Targeting the Best Journal & Preparing Right Submission

Presented by:
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Targeting the Best Journal
Where could you publish
Targeting the right journal

Here’s what you want, right?
Targeting the right journal

Here’s what you are likely to get.

Reject w/o review

78%  74%  50%
The impact factor is important but...
The impact factor isn’t everything!
What is a journal “impact factor”?

The journal impact factor is a measure of the frequency with which the “average article” in a journal has been cited in a particular year.

The impact factor will help you evaluate a journal’s relative importance, especially when you compare it to others in the same field.

*Definition taken from ISI Web of Knowledge Journal Citation Reports 2008*
The impact factor is flawed in many ways

The impact factor measures citations to JOURNALS, not individual researchers or papers: 20% of the articles get 80% citations

Study* showed that of ~30,000 papers in ~2,000 journal over 4 years:

- 23% had 0 citations
- 51% had 1–5 citations
- 12% had 6–10 citations
- 8% had 11–20 citations
- 6% had 20+ citations

The impact factor varies over time

The impact factor varies by subject

The impact factor varies by publication type

What measures of “impact” are available now?

• ISI impact factor (IF)
• Google Scholar “Cited By”
• h-index
• Eigenfactor
• Altmetrics
• Many others

All have Advantages and Disadvantages
Targeting the right journal...
...is where authors most often go wrong.

You must match your research with

✓ AIMS, SCOPE, and CURRENT interests of journal
✓ Types of papers published by the journal
✓ Interests of readers
✓ Potential timing of publication
✓ Required fees and your financial abilities
The editor of the top Oncology journal lists the criteria for selection for his journal (in order of importance):

1. Relevance to journal scope and audience
2. Importance to most journal readers
3. Newness of the information
4. Scientific validity of the evidence supporting the conclusions
5. Usefulness in maintaining the journal’s balance of topics (“priority”)
Targeting the right journal
General vs. Specialized journal
Targeting the right journal
International, National, or Regional?
Targeting the right journal

Open access, copyright restrictions, publication or subscription fees?
Targeting the right journal
Journal type, article format

- Experimental reports
- Applied research
- Methods journal
- Review journal
- Letters/short communications
- Cutting edge
- Cross-disciplinary
Timing matters

Do you need to publish quickly?

- to complete a PhD
- to get a job
- to get a promotion
- to publish results before another group
- to help affect a decision
Targeting the right journal

Costs of publishing
Check to see if there are

• Page charges
• Color charges
• Author fees (open access)

HINT:
If money is a problem, ask if fees can be reduced or waived
Look at DETAILS

Does the journal
• Require transfer of copyright?
• Require authors to deposit data (or refuse supplementary data)?
• Require authors to share materials (seeds, DNA samples)?
• Restrict number of authors?

OR

• $$ Charge for number of print pages?
• $$ Charge for use of color?
• $$ Charge for immediate open access?
Pre-submission inquiries

- Not all journals accept these (check instructions carefully).
- Each journal has different requirements (find out).
- You can also email the editor as a pre-submission inquiry.

State

- What the paper is about
- What is new
- Why it is important
- Why it is a good match for the journal

Some editors will reply; others will not!

- Remember – being encouraged to submit does not guarantee that the paper will get accepted or even reviewed.
Final tips for targeting the right journal

• STUDY
  • the aims, scope, and mission statement of the journal
  • the instructions to authors
  • the readership (through social media)
• Read recent copies of the journal to see what topics and styles are currently favored.
• If in doubt, write to the editor or staff member for suggestions.
Targeting the right journal

Where do you find all this information?

• Journal website
• Instructions to authors
• Copies of the journal

Study these thoroughly.
Targeting the right journal

Look on the journal website to find out:

- Aims/scope statement
- Types of papers published
- Word limits and other criteria
- Formatting requirements
- Style preferences
- Time to publication
- Author fees
Targeting the right journal

Every journal is different

• Study each journal carefully. (Is it a good match?)
• Tailor manuscript, graphics, and other material to meet journal specifications.
• Write a cover letter to highlight match (why your paper fits that course).
• FIND, READ, and FOLLOW the Instructions to Authors. If rejected, carefully choose another journal.
• Tailor paper and materials to fit the new journal.

Not one-size-fits-all
### Selecting a Journal

**List of journals that might be considered for submission of the manuscript**

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This Journal Selection Report was compiled after a detailed analysis of the above parameters. It is solely an indicator of the probability of acceptance in the listed journals and should be treated as a guide by the authors to consider submission of their manuscript to any of these journals. However, it should not be considered as a guarantee of acceptance of the manuscript in any of the listed journals.
Preparing Right Submission
Why bother?

- Wrong type of paper: Rejected without review
- Too long, too short, wrong topic: Rejected without review
- Too specialized, too general: Rejected without review

This wastes time and gives the Editor a bad impression!
Ask yourself these questions

- What types of papers does this journal publish?
- What topics?
- Is my paper a good match?
- Who reads this journal? Is this the audience I want to reach?
- What format is required?
- Are there costs? Can I afford them?
• FIND the Instructions to Authors
• READ the Instructions to Authors
• OBEY the Instructions to Authors

• Look at the journal website
• Look in the print copy of the journal
Costs of publishing

- Page charges
- Color charges
- Open access author fees
- Non-profit vs for-profit commercial publishers
- Lower fees (or no fees) for authors from developing countries
Online demo

- **PNAS** [www.pnas.org](http://www.pnas.org)
- **JBC** [www.jbc.org](http://www.jbc.org)
More questions – formatting

• What types of text files are accepted?
• Word counts? (do not ignore these)
• Figures low resolution or high resolution? What file types? Embedded in text or not?
• How/where to submit – online submission site?
• Paper copies?
Writing style

• Write short clear sentences
• Use active voice
• General journal – avoid/explain specialized words
• Specialized journal – don’t waste space on general explanations
• Add line numbers to the manuscript (check Instructions to Authors on this)
Present the manuscript in good English

- Ask a native English speaker to help you
- Ask your supervisor or colleague to contact
- Someone they know
- Use a professional service (costs!)

If the English is hard to understand, the Editor may reject without review
Spelling

- Use correct, consistent spelling everywhere in
- The text
  - Genus/species names (check spelling!)
  - Author names
  - Chemical or test names
  - Place names
- Spell out acronyms when first used (check spelling)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Numbers

• **Numbers**

• Must be consistent throughout
  ✓ the text
  ✓ the figures
  ✓ the results and conclusions

• Explain any differences
References

- Check Instructions to Authors for journal style
- Change the style for each journal (eg EndNote)
- Check that
  - references in text are also in the References section
  - references in the References section are also in the text
- Check that all links are working (Add a “viewed” date)
- Check that DOIs are correct
Figures and Tables

- Check that all Figures and Tables you provide are mentioned in the text
- Check that all Figures and Tables mentioned in the text are provided
- Make sure that the order of Figures is correct
- Make sure you provide the latest version of each Figure
Keeping track of the right version (V)

- Silver_Fig3_V1_SS
- Silver_Fig3_V2_SS

Or

- Silver and Benson_Fig5_30May09_SS
- Silver and Benson_Fig5_01Jun09_SS PB
Resolution

• Look at the Instructions to Authors to find out what resolution the journal wants
  ✓ for peer review
  ✓ for printing
  ✓ for online publication

• Check file size (? MB)

• Size on printed page (? inches/centimetres)
Copyright and permissions

• Authors assign copyright to the publisher or the journal
• To include a published Figure or Table, ask the copyright holder
• Ask the author as a courtesy
Figure 5. Effects of CO$_2$ enrichment in a laboratory experiment. (a) Biomass of the green alga Scenedesmus, (b) the corresponding algal C:P stoichiometry, and (c) specific growth rates of Daphnia when fed with these green algae. The treatments consisted of 360, 1500, and 3500 ppm CO$_2$, represented by green, blue, and red bars, respectively. Error bars indicate the standard error of the mean. Bars with different letters were significantly different (P < 0.05, Tukey’s pairwise comparison). (From Urabe et al. 2005; adapted with permission from Blackwell Publishing Ltd: Global Change Biology.)
Look in different places to find the publisher

(Urabe et al. 2003; adapted with permission from Blackwell Publishing)
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