Communicating and publishing research

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15
Communicating and publishing research

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Developing and strengthening journals
Important to understand “why” researchers publish

- To comply with funding requirements
- For career progression
- Intellectual tagging – researcher associated with discovery
- Reputation
- Achievement
- For social / public good
- Etc

NOTE:
- “Why” can influence “where” and “when” to publish.
- Many journals already exist on diverse topics.

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Determine necessity for (new) journal

- What is the motivation?
- Is there real demand?
- What gaps exist?
Consider target groups

- Who will publish in the journal
  - Are they currently publishing?
  - Where are they publishing?
  - Are they facing challenges there?
  - What would make them publish in your (new) journal?
  - How will they know about your (new) journal?

- Who will read the journal
  - Why will they read it?
  - Where will they access it?
  - How will you sustain their interest and patronage?

- Other considerations

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Identify niche topics for journal

- Are there identifiable research communities in the specified topics?
- How active are the researchers?
- Consider the available alternative publishing outlets
- Understand disciplinary culture for specified topics
  - E.g. prestige associated with certain disciplines,
- Understand institutional culture of your target researchers
  - E.g. requirement for journals with ISI impact factor
Taking off

- Identify unique journal title (search through ISSN, Google, etc...)
- Title with good acronym (short, catchy, memorable, ...)
- Obtain ISSN or ISBN if printing...
- Develop website
- Logos and unique identifiers
- Register legal business entity
  - for legal issues,
  - handling payments,
  - professional business profile, ..
Editorial team

- Key in review process, quality assurance and credibility
- Consider the following:
  - Professional profile of each (affiliation, etc).
  - Individual credibility
  - Availability
  - Professional alignment to journal thematic areas.
  - Experience
  - Diversity (professional, Institutional, regional considerations)
  - Right attitude to help build journal
Staff capacity

- Communication skills
  - Competence
  - Sensitivity
- IT (needed whether electronic or printed journal)
- Marketing / publicity
- Technical editor
  - ensures reviewers feedback is implemented before publication
- Administrative staff
- Accounts and legal (can outsource)
Infrastructure

- Office
  - Ideally independent
  - Reputable address (searchable online if possible)
  - Accessible
  - Ideal location for professionals visiting

- Efficient communication system with history enabled
  - Discourage verbal correspondence
  - Secure archiving system (back up/ cloud/ etc)
  - Secure IT system (safe from hackers, secure for payments if any, etc

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To observe

- Effective quality control and assurance mechanisms
- Timeliness in:
  - response
  - review
  - publication
- Courtesy and respect
  - Cordial language when pointing out weakness
  - Guide without discouraging
- Sensitivity to challenges facing researchers:
  - Weak skills
  - Lack of access to facilities
  - External constraints (e.g. banking restrictions)
Common challenges researchers face in publishing
Common challenges researchers face

- Inadequate results
- Incomplete or improper analysis
- Reviewer attitude
- Research area not understood by reviewers
- Paper not aligned to journal thematic areas
- Content overload
Challenges ...

- Failure to use recommended journal format
- Language limitation
- Delayed review process
- Reviewer conflict of interest
- Internal conflict amongst research team
- Outdated research methodologies
- Data too old
- Poor IT skills
Conclusion

- Significant number of active researchers in Africa not being published
  - Disparity between countries
  - Disparity between disciplines

- Unique research areas relevant to Africa not being published

- Credible publishing outlets increasingly available

- There is potential and capacity to launch new publications

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Thank you