Reflections

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In this, the third issue of the Journal in 2023, Reflections considers the return of ‘correspondence’ with a discussion between Charles Bamforth and Ricardo Fritzsche regarding Charlie’s Provocation review from earlier this year. In the last century (!), ‘correspondence’ or ‘Letter to the Editor’ was a regular feature in JIB. Rather more contemporary is the use of Google Analytics to analyse website traffic. Whilst a rich source of data, the wheat needs sorting from the chaff. The numbers are interesting and will become more so over time. In terms of visitors to https://jib.ibd.org.uk/index.php/jib, they are from 90 countries with three quarters coming from 10 countries. Continuing the ‘numbers’ theme, there are four KPIs which capture steps from submission to publication. These provide useful insights into the process and identify opportunities for improvement. These KPIs are updated with each issue of the Journal. Finally, a reminder to budding authors that the current ‘instructions to authors’ must be consulted and carefully applied to the submitted manuscript. This saves time (for everyone) and avoids the ‘desk rejection’ of manuscripts that ignore the instructions.

The return of ‘correspondence’

An ‘old friend’ returns to this issue. ‘Correspondence’ or, in recent years, ‘Letter to the Editor’ featured some 136 times between 1920 and 1999, with just four in the noughties. Frequently although not exclusively, these short reports challenged or built on a recent publication in the Journal. Looking back, many of key opinion formers in the industry at the time ‘put pen to paper’ typically eloquently but directly. A few, it must be said, were feisty. Whatever, after a bit of a gap, I’m pleased to reactivate the ‘correspondence’ category with a discussion between Ricardo Fritzsche and Charles Bamforth triggered by Charlie’s ‘provocation’ review that ‘prolonged maturation of beer is of unproven benefit’ in the first issue of this year.
Insights from Google analytics

The JIB web site went live at the end of February. Another tool, Google web analytics provides fascinating insight into the Journal’s ‘readership’. As of the end of September, 15,000 pages have been viewed by 2811 visitors from 90 countries. Of this, three quarters of the visits are from 10 countries.

Publication KPIs

There are four key performance indicators (KPIs) that segment the process from submission to publication. The total process time - KPI 1 – is understandably the one that authors focus on but is a result of three other KPIs. As shown in the chart below the KPIs for the first three issues are not consistent. This is not surprising, as with the switch from Wiley to the IBD publishing JIB, there are several activities which are now ‘in house’. Inevitably, these have taken time to get to grips with and have extended the cycle time from submission to publication. Tracking these activities highlights opportunities to tighten the process. Accordingly, over time I would hope the time from submission to publication will reduce.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPI</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Total process time (in days) from submission to publication</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Time from submission to ‘soft’ accept (intention flagged to the authors)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Time for copy editing by the EiC. On completion, ‘hard’ accept</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Time for pdf creation, review by authors, final proof edits by EiC</td>
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Making it easier for authors

The instructions to authors for submissions to JIB are detailed and perhaps pedantic! Authors need to create their manuscript (and associated Figures, Tables and supplementary information) according to the house style. Consulting and applying the instructions in advance of starting the writing process will save time and effort. Getting this right first time is strongly recommended as, regrettably, ignoring them will result in ‘reject and resubmit’ – an outcome that wastes everyone’s time.

The instructions to authors can be found [here]. Different journals have different requirements and can – in my view – be unnecessarily pernickety. Writing and revising are lengthy and taxing processes, so JIB uses the Harvard format for references which is much, much easier to edit than the Vancouver numbering approach. Further, the reference format in the text and in the ‘references’ are stripped of unnecessary punctuation.

To conclude

Finally, as is the norm, there are four papers in this issue. Subjects include the aroma profile of pineapple beers, tribo-rheology of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beer, impact on beer composition of filtration enzymes during mashing and volatile compounds during batch multi-stage distillation of whisky. The papers are from China, UK, Belgium and France.

Cheers,

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Editor in Chief