EDITORIAL

Reflections

David E. Quain ✉ iD

Institute of Brewing & Distilling,
London, SE1 2ND, UK

✉ david.quain@IBD.org.uk

Headlines

This issue of Reflections considers some of the challenges with the Journal of the Institute of Brewing switching from a global publisher to being self-published. Whilst some were obvious and (reasonably) easy to address, others were unexpected and were revealed over time. In the 'unexpected camp', the visibility of the Journal in university libraries and citation databases was affected with the switch. This was bad news! Publications need to be easily found, read and (hopefully) make an impact. Although a steep learning curve, JIB is now part of EBSCO (used by libraries) and has returned to Scopus (citation database). Going forward, JIB is hopefully joining DOAJ - an index of open access journals. A requirement of the DOAJ application is that the JIB must be digitally archived. It now is, should all be lost with a 'trigger event'! Comparing the journal's key performance indicators is a favourite subject, and for this year three of the four process KPIs have improved over 2023. Finally, this issue contains four research papers. One, on the survival of pathogens in non-alcoholic beers, has made an immediate impact and has been downloaded over 500 times in just 30 days from publication.

'Known unknowns' etc

Although attributed in 2002 to the then USA Secretary of State, Donald Rumsfeld, the 'awareness-understanding matrix' of 'known knowns', 'unknown knowns', 'known unknowns' and 'unknown unknowns' stems from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the USA.

The challenges for JIB with the switch from a global publisher to being self-published by the IBD were more down to earth. The biggest bucket was the 'known knowns' or things that we were aware of and understand. For example: (i) creation of the website, workflow and publishing online, (ii) traceability of papers by associating unique DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers) and (iii) design, format and 'look' of papers. These of course are now history, being in place for the launch the 'new' JIB in February 2023.

The 'known unknowns' or things we were aware of but don't understand has proved more challenging. Abstracting and citation databases play a key role in facilitating the visibility of publications. During the Wiley years, such things were 'under the bonnet'. From 2023, this changed, with the dawning realisation that the new JIB was no longer as visible to readers or citation services. The process of reconnecting is ongoing, but JIB has joined EBSCO (https://www.ebsco.com/) - a service used by university libraries. Similarly, JIB is now back on Scopus (https://www.scopus.com/), the abstract and citation database which underpins CiteScore. Further, citations to papers published in JIB are now visible via Scopus and Google Scholar on the individual publications 'home page'.
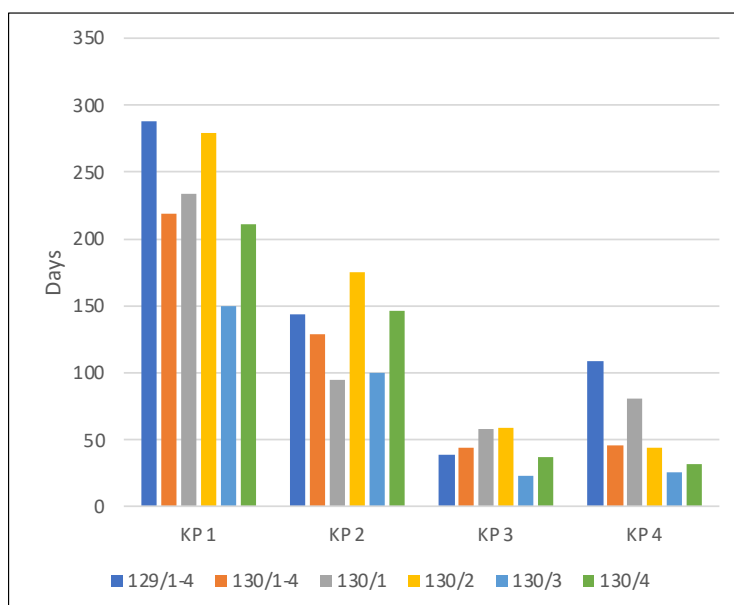
In the 'unknown knowns' or things I was not aware of but understand is the DOAJ an 'index of diverse open access journals from around the world' (https://doaj.org/). Like Scopus, the application process is complex and exhaustive. As part of this and another 'unknown known', is the requirement for the journal to be archived in the event of a 'trigger event'. Long term digital preservation is in place for the Wiley issues and is now for the new JIB. Hopefully, JIB will join the DOAJ in early 2025.

Publication KPIs

The KPIs track the key steps from submission of the manuscript to the publication of the paper. The KPIs are reported for each issue together with a consolidated metric for the 16 publications in 2023 (129/1-4) and 2024 (130/1-4).

KPI	Activity
1	Total process time (in days) from submission to publication
2	Time from submission to 'soft' accept (intention flagged to the authors)
3	Time for copy editing by the EiC. On completion, 'hard' accept
4	Time for pdf creation, review by authors, final proof edits by the EiC

Year on year the average time for three of the KPIs are down in 2024 (1, 69 days; 2, 15 days and 4, 63 days). The average time for KPI4 in 2024 is up from by five days from 39 to 44 days.

To conclude

There are four research papers in this issue, with corresponding authors from Brazil, Japan and two from the UK. The papers report the measurement of isovaleraldehyde in sake, starch breakdown and aroma formation in crystal malt, comparison of hop varieties grown in Brazil and the USA and the survival of pathogens in non-alcoholic beers. This last publication is a timely contribution to an important topic, as reflected by it being downloaded 500 times in the first 30 days after publication.

Cheers,

David Quain
Editor in Chief