

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

What Does it Take for a Journal to Be Global?

The polar opposite of globalization is persistent separation and relentless autarky. There is a worrying image of seclusion that has been arrestingly invoked in many old Sanskrit texts in India....This is the story of a frog that lives its whole life within a well and is suspicious of everything outside it. This "kupamaduka"—the well-frog—has a world view, but it is a world view that is entirely confined to that well. The scientific, cultural and economic history of the world would have been very limited had we lived like such well-frogs. This is an important issue, since there are plenty of well-frogs around—and also, of course, many attorneys of well-frogs.

Amartya Sen, Commencement Address, "Global Doubts,"
Harvard University, June 8, 2000

As businesses have become increasingly global, so too has the world of academia. Major conferences are held in locations around the world and international conference attendances have increased dramatically since the IS field emerged. Global virtual teams among IS researchers are now commonplace, and IS researchers frequently visit and communicate with their colleagues around the globe.

I am excited to see that *MIS Quarterly* mirrors this global phenomenon. Submissions last year came from authors in 36 countries around the globe. Nearly two-fifths of submitting authors were from outside of the United States. Further, the papers published in *MIS Quarterly* are written by authors from around the world. Last year its authors worked in universities in Canada, Korea, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore, and the United States. Approximately a quarter worked in countries other than the United States. A similar pattern holds in 2006, with authors from Australia, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Many authors use samples or case studies from their own countries.

In our shrinking (flattening) world, a global journal is a good thing. Of course, you have to define what you mean by a global journal. To me, it is a journal that (1) offers a global product, (2) uses a process that is truly global, and (3) is perceived as a target outlet by IS researchers around the world.

Global Product

MIS Quarterly has strived to publish articles of interest to the global community. Recent special issues, indicators of what the journal considers to be emerging and important topics, focus on global issues such as Information Systems in developing countries, standard making, and off-shoring. How successful have we been in publishing articles of interest to the global community?

There are several ways of assessing the extent to which a journal has a global product. One way is to look at a journal's impact factor. Thompson Scientific, formerly known as Thompson ISI, is a recognized authority for evaluating journals. Its Journal Citation Reports, available through ISI Web of Knowledge, provides impact factors which reflect the influence of a large number of journals. *MISQ*'s impact factor is very high (4.978) and the 17.17 citations per article places it 10th among the 194 Business and Economics journals evaluated by Journal Citation Reports in terms of citations per article. In their report of journal citations of *MISQ*, Katerattanakul and Hong (2003) found that *MISQ* was frequently cited in journals published outside of the United States: *Wirtschaftsinformatik*, *Australian Computer Journal*, *European Journal of Information Systems*, *European Journal of Operational*

Research, British Journal of Radiology, and Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences. Of course, *MISQ* is also cited in global journals not monitored by Journal Citation Reports.

But, citations alone are not an indication that a journal is respected globally. A second way to judge a journal's global appeal is to look at studies of its rankings. A recent review of global journal prestige by Lowry, Romans, and Curtis (2004) indicates that *MIS Quarterly* is highly ranked in all regions of the globe and is the second highest most globally read journal.

Global Process

Numerous indicators signify that *MISQ*'s processes, especially its reviewing processes, are global:

- Its current senior editors have academic roots in Australia, Denmark, Israel, Singapore, and the United States. One-third work in countries other than the United States.
- The current associate editors represent even greater national diversity: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Hong Kong, Norway, the Netherlands, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Forty percent work in countries other than the United States.
- *MIS Quarterly*'s immediate past editor-in-chief, Ron Weber, is from Australia.
- When we send a paper out for review we try to ensure that it is reviewed from a global perspective. Following a practice initiated by Allen Lee, we encourage selecting a multinational review team. Last year, one-third of the reviewers came from 23 countries other than the United States.

Having a review team with members who work around the world makes it easier for the review panel to jump out of their wells, that is, to rise above regional biases and to appreciate the work of diverse colleagues. Not everyone agrees with this practice. Some complain that it dilutes the quality of the reviews. However, I think that this practice ensures a much fairer review process that enables individuals from anywhere to feel comfortable in submitting to *MIS Quarterly*. It also gives people around the globe the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to write good reviews.

Reviewer selection at *MISQ* is based upon author nominations, as well as the personal knowledge of the associate editor and senior editor of individuals who have expertise in the given area of research and who have completed good reviews in the past. By selecting reviewers from across the globe, *MISQ* is deliberately trying to broaden both the associate editor *and* the reviewer pool. This is because good reviewing is one of the selection criteria for an invitation to serve as an associate editor. Other considerations are the need for coverage of certain research areas and methodologies, global representation, and the publication record of the potential associate editor. Doing a good job as an associate editor is a prerequisite for an invitation to become a senior editor.

In the long run, good reviewing may change the journal's "regime of truth," the institutional infrastructure that generates and circulates truth claims (Introna and Whittaker 2004). Truth is produced in and through "institutionalized discursive practices" such as editorial statements, editorial board selection, and review processes. Associate editors, through their recommendations, and senior editors, through their decisions, shape, reinforce, and alter regimes of truth.

Perceived Target Outlet

But to gain status as a global journal, it is not enough that a journal is consumed by people around the world or that it employs processes that involve people around the world. Rather to be a truly global journal there is a third aspect that is very important: a journal must also be a target outlet for academics from around the world. That is, researchers around the globe want to submit their best work to the journal and they write and format it in such a way that the coveted acceptance is more likely. It is perhaps here that the progress has been the most challenging.

In spite of the advances in submissions from around the world, there are differences in research styles that sometimes make it difficult to objectively and fairly evaluate certain types of research. In a review of papers addressing power and the impacts of information technology, European journals were found to use the same theories as the articles drawn from ranked North American journals (Jasperson et al. 2002). However, the methods differed in these two sets of journals. Similarly, Lowry et al. found that European academics tend to be more behavioral, interpretivist, and practitioner-oriented than North American researchers. Among others, *MISQ* has reached out to the European IS research community through special issues on methodologies frequently published in European journals: action research, design science, and intensive research in IS (qualitative, interpretive, and case studies). *MISQ* encourages submissions of research using these types of methodologies. We continue to publish this type of research. For example, in 2005 we published several qualitative case studies, an ethnographic study, and an historical analysis. As a matter of fact, the 2005 *MIS Quarterly* Best Paper Award is being given to a qualitative research study by Lapointe and Rivard that uses semantic analysis. We have also invited people with expertise in interpretivist research to join the editorial board. We hope that by taking steps to offer a product that is more global and to implement a review process that is more appreciative of global diversity, *MISQ* will be perceived as a highly valued outlet for quality research by researchers around the globe.

Language also impacts the perceptions of a journal as a highly valued target outlet. Clearly, people who speak English have an advantage when it comes to a journal that is published in English. People from countries where English is not the first, or the official, language must work harder for their thoughts to be understood. However, the *MISQ* editorial board is trying to focus on the ideas and the quality of the research. We recognize that the language can be edited and we try to appreciate the many different contexts within which potential *MISQ* authors find themselves. Many *MISQ* authors who do not speak English fluently are able to successfully navigate their papers through the review process by working with native speakers, using language editors, and submitting papers that have been carefully prepared.

Your Help

As *MISQ* editorial board members, we are doing our best to continue to develop *MISQ* as a global journal. But we need your help. We need your help as reviewers who are open to different perspectives and methodologies. We need you to submit quality manuscripts that reflect global concerns. We need those of you who feel there is a bias to work with us in eliminating it. Most fundamentally, we need you, as a member of the international Information Systems community, to take active ownership of *MISQ* and help us further develop it as a global journal.

Best Paper Award for 2005

As briefly mentioned earlier, the Best Paper for 2005 was written by Liette Lapointe and Suzanne Rivard and is titled "A Multilevel Model of Resistance to Information Technology Implementation." The paper appeared in the September 2005 issue of *MIS Quarterly*. Nominations for the best paper of the year are made by the associate editors of *MIS Quarterly*. The senior editors then select the winner of the award from the AE nominations. Our congratulations go to Liette and Suzanne.

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