

ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED. MOST CITED. MOST READ.

Manuscript Transfer at the American Chemical Society

Alyson Weidmann
Managing Editor, Global Journals Development
American Chemical Society

So You Have a Manuscript Transfer System: Now What?
2018 Council of Editors Meeting
May 8, 2018

Proprietary and Confidential
American Chemical Society

ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED. MOST CITED. MOST READ.

Who is ACS?

- World's largest scientific society
- Chartered by Congress in 1876
- Provides educational, science policy, and career programs in chemistry
- Publish 50+ journals as well as symposia-based books
- Editors are active research scientists

Proprietary and Confidential
American Chemical Society

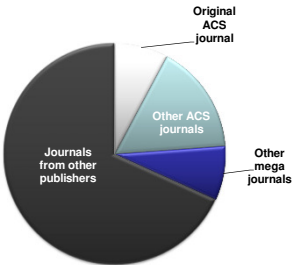
ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED. MOST CITED. MOST READ.

Manuscript transfer at ACS

First piloted manuscript transfer in 2015

75% of declined manuscripts were published in non-ACS journals

Establish manuscript transfer cascade program to retain quality manuscripts within the ACS portfolio



Category	Percentage
Journals from other publishers	~75%
Original ACS journal	~15%
Other ACS journals	~5%
Other mega journals	~5%

- Data based on Rejections of all types by ACS journals in 2015
- Source: Rejected Article Tracker by ImpactVizor, HighWire Press
- Mega journals: *PLoS One*, *RSC Advances*, *Scientific Reports*

Proprietary and Confidential
American Chemical Society

ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED MOST CITED MOST READ

Things to consider in optimizing manuscript transfer

- Author choice regarding receiving journal
- Author satisfaction with their peer-review experience
- Editor workloads
- Staff resources
- Technical limitations

We used data-driven solutions to address challenges in our manuscript transfer program

Proprietary and Confidential
American Chemical Society

ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED MOST CITED MOST READ

Our manuscript transfer experience

Phase 1

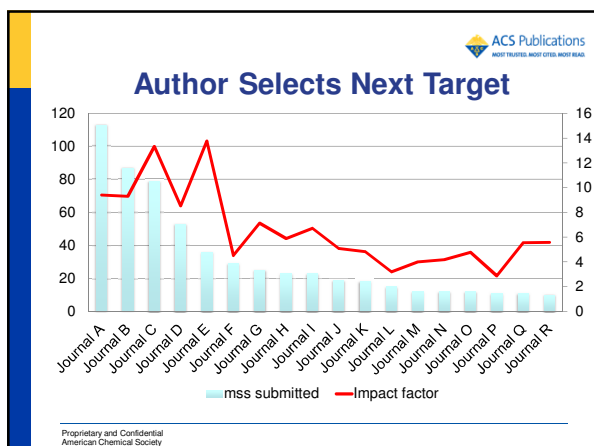
Phase 2

Phase 3

Phase 4

- Editors preferred authors to choose their target journal
- Concerned about lack of knowledge about other ACS journals and relationships with other ACS editors
- Piloted an “author selects target journal” transfer process in 2015

Proprietary and Confidential
American Chemical Society



ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED MOST CITED MOST READ

Editor-guided transfer

- “Editor selects target journal”: introduced editor-to-editor consultations in 2016
- Fewer rejected manuscripts at receiving journal
- Many editors weren’t embracing manuscript transfer
- Workload too high, and initial concerns about lack of knowledge of other journal scopes remained

Proprietary and Confidential
American Chemical Society

ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED MOST CITED MOST READ

Editor-guided transfer

- **Author selects**
 - Frequently, sub-optimal journal was selected
 - 85% rejection rate (by editors of receiving journal), on average
- **Editor recommends**
 - Consultation and transfer processes
 - 45% rejection rate, on average

Proprietary and Confidential
American Chemical Society

ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED MOST CITED MOST READ

Major changes to workflow

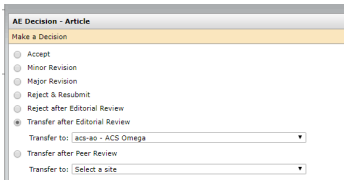
- Introduced cohort journals in spring 2017: limited the receiving transfer journals by core subject area
- Encouraged communication between cohort journals to clarify scopes and eliminate consultations
- Set journal-specific targets for number of manuscripts transferred and published
- Encouraged editors to use manuscript transfer decisions to reject manuscripts

Removed the “Reject” option!

Proprietary and Confidential
American Chemical Society

ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED MOST CITED MOST READ

Hidden Reject button



- Strong pushback from editors
- However, transfer offers increased by 82%
- Additional methods to streamline workflow (eliminating consultations where appropriate), also helped

Proprietary and Confidential
American Chemical Society

ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED MOST CITED MOST READ

Transfer offers are up, but authors are not taking them

Transfer Offers From *Biochemistry* May- November 2017




Destination	Offers	Submitted	Percentage
To ACS Omega	172	32	16%
To All Others	-	-	100%

Proprietary and Confidential
American Chemical Society


ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED MOST CITED MOST READ

Strategies to improve author uptake of transfer offers


- Simplify transfer decision letter, include useful information about the destination journal. Include a statement about the value of the submitted work
- Editors at receiving journal may choose to personally reach out to authors soliciting a transferred manuscript
- Increased communication amongst cohort journals to define journal scope
- Changes to ACS Omega
- Renewed Author Selects transfer



Brand Focus Group and Stakeholder Interviews



ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED MOST CITED MOST READ

Author Selects transfer pilot



- Author selects the destination journal, Part 2
- However, can only select from list of cohort journals
- Editors do not have to recommend a journal or send a consultation
- 3 month pilot for selected titles

Proprietary and Confidential
American Chemical Society


ACS Publications
MOST TRUSTED MOST CITED MOST READ

Conclusions

- Each phase of manuscript transfer was refined to address the challenges of the previous iteration
- Balancing author satisfaction, editorial preferences, and what the data say
- Data informed our decisions at each stage

Brand Focus Group and Stakeholder Interviews
