WHAT ARE EXPECTATIONS FOR JOURNALS FOR SCOPUS DATABASE?

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ARTICLE vs JOURNAL

- Author – Editor
- Experienced researchers - experienced editors
- Introduction – Aims & Scope
- Citations – CiteScore/ImpactFactor
EVALUATING JOURNALS

- Bibliometricians
  qualitative, rather objective, focusses on metric issues

- Subject editors
  can focus on relationships within discipline, recognises outliers and eccentric and narrow focus journals

TYPICALLY A STEP MIX OF BOTH

THE CONTENTS SELECTION ADVISORY BOARD

- The Content Selection Advisory Board works with 17 subject chairs
- The make the day-to-day decisions about admission to SCOPUS
- Meets twice a year to consider strategic issues
SUBJECT CHAIR
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

- Environmental journal character
  - Very broad topic area
  - How do you judge quality?
  - Yet probably an issue with all topic areas
  
  *Reflects my own experiences...*

KEY AREAS OF EVALUATION

- Journal policy
- Content quality
- Journal standing
- Regularity
- Online availability

*...developed within Scopus, but typical of approaches to journal evaluation...*
ONLINE AVAILABILITY

- Usually check this first
- Try and download some published MSS, not always those chosen by the editor for assessment
- The appearance and ease of use of the website is not typically a critical factor in decision making

My assessment often more generous than the internal one…

JOURNAL POLICY

SCOPE

- Sometimes be just a vague statement - journal rapidly publishes high quality articles
- The area is sometimes so broad as to have no niche to occupy
- Sometimes no clarity about why an author would choose to publish there
- Ethics increasingly important

Journal of Rubber Research
Malaysian Rubber Board
International Journal of Entomology and Zoology
JOURNAL POLICY –
STRUCTURE OF BOARD - ORGINS OF AUTHORS
REFEREE PROCESS

- Journal may claim to be international, yet editors/authors are drawn from one country
- Editor status/expertise
- Regional journals do best if the attempt to link with wider international audience
- Narrow authorship appropriate for a region?
- Yet some exceed such expectations

Malaysian Polymer Journal
Plastics Rubber Institute of Malaysia

LOCAL JOURNALS

- Show importance within a region
- Focus on local strengths and knowledgeable authors
- Distinctiveness/focus in the face of local competition
- Need for ISSN

Assessment of quality needs to recognise relevance both locally and beyond
AUTHOR NAME

- In Chinese, Korean especially, but also Smith in English and Singh in India can cause mis-identification of authors
- This is much improved by ORCID
- Many journals ask for ORCID numbers on submission

http://orcid.org/

JOURNAL POLICY – REFEREE PROCESS

- Sometimes unclear
- Hints that it is not of a high standard
- Difficulties in attracting referees
- Use biased referees
  - Not coauthors
  - Not colleagues
- Checks on refereeing

That’s it? That’s peer review?
CONTENT QUALITY
QUALITY AND CONFORMITY WITH STATED AIDS AND SCOPE

- Are the articles recognisably associated with the journal title and scope?
- Are they reasonably distributed across the scope?

This can be a problem for some journals... suggests they have problems in attracting articles or worse...

CONTENT QUALITY

- Quality of layout counts
- Figures can be revealing cut & paste from Excel!
- Are the articles and abstracts readable?
- Look at the hypotheses and conclusions especially
- Frequent problems descriptive/repetitive essay/review lacking intellectual synthesis
NOVELTY
DIFFERENT TYPES OF NOVELTY

- In research- often clearest innovation
- Repeats earlier work at new location, chemical, species…
  Can easily become descriptive
- In interpretation – linked to other work
  This is the hardest and is the most effort
- In conclusion

STRENGTHENING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Often seem to be omitted by many authors
- Is this simply a case study?
- Description without hypothesis
- This often leads to weak conclusions

Some articles seem to be data in search of a hypothesis….
REVIEWs

- Types of reviews:
  - Clinical reviews
  - Data synthesis e.g. global budgets
  - Literature reviews
- Can be used to refocus a journal
- Especially after changes to scope or title
- Attract large numbers of citations if:
  - timely
  - represents a novel intellectual synthesis
  - redirects the field

PROBLEMS WITH REVIEWS

- Simple listing of literature
- Crude bibliometric analysis with little reason or sense of direction
- Often require
  - Novel intellectual synthesis
  - Projecting future directions
FIGURES

- Often seem cut and pasted from Excel!
- Not always tuned to understanding the data
- Poorly positioned and
- Mock 3-D very popular!

Suggests a lack of professionalism....

LOW INFORMATION CONTENT

![Box plot with data](image-url)

- coarse fraktion (>2 mm)
- n = 77
**CONTENT QUALITY**
**NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

- About 10% of the journals are not in English
- Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Polish frequent, but also Farsi, Chinese...
- Can I assess the article? Can I get help?
- Is the journal going to widen its readership?

"We only want Polish readers..."

**WIDENING READERSHIP**
**NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

- Journal title in English – more a problem for Roman alphabet languages such as Malay, Polish etc.
- Offer key words and abstract in English
- Translate both figure and table captions
- Reference list in Roman alphabet (requirement)
JOURNAL STANDING
CITATIONS

- What percentage of articles have been cited?
- How many times are articles cited?
- How recent are the citations?
- Who is citing the articles?
- What country does the citation come from?

However inclusion in Scopus may shift this... what it will look like in future?

PROBLEMS WITH
CITESCORE/IMPACT FACTOR

- Politics of impact factors
- Delays to publication
- Citation engineering
- (Mis)calculation of impact factors: $\frac{N_{\text{cit}}}{N_{\text{art}}}$
- Time span and citation half lives
- Individual impact: IF ~ 20% of variance
INCREASING CITATIONS

- Increasing quality
- Widening access to journal’s audience
- Care with short/preliminary communications
- Publishing timely reviews
- Increasing publication speed
- Integrated cross-referenced special issues
- Requiring updated reference lists
- Saving good articles for beginning of year

ORCID

Need for immediacy cannot await a full paper

Generally regarded as ethical...

PRESS RELEASES

Profile of interesting, but potentially neglected papers

Carbon in Black Crusts from the Tower of London

Stones of cathedral tell corrosive story

Europhotonics, press, television, radio... even National Geographic!
CUMMULATIVE CITATIONS

1000

Nature

Environment

Science & Technology

Atmospheric Environment

1

1 201 401 601 801 1001

article number

citation

CITATION ENGINEERING

… typically by increasing internal citations

- Increasing the number of citable non-article items: letters, product reviews etc
- Writing heavily self-referenced editorials
- Pressuring authors to cite the journal
- Manipulating the reference lists

Usually regarded as unethical…?
**JOURNAL STANDING**

**EDITORS**

- Big boards – are they padded?
- Editors well known and widely published?
- Professional editors (i.e. not academics)
  - Some excellent
  - May not have expert knowledge
  - However they need a good/accessible board

*Non academic editors need convincing web page to outline their editorial philosophy*

**REGULARITY**

- Usually journals manage to meet this
- Some have low publication frequency or quantity, that makes their viability worth thinking about
- May be understandable in some fields

*Rarely a problem...*
**ETHICAL ISSUES**

**INCREASING IMPORTANCE**

**Last laugh**

by Annemarie Glaser

**Presentations at 10 a.m.**

- Creating fake papers
- Approving research proposals in 10 minutes or less
- Increasing a journal’s impact factor through self-citation
- Conducting peer review without reviewers urging signatures

**Room**

Cairo
London

**CareerMart 2009**

“I can’t decide which talk to attend—they’re all so relevant for a career in academic publishing!”

**PRINCIPLES OF TRANSPARENCY**

1. Peer review process
2. Governing body
3. Editorial team contacts
4. Author fees
5. Copyright
6. Dealing with misconduct
7. Ownership and management
8. Web site
9. Name of journal
10. Conflicts of interest
11. Access
12. Revenue sources
13. Advertising
14. Publishing schedule
15. Archiving
16. Direct marketing

**NEW CRITERIA**