

Editors' Notes

EDITORS' REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2008

The past twelve months have witnessed great change at the *Journal of Economic History*. At the end of June, Jeremy Atack stepped down as co-editor, after four years of exemplary service to the JOURNAL and the Association. For the JOURNAL, he has been a model editor, and for me, a source of sage advice. He will be sorely missed.

His place has been taken by Price Fishback, who left the editorial board to become co-editor in the American office. That office also has Brendan Livingston replacing Linda Carter as assistant editor and Paul Rhode taking over for William Collins, who did an excellent job of handling American book reviews. On the editorial board, Robert Allen and Larry Neal will be stepping down; we owe them both a debt of gratitude for scores of outstanding readers' reports. In their place let us welcome Martha Bailey, Dan Bogart, John Brown, Mauricio Drelichman, Eric Hilt, Douglas Irwin, David Jacks, Ian Keay, Kris Mitchener, and Şevket Pamuk.

One other key person also left the JOURNAL's staff—Susan Isaac, who deftly steered manuscripts through the production process for twelve years and managed to keep everyone happy, from prickly authors to tardy editors. Fortunately, we have an ideal replacement in Sabrina Boschetti, who has been assistant editor in Pasadena since I became co-editor and is now serving as production editor as well.

Along with help from the MS Central Staff and our publisher, Cambridge University Press, Jeremy, Sabrina, Sue, and I helped implement Scholar One's Manuscript Central online submissions system, which Jeremy and I described in the last report. The system went live in February, replacing submissions by email and record keeping via Excel files that the editors maintained. This older system has survived for resubmissions, but now it too will disappear, and everything will be handled by MS Central at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jeh/>.

Transitions of this sort are never painless, as anyone who has switched computers or changed software knows. Yet our passage to on line submissions seems to have generated relatively little wailing and gnashing of teeth. A few authors and reviewers had trouble because their internet browsers blocked pop-ups or because they had used a variety of emails over their careers. The solution is simply to allow pop-ups when on the site and to verify that the system has your current email address. You can do so by using the "Edit Account" link at the top right corner of your screen. You should also make sure that the system has the correct salutation (Dr., Prof., Mr., Ms., etc.) on file for you. Otherwise, you may receive automatic emails that begin with a brusque "Dear" followed by your last name. Again, the solution is simply to choose the way you wish to be addressed by going to the "Edit Account" feature.

Using Manuscript Central has also obliged us to modify our procedures slightly. With the online system, when a co-editor accepts a manuscript, it is swept into production and is difficult to snatch back, if any additional changes are necessary beyond the copy editing that takes place in production. What we have done, therefore, is to make all acceptances conditional. In the past, conditional acceptance was reserved for manuscripts with minor problems that had to be corrected before publication. The co-editor might, for example, have made a number of editorial suggestions, which would require the author to rework the prose. Now, however, all manuscripts will be accepted conditionally until they are ready for production.

These temporary birth pains are more than offset by all the advantages of the online submission system. It will cut the Association's costs and save the editors' time for tasks, such as editing, where their marginal productivity is presumably highest. It will

also make it easier to keep accurate records of what has been submitted to the JOURNAL and what has been published. This year I had to assemble the records from two distinct Excel files maintained by the editorial offices and from a Manuscript Central reporting system that was not yet complete. The job was not easy, but in the future it will be much simpler.

Manuscript Central will also help the editors deal with the tide of submissions that pour into the JOURNAL at the beginning and end of academic vacations. This year the flood set an all time record, with 203 total submissions, 158 of them new. The number of new manuscripts has never been that high, or at least that is what the archives back to 1987 suggest (Figure 1). One might worry about double counting, since the data came from three different and partially overlapping sources. Yet a careful investigation suggests that is not the case. I do know that Jeremy and I were busy this year. Perhaps the jump in submissions reflects a long-term trend. I shall let the time series experts decide.

The work load between the two offices has evened out this year, in part because the American office added Latin America to its duties in March of 2008. Until then, the American office handled articles on Canada and the United States only. The shift of responsibilities lightened the work load of the office for the "Rest of the World," which had received 83 new submissions in 2006–2007, versus only 34 for the American office. This year both offices got 79 new submissions, although the Rest of the World office still had more resubmissions (Table 1). The topics of the new submissions at each office moved a bit closer this year, with both offices having 14 new

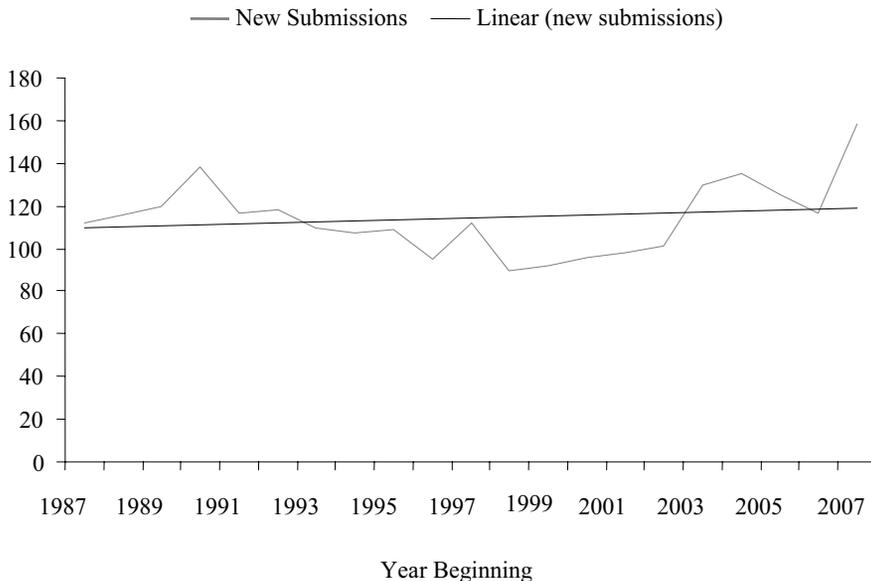


FIGURE 1
TREND IN NEW SUBMISSIONS, 1987/88–2007/08

Source: The yearly totals were taken from the published Editors' Notes.

TABLE 1
ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS BY WORLD AREA, BROKEN DOWN BY TOPIC,
JULY 2005–JUNE 2008

Topic	July 2005–June 2006		July 2006–June 2007		July 2007–June 2008	
	North America	Rest of the World	North America	Rest of the World	North & South America	Rest of the World
Agriculture	5	2	1	3	4	4
Demography	5	5	0	3	1	2
Growth	0	6	0	14	3	10
History of thought	1	1	0	3	1	1
Industry	1	11	5	1	10	6
International trade, finance	3	10	0	5	3	9
Labor	14	3	12	5	20	11
Money and macro	8	5	10	7	6	6
Political economy	7	5	6	24	14	14
Private finance, capital markets	6	9	0	15	3	7
Public finance	0	2	0	0	2	0
Technology	4	3	0	0	6	3
Urban and regional	0	4	0	1	2	0
Other	1	4	0	2	4	6
Total	55	70	34	83	79	79

Note: The numbers include new submissions only. The totals equal the number of new submissions received because a paper is classified in only one topic category. Until March of 2008, the North American Editorial Office was responsible for articles on the United States and Canada; thereafter, it took charge of submissions on Latin America too. In the latest year, this Americas office had 87 total submissions, 79 new and 8 resubmitted. The office for the rest of the world had 116 total submissions, 79 new and 37 resubmitted.

political economy papers. But the American office still received more papers on labor and industry, and fewer on growth.

Handing over Latin America, however, is only part of the reason for the even workload at the two offices. The American office also experienced a surge of new submissions on the United States and Canada, up from 38 in 2006–2007 to 72 this year (Table 2). Some of these new submissions were comparative and were sent to the Rest of the World Office, but the others kept the American Office very busy. Time will tell whether the offices' workloads remain the same.

As for the periods the new submissions covered, they crept away a bit from the era before 1800 (Table 3). Is this a random shock or are economic historians turning away from the distant past? Again, only time will tell.

Despite the record number of new submissions, mean and median decision lags actually fell, both for new papers and all submissions (Table 4). On average, the editors made decisions in 72 days, and the median lag for new papers (80 days) was much lower than last year (111 days in 2006–2007). Other journals take much longer.

The acceptance rate remains virtually unchanged: 19 percent of new and revised manuscripts were accepted this year, versus 18 percent last year (Table 4). The acceptance rate at the American office (14 percent) was lower than at the Rest of World office (23 percent), but last year the reverse was true (27 percent acceptance rate at the American office in 2006–2007, and 14 percent in the Rest of the World office in 2006–2007). Like Jeremy last year, I believe that I have accepted a number of excellent papers.

TABLE 2
REGULAR ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS BY REGION, 1 JULY–30 JUNE

Region	Submissions			
	2004–2005	2005–2006	2006–2007	2007–2008
Africa	2	3	1	1
Asia	16	7	12	17
Australia and New Zealand	2	3	2	2
Eastern Europe/Russia	3	2	4	7
Great Britain	20	14	16	12
Latin America	5	7	9	9
Middle East	5	5	2	6
Non-Spanish speaking Caribbean	0	0	0	0
United States and Canada	65	57	38	72
Western Europe	37	38	44	43
Not applicable	6	5	5	9

Note: The numbers include new submissions only. Totals exceed new submissions because a paper can be classified as pertaining to more than one region.

TABLE 3
REGULAR ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS BY PERIOD, 1 JULY–30 JUNE
2005–2006, 2006–2007, AND 2007–2008

Period	Submissions		
	2005–2006	2006–2007	2007–2008
Twenty-first century		1	2
Twentieth century	55	57	67
Nineteenth century	75	60	81
Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries	25	30	18
Pre-seventeenth century	14	14	13
Not applicable or unknown	0	2	30

Note: The numbers include new submissions only. Totals exceed submissions because a paper can be classified as pertaining to more than one period.

So despite the flood of new submissions and all changes in personnel and procedures, the essentials remain the same at the *Journal of Economic History*. The editors are still demanding, but they do not force authors to wait. They also continue to pay attention to our authors' prose. That takes time, and here I can only repeat Jeremy's complaint from last year, for we continue to receive poorly written submissions. A great article may be lurking there beneath the confused prose, like a statue imprisoned in a block of marble, but even a Michelangelo of an editor may be unable to chip it free. The editors, I should stress, are not the only ones to gripe about the problem. Referees do too, and it no doubt influences their opinion, particularly if they cannot see what the point of a paper is. Perhaps an appeal to the powerful forces of self-interest will work here: if you are an author, do have others read your manuscript before you submit it, and make sure that they pay attention to the form as well as to the content. Otherwise the referees will be grumpy.

TABLE 4
ACCEPTANCE AND TURNAROUND

	American Office		Office for the Rest of the World		Total	
	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08
Accepted	13	12	15	27	28	39
Revise and resubmit	11	26	26	22	37	48
Rejected or withdrawn	18	40	51	59	69	99
Not yet decided	7	9	13	8	20	17
Total	49	87	105	116	154	203

Year	Decision Lags (in days)			
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median
All submissions				
2003/2004	1	303	110	100
2004/2005	1	366	112	104
2005/2006	1	338	97	92
2006/2007	1	215	88	92
2007/2008	1	216	72	81
New submissions only				
2003/2004	1	303	113	103
2004/2005	1	260	100	90
2005/2006	1	338	94	90
2006/2007	1	215	89	111
2007/2008	1	216	72	80

Note: The acceptance figures include new submissions and resubmissions, except when the re-submitted papers have already been accepted conditionally. Until March of 2008, the American Editorial Office was responsible for articles on the United States and Canada; thereafter, it took charge of submissions on Latin America too.

Are there other problems the JOURNAL faces? Several contributors worry that articles published in the JOURNAL before 2001 are not available on RePEc (Research Papers in Economics). Since articles in economic history have a long life, the JOURNAL therefore loses some visibility. Fortunately, Cambridge University Press is now working on this problem, and I hope to have more to say about the solution next year.

PHILIP HOFFMAN, *California Institute of Technology*

Referees for the year were:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Brian A'Hearn | Facundo Alvarez |
| Andrew Alexander | Glenn Ames |
| Douglas Allen | James E. Anderson |
| James Allen | Terry Anderson |
| Robert Allen | Abad Arroyo |
| Wells Allen | Anthony B. Atkinson |
| Lee J. Alston | Gareth Austin |

Ben Baack
Scott Baier
Dudley Baines
Gerben Bakker
Jörg Baten
Robert Bates
Marianne Baxter
Daniel Benjamin
Richard Bensel
Jeffrey Bergstrand
Concha Betran
Margaret Blair
Hoyt Bleakley
Howard Bodenhorn
Dan Bogart
Michael Bordo
Maristella Botticini
Jérôme Bourdieu
Leah Platt Boustan
George Boyer
Loren Brandt
Thomas Brennan
Timothy Bresnahan
Stephen Broadberry
John C. Brown
Philip C. Brown
Warren Brown
Victor Bulmer-Thomas
Carsten Burhop
Joyce Burnette
Colleen Callahan
Charles Calomiris
Neil Canaday
Ann Carlos
Linda Carter
Susan B. Carter
Ben Chabot
Latika Chaudhary
Elaine Clark
Gregory Clark
Sally Clarke
Peter A. Coclanis
Philip R. P. Coelho
Raymond L. Cohn
Harold L. Cole
William J. Collins
Dora Costa
Lee A. Craig
François Crouzet
Timothy Cuff
Tomas Cvrcek
Guillaume Daudin
Joseph Davis
Arthur De Vany
John Devereux
Jean-Pierre Dormois
Mauricio Drelichman
Leonard Dudley
Colleen A. Dunlavy
Gerald P. Dwyer Jr.
Alan Dye
Scott Eddie
Michael Edelstein
Barry Eichengreen
Jari Eloranta
David Eltis
Todd Endelman
Stanley L. Engerman
Jürgen W. Falter
Giovanni Federico
Wilfried Feldenkirch
Stefano Fenoaltea
Niall Ferguson
Joseph P. Ferrie
Alexander J. Field
Ronald Findlay
Price Fishback
Terry Fitzgerald
Marc Flandreau
Robert Fleck
Caroline Fohlin
Nancy Folbre
Oscar Gelderblom
James Giesen
Yoshihisa Godo
William N. Goetzman
Jessica Goldberg
Claudia Goldin
Robert Gordon
Peter Gourevitch
George Grantham
William Greene
Paul R. Gregory
Avner Grief
Richard S. Grossman
Farley Grubb
Timothy Guinnane
Steve Haber
J. David Hacker
Michael R. Haines

Robert Hall
Gillian Hamilton
Christopher Hanes
Mary E. Hansen
Zeynep Hansen
David Harbord
C. Knick Harley
Leslie M. Harris
Ron Harris
Timothy J. Hatton
Peter Hayes
Jac C. Heckelman
Douglas Helms
R. Max Henderson
Alfonso Herranz-Loncan
Robert Higgins
Eric Hilt
Christopher Hoag
Paul M. Hohenberg
Adrienne Hood
Paul Huber
Michael Huberman
Greg Huff
Margaret Humphreys
Jane Humphries
Laurence R. Iannaccone
Douglas Irwin
David S. Jacks
Stuart Jenks
Ryan Johnson
Martha Jones
Charles Kahn
Walter D. Kamphoefner
Mark Kanazawa
Shawn Kantor
Ian Keay
Andrew Keeling
Zorina Khan
Gary King
Daniel Klerman
Meir Kohn
John Komlos
Timur Kuran
Masako Kurohane
Sumner LaCroix
Fabrice LaHoucq
Pedro Lains
Naomi R. Lamoreaux
Ryan Lampe
Anne Laurence
Marc Law
James Lee
Timothy Leunig
Margaret Levenstein
Giovanni Levi
Byron Lew
James B. Lewis
Gary D. Libecap
Jonathan J. Liebowitz
Justin Lin
Peter Lindert
Brendan Livingston
Katherine Livingston
Trevon Logan
Jason Long
Debin Ma
Jim MacGee
Mary MacKinnon
Thomas N. Maloney
Peter Mancall
Robert A. Margo
Pablo Martin-Aceña
Joseph R. Mason
Noel Maurer
Sean McCartney
John J. McCusker
James McGuire
Robert McGuire
Marjorie McIntosh
Christopher M. Meissner
Thomas Merrill
Jacob Metzger
Bernardo Mueller
Ronald Michener
Melinda Miller
David Mitch
Kris James Mitchener
Carolyn Moehling
Jon Moen
Joel Mokyr
Chiaki Moriguchi
Petra Moser
Reinhold C. Mueller
John H. Munro
Kevin Murphy
Aldo Musacchio
Larry Neal
Herbert Nickel
Tomas Nonnenmacher
Salvatore Nunnari

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Patrick O'Brien	Carol H. Shiue
Avner Offer	Ralph Shlomowitz
Sheilagh Ogilvie	Pierre Sicsic
Lee Ohanian	Kenneth A. Snowden
Mari Ohnuki	Mark Spoerer
Tetsuji Okazaki	David Stasavage
Alan Olmstead	David James St. Clair
Martha Olney	Richard H. Steckel
Kevin O'Rourke	Steve Stern
Kent Osband	Jochen Streb
Roger Owen	Roman Studer
Şevket Pamuk	William Summerhill
Prasannan Parthasarathi	William A. Sundstrom
Hugh Patrick	Nathan Sussman
Carla Rahn Phillips	Donald Sutherland
Gilles Postel-Vinay	Dhanoos Sutthiphisal
Mark Potter	Richard Sylla
Leandro Prados de la Escosura	Rick Szostak
Om Prakash	John Tang
Jonathan B. Pritchett	Alan Taylor
Stephen Quinn	Jason Taylor
Dan Raff	Peter Temin
Claudia Rei	Jonathan Temple
Jaime Reis	Juro Teranishi
Paul Rhode	Ross Thomson
Gary Richardson	Mark Thornton
David Ringrose,	Giovanni Toniolo
Albrecht Ritschl	Werner Troesken
Phillip Roberts	William Frank Troost
Carlos Farinha Rodrigues	William Tsutsui
William Rogerson	Abraham L. Udovitch
Ronald Rogowski	Laura Ugolini
Christina Romer	Karine van der Beek
Mary Rose	Eric Van Wincoop
Joshua L. Rosenbloom	Jan Luiten van Zanden
Jean-Laurent Rosenthal	François Velde
Elyce J. Rotella	Jacob Vigdor
Sheldon Rothblatt	Nancy Virts
Jesse Rothstein	Hans-Joachim Voth
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Vernon Ruttan	Carlos Waisman
Raven Saks	Richard Waller
Richard Salvucci	John Wallis
Lars G. Sandberg	Patrick Wallis
Raymond Sauer	James Walvin
Jürgen Schlumbohm	Kirsten Wandschneider
Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey	Marianne Ward
Stuart Schwartz	Marc D. Weidenmier
Larry Schweikert	Thomas Weiss

Allen Wells
Robert Whaples
Warren Whatley
Eugene N. White
Jeffrey G. Williamson
Sam Williamson
Lynne Withey

Susan Wolcott
Nikolaus Wolf
Gavin Wright
Robert Wright
Donghyu Yang
Samy Yiagadeese