PROCEEDINGS REPORT

Annual National Scholarly Editors' Forum (NSEF) Meeting

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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 based on 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.

This report reflects the proceedings of the Annual National Scholarly Editors' Forum Meeting held via Zoom on 11 April 2024.

Views expressed are those of the individuals and not necessarily those of the Academy nor a consensus view of the Academy based on an in-depth evidence-based study.

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SESSION 1: ASSAf BUSINESS MEETING

Facilitator: Prof Keyan Tomaselli (Chairperson: ASSAf Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa [CSPiSA])

Welcome

Prof Tomaselli commenced the meeting by extending a warm welcome to all attendees, with special recognition given to Prof Himla Soodyall, the Executive Officer of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). He highlighted South Africa's distinctive organisational structure, which includes the National Scholarly Editors' Forum (NSEF) and the Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa (CSPiSA). The substantial interest in participating in the NSEF meeting, held annually, highlights ASSAf's success in establishing a cohesive national scholarly publishing community. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, these gatherings were held in person, offering valuable networking opportunities. While the shift to virtual meetings has increased accessibility for many, it has also diminished opportunities for collegial interaction.

The Forum is structured to convene scholarly editors to address shared challenges, strategise for collective advancement, and position South Africa within the global landscape of research and publication.

The minutes of the meeting will be distributed, serving not only as a record but also as a strategic planning tool for the forthcoming phase of publishing. This phase unfolds in a dynamic environment, shaped by rapid digitisation, the advent of open science, open access initiatives, and the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI). These transformative forces challenge previously held assumptions about our publishing landscape. Journal editors must grapple with these pressing issues, and a collective discussion during a general meeting proves effective. Participants can exchange insights, draw from their experiences, and collaboratively address the questions at hand. By collectively considering both the new threats and opportunities, we can navigate this evolving landscape more effectively.

Confirmation of the agenda

The agenda was confirmed without amendment.

Approval of minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 and 22 November 2022

The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted without amendment.

Matters arising from the previous minutes

Report back on the Statement on Issues and Struggles Faced by Editors of Journals in South Africa (Prof Philip de Jager, CSPiSA member)

The initial draft of the *Statement on Issues and Struggles Faced by Editors of Journals in South Africa* was submitted to the ASSAf Council for review. Following this submission, the Council requested a reevaluation of specific questions within the statement. Prof Philip de Jager, chairperson of the subcommittee responsible for drafting the statement, offered feedback on the document.

An analysis of the minutes from the NSEF meeting in November 2021 revealed that editors expressed a need for support across several dimensions:

- Acknowledgment from the university system for the contributions to academic life and the significant work they undertake.

- There was a notable call for financial support for journals, editors, and reviewers.
- Editors highlighted challenges in recruiting reviewers.
- There was also discussion regarding the purpose and role of South African academic journals.

CSPiSA established a subcommittee comprised of Professors Philip de Jager, Leslie Swartz, and Robin Crewe. Their task was to draft a statement aimed at recognising the crucial role played by journal editors and reviewers of South African journals, in shaping academic discourse within the country. This statement underwent several iterations, involving extensive consultation within the broader CSPiSA committee and revisions were made based on the feedback received. Subsequently, the statement was circulated to external reviewers for further input, and their feedback was duly considered. Among the feedback received from reviewers was the observation that the identified issues were not novel and had previously been addressed by ASSAf. Consequently, it was recommended that previous ASSAf statements and comments be integrated into the statement, a suggestion that was implemented accordingly.

The statement had served at the ASSAf Council, which concluded that it was not yet suitable for publication. Prof de Jager summarised the Council's perspective, noting that the statement appeared overly prescriptive towards South African universities. It was emphasised that ASSAf's role does not entail dictating university operations. To address this concern, Prof de Jager proposed adjusting the language to make the statement less prescriptive and more suggestive. Additionally, one reviewer suggested that the statement could be more comprehensive. In response, the subcommittee included a recommendation to relocate the evaluation process for editors and reviewers from the social responsibility category of performance management, typical in most universities, to the research category. However, Prof Johann Mouton from the Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science, and Technology (CREST) cautioned that this recommendation might be perceived as overly prescriptive.

The next course of action involves the subcommittee reviewing and addressing the feedback provided by the ASSAf Council. Subsequently, they will revise the statement accordingly and resubmit it to the Council for further consideration.

Prof Tomaselli highlighted the significance of the work on the statement, noting that editors of South African journals often feel their efforts are insufficiently recognised or acknowledged within their daily workload. Tasks such as editing, peer-reviewing (of publications and rating applications), and external examining are time-consuming yet are expected to be completed outside of regular working hours, despite being essential drivers of the academic endeavor. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) subsidy system's somewhat perverse effects have led universities to view publication primarily in terms of financial gain, neglecting the symbolic value and time-intensive nature of shaping academic paradigms, as editors do. Editors are not mere intermediaries handling submissions and coordinating with reviewers; they play a pivotal role in shaping entire disciplines. The CSPiSA asserts that universities must better recognise the vital role of editors and explicitly incorporate it into performance management contracts. Adequate time should be allocated for editors and reviewers to fulfill their duties on behalf of the broader academic community, beyond their specific contributions to their respective institutions. The issues discussed by ASSAf and CSPiSA resonate globally, as scholarly editors worldwide feel their work is undervalued and inadequately supported. Consequently, academics are often tasked with publishing without consideration for who will manage the publication process, resulting in a critical gap in recognition and reward systems.

Mrs Susan Veldsman further commented that the ASSAf secretariat is actively addressing

the Council's feedback to ensure that the statement is presented in suitable language. She proposed assembling a group comprising various editors, researchers, the CSPiSA subcommittee, and the secretariat. This collective effort will aim to refine the statement's language to enhance its acceptability across a broader spectrum.

Feedback on Scholarly Publishing Programme activities (Mrs Susan Veldsman, Director: Scholarly Publishing Programme, ASSAf)

Open Science Statement

Participants were provided with the SciELO Open Science Statement ahead of the Forum meeting for review. In 2023, the SciELO Network commemorated its 25th anniversary. This network comprises 14 countries, including South Africa through the SciELO South Africa (SA) platform. Every five years, the network hosts a major conference, usually held in Brazil. In 2023, the conference took place in Brazil to mark the 25-year milestone. Prior to the conference, network members were invited to endorse the SciELO Open Science Statement. The endorsement request was received shortly before the South African delegation departed for Brazil. The ASSAf Executive Council granted approval to endorse the statement, which broadly signifies the network's commitment to advancing open science across its member countries.

Guidelines for the use of AI in editorial processes

Mrs Louise van Heerden shared the link to the draft 'Guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in editorial processes'.[1] This document was another item that SciELO members were invited to endorse ahead of the conference in Brazil. South Africa sought the opportunity to consult with scholarly editors domestically on this matter. As the manager of the SciELO SA collection, Mrs van Heerden circulated the document to NSEF members for their feedback and input. A range of comments were received, reflecting diverse perspectives on the use of AI in editorial processes. Some argued against the use of AI altogether, while others recommended incorporating guidelines for AI usage into journal policies. These comments will be carefully considered for possible integration into the guidelines.

The *South African Journal of Science* (*SAJS*) recently introduced guidelines for using AI in writing articles for submission to the journal. These guidelines could serve as a valuable reference for other journals as they develop their author guidelines.[2] Mrs Veldsman noted a growing trend among journals to incorporate AI guidelines into their editorial policies. This incorporation is expected to become a fundamental aspect during the review of the Code of Best Practice.

Performance evaluation and inclusion criteria

Every five years, the SciELO Network establishes new objectives and target outcomes that member journals must adhere to. In preparation for the 2023 conference in Brazil, the SciELO SA delegation conducted an evaluation to assess the level of compliance of journals on the South African platform. Over the preceding five years, approximately 88% of the journals were found to be fully compliant with the established criteria.

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[1] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VkCSyb9rwnIDoWUf6455wy5lQ1z0xqoz/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=117091433628146665110&rtpof=true&sd=true

[2] View the latest issue of the South African Journal of Science here - https://sajs.co.za/editorial-policies#AI-LMMs

With the introduction of a new set of criteria, aligned with international best practices and set at higher standards, SciELO SA is tasked with implementing these new performance and inclusion criteria. The Publications Quality Framework (PQF) project led by Prof Johann Mouton and his team at CREST in collaboration with the DHET, needs to be aligned with the SciELO Network criteria.

This year marks 15 years since the establishment of SciELO SA. The collection has matured significantly during this period. Therefore, a thorough assessment of the journals on the platform is necessary. This evaluation will entail investigating and evaluating their performance, as well as understanding the reasons and consequences of any underperformance. This responsibility will be central to the role of the reconstituted SciELO advisory board, established in 2023.

The criteria for journal inclusion on the SciELO SA platform encompass several key requirements. The journal must be openly accessible; it must be DHET accredited; and it must receive a positive assessment from an ASSAf Peer-Review Panel. The ASSAf peer review process, involving the evaluation of all 322 South African scholarly accredited journals, has concluded. Now, a new evaluation process aligned with the PQF will commence. This updated evaluation process will be more streamlined compared to the previous reviews while retaining its effectiveness and value to the scholarly ecosystem.

The SciELO Network maintains compulsory criteria for journal participation, as outlined in the Code of Best Practice. These criteria include:

- Providing full affiliation details of authors, including department, institution, city, and country.
- Requiring journals to provide abstracts and keywords in English.
- Mandating the availability of all journal policies online, covering areas such as corrections, errata, retractions, withdrawals, and appeals. Journals must transparently articulate their stances on these matters.
- Introducing new criteria aligned with open science principles, including indicating in the journal's policies whether the journal accept preprints, and if so, outlining associated guidelines, as well as specifying whether they endorse open peer review and detailing the process (e.g., full or partial open peer review).
- Requiring journals to disclose their position on the use of AI tools.
- Advocating for inclusive language policies, in line with best international practices. Notably, the *South African Journal of Science* and *Clean Air Journal* already have policies or statements on inclusiveness and equity.
- Emphasising transparency and openness in editorial processes.

The SciELO Network suggested further criteria to improve openness and transparency and the SciELO SA Advisory Committee has agreed that SciELO SA journals be encouraged to introduce the following criteria:

- Journals publishing fewer than 20 articles annually should consider adopting a continuous publication model, whereby articles are released as soon as they are approved by peer reviewers and the editorial team.
- Encouraging the inclusion of links to datasets alongside published articles, where relevant and possible. Some articles are already indicating the presence of associated datasets on the title page and providing links for access.
- Emphasising the need for journals to have sustainability plans in place, as well as editorial development plans for their editors or associate editors. This concern emerged from the Diamond Journal Open Access Study, in which SciELO SA participated, highlighting the importance of effective management and longevity of South African journals.

- Recognising the significance of establishing a social media presence for marketing and enhancing the visibility of a journal. This aspect has been previously raised and discussed in NSEF meetings.

These criteria will be discussed with the editors of journals within the SciELO SA collection.

Dr Nkosinathi Madondo from Mangosuthu University of Technology, who accompanied the SciELO SA delegation to the SciELO 25 conference in Brazil, highlighted a key point raised at the conference regarding outdated and closed research assessment practices. He enquired about the progress made by ASSAf in addressing these issues. In response, Mrs Veldsman noted that Dr Madondo's presentation on open language policy was well-received at the SciELO 25 conference. The ensuing discussion revealed that South Africa has a unique definition of 'transformation' compared to other countries. Dr Madondo's presentation shed light on different perspectives on transformation and its implications. Mrs Veldsman emphasised that scholarly publishing is moving towards open science, with alternative metrics and evaluation methods gaining traction. She suggested that the time is ripe for ASSAf's Scholarly Publishing Programme (SPP) to embrace this direction, starting with creating a platform for meaningful discussions and serious consideration of these matters. In transitioning to open science and advocating for openness, it is crucial to ensure that the evaluation system incentivises authors to engage in open science, open access, and open data initiatives. It is important to have appropriate checks and balances in place to ensure that researchers receive due recognition for their contributions. While discussions on these topics have begun in South Africa, they have yet to gain prominence. Mrs Veldsman affirmed that ASSAf is committed to advancing these discussions and initiatives.

SciELO SA is currently addressing the challenge posed by a few non-performing journals on the platform. International indices such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and Web of Science (WoS) are beginning to remove these journals from their listings. Recognising the importance of maintaining a collection of high-quality, full-text open-access journals, SciELO SA views non-performance as a serious issue that undermines the value and impact of the collection on an international scale. The advisory board has decided to engage in discussions with these non-performing journals, with the possibility of discontinuing their indexing on the platform. Strict measures are being considered and are set to be implemented against journals that fail to meet the required standards.

The NSEF has engaged in numerous discussions regarding the permissible percentage of affiliation for authors representing a particular institution, a matter that has been contentious due to interpretation challenges surrounding the 75/25 percent rule[3] embedded in policy. The DHET maintains that the rules of accredited indices, such as SciELO SA, should supersede those of the DHET research output policy. However, SciELO SA advocates for a diverse spread of authors from different institutions in each journal volume, recommending a 65/35 percent spread to ensure author and institutional diversity in articles published within a specific year. Despite ongoing debates on this issue, SciELO SA acknowledges the need for nuanced rules and criteria to be applied, especially in developing the PQF to meet the requirements of the Research Output Policy. It is worth noting that SciELO SA journals have generally adhered to the existing rule, although discussions on potential improvements continue.

[3] Application Process for Inclusion of Journals into the DHET List (SA Journal list). See Criteria for inclusion https://www.dhet.gov.za/Policy%20and%20Development%20Support/Research%20Outputs%20Policy%202015.pdf

Prof Tomaselli provided the historical context to the 75/25 percent principle. Initially, there was a directive from the DHET requiring a 50/50 percent distribution, which was not yet an ASSAf criterion. This directive arose due to concerns that some journals were disproportionately publishing articles from within the host institution, leading to an uneven distribution of research incentive subsidies across the country. The introduction of the 75/25 percent principle aimed to regulate this issue by limiting the over-publication of authors from individual institutions in their own journals, whether DHET-accredited or included in international indexes. The underlying philosophy behind this principle was that as South African journals developed and gained local and global exposure, they would eventually transition to major international indexes such as WoS, ProQuest, and Scopus. Journals indexed in these databases are considered international and are granted more flexibility regarding the percentage representation of authors, similar to the latitude given to SciELO SA journals. Editors adhering to the 75/25 percent rule face challenges, particularly with universities where researchers across multiple campuses collaborate on large projects. In such cases, authors may need to spread their articles across various journals and issues rather than consolidating them for a special issue guest-edited within the university. This approach can sometimes detract from coherence and uniformity.

Prof Tomaselli further noted that there have been inquiries regarding the interpretation, calculation, and application of fractions of percentages of authors to ensure compliance with the 75/25 percent rule. This highlights the need for clarity and precision in implementing the rule, particularly when dealing with situations where the distribution of authors may result in fractional percentages. Clarifying guidelines and procedures for handling such scenarios would be beneficial in ensuring consistent adherence to the rule across different journal publications.

Mrs Veldsman explained that there are various interpretations of the principle regarding co-authorship. According to SciELO SA's understanding, only the main author is considered in determining institutional affiliation, and co-authors from different institutions are not factored into the calculation. Additionally, there are questions about whether the principle should be applied per issue or per annum. SciELO SA typically interprets the principle on an annual basis, allowing editors greater flexibility to distribute authorship among institutions over the course of a year. This approach enables editors to manage authorship representation more effectively and provides a broader timeframe for achieving compliance with the principle.

Mrs van Heerden provided the link to how SciELO SA interprets the principle.[4] She emphasised that for SciELO SA, the principle serves as a guideline, but ultimately, it is the responsibility of the editor to ensure a well-balanced distribution, both geographically and otherwise, within the journal. Additionally, she shared the link to slides on the interpretation of the policy in a presentation by Dr Pierre de Villiers[5]. According to Dr de Villiers' consultation with DHET, articles with multiple authors from different institutions are not included in applying the rule. This interpretation aligns with the notion that such articles demonstrate collaboration across institutional boundaries, thereby meeting another principle of breaking insularity.

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[4] https://sites.google.com/view/assaf-scholarly-pub-resources/scielo-sa/conditions-and-quality-checks. Note this is for SciELO SA journals and not for journals on the DHET (only) list.

[5] Dr Pierre de Villiers's slides on the implementation of the DHET 75/25 per cent policy can be viewed at https://research.assaf.org.za/assafserver/api/core/bitstreams/34850a06-2c00-4e14-98d1-88946115e034/content. Note that SciELO SA journals are exempt from the 25/75 per cent rule, as are Web of Science, Scopus, IBSS and DOAJ journals where the guideline is 35 per cent and over a year and not per issue.

Mrs Veldsman concluded by highlighting that the PQF aims to provide clarity on the requirements for the sector. She affirmed that ensuring a good spread of authorship is considered best practice internationally. In a comparison between various accredited indexes, SciELO SA found that the principle of a good distribution of authors is widely recognised as best practice. However, it is observed without being overly prescriptive about quantifying the percentage.

SciELO SA Advisory Committee

The SciELO SA advisory committee faced challenges in its functionality due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. Consequently, there was a decision to allow the collection to stabilise before actively identifying and addressing challenges. However, the committee has now been reinstated. The committee members, approved by the ASSAf Council, have been officially appointed, and their names have been shared with the NSEF. The committee held its first meeting on March 7, 2024, with Prof Tomaselli and Prof Igle Gledhill serving as chairpersons. Their input and guidance will be instrumental in ensuring the continued success and quality of the SciELO SA collection.

Future of SciELO SA and strategic plan

SciELO SA is funded by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) through the budget allocated to ASSAf by the National Treasury. Part of this funding is allocated to the Scholarly Publishing Unit, which supports SciELO SA's collection of open access journals. Recognising the importance of ensuring the sustainability of SciELO SA, efforts have been made to advocate for increased endorsement and support from the DSI. SciELO SA has been acknowledged as a national asset, playing a vital role in South Africa's system of innovation, scholarly publishing, and open science. SciELO SA must be formally recognised and supported as a national asset by both the DSI and the DHET. In documentation such as the DSI's Open Science Framework, which is still under consideration by Parliament, SciELO SA is identified as a critical component in advancing open science initiatives. High-level discussions are ongoing between the ASSAf Executive Officer, the DSI Director-General, and DHET to secure the necessary funding to support SciELO SA into the future, enabling it to fulfill its identified role effectively.

Prof Soodyall added that ASSAf has been actively seeking funding for the sustainability of the SciELO SA platform for several years, and discussions on this matter are ongoing. Currently, SciELO SA is still funded from ASSAf's seed funding, which limits the availability of these funds for other important purposes. Efforts have been made to secure funding from other sources, but unfortunately, these efforts have not yet been successful. Nevertheless, ASSAf remains committed to continuing its efforts to source funding for SciELO SA to ensure its functionality and ability to fulfill its role for the public good.

In discussions with the ASSAf Executive Officer regarding the SPP, it has become evident that there is a need to repackage the work of the programme, extending beyond just SciELO SA. Mrs Veldsman has called upon the CSPiSA and the NSEF to participate in this repackaging effort over the coming months. She noted that while the SPP is engaged in significant work, it does not always receive the attention it deserves from government officials, institutions, researchers, or acknowledgment of its crucial role in the scholarly publishing system in South Africa. Other key stakeholders include CREST and DHET. ASSAf serves as a neutral broker for the interests of all related parties. An email will be sent to NSEF members, extending an invitation for their assistance in developing the next five-year plan for the SPP. This initiative is timely as the previous five-year plan is concluding, and all government departments are expected to submit new five-year plans for the period 2025–

2030. In determining the strategic direction for the next five years, the starting point will be to decide which lens to apply. While the consensus studies have been valuable for the SPP and have set a path, it is now essential to pause and consider the way forward.

SciELO SA 15-year celebrations

The SPP is celebrating three significant milestones in 2024: SciELO SA celebrates 15 years, *SAJS* marks 120 years, and *Quest* magazine reaches 20 years.[6] With limited budget resources, careful allocation is essential to properly acknowledge the achievements of each platform. The *SAJS* editorial team is planning an extensive programme to celebrate the journal's 120-year legacy, including the publication of articles highlighting its history. Similarly, *Quest* magazine, initiated shortly after the dawn of democracy, aims to promote science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and citizen science within schools and communities. *Quest* will dedicate some articles to reflect on its history. SciELO SA plans to submit a commentary on its origin and growth to the *SAJS* for consideration. NSEF members are encouraged to share their personal experiences, comments, and anecdotes related to any of these three platforms, contributing to the celebration of their remarkable milestones.

Prof Gledhill made important comments:

- She emphasised that we should not underestimate the respect SciELO South Africa has gained in South Africa through its participation in the DHET incentive scheme. Publishing under this scheme is highly valued by authors, and South Africa's active involvement in SciELO as an open-access South-South alliance significantly benefits the country's research community.
- Prof Gledhill highlighted the crucial role of the SPP, describing it as the 'glue' in the system and a beacon of integrity in the scientific community, especially during challenging times. While the SPP often operates behind the scenes, its impact is evident in discussions within the scientific community. She emphasised that ASSAf hosts and is responsible for this important service to society.

Prof Tomaselli highlighted the importance of stability, investment, and continuity in the strategic planning process for the SPP. He emphasised that facilities and resources should not be taken for granted, especially considering the changing priorities and fluctuating budgets of the government. Developing a framework that can navigate SciELO SA through potential threats while capitalising on opportunities is crucial. Prof Gledhill highlighted the symbolic value of integrity within the SPP. ASSAf serves as the 'glue' that binds the scholarly publishing system together, while SciELO SA acts as the 'window to the world' of prestigious open access research. Ensuring the stabilisation of SciELO SA and establishing a long-term plan are essential priorities that need to be addressed to sustain its role and impact in the scholarly publishing landscape.

Publications Quality Framework Project

The documentation has been sent to NSEF members in preparation for the meeting. This was to enable members to review and familiarise themselves with the content beforehand, facilitating a more informed and productive discussion during the meeting.

The Publications Quality Framework (PQF) project will be funded by the DHET as part of the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP). In December 2022, DHET decided to allocate funding for the PQF project from unspent funds available in the UCDP. Contracts for the project were subsequently signed in January 2023, with CREST appointed

[6] See the most recent *Quest* at https://bit.ly/43WrBaP The focus of this issue is on AI.

as the principal investigator to lead the project, under the leadership of Prof Johann Mouton.[7] CREST submitted a work plan outlining various work packages for implementing the project over three years. Despite a tight timeframe, there were delays due to health issues affecting the project leader at CREST. However, approval was granted by the ASSAf Executive Officer for the SPP to continue participating in the programme. Much of the work involved in the PQF project builds upon the efforts of the large peer-review panels that ASSAf has conducted over the past 13 years. ASSAf is receiving funding for its involvement in the project, although the funding does not cover staff costs. Therefore, the work will need to be carried out by the existing structures of the SPP. Once the panels have been constituted, NSEF members will be invited to assist in the project.

Editors and journals will be required to adhere to the criteria outlined in the PQF, which will be developed taking into consideration the criteria of SciELO SA and the *Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing, and Peer Review*. It is anticipated that journals will undergo evaluation based on the latest criteria, potentially leading to a pivotal moment in determining whether certain journals will continue to be part of the system. ASSAf has already tackled many of the challenges identified with journals during the initial consensus study on scholarly publishing in South Africa. The second consensus study, conducted over ten years, assessed progress and observed that journals have been striving to enhance the quality of their output. However, in some cases, these efforts may not have been adequate. Presently, South Africa boasts a core of high-performing journals, but there are concerns regarding others. Despite efforts to raise awareness about predatory publishing during the second consensus study, such practices persist and are even growing.

CREST has a large team working on the PQF project, and initial findings are already emerging. Some of these findings are concerning, revealing evidence of unethical practices thriving within the scholarly publishing system. The PQF initiative emerged at a time when both the government and the national scholarly publishing community recognised the need for such a system. The objectives of the Research Output Policy were two-fold: to incentivise publication output and productivity, a goal that the policy has largely achieved; and to ensure the production of high-quality research output, an area where challenges have been observed. There has been a recognition within the government that the quality of research output has been declining, necessitating measures to enhance research output quality and integrity across the scholarly publishing system, encompassing journals, books, and conference proceedings.

CREST serves as the principal investigator for the PQF project. Additionally, the DHET mandated the involvement of historically disadvantaged institutions, with the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) being selected. Prof Elisha Chiwari, the Director of CPUT Libraries, was appointed as the other main member of the project's management structure. The project management team also included representatives from DHET, ASSAf, the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA), the National Research Foundation (NRF), and Universities South Africa (USAf). Furthermore, a consultative stakeholder group will guide the project, comprising representatives from South African public universities, research directors, members of the National Scholarly Book Publishers' Forum (NSBPF), and NSEF members. Several developments have occurred since January 2024. An exploratory meeting is scheduled for May 2024, followed by a detailed discussion in June to plan the rollout of various work packages. These meetings aim to ensure effective collaboration and progress in implementing the PQF project.

[7] Prof Mouton's slides on the PQF presented at the NSEF meeting of 11 November 2021 can be viewed here - https://research.assaf.org.za/assafserver/api/core/bitstreams/0b01f740-c9cd-4394-b44c-311e69c0e551/content

Four work packages were envisioned for the PQF project:

Work package 1: Establishment of an alert and support system to assist universities in identifying cases of questionable publishing behaviour before submitting for the publication subsidy.

Currently, numerous instances of predatory and unethical publishing practices have been identified in the submissions made on the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) by university research offices. The objective is to create guides for university research offices to aid in identifying questionable practices.

This would involve establishing a more timely alert and support system to assist universities in identifying cases of questionable publishing behaviour before submitting for publication subsidy.

Work package 2: Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the quality and integrity of all submissions to the DHET.

This would involve implementing rigorous and regular monitoring of all South African journals, developing and monitoring a list of accredited book publishers (both South African and international), and monitoring a list of accredited conference proceedings.

The NSEF and the NSBPF were anticipated to play a crucial role in Work Package 2 by contributing to the shaping of quality aspects of research output. The expected tasks include revisiting the Code of Best Practice in Scholarly Journal Publishing, Editing, and Peer Review. While the code itself may not require substantial revision, it does need to be repackaged and restructured to align with the requirements of the work packages. The appropriate use of AI in publishing practice would need to be incorporated into the Code of Best Practice.

The perspectives of journal editors would be sought regarding suitable quality criteria to be applied. Mrs Veldsman emphasised not relying solely on bibliometric analysis of journals, as this could disadvantage journals not indexed by accredited indexes. However, she advocated for a robust quantitative component in the evaluation of journals. The timeframe for evaluating all 349 current South African accredited scholarly journals within three years was deemed very tight.

Another issue to address would be finalising the Statement on Issues and Struggles Faced by Editors of Journals in South Africa. The PQF project would provide an opportunity to consider alternative metrics and evaluation methods and the crucial role that journal editors play in managing journals as vehicles for research output. This presents a suitable moment to revisit and finalise the statement.

Work package 3: The development and implementation of educational and capacity-building interventions around good practice in scholarly publishing.

Work package 3 would involve capacity-building interventions in good practice in scholarly publishing. Although ASSAf was not explicitly mentioned as being involved in this work package, the documents and criteria that ASSAf plans to update would be crucial in training, especially related to research offices.

Work package 4: Support for ongoing research and analysis of South African scholarly publishing practices to maintain the necessary levels of vigilance and ensure that public

investment in subsidy systems meets the highest standards of research quality and integrity.

Support to the community of practice of South African scholars was envisaged. The NSEF and NSBPF would have an important role to play, and the next consensus study would need to be seriously considered, including the format of the study and the value that the SPP and the community of practice could contribute.

Mrs Veldsman emphasised that the system of scholarly publishing was evolving and assured journal editors that ASSAf would serve as the conduit for communication and consultation in setting the future agenda and workflow.

Prof Tomaselli expressed gratitude to Mrs Veldsman and highlighted that consultations regarding the PQF had commenced in 2023, with the CREST team and DHET engaging with university vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, and research offices, demonstrating the seriousness with which they were approaching the PQF project.[8] He noted that some predatory journals had managed to gain accreditation from DHET, and the process to remove them would be time-consuming. Prof Tomaselli raised concerns about some universities falling short in monitoring unethical behaviour internally. He pointed out that authors knowingly publishing in undeserving journals were straining the research output subsidy budget, estimating that predatory and unethical publishing practices were costing the South African scholarly publishing system over R400 million annually. CREST has statistics indicating a significant increase in scholarly publication incentivised by the DHET research output subsidy system from 7,000 articles in 2010 to 22,000 in 2019, but there were concerns about declining publishing quality due to authors over-producing articles lacking originality. Prof Tomaselli encouraged NSEF members to regularly consult the SAJS, which publishes discussion articles on these topics. Given the strain on the South African economy, it was crucial to protect, ringfence, and use available funding for its intended purpose. He emphasised the importance of consultations continuing, with university administrators being responsible for designing and enacting rules, monitoring publications, and ensuring adherence to best practices and appropriate journal selection within their institutions, a process expected to take several years.

Prof Tomaselli enquired whether the consensus panels would be paused until the completion of the PQF project or if the SPP planned to initiate a new cycle of reviews. Mrs Veldsman responded that the first cycle of evaluating all journals had concluded. It was anticipated that evaluations would recommence under the PQF. Recognising that the previous approach and procedures could not continue given the new criteria, new methods would need to be devised. The PQF project's duration was limited to three years, requiring completion of the review cycle within that timeframe. While the previous cycle had been comprehensive and involved panels, a condensed methodology would be necessary to save time, costs, and ensure efficiency. Initial discussions indicated that a streamlined version of the panels would be employed in the new cycle.

Prof Tomaselli brought up the availability of reviewers as another consideration in determining the procedures for the panels' work. Mrs Veldsman responded that the PQF would be tackled by subject clusters, with experts invited to participate in each cluster.

[8] DHET Research Outputs Communique 2 of 2023 – 26 September 2023 sent to all DVC's for Research and Senior Directors of Research - https://www.dhet.gov.za/Policy%20and%20Development%20Support/Communique%202%20%20of%202023%20Research%20Outputs.pdf

This approach would involve editors within the field as well as some from outside to prevent insularity and maintain fairness in evaluations.

Prof Luke Chimjuka from the University of the Witwatersrand, also a Chief Editor of the *South African Journal of Chemistry*, enquired about the availability of a preliminary copy of the report on quality aspects of journals. In response, Prof Tomaselli mentioned that all consensus panel reports on journal evaluations are accessible on the ASSAf website.[9]

Prof Chimjuka noted the varying approaches universities take in administering research output subsidy revenue, suggesting that some of these methods might inadvertently incentivise academics to publish in predatory journals. He recommended standardising the utilisation of the research output subsidy across higher education institutions.

Prof Tomaselli pointed out that authors are not always aware when a journal is predatory, and even ASSAf members have occasionally published in predatory journals unknowingly. There are templates available for checking whether a journal is predatory, but university assessment committees also need to be vigilant in distinguishing between legitimate and predatory journals and advising employees accordingly.

Prof Tomaselli highlighted that the various models for managing and distributing the research output subsidy income are internal matters for universities. DHET does not seek to impose a single policy or model for publication incentives, but the concern lies in whether these incentives are being distributed ethically. A recurring point raised in NSEF meetings is the unethical behaviour of universities that permit fully-employed researchers to receive a portion of the subsidy as taxable income, contrary to the subsidy's intended purpose of building institutional capacity rather than increasing individual researchers' salaries. This is an issue that the PQF will delve into extensively.

Mrs Veldsman noted that the distribution of the research output subsidy at the institutional level is a sensitive issue. In 2023, the PQF team sent a questionnaire to university research offices to gather information about their practices in this regard, and the diversity of approaches is now well understood. The question now is what the PQF will do about this. Her perspective is that the PQF might opt to establish broad guidelines for institutions regarding how the subsidy could and should not be utilised.

Prof Gledhill encouraged ASSAf to persist in seeking funding for the activities of the SPP, NSEF, and NSBPF, especially during the current period of resource constraints. She emphasised the importance of these debates in demonstrating the relevance of ASSAf, particularly the SPP, and their impact on authors and editors. ASSAf serves as a representative voice for the most active scholars in society and in the realm of scholarly achievement.

Code of Conduct for Research

Work on the Code of Conduct for Research began nearly three years ago in response to regulations of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), particularly concerning the sharing of research data. Despite two attempts to have the code approved by the Information Regulator, it was not endorsed. This setback, however, has led to the

[9] See https://assafopenscience.co.za/business-journal-database/ for your journal entry. Each entry contains a link to the report in which your journal was evaluated.
ASSAf's Reports on Grouped Peer Review of Scholarly Journals (per field) can be viewed here - https://research.assaf.org.za/search?query=Report%20on%20Grouped%20Peer%20Review%20of%20Scholarly%20Journals%20. Note that changes made by the journals since publication of the evaluations are not reflected.

opportunity to include additional considerations in the code, as organisations like the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC) and university research ethics committees seek guidance on navigating the POPIA. One ethical concern is the departure of international entities after conducting research in South Africa, taking the data with them. ASSAf plans to develop a framework as a code of best practice to address these issues and continue consultations with stakeholders. While some concerns have been raised about the change in direction, ASSAf aims to complete the framework within the next two months and seek a meeting with the Information Regulator to discuss the revised approach.

The Information Regulator cited two reasons for not approving the code:

- **Scope:** POPIA specifies that a code should apply to specific groups. However, ASSAf's drafted code aimed to benefit the entire research community, not just its members. This misalignment raised concerns about the scope of the code.
- **Governance:** There were concerns about how ASSAf would govern the code. Clarity was needed on how the code would be administered and enforced within the research community.

Mrs Veldsman emphasised that the governance structure for the proposed framework would differ significantly from that of a traditional code of conduct. The stakeholder consultation process for the code of conduct had been extensive and successful, garnering recognition and appreciation for ASSAf. Moving forward, continued efforts would be made to secure buy-in from stakeholders for the proposed new approach.

ASSAf Open Science Policy

Over the past 15 years, ASSAf has made significant strides in addressing open access issues, which have evolved into broader considerations of open science. However, ASSAf has not yet officially recognised that all of its work is available through open access and open data. To address this gap, ASSAf has decided to develop a policy outlining how the academy aligns its activities with major open science policies such as those established by the DSI, UNESCO, ISC, and G20. Importantly, this policy will only direct ASSAf's activities and will not extend to external institutions. ASSAf's policies, including the Transformation Strategy and the Science Engagement Strategy, are already linked to DSI frameworks, and the construction of the Open Science Policy aligns strategically with these existing policies. By having its Open Science Policy in place when the DSI's Open Science Policy is approved by Parliament, ASSAf aims to ensure coherence and alignment with broader national frameworks.

Prof Tomaselli expressed gratitude to Mrs Veldsman for her thorough account of the SPP's activities. Prof Kelley Moult from the University of Cape Town requested a bulleted summary. In response, Mrs Veldsman assured that comprehensive proceedings of the meeting would be provided, along with all relevant documents as appendices.

SESSION 2: KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Facilitator: Prof Wian Erlank (North-West University)

Life, the universe and LLMs: What editors need to know about AI and LLMs (Dr Martin Bekker, University of the Witwatersrand)

Dr Martin Bekker from the University of the Witwatersrand delivered a presentation on AI and LLMs, drawing from his previous talks at AOSIS forums. The aim is to provide an overview of large language models (LLMs), discussing their structure and functionality. Understanding the nature of LLMs will help editors discern their capabilities and limitations, and prompt considerations for potential policy responses.

The vast realm of artificial intelligence revolves around algorithms, acting as agents, to make decisions. These algorithms can serve diverse purposes, including search, path-finding, and engaging in games with min-max optimisation between adversarial players.

Machine learning, a subset of AI, essentially involves presenting examples to an algorithm and requesting it to produce a certain output based on what it observes. For instance, it might identify the subject of a photo as 'a dog' based on observed characteristics and generalisations. This output could be a classifier, distinguishing between 'dog' and 'not dog', or a predictor, such as a regression model number. It could also be a recommender model, offering a percentage prediction of what content you might want to view next on platforms like YouTube, based on your profile, current and past interests, and current trends.

LLMs represent a significant area within AI, with generative pre-trained transformers (GPTs) being one type. GPTs draw from complex adaptive systems, exhibiting emergent behaviour not solely reliant on user training but also generating novel insights and patterns. Interestingly, the network's size seems to exhibit emergent properties once it reaches a certain scale, typically around 10^{23}.

If we were to develop our own LLM, we would train a simple algorithm to scour the entire internet, as is done by OpenAI and many other LLMs, or a specific corpus like PubMed. The goal would be to identify certain 'concepts', such as a cat, phone, or glass, and discern the relationships or patterns between these concepts. This process would create a galaxy of stars, with each concept acting as a star, resulting in approximately 20,000 concepts and the connections between them. These connections represent potential pathways and the sentences observed over time. For instance, if we were to prompt the LLM with the sentence 'The cat sat on the...', the algorithm would navigate through this vector space to determine the most likely next word probabilistically. Out of the 20,000 connections, approximately 18,000 would not make sense, but based on the corpus it has learned from, the algorithm would likely predict 'The cat sat on the mat' as the most probable completion of the sentence.

In the galaxy analogy, each concept, like a 'cat', may have several 'planets' orbiting around it. These 'planets' could represent different language translations, synonyms, or stylistic variations of the concept. Neuroscientists would refer to these concepts as 'tokens'. When asked to perform a task such as translating a sentence into another language or rendering a sentence in a specific style (e.g., the Gettysburg Address by US President Abraham Lincoln or the "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King Jr), the algorithm would follow a similar route through the galaxy, typically visiting the 'planet' associated with the target language or style.

It's important to note that this system does not think or understand in the way humans do; rather, it simply follows a predetermined path through space. In this analogy, if one 'galaxy'

generates a response to a prompt or instruction, there may be other 'galaxies' or 'constellations' responsible for checking for certain types of harm, abuse, or danger. When a prompt is received and a response generated, it is shown to these other LLMs, often referred to as 'AI guardrails', which interpret the response. For example, if an LLM is asked to create a chlorine bomb, the response would be evaluated by the guardrail 'galaxy' before being sent to the user. If the guardrail identifies the content as harmful, dangerous, nefarious, or illegal, the LLM would respond to the user that the request cannot be fulfilled.

In summary, building an LLM requires a vast corpus of text, typically sourced from the internet, such as the common crawl dataset. A stochastic model is then created as the foundational model, tasked with responding to prompts or queries. Additional 'galaxies' function as safety layers, ensuring that responses meet certain criteria and do not pose harm or risk. Human involvement is crucial in testing and refining the model's responses. By evaluating and 'rewarding' responses that align with human preferences or standards, over time, the model learns to produce outputs that are more desirable to humans through hundreds of thousands of hours of iterative testing and refinement.

Based on this understanding, the model is expected to excel in several areas, including:

- Repackaging of ideas: This involves tasks such as rephrasing, paraphrasing, shortening, or expanding upon text to convey information in different ways.
- Style transfer: The model can translate text into different languages or render it in various styles.
- Grammar correction: Identifying and correcting grammatical errors by suggesting the statistically most probable text.
- Brainstorming and suggesting simple ideas: Leveraging its training on a corpus of text, the model can generate ideas or suggestions. The effectiveness of this function depends on the complexity of the idea, with simpler concepts likely to yield more useful suggestions, while more specialised topics may pose challenges.

The weaknesses of an LLM are as follows:

- It operates as a mathematical model rather than a linguistic one.
- It is sometimes derisively labeled as a 'stochastic parrot' because it generates responses based solely on statistical patterns observed in its training data.
- Without proper context or verification, an LLM may provide plausible yet inaccurate responses, leading to what is termed as 'hallucinations'.
- The model's ability for causal reasoning is limited, meaning it cannot effectively deduce cause-and-effect relationships.
- There is a constant risk of 'jailbreaking', wherein attempts are made to bypass or subvert the safety mechanisms implemented to mitigate harmful or malicious outputs.

The hidden harms associated with LLMs include:

- Human labour exploitation during the training process of these models.
- Considerable environmental impact due to the extensive energy and water consumption involved in both training and operating LLMs, leading to the alienation of users from the resources used to produce the output. This phenomenon can be likened to 'commodity fetishism', where the value of the output is revered without acknowledging the resources invested in its creation.
- Heightened concerns regarding the monopolistic control held by a small number of companies possessing LLM technology, along with the substantial resources required for model training.
- The incomprehensible complexity of LLMs, with their vast networks of connections, poses a fundamental challenge as their inner workings are beyond human understanding.

Additional threats associated with LLMs include:

- Violation of intellectual property (IP) consent, as training approaches such as the common crawl may have indiscriminately utilised academic papers without proper authorisation, potentially bypassing paywalls.
- Inclusion and accessibility of all internet content within the model's corpus, encompassing existing instances of racism, sexism, and hate speech, posing significant challenges in attempting to remove such content.
- Potential for the model to provide negligent, dangerous, or harmful advice due to its nature as a stochastic rather than a thinking model.
- Facilitation of mass-scale cheating, as the model's capabilities could be exploited for unethical purposes.

There are ongoing debates about the existential threats of AI, including the possibility of automating away good jobs and thereby losing executive skills, critical skills, and explainability, as well as both subtle and blatant manipulation.

In considering the implications of AI for scholarly publishing, the ground rules include both the big and the small ethics rules. Despite the changes in technology, our ethical compass has not changed, and the big rules remain the implicit ideals and principles such as fairness, beneficence, and autonomy. Small ethics principles are similarly non-negotiable, including:

- Ownership (including integrity, responsibility, acknowledgement of contributions, etc.)
- Transparency (including stating one's assumptions, showing one's workings, reproducibility, acknowledging sources, etc.)
- Impartiality (including blind review, non-payment for submission, not being swayed by names or influence).

There are five layers to be considered in relation to the extent to which a journal will accept the use of AI:

1. The use of AI might be banned outright.
2. The use of LLMs in proofing for grammar and spelling assistance might be permissible.
3. Some form of co-creation might be permitted, similar to what an editor might do, including not only proofing but also restructuring or reordering of ideas.
4. By opening the door even further, brainstorming and planning might be allowed.
5. Finally, in a 'no holds barred' approach, unrestricted use of AI could be permitted.

In the spirit of integrity, authors using AI should demonstrate transparency by disclosing their prompts and assuming full responsibility for their work. It is essential to note that there is no co-authorship with an LLM. Any engagement with an LLM should be openly declared and accessible. For instance, authors can retain the original work and provide editors with a link to the full transcript.

The SAJS offers valuable guidance on maximising the benefits of LLMs:

- Limit the use to its strengths, such as proofreading and rephrasing.
- Employ LLMs after completing the initial thinking process.
- Always disclose the use of LLMs.
- Avoid allowing LLMs to have the final say, and consistently rephrase their output.

These guidelines are not only sensible and practical but also uphold ethical standards. Attempting to completely ban the use of AI would be impractical and could lead to attempts at circumvention. When AI is utilised appropriately by students, it can have a positive impact by leveling the playing field, particularly for second-language speakers. By prioritising the merit of ideas, individuals can focus on producing content to the best of their abilities and then leverage AI tools to refine their work. As the saying goes, "Good

writing is indistinguishable from good thinking."

The North-West University offers valuable guidance to students regarding the use of AI, which includes:

- Ensuring that students are aware that there will be an AI policy for each module.
- Advising students to stay informed and encouraging them to retain their original work, approach AI output with skepticism, rephrase rather than copy and paste LLM output, and properly declare and cite their use of AI and the prompts they utilised.
- Warning students against engaging in detrimental practices such as misusing or excessively relying on AI, committing plagiarism, and engaging in academic fraud.

From an editorial perspective, suboptimal approaches to AI include:

- That AI can be outsmarted through the use of certain tools. Currently, ZeroGPT[10] appears to be the most effective in predicting algorithmic interference, and while Turnitin has made efforts in this regard, no solution is entirely foolproof.
- Attempting to legislate AI out of existence would be ill-advised and could create incentives for avoidance.
- Trying to keep pace with every new application, tool, and prompt set is also less than ideal.

As editors, we are familiar with our ethical principles and the objectives and purposes of our respective journals. Much of the hype surrounding AI is best disregarded.

Other examples of the usefulness of generative AI include:

- Post-thinking tool (e.g. language fixes)
- Evaluative brainstorming tool (e.g. 'How can I assess…')
- Harness the hallucinations (e.g. point to convincing non-truths)
- 'Explain to me' (e.g. Style transfer)
- Personal coach, reviewer, tutor, or patient (e.g. 'Pretend you are…'). From an author's perspective, it could be helpful to ask an LLM to act as a reviewer for your completed article from the perspective of a particular named journal and provide the feedback that a reviewer might give. This would not become a policy position, but authors could derive benefits. GPT-3.5 is not good at this, and OpenAI is better.
- Change the direction of interlocution
- Generate data
- Literary reviews for unfamiliar fields. AI is good at providing literary reviews of a field that is unfamiliar to you. This approach can deliver a good primer, but would probably be found unsatisfactory in a field you know well. Authors should treat such information only as an overview and not rely on it as an infallible source.
- Alien AI[11]
- Course chatbot.

Some of the ideas presented here are discussed in an *SAJS* article by Dr Martin Bekker.[12]

Q&A

Prof Wian Erlank raised the question of how journal editors can reliably identify the use of AI

[10] https://www.zerogpt.com/

[11] By not mimicking, but rather avoiding human inferences, 'alien' AIs can be designed that radically augment rather than replace human cognitive capacity. https://www.knowledgelab.org/projects/alien-ai/

[12] Bekker, M. (2024). Large language models and academic writing: Five tiers of engagement. South African Journal of Science, 120(1/2). https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2024/17147

beyond the declaration made by authors. Dr Bekker acknowledged that this issue is complex. He mentioned that Edward Tian's GPTZero has proven to be a valuable tool for indicating the percentage of LLM usage in a written piece. He also suggested that it would be technically feasible for platforms like ChatGPT or OpenAI to provide a function to check whether an LLM platform has authored a specific piece, as this data is typically logged with date, version, and stamp information. However, he noted that it might not be in the interest of the parent company to offer such a feature, as it could drive users to competitors. Alternatively, Dr Bekker proposed that universities could potentially access a specialised version of ChatGPT or a similar platform for interrogation, albeit likely at a significant cost. Another approach he mentioned involves querying an LLM about the probability, given a specific prompt, that it would generate a particular series of tokens, with the response indicating a confidence level as a percentage.

In the case of detecting the use of AI in a student's work, it is not necessary to establish a preponderance of the evidence or prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt. Journals may consider checking articles for AI usage similar to their approach in detecting plagiarism. The methods of subterfuge in the use of AI are likely to become increasingly sophisticated, such as feeding data into an LLM and instructing it to generate an article in the style of a named journal, even incorporating textual errors to evade detection. Journal editors should not treat undisclosed use of AI as plagiarism but as outright cheating. Clear guidelines, transparent methods, and penalties are necessary to deter rule violations.

Prof Erlank emphasised that the fundamental principle for journal editors is that authors must have written the article unaided, or they must declare any use of AI. Additionally, there should be clear policies in place, such as a retraction policy, to address situations where undeclared use of AI is detected after publication.

Dr Madondo highlighted the importance of providing excellent undergraduate training for universities to excel in postgraduate studies. He expressed concern about the prevalence of plagiarism and emphasised the need for universities to focus more on nurturing and developing students rather than policing to prevent future problems, as today's students may become researchers writing for publication. Dr Madondo noted that universities are not adequately teaching students how to use AI ethically to improve their writing skills. Instead, the approach seems to be focused on providing workshops to lecturers on the risks of AI. He suggested the development of a module to teach students how to ethically use LLMs.

Dr Bekker emphasised the importance of empowering students through AI literacy, which includes demystifying AI and promoting a greater understanding of its capabilities. This includes teaching students how to recognise the use of AI and what actions to take, as well as understanding appropriate and inappropriate use. He drew a parallel with the use of calculators, which are permitted once learners have mastered manual calculations and understand the underlying principles. Dr Bekker also highlighted the dangers of AI, including the emergence of generative AI that can create audio recordings of a person's voice saying words they never spoke. He stressed the importance of students understanding the risks of relying too heavily on AI and forfeiting opportunities for learning and skill development. Additionally, he mentioned the unethical practice of essay mills and emphasised the need for policy adaptation as technology evolves.

Prof Joey Kok from the University of the Witwatersrand responded to Dr Bekker's suggestion regarding the use of AI as a quick peer reviewer for articles before submission to journals. She considered this to be good advice but emphasised the need for caution. Prof Kok shared her approach when teaching young academics to write, which involves encouraging them to seek feedback from one or two peer reviewers before submitting their articles. She acknowledged that AI could potentially offer another avenue for

obtaining feedback. However, she raised concerns about the risks of placing the first draft of an article into an LLM before submission to a journal. Specifically, she questioned whether this could lead to the article being published under someone else's name and whether it would contribute to further training of the AI model.

Dr Bekker responded by highlighting that any material fed into the free version of GPT (version 3.5) is considered fair game for OpenAI, as they retain indefinite access to it and can use it for training purposes. However, this concern does not apply to locally run LLMs, such as a paid version of Llama installed on one's own machine or within a university network. Dr Bekker illustrated this point with an example involving an employee of Samsung who faced legal repercussions for uploading proprietary company documents to an LLM for language improvement. He emphasised the need for caution when considering the potential dilution of copyright ownership or the unintended use of submitted papers for training AI models.

Dr Bekker expressed interest in the idea of using an LLM to change the direction of interlocution by assigning it a role, such as a career advisor or peer reviewer, in which it asks questions. He emphasised that scholarly articles are typically written after results are available and analysis and thinking have been completed, assuming that a scholarly article is fundamentally distinct from a student paper in this regard.

Prof Leslie Swartz from Stellenbosch University thanked Dr Bekker for his valuable contributions to the SAJS and recommended reading his recently published article in the journal. He highlighted the moral panic and pressure he was facing as a journal editor from certain readers who were anxious and seeking certainty regarding AI. While publication fraud is not a new issue, the emergence of technological forms of fraud has raised new concerns. Prof Swartz enquired whether other journal editors were experiencing similar anxieties from their stakeholders.

Dr Bekker responded to Prof Swartz by viewing the evolving technological landscape as an opportunity rather than a threat. He emphasised that the incentive structure has changed, and when used appropriately, articles can benefit from leveraging the power of LLMs, especially when clear guidelines are in place. Dr Bekker expressed the hope that by providing clear guidelines, paper mills could be eliminated, ensuring that the merit of ideas and contributions to knowledge remain paramount. He believed that with sufficient guidance, the power of AI could be harnessed effectively.

Prof Erlank noted that while the session had primarily addressed the use of LLMs by journal authors, editors were also likely to begin using AI as a tool in their work. For instance, LLMs could be effective in generating abstracts and keywords for articles. However, he cautioned against uploading journal submissions to free version LLMs. Prof Erlank suggested that journal editors should consider embracing AI tools, such as Grammarly, for improving language in submissions.

SESSION 3: ACCESSIBILITY

Facilitator: Ms Mmakwena Chipu (Human Sciences Research Council)

Ownership of published work typically rests with the publisher, leading to limited accessibility. However, the advent of open access has facilitated broader access to scholarly information, allowing it to reach a wider audience.

Update on the OA landscape in South Africa: with special focus on diamond open access – report back (Mrs Susan Veldsman, ASSAf)

Mrs Veldsman shared feedback from the draft South African report of the 'Collaboration for sustainable open access publishing in Africa', a three-year project in which ASSAf participated. Launched in November 2023 by Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL), African Journals Online (AJOL), and the West and Central African Research and Education Network (WACREN), with support from the Wellcome Trust, the project aims to empower African institutions publishing diamond open access (OA) journals.

There would be two open grant funding calls for proposals, scheduled for 2024 and 2025. The documentation and criteria for these calls would be submitted to the Wellcome Trust for final approval and release of funds. These funds are intended to strengthen quality diamond open-access publishing services across Africa. Mrs Veldsman highlighted the forthcoming calls to the attention of editors of diamond OA journals and encouraged applications from South Africa. 'Diamond OA' refers to journals that do not charge any article-processing charges (APCs), making them free to publish and free to access.[13]

The project adopts a participatory funding approach aimed at strengthening national and regional collaborations. It solicits funding commitments from African institutions and governments within a multi-stakeholder forum framework. Journals and organisations are expected to contribute partially to funding diamond open-access journals.

The call in 2024 will also include consideration for APC-based journals that seek to transition to diamond open access. The initiative will involve defining costs and strategies, discussing sustainability models, and providing assistance to journals in transitioning to diamond open access.

As part of ASSAf's participation in this project, the academy was tasked with conducting a landscape survey of diamond open-access journals in South Africa. The project questionnaire was dispatched to the editors and managers of journals and platforms. Two sets of questionnaires were used, one designed for individual diamond open-access journals and the other for platforms hosting these journals. The response rate amounted to approximately 65%, with 17 completed questionnaires returned out of the 26 distributed for journals, and 17 out of 25 received for platforms. This response rate was deemed sufficient to initiate exploration of the subject field.

The raw data has been processed and analysed, and Mrs Veldsman noted that there is still considerable scope for interpreting and probing some of the responses that, at face value, appear to be contradictory.

[13] Diamond Open Access refers to a scholarly publication model in which journals and platforms do not charge fees to either authors or readers. Diamond Open Access journals are community-driven, academic-led, and academic-owned publishing initiatives. https://www.coalition-s.org/diamond-open-access/#:~:text=Diamond%20Open%20Access%20refers%20to,and%20academic%2Downed%20publishing%20initiatives.

Mrs Veldsman provided an overview of the results of the survey for journals:

Different publishing models of South African journals: In 2023, South Africa was publishing 322 accredited scholarly journals. Out of these, 192 are open access, with 81 being diamond open access journals and 111 being gold open access (meaning that article-processing charges are levied). The remaining 130 journals are subscription-based.

Number of people working for journals: This includes key roles such as editors, assistant editors, and administrative support staff; a criticism of the questionnaire is that no distinction was made between these various roles. Nine of the journals reported having two to five people; four journals had fewer than two; one had six to ten, and three had 11–20.

Funding sources of journals: Five journals reported 'Periodically negotiated subsidy', and five reported 'Fixed and permanent subsidy from journal's primary institution's base'. The next highest was three journals with 'Time-limited grants/subsidies from outside the journal's primary institution's base'; two receive 'Permanent public/government funding', and one relies on 'Print sales'. Three of the journals are sustained by 'Other' funding sources.

Unmet funding needs: By far the biggest unmet need is 'Funding for capacity (personnel)', which was reported by six of the journals.

Units responsible for journals: Eight of the journals reported a 'Dedicated Unit - some employed, some volunteers', followed by five journals that reported 'No dedicated unit – employed but share time'.

In-kind support provided by host institutions: Nine of the journals reported 'In-kind support provided by host organisation; Facilities and premises', followed closely by eight that reported 'Service specific IT', seven 'General IT', and six each that reported 'Salaries of permanent staff' and 'HR management, general financial & legal'. Four journals reported that 'Salaries of temporary staff' are provided by the host institution. One of the main findings of the survey is that the diamond OA journals are mainly supported by higher education institutions, which provide in-kind support of various kinds and thus play a huge role in their sustainability.

Other findings:

- Thirteen of the 17 journals reported stable to very stable funding. This needs to be further investigated in light of the reported resource challenges.
- Fifteen journals reported annual approved budgets.
- Eleven of the journals do not have a sustainability plan.
- Most journals have editorial policy guidelines (15 out of 17). It needs to be interrogated why not all the journals have such guidelines.
- Double-blind peer review is the norm.
- IT support services are generally fully outsourced.
- Twelve use online workflows, and five of the 17 reported that some of the work flow is online.
- Most use OJS (15 out of 17).
- Thirteen reported that they cross-reference DOI and ORCiD.

Collaboration amongst journals in terms of services: 'Communication services' were indicated as the highest collaborative services, reported by seven journals, closely followed by six reporting 'IT services' and six reporting 'None'. Five journals each reported collaboration with 'Production services' and 'Training support advice', and three with 'Editorial services'.

Number of editorial members: The number of editorial board members varies enormously, ranging between five and 47. The value of very large editorial boards for some journals needs to be further scrutinised.

Overall challenges faced by journals: 'Financial constraints' were identified as the foremost challenge by 12 journals, and 'Lack of human resources' by nine journals. Six journals identified 'Administrative constraints', four each 'Archiving, backing up or preserving content and software' and 'Technical limitations of existing infrastructure', while two reported challenges with 'Providing adequate resources for the infrastructure and services'.

When ASSAf was approached by EIFL for assistance in researching the diamond OA publishing landscape in South Africa, the academy initially lacked comprehensive knowledge of the existing open-access portals in the country. ASSAf conducted a thorough desktop study and identified 25 portals in South Africa hosting open-access journals, although not exclusively limited to diamond OA journals. The URLs of these portals along with their respective managers were pinpointed. The EIFL project questionnaire was dispatched to the portal managers for completion within a specified deadline.

Mrs Veldsman provided an overview of the results of the survey for portals and platforms:

Portals and platforms: A total of 923 journals are indexed on the 25 identified portals. The two largest are Sabinet African Journals, which indexes 630 journals, and SciELO SA, which indexes 111 journals. South Africa has a number of other portals and platforms that index journals, mostly hosted by individual universities; the two largest are Unisa Press, which indexes 31 journals, and SUNJournals, which indexes 26. There were two commercial models, as well as government-supported models including Khulisa and SciELO SA. Nine of the platforms index ten or fewer journals, while the smallest indexes only one journal, hence the challenges of sustainability.

Units responsible for portals/platforms: Thirteen of the portals have a dedicated unit either full-time or part-time, while four have no dedicated unit, and staff are employed by the institution, sharing their time between the portal and other tasks.

Funding of portals: Similar to the findings for journals, many of the platforms (six) receive a 'fixed and permanent subsidy from the host organisation'. The next-highest response was 'Other', while two have 'periodically negotiated subsidy from the host organisation', one uses 'Print sales' to fund the portal, and another receives 'time-limited grants or subsidies, either private or public from outside the host organisation'.

Indexing of portals: The highest responses were for Google Scholar (14 portals) and Google (11 portals).

Challenges to get indexed: Complying with the challenges to become indexed is a significant challenge. The biggest challenges were identified as 'satisfying the technical participation criteria' and 'satisfying the non-technical participation criteria'. Other reported challenges included: 'paying for membership, annual or one time', 'paying for recurring charges, for example, monthly fees', 'the service requirements and paperwork are too technical', 'responsibility of the institution to apply', and 'Satisfying the metadata requirements'.

Pressing challenges: The most pressing challenges were 'lack of human resources' reported by nine portals, 'financial constraints' reported by six portals, and 'providing

adequate resources for the infrastructure and services' reported by five portals.

The survey identified the key challenges of diamond OA publishing as:

- **Funding constraints.**
- **Infrastructure and technical support**: Lack of technical infrastructure and expertise.
- **Quality assurance**: Maintaining high editorial services and rigorous peer review.
- **Visibility and discoverability**: Struggling to achieve sufficient visibility and discoverability.
- **Capacity building**: Support to new and emerging editors.
- **Transitioning from subscription to OA models** due to the financial implications and the need for careful planning.
- **Advocacy and policy support**: Advocacy and supportive policies at all levels are necessary, as well as funding support, open access mandates and institutional repositories.

Recovering page fees in South Africa: thoughts and suggestions (Dr Hugues Steve Ndinga-Koumba-Binza, University of the Western Cape)

The presentation is based on Dr Ndinga-Koumba-Binz's experience as editor of *Lexikos* as well as the *TINABANTU* journal published by the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS).

Most journals expect authors to pay page fees per published page or APCs, which were initially introduced to cover the printing of an article and many of the other costs necessary for the continuation of the journal. Even though most journals are no longer printed but are now published online and in open access, journals still have to cover various expenses including typesetting and online hosting where the journal does not have a host institution.

The problems include that the recovery of the page fees may not be a smooth process for all journals; there seem to be no standardised mechanisms for page fee recovery; and other than email reminders, there appear to be no means of pressure to get institutions and authors to pay, and to pay timeously.

Dr Ndinga-Koumba-Binz related his experience from two journals:

Lexikos: Published by the Bureau of the Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal. Dr Ndinga-Koumba-Binz served as editor for two volumes and is still an associate editor. His perspective also draws from his experience as a board member of the African Association for Lexicography (AFRILEX).

TINABANTU – Journal of Advanced Studies of African Society: Published by CASAS was established in 1997 and incorporated into the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in 2018. The journal began publishing in 2002 but became dormant in 2012. In 2023, the scientific advisory board approved the re-launch of the journal, and Dr Ndinga-Koumba-Binz volunteered as editor. It was hoped that the first issue would be published as soon as possible. Dr Ndinga-Koumba-Binz shares his experience as the journal editor and a CASAS senior researcher.

In an effort to gauge the scope of issues related to recovering page fees, a brief survey was launched, although not yet finalised. The objective was to determine whether these challenges were isolated to specific journals or more widespread. The goal was to lay the groundwork for discussions aimed at addressing the issue, regardless of its prevalence. The survey comprised a concise questionnaire with 11 primary inquiries, distributed to 35

journals published in South Africa, with responses still being collected. Dr Ndinga-Koumba-Binz plans to expand the survey to include additional journals in the future.

The survey was distributed to journals across diverse fields, encompassing Arts and Humanities, Engineering and Building, Health Sciences, and Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Presently, responses have exclusively originated from Arts and Humanities journals. Dr Ndinga-Koumba-Binz encouraged editors to verify the accuracy and currency of their online contact information, noting instances where emails were undeliverable. He extended an invitation to NSEF members serving as journal editors, yet to receive the questionnaire, to reach out to him for inclusion in the survey.

Dr Ndinga-Koumba-Binz highlighted several survey findings:

Regarding the perception of page fee recovery as an issue for journals, 43% of respondents indicated that it was not problematic. Their reasons included:

- The journal does not impose page fees.
- Page fee recovery is managed by the publisher rather than the journal.
- Efficient support staff dedicated to the task facilitate timely recovery of page fees.

Among those who viewed page fee recovery as an issue (57% of respondents), several reasons were cited:

- Administering page fee recovery is seen as cumbersome, particularly when there is no support team to assist the editor.
- Affordability is a concern, especially for emerging researchers and individuals from low-income countries.
- Difficulty in obtaining fees from authors located outside of South Africa.
- Challenges arise with publishing researchers who lack institutional affiliations.
- Underfunding in certain research sectors exacerbates the issue.

Who actually pays the page fees, and how timeously?
When universities or other institutions cover the page fees, none of the journals reported receiving timely payments. Instead, the breakdown is as follows:

- 14.3% experience long delays in receiving payment.
- 28.6% experience short delays.
- 28.6% receive payments with some form of pressure.
- 28.6% stated that this issue does not apply to their journal.

When authors are responsible for covering the page fees themselves:

- 42.8% of journals reported that authors pay with a short delay.
- 57.1% stated that this issue does not apply to their journal.

The survey findings indicated that the payment of page fees is generally an issue for journals, regardless of whether the journal is published by a medium or major publisher or self-published, even if affiliated with an institution.

Points of discussion arising from the survey include:

- **Can mechanisms be put in place to support journals struggling with page fee recovery?**
    - Suggestions include institutional budgeting for publication subsidies and engaging with major publishers.
- **How to engage the responsibility of institutions?**
    - New and additional roles might be considered for SciELO and the NSEF, including representation and an advocacy role with institutions on behalf

of journals, and leading journals to report to NSEF/SciELO on these kinds of issues.

- **How to deal with overseas authors?**
  - A possibility could be to extend the role of SciELO, or to establish a new organisation for that purpose supported by the NRF, ASSAf and local publishers, along the lines of organisations that deal with copyright.

Exploring the landscape of preprints and innovations in peer review (Dr Thabiso Motaung, University of Pretoria)

A preprint is a version of an academic paper that has not yet undergone peer review or been published in a traditional academic journal. Preprints are posted online in preprint servers, where they can be freely accessed by other researchers.

Preprints make the author's work available almost immediately, usually within 48 hours of screening, compared with traditional publication where there are long lead times before publication, and articles may also be rejected. Preprints become available for comment by experts in the field or the general public, and they can even be submitted to a journal for publication.

The benefits of preprints include:

- Rapid dissemination by bypassing traditional publication delays.
- Accessibility, by promoting inclusivity and free access to scientific knowledge for anyone who has internet connectivity.
- Allowing researchers to openly share work and receive feedback early in the research process.
- Priority and credit, as posting a preprint establishes priority for discoveries.
- Quality improvement through early feedback, leading to higher-quality research outputs.
- Evidence of productivity in grant applications and progress reports.
- Considered a demonstration of an investigator's research output.
- Supporting early-career researchers and scientists from underrepresented groups, for whom the article processing charges of traditional scholarly journals would pose a challenge.
- Playing a crucial role during emergencies. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, preprints facilitated the rapid sharing of research findings that informed the pandemic response. Major breakthroughs related to vaccine development, treatments, or early warnings of disease outbreaks can be communicated first via preprints before being published in a traditional journal.

The first electronic preprint archive, aRxiv, was established in 1991 primarily for physics preprints. Over time, it expanded to include preprints in computer science, mathematics, and related fields. Building on the success of aRxiv, a preprint server for the life sciences, bioRxiv, was established in 2013. In 2019, medRxiv was launched to cater specifically to the medical and health sciences. Since then, several other preprint archives have been established, including AfricArXiv in 2018, which was one of the earliest in Africa. SciELO preprints were introduced in 2021. Another notable development is eLife, which exclusively considers preprint papers.

While research institutions and funding bodies, such as the Wellcome Trust and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, endorse the use of peer-reviewed preprints in research evaluation, particularly in the global North, there appears to be limited acceptance of preprints by research funders in South Africa and other parts of Africa.

Numerous academic publishers are implementing policies concerning preprints, allowing researchers to freely share preprints online while also submitting them for journal publication. This inclusive approach is embraced by many prestigious scholarly publishing houses, such as Nature, Science, The Lancet, BioMed Central (BMC) Series, Oxford University Press, and the Royal Society. Additionally, several local journals have adopted similar policies, including the SAJS, which has established guidelines regarding preprints.

Public review of preprints entails having the manuscript assessed by experts in the field before its formal submission or publication in a journal. Several platforms offer this service at no cost, including ASAPbio Crowd Review, Review Commons, eLife, PeerRef, F1000Research, and Peer Community In (PCI).

Dr Motaung outlined the new publishing model using eLife as an example, a journal where he serves as an editor. This model offers several advantages, including expert public review and assessment of preprints. It also promotes the evaluation of scientists based on the content they publish rather than the venue. Additionally, the final version of the article, equivalent to a traditional journal article, can be utilised for subsidy purposes or to fulfill funders' requirements.

The process involves the following steps:

- A preprint is submitted or proposed to the journal for peer review.
- The editors assess whether they can provide useful reviews to the authors to further improve their work.
- Instead of rejection, expert public review and assessment are provided.
- Authors are allowed to correct any factual errors before the preprint assessment is made public.
- The preprint, along with the public reviews, is made available online for public viewing. This is considered a citable unit as every reviewed preprint is published and assigned a DOI.
- Authors have several options, including submitting the peer-reviewed preprint to a journal for publication, publishing the version of record for indexing at eLife, or revising the work to address reviewers' recommendations.

The components of an eLife reviewed preprint consist of:

- An indication that the work is a reviewed preprint.
- eLife assessment, presented as curation located beneath the Abstract, making it highly visible.
- Article review history.
- Public peer reviews, accessible within the eLife website.

Preprints facilitate the rapid dissemination of research findings, circumventing the delays associated with traditional publication processes and thereby accelerating scientific discovery. However, standardisation of preprint practices is essential to ensure quality and reliability across various preprint servers and disciplines. Robust peer-review standards and mechanisms are necessary for verification to bolster trust in preprints. Platforms such as eLife and PCI are notable for their effective implementation of these standards. Targeted outreach initiatives are needed to increase awareness, particularly in regions like Africa. Seamless workflows and clear guidelines are crucial for the transition from preprints to formal publications when authors opt to publish their preprint as a traditional scholarly article. Platforms like aRxivs excel in this aspect, offering affiliate journals for authors to seamlessly submit their preprints for peer review.

Q&A

In response to a query about the term 'sustainability plan,' Mrs Veldsman clarified that it refers to a strategic roadmap for the journal. This plan encompasses various aspects, including the anticipated number of articles to be published and whether there are plans to increase this figure. Additionally, it addresses financial considerations such as fees and projections regarding the rejection rate of submissions. Crucially, the sustainability plan outlines the financial sustainability of the journal, detailing its funding sources, expected trajectory of funding, and strategies to counteract any potential decline in existing funding streams.

In response to Prof Mathabo Khau's query regarding the ethical implications of withholding publication until page fees are paid, Dr Ndinga-Koumba-Binz clarified that in South African journals, fees are typically requested after publication. Therefore, the issue of withholding publication would only arise in the context of subsequent articles. Dr Ndinga-Koumba-Binz expressed his belief that it would not be considered unethical to delay publishing a second article until the fee for the publication of the first article has been settled. Drawing from his experience with French-language journals in France and West Africa, he noted that publication in these journals is contingent upon payment of fees.

In response to Mr Alfred Nqotole's query regarding the impact of Transformative Agreements on waiving or reducing APCs and whether local journals can adopt a similar approach, Dr Ndinga-Koumba-Binz highlighted that while some journals do not charge page fees, they are funded through alternative sources. For instance, Lexikos was previously funded by Afrikaans organisations, but this support has diminished due to a decline in Afrikaans articles. Similarly, CASAS, before its integration into the University of the Western Cape, had substantial funding from non-profit organisations to publish TINABANTU, but now relies on page fees. While the idea of adopting Transformative Agreements is promising, journals that do not charge page fees would need alternative funding from their host institutions or sponsors.

Ms Blanche Pretorius from the Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa raised two questions: whether cited preprints are allowed, and whether preprint portals are accessible to LLMs. Unfortunately, these questions were left unanswered during the discussion.

SESSION 4: TRANSPARENCY

Facilitator: Prof Jemma Finch (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Open peer review (Dr Jonny Coates, Accelerating Science and Publication in Biology [ASAPbio])

Dr Jonny Coates's presentation focused on the importance of open peer review and why it should be embraced. It highlighted several reasons supporting the publication of peer reviews, including its role in fostering constructive reviewer behaviour, which has been evidenced. Additionally, open peer review highlights that peer review is a scholarly endeavor deserving greater recognition. It serves as a marker of trust for both preprints and journal articles, thereby enhancing credibility. Moreover, publishing peer reviews enhances transparency in journal decisions. It also facilitates the recognition of reviewers, which is particularly beneficial for early-career researchers, aiding in profile building and visibility. Furthermore, open peer review enables the study of peer review processes themselves.

The future of peer review is likely to center around a preprint-focused approach, potentially

following the publish-review-curate model. This model may be integrated with diamond open-access publishing or operate independently. In this future landscape, peer review will be transparent, recognised, and rewarded, with reviews openly shared and policies established by funders and institutions to support this. Discussions surrounding peer review will become more prominent within the academic community, involving reviewers, editors, authors, and readers. Peer review will also play a more tangible role in the training of early-career researchers, with a potential shift towards utilising peer review in research training courses. Emphasis will be placed on the value of reviews as indicators of trust in scholarly work.

The original concept of peer review emphasised the significance of the review process itself, suggesting that it should hold greater importance than the paper under review. This perspective is likely to gain traction in the future, with a shift towards prioritising the peer review itself over the reviewed paper.

Multiple surveys indicate that researchers generally endorse the notion of publishing peer reviews in some capacity. However, there is less agreement on the specifics of how this should be implemented, such as whether the reviewer's identity should be disclosed along with the review.

Peer review should pivot towards being preprint-focused, as this would allow for greater experimentation and innovation in the peer review process. Currently, there is widespread misunderstanding about the nature and efficacy of peer review. The traditional model of peer review has its shortcomings, and there is a need to explore alternative approaches to improve it. Transitioning towards preprint-focused peer review would facilitate such experimentation. Initiatives like ASAPbio have been pioneering new models of peer review, such as cloud review, where reviews come from a broader group of experts rather than just a few individuals. ASAPbio has also launched initiatives to convert journal clubs into preprint review clubs, aiming to provide structured training opportunities, particularly beneficial for early-career researchers, and to democratise the expertise involved in peer review. One notable example is the Review Commons, launched in collaboration with ASAPbio, which offers preprint peer review services. The COVID-19 pandemic has spurred the emergence of additional initiatives in this space, indicating a growing momentum toward reimagining and revitalising peer review practices.

Another critical aspect of openly sharing reviews is that public feedback serves as a vital remedy for misinformation. Consider the case of a paper presenting weak scientific findings related to COVID-19. Within 48 hours of its preprint appearance, the authors withdrew it due to the negative attention it garnered. This rapid correction of the literature is unattainable with traditional publishing formats. This example highlights the necessity of discussing both preprints and papers.

Despite being a relatively new field, preprint review has experienced significant growth since its inception in 2017. This expansion is evident not only in the number of preprint reviews but also in the development of the preprint feedback ecosystem. Currently, there are over 50 different preprint servers, reflecting the increasing diversity of platforms available. Additionally, there has been a proliferation of initiatives and tools built upon this foundation. There are now more than 35 distinct feedback initiatives, ranging from minimalist or freeform services such as PubPeer or social media posts (which can provide valuable peer review) to more structured journal-like services like eLife, Review Commons, and PREreview. Notably, preLights serves as a News and Views-highlighting type of service for preprints, rather than a review platform. Furthermore, led by Europe PubMed Central (Europe PMC) and 'sciety', numerous linking and discovery tools have emerged. These tools aim to consolidate the preprint ecosystem by bringing various components together in one accessible location.

Facilitating recognition and reward is crucial for improving the peer-review system. Currently, a significant problem persists: many early-career researchers, in particular, engage in ghost-writing for peer reviews. A survey on co-reviewing and ghost-writing in manuscript peer review revealed that approximately half of the respondents had ghost-written a peer-review report. Alarmingly, the majority (46%) were aware that their name was withheld from the peer review process, while 32% were unaware, and only 23% were aware that their name had been included. Furthermore, most respondents reported that their work was edited (48%), while a nearly equal percentage either did not know or stated that their work was not edited, yet they still did not receive credit. These findings highlight a concerning trend in the behaviour of many principal investigators and highlight a significant gap in training and recognition for early-career researchers. Moreover, the absence of systems within journals to recognise such behaviour exacerbates the issue. Efforts to address this deficiency and promote transparency and fairness in peer review are urgently needed.

Various methods exist for recognising preprint peer review. For instance:

- Several doctoral programs equate peer-reviewed preprints with high-quality journal articles in terms of academic value.
- The peer-review section of a researcher's ORCiD profile acknowledges and recognises their individual contributions to peer review.
- Europe PMC showcases reviews and evaluations alongside preprints, thus elevating the significance of open peer review. Moreover, linking and discovery tools consolidate this information in a single accessible platform.

Another aspect of reward and recognition is through transparent policies and discussion. Examples of formal recognition for preprint peer review through policy change include the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO), which announced in April 2022 that reviewed preprints fulfil the peer-reviewed publication eligibility criteria for EMBO postdoctoral fellowships. Similarly, Plan S made a comparable announcement in July 2022, stating that papers subjected to a journal-independent standard peer-review process are considered by most cOAlition S organisations to be of equivalent merit and status as peer-reviewed publications published in a recognised journals or platforms. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation went a step further by endorsing the requirement of preprints strongly. They encourage preprint review to make research publicly available when it is ready, and the discontinuation of publishing fees such as APCs will take effect from 2025.

There has also been strong top-down support for a not-for-profit approach, where authors and readers incur no costs for accessing publicly funded research. For example:

- The Office of Science and Technology Policy of the Executive Office of the US President, in August 2022, called for ensuring free, immediate, and equitable access to federally funded research by default in agency-designated repositories without any embargo or delay after publication.
- The Council of the European Union, in May 2023, called for transparent, equitable, and open access to scholarly publications. In its conclusions, the Council urged the Commission and the member states to support policies towards a scholarly publishing model that is not-for-profit, open access, and multi-format, with no costs for authors or readers.

A publish–review–curate system, directly supported by institutions and funders with preprints at the core, can fulfill the objectives outlined in these official statements. Peer-review systems need serious reconsideration to be effective in the future. Those who embrace new approaches most rapidly are poised to gain significant advantages during the transition.

How to incentivise reviewers without compromising the integrity of the peer-review process (Prof Francois Steyn, University of the Free State)

Prof Francois Steyn from the University of the Free State addressed the challenge of incentivising reviewers without compromising the integrity of the peer-review process. Finding reviewers to evaluate academic manuscripts submitted to a journal is often a daunting task for editors. The purpose of the presentation was to explore potential solutions, as there isn't a single universally effective method for incentivising peer reviewers. The discussion highlighted the strong connection between scholars' motivations to engage in peer review and the topic of incentivisation. Practical considerations for incentivising peer review were offered during the presentation.

Recent literature extracts define the purpose of peer review as "using colleagues within the same or similar fields to provide feedback and critique of submitted work," "creating feedback for the editor and author to leverage knowledge and experience in the scientific environment," and drawing on "experts to evaluate the quality of submitted manuscripts." While these imperatives seem attainable, editors often encounter challenges such as reviewers not responding to invitations, failing to meet deadlines, or submitting contradictory or poorly motivated reports.

An important question that arises is why academics should bother to engage with peer review. A recent paper rightfully points out that "academics typically do not have a mandate to participate in the peer review process ... the peer review process requires an incentive for reviewing papers".[14] This suggests that some form of reward or incentive is warranted for their effort. Thus, the question is not whether peer reviewers should be incentivised, but how they can be enticed to participate in peer review.

The motivations for engaging in peer review have been extensively explored in the literature and can be broadly clustered into two main groups: expectations for the self of the individual researcher, and service to the academic community.

- **Self-achievement motivations** mainly relate to younger scholars who are in their early to mid-career and wish to identify with their scientific fields of interest and like-minded colleagues. They need to be aware of new developments in their area of work and they want to learn more about the journal, the editors, or the peer-review process. Since they are focused on their career plans and building their CV, participation in peer review among this group tends to be relatively high.
- **Community-focused motivations** appear to be higher among senior reviewers for reasons of altruism and giving back to academia and science. In other words, the motivation is focused less on the self and more on the moral obligation of service to the academic community. The motivations relate to improving and maintaining the rigour and reputation of the discipline, and promoting the publication of quality research. Members of this group are generally less willing to participate in peer review, and they may become quite selective about the topics they are willing to review.

The challenge for editors lies in strike a healthy balance between eager but potentially less experienced peer reviewers and altruistic peer reviewers who have the experience to ensure higher-quality peer reviews.

The motivations to engage in peer review cannot be entirely divorced from how journals can incentivise reviewers. These mechanisms can be broadly divided into monetary and non-monetary incentives.

[14] Byers, B.S., Dougherty, T.R. & Horo, U. 2023. Peer review in a pickle: Policy approaches for academic peer review. MIT Science Policy Review, 4:49-58.

Non-monetary incentives appear fairly viable, and it is likely that some South African journals are already engaging in these practices, which include printing the names of reviewers in an annual edition or showing them on the journal's website. The reasons for not publishing the names of peer reviewers in single editions could potentially jeopardise the anonymous peer-review process. Younger peer reviewers, in particular, tend to value feedback from editors on the usefulness and quality of their reviews, as well as information on the decision outcome of the paper following peer review. A study in the US even suggested as an incentive that peer reviewers might be given access to the reports of other peer reviewers to help them evaluate the quality of their work. Peer reviewers could be compensated in kind in the form of privileged access to new editions or future discounts on material behind paywalls; although this type of incentive verges on being monetary, the distinction is that it does not entail direct payment. Younger academics tend to welcome certificates from the journal acknowledging their review work. Editors need to thank reviewers for their time and effort. Another consideration, which is not the specific role of journals, is that universities could consider the responsibilities of peer review in the performance management of academics. Taking this kind of approach even further, advertisements for academic and research vacancies often call for some skill in peer review, and although this is not within the scope of influence of journals, it should perhaps become standard practice in advertising senior positions to ask for such experience.

Monetary incentives for peer review have been extensively researched and commented upon. This entails the direct financial payment or remuneration for conducting a peer review, and could also involve equivalent kinds of financial benefits, in the form of vouchers or data bundles, for example. the matter of financial incentives challenges traditional reason since the motivation of individual financial benefit for peer review seems to stand in contrast to community-focused incentives to strengthen the quality of publications in the discipline. The issues include whether financial incentives should rather be considered as a bonus, windfall, or token of gratitude for the reviewer's effort as opposed to an emphasis on capitalist notions of self-interest and profit. At the centre of the debate are questions of motivation theory, which is very pertinent in the literature on the topic, where personal drive and needs interact with expectancies.

The results regarding financial incentives for peer review have been mixed. Some studies found increased willingness to participate in peer review and improved turnaround time of evaluations. However, other studies have shown that this practice can harm motivation and voluntary behaviour, decrease quality and efficiency, and potentially compromise trust in the journal.

Some concerns in considering monetary incentives for peer review include determining the appropriate amount to pay to counteract charges of self-interest, as well as deciding who will cover the cost—whether it be the author, the institution through page fees, or the society, especially in cases where article processing charges are absent. Additionally, there is concern about the administrative burden that paying monetary incentives would place on officials of societies or journals, many of whom often work voluntarily.

In summary, small changes in journal policies could substantially expedite peer review at little cost. More generally, price incentives, nudges, and social pressure are effective and complementary methods of increasing prosocial behaviour [i.e., peer review]."[15] Prof Steyn invited editors with an interest in the topic to engage with him further in exploring the topic, with the ultimate aim of reporting back to the NSEF.

[15] Chetty, R., Saez, E. & Sandor, L. 2014. What policies increase prosocial behavior? An experiment with referees at the Journal of Public Economics. Journal of Economic Perspectives, 28(3):169-88.

Multiple threats of peer review: AI and the sheer volume of increased submissions (Mr Pieter Rall, University of South Africa Press)

Richard Smith, a medical doctor and former editor of the *British Medical Journal*, famously said that democracy and scientific peer review have something in common: both are systems full of problems but are the least bad systems that we have. The many threats and challenges to the integrity of peer review have been thoroughly discussed in numerous articles and editorials. The dangers that may compromise the peer-review system in the present day are well-presented in an article published in the *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians*[16]. They include:

- Adversarial peer review, which occurs when reviewers focus on finding flaws, inconsistencies, or weaknesses in the manuscript without offering constructive solutions.
- Replicating a peer-reviewed manuscript prior to publication.
- Peer review with conflict of interest.
- Soliciting authorship of a peer-reviewed manuscript.
- Callous peer review, where reviews lack empathy or consideration for the authors' efforts and the potential impact of their work. In this context, callousness suggests a disregard for the intellectual contributions of others and a focus solely on critical evaluation without constructive feedback or empathy.
- Fake peer review, when authors suggest fake reviewers (often using fabricated email addresses) who provide positive reviews for their own work.

It is possible to assess these threats separately and attempt to find solutions for each of them by employing increasingly sophisticated peer-review systems, new technologies, and additional resources. However, each of these threats stems from a lack of integrity, not inherent flaws in the peer-review system itself, but rather from a small number of individuals who lack integrity. Instances of the identified threats need to be recognised and mitigated by editors, and often they must address these issues alone. These challenges are therefore immensely problematic for editors, and some threats may simply be overlooked.

Mr Rall raised the question of whether there might be a different approach where the community could assist in verifying the integrity of the review process. While the challenges mentioned above are not new, new threats are emerging, such as plagiarised reviews or the use of chatbots for reviews. In a recent paper on this topic,[17] the authors discovered that some reviews lacked substance and used peculiar jargon with syntax and grammatical errors. This prompted them to subject the peer-review reports to a plagiarism checker, which revealed high levels of similarity with sections of various other peer-review reports, sometimes even containing the same grammatical errors. This strongly suggested that paragraphs had been copied and pasted. The authors noted that the most notable features of the plagiarised quotes were their vagueness and comments in a one-size-fits-all mode that did not refer to specific lines in the reviewed manuscript. Since similarity indexes can only check against a limited number of open reviews available online, the authors believe that what they found could be just the 'tip of the iceberg.' The authors of the article advocate for the use of technology and increased resources to address these threats and suggest that all review reports should undergo scrutiny by a similar software program. However, if editors had convenient means to conduct these checks, the

[16] Misra, Durga Prasanna, and Vinod Ravindran.
2019. "Peer review in academic publishing: Threats and challenges." Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh 49 (2): 99-100

[17] Mikofaj Piniewski, Ivan Jaric, Demietris Koutsoyiannis & Zbiginiew W. Kundzewicz. 2024. Emerging plagiarism in peer-review evaluation reports: A tip of the iceberg? Scientometrics. doi.org/10.1007 /s 11192-024-04960-1.

suggestions might prove helpful. Nevertheless, similarity checkers can only assess documents they have access to online.

Mr Rall raised the question of whether a review system that enables similarity checking and grants the broader community access to peer-review reports could help safeguard the integrity of the peer-review process. Previous speakers have hinted at the advantages of open peer review, and the time is ripe to seriously consider this approach.

In conclusion, Mr Rall referenced a letter published over 20 years ago by Mryl Beck[18], Professor of Geology Emeritus at Western Washington University, addressing the issue of integrity in peer review. He suggests that "anonymous peer reviews are unnecessary, unacceptable, and should not be permitted." Professor Beck's perspective is that "The bottom line on reviewing in general is that we should all do it in such a way as to eliminate any incentive to stay anonymous. A good review is hard to do and takes time. In particular, it takes great effort and ingenuity to write a negative review in a way that the author is glad to receive it. The problem with anonymous reviews is that they allow being rude, vindictive, and/or lazy—especially the latter. In my 40-odd years of writing papers for publication, I have received plenty of negative reviews, most of them ultimately useful. I don't like receiving negative reviews—who does? —but I can swallow my pride and work through a thoughtful negative review for the betterment of the paper. The only reviews I remember that left me permanently angry were anonymous."

Despite the numerous known and emerging threats stemming from new technology, it is important to acknowledge that the majority of authors and reviewers possess the necessary moral character and integrity. They are committed to making our "least bad" system of peer review function effectively. Perhaps, as a community, we should support them by advocating for greater transparency in the peer-review process and making peer-review reports of our journals publicly accessible. By doing so, these reports can be scrutinised by all, ensuring that the actions of a few individuals lacking integrity do not jeopardise the entire review system.

Q&A

Prof Joey Kok expressed support for open peer review on preprint platforms during Dr Coates' presentation but raised concerns about the finite number of reviewers, noting that journals are already struggling to secure reviewers. In response, Dr Coates suggested that opening peer review to early-career researchers could significantly increase the pool of available reviewers. However, he acknowledged the difficulties in finding ECRs and emphasised that this is a problem that institutions urgently need to address. Despite considerable capacity within the system, it is not currently being fully utilised. Moreover, there is growing evidence suggesting that peer review leads to only minimal changes in the majority of cases, with key conclusions in papers remaining largely unchanged. This raises questions about whether the current model of peer review justifies the time, financial resources, and career implications involved.

Prof Kok expressed concerns about potentially overwhelming budding academic authors, particularly with potentially conflicting reviewer reports. In response, Dr Coates emphasised that handling peer-review reports is a matter of training. It is common for peer-review reports to conflict, and finding peer reviewers who agree can be challenging. However, it is the editor's responsibility to advise authors on how to navigate conflicting

[18] Beck, ME Jr. 2003. Anonymous reviews: Self-serving, counterproductive, and unacceptable. *Transactions of the American Geophysical Union*, 84(2): 249.

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review reports. Dr Coates suggested that these issues can be resolved relatively easily with appropriate guidance.

Dr Hester van Biljon from the Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa highlighted that at the South African Journal of Occupational Therapy, reviewers receive three continuing education units per completed review. In response, Prof Steyn supported this form of non-monetary incentive and advised journals to avoid monetary payment incentive models, which editors do not seem to favour.

Prof Jemma Finch enquired whether, given the changing landscape, Dr Coates had any preliminary thoughts from his work at ASAPbio on the suggestion to open up and experiment with peer-review models to determine what works best. Dr Coates responded that there is a growing body of data indicating that open reviews tend to be more collegial and helpful compared to closed reviews. However, he emphasised the need for further research in this area. While there have been various experiments with peer review, there hasn't been an overall assessment of what methods are most effective, which would be challenging to conduct. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, platforms like Twitter proved to be valuable forms of peer review, but quantifying their usefulness poses difficulties. Dr Coates concluded by highlighting that there is still much work to be done in this field.

SESSION 5: CREDIBILITY

Facilitator: Dr Nkosinathi Madondo (Mangosuthu University of Technology)

Corrections, retractions, and publishing scientific criticism: rebuttals and rejoinders (Prof Leslie Swartz, Stellenbosch University)

Prof Swartz commented that in his 30-year experience as a journal editor, the topic of the presentation, namely corrections, retractions, and publishing scientific criticism, had always been a challenge.

The good news is that contestation and debate are, or should be, at the heart of good academic or research practice, and should therefore be welcomed. All scientific knowledge is provisional, and we should be able to change our minds when presented with new evidence and/or better arguments. Any journal that embraces dissent and robust debate is, in principle, much better than a journal that is averse to debate. Even when a journal adopts a strong ideological stance, there must still be space for contestation and revision of views.

The bad news is that the experience of contestation can be tricky and is often unpleasant, and not all contestation is productive. Prof Swartz's perception, drawn from his experience with South African and international journals, is of a global increase in complaints and requests for retractions, although this observation is not formally evidence-based or researched. This trend coincides with other documented increases, such as contestations around ethics reviews of research at some universities. The underlying factors driving this situation include the growing importance of publication metrics, researchers aiming to improve their h-indices, and the DHET subsidy, which may incentivise a sense of urgency to publish research in as many 'salami slices'[19] as possible. Additionally, these contestations occur in the broader context of societal debates over what constitutes knowledge, the prevalence of fake news, identity politics that prioritise the identity of

[19] Salami publication can be roughly defined as a publication of two or more articles derived from a single study. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3900084/

authors over the content of their work, and ideological pressures regarding alignment with particular perspectives. Thus, the issues extend far beyond narrow considerations of scientific content.

Prof Swartz's solution for addressing contestation is to recommend that journals establish policies to address potentially contentious issues. For instance, the *South African Journal of Science* has developed policies on a wide range of topics that other journals could consider and adapt for their own purposes[20]. These topics, listed alphabetically, include:

- AI and large language models
- Appeals
- Authorship changes
- Complaints
- Conflicts of interest
- Confidentiality
- Corrections
- Data publishing ethics
- Discussion of unpublished material
- Inclusive language
- Inclusivity and accessibility
- Media embargoes
- Peer review editing
- Peer review mentoring
- Peer review process
- Peer review report publication
- Plagiarism
- Preprints
- Preservation
- Production process and publication
- Publishing ethics
- Responses and rebuttals
- Retractions
- Self-archiving

The *SAJS* refers to these policies when dealing with contestations and also relies heavily on the guidelines provided by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)[21]. These guidelines offer valuable resources, including flow charts illustrating how contestations should be addressed, cautions about what to avoid (such as avoiding ad hominem responses to contestations), and guidance on striving for constructive outcomes. These resources help ensure that contestations are managed effectively and in accordance with ethical standards, fostering transparency and integrity in the publication process.

Here are some key points selected from the COPE guidelines dealing with the topics of this presentation:

- When a formal critique is received, journals often invite the original authors of the critiqued article to write a reply. The critique and response may be peer reviewed.
- Critiques are often challenging and there are considerations that a journal might face, which are described in the guidance.
- Journals should have a transparent policy for considering critiques.
- Critiques should be reasonable and not contain libellous or defamatory content.
- Critiques should have evidence or data to support the claims.
- Journals must be clear with the authors of the critique and the published article on the

[20] https://sajs.co.za/editorial-policies
[21] https://publicationethics.org/node/50816

timeline and the action to be taken.
- Amendments to the published article may need to be made (e.g., correction or retraction).

Prof Swartz presented some key challenges he had experienced as a journal editor, along with strategies for dealing with them. One challenge involved personal attacks on the competence or ethics of the editor and threats to expose how weak the journal is. Strategies for addressing these challenges include depersonalising the issue by seeking assistance from the editorial advisory board, which is highly active at the SAJS. Prof Swartz emphasises that anyone has the right to point out the weaknesses of a journal, and he encourages those with criticisms to raise their concerns publicly. However, he notes that this rarely occurs.

When a person feels aggrieved, they may exert pressure by claiming that an issue is urgent and warrants an immediate response. In such cases, the editor must assess the urgency of the situation and emphasise that fair, transparent processes take time. It is important to maintain integrity and adhere to established procedures, even in the face of perceived urgency. This ensures that decisions are made thoughtfully and fairly, without compromising the quality of the editorial process.

When a complainant expresses a strong reaction directly to the editor, sometimes confidentially, but refuses to share the concerns with the rest of the editorial team or to put the criticism in the public domain, the editor's options may be limited. In such cases, the editor can request that the complainant provide a contestation that is suitable for publication. This ensures transparency and allows for fair and open discussion of the issues raised. However, if the complainant is unwilling to share their concerns publicly, there may be little else the editor can do beyond encouraging them to reconsider their stance or provide publishable contestation.

There are certain situations where journals must firmly decline to get involved. Some examples include:
- Authors asking journals to mediate in authorship disputes within a research team.
- Reviewers requesting journals to disclose the funding sources for a piece of work.
- Demands for the journal to publish responses without undergoing standard review processes or assessment by expert readers.
- Requests for the journal to report authors to their universities for various infringements.

Those who request journal editors to engage in such activities often do so due to their own conflicts of interest or personal agendas that they are unwilling to address directly. However, it is not the role of the journal to act as their proxies or enforcers. Journals must uphold their integrity and impartiality, refusing to be drawn into disputes or demands that are outside of their purview. Instead, they should focus on maintaining fair and transparent processes in accordance with established guidelines and standards.

Many criticisms, if not most, can be constructive. Here are some examples:
- A scientist respectfully pointed out methodological shortcomings that limited the applicability of findings. The authors, given the right to reply, acknowledged this and published a correction in addition to a brief response to the critic.
- An article written by inexperienced authors had significant methodological flaws but was still published. Academics wrote to the journal, highlighting the issues but not insisting on their letter being published. Publishing a response would have been humiliating for the authors. The editorial team facilitated a response in which the editors themselves decided to retract the article, providing reasons based on the

unpublished critique.

COPE offers excellent guidelines for the retraction of articles[22]. Here are some examples of when editors should consider retracting a publication, as outlined by COPE:

- Clear evidence that the findings are unreliable due to major errors or fabrication.
- Evidence of plagiarism.
- Redundancy of the publication.
- Inclusion of material or data without authorization for use.
- Unethical research practices.
- Compromised or manipulated peer-review process.
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest.

The handling of notices of retraction is indeed crucial. A retraction does not reflect negatively on the journal itself but rather demonstrates the journal's commitment to maintaining the integrity of the scientific record. COPE provides guidelines for notices of retraction, which should:

- Be linked to the retracted article wherever possible (i.e., in all online versions).
- Clearly identify the retracted article (e.g., by including the title and authors in the retraction heading or citing the retracted article).
- Be clearly identified as a retraction (i.e., distinct from other types of correction or comment).
- Be published promptly to minimise harmful effects.
- Be freely available to all readers (i.e., not behind access barriers or available only to subscribers).
- State who is retracting the article.
- State the reason(s) for retraction.
- Be objective, factual, and avoid inflammatory language.

In summary, fostering debate is beneficial for the academic community. Having clear policies in place is crucial, especially for resolving disputes, and it is best to establish and adopt these policies before conflicts arise. Discussions can sometimes become personal and threatening, but editors are advised to remain calm and utilise the editorial advisory board to help depersonalise the situation. The COPE guidelines offer excellent advice and are accessible to all, regardless of whether a journal is a member of COPE. These guidelines serve as valuable resources for maintaining integrity and transparency in scholarly publishing.

Editors should actively engage in debates within their discipline and contribute to the improvement of research. If editors identify weaknesses or errors in the literature, they should communicate with the editor of the relevant journal in a collegial and constructive manner. By doing so, editors can help maintain the quality and integrity of scholarly publications while fostering collaboration and advancement within their field.

Editors' ethical conduct (Prof Felix Maringe, University of the Witwatersrand)

Prof Maringe introduced the presentation by listing some valuable resources for journal editors on ethical conduct:

- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), which promotes integrity in research and publication practices.
- Vancouver Protocols, which are used mainly by the medical profession, define the roles of authors, contributors, and non-author contributors.
- Protection of Personal Information Act (No. 4 of 2013), aimed at safeguarding personal

[22] https://publicationethics.org/retraction-guidelines

information, relevant for publishers handling sensitive data.

- Wiley Author Services[23], offering resources and support for authors publishing with Wiley, including guidance on ethical considerations.
- ASSAf report on a strategic approach to research publishing in South Africa[24], outlining strategies for enhancing research publishing in the country, providing valuable insights for journal editors.

It cannot be overstated that scholarly journal editors occupy immensely significant positions of trust as gatekeepers of what constitutes valid knowledge worthy of dissemination to society. The knowledge disseminated through journals informs critical societal decisions, and the government provides a research output subsidy for all journal articles published by public higher education institutions. Editors-in-chief play a crucial gatekeeping role, ensuring that truth prevails, maintaining the utmost integrity in published content, and upholding fairness in day-to-day decisions. This perception of the editor's role aligns with societal expectations and highlights how editors themselves should perceive their function.

The presentation operates under several key assumptions, including the notion that the contemporary world functions as a knowledge economy, wherein consumption and production are central interacting factors. Unlike previous centuries, where animal-drawn technologies drove production, today's landscape is characterised by the dominance of intellectual capital. This intellectual capital encompasses knowledge bases, unanswered questions, standard methodologies, emerging methodologies, and the scholars who engage with them. Editors play a critical role in the production of knowledge within this framework. They are tasked with ensuring that the knowledge they produce is accessible to consumers without constraints. This entails evaluating whether the dissemination of knowledge aligns with the needs and capacities of those who consume it. By facilitating unfettered access to knowledge, editors contribute to the advancement of scholarship and the functioning of the knowledge economy.

Editors must recognise that Western knowledge forms often hold privileged positions within knowledge hierarchies. However, in the contemporary world, there is a growing emphasis on horizontalisation rather than verticalisation of knowledge systems. While verticalisation, which has historically defined societal structures, prioritises certain knowledge systems over others, horizontalisation seeks to promote equality and inclusivity among different knowledge systems. Editors must be mindful of the fact that knowledge systems that perpetuate exclusion are becoming increasingly outdated.

The conundrum of production and consumption in scholarly publishing arises from unevenly distributed resources for productivity and disparities in the capacity to consume knowledge across the world. South African scholars are keenly aware that if they aim for their work to be accessible at an affordable rate within South Africa, publishing locally is often the best option. While it may be more cost-effective for authors to publish in overseas journals that do not charge page fees, there is a risk that their work could become inaccessible to many South African scholars due to the expenses associated with accessing it.

The knowledge systems aimed at addressing major global challenges such as climate change and its impacts, health and wellbeing, environmental disasters and degradation, global terrorism, poverty, and systemic inequalities are not as robustly developed as traditional disciplinary knowledge systems like physics, chemistry, geography, and

[23] authorservices.wiley.com
[24] https://doi.org/10.17159/assaf/0038

psychology. Methodological approaches within these newer knowledge systems also lack clear definitions. Consequently, essential information that readers seek may lack a solid foundation, potentially leading to ethical dilemmas.

The presentation aims to delve into the significant ethical responsibilities of an editor-in-chief and offer practical guidance for fulfilling this role. It seeks to explore various facets of the ethical duties inherent in editing scholarly journals and lay the groundwork for their practical application across different journal contexts. The objectives include defining ethics from the perspective of a scholarly journal editor, delineating the editor-in-chief's role in various ethical responsibilities, and presenting a model for effectively managing the intricate ethical obligations of a scholarly journal editor.

Ethics can be broadly defined as sets of moral principles that shape the choices and decisions editors make concerning the conduct and impact of research processes and outcomes. These principles are guided by eight interrelated but distinct pillars: confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, the right to withdraw without consequences, beneficence (prioritising the good of others over oneself), non-maleficence (avoiding harm), autonomy and justice, and the imperative to be guided by truth.

Editors-in-chief bear the responsibility of not only ensuring the publication of well-written and well-presented research but also overseeing ethical considerations that encompass:

- Incidences of plagiarism and the implications of identifying plagiarism after publication.
- Selective or misleading reporting, including spin and hype.
- Authorship malpractice such as guest or ghost authorship and denying redundant publication (duplication, salami slicing).
- Ensuring freedom from libelous material.
- Simultaneous submission to multiple journals.
- Duplicate publication of very similar articles, often with only a change in title and minimal adjustments.
- Data manipulation and research fraud.
- Ethics approval by a competent body.
- Self-citation practices.
- Conflict of interest.

Editors-in-chief of scholarly journals assume responsibility and accountability towards:

- Authors, who have a duty to inform truthfully.
- Readers, who have a right to truthful information.
- Reviewers, who have a duty to assess and adjudicate over the efficacy of new knowledge.
- Communities of practice, which have a responsibility to admit new knowledge into their communities where this is warranted.
- Society at large, which has a right to be informed and make informed choices based on the best available evidence.

Ethical dilemmas facing the editor-in-chief of a scholarly journal include:

- Truth vs loyalty (e.g., The results of research may be an indictment of government performance).
- Individual vs community (e.g., Autobiographies of the experience of LGBT communities in universities vs overarching community sentiments about LGBT).
- Short-term vs long-term (e.g., Whether to delay publication of an issue to allow an author to make corrections or to replace the article with an editor's ready article).

- Justice vs virtue (e.g., Whether editors should always be guided by the book, or whether they should allow reasonable action to dictate their decisions).

According to the COPE framework, which provides ethical policy direction for editors, every journal should establish guidance regarding the following areas and provide clarity on how cases will be addressed as they arise:

1. Author ethical obligations
2. Handling allegations of misconduct
3. Authorship and contributorship
4. Handling complaints and appeals
5. Conflict of interest/competing interests
6. Data and its reproducibility
7. Intellectual property
8. Journal management guidelines
9. Peer review process

A tenth policy consideration has been added, not included in the COPE framework but appears in other ethical protocols:

10. Handling post-publication disputes and corrections

Editors must refrain from solely relying on their own judgment to address any allegations that arise and should instead have written policies in place to guide their actions.

In conclusion, editors serve as the custodians and gatekeepers of knowledge within a knowledge-driven society. Truth, fairness, and integrity constitute the cornerstone of the editorial profession. The government of South Africa has set a target to allocate 1.5% of GDP to research and development, and in 2021/22, it allocated R27,756 billion to research and development activities. The knowledge disseminated through scholarly journals is routinely utilised by stakeholders, educational institutions, government departments, and fellow researchers to make crucial decisions on behalf of society. Hence, it is imperative for editors to vigilantly safeguard their work, cognisant of the ongoing debate regarding the extent of recognition they receive. Prof Maringe asserts that editors do not receive adequate recognition for their indispensable role.

Q&A

Prof Elizabeth Henning posed the question of whether access to knowledge and the sharing of knowledge are primarily or somewhat influenced by financial resources. In response, Prof Maringe highlighted the strong correlation between wealth and access to knowledge. Individuals with financial means are more likely to access knowledge, whereas those facing financial hardship may struggle to afford resources such as journal subscriptions, often prioritising basic necessities like food. The crucial question arises regarding the fairness of this disparity and whether editors have a role to play in addressing it. To promote equitable access to knowledge, a significant portion of journals are transitioning to freely accessible online platforms.

Prof Swartz emphasised that the commercialisation of research presents a significant challenge. The Cape Town Statement on Fostering Research Integrity through Fairness and Equity, emerging from the World Conferences on Research Integrity[25], addresses this concern. Authors have frequently commended the *SAJS* for its ethical practices, particularly for not imposing page fees. This is made possible by the *SAJS*'s receipt of a subsidy from the Department of Science and Innovation. Prof Swartz, formerly the editor

[25] Lyn Horn, et al. 2023. The Cape Town Statement on fairness, equity and diversity in research, *Nature*, 615, 790–793. https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-00855-y

of the *African Journal of Disability*, highlighted the financial constraints faced by journals without subsidies, leading to the necessity of charging page fees. Many contributors to such journals are first-time authors with disabilities from various African nations. It is universally agreed among credible journal editors that financial considerations should not dictate what content is published. Resolving this issue is imperative for advancing global equity and promoting African scholarship.

Prof Henning's question regarding whether the ethical frameworks for editors are rooted in law was raised but not directly addressed or discussed during the session.

Dr Madondo emphasised the importance of ensuring that the discussions result in practical and tangible outcomes. Furthermore, members of the National Scholarly Editors' Forum are encouraged to sustain their engagement on these issues, indicating a commitment to ongoing dialogue and action.

WRAP-UP

Prof Keyan Tomaselli, CSPiSA

Connecting the dots: scholarly publishing in South Africa – ASSAf, SPP, CSPiSA, NSEF, NSBPF, DHET, DSI (Prof Keyan Tomaselli, CSPiSA)

Prof Tomaselli provided an overview of the unique structure for scholarly publishing in South Africa. Despite frustrations expressed by young academics in mainstream media articles, there is considerable support for scholarly publishing in the country, albeit fragmented. As Prof Gledhill emphasised earlier, ASSAf serves as the 'glue' that holds the network together, providing integrity to the system. ASSAf boasts a complex and relatively well-resourced structure. Prof Swartz highlighted that *SAJS* receives a government subsidy, indicating governmental support for scholarly publishing. Within ASSAf, the Scholarly Publishing Programme encompasses several portfolios, including SciELO SA, *SAJS*, African Open Science Projects, Peer Review of Journals, and *Quest*.

The role of CSPiSA is to guide and advise on policy for the government and oversee the work of the SPP. Prof Tomaselli serves as the chair of CSPiSA, with Prof Geldhill as the co-chair. The SPP implements policies that are agreed upon by CSPiSA, and major policies are approved by the ASSAf Council. However, the SPP faces the challenge of operating between different government departments, namely the Department of Science and Innovation and the Department of Higher Education and Training.

ASSAf's operational role within national scholarly publishing was established following the first scholarly publishing report. It functions both as a player and an adviser in the scholarly publishing landscape. The ASSAf Council serves an advisory function, with CSPiSA operating as a sub-committee under it overseeing the work of the SPP, ensuring alignment with its objectives and initiatives.

DHET holds the policy-making prerogative and possesses final decision-making powers, while ASSAf advises on policy matters such as databases, funding units, and evaluation criteria. For instance, the 75/25 percent rule was modified by DHET after questions were raised about it more than ten years ago. However, DHET took approximately a year to respond to these queries. This time lag between decisions made within ASSAf and the response of government departments must be considered when managing processes. It highlights the importance of coordination and communication between stakeholders to ensure effective policymaking and implementation in scholarly publishing.

The operational roles of the various bodies involved in scholarly publishing are outlined as follows:
DHET: Responsible for funding, monitoring, and regulating research output. It enables future planning through the publication incentive scheme.
ASSAf: Provides policy oversight of scholarly publications and assesses the quality of journals. It promotes international best practices and offers training workshops and advice to editors.
SPP: Conducts continuous bibliometric studies, monitors and evaluates the scholarly publication spectrum, and ensures qualifiers for DHET disbursements. It also monitors the ethical use of DHET funding and policies misuse and abuse.
CSPiSA: Takes a broad view of its role in commenting on the scholarly publishing landscape.
CREST: Conducts continuous bibliometric studies, monitors and evaluates the scholarly publication spectrum, and ensures qualifiers for DHET disbursements. It also monitors the ethical use of DHET funding and policies misuse and abuse. CREST, along with its partners, will be working on the PQF.

When the NSEF was established about 20 years ago, its approach tended to be top-down, involving giving instructions to journal editors. At that time, South African scholarly publishing was relatively unsupervised, and efforts were made to develop policies and align with international best practices. However, the NSEF has since transitioned to a community-led initiative with a bottom-up approach. This involves consulting, negotiating, assisting, and developing where possible, rather than acting to police the system. ASSAf plays a crucial role as an enabler in this regard.

The topics discussed at this forum meeting regularly arise within ASSAf. SciELO SA and CSPiSA maintain constant communication, almost weekly, to consult on emerging issues that need to be addressed. Prof Tomaselli highlighted the complexity of the structure supporting scholarly publishing in South Africa and highlighted the role of journal editors in shaping the nature of these discussions.

CLOSURE

Prof Tomaselli expressed gratitude to the SPP team for organising an excellent meeting. He expressed hope that the next meeting could be held in person, as it would provide opportunities for networking and collaboration, despite acknowledging the accessibility of online meetings to a larger audience. He suggested that hybrid conferences, though challenging to organise, might serve as an effective compromise between physical and virtual gatherings. He invited participants to become involved in shaping the future direction of discussions.

Mrs Veldsman expressed gratitude to Prof Tomaselli and CSPiSA for their support and for setting the direction of the Scholarly Publishing Programme.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF ACRONYMS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
APC	article processing charge
ASAPbio	Accelerating Science and Publication in Biology
ASSAf	Academy of Science of South Africa
COPE	Committee on Publication Ethics
COVID	Coronavirus disease
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
CREST	Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology
CSPiSA	Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DOAJ	Directory of Open Access Journals
DOI	Digital Object Identifier
DSI	Department of Science and Innovation
DSI	Department of Science and Innovation
EIFL	Electronic Information for Libraries
EMBO	European Molecular Biology Organization
G20	Group of 20
GPT	Generative pre-trained transformer
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
IP	Intellectual property
ISC	International Science Council
IT	Information technology
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LLM	Large language model
NRF	National Research Foundation
NSBPF	National Scholarly Book Publishers' Forum
NSEF	National Scholarly Editors' Forum
OA	Open access
OJS	Open Journal Systems
ORCiD	Open Researcher and Contributor ID
PCI	Peer Community In
PELJ	Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal
PMC	PubMed Central
POPI	Protection of Personal Information Act
PQF	Publications Quality Framework
Q&A	Questions and answers
SA	South Africa
SAJS	South African Journal of Science
SARIMA	Southern African Research & Innovation Management Association
SciELO	Scientific Electronic Library Online
SPP	Scholarly Publishing Programme
UCDP	University Capacity Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
US	United States of America
USAf	Universities South Africa
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WoS	Web of Science

APPENDIX B: BIOGRAPHIES

Dr Martin Bekker is a computational social scientist and AI ethics researcher, and lectures ethics and social science at the School of Electronic and Information Engineering at Wits University. Bekker holds degrees in values studies and philosophy from Stellenbosch, Peace Studies from Bradford, Development from the London School of Economics, and a PhD from UJ. His PhD thesis was a quantitative analysis of popular protest in South Africa, using machine learning and protest event analysis. In a previous life, he was head of the Royal Bafokeng Administration demographical and household survey research team, and served on the World Economic Forum's advisory panel for sustainable mining and minerals.

Ms Mmakwena Chipu has been a noteworthy academic publishing leader for over 12 years. She has contributed to the Africa Institute of South Africa and the Human Sciences Research Council as a Publisher, working on books and the in-house journal, Africa Insight. Mmakwena Chipu holds an undergraduate degree in Publishing from the University of Pretoria and a Postgraduate Honours degree in Publishing from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She is currently enrolled for a Masters Degree with the University of the Witwatersrand.

Dr Jonny Coates' scientific interests have always been within immune cell biology. However, in 2019 he began his journey into the world of preprints and metascience, developing a research program and writing opinion pieces around the use of preprints. In 2021 he launched and continues to host the Preprints in Motion podcast focused on highlighting the benefits of preprints for early career researchers and became the Associate Director at ASAPbio in 2023.

Prof Phillip de Jager (PhD, CA(SA)) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Finance and Tax at the University of Cape Town. He teaches on corporate finance, investments, and research methodology. His research interests are in bank capital, corporate finance, and research about research. He is an associate editor of the Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies (JAEE), Meditari Accountancy Research Journal (MEDAR) and the South African Journal of Accountancy Research (SAJAR). Phillip serves as chair of the UCT Retirement Fund and did recent work on excessive pricing conduct for the Competition Commission of South Africa.

Prof Wian Erlank, Editor in Chief of the Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad / Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal (PER/PELJ), is a Full Professor of law at North-West University in South Africa, where he currently teaches space law and cyber law. He is a NRF rated researcher holding a prestigious Y1 rating. He is a Member of the International Institute of Space Law as well as a Fellow of the European Law Institute (ELI) and an active member of several ELI working groups, specifically those dealing with the legal effect of new technologies. He was awarded the prestigious Von Humboldt (Georg Forster) Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers. He currently serves on the SciELO SA Advisory Committee, and previously served for two terms on ASSAf's Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa (CSPiSA).

Prof Jemma Finch is an Associate Professor in Geography at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). She holds a PhD from the University of York. Following her PhD, Jemma returned to South Africa as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Cape Town, before taking up a lectureship at UKZN in 2011. A palaeoecologist by training, Jemma uses plant

and animal remains preserved in sediments to understand past climate and environmental change. Jemma is an NRF C2 rated scientist, and is the recipient of the 2021 UKZN Vice Chancellor's Research Award. She is an Associate Editor for the South African Journal of Science in the field of Archaeology, Anthropology and Palaeontology. She teaches undergraduate Biogeography and Environmental Change, and has special interests in fieldwork-based training, and in developing scientific writing skills.

Dr Nkosinathi Madondo has an Undergraduate Degree in the Bachelor of Pedagogies and the Bachelor of Arts: English Honours in English Literature from University of Durban-Westville. He also holds a Master's degree in English and Media Studies from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Dr Madondo's Highest Qualification is a PhD in Education obtained from Rhodes University. Dr Madondo has a multidisciplinary 'know-what' and 'know-how' in terms of the ways of being and knowing in the disciplines. This is of Dr Madondo's involvement in the academic support programmes for students enrolled in the Accounting Extended Curriculum Programme at the University of Technology, Academic Learning in English offered for Bachelor of Education at a traditional University and as a Language Specialist in a Science Extended Curriculum Programme at a research-intensive traditional University. Such involvement aimed to broaden access to higher education for students whose schooling left them ill-equipped for success in higher education.

Prof Felix Maringe is a Professor of Higher Education, with previous experience as Head of the Wits School of Education, Assistant Dean for Internationalisation and Partnerships at the Faculty of Humanities at Wits and Director of Research at the Wits School of Education. Currently, he is DVC for Research at the University of Kigali in Rwandaz. He is the Editor in Chief of the Journal of Educational Studies which is hosted at the University of Venda.

Dr Thabiso Motaung is an academic and senior lecturer at the University of Pretoria's Department of Biochemistry, Genetics, and Microbiology, with affiliations at the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute. He is also a Fulbright research scholar at the University of California, Merced, investigating plant-fungal interactions and the role of membrane nanovesicles in intercellular and transkingdom signaling, as well as exploring biofilm formation in filamentous pathogens. Dr. Motaung is actively engaged in various open science initiatives and serves on the board of directors at ASAPbio, and advocates for preprints as the ASAPbio Local Hubs Community lead in Pretoria. Additionally, they contribute as an editor at eLife, reviewing manuscripts under the new model, working with peer reviewers in producing eLife assessments and public reviews for Reviewed Preprints.

Dr Hugues Steve Ndinga-Koumba-Binza, DLitt (Stel), is a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Advanced Studies in African Society (CASAS), University of the Western Cape (UWC). Previously, he served as a Senior Lecturer, postgraduate studies coordinator, and Deputy Head of the Department of Language Education in the UWC Faculty of Education. Before joining UWC, he held positions as a postdoctoral fellow, researcher, and senior researcher at the Centre for Text Technology, North-West University (Potchefstroom). During his tenure at Stellenbosch University from 2002 to 2009, he worked as a researcher at the Centre for Language and Speech Technology (SU-CLaST) and as a part-time lecturer of French and sociolinguistics. He edited volumes 27 and 30 of Lexikos and currently serves as the Associate Editor of Lexikos and Editor of Tinabantu – Journal of Advanced Studies of African Society, a journal he played a key role in revitalizing within CASAS. He has authored over 50 publications spanning the fields of phonetics and phonology, lexicography, sociolinguistics, language education, and ethnohistory.

Mr Pieter Rall is the managing editor for journals at Unisa Press, the publishing arm of the University of South Africa (UNISA). He studied publishing at the University of Pretoria and joined Unisa Press in 2014 after working in the magazine publishing industry and in the educational publishing sector. Unisa Press continues to play a significant role in disseminating scholarly research and promoting academic discourse, particularly in the fields of humanities, social sciences, and education. Unisa Press currently has a portfolio of 46 journal titles as well as a recently established preprint server.

Prof Francois Steyn is professor and head of the Department of Criminology at the University of the Free State. His research career commenced at the Centre for Health Systems Research & Development (UFS), where here compiled research, policy and technical reports for government and development agencies. He was the acting director of the Centre for two years before taking up a lecturing position in the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria where he lectured theory and research methodology. To date, Prof Steyn has published 46 articles/book chapters, presented 38 papers at local and international conferences, authored 39 research reports, and supervised 44 master's and doctoral students. His research focuses on risk and resilience in vulnerable populations, specifically related to children in conflict with the law and female offenders. He is the editor-in-chief of the Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology and Victimology.

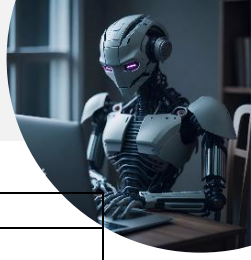
Prof Leslie Swartz is a clinical psychologist and a professor of psychology at Stellenbosch University. He holds a PhD in Psychology from University of Cape Town, and a PhD in English from Stellenbosch University. Most of his work focusses on disability and mental health issues in southern Africa. He is currently editor in chief of South African Journal of Science and of Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research.

Prof Keyan Tomaselli is a Distinguished Professor at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Johannesburg, and Professor Emeritus at the University of KwaZulu-Natal where he is also a Fellow. He is the chair of the ASSAf Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa, and chair of the book and editors' Fora that are managed by the Committee. He is the founder and co-editor of two international journals.

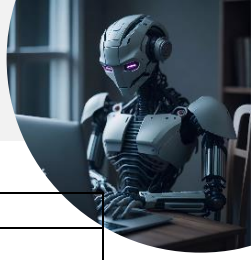
Mrs Susan Veldsman is Director of the Scholarly Publication Unit at the Academy of Sciences in South Africa, responsible for driving the Open Science agenda, to raise the visibility, discoverability and accessibility of South African scholarly journals, improve the quality of SA research output, and support the development of policy frameworks in order to facilitate optimal use and access to publicly funded research. She received the Electronic Publishing Trust (EPT) award for her outstanding contribution to the promotion of Open Access in Developing Countries. Recently, she was the Co-chair of the IAP Report on "Combatting Predatory Journals and Conferences", which was launched on the 16th March 2022. She also received special recognition for her role in establishing the SciELO SA platform in South Africa at the most recent SciELO 25 years celebrations.

APPENDIX C: LIST OF ATTENDEES

Name	Affiliation	Journal representing
Adedokun, T	Durban University of Technology	African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies
Afolayan, A	University of Fort Hare	Journal of Medicinal Plants for Economic Development
Amadi, V	University of Cape Town	Journal of Comparative Law in Africa
Arnold, R	Write Connection CC	n/a (Scribe)
Athiemoolam, L	Nelson Mandela University	Education Journal for Social Change
Aziz, G	University of South Africa	The South African Baptist Journal of Theology
Bamford, C	University of Cape Town	Southern African Journal of Infectious Diseases
Baron, E	University of South Africa	HTS Theological Studies
Basson, A	South African Society of Physiotherapy	South African Journal of Physiotherapy
Bekker, M	University of the Witwatersrand	n/a
Benson, B	University of South Africa	South African Museums Association Bulletin
Beukes, A	University of the Free State	Acta Structilia and Town and Regional Planning
Bradfield, J	University of Johannesburg	South African Archaeological Bulletin
Carolissen, R	Stellenbosch University	Psychology in Society
Carsky, M	University of KwaZulu-Natal	South African Journal of Chemical Engineering
Carte, S	Durban University of Technology	African Journal of Inter/Multi-Disciplinary Studies
Chembe, P	Walter Sisulu University	Southern African Public Law Journal
Chetty, D	University of South Africa	Alternation: Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of the
Chimuka, L	University of the Witwatersrand	South African Journal of Chemistry
Chipu, M	Human Sciences Research Council	Africa Insight Journal
Coates, J	ASAPbio	n/a
Connoway, I	South African Theological Seminary	Conspectus
De Jager, P	University of Cape Town	Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies
De Villiers, P	AOSIS	Journal of Metabolic Health
Denniston, A	Professional Editors' Guild	n/a
Dollie, N	University of Johannesburg	Education as Change
Dudley, S	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment	African Journal of Marine Science
Erlank, W	North-West University	Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regstydskrif (PER) / Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal (PELJ)
Fester, F	Association of Schools of Construction of Southern Africa	Journal of Construction

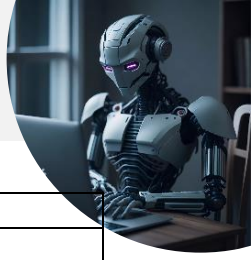


Name	Affiliation	Journal representing
Fick, L	Academy of Science of South Africa	South African Journal of Science
Finch, J	University of KwaZulu-Natal	South African Journal of Science
Gbam, J	University of Pretoria	African Human Rights Yearbook
Gledhill, I	Academy of Science of South Africa	None
Glover, G	Rhodes University	The South African Law Journal
Grobler, N	Academy of Science of South Africa	South African Journal of Science
Hari, N	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Education
Henning, E	University of Johannesburg	South African Journal of Childhood Education
Henry, G	Geological Society of South Africa	South African Journal of Geology
Hill, T	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Transactions of Royal Society of South Africa
Hoctor, S	Stellenbosch University	South African Journal of Criminal Justice; Fundamina
Hoffman, L	University of the Free State	Acta Theologica
Huddlestone, K	Stellenbosch University	Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics Plus
Izevbigie, E	University of Pretoria	Teacher Education through Flexible Learning in Africa
Jacobs, L	University of South Africa	South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science
Jensol, T	Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy	Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy
Joseph, G	University of Fort Hare	None
Kaapu, K	University of Limpopo	African Perspectives of Research in Teaching and Learning
Kasinathan, K	University of South Africa	Nano-Horizons: Journal of Nanosciences
Katuu, S	University of South Africa	Journal of the South African Society of Archivists
Keakopa, S	Esarbica	Esarbica
Khau, M	Nelson Mandela University	Educational Research for Social Change
Kirsten, J	North-West University	Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
Kok, J	University of the Witwatersrand	South African Journal on Human Rights/African Studies
Koopman, O	Stellenbosch University	African Perspectives of Research in Teaching and Learning
Korff, T	AOSIS	AOSIS Scholarly Books
Labuschagne, L	SATS	Conspectus
Lategan, L	Central University of Technology	Journal for New Generation Sciences
Lockhart, J	Cape Peninsula University of Technology	n/a



Name	Affiliation	Journal representing
Madondo, N	Mangosuthu University of Technology	South African Journal of Science
Mahabeer, P	University of KwaZulu-Natal	African Perspectives of Research in Teaching and Learning
Maharaj, S	University of Cape Town Libraries	APOS
Malan, K	University of South Africa	South African Computer Journal
Manga, P	University of the Witwatersrand	Wits Journal of Clinical Medicine
Manqola, N	University of the Free State	
Maphanga, M	Academy of Science of South Africa	n/a
Maringa, H	South African Judicial Education Institute	Judicial Education Newsletter
Maringe, F	University of the Witwatersrand	Journal of Educational Studies
Marutha, N	University of South Africa/ South African Society of Archivists	Journal of the South African Society of Archivists
McKay, A	University of Pretoria / Abertay University	African Human Rights Law Journal
Mdzanga, N	Nelson Mandela University	Educational Research for Social Change
Mhlambi, N	Human Sciences Research Council	Africa Insight Journal
Mhlongo, L	University of South Africa	Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa
Mlambo, N	University of South Africa	Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae
Mncwango, P	Academy of Science of South Africa	South African Journal of Science
Mngomezulu, S	Library and Information Association of South Africa	n/a
Moja, M	Academy of Science of South Africa	SciELO SA
Moshoeu, G	None	South African Judicial Education Journal
Motaung, T	University of Pretoria	eLife
Moult, K	University of Cape Town	South African Crime Quarterly
Mudzi, W	University of the Witwatersrand	South African Journal of Physiotherapy
Muller, I	University of South Africa	Journal of Literary Studies
Mututa, A	University of the Witwatersrand	Journal of African Cinemas
Ndinga-Koumba-Binza, HS	University of the Western Cape	Lexikos and TINABANTU
Nelson, G	University of the Witwatersrand	Occupational Health Southern Africa
Ngcongo, M	University of Johannesburg	Communicare
Ngoepe, M	Library and Information Association of South Africa	South African Journal of Library and Information Science
Nicholson, D	Scholarly Horizons	n/a
Northover, A	University of South Africa	Journal of Literary Studies
Nqotole, A	University of the Western Cape	UWC Journals
Ntanjana, A	Office of the Chief Justice	South African Judicial Education Journal

Name	Affiliation	Journal representing
Nyirongo, R	University of Cape Town	Journal of Comparative Law in Africa
Odei-Mensah, J	University of the Witwatersrand	African Review of Economics and Finance
Oksiutycz, A	University of Johannesburg	Communicare
Olaniran, S	University of South Africa	Journal of Law Society and Development
Oloyede, O	ASR	ASR
Omodan, B	Walter Sisulu University	Interdisciplinary Journal of Education Research
Oosthuizen, L	Senior Officer Research Outputs	
Parker, L	Stellenbosch University	Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk
Pila, R	Academy of Science of South Africa	n/a
Pillay, S	Department of Health (KwaZulu-Natal)	Psychology in Society
Prah, A	African Journal on Conflict Resolution	African Journal on Conflict Resolution
Pretorius, B	Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa	South African Journal of Occupational Therapy
Pretorius, D	University of Witwatersrand	African Journal for Primary Care and Family Medicine
Rall, P	Unisa Press	Unisa Press Journals
Rametse, M	Academy of Science of South Africa	None
Ramsaroop, S	University of Johannesburg	South African Journal of Childhood Education
Rautenbach, H	South African Journal of Natural Science and	South African Journal of Natural Science and Technology
Redelinghuys, S	University of the Witwatersrand	South African Journal of Science
Schoeman, S	Nelson Mandela University	None
Schreiber, B	University of Pretoria	Journal of Student Affairs in Africa
Seedat, S	Journal of the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa	Journal of the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa
Sherwill, T	Water Research Commission	Water SA
Shongwe, M	University of Cape Town	South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science
Smith, I	Academy of Science of South Africa	Khulisa Journals
Snyders, M	University of the Western Cape	None
Soodyall, H	Academy of Science of South Africa	None
Stephanus, K	University of Johannesburg	Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management
Steyn, F	University of the Free State	Acta Criminologica: African Journal of Criminology and
Swanepoel, J	University of the Free State	South African Journal of Agriculture Extension
Swanepoel, N	Association of Southern African Professional	South African Archaeological Bulletin



Name	Affiliation	Journal representing
Swartz, L	Stellenbosch University	South African Journal of Science
Ter Horst, S	North-West University	Quaestiones Mathematicae
Tomaselli, K	University of Johannesburg	Critical Arts
Tshetsha, V	North-West University	
Umeokafor, N	University of Greenwich	Journal of Construction Business and Management
Van Biljon, H	Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa	South African Journal of Occupational Therapy
Van der Merwe, C	University of Pretoria	Journal of Geography Education in Africa
Van Deventer, C	South African Theological Seminary	Conspectus
Van Graan, N	AOSIS	Rehabilitation Advances in Developing Health Systems
Van Heerden, L	Academy of Science of South Africa	SciELO SA journals
Van Wyk, J	AOSIS	Our portfolio
Veldsman, D	University of Pretoria	Verbum et Ecclesia
Veldsman, S	Academy of Science of South Africa	South African Journal of Science
Viljoen, F	African Human Rights law Journal	African Human Rights Law Journal
Whitelaw, A	Stellenbosch University / National Health Laboratory Service	South African Journal of Infectious Diseases
Windapo, A	University of Cape Town	Journal of Construction Business and Management
Wood, N	University of the Witwatersrand	South African Dental Journal
Zitha, S	Unisa Press	Mousaion: South African Journal of Information Studies