

Meta-Reflections on *Meta-Psychology*: The First Five (-ish) Years

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Looking back

As of 2017, the replication crisis in Psychology had spurred a flourishing movement of methodological reform, built on the ideals of open science. Yet, scientific journals were lagging behind, failing to publish this new type of scholarly work. Champions of the reform (innovative meta-researchers, thorough replicators, helpful methodological educators, and methodological terrori...—ahem, sorry—error detectors) thus had a hard time sharing their work through peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Scientific journals were also slow to adopt new higher standards of transparency and openness. Having edited and managed *Meta-Psychology* the past five years, I realize how difficult it must be to reform an already established—and perhaps highly esteemed—journal. By creating a new journal from scratch, it allowed us to do everything right from the very beginning, and having fewer submissions at the outset meant that all the mistakes and clever (actually stupid) ideas were easier to fix...

In hindsight, a bunch of our ideas (outlined in our inaugural editorial; Carlsson et al., 2017) didn't pan out as we had hoped. Very few people spontaneously provided open peer reviews on preprints and we've almost exclusively relied on invited peer reviews. Only a few brave authors submitted their file drawer reports to us. Commenting directly in preprints seemed like a great idea, but turned out to be an absolute nightmare to curate across versions. Having editors write peer review reports together with peer reviewers was very time consuming and many peer reviewers were likely just annoyed by the extra paperwork.

On the other hand, many ideas have fortunately turned out great. Mandatory requirements to share data, materials, and code has been utterly (and perhaps unsurprisingly) unproblematic. With the exception of a few startled reviewers, sharing the entire editorial process, including reviews and identity of reviewers, has been a smooth and straightforward part of our work.

Free to read and free to publish seemed too good to be true. Yet, we have made it possible thanks to partially

DIY copy-editing, tremendous community response and support, and grants from the Swedish Research Council (which we just got renewed for another three years!).

The Swedish Research Council grant has enabled us to have an in-house expert working on what I believe to be, by far, our most important innovation: Reproducibility checks. Nothing is published in *Meta-Psychology* without it first being computationally reproduced by our journal assistant, Lucija Batinović. I dare to say that this adds a value, and quality control, well beyond what any traditional peer review does. Today, I can't even fathom editing a journal that publishes articles without checking first that they are even reproducible.

Looking forward

We started this year by electing a new Editorial Board, following the five-year board renewal outlined in our statutes. Because we are an editorial-owned and self-governed journal, demonstrating our ability to renew and restructure ourselves is important for our credibility to serve our research community. I'm honored to have been elected to serve another five years as Editor-in-Chief, but I'm also happy to see a thriving community, as it is living proof that MP will continue in the future, even when all the founding members inevitably have been replaced.

We have grown a lot these years. The first year we published a handful of studies, but now we're publishing 30–50 articles yearly. Currently, a main focus is to make working on a larger scale smoother. For example, ensuring that reproducibility checks begin already at submission. We are also increasing the demands on authors. When we started, open science practices were new to everyone and our focus was to be helpful and not create obstacles. Today, practices are established enough for us to be able to require authors to not only do things, but do things right (e.g., submitting annotated code that runs).

We are retiring peer reviewers being co-authors of the peer review report, the file drawer section, and although we're leaving peer review open to spontaneous commenting, we won't spend as much time advertising

for it as we have in the past.

We are introducing a format created by Chambers (2020) for the journal *Cortex*, called Verification Reports which are, essentially, post-publication reproducibility reports. We will also be emphasizing our preference for registered reports to go through Peer Community in Registered Reports (PCI-RR) rather than as direct submissions (still an option of course) as we believe that their specialized approach to that process is the best alternative for our authors as well.

Finally, an editorial in 2023 is not complete without discussion of AI and plagiarism. Unsurprisingly, our take is that AI innovations in science, and scientific publication are welcome, but that it should be used in an

open and transparent manner.

References

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