Developing Open Access Journals:
A practical guide

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This is an abridged version of the original book published by Chandos Publishing, Oxford England. This version lacks the chapters covering background information and the depth of coverage of the topics in the original work. It is organized in an outline format. I would like to thank Glyn Jones of Chandos Publishing for allowing me to make this version freely available to the open access community.

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Planning for a New Open Access (OA) Journal

Consider carefully why you want to create a new journal and if you and your colleagues can maintain the journal for the foreseeable future. Creating a scholarly journal is a long-term commitment that should not be taken lightly. You will be doing your profession and the authors that entrust their manuscripts to the journal a great disservice if you are not able or willing to ensure the journal is maintained once it begins publishing.

- Choose a name for the new journal and develop its scope.
    - Choose the name carefully so that it is easily remembered and clearly reflects to scope and purpose of the journal.
        - Do some research to ensure the name you have chosen is not in use or so similar to an existing journal or other entity that it confuses readers. The last thing you want to do is to have to change the name after the journal has become established.
    - Clearly define a scope for the journal. This will need to convey to both readers and authors the content of the journal.
        - Try to define the statement of the scope so that it is short and concise yet clear and unambiguous.
        - You want the scope broad enough to ensure there is adequate material and the journal is of interest to a reasonably large audience yet narrow enough to have a clear focus.
        - Try to find a niche that is not currently saturated with existing journals. Being OA will help in creating a unique niche for the journal.
- Develop a plan for the organizational and governance structure for the journal.
    - Develop and document an organizational structure.
        - If the journal will be operated by yourself or a small number of familiar colleagues largely on volunteer effort it can be very simple and informal.
        - If it will involve more people, and have a significant budget organizational and governance structure will need to reflect this.
        - Even a simple and informally run journal should document the organizational structure.
            - Ensures a consistent understanding of the organization roles and decision making process and lessens the probability of conflict due to misunderstandings.
            - Provides an institutional memory.

            - The organization may need to grow over time as a journal becomes successful.
    - Traditionally, scholarly journals have an editorial board. You should seriously consider forming an editorial board.
        - Provides a source of advice and help in developing policies and direction.
        - Editorial boards often play a significant role in the peer-review process.
        - The reputation of the editorial board can significantly enhance the reputation of the journal particularly a new journal. The board members can also help disseminate and publicize the journal.
        - An editorial board is an expected component of the journal and may be instrumental in getting the journal indexed.
- Journal structure and content
    - Most journals include a variety of content other than peer-reviewed research/scholarly articles. You will need to decide what categories of content will be included and how it will be organized.
        - Types of content often found in scholarly journals
            - Articles (research, review, invited, brief reports, feature, editorial)
            - Letters
            - Book/software reviews
            - Conference proceedings
            - Continuing education
    - Electronic publication allows types of content not feasible for traditional journals such as video, audio and the inclusion of research data sets. These should be considered as well.
    - It will be necessary to determine what format(s) will be used for publishing material in the journal. The two most common are Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and Portable Document Files (PDF). Each has there advantages and disadvantages. eXtendable Markup Language (XML) is often used for archival purposes.
    - Layout
        - Consider looking at a number of other journals, choosing the features you like in each to incorporate into the layout for your new journal.
        - If your journal format is paginated, consider placing the full reference on each page. Otherwise include it somewhere in each manuscript in the journal.
        - Choose a style guide. Most fields have a preferred style guide which you should use. Otherwise use a generic style guide.
    - Volume/Issue – Traditionally journals have published issues at regular intervals, usually monthly or quarterly as bundling articles was as necessity with paper journals. Many electronic journals continue this practice but you can also publish articles as they are ready for publication announcing them to readers via an e-mail subscription list.
- Peer-review policy
    - Most scholarly journals are peer reviewed and there are a number of compelling reasons to have some type of peer based review process.
    - You will need to decide how peer review will be conducted and peer reviewers selected.
    - Web-based data systems can dramatically streamlined peer-review eliminating the clerical aspects of conducting peer-review and allowing new forms of open peer-review that would not be otherwise feasible.

    - Open Journal Systems (http://pkp.sfu.ca/?q=ojs) is an excellent open source journal management system that is probably the best option for a new OA Journal.

Hosting and Data Systems

You will need to address are how your journal will be hosted on the web and how you will back up the material in your journal to ensure it is always available. It is a good idea to have the material in your journal archived through a completely separate organization from the journal.

- Web hosting
    - Your institution may have the capability and be willing to provide hosting for your journal. In many cases this is a good option particularly if the journal is going to be sponsored or closely tied to the institution.
    - If hosting your journal on an institution's server is not possible or a good option, using a commercial hosting company can very inexpensive.
        - Research the choice of a hosting company carefully. Consider cost, reliability, support, ease of use and whether the hosting plan provides the software and options you will need. There is a wide range in cost and quality and some low cost companies provide excellent service.
        - There are many web sites that provide reviews of web hosting companies with feedback from users which are excellent sources of information.
        - If you plan to use journal management software, make sure the hosting plan provides the software necessary to support the package you plan on using.
- Maintaining the integrity of how your material is accessed
    - Material on the web constantly disappears. It is vitally important that how material in your journal is accessed, the exact Uniform Resource Locator (URL), remains consistent.
        - Keeping the same domain name is the first step in the process.
        - The second step is to maintain a consistent organization of the file structure within the journal web site.
            - Think through very carefully how you want to organize the material contained within the journal on the web site within hierarchical folders.
            - Once the journal is operating it will be very disruptive to change the organization of the material as it will change the URL that accesses it.
            - People often link directly to articles and other material in a journal and if you change the organization of the site, those links will no longer work.
- Domains
    - You will generally need to either host your journal under your institution's domain name or purchase your own domain name.
        - Unless your journal is very closely tied to your institution, you should purchase a domain name.
        - They are inexpensive and owning the domain name will allow you to move your journal to a different server without changing how the journal or the material in it is accessed.
        - There are hundreds of domain registrars through which you can purchase domains. If you will be using a commercial hosting service, most are also domain

registrars and it may be simpler to purchase a domain through the same company though this is not necessary.

        - In the future if you need to move your journal to another server the process is relatively simple.
            - Obtain access on the new server. Transfer an exact copy of your journal site to the new server.
                - At this point, you may need to access the new site via its IP address.
                - Be sure to keep the exact same hierarchical folder structure within the site as on the original server.
            - Test it out the new site carefully to make sure everything in the journal is available and displays correctly.
            - Working through your domain registrar, change the entry in the name servers to point to the journal's domain name to the IP address of the new hosting site.
            - Over the next couple of days the change will work its way through the name server system around the world switching access from the old server to the new.
            - Once the switch access to the new server has completed, usually occurring in a few days, and you are sure the full journal site is available, displaying correctly and any server software is working correctly, you can shut down the old server.

- Backup
    - Develop a system that ensures the content, and all supporting documentation for your journal is backed up on a regular basis. This should include both the material contained on your journal web site and any off-line supporting documentation and/or material.
    - The material on the web site may be backed up by the hosting company or the technicians maintaining your institution's servers. It is ***still*** a good idea to maintain your own backup copies.
    - Keep copies at multiple locations in case of fire or other disaster.
- Archiving
    - It is also prudent to develop an archiving strategy that ensures the content of your journal is maintained elsewhere and can be accessed independently of the journal web site
        - Lots of Copies Keeps Stuff Save (LOCKSS) (http://www.lockss.org/lockss/Home) is open source software designed to ensure that important scholarly assets remain available in a distributed, self-repairing, robust, digital preservation system. The LOCKSS Program works with libraries and electronic publishers to preserve materials published online for long term access. LOCKSS system offers a good way to ensure the contents of your journal will be available over the long term.
        - An e-print archive is another potential means of archiving your journal. Your institution may have one or there may be one that is maintained by a society or other group for material in your field.
        - PORTICO (http://www.portico.org) is a not-of- profit service that provides a permanent archive of scholarly literature published in electronic form including electronic journals.

- Journal management software
    - There is journal management software designed specifically for managing a peer reviewed journal. This software can save you a great deal of effort operating the journal once it becomes established, particularly operating the peer review system. These packages also track the publication process allowing you to easily determine the status of manuscripts and ensure they are processed efficiently through the peer review and publication process. A list of free/open source journal management systems can be found at: http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/Free_and_open-source_journal_management_software.
    - The Scholarly Exchange (http://www.scholarlyexchange.org) provides relatively low cost hosting and journal management software as well as backup services. It is free for the first year and the cost of hosting is off-set by content appropriate advertising.

By-laws, Policies, Author Instructions and other Journal Documentation

Even if you are starting a journal by yourself or with a small group of colleagues, develop written documentation for the journal. By-laws tend to be internal, codifying the structure, organization, and operation of the journal. Policies tend to be external stating the practices, procedures and expectations for how the journal interacts with authors, readers and others. Instructions for authors are particularly important informing potential authors of the type of material that is being solicited, how it should be formatted, requirements and how manuscripts and other material should be submitted.

- By-laws are rules adopted by an organization to govern its affairs. Even if when a small group of close colleagues develop a journal, developing by-laws help ensure there are no misunderstandings on how the journal will be operated and provide an “institutional memory” for the journal over time.
    - The language should be clear and concise. A standard format can avoid repetition.
    - Suggested topics – name, organizational roles, outline of the editorial/publication process, review selection process, management/decision making process, financial management, process for amending by-laws.
- Policies state practices, procedures and expectations for authors and readers.
    - Clearly specify policies on the journal web site. Most people would like to follow the journal’s policies but they need to be able to easily access them.
    - Common policies for readers include intellectual property rights and acceptable uses, how conflicts and complaints should be addressed.
    - Common policies for authors concern requirements for submission of manuscripts and other material, expectations for the treatment of humans and animals in research, authorship, conflicts of interest, duplicate publication.
    - Develop an author agreement that authors can affirm when submitting their manuscripts. Include conditions and limitations authors grant for their material, assurances such as the material is original or the author has obtained permission for its inclusion in the manuscript.
        - In the past it was common for publishers to require assigning the copyright for manuscript to the publisher in exchange for publishing the manuscript. This is unnecessary and most OA journals do not follow this practice.
        - The creative commons offers licenses with a variety of options for acceptable use and other requirements for use of the material. They are widely used and

provide an excellent choice for managing the licensing aspect of publishing a journal.

  - Most journals in the biomedical field have a policy concerning conflicts of interest. Most require discloser of conflicts and potential conflicts of interest which is felt in most cases to be adequate for addressing a conflict of interest.
    - One definition of conflict of interest: *A conflict of interest exists when an author's financial interests or other opportunities for tangible personal benefit may compromise, or reasonably appear to compromise, the independence of judgment in the research or scholarship presented in the manuscript submission.*
  - Complaint policies are less commonly provided but can be useful. Providing a brief description on how complaints concerning the material in the journal will be handled can help assure someone with concerns about material in the journal that their concerns will be addressed as well as provide you will clear set of steps a priori on how to address a complaint when it arises.
  - Journals that publish research on animals or human subjects often have policies covering their protection. Most countries have laws ensuring the protection of animals and humans in research. Since these laws differ to some extent and OA electronic journals are international by nature it is suggested your policy require authors follow the laws and guidelines of the jurisdiction in which the research was conducted.
  - Other policies
    - Authorship – many journals specify a definition of what constitutes authorship and ask authors to affirm that all persons qualified for authorship are listed as authors and only those qualified to be authors are listed. Many scholarly fields have general guidelines often developed by professional organizations. If one exists in your field, it is best to base the journal's policy on it.
    - Many journals specifically refuse to publish duplicate or redundant publication. There are both practical and ethical reasons for this policy. Roiq (http://facpub.stjohns.edu/~roigm/plagiarism/Index.html) discusses this topic at some length.
- Instructions for authors should clearly state the information authors need to decide whether their manuscript is appropriate for the journal, how to format the manuscript for submission, what other information is required for the submission and the policies the authors must comply with or agree to in order to have their manuscripts considered for publication.
  - Potential topics
    - Scope of the journal
    - Article formats and other material considered for inclusion in the journal
    - Detailed instructions on formatting style requirements for articles and other written material
    - Review process and timeline
    - Article processing and/or publication fees if any
    - Ownership and intellectual property requirements
    - Policy issues
      - Human/animal protection requirements for research
      - Conflict of interest policy
      - Other policy issues or requirements related to submission material
    - Submission procedures and forms

        - Contact information for manuscript status, questions or concerns
    - Take pains to be very clear and prescriptive in how you want manuscripts formatted and organized. Consider developing a template authors can use to format their manuscripts. This will save a great deal of effort in preparing manuscripts for publication.
        - Allow authors some flexibility in how the manuscript it submitted for review since there is no guarantee of acceptance. Make it understood however, if accepted, the final copy of manuscript must follow the submission guidelines.
        - Be particularly clear on the format requirements for tables, references and figures.
        - Many fields have standard style guides that are widely used. If so reference and be consistent with the guide. If not, consider using a general style guide such as the Chicago Manual of Style.
    - Clearly state any policies the author(s) much agree or affirm. If authors will submit manuscripts via e-mail, provide a block of text stating their agreement to these policies and require that it be included in their cover e-mail. If manuscripts are submitted via a web form, include a checkbox they must check affirming each provision and use server software to ensure that it each required box has been checked.

Resource and Financing Issues

Operating an OA journal takes resources though not necessarily cash flow. Garnering the necessary resources to operate your journal will likely be one of the most difficult tasks you face. In addition, the resources needed are not entirely under your control, largely determined by the number of submissions received and the number of article published. There are a variety of strategies you can use to address the issue of resources.

- Efficiency
    - Using a journal management system while taking some upfront effort install, configure and master will save huge amounts of time in the long run. This is particularly true as your journal becomes successful. It will also allow you to keep much better track of the manuscripts as they are processed through the review/revision and publication process.
    - Use a two-tiered review system to spread the editorial workload among several people as submissions increase. Have a managing editor do an initial review, possibly rejecting some manuscripts prior to peer review and then assign individual manuscripts to different associate/review editors who manage the peer review and revision process.
    - Be prescriptive in how authors format their manuscripts. Design a template and require that authors use it for the final version of the manuscript submitted for publication. This can save a great deal of effort in preparing manuscripts for publication.
- Volunteer Effort
    - Volunteer effort plays a significant role in operating most OA journals. Obtaining editorial help is relatively easy as university faculty receive recognition and generally protected time for these activities. Other technical tasks such as copy editing, web maintenance and typesetting are technical skills most university faculty lack and would likely not received protected time or significant recognition. They are much more difficult to obtain on a volunteer basis.
    - Undergraduate and graduate internships are a possible source of volunteer help.

- Donated Support
    - Donations of time resources and cash are another source of support many OA journals receive. Web hosting and technical support can often be obtained from one's university or other employer. Academic libraries commonly provide support and expertise for OA journals. Some have specific units that collaborate with faculty to publish OA journals. Corporations and foundations are other potential sources of support but probably more difficult and time consuming to obtain.
- Generating Income through the Journal's Operation
    - Author-Fees are a common method of funding OA journals particularly in the scientific, technical and medical (STM) fields since much of the research in these areas is grant funded and most granting agencies allow the use of grant funds to cover author publication fees. While these fees may discourage or preclude some authors from choosing an OA journals. Journals in the STM area that are funded through publication fees have been very successful in garnering submissions. Author-fees where feasible work well in generating adequate funding for professional quality journals and the income is directly tied to the number of publications closely paralleling the resources required to run the journal.
    - Institutional memberships are less common but parallel strategy to author fees. For an institutional membership fee, employees can publish in journals requiring publication fees at no or a reduced charge. Memberships may also provide employees of an organization with access to added value products described below.
    - Charging for added value products such as PDF format or compilations of material is another means of generating income while providing open access to the journal's content. It is not clear how much income this will generate but some journals have used it successfully to generate a portion of their funding.
    - Advertising on the journal's web site is another strategy for generating income. A number of companies provide context-sensitive advertising that is relatively easy to add to the journal's web site and provides appropriate advertisements that tend to be of interest to the readers. Advertising alone is unlikely to provide adequate income for operating the journal but can potentially defray some costs and is easy to implement.

Disseminating the Content of the Journal

Indexing is the most effective means by which you can integrate the content of your new journal into the body of literature in its field and ensure that the journal content can be easily located by scholars. Getting a new journal into major indexes is very challenging and may not be possible initially. Along with indexing, there are a variety of other ways you can disseminate information about the content of your journal and help readers who may be interested in the material find it.

- International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) is an eight-digit number that provides a uniform worldwide means of uniquely identifying serial publications (journals) You should definitely obtain an ISSN for your journal and it is free and easy to do. More information on ISSNs and who to obtain yours can be found at: http://www.issn.org/en .
- Consider joining CrossRef (http://www.crossref.org/). CrossRef is the official Digital Object Identifier (DOI) registration agency for scholarly publications. The DOI system is designed to uniquely identify and facilitate location of digital material. CrossRef supplies a number of other

useful cross referencing services that will help integrate your journals material into the literature. Joining costs $275 USD for a small OA journal plus an insignificant fee for each article you register.

- Indexes – With tens of thousands of scholarly journals published identifying all the relevant research or scholarship in an area can be a difficult. Indexes serve as the predominant way researchers and scholars locate material relevant to their research or scholarship.
    - Indexes are searchable databases describing the content of hundreds if not thousands of journals. There are a variety of different indexes, some owned by societies, some by governments and some by commercial companies. Some index very narrow fields of content and some index very broad areas.
    - What largely distinguishes indexes from other such databases is that they are created manually generally by professional indexers who assign searchable keywords describing the indexed material in a consistent and clearly defined way enhancing the ability of researchers to easily find the material they are seeking.
    - Since indexes are manually created they are expensive and the owners of most indexes are selective in which journals they will index. It may take some time before your journal becomes established and will be accepted into the major indexes in your field.
    - Your research librarian can help you locate the key indexes in your field. Most indexes have web sites. You can use these to find out the requirements for inclusion into the index and the steps you need to take to apply
- Directories are lists of content such as journals and in some cases even information at the article level.
    - It is much easier to get your journal listed in a directory than an index since they do not use professional indexers. Your research librarian should be able to help you locate appropriate directories to list your journal.
    - The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) (http://www.doaj.org) developed and maintained by Lund University Libraries is one directory you should list your journal. The directory contains full-text, open access scientific and scholarly journals that use an appropriate quality control system to guarantee the content of the journal. Journals are required not to have any embargo period. Both journal and article level data are stored in the directory.
    - Making sure your journal is listed in as many relevant directories as possible. This will help your journal and its content be found. It is an effective strategy you can take prior to reaching the point where it will be possible to get your journal into key indexes in the field.
- Content Aggregators are companies that create searchable databases of content for libraries and other organizations. EBSCOhost is one of the largest and like others is generally willing to accept the content of OA journals (http://www.ebscohost.com/thisTopic.php?marketID=21&topicID=236). This is an additional way to get your material disseminated and EBSCO will actually pay you a portion of the fees it receives for access to your journal.
- Metadata harvesters are software programs that harvest metadata describing the contents of a repository containing digital resources. The harvested metadata records are generally organized into a searchable database which can be used to facilitate finding resources located in the repositories that have been harvested.
    - Making the content of your journal available to one or more metadata harvesters is another strategy you can use to disseminate your content.

    - Metadata is simply data describing data, e.g., the contents of your journal in a standardized format designed to be easily read by a computer.
    - Some journal management systems such as OJS will automatically generate metadata for the contents of your journal as it is added to the journal.
    - You simply inform the harvester that metadata is available for your journal and where it will be stored and the harvester periodically retrieves it and makes it available through searchable archives.
- Search engines such as Google, Yahoo! and Ask are another means of advertising your journal and its contents. Search engines automate the process of identifying and indexing content. They use computer programs called 'bots' or 'spiders' to 'crawl' the web, jumping from link to link gathering huge searchable databases that contain text from millions and millions of web pages.
    - A growing number of researchers and scholars are using search engines such as Google Scholar, a search engine focused on scholarly material to find reference material.
        - The material in your journal will likely be found and indexed by the major search engines on its own but you can speed the process by submitting your site to search engines. The directions are usually prominently displayed on their web site.
    - While getting your journal indexed by search engines is easy, the key is to have your material return near the top of the list for searches relevant to the content of your journal. There are strategies that can help you achieve this. There are a variety of web sites such as Bruce Clay, INC (http://www.bruceclay.com) that provide advice on how to accomplish this.
- Professional networking is probably the most effective means of getting the word out about a new journal to the people who will be the most interested in reading it.
    - Announce the journal and possible new articles as they appear on listsevs in the field
    - Professional organizations in the field may be willing to announce the journal on their membership list
    - Post notices at professional meetings and consider getting a booth at the exhibition section of key meetings.
- Gathering intelligence on who is accessing the journal can be useful in making the journal more accessible. A great deal of information is available or can easily be collected on who is accessing your journal site and how they got there.
    - All web servers keep logs that describe the requests for information that have been made to them. In addition the browser used by a person requesting a web page passes additional information such as the web address of the web site that referred the person to the this site if referral came from a hyperlink.
    - Many webhosting companies provide access to server log analyzers that produce digestible reports based on server logs.
    - There are also services such as Google Analytics (http://www.google.com/analytics/) that allow you to place small snippets of code in your web pages that send back information that these services collect and analyze for you. Most do not charge but use the data for their own purposes.

Information on referrals and search engines sending readers to your journal site are particularly helpful in assessing how these strategies are working.

Launching the Journal

There are many decisions that should be made and a lot to accomplish before officially launching a new journal. Anticipating the challenges of getting a new journal established and careful planning before launching can go a long way to ensuring the journal will be successful. The process can be broken into three stages; planning, preparing to launch the journal, and launching the journal.

- Planning Stage – During this stage, you need to move from a vague idea to a detailed conceptualization of the journal.
    - Consider the material in the previous sections to decide on:
        - Name and scope of the journal
        - Editorial board membership and structure and key editorial roles
        - Types of articles and other materials
        - Choice of style, style guide, format and layout
        - Review structure and process
        - Policies and bylaws
        - How the journal will be hosted and journal management software and web development accomplished
        - How the journal will be financed/obtain resources
        - Dissemination plan/strategies
    - One of the most difficult challenges you will face is getting authors to submit their manuscripts to a brand new journal with no track record. A key to addressing this is to have an initial set of articles and potentially other material published when you launch your journal. Use your professional contacts and those of your editorial board to obtain a series of invited articles and other material to launch the journal. Launching your journal with eight or ten articles, particularly from well known people in the field will go a long way to getting the journal established. This is difficult but well worth the effort.
- Launch Preparation
    - Apply for an ISSN.
    - Select and obtain a URL.
    - Install journal management software and develop your web site and decide how the web site will be organized if you are not using journal management software that does it for you.
    - Consider joining and determine a pattern for your digital object identifiers (DOIs).
    - Set a date for the launch of the journal.
    - Develop a "press release" announcing the journal that you can use for dissemination,
    - Test your submission/review system, proof all your web pages and documentation and make sure every on the web site is working correctly.
    - Prepare for dissemination
        - Determine the indexes, directories and search engines you will submit the journal and how to submit your journal to each.
        - Contact and request that professional organizations in the field disseminate your press release to their membership.
        - Identify listservs and blogs in the field you can announce the journal.
- Launch of the journal

    - Once your web site with your initial content is up and running implement your dissemination plan
        - Send out announcements on listservs, to professional organization mailing lists, blogs and bulletin boards.
        - Register your journal with the DOAJ, other pertinent directories and search engines
        - Spread the word through your own professional contact and those of your editorial board.
        - Where possible attend professional meetings and disseminate the press release.
        - Announce the journal on pertinent blogs and listservs.
        - Be relentless and promote the new journal in every way and venue you can. Use your editorial board and their contacts as well.
    - It will take time to begin to receive unsolicited submissions. Much of the first wave of submissions may be rejections from other journals. Balance accepting high quality manuscripts with being able to publish a reasonable number of new articles. It is better to solicit good quality invited articles to supplement submissions rather than accept articles you are uncomfortable publishing but you may have to lower your standards to some extent while your journal is becoming established.

Maintaining and Sustaining an OA Journal

Once your new journal has been launched, you will need to focus on the open-ended tasks of maintaining and sustaining it. It is likely to take some time before the journal will begin receiving a significant number of manuscript submissions. While frustrating, it will give you a chance to work out the bugs in your submission, review and publication processes before becoming inundated with submissions.

- Review Process
    - Tracking - Be sure to set up a system for tracking manuscripts through the review, revision and publication process. As your journal grows and you have multiple manuscripts in various stages of the review process. It is very easy for one to get lost in the system. Authors will often want to learn the status of their manuscripts and even request information on manuscripts long after they were rejected or published. Keeping good records is essential. A journal management system can do this for you automatically.
    - Preliminary review – You will want to do a preliminary review to be sure a manuscript is within the scope of the journal and potentially publishable prior to sending it out for peer review. That way you can notify the author quickly and avoid wasting the time of your reviewers if there is no chance the manuscript will be published.
        - Use the preliminary review as an opportunity to ensure the authors have met any formatting or other submission requirements. You may wish to send the manuscript out for review but inform the author that they will need to address formatting or other issues before it can be published if it is accepted.

- Preparing manuscripts for review – You can either have authors prepare a review copy of their submission, do it yourself or some combination of the two.
    - You may or may not wish to blind the manuscript as to the author(s) and there institutional identities. There is a significant literature on the advantages and disadvantages of blinding reviewers to the identity of authors and authors to the identity of reviewers.
    - Clearly state on the review copy of the manuscript it is copyrighted material for review use only and must not be distributed without the author's permission. It is best to do this in the header of each page.
    - Be sure there are page numbers on each page that reviewers can reference. Most reviewers prefer to have the review copy double spaced.
- Selecting and assigning reviewers and maintaining a review pool
    - Generally it is not difficult to find qualified people willing to review manuscripts. If you solicit reviewers from pertinent listservs, mailing lists of professional organizations and on your web site you should have hundreds to choose from.
    - Assign at least 4 to 6 per manuscript. That way is some do not return the review you will have an adequate amount of feedback.
    - Assign some experienced reviewers you know do a good job and others you are not familiar with to see how they do. Keep records of the quality and timeliness of reviewers, dropping those who do not do a good job. A journal/peer review management system may be able to do this for you.
    - Be sure to give clear instructions and a firm due date for reviewers. If allowed, many reviewers will provide feedback directly in the word processing copy of manuscript which is extremely helpful to authors.
    - Most reviewers greatly appreciate receiving feedback on the manuscript including the other reviewers' feedback and disposition of the manuscript.
    - A form with specific rating criteria as well as space for open-ended comments works best. Be sure to have a section for comments to "the editor only" that are not returned to the author. It is also helpful to the editor to allow reviewers to suggest whether a manuscript should be accepted, accepted with revisions or rejected.
- Feedback decision letter to the reviewers
    - As editor it is your responsibility to make the publication decision and if a manuscript is accepted with revisions, what the author must revise.
    - Reviewer feedback can be very helpful providing different points of view expert advice and issues you may have missed. Different reviewers' points of view can differ widely, and their feedback is occasionally incorrect. ***You as the editor however make the final decision.***
    - If the manuscript is accepted with revisions:
        - Give the author an explicit list of specific revisions that must be made. You may wish to tell the author to consider other feedback from the reviewer but they have the discretion to decide whether they would like to implement it.
        - Ask them to indicate if they are willing to make the required revisions or would prefer to submit the manuscript elsewhere.

            - Set or ask them to indicate a date by which the revisions will be completed. Without a due date, authors often put off completing the revisions indefinitely.
            - When returned, check to see if they have completed the revisions as requested and the manuscript is formatted correctly.
        - If you decide not to accept a manuscript, try to give the author as much constructive feedback as possible.
- Other Types of Material
    - You may wish to include other types of material.
        - Examples include book reviews, letters to the editors and editorials.
        - This type of material is generally not peer reviewed but does require editorial review and manuscript preparation.
        - Book reviews are a special case.
            - Since book reviews serve as effective and inexpensive advertising for publishers, you are likely to receive many unsolicited requests and books for review.
            - It is usually possible to find a qualified person to review the book, particularly if you allow them to keep the book. The biggest challenge is to get them to complete the review which is much more time consuming and involved as compared with an article review.
- Manuscript Preparation Process
    - Copyediting is very challenging
        - It is time consuming and takes a skilled editor who is familiar with the technical language in the field. It will be very difficult to find someone who has the necessary skills and is willing to do in on a voluntary basis.
        - One option is to put as much of the the burden of copyediting on the author as possible. You can require that they either provide a manuscript that is well written and free of spelling/grammatical errors or pay to have someone copyedit it before publication. If you have authors from developing countries this is probably not feasible for them particularly when their native language is different from the one which the journal is published.
    - Formatting for publication is second phase after copyediting. How this will be done will depend on the format(s) in which you publish your articles.
        - Authors will generally submit articles in a word processing format compatible with Microsoft Word and Open Office. It generally makes sense to keep manuscripts in that format through copyediting.
        - Portable Document (PDF) format
            - It is possible to convert directly from the word processing package to PDF.
            - Desktop publishing software provides more control and allows professional level typesetting.
            - Many readers prefer PDF format.
            - PDF files can be large and the format has limitations in terms of searching and tagging.
        - Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)

      - HTML can be done directly from a word processor but the HTML that is generated tends not to be optimal. It is generally better to use a good quality HTML editing program such as Adobe Dreamweaver.
      - It may be helpful to create an HTML template and ask authors to submit their material directly in HTML.
      - HTML is smaller and more compact than PDF and can be more easily searched and tagged. It however does not paginate well and has more limitations in formatting.
    - Extensible Markup Language (XML)
      - XML is becoming widely used and offers significant advantages in terms of archiving, tagging and flexibility over HTML and PDF formats.
      - XML is less useful as a format for directly distributing articles to readers. There are however pre-processors that can generate either PDF or HTML “on the fly” from XML.
  - Preparing figures and tables can be challenging.
    - Instruct your authors to use their word processors “table creation” feature to generate tables. That will ensure tables are in a standard format that will make it easier to convert into other formats.
    - You may want to further specify how tables should look to reduce the effort of preparing manuscripts
    - Specify the graphic format(s) in which figures and other graphic material should be submitted.
    - Sometimes authors create figures using tools embedded in Microsoft Word or other word processing software that can be difficult to extract in a way that maintains image quality. There is an easy way to create a high quality image of an embedded graph or figure with Adobe Acrobat:
      - Generate a PDF version of the manuscript from a word processor. It is best to generate the document with just the single page with the figure/graph
      - Open the PDF document in Adobe Acrobat and resave it in a graphic format. Acrobat gives you a variety of file formats including several graphic formats in a drop-down menu under where you specify the file name. You also have the option of adjusting the image resolution.
      - Open the resulting file in a graphics package. Crop out the figure. Resize as needed.
- Publication Process
  - Journals have typically been organized into volumes and issues.
    - Many OA journals still publish issues at regular intervals but it is no longer necessary.
    - One advantage of publishing issues as regular intervals is that readers know when to expect new material is available.
    - If you publish articles as they become ready you will need to have a mechanism for informing readers when new material becomes available.
      - A mailing list on your journal site can serve this purpose.
      - Announcing new material on existing listserv(s) relevant to your discipline is another option.

        - Even if you bundle articles into issues announcing new material to subscribers as new issues are posted can be helpful.
- Journal Maintenance Processes
    - Journals, like any complex system, need some ongoing review and maintenance. It is a good idea for the editorial board to step back and do a comprehensive review of the journal and its scope and practices at periodic intervals. Some issues to review:
        - The scope of the journal and how it might be revised
        - The journal's operating procedures and documentation
        - Types of manuscripts and other material published,
        - Potential new formats, revision of existing formats and possibly dropping types of material
        - Updating the look and feel of the journal website and its organization, layout and format
        - the journal's sources of funding and support
    - Maintaining the reviewer pool is an ongoing task. There is a natural turn over and some do a good job and some do not.
        - Monitor the activity of your reviewers deleting individuals that are no longer active or do a good job. Journal management software should provide you with the reviewers' review history making this process more convenient.
        - Use relevant listservs, professional organization mailing lists, your subscription list and most importantly your professional contacts and those of your editorial to identify and solicit new reviewers as needed.
    - You will receive a variety of requests for information. Keeping good records is essential. Journal management systems can do most of this for you. Types of requests you will likely receive:
        - Authors and reviewers seeking to document of their activities for promotion/tenure evaluations.
        - Authors will contact you about the status of their manuscripts.
        - Reviewers regularly lose the e-mail notifying them how to download the review copy of a manuscript or the link to the review form.
        - Occasionally you will receive requests for information or surveys concerning the journal
    - A journal is an open-ended ongoing commitment that in most cases will outlive (figuratively and possibly literally) the original founder and editorial board. Maintaining adequate documentation is essential and the key information for operating the journal should not if at all possible reside in the mind of one person.