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In the years immediately prior to the beginning of Crelle's Journal in 1826, the growing German mathematical research community adopted a variety of strategies for the diffusion of their creative work. This took place against major changes in the social and political background and in higher education. In this paper we examine the publishing practices of a selection of individuals, with attention to the varying venues, publics, and career strategies for the researchers. The investigation throws into sharp relief the importance of the appearance of a research journal for the development of mathematical research in the German-speaking world.