

A Guide to Best Practices for Editors of Library and Information Science Journals

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About the LIS Editors Group

The group seeks to provide a collegial and supportive space for editors to engage in frank discussions about their concerns. For this reason registration for the discussion list and attendance at any face-to-face meetings is generally restricted to editors. Although the group has focused on journal editing, editors of other kinds of LIS publications are also welcome to participate.

The LIS editors group advances its work by a discussion list, a Web site (<http://www.lis-editors.org>), and periodic face-to-face meetings. In addition, the group drafted a statement of ethics and best practices for LIS journal editors.

The group has been editor-organized and editor-led from its first meeting, but has received support from the Association of Research Libraries and the Association of College and Research Libraries. The associations have provided staff support and technical services.

To receive notices about meetings and participate in discussion with other LIS editors, please email Julia Blixrud (liseditors@arl.org) and introduce yourself, mentioning the journal you edit.

Acknowledgements

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Endorsers of the Statements and Best Practices

On Friday, July 10, 2009, in Chicago, IL the LIS Editors Group met to finalize the statements. Individual editors are now invited to publicly endorse the statements. A list of endorsers is maintained on a separate Web page on the group's Web site—<http://www.lis-editors.org>.

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Background

It is common for editors in a discipline to organize themselves and meet periodically to share information and consider best practices. Lacking a formal organization to promote the work of editors of library and information science (LIS) journals, in January 2008 a small group of editors of LIS journals met to discuss common concerns and identify practices that can strengthen the collective ability of the journals to serve the discipline and the professionals who create and apply that literature. Convened by the editors of two journals, Joseph Branin, editor of *College & Research Libraries*, and Charles Lowry, editor of *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, these editors and former editors gathered to discuss issues of shared concern and explore strategies for creating an opportunity for editors to convene and consider ethics and best practices. The eight attending editors represented a wide range of high impact journals in the discipline, largely, although not exclusively, association journals.

The discussion highlighted a diversity of practice and a substantial unity of concerns with regard to many issues. After considering some of the kinds of activities pursued by other disciplinary editors' groups and their own concerns, there was a strong consensus that LIS editors would benefit from an opportunity to meet and engage in frank and collegial discussions that would develop into best practice statements and simply to enrich their own roles as editors. Following a second meeting in Anaheim, California, in June 2008, several actions were initiated to advance the development of a set of statements regarding editorial ethics and best practices. A listserv was launched, lis-editors@arl.org, and a Web site for LIS Editors (<http://lis-editors.org>) was created for the group by the Association of Research Libraries. In addition, a small group of individuals volunteered to undertake the drafting of a statement based on an outline developed and approved during the group's 2008 meetings.

In September 2010, at the request of the LIS Editors group, the original statement of ethics and guide to best practices was split into two separate documents. The *Ethics Statement for Editors of Library and Information Science Journals* can be found at (<http://lis-editors.org>).

Introduction

Library and information science journals serve a diverse readership of practicing professionals, researchers, faculty instructing future professionals, and students preparing for LIS careers. While readers seek a variety of knowledge and have a wide range of interests and responsibilities, all expect that journals in the discipline adhere to high ethical standards and employ state-of-the-art editorial and publishing practices. In addition, authors submitting work for editorial and peer review similarly expect to be treated fairly, ethically, and consistently throughout the review and publishing process. They seek publications that will provide them with the best possible opportunity to reach their desired audience in the present and into the future.

While journal publishing generally follows norms that are broadly similar across fields, disciplines often develop unique characteristics or practices with regard to their journal

literature over time. These may reflect the particular balance of theoretical and applied research, predominant research methodologies, specific values that may be preferred within the discipline or a host of other factors. In the case of LIS journals, too, some characteristics of the discipline have implications for the journal literature. Practitioner research is common and generally reflects a strong service orientation. By its nature, the LIS discipline is populated with individuals with a high awareness of state-of-the-art publishing practices and technologies and, in many cases, strong opinions about publishing policies. Consequently, LIS authors are perhaps more likely than those in many other disciplines to penalize journals that are perceived as failing to provide up-to-date publishing services or that work with retrograde policies. LIS editors, therefore, need to be cognizant of evolving best practices and remain diligent in ensuring that their journals are offering authors the highest quality publishing experience from start to finish.

While editors are the main audience for this document, authors, readers, and publishers will likewise benefit from a clear and public articulation of a consensus view of ethical behavior and also reasonable and contemporary publishing practices. However, the authors hope that their work will also be useful to editorial board members and reviewers, or anyone involved in scholarly communication.

This document describes what the editorial committee agrees are reasonable expectations for publishing practices that are of particular concern to the editorial function. The editorial committee recognizes that the state-of-the-art in publishing practices is an evolving benchmark in the digital environment, particularly for journals transitioning from print to electronic publishing. In light of this, the best practices expressed are considered achievable in the current publishing environment, although the committee recognizes that some journals may still be in the process of implementing some of these practices. Rather than expressing a lowest common denominator of practice or describing all current LIS practices, achievable best practices consonant with the values and practices of LIS professionals and researchers are provided.

The companion piece to this guide of best practices is a statement of ethics that describes reasonable expectations for the appropriate conduct of editors, the peer review process, and authors. The editorial committee believes that all LIS editors, and, where appropriate, authors should adhere to the ethical standards described here.

When a journal fails to conform with ethical standards and best practices appropriate to the discipline, all facets of the editorial function are affected. The editorial function includes the recruitment, selection, and production of publishable articles. With regard to the recruitment function, an editor's effectiveness is affected by the quality of the publishing services the journal supports. Attracting the highest quality work is an inherently competitive activity, and publishers cannot reasonably expect editors to perform it successfully if they are not able to offer authors what they regard as state-of-the-art publishing practices. Expediency in turnaround on review, electronic availability to readers, wide dissemination, broad support for discovery, long-term access and preservation, and reasonableness in rights transfer agreements are all important to

authors. Publications that cannot meet best practices within the discipline present even the best editors with real handicaps as they attempt to fulfill their responsibilities to their journals.

A journal's reputation for equitable review practices similarly affects recruitment of manuscripts. Any lack of well-defined and consistently applied review practices also compromises the selection function. Recruitment and selection are intellectually demanding and indispensable in maximizing the quality of a journal's content. Author communication, negotiation of various issues during the review and publishing process, and the preparation and improvement of manuscripts are integral to the editorial process. Policies consistent with disciplinary norms can help make these activities minimally demanding of the editor's time to allow the editor to focus as much energy and attention on the activities that are entirely dependent on the editor's unique expertise.

By adopting the ethical standards described in the companion piece and working toward conformity with the best practices identified in this document, an LIS journal editor will be positioned to meet the general expectations of authors and readers within the discipline, allied disciplines, fields, and related professions.

Statements of Best Practices for Editors of LIS Journals

To fulfill the functions of recruitment, selection, and production of journal articles, editors of LIS journals can be most effective when journals provide up-to-date systems, processes, and policies to support the editorial process. The following series of statements identifies best practices for editors of LIS journals. These statements describe effective practices that are in place for many journals and goals, toward which all journals should work. Authors of manuscripts in the LIS discipline tend to be particularly well informed about publishing practices and to have high expectations of the publishing process. Where best practices are not in place, editors are at a competitive disadvantage in their efforts to obtain works of the highest possible quality.

Section 1: Electronic Formats

- In today's scholarly environment, electronic versions of journals are rapidly becoming the standard for access and preservation. Even if the journal only exists in print currently, publishers should archive those print files in a standard digital format and also move forward with plans to move the publication to an online setting, with a clearly defined strategy for acceptable archival preservation of the online format (see also Section 3: Preservation, for additional discussion).

Commentary: Publishing models today continue to offer format options. Print is not necessarily "old school," but these best practices appropriately focus on electronic formats. Electronic versions add substantial value to readers in terms of facilitated discovery, access, usability, etc. If the print and online formats vary, the publisher and editor need to publicly post information about any differences between formats.

See also Section 3-2 on Digital Journal Preservation.

1-1: Managing Electronic and Print Versions

- Editors and publishers should each understand and communicate clearly the published content differences, if any, between print and online versions so that authors and subscribers understand these differences. Authors need to know up front how their work will be disseminated and what the schedule will be.
- Where there are print and electronic versions, policies about which format or e-version is the version of record should be clearly stated. In establishing such, the official version should be clearly designated in some way, like in a publisher statement, notation, and always in a standard place.
- In considering electronic versions, either for primary access or archival value, the e-version should always include contributors, editors, titles, and other credits that enhance searchability for authors, reviewers, and opinion pieces. If content is rescripted for the online environment, the credits should accurately represent what readers find in the print version.

- The publisher should ensure that the links stay active, or, if changed, should have a notification process in place so that all subscribers can adjust their records accordingly.

Commentary: See also the ongoing NISO work to develop a journal article version standard included in the section on Standards, included in Section 4: Standards.

1-2: Release Schedule

- Regardless of release practice, publishers should have a stated policy for posting articles online and making them available to subscribers.

Commentary: Several options exist for release of e-formats, and publishers now use both. Early release means prior release of the entire issue or the individual article online before print distribution; prior release means as accepted before the final corrected proof of the article and production of entire issue. Simultaneous release (print and online) seemingly delays access and weakens the reason for e-access.

1-3: Digitization of Back Files

- Digitization of any back issues is highly desirable to advance preservation and access throughout the life of the publication. (See Section 3-2: Digital Journal Preservation.)

Commentary: Digitized back issues create critical mass and a single access point to attract online readership, enable value-added services, such as citation linking, etc. Many commercial and society publishers have already completed backfile digitization, and services like JSTOR exist specifically to facilitate discovery, access, and use of backfiles of journal literature.

1-4: Display of Editorial Information

- Each electronic issue should contain a standard description and standard placement of submission practices, as well as policies on issues such as copyright, permissions, etc., as they appear in any print format.
- Instructions to authors statements should, among other things, include:
 - Information on submission and reference style
 - Requirement for abstract content and length
 - Practices regarding provision of keywords for indexing
 - Required elements for author description
 - Handling of proofs and expectations regarding proof checking
 - Procedures for submission of artwork
 - Requirements for or limitations on handling mathematical or other non-Roman scripts
 - Capability of and requirements for producing color images and online materials
 - A description of the peer-review process, including any differences in the treatment of invited submissions and unsolicited manuscripts

- Any ethical practices and standards of integrity expected of the author
- If the publisher belongs to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and is represented by the editor, the Code of Conduct (<http://publicationethics.org/code-conduct>) should be provided to the author.

Commentary: Editors should consider policies as to author guidelines, indexes, and other standard features in context of article level, journal level, appearance in first or last issue of a volume, etc. Author guidelines should be provided on the publisher's Web site for the journal. Where a publisher publishes multiple journals, instructions to authors should be easily accessible by title. The editor is responsible for providing this information to potential authors on request (even if it is not on the Web site) and should respond promptly to any questions or concerns. Ideally, front and back matter pertaining to these specifics should appear in each print issue, so readers do not have to retrieve a different (usually first or last) issue for instructive information. A well-constructed Web site can accommodate these matters where print publications require additional pages per issue.

1-5: Embargoes on Alternate Dissemination

- Embargoed content is a reality of the marketplace, but the shorter the embargo period, up to at least to 6 months, the more readily information can be accessed without unduly harming the publisher's revenue stream.

Commentary: Publishing practices vary with regards to embargo periods when content is hosted by an aggregator. Early projections proposed that online access would curtail subscriptions; thus, delaying full-text access through database providers, unless a local subscription exists, affects aggregators and researchers. Embargoes, as well as wholesale withdrawal of content from aggregators by publishers who establish their own platforms, remain a concern. With sophisticated search engines in place, researchers will seek information elsewhere rather than waiting for a time to pass before accessing a particular article.

1-6: Metadata and Indexing

- Editors and publishers should have authors supply consistent keywords or words/terms from a controlled vocabulary for each article and incorporate these into the print and electronic versions. These would complement any other controlled vocabularies that may be applied by third parties.
- Editors should ensure that metadata are created for their publications that support accurate and persistent citation and that metadata include categories that will support future item discovery and identification (e.g., date, volume, issues).

Commentary: This is not a universal practice, but it is a reasonable expectation of authors given the nature of the field. Metadata enhances discovery and elevates indexing amongst thousands of hits. Many authors of LIS works are expert in the creation of metadata, and LIS authors generally are cognizant of the importance and value of extensive and high-quality metadata. Some online submission systems offer a controlled vocabulary to facilitate the assignment of metadata.

Section 2: Authors Rights Practices

Background on Agreement Types

Publishers usually require some sort of agreement with their authors in order to publish their article. Some types of agreements include:

1. Copyright Transfer Agreements where the author transfers copyright entirely over to the publisher, who often grants some rights (such as to disseminate in the author's classroom) back to the author.
2. Modifications of Agreements where an author transfers (permanently or temporarily) their copyright but the publisher allows for specific uses of the work desired by the author.
3. Author Addendum – Some authors choose to retain certain rights or make rights explicit with an Author Addendum. Others are required by a third party (grantor or employer) to include an author addendum with their copyright transfer agreement. Examples include:
 - The SPARC Author Addendum to Publication Agreement
http://www.arl.org/sparc/bm~doc/Access-Reuse_Addendum.pdf
 - Science Commons Scholar's Copyright Addendum Engine
<http://sciencecommons.org/>
 - MIT Amendment <http://info-libraries.mit.edu/scholarly/mit-copyright-amendment-form/mit-amendment-tool/>
 - Standard licenses by third parties, such as a Creative Commons license <http://creativecommons.org/> which give authors the ability to keep the rights they want and allows others to know how the work can be reused.

Background on Copyright Options

With a few exceptions (see below), authors have copyright until they sign it away. Publishers often need to license some rights to publish the work within the constraints of their business model.

Several possibilities exist for how authors can handle their intellectual property: authors sign an exclusive rights transfer, authors can permit a nonexclusive rights transfer, or authors can retain copyright and license some rights.

Some authors must work under a third party's conditions and therefore have constraints on what can be done with their work:

- Authors may need to honor a pre-existing license or agreement (for example, as a condition of their employment).
- US Government employees' works are considered in the public domain.
- Some funders' policies state that as a condition of receiving funding, their work must be deposited in the funder's repository.
- Some institutions have policies requiring work done at the institution must be deposited in the institution's repository.

2-1: Permissions

Regardless of the type of agreement reached between the publisher and author, agreements should allow for authors to have the following permissions without payment:

- **Permissions for Sharing**
 - Rights or permissions needed for author to post some version of the work on the author's Web site
 - Rights or permissions needed for author to deposit some version of the work in public repositories
 - Author should retain any rights needed to comply with funder requirements or institutional policies
- **Permissions for Teaching**
 - Rights or permissions needed for author to use for course reserves
 - Rights or permissions needed for author to use for course packs
- **Permissions for Future Use**
 - Rights or permissions needed for author to use for derivative works
 - Rights or permissions needed for author to use for anthologies

2-2: Editor Responsibilities

It is appropriate for editors to advocate on behalf of authors. Editors play an important role related to author rights with both publishers and authors.

- **Work with Publishers**
 - Editors should work to ensure the broadest access to their publication and the ability for authors to use their own works. With regard to copyright and usage rights, they should work closely with their journal's publisher to ensure as much access as possible within the constraints of the publisher's business model.
 - Editors should advocate for more open agreements with their publishers
 - Editors should encourage their publishers to accept addenda where there are pre-existing arrangements or policies
 - Editors should advocate for exceptions when they believe it is in the best interest of the journal.
- **Work with Authors**
 - Editors should provide authors with information on the publisher's author rights agreement upon initial contact and have a responsibility to potential authors to respond with any questions or concerns about the provided statements.
 - Editors often understand how publishers will react when an author puts forward changes to agreements, so editors should present authors with their agreement options and educate them on what it means to sign away copyrights.
 - Editors should encourage or assist in self-archiving in the LIS subject repository and the author's institutional repository.

- Editors should encourage authors to consider how they want to use their works and what rights they want to retain.

Section 3: Preservation

- Editors of library and information science journals should ensure that their publications, in both print and digital formats, are properly preserved.

Commentary: This is essential for the future use of journal literature, and it is also very important for setting a model for other professions. According to the American Library Association's 2008 Preservation Policy, "the preservation of information content and information resources are central to libraries and librarianship."

- Best practices and international standards for the proper preservation of the scholarly journal literature, particularly in digital form, are evolving. Editors should keep themselves up-to-date on current preservation guidelines, and they should monitor and actively influence their publisher's and publication's preservation compliance.
- LIS editors should insist that their publications be produced to the highest level of usability, durability, and longevity in whatever medium is used, be it paper, film, magnetic tape, or optical disk that ensure the persistence of these products.

3-1: Print Journal Preservation

- In print format, journals should be produced and bound using paper and binding that meet the current standards of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the International Standards Organization (ISO). ANSI NISO Standard Z39.48-1984 - Permanence of Paper for Publications and Documents in Libraries, adopted in 1984, is that current standard for paper quality. A compliance statement to this standard should be attached to the masthead or copyright area of the journal.
- At least two complete runs of a print journal—that is, every print issue from volume 1, number 1, to the latest print issue—should be stored in a reliable print archive. Such an archive could be managed by a publisher, agency such as the Center for Research Libraries, or an individual library or library consortium that can demonstrate its commitment to long-term preservation of the print material under its care. A reliable print archive should comply with NISO's guideline for the storage of paper records, and express the intention to provide long-term storage and preservation of the journal's print run. OCLC is currently organizing libraries and their print repository programs to create information about trusted print archives.

3-2: Digital Journal Preservation

- Increasing, journal literature is created and stored in digital formats. Digital preservation involves the conditions of the physical media, as well as the software used to organize and retrieve data in a meaningful way. It is essential that preservation metadata be provided for digital formats so that they can be read, processed, and actively managed for long-term use.
- For preservation purposes, digital content must be carefully prepared, stored, and maintained in a secure and actively managed information technology infrastructure. Editors should encourage their publishers to place copies of their digital journal content in the care of a trusted digital repository. A good overview of the attributes and responsibilities of this type of trusted digital repository can be found in an RLG-OCLC Report of 2002 (<http://www.oclc.org/programs/ourwork/past/trustedrep/default.htm>). A 2005 survey of e-journal archiving initiatives, such as Portico, LOCKSS Alliance/CLOCKSS, and OhioLink's and the National Library of Australia's e-journal archives, prepared by Anne Kenney, provides an overview of options for e-journal preservation storage (<http://www.clir.org/pubs/abstract/pub138abst.html>).

3-3: Record Retention for Editorial Working Papers and Correspondence

- Editors should ensure that their publishers and their journals have a record retention policy and program that will guide the enterprise on responsible and legal record retention.

Commentary: In the course of editorial work much documentation is accumulated, including various drafts of manuscripts, correspondence with authors and referees, referee and editorial staff reviews, and business correspondence

- Record retention needs to be established and followed regardless of the format of material or business/editorial system used by the journal and its publisher. As more journals move online and employ editorial management software, it is incumbent on editors to insure these systems have adequate record retention capabilities.
- In general, a records retention program should include a retention schedule that identifies types of records to be retained, for how long, and under what conditions, as well as guidance on privacy and ownership of these records.

Commentary: For example, a journal and its publisher might identify types of records as follows: drafts of manuscripts, final manuscript, referee reviews, editorial reviews, author correspondence, editor correspondence, and business reports. Each type of record would have a retention schedule, such as destroy immediately, retain for two years, retain permanently. Record could be stored locally or in a designated archive, and the records would be "closed" or "open" at a specified time.

Section 4: Standards and Standards Organizations of Interest to Editors

Journals should conform to existing standards and implement new standards as quickly as is practicable.

Commentary: Conformity to relevant standards is important for any journal wishing to offer the optimum publishing service for authors and readers. The library community traditionally has been active and collaborative in standards development. Given that most standards applying to scholarly journals generally have been developed with the active participation of LIS professionals and are even a regular subject for journal articles, it is particularly important for LIS journals to conform to the most current standards.

No comprehensive listing of standards applying to journals is attempted here; however, some of the most broadly valuable recent standards and organizations creating or supporting standards are indicated here.

Organizations Engaged in Ongoing Standards Development

NISO, the National Information Standards Organization

<http://www.niso.org>

NISO produces and maintains a wide range of standards, many of which apply to LIS journals. They develop information industry standards through the joint engagement of content publishers, libraries, and software developers. Please consult the organization's Web site for a full listing of current, superseded, and in-process standards. Current standards are available at <http://www.niso.org/kst/reports/standards>. A few of the recent standards and best practices that are of particular relevance to LIS journal publishing practices include:

- ANSI/NISO Z39.88 - The OpenURL Framework for Context-Sensitive Services
- ANSI/NISO Z39.9 - International Standard Serial Numbering (ISSN)
- NISO RP-7-2008 - Shared E-Resource Understanding (SERU)
- NISO RP-8-2008, Journal Article Versions (JAV): Recommendations of the NISO/ALPSP JAV Technical Working Group

EDItEUR, The International Group for Electronic Commerce in the Book and Serials Sectors

<http://www.editeur.org/>

EDItEUR is the international group coordinating development of the standards infrastructure for electronic commerce in the book and serials industries.

- **ONIX for Serials Suite (In partnership with NISO)**
<http://www.editeur.org/84/Overview/>
ONIX for Serials is a family of XML formats for communicating information about serial products and subscription information, using the

design principles and many of the elements defined in ONIX for Books.

National Federation of Advanced Information Services (NFAIS)

<http://www.nfaais.org>

Best Practices for Publishing Journal Articles includes recommendations regarding article level publishing (increasingly common with electronic journals as articles are released prior to issue publication).

http://www.nfaais.org/Best_Practices_Final_Public.pdf

UK Serials Group

<http://www.uksg.org>

Spanning the wide range of interests and activities between serials producers and readers, members of the UK Serials Group comprise more than 500 organizations, many of them based outside the UK, that engage a broad cross-section of people concerned with the publication, distribution and use of serials.

- **TRANSFER Code of Practice**

<http://www.uksg.org/transfer>

The TRANSFER Code of Practice responds to the expressed needs of the scholarly journal community for consistent guidelines to help publishers ensure that journal content remains easily accessible by librarians and readers when there is a transfer between parties, and to ensure that the transfer process occurs with minimum disruption.

Key standards-related initiatives arising in recent years

Project Counter

<http://www.projectcounter.org/>

The COUNTER Codes of Practice comprise sets of agreed-upon international standards and protocols governing the recording and exchange of online usage data.

Crossref and DOI

<http://www.crossref.org/>

CrossRef is an independent membership association, founded and directed by publishers. It is the official DOI® link registration agency for scholarly and professional publications and operates a cross-publisher citation linking system that allows a researcher to click on a reference citation on one publisher's platform and link directly to the cited content on another publisher's platform, subject to the target publisher's access control practices.

Resources Related to Standards

Open Archives Initiative

<http://www.openarchives.org/>

With roots in the open access and institutional repository movements, the Open Archives Initiative develops and promotes interoperability standards that aim to facilitate the efficient dissemination of content. It has developed protocols for metadata harvesting and object reuse and exchange.

ALCTS: Association for Library Collections & Technical Services

<http://www.ala.org/alcts>

A division of the American Library Association, ALCTS engages a wide range of members working with journals. The association maintains a list of serial standards and related initiatives at:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alcts/resources/guides/serstdsbib/index.cfm>

ALPSP: Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers

<http://www.alpsp.org>

An international trade association for not-for-profit publishers and those who work with them, ALPSP maintains information on standards at:

http://www.alpsp.org/ngen_public/default.asp?ID=377&groupid=195&groupname=Information+and+Resources

NASIG: North American Serials Interest Group

<http://www.nasig.org>

NASIG is an independent organization that promotes communication, information, and continuing education about serials and the broader issues of scholarly communication. NASIG Guides occasionally address key serials standards and related initiatives. See http://www.nasig.org/publications_guides.cfm

Additional Resources

The LIS Editors' Web site provides updated lists of resources for editors, authors, and editorial boards. See <http://www.lis-editors.org/resources/index.html>