Connecting the dots
from submission to decision, the fate of scholarly papers

Ian Potter
Frankfurt Book Fair 2017
11 October 2017
Some assumptions

- This on an ongoing update of our Scholarly Publishing Insights data
- Based on aggregated data from our submission and review platform
- No publisher-level details are disclosed
- Mapping to the Web of Science is to SCI-E and SSCI (for impact quartiles)
- Data is based on submission year. Accept, reject rates are for manuscripts in that submission year cohort
- Country is the country of the submitting author
- WoS Category (of 252) and ESI Research Field (of 22) for any journal is the one in which it has the highest Impact Factor rank percentile (journals may be in more than one category)
A story of growth
In 2016

~6,200 publications

52% are in the two main WoS editors

*SCI-E and SSCI only.
Manuscript submissions
In 2016, there were >1.9 million original submissions.

The chart shows the number of manuscripts from 2012 to 2016, categorized into original submissions, re-submissions, and revised submissions.
Accept rate
Reject rate
Reject without Review rate

% of final decisions


Change
decline in the overall accept rate,
matched with a slow rise in the reject without review rate
72% of submissions to ScholarOne Manuscripts are to WoS indexed title.
>35% in top quartile journals
Number of submissions

Non-Open Access

Open Access†

†SCI-E, SSCI, AHCI, ESCI

Currently in gold OA titles

<5%

Web of Science
Trust the difference

Clarivate Analytics
The scope of current research
Annual original submissions ('000s)

10,000
20,000
30,000
50,000
70,000
Making decisions

Web of Science
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Accept rates vary across subjects
Accept rates for gold OA slightly higher
Reject rates for gold OA are slightly lower.
Reject without review rates don’t differ
Accept rates higher for un-indexed content

Accept rates lower for top quartile content
Reject without review rate (% of final decisions)
Decision times

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Decision time varies considerably across subjects
Mean time from original submission to final decision (days)

- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016

Non-open access
Open access
Mean time from original submission to final decision (days)

- quartile 1
- quartile 2
- quartile 3
- quartile 4
- not indexed

Decision times improve overall — quicker in upper impact quartiles
Submissions by geography
Submission parity
Between US and China in 2017

USA¹: 275.2 papers, 22.3% submission parity
China²: 336.5 papers, 82.5% submission parity
India³: 74.3 papers, 65.2% submission parity
UK⁴: 84.9 papers, 16.4% submission parity
Iran⁵: 38.5 papers, 82.9% submission parity
Brazil⁶: 28.7 papers, 136.0% submission parity

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USA 2016 rank: USA
2012 share: 20.5%
2015 share: 17.6%
Decline in proportion of global submissions: 2.9%
Increase in proportion of global submissions: 5.3%

UK 2016 rank: UK
2012 share: 2.9%
2015 share: 3.7%
Decline in proportion of global submissions: 0.6%
Increase in proportion of global submissions: 5.8%

China 2016 rank: China
2012 share: 17.5%
2015 share: 13.7%
Decline in proportion of global submissions: 0.2%
Increase in proportion of global submissions: 4.5%

India 2016 rank: India
2012 share: 6.5%
2015 share: 5.5%
Decline in proportion of global submissions: 1.0%
Increase in proportion of global submissions: 0.8%

UK 2016 rank: UK
2012 share: 5.5%
2015 share: 6.3%
Decline in proportion of global submissions: 1.2%
Increase in proportion of global submissions: 3.6%

Brazil 2016 rank: Brazil
2012 share: 17.5%
2015 share: 12.9%
Decline in proportion of global submissions: 0.2%
Increase in proportion of global submissions: 5.6%

Japan 2016 rank: Japan
2012 share: 3.5%
2015 share: 2.1%
Decline in proportion of global submissions: 1.4%
Increase in proportion of global submissions: 2.5%

Iran 2016 rank: Iran
2012 share: 3.7%
2015 share: 2.9%
Decline in proportion of global submissions: 0.8%
Increase in proportion of global submissions: 7.3%

Web of Science
Trust the difference

Clarivate Analytics
Decision rates by country
Decision time by country
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Decision times
Quicker in emerging regions — the effect of immediate rejections

USA

China

India

UK

Iran

Brazil

Web of Science
Trust the difference
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The fate of rejected manuscripts
Reviewer demographics
Number of reviews completed in 2016 (S1M Prod1)
How many reviewers are needed?
Percentage of invited reviewers who agree to review:
- 55.8% in 2011
- 47.3% in 2016
Percentage of invited reviewers who complete their reviews

- 53.6% in 2011
- 44.4% in 2016
For every 10 reviewers selected...

- 8.5 were invited
- 4.4 agreed to review
- 4.2 completed their review
Space Science 5.5
Economics & Business 5.1
Mathematics 4.7
Computer Science 4.5
No Research Field 4.5
Neuroscience & Behavior 4.4
Geosciences 4.4
Physics 4.4
Engineering 4.4
Social Sciences, general 4.3
Plant & Animal Science 4.2
Microbiology 4.1
Psychiatry/Psychology 4.1
Clinical Medicine 4.1
Molecular Biology & Genetics 4.0
Materials Science 3.9
Biology & Biochemistry 3.8
Chemistry 3.8
Pharmacology & Toxicology 3.7
Agricultural Sciences 3.6
Multidisciplinary 3.5
Environment/Ecology 3.4
All 4.2

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Slower review in non Impact Factor journals

Time from reviewer agree to completion (days)

2012
2013
2014
2015
2016

Not categorized Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4

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How quickly do they review?
Which demographics contribute?
The story so far...
### Number of days from submission to any final decision

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### Number of days from submission to acceptance

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### Number of days for reviewers to complete their reviews

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### Time from submission to final decision (days)

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Submission growth across the board — concentrated in emerging regions and subjects — but they don’t contribute reviewers.

Decision times vary by subject and faster in upper impact quartiles.

Time to accept consistent.

Web of Science: Trust the difference.

Accept rates higher for gold OA and content not in SCI-E/SSCI — downward trend.

Reject rates lower for gold OA and content not in SCI-E/SSCI — upward trend.

Impact:
- Time to final decision quicker in higher quartiles
- Accept rates lower in higher quartiles — reject without review rates higher
- Review quicker in higher quartiles

Rejects: ~37% appeared in another title.

Measures of impact: ‘lost’ impact

Submission, Manuscript authoring, Peer review, Decision, Accepted manuscript, Rejected manuscript, Published article, Measures of impact, 'lost' impact, Published article, Public journal.