Getting to Know Scholarly Journals

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Multiple Literacies: Explorations of Reading and Writing
Rebecca Welzenbach, Research Impact Librarian
September 1, 2020
Link to these slides: https://bit.ly/3gzY0tx
Link to full text of this session: https://bit.ly/2DisrXC
Use the U-M VPN:
https://its.umich.edu/enterprise/wifi-networks/vpn
What’s a research impact librarian?

I empower scholars to create the conditions under which they can establish:

- A strong public identity
- An account of their contributions to the scholarly enterprise
- A persuasive body of evidence for the impact of their work

Email me at rwelzenb@umich.edu
In more normal times, you’d find me in my office in Hatcher 260A,
For today:

- What’s special about scholarly journals (and why should you care)?
- When & why would you want to identify a particular journal, or compare one to another?
- Lenses for evaluating journals
- What next?
What’s special about scholarly journals?
Current model has roots in the 17th century
- Continuing, public record of scholarly exchange
- Peer review
- Growing network of citations
- 10's of thousands of journals actively publishing today

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Philosophical_Transactions_of_the_Royal_Society
When & why would you want to find, select, or compare journals?
When & Why?

- I have an assignment!
When & Why?

● I have an assignment!
● I found an article I’m interested in & want to evaluate its source.
● I want to keep up with trends in my field. Should I be subscribing to/reading this?
● I need to identify the best possible venue to publish my work.
● I am looking for a variety of readings for a class I’m teaching.
● I am applying for promotion / tenure / a job / a fellowship / a grant / a postdoc and I need to contextualize my work for others who don’t know it.
When you know why, you can get to what:

- Validity
- Reliability
- Rigor
- Exclusivity
- Peer review process
- Timeliness
- Innovation

- Scope & content
- Diversity & representation
- Prestige
- Accessibility/availability
- Copyright practices
- Affiliation with individuals or organizations I trust
- ...etc.
Lenses for evaluating journals
Example: Journal Impact Factor (JIF)

- # of citations in the current year / # of items published in the two prior years
- Intended to guide library collections decisions; now often misused as a proxy for quality
- Explore the JIF (and other metrics): Journal Citation Reports
- San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment
Editorial

- Editor-in-Chief and Editorial board
- Scope & Content
- Peer review process
- Acceptance rate
- Learn more: Platform for Responsible Editorial Policies
Affiliations and Visibility

- Associated with a society, conference, or organization?
- Example: PMLA website
- Abstracting & Indexing: Ulrichsweb Global Serials Directory
Publisher Policies & Practices

- Society, Academic, Commercial, Library?
- Copyright policies, Author agreement, deposit rights
- Sherpa Romeo directory of publisher policies
- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Guidelines
- U-M Copyright Office Author’s Addenda
This seems like a lot to think about.
I agree. Let’s talk more later.

Please, reach out to me!

- Rebecca Welzenbach (rwelzenb@umich.edu)
- Book an appointment online
Additional resources to explore

Library Research Guides:

- [Research Impact Assessment (Health Sciences)]
- [Research Impact Challenge Guide](esp. Days 6-10)
- [Scholarly Publishing]

Other:

- [Starting (and Sustaining!) a Journal]
- [Metrics Toolkit]
- Karin Wulf on The Scholarly Kitchen Blog: “If we don’t know what citations mean, what does it mean when we count them?”
Thank you!