What Should a First-Time and Emerging Researcher Know About Publishing Ethics?

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As *Hypothesis* begins recruiting first-time and emerging researcher submissions, I recalled my early publication experiences starting with an *MLA*News publication[1] up through my first peer reviewed publication four years later in the *Journal of Hospital Librarianship*[2]. When I read those early articles and conference abstracts, I can see how much my writing has changed and – I hope – improved over the years. Back in 2014-2018, I wish I had known to ask the following questions:

Question: What does "a submission can only be considered by one journal at a time mean?" Does this apply just to a manuscript? Or does it apply to conference submissions as well?

The submission checklist and author guidelines cover the main points a journal expects to see from its authors[3]. The acceptance rate can provide an idea of whether or not a journal gives any room for error (or misinterpretations) by an author. Due to poor planning, for one submission I completed major revisions and response to reviewers the week of Thanksgiving.

As the *Hypothesis* Editor, I have chosen to communicate with author(s) about delays and inquire about sending notifications during a holiday. For the peer reviewers, I provide extra time from November 15-December 31st. If it becomes clear that we must push a submission to a future issue, then the author(s) will have extra time to make revisions. Usually the delays are not the fault of the author(s) but rather recognizing and adjusting schedules to accommodate time needed by the Editorial Team.

Conferences are great opportunities to present ideas and to receive feedback from others. Some conferences allow author(s) to submit conference abstracts, which have been submitted and even presented at a previous conference. On one occasion, I submitted an adjusted abstract to a conference and due to scheduling gave two different but very similar presentations back-to-back. Some might have questioned if I was salami slicing, which is when you slice and dice content to make it "different enough" to justify giving multiple presentations[4]! As the presenter, you are at the mercy of the conference schedule – but I now limit the number of things I do at any given conference. Unless each submission is on a separate topic or focuses on something introduced or referenced in passing in a previous presentation or poster, I will not submit a conference abstract.

Hypothesis states in many places the need for author(s) to confirm that the conference abstract has not been published elsewhere. If the conference abstract was presented but not published in any other journal or conference proceeding publication, this is an acceptable submission. If the conference abstract is stored in an institutional repository, authors should share this information at time of submission.

To minimize the chance of duplicate publications, *Hypothesis* will review publicly available conference proceedings from the *Journal of the Canadian Health Libraries Association*, European Association for Health Information and Libraries, *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, and LISTA. We might also do a cursory search of Google Scholar.

Questions: My promotion and tenure application requires x presentations and y peer reviewed publications. I really need to get something published soon. What suggestions do you have for me?

As I was heading into my second year review for promotion with tenure, I had a rejected manuscript, a poster and panel presentation at a national conference, a state conference presentation, and an in-progress book chapter on my list of accomplishments. I was on the verge of panicking. During the holiday season, my parents and experienced researchers said, "You have sulked enough – get back on the horse!" Then, in attempt to get me moving, they asked, "Are you looking for a journal that works with newer authors?" These two questions led me to discovering the *Journal of Hospital Librarianship* policy, which encourages submissions by newer authors, who could receive mentorship from Editorial Board members.

Question: I want to get experience as an author and researcher. What suggestions do you have for me?

This is a tough one, because each person brings different experiences with them. I will tackle this by outlining my self-identified weak spots and steps I took to improve.

Writing

When it came to scientific writing and learning to write in past-present tense, present tense, and active voice; I had a lot to learn. After conversing with tenured colleagues, I wrote book reviews, which allowed me to keep-up with trends and also add content to the existing library collections. Writing a book chapter refined these skills even more as in one week I found and read materials, wrote, and revised about 3000 words.

Research Study Design and Methods

Recognizing that I lack a basic knowledge of research design and methods, I looked for opportunities to collaborate with experienced researchers. At the end of a project, I have a pretty good idea of areas, which would benefit from further training. Completing the Critical Appraisal Institute for Librarians enhanced my ability to analyze an article.

Reading the *Hypothesis* Research Mentor article on statistical analyses and the more recent Data Bytes articles further improved my knowledge on the topic. They also made me realize that one of my studies will not be revised and submitted to a different journal, because the statistical analysis is wrong. Of similar importance (and far easier to acknowledge), though, is that the project data is no longer current or of use to the University Libraries, at the University of Toledo.

Every researcher, director, project manager, and individual must develop the ability to recognize and to say, "this project, program, service, etc. no longer serves the purpose for which we designed it." Last Fall, after being upset and discussing things with my Dad about a situation, he said, "You have given this your best shot – it's time to move on and to explore other options." I hope, readers, you can find a person or people, who will be able to cut through the muddle, know you well, and say this to you. For me, giving up is something I avoid at all costs – I always end up feel defeated and fight the sense that I have let down the other team members. If it's a solo endeavor, then I have to battle the feeling of failure. I am still – in many ways – working through the emotions from that decision, but the relief I felt was immediate. This confirmed to me that it was the right decision.

Join or form a research, writing, etc. group

I now get satisfaction from encouraging others to team up for research projects or to be a team member/facilitator, when I find a group with similar interests and availability. Yes, it took me a while to figure out what I can bring to a team. It also took awhile for me to realize that my self-identification is usually on target. At the University of Toledo, my collaborators are usually better than I am at knowing what skills I bring to a project. Joining a group could assist in kickstarting a project or serve as a way to keep up momentum on a stalled project.

Tracking and Productivity

In Fall 2019, I reconfigured my office white board to list all my ongoing research projects and things I needed to do. For a number of reasons (Hello, Covid!), this got out of date and I was just not using it effectively. I tried everything from to-do lists, writing a journal of what I did on a certain project (sometimes with hours spent on a task), and so forth. None of the above worked. On 02 January 2025, I cleaned off the white board and wrote the first five months of the year. Then, I listed only the hard deadlines. Instead of being discouraged or dreading what's on the whiteboard, it's now fun and satisfying to erase items on a semi-regular basis. Tracking and productivity tools are lovely – but for me to use them, they have to demonstrate an easy way to track forward momentum.

What's *Hypothesis* got for a new, emerging, or experienced author or researcher?

Read the update from the Emerging Researchers Subcommittee report for more information about the upcoming special issue opportunity. For those interested in all things evidence syntheses, read the Evidence Syntheses Subcommittee report. Additional submission categories, which we think will capture the interest of all authors, will be available in the upcoming months and could be featured in the September Issue.

Hypothesis welcomes submissions from new, experienced, or emerging researchers and authors. Provided the content will be of use to the field of library and information science, our Editorial Team will support, mentor, and guide you every step of the way pre-submission to publication!

Be sure to browse the September editorial for topics more pertinent to mid-career and experienced researchers and authors.

Acknowledgments

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