

Topic Planning for Scientific Journals in the Internet Plus Era: Postprint

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Abstract

In the “Internet+” and all-media era, scientific journals must continually adapt to the times. They should actively leverage new technologies such as big data, cloud computing, and the Internet to explore suitable development paths for contemporary scientific journals, while steadfastly upholding the essence of scientific journals—the guarantee and enhancement of academic quality and journal characteristics. Topic selection and planning can fully embody the editorial mission of scientific journals and serve as an important guarantee for both journal characteristics and academic quality. This paper presents the methods and approaches for operating scientific journals in the “Internet+” era, elucidating their importance and significance.

Full Text

Topic Planning for Scientific Journals in the “Internet Plus” Era

Abstract: In the “Internet Plus” and all-media era, scientific journals must continuously adapt to the changing times by actively leveraging new technologies such as big data, cloud computing, and the internet to identify development paths suited to contemporary needs, while steadfastly upholding their essential nature: ensuring and enhancing academic quality and distinctive characteristics. Topic planning fully embodies a journal’s mission and serves as a critical guarantee of its identity and academic caliber. This article explores methodologies and approaches for scientific journals in the “Internet Plus” era, elucidating their importance and significance.

Keywords: Internet Plus era; scientific journals; topic planning

With the rapid advancement of computer and internet technology, contemporary society has entered a new media era that has profoundly transformed lifestyles and social paradigms, posing significant challenges to the survival, transformation, and development of traditional media, including scientific journals. In recent years, scientific journals have embarked on explorations of digital and internet-based publishing. However, regardless of how diversified publishing formats and dissemination channels may become, scientific journals cannot deviate from their fundamental requirements for survival: academic quality and distinctive characteristics. Only by guaranteeing these core elements can scientific journals achieve sustainable development. Topic planning fully embodies a journal's mission and constitutes a vital guarantee of its distinctive identity and academic quality.

Southern Architecture is a Chinese scientific core journal whose evaluation metrics rank among the top in its category. In the “Internet Plus” era, it has actively pursued innovations in topic planning with remarkable effectiveness. Since its revamp in 2008, *Southern Architecture* has placed great emphasis on topic planning, carefully determining themes for each issue and systematically organizing manuscript solicitation and commissioning, thereby demonstrating its positioning as a highly academic, research-oriented publication. This approach has cultivated an excellent pool of authors and reviewers, substantially improving the journal's quality and impact factor. Consequently, it has been selected as a Chinese scientific core journal for six consecutive years since 2012 and has been indexed by the EBSCO database, achieving sustainable and healthy development. This article examines *Southern Architecture's* topic planning strategies and proposes recommendations for enhancing topic planning capabilities for scientific journals in the “Internet Plus” era.

1.1 Aligning Topic Planning with Major Scientific Achievements

Scientific journals serve as platforms for academic exchange and theoretical frontiers of disciplinary research. Their content must fully reflect cutting-edge, original, and advanced research, highlighting the journal's academic value and establishing brand recognition through high-quality articles. From this perspective, *Southern Architecture's* editorial board prioritizes the latest research trends and achievements in the field when developing annual topics. For instance, the construction and planning of beautiful villages have been key projects across provinces and municipalities in recent years, yielding substantial progress and results. The journal addressed this by planning a special issue on “Township Planning and Construction” in 2014(2), providing an avenue for sharing experiences to promote beautiful rural development and enabling readers to stay informed about advances in this area. Similarly, to implement President Xi Jinping's important directives on cultural confidence and “revitalizing heritage displayed across the vast land,” Guangdong pioneered the preservation and utilization of ancient post roads in southern China. *Southern Architecture* responded by publishing a special issue on “Preservation, Restoration, and Revitalization of

Southern Guangdong Ancient Post Roads” in 2017(6), sharing experiences and results from this popular initiative to attract broader attention and research.

Funded projects represent a crucial component of national research innovation. National and provincial-level projects typically maintain high theoretical and applied standards, having undergone rigorous multi-round review and validation during the proposal phase. Throughout project implementation, both interim and final research outcomes can serve as targets for journal topic planning. Research results from project teams represent the cutting edge in their respective fields. Academic papers authored by project leaders or key researchers feature high quality and frontier research, generating high citation counts upon publication and thereby boosting the journal’s citation frequency and impact factor. *Southern Architecture*’s sixth issue each year focuses on “Vertically Funded Research Projects,” increasing the proportion of funded papers and producing positive social impact.

1.2 Integrating Topic Planning with Important Academic Conferences

Every industry and discipline hosts its own brand-name or high-end academic conferences, held annually or biennially. Journals can leverage their advantages of large circulation, wide dissemination, rapid transmission, and numerous readers to integrate with these important conferences for topic planning, enabling mutual promotion. Journals can distribute print copies as conference materials on-site and excavate high-end author groups, while conferences can enhance their visibility through journal features. For instance, the annual Chinese Traditional Vernacular Architecture Academic Seminar is a major event for traditional settlement and folk architecture culture research, gathering domestic and Hong Kong/Macau/Taiwan researchers. *Southern Architecture*’s first issue each year collaborates with this seminar to plan the “Vernacular and Traditional Architecture Research” theme, a practice sustained for six to seven years that has become the journal’s brand feature, accumulating numerous outstanding authors and manuscripts in this area.

1.4 Coordinating Topic Planning with Major Institutional Events

Host institutions (co-organizers) or supporting institutions (council members) of scientific journals are generally research institutes or universities—the main forces of scientific innovation with cutting-edge and abundant achievements. Their major events, such as anniversary celebrations, present ideal topic planning opportunities. This approach can systematically organize a batch of high-quality academic papers while simultaneously enhancing the host institution’s visibility and promoting the journal. *Southern Architecture* planned the “30th Anniversary of South China University of Technology Architectural Design and Research Institute” theme for its 2009(5) issue and the “80th Anniversary of South China Architecture Discipline” for its 2012(5) issue.

1.5 Collaborating with Renowned Scholars on Topic Planning

Academic leaders possess profound scholarly expertise in their research fields, and their research topics and directions represent certain heights of investigation. Scientific journals can extend collaboration invitations to jointly plan topics. Their research achievements also require dissemination through academic papers in scientific journals. Through collaboration, once topics are determined, these scholars can solicit contributions from other domestic and international experts, ensuring both high success rates in manuscript solicitation and guaranteed academic quality. This ensures the topics' high-end nature, innovation, and advancement. In recent years, *Southern Architecture* has annually planned 1-2 issues with academic leaders serving as guest editors, achieving positive social impact. Themes such as "Rural Vernacular Architecture and Regeneration," "Evolving Green Architecture," "Sponge Cities," "New Urbanization—Whither Urban Design," "Rationalization of Planning," and "Architectural Programming Education and Professional Practice" all employ this approach.

2.1 Successful Topic Planning as a Guarantee of Manuscript Quality

Manuscript solicitation is the pathway for implementing topics and a means of ensuring journal quality. With well-conceived topics and quality solicitation efforts, editorial plans can be successfully executed.

2.2 Topic Planning as a Mechanism for Implementing Journal Mission

Every scientific journal has a mission statement that serves as its soul, not only guiding its development direction and providing basis for editors to solicit and edit manuscripts, but also forming the foundation for maintaining a relatively stable readership. Topic planning is an important means of implementing this mission.

2.3 Successful Topic Planning Guides Journal Development

Successful topic planning avoids blind manuscript solicitation and publication, enhancing the editorial department's overall control over each issue's content and enabling purposeful, directional solicitation that guides the journal's development trajectory.

2.4 Successful Topic Planning Strengthens Brand Identity

Topic planning allows editorial departments to consciously develop their own brand characteristics and systematically build and cultivate brand columns.

The ultimate goal of topic planning is to publish excellent papers aligned with the journal's direction and mission, improving publication quality and increasing influence and circulation. Editorial departments must also strengthen their planning and operational capabilities. Even the best topics require successful implementation to translate into social and economic benefits, promote academic

exchange and development, and demonstrate the value of scientific journals. Only by ensuring publication quality and focusing on “content” can scientific journals maintain core competitiveness in the “Internet Plus” era.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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