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***FINAL DRAFT***

***Publishing Graduate Student Research in Geography:***

***The Fundamentals***

### **Abstract**

Carleton University Assistant Professor, Patricia Ballamingie, and Carleton University Library subject specialist, Susan Tudin, offer practical advice on publishing graduate student research within the discipline of geography, addressing the following questions: why, when, where, what, how, and with whom? Section 1 delineates the importance of publishing, identifies potential material to publish, suggests venues in which to publish, and offers pragmatic advice on how to negotiate the publishing process (with regards to peers, supervisors, and editors). Section 2 discusses the effective use of library resources, demystifies the significance of impact factors, and elucidates the history of Open Access publishing.

**Keywords:** academic writing; graduate education; library research; scholarly publishing.

### **The Paper Chase**

Without doubt, publishing in peer-reviewed, well-respected scholarly journals has become the sine qua non of academic performance, and expectations around the number of publications required to compete for tenure-track positions, tenure and promotion, and external funding seem only to rise. This “publish or perish” reality creates considerable anxiety for many graduate students and new scholars, and this article is intended to

assuage those fears, and offer concrete suggestions about why, when, where, what, how, and with whom such publishing might occur<sup>1</sup>.

Blunt & Souch (2008) produced a comprehensive guide, *Publishing in Geography: A Guide for New Researchers* – available as a PDF file through the Royal Geographical Society (RGS), and referenced throughout this article. The RGS guide offers a broad overview about how to publish research in a wide range of geographic publishing outlets and aims to cultivate graduate student interest in publishing their research. It provides practical advice on what to publish and includes many structural details on journal writing, book publishing, and electronic publishing, both inside and outside the academy. It also includes unique perspectives from publishers about the marketing of journal articles, and draws on the experience of editors who collectively have contributed pieces to the ‘frequently asked questions’ section.

Our article provides a more concise alternative that guides new researchers through the publishing experience and explains useful and relevant resources to first-time academic writers, while addressing common vulnerabilities and publisher’s expectations. The overall aim is to help build the confidence of budding scholars.

### ***Why publish?***

There are a myriad of legitimate reasons why you should publish. First, and for many perhaps most immediately compelling, in order to secure an academic position, you need to begin establishing a successful publishing track record in order to be competitive. Anyone who has participated on hiring committees over the past couple of decades will attest to the fact that the portfolios of incoming applicants are increasingly impressive – the bar just

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<sup>1</sup> This article emerged as a result of the authors’ participation on a panel discussion on Graduate Student Publishing in Geography held in February of 2011 at Carleton University.

keeps getting higher! Second, whether you are a graduate student or new scholar, you have likely benefited from public funding of your education (if not entirely, at least in part), and hold a privileged position within society. With privilege comes responsibility – to advance knowledge and (we would add) to advocate for greater social justice and environmental sustainability. Moreover, as you disseminate your ideas, your personal scope of influence will expand. As a student, you are predominantly a *consumer* of research articles, but as a graduate researcher/new scholar, an important shift occurs, and you become not just a consumer, but also a *producer* of knowledge. The success of this shift, as evidenced by your success at publishing, will be central to your evolution as a scholar. Ultimately, publications have intrinsic value, and many are motivated by the genuine excitement of advancing knowledge and contributing to scholarly debate. Finally, many programs now offer the option of combining published and submitted papers into a thesis. One benefit of pursuing this path is the reduction in overall workload compared to completing a thesis and publishing separate papers. However, publishing during the course of your degree generally means delays in program progress – felt most acutely by masters students, who generally complete along a compressed timeline of 1-2 years. For doctoral candidates, instead of 4 years they might expect to take 5 or more if they submit 1-3 papers during their program. The costs and benefits of this approach need to be evaluated at the outset of the degree.

### ***When to begin?***

Setting your publication goals early is a good start. Begin by sorting out the different types of research output that you have and their intended audience, then prioritize your projects. For some students, this may include the results and analysis of their 4<sup>th</sup> year honours

research, but it should definitely include portions of their MA and PhD theses, as well as papers generated through the course of their degrees. Think of your publication record as a constant queue: articles published, articles in revision, articles submitted, articles close to submission, articles for which you are obtaining primary data, and articles planned, but not yet begun.

**Text Box 1: Turning course work into a publication**

One of the most useful pieces of advice a faculty member once gave me was to consider every piece of written work – especially course papers – as potential publication material: never write a paper simply to fulfill a course requirement; always write with a view to developing future research ideas and/or publications. At a recent conference, I presented a paper derived from a combination of my MA and a paper I wrote in my first year as a PhD student. It was through the latter of these that I was able to develop ideas and receive feedback from both faculty and students. After presenting this work as a conference paper, I was invited to contribute it as a chapter in an upcoming book. Writing a graduate-level paper should be seen as an opportunity and not simply a requirement. Despite our busy schedules, it is definitely worth the time and effort to write the best paper possible, since it is ultimately an investment in our future research trajectories and publication records.

-- By Donald Leffers, PhD Candidate, Department of Geography, York University, Toronto, Canada

***Where to get started?***

Part of being a scholar involves following relevant discussions in the key disciplinary journals in your field. Given the considerable breadth of all that geography as a discipline entails, it will be necessary to hone in on one or more sub-disciplines. In general, determine where the active conversations about your select topic are taking place – because that is ultimately what you want to contribute to. It also helps immensely to send an abstract and brief proposal or query to the journal editor for vetting, in order to determine fit. Keep in mind that different journals have different mandates, political biases, and theoretical and methodological inclinations. If you do not receive a reply, this in and of itself gives you

valuable information. And if you do receive a reply, the editor may well suggest an alternate journal if theirs proves inappropriate (and assuming the submission has merit).

Journals vary significantly according to their impact factor (to be elaborated on in Section 2), and as a graduate student, you may find your paper summarily dismissed by top tier journals. But there are so many journals out there, some of which focus solely on graduate research, that you should be able to find an appropriate entry point. Perseverance in the face of rejection, coupled with serious editing, and re-submission to the same or a different journal, typically results in success over the long run.

The peer-review process can be both challenging and frustrating, but trust that over time, your work will be strengthened by its rigor and critical iterations. Perhaps one of the best strategies to get published is to respond directly to Calls for Papers (CFPs), most often distributed through scholarly LISTSERVS (tweak your abstract, approach and organizational structure to the call, to improve the odds of success).

Finally, if you are serious about broad dissemination, you should also consider reputable lay publications (for a much wider circulation), alternate audio-visual formats (radio interviews, documentary films), and new media (blogs). To this end, the Alternative Press Center (APC) in the United States, a non-profit cooperative, publishes the *Alternative Press Index* biannually – a list of alternative, radical, and left periodicals, newspapers and magazines (though North American in focus, it also includes many international titles). The International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) – a standard tool at all European universities – would also include alternative sources, and thus represents another relevant resource in this regard.

### *Publishing Incentives*

A number of geography journals offer incentives to graduate students to encourage them to publish their research. The following are a few examples:

- *Area* offers a cash prize of £500 to encourage submissions from new researchers at an early stage in their careers, and to reward excellence in geographical research.
- *The Canadian Geographer* introduced a New Scholar Paper Award in 2008 to encourage participation in the Canadian Association of Geographer's (CAG) activities. A prize of \$500 (plus a one-year CAG membership) is awarded for the best paper by a new scholar once every two years.
- *The Geographical Review* welcomes graduate students in the fieldwork phase of their doctoral research to publish in their "Geographical Field Notes" section in the journal.
- *Geography Compass* publishes only peer-reviewed survey articles which allows for scholars and advanced students to "keep up with new developments and trends in research, teach in a new or unfamiliar area outside of their specialty, and ensure that ... [they] are exposed only to quality-controlled online content (as opposed to unvalidated content from search engines)." Thus, this journal represents a possible venue in which doctoral students could publish a literature review, though contacting the section editor in advance of submission is necessary.

### ***What to publish?***

First and foremost, journal editors seek to publish rich primary data derived from original research that is well written, theoretically nuanced and topical. This is without doubt the best hook to publish in a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal, as it represents your primary

research productivity. However, other journals such as *Antipode* and *Environment & Planning D: Society and Space* also focus on theoretical debates. You will also need to consider strategically whether to publish a monograph from your thesis, a series of journal articles, or some combination thereof.

Text Box 2: From dissertation to monograph

I wrote my PhD dissertation with the intention of turning it into a monograph. So, the decision about whether to publish articles or a book was made before I even started writing. This made revising the dissertation for publication as a monograph more straightforward but by no means simple – monographs differ quite a bit in tone, style, content, and audience than dissertations. I received advice both for and against publishing a monograph, and probably the biggest drawback has been the delay in circulating my work. But in the end I felt that the research I had undertaken really did work better as a book than as separate articles, and I've been enjoying the process of reframing it for publication.

-- By Emilie Cameron, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada

However, if you do not yet have primary data, or a sophisticated enough grasp of the cutting-edge theoretical debates within your field, there are other ways to demonstrate secondary research productivity and, in so doing, gain experience, confidence, and perhaps, valuable contacts. First, since graduate studies involves significant reading, why not “feed two birds with one seed” and write a book (or even film) review? Ideally, you should select a book that you can review positively, and that you need to read critically and thoroughly for a course (or perhaps for the literature review of your thesis). It helps to check with the journal editor beforehand, to ensure receptivity to a particular title. In fact, many book review editors will supply books if you ask for them, often from either circulated lists of those available or from those listed on journal websites. Moreover, if you identify a title

that is germane to a particular journal, an e-mail to the review editor can sometimes generate a copy from a publisher mailed directly to the potential reviewer!

Second, many journals accept “Notes” – usually around 500 words – that make a discrete contribution such as “a case history, a methodological innovation, [or] one observation about a particular text” (Belcher 2009, p. 45). Blunt & Souch (2008) also recommend that if you don’t have enough material for a full paper, you may wish to consider writing a short Comment or Observation piece. A number of journals accept these contributions – typically about 1500 words (p. 5). Third, if your ability to synthesize themes across the literature is particularly acute, you could consider writing a review article. Although this generally falls within the domain of senior scholars with both depth and breadth of perspective, it is one of the best ways to improve your rating on the citation indices. Fourth, consider responding to one of the many calls to write an encyclopedia entry on a topic within your area of expertise. Successful entries are clear, concise, and written for both lay and scholarly consumption. Fifth, you may wish to conduct and publish an interview with a top scholar or key figure in your field (see Hanson and Ballamingie 2010, for an example). However, a word of caution is in order. While all of the above may effectively bolster your publication record, none represent primary research productivity, nor replace peer-reviewed research articles<sup>2</sup>. And, as a final note, regardless of the format, strict adherence to the submission guidelines is an absolute requirement. Read the instructions carefully, and seek clarification as needed.

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<sup>2</sup> For more publishing advice geared towards graduate student publishing, see Thom Brooks’ online resource: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1085245](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1085245)



### ***How to begin?***

Once you are convinced of the merits of publishing, there are several strategies to spur the process along. Many scholars use conference presentations to motivate and advance an article. Conference sessions are particularly effective when organized thematically (with abstracts submitted to the session chair rather than the conference chair, usually resulting in tighter coherence) and when there is a discussant assigned. The discussant, to whom you will provide the paper in advance of the conference, should ideally provide critical feedback. Moreover, some conference sessions lead directly to publication since journal editors attend organized sessions with thematic issues in mind. As Blunt & Souch (2008) explain: “The skills of précis and concise argument that are needed to present a conference paper are not that far removed from those needed to prepare a good journal article. Receiving immediate comments from some of the target audience for your eventual article is equally valuable” (p. 5).

Most scholars also become part of a larger research community, beyond the confines of their immediate institution, through national and international scholarly associations, and specialty groups. These organizations typically run LISTSERVS, and distribute targeted and relevant Calls for Papers (CFPs). Scan the journal you are targeting, and cite previous articles that directly relate (recall that you are contributing to an ongoing conversation) in particular, weave references from relevant past articles and senior theorists in the field (who may well end up reviewing your article). Use previously published articles from the targeted journal to model for structure and style (Blunt & Souch 2008: 5). Just as you submit a tailored CV for each job application, so too do you submit a tailored article to a specific journal, following the instructions to authors carefully. Familiarizing yourself with

the variety of library databases can also be useful to help further your publishing efforts. Proquest produces the *Papersinvited* database that consists of detailed information and deadlines about CFPs for forthcoming conferences and special issues of scholarly journals. Moreover, you can set up e-mail alerts to keep you informed of relevant opportunities to present and publish your research.

Text Box 3: Publishing in a special issue

My first opportunity to publish my thesis research came sooner than I expected. While I was still in the field, a journal announced it was organizing a one-time thematic conference closely related to my work. When my abstract was accepted, I worked furiously to turn my early findings into a (somewhat) coherent paper. At the conference, I received excellent suggestions, and my revised article was eventually published in a special issue arising from the conference. Although this happened before I felt 'ready' to publish, it worked out very well: I had several chances to improve my manuscript during the review process; it kick-started my move from data collection to analysis and writing; and as part of a well-promoted special issue, my work received more attention than it might have otherwise. While opportunities don't always come at the perfect time, I learned that it doesn't hurt to pounce even if it feels too early.

-- By Carol Hunsberger, PhD, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada

It should also be noted that while writing constitutes a central activity of any academic career, many scholars find the process to be a struggle. J. Cameron et al. (2009) reflect on how novice writers must develop strategies to help them become academic writers – to find their scholarly voice, manage emotions, and develop know-how. The authors suggest the use of social settings such as writing groups or writing workshops to get immediate feedback (282). K. L. Turabian (2007) agrees and suggests that since writing is often done in isolation, students should actively seek advice not only from their supervisors, but also from their peers and trusted colleagues who can discuss progress, review drafts, and keep them on task. She advocates organizing a writing support group of

4 or 5 people working on their own projects who meet regularly to discuss one another's work (22). Furthermore, Boice (2000) states: "Involving others in the work means letting go of some of the control – and of the credit. This delegation of responsibility is a difficult social skill for writers, one commonly overlooked and underappreciated" (184). But mobilizing a social strategy for your academic writing should become a habit.

Finally, it is also important to realize that for most of us, failure is part of success. Be forewarned that referees can sometimes use language that may come across as overly negative, challenging and aggressive. Critique is at the heart of the peer review process, and can sometime overshadow more minor comments that frame the paper in a generally positive light. Once you have digested the constructive feedback contained within a rejection letter, shred it! Moreover, try not to internalize rejection, but rather view it as information and feedback, and adjust your approach accordingly. Sometimes the review process is unfair: the person who reviews your work may not have the necessary expertise in the field to really make an informed judgment; or you may receive conflicting advice from different reviewers (and if this is the case, you should seek clarification from the editor on how to proceed). Williams suggests (2004) that your response to a referee's comments (peer reviewer) should follow the three golden rules: (1) respond completely; (2) respond politely; and (3) respond with evidence. Presenting a detailed letter that responds to all of the reviewers' comments (either addressing their concerns, or presenting a rationale for leaving the text as is) makes them feel valued without compromising your standards and demonstrates respect for a process that should improve the end product. Finally, when considering referees' comments, if the reviewer is just not grasping your intended content,

ask yourself how the text can be reworked so that others will not face the same challenge in interpretation.

Text box 4: Dealing with reports and decisions

My personal experience of the peer review process has varied considerably, from somewhat demoralizing to tremendously encouraging. Each editor has a unique style, and there are certainly vagaries of chance associated with the individual reviewers. Ironically, the highest ranked journal I ever submitted to accepted the paper with only a minor point of clarification requested. However, my experience has almost universally involved major revisions, with a number of rounds of changes before publication. If I had succumbed to a bruised ego, I would never have published. It helps immensely to know that even my senior, well-respected and extensively published colleagues struggle with editors' reports and decisions in much the same way.

-- By Patricia Ballamingie, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

***With whom to collaborate?***

You *can* and *should* publish some of your work as sole author, but collaborating with your supervisor may also prove to be mutually beneficial. Professors are under tremendous pressure to publish, early on to achieve tenure and promotion, and later on, to demonstrate ongoing research productivity (upon which salary increases are often contingent). In addition, your supervisor probably brings some valuable assets into the equation: contacts with editors, and experience negotiating the review process; expertise and theoretical depth; and additional primary data. Moreover, your professor can act as corresponding author, adding legitimacy through institutional affiliation, and continuity (especially relevant since the process can take longer than expected). Trust that working collaboratively can be more productive than working in a solitary fashion. Keep in mind Van Cott's (2005) advice: "Collaborating with you is more attractive to a professor if you are willing to do most of the work, turn around drafts quickly, and take criticism and

suggestions without arguing” (743). Try to have a frank discussion about authorship order up front, to avoid unnecessary grief. Practices vary considerably: some professors insist on going first, others don't. And don't be insulted if they decline (faculty members face multiple, competing demands, and they may be simply overwhelmed and thus unable to collaborate). In that case, you could also collaborate with your peers (especially where you are drawing on a similar conceptual framework, or have conducted comparable case studies).

### **Using library resources effectively**

Begin by familiarizing yourself with your library's journal collection in geography. As Belcher (2009) asserts: “We live in an increasingly electronic world, but the shelf search still can't be beat for speed and accuracy. Keywords searches are always going to miss some journals that a shelf search will reveal” (113). Getting to know the range of possible outlets for your work is an important first step. Discovering where respected authors have published their work and browsing the Table of Contents lists will also help you become familiar with recurring themes and debates within the discipline (Wellington 2003).

In identifying the most appropriate peer-reviewed journals in which to publish, you will need to consult *Ulrich's Periodical Directory*. Typically housed in the library's reference collection, Ulrich's provides an authoritative global listing of bibliographic and publisher information on over 300,000 titles. Librarians, faculty and publishers use Ulrich's to select publications for the library, identify candidates for peer review, determine open access availability, track the launch of new titles and new e-platform providers, and of course, note

title changes. Ulrich’s in-depth information in all subject areas will help identify the most appropriate peer-reviewed journals in which to publish.

### **Impact Factors**

Another important element to consider is the ‘impact factor’ of specific journals – the calculated frequency with which the average journal article has been cited in a particular year. The impact factor helps determine a journal’s rank and overall significance and relative importance to other journals in the same field (Payne 2006). In an academic setting, impact factors are important for recognition, and can thus affect hiring, tenure and promotion decisions – milestones and prerequisites to a successful academic career.

The best-known source for impact factors is the *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)* database. Large academic libraries will have access to JCR through a subscription to the *ISI Web of Knowledge*. This database (shown below) is searchable by subject and/or by title.

**Figure 1: Journal Summary List: Subject Categories: GEOGRAPHY**

Mark	Rank	Abbreviated Journal Title <i>(linked to journal information)</i>	ISSN	JCR Data <sup>i</sup>					
				Total Cites	Impact Factor	5-Year Impact Factor	Immediacy Index	Articles	Cited Half-life
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<a href="#">GLOBAL ENVIRON CHANG</a>	0959-3780	2722	4.918	7.840	0.731	67	5.1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<a href="#">PROG HUM GEOG</a>	0309-1325	2260	3.793	4.290	0.396	48	6.7
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<a href="#">J ECON GEOGR</a>	1468-2702	1181	3.662	4.487	0.412	34	5.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<a href="#">ECON GEOGR</a>	0013-0095	1255	3.028	3.195	0.800	20	>10.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<a href="#">T I BRIT GEOGR</a>	0020-2754	1824	2.672	4.287	0.800	35	7.9
<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<a href="#">ENVIRON PLANN D</a>	0263-7758	1634	2.073	2.750	0.593	59	6.9
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<a href="#">ENVIRON PLANN A</a>	0308-518X	3986	2.070	2.420	0.439	157	7.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	8	<a href="#">SOC CULT GEOGR</a>	1464-9365	679	2.036	1.788	0.200	45	5.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	9	<a href="#">LANDSCAPE URBAN PLAN</a>	0169-2046	3860	2.004	2.789	0.195	123	6.8
<input type="checkbox"/>	10	<a href="#">APPL GEOGR</a>	0143-6228	634	1.904	2.320	0.441	59	6.2

Source: (ISI Journal Citations Reports 2012)

You will quickly notice that not all geography journals are listed in this database. Without doubt, those journals listed include prestigious titles, especially those that are highly focused and specific, but many other well-respected titles are never included. This should not deter you from selecting a title that is not included in this hierarchy, as you may find that those journals have lower rejection rates than those with higher impact status (Wellington 2003). However, as emerging scholars you should be aware of impact factors and their influence in the field. Belcher (2009) notes that the very fact a journal is listed in JCR denotes that it is a preferred publishing outlet, but many other factors can also figure into a journal's ranking, for instance, the higher the number of subscribers, the better the ranking of the journal (119).

Other databases that calculate impact factors include Scopus and a resource recently introduced by Google Scholar. The latter provides a simple way for authors to track citations of their articles and to check on who is citing their publications by setting up a 'Google Scholar Citations' profile. However, this tool has limitations with regards to the date coverage of journals, inclusion guidelines, and the different metrics used to calculate the impact of published works.

### ***Library Databases***

Identifying potential journals by searching for them in the library's databases is the most likely path that graduate students will use next to browsing the Internet. Learning to search the databases properly will be your key to success, so adopting a positive attitude towards library literacy will not be a wasted effort. However, there exist many free databases on the Internet that will also be useful. Notably, check out Genamics JournalSeek or the web directory on Google (Belcher 2009, 115).

Google Scholar is also a useful search tool for finding journal articles because it is fast, convenient and requires no formal training. However, it does not contain comprehensive coverage of any topic. What Google Scholar lacks in quality control, it makes up for in accessibility and the perceived notion by today's student that it contains everything that paid-for databases have anyway. Of course this is not true. But Google has created the expectation of being able to use one start point for all research. Although it is a good tool to help you get started with a research topic, comprehensive coverage can only be found using your library's subscription-based databases (such as GeoBase for geography). These databases all use controlled vocabularies, have advanced search features that help refine your search results and are updated on a regular basis, while the precise journal coverage in Google Scholar remains uncertain. Make an appointment with your subject librarian early on to discuss relevant databases and successful search strategies to locate appropriate literature.

### ***Open Access Publishing***

In the traditional subscription-based world of journal publishing, you will be expected to sign away complete publishing rights to journal publishers even though it may not be in your best interest to do so (Payne 2006), and once published, only those with a journal subscription (individual or institutional) will be able to view your work. Therefore, you need to develop your knowledge of open access literature and publishing.

As Suber (2004) explains: "Open access literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. What makes it possible is the internet and the consent of the author or copyright holder." Bjork et al. (2010) explain: "Open Access emerged in the early 1990's triggered by the possibilities offered by the web, but



also partly as a reaction to the so-called serial crisis of subscription prices which seemed to be constantly rising faster than the rate of inflation.” As a result, a new way for libraries to purchase electronic journal titles evolved as they began to subscribe to bundles of journals that were electronically licensed and accessed. Libraries no longer ‘owned’ hard copies of a particular journal, but rather leased ‘access’ via a licensing agreement.

At the same time, many scholars realized they could post their work on the Internet for broad dissemination without restrictions, and some no longer wanted to hand over their work to the major journal publishers who had maintained so much control to date. In fact, many geographers felt a moral obligation to do so (see Pickerill 2008, for a fuller delineation of this theme). Proponents of open access publishing wanted to access (and publish for others to access) articles without any of the traditional restrictions (such as subscriptions and user fees).

The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), available online, provides free, full text, and quality-controlled access to scientific and scholarly journals, and lists over 6,000 titles (of which, 2,582 are searchable at the article level). There are now over 500,000 articles available. Open access publishing offers an alternative to the current user-pay system for accessing and disseminating academic research, allowing researchers to freely share their work around the world. Benefits include the protection of your copyright privileges, the freedom to distribute your work, in draft or final form, on your personal or institutional web site, the right to archive your work in an institutional repository, and the right to distribute an article to students in a course you are teaching (McClellan & Rustad 2009).

Open access journals promote collaboration, tend to offer faster review and publication than traditional venues, and increase the visibility of your work. Some universities offer financial incentives for graduate students to offset the publishing fees associated with open access publishing. As Argaez (2011) stresses: “Open access is about removing barriers to information in order to accelerate the pace of innovation and scientific discovery” (103). Ultimately, as scholars become more aware of the benefits of open access publishing, a broader, more accessible, and sustainable scholarly communication system will emerge.

#### Text Box 5: Publishing through open access

After considering several journals, I selected an open access international journal. First, I wanted my research to be accessible to a more diverse worldwide audience, many of whom might not be able to access high-cost, subscription-based journals. Second, the journal advertised quick turnarounds; the paper was rigorously reviewed by three reviewers, and even with a second review, the process from submission to publication was only four months. This suited me well, as I was working full time following my MSc. A drawback of open access journals is the publishing fee, but research grants to thesis supervisors may support such costs. Also, the impact factor of this journal was at the lower end of those in my field, and this may currently be typical of such journals, but I do believe that will improve as they become more known and as readership increases.

By Rebecca Barker, MSc, Department of Geography & Environmental Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

## Conclusion

Publishing in a contemporary context poses both challenges and opportunities for the novice researcher. This article sought to offer practical advice regarding why, when, where, what, how, and with whom you may publish as you begin to make scholarly contributions.

Familiarizing yourself with key disciplinary publishing venues, with your library's

resources, and with the new and emerging world of 'open access' publishing represent three important starting points. The experiences of individual scholars, included as text boxes, employ personal anecdotes to elucidate points raised in the text. The 'Resources' section to follow includes a list of relevant and practical sources. This article sought to demystify the publishing process, and thus help build confidence amongst new scholars. It also stressed the importance of using library resources effectively, to carefully consider how the knowledge generated contributes most fruitfully to larger discussions within the academy and beyond.

## Resources

- *Alternative Press Index*: <http://www.altpress.org/index.php>
- Directory of Open Access Journals: <http://www.doaj.org/>
- International Bibliography of the Social Sciences: <http://www.proquest.co.uk/en-UK/catalogs/databases/detail/ibss-set-c.shtml>
- Genamics JournalSeek: <http://journalseek.net/>
- Google Directory: <http://www.google.ca/dirhp?hl=en>
- Google Scholar: <http://scholar.google.ca/>
- Google Scholar Citations: <http://scholar.google.ca/intl/en/scholar/citations.html>
- *Publish, Not Perish – The Art & Craft of Publishing in Scholarly Journals*:  
<http://www.publishnotperish.org>
- SAGE Open: <http://sgo.sagepub.com/>
- SHERPA/RoMEO: *Publishing, copyright policies & self-archiving*:  
<http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/>

- SPARC – Resources for Authors : <http://www.arl.org/sparc/author/>
- *Transforming Scholarly Publishing through Open Access: A Bibliography:*  
<http://www.sparceurpe.org/resources/sparc-eu-materials/general-advocacy-materials/transforming-scholarly-publishing-through-open-access/>

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