

VP Publications Report

Prepared for Policy Council meeting, July 23, 2023

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This report addresses the following three things:

Page 1. What does the VP Publications do?

Page 4. Pressing concerns in the VP Publications domain

Page 10. Important qualifications/criteria for VP Publications in the current context

Appendix: Relevant Policies

What does the VP Publications do?

The official policies of the SDS regarding the scope and responsibilities of the VP Publications and Publications Committee are attached in the Appendix. The responsibilities and activities of the VP Publications, in practice, are described below.

The actual work of the VP Publications has been somewhat different in scope and intensity recently due to the journal publishing industry's accelerating move toward open access.

The VP and Publications Committee have been meeting monthly, on average, since 2019. During this last year of evaluating publisher options we have met every 2-3 weeks. Since the contract period for the 2024-2026 contract is very short, the work in this domain is not likely to slow down. Preparation for the next contract period needs to start immediately, since a decision will need to be made about the following contract by December 2025. Developing viable alternative proposals can take a year or more.

Manages the Society Publications Strategy

The VP Publications is responsible for ensuring that the variety of Society publications, and especially the *System Dynamics Review* (SDR), align with the Society's publications strategy. The most recent Society Publications Strategy, published in 2016, was based on input from Society and PC members in a variety of forms including a formal survey, and less formal individual and group discussions. Its main conclusions were that we needed to broaden the relevance of our publications to more diverse authors and readers.

My primary approach to aligning the SDR with the strategy was to identify an Executive Editor whose publication philosophy aligned with the strategy. Yaman Barlas had done significant work to communicate the diverse scope of the SDR to potential authors before I took office and it was important to both of us to find someone to continue what

he was doing. Once we had identified the appropriate EE, I and the Publications Committee worked with him to continue to develop ways to attract and publish papers relevant to a broader audience.

Oversees the work of the Executive Editor (EE)

This includes communicating regularly with the EE regarding operational issues, helping resolve any operational issues with the publisher or others, engaging the Publications Committee to address questions identified by the EE that require their input.

When an EE's term finishes, the VP Publications is responsible for identifying candidates to replace them, working with the Publications Committee to evaluate candidates, and recommending a candidate to the Policy Council for approval.

Manages the relationship with the journal publisher

The VP Publications is the point person for communications about strategy with the publisher and backup for the EE on operational issues. The home office manages administrative and financial interactions with the publisher. The VP Publications represents the Society in contractual negotiations with the publisher and identifies and evaluates alternative publisher options when needed.

When an existing contract is nearing its end, the VP Publications is responsible for preparing for the next contractual period. The activities in this period depend on details of the changeover, specifically, whether and how the contract allows for renewal or change of publisher.

In 2018, when I started as VP Publications, our contract with Wiley was in a renewal period. That means we did not have the option to end the contract or write a completely new contract. Rather, we only had the option to negotiate for changing terms in the existing contract. I convened an ad-hoc committee to advise on the negotiating process and we collectively wrote an addendum that improved some of the terms in our favor.

For the most recent contract changeover (contract ending December 2023), the open access disruption in the journal publications industry changed our options significantly. To maximize our options, we began the process of reviewing the goodness of fit between Wiley's operations and the Society's needs and identifying and evaluating other options in 2020.

Works closely with the Publications Committee to support the publications strategy and operations

- Core Publications Committee meets approximately every 2-3 weeks
- Executive Editor reports meets with Committee approximately every 4-6 weeks

Keeps current with the changes in the publications landscape that could create opportunities or pose challenges to the Society's publications

- Participates in relevant publisher meetings and webinars, reads publisher blogs and bulletins
- Follows current related news, research articles, commentary and other outlets

Communicates regularly with Society and Policy Council members about VP Publications and Publications Committee work

- Seeks input from members regarding publication needs and activities
- Works with other VP's to support their publication needs
- Reports to members about publication challenges, opportunities, and activities

VP Publications scope of work

According to Society Policies, the VP Pubs is responsible for ensuring the content and presentation of all the Society's public communications align with the Society's publication policies. "Publications" have been broadly conceived to include our journal, *System Dynamics Review*, as well as the Society web site, any other journals, bulletins, web postings, books, video presentations and other public communications of the Society. In practice, the VP Publications has focused primarily on the *System Dynamics Review*, books, bulletins, and video presentations.

Pressing Concerns in the Society's Publications Domain

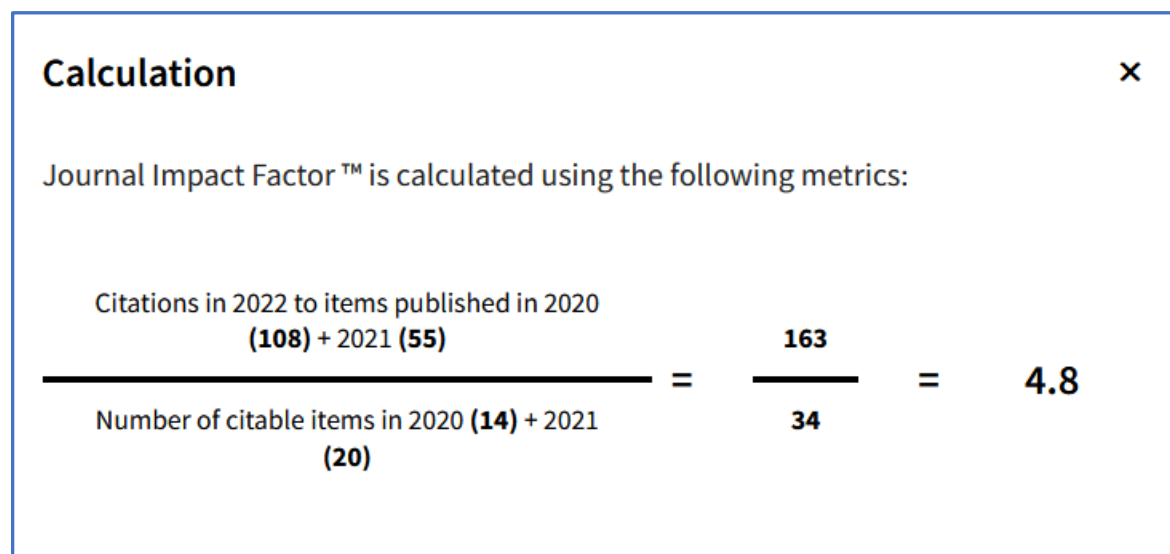
The shift in the journal publishing sector from an institutional subscription model of delivery and revenue generation to an open access model has caused a major disruption in all aspects of journal publishing. This disruption places new pressures on the way we manage our journal and suggests important strategic directions.

We face two key competing pressures:

To remain viable as a journal in the open access world, we need to dramatically increase the number of articles we publish. Publishers are pressing for 50 to 100 revenue-generating articles per year, i.e., those that bring in revenue from open access APC's.

To maintain and increase the scholarly reputation of SDR, we want metrics such as Journal Impact Factor (JIF) to keep increasing.

As the calculation in Figure 1 shows, these two pressures are somewhat at odds.



The screenshot shows a window titled "Calculation" with a close button (x) in the top right corner. The text inside reads: "Journal Impact Factor™ is calculated using the following metrics:" followed by a mathematical formula. The formula is:
$$\frac{\text{Citations in 2022 to items published in 2020 (108) + 2021 (55)}}{\text{Number of citable items in 2020 (14) + 2021 (20)}} = \frac{163}{34} = 4.8$$

Figure 1. Journal Impact Factor calculation for 2023. Source: Clarivate data via Wiley representative Antony Hey, personal communication, 7/21/23.

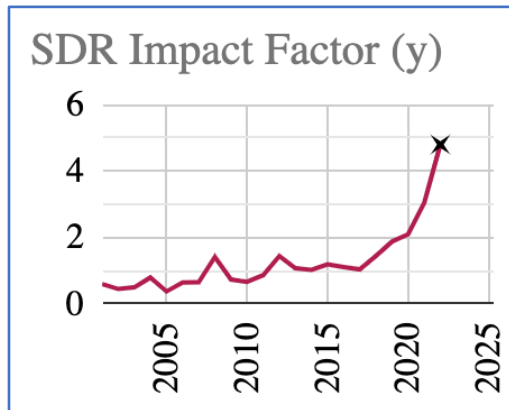
Citable items include Main Articles (including Fast Track), Research Problems, and Notes and Insights.

Increasing the number of citable items, the denominator, without increasing the number of citations would cause the JIF to decrease.

If the current number of citable items stays about the same, increasing the JIF would require an increase in the numerator, the number of citations.

Understanding the Trends

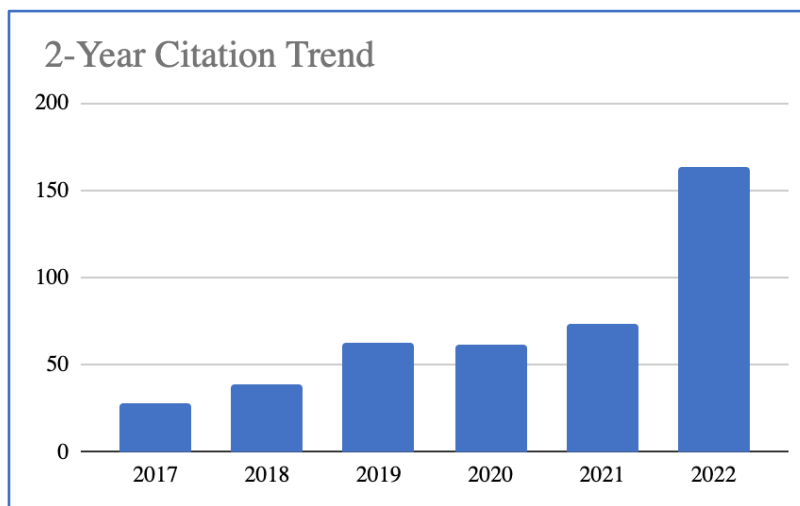
Figure 2 shows SDR’s Journal Impact Factor (JIF) since 2001. This number started rising significantly around 2019 and seems to be accelerating.



Year	SDR Journal Impact Factor
2001-2007	<1.0
2008-2017	Around 1.0
2018	1.448
2019	1.879
2020	2.097
2021	3.04
2022	4.8

Figure 2, Table 1 . SDR Journal Impact Factor from 2001 to 2022. Source: SDS based on Clarivate data

The **numerator** of the JIF equation shown in Figure 1 is the number of times any items that were published in SDR in the previous 2 years were cited in 2022. This trend is shown in Figure 3. The number of 2-year citations shows a pattern similar to that of Figure 2.



Year	# citations
2017	28
2018	39
2019	63
2020	62
2021	73
2022	163

Figure 3, Table 2. SDR 2-year citations from 2001 to 2022, graph and table. Source: SDS (Note: data for 2017-2021 are preliminary and need to be verified. Data for 2022 is accurate from Clarivate)

The **denominator** of the JIF equation is the number of citable items published in SDR in the 2 years before the reporting year. Note that the items counted in the numerator and the denominator are not the same. The numerator counts all citations to any item published in SDR, whether it is considered a “citable item” or not. Citations to Editorials or Book Reviews, for example would count in the numerator but Editorials and Book Reviews would not be counted in the denominator.

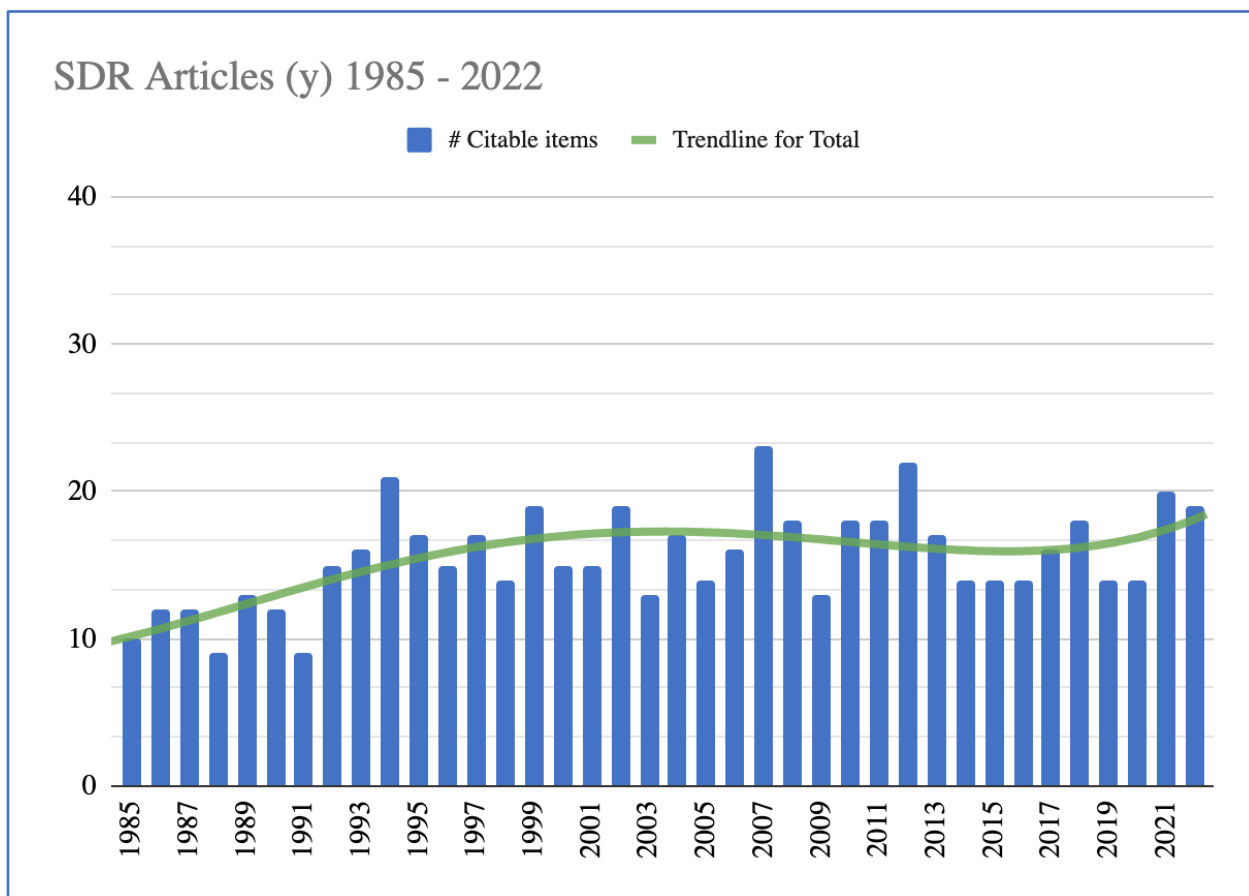


Figure 4. SDR Citable items published per year from 2001 to 2022, graph and table. Source: SDS (Note: data for 1985-2019 need to be verified. Data for 2020 and 2021 are accurate from Clarivate)

Table 3.

Years	Average # citable items per year	Rough estimate of 2-year citable items [JIF denominator]
1985-1991	11.0	22
1992-2013	16.9	34
2014-2017	14.5	29
2018-2022	17.0	34

Overall average = 15.6 items per year and 31.2 items in 2 years

Revenue-generating items include all published items including citable items plus Announcements, Editorials, Letters to the Editor, Commentaries, and Book Reviews. Citations to any of these items count toward the JIF numerator.

Tables 1, 2, and 3.

NUMERATOR		DENOMINATOR		
Year	# citations [JIF numerator]	Years	Average # citable items per year	Rough estimate of 2- year citable items [JIF denominator]
2017	28	1985-1991	11.0	22
2018	39	1992-2013	16.9	34
2019	63	2014-2017	14.5	29
2020	62	2018-2022	17.0	34
2021	73			
2022	163			

SDR JIF

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2001-2007	<1.0
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Comparing these data shows that the rise in the SDR JIF is almost entirely due to the increase in the number of citations.

How can we increase citations?

For the most recent JIF calculation, a close look at the citations for each article provides a number of insights. Table 4 shows the 34 citable items for 2020 and 2021 in selected categories together with the citations for papers in those categories. (Note that the categories are not mutually exclusive.)

Table 4. 2020 and 2021 articles published with selected attributes and their contributions to the total citations in 2022 to items published in SDR in 2020 and 2021

Article attribute	# articles	% of total articles	# citations	% of total citations
Open Access	12	35%	38	23%
Simulation-based	15	44%	85	52%
Non-simulation-based	15	44%	65	40%
Covid-related	3	9%	66	40%
Methods paper	12	35%	45	28%
Applications paper	18	53%	89	55%

Open access papers accounted for 35% of the papers but only 23% of the citations. Applications papers accounted for 53% of the paper and 55% of the citations.

Three papers, on COVID, 9% of the total papers accounted for 40% of the total citations.

There were the same number of simulation- and non-simulation-based papers, and the simulation-based papers yielded more total citations.

Table 5. The five papers that had the most citations in 2022

Authors	Item Title	Article type	# of Citations	
Rahmandad, Hazhir;Lim, Tse Yang;Stermann, John	Behavioral dynamics of COVID-19: estimating underreporting, multiple waves, and adherence fatigue across 92 nations	Simulation-based main article	28	
Darabi, Negar;Hosseinichimeh, Niyousha	System Dynamics Modeling in Health and Medicine: A Systematic Literature Review	Literature Review	26	
Ghaffarzadegan, Navid;Rahmandad, Hazhir	Simulation-based estimation of the early spread of COVID-19 in Iran: actual versus confirmed cases	Simulation-based main article	20	
Struben, Jeroen	The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: simulation-based assessment of outbreak responses and postpeak strategies	Simulation-based main article	18	

Wilkerson, Brooke;Aguiar, Anaely;Gkini, Christina;Czermainski de Oliveira, Igor;Lunde Trellevik, Lars-Kristian;Kopainsky, Birgit	Reflections on adapting group model building scripts into online workshops	Non-simulation-based Notes and Insights	13	
		Total citations for 5 papers:	105	64%

The five papers that had over 10 citations each accounted for 64% of the total citations. They spanned the range of types of papers, with three focused on the global topic of the day: COVID.

Thirteen papers had between 2 and 6 citations each, 8 papers had 1 citation, and 8 papers had no citations.

Initial Observations with Potential Strategic Implications

Increasing our JIF means increasing citations to the things we publish in SDR. This means increasing the visibility and utility of the things we publish so that many people will see, use, and cite them. That means broadening our audience and publishing work that is useful and interesting to a wide variety of people.

As we consider increasing the number of publications, we should be careful to consider that added publications should also have the potential to attract more citations.

The total number of citations in 2022 is 90 more than the number in 2021. If the saliency and global nature of the COVID pandemic is what attracted most of the interest to papers focused on this application, we should expect the JIF to decrease as interest fades.

Important Qualifications/Criteria for VP Publications in this context

In this complicated context, the next VP Publications should be able to ***continue the work that is in progress*** under the Publications Committee and the SDR Executive Editor and ***hit the ground running***. While offering fresh perspectives, the VP should respect the collective efforts made by the publication committee and continue initiatives which may require a long-term commitment.

The worst thing for the Society would be to radically change course in the Publications domain at this time, for at least two reasons. First, even if our impact factor dips after COVID, the increases we see in multiple categories indicate we are getting more visibility and use than we have had for some time. We need to examine the nuances of why this is so and make sure we identify and push the levers in the right direction.

The second reason we need to stay the course relates to the publishing contract. There is very little time until the next decision will need to be made about the contract. It is highly likely that if Wiley proposes a new contract it will be even less favorable than what we have now. The new VP Publications should be open to continuing to explore other alternatives to Wiley.

With an average of 19 revenue-generating items published per year, we have little to no leverage in negotiations with traditional publishers and little likelihood of getting more leverage (i.e. increasing the number of publications per year) in the very near future.

The VP Publications ***should already have:***

- Thorough knowledge of the breadth of the system dynamics field and practices.
- Creative, receptive, and inclusive approach to attracting articles with high interest to a broad audience
- Openness to diverse perspectives and uses for system dynamics
- Willingness to engage different people in making small movements that will help in the long run.
- Ability to coordinate groups of people with different priorities and interest but sharing some common goals around system dynamics.
- Long term thinking about how system dynamics has evolved and will continue to evolve and what role the SDR and other publications of the Society can play in that evolution.
- Clear understanding of how the field has evolved and where it should be in the future. In this regard, active involvement in the SD Society would be important.
- Understanding of the roles of different positions in the Society and how the Publications domain intersects with others.
- Ability to engage Society members across the spectrum of practices and applications in the field to produce articles that are widely read and cited.
- Familiarity with open access changes in the journal publishing industry.

Appendix

Policies relating to VP Publications and Publications Committee

In Policies August 2022:

Vice President – Publications (2024) shall be responsible for all matters including copyright pertaining to the publication of the Society journal and to the content and presentation of the Society's web site; shall ensure that the Policy Council's publications policies are reflected in the various journals, bulletins, web postings and other publications of the Society; shall represent the Society in contractual negotiations with editorial offices and printers; shall oversee the work of the Executive Editor designated in Policy 20; and shall have oversight of editorial policy of the Society's website including archives.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Authorities and Duties: The Publications Committee shall assess the quality, timeliness, distinctiveness, and coverage of publications of the Society and its Chapters and of its web site, with respect to the objectives of the Society and its editorial policies. It shall review the policies and practices of the editors and webmaster. It shall recommend to the Policy Council ways of effecting improvements in the publications of the Society and its web site. It shall annually submit to the Policy Council, via the Vice President Publications, a written report on all publications sent to the members or sold to the general public during the previous twelve months.