the close of 2007, in response to budget cutbacks and the public's growing use of the Internet, the Bureau of Labor Statistics ceased printing the *Monthly Labor Review*. From that point forward, the *MLR* became an online-only journal; however, the *Review* continued to be published in a print-oriented format, despite its online-only existence.

In the fall of 2011, the Bureau launched a team[2] to reimagine the *Monthly Labor Review* as a journal in a web-oriented world. The team did an environmental scan of other scholarly journals and similar government publications. Using web metrics, the team also did some analysis of how users get to the *MLR* site and which articles seem to draw the greatest number of page views. The recommendations were further refined based upon feedback from developers and other stakeholders. Design work on the *MLR* started in January 2013, followed by a fair amount of work transferring the archive into the new design.[3]

In terms of readership, circulation of the first issue of the *MLR* was 8,000 copies; in June 2013, readers accessed 1.1 million page views of *MLR* content. Much of the content accessed was from the most recent issue, but constant access of the archives implies that the information *MLR* publishes continues to stay relevant, sometimes even years after initial publication. In fact, among journals covering industrial relations and labor, the *Review* ranks high in terms of influence.[4]

A guide to the redesigned homepage

The design of the online *MLR* had not been touched since its first appearance online in 2005. The BLS nameplate, which appears throughout the BLS.gov website, was absent. The presentation was fairly simple, displaying the table of contents for the current issue. The staff had often received complaints that archival material was difficult to find.

Please refer to figure 2 to follow along with the description of the changes to the *MLR* homepage. Users can perform a self-guided tour by hovering over the page to get descriptions of the various elements.

Navigation. With this in mind, the new design brings in the BLS banner and improved navigation, allowing users to get to the rest of the Bureau's information with a simple click. Just below the BLS banner and top navigation, in the upper left corner is the *MLR* nameplate, and to the right is the *MLR* navigation ribbon. This ribbon will appear on all HTML pages of the *MLR*. The first item in the navigation is the "Home" tab. This will always take readers back to the homepage of the *MLR*. The next item in the navigation is "Archives." This menu item has a drop-down list and allows readers to find archival materials by date, subject, department, and author. The next item, "For Authors," is a page that describes the requirements when submitting materials to the *MLR* and provides helpful tips for ensuring a speedy response to submissions. The final menu item, "About," gives some information about the *MLR* and includes a list of the editorial and technical staff who keep the publication going.

Figure 2

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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FEATURED ARTICLE

MARCH 2013

U.S. labor market continued to improve in 2012

Lisa Williamson

The U.S. labor market continued to improve slowly in 2012 as unemployment trended downward and employment grew. In the fourth quarter of the year, 12.2 million people were unemployed and the unemployment rate was 7.8 percent, nearly a full percentage point lower than a year earlier. Total civilian employment grew at a faster pace in 2012 than in 2011. (For a comparison of the employment measures available from the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the Current Employment Statistics survey (CES), see the box on page 4.) Still, even with the modest improvement in the job market, a number of labor market problems persisted. For example, the proportion of unemployed people who had been without work for 6 months or longer remained close to historically high levels.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Mothers and the clock

Reviewed by Julie Munson

Many mothers of young children will likely have comparison in mind when approaching this book: "How do I measure up to other mothers caring for their children? Do I spend more time caring for them than average? What about other mothers in my income bracket, or with similarly aged children?" The Time Use of Mothers in the United States at the Beginning of the 21st Century is data rich and has those answers, but it is written more for researchers than for a mother who wants to quickly see how she stacks up while she transitions between making a meal, snuggling and reading with children, ensuring the cleanliness of the kids and their clothes, and guaranteeing that homework gets done.

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BEYOND BLS

Gender gap in patenting

Jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) are often thought of as drivers of innovation in a nation's economy, and the lack of female representation in STEM occupations has recently made headlines.

Do women avoid salary negotiations?

Women are somewhat more likely than their male counterparts to negotiate for higher pay if a job has a flexible salary offer.

U.S. working women are they falling behind in the labor force race?

Is a smaller proportion of U.S. women in the workforce than women in other countries?

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RECENT ARTICLES

Slow and steady: payroll employment grew moderately in 2012
March 2013

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March 2013

Changes in federal and state unemployment insurance legislation in 2012
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March 2013

Recent college graduates in the U.S. labor force: data from the Current Population Survey
February 2013

Hispanic/Latino fatal occupational injury rates
February 2013

State labor legislation enacted in 2012
February 2013

FLASHBACK

May 1981

Finding and maintaining a domestic energy supply is a topic that not only garners attention today, but also was of importance following the oil embargo of the 1970s. This article takes a look at how employment in the energy-related industries expanded greatly following the embargo-related price shocks

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Search box. To the right of the navigation bar is a search box. This is a new feature of the *MLR*. The search is a full-text search of all *MLR* content. A great deal of work went into tagging all of the content items with keywords so that the search engine can provide reliable search results.

Articles. In terms of the presentation of the articles on the homepage, the most recent article, which will be labeled "Featured Article," will always appear in the area just below the nameplate and will be accompanied by an image. As the next article becomes available, the title of what had been the featured article will move to the "Recent Articles" section in the right-hand column. The articles listed in the recent articles section are listed in descending order by when they were first published. To see earlier articles, readers should go to the "Archives" tab in the *MLR* navigation ribbon.

Book Review. Just below the featured article, readers will find the book review. The change here is that we will begin including an image of the book cover along with a brief description of the review and a link to read the review.

Beyond BLS. Below the book review is the newly named "Beyond BLS" department. This department is essentially the same as the former Précis department. The Beyond BLS department features summaries of published articles or working papers dealing with economic research from outside our walls. We hope to feature a broader range of items in the Beyond BLS department.

Flashback. Under the "Recent Articles" box is a section called "Flashback." This area will highlight previously published *MLR* articles. The *MLR* staff will strive to highlight articles that either have particular relevance to the featured article or are relevant to recent economic news.

Subscribe. Below Flashback is a box that allows readers to subscribe to email alerts that notify subscribers when new articles available. Readers simply enter their email address and click "enter"; this will take readers to the full list of BLS email subscriptions that are available.

Article presentation

Possibly one of the more striking changes to the *MLR* is the presentation of the articles. Each article, starting with those first published this month, is now presented in HTML. This allows for ease of reading on multiple platforms, whether it's a desktop computer, a smartphone, or a tablet. An HTML format also allows better access to the full content of the *MLR* for those using screen readers. For readers who are interested in a printer-friendly version, a PDF is available at bottom of the "Related Content" box.

In the articles themselves, a web presentation allows authors to use the tools the web has to offer. Authors can easily link to relevant content. They will also have the ability to display interactive infographics as the material warrants. All charts will have an underlying data table and readers and researchers will be able to view the data.

Readers will also be able to control how much of the article is shown at a time. The default presentation will show "page 1" of the article, and users can continue to paginate through the remainder of the article or can select "View full article" to view the entire article on a single page.

Readers will note that, to the right of the article, there is an "About the Author" box. By clicking on the author's name, readers will be presented with links to other *MLR* articles by that particular author. We will continue to provide contact information and a short bio for each author.

Below the author information box is the "Related Content" box. Within this box are some selected publications that relate to the article. Most of the related content links will be to other *MLR* articles, but in some instances, we may link to articles in other BLS publications, such as *Beyond the Numbers*.

Also in the related content box is a list of related subjects presented as keywords describing the topics that the article encompasses. Readers may explore more *MLR* articles on a particular subject by simply clicking on the keyword.

Publication schedule

In the final sentence of the introduction to the first edition of the *MLR*, it states "The *Monthly Review* will be issued on the 29th day of the month."[5] In recent years, the *MLR* has been published on the last business day of the month. Publishing an issue on a specific day of the month was necessary for getting the publication to the printer, but in a web-oriented world, specifying a particular date is unnecessary and perhaps outmoded.

From July 2013 forward, the *MLR* will be published on a flow basis; that is, articles will be published as they become ready throughout the month. Each article will be dated with the month and the year of publication to make searching the *MLR* archives easier. The hope is that this will provide fresh content to our readers throughout the month. There will be times where BLS will publish articles simultaneously, but BLS will reserve this for special compilation issues, such as the "Projections" issue.

Archives

One of the chief complaints that *MLR* staff has heard from both readers and authors was that it was difficult to search the archives. In response to this concern, the staff has done a great deal of work to try and make search and navigation of the archival material more straightforward.

From the January 1981 issue forward, each article has been tagged with a date, keywords, and author information. Also included in the archives is the archival material from the now-shuttered *Compensation and Working Conditions Online* (also known as *CWC Online*) publication.

By clicking on the "Archives" button in the navigation ribbon, users will be able to browse through the archive by author, date, department, and subject.

By selecting "Browse by Author," users will find the authors listed first name first but sorted according the author's last name (as it was at publication). Readers can quickly jump to a different spot in the alphabet by selecting a letter from the box on the right. When readers click on a particular author's name, they will see a list of all of the *MLR* or *CWC Online* pieces authored or co-authored by that individual.

Readers who wish to use the "Browse by Date" function will note that the current year archive will show as the default. To browse earlier years, readers only need to select the year of interest in the box to the right.

For readers who are interested in perusing previous book reviews, the "Browse by Department" option may suit their needs. Readers need only select the department of interest in the box to the right.

Finally, the "Browse by Subject" archive is quite similar to the subject index as previously published. As they can with the other archive pages, readers can jump to a subject by selecting a letter of the alphabet in the box to the right.

Changes to departments

There are some changes to the departments in the *MLR*. We will no longer distinguish between reports and articles; they will all be categorized as articles. Each article now will include an abstract, and authors may include a list of references that would appear after the article text. In addition, as the *MLR* has done for the past 6 months, articles previously published in the *CWC Online* are now included as part of the collection of articles published in the *MLR*.

Also, the *MLR* is moving away from publishing visual essays. BLS now has a format better suited to the visual presentation of materials; look for visual essays in *Spotlight on Statistics*. We encourage readers to peruse this publication for data analysis in a more visually oriented presentation.

The aforementioned Beyond BLS will essentially remain the same as what had previously been called the Précis department. In addition to publishing the regular summaries of research outside of BLS, from time to time this department may feature papers authored by BLS researchers that have appeared in other journals.

The *MLR* is discontinuing the Current Labor Statistics section. The *MLR* reimagine team felt that more up-to-date information could be found elsewhere throughout the Bureau website. For some guidance on where to find tables similar to those which had been presented in the Current Labor Statistics, please see https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/clsdiscon.htm.

Finally, the Labor Month in Review department has also been discontinued, along with an issue cover and tables of contents. Because the *MLR* is publishing on a flow basis, *MLR* staff didn't feel that this department added much value because it would likely come out after all the material for the month had been published.

Ongoing efforts

In addition to instituting the look and feel changes, BLS has also reestablished the *MLR* Editorial Board. Some of the goals of this advisory group are to advise and assist in the compilation of special topical issues of the *MLR* and to review the slate of submissions to identify gaps, opportunities, and redundancies.

As previously mentioned, the online archive only extends back to 1981. As resources become available, *MLR* staff will begin scanning in more of the archival material and making those articles electronically available.

There have been some slight scope changes to the material published in the *MLR* and some fairly major design changes to the presentation of this material, but what isn't changing is the BLS commitment to publishing high-quality, indepth analysis on issues related to the labor market and price behavior.

We hope you will let us know what you think of the new look and how we can best meet our readers' needs by dropping us a line at *MLR*@bls.gov.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Emily Lloyd Liddel, "The Monthly Labor Review gets a new look," *Monthly Labor Review,* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 2013, https://doi.org/10.21916/mlr.2013.23.

NOTES

1 *Monthly Labor Review*, July 1947, p. ii.

2 Members of the *Monthly Labor Review* reinvention team were Christen Byler, Elizabeth Handwerker, Carol Boyd Leon, Amar Mann, Joe Nunes, Jennifer Price, Terry Schau, Demetrio Scopelliti, and Keith Tapscott.

3 Members of the *Monthly Labor Review* development and testing groups were Robbin Galloway, Kristyn Jeschelnik, Rahul Mootha, Jerie Refugia, Dinara Sagatova, Roopa Sengupta, and Connie Sielaff.

4 Based upon the rankings at http://journal-ranking.com/.

5 *Monthly Review*, July 1915, p. 6.

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