Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

Galter Health Sciences Library & Learning Center

Matchmaker, Make Me a Match: Choosing a Journal

Time to publish those research results? Wondering which journal to choose? Maybe you've decided on a dissemination plan with your mentor, or perhaps you've been publishing for years and know which journals you prefer. Regardless of the route, there are many ways to get your research out there. But choosing a journal is an important step, so let's review a few interesting tools that can help.

Interested in the more traditional approach?

Some key tools for the more traditionally-minded among us include journal assessment reports developed from literature databases. But be warned, no report or associated metric is perfect, so take some time to learn the pros and cons of each.

ISI Web of Knowledge℠

Journal Citation Reports®

SJR SCImago Journal & Country Rank

Journal Citation Report

Thomson Reuter's Journal Citation Reports is home to the well-known *Journal Impact Factor* (JIF), which measures the average number of citations received per paper published in a specific journal in the preceding two years. JIF is helpful if you want to compare different journals in a similar field.

If you're curious about how quickly a journal's articles are cited, check out the journal's *Immediacy Index*. This index measures the number of citations a journal receives in a given year divided by the number of articles the journal published that same year.

Additionally, the report provides the *Cited Half Life* to parse out the citations a journal receives over one calendar year, because the articles cited will vary in age. If a journal's older articles are receiving the majority of the citations, this could indicate the continued influence of those articles in the published literature.

SCImago Journal and Country Rank

A similar report from Elsevier is the SCImago Journal and Country Rank, which includes the *SCImago Journal Rank (SJR)* which takes into account the subject field, quality, and reputation of the journal so that you can compare different journals in similar fields.

If you want to know how a journal stacks up to journals in other fields, check out the *Source Normalized Impact per Paper* (SNIP), which weights citations a journal receives based on the total number of citations in a subject field.

Interested in recommendation engines?

If you are interested in personalized services, there are tools that make recommendations based on a proposed title and

abstract.

The Journal Author Name Estimator (JANE), compares your title or abstract against MEDLINE articles, finding the top 50 articles that are most similar and determines a journal list accordingly.

The EndNote Online Manuscript Matcher uses an algorithm to recommend journals based on your manuscript title and abstract, with an option to also include references. As an added bonus, the matcher displays Journal Citation Report data for each suggested journal. While a bit difficult to find, this tool is definitely worth taking a look at. To find the matcher, go to Galter Library's website and open the Web of Science database. Once in Web of Science, select EndNote from the tabs across the top of the webpage. You'll need to create an EndNote Online account, and once logged in, select the "Match" tab to begin.

The JournalGuide has four different options for matching you with journals, including a match based on your title or abstract. Additionally, you can use their Journal name or Publisher name database to locate and compare journals (using the SNIP metric described above), or search for journals based on category and subcategory.

Interested in personal reviews?

If you enjoy personal review websites (think Angies List™), perhaps a tool that allows authors to share their experiences will pique your interest.

Journalysis is a new tool for authors to share their experiences with academic journals. Their guidelines require contributors to provide facts where possible and to be honest but constructive in their reviews. Additionally, this site also provides metrics and reviews to assist you in your decision making process.

Interested in Open Access?

Supporters of Open Access will appreciate resources that promote strong, healthy open access journals while helping authors avoid weaker journals that could take advantage them. However, no list of open access journals or associated metric is perfect, so take time to research your options.

The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) is exactly what it sounds like: an online directory that indexes and provides access to open access, peer-reviewed journals across all areas of science, medicine, technology and more. While DOAJ does not provide a customized ranking, it does have a voluntary editorial staff reviewing journal applications to ensure high quality standards are met by all journals added to the directory.

Quality Open Access Market (QOAM) provides a group of filters to help you narrow your open access journal search. QUAM has created a ranking based on the quality of service (gathered from academic crowd sources, authors, and others) which is matched against the cost of publishing to better inform prospective authors.

Already published in a journal, but unsure if you can make your article openly available? Check out SHERPA RoMEO to find your publisher's copyright policies.

What's the best of the best?

While it may be difficult to determine the perfect journal for your situation, keep in mind the characteristics that are most important to you and to the field you publish in. Mega journals such as PLOS One and Heliyon are tempting because they potentially offer a wide readership base and increased dissemination of your work to a diverse audience. However, if your research is directed to a smaller group of interested scientists, perhaps consider a topical journal that targets a specific

audience. As always, remember to seek the advice of colleagues and mentors in this process.

Need some help?

Galter Library's Metrics and Impact Core can help you wade through the metrics and reviews to find a list of journals that suits your needs. We can also help your students or class by providing an in-depth review of some of the resources listed here. If you'd like assistance, begin by contacting your liaison librarian.

Also, see our guide "From Research to Publication" for more tools and resources.

Please note: Galter Library does not endorse any particular tool mentioned in this article. Instead, we provide ideas, options, and guidance on the many tools available.