Journal development and recent trends in scholarly publishing

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TODAY’S TALK

Three main topics:

1. Recent trends and developments
2. What are the main aspects in improving journal quality?
3. What are the main outcomes from the recent JST journal development projects?
Recent trends and developments
SCHOLARLY ECOSYSTEM

https://101innovations.wordpress.com/
MAJOR ISSUES IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Access models  Blockchain  Artificial intelligence  Peer review

Preprints  Predatory practices  Infrastructure  Open data
WHAT IS PLAN S?

A group called ‘cOAlition S’ has a plan to accelerate the transition to fully Open Access by 2020: Plan S.

~17 members insist that grant recipients make their work Open Access at the point of publication.

Mostly European funders but also support from China, Canada, India, Jordan & Zambia. Not so much from the USA.
JOURNAL REQUIREMENTS OF PLAN S

Berlin Declaration – freely available, CC BY; authors retain copyright

Journals and platforms: ‘Compliant high quality’

Financial transparency, APC price caps, compliance
REQUIREMENTS OF PLAN S

No ‘hybrid’ or ‘mirror’ journals

Transformative agreements

Repository conditions
POSSIBLE IMPACTS OF PLAN S

Percentage of all articles:

- Global science and engineering articles: 26.7%
- Plan S funded authors: 3.5–8%
- Selected J-STAGE journals | Japanese Journals using ScholarOne: 4–6%
POSSIBLE IMPACTS OF PLANS

However, society journals (especially small ones) are potentially vulnerable:

- Smaller author pool
- Lower revenue, fewer sources
- Higher operating costs
- Increased IT requirements
CRITICISMS OF PLAN S

Timeframe
Lack of clarity
Academic freedom
One size fits all
Current efforts fail
Preprints & repositories?
FUTURE OF PLAN S

• Still uncertain:
  • Expecting updates (May 2019?) and revisions
  • Ongoing debate
  • Many organizations have ‘guarded support’ for Plan S, especially the overall goals of better access for more people, but have issues with the details and timelines
  • Large publishers strongly support hybrid model

Do EU public funders hold the sway to be able to shift the scholarly communications system via a scheme like Plan S?
WHAT CAN JOURNALS DO?

• Be a ‘quality’ journal
• Consider OA if you are not OA
• If OA is not possible, explore other measures
  • Transparent hybrid OA pricing
  • Preprint servers/green route
  • Launch new OA journal (not a mirror)
• If you are OA, apply to DOAJ, attend to other aspects. Join COPE.
• Work with JST to ensure J-STAGE is a compliant platform.
What are the main aspects in improving journal quality?
WHAT MAKES A GOOD JOURNAL?

For authors

• Wide readership, great reputation
• Good Impact Factor
• Fast turnaround
• In relevant subject area

• Good editorial service
• Good platform / publishing services
• Compliant with mandates
• Makes a contribution to a society

For readers

• Interesting, relevant, vital to their work
• Consistently high-quality content
• Varied selection of articles

• Good reputation (of journal and Editorial Board)
• Useful journal features

For societies

• Facilitates community, conversation, connection, discourse, progress
• Makes surplus (or doesn’t lose money)

• Member benefit
• Enhances society reputation
JOURNAL DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

- Plan
- Implement
- Measure
- Review

The cycle goes from Plan to Implement, then to Measure, and finally to Review.
REVIEWING JOURNAL ELEMENTS

Journal review

Foundations

Editorial / Content

Marketing

Distribution / Business model

Technology, Production, Publication
Collect and collate key metrics and parameters

Obtain relevant information from journal

Write reports, collate priorities

Prepare JDP, obtain consensus

Implementation

JDP = Journal Development Plan
## SOME KEY INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundations</th>
<th>Editorial / Content</th>
<th>Distribution / Business model</th>
<th>Technology, Production, Publication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Widely understood journal strategy, good Aims &amp; Scope</td>
<td># submissions, by article type, country, commissioned</td>
<td>Open Access?</td>
<td>Digital first with JATS XML and PDF, open metadata</td>
<td>Marketing Plan</td>
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<td>Comprehensive journal policies encompassed in a Guide to Authors</td>
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<td>Editorial Board structure and function</td>
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<td>Author satisfaction</td>
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<td>Excellent society journal website</td>
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<td>Journal development plan</td>
<td>Turnaround times</td>
<td>Robust legal forms</td>
<td>Would qualify for DOAJ / COPE / Plan S</td>
<td>Brand development</td>
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## ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE: INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

### Section Assessment

<table>
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<td>Introductory statement</td>
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<td>AIMS &amp; SCOPE</td>
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<td>Unoriginal material</td>
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<td>Image and Data integrity</td>
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<td>Reproducing copyrighted material</td>
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<td>Availability of data and materials</td>
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### Key

- **Absent**
- **Lacking**
- **OK**
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PUTTING ELEMENTS TOGETHER

Journal strategy and Review ✔ + Know what makes a good journal ✔ = Journal Development Plan (JDP)
### JOURNAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (BRIEF)

#### Priorities

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<td>Ed. Board structure &amp; internationalization</td>
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#### Actions

- **Set new journal policies on missing elements**
- **Revise Aims and Scope**
- **Revise Instructions to Authors**
- **Review Editorial Board structure and roles**
- **Revise Ed. Board through targeted recruitment**
- **Review and set criteria for acceptance**
- **Enact Reviewer guidelines**
- **Redesign website, with a focus on authors**
- **Include revised journal policies**
- **Improve text**

#### Elements addressed

- **Reputation**
- **Relevance to authors’ disciplines**
- **Increase submissions**
- **Reputation**
- **Relevance to authors’ disciplines**
- **Quality of peer review**
- **Awareness and propensity to submit**
- **Reputation**
- **Relevance to discipline**
JOURNAL DEVELOPMENT SPIRALS

Poor foundations

- Fewer submissions
- Fewer citations/ lower JIF

- Fewer submissions
- Reviewers don’t respond
- People decline Invited Reviews
- Lower APC or subscription revenue
- Potential Ed Board members decline

Keep improving:
- More & better submissions
- Reviewers say yes more often
- Better Reviews submitted

With editorial development and marketing:
- More citations/ higher JIF
- More & better submissions
- Solid foundations
What are the main outcomes from the recent JST journal development projects?
2016 – Standard guidelines and proforma documents

2017 – Open Access Pilot project
Two journals
- Assess applicability of OA based on strategic, financial, legal and other aspects
- If yes, start to implement change

2018 – Journal Development project
Four journals across biology, medicine, physical sciences
1. Newly launching journal
2. Young journal (Vol 3 in 2018)
3. More established journal, but still developing
4. Established journal with large publishing output
Step 1: Assess journal position

- Created >100-line journal data spreadsheet, based on questionnaire responses and other research
- Constructed comprehensive assessment, including:
  - Overall assessment against range of metrics (reputation, size, scientific rigor, etc.)
  - Comparison to an idealized ITA
  - Assessment against requirements of e.g. DOAJ, PMC, Clarivate, idealized website, etc.
2018 PROJECT: STEPS 2-4

Step 2: Prioritize development needs
• Prepared Assessment Overview with suggested priorities
• Conducted discussions with journals
• Produced an agreed list of issues and priorities

Step 3: Prepare Journal Development Plan
• Constructed a clear plan based on the journal’s priorities and the projects’ requirements
• Prepared a schedule for implementation

Step 4: Implement Journal Development Plan
• Provided individually tailored documents and advice
2018 PROJECT: OUTPUTS

- >190,000 words written
- >475 document pages
- >250 emails exchanged
- >11 meetings held

Questionnaires and responses
Meeting agendas and memos
Data sheets and assessments, including
- Journal data + overall journal assessment
- Aims and Scope analysis
- Assessment vs idealized ITA, DOAJ, PMC, Clarivate
- Editorial Board planning
- Website advice
Assessment overviews
Open Access & copyright seminar
Instructions to Authors + revisions, including:
- Aims ad Scope
- Acceptance criteria
- Journal policies
Publishing Plan + revisions
Interim and final reports
Comprehensive advice via email
Despite different types of journals, there were common issues:
2018 PROJECT: MAIN OUTCOMES

Journals now have:

• Revised Aims and Scope statements
• New policies and new ITAs, with professional layout, English, and styling
• Revised Editorial Boards
• Publishing plan and foundational journal documents
• More knowledge and information about scholarly publishing and how to develop their journals
NEXT STEPS

Journal review

- Foundations
- Editorial / Content
- Marketing
- Distribution / Business model
- Technology, Production, Publication

To do

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NEXT STEPS

**Editorial** - how do you become a top tier journal? Who are the best people in the field? What fields? What will your area look like in 10 years? What can you do to shape that? Will you receive those papers?

**Publication and technology** - what initiatives are important to keep your journal at the cutting edge? Can you introduce them? Will your articles be available to new technologies? How do you decide what is useful and what is not?

**Business strategy** - how do you want to develop the program? What suite of journals or what qualities? What new areas are there to move into? How do you deal with changes to publishing landscape? e.g. funder mandates, author behaviour, AI and tech that open new opportunities? What are the copyright and legal implications of new publishing models and how does that impact business? Who will you hire to get you there?

**Marketing** - what do you know about your authors and readers? Who are they? How will you reach more people, more often? What brand image do you have, or do you want?

Keep improving every year
CONCLUSIONS

Through our collaboration, INLEXIO, JST and a number of Japanese societies have successfully demonstrated a framework and model of journal development that can:

• be applied to a range of different journals – independent of their subject, age, publishing model, etc.
• be implemented within an annual cycle
• produce concrete and successful outcomes for journals
• increase journals’ understanding of world’s best practice in scholarly publishing.
Slide 10
- J-Stage supplied – personal communication

Slide 11

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THANK YOU!

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