The Signal in the Noise: OA Journals, Indexes and the Problems of Visibility & Legitimacy

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Searching for sheriffs in OA-ville

Image: National Archives and Records Administration

Academic indexes increase discovery and signal high quality of journal content and practices, making them important for the long-term health of journals.

However, getting a journal included in appropriate indexes is also time-consuming, challenging, and a difficult process for editors to do alone.
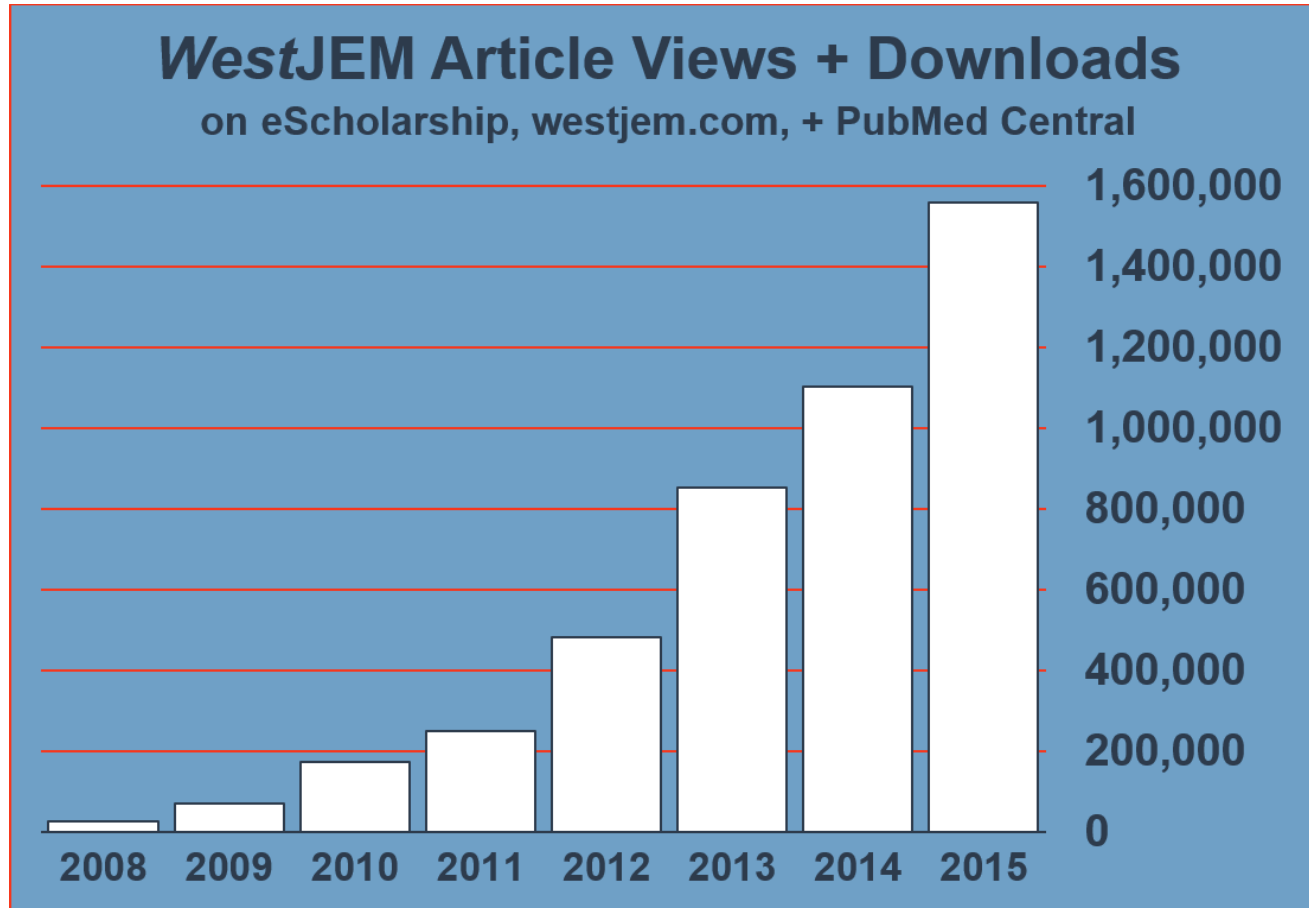
A tale of two indexes/ CDL case studies

MEDLINE — U.S. National Library of Medicine

DOAJ — DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS

- MEDLINE
- Discipline-specific
- Subject specialist librarian partnership (campus)

- DOAJ
- Broad index
- Challenging application
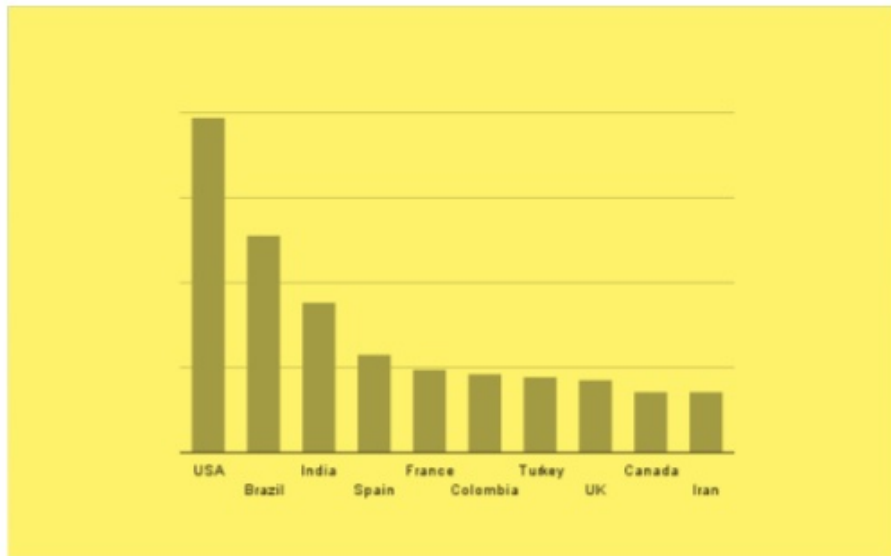- Library publisher partnership (CDL)

WestJEM: local librarian partner

WestJEM Article Views + Downloads
on eScholarship, westjem.com, + PubMed Central

When should library publisher step in? DOAJ case study

Journals removed from DOAJ

- Not discipline-specific
- "Gateway index"
- Famously challenging application
- Confusion around removal and application status

Chart courtesy Dr Tom Olijhoek
https://www.slideshare.net/doaj/doaj-as-gatekeeper-for-quality-open-access-journals

How our team is stepping in:

- Create resources for editors
- Add features?
- Outreach
- Offer to apply on behalf of overwhelmed journals
- Future: generate spreadsheets for application

Subject specialist librarian partner for indexing:

- As journals identify which discipline-specific indexes to target & prioritize
- As journals apply for discipline-specific indexes

Library publisher's role:

- Crucial early indexes/ gatekeepers & gateways
- Challenging processes where there is a broad need for additional resources and support

Conclusions & feedback

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