

# ERGON

## BULLETIN FOR THE UM ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

*Scholarly Publication Support Unit*  
Unit Sokongan Penerbitan Ilmiah



Vol. 4 No. 2, October 2012  
Issue 7  
ISSN 2180-2122

### Message from the Unit

Research universities, being 'research'-centric universities, derive their ranking from, *inter alia*, the number as well as the quality of publications by their members in academic journals. Publications in science and technology journals require funding, and the higher the quality, the more considerable must be the financial support. Top-tier publications arise from ideas well thought out by researchers, who themselves should be in the forefront of their fields of expertise. More importantly, they must be assisted by excellent postgraduate students and fellows in favorable working environments.

Vice-Chancellors or Presidents managing universities have to look into the quality of research output in addition to overseeing the undergraduate programs. Research itself is intimately tied up with postgraduate education, and a top-notch research university should also have an excellent pool of postgraduate students. For the researchers themselves, publications can be justifiably used for their promotion. All this leads to the necessity for adopting a means of measuring academic scholarship based on research output.

In the recent release of the 2012/2013 QS World University Rankings, the University of Malaya managed to climb up to 156<sup>th</sup> position. Although it must be said that this upward movement has been encouraging, much more effort must be put in by both the administration and the academics themselves to inch into the top 100 by the year 2015. Among the local institutions of higher learning, the University of Malaya has, again, affirmed its standing as *the* premier university.

*Professor Dr. Sarinah WY Low*  
Head, SchoPuS

### Contributions to this Issue

The October 2012 Issue presents five articles. Each article covers an important aspect of research publication and academic life. In the first article, Professor Graham Kendall, the Vice-Provost of the University of Nottingham, Malaysia Campus, critically analyses the meaning of impact factors. Although we admit that impact factors provide a quantitative measurement of publications we produce, thus serving a purpose, his message is that academic institutions should not be blind to the metrics but treat them more cautiously. Professor Shigehiko Uni from the Biology Department recalls the University Reform that was implemented in the 1990s in Japan, to much bitter response. As his title indicates, the reform did not result in success; it brought various hardships to researchers and disadvantaging factors to every corner of academia. Professor Jane Elizabeth Klobas from Bocconi University, Milan, Italy, articulates step by step ways to succeed in publishing research results in top-tier journals. Professor Klobas proposes that a quality paper reflects 'three common rules', among which the author's voice is the dominant. In an Editorial, Dr Toshiko Yamaguchi from the SchoPuS Unit reports the gist of UM's Autonomy Plan. This report is written based on a speech by UM's Vice Chancellor during his visits to faculties early this year. The last article is from the Main Library. Ms. Janaki Sinnasamy and Ms. Ai Peng Koh illustrate three key features constituting the ISI Web of Science; Master Journal List, Journal Citation Report, and Web of Science Database. The most intriguing topic in their article appears to be their explanation of why some journals are dropped from the Master Journal List. Professor Kendall's and Professor Klobas' articles arose from their talks delivered at UM on 5 July and 11 May 2012, respectively.

*Assoc. Prof. Dr. Toshiko Yamaguchi*  
Editor-in-Chief



## Contents

<b>Message from the Unit</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Contributions to this Issue</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Journal Rankings: Buyer Beware</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>University Reform in Japan: Struggling Universities</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Publishing in Top Tier Journals</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Editorial: UM's Autonomy Plan</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Verifying the Status of Journals in the ISI Web of Science</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The People of Ergon</b>	<b>12</b>

## Journal Rankings: Buyer Beware

### Introduction

The scientific world is increasingly being driven by metrics. Journal rankings, impact factors and citation counts are commonly used by institutions and individuals to give credibility to the quality of their research. Rightly or wrongly, impact factors are used to help make important decisions regarding promotions, grant proposals and job applications. According to a recent article in Ergon, The University of Malaya requires its scientists to publish in ISI Web of Science journals [4], demonstrating the importance that the institution places on publishing in journals that have a recognised impact factor.

I have often heard statements such as the following:

1. "My paper is better than yours as the journal has a higher impact factor,"
2. "If I publish in an ISI ranked journal my institution will give me money,"
3. "I have to publish in journals that are ISI ranked,"
4. "I have to publish in journals that have an impact factor of greater than n.nn,"
5. "I will not get my PhD unless I publish at least one journal paper in an ISI ranked journal."

Whether impact factors should be used in this way is open to debate. A recent blog post by Stephen Curry (Professor of Structural Biology at Imperial College, London) [1] seemed to strike a chord when the post attracted almost 13,000 page views, generated 460 tweets and attracted 130 comments. The essence of the post was that impact factors were flawed and should not be used to make important decisions. The post also gives a brief history of impact factors and argues that they were not designed for the purpose that they are frequently used for nowadays.

With the advent of Open Access publishing the debate around impact factors is only likely to increase as open access papers are more likely to be

cited as, by their nature, they are easier to obtain. Another blog post [2] might be of interest to those interested in this area as it provides a list of useful resources on open access publishing.

If you are unsure what ISI journal rankings are, or how they are derived, a recent Ergon article [3] explains this. This article also discusses subject categories (which I also refer to below) and describes how you can use the JCR interface to navigate the various options.

This article will focus on one particular aspect as to why you need to be careful of arbitrarily using impact factors when making important decisions which could affect not only your institution but also the career progression of those who work with/for you.

### Subject Categories

The ISI Web of Knowledge Journal Citation service allocates journals to various categories. In 2011, there were about 180 categories (in Science; Social Science provides another set of categories), ranging from Acoustics to Zoology. Each category contains a varying number of journals, depending on the topic. An example, the category Operations Research & Management Science (OR/MS) contains 77 journals. The journal with the highest impact factor is Journal of Operations Management, which has an impact factor of 4.382. The journal with the lowest ranking is RAIRO - Operations Research, with a ranking of 0.220. Table 1 provides some data from the OR/MS category, showing the top five ranked journals and the bottom five ranked journals, along with their impact factors.

#	Abbreviated Journal Title	Impact Factor
1	J OPER MANAG	4.382
2	OMEGA-INT J MANAGE S	3.338
3	TECHNOVATION	3.287
4	TRANSPORT RES B-METH	2.856
5	EXPERT SYST APPL	2.203
	.....	
73	J SYST ENG ELECTRON	0.276
74	QUAL TECHNOL QUANT M	0.276
75	ASIA PAC J OPER RES	0.25
76	FLEX SERV MANUF J	0.25
77	RAIRO-OPER RES	0.22

Table 1: Sample journals from ISI Web of Knowledge subject area OR/MS, Top/Bottom five (of 77) journals by impact factor (2011)

Knowing the impact factor of each journal in a category means that we can easily calculate various statistics. Table 2 shows these statistics for the OR/MS category. We have calculated the sum of all the impact factors, the minimum and maximum impact factors, along with the average and standard deviation.

### Analysis

We chose five categories at random. Well, almost at random: four were chosen at random (although probably biased towards the authors' research interests). One was chosen where the category contained a high ranking journal, in order to highlight the points that are made below. The categories analysed are.

1. Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence
2. Engineering, Aerospace
3. Engineering, Chemical
4. Oncology
5. Operations Research & Management Science

# of Journals	77
Sum	80.00
Min	0.22
Max	4.38
Average	1.04
Stddev	0.75

Table 2: Operations Research & Management Science statistics

# of Journals	111
Sum	158.38
Min	0.06
Max	4.91
Average	1.43
Stddev	1.06

Table 3: Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence statistics

# of Journals	26
Sum	18.32
Min	0.00
Max	3.00
Average	0.70
Stddev	0.60

Table 4: Engineering, Aerospace statistics

# of Journals	133
Sum	237.39
Min	0.03
Max	31.68
Average	1.80
Stddev	3.19

Table 5: Engineering, Chemical statistics

# of Journals	194
Sum	753.32
Min	0.11
Max	101.78
Average	3.96
Stddev	8.24

Table 6: Oncology statistics

Tables 2 to 6 show the statistics for these five categories.

It is apparent that there are vast differences between the categories with regard to the impact factors. If you mainly publish in Operations Research journals, the average impact factor is 1.04 whereas, if you are an oncologist your average impact is 3.96. If you are unfortunate enough to publish in Aerospace journals you will only average an impact factor of 0.70. If you are an oncologist, you have 194 journals to choose from, but Aerospace only has 26 journals in its category. The top ranked journal in Oncology has an impact factor of 101.78 but in Aerospace the highest ranked journal only has an impact factor of 3.00. If you work in an institution where you are encouraged to publish in journals that have an impact over a certain value then you are, again, better off being an oncologist. Table 7 shows the number of journals available to you for each of the categories we considered above, showing how many journals are available that are ranked at greater than 1.5 and 4.0. You'll see that Aerospace is struggling to find any high ranking journals and Oncology has a large selection of journals that are ranked at over 4.0.

Category	> 1.5	> 4.0
Operations Research & Management Science	16	1
Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence statistics	41	5
Engineering Aerospace	2	0
Engineering Chemical	53	7
Oncology	139	47

Table 7: Number of journals with impact factors greater than 1.5 and 4.0

### Conclusions

We have analyzed five categories (of the approximately 180 available in Science) to show that comparing journals rankings across categories is not particularly illuminating. Whilst a fuller analysis, of all categories, might be more insightful, this small sample does show that there are wide variations across categories and caution should be exercised if you try and use a one size fits all strategy for your institution. Even smaller units (such as research groups) cannot be fairly compared if scientists are publishing in different categories. For example, I generally publish in Operations Research and Artificial Intelligence journals and Tables 2 and 3 show the difference between these categories. Whilst impact factors can serve a purpose, the scientific community should be careful when using them without providing some contextual background.

## References

- [1] S. Curry. Sick of impact factors. <http://occamstypewriter.org/scurry/2012/08/13/sick-of-impact-factors/>, Aug 2012. (Part of the Reciprocal Space blog).
- [2] B. Nerlich. Open access-what's out there? <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/makingsciencepublic/2012/08/10/open-access-whats-out-there/>, Aug 2012. (Part of the Making Science Public blog at the University of Nottingham).
- [3] J. Sinnasamy. Journal ranking using JCR (journal citation reports). *Ergon: Bulletin for the UM Academic Community*, 4(1):8-12, 2012.
- [4] J. Sinnasamy. Two different webs: ISI web of science and ISI web of knowledge. *Ergon: Bulletin for the UM Academic Community*, 4(2):7-8, 2012.

*Professor Dr. Graham Kendall  
Vice-Provost (Research & Knowledge Transfer)  
University of Nottingham  
Malaysia Campus*

## University Reform in Japan: Struggling Universities

### The Background

In the 1980s, Japanese politics was strongly influenced by the strain of political thought called neoliberalism, which had been proposed by Margaret Thatcher, a British ex-prime minister. Neoliberal ideas influenced the then prime minister of Japan, Yasuhiro Nakasone, to reduce the size of the government and the number of public servants. He aimed to activate the Japanese economy. Thus, national railways, national telephone and telegraph communication services, the postal system, national research institutes, and national hospitals were transformed into corporations or private companies.

The government also proposed to change national universities (82 schools) and public universities (81 schools) into self-supporting universities with a general philosophy of autonomy and freedom of study. However, the universities in many cases responded to this proposed university reform with skepticism, since universities were not structured to be profit-making concerns and university faculty, administration, and students disliked the further intervention by the government.

The government stressed that national and public universities did not exist separately from society and asked, the universities to think about a reducing their dependence on the government in order to achieve real autonomy through their own financial power, because national universities and public universities had been supported by tax from the national or local government, respectively, in addition to the tuition fee paid by students parents of students. Besides, the students graduated from such

universities were employed by the companies which were also closely related to the society.

However, the universities' association disagreed with this initial proposal as they feared that universities would face difficulty in obtaining funding. The government claimed that the attitude of these universities was similar to the attitude of a spoiled son sending his bills to his parents—as the universities had always asked for increased budget from the government. Eventually, the government could no longer support the operation and the increased expenditure of the universities. This led to the government proposal of turning the universities into corporations in 2004, with some amendments in allowing universities to become privatized and to function like a business entity.

### Reform in Research Universities with large Graduate Schools

National and public universities have been transformed into three groups:

- 1) Universities with graduate school curricula: Established universities with a long history and enrollment of almost equal numbers of postgraduate and undergraduate students. This group includes the University of Tokyo, Kyoto University and others, with a total of 10 schools out of the 82 national universities.
- 2) Research universities: Graduate schools and undergraduate schools. This group comprises 20 schools from a total of 163 national and public universities. The ratio of postgraduate to undergraduate enrollment is lower. Academic staff conduct a research on their subjects mainly in the graduate schools. The qualifications for a professor or associate professor in a university with a graduate school curriculum and in a research university are set by the government and the academic staff belonging to the graduate schools. The research activities of the staff are reviewed by the government every six years.
- 3) General universities: The focus of education is on undergraduate students, with small graduate schools in some cases. There are a total of 130 schools in this category.

Recently, some national universities were merged with small national universities which were devoted to specific research fields such as foreign language studies or marine sciences. There are 700 private universities in Japan, half of them cannot attract enough candidates for admission and 10 schools have difficulty in managing every year, due to the decline of the younger population in Japan. Hence, many universities have to invite international students, mainly from China, South Korea, and Taiwan.

After the universities had been turned into corporations, the number of academic and supporting staff was decreased, and the basic budget for research per academic staff was significantly decreased.

The researchers were also required to apply to the government for research grants (the acceptance rate is 20%). It may be a "winter season" for the researchers in the universities. If researchers are unable to get the grants, they have to think about collaborating with a leader who has a big grant or about changing their subjects in order to get grants easily. It appears to be difficult for many researchers to continue to research based on their own interests. Some researchers commented critically that big, trendy research projects have been accepted easily but the outputs are questionable.

The situation was worse for basic research because the authority in charge of the grant could not evaluate the importance of such research. Dr. Osamu Shimomura, who is a Japanese marine biologist, a professor emeritus at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, USA, and the Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry in 2008, has mentioned his experiences. When Dr. Shimomura had discovered the green fluorescent protein (GFP) in jellyfish in 1962, he could not imagine that this protein would become an important tool for the life sciences and for clinical medicine in the near future. Therefore, in order to ensure that potential valuable basic research is not neglected, a special committee was established by the government and university researchers in order to increase the acceptance rate for the basic research on government funds.

Despite the problems, many universities have been launching or planning new businesses or joint research with private companies. University hospitals and research activities in engineering or agricultural fields have been financially well managed. The University of Tokyo seems interested in increasing its rank among world top universities. It was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the 2012 Times Higher Education Supplement according to the University of Tokyo's website. Among the important criteria in the ranking is the quality of the research activities of a university, which can be evaluated by the number of articles published in journals; however, this does not reflect the quality of education itself as quality of education is difficult to assess.

Recently, people have offered several criticisms of the present condition of research universities. Many students have much specialized knowledge but have not learned fundamental subjects and their foreign language as well as mother-language literacy competency has become low. Many students are dissatisfied with university education as they struggle to find an appropriate job after graduating. Graduate schools have been producing many researchers, equipped with the Ph.D., who cannot find appropriate research positions.

### **The University that attaches Importance to International Liberal Arts**

Due to the problems faced by research universities, new universities with emphasis on liberal arts were

established. These universities have a clear mission to produce students with higher linguistic literacy and communication ability based on global viewpoints. One good example is Akita International University, AIU (public university), Akita. AIU introduced small size lectures limited to 15 students. Students mainly learn liberal arts such as mathematics, physics, history, humanities, languages (English, a second foreign language, and one's mother-tongue) and music, but practical subjects are excluded. English is used in the lectures of many subjects: half of the faculty are non-Japanese and many international students are enrolled. All the students experience community life in the university dormitory. Every student has to study undergraduate subjects for one year in one of its 131 partner universities in 38 foreign countries.

The passing mark of each subject is very high and a half of the students cannot finish their undergraduate studies within four years. The library is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Personnel affairs of the faculty and staff are managed by the president, not by the faculty council that usually has all responsibility in many other universities in Japan. Academic staff members are employed under a three-year contract. Staff performance is reviewed at the end of three years and are reappointed or not based on their achievements. Many companies highly value graduates from such universities: almost all graduates have been employed by private companies and are internationally active while the average employment rate of university graduates is 70% in Japan.

### **The University where the Author used to work**

I would like to introduce Osaka City University, OCU (public university), Osaka, where I studied parasitic diseases as my research subject and taught medical zoology to medical students for 25 years. One of the main research themes of my university is urban problems: housing, traffic, access to medical treatment, education, crime, business, economy, and environmental issues.

Many OCU academic staff members are given opportunities to do their research in foreign universities. If one is invited by a foreign university, the school permits him/her to go there to do his/her research for a few years. Our university has more ample funds for such programs than Japanese national universities. I did my research on malarial vaccine in Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, and on zoonotic filariasis in the Muséum National de Histoire Naturelle in Paris, France.

The university has produced several famous professors: Professor Yoichiro Nambu who moved to Chicago University, USA, and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2008, and Professor Shinya Yamanaka at Kyoto University received his Ph.D. at our medical school and succeeded in producing

induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells). He discovered that introduction of only four kinds of genes was needed to transform general cells to the iPS cells which can be developed into any kind of cells. Due to the discovery, he will most probably be awarded the Nobel Prize in the near future. In 2009, he gave a lecture at our medical school and told us why he had decided to start such a difficult project as producing iPS cells. He was a physician and even if he should have failed to make such cells, he still could support his family.

### Financial Independence of Scholars

How can we concentrate on our own study without any concern for our financial well-being? Professor Seiroku Honda (1866-1952), after he had graduated from the University of Tokyo, studied forestry at the Technischen Universität Dresden in Germany. A German professor there suggested that he should establish early financial independence because being independent in research, gaining authority as a professor, and even human dignity are all based on one's own economic strength.

During his early tenure at the University of Tokyo, he saved one-fourth of his salary every month. He had eight family members to support and at around the end of every month, he and his family had no choice but to eat plain rice with only sesame seeds and salt for dinner. When his children told their mother that they wanted to eat fish, she used to say that they would eat fish the next day. Prof. Honda, whenever he related the story, said that that was a very painful memory. He spent 10 years of such hard days, saving up every penny. When he was 39 years old, he was earning more by the interest on his savings than by working at the university. Every day, he wrote just one page, yet all these pages ended up as 370 books at the end of his life. His wife, Senko, must be the one to be praised because she accepted and supported her husband's way of living.

Later, Prof. Honda bought stocks and land and became a millionaire. He donated a large amount of money to the university and advised them to buy a huge area of forest. Now, the University of Tokyo owns 0.1% of Japan's land area and uses this land for the school's field practice. When the university faced financial difficulties, the sale of the timber saved the university.

For two decades after he had become 40, he was able to concentrate on his own research without any concern about getting his research funds or supporting his family. When he retired from the university at 60 years of age, he donated, anonymously, almost all his money to the university and to welfare facilities. He founded a scholarship and up to now 1,500 students have been enrolled in college thanks to the scholarship. He is called the "Father of the national parks" in Japan: He planted many cherry trees in many parks in Japan. His grandson was also a professor of the University of Tokyo and a Nobel Prize candidate.

### Conclusion

Japan has been hit by many natural disasters but has few natural resources. It is essentially important to develop excellent *human* resources based on good education to keep the nation sound. We have been trying to reform Japanese universities to adapt themselves to the present world by classifying them into three groups: Universities with graduate school curricula, research universities, and general universities. Small but high quality universities offering international liberal arts and language courses were later introduced and have been highly evaluated. Research universities have produced experts in specific fields, but do not succeed in making highly educated students with well-balanced knowledge.

Becoming semi-independent of the government in 2004, national universities and public universities are expected to demonstrate their unique and strong points in research, education, and other activities, and show the public what kind of students they are trying to produce. Hereafter, universities will be chosen by students based on their strong and distinctive points and the students who graduate from such universities must be highly valued by companies and in the society.

At the end of this essay on university reforms in Japan, I recall the principle of a famous book entitled "Self-Help" written by Samuel Smiles. He insisted that individuals must improve themselves by their own endeavor. This spirit of self-improvement must be applicable even to a university as well as to an individual.

*Shigehiko Uni, Ph.D.  
Visiting Professor  
Institute of Biological Sciences  
Faculty of Science  
University of Malaya*

## Publishing in Top Tier Journals

### Introduction

What does it take to publish in a top tier journal? In this article we assume that you have already done good research, so we concentrate on journal publication and its interaction with writing.

### Publication and ranking

The process towards publication begins with informal research notes and continues until findings are disseminated to the public. Researchers formally publish their findings for other scholars in journals and books. Useful or interesting works are then cited in subsequent scholarly works.

Attention to journal publication and citation reflects the current importance of university rankings. A high rank attracts benefits such as quality students, staff and funding, so ranking criteria cannot be

ignored – but beware! Ranking criteria change as new ranking organisations (ROs), publishers, databases and methods for ranking enter the market.

Most ranking criteria include the number of articles published by university staff. Others also count citations to these articles. To count citations, ROs use a journal citation database: either Thomson Reuters (ISI), or Scopus, or both.

ISI journals have an impact factor (JIF). New journals are added to the ISI database each year, and the JIF (and ISI journal rankings) change from year to year. The JIF is an approximation of the citability of papers in a journal: only a small proportion of papers in most journals comes to be highly cited. ROs do not distinguish between tiers because they use citations to actual papers.

Key actors in the journal publication process include the author, the editor and reviewers. Your paper goes first to the journal editor, who scans for its meeting basic criteria: does it make a contribution to the field, is it satisfactorily written, is it suitable for the journal? If the paper seems satisfactory, the editor assigns two or more reviewers who are asked for their detailed opinion. (Sometimes a deputy editor plays an intermediate role.) The rest of this article considers how to increase the likelihood that the editor sends your paper for review, and that it is accepted for publication.

### The relationship between publication and writing

Strategies for publication and writing interact, as shown in Figure 1.

	Writing strategy		Publication strategy
W1	Common rule	←→ P1	Choose the journal
W2	Prepare paper for submission	→ P2	Submit the paper
W3	Revise for resubmission	→ P3	Respond to editor

Figure 1. Publication and writing strategies

#### P1: Choosing the journal

Choose a journal that is a good match for your paper. Check the journal scope statement – does the journal publish articles on your topic and with the orientation you take? Are the editors familiar to you from your reading, conferences or your work? Are authors writing about issues similar to your research? Can your paper contribute to the debate?

Once you have selected the journal, download the instructions for authors, and read the journal’s editorial policy that will provide tips for publishing in the journal. Following the instructions early in the writing process makes it simpler to prepare your paper for publication. Author templates (when available) provide useful guides to structure, formatting, etc. Editors see adherence to the guidelines as an indication that you are serious about submission to their journal.

Three possible times to choose a journal are:

- before starting your research. Choose the research to fill a gap identified in the journal;
- before writing the paper, but after research has been completed;
- after writing up your work, but before completing a final draft.

The first option is sometimes recommended in fields with established secondary databases and short publication times, but there are risks: someone might already be working on the problem, or, if you continue to write one-off papers with no unifying theme, your career may stall. Making choice of a journal in the time between the second and third options often works well. The research is finished, and drafting the paper helps to identify any additional work needed to get the paper publication-ready.

#### W1: The common rule

Communicate clearly, concisely, and in your own voice.

Three voices are typically heard in academic writing:

- The voice of the author(s) of the paper
- The indirect voice of a source of ideas (a reference)
- The direct voice of the source of words (a quote)

The author’s voice should be the dominant voice. Your ability to tell the story of what you did and what you discovered, in your own terms, is an indication that you have sufficient mastery of your work for it to be worthy of publication in a top-tier journal.

You can ‘hear’ the different voices in the following extract from McGill and Klobas (2009): “To gain further understanding ... we consider models that have shown promise in predicting information systems success.” (authors’ voice) “Goodhue and Thompson (1995) proposed that an explanation ... needs to recognize both the task for which the technology is used and the fit between the task and the technology.” (indirect voice of source) “They defined task-technology fit as ‘the degree to which a technology assists an individual in performing his or her portfolio of tasks’ (p. 216).” (quote is direct voice of source)

#### W2: Preparing for submission

Editors typically ask reviewers if a paper is

- relevant to the journal
- original
- clear and concise
- valid

This simple set of meta-criteria is a reminder that editors and reviewers do not make decisions on the individual elements of the paper (although the structure and content should be correct) but on the whole. Some key sections of the paper act as indicators of overall quality: introduction, conclusion, title and abstract.

A good *introduction* clearly and concisely establishes the purpose and contribution of the

paper. Think of it in two parts. The first provides the reasoning behind your paper, typically the problem or gap that the study addresses (its purpose) and why it is significant, and the second underlines the contribution that your study makes, including your proposition or overarching research question. An example can be found on pp. 345-346 of Tsui et al (2006). The first paragraph establishes purpose by briefly reviewing issues in the field of organisational culture before stating, "The purpose is to explore the nature of organizational culture across ... three types of firms". The third paragraph underlines this assertion: "the contribution of the ... study ... is in developing and validating a measure of organizational culture in the Chinese context".

The *conclusion* is a concise statement of the contribution of the paper. It demonstrates how your work has resolved the problem stated in the introduction. It might also extend the discussion into the surrounding field, e.g., from organisational culture to general management.

With the increase in journal submissions, there has been a shift away from the enticing "indicative" article *title* to "informative" titles. Consider the following possibilities for the same (fictitious) paper: "The preparation of Malaysian scholars for publication in top tier journals" (informative); "Malaysian scholars are well prepared for publication in top tier journals" (indicative). The current consensus is that editors and readers respond more positively to informative titles.

*Abstracts* need to be informative. You usually have about 150 to 300 words to summarise the purpose of your paper, method, findings, contribution and implications. If you are unable to establish originality and validity clearly and concisely in the abstract, expect a desk rejection. So, take the time to craft your abstract before submitting the paper. There are many examples in top-tier journals.

## P2. Submitting the paper

Before you submit, check that the final version follows the instructions to authors. To submit, carefully follow the journal's submission guidelines. Include a brief covering note to the editor, pointing out the paper's contribution and its relevance to the journal. Include alternative contact information if you are unavailable any time during the review period.

## W3. Revising for resubmission

Reviewers are typically asked to recommend one of the following actions for a paper:

- Accept without revision
- Accept with minor revision
- Return for major revision
- Reject

The third recommendation, "revise and resubmit", is the most common. This is NOT a rejection. It is an invitation to revise your paper in response to comments from peers who have not previously seen the work.

After a day or two for 'reflection', read the editor's letter and the reviews carefully against your paper. Consider why any criticism might have been made and how you might revise to make your meaning clear. Respond to each recommendation with a revision or (less often) the reason the proposed revision would weaken your paper.

## P3. Responding to the editor

Resubmit according to the journal's guidelines. Include a summary of the revisions you have made. For example, if the reviewer says "The distinction between proprietary and tacit knowledge seems unclear", you might respond "We revised pp. 4-5 of the case description to clarify that 'proprietary' knowledge 'exists in both encoded and tacit forms'."

## Conclusion

Publishing in a top tier journal assumes respect for the journal's editors, reviewers and readers. It requires knowledge of your contribution to the literature and attention to the detailed rules of academic writing and publication. I hope these guidelines have demystified the latter!

## References

- McGill, Klobas (2009) A task-technology fit view of learning management system impact. *Computers & Education* 52(2): 496-508.
- Tsui, Wang, Xin (2006) Organisational culture in China: An analysis of culture dimensions and culture types. *Management and Organisation Review* 2(3): 345-376.

*Professor Dr. Jane Klobas*  
*Alberto Dondeña Fellow, Carlo F. Dondeña Research Centre,*  
*Bocconi University, Milan, Italy*  
*jane.klobas@unibocconi.it*  
*Research and Education Consultant, jane.klobas@iinet.net.au*

## Editorial: UM's Autonomy Plan<sup>1</sup>

Since the visit of Tan Sri Dr Ghauth Jasmon, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Malaya, to each of our faculties early this year, it has remained fresh in our memory that UM has geared up to undertake the Autonomy Plan to revitalize its research culture, or more broadly seen, to revitalize the university's image as *the* prestige research university in Malaysia. Here we intend to sum up the main issues and ideas constituting this plan, as we perceive that the implementation of this plan will certainly influence our activity of publication and writing, and ultimately

<sup>1</sup> The figures used in this writing are based on the PowerPoint talk presented by Tan Sri Dr Ghauth Jasmon in April 2012. I sincerely thank Tan Sri Dr Ghauth Jasmon for having read the first draft of this article.

influence the evaluation of our academic performance.

The Autonomy Plan is part of a larger enterprise to transform the higher education sector in Malaysia. The ultimate goal of this enterprise is to globalize the university, to make the university strong, competent and equal in all respects to ‘world-class’ research universities in the West as well as in the East. The Plan assumes that the vital factor which must transform UM into a renowned, competitive, research university is an increase in quality research.

It is our wisdom that research does not exist in a vacuum. Research requires people who produce research, people who support our research, a great library, necessary facilities, a congenial environment, time, space, a history of and respect for the culture of research, and finance. It is thus clear that research requires resources in many different spheres and that research is costly. As the figures in the Vice Chancellor’s presentation show, UM spends US \$70 million for annual research funding, whereas Tokyo University spends US\$ 700 million and NUS US\$ 203 million. Other things being equal, this picture may disclose the link that the amount of research funding is an indicator for the level of success in high impact research. This cognizance is indeed one of the triggers of the idea of Autonomy. If the university becomes autonomous, then according to the Plan it is allowed to make independent decisions, or enjoy liberty of deciding, on the roles of its various constituent operational aspects, such as institutional governance, finance, human resources, and academic planning. In other words, the Plan promises that the university will enjoy the following nine benefits, which we quote from the Vice Chancellor’s presentation: (i) increase

in graduate employability; (ii) increase in high impact research; (iii) increase in quality academic staff; (iv) increase in the number of experienced professors; (v) efficiency of financial management; (vi) increase in internally generated income; (vii) effectiveness in institutional governance; (viii) strengthening of networking and internationalization, and (ix) increase in the number of post-graduates. In order to succeed in creating an autonomous university, the university in turn has to establish its solid economic independence. Not to speak of faculty-level small-scale financial independence, the university currently has three large-scale private sector projects in mind. These are to build a health metropolis, to develop a commercial district, and to assist in the more profitable marketing of plantation products.

The Autonomy Plan is an overall remarkable and ambitious vision, but within it much may still lie in the shadows. Unless the Plan concurs with its careful planning and application, it may well nurture the ethic that research is synonymous with saleability. This may be a fatal disadvantage to certain disciplines, particularly those integral to human thinking, whose research output is not directly translatable to commerce and profit. Moreover, it is an irony that many, if not all, of the nine merits stated above can be achieved without recourse to any Plan. A touch of skepticism is invaluable in the drafting of any overarching scheme. Viewed this way, even briefly, the Autonomy Plan is after all in the realm of the unknown.

*Dr. Toshiko Yamaguchi  
SchoPuS Unit  
University of Malaya*

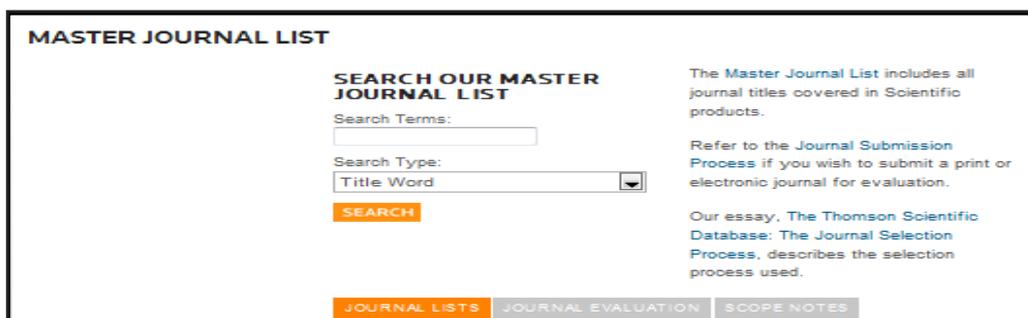
## Verifying the Status of Journals in the ISI Web of Science

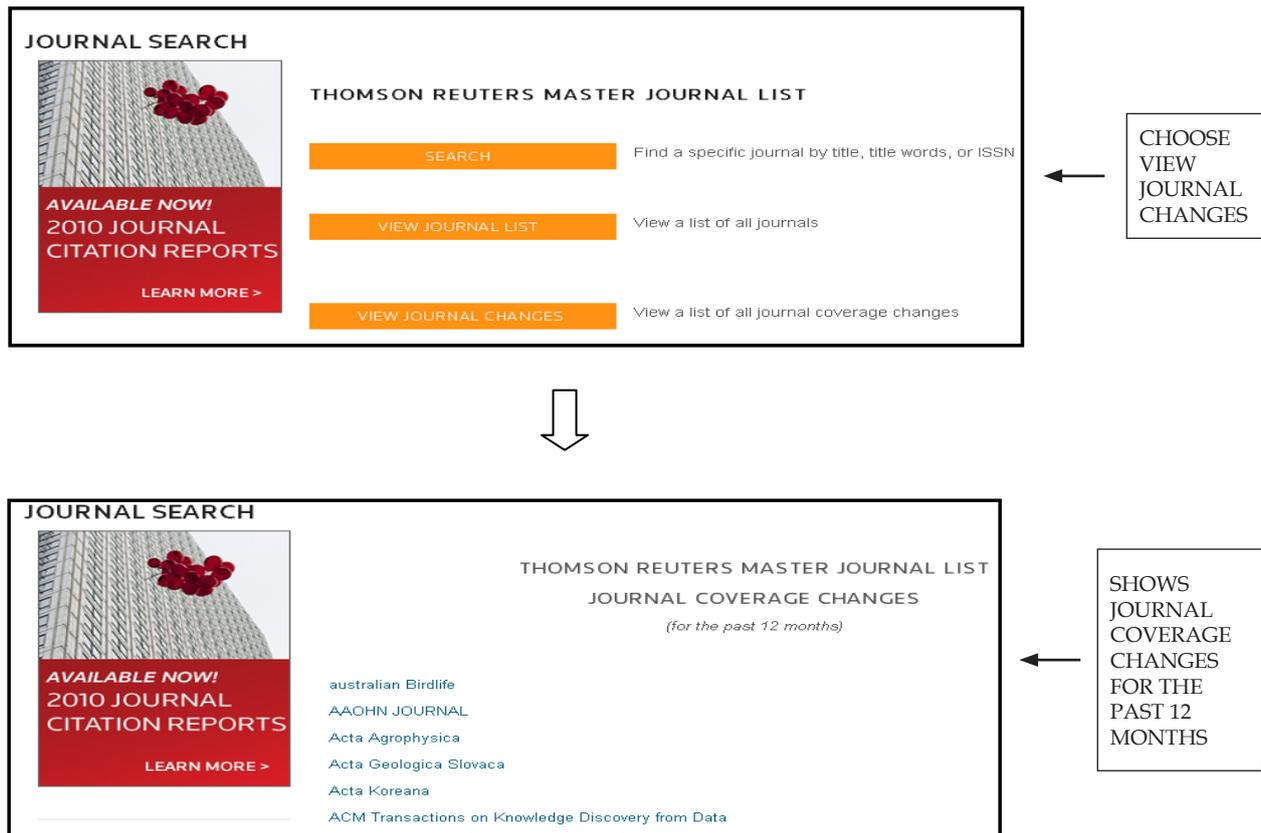
Unexpected changes can occur in the journal listings in Web of Science and researchers and academics must be alert to them. These changes can have an effect on the status of journals indexed, and subsequently, may have implications on research output. Generally, changes in the listing of journals in Web of Science can occur for 3 reasons:

- i. A title has been newly added
- ii. A title has been changed
- iii. A journal has been dropped

These changes can be traced from the Master Journal List at:

<http://ip-science.thomsonreuters.com/mjl/>





Examples of journal changes [26<sup>th</sup> July 2012]

- **Aesthetic Surgery Journal**  
*Newly Added*
- **Advanced Science Letters**  
*Dropped*
- **Annals of Tropical Medicine And Parasitology**  
*Changed to*  
**Pathogens And Global Health**

Thomson Reuters updates information on journal changes each week. The University of Malaya's policy is to refer to these journal changes as and when needed. The implication is that if the researcher had previously submitted and got approval for a publication in a journal which is now dropped, then that publication in that particular journal will not be considered. Hence, it is imperative that researchers and academics keep track of the changes of their favorite journal titles.

### Why are journals dropped?

There can be reasons for journals to be dropped from Web of Science Master Journal Listing. Thomson Reuters also have their own 'enunciated' criteria for adding and dropping journal titles. Thomson says about 20-30 current journals are added and dropped every month (FAQ Web of Science).

The discovery of unethical practices can be one reason for a journal to be dropped. Journal self-citation can also eventually result in its being dropped. Scams involving authors who fake identities of reviewers when submitting papers can also be a reason. In a virtual environment such as open access journals, it is not impossible for unscrupulous agents to invent bogus authors, editors and reviewers. In fact, the entire journal publication can have a counterfeit website, as in the case of *Archives des Sciences*. The genuine publisher of that journal had to publicly proclaim that theirs is the genuine version.

The Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia (MOHE) continuously monitors the situation to keep track of any abuse in quality publications. The year 2010 closed with an announcement from MOHE that journals published by *Academic Journals*, *European Journal Publishing* (Euro Journal), *CG Publishing* (Common Ground Publishing) and *African WorldPress*, are no longer recognized. Journal titles by these publishers as of June 2012 are as follows:

ACADEMIC JOURNALS	EUROPEAN JOURNAL PUBLISHING	CG PUBLISHING
African Journal of Agricultural Research	European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Sciences	International Journal of Environment, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability
African Journal of Biotechnology	European Journal of Scientific Research	International Journal of Interdisciplinary
African Journal of Business Management	European Journal of Social Sciences	International Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Change Management
African Journal of Microbiology	International Research Journal of Finance and Economics	International Journal of Learning
African Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology		International Journal of the Humanities
African Journal of Plant Research		
International Journal of the Physical Sciences		
Journal of Medicinal Plant Research		
Scientific Research and Essays		

Table 1: Publishers and their titles not recognized by Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia as of June 2012

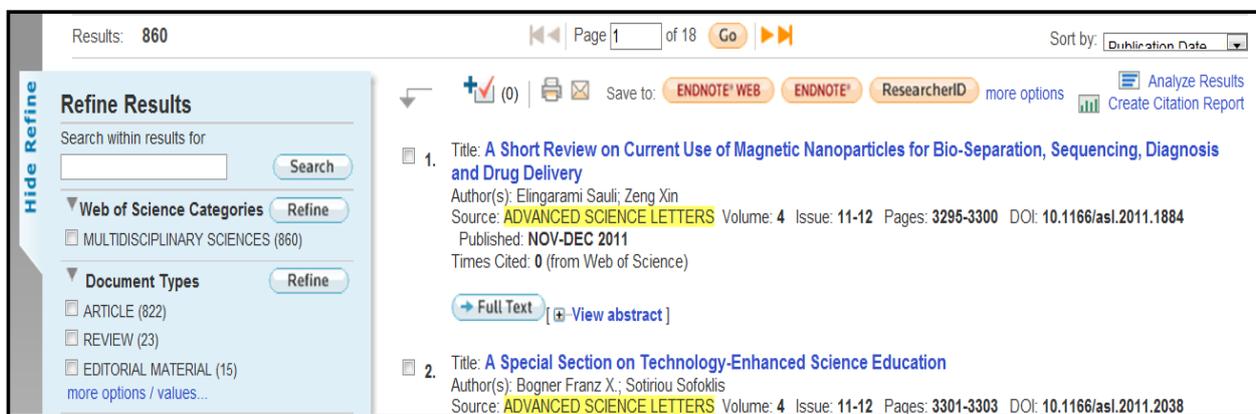
### Journal listings in Journal Citation Reports (JCR) vs Master Journal List

Most of us refer to Journal Citation Reports (JCR) to verify the impact factor and tier of a particular journal title. JCR only displays titles from one year ago and on backwards. This is because the calculation for the impact factor of any journal is based on the total number of articles and citations for 2 complete years. Therefore JCR 2011 (updates in September 2012) shows the status of journal titles for the years 2009 and 2010.

JCR	MASTER JOURNAL LIST
Most often, only journals with an 'impact factor' value are listed in JCR	All journals indexed by ISI Web of Science are listed
Latest release is in June and final updates are in September every year	Real time
JCR's coverage is one year before. For example, JCR 2011 released in June 2012 includes titles indexed until 2011.	Real time

### Journal Listings in ISI web of Science vs Master Journal List

Almost all of us refer to the Web of Science database to check if an article has been indexed. It must be remembered that even if a title has been dropped from the Master Journal List, it will continue to be displayed in Web of Science. For example, on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012, the Master Journal List revealed that the journal 'Advanced Science Letters' had been dropped from the list. However, searching Web of Science for the same day will retrieve articles from that journal.



The reason for this is simple. Web of Science will keep the articles until 2011 because it was dropped from the list only in the year 2012.

It must be reiterated that researchers and academics should know the basic difference between the Master Journal List, the Journal Citation Report and the Web of Science database. The Master Journal List has the complete list of titles (real time). JCR lists titles which have an impact factor. The Web of Science database displays articles from journals indexed. Articles from journals dropped or whose title has been changed will continue to be displayed until the year it was dropped or changed title.

*Janaki Sinnasamy and Ai Peng Koh*  
*Librarian*  
*University of Malaya Library*



### **The People of Ergon**

*Head of the Unit:*

Prof. Dr. Sarinah WY Low  
 (Faculty of Medicine)

*Editor-in-chief:*

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Toshiko Yamaguchi  
 (Faculty of Languages and Linguistics)

*Editorial board:*

Dr. Rajeswary A. Sargunan  
 (SchoPuS Unit)

Prof. Dr. Seik Weng Ng  
 (Faculty of Science)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ching Chuan Gan  
 (Faculty of Law)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Saidur Rahman Abdul Hakim  
 (Faculty of Engineering)

Ms. Ai Peng Koh  
 (Central Library)

*Editorial Assistant:*  
 Ms. Farhana Zaulkifli

We can be contacted at [uspi@um.edu.my](mailto:uspi@um.edu.my) or  
 03-7967 7812 / 7355.

*Published by the Scholarly Publication Support  
 Unit of the University of Malaya*



### **From the Unit**

We offer editing service. If you are interested to use our service, please contact 03-7967 7812 / 7355 for further information. Submission procedures: A final draft should be double-spaced in 12-point font and sent to [uspi@um.edu.my](mailto:uspi@um.edu.my). A fee is charged to the author.