Invited Paper
Getting Published in JISE: A Practical Guide from the Editors

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a practical guide to publishing in the *Journal of Information Systems Education* (JISE) for current and future authors. We introduce the journal, discuss its scope and mission, and provide an outline of the various submission types and the submission process. We list the top reasons for why papers are desk-rejected, and we describe the makings of a "good" paper. It is our hope that this paper will make the publication process – its pitfalls and its requirements – clear for anyone wishing to publish in JISE.

Keywords: Academic publication, Information systems education, Pedagogy, JISE

1. ABOUT JISE

The *Journal of Information Systems Education* (JISE) is a peer reviewed journal published quarterly that focuses on IS education, pedagogy, and curriculum including (but not limited to) model curriculum, course projects/cases, course materials, curriculum design & implementation, outcomes assessment, distance education challenges, capstone learning projects, technology selection & impact, and industry relations.

The mission of JISE is to be the premier journal on information systems (IS) education. To support that mission, JISE emphasizes quality and relevance in the papers that it publishes. In addition, JISE recognizes the international influences on IS education and seeks international input in all aspects of the journal, including authorship, reviewing, and Editorial Board membership.

JISE operates as a *Diamond Open Access* journal. This means that there are no subscription fees, no submission/processing fees, and no publication fees. All papers published in JISE have undergone rigorous peer review. This includes an initial editor screening and double-blind refereeing by three or more expert reviewers. Submissions are judged not only on the suitability of the content, but also on the readability and clarity of the prose.

2. JOURNAL SCOPE AND SUBMISSION TYPES

JISE seeks original articles on current topics of interest to IS educators and researchers. Research or application oriented articles that describe curriculum, pedagogy, professional development, or educational facilities issues will be considered for publication in the journal.

JISE also seeks Teaching Tips that address teaching in practice and the experiences of the instructors and students. Tips should address the author's experience using the tip (both what worked and what didn't work). For more information on writing IS teaching tips, see the invited paper by Lending and Vician (2012), titled "Writing IS Teaching Tips: Guidelines for JISE Submission," which was published in the issue of "Volume 23, Number 1, Spring 2012."

JISE solicits Teaching Cases for publication and use by readers in their curriculums as well. Case study approaches to teaching information systems concepts are recognized as important and valuable techniques. Cases promote active learning-by-doing, rather than the more traditional lecture-based approach, and thus encourage the development of those higher-level skills. Creative problem-solving, interpersonal communication, and group/teamwork are the types of skills that employers increasingly demand of new graduates and

prospective employees. For more information on writing IS teaching cases, see the paper by Cappel and Schwager (2002), titled "Writing IS Teaching Cases: Guidelines for JISE Submission," which was published in the issue of "Volume 13, Number 4, Winter 2002."

All manuscripts selected for publication must maintain a high standard of content, style, and value to the readership. An important criterion for acceptance of a manuscript for publication is the relevance of the work to the educational environment and its potential usefulness for advancing the quality of IS education.

3. WHY SOME PAPERS ARE DESK-REJECTED

Receiving a desk reject decision from the editor is frustrating. It means the paper never made it to the review process and was never read by reviewers. It means there was something inherently wrong with the paper that the editor had to return it. It doesn't mean the paper is bad or that it can't be published in JISE or elsewhere. It's just that, in its current form, it's not an appropriate fit for JISE. In an editorial published in the *Pacific Asia Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, Jiang and Tsai (2019) provided seven leading causes of getting desk rejections at PAJAIS: (1) the mismatch of scope, (2) a weak introduction, (3) a poor review of literature, (4) problematic methods, (5) limited contributions, (6) non-academic manuscripts, and (7) resubmission of a rejected paper.

There are some good reasons why papers are desk-rejected by the editor. Sometimes the paper can be fixed to address these reasons. Whether a revised paper would be acceptable as a resubmission to JISE is a conversation to be had with the editor as each situation is unique. In no particular order, the most common reasons why some papers are desk-rejected at JISE are: nothing novel, out-of-scope topic, insufficient research or methodology, incomplete formatting, improper language or grammar, too similar to prior work, and unclear submission type.

3.1 Nothing Novel
The goal of nearly all academic research is to provide novel findings, theories, or opinions. Publishing in JISE is no different. A paper that fails to provide any new results will likely be rejected by the editor. A paper that simply describes a phenomenon or an experience will likely be rejected by the editor. This does not mean that the results and the discussion must be earth-shattering or paradox-shifting; it simply means there must be something to the paper so when a reviewer asks "so what?" there is an answer more than "there's nothing here."

Not all submissions to JISE require a research methodology and statistical analyses – JISE accepts teaching cases and teaching tips as described earlier. However, these teaching cases and teaching tips must still be novel. For example, a problem-based teaching case where students are asked to model an organization's data through an entity relationship diagram must provide the students and/or the teacher with something different than the many examples of database modeling already published and available.

3.2 Out-of-Scope Topic
JISE publishes papers on topics related to the teaching of information systems (IS) at the university level. There are many other courses and disciplines (marketing, physics, psychology,

etc.) at the university level, and there are additional places (high schools, trade schools, etc.) where information systems is taught. However, these are all beyond the scope of JISE. In addition, a study about a particular phenomenon that is being tested/researched in an IS course is not necessarily automatically appropriate for JISE. If that same study could be conducted in a finance course or a mechanical engineering course, then the topic of investigation is not really about IS and the teaching of IS at the university level. Such studies must be explicit as to how they are appropriate for JISE. Finally, using technology (software or hardware) tools in a course, even in an IS course, is not a guarantee for an appropriately scoped paper. JISE is not a technology journal – there are many other journals which focus on the use of technology in the classroom or within the educational environment.

3.3 Insufficient Research or Methodology
Somewhat related to the first reason in this list – nothing novel – is having insufficient research or methodology. This is the case where the paper attempts to answer a well-defined set of research questions and hypotheses, but the methodology and actual research conducted is not sufficient to answer these questions and test the hypotheses. As a result, the reported results may be based on the data collected and the analyses, but the conclusions reached are not possible due to the mismatch between the research questions and the methodology. Sometimes, these papers are put through the review process as the reviewers are able to flesh out the necessary changes and modifications. Other times, however, the insufficiencies are too great to warrant the paper continuing through the review process.

3.4 Incomplete Formatting
JISE has a required format for initial submissions – https://jise.org/initial.html. All new submissions must follow these guidelines. While specific, the guidelines allow for a great deal of flexibility and are not onerous. However, issues with formatting – citations and references are the most problematic – can lead to a desk reject. In addition, all submissions must be Word documents, as PDFs are not suitable and will delay the overall review timeline.

3.5 Improper Language or Grammar
JISE is proud to be an international journal with authors, reviewers, and readers from around the world. All published articles (and therefore all submissions), however, must be in English with proper language and grammar usage. While minor issues can be resolved through the review process and editing, major issues with language and/or grammar will make the submission difficult to read and understand. Many reviewers will refuse to read such papers, and some reviewers will simply give the paper a Reject rating. Authors, especially those whose first language is not English, are strongly encouraged to have their submissions proof-read and edited by a native English speaker or a professional editing service prior to submission.

3.6 Too Similar to Prior Work
JISE solicits only original contributions that have not been previously published or are not currently under review for publication elsewhere. However, JISE encourages authors to submit manuscripts first to a conference and then submit a refined version to JISE. Submitting work to conferences is an

important part of the publication lifecycle for many papers. Papers awaiting presentation or already presented at conferences must be revised (ideally, taking advantage of feedback received at the conference) and have a slightly modified title to receive consideration. Submitting a paper identical to one previously accepted at a conference is not allowed, and such papers will be rejected.

3.7 Unclear Submission Type
While JISE accepts papers across three submission types – traditional research, teaching cases, and teaching tips – there are times at which a submission is not clearly in one of these three categories. Such a submission will be desk rejected, though the editor will likely have a conversation with the author(s) to determine if some modifications can be made in order for the paper to better fit into one of the three categories.

4. THE MAKINGS OF A GOOD PAPER

It should go without saying that simply avoiding the above-mentioned reasons for a desk-reject is not enough to guarantee a submission will proceed through the review process. They are surely important to keep in mind, though. In an editor's commentary published in *MIS Quarterly*, Straub (2009) specifies four required elements for a paper to be accepted at a top journal: (1) its basic idea is exciting, (2) its research questions are nontrivial, (3) it hits themes that are popular, and (4) it sufficiently uses or develops theory. More importantly, though, authors targeting JISE with their papers should keep the following tips in mind for a good paper: make a contribution to the field, be interesting, have complete and appropriate content for the specific type of paper, and include all necessary and sufficient references.

4.1 Contribution to the Field
A paper must have a meaningful answer to the question: So what? After reading a paper, if someone asks this question, the answer can't be "I don't know." The paper must provide some contribution to the IS pedagogy field. This could be through the testing of a new theory or of a theory borrowed from another field, the application of new statistical techniques and data analyses, the combination of treatments not seen before, or, in the case of teaching cases and teaching notes, new resources for instructors that go beyond the existing literature and available classroom resources.

Whether the theory, the analysis, or something else, the contribution to the field must be evident. The contribution should not be oversold or over-hyped. The reason for the paper to be published is to share new knowledge with the broader community. This new knowledge must be clearly identified in the appropriate sections of the paper and, in particular, in the discussion section. If the reader, or in the case of a new submission, the reviewer, is not clear how the paper adds to the literature, the chances for a successful review diminish.

4.2 Interesting
Academic papers tend to be long. It is important that the writing keeps the interest of the reader. Part of this is the topic itself, and the other part is the writing style. The greatest results are beneficial to the community only when they are known. If a paper is poorly written, a smaller audience will read it, resulting in decreased contribution to and impact on the community.

4.3 Complete and Appropriate Content
With three types of papers in JISE, it is critically important to make sure that all necessary components are included. Each of the paper types is described below:

4.3.1 Traditional Research. As with most journals and papers, the typical JISE paper will include the following sections: introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis, discussion, and conclusion. The section titles are not set in stone, but this general order should be followed. The Introduction should set the stage for the rest of the paper by identifying the problem or the issue that is being investigated. The Introduction should describe the purpose and goals of the paper, briefly discuss the research questions, and end with an outline of the rest of the paper. The Literature Review is more than a summary or a long list of previous work discussed one at a time. It should analyze and address the relevant papers that motivate the current work and contribute to the theory and methodologies being used. Any knowledge gaps should be identified, especially if they will be dealt with in the current paper. The research model and hypotheses, if appropriate, should be described relative to the existing literature and theories.

The Methodology section should clearly describe the sample population, the data collection methods, and any summary statistics. This information should be in enough detail that others can accurately replicate the study. The Analysis section provides the detailed accounting of the statistical analyses, including discussions of validity and reliability as appropriate to the methodology. Include appropriate citations to support specific analysis choices and statistical techniques. This section should delineate the results of the hypothesis testing, but a full discussion is not needed.

The Discussion section provides a full elaboration of the results. This includes anything not covered in the previous section, but especially how the results compare and contrast with previous research and the underlying theories of the study. Where are the major differences? Are there remaining gaps in the understanding of the phenomenon? What did the study confirm or leave unanswered? What are the pedagogical and future research implications? This is where the "so what?" question is answered. The final section, Conclusion, summarizes the study, provides a concise recap of the research questions and their answers, and delineates the study's overall contribution to IS pedagogy.

4.3.2 Teaching Case. According to Cappel and Schwager (2002), a Teaching case is suggested to have the following components: title, abstract, keywords, case summary, case text, references, and author biographies.

Specifically, the Case Summary section summarizes the content of the case; and the Case Text section contains the case itself. A "good" IS case: (1) addresses IS subject matter, (2) has a clear sense of purpose, (3) provides realism, (4) is of appropriate length, (5) is objective in presentation and tone, (6) has a hook, (7) addresses a timely topic, and (8) has been "pre-tested" (Cappel & Schwager, 2002). Previously published Teaching Cases can be viewed at https://jise.org/cases.html.

Teaching notes should accompany the case submission as a separate file. These notes might include Discussion, Questions/Answers, or Proposed Solutions for use by the instructor using the case. Each question is followed by a

suggested answer. This discussion might also address common misunderstandings of students about the case or features of the case that some insightful students will notice while others will overlook. Questions/Answers or Proposed Solutions for project-based (systems solutions) cases will include tables, charts, systems prototype screens, or diagrams that present the solution. For example, with a systems analysis and design case, the proposed solution might include data and process diagrams, a table listing the entities and attributes, and sample system outputs. A programming case might include program code. Teaching notes will not be published in JISE, but will be made available to verified instructors through a password-protected portion of the JISE website. This will prevent students from going to the library and getting "the answers" as proposed by the authors.

4.3.3 Teaching Tip. According to Lending and Vician (2012), a Teaching Tip is suggested to have the following components: title; abstract; keywords; introduction; the assignment, course, or curriculum; teaching suggestions; evidence; discussion; conclusion; references; and author biographies.

Specifically, the Introduction section provides an overview of the need; the Assignment, Course, or Curriculum section includes a discussion of what was done; the Teaching Suggestions section provides the benefits of the author's experience in using the technique; the Evidence section provides a discussion showing that the innovation worked; the Discussion section reflects upon the Teaching Tip and shares experiences with others; and finally, the Conclusion section reflects upon how this tip contributes to information systems education (Lending & Vician, 2012). Previously published Teaching Tips can be viewed at https://jise.org/tips.html.

4.4 Necessary and Sufficient References
An important part of any academic research paper are the references and citations. This is no less true for pedagogical research in JISE. A quality paper will have all of the necessary references and citations to fully support the claims made throughout the paper and the placement of the paper within the prior research.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Professors in higher education are supposed to do three things: teaching, research, and service. Publishing more and often in high quality journals is essential for finding a job, getting a promotion, and retaining a job (Moosa, 2018). "Publish or perish" is a phrase used to refer to "an attitude or practice existing within academic institutions, whereby researchers are put under pressure to produce journal publications" (Moosa, 2018, p. 1).

In this invited paper, we provided a practical guide to publishing in JISE for current and future authors. Most importantly, we listed the top reasons for why papers are desk-rejected, and we described the makings of a "good" paper. It is our hope that this paper will help IS educators who wish to publish in JISE.

Getting published in JISE kills two birds with one stone. It not only fulfills the publication requirements for authors to attain tenure and promotion, but it also helps sharpen their teaching skills, resulting in improved teaching and learning effectiveness.

6. REFERENCES

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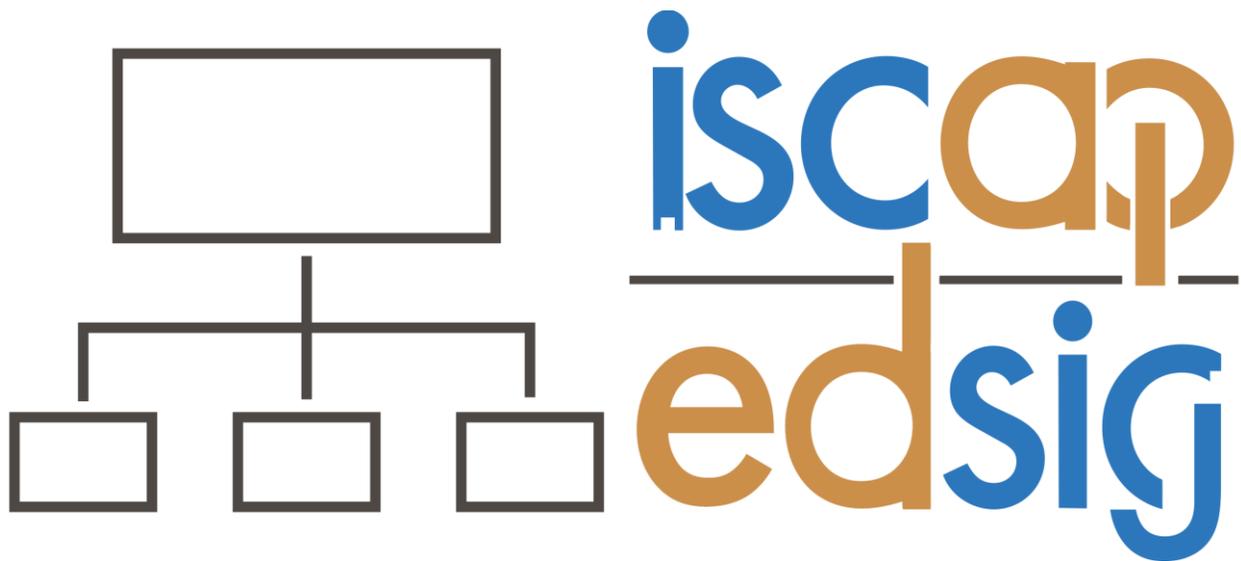
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STATEMENT OF PEER REVIEW INTEGRITY

All papers published in the *Journal of Information Systems Education* have undergone rigorous peer review. This includes an initial editor screening and double-blind refereeing by three or more expert referees.