System Dynamics Review

Executive Editor Report to SDS Policy Council
Prepared by Rogelio Oliva
January, 2015

This report is structured in four sections and represents the summary of activities for the 2014 calendar year.
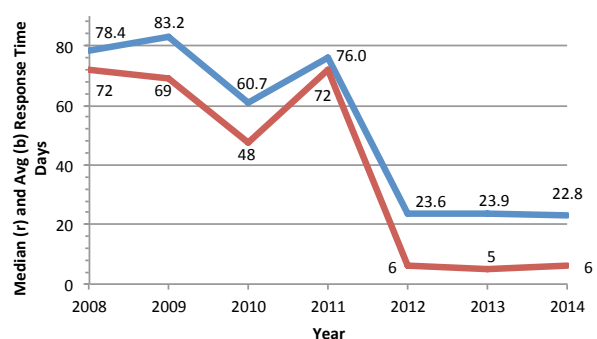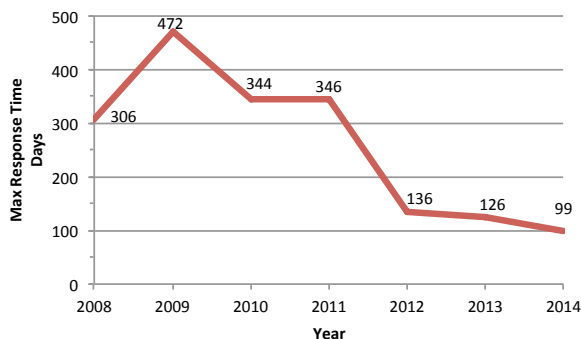
1. **Publication Status**
   1.1. Publication of Volume 30 (2014) continued to suffer from the delays caused by the lack of quality submissions that started to be felt in 2013. As you recall, issue 29:4, original scheduled for 12/2013, did not come out until 3/2014. We published a double issue (30:1-2) in 6/2014 that brought us back to schedule, and issue 30:3 came out on time (9/2013). However, we are still waiting for two papers to complete issue 30:4 (originally scheduled for 12/2014).
   The number of papers under review is promising and it would be enough to complete up to issue 31:3, but revisions are taking long and not all authors follow through.
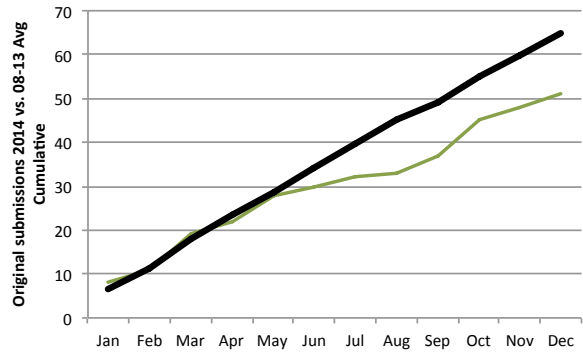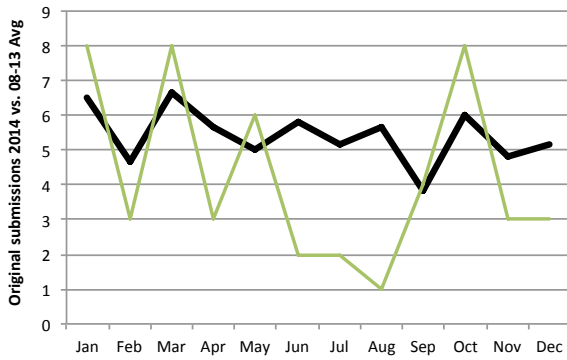   1.2. To partially address the lack of copy, starting with the double issue 30:1-2, we reverted to our old page layout with wide left margins. Since 2011, we had increased the page count in our contract with Wiley and changed the journal layout allowing us to print more papers per issue. While the policy worked well when he had a backlog of papers under review, these changes require a rate of original submissions that the community has not been able to sustain. Reverting to fewer papers per issue is a way to address this shortcoming.
   1.3. In January 2015 we will 'publish' the third **Virtual Issue** (a group of already-published papers on the same topic) of the SDR. This VI, focusing on "Health and Health Care," was edited by Gary Hirsch, Jack Homer, and Andrada Tomoaia-Cotisel. As expected, the two previous VIs (1/2013) had a significant impact in readership (as measured by downloads). Furthermore, virtual issues are a good entry point for novices into our journal.
   Despite how easy it is to put them 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.
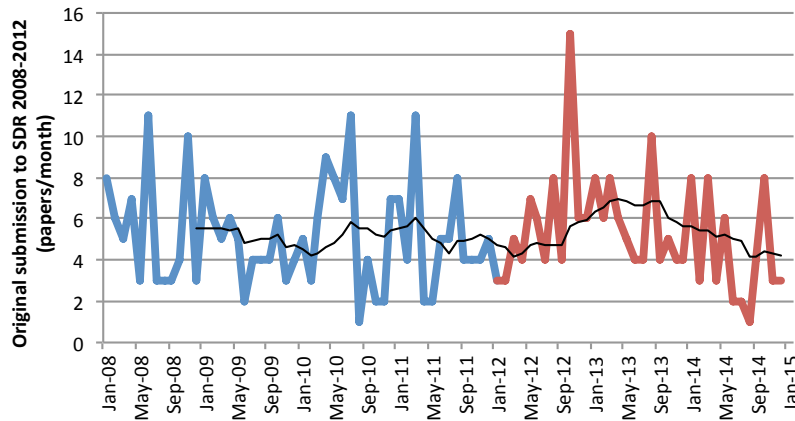
2. **Reviewing Performance**
   2.1. The editorial team continues to provide excellent service. The maximum, average and median submission-to-decision times have remained stable since 2012.
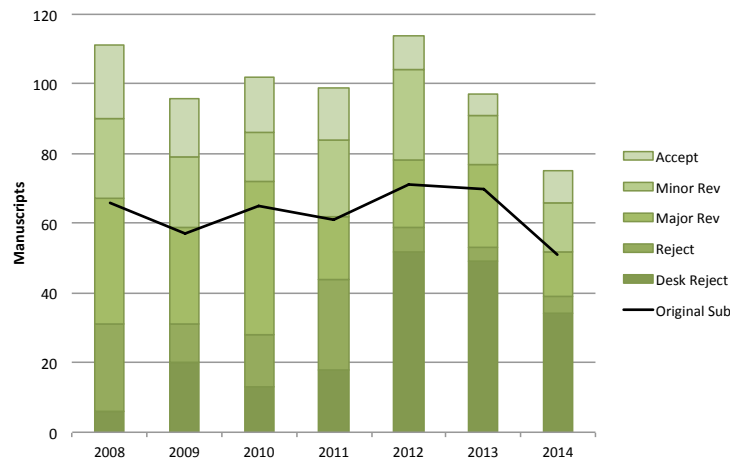

   2.2. While this improvement in customer service had a positive effect on the submission rate, since May 2014 we have seen a drop in the submission rate of original work. Graphs below plot the monthly and cumulative original submission rate for 2014 (green line) and compare it to the average submission rate over the last five years.

The figure below shows the monthly original submission rate over the last 7 years. The 12-month moving average (thin black line) suggests that the downturn of submissions is within the normal limits observed in 2009-2011.
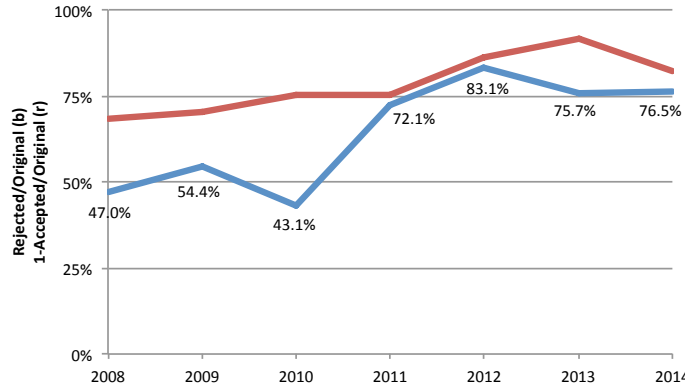

2.3. Most of the improvements of the review process have emerged from stricter criteria (including new documentation guidelines) before papers are sent out to reviewers (note the higher fraction of desk rejects).

Decisions on 2014 manuscripts are as of 1/21/15 — 2 submissions are still under review.

While this leaner and faster review process increased the journal rejection rate (blue line in graph below), note that the final acceptance rate (red line is 1-acceptance %) was not affected as much as

many authors abandoned their papers (gap between red and blue line) due to the long review process under the old review scheme.
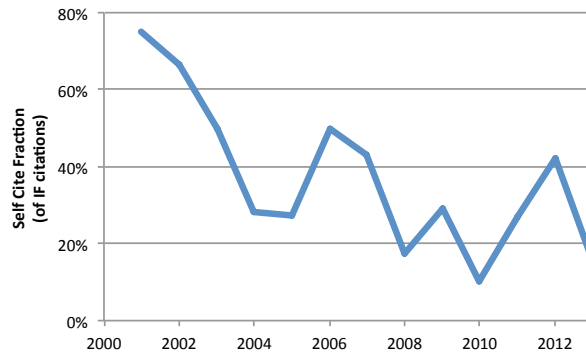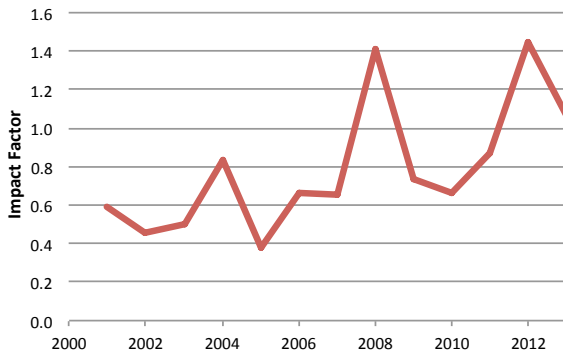

The jump in the 2011 rejection rate reflects the fact that most of the decisions on 2011 submissions were made in 2012, as there was a significant backlog of papers under review.

3. **Journal Performance**

   3.1. 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 report still gave us a solid performance with the third 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). An unexpected benefit of faster reviews and shorter time to publication was the fact that we are increasing the number of our citations that count towards our two year impact factor (the spike in 2012). The delays in publishing the journal affected the number of self-citations that could be included in the IF and consequently both numbers dropped from the 2012 performance.

4. **Future Plans**

   4.1. I originally accepted to serve Executive Editor of the SDR for a period of four years (2012-15). The four-year period expires in December of 2015 and I want to take this opportunity to confirm to the Policy Council that issue 31:4 will be the last issue in which I will work on as Executive Editor and ask the Publications Committee to find my replacement in time for the transition. I thank the Society for the privilege of letting me serve in this capacity and remain available to work with my successor to ensure a smooth transition.

Rogelio Oliva
Executive Editor
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