

Committee on Scholarly Publishing
in South Africa

Report on Grouped Peer Review of
Scholarly Journals in
**Communication and
Information Sciences**



science
& technology

Department:
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





© Academy of Science of South Africa

March 2019

ISBN 978-1-928496-06-9

DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/assaf.2019/0041>

Cite: Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), (2019).
Report on Grouped Peer Review of Scholarly Journals in Communication and Information Sciences
[Available online] DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/assaf.2019/0041>

Published by:
Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)
PO Box 72135, Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria, South Africa, 0040
Tel: +27 12 349 6600 • Fax: +27 86 576 9520
E-mail: admin@assaf.org.za

Reproduction is permitted, provided the source and publisher are appropriately acknowledged.

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) was inaugurated in May 1996. It was formed in response to the need for an Academy of Science consonant with the dawn of democracy in South Africa: activist in its mission of using science and scholarship for the benefit of society, with a mandate encompassing all scholarly disciplines that use an open-minded and evidence-based approach to build knowledge. ASSAf thus adopted in its name the term 'science' in the singular as reflecting a common way of enquiring rather than an aggregation of different disciplines. Its Members are elected on the basis of a combination of two principal criteria, academic excellence and significant contributions to society. The Parliament of South Africa passed the Academy of Science of South Africa Act (*No 67 of 2001*), which came into force on 15 May 2002. This made ASSAf the only academy of science in South Africa officially recognised by government and representing the country in the international community of science academies and elsewhere.





Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa

**Report on Grouped Peer Review of Scholarly Journals in
*Communication and Information Sciences***





Table of Contents

Acronyms/Abbreviations	6
Preface	7
Foreword	8
1 Periodic Peer Review of South African Scholarly Journals: Approved Process Guidelines and Criteria	10
1.1 Background	10
1.2 ASSAf PRPs	10
1.3 Initial Criteria	10
1.3.1 Editorial Process-related Criteria: Generally Based on the National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review Developed by ASSAf	10
1.3.2 Business-Related Criteria	11
1.3.3 Bibliometric Assessments	11
1.4 Process Guidelines for Setting up the Panels, Peer Reviewers, Panel Meetings and Reports for the Subject Peer Review of Journals	11
1.4.1 Background to ASSAf PRPs	11
1.4.2 Role of the Scholarly Publishing Unit	11
1.4.3 Setting up Panels	12
1.4.4 Selecting Panel Members	12
1.4.5 Criteria for Membership	12
1.4.6 Conflict of Interest	12
1.4.7 Organising the Panels	12
1.4.8 Selection of Peer Reviewers	13
1.4.9 Panel Meetings and Procedures	13
1.4.10 Post-meeting Procedures and Panel Reports	13
2 Special Considerations Concerning South African Communication and Information Science Journals	14
3 Panel Members	15
4 Consensus Reviews of Journals in the Group	15
4.1 Archives and Museums	15
4.1.1 ESARBICA Journal	15
4.1.2 South African Museums Association Bulletin	17
4.2 Communication Sciences	19
4.2.1 Communicare: Journal for Communication Sciences in Southern Africa	19
4.2.2 Communitas	22
4.3 Information and Communication Technology	24
4.3.1 African Journal of Information and Communication	24
4.3.2 South African Computer Journal	27
4.4 Library and Information Science	29
4.4.1 Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa	29
4.4.2 Innovation: A Journal for Appropriate Librarianship and Information Work in Southern Africa	31
4.4.3 Mousaion: South African Journal of Information Studies	33
4.4.4 South African Journal of Information Management	35
4.4.5 South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science	37

4.5	Media and Journalism	40
4.5.1	African Journalism Studies	40
4.5.2	Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies	43
4.5.3	Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research	46
Appendix A: Questionnaire Sent to Each Editor of Journals being Peer-Reviewed		50
Appendix B: Requests to Independent Peer Reviewers		53



Acronyms / Abbreviations

ASA	African Studies Abstracts Online
AJIC	African Journal of Information and Communication
AJOL	African Journals Online
AJIS	African Journal of Information Systems
AJS	African Journalism Studies
ASSAf	Academy of Science of South Africa
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COPE	Committee on Publication Ethics
CNKI	China National Knowledge Infrastructure
CPD	Continuous professional development
CC	Creative Commons
CSPiSA	Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DOAJ	Directory of Open Access Journals
DST	Department of Science and Technology
EAB	Editorial advisory board
EBSCOhost	Elton B Stephens Company (EBSCOhost) Research Databases
ESARBICA	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HESA	Higher Education South Africa (now USAf)
IBSS	International Bibliography of the Social Sciences
ICA	International Council on Archives
ICT	Information and communications technology
iMASA	Institute for Media Analysis in South Africa
INASP	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
IPP	Impact Per Publication
ISAP	Index to South African Periodicals
ISI	International Scientific Indexing
LINK	Learning Information Networking Knowledge Centre
LIASA	Library and Information Association of South Africa
LIS	Library and Information Services
LISA	Library and Information Science Abstracts
LLBA	Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts
MLA	Modern Language Association
NASA	National Archives of South Africa
NLSA	National Library of South Africa
NRF	National Research Foundation
NSEF	National Scholarly Editors' Forum
OCLC	Online Computer Library Centre
OJS	Open Journal Systems
PRP	Peer review panel
RILM	Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale
SABINET	South African Bibliographic and Information Network
SACJ	South African Computer Journal
SACOMM	South African Communication Association
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAICSIT	South African Institute of Computer Scientists and Information Technologists
SAJIM	South African Journal of Information Management
SAJLIS	South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science
SAMA	South African Museums Association
SAMAB	South African Museums Association Bulletin
SciELO SA	Scientific Electronic Library Online South Africa
SJR	SCImago Journal Rank
SPU	Scholarly Publishing Unit
SNIP	Source Normalised Impact Per Paper
SSCI	Social Science Citation Index
SU	Stellenbosch University
UCT	University of Cape Town
UFS	University of the Free State
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
Unisa	University of South Africa
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
USAf	Universities South Africa (previously HESA)
WoS	Web of Science

Preface

Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa (CSPiSA)

Discipline-grouped Peer-review Reports on South African Scholarly Journals

This is the ninth in the series of discipline-grouped evaluations of South African scholarly journals. Eventually, it is hoped that all scholarly journals in the country will have been subjected to independent, multiple peer review as part of a quality assurance process initiated by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). The quality assurance process is a precursor to the identification of journal titles to be loaded on to the open access platform, Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) South Africa. Only open access journals of a sufficiently high quality will be included in this fully indexed, free online, multi-national platform, now also directly featured on Clarivate Analytics' Web of Science (WoS) portal.

The traditional focus of peer review is on a single journal article, book chapter or book. It is less common to subject journals to independent, multiple peer review, as these are usually evaluated in qualitative, reputational terms, or bibliometrically, by means of impact factors.

The peer review of South African scholarly journal titles thus required the development of a new methodology that was piloted successfully with the first two discipline-grouped peer review reports, published in 2010, on the Social Sciences and Related Fields, and the Agricultural and Related Basic Life Sciences. This work was not achieved without difficulty, as the process was unfamiliar to reviewers accustomed to reviewing single articles.

ASSAf has confidence in this ambitious programme, which is aimed at ensuring that the bulk of South African scholarly journals are of a high quality. The process goes beyond the familiar journal assessment approaches mentioned above by providing concrete recommendations to enable the editor(s) of journals, especially those not deemed to be of a sufficient standard, to take corrective action and provides an opportunity for them to reapply for evaluation.

The process centred on multi-perspective, discipline-based evaluation panels appointed by the Academy Council on the recommendation of the Academy's CSPiSA; journal editors were requested to complete specially designed questionnaires, and peer reviewers were selected from a spectrum of scholars in the fields concerned. Each editor was asked to provide answers to a set of questions, which were used to address the scope and focus of the peer-reviewed articles in the journals under review, the authorship generally, and the presence or absence of enrichment features, such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews and news and views articles. (The editors' questionnaire and peer reviewers' set of questions are appended to this report.)

Each discipline-based evaluation panel met to discuss the individual peer reviews and questionnaires and consolidated them into a consensus review for each journal. Final formulations and recommendations were prepared, including suggestions for improvement from both the peer reviewers and the panel. The responsible editors were given an opportunity to check the accuracy of the information in each individual journal report, and the final version of the report was submitted for approval to the ASSAf CSPiSA and the Council of ASSAf.

As the latest in the series of reports, it is evident that much has been learned from the previous discipline groups and that, going forward, the process will become more streamlined, such that subsequent reports will follow in rapid succession.

I would like to thank the Chair of the Panel, Dr Bok Marais, and members of the evaluation panel, and particularly Prof Robin Crewe, who is responsible for overseeing ASSAf's peer review panels' activities, for his leadership in this quality-assurance process. I acknowledge the important role played by the staff of the Academy in supporting the process; Ms Susan Veldsman, Director of the Scholarly Publishing Unit, and the Project Officers who worked under her direction, namely, Ms Desré Stead and Ms Mmaphuthi Mashia-chidi. Ms Patricia Scholtz is thanked for copy-editing. Finally, I acknowledge the contribution of the many individual peer reviewers who have each contributed towards strengthening the quality of South African scholarly journals.

Prof Roseanne Diab

Executive Officer: Academy of Science of South Africa

Foreword

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) congratulates ASSAf for yet another discipline-grouped peer review report. The report is aimed at improving the quality of the journals in our higher education system, thereby influencing the standard of research conducted in the respective fields. It is in the interests of our higher education system and society in general that the quality of research conducted in the system should be continuously improved.

The DHET published the Research Outputs Policy (2015) in the *Government Gazette* (Vol 597, No 38552). The policy, which is a revised version of the Policy and Procedures for Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions of 2003, came about after almost ten years of implementation of the previous version after a drawn-out process of studying several publications and a consultative process within and outside the higher education sector.

Three additional journal indices were included over and above the initial three. Further changes include the rule that at least 75% of articles published in a journal must emanate from multiple institutions. Overall, though, the effected changes to the policy were aimed at improving the quality of publications from the higher education system. Based on evidence, the Policy and Procedures for Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions of 2003 had managed to increase the quantity of publications from the system. However, as part of analysis of data and patterns, the DHET observed that the quality of some publications was questionable. Thus, the policy encourages all South African journals to aim for international standards in order to apply for inclusion in accredited international lists or indices. Several studies suggest that predatory journals come about partly because of pressure to publish and to accrue maximum subsidy. As such, the policy reminds institutions and academics of the importance of research integrity, ethics and the essence of knowledge dissemination rather than maximum benefits accompanying publications.

The DHET continues to explore various means of improving the quality of publications and to deal with the scourge of predatory journals. We would like universities to pay serious attention to improving the quality of publications using the known measures employed internationally, such as peer review and the accepted norms of scholarship. If need be and as the Research Outputs Policy indicates, the DHET will even consider introducing penalties to non-complying institutions. The effort towards improvement of quality in our higher education system is everyone's responsibility.

Mr Mahlubi Mabizela and Ms Fhumulani Maanda

University Education Policy

Department of Higher Education and Training



1 Periodic Peer Review of South African Scholarly Journals: Approved Process Guidelines and Criteria

1.1 Background

During the launch meeting of the ASSAf-led National Scholarly Editors' Forum (NSEF) held on 25 July 2007, the 112 participants supported ASSAf and its CSPiSA in taking the lead in the implementation of Recommendation 5 of the 2006 ASSAf report on *A Strategic Approach to Research Publishing in South Africa*. This recommendation dealt specifically with the need for a system of quality assurance for over 260 of the country's journals which are accredited by the DHET:

Recommendation No 5: That ASSAf be mandated jointly by the Departments of Education and Science and Technology to carry out external peer review and associated quality audit of all South African research journals in five-year cycles, probably best done in relation to groups of titles sharing a particular broad disciplinary focus, in order to make recommendations for improved functioning of each journal in the national and international system.

1.2 ASSAf PRPs

The quality assurance system for journals is conducted primarily through discipline-grouped peer reviews carried out by a series of purpose-appointed peer review panels (PRPs) drawn from the ranks of researchers and other experienced scholars in and around the fields concerned in each case, as well as persons with practical (technical) publishing experience. The proposed ASSAf PRPs are overseen by the CSPiSA, but appointed by the Academy Council. Their draft reports are sent to relevant stakeholders for comment and input, before finalisation by the PRP concerned, and ultimate consideration sequentially by the CSPiSA and the ASSAf Council.

The following quote from the ASSAf report clarifies the approach to be followed in the review of the journals and some aspects of the approach proposed:

The periodic, grouped quality assurance-directed peer review of South African research periodicals would function analogously to the quality audits of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), would be developed as an outcome of the Editors' Forum, and would focus on: the quality of editorial and review process; fitness of, and for purpose; positioning in the global cycle of new and old journals listed and indexed in databases; financial sustainability; and scope and size issues. The ASSAf panels carrying out the reviews would each comprise 6 – 8 experts, some of whom would not be directly drawn from the areas concerned, and would require data-gathering, interviews, and international comparisons, before reports with recommendations are prepared, approved, and released to stakeholders such as national associations, the Departments of Science and Technology and of Education, the CHE/HEQC, the NRF and Higher Education South Africa (HESA now Universities South Africa (USAf)).

It must be emphasised that the main purpose of the ASSAf review process for journals is to improve the quality of scholarly publication in the country in a manner that is consonant with traditional scholarly practices – primarily voluntary peer review. It is not an attempt to control these publications in any way. ASSAf respects the independence and freedom of researchers and of the research process itself as important preconditions for the critical and innovative production of new knowledge. At the same time, the work of South African researchers has to be assessed, both qualitatively and quantitatively, as part of the global community of scholars and scientists, and in this respect ASSAf has an obligation to contribute to the improvement of quality of such work where possible.

1.3 Initial Criteria

A number of criteria were explored in the part of the ASSAf report <http://research.assaf.org.za/handle/20.500.11911/49> (Chapter 4) that dealt with the survey of the over 200 then-current editors of accredited South African scholarly journals. Other possible criteria were proposed in other sections of the report or have since been suggested by members of the CSPiSA or the NSEF. These are grouped and listed below, and are consolidated in the questionnaire presented in Appendix A.

1.3.1 Editorial Process-related Criteria: Generally Based on the National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review Developed by ASSAf

- Longevity of the journal (continuous or discontinuous), in years.
- Number of original peer-reviewed papers published per year during the last five years, plus number of manuscripts submitted, plus number rejected out-of-hand or after peer review; average length of published papers; and 'author demography' of papers submitted and published.
- Number and nature of peer reviewers used per manuscript and the overall number per year, including institutional and national/international spread, plus quality (as per the *National Code of*

- *Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*) and average length of peer-review reports.
- Average delay before publication of submitted manuscripts and frequency of publication.
- Professional stature and experience of the editor; how he/she is selected; how long the editor has been in service; and the success or otherwise in addressing the major issues in the field, through missioning of reviews/articles, editorial comment, etc.
- Number and professional stature/experience of editorial board members, plus selection processes, turn over, and nature of involvement in handling of manuscripts or in other functions. If international members serve on the board (desirable), whether they are a mix from developed and developing countries.
- Existence and nature of editorial policy/guidelines, plus how often these are revised/updated; conflict-of-interest policy (e.g. how manuscripts are assessed when submitted by an editor member as author/co-author).
- *Errata* published – how many per year?
- Value-adding features, such as editorials, news and views pieces, correspondence on papers, reviews, policy/topical fora, etc. – how many, and how are they generated? What proportion are they of the total pages in journal issues?
- Any peer-review process of the journal already in place (e.g. by professional association).

1.3.2 Business-related Criteria

- Frequency and regularity ('on time') of publication.
- Print runs (redundant stock, direct versus indirect distribution to readers).
- Production model and service provider(s).
- Paid and unpaid advertising.
- Sponsorship and *quid pro quos*.
- Paid and unpaid subscription base and how this is marketed. Cost level of print and (if applicable) e-subscriptions.
- E-publication. If this is done, what are the website/portal and access possibilities for users? What evaluation is done, especially in respect of tagging and searchability?
- Whether there are html/xml and PDF versions, or only PDF, and whether multimedia is used.
- The portals for open access, if provided. If not e-published, whether this is being considered, and how.
- Total income and expenditure per annum.
- Distribution to international destinations.
- Indexed in WoS and/or International Bibliography of Social Sciences (IBSS), or any other international database? If indexed, for how long and how continuously.
- Offers to purchase from multi-national publishers.
- Copyright arrangements.

1.3.3 Bibliometric Assessments

- Citation practice – how many authors are listed?
- If applicable, what are the WoS-type impact factors (and various derivatives) over the last five years?
- Are reviews a regular/increasing feature?
- If articles are not in English, are English abstracts mandatory?

1.4 Process Guidelines for Setting up the Panels, Peer Reviewers, Panel Meetings and Reports for the Subject Peer Review of Journals

1.4.1 Background to ASSAf PRPs

The quality assurance system for journals is implemented primarily through discipline-grouped peer reviews carried out by a series of purpose-appointed PRPs drawn from the ranks of researchers and other experienced scholars in and around the fields concerned in each case, as well as persons with practical (technical) publishing experience. The proposed ASSAf PRPs are overseen by the CSPiSA, but appointed by the Academy Council. Their draft reports are sent to relevant stakeholders for comment and relevant input, before finalisation by the PRP concerned, and final consideration sequentially by the CSPiSA and the ASSAf Council.

1.4.2 Role of the Scholarly Publishing Unit (SPU)

An ASSAf project officer of the SPU is assigned to support each panel chair, but reports to the Director of the SPU in terms of review logistics and the production of draft and final review reports. The project officer is responsible for the following issues and activities:

- selecting and appointing panel members;
- obtaining completed questionnaires from editors;
- organising panel activities, including meetings; selecting independent peer reviewers for each

- journal or groups of titles;
- drafting consolidated version 1 reports; and
- obtaining CSPiSA and ASSAf Council approval for final, publishable panel reports.

1.4.3 Setting up Panels

The proposed PRPs are chaired by an ASSAf Member and appointed by the Council, which assumes accountability for the PRP's work in helping to develop a credible quality assurance mechanism for South African scholarly journals.

1.4.4 Selecting Panel Members

- The appointment process of PRP members is managed by the Chair of the CSPiSA until the panel and its chair have been appointed.
- CSPiSA members are asked to assist in preparing a list of at least 12 – 13 names, of which the last 4 – 5 are considered potential alternates to the first 7 – 8.
- A typical PRP consists of 6 – 8 members.
- Each name must be accompanied by critical personal and career details, as well as a brief motivation, to enable the CSPiSA, and later the ASSAf Council, to apply its mind to the question of constituting the best possible, most competent PRP.
- The draft list of potential members is published on the ASSAf website, and is also circulated for comment to members of the NSEF at least two weeks before the Council meeting where the appointments are to be made.
- All comments received will be noted in making the final decision.
- All provisionally listed persons are required to complete and submit conflict-of-interest forms prior to the Council's consideration of the list in question.

1.4.5 Criteria for Membership

- The individuals selected to serve on a PRP should have experience and credibility in the disciplines under review or in related disciplines, or be senior scholars who may be from a completely different discipline. Generally, the composition of a panel, in an approximate ratio of 3:3:2, should be a mix of disciplinary specialists, specialists in areas cognate to the broad disciplinary area concerned, and 'wise people' who are steeped in scholarly practices and drawn from any broad disciplinary area.
- The panel members should have demonstrable expertise and experience in both the editing and peer-review aspects of research journals.
- It is not necessary that all PRP members be experts in both editing and peer-review aspects – a mix of senior academics and a few active editors (of journals not under review) is appropriate but all should have some appreciation of both editing and peer review.
- At least one member should have direct practical (technical) experience of publishing. Persons selected as panel participants will typically be drawn from ASSAf's Membership, academic institutions, science councils and consultants.

1.4.6 Conflict of Interest

- It will be necessary to take care to avoid real or perceived conflicts.
- Committee expertise, balance and conflicts of interest are discussed at the first meeting (and may again be discussed at any later meeting) of the PRPs, and recommendations to resolve problematic issues can be brought through the SPU (Secretariat) to the ASSAf Council for possible amendment of the composition of PRPs.
- Panel members are requested to submit written conflict-of-interest statements, and are bound to report any new potential sources of conflicts of interest during the quality review process.

1.4.7 Organising the Panels

The organisation of the panel is conducted by its chair, supported by the assigned project officer. The activities related to organisation typically include:

- Planning and costing the review and panel activities.
- Obtaining completed questionnaires from each editor/equivalent (concerning publishing logistics).
- Identifying suitable peer reviewers for each journal or group of titles (concerning content quality).
- Assembling hard copies of journals or providing access to the journal online.
- Establishing panel meeting dates, assigning tasks, and collating materials.
- Preparing and distributing pre-meeting and post-meeting materials (draft version 1 reports, i.e. assembled peer reviews and editors' questionnaires, in template form).
- Taking responsibility for post-meeting activities, including draft version 2 report preparation, circulation for comment to panellists and editors, and preparation and processing of final reports.
- Evaluation of panel processes.

1.4.8 Selection of Peer Reviewers (See above)

- At least two, but preferably three, independent peer reviewers, as well as alternative reviewers must be agreed upon by the panel for each title or group of similar titles.
- Members of the CSPiSA and the ASSAf Membership in general will be given an opportunity to volunteer through a specific written call.
- Other candidates will be sought from lists of the NRF and active science council research staff.
- The process of selection is overseen by the panel chair. The final agreed appointments of willing volunteer reviewers are made by the panel itself.
- Conflicts of interest must be avoided – thus current or former editors cannot become peer reviewers of the journals concerned; this also applies to current members of editorial boards.
- The project officer must arrange access to hard or e-copies of the journals under review by independent experts.
- The core questions to be answered in each case must be provided to peer reviewers, who should be asked to ensure that these questions are all addressed in their reviews.

1.4.9 Panel Meetings and Procedures

Preparations

- The ASSAf project officer is responsible for drawing up the version 1 report on each journal. Each reviewer's answers should be consolidated under the standard headings of the draft; each input as a separate paragraph. The editor's questionnaire should also be inserted as a single item under 'questionnaire' and 'business aspects'.
- The documentation (editors' questionnaires, peer-review reports) should be sent out by email to all panellists at least two weeks prior to the panel meeting.
- Conveners of sub-sets of journals should be alerted at this time to their role at the forthcoming panel meeting – to present the journals in the set, and to make recommendations for discussion and elaboration. If unable to attend, they should be asked to submit written notes for presentation to the panel by the convener.
- Ideally, hard copies of issues of journals to be considered should be available at the meeting, but if logistically impossible, this can be dispensed with.
- A quorum of at least two-thirds of the members of PRPs must be guaranteed at any meeting, otherwise a new date must be sought.
- Panellists should be informed at the same time that hard copies of all documentation will be available at the meeting in bundles containing the completed editor's questionnaire and reviewers' reports for each journal title.
- The responsible project officer should ensure that at least two peer reviews, and preferably three, are in hand for each title by the time of the initial send-out of materials, or, by default, by the date of the meeting, for tabling on the day.

Meeting

- Journal titles should be considered in sub-sets.
- Consensus on each of the criteria should be agreed *seriatim* as per a convener's spoken summary, and noted by the project officer in attendance.
- Particular attention should be paid to reaching agreement on recommendations in respect of:
 - (a) An invitation to the publisher/editor to join the SciELO South Africa platform (if the journal is open access and meets the special criteria on frequency of publication and annual number of original peer-reviewed articles).
 - (b) A recommendation to the DHET on accreditation in its list of South African journals in which any article is considered as a valid research output.
 - (c) If not recommended, suggestions for improvement that would make it possible to make an invitation and/or recommendation under (a) or (b).
 - (d) Suggestions for improvement or enhanced function in general.

1.4.10 Post-meeting Procedures and Panel Reports

- When producing a version 2 report, the three paragraphs in each item have to be consolidated to produce a consensus version.
- A detailed and motivated draft version 2 report of each peer review panel's findings and recommendations is prepared by the assigned project officer, working closely with the panel chair.
- The project officer and convener should reach agreement on the record of the meeting in respect of all outcomes within no more than two weeks.
- The meeting record should be sent for comment and ratification to all panellists (including those who were not able to attend the meeting) and replies should be received within one week.
- The convener should prepare a final version of the meeting record and submit a copy of each journal-specific item as a privileged communication to the editor concerned for written comment within no more than two weeks.

- The convener should identify any editor's comment that might materially change the recommendations in the record and submit these to the panel for consideration and decision.
- The finally agreed-upon record should be submitted to the CSPiSA for approval before its submission to the ASSAf Council and public release.

2 Special Considerations Concerning South African Communication and Information Science Journals

This ASSAf review of Communication and Information Sciences included 14 journals, each represented by three volumes covering the period from 2013 to 2015 (some were assessed from 2012). The four-phased review process in which a total of 42 senior researchers from across the country made contributions, is described in the introductory chapter of this report and included feedback from the editors of the respective journals (which generally were very constructive, although one or two requested more detailed information on certain aspects). The feedback from editors on recent years (2016 to 2017) provided us with further updates which were considered by the panel and included where it was deemed necessary.

As could be expected the scholarly journals vary in terms of their establishment, some dating back 50 years and more. The journals covered by this review have a varied history, but mostly share the fact that they were founded by either an individual academic or a university department. In some cases, those individuals (or departments) retained the editorship for many years, thus not really providing space for renewal.

These reviews took place against the background of the significant evolution of the disciplinary fields of Communication and Information Science over the past number of years and are also agents of and subject to further evolution currently. Three interrelated dynamic factors are important in this regard.

First, and as applies to the rest of the South African research space, the socio-political changes of the past two or more decades have changed the environment and governance context in which research takes place (e.g. growing emphasis on the contribution to development, utilisation and implementation of research findings, etc.), as well as research funding priorities.

Second, the globalisation process, and more recently the Africanisation and decolonisation thrusts, have and are increasingly influencing various facets of the research agenda.

Third, the exponential rise of the Internet and alternative media, such as social media, has pervaded virtually every aspect of information and communication. The latter revolutionary process has several implications, such as the shifting of boundaries between disciplines and such boundaries becoming increasingly permeable; the nature of 'scientific' fact and other forms of knowledge and, in its wake, a growing debate about what constitutes 'scientific' research. Within this dynamic context the 14 Communication and Information Sciences journals reflected, stimulated and disseminated scholarly information during the review period.

Given the preceding rapidly evolving context, the panel was struck by the richness of the number of journals in a relatively narrow field of scholarly endeavour. The review process showed that the quality of articles was overall good to excellent, also reflecting effective peer evaluation systems. In a few instances, the need for more articles from African countries was raised. The inclusion of additional scholarly features like critical and thematic editorials, topical reviews of developments in the relevant field and book reviews were recommended in the case of those journals that did not already include such features. In view of the dynamic nature of the fields of information and communication, it was further suggested that editorial boards on occasion could consider special issues of a journal on a salient topic on the one hand, and an invited editor on the other.

The quality of technical and management aspects of most of the journals, especially important in the fields of information and communication, were highly rated as being very professional. Only a few journals were found not (yet) to comply with such high standards, e.g. in the form of abstracts not being structured in a standardised form and publishing schedules not strictly being observed. The tenure of editors, diversity of editorial boards, aging editorial board members, and the shrinking pool of reviewers were further listed as challenges. The panel has also strongly recommended the move to open access.

In general, all the journals received good qualitative reviews and came out favourably – a few journals were rated as excellent. It was recommended that all 14 journals maintain their accreditation status.

Although it is conceivable that editors could potentially experience these reviews as interference (invasive) within their terrain and functions, the purpose of the exercise in general and the review of these journals, in particular, were done with the overriding purpose of further improving these journals and thereby also contributing to the development of the respective fields of study.

Note: The period of review of these journals was from 2012/2013 to 2015, just prior to when the new DHET research outputs policy came into effect.

Panel members who are directly involved with the journals being reviewed did not contribute to the reporting or the recommendations for those particular journals.

3 Panel Members

- I. Dr Hendrik (Bok) Marais (Chairperson), Chief Executive Officer: Science & Technology Network.
- II. Prof Marijke Coetzee, Professor: Academy of Computer Science and Software Engineering, University of Johannesburg.
- III. Prof Archie Dick, Professor and Head: Department of Information Science, University of Pretoria.
- IV. Prof Anthea Garman, Professor: Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University.
- V. Prof Karin de Jager, Emeritus Associate Professor: Library and Information Studies Centre, University of Cape Town.
- VI. Prof Abiodun Salawu, Professor: Indigenous Language Media in Africa Research Entity, North-West University.

Director, Scholarly Publishing Unit: Ms Susan Veldsman
Project Officer, Scholarly Publishing Unit: Ms Desré Stead
Project Administrator, Scholarly Publishing Unit: Ms Mmaphuthi Mashiachidi

4 Consensus Reviews of Journals in the Group

4.1 Archives and Museums

4.1.1 *ESARBICA Journal*

Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *ESARBICA Journal* is the publication of the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA). Its focus is on records and archives management and the related fields of knowledge management and indigenous knowledge systems.

It provides a platform to disseminate and share research results. It also exposes South African researchers to regional and international trends in records and archives.

The primary target audience is predominantly practitioners and scholars in the ESARBICA region (Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe) and allied international scholars.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The editor is well known and respected as an academic and researcher in the field. The editorial board is well represented by members of the eastern and southern African region, as well as by members from other African countries, Europe, Canada, etc. They are all from reputable universities, archives and organisations.

Information about the editorial board members should be updated on the journal's web page.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 1982 and one issue is published annually. It is available online through African Journals Online (AJOL): <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/esarjo/index>. According to the journal, 85% of institutions in the ESARBICA region receive the journal. It is accessed from 40 different countries, of which 30 are African countries. It is pre-scheduled to appear on a given date, however, issues do not appear regularly on the scheduled date. There were no significant interruptions.

Over the three-year review period, 32 full articles and four short communications have been published. The number of full article manuscripts received over the same period was 38 and ten short communications were also received. The rejection rate is 15%; 2% were rejected without peer review and 13% were reject-

ed after peer review. There were 21 peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Two peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. They are selected by their expertise in the field and should there be no conflict of interest. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. The articles are sent back to the original reviewer for approval before final consideration. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is not assessed, and information is not captured in a database. Twenty-five reviewers were used in one year over the review period; 12 of these reviewers had non-South African addresses. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is 12 months in print, and six months online.

The editor, who has been running the journal for 12 years was not appointed competitively, but through a nomination process. The period of appointment is indefinite. Members of the editorial board have been in office between one and ten years. The board handles peer reviews and advises on editorial policies and practices. The editorial advisory board (EAB) has been in office for two years. Board members are elected through a nomination process and are nominated from inside and outside the country. The board provides specific topical expertise.

The journal has 'Instructions to Authors' but plans to formulate a policy on editorial guidelines. There is no conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's guidelines do not align with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The journal does publish *errata* if necessary.

ESARBICA Journal publishes value-adding features such as critical editorials and critical topical reviews. Approximately 99% of the pages in each issue represents peer-reviewed original material.

[Note: Two new editors were elected in 2017.]

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: There is a good proportion of average to high-quality articles. However, it seems that the *ESARBICA Journal* also accepts contributions by less experienced authors which is commendable. There is a good number of articles per annum.

The topics of the articles cover a wide range of related themes, but the emphasis is on records management rather than actual archival practices. There is a focus on local problems, but many articles also focus on general issues and theory. Most of the articles are by authors across South Africa and Zimbabwe. The journal serves a particular region, but the published articles are skewed to a handful of countries representing the region. There should be a clear distinction between full-length articles and shorter contributions.

Keywords are useful for Internet searching. The online version only gave access to articles, one at a time and the table of contents did not reflect any additional scholarly features other than the odd editorial.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: There are English abstracts for all articles, however these require copy-editing. There was one *erratum* observed in the volumes under review. Harvard referencing is used and the journal does provide guidelines, however in some articles there are inconsistencies in the application of the prescribed style.

In general, presentation is good, however there are typos; tables and other illustrations are of poor quality.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: *ESARBICA Journal* provides a useful vehicle for students to publish their work. It is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus, although more theoretically innovative and challenging contributions would be welcome.

It is a niche publication and there are no other journals covering the same geographical and content area. It was generally felt that it stands up reasonably well in comparison to leading international journals. One reviewer felt that the journal is not on the same level as leading international journals in the field, although it plays an important role in promoting the discipline.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The ESARBICA and the National Archives of South Africa (NASA) are the owners and publishers of this journal. The regular print run of the journal is 300 copies per issue. The production and distribution are not outsourced. The journal carries unpaid advertising; it does not receive financial sponsorship.

The number of paying subscribers is 55, of which 45 are organisations as opposed to individuals. There are no page fees or article-processing charges. The journal currently uses a manual system for the management of editorial workflow, however there are plans to move to an online system. Access is free online but with password protection and it is also part of a commercial e-publication service.

There have not been any offers to purchase the journal from multi-national publishers. ESARBICA holds the copyright. In terms of licensing agreements with authors, they may use their articles for educational purposes, in books edited by themselves and they may load articles on to their websites and institutional repository, but permission for e-publication must be obtained from ESARBICA.

The journal has been indexed by Elton B Stephens Company (EBSCOhost) Research Databases, Google Scholar, IBSS, and ProQuest's Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA). Impact factors have not been determined. There are altmetric indicators. 'Front details' such as titles, authors, email addresses, affiliations and English abstracts are mandatory for papers. The journal was independently peer-reviewed before by ProQuest in 2013.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The evidence suggests that management of the journal needs enhancement. Few policies are in place. The role of the board is unclear and it seems that despite the editor's indications of such, the panel has observed that board members are not active in oversight. Fresh energy at editorial level seems overdue. Perhaps the society should consider a marketing project, as its present subscriber-base is much too small. Attracting more international contributions will also assist in this regard.

Contributions need to be sought actively: in the realm of theory, and from neglected countries in the region.

The inclusion of scholarly features especially book reviews could be considered.

There should be more professionalism in terms of language used. Proper citation practice and structured abstracts should be applied consistently. The quality of tables and other illustrations could be improved.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO South Africa platform provided that it becomes open access.**
- III. **The editor and editorial board should consider improving the management of the journal and its professionalism.**

4.1.2 South African Museums Association Bulletin (SAMAB)

Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *South African Museums Association Bulletin (SAMAB)* provides a forum for the publication of peer-reviewed articles that promote the discussion, debate, dissemination and exchange of information on aspects of museology, with particular, but not exclusive reference to South Africa.

The SAMAB has been the platform through which museum professionals and practitioners have shared their research and experiences since 1936 to date. The journal is positioned within the South African museum sector and is the only journal dedicated to the dissemination of research of this nature. As such, it makes a valuable contribution to the discipline of museology and related disciplines.

The SAMAB aims to focus specifically on issues within and pertaining to museums. The SAMAB enables the communication of current issues, practices and policies regarding collections management, curatorial discourse, museum administration, research, exhibitions, visitor studies, community engagement, education, conservation and other topics relevant to the museum sector. The journal promotes rapid communication amongst academics, practitioners and other persons who are interested in contributing to the discourse of disciplines residing within museology.

The SAMAB is available to all paid-up members of the South African Museums Association (SAMA). Local and international subscribers access the journal through the South African Bibliographic and Information Network (Sabinet).

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The editor is a highly rated researcher of national standing and the rest of the editorial team are practising museologists and subject experts. The editorial board does reflect national and international representation. There are representatives from South African universities and museums, as well as independent heritage practitioners on the editorial board.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

SAMAB was established in 1936 and it is published annually. It is available online via Sabinet: <http://journals.co.za/content/journal/samab/browse>. The pre-scheduled issues appear regularly on given dates. In 2011/2012, there was a significant interruption due to financial challenges, when the journal was not able to publish the conference papers of the given year.

Twelve full articles and 12 conference papers were published in two issues over the three-year review period. The number of manuscripts received over the same period totalled 25 full articles and 14 conference papers. Seven manuscripts were rejected without peer review and six after peer reviewing. There were no peer-reviewed papers by authors from outside the country.

A total of two peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. They are selected based on their area of expertise. 'Double-blind' peer reviews are conducted. The journal rigorously implements valid reviewer critique and article improvement. Peer reviewers do not receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is not assessed. The number of peer reviewers used in one year is 24, of which two had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's record system. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is between four to five months.

The editor has held the position for three years. The appointment which was for a three-year period was not competitive. The editorial board conducts peer reviews and advises on editorial policies and practices. The length of office is two years and appointments are not competitive. Members are appointed from both inside and outside South Africa.

While the editorial guidelines are not aligned to the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*, the practice of the editorial team is aligned to the principles in the code. There is no conflict-of-interest policy. There is no policy for *errata* but these are published if necessary.

The journal does not publish any value-adding features. Approximately 90% of the pages in each issue represents peer-reviewed original material.

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: The quality of the articles varies between highly academic papers to practical or technical aspects. The range of articles covers aspects from all over South Africa by South African authors.

There is a contextually good number of articles although the majority of the articles are conference papers.

Although it is stated that SAMAB is the only journal for museology-related articles, it is somewhat debatable as a variety of other accredited journals such as the *SA Journal for Cultural History*, to name but one, regularly publishes museum and heritage-related articles.

There are no additional scholarly features.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: Some volumes have English language abstracts as well as keywords, but there is one volume where articles lack abstracts. There were no *errata* in the volumes under review. Citation practice varies and not all articles are accompanied by a bibliography or references.

Presentation is clear but layout varies (columns or full-page articles). Illustrations and their captions are presented in various ways, but sources are acknowledged.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: It is a good stimulus for young researchers as it reflects both practice and developments as well as possible social impact of changes.

As with all heritage and museum-related matters in South Africa, funding is a major obstacle and the lack thereof is often the reason for the abortion of many a project or product. It would therefore probably be unfair to compare SAMAB with leading international journals. Other international museum journals are also more specialised, concentrating on management or restoration.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The SAMA is the owner and publisher of the journal. There is a regular print run of 50 copies. Printing is outsourced. The journal does not carry advertising and is not supported financially. However, there was a once-off financial sponsorship from the South African Post Office to assist with the 2016 volume of SAMAB. There are approximately 63 mainly institutional subscribers. There are no page charges or article-processing charges.

The editorial workflow is managed manually. It is not accessible free online. It is part of a commercial e-publication service through Sabinet.

There have been no offers to purchase by multi-national publishers. Copyright reverts to SAMAB but there is no licensing agreement with authors.

The journal has not been indexed and does not have an impact factor. Altmetric indicators are available for a fee from Sabinet, however the journal has opted not to pursue this option. Sabinet does supply statistics of logins to the journal.

'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory.

This is the journal's first independent peer review.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The journal is partly scholarly and partly a bulletin of the Museums Association.

The editor should consider publishing conference papers separately or make these available online. Alternatively, the papers could be edited and turned into fully cited articles which adhere to the guidelines.

The SAMAB guidelines for authors as published in Volume 35 should be used as a starting point and guide to all prospective contributors. Articles should be accompanied by structured abstracts. There should be consistency in citation practice, and clear instructions for citation and referencing.

Layout should be standardised to the use of columns or full pages.

The inclusion of additional scholarly features could be considered, such as editorials in each issue and book reviews.

It would be good if the journal could add a section about exhibitions. Discussing and highlighting an exhibition or the designer could explain the exhibition, the thoughts behind the design and these could be illustrated with photos.

The editor should consider moving to an open access system for the journal to be more accessible and visible.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO South Africa platform provided that it becomes open access.**
- III. **The editor and editorial board should seriously consider the recommendations in this review in order for the journal to be deemed as scholarly.**

4.2 Communication Sciences

4.2.1 *Communicare: Journal for Communication Sciences in Southern Africa*

Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

Communicare: Journal for Communication Sciences in Southern Africa is a paradigm-neutral accredited,

national academic journal for the communication sciences in southern Africa. Since its inception more than three decades ago, the academic project of *Communicare* has provided a platform for local scholarly reflection on issues of human communication, regardless of the perspective or context. The journal publishes original articles of both a theoretical-conceptual and an empirical nature employing a wide range of methodological approaches.

Communicare aims to serve as a point of reference for local academic debate and geo-specific theorising, and specifically aims to complement (or counter) global perspectives by amplifying and consolidating regional research and scholarship.

Communicare publishes original articles in a wide range of communication sub-disciplines and related disciplines including organisational communication, strategic communication, marketing communication, corporate communication, development communication, social change, political communication, gender communication, post-colonial studies, identity politics and politics of everyday life, celebrity studies, visual communication, internet studies, gaming, digital communication, new media, film studies, media studies, cultural studies, popular culture, and journalism.

Submissions are invited from established and emerging researchers, provided that submissions have local (South African or regional) relevance and/or address the core aims of the journal. The journal has a focus on communication sciences, which is by its nature transdisciplinary and has multiple sub-disciplines. The particular focus of the journal is on social praxis.

Communicare is made available to South African Communication Association (SACOMM) members and is also accessed by readers in 21 different countries.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The journal has a high national disciplinary reputation. The editor is a respected scholar and is one of the few communication scholars in the country who has a broad, unbiased paradigmatic outlook on the field. The editorial board is composed of both local and international experts from various institutions and sub-disciplines of communication science, although there may be a need for rotation of members every three to five years.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

Communicare was established in 1981 and publishes issues biannually. It can be accessed online: http://reference.sabinet.co.za/sa_epublication/comcare. During the period of January 2013 to July 2015, there was a total of 25 881 views and 6 385 downloads. The online journal is accessed from 21 different countries worldwide including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Finland, Germany, Israel, Netherlands, Taiwan, United Kingdom (UK), and United States of America (USA). African countries other than South Africa include Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.

Issues are pre-scheduled to appear in July and December and issues do appear regularly on the scheduled dates. There have not been any significant interruptions.

During the three-year review period, 32 full articles were published, as well as 25 empirical and seven conceptual review articles. Between 2012 and 2015, 88 manuscripts were received. The overall rejection rate was 64%, of which half was rejected without peer review and the other half was rejected after peer review. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was four.

Three peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. Peer reviewers are selected based on their expert knowledge in the field and peer referral. The peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented.

Due to a lack of resources, peer reviewers do not receive follow-up information. However, reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. In 2014, 29 peer reviewers were used of which only one had an address outside South Africa. Peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is between three and six months.

The editor, who has been running the journal for five years, was competitively appointed within the School of Communication. Since the publication of the journal resides in the School of Communication, the internal publication committee made the appointment. There was no fixed period of appointment however, the previous appointment was from 1992 to 2003.

Members of the editorial board are not appointed competitively. The length of office is five years and

members are from both inside and outside the country. The board handles peer reviews in some instances where they have expert knowledge that is relevant in terms of the topic of the manuscript to be reviewed. They also advise on editorial policies and practices, and provide specific topical expertise. The EAB is part of the editorial publication committee.

Editorial/policy guidelines are published in the front pages of the journal, as well as on the journal's website. Conflict-of-interest is also included in the guidelines which are aligned with ASSAF's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. No errata have occurred but are published if necessary.

Critical editorials are published but there are no other value-adding features. All the pages in each issue represent peer-reviewed original material.

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: *Communicare* is regarded as one of a few journals to publish interdisciplinary research in communication. The articles are from a wide range of sub-disciplines in communication, and the quality is of a very high standard, displaying rigorous conceptual or empirical evidence. This is a good sample of the best work done in southern Africa. The journal focuses on issues with a local and regional relevance.

The authors represent a relatively wide spectrum of local institutions, but more international authors could further raise the profile of the journal. The rejection rate is 64% and the double-blind review process seems to work well.

No additional scholarly features are included in the journal.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: Proper English abstracts accompany all articles. No errata were observed in the volumes under review. Citation practice is good and citations are representative with a good spread of authors being cited both locally and internationally.

The design, layout, style, and copy-editing are of a professional standard.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: *Communicare* is certainly suitable as an authoritative source of knowledge and reference for local graduate students and novice researchers to further their studies or careers. The journal does not provide a separate outlet for emerging researchers; they have to compete with established researchers to get their work published.

The journal compares very well with international journals in the field of communication science in terms of quality of content.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The journal is published by the SACOMM, School of Communication at the University of Johannesburg. The regular print run of the journal is 200 copies per issue. The production and distribution are not outsourced. The journal does not carry advertising and does not receive financial sponsorship.

Communicare had only six paying organisational subscribers and five paying library subscribers in 2015. The majority of other subscribers on the mailing list are affiliated SACOMM members. The journal is distributed free of charge to individual SACOMM members. There are page and article-processing charges. The editorial workflow is managed through manual systems and loading of articles online. Issues from 1999 are part of Sabinet Africa's ePublications and are therefore subscription-based. Issues up to 1998 are available on Sabinet African Journal Archive. There have been offers to purchase from multi-national publishers but details were not specified. Copyright is vested in the authors but there are no licensing agreements with authors.

The journal has been indexed by China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), EBSCOhost, Exlibris, Google Scholar, Online Computer Library Centre (OCLC), and Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers. An impact factor has not been established for the journal. Altmetric indicators are determined through Sabinet. It is mandatory to have 'front details' for papers and English abstracts. It has not been independently peer-reviewed before.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: *Communicare* is commended for being a sound academic journal for more than 30 years. It serves as an important mouthpiece to South African scholars and remains a good quality reference for both students and scholars alike. The wide-ranging paradigms and disciplines covered in one journal such as *Communicare* is indeed a rare addition for scholars and students.

The same editorial board has been in position for some time now. The journal may consider including a few new and younger members and could also recruit members from other countries in the region.

The editor should consider the feasibility of moving to an online system for submission and review.

The journal would benefit from the inclusion of scholarly features such as book reviews and information on scholarly associations and conferences.

It is suggested that the frequency of publication be increased to publishing quarterly should the resources become available.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO South Africa platform provided that it becomes open access.**
- III. **The editor should seriously consider broadening the editorial board and including younger board members.**
- IV. **The panel commends *Communicare* for being a good-quality journal.**

4.2.2 *Communitas*

Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The focus and scope of the journal is on community communication and information impact. The discipline is communication sciences but an interdisciplinary focus is also accommodated.

It has a unique focus and scope with regard to empirical development communication issues.

The primary target audience is predominantly southern African scholars.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The editor-in-chief, at the time of the review, was internationally recognised. The editorial board members can be described as largely South African with a good national disciplinary reputation. This can probably be attributed to the local South African community focus of the journal, with the vast majority of articles dealing with topics reflecting the community issues in the South and southern African context.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 1994 and it is published as one issue annually. It is available online at the following address: journals.ufs.ac.za or via this direct link: <http://journals.ufs.ac.za/index.php/com>. Archived volumes from 2006 are also available online. Issues are pre-scheduled and appear regularly before the end of October. There was a significant interruption when the editor left the journal in the 1990s, but there were no further interruptions in publication since 2000.

Over the three-year review period, 33 full articles were published. The number of manuscripts received over the same period was 51. There were eight manuscripts that were rejected without peer review and six after peer review. There were no peer-reviewed papers that had authors from outside the country.

Two peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. The selection of peer reviewers is based on specialisation of expertise. Peer review is conducted 'blind'. Reviewer critique and article improvement are rigorously implemented when it is valid or reasonable. When major revisions are recommended, peer reviewers receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database.

In 2015, 15 South African peer reviewers were used. Peer-review reports were accessibly retained. On average, the period between the receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is five months.

The founding editor has been in office since 1994 and the editor-in-chief from 2000 to 2016. Both editors were not appointed competitively and have no specified period of appointment. The editorial board handles peer review, advises on editorial policies and practices, and provides specific topical expertise. Members are not appointed competitively and there is no specified period of appointment. Members are appointed from both inside and outside the country.

There are editorial guidelines available online at journals.ufs.ac.za or via the direct link: <http://journals.ufs.ac.za/index.php/com/navigationMenu/view/policies>. The guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The journal's conflict-of-interest policy is available here: <http://journals.ufs.ac.za/index.php/com/navigationMenu/view/policies>. *Errata* are published if they occur. All pages in each issue represent peer-reviewed original material.

Content:

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: This is an annual journal and the number of articles is around 12 per issue which is an adequate number. The articles in the journal are generally of a good quality and depth – indeed many could have appeared in international journals. The authors are predominantly based in South Africa. Contributions are from institutions across the country, although in the volumes under review, there were possibly a disproportionate number by authors from the University of the Free State (UFS) where the journal is published.

The focus of *Communitas* is local and regional, covering a wide range of topics and disciplines and in so doing renders a valuable contribution to the understanding of and insight into wider community issues seen from different perspectives.

No additional scholarly features are included. This journal does not have an editorial, scholarly correspondence or even book reviews to link previous and current discussions in the journal. The opportunity at hand is lost, particularly if the journal is seen as a national reference for the field.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: Every published article is accompanied by a well-formulated English abstract. There were no *errata* in the volumes under review. The citation style and practices comply with other academic journals.

The presentation, design, layout and style are good and compare favourably with other South African journals.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: This journal reads well and provides an excellent publication outlet, as suggested by the fact that it contains contributions by novice researchers. It is an ideal vehicle for young and upcoming local academics to develop their publishing careers and it provides a launching pad for moving into the international domain.

With the exception of its conscious focus on local issues and themes, the *Communitas* journal compares well with international academic journals. Although it is not an international publication, it could be transformed into one in terms of scope and interest should the editorial board be interested in doing so.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The Unit for Community Communication in the Department of Communication Science, UFS, is the owner of the journal and the publisher is SUN Media, Bloemfontein. Production is outsourced to SUN Media. During the period under review, 100 copies were printed.

The journal does not carry advertising, nor does it receive financial sponsorship. There are also no paying subscribers. Authors are charged a fee to publish in the journal. There is an online management system and articles are loaded onto the website. The journal has been open access since 2006. Copyright is reserved and there is a licensing agreement with the authors whereby submissions should not be made elsewhere and *Communitas* accepts no responsibility or liability for any plagiarism committed.

The journal is not indexed and has no impact factor. Altmetric indicators have not been determined. There are mandatory 'front details' for papers and English abstracts. The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

[Note: As of 2017 the journal is fully online, and no hard copies are printed. Since the review was completed the journal is now available on the Open Journal System (OJS) platform at this address: journals.ufs.ac.za. The website has been improved to include information on the editorial board and authors' names are now mentioned in the article titles.]

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: A slightly increased emphasis on quantitative, explanatory or mixed method research contributions could add value to the scope of methodological contributions to the journal.

The editor could explore the possibility and strive to realise the potential of the journal to become international in scope.

The editor should consider the introduction of additional scholarly features such as topical reviews, commentaries, book reviews and scholarly correspondence which can enhance the journal's social impact. Editorials and other scholarly views would be welcomed, however, particularly by an editor of such a high-standing reputation as well as other members of the editorial board.

The process should move to an online submission and reviewing system, at least via e-mail.

The website could be improved to include some information currently only available in the printed version (names of people on the editorial board, for instance). It would also be appropriate if authors were mentioned and not only the article titles (please refer to Business aspects).

Improvement on metadata, particularly for research engines and citation manager software is another worthy improvement. Consider the introduction of article-level metrics (such as views and downloads) which authors are able to obtain from their article's landing page after publication.

The journal should try to avoid editorial staff, especially the editor, publishing in their own journal (in reference to the period under review). If they do publish in their own journal, it should be peer reviewed externally. There is great appreciation for the fact that accredited journals which provide an outlet for community and development communication contributions with local relevance are limited in number.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. The journal should be invited to join the SciELO South Africa platform.**
- III. The editor should seriously consider the recommended improvements listed in this review.**

4.3 Information and Communication Technology

4.3.1 African Journal of Information and Communication

Focus and scope:

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *African Journal of Information and Communication (AJIC)*, is an accredited academic journal. The journal invites research on a broad range of themes and topics from academics, authors and postgraduate students across the African continent, and from a broader authorship. These themes and topics include: trends in electronic communications policy and regulation on the African continent; competition in African telecoms infrastructure and services markets; broadcasting policy and regulation in Africa; broadcast digital migration; spectrum regulation; understanding the African Internet economy; advances in digital applications and services in African countries; advances in e-commerce in Africa; advances in e-government in Africa; trends in cyber-security, digital innovation and digital transformation in African economies and society.

The journal has an inter-disciplinary focus, with respect to the disciplines underlying policy, regulation and digital transformation of economy and society and with respect to the research problems studied and the research methodologies applied to these problems. While the journal focuses on the broad field of digital transformation, it selects themes for publication on an annual basis.

In over a decade of publication, the journal has provided a space for South African academics and postgraduate students to publish contributions based on research in a field that is relatively recent compared to other fields in this broader knowledge group of the communication, information and knowledge systems sciences.

This is currently the only South Africa-based journal that offers a scholarly publishing focus on the transformations that arise from the deployment of electronic communications, information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructures and digital applications; the availability of human resources for electronic communications and Internet-based activity; the introduction or absence of policy, law and regulation for the electronic communications and Internet era; and the wide range of applications in e-commerce, e-government, e-society including social media. The primary target audience of the journal is the research community on the African continent, currently limited to Anglophone countries. The journal shifted its focus from southern Africa to the African continent in 2011 and has for the past four years done the initial work to attract African scholars to publish here.

The journal is published online as an open access, free to download journal, under a Creative Commons license. The journal issue is made available online in three formats (i) individual articles (ii) online full issue (iii)

online print-on-demand format full issue.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The editorial team/editors have high national and international reputations. The editorial board is of good international standing and interdisciplinary in nature. Since the editors are mainly based at the University of the Witwatersrand, the journal may potentially be seen as an in-house journal. Fortunately, very few articles are published by authors from the same institute which eliminates this concern.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

AJIC was established in 2000 with an annual publication frequency. The journal is accessible online: <https://www.wits.ac.za/linkcentre/ajic/> and <http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/19251> and via Sabinet. The journal has received contributions from the following African countries amongst others: Egypt, Ethiopia, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, indicating that the journal is read by academics in these countries.

In the current phase of development, articles are published online as they become ready for publication during the year and therefore, there are no pre-scheduled publication dates. The full journal issue is compiled and published before the end of the year. There are also no available scheduled dates for issues to appear.

There was a significant interruption in publication in 2009 when the founding editor left the university and it was only possible to publish the next issue in 2010. In 2014, the proposed annual issue was not published as the journal undertook a transition from a single annual publication to a multiple annual publication. Arising from this transition, three thematic issues were published in 2015 as indicated above.

Over the three-year review period, 23 full articles, four review articles, four book reviews and two other guest editor overviews were published. The number of manuscripts received included 45 full articles, three review articles, four book reviews and two overview articles. The number of manuscripts rejected without peer review totalled 14 and the number of rejected manuscripts after peer review was eight. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author beyond the borders of South Africa in 2015 was 25%.

There are usually one or two peer reviewers who are approached for each submitted manuscript. The selection of the peer reviewers is based on their knowledge and expertise on the particular content of the scholarly contribution in the article, as well as on the basis of their standing in the field and their own publications. Peer reviews are conducted in a 'blind way'. Peer-review comments are addressed prior to publication. Failure to adequately address review comments leads to rejection. Review comments and the authors' revisions are scrutinised by the corresponding editor prior to a publication decision. A peer-review template is provided to the peer reviewer, who is encouraged to offer detailed comments.

In addition to peer review, the editorial team, including guest editors, undertake a rigorous editorial review process prior to and post peer review, providing annotated comments on the article and general editorial guidance to authors, noting many of the items raised in the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The journal has not consistently provided follow-up information to reviewers and this guidance will be considered in forthcoming issues. Reviewer performance has also not been systematically assessed thus far, though the journal does distinguish between reviewers who have applied their minds and reviewers who have not. Information pertaining to the review process, including the name of the authors, reviewers, articles and abstract, is recorded in a simple spreadsheet for each journal issue. An assessment of the performance of the reviewers can be included in this spreadsheet.

In 2013, 16 peer reviewers were used and 31% of those had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports were accessibly retained in records and the average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication, both in print and online, is 12 months.

The editor took over as corresponding editor when the founding editor left the university in August 2008. The appointment was not competitive and there is no set period. Members of the EAB conduct peer review of individual manuscripts. However, peer review is conducted by a broader range of academic and scientific reviewers, not by these members alone. There have only been a few changes in editorial policies and practices since 2008, mainly in relation to the focus and scope of the journal, in which the editorial board was involved. There are members from both inside and outside South Africa. Members provide specific topical expertise.

Editorial guidelines are published on the website. There is no conflict-of-interest policy. There are scholarly features such as critical editorials and case notes. The percentage of pages in each issue representing peer-reviewed original material is approximately 75%.

[Note: Google Analytics statistics show that there was a total of 571 visitors in one month in 2017.]

Content (Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: The journal maintains a good standard with regard to article editing and the general quality of the articles is high. The number of articles per annum is satisfactory even though there seemed to be an interruption in publication in 2014.

The journal represents good-quality research done in South Africa, but not necessarily the highest quality work. Articles focus on topics relevant to South Africa and the African continent within well-chosen thematic issues. There is representation from authors from South Africa. The representation from other African (international) countries can be improved from the number of international authors currently represented. The editorials are useful and well written. The journal's impressive book review profile is a useful feature worth encouraging.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: Abstracts are informative, concise and well-written for all articles. There is no publication of *errata*, but the policy of updating online papers is seen to be in order. There is good citation practice. The presentation is good. Since 2015, the design and layout has much improved and the issues are quite attractive in format. Images are all attributed correctly; an important consideration for an open access journal released under a Creative Commons license.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal plays an important role in the development of local graduates as emerging academics are publishing their research in the journal, in addition to providing a publishing space for experienced researchers.

International comparability is challenging. The journal can be compared favourably with several similar international journals such as the *African Journal of Information Systems (AJIS)* which is published in the USA. The level of academic rigour and quality is at least on par or even better than *AJIS*; however, *AJIC* pays more attention to layout.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The owner and publisher of the journal is the Learning Information Networking Knowledge Centre (LINK) located at the University of Witwatersrand. The production was outsourced until 2015 but was brought in-house from 2016. The journal does not receive any financial sponsorships. There are no paying subscribers because the journal is available free online. There are no page charges or article-processing charges. The journal also does not use paid or unpaid advertising.

The management of editorial workflow is self-managed by the use of electronic files, spreadsheets and email. The editor has since commented that the journal will be exploring the use of an online journal management system in consultation with Sabinet, once the service is made available. There have been no offers to purchase from multi-national publishers.

In terms of copyright arrangements, there is open access under a Creative Commons Licence. The articles are considered to be the joint intellectual property of the journal owner and of the authors for the purposes of publishing under an open access licence.

The journal is indexed in Google Scholar but no other indices, therefore there is no impact factor. Google Analytics is used to determine altmetric indicators. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. It has not been independently peer-reviewed before.

[Note: In 2015 and 2016, three thematic issues were produced per annum. In 2017, a single non-thematic issue was produced.]

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The *AJIC* journal should be encouraged to diversify its editorial board to protect the journal from the possible perception of bias.

The journal is applauded for the move from a South African to an African profile, as well as gaining a more interdisciplinary flavour. However, the journal should actively try to solicit more contributions from authors outside the country by possibly publishing the call for papers more extensively and linking with African interdisciplinary conferences.

Given the high-quality articles, the journal could publish additional issues per annum and should continue the trend of publishing relevant themes.

The visibility of the journal could be raised by publishing calls for papers on relevant mailing lists linking with current conferences for example.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal is already on the SciELO South Africa platform.**
- III. **The editor should seriously consider the recommended improvements listed in this review.**
- IV. **In addition, the panel compliments this small but high-quality scholarly journal that covers a set of well-chosen themes on developments in this discipline in South Africa and elsewhere on the continent. The journal plays an important role in the development of local graduates and is a valuable resource for more experienced researchers.**

4.3.2 South African Computer Journal

Focus and scope:

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *South African Computer Journal* is an accredited specialist ICT academic journal, publishing research articles, technical reports and communications in English in the computer science and information systems domains.

Its primary focus is computer-related research (computer science and information systems), but interdisciplinary work that is based on these topics is also accepted. It provides an outlet for research of greater interest to South Africans as opposed to an international audience.

While it is intended primarily as a local forum for research publications, contributions from scholars from other countries are most welcome to submit articles for review.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The editor of the journal is active and efficient. The associate editors, who make the final decisions on article acceptance, are well-respected academics and two are international. The editorial board has more local members, with some prominent international members.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was first established in 1979 as a *Quaestiones Informaticae* but the title was changed to the *South African Computer Journal (SACJ)* in 1989. Two issues are published per year, with occasional additional special issues. The journal is accessible online at: <http://sacj.cs.uct.ac.za/>. The most downloaded paper had over 17 000 downloads, and 28 papers published over the three-year period have had over 1 000 downloads. Pre-scheduled issues appear in July and December and appear regularly on the scheduled dates. There was a significant interruption in 2011 when only one issue was published instead of two.

There were 31 full articles and one viewpoint published over the three-year review period. Five manuscripts were rejected without being peer reviewed, while 62 manuscripts were rejected after being peer reviewed. There were two papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address. Usually four peer reviewers are approached to review each submitted manuscript. The peer reviewers are selected through databases and contacts. Peer reviews are conducted in a 'double-blind way'. There is rigorous implementation of valid reviewer critique and article improvement. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information only if the paper is sent for another round of review.

Editors rate reviewers and this information is stored in the database. In 2014, 27 peer reviewers were used, of which three had non-South African addresses. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in their records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online is 373 days.

The editor, who has been in office for five years was not appointed competitively. It is a five-year period of appointment. The editorial board does not handle peer reviews but advises on editorial policies and practices. Members were not appointed competitively. The current editorial board has been in office since July 2015. The appointment is for a period of five years. Members are from both inside and outside the country. They provide specific topical expertise.

The editorial guidelines can be found online at: <http://sacj.cs.uct.ac.za/index.php/sacj/about/editorialPolicies>. The guidelines are not aligned with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and*

Peer Review. There is no formal policy, but authors are required to disclose all conflicts of interest. The journal publishes *errata* or *corrigenda*. The editorial panel reserves the right to publish corrections if the authors do not and in serious cases a paper may be retracted.

The journal contains value-adding features, such as critical editorials and a few critical topical reviews. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material ranges between 90 and 99%.

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: The quality of articles is good to high and many could have been accepted by international journals. The number of articles per annum is sufficient, with two volumes per year that contain a good number of papers. However, the number of annual papers has not been consistent over the past years (2013 to 2015).

The work published is very diverse; the papers do provide a good sample of research done in South Africa. Local computing problems are well represented in this journal. There are articles by both local and international authors, though the number of international authors is very small. There are regular editorials. Letters and viewpoints are only published occasionally since they are rarely submitted.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: Proper English abstracts are published. *Errata* are published when appropriate. The citation practice used is good. Presentation, design, layout and style are all exceptional. Much attention is given to copy-editing and type-setting.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal fills a unique gap in the general research arena in South Africa and, as such, plays an important role. It is suitable to encourage local students and graduates to publish and plays an important role for established researchers. The connection of this journal to the South African Institute of Computer Scientists and Information Technologists (SAICSIT), and the national annual conference, is important in this regard.

As the journal is a very general computing journal, it is very difficult to compare the *SACJ* to international journals as they are more domain-specific, but it can perhaps be compared to a journal such as *Acta Informatica*.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The owner of the journal is the SAICSIT. It is an online journal and production and distribution is handled in-house. The journal does not carry advertising and it is not financially sponsored. Since it is open access and membership or passwords are not required to access, there are no accurate figures on readership nor any concept of subscribers.

Subscribers can access the journal through Sabinet. The number of organisations as opposed to individuals is undetermined. There is an article-processing charge of R6 000 per paper. An online management system through OJS is used for the management of editorial workflow.

The journal is open access and is also part of the Sabinet's e-publication service. There have been no offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The authors own copyright and cede the right of first publishing. The journal has a licensing agreement with authors (Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 License (CC BY-NC 4.0)).

The journal has been indexed by the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, Scopus and Ulrich's. Altmetric indicators have yet to be determined via Sabinet.

'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. The journal has not been independently peer-reviewed before.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The *SACJ* should continue to cater for a wide range of computing-related topics as South Africa cannot sustain journals that are too specialised.

The editorial board could be extended to provide a broader pool of researchers who would encourage their colleagues/peers and students to submit to the journal.

The journal should provide more opportunities for young researchers to gain experience and confidence by providing a section for PhD students. Even though these submissions may not be considered as full papers, a way should be found to try to subsidise such an effort.

More participation from researchers of all South African, as well as southern African universities should actively be pursued.

The journal could provide the download of a full issue as one PDF document from the journal's website.

Non-article contributions, such as book reviews, should be extended.

The journal could consider reducing the article-processing charges on a case-by-case basis.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal is already on the SciELO South Africa platform.**
- III. **The panel compliments the journal for featuring high-quality papers covering a wide range of computing-related topics in South Africa and internationally. It provides a unique gap in the research arena in South Africa and provides a stepping stone for young academics, as well as more established researchers.**

4.4 Library and Information Science

4.4.1 Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa

Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa* (NLSA) was established in 1946 primarily to promote the collections of the NLSA and other repositories. Articles are of interest to a wide range of readers interested in historical, cultural, literary or political issues relating to southern Africa.

The focus of the journal is on "historical and other articles related to the library". It is an interdisciplinary journal serving the broad humanities research community in South Africa. The primary target audience is local and international. It is sent to libraries worldwide.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The editor is an internationally respected scholar and historian, and the editorial board consists of first-rate scholars of both national and international standing.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 1996 as the *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa*. It is now published biannually under the current title. Pre-scheduled issues appear regularly in June and December. There have not been any significant interruptions. The NLSA entered into an agreement with EBSCOhost in 1995. Issues dating from 1995 to 2014 may be consulted on the EBSCOhost platform under the original title and from 2015 to date, under the current title.

Over the three-year review period, 30 full articles and 20 book reviews were received. Five full articles were rejected without peer review and there were no rejected manuscripts after peer review. Around 50 papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

At least two peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. Peer reviewers are selected for their knowledge or because of their membership of the advisory board. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. There is quite rigorous implementation of valid reviewer critique and article improvement. Peer reviewers do not receive follow-up information. Reviewers' performance is not assessed. Six peer reviewers were used in one year of the review period. Three reviewers had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are not retained. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is six months.

The editor, who has been running the journal for three years, was not appointed competitively. The edito-

rial board was also not appointed competitively and the period of appointment is indefinite. Members are appointed from inside and outside the country and provide specific topical expertise. They occasionally handle peer reviews.

Editorial guidelines are available on request but there is no formal conflict-of-interest policy. The editorial guidelines have not been aligned with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. Errata are published if necessary. The journal contains value-adding features, such as critical editorials and analytical book reviews.

Fifty per cent of the pages in each issue represents peer-reviewed original material.

[Note: Since the review, the board has been diversified to be more inclusive. Information on board members will be made available electronically. The journal is already addressing its subscriber base and has a strategy to attract more international contributions. Further online visibility is currently being addressed, e.g. via the National Library's website and through social media.]

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: The quality of the journal is generally good. The two issues with eight to ten articles per issue in 2015 would be a standard the journal could attempt to sustain.

This journal is more of a bulletin than a journal and its focus is on South African history rather than on information science. It would serve well as a historical journal. It strongly focuses on the southern parts of the country, particularly the Western Cape. The articles are mostly written by South African authors, although a few authors of notable international standing have been evident.

Book reviews at the back of the bulletin are thorough and written by experienced and reputable researchers. There are informative editorials, expert critical reviews and notes on a regular basis. The images included in the publication (including the covers of books reviewed) are most appropriate.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: Abstracts are not provided. There were no *errata* in the volumes under review. Citation practice is generally good.

Articles are often illustrated by colour plates of rare historical illustrations, as well as black and white prints. There is always proper acknowledgement of sources.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: The bulletin is useful for younger scholars and researchers in librarianship, as well as South African history.

The journal carries articles very similar to other local history journals. It is difficult to compare the bulletin with international journals.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The regular print run of the journal is between 300 and 500 copies per issue. The journal is published by the NLSA. Production is outsourced but distribution is handled in-house. The journal does not use advertising, nor does it receive financial sponsorship.

The number of paying subscribers is 200, of which 50% are organisations and 50% are individual subscribers. There are no page or article-processing fees charged. The editorial workflow is managed manually.

There have been no offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. Copyright arrangements are available on request. The journal does not have any licensing agreements with authors. It has not been indexed and has no impact factor. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory. It has not been independently peer-reviewed before.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The focus of the journal is on South African history rather than on information science. There should be a clear statement of purpose (or policy) that clarifies what the bulletin wants to achieve, and how this relates to the National Library. In addition, the editor could seriously consider changing either the journal title or its focus to reflect the nature of the publication. One suggestion is that the editor look at examples of bulletins or journals published by national libraries in other countries.

The editor should consider diversifying and broadening the expertise of the editorial board to include young scholars and members who are more representative of the country. Information on the board should be updated and made available electronically.

Abstracts are recommended for all articles. Editorial guidelines could be improved.

Perhaps the society could consider a marketing project, as its subscriber base is much too small. Attracting more international contributions will also assist in this regard.

Although it is acknowledged that the journal has representation on EBSCOhost, a stronger online presence should be explored which would increase the journal's visibility.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO South Africa platform provided that it becomes open access.**
- III. **In addition, the panel believes that the journal should seriously consider changing the journal title or its focus to reflect the nature of the publication.**

4.4.2 Innovation: A Journal for Appropriate Librarianship and Information Work in Southern Africa

Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The primary purpose is to publish material on libraries, information supply and other related matters in South and southern Africa. Despite the focus mentioned above, libraries and information cut across all disciplines and this is often reflected in the content of the articles published.

It is one of the few accredited journals in the library and information discipline in South Africa and, as such plays, a very important role in encouraging and enabling people in the library and information services (LIS) sector, both practitioners and researchers/academics, to publish.

The target audiences are practitioners and academics/researchers locally and abroad. While the print run is relatively small, there are institutional and individual subscribers locally and overseas. The majority, however, is local. The fact that articles are available electronically from AJOL and Sabinet certainly assists in extending the reach of the journal.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The journal has no permanent editor; hence the quality of articles is dependent on the guest editor, who is appointed from the editorial board for open issues, or external guest editors may be invited.

The EAB comprises eminent international scholars and national scholars from a variety of South African institutions. Although the board could be expanded, the panel acknowledges that the pool of scholars in this discipline is getting smaller.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 1990 and has a publication frequency of two issues per year. The journal is available electronically via AJOL and Sabinet: <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/innovation>; <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/innovation>.

Issues are pre-scheduled to appear in June and December of each year and since its inception the journal has been published regularly on these dates. If not in the scheduled month then issues appear as soon as possible thereafter. There have been no significant interruptions.

Between June 2013 and December 2015, 53 full articles were published in six issues and 65 full article manuscripts were received. No manuscripts were rejected without being peer-reviewed. Twelve were rejected after peer reviewing. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was 25%.

Two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. Peer reviewers are selected based on their subject expertise. Peer review is conducted in a 'double blind' process. There is rigorous implementation of valid reviewer critique and article improvement; this is taken seriously by the journal editor/s of a particular issue. Peer reviewers do not receive follow-up information and reviewer performance is not

assessed. In 2014, 48 peer reviewers were used, although they may have been approached more than once. Ten per cent of these reviewers were from outside the country. Peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records but only for a limited time. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is six months.

Editors are drawn from the editorial board and guest editors are occasionally invited to edit the journal. The editorial board was established in 2000. From time-to-time the board handles the peer reviewing and advises on editorial policies and practices. The members are not appointed competitively, and the period is unspecified. They are appointed both from inside and outside the country and they provide specific topical expertise.

There are no editorial guidelines. There is also no conflict-of-interest policy in place. *Errata* have been published on occasion and will be published should the need arise. The errors in question were of a technical nature and not substantive.

Value-adding features of the journal include occasional critical editorials and if needed, correspondence on published articles. All pages in each issue represent peer-reviewed original material.

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: The majority of the articles published in the journal are of a good standard and includes some of the best work done in South Africa. There are a reasonable number of articles per annum. Most articles focus on important research questions and professional issues and developments of wide interest to librarians and other information professionals, but they are addressed in the context of local and regional specificity. There is a strong focus on local and regional concerns.

Authors of the articles are well-respected researchers and practitioners working in a variety of South African institutions. The special issues, though, draw a really good range and number of contributors from across Africa. There are a few international contributions.

There are descriptive editorials, but no other scholarly features.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: All articles are introduced by abstracts in English. Copy-editing is good. The citation practice is sound. No *errata* were found in the issues under review.

The online issues are clearly presented with no distracting design elements. The graphics, including tables and charts, pose no ethical dilemmas.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: This journal focuses strongly on local and regional issues and is regarded as required reading for local graduate students and young staff. Innovation does seem to encourage and mentor young professionals and researchers, in addition to publishing work by established scholars.

It is difficult to compare the journal with leading international journals as the target audience, readership, intents and purpose are different.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The owner of the journal is the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and the journal is published under the auspices of the Information Studies Programme, School of Social Sciences. The regular print run of the journal is 140 copies per issue. Production and distribution are not outsourced. There is neither paid nor unpaid advertising. The journal does not receive any financial sponsorship.

The number of paying subscribers is 100, of which approximately 90% are organisations as opposed to individuals. Page or article-processing fees are not charged. The management of editorial workflow is conducted using a manual system.

Innovation is accessible online via AJOL and Sabinet, via subscription or fee access.

There have been no offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. Copyright arrangements are held by the journal and there are no licensing agreements with authors.

The journal is listed in the Index to South African Periodicals (ISAP) and LISA. The journal does not have an

impact factor. Altmetric indicators have not been determined. It is mandatory to have 'front details' for papers and to have English language abstracts.

The journal has not been independently peer-reviewed before.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: It might be a good idea to consider appointing a (volunteer) editor-in-chief who could serve as the journal's single point of contact for authors, just to make the submission process and the author-editor communications regarding manuscript revisions more straightforward than they might be with rotating editors. An editor-in-chief as coordinator might also provide more continuity over time.

A few of the editorial committee and editorial board members have served for many years. The editorial board should be renewed, and younger members could be recruited.

The number of papers published by members of the editorial committee and board is high. It may also be of benefit to have a conflict-of-interest policy, considering that many authors of papers have published work in the publishing organisation.

All issues should have editorials and they should be more critical rather than descriptive. The themed special issues should aim to have conceptualised or critical editorials. The journal could publish occasional book reviews.

Editorial guidelines should be put in place and contact details for the editors should be made available.

Desk rejections could reduce 'average' quality articles.

A call for papers for special issues must be publicised as widely as possible.

It would be of benefit to the journal to be indexed more widely. Better publicity is required.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO South Africa platform provided that it meets the criteria.**
- III. **The editorial committee should consider appointing a (volunteer) editor-in-chief and the editorial board should be renewed.**

4.4.3 Mousaion: South African Journal of Information Studies

Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

Mousaion: South African Journal of Information Studies focuses on information studies in the broadest sense of the word, including all the information-related professions, e.g. libraries, information centres, archives and records offices. This includes not only the institutions, but also the users, sources and theoretical issues, such as information use and behaviour, sources (e.g. children's books), knowledge management, etc.

The journal is interdisciplinary as far as issues mentioned above are concerned. It is aimed at African scholars, but also the broader academic world.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The editor has a good national reputation and is an established scholar. The editorial board consists of both national and international professionals of good standing, but at the time of the review members were mostly South African scholars.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 1956 and is a quarterly publication. It is accessible online via the Sabinet portal and through University of South Africa (Unisa) press: <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/mousaion>; <https://www.upjournals.co.za/index.php/LIS/index>. It had 4 262 downloads and 3 697 views over the period from 2014 to 2015. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on given dates. There have been no significant interruptions in publication.

Over the three-year review period, 80 articles were published. The rejection rate is 20%; three full arti-

cles were rejected without peer review and 15 were rejected after peer review. On average, 45% of the peer-reviewed papers had at least one author who was not South African.

Two to three peer reviewers are usually approached to review each submitted manuscript. They are selected from a core list and the board assists by suggesting names of potential reviewers. Previous authors are also often asked for advice. Peer review is conducted in a 'blind way'. Authors are requested to supply a report on corrections made or not made. Articles that are returned to authors for major corrections are, if resubmitted, sent to the reviewers again. Peer reviewers occasionally receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database.

Approximately 54 peer reviewers were used in one year over the review period, of which 66% had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is six months.

The editor, who has been running the journal for 12 years, was not appointed competitively. The period of appointment is undetermined. The editorial board handles peer review, advises on editorial policies and practices and provides specific topical expertise. The length of office for editorial board members is between two and seven years. Members are not appointed competitively. They are appointed from inside and outside South Africa.

The journal has editorial guidelines, however these are not aligned with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. There is no conflict-of-interest policy. The journal publishes *errata* when necessary. Value-adding features of the journal include analytical book reviews and correspondence on published articles, if received. Most of the content in each issue represents peer-reviewed original material.

[Note: According to Unisa Press there was a sharp rise in the number of downloads and views since 2016.

From 2015 to 2017, 94 articles were published in four issues per annum. Thirteen articles were rejected before peer reviewing and 13 were rejected afterwards.

Changes were made to the editorial board in 2017. Of the 17 members only three are from South Africa. International members are from Botswana, Canada, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Slovakia, Uganda and the USA.

Unisa Press is investigating the possibilities of the journal moving to open access.

The editor has recommended that a sub or assistant editor be appointed to focus on acquiring publications to be reviewed and finding reviewers to do the reviews.]

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: The articles published in the journal are of a consistently good quality. The four issues produced annually include the expected number of articles for a journal of this type, i.e. eight articles per issue.

There is a broad focus on local South African and African issues. Many of the issues discussed and explored are unique to Africa and require African solutions and debates. Authors from many different African institutions publish in the journal, and at times their co-authors are from institutions beyond the continent. There is a good selection of material from Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Although three book reviews were published in the volumes under review the editor could consider including more book reviews. There were no letters or review articles. Critical editorials and articles dealing with theoretical matters should be considered for inclusion.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: Full and informative abstracts are published but these should be in English for indexing purposes even if the article is in Afrikaans. No *errata* were found in the copies under review however these would be published if warranted. The citation practice is acceptable, however clear instructions should be made available.

The published journal is professionally and well presented with clear design and style.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: *Mousaion* fulfils an important academic function in publishing articles by young research-

chers across southern Africa. It has always been regarded as required reading for young scholars. The journal is also an important vehicle for African scholarship.

Certainly, many of the articles could have been published in international journals, although their relevance is clearly focused on an African readership. The articles can be compared with those of international journals that focus on their own local issues. Although not deliberately competing with international journals, it does compare well with some with similar aims.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

Mousaion is owned by Unisa and is published by Unisa Press. The regular print run of the journal is 100 copies per issue. The production and distribution are outsourced to Unisa Press. The journal does not carry advertising. Unisa carries all the costs of publishing the journal.

The journal has 68 paying institutional subscribers, of which 50 are organisations as opposed to individuals (52 South African; 16 international). There are no page or article-processing charges. The editorial workflow is managed using OJS.

Multi-national publishers have made no offers to purchase the journal. Copyright arrangements are stipulated by Unisa Press and authors transfer rights to the publisher/publishing institution.

The journal is listed in Google Scholar but no major indexes. There is therefore no impact factor. Altmetric indicators are available through Sabinet, but the journal has chosen not to opt for this service.

The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: It is suggested that the editor and board seriously consider moving the journal to open access. This may not be financially feasible, of course, but open access would likely raise the journal's visibility internationally and would facilitate the authors' impact in their respective fields.

Articles dealing with theoretical matters should be encouraged.

There should be clear instructions with examples for citation practice, and abstracts must be in English if the article is in another language.

Critical editorials should be provided for each issue and occasional book reviews should be considered.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO South Africa platform provided that it becomes open access.**
- III. **The panel recommends that the editor and board seriously consider moving the journal to open access and making an improvement on its scholarly features.**

4.4.4 South African Journal of Information Management (SAJIM)

Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The *South African Journal of Information Management (SAJIM)* is an information management journal, aimed to serve as a platform for discussion and debate in this developing field.

The journal seeks to create new paradigms, overcoming traditional information management activities of collect, store and dissemination; seeking to engage, inform, and catalyse scholarly discourse within research and real-world practises. It focuses on exploring and managing activities that make changes in patterns of behaviour of customers, people, organisations, and information that leads to changes in the way people use information to engage in knowledge-focused activities.

The journal crosses and affects various disciplinary (academic, business and financial) arenas, to promote information management processes (innovations in information, knowledge and content management) which are critical to the survival and growth of organisations and people.

The journals' intended focus is South Africa, but it also welcomes related articles from other regions on the African continent.

The journal is aimed at academics, researchers, practitioners and students within information technology and information and knowledge management disciplines.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The editor and assistant editor are recognised scholars and are both attached to the University of Johannesburg (UJ). The national and international members of the board represent a number of academic institutions in a variety of countries (Canada, Europe, USA and some African countries). The editorial board includes notable national and international members, some of them being recognised authorities in their fields of specialisation.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 1999 and is published annually. It is accessible online at <http://www.sajim.co.za>. There were 111 391 visits and 1 542 793 downloads over the three-year review period. It is accessed by users from 196 countries; 47 of these are from the African continent. Issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on given dates. There have been no significant interruptions to date.

Over the review period, 46 full articles and three 'reviewer acknowledgements' were published. A total of 114 full article manuscripts were received. The number of manuscripts rejected without peer review was 34; 23 were rejected after peer review. Thirteen per cent of the peer-reviewed papers had at least one author who was from outside the country.

Two peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. The selection of peer reviewers is based on expertise, reputation, specific recommendations and previous experience of reviewers' performance. The peer reviews are conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvements are rigorously implemented. Peer reviewers do receive follow-up information, reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. In 2014, 36 peer reviewers were used, three of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in records. The average period between the receipt of a manuscript and its publication online is 92 days.

The editor has been in office since 2013. This was not a competitive appointment and the period of appointment is unspecified. The editorial board handles peer review and also advises on editorial policies and practices. The length of office is five years for both the editorial board and the EAB and members are not appointed competitively. The EAB are appointed from inside and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The journal has editorial guidelines which can be found online at <http://sajim.co.za/index.php/sajim/pages/view/about>. The guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The publication policies can also be found at http://aosis.co.za/documents/policies/AOSIS_Publication_Policies.pdf. There is a conflict-of-interest policy for authors, reviewers and for published papers. The journal follows the publisher's policy on *errata*. The journal publishes 'reviewer acknowledgements' but no other value-adding features. Approximately 96% of the pages in each issue represent peer-reviewed original materials.

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: The quality of the articles is very good. Topics are very relevant to the African context. Articles in most cases are based on sound empirical research and followed by scientifically-based findings; research methodology is almost always well-defined and many of the articles have a 'real world' application. There is one issue per annum containing approximately 16 articles in each issue which is considered an adequate number of articles for a journal of this nature.

Articles represent an adequate sample (maybe even a good sample) of the work done in the country in the discipline of information and knowledge management. A large number of the articles focuses on information management problems and issues in a southern African context, as can be expected with most of the contributors coming from this area.

Articles are set in a mostly African or Southern African context. Although this is the strength of the journal, articles dealing with theoretical matters should be encouraged. The journal should continue to have a broad focus.

There are no additional scholarly features. The online system makes provision for 'comments' with each article which is a convenient feature for readers who want to give their opinions on the article.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: There are well-prepared English abstracts for all articles. Although there were no *errata* published in the volumes under review, the journal has a policy to manage them. Good citation practice is followed in the articles examined however, no clear instructions for the prescribed citation style were found. The journal's online presentation, design, layout and style are exemplary. Clear rules for ethical publication are provided in the policy.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: Over the years, this journal has developed the positive reputation for providing an excellent platform for young and upcoming academics while simultaneously maintaining its academic rigour. The publication fee may be a problem for some prospective authors who do not have access to funding.

This is among the better journals in the field and an important vehicle for African scholarship. It compares well with some international journals.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The title owner of the journal is the UJ and the publisher is AOSIS. There is no regular print run as this is an online journal. *SAJIM* does not carry any advertising and has no financial sponsorship. The journal is available online open access, hence there are no subscribers.

There are article-processing charges. An online management system is used for the management of editorial workflow. It is also part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism (DOAJ).

There have been no offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. Ownership of copyright of the manuscript contents remains with the authors. Articles are published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) usage licence.

The journal is indexed in AOSIS Library Index, Cengage Learning, DOAJ, Ebscohost, Google Scholar, ProQuest and Sabinet. The Google Scholar impact factor is 3.50. Altmetric indicators have been determined for the journal. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory.

The journal has been independently peer reviewed by the DOAJ.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The journal may consider inviting more European and African members onto the editorial board. The editorial list should be updated and outdated details removed.

The editors can try to attract more contributions from outside South Africa, especially from other (southern) African countries.

Clear instructions for bibliographic style should be provided in 'Instructions for Authors'.

Articles dealing with theoretical matters should be encouraged.

Additional features such as editorials, comments and debates, book reviews and perhaps even conference announcements should be considered.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The journal is already on the SciELO South Africa platform.
- III. The editor should consider more contributions from southern Africa.
- IV. In addition, the editorial board must be extended to include members from other African countries.

4.4.5 South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science (SAJLIS)

Focus and scope:

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

The journal seeks to embrace a wide range of practical and research components, including information and research literacy, information management, children's literature, ethics, globalisation, impact of the digital divide, technology, scholarly communication, open scholarship, indigenous knowledge systems, etc. The objective is to serve and reflect the interests of the South African LIS community across the spect-

trum of its wide-ranging activities and research. In addition to formal scholarly articles, the editors solicit articles on issues of practice and controversial matters as they arise. It is intended to actively encourage young writers, researchers and practitioners to share their experiences and findings so that all aspects of research, teaching, thinking and practice are brought together.

While the focus is the discipline of library and information science, the journal welcomes submissions from cognate disciplines, thus encouraging interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.

This is the official journal of the professional body Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) for the LIS sector in South Africa. Hence the journal, in its contribution to the development of the profession, carries the responsibility of bringing together LIS research and professional practice. This converging of theory and practice is seen as an enabler towards the growth of the profession, its contribution to the development of the country, as well as to the growth of scholars and scholarship in general.

The primary target audience is the LIS and related research communities, inclusive of academics and scholars (nationally and internationally), practising information professionals, as well as policymakers (including government officials).

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The editor-in-chief is an internationally respected scholar who is well published and an actively engaged scholar. The members of the editorial board are well established and highly regarded scholars from a variety of institutions. Nations represented include Botswana, Ghana, Namibia, Nigeria, and South Africa, as well as Australia, Denmark, New Zealand, the UK and the USA.

The list of editorial team members must however be updated, as some published details are no longer correct.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 1933 and was published under the title, *South African Libraries*. Since 2002, it has held the title of *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science*. It is published biannually and is accessible online at <http://sajlis.journals.ac.za/pub>. There were 3 011 successful pdf requests for 2014. It has been accessed by users from 126 countries; 19 of those countries are from the African continent. Since going open access, its reach has extended further and there is now evidence that the journal is being read in 126 countries around the world. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on given dates, one mid-year issue and another at the end of year or early in the following year.

There was a transitional period between 1998 and 2001 when there was a hiatus in the frequency of publication due to changes in the publishing organisation. A total of 36 full articles and two book reviews were published over the three-year review period. Approximately 72 manuscripts were received between 2013 and 2014. The number of rejected manuscripts without peer review was eight, and 46 were rejected after peer review. Six of the peer-reviewed papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Two to three peer reviewers are generally approached for each submitted manuscript. They are selected on the basis of expertise and publication track record in the discipline and related areas. The peer reviews are conducted in a 'blind way'. Valid reviewer critique and article improvement is implemented rigorously. The paper is only accepted if the editor is satisfied that the reviewers' comments have been adequately addressed. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information on request. OJS is used to capture the reports of the reviewers for future reference. The editor makes assessments of reviewers' reports when selecting reviewers. In 2014, 51 peer reviewers were used. A total of 26% of the reviewers had a non-South African address. The OJS captures the reports of the reviewers as part of its workflow. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication online is between eight and ten weeks.

The editor, who has been running the journal since 2013, was appointed competitively. The period of appointment is two terms of two years each. The EAB have been in office since 2013 and serve for a two-year period. The board handles peer reviews and advises on editorial policies and practices. Members are appointed by nomination and approval of the Representative Council of LIASA. They are appointed from inside and outside the country (40% international; 60% national). The board also provides specific topical expertise.

The journal has editorial guidelines which are aligned with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. There is no conflict-of-interest policy. There is no errata policy, however errors are corrected immediately upon detection. The value-adding features include editorials and analytical book reviews. All the pages in each issue represents peer-reviewed original material.

[Note: The editor has given assurance that over the last two years, details of individuals on the editorial

board have been updated. More importantly, as the journal management team has in the past year recommended to the owner of the journal (LIASA) a revision of the editorial board membership for the precise reason pointed out by the review panel (replacement of older and sometimes not active members of the board with younger scholars).]

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: The published articles are of good quality, with a mix of quantitative and qualitative research, as well as reviews and broader articles on professional matters. The two issues produced annually include the expected number of articles for a journal of this type.

It features a good mix of local and some international authors and focuses on both local and regional issues. Articles tend to address the issues and concerns of the library and information science field at large, often using local or regional data to broaden and deepen understanding.

Authors of the articles published in *SAJLIS* are scholars working in a variety of institutions and their publications exemplify high standards for research design and methods and for reporting research findings. The publication offers a good sample of the best work done in South Africa, particularly by younger researchers and professional librarians, although it was noted that the top South African researchers tend to try to publish their best research in the best international rather than local journals.

The journal contains editorials and occasional book reviews, although the panel was of the opinion that editorials could be more critical and thematic. The addition of more scholarly features, such as 'letters to the editor', could be considered.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: English abstracts are well written but could be better structured to be more informative. No *errata* were found in the copies under review. The citation practice is sound, although some inconsistencies were noticed. The presentation, layout, style and copy-editing are all good. Figures are well-presented.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: This journal constitutes the scholarly arm of LIASA and is regarded as required reading for young librarians and graduate students. The articles provide appropriate stimulus, and give examples of a good range of research techniques and approaches to encourage sound practice.

The journal is useful as a high-standard 'first avenue' for obtaining experience in publishing articles. The journal's authors include both women and black scholars.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

LIASA owns the journal and the online publication is hosted by Stellenbosch University (SU). There is no regular print run since it is an online journal. Production is handled in-house. The journal has no financial sponsorship and does not carry advertising. It is available open access and therefore there are no paying subscribers. There is an article-processing charge of R2 000 per paper. The editorial workflow is managed via OJS. The journal has had no offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. There is a licensing agreement with authors in the form of a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

The journal is indexed in Crossref, DOAJ, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, Scopus and WoS. It has no impact factor and altmetric indicators have not been determined. 'Front details' for papers and English abstracts are mandatory.

This is the journal's first independent peer review.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: *SAJLIS* is an internationally recognised journal publishing well-conceptualised and well-presented operational and theoretical research. Given the quality of such journals internationally, the team are to be commended on the standard and rigour of the publication; it is a leading exemplar of its type internationally.

The editorial board should be 'refreshed' with a view to rebalancing the proportion between active scholars and those who have retired or are retiring. The existing list should be updated to ensure that institutional affiliations are up-to-date.

The role of editor-in-chief for a major scholarly journal such as *SAJLIS* is very demanding; the journal could consider the possibility of issuing a guest-edited thematic issue once every couple of years. A member or two members of the board could perhaps serve as guest editors.

The editor could provide more in-depth and thematic editorials. Currently, these are descriptive and contain material on the journal rather than professional matters.

Abstracts could be structured according to a specified format.

The book reviews feature should be revisited. Consideration should be given to either increasing the number of reviews per issue or allocating to one of the two issues alone.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal is already on the SciELO South Africa platform.**
- III. **The panel commends the journal for being a high standard and quality publication.**

4.5 Media and Journalism

4.5.1 African Journalism Studies (AJS)

Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

Areas of focus may include but are not limited to: the political economy of journalism; global flows and contraflows of journalistic content and capital; journalism and social change; journalism and cultural identity; freedom of the press; journalism ethics; theories of journalism; journalism education and research; changing journalistic practices and norms. The role of journalism in mediating the emerging geopolitical relations between Africa and other regions of the Global South is of particular interest.

The journal aims to contribute to the ongoing extension of the theories, methodologies and empirical data to under-researched areas of knowledge production, through its emphasis on African journalism studies within a broader, comparative perspective of the Global South. *AJS* strives for theoretical diversity and methodological inclusivity, by developing theoretical approaches and making critical interventions in global scholarly debates. Manuscripts dealing with the intersections between journalism, politics, culture and society as these pertain to Africa and comparable regions in the Global South are especially invited.

AJS is available to readers in print and online, and through various subsidiaries.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The founding editor, editor-in-chief and associate editors have high national/international disciplinary reputations. The board comprises of well-respected national, regional and international scholars.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

AJS was established in 1980 as *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies*, until the title was changed in 2014 and it was renamed as *African Journalism Studies*. It is published quarterly.

The journal is accessible online at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/recq>. There was a total of 34 955 page views (incl. Issues list, Table of Content, Abstracts & References page views and 11 216 full text downloads) in 2015. The journal received contributions from 105 countries in the same year. This includes countries in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, and North America. Contributions were received from 27 African countries including Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi and South Africa.

The journal is pre-scheduled for issues to appear on given dates and appear regularly on these dates. There have been no major interruptions to publication.

Between 2013 and 2015, there were 132 full articles, and eight review articles. The number of manuscripts received was 143 full articles and nine review articles. The number of manuscripts rejected without peer review was 30% (43 full articles and three review articles). The number of rejected manuscripts after peer review was 4%, of which six were full articles and one a review article. A percentage of 66% of the peer reviewed papers had at least one author with a non-South African address and 16% were from other African countries.

[Note: Between 2015 and 2017, 198 full articles and eight review articles were received. The average desk rejection rate was 56% over the same period.]

Usually two to three peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. Peer reviewers are selected from three sources: the editorial board, experts in the editors' network and reviewers suggested by authors. Peer reviews are conducted in a 'blind way'. Reviewer critique is taken very seriously. Authors are required to indicate how they have responded to reviews when submitting revised manuscripts. In the case of major revisions, reviewers are asked to evaluate the revised article again. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database, archived on the ScholarOne manuscripts portal.

Seventy-nine peer reviewers were used in 2014. Approximately 52% of these were non-South African. Ever since the journal implemented ScholarOne, peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is 230 days in print and 220 days online.

The editor has held the position from 2007 and was appointed competitively, succeeding the previous editor, after serving as deputy editor for three years. There is no fixed period for editorship, but the deputy and associate editors have been rotated several times to avoid stagnation.

An editorial board, with South African and international scholars has been in place since 1980 when the journal was founded. With the change of editorship in 2015 the board obtained a stronger sub-Saharan membership. Board members are selected on the basis of their expertise, with a view to geographical spread (local/international), diversity of research areas and institutional representatives in the local context. Members are appointed competitively, and have a three-year term of office, although it is not fixed. They handle peer reviews as reviewers and advise on editorial policies/practices. There is no distinction between the editorial board and the EAB. Members are from inside and outside the country and they provide specific topical expertise.

The journal has a detailed 'Instructions for Authors' page online which gives information on the journal's editorial policy and guidelines and is available here: <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=recq21&page=instructions#.VhOMaPmqpBc>. Furthermore, Taylor & Francis (Routledge) is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). All journals of Taylor & Francis (Routledge), including *African Journalism Studies* abide by the COPE guidelines on publication ethics, available here: <http://publicationethics.org/about>. There is broad alignment with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review* and it is the publisher's policy to publish *errata*, as per the guidelines available here: <http://journalauthors.tandf.co.uk/publication/corrections.asp>.

There are book review sections in every issue, as well as occasional 'comment and analysis' pieces that are shorter in length, often more polemical, or responses to current events. Editorial notes appear in most issues and are often longer pieces that include critical analysis of key themes in the issue.

The journal's policy is to publish peer-reviewed original material only. The only exceptions to this rule are in the case of book reviews, occasional opinion pieces or obituaries, but these editorial decisions are usually made after discussion with colleagues. Editorial notes are not reviewed, but like the opinion pieces, these are flagged clearly to distinguish them from research articles.

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: The quality of the articles is high. There is definitely a good number of articles published given that there are four issues per year. There are many local authors, with some African, or diasporic African/South African ones. There are fewer contributors from the UK and USA.

The journal has a strong focus on local problems (e.g. national media issues), but also on issues from across the sub-Saharan region, which is in line with the journal's focus.

The articles present a good sample of the best work published in the country.

The articles published in the journal cover a variety of theoretical/methodological approaches and the journal also attains a balance between conceptual/theoretical articles and empirical ones. The journal can give more coverage to media-related issues such as ethics, social media, history, and legal topics.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: There are appropriate English abstracts for all articles. Over the review period, there

was no incidence of publication of *errata*, however measures are in place for suitable publication of *errata* should these occur. The journal has good citation practice.

It was noticed that some issues do not carry biographical data about the authors and there should be consistency on this.

Design, layout and style of the journal are good. The journal is professionally run and is well presented.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: The content appeals both to established and emerging academics, and students alike and it is suitable as a general stimulus for graduates in the discipline.

The journal compares favourably with other relevant journals in the field of journalism.

The *AJS* is a bit too narrow in scope, especially when there are only a few journals in the fields of communication and media studies in South and southern Africa.

In the three volumes under scrutiny, there were only a handful of articles about ethics and very little about social media, history, or legal issues affecting journalism.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

The Institute for Media Analysis in South Africa (iMasa) is the legal owner of *AJS*, while Unisa Press and Taylor & Francis (Routledge) are the co-publishers. The journal was previously published by university publishers, locally and internationally. Regular print runs are done through Unisa Press (South Africa) with 100 prints per issue and through Taylor & Francis (international), with another 100 prints per issue. Production and distribution are not outsourced. The journal also does not use paid or unpaid advertising.

The journal does not receive financial support. The editors, editorial board members and peer reviewers all perform voluntary service. Subscriber details are business-sensitive. Approximately 20 institutions and 350 libraries in South Africa and other countries in Africa access the journal. There are 2 314 international institutions and libraries that access the journal as part of the Taylor & Francis sales deals. In addition, approximately 25 institutions subscribe directly to the journal. Furthermore, 5 681 institutions worldwide have access to *AJS* via development initiatives, such as the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) and Research4Life.

There are no page charges or article-processing charges. There is an online management system (ScholarOne). Online access is via a commercial e-publication service in which the journal is held behind a paywall and individuals, and institutions need to take out a subscription to access the journal's content.

The publisher of *AJS* is multi-national and has not offered to purchase the journal (it is owned by iMasa).

There is a standard copyright licence to publish and a Creative Commons licence if publishing open access. It is a condition of publication that authors assign copyright or license the publication rights in their articles, including abstracts, to iMasa. This enables Taylor & Francis (Routledge) to ensure full copyright protection and to disseminate the article, and the journal, to the widest possible readership in print and electronic formats. Authors retain many rights under the Taylor & Francis (Routledge) rights policies, which can be found at: <http://journalauthors.tandf.co.uk/preparation/copyright.asp>.

The journal is indexed in African Studies Abstracts (ASA) Online, Communication and Mass Media Complete, ProQuest, Sabinet, Scopus, Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and ISAP. Impact factors on WoS for 2014 is 0.216 and the five-year impact factor is 0.389. [Note: The two-year impact factor for 2016 was 1.056 and five-year impact factor was 1.] The ranking is 74/76 (Communication) on Journal Citation Reports for 2015. Altmetric indicators are administered by Taylor & Francis.

There are mandatory 'front details' for papers and English abstracts. This is the journal's first independent peer review.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The *AJS* publishes good-quality articles and complies with professional publishing standards.

The consensus review yielded two closely associated recommendations that may further improve the quality of the journal.

Although the panel acknowledges that there are themed issues which feature articles on normative frameworks, regulation and policy, the journal can give more coverage to these topics. The panel would like to

see more articles dealing with current issues such as ethics, social media, feminist perspectives, relevant Afrocentric theory, history and legal topics, to list a few. To this end, the editors and editorial board may consider inviting guest editors to produce these special issues on a regular basis that could stimulate further contributions on these topics. This, in turn, would stimulate students and scholars to focus some of their work in these important but neglected areas.

More African representation on the board would fill the regional gap that exists currently and thereby also encourage submissions from other African countries.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO South Africa platform provided that the business relationship with Taylor & Francis (Routledge) were to change.**
- III. **The panel recommends that the journal could consider widening its scope as indicated in the suggested improvements.**

4.5.2 Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies

Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

Critical Arts has, from its outset, maintained a global reputation of conceptual freshness, textured writing, and experiential analysis, which draws readers into its articles, its narrative themes and its theoretical explorations. Articles published in *Critical Arts* are global in reach while retaining a particularity of context, specificity of content and relevance of topic. When focusing on southern African issues, these are situated in relation to, or contextualising them against a backdrop of global (or northern) issues. These kinds of relations distinguish *Critical Arts* from other cultural and media studies journals and is asserted as one of its core strengths. As a result, the journal attracts authors who want to discuss local case studies within global relations appealing to international scholarly communities.

Critical Arts is transdisciplinary, grounded in a cultural and media studies paradigm that includes new approaches such as critical indigenous qualitative methodologies, practice-led research amongst other innovative methods included within these rubrics. Practice-led research is employed in the disciplines of visual arts, visual anthropology, dramaturgy and sociology amongst others. It aims to highlight the systematic and rigorously applied conventions of artistic creation. The method uses non-positivistic research tools, such as narratives, autoethnography, oral history, as well as innovative, experimental and provocative essays on the theories, practices and possibilities of critical qualitative research. On occasion, the journal has included articles that draw on calculus and statistical methods, provided that these are mobilised to enable conceptual innovation. In fact, transdisciplinarity and openness to multi-methodological approaches is the essence of the field of cultural studies.

Critical Arts is available online and in print to readers both locally and internationally via Taylor & Francis online sales deals, as well as traditional institutional and personal subscriptions and development initiatives.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The editor-in-chief and other members of the editorial team have high national and international disciplinary reputations. The editor has served in this capacity since 1980. All members of the editorial board have high national and international disciplinary reputations. In this sense, the journal enjoys a high international position among journals in its field. There is a good spread of institutional origin of editorial board members and authors.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

The journal was established in 1979. It publishes six issues per annum. It is available online at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/rcrc>. In 2014, the journal had 95 000 page views and nearly 16 000 full-text articles downloaded. The journal is read in 115 countries across various regions such as Africa, Asia Pacific, Australasia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America, Northern and Central Europe, and South Asia. The journal is read in 22 African countries with Algeria, Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe as the top ten African countries.

Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on scheduled dates and appear regularly on these dates. There have been no significant interruptions in the history of its publication.

Between June 2012 and June 2015, 126 original full articles were published, along with one letter, one review article and five book reviews. Other papers included three obituaries and 25 'critical commentary' responses. The number of manuscripts received over the same period totalled 243 full articles, two letters,

two review articles and six book reviews. The rejection rate was 48%. A total of 85 manuscripts were rejected without peer review and approximately 32 were rejected after peer review. Seventy per cent of the peer-reviewed papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. Reviewers are selected on the basis of their conceptual expertise and disciplinary specialisation, seniority in the field, availability, reliability and the intelligence with which they approach the task of reviewing. The editorial board provides the core of the reviewers but many reviewers beyond the journal are also recruited where necessary, from both South Africa and globally. Peer reviews are conducted in a 'blind way'. Submissions that require revision are accompanied by an author statement on the revisions done, and where substantive revisions were requested, the revised paper is re-reviewed by the original reviewers in close liaison with the editorial coordinator and editor. Peer reviewers receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is assessed, and information is captured in a database. The number of peer reviewers used in one year was approximately 80 or 90 of which 60% had non-South African addresses. The peer-review reports were accessibly stored in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is 18 months for both print and online publications.

The editor, who has been running the journal since 1980, was not appointed competitively. The period of appointment is indefinite. The editorial board handles peer review and advises on editorial policies and practices. The editorial board and EAB have been in office for long terms. Members are not appointed competitively, and their length of office is indefinite but dependent on their consistent contribution and productivity. Members are appointed from inside and outside the country. The board also provides specific topical expertise.

There are editorial guidelines which can be found online. Conflict of interest is dealt with on a case-by-case basis, where necessary in consultation with the Taylor & Francis office both in South Africa and in the UK. All authors are required to sign publishing agreements with Unisa Press, as are guest editors with Taylor & Francis. Where members of the editorial board guest edit and publish a paper, or where a paper is submitted, a different member of the board or an alternate will handle the review process. *Critical Arts* is a member of the COPE, based in the UK. COPE manages disputes and rules on them. Fortunately, *Critical Arts* has never had cause to use COPE as disputes have been rare and have always been resolved easily. The guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. It is the publisher's policy to publish *errata*, as per the guidelines.

Critical editorials, critical topical reviews, analytical book reviews and 'News and Views' analyses of articles are the value-adding features that are published in the journal. Other features include several interventions on pressing contemporary issues that feature innovative writing – creative expression selected from shorter work that is innovative, original, and significant. Ninety per cent of pages in each issue represent peer-reviewed original material.

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: It is commendable that the journal publishes ten articles per volume on average in six volumes per annum. The majority of the articles are of a high standard. As such, the journal is of a high and international standard; the rejection rate of manuscripts is 48%. *Critical Arts* covers local and regional issues. Approximately 40% of the content is contributed by international authors.

One reviewer commented that the content was thoroughly enjoyable, and an appreciation was gained of the high quality of research being done in the field.

The journal provides for additional scholarly features, such as editorials, book reviews and scholarly correspondence.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: The articles are well-written on the whole, and much credit for this goes to the editorial team. The language used throughout the journal is of a high standard and appropriate abstracts in English accompany all articles. The citation practice is good. The journal is top notch in design, readability and style. In the rare instance of an *erratum*, it was done in a suitable manner. Overall presentation is good. In addition, the editorial front matter contains the usual information on mission, target audience, required style and peer review process.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: This journal is both a stimulating source of new knowledge and a medium for publishing research by advanced students. It is pleasing to see Masters and PhD students publishing in the journal.

Critical Arts is the 'go to' journal for cultural studies in Africa (not only in South Africa). Similar work appears

in other journals, but nowhere near as intensely as in this one. Research in communication and media studies compares well with work in these fields appearing in other South African journals.

It is a well-known, respected international journal. In the field of cultural studies, it compares very favourably with the best in the world.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

Critical Arts Projects is a registered non-profit organisation owned by its editor and associate editors. The publishers are Unisa Press and Taylor & Francis. The regular print run is 100 copies through Unisa Press (Africa) and 100 copies through Taylor & Francis (international). Unisa Press does the production in collaboration with Taylor & Francis UK. Hard copy distribution in Africa is managed by the National Inquiry Services Centre (NISC). Electronic distribution is done by Taylor & Francis, which also uses subscription agencies like EBSCO-host.

There is no advertising in the journal and it receives no financial sponsorship. The journal is available to approximately 25 institutions and libraries in South Africa and 350 in the rest of Africa. In addition, the journal is available to more than 1 800 institutions and libraries in the rest of the world. As mentioned above, these figures also include access via development initiatives, such as INASP and Research4Life, especially in African and other developing regions. Most subscriptions to *Critical Arts* are from organisations and individual subscriptions present a negligible amount. Page charges are levied on South African-based authors where these are paid for by their institutions. Open access article-processing charges are optional, should an author wish to make their paper open access via Taylor & Francis' Open Select programme. An online management system (ScholarOne) is used for the management of editorial workflow.

Issues published between 1980 and 1992 are available as open access on the eJournals site; one issue (of six) is made available as open access via Taylor & Francis annually. The journal is also part of a commercial e-publication service and content is accessed by subscribers via the *Critical Arts* Taylor & Francis web page. There have been no offers to purchase from multi-national publishers and copyright arrangements are vested in the journal. Copyright is vested in Critical Arts Projects. However, requests for re-publication as chapters in books are discussed with Taylor & Francis. Routledge has also republished a number of thematic issues in book form.

The journal has been indexed by Alternative Press Index, Arts and Humanities Citation Index, ARTBibliographies, Film Literature Index, Humanities International Index, IBSS, International Bibliography of Theatre and Dance, ISAP, Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA), Modern Language Association (MLA) International Bibliography, Periodicals Index Online, Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM) Abstracts of Music Literature, SSCI, and WoS. The WoS impact factor for 2014 was 0.33 while the five-year impact factor is 0.22. Altmetric indicators are determined by Taylor & Francis. There are mandatory 'front details' for papers and English abstracts.

The journal has not been independently peer reviewed before.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The journal appears to be well-managed and has a tight editorial policy.

The editorial board could be broadened and diversified further by the inclusion of scholars from the Global South.

It was noticed that most Africa-based contributors are from South Africa; a few contributors are from southern Africa and indeed very few from the rest of Africa. The editor could solicit more contributions from the rest of Africa. One suggestion would be to invite guest editors of special issues from East, West and North Africa, although there is a limited pool to select from, since cultural and media studies are not well established in Africa.

The editorial board could consider creating a permanent section for exceptional student research. This could stimulate healthy competition among graduate students across the region.

The Taylor & Francis connection makes the journal more formal and widely known, while at the same time, constraints access to the published articles. It is recommended that the journal looks at ways to ensure a shorter embargo for open access.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO South Africa platform provided that the business relationship with Taylor & Francis (Routledge) were to change.**

III. The editor should seriously consider the recommended improvements listed in this review.

4.5.3 *Communicatio*: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research

Focus and scope

(Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership)

Communicatio focuses on and seeks to publish original research articles of the highest standard and of special interest on South African and African communication contexts in the fields of communication theory and philosophy; media and cultural studies; organisational and management communication; visual communication; intercultural communication; advertising and marketing; developmental communication; political communication; new media (policy and social implications); and international communication. The journal's focus is on communication science and its related fields which are media studies, cultural studies, journalism, and interpersonal, group, organisational and corporate communication. Communication science is, in terms of its ontology and epistemology, interdisciplinary.

The journal is the oldest journal in communication science in South Africa and has since its inception more than 40 years ago served the vast community of communication scientists' research interests as a publication platform and as a vehicle for scientific communication. Unlike the other South African journals in the discipline, *Communicatio* focuses specifically on communication science in its phenomenological sense.

Lecturers and researchers in communication science and its related fields at all research and teaching institutions on the continent and increasingly overseas publish in the journal. However, government and self-regulatory bodies in the field of media regulation, the media, and advertising, marketing and corporate communication organisations also publish in the journal.

Communicatio is available to readers in both print and online, and through various subsidiaries.

Editing functions

(Standing, local institutional spread, international participation)

Consensus review: The editorial board members are well-known scholars of high national and international standing. The former and current editor-in-chief and executive editor are established scholars who publish widely and have ample experience. [A new editor-in-chief was appointed from 2017.] The majority of members of the editorial board serve or have served on editorial boards of several other journals in the field of communication.

Questionnaire

(Editorial process-related criteria)

Communicatio was established in 1975 and is published quarterly. It is accessible online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/rcsa>. In 2014, the journal received 15 830 full text article downloads and 73 289 journal web visits. It was read by users in 70 different countries worldwide and 21 countries on the African continent.

There have been no significant interruptions since 1982, when the current editor-in-chief re-launched the journal. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on given dates and in fact appear regularly on these scheduled dates.

Over the three-year review period, 73 full articles and one obituary were published. The number of full article manuscripts received in the same period totalled 161 and one letter was received. The number of manuscripts that were rejected without peer review was 28, and 14 manuscripts were rejected after peer review and resubmission. The proportion of peer-reviewed papers that had at least one author with a non-South African address was approximately 75%.

Two to three peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. The peer reviewers are selected through a consultation between the editor-in-chief, the executive editor, members of the board, and if needed, a subject specialist in the field of the article. The peer review is conducted in a 'blind way' and there is rigorous implementation of valid reviewer critique and article improvement. However, the peer reviewers do not receive follow-up information. Reviewer performance is assessed and information is captured in a database. Twenty peer reviewers were used in 2014 and the proportion of these who had non-South African addresses was 5%. The peer-review reports were accessibly retained in the journal's records and archived. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is four to eight months and online is four to six months.

The editor who had been editing the journal since 1982, was not appointed competitively. The editorial board handles the peer reviews and also gives advice on editorial policies and practices. The previous editorial board was in office since 2013 but a new editorial board has since been appointed. There is an international editorial board and members have been in office between three and 20 years. The appointments were not competitive and the period is indefinite. They are appointed from inside and outside the country and provide specific topical expertise.

The journal has a detailed 'Instructions for Authors' page online which gives information on the journal's editorial policy and guidelines and is available here: <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=rca20&page=instructions#.VdsLmqqko>. Furthermore, Taylor & Francis (Routledge) is a member of COPE. All of the Taylor & Francis (Routledge) journals, including *Communicatio* abide by the COPE guidelines on publication ethics: <http://publicationethics.org/about>. The guidelines are aligned with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. It is the publisher's policy to publish *errata*.

Communicatio publishes critical topical reviews with themed editions but publishes no other value-adding features. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 95%.

[Note: A new editor-in-chief was appointed in 2017 after consultation with the international editorial board.

Book and film reviews are being considered and are the responsibility of the recently appointed executive editor.

A dedicated themed issue editor has been appointed with the responsibility of sourcing authors within especially the African scientific community.]

Content

(Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features)

Consensus review: Conceptually and methodologically the articles vary from satisfactory to top quality. The journal is an adequate sample of the best work done in the country and in Africa within communication science. The rejection rate of manuscripts for publication is an estimated 55% (normally about 20% in this field of research). 'Double-blind' peer reviewing clearly bears fruit.

The journal has four issues per year and publishes up to 32 articles per annum and each issue has an adequate number of articles.

The journal is of relevance both to the field of communication science and the region. The journal covers a number of salient, important and contemporary issues within the field of communication science and its related fields. The majority of the articles are focused on countries in Africa, especially the southern African region and beyond.

The journal attracts contributions from authors located at universities across South Africa, the African continent and in the diaspora; up to 12% from outside South Africa.

Communicatio does not include additional scholarly material such as editorials and book reviews.

Essential technical features

(English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation)

Consensus review: Articles include well-written abstracts in English. The articles are well edited for grammar, language and content. No *errata* were observed in the volumes under review however the publisher has a policy on publishing *errata*.

This journal is consistent with its citation practice (Chicago Manual of Style). Instruction for prospective authors is very clear about the journal's requirement in this respect.

The design, layout, style and presentation of the online version of this journal makes it easy to read and the journal compares favourably with others in this field.

The images used have been well captioned and sources clearly indicated.

Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal is a valuable resource and an ongoing stimulus for South African and African students and emerging researchers. It clearly encourages the mentoring of new and upcoming authors.

Communicatio is one of the oldest journals in the field of communication, media and related disciplines in the South and is well established. It provides a reference point for many upcoming journals and researchers.

In terms of the quality of authors it attracts, *Communicatio* can be compared with international journals such as *Journal of Communication* and *Journal of African Media Studies* among others.

Business aspects

(Business-related criteria; Bibliometric assessments)

Unisa Press is the legal owner of *Communicatio*, and Taylor & Francis (Routledge) is the co-publisher. The regular print run through Unisa Press in South Africa is 150 copies per issue. Through Taylor & Francis, the regular international print run is 85 copies per issue. The production and distribution are done in-house. There is no advertising in the journal and it is not financially sponsored. Subscriber details are business-sensitive, however the journal is available to approximately 70 institutions and libraries in South Africa and the 350 institutions and libraries in the rest of Africa. In addition, *Communicatio* is also available to almost 1 800 institutions and libraries as part of the Taylor & Francis sales deals. These figures also include access via EBSCO-host and development initiatives such as INASP and Research4Life. There are no page or article-processing charges. Management of editorial workflow is conducted via an online management system.

The journal is held behind a paywall and individuals and institutions need to take out a subscription in order to be able to access the journal's content.

The publisher of *Communicatio* is a multi-national publisher but has a South African-based office and works with Unisa Press. There have been no offers to purchase the journal.

It is a condition of publication that authors assign copyright or license the publication rights in their articles including abstracts to Unisa press. This enables Taylor & Francis (Routledge) to ensure full copyright protection and to disseminate the articles and the journal to the widest possible readership, in print and electronic formats. Authors retain many rights under the Taylor & Francis (Routledge) rights policies, which can be found at <http://journalauthors.tandf.co.uk/preparation/copyright.asp>.

The journal is indexed by Communication Abstracts, Communication and Mass Media Complete, Current Abstracts, ISAP, RILM Abstracts of Music Literature, Scopus and WoS. Impact factors for 2014: Source Normalised Impact Per Paper (SNIP): 0.613; Impact Per Publication (IPP): 0.213; SCImago Journal Rank (SJR): 0.245. The journal has altmetric indicators that are administered by Taylor & Francis. There are 'front details' for papers and English abstracts which are mandatory. The journal has not been independently peer-reviewed before.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: It is noted that the previous editor-in-chief, who resuscitated the journal in 1982 and was *ipso facto* the founding editor, held the position for 35 years. It is recommended that a succession plan be implemented allowing for cycles of five years or reappointments for a second term of five years to a total of ten years. While this suggestion is not by any means an indication that the current editor is unqualified, there is need for the implementation of a term limit in keeping with international best practices which will allow for circulation of new ideas and new approaches to running the journal.

The absence of analytical book reviews is not in tune with international best practices especially for a journal that has been in circulation for so long. Although the editor-in-chief has noted that the inclusion of book reviews will be considered, this should be prioritised. The journal should consider including a section of analytical book and film reviews. This will help popularise publications and productions from South Africa and the African region. The editorial team should consider appointing a book review editor, thereby providing opportunities for capacity development.

A lower acceptance rate should be continued, since it will encourage the continued improvement in the quality of manuscripts.

The editor-in-chief has noted a strategy to recruit high-profile authors and researchers from the African and international scientific community as reviewers. This strategy should raise the stakes and help to increase the profile of this longstanding and valuable resource.

Panel's consensus view:

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The journal should be invited to join the SciELO South Africa platform provided that the business relationship with Taylor & Francis (Routledge) were to change.**
- III. **High-profile authors must be recruited, and the journal should also include additional editorial and discipline relevant material such as analytical book reviews.**



Appendix A:

Questionnaire Sent to Each Editor of Journals being Peer-Reviewed

The questionnaire was revised in 2015 before the reviews took place.

1 Purpose of journal, positioning, focus, scope, readership, etc.

- 1.1 What is the focus and scope of the journal (i.e. what does it say about this in your masthead)?
- 1.2 Is the journal's aim to focus on a specific discipline or field or does it (also) include an interdisciplinary focus?
- 1.3 How does the journal serve the South African research community in relation to its focus and scope?
- 1.4 Who are your primary target audiences (predominantly local scholars or also further afield)?
- 1.5 What is the journal's reach and how is the readership composed? (i.e. international subscribers, institutions, and/or individuals in terms of numbers and/or percentages)?

2 Editorial process-related criteria:

- 2.1 When was the journal established?
- 2.2 What is the publication frequency of your journal, per year?
- 2.3 If online,
 - 2.3.1 What is its URL?
 - 2.3.2 What is the visit and downloaded record?
 - 2.3.3 In how many countries is the journal read?
 - 2.3.4 In how many African countries is the journal read?
- 2.4 Scheduled issues:
 - 2.4.1 Are issues of your journals pre-scheduled to appear on given dates?
 - 2.4.2 If scheduled, do the issues in fact appear regularly on the scheduled dates?
- 2.5 Have there been significant interruptions in publication since the journal's inception? If so, provide details.
- 2.6 Peer-reviewed original papers:
 - 2.6.1 How many peer-reviewed original papers have you published during the last three years:
 - a Full articles?
 - b Letters?
 - c Review articles?
 - d Book reviews?
 - e 'Conference papers'?
 - f Other?
 - 2.6.2 How many manuscripts in each of the above categories were received in the last three years?
- 2.7 Rejection rate:
 - 2.7.1 Approximately how many manuscripts in each category were rejected without peer review (as a pre-peer review decision)?
 - 2.7.2 How many were rejected after peer review?
- 2.8 What proportion of peer-reviewed papers of all kinds that you published had at least one author with a non-South African address?
- 2.9 Peer reviewers:
 - 2.9.1 How many peer reviewers are usually approached for EACH submitted manuscript?

- 2.9.2 How are peer reviewers selected?
- 2.10 Is peer review conducted in a 'blind way', i.e. authors and institutions blinded out?
- 2.11 How rigorous is the implementation of valid reviewer critique and article improvement?
- 2.12 Do peer reviewers receive follow-up information, e.g. outcomes of the reviews?
- 2.13 Is reviewer performance assessed and is such information captured in a database?
- 2.14 Total of peer reviewers
- 2.14.1 How many peer reviewers were used in total, in any ONE of the last three years?
- 2.14.2 What proportion of these had non-South African addresses?
- 2.15 Are peer-review reports accessibly retained in your records?
- 2.16 What is the average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication
- In print?
 - Online?
- 2.17 Editor/Editor-in-Chief
- 2.17.1 How long have you been Editor/Chief Editor of this journal?
- 2.17.2 Were you appointed competitively (i.e. following advertisement and a selection process)?
- 2.17.3 For what period have you been appointed?
- 2.18 Do members of your Editorial Board and/or Editorial Advisory Board:
- 2.18.1 Handle peer review of individual manuscripts?
- 2.18.2 Advise on editorial policies/practices?
- 2.18.3 How long have they been in office?
- Editorial Board:
 - Editorial Advisory Board:
- 2.18.4 Are they appointed competitively (i.e. following advertisement and a selection process)?
- 2.18.5 For what period?
- 2.18.6 From inside and outside the country?
- 2.18.7 To provide specific topical expertise?
- 2.19 Policies
- 2.19.1 Do you have published editorial/policy guidelines? What is the policy? (Please send us a copy)
- 2.19.2 Is there a conflict-of-interest policy? If so, please provide details.
- 2.19.3 Have your editorial/policy guidelines been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*?
- 2.20 Do you publish *errata* in all cases where errors have become apparent? What is your policy?
- 2.21 Does your journal contain value-adding features such as:
- Critical Editorials?
 - 'News and Views' analyses of articles being published?
 - Critical topical reviews?
 - Analytical book reviews?
 - Correspondence on published articles?
 - Others?

2.22 What is the percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material?

3 Business-related criteria:

3.1 Who is the actual title owner (legally) of the journal? And the publisher?

3.2 What is the regular print run of your journal, if it is printed?

3.3 Is production and distribution outsourced? If so, provide details.

3.4 Do you carry advertising which is:

- Paid?
- Unpaid?

3.5 Do you receive financial sponsorship(s)? If so, please list the sponsors and provide details.

3.6 What is the number of paying subscribers?

3.7 How many of the subscribers are organisations as opposed to individuals?

3.8 Do you impose page charges or article-processing charges on authors? If so, provide details.

3.9 How is the editorial workflow of the journal managed?

- Online management system
- Loading of articles onto web
- Manual systems
- Other

3.10 If your journal appears online:

- Is it free online (open access)?
- Is it free online but password protected?
- Is it part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication service?
- Is it part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism (i.e. Medline)?

3.11 What is the journal's estimated total cost per annum?

3.12 Has the journal had offers to purchase from multi-national publishers?

3.13 What are your copyright arrangements?

3.14 What licensing agreement do you have with authors?

4 Bibliometric assessments:

4.1 Could you provide us with a list of the indexes in which the journal is indexed (including Web of Science and/or the IBSS, Google Scholar, Scopus as well as others)?

4.2 Have impact factors (e.g. Google Scholar, WoS or Scopus) ever been determined for your journal? If so, what were they?

4.3 Do you use any altmetric indicators (number of visits to journal website, number of downloads, citations on social media) to monitor the journal's 'performance'?

4.4 Are 'front details' for papers like titles, authors, addresses, affiliations and English abstracts mandatory?

4.5 Has your journal ever been independently peer-reviewed before and by whom?

5 General:

5.1 Is there any other information or do you have any comments that may be useful to the Panel?

5.2 What do you regard as the main challenges that the Journal and the Editorial team face?

Appendix B:

Requests to Independent Peer Reviewers

1 Do the hard copies of the last 2 – 3 years of issues of the journal reflect:

- 1.1 high national/international disciplinary reputations/standing of the Editor-in-Chief/Associate Editors/members of the Editorial Board?
- 1.2 a high/good (general/average) quality of the articles accepted/published?
- 1.3 a (contextually) adequate/good number of articles per annum?
- 1.4 an (adequate/good) sample of the best work done in the country in the discipline/field?
- 1.5 a focus on local/regional kinds of materials/problems?
- 1.6 publication of articles by authors from across the country, and internationally?
- 1.7 useful additional scholarly features like editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, scholarly correspondence, etc.?
- 1.8 proper (English-language) abstracts for all articles?
- 1.9 suitable publication of errata?
- 1.10 good citation practice?
- 1.11 good presentation, design, layout, style, copy-editing interventions, images are used in an ethical manner?
- 1.12 suitability as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students/young staff in the discipline concerned?
- 1.13 some kind of comparability with leading international journals in the field?

2 Please list your suggestions for an improvement programme for the journal.



1st Floor Block A, The Woods
41 De Havilland Crescent
Persequor Park
Meiring Naudé Road, Lynnwood
Pretoria, South Africa

PO Box 72135
Lynnwood Ridge 0040
Pretoria, South Africa

Switchboard: +27 12 349 6600/21/22
Tel: +27 12 345 6789
Fax: +27 12 345 6789

