

*Journal of Research Practice*  
Volume 9, Issue 1, Article E1, 2013



*Editorial:*

## **Current Editorial Initiatives: A Progress Report**

**Werner Ulrich**

University of Fribourg, SWITZERLAND;  
Lugano Summer School, SWITZERLAND  
[wulrich@gmx.ch](mailto:wulrich@gmx.ch)

**D. P. Dash**

Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak Campus, MALAYSIA;  
Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar 751013, INDIA  
[professor.dpdash@gmail.com](mailto:professor.dpdash@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

This editorial article reports on the progress that the *Journal of Research Practice* (JRP) has achieved in its ongoing development since November 2011, when a number of editorial initiatives were announced. Several new initiatives are also proposed. In addition, there are some current announcements, including a number of recent awards, distinctions, and nominations.

**Index Terms:** academic awards; concept hierarchy; editorial roles; focus areas; index terms; journal development; funding model for open-access journals; review criteria

**Suggested Citation:** Ulrich, W., & Dash, D. P. (2013). Current editorial initiatives: A progress report. *Journal of Research Practice*, 9(1), Article E1. Retrieved from <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/364/300>

---

Based on an extensive analysis of the journal's strengths and weaknesses, an earlier editorial article (Ulrich & Dash, 2011) initiated the development of the JRP Concept Hierarchy, a taxonomy of index terms that should facilitate thinking and writing about research practice as well as defining areas of editorial focus and reviewing articles submitted to the journal. A first version of the taxonomy was introduced and the journal's six focus areas were defined based on it. Already at that time we announced, "The concept hierarchy is part of a more comprehensive initiative to strengthen the journal's profile and visibility, an initiative that will also include a restructuring of the editorial team and new roles for the journal's dedicated reviewers and active readers." As

guidelines for this more comprehensive effort, four main strategies for developing JRP were defined:

- Strategy #1. Strengthening JRP's Profile and Visibility
- Strategy #2. Restructuring the Editorial Team
- Strategy #3. Lowering the High Rejection Rate
- Strategy #4. Making Full Use of the Online Open-Access Format

In a subsequent editorial (Dash & Ulrich, 2012), we reviewed the journal's origin and growth and discussed some issues and methods for assessing a journal's relevance and utilization, including but not limited to bibliometric methods. Based on these considerations along with the previously defined strategies for developing the journal, we designed a new structure for the journal's editorial team consisting of the journal's Editors, Focus Editors, Associate Editors, Distinguished Reviewers, and Forum Members. For all these members of the editorial team, key responsibility areas and nomination criteria were defined.

The time has come for us to report on the progress we have made in implementing these initiatives. We also use this opportunity for some additional announcements. Taken together, the nine sections that follow inform about these three, partly overlapping, topics: (a) awards, distinctions, and nominations (Sections 1-4), progress report on continuing initiatives (Sections 3-6), and proposed new initiatives (Sections 7-9).

## 1. Academic Award for a JRP Article

For the first time, an article published in the *Journal of Research Practice* has received a formal distinction. In September 2012, the Carl Couch Center for Social and Internet Research (CCCSIR), a non-profit organization located at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa, dedicated to promoting scholarship in sociological and communication research, awarded the *2012 Norman K. Denzin Qualitative Research Award* to Patricia Sotirin for her article "Autoethnographic Mother-Writing: Advocating Radical Specificity" (Sotirin, 2010). The article was published in JRP, Volume 6, Issue 1 as part of a special issue on "Autoethnography as Research Practice," edited by Faith Wambura Ngunjiri, Kathy-Ann C. Hernandez, and Heewon Chang. We congratulate all the contributors on this achievement.



Patricia (Patty) is a US American citizen living in Chassell, Michigan. She holds a PhD degree from Purdue University and an MA from San Diego State University, both in Communication Studies. She is Professor of Communication in the Department of Humanities at Michigan Technological University, Houghton, Michigan, where she teaches and researches on critical-interpretive and qualitative approaches to issues of culture, relationality, and gender. Her work draws on discursive theories of communication, critical management studies, cultural studies, feminist theories, and

qualitative methodologies. She is Editor of *Women and Language*, an interdisciplinary journal about communication, language, and gender.

We asked Patty what motivated her to write this article and what was its core idea or concern. As she answered:

I wrote this article in response to criticisms of evocative autoethnography and my own concerns to think through the task of autoethnographic writing; taking a Deleuzian perspective, I felt that the *sine qua non* of autoethnography could be radically rethought in terms of singularity rather than evocation. I think the award acknowledges this possibility or perhaps just the provocation to critically reflect on the autoethnographic project.

We are proud to have Patty among our authors and wish her all the best in her continuing work as a researcher and teacher.

## **2. High Distinction for a JRP Focus Editor**

In October 2012, Professor Wiebe E. Bijker, one of our new Focus Editors, was awarded the *Leonardo da Vinci Medal* of the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT), in recognition of his contribution to our understanding of the history of technology. The medal is the Society's highest distinction for achievements in its field of research. Award details can be found in the Maastricht University web site at [www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Main/Sitewide/News1/HighDistinctionForWiebeBijker.htm](http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Main/Sitewide/News1/HighDistinctionForWiebeBijker.htm)

We congratulate Professor Bijker on this outstanding distinction.

## **3. New Distinguished Reviewers**

The following regular peer reviewers of the journal have received our internal *JRP Best Reviewer Award* for 2012:

Elizabeth Clare Temple, University of Ballarat, AUSTRALIA

Linda Lundgaard Andersen, Roskilde University, DENMARK

Michelle K. McGinn, Brock University, CANADA

Stephen Soldz, Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis, UNITED STATES

We congratulate all four contributors and thank them for their dedication to JRP's peer review process. Michelle K. McGinn and Stephen Soldz have received this distinction previously. Now Linda Lundgaard Andersen and Elizabeth Clare Temple join them and the earlier recipients of this award in the journal's editorial team as our "Distinguished Reviewers." As in previous years, the names of the best reviewers of 2012 were announced in the last article of JRP's past volume, see [Submission Reviewers for Volume 8, 2012](#). The complete list of our Distinguished Reviewers can be found at

<http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/about/editorialTeam>, where you will also find the short biographies of the newly appointed members.

#### **4. New Focus Editors**

We could recently complete the nomination process for our new Focus Editors. All the Focus Editors have been appointed and their biographies and statements of major aims as focus editors appear in the editorial article in JRP, Volume 8, Issue 1 (there, Subsection 3.2). Likewise, the short biographies of all Focus Editors have meanwhile been added to the page “Editorial Team” in the journal’s web site. The Focus Editors are:

1. Research Applications: [Richard J. Ormerod](#), University of Warwick, United Kingdom
2. Research Spaces: [Wiebe E. Bijker](#), Maastricht University, Netherlands
3. Research Education: [Lynn McAlpine](#), University of Oxford, United Kingdom
4. Research Experiences: [D. P. Dash](#), Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus, Malaysia; Xavier Institute of Management, India
5. Research Philosophy: [Werner Ulrich](#), University of Fribourg, Switzerland; Lugano Summer School of Systems Design, Switzerland
6. Research on Research: [Gerard de Zeeuw](#), University of Lincoln, United Kingdom; University of Leuven, Belgium; University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

We are grateful to the new colleagues who have agreed to cooperate with us in developing the journal by assuming this important new editorial role. All our editorial team members, reviewers, and authors are henceforth welcome to contact the Focus Editors of their choice with a view to discussing specific questions they may face in their efforts to contribute to the journal.

#### **5. Restructuring of the Editorial Team**

As a result of the above-mentioned efforts, the renewal of our editorial team has progressed considerably; please consult the “Editorial Team” page in the “About” section of the JRP web site. The new structure is in place and many new members have been appointed to the editorial team. A next opportunity to complement and partly renew the editorial team will occur when the newly introduced standard term of 3 years of service comes to an end for each member. Meanwhile, we observe that many of our team members still have no short biography in the “Editorial Team” page or have not added a portrait picture as yet. We take this opportunity to request all team members to check their short bio and make sure it is complete and up-to-date. Feel free to request our assistance if you should encounter any difficulties in uploading your text or picture. Thank you.

#### **6. Major Update of the JRP Concept Hierarchy**

In January 2013, the first major update of the [JRP Concept Hierarchy](#) (Version 2.0) was completed after several months of intensive work. The definition of the journal’s focus

areas in terms of assigned subject areas was revised, and the list of the keywords assigned to the subject areas was completely reworked. The following changes resulted from this exercise:

(1) The number of subject areas has grown from 41 to 42, four of which have new names. The names of the two subject areas covering qualitative and quantitative methods of research were changed to “qualitative analysis” and “quantitative analysis,” so as to reflect their broadened concern. More importantly, following considerable discussion--we thank Ken Friedman (Australia), Harold Nelson (USA), Francois-X. Nsenga (Canada), and Daniela Rothkegel (Sweden) for their contributions--the original subject area “Art & design” was split into the two new subject areas: “Art & research” and “Design-oriented research.” Both new subject areas represent important and interesting new areas of research practice that deserve recognition. Although both subject areas involve artistic aspects, they orient themselves towards rather different aims and notions of good practice and for this reason deserve different treatment. For example, in comparison to research in the arts, design-oriented research tends to be much more purposeful and service oriented.

(2) The assignment of subject areas to the journal’s six focus areas has been revised, along with a minor editing of the description of the focus areas in the table “JRP Focus Areas Aims, Subject Areas, and Core Questions.”

(3) The total number of entries in the list of “JRP Subject Areas and Keywords” has grown considerably, from 5,800 index terms in Version 1.0 (of 16 November 2011) to 13,200 index terms in Version 2.0 (of 14 January 2013).

(4) Finally, as a last major change and, as we hope, progress that deserves being mentioned here, the alphabetical ordering of index terms in the Subject Areas and Keywords list has been changed. To make the list more user-friendly, index terms are now systematically ordered according to the model of a phone directory rather than that of a dictionary. That is, compound terms (so-called multi-word strings) are now ordered word-by-word rather than letter-by-letter, which results in a better overview of entire word families. For details and examples, please see the introductory *Notes* in the Keywords list (there, Note 3).

What remains unchanged is the fine layout and navigation feature of the list, thanks to excellent design and coding by our technical partner at AU Press, Sergiy Kozakov. Thank you, Sergiy.

## **7. New Article Categories**

As a new initiative, we plan to introduce two new categories of articles:

1. *Viewpoints & Discussion*--to encourage user comments and debates on published articles.
2. *Invited Reviews*--to strengthen the service orientation of the journal.

“Viewpoints & Discussion” articles should help us take better advantage of the speed of publication that is made possible by the journal’s review system and online publishing format, so as to offer our readers a vehicle for active and spontaneous participation. We invite our readers to submit comments on JRP articles directly through our online submission system, designating their submissions as such. In the interest of rapid publication, and also because this new category of articles aims to allow authentic expression of opinions rather than detailed accounts of research-related topics, we foresee an accelerated review process that as a rule will consist merely in a brief summary assessment by the Editors; however, in special cases and in agreement with the contributors, the Editors may still decide that an ordinary review process ought to be followed. We hope that other readers will then respond to such comments by articulating their own different views, or the Editors may directly invite such responses, so that in future a lively discussion section may (at least occasionally) enrich the journal.

“Invited Reviews” are to become an efficient means for informing our readers about the current state of discussion and recent developments in defined areas of research practice, with a view to stimulating further discussion. We are thinking particularly of fields of research that develop rapidly or bring forth innovative developments that might also be of interest to other fields. The idea is that such invited reviews, apart from being informative as stand-alone articles, may also stimulate submissions of individual research articles on related topics and/or contributions to the new Viewpoints & Discussion section. Guest editors of future special issues might also consider an invited review article in planning the issue content.

## **8. Guidelines for Reviewers**

Taking up an initiative by one of JRP’s Distinguished Reviewers, Michelle McGinn (she is a professor of education at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada), we have decided to put together a revised list of criteria and possibly some additional guidelines for our peer reviewers. Michelle will address all members of the JRP Editorial Team with an online survey, the aim of which will be to explore what really matters to our peer reviewers in evaluating a submission. On this basis, we will then work out a systematic set of criteria and possibly some guidelines for the reviewers that will be available in the JRP web site. We are grateful to Michelle for this initiative.

## **9. New Sponsorship Initiative**

We need to strengthen the financial basis of the journal. Of our two current institutional sponsors, both of which have supported the journal since its inception, the Lugano Summer School of Systems Design at the University of Italian Switzerland in Lugano is scheduled to cease operation by the end of 2013 and for this reason will not be able to continue sponsoring the journal. On this occasion we have reviewed our funding model. We would like to continue relying on sponsorships rather than, say, submission and/or publication fees as our main financing vehicle; the only article-related fee that we find adequate is our current, voluntary fee of USD 100 or less for our exceptional copyediting

service. However, we have decided to redefine the journal's sponsorship model as follows:

(1) *Two sponsorship categories:* We plan to offer two different sponsorship categories, institutional and personal sponsorships. Institutional sponsors will commit themselves to an annual sponsorship contribution for a basic term of 3 years (suggested amount USD 500-1000 per annum). Personal sponsors will commit themselves to an annual sponsorship, equally for a standard term of 3 years (suggested amount at least USD 25 per annum).

(2) *Easier payment modalities:* We are looking into ways of making sponsorship contributions easier. Some of the specific issues we are facing in this regard are related to the cumbersome process of international banking transactions, variations in tax laws across countries, and the demands of auditability of the payment process. We have initiated conversations with specific institutions which can assist us in this task. This is still work in progress.

(3) *Better visibility:* Both institutional and individual sponsors will be acknowledged on a special "sponsorships" page of the journal's web site. Each institutional sponsor will be entitled to the publication of a brief summary of the institution's name and address, possibly with a brief mission statement (one sentence only), along with its corporate logo and a link to the institution's web site. Similarly, each personal sponsor's name and place of residence will be listed along with an institutional affiliation (if desired) and a link to a personal web site (if desired). In addition, the visibility of institutional sponsors will be further improved by listing them in the right-hand margin of all pages of the JRP web site, a measure that has already been implemented recently.

As of now, we ask our readers to help us in putting together a list of potential *institutional sponsors*. We are thinking particularly of research institutions, research funding and evaluation agencies, academic societies, professional bodies, and other institutions inclined towards open and organised inquiry. The Editors will then contact each of these institutions on an individual basis and invite them to become institutional sponsors of JRP. So please contact the Editors if you have any names of institutions or ideas to contribute to this initiative.

We also invite all our readers and collaborators to consider becoming *personal sponsors*. Please contact the Editors expressing your interest in becoming a personal sponsor of JRP.

We end this editorial article with a big "Thank You" to all our contributors who have offered us their support in the past year. Together with you, we will continue our efforts to make the *Journal of Research Practice* a high-quality forum for sharing research experiences and reflections.

## References

- Dash, D. P., & Ulrich, W. (2012). Introducing new editorial roles and measures: Making the Journal of Research Practice relevant to researchers. *Journal of Research Practice*, 8(1), Article E1. Retrieved from <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/314/249>
- Sotirin, P. (2010). Autoethnographic mother-writing: Advocating radical specificity. *Journal of Research Practice*, 6(1), Article M9. Retrieved from <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/220/189>
- Ulrich, W., & Dash, D. P. (2011). Introducing a concept hierarchy for the Journal of Research Practice. *Journal of Research Practice*, 7(2), Article E2. Retrieved from <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/279/239>

Published 11 March 2013

---

Copyright © 2013 *Journal of Research Practice* and the authors