

Publishing in the Journal Literature of Library and Information Science: A Survey of Manuscript Review Processes and Acceptance

Barbara J. Via

The journal literature of library and information science is important because it not only enhances the ability of librarians to do their work, but also provides a major part of the scholarly underpinnings, both theoretical and applied, for the field. Many academic librarians are expected to publish in the journal literature as part of their faculty responsibilities. There is keen interest on the part of academic librarians in assessing the quality of library and information science journals, the methods used to review unsolicited manuscripts, and the acceptance rates for those manuscripts. This article reports on a survey of library and information science journal editors. The survey results show that thirty-four of the sixty-eight journals covered by the survey utilize some form of blind review for unsolicited manuscripts. The proliferation of new journal titles in the field has meant that there are many more publishing outlets for potential authors. This survey shows that the acceptance rates reported in earlier studies in 1978 and 1988 have risen for a majority of the journals reported in this study.

Prospective authors of articles in the field of library and information science face a nearly overwhelming array of journals to which they might consider submitting manuscripts. However, information on these journals—their aims and scope, their quality, and their manuscript review processes—sometimes is difficult to ascertain. Because promotion and tenure decisions in academic libraries are often based partly on the perceived quality of the journals in which articles are

published, it is important that academic librarians be well informed about the publication policies and practices of journals in the field. This paper reports on the results of a survey that investigated manuscript review processes, acceptance rates, and availability of instructions to authors for library and information science journals.

The proliferation of journal titles is not a new phenomenon. A quarter century ago, in an oft-quoted piece on the library press, Eric Moon, former editor of *Library*

Barbara J. Via is Reference Coordinator and Bibliographer at the Thomas E. Dewey Graduate Library for Public Affairs and Policy at the University at Albany, State University of New York; e-mail: bv848@cnsvox.albany.edu.

Journal, provided a dismal picture of the state of library literature. He opened his article by stating:

The deadliest disease afflicting the library press is proliferation. The kindest and most conservative estimate I am able to bring myself to make is that there are at least three times as many library periodicals in this country as we can afford or are necessary. Perhaps the most constructive single thing that could be accomplished would be to persuade at least one in three publishers of a library periodical to cease publication.¹

It is obvious from a quick scan of the list of periodicals indexed by *Library Literature* in 1994 that Moon's suggestion about pruning the number of publishing

This plethora of journals strains library budgets and most certainly spreads the limited number of quality articles among diffuse journals, many of which have very low circulation.

outlets for library science literature has not been heeded. The appearance of many new titles in the late sixties and through the seventies is probably attributable in some part to the faculty status movement for academic librarians and its attendant "publish or perish" ethos. This proliferation continued into the eighties and nineties. Indeed, the past fifteen years or so have seen a veritable explosion of new periodicals devoted to ever-narrower sub-topics of library and information science.

Moon's stated "evils" of the proliferation of periodicals still seem convincing. Specifically, he stated that the proliferation of journals:

spreads too thinly the limited amount of good material; . . .

spreads too thinly the advertising support which otherwise could help sustain a smaller number of stronger . . . magazines; . . . occasionally diverts into an obscure publication a piece of writing that deserves to reach a wider audience . . . proliferation makes it possible for almost anything on the topic of librarianship, no matter how appalling, to find its way into print. . . .²

In 1995, there are so many library/information science journals on the scene that in addition to journals devoted to reference services, there are journals devoted to music reference services, legal reference services, and medical reference services. Commercial publishers account for the majority of the recent multiplication of titles. In fact, one publisher has produced at least nineteen new journals dealing with various subtopics of library and information science since 1980. There are now journals devoted to college and undergraduate libraries, popular culture in libraries, public and access services in libraries, and primary and original works. This plethora of journals strains library budgets and most certainly spreads the limited number of quality articles among diffuse journals, many of which have very low circulation. W. Boyd Rayward states that "if there are too many journals, scholarly standards will fall as editors compete for a limited number of good articles and fill up their journals with the best of what remains."³

Assessing the Quality of Journals

As it seems likely that in the near future the number of journals will not diminish, it is critical that prospective authors carefully consider where to submit their manuscripts. They need to have a clear idea of the scope of the journals in the field, the likely readership, and the process used by the journals to review unsolicited manuscripts. The ranking of library and information science journals

(reported by John Budd; Belen Altuna Esteibar and F.W. Lancaster; David F. Kohl and Charles H. Davis; Renee Tjoumas and Virgil L.P. Blake; and Mary T. Kim) should be considered when deciding to submit to a given journal.⁴

Various authors (including Jesse Shera; Kohl and Davis; and Stuart Glogoff) have defined a "core" group of library and information science journals.⁵ However, even within this core group, there is great variation on how manuscripts are reviewed. In fact, *Library Trends*, which consistently appears high on ranked lists of journals for the field, solicits all manuscripts and therefore does not get included in lists of refereed journals.

For prospective writers employed in academic libraries, especially those with faculty status, it is often the refereed literature that holds the most weight in terms of tenure and promotion, and rank. The refereed journal is widely considered the appropriate outlet for scholarship. The referee process is meant to provide an unbiased, expert review of the methodology, arguments, presentation, and conclusions offered in a research paper. In her book on the editing of journals and newsletters, Josephine Lyders describes refereed journals as "intended to improve the literature of the field through broader participation in the publishing of new ideas and new material. . . . Refereed journals seek to encourage better scholarship, which is of obvious value to a profession."⁶

A noteworthy review of the literature on refereeing has recently appeared in the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*. In that review, Margaret Stieg Dalton discusses the role of refereeing, its history, its standards, criticisms of the referee process, and prospects for the future in light of the rapid evolution of electronic publishing. Dalton concludes her review by stating that electronic publishing is changing scholarly publishing and that "there is a good chance that refereeing will no longer play the major role that it has in publishing."⁷ Until the scholarly

community begins to adjust its view of the refereed journal as the benchmark of scholarly publishing, tenure and promotion committees in universities and colleges will continue to judge the quality of journals at least partly on whether a referee process is employed for manuscript review. It is therefore critical that these committees have accurate information upon which to base their evaluations of journal titles. In studies such as Budd's and Kim's, which have used measurable factors such as citation statistics to evaluate journals, the most heavily cited journals are, for the most part, those that utilize some sort of referee process (broadly defined to include those using blind review by editorial board members).⁸ Further, the majority of the journals that are given highest-perceived prestige rankings by library school deans and ARL directors as reported by Kohl and Davis, are those that utilize some form of blind review.⁹ Daniel O'Connor and Phyllis Van Orden, writing in their 1978 article on publishing opportunities for librarians, state: "Although refereeing does not guarantee the production of quality manuscripts, it does inject independence and impartiality into the selection process. Ideally, a referee is an outside expert who judges anonymous manuscripts for their intrinsic worth."¹⁰

Misinformation on whether given journals are refereed or not abounds. For instance, *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory* indicates whether a journal is refereed by the phrase "Refereed Serial" at the end of an entry.¹¹ However, several journals listed in the 1994/95 edition of *Ulrich's* as "refereed" do not qualify as refereed. For example, *The Acquisitions Librarian* and *The Reference Librarian*, both of which accept only solicited articles, are listed in *Ulrich's* as refereed journals. Conversely, several journals that do employ a blind referee process, including *American Archivist*, *College & Research Libraries*, *Government Information Quarterly*, *Library Resources & Technical Services*, and *Libraries & Culture*, are not listed as refereed in *Ulrich's*.¹² In an

TABLE 1
Manuscript Acceptance Rates

Journal Title	% of feature art. publ. from unsolic. mss.	# of unsolic. mss. rec'd. (1994)	% of unsolic. mss. accepted (1994)
Acquisitions Librarian	0%	NA	NA
Against the Grain	5-10	15	83%
American Archivist	75	30	50
American Libraries	90	750	7
Art Documentation	33	5-6	75
The Bottom Line	c. 25	14	33
Bulletin of the Medical Library Assn.	50	40	75
Canadian Journal of Info. & Lib. Science	66	12	25
Catholic Library World	20	7	28.5
CD-ROM Professional	10	40-60	<10
Collection Building	0-100	20	60
Collection Management	0-5	7	50
College & Research Libraries	100	100	35-40
Database	10	unavailable	25
Government Information Quarterly	25	20	50
Horn Book Magazine	0-10	c. 50	10
Information Processing & Management	100	95	40-50
Information Services & Use	25	12	60
Information Technology & Libraries	100	20	70
Int'l. Information & Library Review	100	55	40
Int'l. Journal of Micrographics & Optical Technology	80	12	90
Journal of Academic Librarianship	100	110	45
Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship	100	unavailable	unavailable
Journal of Educ. for Lib. & Info. Science	100	14	20
Journal of Government Information	60	60	35
Journal of Information Ethics	varies	unavailable	unavailable
Journal of Information Science	80	c. 60	c. 60
Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery & Information Supply	70	50	75
Journal of Library Administration	10	25	25
Journal of Religious & Theological Inform.	50	10	6
Journal of the Amer. Soc. for Info. Science	100	84	65
Journal of Youth Services in Libraries	50	21	57
Judaica Librarianship	varies	40	90

(cont. on next page)

annual guide to library periodicals by Molly Skeen, entries indicate whether a journal is refereed.¹³ Several titles listed as refereed in that guide did not indicate the use of a referee process in answers to the survey reported here. Examples include *The Bottom Line*, *The International Journal of*

Micrographics and Optical Technology, and *Popular Culture in Libraries*.

In a recent monograph, *Guide to Publishing Opportunities for Librarians*, Carol F. Schroeder and Gloria Roberson define a refereed journal as "one in which submitted manuscripts are evaluated by an independen-

TABLE 1 cont.
Manuscript Acceptance Rates

Journal Title	% of feature art. publ. from unsolic. mss.	# of unsolic. mss. rec'd. (1994)	% of unsolic. mss. accepted (1994)
Libraries & Culture	100%	26	58%
Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory	10	20	40
Library Administration and Management	50	60	50
Library & Archival Security	c. 80	13	85
Library & Information Science Research	100	50	50
Library Hi Tech	10	75-100	6-7
Library Mosaics	100	46	26
Library Quarterly	100	46	26
Library Resources & Technical Services	90	38	83
Library Trends	0	NA	NA
Medical Reference Services Quarterly	75	15	73
Microcomputers for Information Mgt.	75	NA	c. 60
Microform Review	25-35	6-8	c. 100
Music Reference Services Quarterly	c. 25	5-6	100
Notes: Quar. J. of the Music Lib. Assn.	varies	9	33
Online	10	10	5
Popular Culture in Libraries	25	c. 20	25
Primary Sources & Original Works	25	5	40
Public Libraries	75-100	30	56
Public Library Quarterly	75	10	90
Public & Access Services Quarterly	60-70	20	66.6
Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship	50-60	6-8	100
Reference Librarian	0	NA	NA
Research Strategies	100	22	68.2
RSR: Reference Services Review	75	20	70
RQ	100	40	66
Resource Sharing and Inform. Networks	50	14	80
Rural Libraries	1	3	c. 20
School Library Journal	10	284	11
School Library Media Quarterly	60	c. 60	c. 20
Science & Technology Libraries	c. 75	20-30	c. 50
Serials Review	66.6	18	80
Special Libraries	85	34	61
Urban Academic Librarian	50	6	66
Voice of Youth Advocates	100	15-20	85

dent expert or a panel of experts. The reviewers evaluating the manuscript may be members of the journals' editorial board, or external reviewers, or a combination of both."¹⁴ The list of refereed journals provided in the book includes several titles that did not indicate on the survey reported here that they employ a referee process in

their review of manuscripts. These titles include *The Bottom Line*, *Collection Building*, and *The International Journal of Micrographics and Optical Technology*.

There is debate in the literature about what criteria must be met in order for a journal to be labelled "refereed," but several common criteria are included in

many authors' lists of basic requirements. Josephine Lyders notes that refereed journals in the field of library science do have common characteristics in their review processes. In her book on newsletter and journal editing, Lyders lists the criteria adopted by *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* when it became a refereed periodical in 1989. They include the following: guidelines for authors are published regularly; the editor acknowledges receipt of a manuscript within two weeks; the author's name is not to appear on the manuscript; referees will have a written job description; the editor, with help from others, identifies referees; referees are invited to serve by the editor and are re-

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quested to respond in writing; two or more people in addition to the editor review each manuscript; reviewing is double-blind; referees use the evaluation form designed by the editor; the editor respects recommendations of referees but handles the final publication decision; turnaround time for the referee's response to the editor is normally four weeks; the editor excerpts and/or summarizes referees' evaluations and sends them to the author with the letter about the decision on publication; turnaround time from receipt of the manuscript to author notification about the decision on publication is up to ten weeks; referees do not have a defined term—length of service depends on willingness and ability; and the names of referees are published once in each volume of the journal.¹⁵

The Survey

This study attempted to gain information on the manuscript acceptance rates and

the review processes for eighty-seven library and information science journals. The survey was designed to update and expand the information provided by Budd in 1988 and by O'Connor and Van Orden in 1978.¹⁶ The author modeled the survey questionnaire on data provided in Budd's report. The journals included in the study are all English language, and nearly all are published in the United States. Specifically excluded were local or regional publications, and those publications that consist largely of staff-written news stories about products and services. There are sixty-eight journals included in this report. The response rate was 80 percent (seventy completed surveys of eighty-seven solicited). Two responding journals are excluded from the report. One journal editor completed the survey but suggested that the journal was not really suited to the study because of its being a newsstand type of publication. The editor of *Wilson Library Bulletin* completed the survey, but the journal ceased publication with the June 1995 issue.

Nearly all the journals included in this survey are indexed by *Library Literature*, the major U.S. indexing tool for library and information science journals. Indexing coverage is extremely important in ensuring a wide audience for professional and scholarly journals. The journal start dates are of interest in light of Moon's exhortation in 1969 that fewer library science journals were needed. Forty-eight of the sixty-eight titles included in this report began publication after Moon's 1969 article appeared. Information on number of manuscripts received and acceptance rates is reported in table 1. Editors reported data on numbers of manuscripts received and acceptance rates for calendar year 1994. A comparison with Budd's 1988 survey findings is shown in table 2. This table shows that for the majority of the journals covered by both Budd's survey and the current survey, the number of unsolicited manuscripts received by

TABLE 2
Comparison of Manuscript Acceptance Rates
(Budd and Via Surveys)

Journal Title	Budd # of Unsol. Mss. Received	Via # of Unsol. Mss. Received	Budd % Unsol. Mss. Accepted	Via % Unsol. Mss. Accepted
American Libraries	150-200	750	8-13%	7%
Bull. of the Med. Lib. Assn.	90	40	44	75
Catholic Library World	30	7	33	28.5
Collection Building	50	20	40	60
College & Research Libraries	100	100	35	35-40
Information Processing & Management	85	95	29	40-50
Information Tech. & Libs.	75-100	20	c. 60	70
Journal of Academic Librarianship	100-150	110	13-30	45
Journal of Educ. for Library & Information Science	45-55	14	29-44	20
Journal of Government Information*	20	60	60	35
Journal of the American Society for Information Sci.	75	84	67	65
Journal of Youth Services & Libraries	50-60	21	25-60	57
Libraries & Culture**	45	26	36	58
Library & Archival Security	6-10	13	30-83	85
Library & Information Science Research	30-40	50	30-53	50
Library Quarterly	c. 54	46	24	26
Library Resources & Technical Services	41	38	32	83
Medical Reference Services Quarterly	12	15	42	73
Microform Review	3	6-8	100	100
Online	60	10	33	5
Public Libraries	c. 40	30	20	56
Public Library Quarterly	30	10	67	90
RSR: Reference Services Review	10-20	20	50-100	70
Research Strategies	75	22	32	68.2
Resource Sharing and Information Networks	10-15	14	c. 90	80
RQ	58	40	31	66
School Library Journal	300	284	10	11
School Library Media Quarterly	35	c. 60	38-43	c. 20
Science & Technology Libraries	5-10	20-30	40-100	50
Special Libraries	25	34	48-52	61

*Title at the time of Budd's survey was *Government Publications Review*.

**Title at the time of Budd's survey was *Journal of Library History*.

TABLE 3
Comparison of Manuscript Acceptance Rates
(O'Connor & Van Orden, and Via Surveys)

Journal Title	O'Connor & Van Orden # Unsolic. Mss. Received	Via # of Unsolic. Mss. Received	O'Connor & Van Orden % Unsolic. Accepted	Via % of Unsolic. Mss. Accepted
American Archivist	40	30	50	50
American Libraries	200	750	5	7
Bulletin of the Medical Library Association	95	40	50	75
Catholic Library World	30	7	20	28.5
College & Research Libraries	135	100	25	35-40
Horn Book Magazine	100	c. 50	10	10
Information Processing & Management	70	95	60	40-50
Information Technology & Libraries*	50	20	40	70
Inter. Journal of Micrographics & Optical Technology†	15	12	95	90
Journal of Academic Librarianship	150	110	24	45
Journal of Education for Library & Information Science†	150	14	10	20
Journal of the Amer. Society for Information Science	75	84	50	65
Journal of Youth Services in Libs.‡	50	21	13	57
Libraries & Culture§	55	26	30	58
Library Quarterly	85	46	15	26
Library Res. & Tech. Services	40	38	50	83
Microform Review	10	6-8	80	100
Notes	14	9	40	33
RQ	100	40	20	66
School Library Journal	300	284	10	11
School Library Media Quarterly#	20	c. 60	3	20
Special Libraries	170	34	49	61

*Title (at the time of O'Connor & Van Orden's survey) was *Journal of Library Automation*.

†Title was *Journal of Micrographics*.

‡Title was *Journal of Education for Librarianship*.

§Title was *Top of the News*.

#Title was *Journal of Library History, Philosophy and Comparative Librarianship*.

*Title was *School Media Quarterly*.

individual journals has decreased since Budd's report, whereas acceptance rates have risen. This finding seems to support the idea that the continuing expansion of new journal titles has meant that authors have many more choices of publishing outlets. This may be a contributing

factor to the higher acceptance rates for unsolicited manuscripts. Another factor for lower submission rates could be the rapid phenomenon of electronic communication, including listservs, e-journals, and other outlets for professional writing.

A comparison of twenty-two titles included in the present study and the 1978 study by O'Connor and Van Orden is presented in table 3. This table shows a marked difference in numbers of manuscripts submitted and their acceptance rates between the 1978 survey and the present one. Interestingly, for a number of the refereed titles covered by both the O'Connor and Van Orden study and the present survey, the decline in numbers of manuscripts submitted and the rise in acceptance rates is notable. *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, *College & Research Libraries*, *Information Technology & Libraries*, *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *Journal of Education for Library & Information Science*, *Libraries & Culture*, *Library Quarterly*, *Library Resources & Technical Services*, *RQ*, *School Library Media Quarterly*, and *Special Libraries* all show a decrease in numbers of manuscripts received and an increase in the acceptance rate of unsolicited articles between the 1978 survey and the present one.

The various methods that journals employ to review manuscripts are displayed in table 4. The information in table 4 shows that a large number of library and information science journals employ some type of referee process. The journals that utilize a blind external review process would only include those journals listed under the category "External referees who do not know the author's name decide." (Twenty-seven journals fit that criterion in this study.) However, it is certainly worth noting that the instructions to authors provided by some of the most prestigious journals in the field indicate that manuscript review is blind, but is most often performed by members of the editorial board, rather than external reviewers.¹⁷ Presumably, editorial board members are chosen for their expertise in the field, are well versed in the aims and scope of a given journal, and are well qualified to judge manuscripts where author names are removed. There are advantages for editors in having edito-

rial board members review manuscripts, including sharing a vision of the purpose of a given journal, preferred writing style, and timeliness of the review process. If the term *refereed journal* is more broadly defined to include blind review by editorial board members (six titles in this study), then thirty-three of the sixty-eight journals covered by this survey could be considered refereed.

It is important that journal editors provide prospective authors with a clear statement of the scope and aims of a particular journal, and with instructions to authors that include a detailed description of the manuscript review process. This information should be published within the pages of each journal at least once for each volume. The frequent publication of this information is mutually beneficial for editors and prospective authors. Inclusion of this material in a journal should prevent editors from having to review at least some pieces that either are clearly out of scope or do not conform to the journal's stylistic requirements. For prospective authors, such information can save a lot of time and frustration. The majority of journals (fifty-two of sixty-eight) included in this study do provide at least some type of instruction to authors within the journal itself. Unfortunately, some of these instructions are neither very detailed nor very helpful. For example, simply stating that "all manuscripts are refereed" without any explanation of the process is not really useful. Or stating that a "blind" process is used, but not indicating that blind copies must be submitted with a separate author/title page seems less than helpful. Journals that include clear, complete instructions to authors and that could serve as examples for editors of other journals to emulate include: *American Archivist*, *College & Research Libraries*, *Government Information Quarterly*, *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, and *RQ*.

TABLE 4
Methods of Manuscript Review

Journal Solicits All Manuscripts

Acquisitions Librarian
Library Trends
Reference Librarian

Journal Accepts Unsolicited Manuscripts• **Editor alone decides**

The Bottom Line
*International Journal of Microgra-
phics and Optical Technology*
Journal of Information Ethics
Microform Review
Public Library Quarterly
Voice of Youth Advocates

• **Editor decides with other staff**

American Libraries
CD-ROM Professional
The Horn Book Magazine
*Library Administration and
Management*
Library Mosaics
Popular Culture in Libraries
Rural Libraries
School Library Journal

• **Editor and editorial board decide**

*Bulletin of the Medical Library Assoc.**
Collection Building
*Journal of Business & Finance
Librarianship**
Journal of Library Administration
Library & Archival Security
*Medical Reference Services Quarterly**
Music Reference Services Quarterly
Public & Access Services Quarterly
*RSR: Reference Services Review**
*Research Strategies**
Science & Technology Libraries
*Special Libraries**

• **External referees who know the author's name decide**

Against the Grain
Information Processing & Management
Journal of Information Science

Journal of the Amer. Soc. for Inf. Science
Judaica Librarianship

• **External referees who do not know the author's name decide**

American Archivist
Art Documentation
*Canadian Journal of Inf. & Library
Science*
Catholic Library World†
Collection Management†
*College & Research Libraries**
Government Information Quarterly
Information Services & Use†,§
Information Technology & Libraries
International Information & Library Rev.†,§
Journal of Academic Librarianship
Journal of Educ. for Library & Inf. Sci.†
Journal of Government Information
*Journal of Religious & Theological
Information†*
Journal of Youth Services in Libraries
Libraries & Culture
Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory†
Library & Information Science Research‡
Library Quarterly,:‡*
Library Resources & Technical Services,:*
*Microcomputers for Information
Management†*
Primary Sources & Original Works‡
Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship
RQ
School Library Media Quarterly
Serials Review,:‡*
Urban Academic Librarian

• **Combination of methods are used**

Database
*Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document
Delivery & Information Supply*
Library Hi Tech
Online
Notes
Public Libraries†,§
Resource Sharing and Information Networks

*Review is blind, but may be by a combination of editorial board members and external reviewers.

†Some manuscripts may be rejected by the editor without being sent for review if out of scope or poorly written.

‡Editor (sometimes with editorial board) makes final decision based on reviewers recommendations.

§Editor occasionally accepts a manuscript w/o external review.

Conclusions

The variety of responses received to the questionnaire raised issues that had not been anticipated. For example, there are journal editors who indicate they use a referee process but note that they are not always consistent in their review. For example, one editor commented: "Some are obviously of high enough quality for me to decide." Another editor stated: "If a well-known author sends us something time sensitive we will use [it], but this is done sparingly." Another journal uses various methods of review, depending on the topic, type of article, etc. The problem with this type of inconsistency is that an author in his or her vita may list a given article as being in a refereed journal when, in fact, the article may not have been subjected to a referee process.

Even when a journal consistently employs a referee process, there are other concerns. Glogoff, reporting on his survey of referees for scholarly journals in librarianship, found that for 50 percent of the referees, no evaluation criteria form was provided for manuscript review.¹⁸ Another concern is that although articles appearing in refereed journals are often given more weight when being judged by peer review bodies in academic libraries, these articles do not necessarily qualify as research articles. A study by Lois Buttlar showed that the majority of articles published in even the core journals for the field are not research based. In her analysis, Buttlar found that in the sixteen journals she studied, all of which publish at least some research-based pieces, 1,725 articles were published between January 1987 and June 1989, but only 500 met Buttlar's criteria for the research-based category. Buttlar defined a research-based article as follows:

one in which a formal research methodology was used in order to collect and/or analyze data (e.g.,

survey or interview, experiment, content analysis, statistical analysis of existing data, development of linear programming or other mathematical model, case study, historical study with extensive primary and secondary sources, citation analysis or bibliometrics, and an observation/field study) as opposed to an opinion paper, description of the status quo, editorial, book review, or news/announcements.¹⁹

Prospective authors in the field of library and information science would be wise to carefully review manuscript submission information for a given journal before submitting a piece of writing. If an author's goal is to communicate and to have a wide audience for the work, he or she should consider the journal's indexing coverage, citation ranking, and perceived prestige. First-time authors could gain valuable insight by reading an editorial in the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* titled "Why Authors Fail." In it, Trudy K. Landwirth gives an analysis of referee criticisms for manuscripts rejected between April 1988 and June 1990.²⁰ Also, an article by editor Beryl K. Smith, in *Art Documentation*, provides much helpful advice to budding authors.²¹

The survey reported on here, as well as earlier surveys, provides evidence that manuscript review processes for journals in the field of library and information science are difficult to describe consistently and reliably. An interesting recent article by William K. Black and Joan M. Leysen stresses the need for clear performance criteria for academic librarians. In an appendix to their article, they provide some useful factors to consider in judging the merit of publications by library faculty. Acceptance of a given work through a referee process is but one of twenty-two factors listed.²²

Perhaps it is time for academics to rethink the way that scholarly writing is evaluated in terms of faculty promotion

and tenure decisions. The appearance of an article in an externally refereed journal should be but one of many factors considered in evaluating the published work. The quality of a given piece of writing,

its contribution to the knowledge base of the field, its readability, its timeliness, and its accessibility through indexing coverage are among the factors that should be considered.

Notes

1. Eric Moon, "The Library Press," *Library Journal* 94 (Nov. 15, 1969): 4104.
2. *Ibid.*
3. W. Boyd Rayward, "Scholarly Publishing in Journals of Library and Information Science," *Australian Library Journal* 39 (May 1990): 132-33.
4. John M. Budd, "The Literature of Academic Libraries: An Analysis," *College & Research Libraries* 52 (May 1991): 290-95; Belen Altuna Esteiber and F. W. Lancaster, "Ranking of Journals in Library and Information Science by Research and Teaching Relatedness," *Serials Librarian* 23 (1992): 1-10; David F. Kohl and Charles H. Davis, "Ratings of Journals by ARL Library Directors and Deans of Library and Information Science Schools," *College & Research Libraries* 46 (Jan. 1985): 40-47; Renee Tjoumas and Virgil L.P. Blake, "Faculty Perceptions of the Professional Journal Literature: Quo Vadis?" *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 33 (summer 1992): 173-94; Mary T. Kim, "A Comparison of Three Measures of Journal Status: Influence Weight, Importance Index, and Measure of Standing," *Library & Information Science Research* 14 (Jan./Mar. 1992): 75-96; Mary T. Kim, "Ranking of Journals in Library and Information Science: A Comparison of Perceptual and Citations-based Measures," *College & Research Libraries* 52 (Jan. 1991): 24-37.
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