

Publishing in the Social Sciences

Introduction

Publishing in the Social Sciences, as with all of academia, is an integral component of scholarly success. This tutorial will provide a basic outline for the publication process from choosing a journal to an article's acceptance. Links to outside sources on particular stages of the process will be provided as they are encountered and sources for further reading will be supplied at the end.

Picking a Journal

Targeting the appropriate journal for submission of your article is essential to both acceptance and reaching your desired audience. Impact Factor (IF) is one of the most commonly talked about criteria for selecting a journal for submission. The Impact Factor is a score derived from the average number of citations attributed to a particular journal. This score, calculated and distributed by Thomson Reuters' *Journal Citation Reports*, is often used to gauge how 'important' a journal is, and thus how 'important' an article is. However, there are many other factors to consider when choosing a journal, such as speed (review/publication period) reach (geographic and discipline scope), acceptance rates, and a variety of other metrics. Additionally, it may be prudent, particularly for junior scholars, to publish in a wide array of journals. Once you have made your choice, it is also a good idea to read over articles from the journal in order to gain a solid appreciation for what they are looking for.

[For more information on picking a journal see:](#)

Boellstorff, T. (2011), In This Issue: Publishing and Publics. *American Anthropologist*, 113: 381-382.

Submission

Submission procedures and requirements vary widely across publishers and journals. Be sure to read the 'Guide for Authors' on the Journal's home page (ex: <http://antiquity.ac.uk/contribute>). There, you will find all of the information on length, formatting, citations and file formats. Below you will find a brief list of elements common of these guides to keep an eye on.

Formatting

Text Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is extremely important that you check the maximum length of articles accepted by your journal, and what that includes. Even within a journal, different types of submissions (e.g. research, review, debate) may have different maximum lengths. These maximum text lengths often may include the abstract, figure/illustration captions, acknowledgements and the bibliography.
Figures and Illustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Much like text length, each journal has a maximum number of figures, photographs and/or illustrations that it will allow in a given article. Additionally, check the journal's policy on publishing in color before you submit any charts or graphs in which color differences are essential.
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every journal has its own conventions used for publication. Be sure you are aware of footnote and quotation protocols, as well as citation styles. In addition to conventions for using and citing sources, journals will have specific protocols for dates, numbers, names, and italicization. Be sure to check ALL of these before submission.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ For further guidance on how to work with sources in your academic writing, see the CTL's tutorials on 'Using Sources': http://ctl.yale.edu/writing/using-sources
File Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Now that your article is completed and adheres to the journal's standards and conventions, it is necessary convert your article to the required format for submission. Aside from selecting the PDF/Doc format, it is also important to arrange your article's components in the correct order. Some journals require imbedded artwork and captions, while others may request separate files. Additionally, some journals may allow for the inclusion of supplementary materials that may help keep your word count low.
Prepare for Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most journals will offer you the opportunity to identify Preferred and Non-preferred reviewers. In some cases, you may wish to exclude individuals based on academic rivalries or other concerns. However, be sure not to include too many names, as this can be seen as a red flag to editors who will wonder why you have so many enemies. Keep in mind, these are only suggestions and the editors are under no obligation to comply.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ For an in depth look at this process see: https://methodsblog.wordpress.com/2015/11/27/non-preferred-reviewers/• Before you submit your article, review the peer review policies of your journal to see what type of review they employ (see below). If they use a double-blind review, you will need to anonymize your manuscript by deleting your name and other identifying features.

Peer Review

Once an article is submitted, it will be checked for plagiarism and content to assure it is within the scope of the journal. Only after these steps are completed will the journal editors select reviewers. It is the job of these peer reviewers to consider the substance and novelty of the article and identify ways in which it may be improved. There are several types of peer-review used by journals, each with their own advantages and disadvantages.

Peer Review Types

Peer Review Types	
Single Blind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where only the anonymity of the reviewer is maintained.
Double Blind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where the anonymity of the reviewer and author is maintained.
Open Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where no anonymity is maintained.

Acceptance

Once your article is accepted, you will be given the opportunity to complete final edits and/or corrections as long as they do not substantially change the accepted manuscript. Also, make sure you review the licensing agreements so you understand how to, and how not to, promote your article on social media or other outlets.

Other Things to Consider

Formatting

Formatting	
Open Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open Access (OA) publishing is a means of making an article available online for free. Recently, there has been an increase in the number and variety of OA journals, and many publishers now offer OA options. Although OA is becoming more popular, there are various advantages and disadvantages that must be considered.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Before you choose to proceed with OA, visit the <i>Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition's</i> (SPARC) website: http://www.sparc.arl.org/issues/open-access○ For a list of common OA journals visit the Directory of Open Access Journals: https://doaj.org/subjects

Predatory Journals

- With the growing digitization of information and the rise of Open Access publishing, dozens of journals are established every year. Although many of these journals uphold the rigorous standards of academic publications, many do not. Based on a series of criteria (i.e. integrity, poor journal standards, opaque business practices), some publishers have been labeled as ‘predatory.’ These journals may contact potential authors directly, often via email, to solicit article submissions.
 - For a more in-depth look into the criteria considered, see Jeffrey Beall’s explanation: <https://scholarlyoa.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/criteria-2015.pdf>
 - For an up-to-date list of predatory publishers and journals see Beall’s List: <http://scholarlyoa.com/2014/01/02/list-of-predatory-publishers-2014/>

Further Resources

Choosing a Journal

- Virginia Tech University Libraries
<http://www.lib.vt.edu/find/journals/select-journal-publish.html>
- Taylor & Francis
<http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/how-to-choose-a-journal/>

Submission process

- Virginia Tech University Libraries
<http://www.lib.vt.edu/find/journals/submit.html>
- The Guardian
<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jan/03/how-to-get-published-in-an-academic-journal-top-tips-from-editors>

Open Access

- Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association
<http://oaspa.org/information-resources/general-information/>
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
<https://libraries.mit.edu/scholarly/mit-open-access/general-information-about-open-access/open-access-faq/>