POWER UP!

Supercharging the manuscript-to-journal pathway

Chris Leonard, Cactus Communications
Warning!

I’m a twitter addict and my references are largely to tweets, occasionally memes.
Submitting manuscripts to journals sucks
And it takes up valuable time

• The time to submit online (up to 2 hours for multi-author papers)
• The time to first editorial screening (desk reject)
• The time to accept or reject (a fortnite, up to >12 months).
  • If reject – start the whole process again.

Cait Cavanagh, PhD
@Cait_Cavanagh

Today a manuscript I really care about was accepted for publication. In the 3 years since we finished writing it, it was rejected at 7+ journals. But we believed in the paper’s contribution and know it’s going to impact the field.

Just a reminder not to give up on your work!

3:56pm · 23 Oct 2019 · Twitter for iPhone
And it feels meaningless to the author

These people are our brightest and best, and we’re ‘wasting’ their time on what feels like a tedious call of duty.

Surely we can do better than this in the early part of the 21st century?
What would it look like if an author reinvented the whole process?

• In product development there is great focus on user-centered design.
• There has been a notable lack of that in academic services.
• What would submission systems look like in an author-centered universe?
Here’s what we learnt...

• Authors want to submit once and once ONLY
• Authors want primacy and citeability of preprints
• BUT they also want the authentication that only a peer reviewed journal brings
Things suggest themselves from there

• Author writes, and then will preferably upload to a preprint server. That’s the last time they want to worry about uploading it anywhere.

• But can we make it even easier on the author? Emailing the URL to a journal editor still feels like a shot in the dark.
Making it better

• Showcase unpublished work to multiple journal editors
• Filter out manuscripts that would be desk-rejected
• Match articles semantically to journals
• Let editors filter by relevance, quality, geography etc.
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<td>84%</td>
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PubSURE Team

- You have 3 invitations to submit to journals
Why did Cactus do this (and not X)?

• At Cactus, we act as a kind of umbrella operation, spanning multiple publishers. As such we are publisher-independent.

• At Cactus, we have 18 years of experience and consistent manuscript throughput with Editage.

• At Cactus we have been developing AI tools in NLP for academic publishing for the last 24 months and have market feedback on what works well - and not so well.

• At Cactus we have a vision to work with researchers to reimagine academia from their point of view.
What’s in it for journals/editors?

• See the best content first.
• Improve the quality of your journal.
• Improve your coverage from rapidly growing research centers.
• Strategically steer content focus.
• Cut down on acquisition costs.
• Speed up publication time.
What’s in for preprint servers?

• Makes preprint servers even more attractive to authors
• Preprint servers as the *de facto* submission route to journals?
• Ensures that journals and preprint servers enjoy a (short-term) symbiotic relationship where they both get stronger thanks to closer ties between them.

> I’ll come back to this soon.
Who pays for all this?

• Business model is:
  • Free for authors forever
  • Free for editors until we have proved value, then of the order of an APC per journal per year.
  • Multiple editors per journal possible
  • Low/no barrier to sign up

• We do filter every applicant to screen out predatory journals.
What’s the next logical step?

• Where does this go next – or what are the extrapolations of this? How can we track, and field, suggestions on iterating this?
A plaintive plea to the world

Make your documents machine-readable.
Very few preprint servers offer or demand epub/html/xml
PDF is holding back many initiatives in interoperability & AI/ML/NLP.
Also a real accessibility issue.
How else can we Power Up researchers?

- People
- Processes
- Workflows

Processes and workflows are easy to re-engineer and rebuild. But the focus on these at the expense of a more holistic view of researchers means we aren’t as ‘user-centered’ as we might be.

What else is important? Support, networks, emotional backup, mentoring, mental health, education. Without this, everything else is of only marginal value.
YOU HAVE DIED OF DYSENTERY
Thank you!

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• christopher.leonard@cactusglobal.com / @hooHar

Answers: Super Mario World
         Fortnite
         Call of Duty
         Track and Field
         The Oregon Trail