

Editorial for EJKM Volume 15 Issue 4

EJKM: Entering into the new age of Continuous Open Access Publishing

The purpose of this Editorial is to introduce a significant change in the way that EJKM will publish articles. As of this issue, the EJKM is entering into what is known as a “continuous publishing” mode, whereby we publish accepted papers as soon as possible in the current journal issue. Hence, this new issue begins with just two papers. As we accept more papers, we will add them to this issue for up to three months. Additionally, we will also start publishing more special issues and releasing them as soon as they become available as an article collection.

For our authors, the change benefits them because soon after we accept your paper, it will undergo a proofreading and typesetting phase, and soon appear in an issue. For most academics, the time that their article appears in print is the time that it counts for their university and national performance management systems. Thus, the changes we are making will help speed up the process from when an author submits a paper to when it appears in print.

The sooner the article is in print; the sooner it is made available to other researchers. By reducing the time to publish we are also helping get the work cited sooner because the research is more relevant than if there is a significant time lead of a year or more before articles traditionally appear in print. Earlier publishing will also benefit EJKM because more citations help raise its prestige and as Editor, I am working closely with our publisher on making EJKM a more widely recognized outlet for knowledge management, intellectual capital and intangibles research. As EJKM’s prestige rises, then so too will submissions increase and the continuous publishing model will allow the number of acceptances to grow. However, the growth will not be at the expense of publishing quality research, which means we will expect higher quality submissions as prestige rises. Quality and prestige are inseparable in academic publishing.

To give you some more background to the decision to use the continuous publishing model I want to outline some of my views and experiences with academic publishing. I do this because EJKM is an Open Access journal that charges a publication fee. The fee is needed to cover production costs because the publisher does not sell EJKM to university libraries as a subscription. Open Access means that anyone with internet access can read your research without needing to pay. However, I want to outline how EJKM is different to what are commonly known as “vanity” publishers, who publish most anything for a fee, regardless of its academic merits.

When I first joined academia more than a decade ago; I was intrigued by the business model behind publishing academic journal articles. The traditional publishing model whereby an academic, usually employed as a public servant, is paid by a university to conduct research and then attempt to publish the research outcomes in an academic journal that is owned by a private publishing company. For the privilege of publishing, the academic relinquishes their copyright to the publisher. In turn, that company sells subscriptions to the same universities that funded the academic’s salary and maybe even extra funds to conduct the research. Even worse, the academic receives no money from the use or sale of their research from the publisher. The academic publishing business model is a big money spinner for the traditional academic publishers. For example, Elsevier, one of the biggest academic publisher’s had an income over US\$25 Billion in 2015 (Schmitt, 2015).

Most academics are happy with this model because if they publish in a journal owned by one of the big academic publishing houses, this usually means that they achieve recognition for their research and comply with publishing performance targets set by their universities. Additionally, there can be other rewards such as promotion, salary bonuses, research funding and travel to conferences should that research be high quality and in demand from other researchers. Academics live in a *publish or perish* world (de Villiers and Dumay, 2013) and to have one of the traditional academic publishing houses accept a paper for publication is a stepping stone to one’s career and future (Guthrie *et al.*, 2015).

So popular is publishing with companies like Elsevier, it can take a year or more for the article to appear in the journal. The time lag from acceptance to publication is a common complaint among academics who are only given credit for publication when it appears in the journal, not when they receive an acceptance. Couple this with the two to three years it takes to conduct research and write an article, along with a lengthy review process of one to two years, it is not surprising that from the inception of an idea to having it published as research can take more than half a decade. However, when academic careers rely on publishing in the best journals and being research active, it creates continuous pressure on academics to perform that may help destroy the very human capital is needed to carry out and write up the research (Martin-Sardesi and Guthrie, 2018).

The lure of money and the frustration of academics needing to publish today and not in five to ten years time has also spurred thousands of smaller publishing houses that offer quick review and publishing timelines, all for a sizable fee. However, these “vanity” journals have questionable marketing and publishing practices and prey upon those academics, often Ph.D. students and early career researchers lured by the promise of short-cutting the system. Some vanity journals are so good at marketing that they have even ended up on the acceptable journal lists for performance measurement at university and national levels. Unfortunately, many academics who end up publishing in these vanity journals, end up with a black mark on their names, rather than prestige.

While EJKM has a publishing fee, I want to assure current and prospective authors that EJKM will always maintain ethical publishing practice. Most vanity journals will publish hundreds of articles per year, while at EJKM we will try to publish 20 or more quality articles. Just because we accept an article for review does not guarantee publication, and all articles undergo a thorough and transparent review process. Publishing fees are only requested on completion of the double blind peer review process, when a paper has finally been accepted for publication. Additionally, I have worked hard with the publisher to restructure the journal by adding prominent scholars as Associate Editors and as members of an International Advisory Board. These measures show that EJKM will continue to grow as a valuable source of high-quality contemporary research on knowledge management, intellectual capital, and intangibles.

References

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Editor-in-Chief

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