

Maximize your scientific output while keeping your integrity

On the ethics of manuscript submission

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Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

At the end of this module, each attendee will be able to:

1. List the most agreed upon rules for article submission.
2. Read the Instructions for Authors in different journals and identify submission guidelines.
3. Explain the ethical problem and economic cost of multiple submissions.
4. Enumerate the different expressions used to define a minimum publishable unit.
5. Recognize redundant or salami-sliced publications among a series of abstracts.
6. Assess the content of a potential manuscript and decide whether it fits as a publishable unit.

Outline

1. Why do we publish?
2. What to publish?
 1. Types of articles
 2. Publishable units
3. Where to publish?
4. When to publish? Identifying minimal publishable units
5. Ethical issues:
 1. Duplicate submissions
 2. Salami slicing

Recap: Why do we publish?



The
KNOWLEDGE
GAP

What to publish?

- **Types of articles:**

- Review articles
- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses
- Other types:
 - Editorials
 - Commentaries
 - Opinion

- Research articles
 - Short reports
- Methodology articles
 - Protocols
- Case studies
- Update articles

What to publish?

- Content
- Publishable units
 - MPU
 - Publon

Where to publish?

- **How to choose a journal?**

- Scientific magazines
- Primary and Secondary literature/ Journals
- Repositories

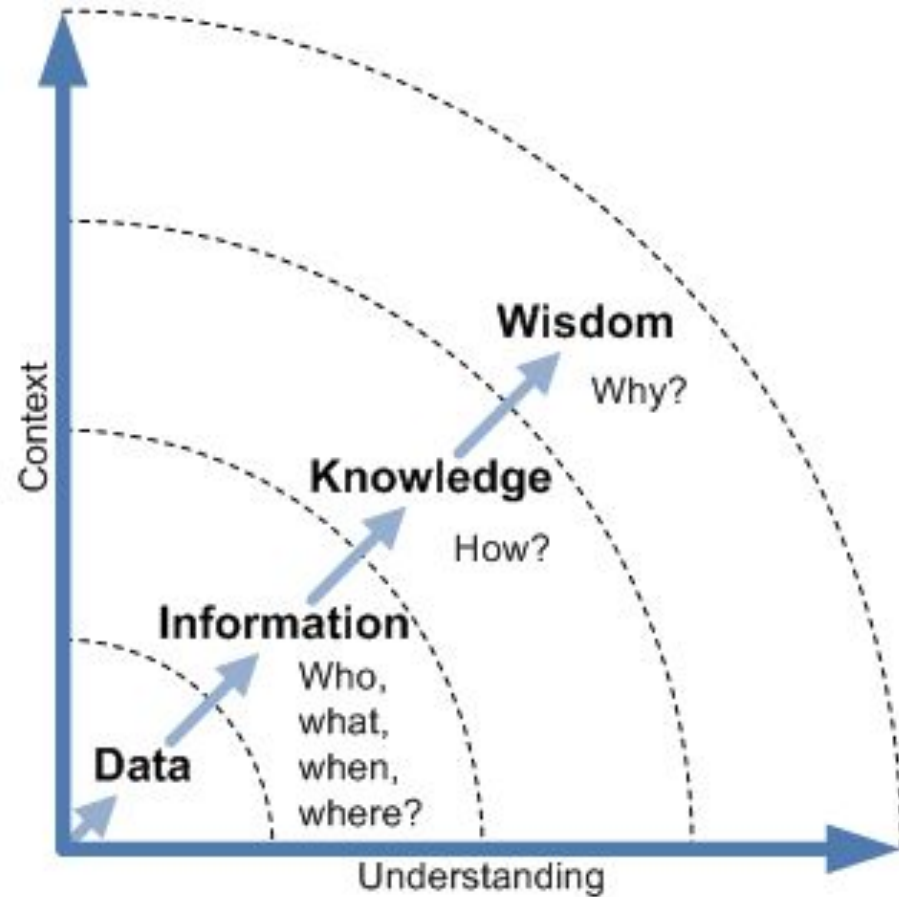
- **Who/what helps you decide?**

- Audience/ readership
- Stakeholders (patients, industry, the public, etc.)
- Rewarding systems/ graduation or promotion committees/ funders

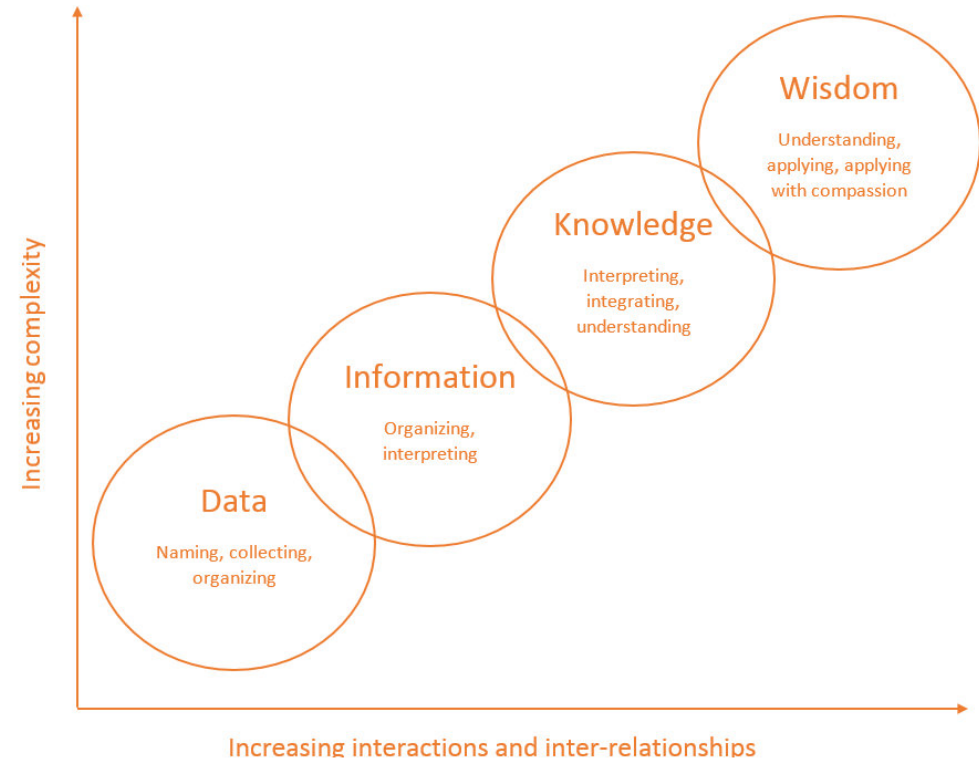
When to publish?

- What constitutes a publishable unit?
- The levels of knowledge:
 - **Data < information < knowledge < wisdom**
- Publishing data
- Publishing updates
 - Progress reports
 - Software/database versions
- Innovative ideas:
 - Collaborative publications (wiki style)
 - “Dynamic” articles (versioning, beyond the PDF, etc.)

When to publish?



Nelson Data-to-Wisdom Continuum



(Nelson & Joos, 1989)

Journal rules about submission:

- **Activity #1**: Teamwork → 1 min report:
 - Download instructions for authors of your favorite journal and extract the rules and regulations regarding multiple submissions and declarations of similarly submitted manuscripts

Dual/multiple submissions:

- Why, in your opinion, do journals not allow publishing manuscript that have been submitted elsewhere?
- Why, in your opinion, do journals not allow submitted manuscripts to be considered by other journals?
- **Why, in your opinion, might authors need to submit to multiple journals till one accepts the manuscript? Are authors totally wrong?**
- Do you think that preprint repositories may solve or complicate the problems?

Salami slicing and publication inflation



<http://www.jw-mc.com/news/the-telegraph-and-a-lesson-in-salami-slicing>

Salami slicing and publication inflation

- **Activity #2:**

- Use COPE's (Committee On Publication Ethics) Flowchart about dual publication
- Use Elsevier's FactSheet about Salami Slicing
- **Answer the following questions:**
 - Why Salami slicing is seen as unethical?
 - When could Salami slicing be appropriate?
 - How to avoid being a Salami slicer?
 - How to avoid being **SEEN AS** a Salami slicer?

“Overmilking your data”



http://bestdailyquotes.com/i/153371/fx0_the_freedom_fighters

Activity # 3: Case studies

Research integrity corner

Salami publication: definitions and examples

Vesna Šupak Smolčić

Example 1: A group of authors presented preliminary results of a pilot study in the form of a short communication in one journal. Two years later, the same group of authors published an article based on a much bigger sample in the same journal. They referred to the short communication published earlier and readily presented their results which supported the hypothesis based on the pilot study. Should this be considered a salami publication?

Example 4: During research, an author presented a part of the collected data in the form of a poster presentation at a congress meeting. At the end of the year, the same author, together with his colleagues, published an article with almost the same title as the poster presentation. The hypothesis was almost the same but there were several additional parameters presented in the published article. Is this considered to be salami publication?

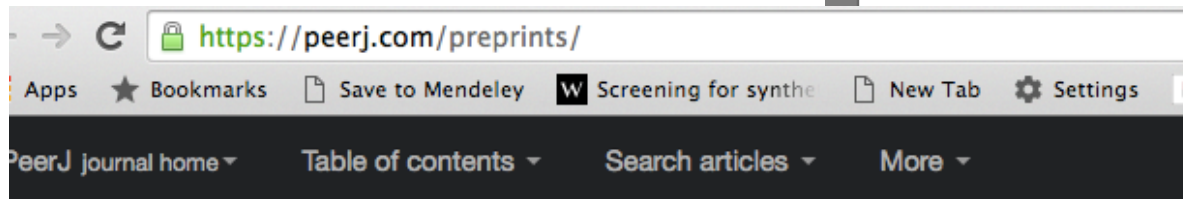
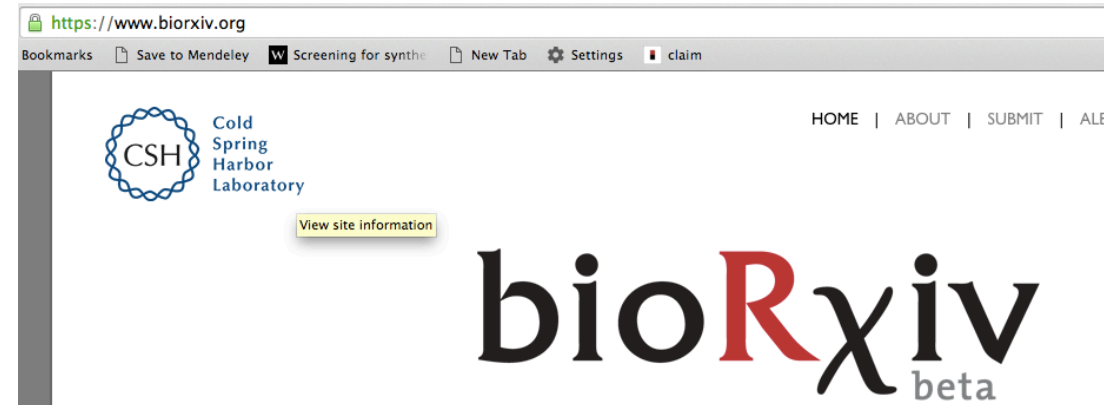


Activity # 4: The Salami detector

- Examine the list of abstracts handed to you and comment whether you think they represent some sort of slicing.

Open Discussion

Special Cases: Preprints and “Arxiv(e)s”



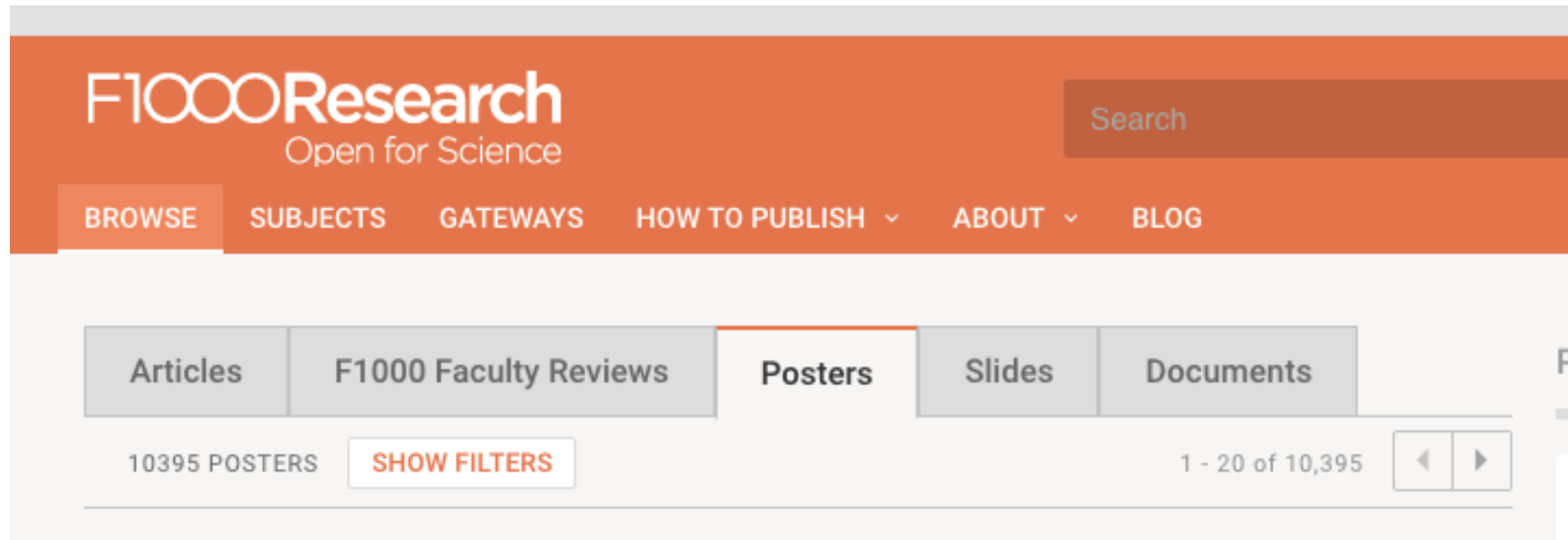
Current Issue - October 2017

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Sorted by downloads [Sort by date](#)

Open Discussion

Special Cases: Publishing posters, proceedings, etc.



- Preprints vs. posters
- Preprints vs. postprints (e.g., ResearchGates, PMC)

Take Home Message

- At present, the publication ecosystem considers the article as a UNIT, and the number of articles still counts towards building one's career. Thus replication, duplication, redundancy, slicing are all tools that may be **intentionally** or **unintentionally** used to **inflate** one's CV.
- Journals use time, money, and effort to oversee the peer review and to typeset and format articles. Multiple submissions overload the system and may lead to its collapse.
- Sometimes it is hard for authors to decide WHEN to publish, and whether to publish data, information, a partial story, or a near-complete story → publishers can't wait forever; patients and stakeholders can't wait forever; neither can funders or graduation & promotion committees!
- As with other aspects: honesty, transparency, and balance are needed for proper judgment.
- Innovative alternatives to **static articles (beyond the paper or PDF)** are needed.