

The publishing process in English language journals

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Overview

- Background to my writing career
- The best advice I ever had...
- Making writing part of the research process
- How to target a journal
- Talking to the editor
- The review process
- Receiving the review and how to respond...



My writing career so far

- 35 Scopus ranked articles since 2004, mainly in geography, sociology and management studies
- Gradually appearing in ‘more’ prestigious journals
- Reviewer for many ‘top’ journals and on editorial board of two journals
- Currently writing two books so spending some time away from journal writing
- But my career was almost over before it began...



- First four articles were all rejected – I was only on a one year contract so this put me under massive pressure
- In UK every 6 years or so academics get assessed and you have to submit your four best papers – so very little chance of a career until you have these
- Massive amount of pressure on young academics – have to write papers not books



REF2014



Cyngor Cylloedd Addysg
Uwch Cymru
Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales



Department for
Employment and Learning
www.DELni.gov.uk

Research Excellence Framework

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the new system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs). It will replace the **Research Assessment Exercise** (RAE) and will be completed in 2014. The REF will be undertaken by the four UK higher education funding bodies. The exercise will be managed by the REF team based at HEFCE and overseen by the REF Steering Group, consisting of representatives of the four funding bodies.

The primary purpose of the REF is to produce assessment outcomes for each submission made by institutions:

- The funding bodies intend to use the assessment outcomes to inform the selective allocation of their research funding to HEIs, with effect from 2015-16.
- The assessment provides accountability for public investment in research and produces evidence of the benefits of this investment.
- The assessment outcomes provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks.

REF 2014 latest news

Citation data

Elsevier has been awarded the contract for provision of citation services in the 2014 REF.



My early mistakes

- Not enough theory
- Not enough linkages to the wider debates
- I was told it was ‘high quality journalism’
- The ‘balance’ of the articles was wrong – i.e. too much or too little in certain sections
- Trying to say too much in an article
- Not thinking enough about why people would want to read it!



The best advice I ever had...

- Early in my writing career I would spend a great deal of time making the article as perfect as possible
- However, a leading Prof told me that reviewers are all (unrepeatable)***** and that even if the article is great they will want something to be changed
- Therefore it is more important to get the structure, aims and level of interest right



- If the editor and reviewers like the idea then they will guide you in how to make the paper publishable – thus it is better to spend more time after the review process
- Therefore, it is really important to chose the most suitable journal, good editors and to talk to people that have been published in the journal to get their views
- Thus the idea is only part of the process



Making writing part of the research process

- When writing a grant proposal in the outputs section I always spend a lot of time thinking about journals which would be suitable for the aims and objectives of the research
- Then during the course of the research data can be put in a file set up for each paper as well as ideas and suggestions
- Then during the project the journals can be ‘researched’ as well



How to target a journal

- What strategies do you employ when looking for a journal for your work?
- How do you search for journals?
- Who do you ask for advice?
- Why do you want to publish there
- How do you decide on your audience?



- The first question is empirical or theoretical
 - If the paper is more empirically based then there will be fewer journals as they will tend to be more specialized but your audience will be interested in the work. For example, if it is on a Russian case study somewhere like Europe-Asia Studies would be more suitable than a leading discipline based journal
 - If more theoretical then a boarder range to chose from but need to think about which is most relevant – i.e. methods and analysis



- Next is high impact or more chance of success?
 - Benefit of high impact journals is that the reviewers are likely to be leading experts in their field – therefore the comments you get back can be very useful. Even if you are rejected then it can help make the paper better for resubmission elsewhere
 - But success rates can be very low, the review process very long (a recent paper of mine was reviewed four times...) and it takes a long time for it to be published – especially in the run up to REF



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All Databases

Search

Example: oil spill* mediterranean

 in

AND in

Example: O'Brian C* OR OBrian C*

AND in

Example: Cancer* OR Journal of Cancer Research and Clinical Oncology

[Add Another Field >>](#)

Searches must be in English



Journal Citation Reports®



Subject Category Selection

<p>1) Select one or more categories from the list. (How to select more than one)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ANTHROPOLOGYAREA STUDIESBUSINESSBUSINESS, FINANCECOMMUNICATIONCRIMINOLOGY & PENOLOGYCULTURAL STUDIESDEMOGRAPHYECONOMICS
<p>2) Select to view Journal data or aggregate Category data.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="radio"/> View Journal Data - sort by: <input type="button" value="Journal Title"/></p> <p><input type="radio"/> View Category Data - sort by: <input type="button" value="Category Title"/></p>
<input type="button" value="SUBMIT"/>	

Journal Citation Reports®

 WELCOME  HELP

2010 JCR Social Science I

Journal Summary List

[Journal Title C](#)

Journals from: **subject categories SOCIOLOGY**

 [VIEW CATEGORY SUMMARY LIST](#)

Sorted by:

Impact Factor

 SORT AGAIN

Journals 1 - 20 (of 132)

|◀|◀|◀|[1|2|3|4|5|6|7]▶|▶|▶|

Page

 MARK ALL

 UPDATE MARKED LIST

Ranking is based on your journal and sort selections.

Mark	Rank	Abbreviated Journal Title (linked to journal information)	ISSN	JCR Data <small>i</small>						Eigenfactor™ Metrics <small>i</small>	
				Total Cites	Impact Factor	5-Year Impact Factor	Immediacy Index	Articles	Cited Half-life	Eigenfactor™ Score	Article Influence™ Score
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	AM SOCIOl REV	0003-1224	11353	3.693	5.840	0.385	39	>10.0	0.01651	3.994
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	ANNU REV SOCIOl	0360-0572	4759	3.592	5.028	0.520	25	>10.0	0.00660	3.120
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	AM J SOCIOl	0002-9602	10734	3.358	5.113	0.457	35	>10.0	0.01309	3.459
<input type="checkbox"/>	4	GENDER SOC	0891-2432	1749	2.088	2.877	0.300	30	10.0	0.00395	1.312
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	INT POLIT SOCIOl	1749-5679	130	2.057	2.214	0.238	21	2.7	0.00114	1.051
<input type="checkbox"/>	6	SOCIOl METHOD RES	0049-1241	1704	2.000	2.448	0.550	20	>10.0	0.00321	1.722
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	SOCIOl RURALIS	0038-0199	974	1.978	2.132	0.478	23	8.7	0.00145	0.705
<input type="checkbox"/>	8	ANN TOURISM RES	0160-7383	3698	1.949	3.140	0.212	52	>10.0	0.00280	0.614



- Lower impact journals have benefits though
 - Editors are more keen for submissions as they need to fill their editions. Thus they are more likely to spend time on the article
 - A quicker turn around meaning your work is still up to date when it is published
 - Often more specialized meaning people with similar research interests are more likely to find your article
 - Higher level of success



Mark	Rank	Abbreviated Journal Title (linked to journal information)	ISSN	JCR Data <small>i</small>					Eigenfactor™ Metrics <small>i</small>		
				Total Cites	Impact Factor	5-Year Impact Factor	Immediacy Index	Articles	Cited Half-life	Eigenfactor™ Score	Article Influence™ Score
<input type="checkbox"/>	81	ARMED FORCES SOC	0095-327X	419	0.615	0.960	0.273	33	8.8	0.00096	0.330
<input type="checkbox"/>	82	Z SOZIOL	0340-1804	248	0.611	0.641	0.200	25	9.1	0.00068	0.267
<input type="checkbox"/>	83	YOUNG	1103-3088	169	0.583		0.350	20	6.3	0.00061	
<input type="checkbox"/>	84	CULT SOCIOl	1749-9755	62	0.559	0.865	0.316	19		0.00036	0.352
<input type="checkbox"/>	85	CORNELL HOSP Q	1938-9655	66	0.549	0.662	0.056	36		0.00008	0.057
<input type="checkbox"/>	86	SOCIOL RES ONLINE	1360-7804	350	0.544	0.705	0.120	50	5.7	0.00165	0.330
<input type="checkbox"/>	87	SOCIETY	0147-2011	1055	0.540	0.569	0.188	64	>10.0	0.00132	0.223
<input type="checkbox"/>	88	KOLNER Z SOZIOL SOZ	0023-2653	363	0.536	0.754	0.114	70	9.2	0.00074	0.269
<input type="checkbox"/>	89	J MATH SOCIOl	0022-250X	471	0.522	0.817	0.154	13	>10.0	0.00042	0.363
<input type="checkbox"/>	90	CAN REV SOCIOl	1755-6171	245	0.483	0.770	0.000	19	9.3	0.00047	0.276
<input type="checkbox"/>	91	REV RELIG RES	0034-673X	388	0.473	0.483	0.207	29	>10.0	0.00063	0.228
<input type="checkbox"/>	92	MOBILIZATION	1086-671X	263	0.467	1.053	0.000	23	7.0	0.00149	0.680



When you have chosen

- Really research the journal – does it have similar papers to yours in terms of methodology and theory
- What are the aims of the journal, who ‘owns’ it – this will be on the website
- Use google scholar to see what papers from the journal have been successful
- Draw on debates from previous issues and cite them – editors are under a lot of pressure to increase their citation index



Talking to the editor

- When you have chosen the journal and are writing the paper it is worth writing to the journal editor to ask whether the idea is suitable and whether support is available for junior or overseas academics – some explicitly state this on their website
- If the editor suggests that it not a suitable topic then look elsewhere – they are supportive then it is worth emails academics who have been published in the journal to get there feedback – some will not reply but many are happy to help



The writing process

- Western journals normally follow a similar template; 7000 – 8000 words (including references) but all have different styles and referencing – make sure you adhere to these before you submit as it is very frustrating for a reviewer if they are wrong and you don't want to annoy them other trivial things!
- Most also follow a similar structure – intro, theory section (or review of the literature), methods, results and discussion and conclusions – some journals differ but these are mainly online ones – check out the website and previous



Creativity and project management: a comic

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Abstract

It's a comic book, the clue's in the title. The idea is to tell a story about how a research project took place focusing not on the data that was generated, or even so much on how we generated the data, but on the way we actually tried to manage the project. Generally the academy likes to draw a veil over the messy bits which make scholars look like idiots and allows outsiders to question whether or not projects should have been funded in the first place. But if you're willing to sail your academic reputation out to sea on a long boat and set it on fire then you might illuminate the dark corners of the black box in which these processes normally reside. Project management can be a crucial, highly creative, part of the process of generating new academic knowledge. We argue that acknowledging

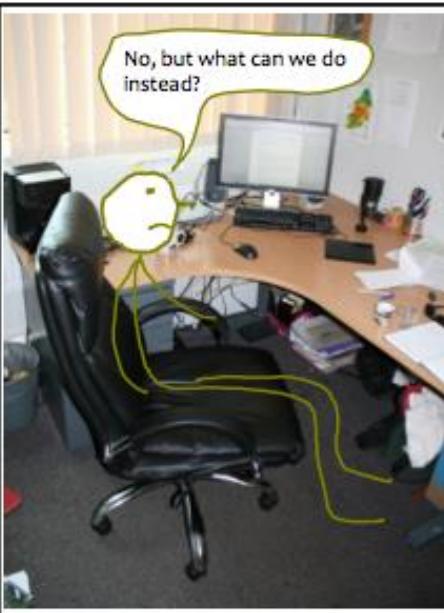


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Rewind to 2006.

Our heroes are bored & vaguely frustrated with what they're doing. They've positioned themselves cynically, and with cowardice into work that looked good within their department. But now in 'safe' lectureships they say to themselves "is that all there is?"



And then it dawns on them...



And so it came to pass that our heroes started writing their first proper grant application about something they actually wanted to research. The basic notion was simple: everyone seems to be interested in walking interviews, but what difference does walking with a participant actually make?

By attaching GPS devices to participants while they walk and talk, words and spaces could be (fairly) precisely mapped. Three groups of people would be used: those who only undertook walking interviews, those who only undertook traditional sit-down interviews, and those who did both. Then they'd be able to analyse the different ways the different groups talked about a particular space.

But which space?

This was the height of the pre-credit crunch boom. Phil & James were already producing a book on urban regeneration (Jones & Evans 2008) and were getting a little exercised by the ways that, for all the talk of community engagement, in the final analysis people seemed very much squeezed out of the process. They were both particularly miffed about the Digbeth area of Birmingham where a big project branded 'Eastside' was taking place which seemed hell bent on erasing the histories, both physical and social that existed there.

Rescue archaeologists go into an area prior to redevelopment and try to record traces of past settlements. Why couldn't geographers do the same with people's spatial memories of spaces about to be radically changed. Why not create a Rescue Geography?



- Make readers aware ‘why’ they should be reading this – too many papers sent for review get the response ‘so’ even if they have really good ideas in them
- Ensure you have a great deal of referencing in the article to demonstrate you are up to date with the current debates
- Place the work within its wider contexts – this makes it as interesting as possible to a wide audience and will ensure that it gets cited



Scholar

Articles and patents

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[Create email alert](#)**[book] Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age****A Giddens** - 1991 - [books.google.com](#)

Stanford University Press Stanford, California © 1991 Anthony **Giddens** Originating publisher Polity Press, Cambridge, in association with Blackwell Publishers, Oxford First published in the USA by Stanford University Press, 1991 Cloth ISBN 0-8047-1943-8 Paper ISBN 0-8047- ...

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In offering a preliminary exposition of the main concepts of structuration theory** it will be useful to begin from the divisions which have separated Junction^sm (including systems theory) ^4^tru^ur^^n_ on thToiehana^Mfrom hermeneutics and the various forms of 'interpretative ...

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Beginning with a critical examination of the importance of structuralism for contemporary sociology, the author develops a comprehensive account of what he calls "the theory of structuration." One of the main themes is that social theory must recognize, as it has not ...

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The Constitution of Society Outline of the Theory of Structuration Anthony **Giddens** University of California Press Berkeley and Los Angeles This One Q4CX-S2T-FQ0Y ... © Anthony **Giddens** 1984 First published in the United States by the University of California Press, 1984 All ...

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[\[book\] Archaeological theory: an introduction](#)

M Johnson - 2010 - books.google.com

This second edition first published 2010 © 2010 Matthew Johnson Edition history: Blackwell Publishing Ltd (1e,1999) Blackwell Publishing was acquired by John Wiley & Sons in February 2007. Blackwell's publishing program has been merged with Wiley's global Scientific, ...

[Cited by 240](#) - [Related articles](#) - [All 10 versions](#)

[Field Research Practice in Management and Organization Studies: Reclaiming its Tradition of Discovery](#)

K Locke - [The Academy of Management Annals](#), 2011 - Taylor & Francis

This review reasserts field research's discovery epistemology. While it occupies a minority position in the study of organization and management, discovery-oriented research practice has a long tradition of giving insight into new, unappreciated and misappreciated ...

[Cited by 1](#)

[Leadership in Organizational Knowledge Creation: A Review and Framework](#)

G Von Krogh, I Nonaka... - [Journal of Management](#) ..., 2011 - Wiley Online Library

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- Make the writing as concise as possible – it is easy to over complicate and waffle at the start and end of a paper but make it as immediate as possible.
- Make each sentence count – if it is not adding to the argument or moving the paper along then it is not needed
- When you have written a section go and take 10% of the words out – it will make it more direct and often one sentence can be made from two



- Use the active voice as much as possible and be confident in the writing. This makes the article seem much more authoritative and focused, compare;
 - The aim of this paper is to explore...
 - This paper explores...

As well as sounding more confident and easier to read it uses a lot less words as well



- Develop a network of friends and colleagues – including some from overseas whom you can send a final draft version to for peer review
- Ask them to be honest and don't be upset if they are critical – once the group starts working the benefits can be huge
- Ask a non-academic to read the paper to make sure the points are clear and there is no repetition – even if they do not understand it all a totally 'clean' set of eyes is really useful



- Make sure the conclusion is very strong – this is where most people will quote from
- Draw the reader's attention to your other work and to those with similar research interests – think of it as broadening the community
- Wait for the reviews...

The review process

- Most journals send articles out anonymously to three reviewers
- They will report back to the editor who will make a decision based on the reports – but the editor has the final say (which is why it is important to find out about them – does the journal have a lot of young scholars in it for example)



- The paper can be either be accepted or rejected without further discussion but this is relatively rare
- More common are ‘accept with revisions’ or ‘revise and resubmit’.
- ‘accept with revisions’ means that the paper is very close to publication standard and the editor will ask for some revisions – which normally they will look at without sending the paper back out to review or it will only go out to one reviewer



‘revise and resubmit’

- Means that the editor and at least one of the reviewers like the paper but that there are problems with it but if it is revised it might be suitable for publication
- The editor will send you copies of the reviewers' comments and how he/she would like you to respond to them
- Often the reviews contradict each other and hopefully the editor will guide you to the most important points



What to do with a revise and resubmit

- Put the reviews in a draw for a week or so...



- It is pointless looking at the reviews when you get them in much depth as you will never agree with them when you are annoyed
- It is very rare that a reviewer will be nasty for the sake of it – more often the comments are meant to be constructive – however, reviewers are often short of time and thus are not always polite
- In almost all of my experience the comments have made it a better paper even if it has gone eventually to another journal



- Reviews can vary greatly in length – I have had from a paragraph saying pretty much ‘no’ – to over 4000 words. Great that they engaged so much but not much use as their suggestions would be enough for another 5 papers!
- They are often contradictory – hopefully the editor will guide you through them
- Don’t be afraid to disagree with them
- See them as a guideline to getting the work published



- If you have any questions about the reviews write to the editor for clarification
- When you have completed the revisions write a detailed letter to the editor showing how you have changed the paper (include page numbers etc)
- Don't feel that you have to agree with all the reviewers' comments – as long as you say why you have not made the changes most editors will consider this



- Normally the paper will then go back out to review to at least one of the reviewers and hopefully it will come back with accept with revisions
- Then it is just a matter of doing these and you will have the paper accepted
- At the moment a lot of journals have very long lead times (the time from acceptance to publication) but more and more journals are publishing accepted papers online before the print versions come out

