

## Journal Review

# Journal of Library Outreach and Engagement

Stacy H. Johnson 1

<sup>1</sup> Sam Houston State University; [shjohnson@shsu.edu](mailto:shjohnson@shsu.edu)

**Keywords:** library marketing, library outreach and engagement, academic libraries, public libraries, school libraries

## 1. Journal Information

Journal Name: [Journal of Library Outreach and Engagement](#)

Journal URL: <https://iopn.library.illinois.edu/journals/jloe/index>

ISSN (if applicable): 2690-2672

Wayback Machine URLs: [COPE: Core practices](#); [DOAJ](#); [DOAJ Guide to applying](#); [DOAJ search results](#); [Google Scholar search results for JLOE citations](#); [IOPN: About IOPN](#); [IOPN: IOPN Journals](#); [IOPN: Policies](#); [ISSN Portal search for JLO&E number](#); [JLO&E: About the journal](#); [JLO&E: Archives](#); [JLO&E: Author Agreement](#); [JLO&E: Contact](#); [JLO&E: Current Issue](#); [JLO&E: Editorial Team](#); [JLO&E: Information for Librarians](#); [JLO&E: Information for Readers](#); [JLO&E: Submissions](#); [JLO&E Volume 3, Issue 1: Letter from the Editors](#); [Library Publishing Coalition: About Us](#); [Outreach and Engagement your thing? Publish here!](#); [Public Knowledge Project: About](#); [Public Knowledge Project: Open Journal Systems](#); [WCAG 2.0 Accessibility Guidelines](#)

Dates of Wayback Snapshots: 2023-10-05, 2023-10-06, 2023-11-13, 2023-11-14, 2023-11-15, 2023-11-20, 2023-11-21

## 2. Reviewer Positionality

Stacy H. Johnson - Assistant Professor, Research & Instruction Librarian, Sam Houston State University.

My scholarly efforts include performing a survey-based study of undergraduate student social media use. My service activities reflect involvement in library outreach and engagement activities at Sam Houston State University. I am also interested in the journal as a future publication venue. Before my current position as a reference and instruction librarian, I was a news reporter and editor. I have taught an upper-level specialty writing class at my institution in addition to my work as a faculty librarian and information literacy course instructor. My experience and knowledge as a media professional help inform my practice regarding outreach and engagement as an academic librarian and as a scholarly author.

Bias statement: One of the authors of an article published in an edition of the *Journal of Library Outreach & Engagement* is a colleague in the same department at my institution. I provided light copy-editing for the submission, but made no substantial changes. This did not influence my decision to submit a review as I was unaware of the review opportunity at the time. I do not feel this association will influence my ability to assess the publication using the rubric provided by the *Reviews: The Journal of Journal Reviews*.

## 3. Journal Review

### 3.1 Transparency of Practice

The *Journal of Library Outreach & Engagement* (JLO&E) provides a venue for academic, public, school, and special libraries as well as other cultural heritage institutions to share their outreach

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activities. Double-blind, peer-reviewed, and open access, it is a welcome forum to further knowledge in marketing and promotional activities, as few others currently exist in the field.

*JLO&E*'s "Current Issue" page (JLO&E, n.d. -e) features links designating it as a member of the University of Illinois Libraries' Illinois Open Publishing Network. IOPN states on their "Policies" page (IOPN, n.d. -c) their commitments to preservation, open access, and accessibility. These policies are in line with Committee on Publication Ethics' core practices (COPE, n.d.). I was unable to find specifics related to COPE core practices regarding allegations of misconduct, complaints and appeals, or conflicts of interest on the journal's website or on the IOPN website at the time of this review. However, the "IOPN Journals" page (IOPN, n.d.-b) calls for members to maintain academic integrity and provides policies on related issues, including requiring editorial managers to be credible, ensuring high standards for the editorial process, providing links to original material as often as possible, and committing to reviewing material in a timely fashion.

*JLO&E* is published solely online and assigns DOIs for articles and issues (JLO&E, n.d. -e). An ISSN is listed on the "About the Journal" page (JLO&E, n.d. -a). When I searched the ISSN Portal by the ISSN number, there was a provisional record in place (ISSN International Centre, 2023). There is transparency about the publishing process and timeline included on *JLO&E*'s "Submissions" page (JLO&E, n.d. -i). The journal specifies the typical number of articles published in each issue, outlines expectations for potential publication dates, offers a link to an accessible Google Doc author agreement (JLO&E, n.d. -c), and shares a checklist for authors. The "Submissions" page (JLO&E, n.d. -i) further outlines copyright policy and licensing terms (also included on the author agreement) and the journal "strongly encourages" licensing published work under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY 4.0) license. There is also the option for licensing under Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC 4.0). According to the author agreement (JLO&E, n.d. -c), no sharing of preprints is allowed. The "Current Issue" page (JLO&E, n.d. -e) states the journal does not charge authors processing fees to publish and accepts submissions on a rolling basis.

### 3.2 Behaviour

A colleague at my institution co-authored an article in 2023 and in their experience, *JLO&E* practices its own outlined policies regarding submission and communication during the review process. The author mentioned that although they did not participate in it, the journal provides a pre-peer-review program on the "Submissions" page (JLO&E, n.d. -i) to assist those unfamiliar with the scholarly publication process. Co-editor Mara Thacker confirmed the mentorship program in an interview in the American Library Association's "Intersections: A Blog on Diversity, Literacy and Outreach" (Spencer & Thacker, 2021). This should be noted as an indication of the journal's willingness to help potential authors to fully understand the peer-review process. I have no personal knowledge of the journal's practices.

The journal offers readers publishing notification services for new issues through a registration link on the "Information for Readers" page (JLO&E, n.d. -h). They provide a statement there as well regarding privacy policies to safeguard users' personal information.

### 3.3 People

*JLO&E* lists editorial board members on the "Editorial Team" page (JLO&E, n.d. -f). The editors are from academic, public, school, special libraries and library associations in Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, and California. It offers support on a "Contact" page (JLO&E, n.d. -d) with information on communicating with the editors directly.

### 3.4 Equity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility Practices

A recent "Letter from the Editors" (Christensen, Thacker, Roberts, et al., 2023) in the journal offers evidence of attention to inclusivity and diversity practices. They mention an Idea Lab piece in the same issue regarding ethics and use of social media in libraries. They also rebuke assaults to free speech and provide a call to action by including a link for readers to sign a letter of support for American Library Association President Emily Drabinski.

In the ALA blog interview, Thacker states the publication's co-founders deliberately sought diversity in the makeup of their editorial advisory board (Spencer & Thacker, 2021). She said the journal welcomes submissions from authors "across demographics and institution types." Editors

on the “Editorial Team” page (JLO&E, n.d. -f) represent several geographic locations and institution types. Authors also represent diverse institutions, as determined by examining their contact information in randomly selected articles. The journal content also reflects these commitments. Works published in the journal discuss studying social justice issues such as equity in healthcare, in meeting needs of a range of patrons, and in access to information in a variety of libraries and cultural heritage institutions.

The journal is understandable and operable after scanning a random selection of content from the JLO&E “Archives” page (JLO&E, n.d. -b) and comparing it to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C, 2023). For perceivability, the PDFs provide options for screen reading selected passages of text and zooming for visibility. The content also follows WCAG 2.2 guidelines for uses of color, contrast and spacing. Figures did not have alternative text in the random sample of articles examined for this review, and their inclusion would increase accessibility.

### 3.5 Scholarship

Using a scan of randomly selected articles, authors are based in non-profit institutions like academic, public, school, and special libraries. They hail from a variety of libraries and other cultural heritage institutions in the United States, Africa, and Europe. Submissions are accepted from many researchers and practitioners, not just a few individuals or concentrated in one institution. JLO&E issues are edited for adherence to a standard citation style and produced with attention to detail and quality. There were few if any noticeable errors or formatting problems detected.

Original research article submissions in the journal explore ideas regarding interfacing with patrons and showcasing an array of collections. With a random selection of issue content, I found primary research on gathering data for planning outreach activities and on accommodating remote patrons, for example. This information is applicable to outreach activities in many disciplines, providing potential crossover interest by scholars in other subject areas. As one of few journals specifically focused on marketing in libraries, it provides current content for those involved in building relationships with patrons at their institutions. The articles include abstracts, introductions with literature reviews, methodology sections, results with clearly rendered tables, graphs and figures, discussion and conclusions that draw appropriately from related literature, and full reference lists.

The journal also publishes book reviews, updates from the field, and Idea Lab articles, according to their “Submissions” page (JLO&E, n.d. -i), and intends to publish around four to eight scholarly articles, three to five feature articles, and a maximum of two book reviews per issue. Authors who wish to publish but are not able to dedicate time or resources to perform original research will find opportunities to submit content in those formats.

### 3.6 Relationships

IOPN journals must have one editorial board member from University of Illinois upon joining to be included in the network, according to their “IOPN Journals” page (IOPN, n.d. -b). However, they will continue to host journals if the University of Illinois board member decides to leave the institution.

On their “Information for Librarians” page (JLO&E, n.d. -g) JLO&E states they use Open Journal Systems (OJS). OJS is an open-source journal publishing software application developed by the Public Knowledge Project at Simon Fraser University (Public Knowledge Project, n.d.-b). On the “About IOPN” page (IOPN, n.d.-a) IOPN states they are a member of the Library Publishing Coalition and the Public Knowledge Project. University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign is confirmed as a member of the Library Publishing Coalition through the LPCs “About Us” page (Library Publishing Coalition, n.d.).

There are 73 citations in Google Scholar to items in *Journal of Library Outreach and Engagement* (Google Scholar, n.d.). It is not confirmable in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) at the time of this review by searching the organization’s database for the journal title (DOAJ, 2023, 2023 November -b). The journal’s activities outlined above in the Transparency of Practice section meet many of DOAJ’s list of inclusion criteria on their “Guide to applying” page (DOAJ, 2023 November -a). I have no knowledge of whether the journal has applied to be indexed in DOAJ. JLO&E asks librarians to include links to the journal in institutional catalogs on the

“Information for Librarians” page (JLO&E, n.d. -g). IOPN states they require journals to be indexed within three years on their “IOPN Journals” page (IOPN, n.d.-b). The journal was within that timeframe as of the writing of this review.

There is no information as of the time of this review concerning *Journal of Library Outreach and Engagement* in a title search of The Retraction Watch Database (The Center for Scientific Integrity, 2018). I found no issues with their practices or reputation when scanning other publications in the discipline to find mention of JLO&E’s behavior by searching for the journal’s title in EBSCO’s Library & Information Science Source.

### 3.7 Background and History

The journal started publication in 2020 with funds obtained through University of Illinois Libraries innovation grant (Spencer & Thacker, 2021). The JLO&E “Current Issue” page (JLO&E, n.d.-e) lists Volume 3, Number. 1, September 2023, as the most recent issue. On the journal’s “Archives” page (JLO&E, n.d.-b) all issues are available as open-access PDFs.

## 4. Discussion & Conclusions

*Journal of Library Outreach and Engagement* is an open-access, peer-reviewed scholarly journal focusing on reaching patrons and highlighting collections in libraries of all types. Original research articles share findings from studies in institutions across North America, in Africa and in Europe. It welcomes diversity among its editorial board and authors and features a clearly outlined submission process. Based on the evidence above, I believe *Journal of Library Outreach and Engagement* can be considered a reputable scholarly publication.

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