



## iSchool Best Practices – information and proposal form

Please fill in the information below and upload the proposal form (in PDF format) at the [secure submission website](#) for consideration for presentation at the *iSchool Best Practices Track* at the 2018 iConference in Sheffield, UK. Please keep to the advised length or the proposal will not be considered for review.

Please consider also the key review criteria for selection:

- Observable results
- Grade of innovation
- Pedagogical dimension
- Degree of knowledge transfer

Questions about the *iSchool Best Practices track* should be directed to the chairs of the track:

### iSchool Best Practices Chairs

- [Ann-SofieAxelsson](#), University of Borås, Sweden
- [António Lucas Soares](#), University of Porto, Portugal

For general questions about the iConference, please contact iConference Coordinator [Clark Heideger](#).

<p><b>Name(s) of Author(s):</b> JieXu, Ke Dong, Anthony Watkinson</p>
<p><b>Title of submission:</b>Scholarly JournalPublishing Practices at Wuhan iSchool: Current Situation and Challenges</p>
<p><b>Area (please check the applicable area description with an x):</b> Curriculum Teaching Student experience Research Administrative management <b>x</b></p>

Other (please enter the applicable keyword): scholarly communication, publishing

**Submission abstract (max 150 words):**

The paper presents the current situation of the four journals that are published and hosted by Wuhan iSchool(School of Information Management) and then discusses the challenges faced by the school in regard to journal management. Particularly, the efforts and measurements that Wuhan iSchool takes for overcoming all the difficulties and challenges of improving the quality of the journals has been described . Based on the individual experiences of the two authors who are working as editors and project developers of these journals, the Wuhan iSchool's experience and lessons in running academic journals are thoroughly discussed so that other iSchools can learn from this example

**Submission description (max 2,350 words):**

**1. Introduction**

A scholarly journal is not only the carrier of information and knowledge for academic communication in particular scholarly discipline, but also a symbol of social capital for its mother institute and publisher. It is very common for reputable research institutes to publish scholarly journals related to their discipline. Wuhan iSchool(School of Information Management at Wuhan University), which is the oldest, largest and strongest teaching and research institution in the field of library and information science (LIS) in China, has the best situation and the necessary resources to publish scholarly journals for researchers in its area. By 2016, Wuhan iSchool has been publishing four academic journals. Two of them have already well established and enjoy a high level of reputation among peers;the other two are recently started and struggling to attract good quality submissions. This report aims to present current situation of the four journals published and hosted by Wuhan iSchool and discusses the challenges faced by the school in regard to journal management. Based on the individual experiences from the two authors as editors and project developers of these journals, the Wuhan iSchool's experience and lessons of running an academic journal are specifically described and thoroughly discussed so that other iSchools may take advantage of the lessons learned

**2. Current Situation**

Wuhan iSchoolhas been publishing four scholarly journals (see details in Table 1) for both domestic and overseas LIS society. Three of them are published in Chinese language and mainly domestic-oriented. The recently launched one is an international English language journal which is co-published with De Gruyter using the model of immediate OA.

**Table 1 General Information of Scholarly Journals Published by Wuhan iSchool**

Journal Name (ISSN)	Started Year	Language	Frequency	Indexed Database	Rank 2016	Estimated Rejection Rate
<i>Document, Information &amp; Knowledge</i> (1003-2797)	1984	Chinese	Bimonthly	CSSCI <sup>1</sup>	5/20	85%
<i>Publishing Science</i>	2006	Chinese	Bimonthly	CSSCI	8/15 <sup>2</sup>	70%

<sup>1</sup>CSSCI refers to China Social Science Citation Index.

(1009-5853)							
<i>Journal of Information Resources Management</i>	2011	Chinese	Quarterly	—	—	60%	
(2095-2171)							
<i>Data and Information Management</i>	2017	English	Quarterly	—	—	—	
(2543-9251)							

Among all the four journals published by Wuhan iSchool, *Document, Information & Knowledge* has the longest history and the best reputation. It is a comprehensive journal aims to serve the researchers and professions from library, information and archived management areas. The journal has pervasive academic influence in domestic LIS academia and advocates the ideology of "human-oriented" and "to integrate theory with practice". Although it is a reputable journal, *Document, Information & Knowledge* is focused more on classic study on library, information and archive and mainly serves the knowledge transfer need of LIS professions, and thus it cannot fully meet the new development of LIS discipline in digital environment and the emergence of an interdisciplinary approach to the subject. Therefore, in 2011, *Journal of Information Resources Management* has been launched to meet these demands of disciplinary development. The new journal tends to publish interdisciplinary researches which shed lights on the relation between people, information and technology. The journal has been influenced by the iSchool motto and is more open to publish unestablished early career researchers' or even graduate students' papers. So far the journal has received good reputation by word of mouth and published many innovative results in the past six years. Different from previous two journals, *Publishing Science* has been grouped in the journalism and communication catalogue by CSSCI. The journal has been taken over by Wuhan iSchool from Association of Editors of Hubei Province in 2006. The predecessor of this journal was more industry practice oriented; it used to be a professional journal for editors from both trade book publishing and scholarly publishing. After the transformation in 2006, the journal became a peer reviewed publication for the learned community of the study of publishing and academic communication. After 12 years' development, the journal has not only accumulated a reputation among peers and practitioners, but has also expanded the academic influence of the publishing study department of Wuhan iSchool. The new born journal, *Data and Information Management* jointly launched by Wuhan iSchool and De Gruyter in March 2017, provides free access to its full-text articles as soon as they are available online. The open access fees (article-processing charges) are fully paid by Wuhan University. From the name of the journal we can see the school has positioned it to be a new periodical which aims to promote data-driven information management research. And as an English-language journal, its audience and authors are expected to be from overseas. Over 60% of its editorial members are from top foreign universities and research institutes.

### 3. Challenges

As research and teaching institutes, iSchools have to face many challenges and difficulties

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<sup>2</sup>In CSSCI, *Publishing Science* is in the catalogue of journalism and communication not LIS.

in running scholarly journals, Wuhan iSchool's experiences might be illuminating for others to look at.

### **3.1 Management problems**

One of the biggest management problems is that it is short-handed. As a research and teaching oriented institute, Wuhan iSchool only employs 4 full-time in-house staff to run the four journals. Two work for *Document, Information & Knowledge*, and the other two work for *Journal of Information Resources Management* and *Publishing Science* respectively. Although these four people are working as editors and all hold PhD degrees in LIS fields, none of them have experiences of journal publishing before working for the journals. As for the latterly launched English journal *Data and Information Management*, all in-house editors are faculty members who work part-time for it. Because Wuhan University has set very strict requirements of recruitment, for instance, PhD degree and overseas education background are needed in addition to several papers published in international journals (indexed by WoS or Scopus); it is very difficult for Wuhan iSchool to hire editors who can meet all these rigorous conditions.

Lack of sufficient funds is another barrier to the development of the journals. All four journals published by Wuhan iSchool are not for profit, so the authors don't pay anything for the reviewing and publishing and readers can access to their full text content for free<sup>3</sup>. However, for free doesn't mean at no cost. All the operating cost is covered by the school and Wuhan university. The limited funds provided by Wuhan university is now fully used for administrative expenses, and thus no extra investment can be made in marketing such as advertising and organizing scholarly meetings to extend the influence of the journals.

### **3.2 Too many papers published from the school's research fellows**

As one of the best institute of LIS in China, Wuhan iSchool produces many good research papers each year. Not surprisingly, a considerable numbers of the submissions to the three Chinese journals published by the school is from its own research fellows (see Table 2). Publishing too many papers from the school can be a double-edged sword for journal development. On one hand, 'internal submissions' from both teachers and students make sure the journals have sufficient papers to publish; on the other hand, publishing too many 'own papers' would give the whole learned community an impression that these journals favor papers from Wuhan iSchool. In this case, authors from other institutions might well be worried about getting unfair treatment from the journals, and thus they may not submit papers to the Wuhan iSchool journals. Moreover, because these journals are not the best ones in the field (though some of them are good ones), the staffs' best papers do usually not come to them but go to top-ranked journals. Inferior contributions from inside and less submissions from outside will lower the quality of the journal gradually. This can be seen clearly in the case of *Publishing Science*, in 2016, 25% of its published papers were from Wuhan academics, but only 18% of most cited papers were Wuhan iSchool contributions.

### **3.3 Fierce completions**

As of August 2017, there were 68 Chinese journals published in the field of LIS study, 19

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<sup>3</sup>For three Chinese journals, there are 3-6 months delay for full text online available.

of them were indexed by CSSCI. The competition between journals is fierce. Best papers always go for the top-ranked journals and ‘inferior’ journals are struggling of attracting good quality submissions. Influenced by China’s current scientific research evaluation system which attached great importance to international indexed English journal papers, more and more good papers ‘flow out’ to international journals published by giant commercial publishers and reputable Western institutes. The scholarly publishing is a reputation industry, its trick for success is to publish good quality papers. The three Chinese journals published by Wuhan iSchool are all facing ‘ceiling effect’: they are good journals but not in the first class, so the best papers tend not to come to them and the inferior ones would probably be rejected by them. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for them to improve. With regard to the latterly launched English journal, it is even more difficult for them to get submissions, since few people know this new journal in and out of the country.

Indeed, graduate students and faculty members can submit papers to the journals, but on one hand, as discussed before, too many papers from Wuhan iSchool itself will lower the reputation of its journals; and on the other hand, the best papers from the school students and faculties always go to the top-ranked journals.

**Table 2 The Quantity and Quality of Published Papers from Wuhan iSchool in Three Chinese Journals (2016)**

Journal Name	Published Papers from Wuhan iSchool (%)
<i>Document, Information &amp; Knowledge</i>	25%
<i>Publishing Science</i>	25%
<i>Journal of Information Resources Management</i>	50%

#### 4. Solutions and Implications

In order to promote journal development and make these journals a better platform for scholarly communication at home and abroad, in 2016, Wuhan iSchool set up a publishing center specializing in operating the four journals. Moreover, diversified measures have been taken to overcome the difficulties and challenges (See Table 3). For instance, the journal *Document, Information & Knowledge* has successfully applied for subsidies from National Social Sciences Fund, and the university granted 16 thousand USD to the journal *Publishing Science* each year for three years in success. The money was used for rewarding best papers, organizing author workshops and sponsoring scholarly conferences to enlarge the journals’ influence. For solving the problem of short staffing *Journal of Information Resources Management* and *Publishing Science* has outsourced proofreading, marketing and online dissemination to third parties. *Data and Information Management* hires English native researchers who working as part-time editors for it and encourages Wuhan iSchool faculty members to invite English submissions when they attend international conferences.

Among all these efforts, assigning section editors is one of the most effective measures that work well for the latest launched English journal. The journal *Data and Information Science* aims to publish papers from interdisciplinary researches which involve in LIS, computer science and management science. In order to provide better service to the

authors and reviewers from three different disciplines, three senior scholars from the school were appointed as section editors, and they are in charge of dealing with submissions from respective disciplines. With their efforts, communication between authors and reviewers is becoming smoother.

Since social media has been widely used among Chinese scholars, the journal publishing center at Wuhan iSchool has set up four social media accounts for each journal on popular social networking websites, such as Weibo and Wechat. Editors not only use these social networking tools to disseminate latest published papers but also communicate with authors and readers (See Figure 1).

**Table 3 Challenges and Solutions from Wuhan iSchool for Scholarly Journal Publishing**

Challenges	Solutions
Lack of funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apply for national fund</li> <li>2. Ask financial support from the university</li> </ol>
Lack of sufficient staff (short-handedness)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outsource</li> <li>2. Encourage faculty members to do part-time jobs for the journals</li> <li>3. Engage PhD students</li> </ol>
Balance between internal and external submissions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reward best papers</li> <li>2. Set limits for internal submissions</li> <li>3. Promote the journals on social media</li> </ol>
Difficulty of attracting good quality papers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invite submissions</li> <li>2. Organize special issue</li> <li>3. Assign section editors</li> </ol>



**Figure 1 Publishing Science's Official Account Interface on Wechat**