**Marketing Your Journal**

Pluto Journals guide for Editors marketing their Journals in the age of Open Access

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**Marketing Open Access Journals**

1 **Introduction** As Editors, you’re aware Open Access presents great opportunities to boost your readership and attract more submissions. We have produced this short guide to help you to increase the readership for your Journal — both inside and outside the academy.

In January 2021 Pluto Journals took the step of flipping all 21 of our Journals to Open Access which means they are free to read. By end of January 2022, the usage statistics of the portfolio of Journals had increased by a staggering 650%, over the figures in 2020 and by 850% over the figures for 2019. This is great news but it also comes with the challenge of continuing to grow usage in the years ahead as this is an important element in the Subscribe to Open (S2O) contract where Academic Libraries continue to pay a fee partly based on the increased usage that Open Access delivers.

2 **Sharing OA articles — What’s the diﬀerence?**

Although the articles will be freely available to read they will still be hosted on a platform who will be tracking their usage statistics. In our case, this is Science Open.

When sharing whole issues or individual articles, you should only share the relevant links for these. We are tracking the usage statistics before going OA and what happens to the usage of your Journal after we make this move, and we’ll be sharing these statistics with you. To get an accurate picture of usage, we need to direct traﬃc to the host of our content.

You should share the Digital Object Identiﬁer (DOI) for each article, this is a long-lasting identiﬁer that is assigned to each article and when clicked will lead the reader to Science Open. You can ﬁnd these on the host’s page for issue under the title for each article or on the page for the article you want to share. For example,

Here is where the DOI is located for a recent article from the Journal of Fair Trade hosted on Science Open:

2.1 **Discourage the posting of PDFs**

In practice, this means you shouldn’t post PDFs of articles or the whole issue onto your own website. We also ask that you discourage authors from sharing the PDF too, and instead ask them to share the Science Open link for the whole issue or the DOI for their individual article when they are sharing their article on social media and to colleagues. This is again to get a better picture of the success of going OA for the usage of the Journals. The usage statistics will be able to tell us where the Journal is being accessed and by which institutions. When lots of PDFs are shared and we don’t have access to any of these usage statistics, it makes it diﬃcult to get an accurate picture of how the articles are being used.

2.2 **Posting the Table of Contents of the Journal**

With all of this in mind, we encourage you to share the Table of Content of your Journal on your websites and the related abstracts. However, when linking to read to the articles, please use the relevant links as described above. For example, when uploaded onto your website, it would look something like this from another Journal: https://esiculture.com/current

You can share the table of contents with the links to each of the articles on your website or in newsletters. It is also a good idea to share the DOIs for the articles on social media and to encourage authors to do the same. We will share with you a document that includes the article titles, abstracts and links to the articles for you to share.

3 **Logos**

If you don’t have a logo for your journal already, you will need to develop one. This may be slightly diﬀerent to the design on the front cover of the Journal.

Below are the logo dimensions for diﬀerent platforms:

• Science Open

Logo: 223x223 px

• Twitter

Proﬁle photo: 400x400 px

Cover image: 1500x500 px

• Facebook

Proﬁle photo: 180x180 px

Cover image: 820x312 px

• LinkedIn

Proﬁle photo: 300x300 px

Cover image: 1128x191 px

• Instagram

Proﬁle photo: 110x110 px

4 **Email marketing**

Marketing over email is one of the oldest kinds of internet marketing and remains as a great way for publishers and editors to stay connected with subscribers, potential readers, and associated organisations. Regular marketing newsletters don’t just include links to your most recent articles (although they certainly should!), but they can help you attract researchers to your journal through advertising calls for papers and news from organisations supportive of your journal. Marketing your most recent articles over email helps people to know when your content has been released online, contributing to your usage statistics.

4.1 **How do I set up a mailing list?**

If you don’t already have a mailing list, setting one up from scratch can be some work but it brings a lot of rewards in helping people discover your content. You may want to have someone on your editorial board dedicated to this task.

Some steps we’ve identiﬁed to help you set up a mailing list:

1. **Pick an email marketing platform** — we use MailChimp, it is easy to use and you will be able to host up to 2000 contacts for free.

2. **Set up an opt-in form** — you will need to have a sign-up form for your email list so that you have the permission of the people you’re emailing so you can contact them. The marketing platform provider you use normally has this an integrated feature so you can add this to your website or blog

3. **Start building subscribers** — as you now have a way for potential subscribers to sign up, you can start encouraging people to join the list. For this, you can share the link to the sign-up form on social media, add a link to the sign-up form to your signature, ask recent authors if they would like to sign up to hear more, and ask aﬃliated organisations to share the link to sign up

4.2 **How do I build an existing mailing list?**

If you have an existing mailing list, or you want to begin developing your new one, here are some suggestions on how to do this:

**Segment your audience** — as you add subscribers to your list, these might be part of diﬀerent target audiences. For example, a proportion of subscribers might be researchers who would read the journal and potentially answer calls for papers, another proportion of subscribers are organisations that are related to the content of the journal. For these two types of audience, the message and emails you put out to them is likely to be diﬀerent, as the researcher wants links to articles and the related organisation probably wants information about subscriptions and supporting the journal, as well as article links. As they get added to the list, it is worth tagging these diﬀerent audiences so you can send them diﬀerent emails if necessary

**Ask recent authors about subscribing to the newsletter** — it’s an easy way to keep growing the mailing list and they might submit a paper again!

**Share the link to sign up to your newsletter often** — put the link to sign up to the newsletter in your email signature/on your social media/our website and anywhere you can think of!

4.3 **How can I track my campaigns?**

It’s important when you send out an email marketing campaign to have an idea about what you’re trying to achieve so you can assess how it went.

Here’s some ways you can do that:

Check if it increased usage — If you’re advertising a new issue, your aim is probably to get more people to click through to the recent issues.

We can ﬁrst track whether they are clicking through to the articles on the reporting from your marketing platform — such as MailChimp — where it will tell you what links were clicked on and how often. We can also track if it increased usage of your journal by looking at those statistics. We’re happy to pull usage statistics for you for a speciﬁc time period!

Similar tracking methods can be done for other things you might send out to email lists, such as looking at how many CFP responses you’ve had if you sent it out to subscribers

4.4 **E-Marketing Best Practices**

We’ve drawn up some guidelines below to help you create eﬀective email marketing campaigns for your Journal:

**Create templates you can reuse** — Use a system like MailChimp to create a basic template with your Journal logo that you can reuse for diﬀerent emails

**Specify your main message and ’call to action’** — Figure out what it is you want from your email. Is it you want people to read the latest issue, to sign up to a conference, or to attend a seminar you’re holding? This is your main message and what you want them to do is your ’call to action’. For example if your message is you want them to read the latest journal issue, your call to action is to ’click here to read the journal’

**Keep the main message and call-to-action close to the top of the email** — The main message of your email and your ’call to action’ needs to be at the top of the email before you scroll down so people are most likely to see it

**Avoid overly lengthy emails** — It is tempting to write a very lengthy email, but these are unlikely to get the result you want (e.g. people signing up to a conference or clicking through to a journal)

**Personalise the greeting** and ‘To’ ﬁeld — Systems like MailChimp allow you to tick a box to personalise these ﬁelds. This helps you engage with the people on your email list more

**Keep your subject lines short and sweet** — Long subject lines will get cut oﬀ on most email programmes and people need to be able to skim it to tell what it is about. Keep the subject line concise and about your main message

**Conduct a ‘ﬁve second test’** — Send the email to someone in your editorial board before you send it out. They should be able to tell what your call to action is within ﬁve seconds of opening the email

5 **Social media marketing**

Social media platforms provide a great opportunity for you to share the research in your journal and help you to increase its visibility in the process.

5.1 **Why promote on social media?**

* Reach a wider audience, both within and outside your journal’s ﬁeld
* Increasing the visibility of your work through increased downloads and citations
* For authors, this opens up further opportunities for disseminating research, including conference or speaking invitations
* It can build your network of authors to submit work to the journal
* When following or contributing to conversations online, it shows the journal and its content is current and relevant

5.2 **Who should post on socials?**

**Publisher** — we share content on our social media channels, although this can be sometimes limited, but please do share with us any conference details, blog posts, or other content, and be sure to our social media accounts!

**Journal speciﬁc account** — you can set up accounts for your journal on most social media platforms and send out content directly from there. This has the beneﬁt that you have an ’identity’ as a journal that is clear to people, however, it can sometimes be impersonal in what is a very personal marketplace so be sure to combine it with other methods of promotion

**Editor/researcher accounts** — many of you will have your professional accounts on diﬀerent social media platforms and with these you can share content about the journal. This has the added beneﬁt that it is quite personal and tends to reach more people, particularly as many of you will have existing research contacts following you already

5.3 **What kind of content should I share?**

The key is not to overwhelm yourself — all that matters is you start posting! Sharing a variety of content helps promote your journal, and don’t be afraid to share content from other similar journals too. Here is some ideas for what you can post:

* Sharing recent articles is a good go-to, and if possible you can tag the author in the post and ask them to share it
* Promoting calls for papers and calls for new editorial board members
* Sharing conferences and talks you are organising related to the journal may help you reach more researchers in your ﬁeld

5.4 **Social media best practices**

In the subsection above we’ve indicated some of the kind of content you might want to share. We’ve created some guidelines to help you create posts that will get the most engagement on social media:

**Only share one article at a time per post** — this way you can track its success using the Facebook or Twitter analytics tools. Multiple links are also potentially confusing for people

**Shorten the links you share** — use something like bit.ly or a similar site to shorten the URLs. This will make your posts less messy and these websites have some tracking features on diﬀerent plans to let you look in detail how much your social media eﬀorts are driving people to either the Journal, events or to membership when you share about that

**Add a call to action on your post** — For example this would be ‘read the article here’, ‘click here to read the article’, ‘sign up to the event here, etc. This is intended to maximise engagement and gives people reading your post clear instructions

**Share images with your posts** — This will help with the algorithm onboth Facebook and Twitter. If you can’t get a related image to the article, then use a default graphic for the Journal optimised for the ratios for Facebook/Twitter

**Brieﬂy describe the article** — You can use some of the abstract and relevant key words to get people interested

**Use #Hashtags sparingly** — Only use a hashtag if you’re aware that it’s used a lot. For example #OpenAccess does get used, but hashtagging the name of your journal might not be as eﬀective!

**Tag relevant people in your post/image** — Tag your editors, authors, Pluto Journals, and other aﬃliated organisations. You can tag them in images you share too. This will boost your post and they are likely to reshare your content

Here’s some examples of what this all might look like put together:

Remember though, these are guidelines. You can share videos of your editors and authors talking about content, and even go live on Facebook presenting a talk. Sometimes the most interesting posts on social media are the ones that break the mould!

5.5 **Tools for social media**

Here are some tools for making social media marketing a bit easier to manage:

* **Buﬀer** — this is a simple and easy to use social media scheduling tool so you can schedule posts ahead of time and leave them to go out.
* **Tweetdeck** — if you are using Twitter, this can helpfully keep track of followers you are particularly interested in and you can schedule tweets from there.
* **Canva** — this website will help you make simple graphics for social media and can be useful if you are creating promotional material for a conference or something similar.
* **Analytics** — you can view the analytics of Facebook and Twitter for your page so you can see how your posts are performing.
* **Bitly** — this is a link-shortening website you can use for free if you sign up, and it can be used to shorten links to your journals or other content you share.

6 **Other ways of marketing your Journal**

Social media and email marketing are not the only ways for you to promote your Journal and your activities. We encourage you to get creative. Here are some additional ideas for promotion:

**Webinars –** are a good way for Editors and Authors across the world to present and discuss their papers. We can help to organize a webinar for you.

**Events** — These can be talks, conferences, book launches, online or oﬄine. They oﬀer an opportunity to share the research from your Journal and to connect with researchers in your ﬁeld

**Press Releases –** If you are publishing an article that covering a subject that is currently in the news a press release to relevant publications can help to promote your journal.

**Podcasts** — Organising a podcast or appearing on one where you promote the Journal can really boost your readership and submissions

**Videos from researchers** — Short videos from researchers explaining their research oﬀers something that can be easily shared. This can be shared over email, on social media, and put on your website

**Merchandise** – tote bags, pens etc. Creating a limited range of products branded with your Journal logo is a good way to increase the visibility of your Journal or network. You can sell these products or give them out in your events. We can suggest some ethical suppliers of these products.