How to Do Editorial Research: Getting Started

Mary Warner, CAE, and Jeanette Panning, CAE
Council of Science Editors
May 8, 2018

Why do Editorial Research?

To gain information (data) about your journal and its readership

- Submissions
- Impact factor
- Peer review
- Authorship
- Business models and pricing
- Readership
- New projects
Sample Questions

• Does author affiliation (or gender) affect peer review outcome?
• Where are papers in my journal being cited most often?
• Does social media promotion (or media coverage) increase submissions?
• Should we start an open access journal?
• How would raising our subscription price affect readership?
• Does impact factor reflect the true impact of a journal?
• Is copyediting quality affected by the use of freelance editors vs in-house editors?

Methodology: Metrics

Make use of the reporting capability of your manuscript submission system

• All major electronic manuscript systems have powerful standard reports as well as “build-your-own” reporting capabilities
  • Submissions by authorship affiliation, gender, society membership, etc.
  • Accepted vs. declined manuscripts by author and reviewer characteristics
  • Reviewer quality (if you score your reviews)
  • Trends over time

Search online databases

• Broad-based information
  • Web of Science, Journal Citation Reports (Clarivate)
  • Google Scholar
  • EBSCO
• Subject specific information
  • NIH (PubMed), Chemical Abstracts, IEEE Xplore
• Publisher specific information
  • Science Direct (Elsevier)
  • Wiley Online Library
  • Oxford Academic
  • SpringerLink
Methodology: Surveys

Who?
• Readers, subscribers (and nonsubscribers), members (and nonmembers), authors, reviewers, authors in competitive journals– any group in whose opinion you’re interested
• Ensure a large enough sample to get valid results

How?
• Email to potential respondents with link to a survey tool
• Several tools– some with free limited capability– are available (SurveyMonkey, Survey Gizmo, GetFeedback, etc.)
• Analyze data within the survey tool

Tips
• Design carefully– not as simple as it may seem
• Make use of online resources on how to maximize results
• Ask a colleague to test your survey before you send it out

Best practices
• Keep it short– no more than 10-15 minutes to complete
• No more than 5 choices for ratings
• Succinct (simple) wording to avoid confusion
• No more than 2 open-ended questions
• Use responsive design to allow completion on mobile devices
• If possible, offer an incentive (access to results, raffle for a gift card, etc.)

Case Studies
• Social Media– Morgan Sorenson, AAN
• A Reviewer Incentive Program to Motivate Peer Reviewers– Jeannine Botos, OUP
• Identity Verification of Author Suggested Reviewers– Kelly Anderson, ASCE
Questions?

Mary Warner
Sr. Director, Periodicals
American Pharmacists Association
mwarner@aphanet.org

Jeanette Panning
Director, Publications
American Geophysical Union
jpanning@agu.org