
EDITORIAL**New Scholarly Journals in Developing Settings: The Nuts and Bolts**

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Scholarship is about the creation and sharing of knowledge, and one of the most important means of exchanging the results of research activities is the academic journal (1). There are a variety of scholarly and scientific journals with national, regional or international scope produced in developed as well as in and developing settings. Their scope ranges from a broad focus, covering a range of topics from diverse of contributors, to specialized journals with a narrow focus, based on either the research interests of the contributors or on a the subject matter. For a new scientific or scholarly journal, deciding on the type of journal to produce is a significant decision, which carries long-term implications on the direction of the publication (2). Indeed, setting up and maintaining a scholarly or scientific journal is a major undertaking. There are numerous tasks to be fulfilled on a regular basis, and there are a variety of roles to be taken and activities to be done.

Decision on the best choice for a new journal must be based upon the specific research interests, the potential target audience, gaps in existing journal that cover one's area of interest, and institutional requirements and considerations (3). There are a variety of important reasons for creating a journal. This may include a new and unique record of scholarly activity, the recognition gained by the publisher, and individual career development. However, the bottom line is that Journal has the potential to contribute to the academic, economic and cultural development of the community, the country, the region and beyond (2). Indigenous publishing can help to close the "knowledge gap" between the well-funded and powerful voices from the north and the often-overlooked ideas, innovations, and discoveries from the south (4). A new journal from a developing setting helps one join the community of scholars, challenging the domination of ideas by international publishing bodies, and make local research more visible among researchers, students, and scholars (2,4).

Establishing a scholarly or scientific and sustainable journal helps institutions/publishers in making decisions in the allocation of scarce financial resources and fosters new collaborations between local, regional, and international researchers and institutions. However, it requires serious commitment of time and money, basic project management skills, and, oftentimes, turning overwhelming challenge to a rewarding success. One needs to find the right people, providing traditional volunteer labor in journal publication for authoring, reviewing, and editing. The unpaid labor in these key roles makes it possible to start a journal with a very modest budget. It is imperative that the journal secures the commitment of a journal manager or editor, who, as one

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of the initial critical steps, forms an effective editorial board (5). A journal manager or editor plays a critical role in developing the policies for the new journal, and in establishing the journal's credibility right from the outset. In the long haul, journals with more people involved in the functions of the editorial office would have the advantage of spreading the work out more evenly, as well as providing opportunities for more participants, which could include graduate or undergraduate students.

Getting submissions from the best and brightest authors in the field, as well as recruiting committed reviewers are nagging challenges that need innovative approaches in the journey of establishing a reputable journal. The high cost of producing and distributing a print journal calls for exploring a variety of funding sources and ensuring a sustainable financial model, which is an uphill struggle in developing settings (2). Going online renders substantial cost savings, which turn out to be a myth as one needs to ensure that journal collaborators and readers have the technological infrastructure - adequate hardware, software, and bandwidth availability (6). And one should work diligently to ensure that the journal maintains its target audience, and the audience finds the journal.

The print journal has a long tradition in scholarly communication. Increasingly however, publishers are developing electronic versions of their print journals. Both print and electronic journals have their own unique benefits and challenges (7). Examining these closely will help to guide your decision on how to publish your new journal. Adequate storage space for print journals is also a concern. Electronic publishing (or online publishing, e-publishing, etc.) involves placing content on the Internet, to share with the wider world. An important consideration in going online is the significantly lower production and distribution costs. Other considerations include the need for hardware, software, bandwidth, and some level of technical expertise to produce an online journal. Another option to be considered is to publish in both print and electronically. This is quite common in the world of scholarly publishing, either as a transitional strategy in moving from print to online, or as an attempt to gain the benefits of both methods. For journals with the resources to produce their journal in both formats, this can be a very powerful combination.

Considering economic models for a journal, subscriptions constitute an important means of financially supporting publishing. Open access publishing is a new approach to distributing journal content, replacing subscription-based access with universal, online availability (8). Without any subscription income, however, open access journals must have a sustainable source of funding to ensure the long-term viability of their publications. For most new journals, however, the global audience accesses the journal through open access publishing and looking into opportunities for alternative sources of funding is an option worth serious consideration.

An important aspect of starting a new journal is to assure exposure to as wide an audience as possible. Getting a new journal recognized and read is critical for its success. This may involve marketing, traditionally through expensive promotions and advertising and, more economically, getting the word out through professional networks. One may also take advantage of the social media or other forums of communication (9) to announce the release of the new publication and make a “call for papers”. Contacting local libraries (academic, institutional, public) and informing them about the new journal help in promoting local publishing ventures. A new electronic journal can be made more visible to search engines through good web site design and submitting the site to major scholarly search engines and by providing open access to the journal’s content.

Another method of building professional recognition by a new journal is using different techniques for measuring the use and impact of the journal. This will provide clear evidence of the success of the journal and allow for regular evaluation progress. Journals with high citation impact are among the most respected and successful academic journals in their fields. While this is not an uncontroversial means of measuring the value of a journal in the academic community, it is the standard that most people recognize and use. Indexes and databases want to include in their resources journals that have a high citation impact. Libraries may also be motivated to promote journals with a high citation impact. The challenge for new journals is to get this process started and effected.

Starting a new journal in a developing setting represents a significant investment of time and resources. The future of a new journal or that which is its formative years, like the Ethiopian Journal of Pediatric and Child Health (EJPCH), essentially hinges on a vibrant editorial board, commitment from authors in contributing articles, and effective review process. A concerted and well-coordinated effort of the editorial office, authors, and peer-reviewers (as well as the publisher) ensures a high quality of content that must be at the heart of successful publication of the journal. Establishing a new journal that can withstand the rigors of regulatory evaluation and obtaining accreditation is a daunting task that should be undertaken thoughtfully and with a clear sense of purpose. A sustainable financial model is a critical component for any successful journal. Exploring a range of funding opportunities, from the more traditional methods such as institutional support, to more unorthodox methods will ensure the long-term viability of a newly establishing journal.

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