

# Adaptations of Academic Journal Abstracts to Conflicting Demands of Stakeholders

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## 1. Introduction

For many years we have been in a period of rapid increase in the production of academic text and, we may hope, knowledge. Even before the internet revolution Milas-Bracovic and Zajec (1989) could open an article on abstracts of research articles by invoking “[t]he exponential growth of scientific and technological information on the one hand, and the rapid development of information technology based on computerization on the other”.

Again, even before the internet revolution it was claimed that scientific research articles were becoming more promotional to stand out in the crowd of academic texts, as this sixteen-year-old quotation suggests:

“It is not so much the *amount* of news value that is remarkable in today’s scientific journal articles as it is the promoting of it. Today’s scientists seem to be *promoting* their work to a degree never seen before” (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995: 43, italics in the original).

Novice writers need to acquire the necessary linguistic skills for this purpose. It is a natural assumption that an on-line abstract for a journal article would be one of the places to display these skills, as it is the showcase to entice readers to the full paper.

However, Dahl (2004) found that her sample of abstracts was not characterized by promotional language. Why is this the case? In this study we are trying to solve this puzzle by drawing on different perspectives on the analysis of abstracts. The key point is that abstracts are a focus of interest for a variety of actors. Because various parties are involved in publication, it seems necessary to take the interests of at least three groups of different stakeholders into consideration: those of researchers as authors, information scientists/librarians, and of journal editors and publishers. These groups, along with the readers who use the abstracts, have different and partly

conflicting interests in the nature of abstracts. Furthermore, given that on-line presentation is a relatively new phenomenon, and the idea that academic writing is increasingly promotional has a venerable history (Fairclough 1993, Bhatia 1997) it is also interesting to observe the historical development of the structure and language in abstracts. Thus this study investigates the historical development of abstracts from different stakeholders' perspectives.

## 2. Different approaches to the analysis of academic journal abstracts

### 2.1. Publishers' normative requirements

Journals increasingly define the type of abstract they expect in the instructions for authors, and this constitutes another type of factor defining the form of actual abstracts. Table 1 gives the requirements of *Cell* and the *Journal of Consumer Research* as examples. A significant factor in this connection is the desire of large journal publishers to standardize requirements across titles, which means that abstract requirements need not necessarily reflect disciplinary developments, but rather institutional decisions within the publishers.

Table 1: Journals' instructions

<i>Cell</i>	<i>Consumer Research</i>
The Summary consists of a single paragraph of fewer than 150 words. It should clearly convey the conceptual advance and significance of the work to a broad readership. In particular, the abstract should contain a brief background of the question, a description of the results without extensive experimental detail, and a summary of the significance of the findings. References should not be cited in the Summary.	Please include an excellent abstract (150 words max) that carefully summarizes your work. Your abstract should contain: 1) Motivation/ Problem (what gap your research will fill); 2) Approach/Methods; 3) Results; 4) Implications and Conclusions. Use keywords within your abstract (very important for indexing and abstracting). Do not include any citations, tables, figures, or any information in your abstract that is not in your manuscript.

Some journals do not specify abstract content at all: *Econometrica* for example merely says:

Pages should be numbered, and an abstract (**of no more than 150 words**), as well as keywords and complete author affiliations, should be included in the paper in the title page. (JEL numbers are optional.)

### 2.2. Discourse analysts' perspective

Discourse and corpus analysts have approached academic journal abstracts descriptively, attributing the variability to the authors' linguistic or disciplinary backgrounds (Swales 2004). The objectives were both to advance one particular interpretation and to provide tools for novice

writers to understand disciplinary expectations (Hyland 2000).

### 2.2.1. Evaluative language and discourse in abstracts

To help writers to produce persuasive abstracts, some studies in discourse analysis have investigated evaluative language in abstracts (Hyland and Tse 2005; Stotesbury 2003). It is found that across the disciplines writers often employ various linguistic devices such as personal pronouns, evaluative adjectives, and *that*-clause (Hyland and Tse 2005; Stotesbury 2003) and it is suggested that this is promotional discourse intended to draw readers' attention and to promote the work. Lindeberg (2004) looked at both promotional moves and language use in three related disciplines i.e. two journals each in finance, management and marketing. She shows that abstracts in marketing journals showed most use of direct promoting with the use of claims of centrality, gaps, and boosts, followed by management and finance journals. Use of promotional language seems to show some variation even among the closely related disciplines.

By contrast, however, through the analysis of argumentative abstracts in economics and linguistics, Dahl (2004) did not find "the selling aspect" of abstracts through overt lexical promotion.

Much writing on academic discourse would lead one to expect increasingly promotional discourse in recent years. A few studies have investigated chronological development of abstracts in academic journals (Gillaerts and Van de Velde 2010; Hyland 2000). Hyland' database, comprising abstracts from 8 disciplines between 1980 and 1997 shows that abstracts have generally become 32 percent longer and more informative. The study of Gillaerts and Van de Velde (2010) confirmed the increase in the size of abstracts. But their study also shows that the use of interactional metadiscourse in 72 abstracts in the *Journal of Pragmatics* has decreased in the past 30 years. We need to pay attention to abstract analysis from a different perspective.

### 2.3. Efficiency in abstract discourse

Rather than aiming to help writers be more persuasive, information scientists or librarians have adopted a reader perspective and worked on economical and efficient ways of abstracting information (Cross and Oppenheim 2005; Lancaster 2003; Pinto 2003). The concluding remark of a study on linguistic forms of abstracts by information scientists shows the conflicting demands of two different camps, one to improve the clarity of abstracts and the other to highlight the authors' contribution.

“What is new in the ESP studies is that they show clearly what devices authors use to promote their articles, and how they achieve such **bias** linguistically”. (Montesi and Urdiciani 2005, p.75). (bold letters by the authors)

To eliminate “authors’ bias”, authors’ abstracts were sometimes revised by editors (Mani 2001; Cremmins 1996). Nevertheless, Montesi and Owen (2007) find that because of the rapid and large flow of information, most abstracts on the abstracting database were from author abstracts rather than edited versions. It looks as if writers are fully in charge of abstracts, but subject to demands from information scientists — and publishers — for more neutral and reader-friendly texts. It may be the case that the authors can only achieve as long as other stakeholders can agree to their writing. It seems necessary to study the linguistic forms that have been used to achieve the purpose of the authors in conjunction with the interests of the other stakeholders.

### 3. The study

#### 3.1. The purpose

This study analyzes a corpus of academic journal abstracts from highly-rated (A+) journals by Harzing (2011) in three disciplines: economics, marketing, and cell biology. The purpose was to investigate the development of abstract texts in the tension between the writers’ wish to promote their work, the readers’ need for clarity, represented by information scientists, and the journal editors’ and publishers’ urge to increase the readership. Focus was placed on the historical dimension. The research questions were set out as follows.

- 1 ). Have the length of abstracts changed over the past forty years?
- 2 ). What linguistic features of abstracts have changed over the past forty years?

#### 3.2. Data

The data were from the following three journals; *Econometrica*, a theoretical journal, *Journal of Consumer Research*, a marketing journal with data mainly coming from surveys, and *Cell*, Cell biology journal, focusing on experimental studies. For the analysis of abstracts to approach the above three questions, a small corpus of abstracts was created by downloading thirty abstracts each from volumes for 1970 (1974 for Cell and Consumer Research), 1990 and 2010 of the three journals, consisting of 90 abstracts from each journal. The analysis thus focuses on the 270 abstracts in the three journals. Corpus searches were carried out on the use of personal pronouns,

verbs, modal verbs and nouns.

The number of single authored papers decreased in all the three journals over the past forty years with some variation. In *Cell*, 11 out of 95 papers were single authored in 1974 but none in 1990 or 2010, and the proportion in JCR dropped from 30% to 8% while the majority of papers were single-authored in *Econometrica* in 1970 and a third remain single authored in 2010.

Table 2: Authorship of articles in three volumes of *Econometrica*

Year	Number of papers	Number of single authored papers
1970	57	39
1990	54	21
2010	44	10

Table 3: Authorship of articles in three volumes of *Journal of Consumer Research*

Year	Number of papers	Number of single authored papers
1974	20	6
1990	29	10
2010	70	6

Because use of first-person pronouns (*I* and exclusive *we*) is an important issue in previous research on abstracts, samples with only multiple-authored papers were established for *Cell* and *JCR* while from *Econometrica* the sample was divided into single authored and multiple authored, with 15 papers respectively for these two types of papers.

Table 4: Authorship of sampled articles from three journals

Journal	<i>Econometrica</i>		<i>Consumer Research</i>	<i>Cell</i>
Years of publication \ Type of authorship	Single author papers	Multiple author papers	Multiple author papers	Multiple author papers
Number of abstract from 1970	15	15	30	30
Number of abstract from 1990	15	15	30	30
Number of abstract from 2010	15	15	30	30
Total number of abstracts	45	45	90	90

### 3.3 Method

#### Corpus analysis

The 270 abstracts were divided into 9 sub-corpora, and significant words were searched for

separately in each set of 30 with *Econometrica* further dividing into single and multiple author papers, so that both cross-disciplinary and diachronic comparisons could be made.

The search software used was WordSmith Tools Version 4 (Scott 2007). Searches were made for the types of evaluative words identified by Hyland & Tse (2005) and by Lindeberg (2004) and Dahl (2004) and for the metadiscoursal vocabulary examined by Gillaerts and Van de Velde (2010). We also searched for vocabulary signalling moves for Gap.

## 4. Findings

Here we report the results of our analysis of linguistic features across the three journals over the forty years.

### 4.1. Length

Table 5: The length of abstracts

Year	1970	1990	2010
Journal			
<i>Econometrica</i>	3499	3947	3433
<i>Consumer Research</i>	1597	3063	4356
<i>Cell</i>	4701	4108	4452

On the historical dimension, it seems that the difference in abstract length among the journals has become less distinct over the years. The total length of abstracts has increased as was shown by previous studies (Gillaerts and Van de Velde 2010; Hyland 2000). However, looking at different journals individually, we find that the size of abstracts in *Econometrica* and *Cell* has remained the same while those in *Consumer Research* have more than doubled. In 2010, although the word limit of the abstract was the same in the three journals, i.e. less than 150 words, *Econometrica* has the shortest length of abstracts.

### 4.2. Linguistic features

#### 4.2.1. Inter-journal variation and shared trends

We find some inter-journal variation and some shared change in the use of personal pronouns, verbs and nouns in the three journals over the forty years.

Self-reference words (e.g. *I, we, my, our, the author(s), the researcher(s)*)

Use of first-person pronouns has increased sharply over the period (Table 6)

Table 6: Absolute numbers of first-person pronouns (*we, our, I, my*)

	<i>Econometrica</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>Cell</i>
1974	13	2	12
1990	26	3	41
2010	25	51	58

These are mainly instances of *we* and they have increased over the forty years in all the three journals, reflecting the shift from the active voice to the passive voice, and as Lindeberg (2004) would say, increasingly promotional discourse. However, the sharp increase seems to take place at a different period, 1990 for *Econometrica* and *Cell*, but 2010 for *Consumer Research*. It is interesting that *Cell* had instances of *we* even in 1974 while the use in *Consumer Research* shot up from 0 in 1974 to 55 in 2010. *Consumer Research* had no instances of *we* in 70 but 45 in 2010; the shift in *Consumer Research* was more drastic than *Econometrica* and *Cell*. In *Econometrica*, we examined the use of *we* in single and multiple authored abstracts separately. The third person noun *the authors* and *the researchers* never occurred in the journals analysed except one case of *the authors* in one *Consumer Research* 2010 abstract.

As one abstract may use more than one instance of *we*, or *I* in case of a single authored paper, the number of instances per abstract was counted. Single authored abstract do not seem to prefer the use of either *I/we* in the abstract, while multi-authored abstracts show more variation in their use. When three journal abstracts were compared, we find that the use in *Cell* has become much more standardized than that in *Consumer Research* and *Econometrica*. Although no requirement was specified in the use of personal pronouns, editorial policies may have been reflected in the use.

Table 7: Number of instances of *we* in an abstract in *Econometrica*

Single authored abstracts

Instances of <i>I/we/our</i>	74	Instances of <i>I/we</i>	90	Instances of <i>I/we</i>	2010
	No of abstracts employing <i>I/we</i> out of 15		No of abstracts employing <i>I/we</i> out of 15		No of abstracts employing <i>I/we</i> out of 15
0	14/10	0	12/1	0	13/11
1	1/3	1	2/1	1	2/2
2	0/0	2	0/2	2	0/0
3	0/2	3	1/2	3	0/0
4	0/0	4	0/0	4	0/0
5	0/0	5	0/0	5	0/0

Multiple authored abstracts

74		90		2010	
Instances of <i>we</i>	No of abstracts employing <i>we</i> out of 15	Instances of <i>we</i>	No of abstracts employing <i>we</i> out of 15	Instances of <i>we</i>	No of abstracts employing <i>we</i> out of 15
0	<b>10</b>	0	<b>3</b>	0	<b>2</b>
1	3	1	5	1	3
2	0	2	4	2	5
3	2	3	0	3	4
4	0	4	1	4	1
5	0	5	1	5	0

Table 8: Number of instances of *we* in an abstract in *Consumer Research*

74		90		2010	
Instances of <i>we</i>	No of abstracts	Instances of <i>we</i>	No of abstracts	Instances of <i>we</i>	No of abstracts
0	<b>30</b>	0	<b>28</b>	0	<b>9</b>
1	0	1	2	1	7
2	0	2	0	2	7
3	0	3	0	3	5
4	0	4	0	4	1

Table 9: Number of instances of *we* in an abstract in *Cell*

74		90		2010	
Instances of <i>we</i>	No of abstracts	Instances of <i>we</i>	No of abstracts	Instances of <i>we</i>	No of abstracts
0	<b>26</b>	0	4	0	0
1	2	1	<b>16</b>	1	<b>20</b>
2	1	2	5	2	7
3	0	3	4	3	0
4	1	4	0	4	3

In order to investigate the change in frequency, we focus on the reporting verbs that increased or decreased more than five instances between 1970 and 2010.

In order to identify historical differences and shared features, we investigated some verbs whose frequency had changed by more than five instances in at least one journal. We found seven verbs for this purpose. As six of them were regular verbs, we divided them into passive and active voice, treating past and present participle as the same verb. However, one irregular verb *find* was treated as one verb, separate from *found* because *found* itself did not increase nor decrease in the data.

When voice of verbs was categorized into two, tense of active voice verbs was also grouped into present, past and present perfect tense, to examine the relationship between tense and voice. Finally to investigate the use of a subject, instances of *we* was counted for active voice use.

In *Econometrica*, *examine*, *show* and *provide* were found to have shown some change over the forty years. The results show that the proportion of passive and active of *examine* and *show* has not changed while *provide* has shifted to active use. Voice preference seems to differ among the verbs. Although the voice of *provide* has changed to active, it does not seem to have *we* as a subject in *Econometrica*.

Table 10: Instances of passive and active voice use in *Econometrica*

<i>Econometrica</i>	1970	1990	2010
	Passive/Active instances	Passive/Active instances	Passive/Active instances
	No of active voice verbs in present/past/present perfect (no of <i>we/I</i> )	No of active voice verbs in present/past/present perfect (no of <i>we/I</i> )	No of active voice verbs in present/past/present perfect (no of <i>we/I</i> )
demonstrate	0/2	0	1/1
	2 present	0	1 present
	0	0	0
examine	6/4	13/10	5/6
	4 present	10 present	6 present
	1	7	3
find	1	2	2
	1 present	2 present	2 present
	0	2	2
report	0/1	1/1	0/1
	1present	1 present	1 present
	0	1	0
provide	1/4	1/6	3/13
	2 present, 2 past	6 present	13 present
	0	2	2
show	6/5	11/11	6/6
	5 present	11 present	6 present
	1	7	3
suggest	1/2	2/0	0/3
	2 present	0	3 present
	0	0	0

In *Consumer Research*, more verbs show change over the forty years. As was shown in *Econometrica*, some verbs started appearing more in active voice from 1990. The ratio between passive and active of the verb *examine* was 5 to 7, and 3 to 5, in 70 and 90 respectively, but all the 17

cases in 2010 were active. *Find* is also the verb which jumped its use with half of the verb with *we* in 2010.

Table 11: Instances of passive and active voice use in *Consumer Research*

<i>Consumer Research</i>	1970	1990	2010
	Passive/Active instances	Passive/Active instances	Passive/Active instances
	No of active voice verbs in Present/past/present perfect (no of <i>we</i> )	No of active voice verbs in Present/past/present perfect (no of <i>we</i> )	No of active voice verbs in present/past/present perfect (no of <i>we</i> )
demonstrate	0/2	0/2	0/8
	2 present	1 present, 1 past	8 present
	0	0	5
examine	5/2	3/2	0/17
	1	2	15 present, 2 present perfect
	0	0	6
find	0	1	18
	0	1 present	18 present
	0	1	10
report	1/1	0/1	0/1
	1 present	1 present	1 present
	0	0	0
provide	0/1	0/8	0/3
	1 present	8 present	3 present
	0	0	2
show	1/1	0/5	0/7
	1 present	3 present, 2 past	7 present
	0	0	5
suggest	3/2	0/3	0/6
	2 present	3 present	6 present
	0	0	1

In *Cell*, *show* and *suggest* show some change over the years but *Cell* and *Econometrica* did not seem much change in the use of verbs. In contrast, in *Consumer Research* *demonstrate*, *examine*, *find* and *report* increased dramatically but *suggest* somehow decreased.

Table 12: Instances of passive and active voice use in *Cell*

<i>Cell</i>	1970 Passive/Active instances	1990 Passive/Active instances	2010 Passive/Active instances
	No of active voice verbs in Present/past/present perfect (no of <i>we</i> )	No of active voice verbs in Present/past/present perfect (no of <i>we</i> )	No of active voice verbs in present/past/present perfect (no of <i>we</i> )
demonstrate	2/0	4/0	4
	2 present	4 present	4 present
	2	3	3
examine	1/0	0/1	0
	1 present perfect	1 present perfect	0
	0	1	0
find	0	3 present	1 present
	0	3	1
	0	3	1
report	0	0/2	0/8
	0	2 present	8 present
	0	2	8
provide	0/1	1/1	0/5
	0	1 present	5 present
	0	0	0
show	6/3	1/11	0/18
	3 present	7 present, 2 past, 2 present perfect	14 present, 4 past
	0	4	12
suggest	0/13	0/12	0/9
	11 present, 2 past	10 present, 2 past	9 present
	0	1	0

The change, however, does not seem to be simply from passive to active. This is because in the three journals, *demonstrate*, *report* and *suggest* never appeared in passive voice but only in active voice. This implies that some verbs are likely to appear more in active voice. Furthermore, unlike *Econometrica*, verbs in active voice tend to have more instances of *we* as a subject in *Cell* and *Consumer Research* in 2010. However, some verbs seem to prefer non-human subjects as *suggest* tends to appear mostly with inhuman subject such as *the data* in *Cell*. Also the shift to the use of *we* in general seems to be slow as is shown in *show*, *demonstrate*, *examine*.

These verbs in active voice also tended to appear in the present tense. In *Econometrica*, active voice verbs tended to be in present tense even in 1970s with only exception of *provide*, which occurred in the past. All five of the verbs examined in *Consumer Research* were employed in the

present tense with the exception of one instance of *examine* in 2010. In *Cell*, *report* and *suggest* were also only used in the present tense.

Next we investigated nouns that increased or decreased more than five instances.

### Use of nouns

We find change both in discipline specific terms such as *cells* in *Cell* and general nouns common in research articles such as *findings* and *model*.

Table 13: use of nouns with some changes in *Econometrica*

	Experiment(s)	model	parameter(s)	equilibrium
70	3	52	5	12
90	0	34	13	24
10	20	25	6	5

Table 14: of nouns with some changes in *Consumer Research*

	effect(s), effectiveness, (effective)	studies	findings	research	comparison	consumption	consumer(s), consumers'	lay
74	7(0)	5	5	9	0	0	21	0
90	12(1)	4	4	7	3	9	31	0
10	37(3)	13	12	25	9	12	80	11

### *Lay (diagnosis/ theories/belief(s))* (2/4/5)

	model	results	data	analysis	decision
70	15	9	7	7	15
90	7	12	4	4	12
10	8	6	0	1	8

Table 15: Use of nouns with some changes in *Cell*

	results	model	data	finding(s)	cells	cell	growth
70	7	2	1	1	75	38	24
90	10	3	2	2	31	20	2
10	12	10	8	6	25	14	8

Some discipline specific nouns seem to have decreased. For example, the theoretical journal *Econometrica* has used fewer instances of *model*, and *data* in the marketing journal *Consumer Research* disappeared. Similarly, instances of *Cell* and *Cells* plunged in *Cell*.

We have focused on general terms such as *analysis* that showed a change in only one journal. However, to grasp the overall picture of the change, we also investigate how they behave in all the journals.

Table 16: Comparison of frequently used nouns

	analysis			experiment(s)/tal			parameter(s)			research			studies		
	E	CR	C	E	CR	C	E	CR	C	E	CR	C	E	CR	C
1974	5	7	2	3	2(6)	2	5	0	1	2	9	0	2	5	2
1990	3	4	3	0	12	1	13	0	0	1	7	0	0	4	0
2010	5	1	1	20	6	0	6	0	0	0	25	0	0	13	2

E: *Econometrica*, CR: *Consumer Research*, C: *Cell*

Although the above nouns are relatively general terms in academic journals, *Cell* did not seem to use most of them in the abstracts. In *Cell* it is interesting that *experiment(s)* and *research* never appeared, and the less familiar noun *model* has increased. In *Consumer Research*, although most of the work is in the form of the survey, *research* surged from 9 in 1990 to 25 instances in 2010. By the same token, the use of *experiment(s)* jumped from 3 to 20 instances in *Econometrica* where writers mostly present their theoretical model. In fact, use of *model* decreased in *Econometrica*. In other words, nouns whose use is assumed in the journal has decreased, while those not inherent to the discipline increased.

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

This study identified chronological change in the length of abstracts and linguistic use. Although the total length of abstracts has increased over the years, the increase was only observed in *Consumer Research*. It seems necessary to consider the variation among the journals analysed.

Linguistic analysis of voice of verbs and nouns has shown the necessity of taking the standpoint of the publishers and the editors into consideration in the analysis. For example, the decrease in the instances of *suggest* in *Cell* indicates that as the most prestigious journal in the discipline, the editors may not be ready to accept abstracts with tentative stance. The decrease in interactional metadiscourse in *Journal of Pragmatics* in Gillaerts and Van de Velde's findings (2010) can also be explained from the publishers' perspective. They may have identified some danger in the use of the promotional or/and evaluative language, as argued by information scientists. Promoting the writers' own work and maintaining the journal credibility and objectivity seems to be a delicate act to follow, due to conflicting demands of various stakeholders.

From the chronological analysis, *we* has increased in multiple-authored abstracts in particular since 1990 in the three journals, The use of *we* certainly draws attention to the human agents in research, possibly promoting the contribution of the researchers. It has to be noted, however, that the degree of increase in personal pronouns seems to differ depending on the journal. The increase in *we* also indicates a change from passive to active voice. This shift seems to have caused another type of change because it increased the use of certain verbs such as *demonstrate*, *find* and *report*. As this change was quite explicit, it can be said that the writers are allowed to use *we*.

Why would this be the case? One possible answer seems to be that active sentences are found to be easier to comprehend than passive sentences (Slobin 1966). If the use of active voice helps readers, it certainly benefits the editors and the publishers as it increase the amount of access to the journal. Thus, if it is beneficial to the editor and the publishers, some promotional element can be accepted to appear on-line. If not, the writers need to promote their contribution covertly without using typical evaluative adjectives and adverbs. The increase in *that* clause as evaluative element pointed out by Hyland and Tse (2005) seems to be a good example of hiding the booster not to be taken out by the editors.

In this study, this implicit promotional device seems to be the use of nouns that are not inherent to the discipline such as *experiments* in theoretical abstracts. They can be a strategic device to draw attention from the readers. To succeed in publication, the writers need to understand not only disciplinary conventions but also what the editors and publishers expect from the publication, the different stakeholders' perspective.

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Appendix

**Econometrica:** <http://www.econometricsociety.org/submissions.asp>

**AIMS AND SCOPE**

“The Econometric Society is an international society for the advancement of economic theory in its relation to statistics and mathematics.... Its main object is to promote studies that aim at the unification of the theoretical-quantitative and the empirical-quantitative approach to economic problems and that are penetrated by constructive and rigorous thinking.”

**Cell :** <http://www.cell.com/authors>

**Aims and Scope**

*Cell* publishes findings of unusual significance in any area of experimental biology, including but not limited to cell biology, molecular biology, neuroscience, immunology, virology and microbiology, cancer, human genetics, systems biology, signaling, and disease. The basic criterion for considering papers is whether the results provide significant conceptual advances into, or raise provocative questions and hypotheses regarding, an interesting biological question.

**Consumer Research:** <http://ejcr.org/newguidelines.pdf>

**EDITORIAL OBJECTIVES**

*JCR* publishes empirical, theoretical, and methodological papers of the highest quality on topics in consumer research. The overriding criterion for publication in JCR is that *the paper should advance understanding of consumer behavior or the conduct of consumer research*. Typically, a paper suitable for JCR should attempt to advance, deepen, or repudiate existing published theory about consumption, and offer empirical support for its claims.