How do we ensure that we have the best Editorial Advisory Board members for our journal?

Mary Warner, CAE
Senior Director, Periodicals, American Pharmacists Association
2018 CSE Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA
May 8, 2018

Session 5.2: Editorial and Publishing Questions — Data-Informed Decisions

Editorial Advisory Boards

• Subject matter experts to advise the journal editors and staff
• Size varies from ~15 to over 500 members depending on the function of the EAB
• What makes a good Editorial Advisory Board member?
  • Subject matter knowledge
  • Engagement
  • Contacts in the field
Data

- Looked at performance of EAB members over the last 5 years for an EAB with rotating 3-year terms (70 total members)
  - Reviewer performance
    - Were they available to review when asked?
    - Did they return their review on time?
  - Engagement with EAB activities
    - Attendance at EAB meetings and calls
    - Participation
  - Feedback
    - Responsiveness to ad hoc questions

Results

- Younger/early career members were more engaged with the editorial team and other EAB members
  - Reviewed more often/faster
  - Attended EAB meetings and calls regularly
  - Provided good feedback when requested

Lessons Learned

- Mix of age, experience, backgrounds makes the best EAB
  - Actively look for early career scientists and those in emerging subject areas to join the EAB
  - Don’t rely only on nominations from the Journal’s editors
  - Make expectations for service on the EAB clear to new members— it’s not just a ceremonial position
Are reviewers being confidential with manuscripts during the peer review process?

Jill Jackson
Managing Editor & Publishing Administrator
American College of Physicians

2018 CSE Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, May 8, 2018

**Annals of Internal Medicine**

Annals of Internal Medicine is ranked 5th among 154 general medicine journals. It is one of the most highly cited and influential journals in the world. Annals sends 35% of submitted manuscripts to external peer review.

**Case of Plagiarism**

In August 2016, *Annals* was contacted regarding a case of plagiarism. A peer reviewer who had evaluated the paper for *Annals* subsequently published the work in another journal as if it was his own.
Dear Plagiarist

Confidentiality

- We decided to assess peer reviewers’ self-reported use of the manuscripts they receive for review.

- It is not known how frequently peer reviewers use the information gained from received manuscripts in a manner that is inconsistent with the goals of peer review.
Survey

- All recipients of Annals papers sent for external review in 2015 and 2016 were invited to complete an anonymous online survey.
- 1,431 of 3,275 invited reviewers (44%) completed our survey.

Survey Questions

- Have you ever shown a paper you agreed to review to other colleagues without seeking the permission of the journal’s editor?
- Have you ever kept a copy of manuscript you reviewed after submitting your comments?
- Have you ever used the information in a paper you reviewed for personal and/or academic benefit?
- In what way(s) have you used the information in a paper you reviewed for personal benefit prior to the paper’s publication?

Have you ever kept a copy of a manuscript you reviewed after submitting your comments to the journal?

Yes No

<table>
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<th>0%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>20%</th>
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<th>50%</th>
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Use of information in a paper you reviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported Uses</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altered my research plans</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed results with research colleagues</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speeded submission of my related work</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delayed submission of my review</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copied a part of manuscript for my own work</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>6</td>
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Conclusion

Tusting that reviewers will treat manuscripts received for peer review as confidential communications is an essential tenet of peer review.

Although self-reported and from a small sample, these results suggest that abuse of such trust does occur.
How do you make the author of a rejected manuscript happy?

Jody Plank, PhD
Manager, Products & Analytics
Global Journals Development | Publications Division
J_Plank@ACS.org

2018 CSE Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, May 8, 2018

Rolling Author Survey Responses Provide a Means to Understand Author Experience and Perception

- 110,000+ surveys distributed each year
- Corresponding Authors only

Sections of the Author Surveys

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Published</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
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<td>Motivations</td>
<td>✔ ✔ ✔ ✔</td>
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<tr>
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<td>✔ ✔ ✔ ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production Experience</td>
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<td>✔ ✔ ✔ ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
<td>✔ ✔ ✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔ ✔ ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future Plans for this Manuscript</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Future Publishing Plans</td>
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<td>✔ ✔ ✔ ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing (New Journal Discovery)</td>
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<td>✔ ✔ ✔ ✔</td>
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<th>Start Date</th>
<th>July 2015</th>
<th>July 2016</th>
<th>June 2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Responses (Jan, 2018)</td>
<td>16,900</td>
<td>15,600</td>
<td>1,500</td>
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Specific aspects of the peer review experience surveyed

- Ease of form completion (e.g., Copyright)
- Clarity of Author Guidelines
- Overall experience with submission system
- Contact with the Editor
- Contact with editorial staff
- Speed of peer review decision
- Clarity in which peer review outcome and feedback was shared
- Comments received from Editors
- Comments received from peer reviewers
- Appropriateness of expertise demonstrated by Editor's feedback
- Appropriateness of expertise demonstrated by peer reviewers' feedback

Editor communication is strongly correlated with Author satisfaction

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient with Overall Satisfaction

- Ease of form completion (e.g., Copyright)
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- Comments received from peer reviewers
- Appropriateness of expertise demonstrated by Editor's feedback
- Appropriateness of expertise demonstrated by peer reviewers' feedback
Rejected Authors are satisfied if they feel the Editor displayed appropriate expertise.

There is a strong link between dissatisfaction and interest in future submissions.

When do you expect to submit another manuscript to this ACS journal?

There is a strong link between dissatisfaction and interest in future submissions.

Reject Author Satisfaction Since the Editor’s Conference.
Rolling author surveys can be a powerful tool to generate convincing and actionable data:
- Plan the surveys very carefully to ensure they will provide meaningful data over time
- Continuously monitor and communicate the results to the editors
- Even rejected authors can be very satisfied with their editorial experience
  - Dispel the idea that rejected authors will just be unhappy because they were rejected
- Group discussions/brainstorming among Editors can be very productive
Can we improve turnaround time by tweaking auto-reminders?

- Asked editors why it took so long to get to a final decision.
- Blamed reviewers for taking a long time.
- Anecdotal not evidence based.
- Created Editor and Reviewer Performance Report

...
Delay not with reviewers
- Given 45 days, completing in ~36 days
- Delays with editors
- Ed office asked to change 45 day reviewer deadline to 30
- Editors reluctant

Reviewer Reminder Structure
- Review 1 due in 45 days
- Pre-reminder (your review is due in 5 days) would go out
- Most reviews came in the day after the reminder
- Changed Review 1 pre-reminder to 10 days before due date

Reviewer Reminder Structure

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Pre-reminder</th>
<th>Time taken</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45 days</td>
<td>5 days before deadline</td>
<td>36 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>45 days</td>
<td>10 days before deadline</td>
<td>29 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 days</td>
<td>10 days before deadline</td>
<td>22 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 days (a few journals)</td>
<td>10 days before deadline</td>
<td>15 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reviewer Reminder Structure

- Invite reminder: 5 days after Invite
- Uninvited: 10 days after invite
- System reviewer reminders
  1. 10 days before due
  2. 3 days before due
  3. 0 (day it is late)
  4. 5 days late
  5. 10 days late
  6. Editor intervention

Editor and Reviewer Performance Report
Benefits: Accountability

- Editors and AEs know report will be sent out twice a year
- Some EICs shifted their focus on managing AEs better
- AEs started assigning alternate reviewers to keep things moving
- Some competition between some editors
- Reports are provided to oversight committees and used in consideration for editor awards

Reductions in TAT

- Average time to first decision for all ASCE Journals reduced by 50 days since 2011
- Other reductions since the report:
  - 7 day reduction in average time for AEs to make a recommendation to editor
  - 3 day reduction in average time for reviewers to respond to invite
  - 37 day reduction in time to first decision when looking at papers in full review (no ed rejects)
Lesson Learned

- Look beyond your canned reports
- Find data points to make your argument
- Share data to encourage peer pressure and competition for high performance
- Review your automatic reminders annually
- Use actual performance to push for efficiencies

Background

- Most common issue in Production related to graphics failures (~40%)
- Figures must meet PLOS’ quality and formatting requirements before publication
- We had one in-house graphics specialist and a large number of graphics issues → led to a large backlog
- Lack of author resources in figure editing
Goals

- Assist with the resolution of most common figure issues and remove backlog
- Decrease of the number of image-related tickets Apex had to create
- Shorten vendor turnaround times
- Keep development costs down
- Improve author experience

What is PACE?

- PACE is a ‘Preflight Analysis and Conversion Engine’ image tool
- Allows authors to effortlessly transform images to exact publisher specifications in minutes
- Resolves most common figure issues, provides an issues/fix report, and offers PDF previews of fixed figures
- Apex developed the tool for free; no cost for PLOS or authors!
File Requirements

These are the criteria that PACE accesses based off the PLOS Figure Requirements:

**Upload**
- Accepts 9 common file types, incl. DOCX, JPEG, PDF, PNG, PPT, etc. Zip files also allowed.
- Converts figures to TIFF Format with a downloadable report in minutes
- Easy to use drag/drop UI

**File Storage**
- PACE keeps your originally uploaded files, Figure File Quality Reports, and any PACE generated figures for seven days

For each figure, PACE provides:
- Downloadable versions of original and edited figures
- Renamed figure files according to PLOS convention
- Lists changes made as well as errors that it can’t resolve
- A preview of the figure within a PLOS formatted PDF
Example Report

PACE Limitations

- External system that authors have to be directed to; not integrated into submission system
- Not a one-stop solution for resolving all figure issues
  - Cannot edit content (typos, cropping, etc.)
  - Vendors and in-house staff handle more complicated issues

Workflow Changes

- Introduced to PLOS/vendors in Dec 2015; available to authors in early 2016
- Trained in-house production staff to resolve graphics issues
- Feb 2016: Included PACE instructions in outgoing communication to authors
- Oct 2017: Allowed us to turn off a troublesome image review tool in our submission system
**Users**
- Over 55,600 users and more than 120,000 sessions
- Average of 2,100 new users per month in the last year
- Average session duration of 5:25

...and continuing to grow!

**Users by Location**
- Users in 180 countries
- US has biggest user base followed by China

**Results**
- Reduced Salesforce cases by 50%, and JIRA tickets by 30%
- Saved ~$55K in resource/process costs from 2016 – 2017
- Helped reduce turnaround times to meet aggressive publication schedules

Effect of PACE on Number of Articles with Image Quality Issues
Looking Forward

- Apex is continuing to develop PACE
  - Process additional file types
  - New figure cropping tool
  - Cleaner UI

Questions?

jhamlin@plos.org

Thank you!