



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

EVALUATION OF THE AID TO SCHOLARLY JOURNALS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

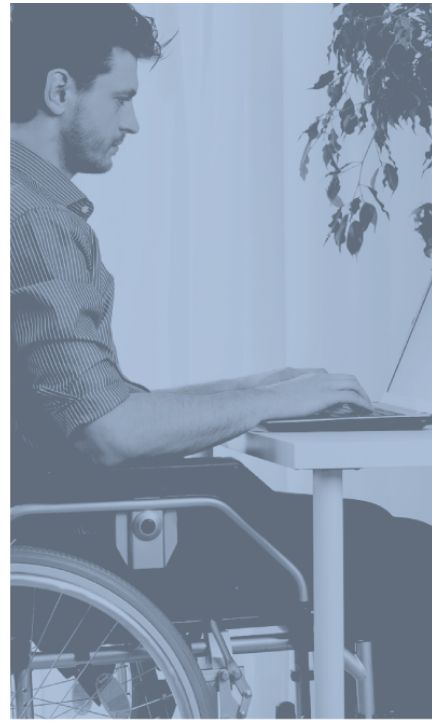
PROGRESS AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

DINA GUTH, SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER,
RESEARCH GRANTS PORTFOLIO

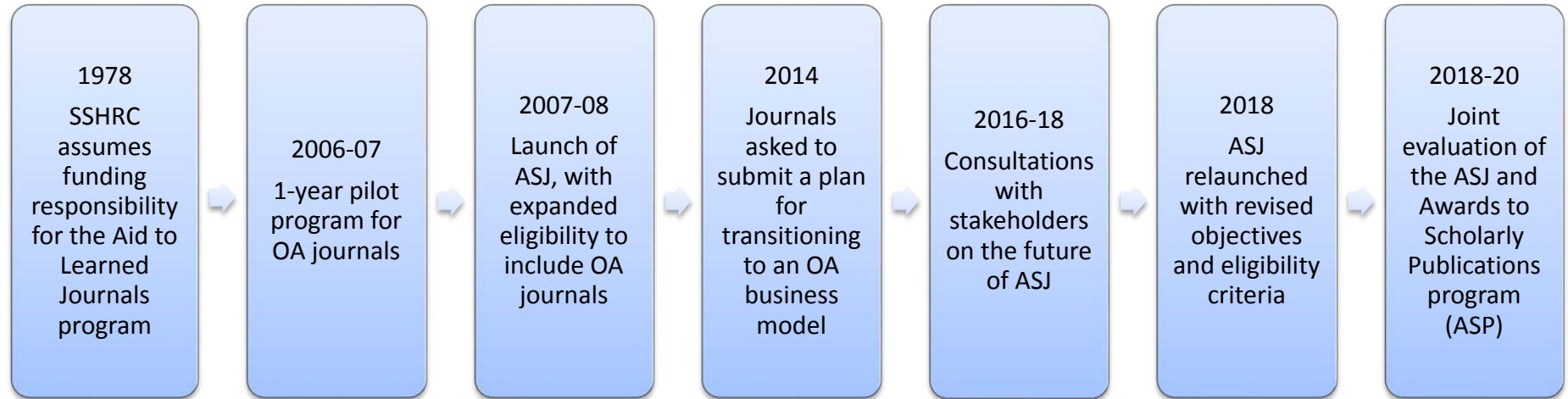
NOVEMBER 25, 2020

Presentation Outline

- Context
- Evaluation: goals and process
- Evaluation: preliminary findings
- Next steps and upcoming activities



ASJ: PROGRAM HISTORY



ASJ COMPETITION 2021

- Part of ASJ's regular 3-year competition cycle
- Competition deadline in Fall 2021
- No major changes currently expected
- Flexibility for journals impacted by COVID-19



Open Government Open Science

Government of Canada's 2018-20 National Action Plan on Open Government includes an open science commitment to "make federal science, scientific data, and scientists more accessible."

The Office of the Chief Science Advisor released a Roadmap for Open Science in February 2020 for science and research funded by federal government departments and agencies.

The Tri-Agencies have had an Open Access Policy on Publications since 2015 and have developed a Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy.



Tri-Agency Open Access Working Group

Ensure a harmonized approach across the agencies

Review compliance monitoring

Coordinate actions and responses with Government of Canada departments and other stakeholders

Monitor OA developments in other jurisdictions

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

- Plan S, an initiative for OA publishing launched in September 2018 by cOAlition S, an international consortium of research funding and performing organizations.
- UNESCO is developing a Recommendation on Open Science to be adopted by Member States in 2021.
- The International Science Council identified Open Science as a priority in its 2019-21 Action Plan and has launched a project on The Future of Scientific Publishing.
- In November 2019 the Tri-Agencies became signatories of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), a global initiative that seeks to improve the ways in which the output of scientific research is evaluated.

COVID-19 and Open Science

- Office of the Chief Science Advisor calls on publishers to make COVID-19 and coronavirus-related publications and data immediately accessible.
- CIHR and NSERC sign the Joint Statement on sharing research data and findings relevant to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.
- Tri-Agencies collaborate with the Office of the Chief Science Advisor to establish the CanCOVID Platform.
- Impacts of COVID-19 on scientific publishing.

Program Evaluation

Aid to Scholarly
Journals and Awards
to Scholarly
Publications



Goals

Process

Preliminary Findings

CONTEXT AND SCOPE

- Part of SSHRC's routine evaluation of its programs.
- The last evaluation of ASJ took place in 1985, as part of a joint evaluation with the Awards to Scholarly Publications Program (ASP).
- The current evaluation is also a joint evaluation with ASP.
- The evaluation covers the period 2008-18.

PROCESS

- Conducted by the Evaluation Division in collaboration with an external evaluation consulting firm.
- Guided by an Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) composed of senior program staff, 3 ex-officio external representatives, and evaluation division representatives.
- 2-phased sequential process, including a review of administrative data and documents, a retrospective cohort study, literature reviews, key informant interviews, and surveys of journal editors and researchers.

Relevance

- Is there a need for the federal government to provide direct financial support to journals and publishers in the scholarly publishing sector to increase dissemination of Canadian SSH research results?
- Do ASJ and ASP objectives align with federal roles and priorities?

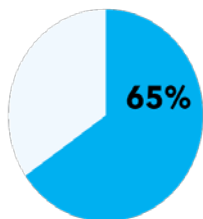
Performance

- What contribution has ASJ/ASP funding made to quantity, quality and dissemination of published Canadian SSH research?

Cost-Efficiency

- Are ASJ/ASP delivered in a cost-efficient manner?
- Are there viable alternative approaches SSHRC should consider to increase dissemination of original Canadian research results in the social sciences and humanities?

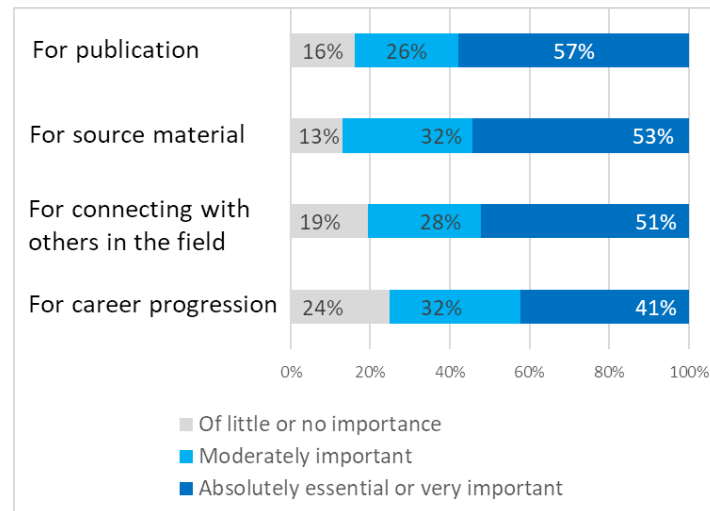
RESEARCHERS



A majority of Canadian SSH researchers have published in a Canadian journal

A majority rate Canadian journals in their field as important (survey)

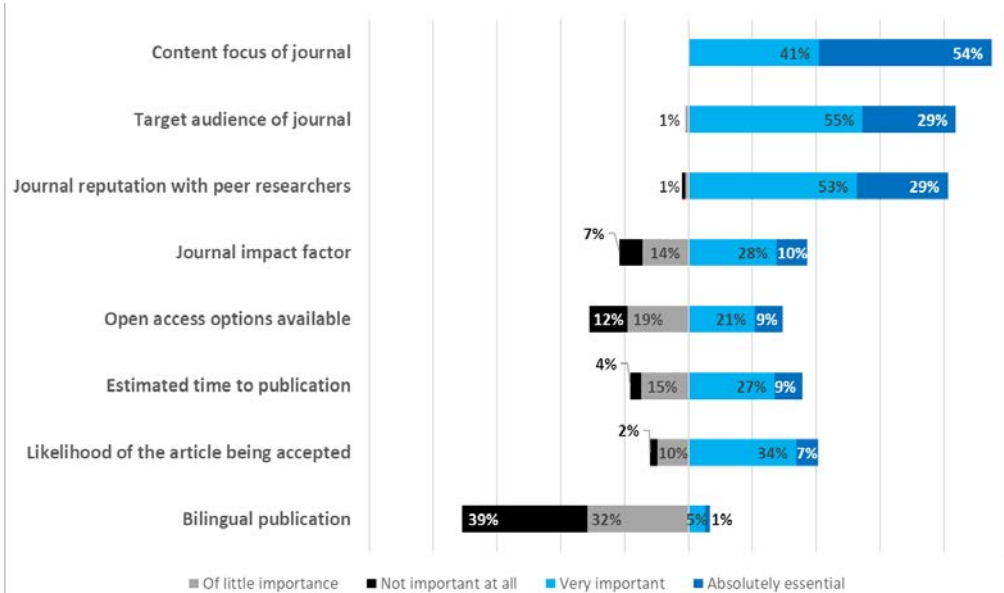
“Peu de revues à l’extérieur du Canada vont s’intéresser, par exemple, à la francophonie canadienne, et ce, à quelques rares exceptions. Ce n’est donc pas seulement pour la publication de mes résultats de recherche, mais bien pour le développement et l’avancement de champs de recherches en entier.” (Early career academic)



RESEARCHERS: SELECTION OF PUBLICATION VENUE

Over 80% of respondents reported the content focus of the journal, its target audience, and the journal's reputation to be essential or very important.

71% rated bilingual publication to be of little or no importance.

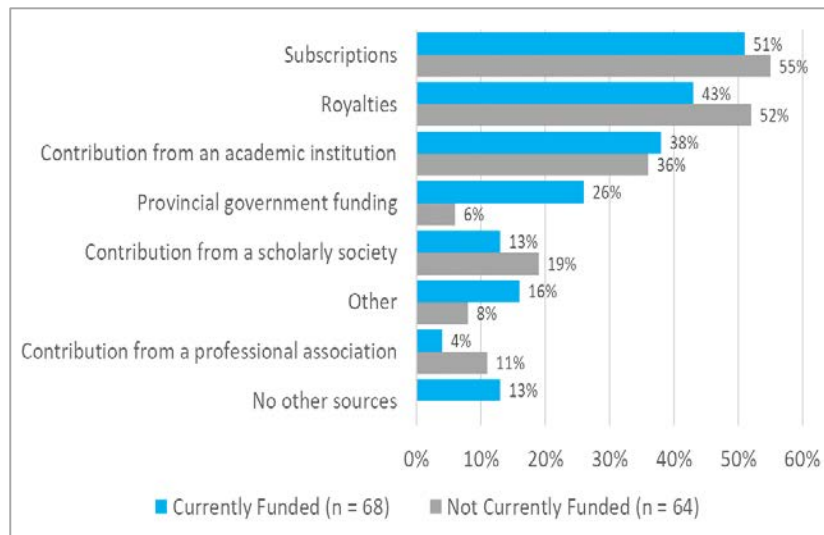


JOURNALS

For most funded journals, ASJ is more than half their revenue.

- Average share of revenue: 67%
 - For Gold OA journals: 78%
 - For Delayed OA journals: 54%

Only 6 journals of all those surveyed (funded and unfunded) reported using Article Processing Charges (APCs).



Alternate revenue sources over past 12 months, editor survey respondents



SSHRC PRIORITY AREAS

Official languages

Canada Research Coordinating
Committee (CRCC) priorities

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Indigenous research and reconciliation
- Early Career Researchers

Open Access

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

- 98% of journal editors reported little or absolutely no language barriers encountered in the process of applying for ASJ funding.
- Among researchers responding in French, 61% reported experiencing at least some language barriers to publishing their research, compared with 9% of those responding in English.
 - Pressure to publish in English due to lower value placed on French-language publications at the institution.
 - Bearing cost of translation to publish in English.
 - Reduced productivity and more critical peer reviews due to publishing in a second language.
- Although 23% of surveyed researchers reported French as their primary language at work, only 12% reported French as the language they typically use for book and article manuscripts, 80% reported English, and 8% responded 'it depends'.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

- 72% of continuously funded editors reported undertaking activities explicitly aimed at increasing equitable and inclusive participation in scholarly publishing in the past 12 months.
- Editors reporting activities aimed at EDI were asked to describe them:
 - 80% reported efforts to increase the diversity of the journal's editors
 - 34% reported efforts to increase or sustain a diversity of topics

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH AND RECONCILIATION

- Some journals pursue an explicit mandate to mobilize Indigenous research.
- Indigenous research and research related to reconciliation in the Canadian context is most likely to be published in Canadian journals.
- Survey respondents described research focused on Canadian topics to be less relevant outside of Canada, and the importance of Canadian journals for the development of some fields of research within Canada.

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

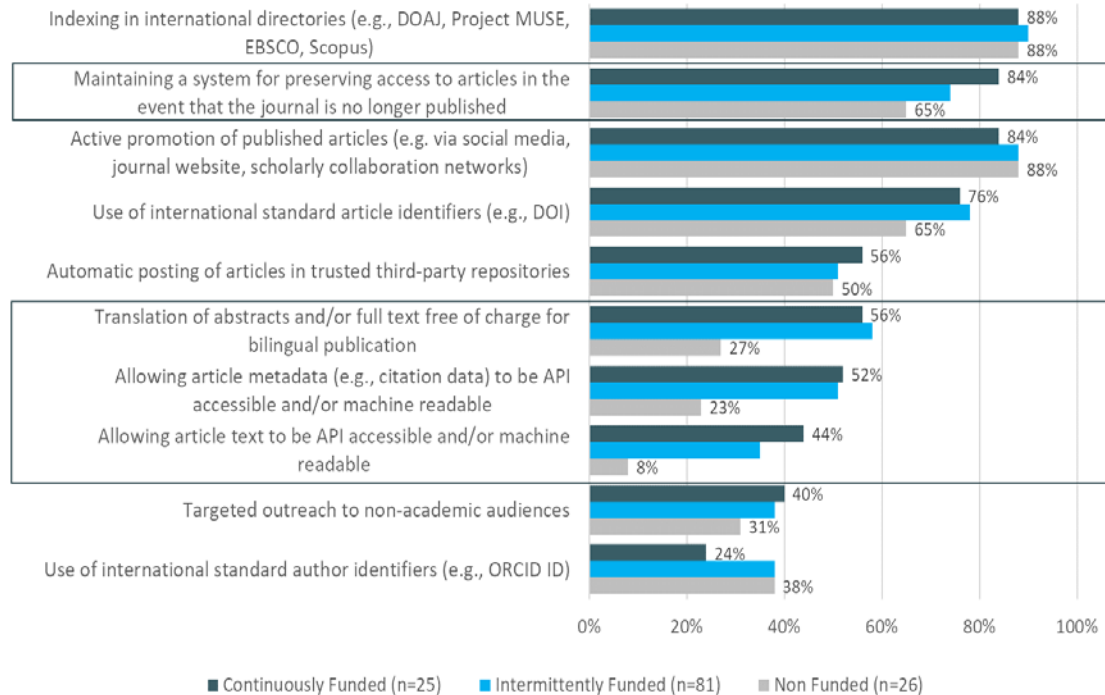
- Of the surveyed researchers, early career researchers were more likely to rate Canadian journals higher in importance for connecting them to others in their field.
- 41% of surveyed researchers reported Canadian journals to be essential or very important to career progression.

“Canadian journals are less central [to me] than they would be for others working primarily on Canada. At the same time, they remain important to me in that many of the scholarly networks in which I work are based in Canada, and publishing some of my work in Canadian contexts enables me to maintain and expand those networks. This is of crucial importance in fostering research in Canada.”

(Early Career Researcher)

JOURNAL ACCESSIBILITY AND DISCOVERABILITY PRACTICES

Current accessibility / discoverability practices (editor survey)



OPEN ACCESS

- 92% of journals funded continuously between 2008-18 are OA journals.
- 22 journals funded continuously between 2008-14 did not apply to the 2018 competition.
 - Of these, 95% identified as subscription only or hybrid journals.
- 12 journals with no prior applications were funded for the first time in 2018.
 - 92% of the journals new to ASJ are Gold OA.

OPEN ACCESS

- 48% of editors of previously funded journals indicated that the 2018 changes affected their OA strategy.
 - Among editors reporting a change in strategy, 55% responded that changes to ASJ sped up their OA transition.
- 48% of editors of previously funded journals indicated that the changes did not affect their OA strategy.
 - 80% of editors reporting no change in OA strategy as a result of ASJ responded that their journal was already eligible under the 2018 requirements.
- 8% of all responding editors reported that their journal charges APCs (including hybrid and OA journals). Less than 2% of OA journals currently funded by ASJ charge APCs.
 - Internationally, 22% of SSH OA journals are reported to charge APCs.*

** Estimates of the number of OA journals charging APCs varies. Other estimates, for OA journals of all disciplines, range from 13-47%.*

OPEN ACCESS

- Among surveyed researchers, around 40% had published in Gold OA, 40% had not, and 20% were unsure.
 - The leading influences for those who had published in Gold OA were the availability of a free or low-cost option among their choice of journals, or access to funding to pay author fees (APCs).
 - Among researchers who had not published in OA, the most commonly indicated reason was that the Gold OA option in their choice of journals required an author fee which was too high. This was reported by 57% of early career researchers and 27% of established researchers.
- The same proportion (30%) of researchers reported OA options to be of little or no importance for selection of a journal as reported OA options to be essential or very important.
 - 41% of early career researchers reported OA options to be essential or very important, compared to 28% of mid-career and 23% of established researchers.

NEXT STEPS AND UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- Evaluation report finalized and published (2021)
- Launch of ASJ 2021 competition (Spring 2021)
- Deadline for ASJ (Fall 2021)
- Results announced (Winter 2022)

QUESTIONS

- ✎ Contact Us: scholarlyjournals@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca
- ✎ Subscribe to our eNewsletter: **Dialogue**
- ✎ Visit our website: www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca



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THANK YOU!

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