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Get Published! Straight Talk from the Editors at *Partnership*

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Abstract

This paper covers the origin, history and scope of *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, the editorial process and timeframes, research and scholarship for librarians, the peer review process, the components of a good research article, and practical tips on what editors look for in a manuscript submission with examples from *Partnership* journal. It is intended for anyone writing a research article but should be particularly helpful to first-time authors. The paper was first given as a presentation at Ontario Library Association Super Conference on January 31, 2013.

Keywords

librarians; publication; e-journal; editorial process; research and scholarship; peer review; research articles; research methodology; Open Journal Systems; OJS; *Partnership*

About the Journal – History

Partnership: the Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research had its origin at a meeting of The Partnership, the consortium of provincial and territorial library associations of Canada, in February, 2005. The idea of launching a journal was proposed by Cynthia Archer, Director of Libraries at York University. Jennifer Richard of Acadia University was appointed as the founding Editor. She and a committee of eighteen volunteers[i] established the format for the journal and brought it to fruition. The first issue was published November, 2006.

Vision

The vision statement for Partnership was clearly articulated in Jennifer Richard's inaugural editorial:

> *The purpose of this initiative is straightforward: to provide myriad opportunities to the Canadian library community in the realm of scholarly communication. The journal is an outlet for sharing innovations in the workplace and one of a very few Canadian venues for the much desired peer review status. In addition, the journal provides a chance for librarians and library workers to be editors, reviewers and writing coaches. Though of great importance to academic librarians, whose tenure or promotion often depends on peer review, this journal is in no way meant exclusively for academics: this is a journal for everyone.*
>
> *Our philosophy guarantees rigorous peer review and high standards for both theoretical and practical articles which are made freely and immediately available to everyone…*
>
> *In this journal you will also find news, profiles and views from librarians and library workers across Canada, further connecting members of our library community* (Richard 1).

Over the years the journal has remained remarkably true to the founding vision. Successive Editors have been reluctant to interfere with what has proven to be a winning formula.

Background and Characteristics

Partnership journal is published by The Partnership and receives sponsorship support from the University of Guelph and the University Library, University of Saskatchewan. Guelph provides an in-kind contribution as the host for the OJS software platform on which the journal resides. The University of Saskatchewan Library has provided a three-year, $600 annual line-of-credit to cover operating expenses for the journal.

As the name indicates, *Partnership* is a Canadian journal. It is dedicated to providing a venue for Canadian library and information professionals to communicate the results of their research and scholarship to an audience of their peers. That being said, the content in *Partnership* is not exclusively Canadian in origin. The journal does receive and accept international submissions; international articles, notably from Africa and the U.S., have accounted for about 5% of the content in the journal.

We call *Partnership* "a practitioners' journal". The vast majority of articles derive from practice-based research – what Ernest Boyer termed the Scholarship of Application – and are written by and for practising librarians (21). However, once again, this designation is not exclusive as about 2.5% of *Partnership* authors have been LIS professors.

The journal is structured into nine sections. The Theory and Research, and Innovations in Practice sections are subject to traditional double-blind peer review. The Conference Spotlight section features articles derived from conference presentations. Because it is difficult to conceal the identity of the authors of such articles, single-blind or "arms-length" review is employed for Conference Spotlight submissions. The remaining sections of the journal: Editor's Comments, Professional Development, Media/Publication Reviews, Profiles, Viewpoints, and News and Announcements, are dependent on editorial review only.

In practice, the unique, hybrid – partially peer reviewed/partially not – format of *Partnership* results in a journal that addresses the needs of all sectors of the library and information community. In fact, one of the strengths of the journal is its multi-type appeal. Figures 2 and 3 (pages 6, 7) show that Partnership authors come from every type of library background and all Canadian provinces and territories.

Partnership is proudly and unabashedly open access. This ensures wide and rapid distribution of articles as soon as they are published. The journal has adopted a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 license which all authors agree to at the time their manuscripts are submitted.

Partnership is indexed in Google/Google Scholar, Library Literature & Information Science Full Text (Wilson), Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (EBSCO), Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Scholars Portal (OCUL), and JournalTOCS. Work is under way to have *Partnership* included in Gale and ProQuest products as well.

Aside from the sponsorship dollars contributed by the University of Saskatchewan Library, *Partnership* has operated for seven years without funding. This doesn't mean there is no expense to producing the journal because the cost in terms of human labour is significant. It means that the journal is dependent on the commitment and dedication of individuals who are willing to contribute their time and energy as a service to the profession and because they believe in the importance of open scholarship. The journal is also dependent on the goodwill of employers of the members of the editorial team, who in some cases allow staff time or give credit for journal activity as part of a librarian's assignment of duties.

Editorial Team

The *Partnership* editorial team (see Table 1) currently consists of thirteen members from six different provinces, spread across the country from Victoria, B.C. to Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Editors are selected through open competition, with decisions being made by a search committee composed of members from The Partnership and the editorial team. Editors are appointed for renewable two year terms.

There are significant challenges to managing a journal with no budget and a staff distributed across four time zones. The majority of communication takes place by email, with occasional audio teleconferences and one annual face-to-face meeting at the OLA Super Conference. Complimentary Super Conference registration for *Partnership* editors is generously provided by OLA; however, due to other cost considerations, not all editors have been able to attend. Consequently, there are *Partnership* editors who have worked together for years and have never met in person.

Table 1. *Partnership* Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief	David Fox	University of Saskatchewan
Section Editors		
Innovations in Practice	Mary Kandiuk	York University
Theory and Research	Ann Smith	Acadia University
Conference Spotlight	Jennifer Easter	University of Guelph-Humber
Professional Development	Jessica Lange	McGill University
Media/Publication Reviews	Michael Hohner	University of Winnipeg
Profiles	Leanne Olson	Western University
Viewpoints	Lindsay Gibb	The Beguiling – Library Services Dept
French Language Editor	Kumiko Vézina	Université Concordia
Copyeditors	Catherine Jeanjean	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
	Michael Lines	University of Victoria
Layout Editors	Rainer Schira	Brandon University
	Mark Weiler	MLIS, Western University

Basic Facts

As of December 31, 2012, *Partnership* had published fourteen issues consisting of 294 articles by 271 unique authors. The journal currently has 213 registered peer reviewers and 763 registered readers. To date there have been 750,972 article “reads”. What percentage of these “reads” represents article downloads, versus web crawler activity, is difficult to determine.

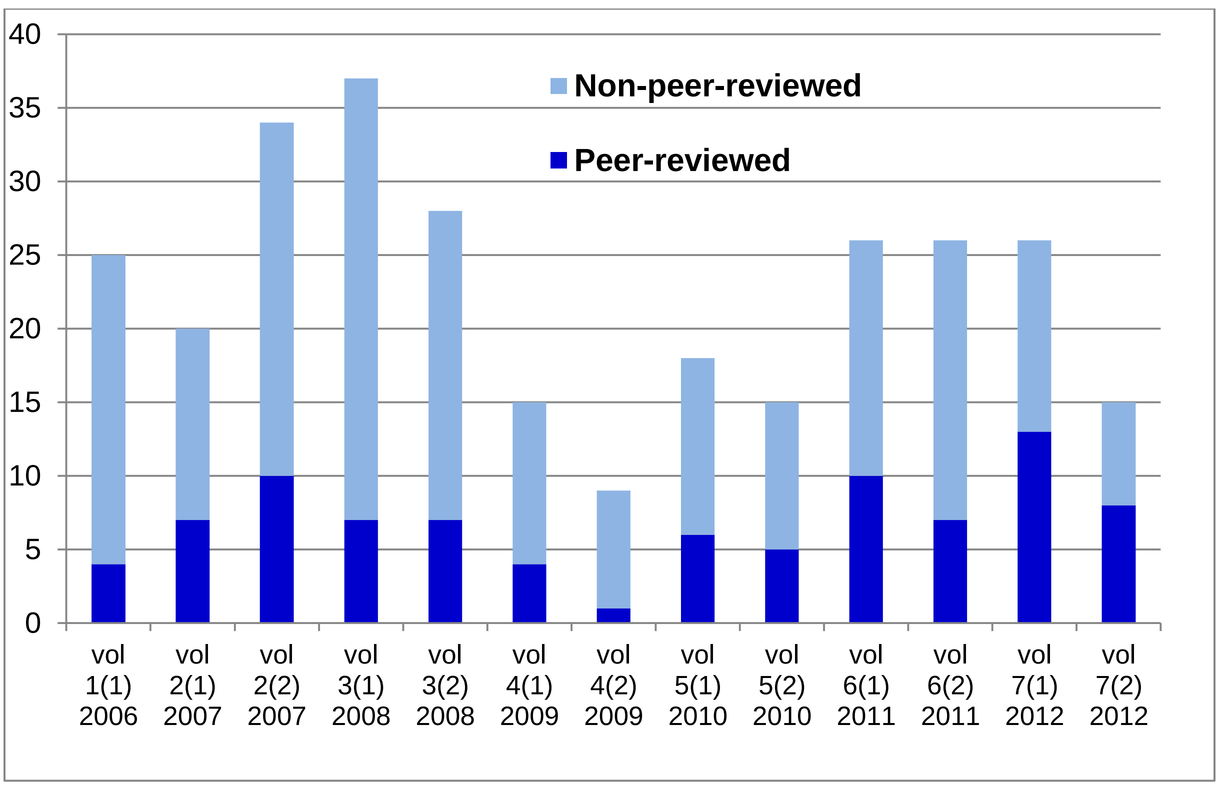
Table 2. Articles by Section

Section	Articles	Percentage
Media/Publication Reviews	57	19.4
Profiles	48	16.3
News and Announcements	47	16.0
Theory and Research*	45	15.3
Innovations in Practice*	31	10.5
Professional Development	26	8.8
Editor's Comments	15	5.1
Conference Spotlight*	13	4.4
Viewpoints	12	4.1
TOTAL	294	100.0

* Peer reviewed

Table 2 shows the breakdown of articles by journal section. Over the life of the journal, 30.2% of articles have been in the three peer reviewed sections; however, in recent years that percentage has been increasing.

Figure 1. Articles by Issue



Partnership has published an average of 21 articles per issue, although, as Figure 1 demonstrates, the number has fluctuated considerably. Figure 1 also illustrates the increase in the percentage of peer reviewed content since 2009.

Figure 2 shows a breakdown of *Partnership* authors by sector of employment. Not surprisingly, more than half of *Partnership* authors have come from the university sector, reflecting the fact that publishing is often a requirement for the promotion and tenure of university librarians. However, what is interesting is that all conceivable library sectors are represented, including LIS professors and students. PhD's from disciplines other than librarianship made up 1.85% of authorship.

Figure 3 shows *Partnership* authors by province and territory. While more than a third of the authors have been from Ontario, every part of the country is represented in this chart. As previously noted, 5.17% of authors have come from outside of Canada. To date there have been no instances of international collaboration on *Partnership* articles.

Figure 2. *Partnership* Authors by Sector

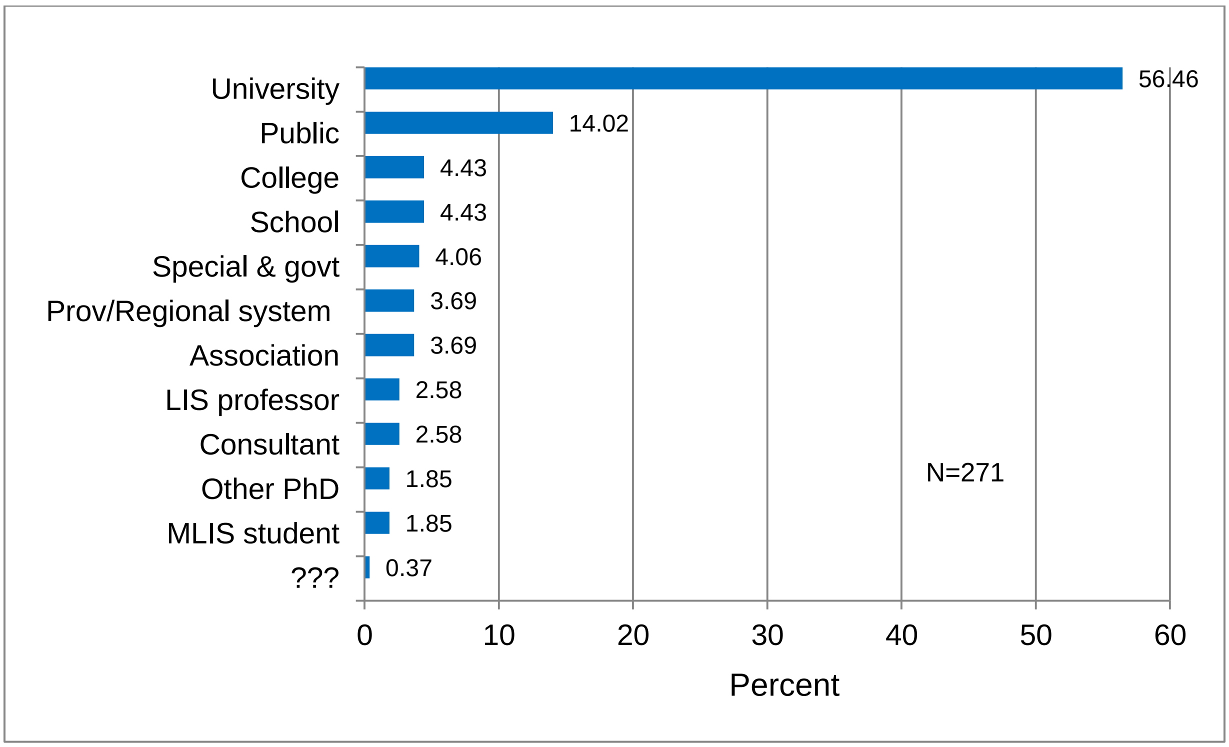
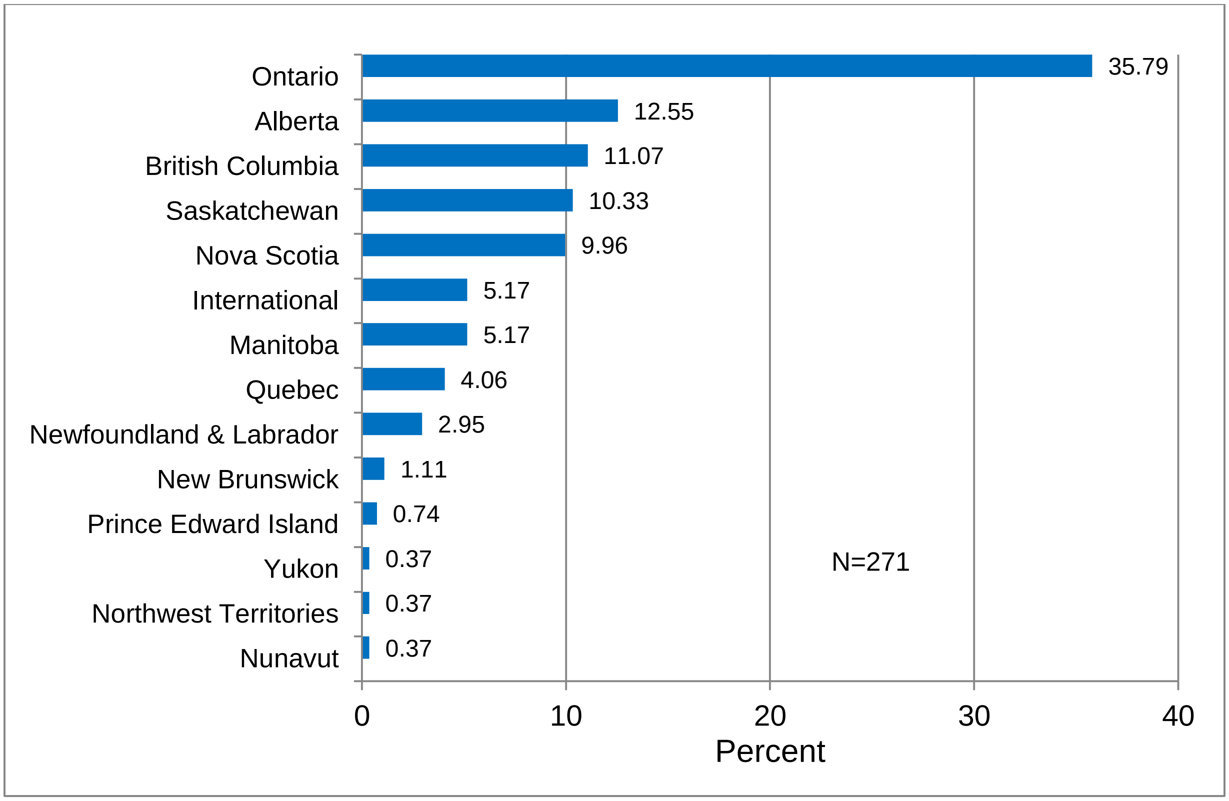


Figure 3. *Partnership* Authors by Province and Territory



Figures 2 and 3 illustrate clearly that, at least where authorship is concerned, *Partnership* is definitely fulfilling the vision of being "a journal for everyone", and at the same time it is successfully reflecting the regional and multi-type character of its sponsoring organization, The Partnership.

Submissions

Partnership is hosted on the Open Journal Systems (OJS) v. 2.3.8.0 platform at the University of Guelph. Both the public user interface and the journal administrative functions are handled by OJS. All of the editorial workflow takes place online in a secure, confidential environment. The journal accepts online submissions in MS Word format, and authors must first register on the system in order to submit.

Section Policies and Author Guidelines govern the length and format for manuscripts. Manuscripts must be original work not previously published, and not concurrently being considered by another publisher. In keeping with the open access philosophy of the journal, authors must accept the Creative Commons license prior to submitting a manuscript. This has never been an issue, as most librarians – or at least the ones who submit to *Partnership* – seem fully committed to the principles of open access.

The Editorial Process

Table 3. Steps in the Editorial Process

Function	Timeframe
Editor review, select peer reviewers, request reviews	1 week
Peer review	4 weeks
Evaluate reviews and make editorial decision (Accept, Revisions required, Resubmit for review, Reject)	1 week
Author's revisions	4 weeks
Editor review	1 week
First stage copyedit	1 weeks
Author's copyedit	2 weeks
Final copyedit	1 week
Initial proofread	.5 week
Prepare galley proofs	.5 week
Author proofread	1 week
Corrections	.5 week
Final proofread	.5 week
TOTAL	18 weeks

Table 3 shows the thirteen steps in the *Partnership* editorial workflow that take place once a manuscript has been uploaded by the author. At *Partnership*, a submission to one of the peer reviewed sections is processed in a little over four months, if all goes smoothly. Non-peer reviewed submissions are completed in about three months. The largest part of the eighteen week timeframe is dedicated to activities performed by the author and peer reviewers. The editors' work is compressed into just seven weeks.

The editorial workflow is a painstaking, multi-step process during which an author's work is validated, critiqued, revised, edited three times for clarity of language, grammar and punctuation, proofread, formatted, corrected, proofread again, and finally published. Over the course of this exacting treatment, many hours are spent on each manuscript, until the final article is the best it can be. The editorial process really does result in significant improvements to the manuscript – a fact which authors have been quick to acknowledge.

The eighteen week publication timeframe is a best-case scenario. The production schedule is so tight that any complication that crops up along the way can result in a submission being deferred to a future issue. The chief reason for postponement, based on input from the peer reviewers, is a "Resubmit for review" decision by the editor. This usually means that extensive revisions, and possibly a second round of peer review, will be required before the manuscript may be accepted for publication.

Research and Scholarship for Librarians

There has been increased interest in research and scholarship on the part of Canadian academic librarians over the last decade. David Fox, Librarian Emeritus, University of Saskatchewan and Editor-in-Chief of *Partnership*, has published three studies examining scholarship and Canadian academic librarians, including one in *Partnership* in 2007*.* As pointed out by Alvin Schrader from the University of Alberta, there is an expectation that librarians working in Canadian research libraries "contribute actively to the knowledge base of their professional discipline," as well as "align themselves more centrally with the broader academic process of scholarly communication" (1). In 2012 the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) announced the Librarians' Research Institute which is intended to "provide practicing academic librarians in Canada an opportunity to immerse themselves in sustained conversations and activities related to scholarly research, inquiry, and publishing." This Institute is "a step toward building an infrastructure for librarian researchers across Canada and for building a community of our own researchers in CARL libraries." *Partnership* has played an important role in the endeavour to promote research and scholarship among librarians in Canada. As stated by Mary Kandiuk, Editor of the Innovations in Practice Section, "the creation of an open access journal for members of Canada's national network of provincial and territorial library associations was a landmark in the history of Canadian libraries and librarianship, providing an important venue for peer reviewed research that is openly available" (2).

"A critical professional literature is one of the hallmarks of a profession," writes Michael F. Winter in *The Culture and Control of Expertise*: *Toward a Sociological Understanding of Librarianship*. There is also a "high degree of practitioner participation in the production of professional literature," he states, and this holds true for library and information science (103). As mentioned earlier, *Partnership* is for the most part a "practitioners' journal." Like their counterparts elsewhere, Canadian librarians in all sectors "engage in the scholarship of inquiry in order to apply their findings to the everyday challenges of providing library services" (ACRL). This scholarship of inquiry can take many forms, including:

- *Conducting bibliometric and citation studies;*
- *Investigating how faculty and students seek and use information;*
- *Creating new ways to organize information;*
- *Developing new methods and strategies for information retrieval;*
- *Establishing new mechanisms to evaluate library services and processes;*
- *Researching the impact of the library on knowledge creation;*
- *Examining effective approaches to providing reference and delivering instructional activities;*
- *Compiling bibliographies* ("Scholarship for Librarians").

In addition, many librarians have graduate degrees in other academic disciplines and produce scholarship outside of the field of library and information science.

Research Methods in Library/Information Science

Librarians apply a wide range of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in the conduct of scientific investigation or inquiry to advance the discipline's knowledge base (ACRL). Research methodologies in library/information science employ the same techniques that are used in the social sciences such as:

- *Bibliometrics (using quantitative analysis and statistics to describe patterns of publication within a given field or body of literature);*
- *Survey Methods (sampling of a population using qualitative or quantitative measures);*
- *Historical Approach (collecting historical information about a problem or topic)*
- *Qualitative Analysis (examining non-measurable data);*
- *Content Analysis (analyzing the actual content and internal features of media);*
- *Discourse Analysis (questioning the basic assumptions of quantitative and qualitative research methods);*
- *Structural Analysis (analyzing and exploring the structures underlying the text or system, which make the content possible)* (Palmquist).

The ultimate goal is finding solutions to research problems and creating new knowledge. Research can also involve expanding on previous study in an area. Originality is critical in research, and through the use of scientific investigation or inquiry the librarian researcher seeks to shed new light on areas of interest and concern to other library and information professionals. The type of research being conducted will dictate the kinds of research methodologies that are employed to conduct this investigation or inquiry and the method(s) used to collect data. It is quite common to use “mixed methods,” that is, to use both quantitative and qualitative methods together, e.g., administering a questionnaire followed by conducting interviews. Research typically involves the formal communication of findings. This communication can take a variety of forms. Examples of scholarship for librarians include:

- Publishing research in journals, books, and conference proceedings;
- Conference presentations;
- Hosting webinars;
- Book reviews;
- Editorial positions;
- Conference poster sessions;
- Non-refereed articles;
- Grant proposals;
- Peer reviewing.

Librarians are increasingly engaged in digital forms of scholarly communication such as authoring blogs, maintaining wikis, etc. For a fuller description defining and describing the kinds of scholarship undertaken by academic librarians, see the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Academic Librarianship and the Redefining Scholarship Project*.

Choosing the Appropriate Venue for Publication

Choosing the right journal to which to submit an article is an important decision and should be given consideration early on in the process as opposed to after the article is written. The author should have several journals in mind. What "types" of articles do these journals publish? Do they publish articles on the subject of the work being submitted? Finding the right journal will reduce the possibility of rejection after what is often a long peer review process. Authors should also review the journal's instructions for authors, which provide guidelines for manuscripts, and closely examine the articles to see how they are structured and what format is used for tables and graphs. An important consideration is whether the journal is peer reviewed as articles must be peer reviewed in order to be considered research articles. Other factors to consider are the reputation of the journal, frequency of publication and length of time for an article to appear, availability, open access (DOAJ), and indexing.

Peer Review

Peer review, the critical evaluation of work by other scholars and practitioners in the same field or occupation, traces its origins back to the 17th century.

> *The Royal Society is the world's oldest scientific publisher, with the first edition of Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society appearing in 1665. Henry Oldenburg – Secretary of the Royal Society and first Editor of the publication – ensured that it was "licensed by the council of the society, being first reviewed by some of the members of the same", thus making it the first ever peer reviewed journal* ("Royal Society Journal").

Evaluation of the communication of findings through the use of peer review is a critical element of serious research and scholarship. A peer reviewed journal article is considered to be the gold standard for the social sciences, including library and information science. Also described as "refereed," the process is "blind" (with some exceptions such as the *Harvard Business Review's* Guidelines for Authors, which uses an editorial review process) which means that the author of the manuscript is not revealed to those who are invited to review it. The intent is to ensure that reviewers are not influenced by the reputation of the author or any possible connection to or relationship with the author.

Peer Review Process

The editors at *Partnership* rely on a large pool of peer reviewers that extend across the country and beyond. The peer review process employed by *Partnership* is similar to that of other peer reviewed journals and is comprised of the following steps:

- The author submits manuscript which is sent out for blind peer review (usually two or three reviewers);
- The peer reviewers provide a recommendation to accept, accept with revisions, resubmit for review, or decline the submission;
- The editor makes a decision on the basis of the feedback in the reviews;
- The author receives reviewers' comments via the editor and if instructed makes revisions on the basis of the feedback received;
- The editor makes the final decision to accept the submission for publication on the basis of the revised manuscript.

This process can take several months depending on the journal.

The responsibilities of the different players in the peer review process are as follows:

- Peer reviewer: assesses the quality of the work; has a background in/understanding of the subject in order to be able to evaluate it; recommends revisions to improve the quality of the work; treats the work as a privileged document;
- Editor: ensures a standard of quality for what is published; selects peer reviewers who are appropriate for the submission; balances and considers the comments of the reviewers; decides whether the article should be accepted, accepted subject to revisions, resubmitted for review, or declined; provides appropriate feedback on the reviews to the author; ensures the final manuscript incorporates the comments of the reviewers and meets the standards of the journal;
- Author: considers the comments of the peer reviewers; makes revisions as necessary.

Feedback from authors in response to the reviews of their manuscript invariably suggests that that the peer review process serves to improve the manuscript. Experience has also shown that being a peer reviewer is good preparation for writing one's own article as several *Partnership* reviewers have gone on to submit their own manuscripts for consideration by the journal. Peer reviewers often realize that they are involved in some type of activity/work that lends itself to more formal scientific investigation and their own article or other publication. Many articles in *Partnership* evolve from presentations given at conferences and workshops.

Peer Review in the Age of the Internet

There is increasing concern about anonymity of peer review in the age of the Internet. As is pointed out by Murray Dineen in *University Affairs*, "[t]he current system of peer reviewed scholarly work was established in an era of typewriters, postage stamps and the printed page." He states that "[a]nonymous peer review is rarely anonymous. By the time one's research reaches the level of sophistication necessary to attract scholarly interest, one's identity is known to peers. Nor is peer review always objective," he writes, and posits that "[r]eviewers often hide behind anonymity to deliver unwarranted attacks." However, review by other scholars familiar with the field or working in the same discipline is critical to scholarship. As Mary Francis writes in *College & Research Libraries*, "the process of peer review may change, yet the evaluation process will persist." In a digital environment, Dineen further proposes, "[i]n the hands of an editor, peer review could become a form of colloquy, an exchange between author and reviewers." There have been several recent experiments with peer review of this nature. As Patricia Cohen writes in the *The New York Times*, humanities scholars "argue that in an era of digital media there is a better way to assess the quality of work. Instead of relying on a few experts selected by leading publications, they advocate using the Internet to expose scholarly thinking to the swift collective judgment of a much broader interested audience." She describes one of the most well-known examples, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, which in 2010 opened its articles to public comment prior to publication. Four articles were posted and a group of experts were invited to post their signed comments. Others could also provide comments but only after registering with their own names. In the end a total of 41 people made more than 350 comments, many to which the authors responded. The articles were revised and published after editorial review.

How Do Partnership Editors Evaluate Manuscripts?

Innovations in Practice Section

The Innovations in Practice (IP) Section publishes articles that "describe new initiatives and analyze their outcomes." Authors are invited to "let others know how [they] put [their] best ideas into practice and what lessons can be learned from the experience." Some of the questions that the Editor of the IP Section asks of a manuscript under consideration include:

- Is it timely?
- Is it innovative?
- Is it unique?
- Does if create a context for the general reader and provide a description and discussion of the project planning and implementation to guide others?
- Are the conclusions based on findings/evidence that are clearly evident to others?
- Is there appropriate interpretation of results?

Most Common Peer Reviewer Criticisms

An analysis of the reviews for fourteen Innovations in Practice articles published by *Partnership* over the last two years reveals the following most common peer reviewer criticisms:

- Insufficient detail regarding the methodology for the project, including instrument samples, outcomes, background/context;
- Gaps in the literature review;
- Unsubstantiated statements, e.g., conclusions not based on findings; sweeping generalizations; use of “indicates” as opposed to “suggests,” “assumes” as opposed to “anticipated”; lack of references/examples to support statements – “information presented as fact requires attribution!” (reviewer comment);
- Poor organization/structure/flow of the article;
- Lack of: definitions, applications, documentation, URLs and bibliographical references;
- Poor language/grammar; jointly authored articles not consistent in tone/writing.

A Noteworthy IP Article

A noteworthy Innovations in Practice article is “Creating and Hosting Student-Run Research Journals: A Case Study” by Adrian K. Ho published in *Partnership* vol. 6 no. 2 (2011).

Abstract:

> *This case study aims to examine an academic library’s roles in facilitating the creation and hosting of open access student-run research journals. In addition to providing an online platform to host the journals, the library acquaints students with scholarly publishing, assists them in securing various resources available on campus, and offers support for content management. There are challenges and opportunities for the library as it undertakes the responsibility of hosting student journals. The article concludes with a discussion of possible topics for future research.*

The qualities that make this a noteworthy article include:

- The case study is situated in the broader context of the university’s mission and the library’s role in support of that mission;
- The topic is current and of interest to others;
- The article is well written and well organized;
- The literature review is thorough and includes references throughout the article to support the discussion;
- The article provides enough detail to assist other libraries that may wish to embark on a similar undertaking;
- The article discusses the challenges and potential pitfalls of the initiative.

Theory and Research Section

An analysis of the views of the peer reviewers in the Theory and Research (TR) Section, and the Section Editor’s experience, lead to the following suggestions and observations for avoiding some of the recurrent pitfalls found in research manuscripts submitted to the

TR Section of the journal. Finally, the TR Section Editor reflects upon her role when receiving a submission as well as before and after the peer review process.

Structure of a Research Article

One of the main criticisms from the peer reviewers is that important sections or information are missing from the structure of the manuscript. A research article should have a standard structure that usually includes the following components, typically – but not always – in the following order:

- An Informative Abstract
- An Introduction
- A Literature Review
- A Clear Methodology
- The Scope of the Project
- The Results
- The Limitations of the Results
- A Discussion Section
- The Conclusions
- The Acknowledgements
- The References
- The Appendices

Obviously, the structure of research articles can vary in the number and order of sections or in the interaction between the sections. Nevertheless, editors and reviewers have certain minimal expectations which must be met by manuscripts submitted to the journal. These expectations include the following: an informative abstract, an introduction, a literature review, methods, results, discussion, conclusions, and references. If a survey is part of the research, then the survey instrument should also be found, typically in an appendix.

The Introduction

A strong introduction sets the scene for a good article. One of the things the introduction must do is outline or answer a specific question or set of questions: What are you studying? Why is it important? What is the context or background? A strong and concise thesis statement or clear set of questions is essential for conveying what you are studying. A good example can be drawn from Howard’s 2012 *Partnership* article:

- *What children's literature is currently being used in Atlantic Canadian school classrooms?*
- *Are teachers in the Atlantic provinces familiar with the work of both national and regional children's authors and illustrators?*
- *Do teachers in the Atlantic provinces currently use the work of regional children's authors and illustrators in their classrooms?*

- *What further information do Atlantic Canadian teachers need to facilitate or encourage their use of regional authors and illustrators?* (3)

Once the thesis or research question is established, the next step is to outline clearly why it is important to do the research. Thus, for instance, an article about roaming reference might argue that, "Faced with these numbers, the library decided to investigate alternative modes of reference to reach their patrons[;] . . . an active approach was needed" (McCabe and MacDonald 2), or point out that, "It is clear, then, that mobile technologies offer libraries the opportunity to provide unprecedented access to their collections" (Doi, Mason, and Wiercinski 3).

The next crucial step is to provide readers with sufficient background to understand the research. This may involve outlining important contexts or defining your terms. Something like, "Some of the reasons for this trend . . . " (Horwath 2), or "The term 'roaming reference' has never been clearly defined. . . . In essence, it is anything occurring away from the confines of the reference desk" (McCabe and MacDonald 2).

Literature Review

The biggest pitfall of the literature review in the Theory and Research Section is the "shopping-list" approach where each project is described in a few sentences, and the review is simply listed chronologically or (even worse) seemingly at random. A good literature review has a narrative arc and contains a synthesis of the literature and analysis. The purpose of the literature review is to enable the reader to place the new study (your article) in its scholarly context. Ultimately, such contextualization also justifies the research study. After reading the literature review, the reader should accordingly be aware of the big issues, debates, problems, and discussions in the area and how this relates to the study.

The following example is taken from the opening paragraph of an excellent literature review on project management ("PM") in libraries. The synthesis of the literature is highlighted. Note how the author provides a general overview and then lets the reader know the themes by which the rest of the literature review will be organized:

> *While the number of projects in libraries has been increasing,* ***the Topic of PM has not been written about as much as other subjects in the library literature*** *(Burich et al. 19; Feeney and Sult 745; Winston and Hoffman 52 and 55). However, within the literature that does exist,* ***there are three aspects of the topic that are described in detail:*** *1) the PM methodologies used to manage particular library projects, 2) PM methodologies and/or tools for librarians discussed on a general level (i.e., not related to particular library projects) and 3) PM training and skills needed by librarians.* ***What follows is a discussion of the library literature grouped by these three themes*** (Horwath 2).

Methodology Section

It is vital that you take the time to think carefully about your research study before you begin. Take the time to design your study to make sure it collects the most reliable and valid data possible within your constraints. The methodology section contains information about the overall research design, the research techniques used to capture the data, and how the data was analyzed. Whilst *Partnership* editors can (help to) fix poor writing, we cannot fix bad research. If there is some flaw in your research methodology or data collection, it will almost certainly undermine the results of the study; in the worst case, such flaws may well render a manuscript unpublishable.

The most common pitfalls in the TR Section surround surveys, the analysis of qualitative data, and the omission of human ethics permissions. When the peer reviewers have criticisms of surveys, it is often in the area of question design. We would suggest taking the time to pre-test surveys, to check that those questions really are unambiguous and that they truly capture the best information in light of your research questions. Qualitative data analysis can sometimes be a mystery to the reader because authors leave out important details about how it was done, or who did it (or both). If Human Ethics permissions were sought for the research or data collection, then obviously the researcher needs to state this. Researchers also need to state if conditions of anonymity or confidentiality were guaranteed to the participants of their study.

Below are comments on a noteworthy methodology section in Stagg Peterson et al.'s article, "Preschool Early Literacy Programs in Ontario Public Libraries." These comments were provided anonymously by a *Partnership* peer reviewer:

> *The multi-method approach has contributed significantly to the validity and robustness of this data. While these children are too young to be interviewed, their "voices" have been captured through observation. All too often our research just examines adult perspectives. The sampling appears to be appropriate; in any case the author(s) has (have) described the limitations of the sampling. There certainly is enough data. Reporting the numbers gave a nice quantitative overview; sharing excerpts from the qualitative data made the number findings come alive.*

Results Section

The results should be summarized in a concise, logical framework. Some of our best results sections make clear and effective use of charts and tables and effective summaries of textual data. A pitfall in the results section is that the charts are sometimes confusing due to inadequate labeling – which is easily fixed. But more frequently there just aren't enough charts. In other words, much of the textual information could be better presented in tables or charts.

Effective Use of a Bar Chart

The chart shown in Figure 4 summarises the data clearly and simply. This chart can be understood on its own. The reader doesn't need to move between the text and the chart to understand the chart. There is adequate labelling of the axes. The total number of responses is also conveyed, i.e., N = 463.

Figure 4. Effective Use of a Bar Chart

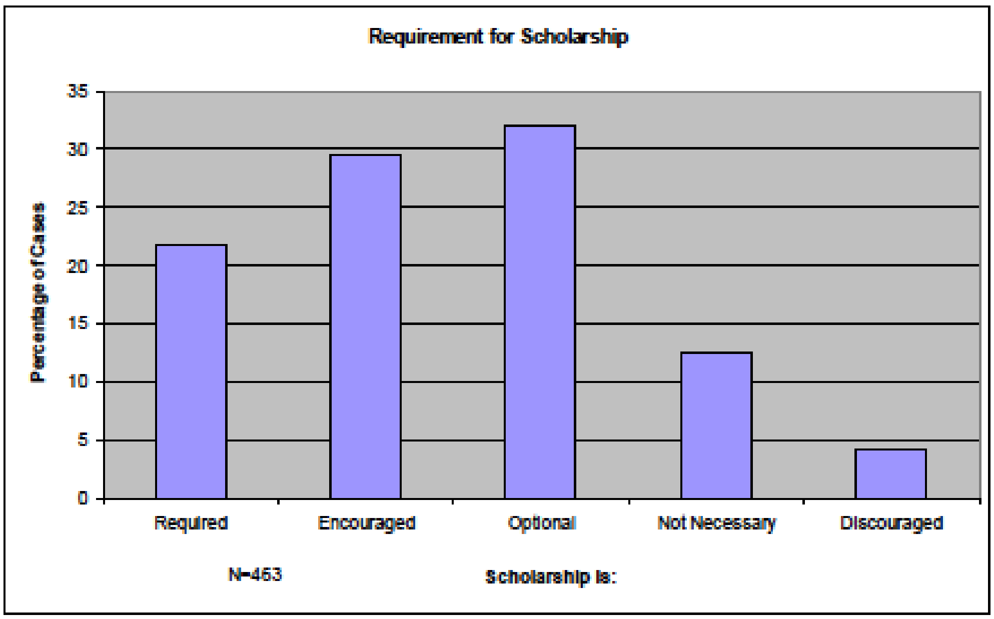


Figure 2: Requirement for Scholarship

(Fox 7)

Effective Use of a Table

As you can see, the table shown in Figure 5 summarises the data clearly and simply. The table is self-sufficient and can be understood on its own without the surrounding text. Both the frequencies and percentages are indicated. Importantly, the table amplifies what is in the text and does not simply reiterate it.

Figure 5. Effective Use of a Table

purpose. Furthermore, as Table 1 demonstrates, most universities have not provided their librarians with either formal or informal guidelines concerning an appropriate time commitment to scholarship.

Table 1: Guideline for Scholarship Time Commitment

Q18: Does your university have an accepted guideline for the percentage of time librarians should devote to scholarship?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	53	11
No	334	72
Don't Know	76	16
Total Respondents	463	100

(Fox 7)

Effective Representation of Textual Data

Below is an excellent example of how to handle textual data. There is plenty of rich description, involving summary and quotation. It is clear at all times who is being quoted – the parents and caregivers. It is also clear that the overall "result" from this section is "school readiness". The results are linked directly to the research questions as the headings are to the original research questions.

> ***Perspectives about Program Goals [Research Question]***
> *School readiness was parents'/caregivers' predominant desired outcome for their children's participation in the library program. It was also an important goal for many library staff members. Parents/caregivers gave specific examples of the school readiness behaviours they hoped that their children would develop through participation in the library programs, including statements that they hoped the program would teach their children to "learn to sit and listen" and "learn to interact with other kids" (Stagg Peterson et al. 6).*

Discussion Section

The discussion section is where the results are interpreted. Weak discussion sections contain restatements of results without placing them in a wider context. The discussion section is where the researcher tries to answer the question: how does this new argument or data or research agree or disagree with what is already known? How does this move us forward? The opening sentences of this section might reiterate the most important findings, and the results might then be compared with the results of other studies. Perhaps the authors even question how meaningful some of the original definitions are. The limitations of the study would be acknowledged in this section, and the areas (if any) for future research.

The Conclusion

The conclusions need to be based upon the research described in the body of the manuscript. Two common pitfalls of weak conclusions are basing results on the addition of new information, and overstating the significance of the research findings. No new information should be presented in this section. Conclusions should be reasonable and based upon the findings and the scope or limitations of the discussed research.

Prior to Submission of a Manuscript

Prior to submission it is always recommended that authors obtain feedback on their manuscript from one or more trusted colleagues. This can help to ensure readability and catch minor errors or problems that might otherwise slow down acceptance of the manuscript.

Editorial Review

In the preliminary read of a manuscript the Theory and Research Editor checks to see that a submission meets the threshold criteria. These criteria are:

- Is it already published?
- Is the subject matter topical, of practical use, or of interest to our readers?
- Is the scope research, theory, or a substantial review article? If not, would it be more appropriate for another section of the journal?
- If it is a research article, is it complete?
- Is it to a minimum standard of research?
- If it is a theory or review article, is it of sufficient depth?
- Is it written to an acceptable standard of written English, grammar and punctuation?
- Is it MLA style?
- Is it anonymous? (for the purposes of the blind peer review)

Following peer review the Theory and Research editor looks for appropriate revisions indicating thoughtful and careful response given to the comments of the reviewers and the editor. The author is responsible for the integrity of the article, so the changes that are made have to make sense, and be acceptable, to the author. Not every change recommended by a reviewer need be made. However, the reviewers are there to enhance the quality of the work so it is worth making the effort to consider their input seriously.

Why Publish in Partnership?

Partnership is a distinctive publication serving the library and information sector in Canada. Unique in its breadth of scope and coverage, *Partnership* is both a scholarly journal and a more general publication, offering rigorous peer reviewed articles alongside news, reviews and viewpoints of interest to practitioners. This hybrid format makes *Partnership* a good choice for first-time authors, who can gain experience with the publishing process by writing for the less formal sections of the journal before tackling a peer reviewed article. And as a fully open access publication, *Partnership* offers wide and rapid dissemination of articles – with no subscription fees or article processing charges. The friendly and knowledgeable editors at *Partnership* work hard to make manuscript submissions better. This fact has been acknowledged over and over again by grateful authors.

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Note

[i] The contributors to the inaugural issue of *Partnership* were: Sue Adams, Cynthia Archer, Catherine Baird, Tanis Fink, Lindsay Glynn, Michael Hohner, Catherine Jeanjean, Lorie Kloda, Heather Matheson, Cynthia McKeich, Heather Morrison, Erin Palmer, Della Paradis, Jennifer Richard, Pam Ryan, Catherine Steeves, Shad Turner, Virginia Wilson, and Kelli Wooshue.