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Introduction

- The purpose of this presentation is to help reduce the stress of the research/publishing part of the process by providing useful advice/tips with regard to publishing professionally.

- DISCLAIMER: there are no guarantees in life, and this presentation is no different – we are not guaranteeing that if you follow these tips, you’ll get published; the tips in this presentation are intended to improve your chances of getting published.
Introduction

- With faculty status — and the frequent requirement of tenure — comes the expectation that librarians will perform some of the same requirements to which traditional classroom faculty are subject.
- One of those requirements is publishing.
- “Publish or perish” is a common academic proverb.
- There is often a great deal of pressure that goes along with tenure, in turn making the publishing part of the process stressful as well.
Introduction

- But maybe you’re just interested in publishing and AREN’T subject to tenure
- Maybe you’re interested in partaking in the process of scholarly communication
- Maybe you believe your research will help others
- Maybe you see publishing as service
- Maybe you see publishing as the obligation of the scholar
- In any case: this presentation will be useful!
Introduction

Why are YOU here?
Tips: Getting Started

- Like many of the patrons we encounter, the library science literature suggests that many librarian-authors struggle with simply getting started.
- The literature suggests simply brainstorming — just sitting down and exploring issues of interest.
- One author recommends that authors “predict something” or “predict anything” and to avoid buzzwords †.
- Another solution is collaboration, with colleagues or via writing groups (but more on that shortly).

Tips: Getting Started

- Starting small is also a common recommendation from the literature.

- Poster presentations and conference presentations are means of getting started, as they can help an author gauge interest in a topic, as well as garner feedback regarding a topic and its presentation.†

- Poster sessions, being less involved and less structured, can serve as a motivator and “practice” for full-fledged publications.†

† Jim Gravois, “Poster Sessions, Promotion, and Publishing: Is There a Connection?” The Journal of Academic Librarianship
Tips: Getting Started

- Consider becoming a peer-reviewer for a journal you’ve thought about submitting to, to get a feel for their standards, expectations, and processes.
- Becoming a peer-reviewer will also give you a better perspective on good writing and research versus bad writing and research.
- This is especially helpful if you’ve never published before – it can give you a better idea of how publishing works behind the scenes and what journals are looking for, and even maybe ideas for writing!
Tips: Getting Started

- Other small steps include volunteering to write columns (e.g., for Louisiana Libraries) or to write for newsletters.
- Both of these offer less pressured environments for writing (that is, not research-oriented or subject to peer-review) but good practice for professional writing.
- Another small step includes writing reviews for professional publications — again, less pressure, but good practice, like columns or newsletter articles.
Why Book Reviews?

- Easy way to start professional writing
  - 500,000 books published annually
  - Intense competition for sales

- Free books!
  - Especially for difficult subjects

- Contribute to the profession
  - Build your reputation
Where to Publish Book Reviews

- Online Blogs and websites
  - Good Reads, Library Thing, idreambooks.com

- The big general publishers
  - CHOICE, ARBA, Library Journal

- Subject-Specific journals
  - Usually longer and difficult (but not always)
Parts of a Book Review

- **Literature**
  - What makes the current item special?

- **Mechanics**
  - Readability, Structure, etc.

- **Evaluation**
  - What are the strengths and limitations?

- **Recommendation**
  - Who should read this resource?
Things to Keep in Mind

- Audience
- Find a Niche
  - Lots of reviewers want History books
- Be willing to review online resources
- Pay to Play?
- Practice, Practice, Practice
Tips: Getting Started

- Writing groups were mentioned earlier – let’s return to that
- Writing groups have many benefits, beyond the writing aspect, but for our purposes, these groups can serve as incubators for research projects
- They can also provide venues for brainstorming; feedback; collaboration; and peer review
- LSU’s Writers Group offers workshops on writing/publishing-related topics, as well as the aforementioned benefits †

† Blessinger et. al, “Formation of an Academic Writing Group at Louisiana State University,” Codex, 2010
Tips: Submitting Your Work

- There are two simple things to bear in mind with regards to submitting your work: common sense and courtesy.

- Common sense includes:
  - Getting a colleague to review your work prior to submission, to check for clarity and errors.
  - Making sure to match your article with the appropriate journal — does your article fit the journal’s scope?
  - Following submission guidelines — are you complying with all the journal’s requirements?
  - Observing deadlines.
Tips: Submitting Your Work

- Courtesy is the next logical step from common sense.
- As in most things, one does get more flies with honey.
- Using common sense is also a courtesy 😊.
- Other courteous considerations include:
  - Be patient
  - Be professional
  - Observe deadlines (yes, this, again)
  - Respect that there’s a process
  - Respond promptly to contact
Tips: Acceptance

- So, let’s say the news is good: your work has been accepted for publication! Congrats!
- First and foremost: acknowledge that you’ve received the news and recommendations, and that you still intend to publish your work with the publication
- Common sense and courtesy should continue
- Continue to honor deadlines (yes, that, again, again)
- Be sure that everything is clear regarding copyright
- In short: continue with all the recommendations we’ve discussed thus far
Tips: Acceptance

- Your work is not done yet, though: most articles are **NOT** designated “accept without revisions” – **MOST** articles are designated “accept with revisions”

- Be receptive to revisions – they are intended to improve your article and its reception by other scholars, so...

- **DON’T TAKE REVISIONS OR CRITICISM PERSONALLY!**

- You may receive **conflicting suggestions or revisions**; take the ones that make the **most sense in the context of *your* article** and apply those
Tips: Rejection

- So, let’s say the news is **bad**: your work has been rejected for publication. **Oh no!**
- First and foremost: **don’t immediately assume that it’s because your work is bad** — it may be that the editors believe your article doesn’t fit within the scope of the journal.
- Keep a clear and cool head — **DON’T TAKE IT PERSONALLY** — continue to be **courteous**.
- Keep it in perspective: the editor(s) and reviewers aren’t “not getting it” or ignoring your genius 😞.
Tips: Rejection

- Not all publications will tell you upfront why your work is being rejected — don’t be afraid to ask why.

- Don’t be afraid to ask for suggestions for improvement; if revisions are suggested, apply them.

- Again: don’t be afraid to become a peer-reviewer, to gain a better understanding of what publications look for and how they evaluate submissions.

- If you didn’t get a colleague to review your submission before, get one to now — see if they agree with the verdict and, if they do, why.
When brainstorming ideas, look to the literature – identify gaps or more closely examine ideas that have been neglected or little studied in the lit.

Also, look at your own library – brainstorm ideas from your professional or personal experiences; practical case studies can be very useful.

Write in a personal but professional voice; no one wants to read boring (albeit important) research – engage your readers.

And remember: COMMON SENSE and COURTESY.
Last Tips & Comments + Checklist

- The scope of my article matches the journal’s scope
- My writing is clear, professional, and engaging
- I have had a colleague pre-peer-review the work, to catch errors; identify elements that may need clarification; and/or provide useful feedback
- My submission complies with the journal’s guidelines
- I am aware of the journal’s copyright policies and am in compliance with them
- I will honor deadlines and respond to contact in a timely and professional fashion
Places to Publish

- CHOICE
- Codex
- College and University Media Review
- Louisiana Libraries
- Journal of Academic Librarianship
- Journal of Information Literacy
If you have questions about this presentation or about publishing or improving your writing, please feel free to contact me at lowe@ulm.edu. I’d be glad to talk with you!