

2021: Annual Report to the CAG/ACG on *The Canadian Geographer – Le Géographe canadien*

Overview

This is my eleventh (and penultimate) year of editing *The Canadian Geographer-Le Géographe Canadien*. In that time, the journal and the publishing industry have changed significantly as Open Access publishing, online-only reading, impact factors, and a number of other influences have buffeted our journal—and all publications. We have responded in an agile manner to most challenges and opportunities. As a result, the journal is in a strong position. Our editorial team, supported by the Canadian Association of Geographers, is keen to continue to attract authors, enhance our content, and widely disseminate our journal. This report summarizes our position in the industry and in the discipline of geography. It highlights recent and planned changes to the journal name and design. It also focuses on persistent challenges, as well as emerging trends. Additionally, this report summarizes and explains a number of metrics that describe the situation at *The Canadian Geographer-Le Géographe Canadien* at the end of 2021.

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Emphasis in 2021

We are grateful to our incoming President Nathalie Gravel, as well as the Feminism and Geography Special Interest Group of the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG), for bringing to our attention that the French language version of the journal name (*Le Géographe canadien*) is masculine. As Editor of the journal, I worked in conjunction with the CAG to select a new name that would address this concern, and continue to have the same meaning in French and English. A major concern with making this kind of change was that we did not want to affect our journal indexing, citation tracking, and impact factor through an abrupt name change. To that end, we happily agreed upon *Canadian Geographies* (English) and *Les géographies canadiennes*. Our current President, Neil Hanlon, has outlined this change to the CAG. We are currently working on a new logo for the journal that both reflects the name changes, as well as a return to the blue of the CAG logo.

Wiley, our publisher, is in the process of rolling out a 'New Journal Design' (NJD) among all of its journals across all disciplines. The purpose of the NJD is to enhance reading on digital devices and on screens in general, and to make it more efficient to proceed from an 'accept' decision to EarlyView online publication. This change will for the most part not affect our authors, with a notable exception being a change in our reference style. After years of using a bespoke reference style, we are changing to APA, which will make our authors' formatting much easier. The look of articles, both online and in pdf format, will change in a variety of ways including a different font, treatment of authors lists, etc. The transition to our new format will be phased in. We anticipate publishing new author submission guidelines by end of June. Publications already in progress will continue to be produced in the current format; we anticipate switching over production completely to the new format by end of August.

Open Access publishing is here to stay and will, almost certainly, increase its reach over the next few years. We know that papers published as Open Access receive three times more downloads and almost double the citations. However, as a society journal that supports the CAG, it is important that we continue to offer traditional publication. We are trying to balance this while promoting Open Access to authors. In 2021, we published eight Open Access papers, double the number in 2020. We are also highlighting two papers every month, and Wiley makes those papers "free to read" online.

Our operations as a journal over this last year were still affected by the pandemic—although to a lesser degree than in 2020. Our usual challenges securing reviewers, however, continued, and deadlines were more often missed by authors and reviewers alike as we all worked to adjust and adapt to the reality of co-existing with COVID-19. Reviewer defaults also increased.



Overall, our submission numbers were up considerably in 2021. This is very positive news and is doubly welcome as generally submission rates were down across Wiley's many journals. We are keen to continue this trend.

We continue to broaden the appeal and accessibility of our journal to French language readers. To that end, our French editor, Martin Simard has agreed to lead a special section and has graciously undertaken the critical task of translating some of our key author tools (Style Guide, Author Guidelines) into French. These will be implemented over the next few months as part of the NJD transition.

We have found that special sections have worked well, both for the journal and for the authors who contribute. There is an efficiency and focus to the submission-review-production process, it exposes new authors and reviewers to the journal, and enables *TCG-LGC* to provide current content on key issues of the day. In 2021, we ran two special sections. We encourage Canadian (and international) geographers to submit ideas for special sections. This is an opportunity to collate papers that generate conversations and a range of ideas related to a specific topic. Special section papers are available to read, distribute, and cite as soon as they are posted to Wiley's EarlyView.

Finally, 2021 marked the final year for Ryan Burns as the journal's book review editor, after three valiant years of service. We thank Ryan for all the hard work he did on behalf of our journal.

Manuscript Submissions

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
English manuscripts	66	53	39	63	69	61	68	68	40	71
French manuscripts	9	2	5	1	8	5	6	3	5	6
TOTAL	75	55	44	64	75	66	74	71	46	77

Table one: Original manuscript submissions sent to peer review, 2012–2021. Note that our submissions increased by over 60% in 2021, which compares favourably with a decrease of almost 5% across all Wiley journals.

The submission count for 2021 included 77 manuscripts, after withdrawals (n=4). This marked increase reflects increased submissions overall, we hope at least in part in response to our active efforts to encourage submissions. It also reflects a record number of submissions that came in during 2021 for four special sections, three of which are publishing in 2022. A total of 31 manuscripts submitted in 2021 had guest editors.

2021 was a strong year in terms of special sections. We started the year with a special section titled “Geographies of Indigenous health and wellness.” Guest edited by Chantelle Richmond, this section included seven papers by a wide variety of authors. We closed the year with our first ever bilingual special section in our last issue, guest edited by Danièle Bélanger, Nadine Cattan, Diego Coletto, and Jean-Baptiste Frétigny. Titled “When migrants produce the city: Everyday negotiations of urban space / Quand les migrants produisent la ville : Négociations quotidiennes de l’espace urbain” this section included papers covering a variety of cities, from Paris to Lima.

There were 14 book review submissions in 2021, a notable drop from earlier years. For reference, the count in 2020 was 27. This reduction was due in part to timing. A set of reviews solicited in 2021 were all submitted in January of 2022, so we anticipate our book review counts to increase in this calendar year.

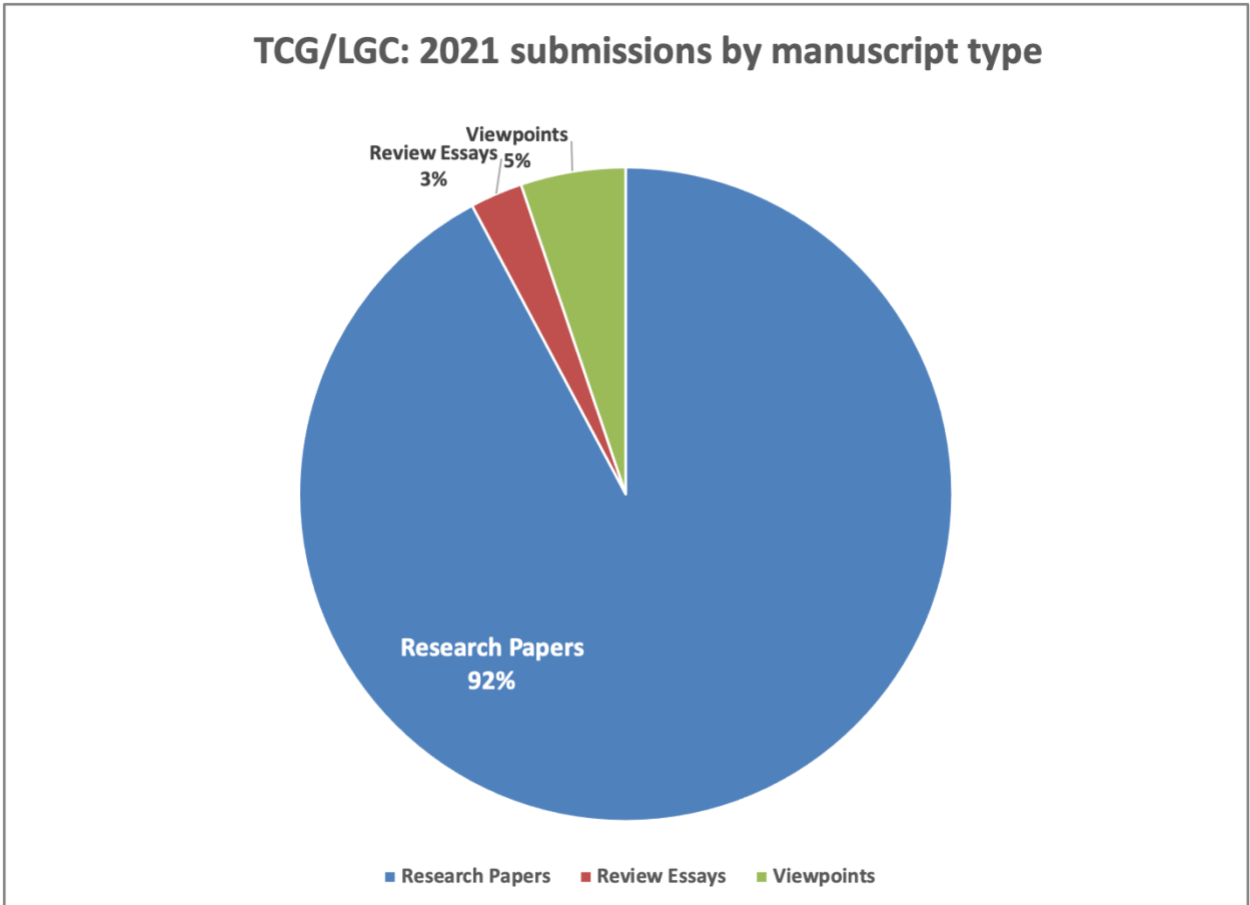


Figure one: Original submissions, by type in 2021. Research papers continue to be the primary manuscript type submitted to our journal.

Dispositions

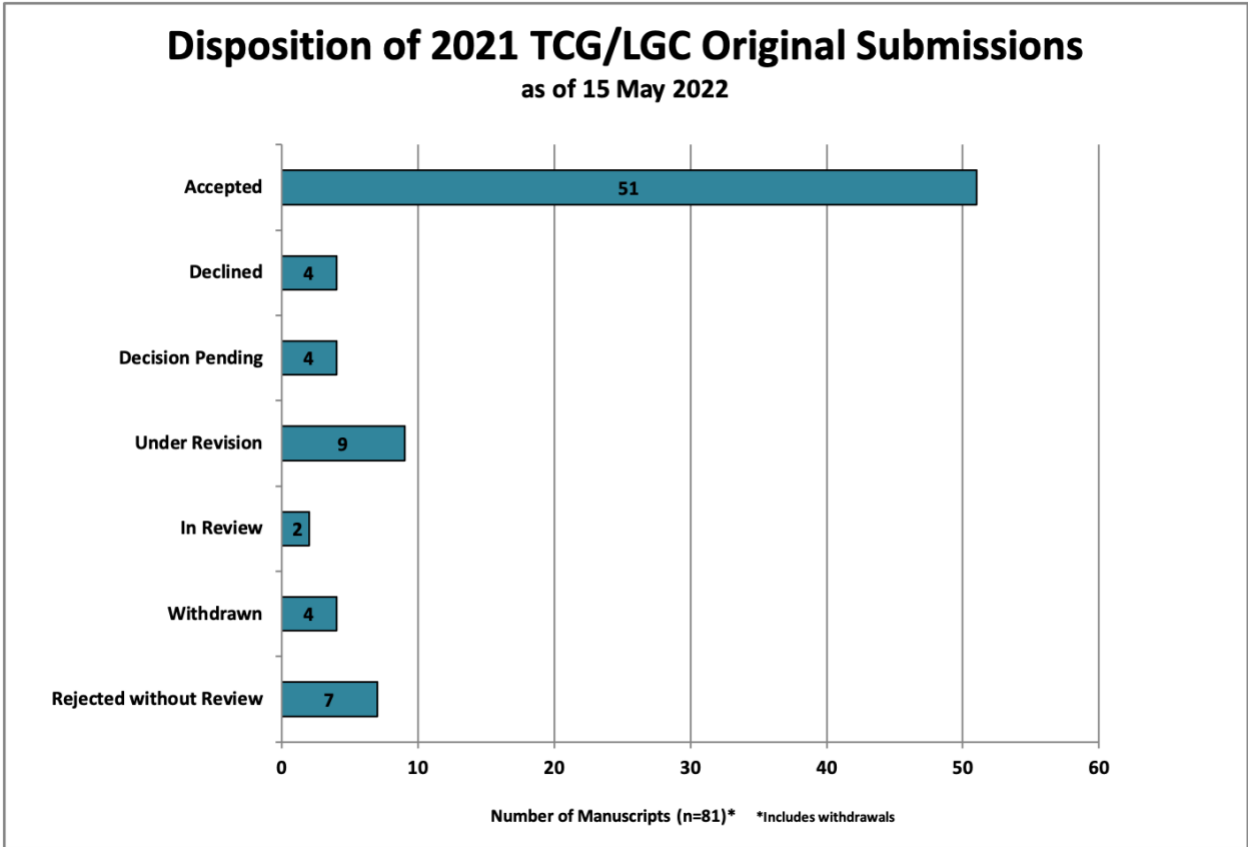


Figure two: Disposition of original manuscripts in 2021.

Our acceptance rate for 2021 submissions that have received a final decision (n=51) by time of writing is 66%, roughly the same as it was last year. Our acceptance rates are fairly high in years with multiple special sections. While some of the submissions for these sections are ultimately declined or withdrawn, most move on to publication because they are being submitted by authors who have been invited or vetted in advance. Our count of manuscripts rejected without review is down by roughly a third from the previous year, which we hope signals a better understanding on the part of submitting authors about what constitutes an appropriate submission for our journal.

Reviewing and time to decision

2021 proved a somewhat easier year in terms of recruiting reviewers, certainly compared to 2020, which was the most difficult year in my tenure. Some of this easing was due to our practice of requesting that guest editors secure reviewers for their special sections in advance of papers being submitted. While that does not prevent review delays and the odd default, it does cut down significantly on the upfront time spent trying to find reviewers for a paper after it’s been submitted. Aside from that, 2021 proved somewhat similar in its challenges to 2020. Stretched by the pandemic and the demands of often-unusual working arrangements, reviewers’ capacity continues to be low. Given ongoing challenges securing a full complement of three reviewers, we balanced time for peer review with review coverage and increasingly worked with two reviewers. Our biggest challenge, across all manuscripts, was review lateness and a slightly higher than usual incidence of complete default. We are hoping as we start to emerge from the pandemic, these patterns will begin to right themselves.

Despite these challenges, as editor, one of my goals is to continuously work to decrease the time from author submission to decision and I’m pleased to report that 2021 was a good year in this regard. In 2020, our time from review to initial decision was 77 days. In 2021, despite the marked increase in the number of manuscript submissions, it dropped significantly to just over 60 days for peer-reviewed submissions (with the seeming exception of the two review essays, which we believe is coincidental). In part this improvement is thanks to the discipline of our guest editors who have worked with us to be punctual in our decision making phase.

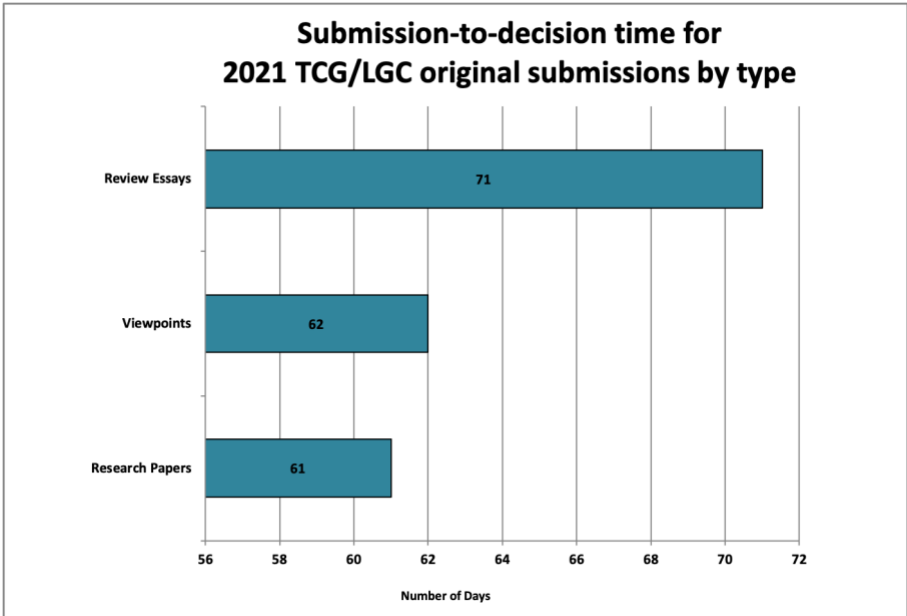


Figure three: Days from first submission to decision for 2021 submissions, based on paper type.

Bibliometrics and rankings

ISI impact factors and rankings are reported in late June for the preceding year. The *TCG-LGC* impact factor for 2020 was calculated as a quotient in the following way:

$$\frac{\text{Number of citations in 2020 to } TCG-LGC \text{ articles published in 2019 and 2020}}{\text{Number of source items published in 2019 and 2020}}$$

Our most recent Impact Factor is for 2020 is excellent at 1.5. This is a 50% improvement over the 2019 impact factor at 1.032. Both are a considerable improvement over low point in 2002 and our more recent trough in 2015 and 2016, when the impact factor dropped to 0.88 and 0.89 respectively. Indeed, this is our best impact factor ever.

It is ironic, therefore, that Wiley has advised me that they and most major publishers are discounting impact factors going forward. The reasons for this are many but, in a nutshell, it is a response to an over-emphasis on impact factors on choice of publication venues by authors. All major publishers have signed onto DORA (<https://sfdora.org/read/>), a declaration which announces the initiative to reduce scholarly and institutional emphasis on impact factors. The reasons include the fact that a journal may have a high impact factor based on a very small slice of its published papers; every domain has a different norm for impact factors; editors are able to manipulate impact factors (I was unaware of this); and the data used to calculate them are not widely available or shared publicly.

ISI Rankings are published by Thomson-Reuters as Journal Citation Reports, a part of the Web of Science.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
ISI Impact Factor	0.426	0.561	1.263	1.172	1.179	0.878	0.896	1.477	1.141	1.032	1.5

Table two: Journal Impact Factors from 2011 to 2020. The journal impact factor for 2020 is the highest we have ever received.

Institutional subscriptions and access to TCG-LGC worldwide

I frequently report increasing downloads year over year. But the data for 2021 are even more impressive than usual. The downloads for TCG-LGC increased 41% in 2021. This compares with an increase of 30% across all other Geography journals.

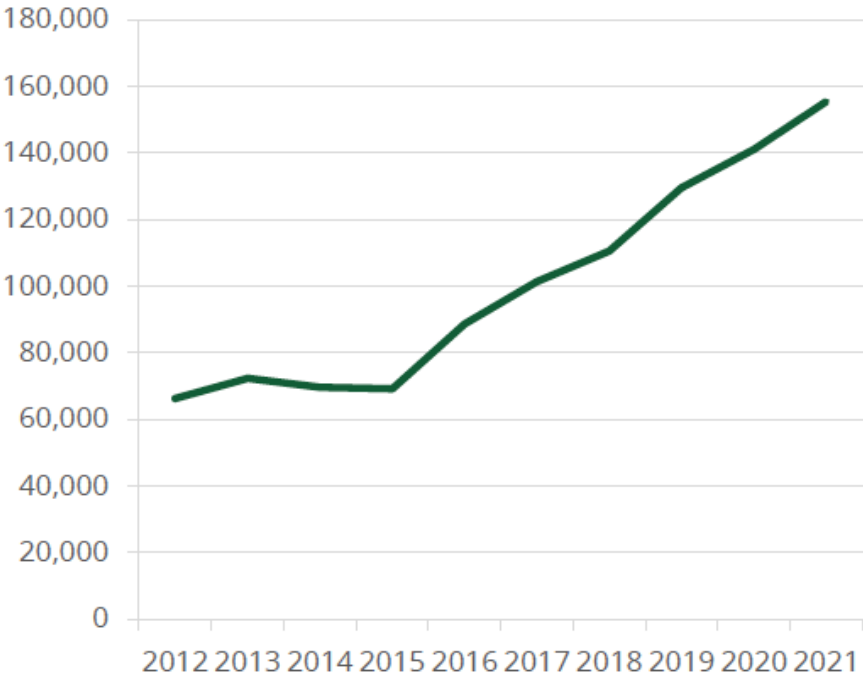


Figure four: The increase in downloads over the past 10 years. The journal is definitely increasing downloads at a high rate.

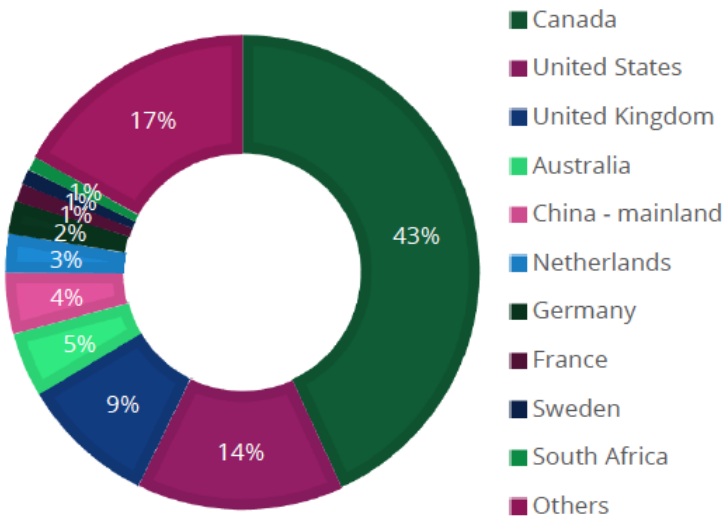


Figure five: The top ten countries where downloads of our papers are happening. Note that downloads from China are becoming more important.

It is not a surprise to see that Canadians are the chief source of article submissions as well as downloads.

The ten most downloaded papers in 2021 are from a surprising range of years past, again demonstrating our papers have a much longer life measured by either two-year or five-year impact factors.

Rank	Author(s)	Article Title	Volume	Issue	No. of Accesses
1	Richmond, C. et al.	Supporting food security for Indigenous families through the restoration of Indigenous foodways	65	1	3,000
2	Cockayne, D.	The feminist economic geographies of working from home and "digital by default" in Canada before, during, and after COVID-19	65	4	2,893
3	Werf, P. et al.	Food for naught: Using the theory of planned behaviour to better understand household food wasting behaviour	63	3	2,379
4	Shah, T. et al.	Geographic accessibility to primary care providers: Comparing rural and urban areas in Southwestern Ontario	64	1	2,104
5	LEPAWSKY, J. & MCNABB, C.	Mapping international flows of electronic waste	54	2	1,961
6	Brydges, T. & Pugh, R.	Coming into fashion: Expanding the entrepreneurial ecosystem concept to the creative industries through a Toronto case study	65	3	1,939
7	Vanhellemont, L. et al.	Street vendors in Lima in the time of COVID-19: Guilty or oppressed?	65	4	1,879
8	Bowra, A. et al.	Indigenous learning on Turtle Island: A review of the literature on land-based learning	65	2	1,564
9	Daigle, M.	Awawanenitakik: The spatial politics of recognition and relational geographies of Indigenous self-determination	60	2	1,545
10	Aldred, T. et al.	Mining sick: Creatively unsettling normative narratives about industry, environment, extraction, and the health geographies of rural, remote, northern, and Indigenous communities in British Columbia	65	1	1,473

Figure six: The ten most downloaded papers in 2021. Note that the most downloaded paper was by Chantelle Richmond who led a special issue on Indigenous health. Many of our top downloaded papers are Open Access – which significantly extends their reach globally.

Altmetrics and the use of media exposure to measure relevance

Large publishing companies have started keeping track of which articles get media and social media exposure. This is another way to measure relevance especially outside of the academic community. A number of papers published by *TCG-LGC* have attracted such exposure as illustrated in Table four below. Also of note is that the special section led by Chantelle Richmond on Geographies of Indigenous health and wellness received an Altmetric score of 28 and the section was referenced in 37 tweets. Clearly broadcasting newly published papers (and sections) on social media will increase our Altmetric scores.

Article title	Highest Altmetric Attention Score 2021	All mentions	Mentions from social media	Mentions from news & blogs	Mentions from policy documents & Patents
"Wilderness" revisited: Is Canadian park management moving beyond the "wilderness" ethic?	81	34	23	11	0
Reconstruction of past backyard skating seasons in the Original Six NHL cities from citizen science data	55	29	24	5	0
Structural adjustment programs and housing affordability in Accra, Ghana	47	12	0	11	1
Indigenous student labour and settler colonialism at Brandon Residential School	35	24	20	4	0
The concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution: Implications for management of resources	31	51	40	4	5

Table three: Articles with the highest Altmetric scores in 2021.

Final word

TCG-LGC remains in a strong position in terms of metrics, marketing, and readership. We continue to attract readers, citations, and downloads. This is comforting given the immense changes facing the academic publish industry including Open Access journals and a proliferation of publishing choices. Our aim is to hold this course in 2022 and beyond.

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