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## The Society and Its *Journal*

I have been a member of the *JASIST* Editorial Board for more than 16 years – long enough to witness many changes in our Society’s major scholarly publication. The *Journal* has grown in size while maintaining its high ranking among comparable journals. The publication backlog has decreased and time-to-publication reduced.

Yet, like most things, the *Journal* could be improved. One thing editorial board members have noticed is that our competition is getting better. Their impact factors have been rising. In some years, for some journals, the impact factor is superior to that of *JASIST*.

Perhaps the quality of these other journals is why some ASIS&T members submit their manuscripts to them rather than *JASIST*. Or perhaps it is personal connections to other editorial boards and their members that account for this decision. Whatever the reason, it is unfortunate that more of our members do not make *JASIST* their first choice.

Who belongs to ASIS&T is, of course, a related factor. A few years back, and with the help of the *JASIST* publisher, I did a longitudinal analysis of *JASIST* authorship from 1990 to 2000, finding that almost two-thirds of the authors were not members of ASIS&T and that there were roughly as many authors from computer science departments as from LIS departments (about 20% came from each discipline). I followed up that analysis with a survey of 131 of those non-member authors. What they told me

would not surprise you: Other organizations competed for their attention, time and money, and they chose to join ACM, IEEE, the American Library Association or some other association, rather than ASIS&T. A few of the European and Asian authors cited the North American emphasis of ASIS&T as a reason for not joining. While they lavished praise upon the Society’s *Journal*, they were not as convinced about the value of ASIS&T membership.

So it is that we have many non-members publishing in *JASIST* and a number of members who prefer to send their work elsewhere. The latter circumstance is a shame as it undermines the virtuous circle operating between the Society and its journal: The more that prominent members of the Society publish in *JASIST*, the stronger the *Journal* becomes. And the stronger that *JASIST* becomes, the more visible and financially secure the Society becomes.

My hope for ASIS&T is that we recruit more members. And my wish for the *Journal* is that more of our members will publish there. We need to keep our Society’s primary publication strong. The best way we can do that is to make it the first choice for our own work and that of our students and colleagues.

I believe that under the stewardship of our new editor, Blaise Cronin, *JASIST* will improve. I predict that both the rejection rate and the impact factor will rise, making the *Journal* more prominent than ever. Can we make our Society equally attractive to non-members? ■