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From: Ad Hoc Journal Committee: Peter Dixon (chair), Michael Masson, Murray Singer,
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Subject: Ad Hoc Journal Committee Report

In February, 2005, Peter Dixon was asked by then CSBBCS president Murray Singer to form an ad hoc committee to prime discussion of an association between CSBBCS and an academic journal. The mandate for the committee that was subsequently approved is as follows:

The task of the Journal Committee is to prepare background information for deciding whether CSBBCS should become associated with a scientific journal. The information should be summarized in a report to the CSBBCS Executive, to be submitted in January 2006. In its report, the Committee should: (i) collate and summarize the previous deliberations on this issue; (ii) outline a cost/benefit framework for making such a decision (including alternatives such as electronic publishing, paper publishing, or some hybrid); (iii) list existing examples or possible models of such an association (providing information such as society membership, direct costs to the membership, pages per volume, library subscriptions, and journal visibility); and (iv) discuss potential new relationships with *CJEP*.

Michael Masson, Murray Singer, and Richard Brown agreed to serve on the committee.

An association with an academic journal has some history of prior consideration in CSBBCS. In the early 1990s, CSBBCS considered a proposal to take over the *CJEP* from CPA. CSBBCS did not pursue the proposal at least in part because of the potential for financial commitments beyond its resources. A few years later, Chris Herdman reported to the Annual General Meeting some preliminary investigations into the possibility of founding an electronic journal for the Society. No further action was taken, perhaps because of a lack of strong interest among the membership and few available resources. In June, 2003, Peter Dixon (then Editor of *CJEP*) wrote to the presidents of CPA and CSBBCS with a proposal to have *CJEP* published commercially and to have CSBBCS take on significant editorial control of the journal. Although CSBBCS was willing to consider such a proposal, the Publications Committee of CPA voted in 2004 to maintain production of the *Journal* in house.

The present report is organized into four sections. First, we describe a range of options on the nature and content of an academic journal. Second, we present a cost/benefit framework for an association with an academic journal and describe some of the resource and financial issues that should be considered in making such a decision. Third, we provide some concrete examples of journals sponsored by academic associations and the costs and benefits that seem to accrue to

those societies. Fourth, we discuss the special problem of the relationship between actions by CSBBCS in this domain and the *CJEP*.

Journal Models

If CSBBCS were to found a journal, a basic decision that has fundamental implications for resources concerns the journal's format. Print journals are expensive to produce and distribute, and producing a print journal is generally beyond the resources of a small academic society. However, many publishing companies produce print journals for academic societies with only a modest financial commitment from the society membership. In such cases, a significant portion of the journal operating costs are recouped from library subscriptions. Electronic journals can be published via the web and have no distribution costs and very small marginal costs per journal page. However, resources are needed for serving the journal's content; indexing, and maintaining the journal issues and website; for copy editing and formatting journal articles; and for maintaining an editorial office. It is possible for a single, knowledgeable individual with modest institutional support to maintain and edit an electronic journal entirely on his or her own. However, it requires a substantial commitment of time and facilities that are often not available. Support for electronic journals might also be obtained from commercial publishing houses with some financial commitment from the society. There are also hybrid models in which some aspects of the journal are published on paper and others only electronically. For example, *Experimental Brain Research* publishes many articles first electronically, presumably to reduce publication lag; *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* publishes forthcoming articles electronically for similar reasons; and *Brain and Behavioral Sciences* does so as part of their peer commentary mechanism.

Another major question for founding a journal concerns the content. The most obvious model is to provide an outlet for traditional full scientific reports. However, one could attempt to foster a range of areas in keeping with the membership of CSBBCS, or one could attempt to target particular niches where a new journal might be well received (e.g., methods, interdisciplinary research). Another model is to develop an outlet for timely short reports. (Such a journal might be particularly suited to electronic publication, for example.) Still another possibility is provide a forum for integrative work and/or peer commentary, perhaps along the lines of *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. With any of these content models, it may be useful to consider what gain there might be with associating CSBBCS with that specific type of journal effort. For example, are there characteristics of Canadian research in brain, behavior, and cognitive science that would make such effort valuable and productive? More generally, one should consider the role of a new journal in the field given the existing range of publishing outlets. It might be argued that serious consideration should be given to a new journal only if a clear need can be identified in the discipline.

There are several other aspects of journal publication that would need to be pursued in the context of any concrete proposal. For example, it is important to ensure that a journal's content is available through common indexing services such as the *Science Citation Index* or *PsychInfo*. Another issue is the growing movement for "open-access" journals in which readers and institutions are not charged for access to the journals, motivated in part by funding agency policies. (SSHRC, for example, has recently considered policies related to such journals.)

Although attractive on a philosophical basis, such arrangements clearly conflict that with the business model that makes publishers interested in publishing new journals.

Costs and Benefits

Costs. The most obvious costs to the Society are financial. Publishing a print journal in-house is expensive; for example, it is estimated that CPA spends on the order of \$60,000 to publish the *CJEP*. However, it is the Committee's impression that only very large organizations (such as APA) undertake to publish their own journals and that smaller societies typically have a contractual arrangement with a commercial publisher. In such arrangements, the publisher takes care of the production costs and would expect to make money from institutional subscriptions to the journal. A society might be expected to contribute to the journal's revenue as well (e.g., in terms of member subscriptions), but with a well-established journal, a society could actually profit financially.

Publishing an electronic journal can have significant costs as well, although generally less than for print journals. One estimate for the cost of paying a commercial publisher to host an ejournal site (obtained from information provided by Allen Press) is \$15,000 per year for up to 500 pages. There might be additional costs for an electronic submission and review system, advertising, or having the articles available on a pay-per-view basis. There are also nonprofit organizations that publish electronic journals. These might be expected to provide less support for less money. Generally, the costs of electronic publishing could be much less if a knowledgeable person contributed their expertise to the journal.

There are also nonmonetary costs. These include the time and effort spent by the Editor, Associate Editors, and Consulting Editors. With an electronic journal, some aspects of the journal setup and operation might done by volunteers (other than the Editor), and this of course could be a substantial commitment by some individual(s). There is also the potential that such contributions could turn into real financial costs if those duties need to taken up by paid personnel in the future. There would also be the time spent by the CSBBCS Executive or some other oversight committee in selecting editors and making policy decisions concerning the journal. There is also the time and effort needed in discussing journal business at the Annual General Meeting and at other times among the Society membership.

Benefits. There are both tangible and intangible benefits that might accrue from an association with an academic journal. Tangible benefits include the ability to publish communications of the Society such as, for example, the conference program and abstracts, award-winning student papers, and the Hebb lecture. Judging by the experience of comparable societies and journals, a successful journal also has the potential to be a money maker for the Society once it is firmly established.

Intangible benefits that might accrue include greater Society cohesion and identity (assuming that all elements of the Society cooperate in contributing to the journal). If the journal is well regarded and well cited, it could lead to greater visibility of the Society nationally and internationally. If a journal subscription is a benefit of Society membership, it might be an inducement for more people to join. Depending on the nature and content of the journal,

compelling arguments might be made that a new journal might be a benefit to the field as a whole.

Examples

In this section, we provide some information about journals that are associated with scientific societies comparable in some respect to CSBBCS. As well, we outline some additional information obtained from publishing houses that might plausible candidates for publishing a CSBBCS journal.

Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology (CPA). The *CJEP* is a special case for these deliberations and will be discussed in more detail below. Here, we outline some information about the journal's production and budget. It is published quarterly and has an annual page limit of 300 8.5" × 11.0" pages. In 2004, the journal received 77 new unsolicited submissions, and the acceptance rate was approximately 20%. In the recent past, the *Journal* has published a special issue (with invited submissions) each year. This year (and possibly in future years) *CJEP* will publish the CSBBCS Hebb Award lecture. The journal is published by CPA along with the other two CPA journals, *Canadian Psychology* and *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*. CPA employs a managing editor for the three journals and a financial officer who support the *CJEP* along with other duties. CPA contracts out the copy editing, page layout, printing, and mailing of the journal issues. CPA has an agreement with APA to electronically publish the journal so that they can be searched along with the APA journals. This arrangement has the potential to generate revenue since libraries pay APA for electronic access to their journals (including *CJEP*); however, at the moment the profits from electronic access are being used to systematically bring back issues online. Members of CPA have the subscription cost of two of the journals included with their dues, and members select which two they will receive. Relatively few members select *CJEP*. However, historically *CJEP* has had significantly more library subscriptions than the other two CPA journals. (Currently, there *CJEP* has 289 library subscriptions.) CPA apportions revenue from member dues to each journal based on the number of members who elect to receive that journal. Based on this accounting, CPA calculates that *CJEP* operates at a loss. In the past, the *Journal* has had an editorial office operating budget of about \$16,000 and has spent an additional \$8,000 on honoraria for the editor and one or two associate editors. However, recent experience suggests that the actual cost of operating the journal office for *CJEP* is closer to about \$10,000, most of which is devoted to the salary for a part-time editorial assistant.

Discourse Processes (Society for Text and Discourse). The Society of Text and Discourse is comparable to CSBBCS in terms of size but is focussed on a much narrower segment of the discipline. *Discourse Processes* was started in 1978 and became affiliated with the Society a number of years later. The journal recently switched from Ablex to Erlbaum and is happy with the change. They may have around 500 library subscriptions and 600 individual subscriptions; individual subscriptions are included as part of membership dues. Erlbaum is reported to be flexible with respect to page allocation and operating expenses.

Applied Cognitive Psychology (Society for Applied Research in Memory and Cognition). SARMAC is similar in size to CSBBCS, but has a focus on applied research. *Applied Cognitive Psychology* is owned and published by Wiley, and the founding editor (G. Davies) receives royalties. (The relationship with SARMAC came some years after the journal was founded.) The

Society’s expenses related to the journal are paid by Davies out of his royalties. In 2005, *ACP* received well over 200 submissions and had an acceptance rate of around 50%. The journal publishes 9 issues a year, including a longer special issue and a “themed” issue. Although there is a page allocation for the journal, it is not very restrictive. (The journal currently publishes around 1000 pages per year.)

Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology (Experimental Psychology Society). EPS is comparable to CSBBCS in terms of representation of the discipline and membership. Consequently, their journal provides a reasonable model to which CSBBCS might aspire. However, *QJEP* is well established and has a long history of impact in the field that could not be duplicated initially. The *QJEP* used to be published as two sections (*A* and *B*), but this year has been merged. In 2004, the two sections combined received 180 submissions, but this jumped to 260 in 2005. The Editor attributes this increase to a popular new “short articles” section with rapid and brief reviews and fast-track publication. (However, this type of submission also has a relatively high rejection rate.) They publish occasional special issues, on average once every 18 months or so. Forthcoming articles are published on the web shortly after they are accepted. Publication of the journal is periodically put out to tender, and publishers bid to publish the journal. Their current contract with Taylor & Francis guarantees EPS a fixed income for the next four years; this income funds the EPS conference, underwrites free print copies of the journal for the members, and allows the Society to maintain a low membership fee.

Cognitive Science (Cognitive Science Society). The Cognitive Science Society is significantly larger than CSBBCS and has a broad interdisciplinary focus. Although the journal is relatively small in terms of number of submissions, it has a substantial impact on the field. In 2004, *Cognitive Science* received 136 new submissions and had an acceptance rate of approximately 23%. In recent years, the journal has not come very close to using its page allotment. Since 2003, a special issue has been published annually honouring the winner of the David E. Rumelhart Prize. The journal is published by Erlbaum, having moved from Elsevier in 2005. The journal makes money, both for the Cognitive Science Society and the publisher. For example, Elsevier paid the Society \$35,000 US for the right to publish the journal, and the current arrangement with Erlbaum is regarded by the outgoing editor as on balance a better deal for the society. Members of the Society receive print copies of the journal as part of their membership and can access the journal and back issues electronically through Erlbaum’s website.

Some relevant statistics on these journals is provided below:

Journal	Society Members	Dues (Cdn \$)	2004 Pages	2004 Articles	2004 ISI Impact
<i>CJEP</i>	4,672	225	290	26	0.796
<i>DP</i>	200	86	592	27	1.025
<i>ACP</i>	250	86	1,141	68	1.239
<i>QJEP</i>		24	1,526	61	1.426

Journal	Society Members	Dues (Cdn \$)	2004 Pages	2004 Articles	2004 ISI Impact
CS	1,265	86	1,043	42	2.410

Feedback from Publishers. Several publishers were contacted concerning issues involved in founding a new journal, and the Committee received feedback from Lawrence Erlbaum Associates and Psychology Press (a division of Taylor & Francis). Both were enthusiastic about the possibility of working with CSBBCS on a new journal, presumably because they regard it as a potential business opportunity. However, in the absence of a specific proposal, they were unable to provide precise information about how such a publishing arrangement would work. A general theme was that the publisher (and the Society, presumably) would have to be prepared to bear some costs for the first few years as the journal becomes established, and a long-term commitment by the Society to the journal would be important. It is likely that an arrangement in which Society members automatically subscribe to the journal as part of their membership dues would be regarded favourably, although neither publisher suggested that this was mandatory. In getting a new journal established, one target would be to have 25 institutional subscriptions by the end of the first year of publication. Probably, one would want to start relatively small so that careful attention can be paid to costs until the journal is profitable (e.g., one suggestion was a page limit of 256 6" × 9" pages per year). To sell a new journal to a publisher, it would be important to have a clear sense of the other journals with which it might be competing and what new "niche" the journal would occupy.

Relation to *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology*

Any discussion of founding a journal associated with CSBBCS should entail a consideration of the relation to *CJEP* since the *CJEP* potentially overlaps with the goals and clientele of a distinct CSBBCS journal. Indeed, members of the *CJEP* editorial board are commonly members of CSBBCS (rather than of CPA), and Canadian research in the *Journal* is likely to have been presented at the CSBBCS annual meeting (and not at CPA's). Historically, CSBBCS and CPA had an agreement in which CSBBCS members could subscribe to the *CJEP* for a reduced subscription rate. (The regular individual subscription rate is \$80.25.) However, the arrangement is not advertised by either CPA or CSBBCS, there is no readily available information on what the reduced rate is, and no evidence that anyone currently takes advantage of it. Some members of CSBBCS are also members of CPA and subscribe to *CJEP* as part of their CPA dues, but it is difficult to ascertain how many individuals fall into that category. At present, *CJEP* publishes primarily in the area of human experimental psychology, and this is only one aspect of the CSBBCS membership. However, this is because there are few submissions from other areas, and the mandate for the journal is broader. Indeed, *CJEP* has occasionally published papers in neuroscience and animal learning, and there have been several recent special issues devoted substantially to neuroscience or cognitive neuroscience. Given the potential overlap in content, it would be unfortunate if CSBBCS founded another Canadian journal that competed with *CJEP* for submissions and readership. This might be avoided by carefully crafting the nature and content of a new journal. It's also possible that consultation with CPA and the *CJEP* Editor might lead to a cooperative effort to foster distinct roles for both *CJEP* and a CSBBCS journal.

Rather than founding a potentially competing journal, another possibility is to pursue greater involvement of CSBBCS with *CJEP*. In the current climate, it is unlikely that CPA would be interested in ceding *CJEP* to CSBBCS, even if CSBBCS were willing to take it on. Indeed, in discussions with Murray Singer, CPA Past-President John Arnett indicated that CPA is relatively content with the status quo with respect to their journals. However, it is conceivable that CPA would be open to discussions of some other form of cooperative arrangement, particularly if it could be argued that such an arrangement would enhance the readership and financial support of the *Journal*. For example, CSBBCS members might contribute a modest amount to the *Journal* through their dues in exchange for electronic access to the *Journal* and recognition of CSBBCS role on the journal masthead. Another possible benefit that might be negotiated would be the publication of an annual special issue that might contain material of special interest to the CSBBCS membership (e.g., student award papers and the Hebb lecture). (Such a special issue could be published only electronically to avoid detracting from the *Journal's* regular page limit.) A more significant form of cooperation might be to have a special electronic version of the *CJEP* that is associated with CSBBCS and specializes in certain kinds of content (e.g., timely short reports). Such an arrangement might be superior to starting a new journal since it would take advantage of the existing CPA publication infrastructure and would build on the existing reputation and library subscriptions of *CJEP*. Any of these kinds of cooperative arrangements would seem to entail that CSBBCS should be involved in some respect with the governance of the *Journal* (such as setting journal policy and selecting editors), and it is difficult to predict how CPA would respond to such negotiations.