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LIS Journal Quality:
Results of a Study for the IFLA Library and Information Science Journals Section

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Introduction

The concept of journal 'quality' traditionally has been measured against quantitative measures such as circulation, total number of pages per volume, number of times cited in the literature, and coverage by indexing services. This research project, undertaken on behalf of, and initially funded by, IFLA's Library and Information Science Journals Section (LISJ), follows a presentation by one of the investigators at IFLA Bangkok which sought to establish general criteria for assessing journal submissions from Asian authors (Gorman 1999). That paper suggested that quantitative measures were perhaps unsuitable for evaluating the qualitative factors that contribute to journal excellence. Following that presentation, and picking up a suggestion made some years earlier by Maurice Line, Ludmila Kozlova, Chair of LISJ's predecessor Round Table, asked the presenter to undertake a pilot study of journal quality.[1]

This investigation took a more qualitative approach to understanding journal quality based on perceptions of key stakeholders – the editors, referees, editorial

[1] The RTLISJ has since become a full section of IFLA's Division VII called the Library and Information Science Journals Section.

board members and impartial readers. The specific target of the study was Library and Information Science (LIS) journals, and the scope was a broadly based international investigation of journal quality. There can be no doubt that there are some very fine LIS journals that fully merit their reputations, but this can't deflect from the commonly expressed opinion that LIS journals around the world are of very uneven quality ranging from excellent to poor, that they do not meet a common set of standards of excellence, that there may not even be such a set of standards, that journals in developing countries in particular might benefit from a better understanding of quality, and that all such journals can become more effective channels for the communication of theory and practice to the various information professions within LIS. The end goal is journals that effectively encourage and facilitate the exchange of ideas, theories, best practices and news between practitioners, educators, students, vendors, and other interested parties.

However, 'improved journal quality' must take into account the reality that contributors to journals write for a variety of reasons (Gorman 1999). Primarily, scholars and practitioners write to disseminate new research findings or ideas. The publication of a journal article establishes precedent in the formation of new knowledge, and it puts the new information in the professional domain where it can be scrutinised, criticised and either accepted or rejected. It may then contribute to further discourse. Secondarily (perhaps), the author also makes personal gains by adding to a list of publications that can be used for tenure and promotion, for gaining professional acceptance that may lead to speaking engagements, consultancy work, perhaps even awards.

There is, then, an apparent contradiction between the intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for scholarly and professional writing, for personal benefits can result from numerous articles of indifferent quality, whereas the imperative for the discipline is the discovery of new conceptual approaches and new techniques, for which the need is for articles of the highest quality. That the scholarly communication system has survived almost unchanged for so long shows its robustness, but the inherent contradictions in the system make it vulnerable to distortion under certain circumstances. If, for example, the 'publish or perish' imperative creates such demand among hopeful authors that editors are overwhelmed with manuscripts of an indifferent quality, then there is potential for the erosion of standards. This may occur if new journals start up to cater for the unfulfilled demand from hopeful authors. There is some evidence from research by Calvert and Shi (2000) on quality and quantity in journal publishing that this has happened in China already.

Both extrinsic and intrinsic reasons lead to publications that might be assessed by quantitative means, but also by qualitative means. Behind the quantifiable

factors, then, are as yet untested qualitative factors, which is what has led to the present project.

Objectives and Methods

The study had three principal objectives:

- to identify the most commonly accepted criteria for evaluating LIS journals
- to evaluate the success of LIS journals in meeting the criteria
- to suggest critical success factors for improving the quality of LIS journals

These objectives were achieved through three inter-related activities. First, other writings were reviewed in order to develop tentative criteria of journal quality. Second, the investigators interviewed several LIS journal editors, asking for their views on the factors that contribute to journal quality. Third, selected LIS journals, including those edited by the editors interviewed, were examined by the investigators to see how closely they match the standards expressed by the editors during the interviews. Finally, the investigators combined the findings for steps 1-3 to produce a list of common criteria of journal quality that could be used to evaluate LIS journals no matter what their country of origin. The list is offered along with recommendations for action that are intended to help publishers and editors achieve the criteria of quality identified by this project.

Related Literature

Most assessments of journal quality are driven by the practical necessity of producing ranked lists of journals in each academic discipline so that tenure and promotion committees can assess the publication lists from applicants. One result of this is discussed by Ali, Young and Ali (1996). They indicated that core lists have been drawn up for many disciplines, and that these are usually based on citation analysis, circulation figures and coverage in indexing and abstracting services. Citation analysis tells us much about the structure of scholarly literature, and Sen (1999) supports the use of citation analysis. Yet Altmann and Gorman (1999) have cast doubt on the efficacy of journal citedness as a criterion of value with relation to acquisitions and relegation, and the same might be said of citedness as a criterion for developing core lists. The fact that article *x* is cited *y* times is not an indication of quality, but rather that it is cited – it is available, it is in a journal held by many libraries, and perhaps the author (or publisher or editor) is particularly good at self-promotion. Some professional associations publish journals that are given to members at part of the subscription package, and it can be noted how often such journals are cited by LIS authors in developing

countries. The simple reason is that they have poor access to some high quality but expensive journals that merit citation, but easier access to journals that come with an association's membership subscription, hence such journals are cited more than their quality would appear to merit. This is one of the reasons the researchers preferred not to use citation counts as a simple measure of journal quality.

An intriguing project was conducted by Chressanthis and Chressanthis (1993), one an economist, the other a serials librarian. They hypothesised that journal quality was dependent upon a number of cost factors, and especially the manuscript submission fee. They found that their definition of journal quality most closely correlated with the total number of journal article pages printed in the year, journal age, the editor's institutional affiliation, the manuscript submission fee, and the total circulation of the journal. There was insignificant correlation with the presence of advertising and the journal affiliation with a professional association. The measure of quality used by the authors, however, was the total number of citations to the journal: therefore, independent variables such as the number of articles printed and the total circulation of the journal would inevitably have a high correlation with this measure of 'quality'. Citation analysis will always be biased in favour of high circulation journals, which is why even Garfield (1977) cautioned against using it on its own as a measure of journal quality.

Anderson (1997) has provided another view of journal quality, arguing that it is linked to 'excessive publication' – submitting the same manuscript to two or more journals. His research was mainly qualitative in that he used journal editors' opinions on a number of questions as his major source of information – the same method employed in the present investigation. Editors believed their guidelines to authors gave some protection against double publication of manuscripts, though a sizeable number admitted that their guidelines needed review and strengthening. As a sidelight, Anderson's qualitative research suggested that editors have primary responsibility for quality, referees the next most influence, and with the editorial boards a distant third.

In a lengthy, thorough and original article Day and Peter (1994) used qualitative methods to ask subscribers and authors, plus some editors and editorial advisors, what they thought about journal quality. They created a list of quality criteria to use in their research:

- research design
- depth
- purpose
- practical examples

- rigour
- descriptive versus analytical
- presentation
- conclusions
- relevance
- focus versus generalisation
- application
- relevant references and recency
- clarity of thought
- structure
- interest.

Day and Peter reported that reviewers often asked additional questions, including the following:

Does the article add to what is already known?
Is the article demonstrably related to what has previously been written?
Are the arguments employed valid in terms of the body of knowledge?
Is the article easy to read?
Do the arguments flow logically?
Does the article make a difference?
Are the conclusions strong?

From all of this a number of criteria were selected as most relevant and applicable without the need for extensive explanation as to meaning, and these criteria were seen to fall into three major categories:

- prestige (of the editor, etc.)
- properties of articles within a journal (e.g. methodological rigour)
- presentational aspects.

Day and Peter's qualitative approach is echoed to an extent by Nkereuwem (1997), who used Lester's method of journal evaluation that combines input measures, decision measures and output measures into an index of journal quality for ranking journals (Lester 1990). There is a bias in this method that favours journals with a wide market reach.

Criteria drawn from the literature

After careful review of the literature, the resulting main categories used in this project were:

- qualities of the articles
- presentation factors
- aspects of prestige
- income factors

The first three categories were derived from Day and Peter (1994), while the minor category of income factors was taken from Chressanthis and Chressanthis (1993).

It became clear early in the process of gathering data from LIS journal editors that the disaggregated properties (qualities) of the articles mattered far more than the other categories, so the investigation focused on the criteria in that category.

Analysis of factors affecting journal quality

LIS journal editors in Australia, China, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand the Philippines, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America were approached. Some were interviewed in person, and others were asked to write brief notes on how articles were chosen for publication, and how they as editors ensured that the selected articles matched the aims and purpose of their journals. They were also asked to provide, in keywords, the criteria they used for selection or rejection for publication of a contribution, and to rank their criteria in order if they felt it possible to do so.

From the outset the principle underlying our investigation has been that a journal is the sum of its parts, and these parts must be individually strong for the journals to benefit. Therefore, in our view the most appropriate method of evaluating journal quality is the examination of its disaggregated content, or individual articles.

Quality of Articles

The initial list of criteria to be used for assessing article quality was edited as a result of input by the various editors. Gorman (1999) had suggested six criteria for the evaluation of submissions to LIS journals, and it was these six that the editors ultimately accepted, in slightly modified form, as most relevant to the assessment of article quality/content:

- advancement of knowledge
- new information or data

- theoretical soundness
- level of scholarship
- acceptable research design
- appropriate methodology and analysis.

It was our original assumption that quality factors would differ according to the type of article or journal being evaluated, but in fact this proved not to be the case. That is, if we assume that there are three broad categories of writing in the LIS journals (research reports, practice-based writing, thought pieces), we might logically assume that each of these requires a different style of writing. Our research showed that this was incorrect.

Regardless of the type of article, editors perceive originality to be the most important factor in their assessment of manuscripts. What editors want is sometimes expressed by saying they want their journals to be 'practical' rather than theoretical. Practitioners, however, do not want to be told how to carry out their jobs as they are at present; rather, they seek new and more efficient and effective ways to work. This is perhaps why editors value 'newness' in manuscript content above other criteria. For one editor this was closely related to his role perception. He felt he had to be a 'missionary editor', trying to persuade librarians to reflect on their roles and to think in terms broader than the next crisis. The evidence from the articles in this study is that his missionary endeavour has a long way to go, for overall the articles are short on originality and long on repetition of the known. Too many writers in our discipline seem unwilling to take a gamble and suggest something new, innovative or challenging. There is a tendency to re-invent the wheel time after time because writers are narrowly focussed on their own area, field or region. They seem unaware of work going on elsewhere – this is especially true in the North American literature where LIS authors seldom use knowledge generated elsewhere.

But 'newness' alone is not enough. There must be a theoretical base to the content, and recognition of the wider body of knowledge to which the writing is related. Although editors value these criteria highly, on both counts (theoretical implications and relation to the literature), the content of LIS journals fall below desirable levels in our view. Practising librarians – at least those who write for publication – are often unaware of developments in the discourse as, surprisingly, they fail to keep abreast of the literature (it is surprising because librarians ought to search the literature efficiently). As a consequence, they too often seem to develop constructs *ex nihilo*, which can lead to writing that is bereft of ideas and unable to draw out general applications – some of this is touched upon later in this report.

Closely related to the failure of articles to recognise their place in the corpus of literature is an inability to apply appropriate research methods or data analysis techniques to research problems. Editors maintain that for research manuscripts the research design is an important consideration, and the evaluation templates we examined all included research design among the evaluation criteria; yet so often in this investigation we came across articles that were unnecessarily complex, applying 'industrial strength' methods to very simple problems, or using very sophisticated data analysis software to analyse data where simple spreadsheet applications would suffice. One quickly becomes cynical and assumes that if there is nothing new or interesting to be said, the writer then hides this behind obfuscatory data analysis techniques. One view is that such articles are by inexperienced or poorly trained researchers who set out to impress with their knowledge of research techniques rather than an ability to solve problems simply and efficiently – something to be encouraged in a discipline noted for its applied research culture.

Finally, clarity of writing and structure are criteria that all editors value, but again are in short evidence in the articles examined. Far too many articles are poorly written, with weak structure and unclear expression. In short they exhibit the characteristics of what one might call 'bad English', which is something any competent editor should be able to correct, or require the writer to correct prior to publication. Clarity, of course, is closely related to readability; we can assure you, after reading several hundred LIS articles, that readability is in exceedingly short supply. This is what one colleague calls the 'bore factor' – how quickly one is bored when sitting down to read an LIS article. LIS literature seems very good at not knowing how to engage the reader's attention or interest. As Maurice Line once said, 'you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink; you can lead a librarian to books, but you can't make him read'. Little wonder, given what they are asked to read…. Articles are too long, because authors take too long to get to the point, perhaps because there is a bias against short pieces. A long article may make one point, maybe two, which at best is confirmation of something already written about – it could be said in fewer words, and to greater effect. The two researchers were not competent to evaluate the quality of writing in other languages. Those advising us on the quality of non-English LIS journals said that the writing in Europe was of an acceptable standard, though sometimes rather long-winded, and in non-European languages the problem was usually an inability to make points clearly and consistently – not so much a problem of writing but in the underlying thinking.

Several editors said they received manuscripts 'out of field' that were rejected almost automatically. This suggests that the solicitation process might lack focus, yet almost all journals publish guidelines or information for authors. Often, however, these seem to provide guidance only on formatting of the manuscript,

preparation of the copy, how many copies to provide, footnotes style, and so on. Few mention methodological rigour, use of the literature or the required depth of analysis. Several editors agreed that their guidelines needed revision and strengthening. In addition more could be done to disseminate the guidelines in order to attract better manuscripts that are clearly within a journal's scope. Many Asian journals already use their Web sites to publicise author guidelines and recent tables of contents, and this seems to be a simple and relatively inexpensive way of telling prospective authors what the editors want to see submitted – as long as the guidelines actually address substantive matters of content. Workshops held in conjunction with professional conferences are another means used by editors to inform potential authors of what is expected in an acceptable submission.

Unfortunately, existing guidelines are only a weak defence against unscrupulous authors. Many editors said that they uncover several cases annually of manuscripts being submitted to more than one journal. Obviously many more cases escape unnoticed. Whether this severely affects journal quality, as Anderson (1997) claims it does, was not something this pilot project was able to determine. Clearly, though, the 'publish or perish' imperative in some Asian countries leads a few desperate and unethical individuals to try such tactics, and editors need better protection than they have at the moment.

Recommendations

All of the quality factors said by editors to be important selection criteria seem to fall short in our analysis of articles – either editors need to devise a new set of criteria, or, perhaps more tellingly, they need to enforce their own views more rigorously.

In particular continued efforts should be made to improve awareness amongst potential authors of what they will be expected to provide in the way of theory, context and methodological soundness; this is especially true in research articles, but also in practice-based pieces that need to be embedded more firmly in the existing culture of LIS writing.

Guidelines for manuscripts need to be improved so that all potential authors know what is expected of them prior to the submission of a manuscript, not after it has been received and reviewed by an overworked editor.

Clarity and structure are simple factors that anyone with a clear command of style and grammar should be able to monitor more closely. Editors must be more demanding of their writers in this regard and learn to reject bad writing as much as bad research.

The Editorial Team

It should come as no surprise from these findings and recommendations that the editorial team of a journal should be exercising greater quality control than seems apparent from our investigation. While individual journals exhibit high standards and exemplary quality control procedures, on balance this is not the case.

A. The Editor

Clearly the findings just reported suggest that there is a very strong link between the journal editor's ability or control of the quality process and journal quality. It must be emphasised that 'ability' is different from 'prestige'. The value of a prestigious editor is that he/she can attract manuscripts from individuals who have high regard for the editor, usually as a result of the editor's own scholarship or research rather than editorial expertise. This high regard may outweigh other reasons to offer the manuscript to a different journal, and this brings obvious benefits to the journal. Whether this is sustainable over time, however, is open to question. In our investigation it is editors who exhibit clear ability as editors who contribute to a journal's long-term success more than a 'big name' editor. More often than not, however, an editor from a well-respected institution will also be a well-respected and competent editor; though the corollary does not necessarily hold, with lesser institutions producing less adequate editors in our investigation.

A good editor knows the disciplinary field well, is alert to trends/changes in the discipline and who in the profession is developing the new ideas. In some cases we have found quite young editors doing an excellent job simply because they take the trouble to stay abreast of new developments in the discipline. A significant key to success in this regard is networking, making contact with authors and potential authors, and encouraging them to submit manuscripts for publication in an increasingly competitive market.

In addition, a significant part of an editor's work continues to be the hard slog of evaluating manuscripts, exercising fair and impartial judgement in this work, insisting that standards are maintained, having an eye for detail and ensuring that referees are doing their job. Unfortunately, it is our perception that many editors do not follow these requirements rigorously or carefully, or they do not have a sound grounding in editorial matters.

In many cases the editor is a willing volunteer with few credentials and no training for the job. The more successful editors in Asia – that is, editors whose journals seem to set high standards and achieve them – already hold higher degrees in LIS or related disciplines. In our view improving the educational

standard of other editors would almost certainly have a positive impact on journal quality.

B. The Referees

Where peer review is employed, and in our view this should be in the vast majority of LIS journals as a means of exercising better quality control, it is important to use referees who are up to the task. In this research we have found that many journal editors select as referees those they *believe* will perform well, but without any necessarily convincing evidence of this – all too often referees are selected on the basis of reputation or willingness to serve, rather than skill as a referee.

Several referees were asked about training; none in our survey had received any training beyond, in some instances, a request to use a template when evaluating submissions. Many referees report simply being asked to 'have a look' at a manuscript, or 'give us your opinion'. If referees and the refereeing process are to be taken seriously as a means of quality control, then each referee must be trained in understanding the quality factors sought by a particular journal and initially should operate in a mentoring system until they are familiar with the standards of the journal in question.

This situation helps us understand the comment from one editor, 'there are refereed journals, and then there are refereed journals'. All referees need to have a clear understanding of the journal's mission and what it is trying to achieve, beyond sales. Referees must understand what each quality criterion means for the editor, since they are extensions of editorial policy, and the content of a refereed journal can be only as good as the refereeing process is rigorous. It seems that this understanding is weakest among journals from Africa and Asia, since most respondents from these regions indicated least understanding of the refereeing process.

C. The Editorial Board

Our research has shown that there is a clear division in opinion about the importance of the editorial board. Of the triumvirate of editor, editorial board, and referees, journals published in Western countries generally ranked the editor as the most important followed by the referees, and the editorial board last of the three. In many Asian countries, though, the view is that, while the editor is the most important, the editorial board ranks second and the referees least important. Asian LIS journals are frequently sponsored by institutions or organisations (in

China they must be), and the sponsoring body takes an active role in the journal's editorial processes. Compared with Western LIS journals, the editorial board has more influence. Non-board referees are not used nearly so much in Asia as they are in the West, and generally only when the content of the manuscript is beyond the knowledge of any board member.

This gives rise to the general question, what is the role of an editorial board? Are members the same as referees? Are they selected on the basis of prestige or willingness to do a job thoroughly? Many editors report having board members who do little, yet they remain on the board for a variety of reasons – inertia, tradition, assumed prestige. One editor even said, 'I have no idea who most of the board members are – I just inherited them when I took over the journal'.

Recommendations

The controllers of journals should appoint editors who are well educated in the appropriate discipline and who make a practice of keeping well informed about disciplinary trends, who have high-level editorial skills in the language of the journal, and who have an extensive network upon which to draw for submissions, editorial board members and reviewers.

Where necessary, editors should be provided with training in editorial procedures and should be required to set quality standards to be followed by board members and referees.

Referees should be selected on the understanding that they have a valuable service to provide, and they should be provided with a clear statement of this service, including timelines, definitions of quality criteria and a template for assessing submissions. Editors should be ruthless in pursuing referees who fail to deliver by agreed deadlines.

Publishers and/or editors should develop a clear understanding of the role of editorial boards, and all parties should share the same understanding. New editors will find it useful while putting a board together if the publisher maintains a list of LIS scholars willing to be active members of editorial boards. Publishers should also make it clear that board membership is not a sinecure and provide editors with a statement of duties of an editorial board member.

Affiliation

Our research shows no significant correlation between journal affiliation and journal quality, with the specific exception of LIS journals in some Asian countries. That is, in our assessment of individual articles, journal patronage has

no discernible impact; looking at peer-reviewed journals as an example, we find that those operated as e-journals by an enterprising editor, those owned by commercial publishers and those controlled by professional associations are all likely to have content of similar quality. While investigating journal quality in Asia, however, it has become apparent that there is a strong connection between affiliation and quality in some countries. The sponsoring institution played a significant part in establishing the status of LIS journals in China, with the three highest ranked journals being sponsored by the National Library, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Peking University respectively. As noted previously, Chinese journals must be affiliated with a state-recognised entity, and that body appoints the editor-in-chief. This gives some benefits of prestige to the journal. On the other hand, there are hints that this results in cronyism, e.g. in the selection of some manuscripts, that inevitably has a negative effect on quality. This appears to have a *significant* effect on journal quality in some countries, including China and India.

Financial Aspects

Chressanthis and Chressanthis (1993) hypothesised that journal quality was dependent upon a number of cost factors, and especially the manuscript submission fee. Their definition of journal quality was most closely associated with the total number of journal article pages printed in the year, journal age, the editor's institutional affiliation, the manuscript submission fee, and the total circulation of the journal. Our research agrees with some of these factors (journal age, and the editor's affiliation) but not others. As we indicated at IFLA Glasgow, our research has found little correspondence between LIS journal quality and the number of pages in a journal. The *Journal of Documentation*, to give one example, is acknowledged to be a leading LIS journal, but it does not have more article pages than other LIS journals.

We are unaware of LIS journals charging a manuscript submission fee on a regular basis. At least one LIS journal in China charges authors who submit to a specified issue each year, and in return the editors give extensive assistance to the authors to help them improve the manuscript; but we emphasise that this is for just one issue per year. If this process leads to better writers then it is something that other journals should investigate, especially if this is limited to younger professionals who can benefit from training in return for a publication fee.

There is almost certainly some correlation between measures of quality and the total circulation of the journal, though this is partly a circular argument. If prospective authors use impact measures such as citation analysis to measure quality, then this will probably coincide with high circulation journals, irrespective of any aspects of quality. As an example, commonly cited journals in

articles written by authors from developing countries include those received as part of association memberships.

Commercialisation

Our study also examines quality in terms of whether a journal is published by a profit-making or non-profit-making body. No close connection has been discovered to suggest that commercial publishers produce LIS journals of higher or lower quality than non-commercial publishers.

In many cases where journals once fully funded by a sponsoring body are now expected to generate cost-recovery revenue, editors have expressed concern over the impact of this on their role. There is almost complete agreement, however, that, after the initial shock, the editors have realised that the greater independence that accrues from new sources of income generation is beneficial to the journal. These editors have used the revenue to improve the physical appearance of the journal, to commission manuscripts, to run workshops for prospective authors, etc.

Recommendation

Publishers and editors should agree on some financial independence for journals that allow revenue to be ploughed back into improving journal quality.

Journal Prestige and Age

To say that a journal's prestige results in journal quality is a circular argument. In many ways it is the quality of the journal that produces the prestige.

The age of a journal is related to its prestige. It takes time for a journal to acquire prestige, which comes from a number of factors but has to be earned primarily by the production of a good quality journal of a period of years. In Asia, where there is a natural respect for age, it is the older journals that have the highest prestige, and also they are considered to be the best in terms of quality.

Presentation

An area of concern that emerged, somewhat surprisingly, during the investigation was the physical presentation of LIS journals. It is difficult to discuss presentational aspects of journal publication simply because it is a highly subjective category, and few editors or readers claim expertise in matters of design.

Literally all of the examined Chinese journals were using a cover design introduced within the past two years, or were using a higher grade paper than in the past, and all Chinese editors seemed conscious of layout, font and other design issues in ways that would not have troubled them even a short time ago. Several editors, however, when questioned about their technical knowledge, admitted that they felt uneasy about commenting on matters related to physical presentation and style. As one editor said, 'I think I know what I like and what looks good, but this is a very personal matter and I could not give any objective assessment of what a journal ought to look like.' Matters of presentation, then, are very much in the eye of the beholder– not a satisfactory situation when seeking to determine quality in an objective manner. Commercial publishers such as Emerald are likely to have complete control over their journal's physical presentation, and they have the resources to do this well. Smaller publishing companies are less likely to have design resources, and they will have to make a choice about whether or not to spend money on presentation. Our research suggests that tangibles do affect perceptions of quality, so money spent on presentation is money well spent.

Recommendation

LIS publishers should invest more resources into their journal's appearance.

Accessibility

Some perceptions of journal quality are formed by prospective authors based on measures such as citation counts. Mostly such measures favour high circulation journals, but these are not necessarily journals perceived to have high quality by editors. Some may be distributed as part of an association membership. Many who write for journals cannot afford to pay for subscriptions, and in countries where libraries have few LIS journal subscriptions it is the most familiar journals that attract manuscripts.

Another aspect of accessibility is language. Anglophone publications reach most parts of the world. Even where English is not the official language there are LIS academics that can read English. The reverse is not true. There are many good LIS journals published in languages other than English but they are barely known in the Anglophone world. New ideas are presented in these journals, but they only have a limited impact on the discourse because they are not read in North America, the United Kingdom, etc.

There are a few examples of journals agreeing to a formal exchange of material, i.e. an LIS journal published in the US agrees to publish the best article published

in a respected Chinese LIS journal, in translation, and the reverse is also done. Exposure to ideas is increased in both directions, and each journal gets access to one good article that would otherwise not have come its way. This kind of exchange agreement exists in a few cases; for example, *College & Research Libraries* exchanges one article per year with *Journal of Library Science in China*

Recommendations

Improving access to LIS journals in developing countries should increase awareness of good quality journals, which should have the benefit of increasing manuscript submission rates from such countries if this is encouraged.

There is mutual benefit in exchange agreements between anglophone LIS journals and foreign language LIS journals. Publishers could encourage this.

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