The Researcher’s Critical Path – How should the publishing community address the current gaps and future needs of the researcher?

Insights Into What’s on the Researcher’s Mind With Respect to the Academic Publishing Process

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Editage / Cactus Communications

Helping You Get Closer to Your Authors | Helping Authors Get Published
Let’s begin with some facts for perspective...

EVERY YEAR

ABOUT 8 MILLION RESEARCHERS

PUBLISH

2.5 MILLION ARTICLES

8,000,000
2.5 MILLION ARTICLES IN

28,134 Peer-reviewed English-language journals*

10,900 journals

22,000 journals

Included in Thomson Reuters’ Journal Citation Reports

Included in Scopus

* As of 2014 - Ulrich’s database

Note: Venn diagram not to scale
Increasing research output from ESL countries

**SOURCE:** Battelle, R&D Magazine, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, CIA Fact Book, OECD.
This causes a lot of pressure...

For authors

And for journal editors

Publish or Perish
Previously identified gap in perspectives between authors and editors

Authors think...

• They understand publication ethics and do the best they can to adhere to standard guidelines
• They address and respond carefully to all peer reviewer comments
• Journal instructions for authors are often incomplete and unclear

Editors think...

• Authors don’t realize the importance of publication ethics
• Authors only address the peer reviewer comments they find agreeable
• Journal instructions for authors are generally clear and complete

Please, mind the gap!
So we asked authors globally for their opinions

- Ongoing survey by **Editage Insights**, a global learning and resource platform for researchers
- Survey being run in English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Portuguese
- Seeking authors’ opinions on all aspects of the journal publication process

Manuscript preparation
Journal selection
Journal processes
Peer review
Open access
Publication ethics

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
Total number of respondents for each survey language (Interim analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplified Chinese</td>
<td>1,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>1,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$n = 5,293$

The story so far – An interim analysis (5,259 responses)

Which of these primary roles do you identify yourself with as a researcher?

Roles identified when selecting “other”

- Author 83%
- Journal editor 4%
- Institutional head or administrator 1%
- Other 12%

$n = 5,259$

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
Top 10 countries represented (current location)

Number of authors currently working in these countries

- China: 1,493
- Brazil: 909
- Republic of Korea: 306
- Japan: 283
- United States of America: 273
- India: 211
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: 78
- Australia: 68
- Turkey: 50
- Canada: 45
- Portugal: 44

n = 4,299

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
Author respondents by field of study

- Medicine and Allied Health Sciences: 37.8%
- Humanities and Social Sciences: 18.9%
- Life Sciences: 18.2%
- Physical Sciences: 8.7%
- Other (please specify): 16.4%

Fields identified when selecting “other”

- Architecture
- Information Technology
- Development
- Human Business Law
- Mathematics Teaching
- Chemistry Research
- Engineering
- Interdisciplinary Science Public Health
- Education Arts Management Psychology
- Applied Test Economics Veterinary Medicine Nursing Energy

n = 4,299

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
Experience and English proficiency of author respondents

How long have you been involved in academic research and/or journal publishing?

- More than 5 years: 50%
- 1 to 5 years: 38%
- Less than 1 year: 12%

What is your written English proficiency?

- English is my first language: 52%
- English is not my first language but I’m comfortable writing in English: 38%
- English is not my first language and I find it challenging to write in English: 10%

How many papers have you published in an international English-language journal?

- More than 5: 29%
- 1 to 5: 36%
- Trying to publish my first: 18%
- None: 17%

n = 4,298

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
What do authors struggle with most?

Percent authors who find specific stages of the publishing process “VERY DIFFICULT”?

- Manuscript preparation and submission: 33.8%
- Responding to peer reviewer comments: 27.1%
- Selecting a journal for your manuscript: 18.9%
- Tracking manuscript status in journal submission systems: 14.7%
- Ensuring compliance relevant ethical guidelines: 8.5%


n = 4,277
## How do authors choose a journal for their manuscript?

Factors considered, ranked from MOST IMPORTANT (1) to LEAST IMPORTANT (7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The journal should have a high impact factor for my field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The journal should have published similar papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The journal should offer a short time-to-publication or have a rapid publication option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>My colleagues and seniors should be reading the journal regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The journal should have a clear and professional-looking website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The journal should be open access or have an open access publishing option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The journal’s submission process and charges should be clearly mentioned on its website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ n = 3,876 \]

**SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES:** [http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD](http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD)
Perspectives on open access publication

Have you ever published in an open access journal, or chosen to make your paper open access in a subscription-based journal?

Reasons for publishing open access (% respondents)*
- Increase research outreach (34.3%)
- Coincidence (29.5%)
- Preference for OA (15.3%)
- Publication guarantee by the journal (13.6%)
- Institutional/funding body mandate (7.3%)

Reasons for not publishing open access (% respondents)*
- Coincidence (34.3%)
- Affordability (29.5%)
- Lack of understanding (15.3%)
- Mistrust in quality of OA journals (13.6%)
- No adequate benefits of OA seen (7.3%)

n = 3,875

*Multiple selections allowed

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
In general, how well do you think journal guidelines for authors are framed?

- Clear and complete: 27%
- Clear but incomplete: 42%
- I don't know: 4%
- Unclear and incomplete: 11%
- Unclear but complete: 16%

n = 3,799

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
Perspectives on time to publication

What is the shortest time in which you’ve had a paper published (from submission)?

- I haven’t had a paper published yet: 14.7%
- More than 6 months: 15.2%
- 3 to 6 months: 25.7%
- 1 to 3 months: 25.6%
- Less than 1 month: 6.7%

How long do you think it should ideally take to publish a paper in a journal (from submission)?

- It doesn’t matter how long it takes if the quality of publication is high: 8.0%
- Less than 6 months: 26.3%
- Less than 3 months: 45.2%
- Less than 1 month: 8.3%

n = 3,775

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
What aspects of journal publishing do authors want changed?

Would you like to change something in the publishing system?

- Yes (check my comments below)
- No. I am satisfied with the system

51.7% 48.3%
n = 3,712

Main pain points and author-suggested areas of improvement:

1. Time to publication
2. Peer review process/quality
3. Fairness/objectivity/bias
4. Affordability (costs/charges)
5. Pressure to publish
6. Process standardization

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
Why take months to close to a year just to say no

There should be an effort to uniformize manuscripts requirements (such as file type, file size, figure embedding, and so on, and so forth)

Yes, the system needs to be faster and less bureaucratic

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
I believe that the pressures should be reduced in order to get a really good, reproducible study.

Young researchers should have a different section for publication in each peer reviewed journal.

More access to resources / help for publication

Use instant communication tools like QQ, WeChat

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
Improve the peer review system.
There should be a way for this work to be better recognized academically, since many researchers refuse to "waste time" giving a correct opinion to help the authors.

Expand bilingual or trilingual journals in order to internationalize science.

High impact journals charge too much to publish the article.

It should have a defense system where authors can file complaints.

Sample author comments about the journal publishing system

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD
Question Period / Open Discussion

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