

No-fee inclusive journals, and disappointment with DOAJ

by Heather Morrison

Abstract

This post highlights two living models for inclusive, no-fee journals. One is a global network of not-for-profit journals that are diverse in language and content (the *Global Media Journal* network). The other is an English language journal with content that is global in scope (the *International Journal of Communication, IJOC*). These two examples were selected because the journals are fully open access, inclusive, have no publication charges, and are the journals that I would recommend irrespective of OA and fee status. They are in my discipline and I am acquainted with some of the members of their highly qualified editorial boards and have discussed with them their involvement in these journals. I am disappointed to find that most of these journals are no longer listed in DOAJ. If journals like these are not included in DOAJ, in my field, another list is needed. Recommended actions for sustainability of not-for-profit no-fee inclusive journals like these: re-direct financial support from the large for-profit commercial publishers to provide support for these journals (library journal hosting, a common practice in North America, can be part of the solution); reach out to understand their needs, recognizing that a small not-for-profit no-fee journal has no funds to send staff to OASPA or lobby on their behalf; include in listings like DOAJ for maximum dissemination of their works; and find examples of journals like these and make them a priority in open access education.

Details

This post is inspired by the useful information provided by Egyptian scholarly ElHassan ElSabry to the Global Open Access List (GOAL) in August 2019, which can be found here:

<http://mailman.ecs.soton.ac.uk/pipermail/goal/2019-August/005195.html>

Two points raised by ElHassan ElSabry are that publication charges in international journals are a barrier for scholars in a country like Egypt, where scholars must pay out of pocket. Even the 50% waiver provided by a publisher like SpringerOpen for authors from a low to middle income country like Egypt still leaves a very substantial cost for the author. Aside from cost, another barrier is that international journals often do not welcome authors from outside the developed world. This post features examples of two no-fee, inclusive approaches to journal publishing.

These and similar journals can provide an immediate solution for some scholars. A major limitation is that a tendency to welcome authors from around the world may vary depending on discipline, sub-discipline, region and among particular communities of scholars. In the field of communication, many scholars and journals welcome submissions from authors around the world. My own research is global in scope, so it is not surprising that this is reflected in the journals published by scholars in my communities.

Global Media Journals Network <https://globalmediajournal.wordpress.com/>

The Global Media site describes the network as follows: “Founded by Dr. Yahya R. Kamalipour, in 2002, the Global Media Journals network includes the following independent open-access peer-reviewed editions. Published in many languages, each edition is hosted by a major university and has its own managing editor and advisory board”. I first met Dr. Kamalipour at a 2014 Global Communication Association conference in Ottawa, Canada, hosted by scholars at St. Paul University, with which the

University of Ottawa has a long-standing relationship. I was very favorably impressed with Dr. Kamalipour, the Global Media Journals network, the conference, and the Global Communication Association (also founded by Dr. Kamalipour). I have discussed the journals with some of the editors, respected scholars including scholars associated with my own University.

GMJ Editions	Status	Hosts/Sponsors
Global Media Journal: Arabian Edition	Active	Amity University Dubai
Global Media Journal: Canadian	Active	University of Ottawa
Global Media Journal: Chinese	Active	Tsinghua University
Global Media Journal: German	Active	Freie University Berlin/Germany and the University of Erfurt/Germany
Global Media Journal: Indian	Active	University of Calcutta
Global Media Journal: Malaysian	Active	University Putra Malaysia
Global Media Journal: Mexican	Active	Texas A & M International University and Tecnologico de Monterrey at Monterrey
Global Media Journal: Persian	Active	University of Tehran
Global Media Journal: Russian	Active	Pyatigorsk State Linguistic University
Global Media Journal: Turkish	Active	Yeditepe University
Global Media Journal: Australian	Active	Western Sydney University

From: <https://globalmediajournal.wordpress.com/>

Browsing through the URLs on this list, I found that 7 of the 11 journals exhibit publishing activity in 2019, and an additional 3 in 2018. Only one, the Malaysian journal, may be inactive, having last published in 2016. The URLs for the Malaysian and Persian versions do not work, but the journals can be found here: Malaysian: <http://gmj-me.upm.edu.my/?> and Persian: <https://gmj.ut.ac.ir/>

As of August 12, 2019, only 3 of the 11 journals are listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals. In previous years, it appears that all were listed.

International Journal of Communication <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/index>.

The International Journal of Communication (IJOC) was founded by scholars at the University of Southern California – Annenberg, and USC-Annenberg hosts the journal. There is no fee for publication. How is this possible? In North America, it is common for academic libraries to provide journal hosting services for journals faculty are involved with. It makes sense for universities to provide this kind of technical support for services needed by faculty members, just as universities provide facilities for advanced computing, word processing, statistical analysis, bibliographic management and pedagogical tools, to name a few examples. The infrastructure (hardware, software, staffing) requirements are very similar. To learn more about this North American approach, I recommend starting with the website of the Library Publishing Coalition: <https://librarypublishing.org/>

Although IJOC is published exclusively in English, a quick glance at the Table of Contents for the most recent issue (Volume 13, 2019) illustrates global diversity in topics. Articles covering U.S. based issues

are intermingled with articles focused on China, South Korea, the EU, Africa, Afghan Media, and Chile. There is a special section on East Asia, and one on Extreme Speech in different countries that directly addresses questions of growing social exclusion in the broader society of which academic exclusion is just one example.

As of today, IJOC is no longer listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ).

Recommended actions for sustainability of these inclusive not-for-profit examples of open access:

- Re-direct economic support (library budgets) from large for-profit commercial publishers to support journals like this. This can be accomplished at significant cost savings to libraries – see my 2013 First Monday article for an explanation:
<https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/4370/3685>
- Library journal hosting can be part of the solution, but journals need some financial support for academic and support staff time and incidentals; the SSHRC *Aid to Scholarly Journals* program provides one model of this type of support, and in addition provides a model for journal-level peer-review, ensuring academic quality: http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programmes-programmes/scholarly_journals-revues_savantes-eng.aspx
- Reach out to journals like these to understand their needs; recognize that a small not-for-profit no-fee journal does not have funding to send staff to conferences like OASPA or to lobby (unlike large commercial publishers).
- Include the journals in major lists and indexing services such as DOAJ to increase dissemination for the journals and their authors.
- To encourage not-for-profit inclusive journals like these ones, find examples like these and make them a priority in open access education.

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