

# RESEARCH QUALITY MATTERS

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# Motivation for this talk



- Performance measurement is spreading and in some countries is pervasive
- The assumption is that quality can be measured
- I shall try to show why this is not true for research publications
- I shall explain how to publish successfully
- I shall give my views on how we might do our jobs better

# Contents



- Research Quality Matters
- Journal Publications
- Journal League Tables
- Fun & Games; Measuring Measures
- 2009 Impact Factors
- Quality Matters
- Conclusions

# Research Quality Matters



- Matters – important or things about it
- When a research paper is refereed for a journal, what is being assessed by the referee?
  - ▣ Quality of the paper? (absolute)
  - ▣ Acceptability for the journal (threshold)
  - ▣ Or what? (personal to referee)
- UK Government's Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)
  - ▣ One panel 2001, 2 panels 2008

# Journal Publications



- Research without dissemination  
is not research
- A research paper is the obvious  
observable output
- So it would be desirable to measure  
paper quality

# Journal Publications



- No Criteria for Quality (except negatives)
- Peer review is conservative
- Quality research breaks the mould
- French revolution.....!
- Good or bad is judgement...
- Fashion
- State of the world
- Reputation of the researcher

# So do research publications have any value at all?



- Purpose of dissemination is to debate
- On giants' shoulders ...
- Contributions are difficult to divide up
  - ▣ Especially if refereeing involves many people many times.
- So...assessing quality of any one publication can only be a pretence!

# Journal League Tables



- Assume: we can measure research quality
- Wouldn't it be nice to avoid reading the paper as well...?
- For convenience, assume  
paper quality = journal quality
- Then rank journals
- Hey presto...the answer!



# Journal League Tables



- So far, not much intellectual effort
- And easy to regulate
- So...let us control our people using journal league tables!
- You will publish so many journals per year in the following journals....

# Demand Exceeds Supply



- Great - competition!
- Field day for operators – they may even publish something meaningful!
- This is why the RAE panels read the papers
- But maybe I'm too critical.....
- Lets play journal league tables...!

# Fun & Games: Measuring Measures

## AIS League Table

Journal	Position in AIS league table	Relative Position
MISQ	1	1
ISR	2	2
JMIS	5	3
EJIS	11	4
JAIS	26	5
ISJ	32	6
JSIS	46	7
JIT	78	8

# The 2008 Impact Factors

Journal	Impact Factor 2008	Relative Position
MISQ	5.183	1
JMIS	2.358	2
EJIS	2.261	3
JIT	1.966	4
JAIS	1.836	5
ISJ	1.660	6
JSIS	1.484	7
EJIS	1.202	8

# Now some observations about EJIS



- One of two I.S. journals with most papers listed in the 2008 RAE.
- Impact Factor distorted by
  - ▣ Published 4 issues a year four or five years ago, about 24 papers a year or about 300 pages
  - ▣ Now 6 issues a year, about 50 papers per year in 700 pages

## Some more observations....



- The way the Impact Factor is.
- ISJ is artificially high because it published fewer papers last year.
- JMIS is sliding down remorselessly
- ISR is in freefall
- JSIS, always slim (12-15 papers per year) therefore has a volatile impact factor

# Number of papers published in last 2 years

Journal	Papers Published (PP)	Relative Position
EJIS	87	1
JMIS	84	2
MISQ	77	3
JAIS	67	4
ISR	55	5
JIT	54	6
ISJ	51	7
JSIS	32	8

# Number of papers published in last 2 years times impact factor

Journal	Impact Factor (IF)	Papers Published (PP)	IF x PP	Relative position
MISQ	5.183	77	399	1
JMIS	2.358	84	198	2
ISJ	1.660	51	85	=3
JIT	1.966	54	106	=3
ISR	2.261	55	124	=3
EJIS	1.202	87	105	=3
JAIS	1.836	67	122	=3
JSIS	1.484	32	48	7



# The Fiddling-with-Violins (cf Nero) League Table Combined Table of Tables...

Journal	AIS league table	Impact Factor (IF)	Papers Published (PP)	IF x PP	RAE papers	Ray's rank	Ray's wtd rank
EJIS	4	8	1	3	2	=3(18)	1(37)
JMIS	3	2	2	2	7	2(16)	2(54)
MISQ	1	1	3	1	6	1(12)	3(69)
JAIS	5	5	4	3	8	6(25)	4(101)
ISR	2	3	5	3	5	=3(18)	5(113)
JIT	8	4	6	3	1	5(22)	6(136)
ISJ	6	6	7	3	4	7(26)	7(163)
JSIS	7	7	8	7	3	8(32)	8(184)

So we can now see that.....



Most journals can be number one in a league table  
built to seek that outcome

But remember.....

**‘Quality Matters’...!**

# The 2009 Impact Factors

Journal.,246	Impact Factor 2008	Impact Factor 2009	Relative Position 2008	Relative Position 2009	Change In Impact Factor
MISQ	5.183	4.485	1	1	-0.3
JMIS	2.358	2.098	2	4	-0.26
ISR	2.261	1.792	3	7	-0.47
JIT	1.966	2.049	4	5	0.09
JAIS	1.836	2.246	5	2	0.41
ISJ	1.660	1.966	6	6	0.31
JSIS	1.484	2.212	7	3	0.73
EJIS	1.202	1.200	8	8	0

# So we can now see that.....



- Most journals can be number one in a league table built to seek that outcome
- But remember.....  
‘Quality Matters’...!

# So how do you write a quality paper?



4 questions....

- What story are you trying to tell the reader?
  - ▣ One story, note, not many. There than two or three major points to the story confuses readers.
  - ▣ Story written for the reader can be understood in 10 years time by the author.
  - ▣ Story written for the writer (the majority published) - the authors as perplexed in 10 years time as readers are now.
- What will the reader know after reading your story that they did not know before reading the story?

# The questions continued...



- Why should anyone believe you?
  - ▣ This is the downfall of many papers, but if not believable, then that is the end of the paper.
- What value will the reader attach to the point of the story?
  - ▣ If none, - ....

# The questions continued ...



- What is the essence of your paper in one sentence?
  - ▣ I know I said four questions, but this fifth question has nothing to do with whether your paper is published or not.
  - ▣ Answering this question readily enables readers to attach the idea to you the author, and hence is likely to push your citation index up and enhance your reputation.

# The questions continued ...



- What motivated your research and the paper you have written?
- Motivation seems interesting
  - ▣ If paper interesting, might get more cited
  - ▣ Or read
- See CIT Editorial for latest version



# Paul's Seven Success Factors



1. Integrity

2. Dissemination

3. Experience

4. Confidence

5. Quality

6. Simple

7. Determination

# I.S. Definition



□ Information Systems is Information Technology In Use

□ I.S .is I.T. In Use

□ Is It U?

# IDECQuSD!



Pronounced ID excused.....!

The 7 factors might allow us to be excused from  
identity problems

Maybe even accepted.....!

# Final Comments



- Further reading
  - ▣ read Ray's editorials for past 5 years
  
- I have been asked to launch 3 journals by ORS
  - ▣ Performance Measurement? Any interest, see me
  
- Living with Parkinson's Disease: Shake, Rattle and Roll – conference desk