

System Dynamics Review

Executive Editor Report to SDS Policy Council

Prepared by Rogelio Oliva

February, 2016

This report is structured in six sections and represents the summary of performance for the 2015 calendar year.

1. Publication Status

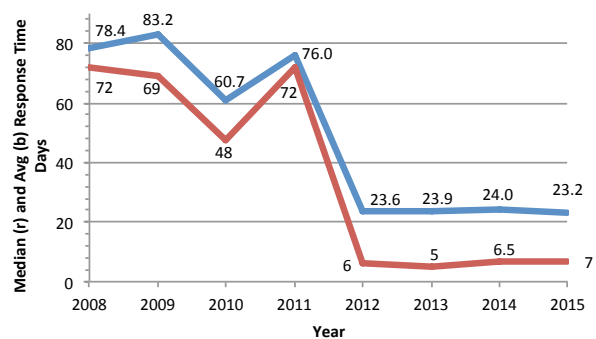
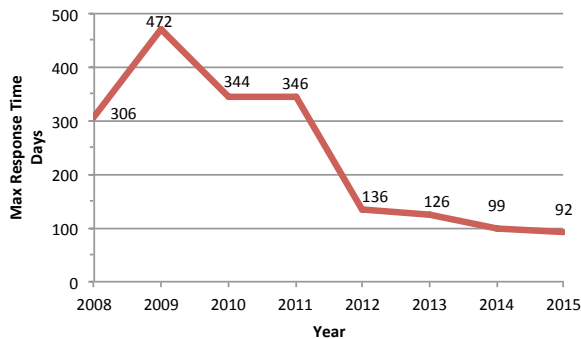
Publishing time is catching up ... but we are still 3 months behind

- 1.1. Publication of Volume 31 (2015) continued to suffer from the delays caused by the lack of quality submissions that started to be felt at the end of 2013. Issue 30:4, original scheduled for 12/2014, did not come out until 4/2015. We published a double issue (31:1-2) in 10/2015, and issue 31:3 came two months later (12/2015). All the material for issue 31:4 (originally scheduled for 12/2015) has been accepted and is currently under production. Despite the long submission draught early in the year, we have reduced the publication delay by one month relative to where we were last year. The number of papers under review (10) and awaiting revision (4) is promising and it would be enough to complete up to issue 32:3, but revisions are taking long and not all authors follow through.
- 1.2. All previous **Virtual Issues** (1/13 and 1/15) have had a significant impact in readership (as measured by downloads). Furthermore, virtual issues are a good entry point for novices into our journal. However, despite the ease to pull *Virtual Issues* together, and my efforts to promote them among the SIGs, there has not been much interest in the community to organize these VIs. Suggestions on how to activate this from the PC will be appreciated.

2. Reviewing Performance

Review times and process continues to be stellar

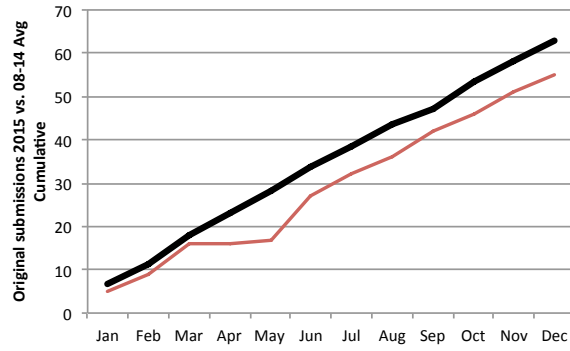
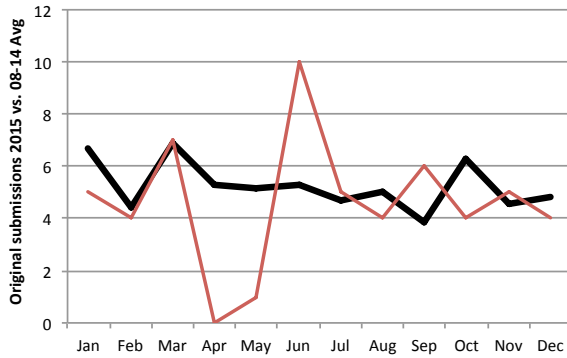
- 2.1. The editorial team continues to provide excellent service. The maximum, average and median submission-to-decision times have remained stable since 2012.



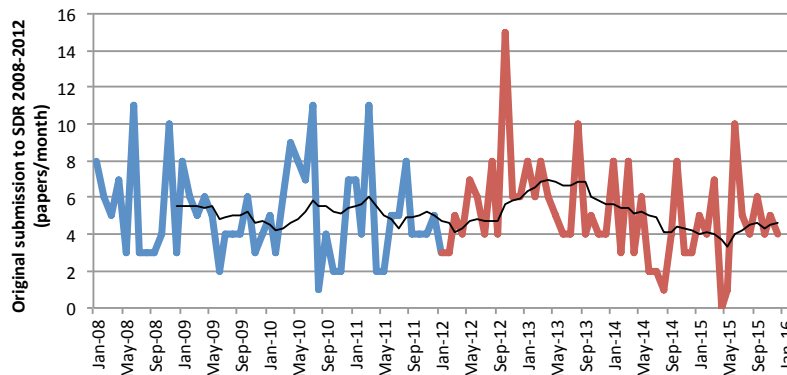
3. Submission Rate

Original submission rate is slightly up ... but still not high enough

- 3.1. We had a total of 55 original submissions in 2015. This is slightly up from 2014 (51), but is still down from the average number of submissions in the 4 years prior to when I took over: 62 original submission per year. The Graphs below plot the monthly and cumulative original submission rate for 2015 (red line) and compare it to the average submission rate over the last six years.



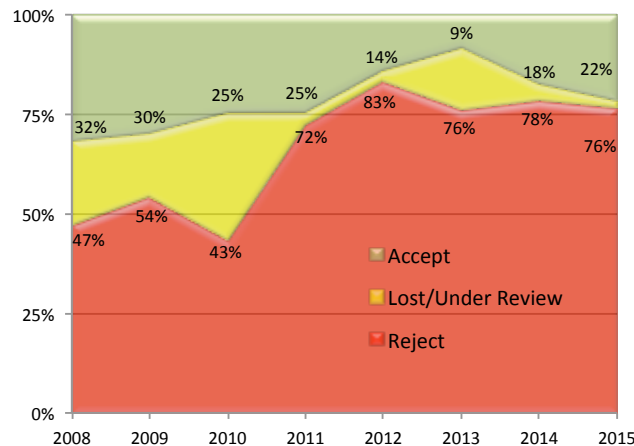
Interestingly, the average for submissions for the 4 years I was EE was the same as the average over the 4 prior years. We had unusually high submissions when I first took over (71 original submissions per year). In part, no doubt, to the better service and people still adjusting to the new submission standards. The figure below shows the monthly original submission rate over the last 8 years. The 12-month moving average (thin black line) shows a significant drop in the submission rate of original work between May 2014 and May 2015 but suggests that the downturn of submissions is within the normal limits observed in 2009-2011.



4. Acceptance Rate

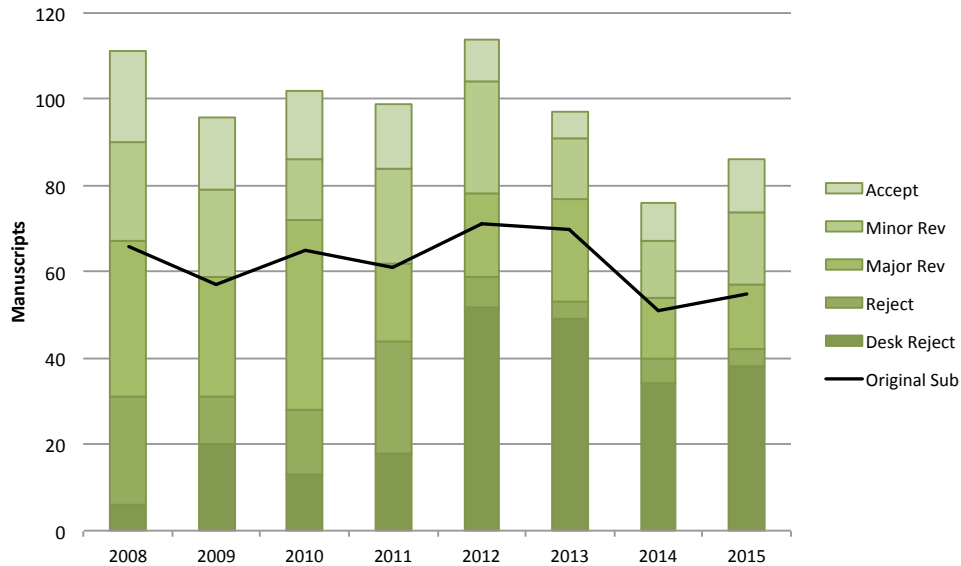
Acceptance rate is up

4.1. Acceptance rate in 2012-13 was 11.5%, our acceptance rate in 2014-15 is up to 20% ... and I do not believe that we have lowered our standards. Evidence seems to indicate that the lower number of submissions in the last two years is in part a result of people being more careful on submitting their material to the SDR.



The jump in the 2011 rejection rate reflects the fact that most of the decisions on 2011 submissions were made in 2012 as there was a significant backlog of papers under review.

4.2. Most of the improvements of the review process have emerged from stricter criteria (including new documentation guidelines) before papers are sent out to reviewers (note the higher fraction of desk rejects). Over the last two years, however, the number of desk rejects (and total rejects) has dropped.



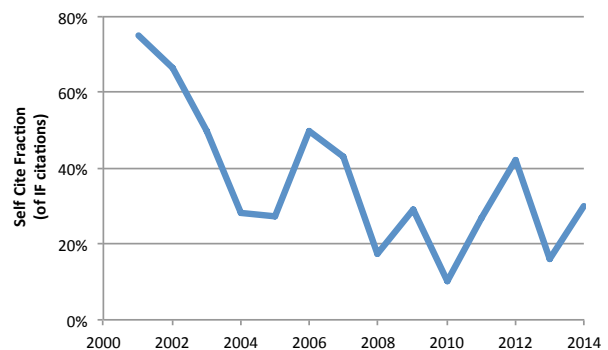
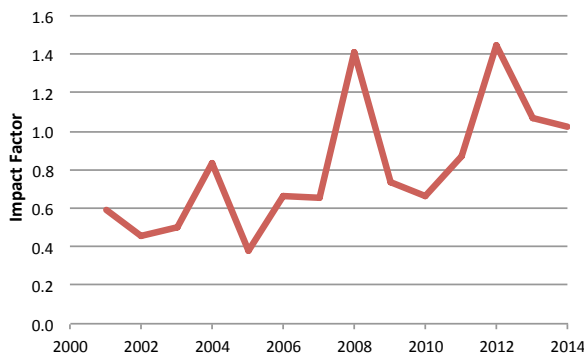
Decisions on 2015 manuscripts are as of 2/15/16 — 1 original submission is still under review.

5. Journal Performance

Citations (Impact Factor) are holding ... but have taken a hit from the delayed publications

5.1. The graph on the left shows the evolution of the 2yr impact factor (Thompson). While it was not possible to match the banner year that we had with the 2012 report (highest Impact Factor and Immediacy Factor in the history of the journal), the 2013 and 2014 reports still gave us a solid performance with the third and fourth highest ever IF (2008, the second best year, was when the 50th Anniversary Special Issue became eligible for the IF accounting).

We still have self-citation fraction that is much lower than the average for specialized journals (right graph).



6. Closing Remarks

While I don't think we are out of the woods yet, I do believe that all the evidence is suggesting that we are almost through of the expected 'worse before better' that we anticipated when we implemented the higher publication standards in 2012. I was deliberate on the strategy that focus on improving the

internal editorial process before we could go out and advertise and capture more potential authors. None of these internal improvements would have been possible without the Managing Editors (Laura Black, Andreas Größler, Luis Luna-Reyes, and Markus Schwaninger). They are the ones that set up the new publications and review standards, and are the ones that made it happen. Not only that, but they also dealt with the huge backlog that we had back in 2012, and continue to find outstanding reviewers and provide excellent reviews all within the time we promised our authors. The society should somehow acknowledge the extraordinary (and thankless) service that the Managing Editors perform.

I am proud of the process and standards that we have in place and I'm thrilled to turn the *Review* over to Yaman Barlas. Yaman has been in the editorial team of the *SDR* for a long time, and he is familiar with the processes and the challenges we have moving forward. I cannot think of better hands to take over the journal at this junction. I hope the processes that we put in place allow him to take the journal into the new direction of expanding our author base. Please show him the same support (and patience) that you showed me when I took over.

It has been a privilege to serve in the capacity of Executive Editor of the *System Dynamics Review*. I thank the Policy Council for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Rogelio Oliva
Executive Editor (2012-15)
System Dynamics Review