



New year, new editorial team

Emma Weitkamp

Abstract

In this Editorial, I reflect on my time as Editor in Chief of JCOM and thank the community of scholars and practitioners who have helped to ensure the success of JCOM by generously contributing their time as reviewers, as well as authors and readers. This community has made my time as Editor in Chief rewarding and informative, as I have learned more and more about our diverse field. I am sure that JCOM will continue to grow and develop under the directorship of Michelle Riedlinger and Marina Joubert.

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After nearly 8 years as Editor in Chief of JCOM, I'm stepping down and handing over to Michelle Riedlinger, with Marina Joubert as Deputy Editor. As I hand over the reins to this fabulous new team, I wanted to reflect on the past few years and how the journal has developed.

In my first editorial as Editor in Chief of JCOM ([JCOM_1302_2014_E.pdf](#)) I outlined a vision for JCOM as a shared space — a place where academics and practitioners could meet and exchange ideas and a place that connected the global science communication community. In essence a place that crosses roles, continental and linguistic boundaries. While that mission is by no means complete, I hope that during my time as Editor in Chief I have pushed the journal somewhat in that direction. There are some concrete signs that this is the case. Practitioners have always had a voice, often contributing to commentaries published in the journal, but we have also created new publishing formats that we hope have encouraged practitioners to contribute their work, with the 2018 launch of our 'Practice Insights'. More recently, we began accepting Review articles in 2020. Reviews contribute to our community by consolidating learning within a field, and hopefully generating new insights. I hope they are valuable to all our readers, regardless of role. During the past 7 years, we have seen a significant increase in the number of submissions, particularly of research articles, though we are also seeing a growing number of submissions of Practice Insights (Figure 1). We continue to accept commentaries, such as this one on Neglected Spaces in Science

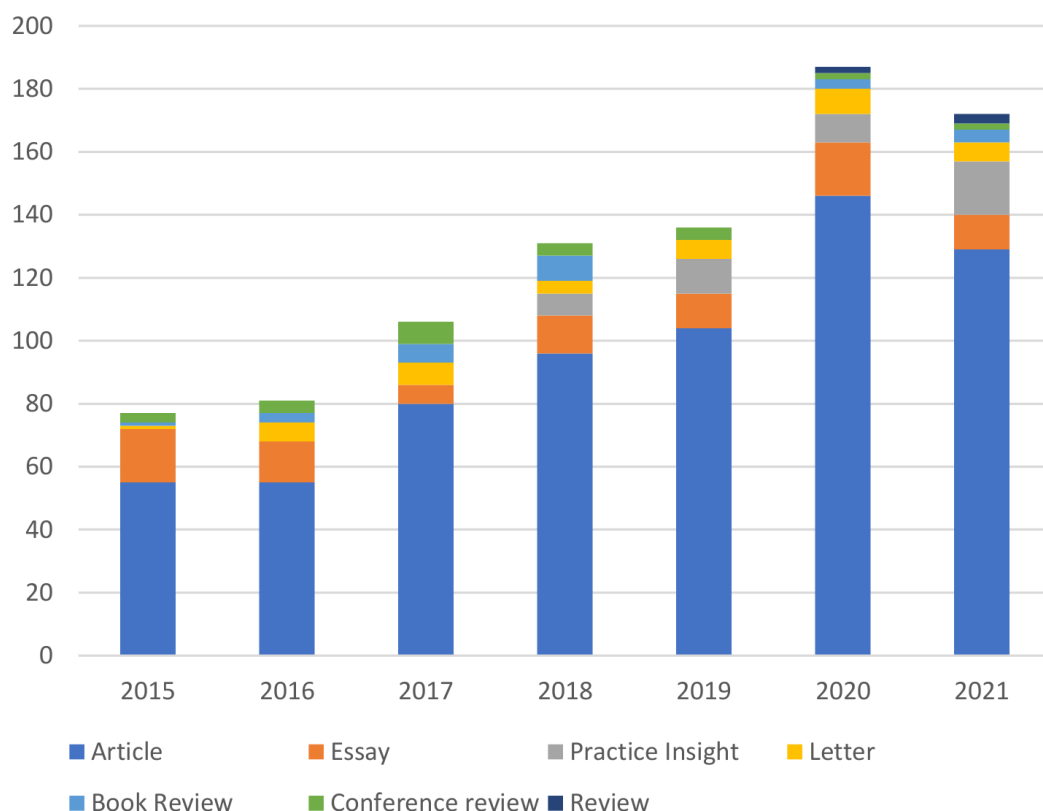


Figure 1. Submissions to JCOM by type.

Communication (<https://jcom.sissa.it/archive/20/01>). If you have an idea and would like to co-ordinate such a collection, please contact the editorial office.

Increasing submissions does not necessarily signify quality or indeed visibility of articles. While measuring quality is challenging, some measure that the increase in submissions has been accompanied by an increase in quality can be seen in the rise of the journal's Citescore (a measure of how frequently articles are cited), which has climbed from 0.8 to 2.2. A further reflection of the strength of the JCOM community is the requests we receive to host Special Issues. Since 2016, when we placed our first call for a Special Issue on Citizen Science (which had to be split into two volumes to accommodate the large number of quality submissions), we have published special issues on: The History of Science Communication (2017), User Experience of Digital Technologies in Citizen Science (2019), Communication at the Intersection of Science and Politics (2019), Stories in Science Communication (2019), two volumes on COVID-19 and Science Communication (2020), Re-examing Science Communication: models, perspectives and institutions (2021), Third International ECSA Conference (2021), with two special issues underway for 2022 (watch this space!). All of these special issues can be found in the JCOM Archive (<https://jcom.sissa.it/archive>).

JCOM is a community of authors, readers and reviewers. Without authors, there would be no journal. As Editor in Chief, I have sought to create a journal that welcomes papers from across the world and over the past 7 years, we have received papers from authors representing 70 countries, from Albania to Viet Nam.

Although the most submissions are received from corresponding authors based at US institutions (Figure 2), the top 15 countries of origin of corresponding authors represents all continents.

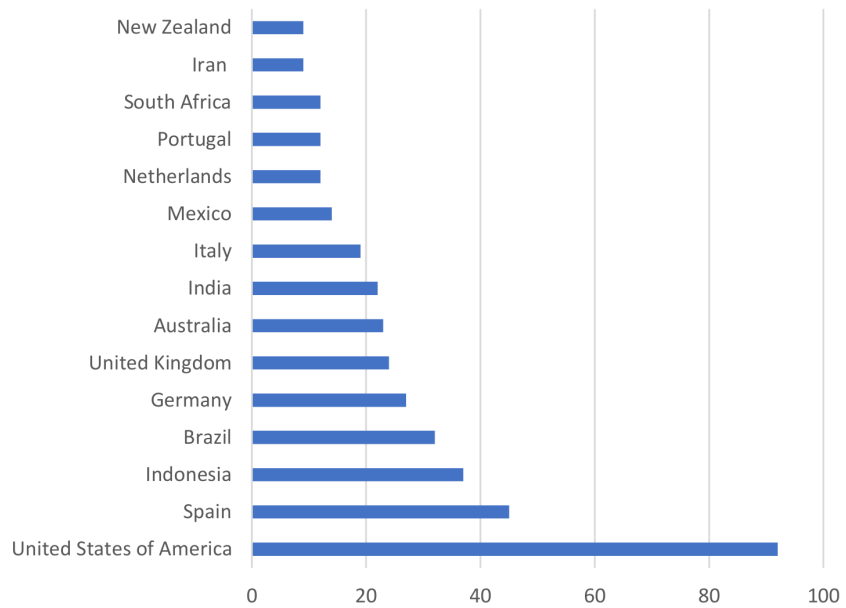


Figure 2. Corresponding authors country of origin.

A similar picture is seen when we consider the geographical origins of visitors to the JCOM website, with many readers based in Europe, North and South America and Asia (Figure 3). These data highlight the global reach that JCOM has achieved, one I hope will strengthen further under Michelle and Marina’s leadership.

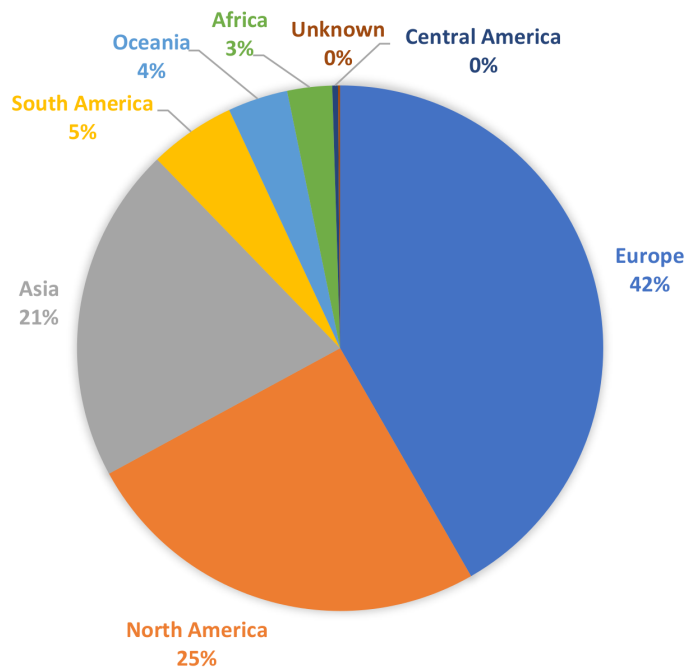


Figure 3. Origins of JCOM website visitors.

It would be remiss if I did not also recognise the essential role of referees. We rely extensively on their good and would be unable to have a successful peer review process without them. My heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to the JCOM community through the process of refereeing submitted manuscripts. Referees give valuable time and through insightful comments they challenge authors to improve their manuscripts. There is many an author whose work has been improved by being challenged to be more analytical in their writing (and sometimes data analysis) as well as being pointed to new literature. Readers will also thank referees for requesting more detail (particularly of methods) or demanding greater clarity in writing. So a huge thank you goes out to all the referees that have supported the journal in past years.

I have very much enjoyed my time as Editor in Chief, thanks in large part to you the community that has coalesced around the JCOM. It is your support, as authors, reviewers and readers, that makes JCOM the journal that it is. I'm sure you will continue to support and challenge us, the community of researchers and practitioners of science communication as I handover leadership. For now, I wish to thank you for being such a supportive community.

Author

Former Editor in Chief of JCOM, Professor Emma Weitkamp is based at the University of the West of England, Bristol, where she teaches science communication to MSc and undergraduate students. Her research interests centre on science and the arts and environmental communication.

E-mail: emma.weitkamp@uwe.ac.uk.

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