Starting (and Sustaining!) a Journal

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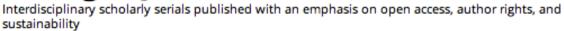MICHIGAN
PUBLISHING

Michigan Publishing

Michigan Journals

Today we'll cover:

- What to think about before starting a journal (or taking over as editor)
- How to launch the first issue
- Then what? The first day of the rest of your life...

(How Open Access fits into the picture)
(How Michigan Publishing fits into the picture)

If you have questions, you can always contact
mpublishing@umich.edu

Part I:

Deciding if you really want to launch (or edit) a journal

Why?

Why are you taking our Christmas tree?

Why?

"…addresses the **dearth** of high-profile open access journals in philosophy."

"There are **no publications** addressing User Experience in libraries, despite the fact that it is one of the fastest-growing areas of interest within the field."
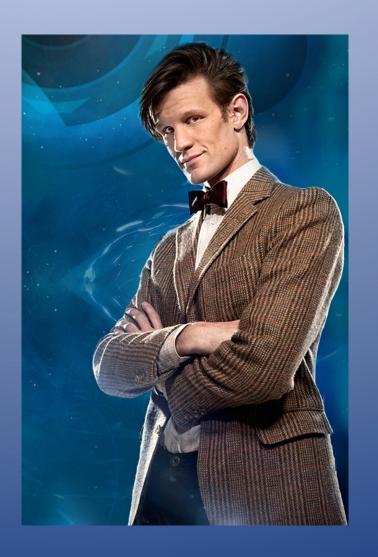
"This traditional model has led to **a cluster of crises** in the peer-review and publication system…which our distributed model aims to redress."

"The initial motivation of establishing JMMH was **to decrease the 90/10 Gap**, in which 90% of research resources focus on 10% of global community, predominantly high- income Western countries."

…"it aims to afford proponents and critics of the figurational paradigm **the opportunity to publish** their work in a dedicated online peer reviewed journal."

Why?

Who?

Why?

"…a forum where **practitioners of User Experience (UX) principles in libraries** (wherever they are, whatever their job title is) can have discussions that increase and extend our understanding of UX principles and research."

"**Students** of philosophy, including **undergraduates, graduate students, and autodidacts**."

Who?

"The **members of the Editorial Board** serve **as peer reviewers** for incoming materials and are chosen according to their expertise and field interests."

"Materials written in Manchu, or concerning the Manchus and their activities, are therefore important for … **historians** (especially those working on China or Inner Asia); **linguists** (for whom Manchu is the most important language in the Tungusic branch of the Altaic languages); and **scholars of literature**, for the large body of Manchu literary works (both composed in Manchu and translations of Chinese). "

"The immediate audience is **our network of colleagues (at UM, Latin American universities, and other partner institutions) and their students.** We will start with works that will be useful right away to projects that we are undertaking."

Why?

Who?

What?

What is your quest?

Why?

Who?

What?

"Publication will be **entirely digital**, with accepted papers published in PDF. Publication in **PDF** is important for two reasons…"

"…is **a digital, web-based publication**. All content will be delivered to us as electronic documents, and will live electronically in publication. Because we want the journal to be web-based, we want the content to appear only **as HTML**."

"…**will be available for free**. In our view, open access publication provides the greatest benefit for the least cost, and encouraging open access publication is a duty of academics…"

"We do not intend to review, edit, or select new work but rather **to translate and republish work that has already been vetted through peer review by journals or presses**."

"Right now, our plan is to **publish once a year**, but we will revisit this question once we get a better sense of the quality and volume of submissions the journal will attract."

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Why?

Who?

What?

How?

How do you hold a moonbeam in your hand?

Why?

Who?

What?

How?

Why?

Who?

What?

How?

When?

Why?

Proposal received: June 2010
Journal launched: January 2013

Proposal received: June 2010
Journal launched: May 2012

Who?

Proposal received: December 2010
Journal launched: January 2012

What?

Proposal received: June 2011
Journal launched: January 2012

How?

Proposal received: October 2011
Journal launched: January 2013

When?

Proposal received: February 2012
Journal launched: June 2013

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Part II:

So, you've decided to start a journal....

Time to think about:

- Access
- Copyright & Licensing
- Publisher
- Platform & Format
- Business Model & Funding
- Editorial Workflows & Policies
- Long-term planning

Access

Will this journal be available to readers:

- For free (Open Access)
- By subscription (or as a benefit of association membership)
- By subscription for immediate access; for free after an embargo
- For free on the web, with a charge for print or other output formats

Remember: charging has hidden costs of its own: you need to manage subscriptions, restrict access to content, accept payments, etc.

Copyright & Licensing

Who owns the copyright to content of your journal?
- Authors retain it
- Authors transfer copyright to journal

What license will you use to govern the use and re-use of content (the other half of Open Access)?
- Creative Commons
- Authors' right to deposit in an open institutional repository
- Editors' right to have the journal indexed/aggregated anywhere they want

Publisher

Do you want to partner with a publisher?

- Leverage existing expertise and infrastructure
- May lend authority/legitimacy to your publication
- Sustainability/long-term preservation of content
- May raise the profile/readership of your journal

Or publish the journal yourself?

- Total control
- Freedom to experiment with new approaches
- Low-cost/low-barrier to entry for experimental projects
- Not tied to an institution, organization, or company

Platform & Format

How do you want to make the journal available to read?
- In a web browser
- In a PDF downloaded from the web
- In print (single article, or entire issue)
- As an ebook (Kindle, epub, etc.)

How will it be hosted?
- Wordpress
- Open Journal Systems
- Digital Commons (or other institutional repository)
- Homegrown platform
- etc....

Business Model & Funding

How will the publication be established & sustained?

- Grants (renewable?)
- Faculty research funds
- Other departmental or institutional funding
- Author fees upon submission or acceptance
- Revenue from subscriptions or sales of products
- Other related activities (conferences, webinars, society membership fees)
- Students, interns, volunteers...(treat them well, provide plenty of support, and expect high turnover)

Business Model & Funding (2)

What are your expenses, anyway? They might include:

- Hosting/domain name
- Web design
- Editorial management (communication, review, nagging...)
- Copy-editing
- Typesetting
- Printing
- Conversion to ebook formats
- Administrative (mailing, handling fees and invoices)

Consider whether expenses are one-time, occasional, or ongoing

Editorial Workflow & Policies

- Frequency of publication (sticking to this schedule is important for establishing legitimacy)
- Submission guidelines
- Turnaround time to acknowledge acceptance, and to publication
- Approach to peer review (Open? Blind? Post-Publication?)

Acronyms to know and love

- ISSN = International Standard Serials Number
- DOI = Digital Object Identifier
- IF = Impact Factor, Thompson Reuters' measure of a journal's value
- RSS, OAI-PMH = types of feeds (ways for others to automatically retrieve your content)

Part III:

The first day of the rest of your life

Time to Think About

- Establishing reputation
- Managing Expectations
- Taking the long view

Establishing Reputation

- Announce to colleagues (list servs, conferences)
- Engage editorial board, recruit strong content
- Where do you want the journal to appear?
  - PubMed, MLA International Bibliography, Project Muse, Google Scholar, EBSCO, Web of Knowledge?
  - Investigate the guidelines and requirements for these products, and submit your journal for consideration

Managing Expectations

- Disciplinary context matters.
- Successful journals require time, effort, financial support, and commitment.
- Impact factors don't happen overnight.
- No, your journal will not be in the *MLA Directory of Periodicals* as soon as it launches.
- Good, fast, or cheap. Pick two!

Taking the Long View

Planning the first issue is a lot of work--but it's not enough!

- Look ahead to at least the first 3-5 issues (you may need to solicit most of the content for these yourself)
- Consider funding/support for the first 3-5 years
- Think about handoff
  - How will the journal be turned over to a new editor?
  - If you change jobs or move to a new institution, what will the impact be on the journal?

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- Contact us for a meeting!
- Complete a proposal
- Proposal review goes through a few stages
  - Editorial
  - Production/Technology
  - Recommendation to administration
  - Approval
- If approved, we'll ask you to complete a transmittal form containing details that help us set up and promote your journal
- You handle the editorial side, we handle the production and technology side. We work together to promote the journal

Thank you!

Questions? Comments?

Additional Resources

- Genevieve Brown and Beverly J. Irby, "Fourteen Lessons: Initiating and Editing an Online Professional Refereed Journal." *Journal of Electronic Publishing* 8, issue 1 (August 2002). http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/3336451.0008.106

- DOAJ, "Online Guide to Open Access Journals Publishing," http://www.doaj.org/bpguide/