

# CIRES IR PhD School

Writing Workshop: Reviewing and  
Responding to Reviewers' Comments

Andrew Burton-Jones

Professor of Business Information Systems

Oct 2024

# Agenda

3.00-3.30pm: Background

3.30-4.00pm: Journal reviews

4.00-4.30pm: Responding to reviews

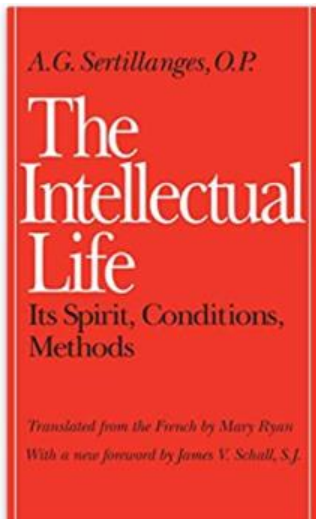
Background

# Alternative visions of academia:

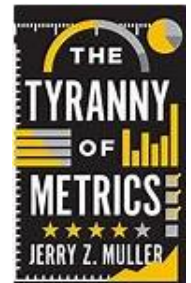
A life of the mind

and/or?

Feeding the machine



**Post-PhD researchers' experiences: an emotionally rocky road**  
Isabelle Skakni and Lynn McAlpine  
*Department of Education, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK*



# Background

- Much of our job is reviewing
- Rather than 40-40-20, last week was 10-15-75:
  - Two MISQ SE reports
  - Tenure and promotion letters for HK and US
  - Award committees for AIS
  - Grant reviews (Australia and overseas)
  - Reference letters for PhD students
- We also do many other types of reviews:
  - School reviews, PhD milestones, external PhD exams, recruiting committees, etc.

# Your views?

1. Why do we review so much?
2. How might reviews vary by purpose, e.g.:
  - PhD milestones
  - Grants
  - Workshops/conferences
  - Journals
  - Awards
3. Do review norms/practices vary by discipline?
4. How do you know if you are good at reviews?

## Some benefits of reviewing

1. You help
2. You learn
3. You become part of a community
4. Career pathways open (for more reviews 😊)

## Some costs of reviewing

1. You have less time to do your own work
2. You can become egotistical or quick to pontificate
3. You may hurt someone and/or bear reputational costs

# MISQ Reviewer of the Year for 2022

... I just love Sarah's reviewing. She is one of my favourites

... Her review was diligent and highly useful.

... What characterizes Sarah's reviewing (beyond timeliness, willingness to accept new reviews) is a combination of depth and breadth: she really gets into the details of the empirics, combined with a healthy breadth of conceptual resources



Sarah Lebovitz  
University of Virginia

... each review has been detailed, highly constructive and insightful.

... I just appreciate the kindness and thought put into each review given by Sarah.

... Sarah's reviews are lovely. They are nitty-gritty detailed while at the same time steps back to give the broader perspectives. She is an "active" reader in the sense that she steps into the shoes of the narrative, to try to understand it from the inside.

Based on recommendations from SEs, AEs, and EIC analysis and selection



# MISQ Outstanding Associate Editor for 2022



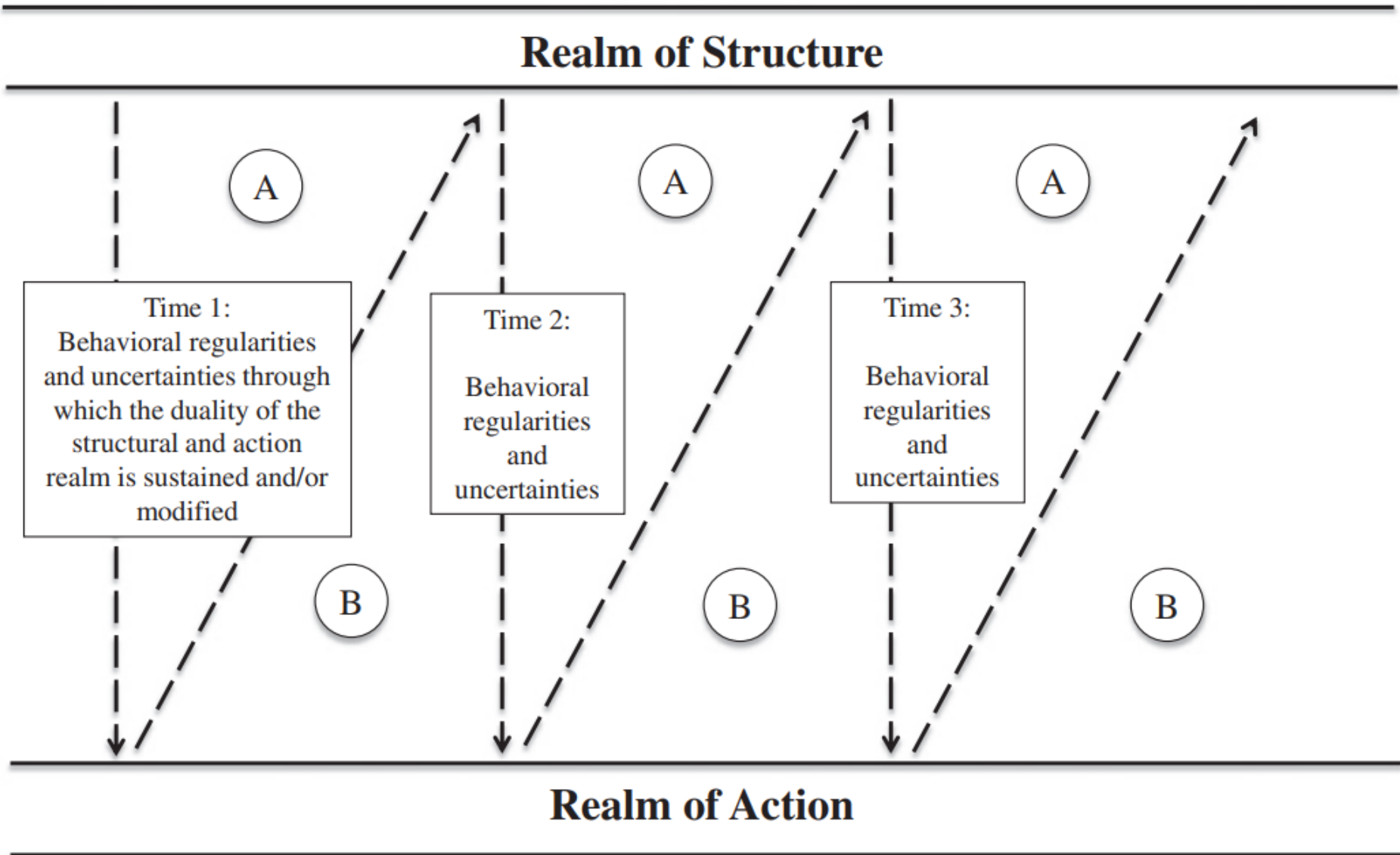
Mari Klara Stein  
Tallinn University of  
Technology

- Mari is an outstanding AE. She is sharp, structured and timely. More importantly, she injects energy, passion and engagement in the process that keeps us on our toes for what is important, relevant, consequential.
- Mari engages closely with the manuscript reviewers. She regularly makes brilliant, perceptive observations about the argument and data of a manuscript, highlighting aspects I might have missed
- Great working spirit, very quick turn-around, and excellent attention to scholarly detail. Quite amazing.
- Very quick, responsive in setting up review team; insightful comprehensive reports

Based on recommendations from SEs and EIC analysis and selection

# Journal reviewing

# Are journal practices stable?



# Looking at journals with a design lens



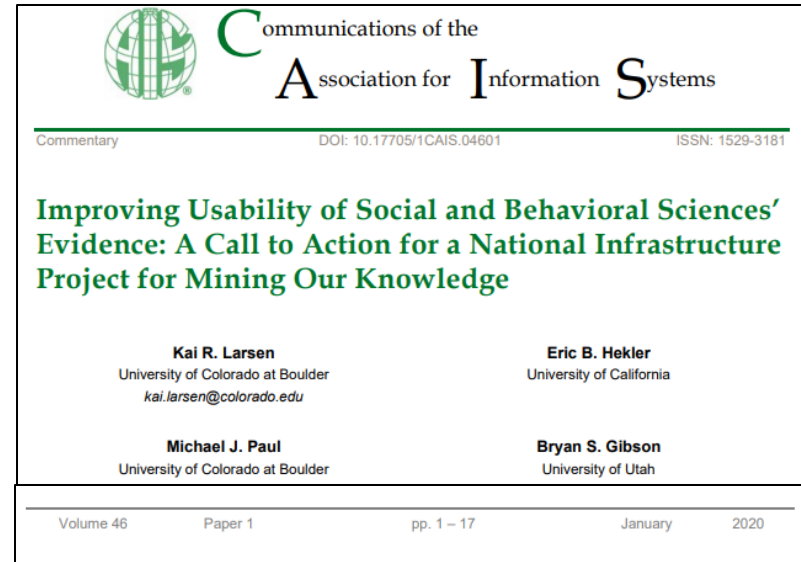
**Journal of Information Technology**


Journal Home | Browse Journal | Journal Info | Stay Connected

**Artificial intelligence and the conduct of literature reviews**  
Gerit Wagner, Roman Lukyanenko, Guy Paré   
First Published October 8, 2021 | Research Article |  Check for updates  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/02683962211048201>

## When is a Publisher not a Publisher? Cobbling Together the Pieces to Build a Workflow Business

By **ROGER C. SCHONFELD** | FEB 9, 2017 | 7 COMMENTS



 Communications of the  
**A**ssociation for **I**nformation **S**ystems

Commentary | DOI: 10.17705/1CAIS.04601 | ISSN: 1529-3181

**Improving Usability of Social and Behavioral Sciences' Evidence: A Call to Action for a National Infrastructure Project for Mining Our Knowledge**

**Kai R. Larsen**  
University of Colorado at Boulder  
[kai.larsen@colorado.edu](mailto:kai.larsen@colorado.edu)

**Eric B. Hekler**  
University of California

**Michael J. Paul**  
University of Colorado at Boulder

**Bryan S. Gibson**  
University of Utah

Volume 46 | Paper 1 | pp. 1 – 17 | January 2020

## Semantic Science: machine understandable scientific theories and data

David Poole  
<http://www.cs.ubc.ca/spider/poole/>  
October 13, 2007

# Looking at journals with an institutional lens

## Hacking a Top Journals List: A Collective Approach to Developing Metrics?

By LISA JANICKE HINCHLIFFE | AUG 31, 2021 | 1 COMMENT

## About Plan S

Plan S is an initiative for Open Access publishing that was launched in September 2018. The plan is supported by cOAlition S, an international consortium of research funding and performing organisations. Plan S requires that, from 2021, scientific publications that result from research funded by public grants must be published in compliant Open Access journals or platforms.

'Plan S' and 'cOAlition S' – Accelerating the transition to full and immediate Open Access to scientific publications (coalition-s.org)



## NHMRC/ARC OPEN ACCESS MANDATES

Both of Australia's largest research funders, the [Australian Research Council \(ARC\)](#) and the [National Health and Medical Research Council \(NHMRC\)](#), now have open access policies in place. These policies are designed to bring publicly-funded Australian research to a worldwide audience. If your research is funded by either of these bodies, these changes will have a significant impact on you and your research.

## The New Clarivate Science: A Second-Order Consequence of Open Access

By ROGER C. SCHONFELD | DEC 9, 2021 | 2 COMMENTS

## Silverchair Buys ScholarOne from Clarivate

By ROGER C. SCHONFELD | OCT 28, 2024 | 7 COMMENTS

# Looking at journals with a competition lens

Dear BSI-ers,

The last brown bag lunch for 2021 will be about publishing in Nature journals. Few things give you more academic kudos than publishing in a Nature journal, and sustainability researchers are lucky to have at least four options to choose from: Nature Climate Change; Nature Sustainability; Nature Human Behaviour, and Nature Communications.

Cracking one of these journals is not easy, but it becomes somewhat easier to the extent you're aware of the implicit rules of the game (which can be quite different from your average A\* journal in the ABDC list). There are a few BSI folk who have published in Nature journals over the years ... in this brown bag lunch we'll be sharing our collective insights on that process.

The session is scheduled for 12-1 on Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>.

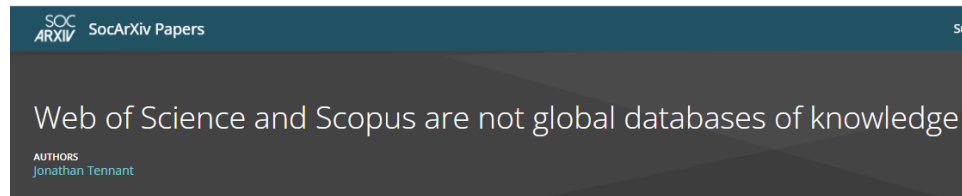


The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/leap.1422](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/leap.1422). The page features the Wiley logo and the text 'LEARNED PUBLISHING Association of Learned & Professional Society Publishers'. Below the logo, there is a green rectangular placeholder. The article title is 'Expanding *Nature*: Product line and brand extensions of a scientific journal'. The authors are listed as Mahdi Khelifaoui and Yves Gingras. The publication date is 'First published: 05 October 2021' with a DOI link. Navigation options include 'Original Article' and 'Full Access'. A 'SECTIONS' menu is visible on the left, and 'PDF', 'TOOLS', and 'SHARE' icons are on the right. The 'Abstract' section begins with the text: 'Academic publishers now market their most prestigious journals as commercial brands. This paper investigates this trend in the scholarly publishing market, by analyzing how the successive owners of the journal *Nature* have capitalized on its reputation to generate additional profits to those already accumulated through university library subscriptions. Two branding strategies of the journal *Nature* are analyzed: the first one, product line extension, consists in extending the *Nature* brand in the same product category, by creating an ever-increasing number of derived *Nature* journals; the second one, brand extension, consists in extending the *Nature* brand to other categories of products and services, such as academic rankings, sponsored supplements, feature advertisements, or webinars and trainings. The *Nature* brand leveraging strategy has been imitated by many other journal publishers. These branded products and services are well suited to the

# Looking at journals with a power lens

Weber/Editor's Comments

osf.io/preprints/socanxiv/qhvgr/



## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

### The Alliance

MIS Quarterly Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. v-xi/September 2002

## Clarivate

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Clarivate** is a **public analytics** company that operates a collection of **subscription-based** services, in the areas of **bibliometrics** and **scientometrics**; **business / market intelligence**, and **competitive profiling** for pharmacy and **biotech**, **patents**, and **regulatory compliance**; **trademark protection**, and **domain and brand protection**.<sup>[4]</sup> In the academy and the scientific community, Clarivate is known for being the company which calculates the **impact factor**,<sup>[5]</sup> using data from its **Web of Science** product family, that also includes services/applications such as **Publons**, **EndNote**, **EndNote Click**, and **ScholarOne**. Its other product families are **Cortellis**, **DRG**, **CPA Global**, **Derwent**, **MarkMonitor**, **CompuMark**, and **Darts-ip**,<sup>[6]</sup> and also the various **ProQuest** products and services.

It formed in 2016, following the acquisition of **Thomson Reuters'** Intellectual Property and Science Business by **Onex Corporation** and **Baring Private Equity Asia**.<sup>[7]</sup> In recent years, the company has been noted for its acquisitions. In December 2021, it bought ProQuest for \$5.3 billion.

**Contents** [\[hide\]](#)

## Journal Impact Factor (JIF)

Journal Impact Factor (JIF) is calculated by Clarivate Analytics as the average of the sum of the citations received in a given year to a journal's previous two years of publications (linked to the journal, but not necessarily to specific publications) divided by the sum of "citable" publications in the previous two years. Owing to the way in which citations are counted in the numerator and the subjectivity of what constitutes a "citable item" in the denominator, JIF has received sustained criticism for many years for its lack of transparency and reproducibility and the potential for manipulation of the metric. Available for only 11,785 journals (Science Citation Index Expanded plus Social Sciences Citation Index, per December 2019), JIF is based on an extract of Clarivate's Web of Science database, and includes citations that could not be linked to specific articles in the journal, so-called unlinked citations.

## CiteScore metrics

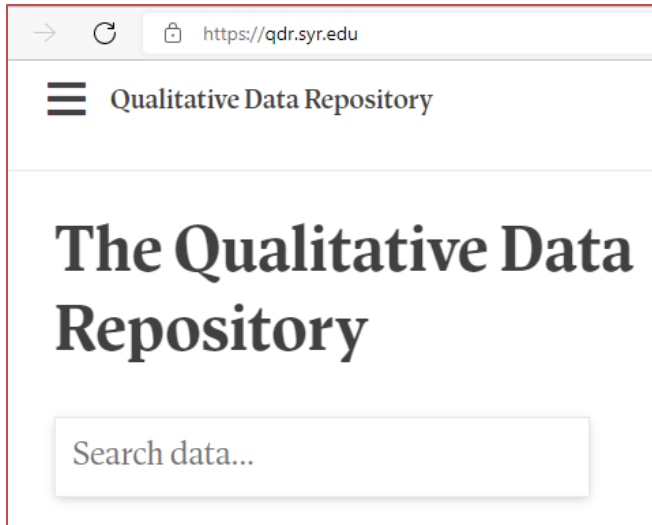
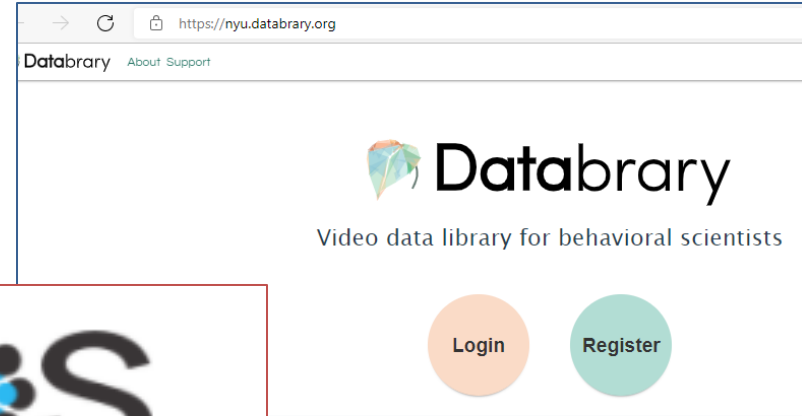
CiteScore metrics are a suite of indicators calculated from data in Scopus, the world's leading abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature.

Calculating the CiteScore is based on the number of citations to documents (articles, reviews, conference papers, book chapters, and data papers) by a journal over four years, divided by the number of the same document types indexed in Scopus and published in those same four years. For more details, see [this FAQ](#) .

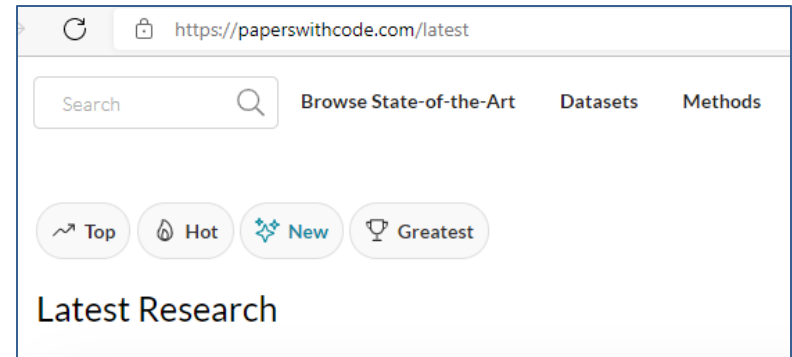
CiteScore is calculated for the current year on a monthly basis until it is fixed as a permanent value in May the following year, permitting a real-time view on how the metric builds as citations accrue. Once fixed, the other CiteScore metrics are also computed and contextualise this score with rankings and other indicators to allow comparison.

<https://www.elsevier.com/authors/tools-and-resources/measuring-a-journals-impact>

# Looking at journals with a transparency lens

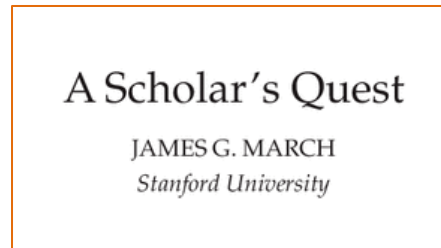


**Annotation for Transparent Inquiry (ATI)  
at a Glance** <https://qdr.syr.edu/ati>





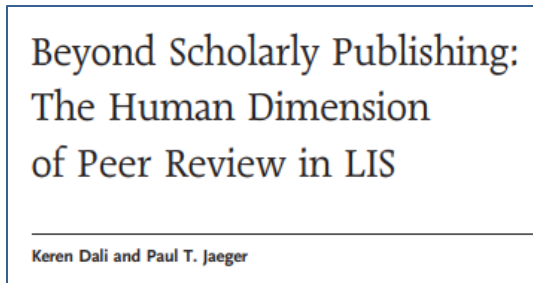
# Looking at journals with a practice lens



## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

### The *MIS Quarterly* as a Platform for Engagement

By: **Arun Rai**  
Editor-in-Chief, *MIS Quarterly*



# Looking at journals as a work-in-progress

**JRSM**  
JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE

[J R Soc Med](#). 2006 Apr; 99(4): 178–182.

PMCID: PMC1420798

doi: [10.1258/jrsm.99.4.178](https://doi.org/10.1258/jrsm.99.4.178)


PMID: [16574968](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16574968/)

## Peer review: a flawed process at the heart of science and journals

[Richard Smith](#)

Review | [Open Access](#) | [Published: 30 April 2020](#)

## The limitations to our understanding of peer review

[Jonathan P. Tennant](#) & [Tony Ross-Hellauer](#) 

[Research Integrity and Peer Review](#) 5, Article number: 6 (2020) | [Cite this article](#)

19

Editing Innovation Into  
*Administrative Science Quarterly*

KARL E. WEICK

ome > The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science > Volume 72, Number 3

PREVIOUS ARTICLE

FREE

## Is Peer Review a Good Idea?

[Remco Heesen](#) and [Liam Kofi Bright](#)

The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, volume 72, number 3, September 2021.

*Example:*

Editing innovation  
at MISQ

The logo for MIS Quarterly, featuring the word "MIS" in a smaller, red, sans-serif font above the word "Quarterly" in a larger, red, serif font. The "Q" in "Quarterly" is significantly larger and has a decorative flourish at its base.

# Which journal innovations to pursue?

- When does a manuscript become an article?
  - Pre-prints, early reviews
- What is in the article versus outside?
  - Role of research archives (e.g., OSF, Kaggle)
- What is in the article and how do I find it?
  - Semantics, topics, recommendations/search (push/pull)
- How can articles be curated? (e.g., issues, other curations)
  - Human curated, machine curated
- What should accompany an article?
  - Open reviews + Significance statements + Promotion + Local language initiatives ??
- How should articles be made available?
  - Open access

# Notes from MISQ SE Workshop Oct 19, 2021

Initiative	Potential Use Case	Makes Sense Because	Concerns
<p>Open identities of reviewers upon publication</p> <p>** Consider further, but not strong support (done during Carol's term as EIC)</p>	With reviewer permission	Gives credit to reviewers; motivates civil, even when critical, reviews	May induce some gaming by reviewers, but less likely with length of review cycle
<p>Open identities of authors and/or reviewers during review process (i.e., single-blind or non-blind reviews)</p> <p>** Do not consider further</p>	Methods Article	When methodological sophistication is very high, the pool of relevant authors and reviewers can be very small. Revealing identity may assist with credibility and may also assist with alleviating 'method wars'.	Potential for bias (e.g., trading favors, exercising influence, or unwillingness to criticize) when identity is known
	Research Commentary	Refereed by editors/senior scholars, who are more impervious to pressures	
	Issues and Opinions	Author/reviewer vantage point may be relevant to opinion on issue	
<p>Open reports (publishing reviews)</p> <p>** Consider further (without reviewer identity) (already done in our reviewing workshops)</p>	Any willing author/review team	<p>PhD students/junior scholars get a sense for how the review process works</p> <p>Potential for review process debates to spark further research</p>	<p>If review process asked authors to remove part of paper, does making this available reduce authors' ability to use that part in other papers?</p> <p>Privacy of reviewers, who may not wish specific comments broadcasted, especially if coupled with open reviewer identity</p>

Initiative	Potential Use Case	Makes Sense Because	Concerns
<p>Interaction between authors and reviewers</p> <p>** Do not consider further</p>	Any willing author/review team	Allows misunderstandings to be addressed at the time rather than waiting months for the next cycle to try to clarify the issue.	More work on the review team. Reviewer pressure to respond to junior scholar P&T pleas/ senior scholar status
<p>Interaction among reviewers</p> <p>** Do not consider further</p>	An SE/AE might coordinate a discussion among reviewers to resolve conflicting views in the review process before sending out the packet.	Reduces difficulty for authors and reviewers when reviewers have conflicting views and when the SE/AE is unable to resolve the conflict themselves	Freeloading/groupthink
<p>Open participation/ PREreview</p> <p>** Consider further (could link with DEI initiative)</p>	Leveraging our existing <i>reviewer workshop</i> , we ask a high-performing reviewer from that workshop to write a pre-review for an incoming manuscript (vetted by an experienced reviewer/editor). The authors then sharpen the paper before formal submission.	Way to develop/mentor new authors, especially those from less advantaged regions and give more training to reviewers	Adds coordination costs (for EIC, review coordinator, SE). Decreases pool of reviewers when manuscript is submitted to journal
	Leveraging our existing <i>author workshop</i> , we require any paper submitted to MISQ from that workshop to include workshop feedback in the cover letter	Currently, no way for review team to determine whether the author used feed back from Author Workshop or leverage those inputs	Author and/or review team feels constrained by workshop feedback

Initiative	Potential Use Case	Makes Sense Because	Concerns
Open final pre-production version commenting  <b>** Do not consider further</b>	Authors who wish help with final proofing of their manuscript	Reduce typos and more significant publication errors	MISQ potential loss of revenue
	Post-publication promotion and impact	Help with promotion of papers (e.g., “most liked”) and development of collaboration teams that otherwise might not occur	Could promote undesirable behaviors (e.g., increasing favorable comments on your own papers)
Registered reports  <b>** Consider further</b>	Could work for individual papers (opt-in) or for special issue on a controversial topic.	Authors get feedback before they expend resources on a potentially costly study.  Helps with controversial papers (where there is a vested interest in the results) or papers for which there could be negative reviewing outcomes due to biased expectations (e.g., I’m rejecting this because the results are obvious! Or I’m rejecting this because the results don’t make sense).	Authors might get “scooped” between pre-registration and execution  More work on editors, reviewers, authors (e.g., check paper against plans)  Could it lead to ‘safer’ or less creative studies because of risk aversion?  Could it accidentally signal that we are preferring deductive research over other genres in our initiatives?
Results-free review/ registered reports  <b>** Consider further</b>	Same as for registered reports. An alternative for authors when the window for data collection is not in their control.	Avoids bias/vested interest in evaluating controversial papers or where biased expectations.	Pertains only to deductive research: “has an affinity with normal science”
<b>Others raised in meeting to consider at ICIS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bring back reject-resubmit? (Sunil)</li> <li>- Role specification; metaphor to judicial process (Sunil)</li> <li>- Open pre-review by anyone during a short window; as used in CS (Atreyi)</li> </ul>			

# Disciplinary differences

Given all the above, we should expect some similarities and differences in reviewing norms across fields, e.g.:

- Length and detail of papers and reviews
- Number of expected revisions
- Focus areas of reviews
- Reviewer/editor/chair roles
- Degree of support/developmental culture
- Current trends/changes
- etc...



# Journal reviews (in Information Systems)

# MISQ

- Information systems in organisations, industry, society
- Finest scholarship in the field

## Some numbers for context

Just under 1K submissions per year

~70 editors, two thirds USA

Time to accept (from 1yr to 5.5yrs; avg 2.5yrs)

Average # rounds to accept (4.5)

Average cycle time per round (<60 days)

Quality/impact of papers: ~3-4 = tenure at good US school

# Understanding categories at MISQ

<https://misq.umn.edu/categories/>

## Articles in each category reviewed differently:

- Research article (55 pages)
- Research note (30 pages)
- Research commentary (30 pages)
- Issues and opinions (30 pages)
- Methods article (55 pages)
- Theory and review article:
  - Theory generative research synthesis (65 pages)
  - Theory development (55 pages)

# Reviewer roles at MISQ <https://misq.umn.edu/roles/>

**Table 1. Summary of SE, AE, and Reviewer Roles in the MISQ Editorial Process**

	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Associate Editor (AE)</b>	<b>Transparency Editor (TE)</b>	<b>Senior Editor (SE)</b>
<b>Perspective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Individual</i> based on expertise and experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Holistic</i> across reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Holistic</i> across paper, transparency commitment, and transparency materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Holistic</i> across all aspects</li> </ul>
<b>Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution of the paper</li> <li>• Major issues that affect publishability of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensemaking of reviews</li> <li>• Own assessment</li> <li>• Revisability of paper within reasonable time and effort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping of transparency commitment to transparency materials</li> <li>• Understanding of MISQ standards and practices of open science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensemaking of reviews and reports from AE and TE</li> <li>• Own assessment</li> <li>• Revisability of paper in reasonable time and effort</li> </ul>
<b>Value Added</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback based on expertise (domain, theory, method)</li> <li>• Suggestions for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance</li> <li>• Not vote-counting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for SE and authors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance</li> <li>• Not vote-counting</li> </ul>
<b>Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice regarding paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation regarding paper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation regarding transparency materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions on each round</li> </ul>

More detail on TE role at:  
<https://misq.umn.edu/research-transparency>

# *Reviewing errors*

- Type I: Accept a paper that should be rejected
  - We solve this by rejecting all papers !! (Famous Reviewer 2!)
- Type II: Reject a paper that should be accepted (Detmar editorial)
  - <https://misq.umn.edu/misq/downloads/download/editorial/5/>
- Type III: Write the wrong paper (Arun editorial)
  - <https://misq.umn.edu/misq/downloads/download/editorial/659/>

# *Guidelines on reviewing*

## **EDITOR'S COMMENTS**

### **Writing a Virtuous Review**

By: **Arun Rai**  
**Editor-in-Chief, *MIS Quarterly***  
**Regents' Professor of the University System of Georgia**  
**Robinson Chair of IT-Enabled Supply Chains and Process Innovation**  
**Harkins Chair of Information Systems**  
**Robinson College of Business**  
**Georgia State University**  
**[arunrai@gsu.edu](mailto:arunrai@gsu.edu)**

# *Guidelines on writing a virtuous review*

State your expertise and focus your review accordingly

Refrain from signal jamming—focus on issues that make or break the paper

Substantiate claims and suggestions

Detect and advocate for ambitious and intellectually novel work that may be impactful

Preserve the voice of the authors - do not ghostwrite or impose personal preferences

Do not send the authors on a wild goose chase

Avoid Janus-faced assessments

Be diligent to avoid springing avoidable surprises in later rounds in the process

Provide timely reviews

Write the review you would want to receive

Review a revision conditional on the editorial guidance

Provide authors leeway on how they address issues

Maintain professionalism in the face of disagreement

# Common reviewer reminders

- Page length restrictions, no supplementary materials
- Decisions not in reviews; no reject-resubmits
- Transparency policy (suggestions but not reviews)
- Gen AI: Disclosures, prohibitions (no uploading)



# ***Why is this review process going around in circles?***

## **– My personal observation:**

- We're all trying to avoid Type III error but we don't know the best way of doing it.
- Collective uncertainty is healthy – a sign that we are pushing the frontier!
- The newer and more impactful the paper's ideas, the *harder* it is to figure out, so we shouldn't expect consensus
- We need to be patient with each other while also working towards an efficient solution
- We need to be willing to take risks and to learn

Some good stories published here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/misqinsider/>

# Great editors...

1. Are kind!
2. Advocate for great papers
3. Reach out if they have difficulties
4. Can handle a wide variety of papers
5. Respect reviewers but not beholden to them
6. Understand journal categories and journal review systems
7. Engage well with everyone (authors, reviewers, other editors)
8. Find a balance between assessing the paper they see, and what it could be
9. Are fast within rounds (quick feedback) and over rounds (get to decision quickly)
10. Manage ethical issues in the review process and outside it (e.g., on social media)
11. Understand how science exhibits fundamentals and fads (e.g., causality, practice turn, etc.)
12. In final stages, do all they can to reach closure (don't leave all the details for someone else)

# Some common questions

- How do I become a reviewer or editor?
- How long should my review be?
- How much time should I spend on my review?
- Why did the editor overturn my decision?
- The editor's decision was opposite to mine; was my review bad?
- I know the paper/authors; should I decline the review?



# Responding to reviews

# Context - types of responses

1. Formal responses to reviewers
  - Subject of this talk
2. Formal proposals to the assigned editor
  - I've done with mixed results – some examples later
3. Informal proposals/emails to the assigned editor
  - I've only rarely done; mainly re logistics (delays)
4. Formal appeals to the editor-in-chief
  - I've never done

# Persistence – a tale of four papers

My journal publications since 2010	Acceptance at 1 <sup>st</sup> journal	Acceptance at 1 <sup>st</sup> journal after rejection at 1 <sup>st</sup> journal	Acceptance at 2 <sup>nd</sup> journal after rejection at 1 <sup>st</sup> journal	Acceptance at 2 <sup>nd</sup> journal after rejection at 2 <sup>nd</sup> journal
Bera et al. 2011, MISQ				😊
Burton-Jones and Grange 2013, ISR			😊	
Bera et al. 2014, ISR		😊		
Burton-Jones, 2014 I&O	😊			

# A closer look at those rejections

## 1. Bera et al. 2011

- Rejected at ISR (first round) → Rejected at MISQ (first round)
- Send formal proposal to assigned editor

### **Re: Senior Editor Decision Regarding MISQ 5074**

Dear Alan

Thank you for your letter regarding our paper: MISQ 5074. We appreciate the effort you spent assembling the review team and the care you took with your final decision. Although we respect your final decision, we are writing to see if you might reconsider it. This is for three reasons:

- SE reconsiders, accepted at MISQ several rounds later

# A closer look at those rejections

## 2. Burton-Jones and Grange 2013

- Rejected at MISQ 1<sup>st</sup> round (option to send ‘new’ paper)
- Send formal proposal to assigned editor

### **Re: Proposal for MISQ Theory and Review Resubmission**

Dear Lynne:

Thank you for your recent SE report on our manuscript: 2009-TR-10520. We thank the review team for their constructive comments and we are grateful to you and the AE for giving us the opportunity to resubmit a new paper. In your SE report, you suggested that we draft a plan for discussion with you and the AE before we begin rewriting. Please find our plan enclosed.

- Lukewarm response
- Send to ISR → accepted several rounds later



# A closer look at those rejections

## 3. Bera et al. in press

- Rejected at ISR 1<sup>st</sup> round (option to send ‘new’ paper)
- Send formal proposal to assigned editor

**Re: Request for resubmission of ISR-2011-211**

Dear Dr. George:

Thank you for your letter and the detailed review packet. Underneath your letter below, we outline what we believe were the major issues identified by the review team and why we think we can address them. You offered in your letter a reject-and-resubmit opportunity, noting that this would be a: “chance to completely rework your manuscript and resubmit it to ISR as a completely different paper.” We are writing this letter to:

1. explain why we think we can address the review team’s concerns in a resubmission
2. request your permission to keep the same review team for the resubmission

- Accepted at ISR several rounds later

## Lessons for 'winning them over'

1. Provide the forest and the trees
2. Do more than they ask
3. Leverage expertise
4. Don't play reviewers against each other
5. Argue politely if you are right
6. Show that issues are deep
7. Show that you are human

Sometimes you won't win ....

But ...

8. The aim is to have impact, not to 'win'

# 1. Provide the forest and the trees

- Forest: provide a summary

**Response Document**

Dear Editors and Review Team Members:

Many thanks for the comprehensive review packet. We summarize the main changes to our paper here and follow with a more detailed point-by-point response.

- Trees: provide verbatim point-by-point responses

#	AE Comment	Response
0	This manuscript is well-written and easy to read. The goals of the work are clearly stated. Nonetheless, the reviewers and I have identified a number of important issues that I recommend the authors address. The reviewers are generally consistent in their concerns. In what follows, I summarize the reviewers' comments, adding my own thoughts as appropriate, and provide additional comments of my own.	Many thanks for your good analysis of the paper and the many recommendations you gave. We worked very hard on the revision and believe we have addressed all the major points.

## 2. Do more than they ask

- **Additional data in empirical paper**

*“[To address problems on the last version...] we therefore conducted a new experiment and a follow-up protocol study using stronger manipulations. The results of the new experiment confirmed the proposed interaction effect.”*

- **Additional data in conceptual paper**

*“Perhaps the most noticeable of our final changes was that, although not asked for by the review team, we felt that we could improve our review of the literature on effective use. We therefore carried out a more structured review (we had been doing this concurrently over the last year) and we now report these results.”*

# 3. Leverage expertise

## Burton-Jones and Grange 2013

We shared our revision with Yair and asked him to look at footnote 1. His edits are shown below. Basically, we think our reading of the theory is fine for the purposes of our paper, but please let us know if you think we need to clarify things more.

Yair's comments on our footnote 1 (shaded & bold):

For completeness, we note that some might argue that the deep structure of a word processor *is* pre-specified, and involves an underlying view of *all* the tasks it supports (from text entry, to figures, to forms, to mail merging, etc). Our reading of representation theory is that these functions simply provide the *potential* for users to create deep structure **{\*\*\*Such functions help manipulate the symbols - the representation - independent of its meaning. Interestingly - if**

## Bera et al. in press

We emailed Richard Mayer at Santa Barbara and Clark Chinn at Rutgers to be sure and they agreed that we were examining an understudied topic.

Richard Mayer (5/27/2013) and Clark Chinn (6/12/2013) suggested that, in psychology, the researchers doing the most closely related work to us were Slava Kalyuga (UNSW) and Danielle NcNamara (ASU). Kalyuga's work is not actually that closely related, so we do not cite it. Some of McNamara's work is relevant and we cite it, but neither Kalyuga's work nor McNamara's work examines the inverted-U effect that we study.

# 4. Don't play reviewers against each other

## Our response

As an aside, we believe that the reviewer's positions on this question were extremely revealing because they provide evidence for the lack of defined principles for decomposition in OO analysis. For example, Reviewer 1 (paragraph 1) questioned whether decomposition was important in OO analysis. In contrast, Reviewer 2 (paragraphs 4 & 5) believed that the importance of decomposition in OO analysis was so well known that it was of little value to test it. We respectfully believe that the difference of opinion amongst such well-qualified reviewers highlights the lack of defined principles for decomposition in OO analysis.

## Reviewer unmoved

Perhaps I can clarify the question I raised last time: Do analysts come up with class diagrams following a decomposition approach? Now, I am not questioning the use of decomposition in a systems approach. So, in contrast to your inference, my views are not opposed to that of reviewer 2 ... The issue is (to repeat): Do analysts use a decomposition approach in coming up with *class diagrams*?

# 5. Argue politely if you are right

AE7	<p>Further, I am concerned about procedural knowledge. Given the lack of experience in conceptual modeling, would subjects have been able to appropriately understand the EER scripts? That may be a potential confound unaccounted for in the study.</p>	<p>We assume you mean procedural knowledge about conceptual modeling. We don't see how conceptual modeling knowledge can be a confound. Conceptual modeling knowledge can interact with domain knowledge in influencing readers' problem-solving performance (as Khatri et al. 2006 showed), but we randomly assigned students to groups and there were no major differences in conceptual modeling knowledge across groups (see Table 4).</p> <p>Although we don't believe that conceptual modeling knowledge is a confound, we revised Section 5.2 to state that it would be valuable to examine whether there is a three-way interaction between conceptual modeling knowledge, domain knowledge, and ontological clarity. That would be an interesting study.</p>
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# 6. Show that issues are deep

## Reviewer's point:

Finally, I am unconvinced that non-users must be excluded from collective use. Perhaps this reflects only that you are meaning TI, TA and SA when you speak of use. But if we return to your definition of use as "*a user's employment of one or more features of a system to perform a task*" and take that to the group level, could we not have a situation where the group delegates one or more tasks to a subset of its members to carry out directly, to the benefit of the group as a whole.

## Excerpt from Response

There are two issues here:

1. *Should collective usage include non-users?*

We still suggest that the answer to this is "no." We suggest a more flexible position in this version - one that allows for (broader) interpretations of usage, as long as they are consistent with their views on this issue (see pp. 7-8).

2. *Does the presence of any non-users preclude the existence of collective usage?*

We suggest that the answer to this is "no." Even if we rely on an assumption of direct employment of an IS, it is possible for collective system usage to exist even if not all members use the system. The key here is that the collectives refer to different entities (i.e., a collective within a collective).



# 7. Show that you are human

- **Acknowledge error**

- *Second, although we felt we had used RT correctly, it turned out that R1 was right and we had failed to appreciate some distinctions in RT between deep structure and data.*

- **Ask for help**

- *Although I feel confident about my reading of the positivist/ quantitative literature, I am not deeply embedded in the interpretive/ qualitative literature and so I shared my paper with several qualitative researchers before resubmitting it to be sure that my reading of that literature was fair. Based on the feedback I received, I feel that my analysis is fair, but I am interested in obtaining feedback from the review team on this section.*

# Sometimes you won't win

- Dear Andrew  
I really hated sending this report.

Can talk about it later, but I think some of your message was lost because of side issues you attended to, in part because of prior reviewer comments e.g., the ontology versus epistemology issue.

regards

...

But...

## 8. The aim is to have impact not to 'win'

- Story of my first publication

# You will definitely have bad days....

...seems like this section is 'bashing' prior literature.

you write for yourself and not for the reader.

there are numerous inconsistencies and non-sequiturs in the author's treatment of the issues

Your analysis is skeletal to the point of parody

This paper is a throwback to 1980's theorizing

It is not clear how future researchers can benefit from this paper.

...unfortunately by the time you reached your actual contribution, I had lost interest.

this paper's advice is harmful

why do we need such a deliberately naïve analysis to tell us what we all already know?

# And you will have good days too....

I have been reflecting on the papers I have handled over the last year and I am writing to you to see if you would submit it again. It was saying something important and in retrospect I should have given it an R&R

Very well done. It is rare to see such a dramatic turnaround from one submission to the next.

I wish we had more papers like yours....

In the future, I am sure many IS doctoral programs would include this paper as reading materials for students