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

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Searching for sheriffs in OA-ville
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
  - 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

0 200,000 400,000 600,000 800,000 1,000,000 1,200,000 1,400,000 1,600,000
When should library publisher step in? DOAJ case study

- 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