

To: Michael Myers (AIS President)
Jane Webster (Chair, AIS Publications Committee)

From: AIS Senior Scholars Forum Subcommittee on Journals, 2006

23 April 2007

Dear Michael and Jane,

As you know, the senior scholars forum consists of senior information systems academics (normally either ex-editors-in-chief of the MIS Quarterly and IS Research plus former program chairs of ICIS and presidents of AIS).

We meet once a year at ICIS to discuss a particular issue. During 2006, our issue has been 'IS journals', in particular the paucity of 'A' journals in the field. Following our forum at ICIS in December we have had a very useful email debate on the topic and we agreed to write to you with our views as we feel that the AIS can play a vital role here.

The number of A journals being limited to two (MISQ and ISR) is detrimental to the information systems community. Some Deans are even suggesting that their probationary colleagues should target only these two journals and this has a crowding out effect: it is unworkable if the field wants to grow and get its junior faculty tenured. There are other concerns, in particular, that concentration on these two journals may lead to conservatism and conformity in the discipline. Although we think increasing the numbers of papers in these two journals will help, it will not therefore fully address the issue.

We propose that the AIS publishes a 'basket' of journals that the AIS deems as 'excellent', rather than talk about 'A' journals and 'B' journals, as this will only prolong the status quo. Amongst other considerations we had the following criteria in mind when constructing this list:

- (1) That JAIS, being the leading journal of our academic society, must be included in this list.
- (2) Our list of journals should include only IS journals, that is, those journals particularly associated with 'our' community - not management, computer science or whatever.
- (3) Our list should represent a greater internationalization and a broadening of the scope of journals represented on our top list.

We therefore suggest a basket of six journals: MISQ, ISR, JAIS, JMIS, EJIS, and ISJ. We think that JSIS and JIT could be added to the basket without loss of quality (the decision being made on whether a basket of six or eight journals is deemed the most appropriate). This basket of top journals gives different perspectives of the discipline, different research approaches, different traditions and so on, but are all 'IS' and are all quality journals. Moreover, through their senior editors, associate editors, and so on, many of these journals also represent the true international scope of the discipline.

Depending on how the basket of six highly rated IS research journals is used, it can be very helpful, but it does not provide insight into the diversity in a field that has strong connections to other disciplines and has strong journals in specialty areas (much like some of the sciences). The appropriate journal for a researcher with a specific research result is the journal with the appropriate audience for the research.

The basket of highly rated IS research journals lists journals that have the field of information systems as the primary audience rather than specialty areas or intersections of the IS field with other disciplines. They represent high quality journals that speak to the information systems field as a whole rather than special areas within it.

The six journals that are highly rated reflect a worldwide community of scholars that has good agreement in its view of the domain of information systems as a field of study and research but also reflects international cultural and research diversity. All of the highly rated IS research journals have regular international contributions and international readership.

In the 2006 Senior Scholars' Forum we agreed that the AIS can play a major part in initiating and seeing through this change that will provide greater opportunities for colleagues to publish, provide a wider scope of excellence in IS research papers and, in general, improve the perception of the IS discipline generally.

We think that the view that we put forward here is consistent with the espoused policy of the AIS. We would like to help the AIS 'make it happen'.

Can we agree to a way forward?

Best wishes

Carol Saunders

Co-chair, Senior Scholars Forum, 2006.

Subcommittee on Journals

David Avison

Gordon Davis

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Dennis Galletta

Rudy Hirschheim

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