

Opening-up the early stages of research: new journal RIO to publish research proposals.

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Research Ideas & Outcomes (RIO) is the latest scholarly journal seeking to fix the broken scientific publishing system. It has been created specifically to enable and encourage the entire research cycle to be published, including research proposals and ideas. Founding editor [Ross Mounce](#) outlines what the journal seeks to achieve and how it will speed up the publishing process by eliminating the need for an outsourced typesetting process.



Few like to admit it, but the traditional process of research is immensely wasteful. Inefficiency occurs in every part of the research cycle, perhaps none more so than the research proposal stage. For example, [nearly 90% of EU Horizon 2020 grant proposals were rejected](#). Many of these proposals are extremely good works, written by teams, over many months of work. Significant effort goes into crafting research proposals, yet as research outputs in themselves, they are hugely under-utilised. After the proposals are scored and either funded or not funded, typically via closed processes, what happens to these documents? Most stay hidden, never to be seen again, regardless of whether they were funded or not.



The Suffragist Publishing Office (Wikimedia Public Domain)

What if we treated proposals like other outputs of the research cycle: like data, like software, like research articles? What if we *published* proposals in a journal, regardless of whether they were funded or not, to enable the citation of ideas not yet tested, to foster collaboration, to demonstrate the quality of proposed research, and to help others see what good proposals look like...

Launched yesterday, a new journal called [Research Ideas & Outcomes](#) (RIO) has been created specifically to enable and encourage the *entire* research cycle to be published, from start to finish, specifically including research proposals and ideas; the earliest stages that rarely get published (see the video below for more explanation).

Efficient publishing technology does away with the need for typesetting

The innovations provided by RIO journal do not stop there though. Another of the [major features](#) of the journal is its authoring, reviewing and publishing system called [ARPHA](#) for short. This system is a revolution in itself: if used fully, it eliminates the need for an outsourced typesetting process and all the associated errors that entails which frustrate authors and delay publication. It also speeds up the publishing process; no delay waiting for typesetters, and it reduces the cost of production as [good typesetters charge a non-negligible sum per page](#).

I remember only too well getting manuscript proofs back from a different publisher and seeing that [the typesetting process had converted the word 'Phylomatic' into 'phlegmatic'](#) (see tweet above) – the latter word was not in any submitted author version! This error had been introduced by mistake during the shadowy typesetting process, something publishing companies typically keep very quiet about as it's a remarkable inefficiency in the publishing process. Typesetting is arguably an anachronism and doesn't need to exist if authors use tools that are specifically designed to produce structured academic outputs. Don't take my word for this: memorably, Dr Kaveh Bazargan, who runs a high-quality, successful typesetting business (River Valley) stood-up at a conference in 2012 and said of typesetting: "[It's madness. I'm here to say I really shouldn't be in business](#)".

Pensoft have cracked the authoring tools problem with a solid solution that has been successfully developed & tested with the [Biodiversity Data Journal](#) and shown to be a robust system. By combining the ARPHA publishing system, with a broad subject-scope, a philosophy of publishing the entire research cycle, and low cost open access publishing, I genuinely think RIO journal offers a distinctive and attractive option for authors, significantly better in production workflow than most other journals. Alongside Dr Daniel Mietchen, I am proud to be a founding editor of this visionary new journal.

RIO journal will be open for submissions for any and *all* parts of your research cycle from 1st November 2015. Official Website: <http://riojournal.com/> Twitter: [@RIOJournal](#)

Note: This article gives the views of the authors, and not the position of the Impact of Social Science blog, nor of the London School of Economics. Please review our [Comments Policy](#) if you have any concerns on posting a comment below.

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[Dr Ross Mounce](#) is a postdoctoral researcher at the Natural History Museum, London doing text mining to discover and link-up published information about NHM specimens. He is working with [The ContentMine](#) team to encourage the adoption and use of content mining tools and techniques. As a keen advocate for [open scholarship](#), you can find him at [OpenCon2015](#) (Brussels) – the student and early career researcher conference on Open Access, Open Education and Open Data.

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