

Scholarly Communications in a Digital World

Results of informal survey on publication cultures

26 January 2005

We wanted to begin by emphasizing that when we come together to discuss scholarly communication, many of us are coming from different cultures. Although we often share common goals, communication can be complicated by different definitions, values, and approaches. As in any cross-cultural communication, one starts with openness and appreciation for differences to learn how different communities achieve the same goals.

Thus, this was not an attempt to be a rigorous, statistically significant survey, but a way to collect snippets that can expand into stories as we discuss our differences, and strive to find our common goals. The individual comments are more fun to read than the tables (especially if you play the game of “Identify that discipline!”)

Thank you for your comments on the survey!

Jack Snoeyink, UNC Computer Science

Check the statements that would apply in your discipline or area.

	Total
You must write your book (or books) for tenure.	12
Electronic publications don't count.	17
Only the invited presentations matter at a conference.	8
Only deans care about journal publications.	4
Patent first, then publish.	6
Publishing in a conference prevents journal acceptance.	12
I obtain almost all my reading material online.	25
Almost all highly respected journals are published commercially.	21
Page charges are optional.	14
Total Respondents	49
(skipped this question)	16

*Negative correlations
in the data are interesting:
Strongest: book for tenure
vs. reading online -JS*

Author order on journal publications is (check all that apply)

	Total
Alphabetical	12
Students first	4
Important for tenure/promotion	32
First author contributed the ideas	13
Last author contributed the ideas	6
First author did the work	22
Last author contributed the money or lab space	9
Less relevant; majority single authored	13
Total Respondents	52
(skipped this question)	13

*Positive correlation between
last author contrib. \$ and
lab, and both first author
did work & last author
contrib ideas. -JS*

Typical time periods for:

	1 mo	3 mos	6 mos	1 yr	2 yrs	more	don't know	Resp
Journal refereeing (submit->accept)	7% (4)	29% (16)	29% (16)	22% (12)	4% (2)	0% (0)	9% (5)	55
Journal backlogs (accept->print)	4% (2)	15% (8)	27% (14)	33% (17)	4% (2)	0% (0)	17% (9)	52
Monograph (final->print)	0% (0)	2% (1)	15% (7)	28% (13)	15% (7)	2% (1)	38% (18)	47
							Total Resp (skipped)	55 10

Please check how many of each type of publication you expect to have each year:

For YOURSELF

	<0.5	1	2	3-4	5-8	9-16	>16
Books (monographs)	98% (43)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	2% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Volumes of collected papers	97% (38)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	3% (1)	0% (0)
Paper in a volume	33% (15)	44% (20)	18% (8)	4% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
" in refereed journal	8% (4)	43% (22)	22% (11)	20% (10)	4% (2)	4% (2)	0% (0)
" in conf. proc.	35% (14)	30% (12)	22% (9)	8% (3)	5% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
" in preprint archive	80% (24)	10% (3)	7% (2)	0% (0)	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
abstract/pres. at conf.	13% (6)	27% (12)	31% (14)	13% (6)	16% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)
invited pres. at conf.	21% (10)	50% (24)	21% (10)	4% (2)	2% (1)	2% (1)	0% (0)
web site created	50% (19)	18% (7)	16% (6)	11% (4)	3% (1)	0% (0)	3% (1)
archive of data, records	74% (23)	16% (5)	3% (1)	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	3% (1)
					Total Resp. (skipped)	55	10

For a senior GRAD student, UNTENURED faculty member, TENURED faculty member

	<0.5	1	2	3-4	5-8	9-16	>16
Books (monographs) grad	100% (28)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
untenured	91% (29)	9% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
tenured	81% (26)	19% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Volumes of collected papers grad	100% (28)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
untenured	86% (25)	14% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
tenure	73% (19)	27% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Paper in a volume grad	67% (20)	30% (9)	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
untenured	29% (9)	55% (17)	13% (4)	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
tenure	23% (7)	52% (16)	26% (8)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
" in refereed journal grad	22% (8)	61% (22)	14% (5)	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
untenured	3% (1)	31% (12)	36% (14)	28% (11)	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
tenure	3% (1)	30% (11)	41% (15)	19% (7)	8% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
" in conf. proc. grad	38% (11)	48% (14)	10% (3)	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
untenured	28% (8)	28% (8)	31% (9)	10% (3)	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
tenure	21% (6)	34% (10)	31% (9)	14% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
" in preprint archive grad	85% (22)	12% (3)	4% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
untenured	77% (17)	23% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
tenure	68% (15)	18% (4)	14% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
abstract/pres. at conf. grad	15% (5)	55% (18)	30% (10)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
untenured	16% (5)	28% (9)	38% (12)	16% (5)	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
tenure	13% (4)	19% (6)	52% (16)	10% (3)	3% (1)	3% (1)	0% (0)
invited pres. at conf. grad	85% (22)	15% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
untenured	55% (18)	27% (9)	15% (5)	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
tenure	31% (10)	41% (13)	16% (5)	12% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
web site created grad	71% (20)	18% (5)	7% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	4% (1)	0% (0)
untenured	77% (20)	19% (5)	0% (0)	4% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
tenure	87% (20)	13% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
archive data, records grad	81% (21)	15% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	4% (1)	0% (0)
untenured	84% (21)	12% (3)	4% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
tenure	83% (19)	17% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Additional comments show the range of opinion better than the tables.

1. This was hard to answer. Because of the length of law articles, often it is one very other year. Others seem to be able crank out one per year easily.

Total Respon	37
dents	40
(skip-	39
ped	28
questn)	25
	26

2. These are very difficult questions since labs vary wildly in size. Some sizable labs will have eight people publishing and everyone's name goes on each publication, only the order is different. In that situation, everyone in the lab, from students on up, will have 10-20 papers per year.
3. Typical rate for faculty at research 1 institutions- a book every 5-7 years; 1-3 essays a year in collections, journals, etc. sometimes exhibition catalogues instead of books, or essays in exhibition catalogues.
4. Refereed journals are the norm for quality chemistry. Conference proceedings are occasionally grudgingly submitted. They are NOT generally considered to be works of high quality.
5. Journal articles are usually quite lengthy and are the expected form of publication, though textbooks and treatises or guides for the practitioner are also well received.
6. My discipline is sociology. Parts of the field focus on the publication of books, other parts on articles. I am in the latter part of the field.
7. The book is the standard unit for tenure and promotion.
8. Publication is a mix of books and articles. Generally, 1 book and 10 articles for tenure, but that depends on quality of submissions.
9. I have given the expectations for publication more for the School of Education as a professional school. The expectations might be higher in a department. I am thinking that one might complete a book every 2 or 3 years while doing other things.
10. These statistics are not indicative of my profession. For an untenured assistant professor, the expectation is 1 book and about 10 articles. For an associate professor, it is a second book and about 6 or 7 articles. A full professor will publish above those numbers.
11. The standards in my field for a graduate student are generally not papers per year but total papers during graduate career: 2 first author and two secondary author are hoped for standard.
12. We do not have graduate students in our department, and we tend to be more teaching and outreach focused than those in the Traditional disciplines of history, Anthropology, political Science, etc.
13. I create educational software for foreign language learning and find no regular way of reporting that activity.
14. I don't "count" publications-- it's what's in them that matters. So I give data only for myself.

Any statements missing that particularly characterize scholarly publication in your discipline?

1. The more the merrier
2. NO. We just write books.
3. Publications in referred journals are the most important scholarly contributions
4. I don't understand the list in 5. In my discipline we don't write books for tenure. The others statements are relevant but I disagree with most of them.
5. For a science faculty, the above are really silly questions. Most of the best Chemistry journals are society based and are published both electronically and as paper. The electronic form is the more widely accessed. Publications are valued by communities of scholars, and are valued by the colleagues of faculty. If an author publishes a full paper in a conference proceedings, or posts it on a web-site, it has been published. Journals should not consider it for publication, then.
6. Law is probably unusual in light of patterns of law review publication. The SSRN developments of putting pre-publication working drafts on line may be a helpful model
7. The professional organizations play a critical role in defining scholarship.
8. Currency is paramount. Online publications frequently contain additional data and information not in the print versions. 'scholarly' health information is in increasing demand by the public as they take a more active role in their own health care decisions - the audience is not just scientists/students any more.
9. NIH campaign for open access as well as giant, commercial pub houses are threatening survival of quality, professional journals.
10. Law journal articles of significance are critical for tenure and impact. Law journal articles are generally not peer-reviewed. Law journal articles are published by and with the financial backing of law schools, so the journal subscriptions are inexpensive. Prestige of law reviews largely follows the prestige of the law school publishing them.
11. In law, the most respected journals are published by law schools and the school typically underwrites the cost of publication. Therefore, the cost of scholarly journals for law is not the major issue. Other legal materials are certainly very expensive.
12. We have a clear hierarchy of journals that are "preferred" and weight heavier towards the tenure process. This is an enormous barrier/issue to be addressed in medicine and public health professions.

13. Conferences are seriously refereed, and acceptance rates run 10% to 20% in the best conferences. This is often a tougher acceptance rate than many of the journals. Promotion committees often do not understand this and treat conference publications as unrefereed, and hence not significant. However, systems builders in my area usually publish in these refereed conferences, since the results get out 1 to 2 years faster than in journals.
14. Publication in peer reviewed electronic journals does not carry the same weight as publication in traditional paper journals
15. Key publications in library and information science are not yet online but really need to be.
16. I think we need to distinguish electronic from open access. The former doesn't mean the latter is true. There is nothing prejudicial against electronic publishing, it's just at the present time there are no open access journals that have the prestige of the traditional journals.
17. --Publishers continue to experiment with pricing models for online access to scholarly journals, sometimes changing from one year to the next; --Researchers in my area of librarianship (STM) want everything online and may have little interest in publications not available online; --Online access is increasingly important for a publication's survival/non-cancellation by libraries; --The number of commercial publishers in my field (STM) continues to shrink, and this trend creates a monopoly on content; --ISI impact factor is an important quality designation (despite its faults) that may be increasing in importance; --Acceptance of Open Access journals as a legitimate forum for publication is slowly gaining ground, and at different rates for different disciplines.

Any other comments on aspects of publication culture that are characteristic in your discipline?

Publication styles & times

1. A positive outcome of a journal review is a revise and resubmit. Very few articles are accepted on first review. This adds uncertainty to the estimate of the time it takes from submit--*accept.
2. My discipline has been the most instrumental in creating the ability to publish online, yet is slow to accept the scholarly validity of actually doing so.
3. Electronic (only) journals are not well viewed in the field.
4. I am an Editor-in-Chief of a major American Chemical Society journal. ACS in 2003 published *24,000 papers and *180,000 pages in its ca. 28 journals. Most ACS papers (*2000/year in my journal) are submitted via web. A key to maintaining a high quality journal (in review and selection) is for the Editors to have a highly efficient electronic system. A significant part of the costs of our journals is developing the IT to do this.
5. Conferences are more important than journals for rapid dissemination.
6. The actual publication of monographs oscillates between 12 and 15 months.
7. For #8, the time--at UNC Press--from submission of final version of a straightforward scholarly book ms. (ready for copyediting) until the arrival of bound books is 10 months.

Author order:

8. This varies enormously depending on the journal. Likewise with conferences I edit a journal that will not accept conference papers unless there is some substantial new idea or data
9. Authorship strictly follows guidelines of the American Psychological Association with order determined by importance of contribution.
10. In Chemistry, the principal investigator is designated with an asterisk, the remaining contributors are usually listed in order of decreasing contribution to the overall scholarship of the work. -Multiple co-authors are more common than not. -a Ph.D. student can publish (with their graduate advisor) between 1 and 10 peer reviewed papers, depending on project type, productivity, etc.
11. Most articles are joint authored. If two authors, the culture is to think that both contributed a lot (and probably close to equally). Less common in our field to have more than 3 authors on a paper. Co-authored articles are fine for tenure as long as the researcher shows up as first author a number of times.
12. This varies enormously depending on the journal. Likewise with conferences I edit a journal that will not accept conference papers unless there is some substantial new idea or data
13. On author order, usually the person who did the most actual work is listed first. The person who coordinated the work (usually the Laboratory head, me) is typically listed last but I would argue they did much more than contribute the money and lab space.

Disciplinary differences

14. It is becoming more difficult to publish first monographs.
15. In computing, almost all publications of substance are in conferences, which are highly refereed.

16. There is no "one" journal for Afro-American Studies -- in fact, most people in my discipline publish in History or Political Science journals.
17. The American, German, and British Chemical societies publish their own journals, sometimes with the help of private publishers. They comprise most (but not all) of the well-respected journals. -private publishers (Elsevier etc) publish many niche and 2nd-string sub-field journals that are well filled, but not of the quality of the former journals.
18. There is a crisis of publishing in art history because presses are dropping their entire art history list. There are fewer and fewer places to publish. The need for illustrations complicates the process.
19. To be accepted for publication in literary journals one had better toe whatever politically correct line is currently in fashion.
20. Multiple submission to law reviews makes publication in law different from other fields