EDITOR'S COMMENTS

A Community-Based View of *MIS Quarterly*

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I am honored to begin my term as the 14th editor-in-chief of *MIS Quarterly*. It is also quite humbling to be in the company of the prior EICs. They have laid the foundation for this journal and the information systems discipline. I appreciate all they have done to get *MISQ* to where it is today. I also want to express my sincere gratitude to the *MISQ* Policy Committee for entrusting the journal to me. I do not take that trust lightly.

Today, *MISQ* is a highly respected journal that represents the breadth of the IS discipline. In the early days, *MISQ* had an applied orientation (Dickson, 1977) with an emphasis on "the management of information technology and the use of information technology for managerial and organizational purposes" (Zmud, 1995, p. xxi). While this remains true, *MISQ* has evolved alongside the discipline and seeks papers with an even broader focus, moving beyond management and use of technology to also include societal and policy impacts.

The importance of *MISQ* to the discipline is unquestioned. Many authors have a goal of publishing in *MISQ,* as publications in the journal are highly valued and, in many cases, expected in promotion and tenure cases. Because the journal has evolved with the interests of information systems scholars, *MISQ* receives high marks for loyalty, review quality and timeliness, and publishing interesting research.[1] All indications show that the journal is in a good place. So, as Straub (2008) asked: "What value can a new EIC possibly add" (p. iii)?

Because *MISQ* was the first journal for the IS community and therefore plays a significant role, this is an important question to ask. The journal has shaped the community by introducing new topics and methods. The journal has also been shaped by the community as new and interesting areas of research have evolved. To me, it makes sense to look at *MISQ* through a community lens to answer the question: "How can the journal and the community work together to move to the next level?"

Reducing Time to Publication through Community Commitment

The past decade has seen a significant drop in the review cycle times for articles at *MISQ*. This is quite impressive considering we have an extra layer in the process compared to other journals with similar turnaround times. I applaud the efforts of the EICs who came before me in highlighting this as an important issue and creating a culture of timeliness among the editorial board. Rai's (2016) focus on speed as part of his trifecta vision had a significant impact on moving the needle here. Currently, the average cycle time at the journal is around 57 days. To reduce this time further while still maintaining high-quality reviews will require community commitment.

For those of you who have successfully traversed the publication process, you will likely want to remind me that the review cycle time is not the only thing that matters. The number of rounds is also a significant component of time to publication, and *MISQ* currently averages 4 to 5 rounds to acceptance. Since this adds quite a bit of time to the overall process, one might ask why papers go through so many rounds at *MISQ*. I would argue that we, the community of reviewers and editors, are in search

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[1] See https://aisnet.org/general/custom.asp?page=SeniorScholarSurvey

of the "perfect paper" and we believe that with enough rounds we'll get there. But do we ever really get to a *perfect* paper? No. Do we need to? Again, I would say no. There have been many excellent papers published at *MISQ*, and I am confident there are scholars who could identify problems with them. And this is ok. The goal of the journal is not to publish perfect papers; if that were our goal, we would never publish anything! Our goal is to publish research that advances knowledge, complete with the idiosyncrasies that are associated with the problems we study and the methodological choices we make.

Frustration with review cycles and reviewer requests is prominent in the minds of community members. In the past few months, many have shared their concerns over the endless requests for additional tests, analyses, robustness checks, and data sets. Essentially, they ask, "When is enough *enough*?" As a community, we need to have a conversation about process expectations so that authors and reviewers can speak a common language. Clear expectations enable authors to provide sufficient details in the submission so that it can be evaluated appropriately and move through the process, ideally with fewer revisions. Likewise, clear expectations enable reviewers and editors to apply criteria consistently in assessing papers, which can help reduce the time to review papers.

Finally, a significant amount of the time to publication is the time the authors spend revising. I acknowledge that this can be extended by the countless requests for more. However, I also note that requests for extensions to the six-month revision timeline are common. In fact, I would say they are almost expected. As a community, we need to think of extensions as the exception rather than the rule.

Ultimately, making further progress in reducing cycle time, number of revisions, and overall time to publication will require a bit of a culture change, both at the journal and in the broader discipline. I'm confident that, as a community, we can work together to improve these statistics and reduce the time to publication while still publishing high-quality papers.

Growing the Next Generation of Editors through Community Mentoring

People often ask: "How do I become an editor at a top journal?" Essentially, becoming an editor starts with being a reviewer and an author. Over the past eight years, there has been significant growth in outreach through workshops. These workshops do an excellent job of engaging the community and expanding the reviewer and author pools. The next important step will be to bring workshop participants into the editorial review process and institutionalize our mentoring.

I have heard from multiple reviewer workshop participants that they have not yet been invited to review for the journal. On the one hand, this is not surprising, given the popularity of these workshops and the number of people who participate in them. On the other hand, we do need a process for systematically integrating them into the review process. Workshops are good, but actually reviewing a paper in real time and being part of the process is the next step. We need to institutionalize this process so that workshop participants get to try it out (and the journal gets to try them out). It is certainly possible that they (or we) will decide it's not a good fit, but those individuals who participate in workshops need to move on to the next step in the process— reviewing a submission for *MISQ*.

Simply reviewing, however, is not enough. The reviews need to be timely and of high quality. To achieve this, we need to close the loop and be sure that reviewers, especially new reviewers, are receiving feedback on their reviews. Since we are quite accustomed to negative feedback, the assumption is often that everything is fine when there is no feedback. But, in some cases, that's simply not true. Closing the loop is hard. It's hard for an AE to tell a colleague that their review was subpar. It is, after all, possible that that same colleague may be reviewing their paper in the future. But if we want to be better as a community, we must. I have asked SEs to do the same with AEs—I will do the same with SEs. We can only get better if we are willing to give and receive constructive feedback. If there is an expectation of doing so, perhaps that will help lessen any negative perceptions involving the feedback.

Reviewing is only one piece of becoming an editor. Publishing is the other. The author workshops have been well-received and provide an opportunity for aspiring authors to receive feedback from current editors and reviewers at the journal. Increasing the conversion rate of workshopped papers into publications is also an opportunity for mentoring. By enlisting the community in mentoring partnerships with reviewer workshop participants, we can move the most promising papers through the review process and increase the number of first-time authors, thereby expanding our pool of future editors.

Increasing Community Access to MISQ

MISQ has a history of community engagement. I believe it is a large part of what has made the journal so central to the "institutional structure of our field" (Burton-Jones, 2021, p. iii). Continuing that engagement is essential for *MISQ*; thus, we will continue the author and reviewer workshops, as they are key to community engagement. They are also the best opportunities we have to expand the network of people with a connection to *MISQ*.

In addition to these larger events, we will provide opportunities for interaction with me and the board members. I have an open-door policy at the University of Arizona and will simulate that for the larger community through EIC Open Door sessions. These sessions will provide opportunities for anyone from the community to ask questions and share their thoughts about the journal. Initially, I will host them, but over time, I will invite other editorial board members to join me. The objective of these sessions is to provide two-way communication with the community. It is my hope that through these interactions, the community and the board will learn more about each other and how we can continue identifying, nurturing, and publishing the very best research in IS.

Including Multiple Communities

As Davis and Olson (1985) stated, "MIS as a concept continues to evolve" (p. 10). This is true today more than ever. In 2008, one of Straub's initiatives was to remove constraints around the types of work considered acceptable at *MISQ*. This initiative to approach *MISQ* as a "big tent" was continued by Goes (2013) and continues to be furthered at the journal today. This is essential to who we are as a discipline and is central to *MISQ* as a journal.

I consider myself fortunate that throughout my career I have been exposed to people who have challenged me to think differently. At the University of Minnesota, I was taught that while I may not fully understand other methods or approaches to research, it is important to appreciate what this research adds to our collective knowledge. My colleagues at the University of Arizona have helped me to see the connections among behavioral research, design science, and economics approaches. There is interesting research in each of these areas and at their intersections.

I commit to continuing the "big tent" perspective of the journal and actively working to engage with the various communities in and around the IS discipline. Ultimately, I believe we need to include as many voices as possible in the reviewing and authoring process. The diversity of thought will contribute to our ability to advance knowledge in a way that is relevant to the IS discipline, as well as other disciplines. As I look at the research being done in our field today, I am excited to see scholars taking on the interesting problems of today (and tomorrow) and I see many exciting opportunities for even more diverse perspectives to be represented at *MISQ*.

Integrity in All We Do

Despite the largely positive perception the community holds for *MISQ*, all too often I hear murmurings that *MISQ* is "a club." It always saddens me to hear this, as I consider *MISQ* to be the heart of the discipline. In my mind, the journal has always been *the* place to publish since it is the leading MIS-focused journal. To hear that IS scholars feel that publishing in *MISQ* is not attainable—not because of their research but because of the perception that they need to know the "right people"—concerns me. I know that every single person on the editorial board strives to make fair and equitable decisions. I also know that we are all human and we all make mistakes. I would hate for innocent mistakes to be misperceived. That said, too many innocent mistakes can be a problem for the journal and the discipline. Sometimes the errors are the result of misperceptions or miscommunications and they simply require a resetting. Other times they might require mentoring to overcome. In any event, I welcome input from the community and look forward to working together to dispel the myth of "the club."

I maintain that *MISQ* is *the* journal of the discipline. In 1977, it was the first journal dedicated to information systems topics and continues to be the premier outlet. We have a phenomenal community of authors, reviewers, and editors, as well as future authors and editors. Although the journal is in great shape, we must continue looking ahead for ways to improve. I look forward to working with the community to do so and I look forward to seeing your very best work submitted to *MISQ*.

Acknowledgments

When I look at everything Andrew Burton-Jones has done for the journal over the past three years, I am impressed by all that he was able to accomplish. He made great strides in reducing review cycle times, expanding community access to reviewer and author workshops, launching the transparency initiative, and increasing the diversity of the board—to name just a few. I am excited to build on all that he has accomplished and look forward to working with the board and the community to continue the tradition of excellence at *MISQ*. Andrew has been extremely helpful to me in my transition into this role, and I wish him all the very best as he takes on his new role as president of the Association for Information Systems.

I would also like to acknowledge the excellent support of my alma mater, the University of Minnesota. Alok Gupta, as publisher, has been very helpful in my transition, and I know he will be even more helpful as we work toward an improved platform for the journal. Emily Borra took on the herculean task of filling Jan DeGross's shoes, and she has done so in an extraordinary manner. Although I am sad that Jan will not be joining me on this journey, I am delighted that Emily will. Kaylee Brosius has educated me on social media, and I look forward to learning more from her as we expand *MISQ*'s social media presence. I'm also quite thankful to Monica Birth for the excellent job she does copyediting papers, including editorials! It is exciting to work with such an excellent and committed team.

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Editorial Board Changes for 2023/2024

The following editors completed their terms on the *MISQ* editorial board in December 2023. I am sorry to see them leave as I begin my term, and I want to thank them for their dedicated service and their significant contributions to authors and the field.

Associate Editors

Miguel Godinho de Matos, Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics
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The following editors join the board in 2024. I am excited to welcome these exceptional scholars to MIS Quarterly. I know they look forward to serving the community and providing excellent guidance to authors and reviewers.

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Margunn Aanestad, University of Oslo
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