Editor’s Report | Markus Flury

Virtual Board Meeting: Thursday, November 5th, 9:00 AM central, Microsoft Teams

1.1 Journal update

Vadose Zone Journal has been under the open access model now for the 3rd year. All papers published in VZJ are immediately accessible to a global readership, which helps to enhance visibility and impact beyond the vadose and critical zone research community. The cost for publishing an article in VZJ consists of the article processing charge (APC) of $1750 plus excess page charges for pages over 7 of $100/page for SSSA members and $200/page for nonmembers. As of January 1, 2021, the APC will increase to $1800. While the APC is modest and compare favorably with other open access fees from other hydrology journals, the page charge can add up considerably for longer articles.

The number of submitted original research papers has decreased in 2020 (Figure 1). Total submission until Sept. 30 was 108 in 2019 and 104 in 2020. This decrease may be explained by the COVID pandemic. We also noticed that authors often ask for extension of revision deadlines due to the pandemic.

Vadose Zone Journal, like all other journal from ASA, CSSA, and SSSA, is now published in partnership with Wiley. The editorial office in Madison still manages the review process and the copyediting, Wiley is responsible for the other production processes. With the partnership with Wiley, some of the publishing procedures have changed. The most impactful is that Wiley will only push articles to Web of Science at the closure of an issue, but because VZJ after the change to open access has only one issue per year, our articles in 2020 were not pushed to Web of Science until the issues of 2020 closed. We will therefore reinstitute issues again in 2021, with 6 issues published per year. This will ensure that VZJ articles are listed timely in Web of Science. Nonetheless, the missing presence in Web of Science of our 2020 articles in the year 2020 likely will hurt our impact factor in 2021.

In 2020, VZJ published two Special Sections on “Transdisciplinary Contributions and Opportunities in Soil Physical Hydrology,” guest-edited by Ole Wendroth, Scott Bradford, and Thomas Harter, and “Agrogeophysics: Geophysics to investigate soil–plant–atmosphere interactions & support agricultural management,” guest-edited by Sarah Garré, David Hyndman, Benjamin Mary, and Ulrike Werban. Both special sections have been very successful, and will make a great contribution to VZJ. I thank the guest editors for initiating, promoting, and managing the review process of these special sections. A new Special Section on “Emerging Contaminants in the Vadose Zone” is planned from a symposium at EGU 2021 in Vienna. In 2020, two update papers, three reviews, and one book review were submitted.

Figure 1 Number of papers published in VZJ by paper type and total number of papers submitted in the period between 2014 and 2020 (until September 30, 2020)
Starting in September 2020, VZJ along with the other journals from ASA, CSSA, and SSSA, will introduce the CRediT system to describe authors contribution to their articles. In addition, starting in 2021, the name of the corresponding Associate Editor of each published article will be listed in all ASA, CSSA, and SSSA journals.

1.2 Promotions, news presence, social media

Kate Smits, our Science Communications Editor, and D.J. McCauley from CSA News, have done a fantastic job in promoting selected articles for short highlights and extensive feature articles in CSA News and social media outlets. Two articles and a special section were promoted as feature articles into CSA News (Figure 2).

A novelty in 2020 are the addition of video abstracts to selected articles. A special thank you to Naftali Lazarovitch for initiating these video abstracts and managing and editing them. Video abstracts are short video taped presentations by the authors of a paper, providing the highlights of their findings. Naftali managed 13 video abstracts, and these are available on YouTube and also posted together with the VZJ paper on the VZJ website (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRnD8HbgKpc, http://www.com/watch?v=Ph8e-7WYbxI, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2s-FAadUEg, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_LOCcSBDDg).

New in 2020 is also the institution of an outstanding paper award. This award will recognize the best paper published in the previous 2 years. The Editor and up to 5 Co-Editors and Associate Editors will select the outstanding paper based on a series of criteria from the top 10 most cited/most read papers. The Outstanding Paper Award will be presented at the Annual Meeting Publications Reception. The awardees will receive a framed certificate for the main author, and unframed certificates for additional authors. The 2020 outstanding paper is by Sprenger et al., Measuring and Modeling Stable Isotopes of Mobile and Bulk Soil Water (https://doi.org/10.2136/vzj2017.08.0149).

1.3 Metrics

In 2019, the VZJ impact factor is 2.504, dropping from last years impact factor of 3.634 (Figure 3). The drop of the impact
FIGURE 4  Journal Citation Report: Top papers contributing to Impact Factor

FIGURE 5  Journal Citation Report: Distribution of number of citations

factor is due to several highly-cited review papers published in 2016, which fell out of the impact factor calculation. The top papers contributing to the impact factor are shown in Figure 4. All these top cited papers were reviews or updates. The distribution of overall citations is highly skewed, with the majority of papers receiving 1 to 3 citations (Figure 5).

VZJ currently has 4 highly-cited papers in Web of Science:

- Zacharias et al., 2011. A Network of Terrestrial Environmental Observatories in Germany
- Simunek et al., 2016. Recent Developments and Applications of the HYDRUS Computer Software
- Vereecken et al., 2016. Modeling Soil Processes: Review, Key Challenges, and New Perspectives
- Walvoord and Kurylyk, 2016. Hydrologic Impacts of Thawing Permafrost-A Review


FIGURE 6  Comparison of impact factors among Tri-Society journals. CS: Crop. Science; AJ: Agronomy Journal; SSSAJ: Soil Science of America Journal; JEQ: Journal of Environmental Quality; VZJ: Vadose Zone Journal; JPR: Journal of Plant Registrations; TPG: The Plant Genome
difficulty of finding adequate reviewers for our papers and slow reviewer response time.

The distribution between US and international submission remained, fairly constant, with around 75% of international submissions. Most submissions are, in order, from the US, China, Germany, and Canada (Figure 8).

The number of original research papers published in 2019 has decreased slightly compared to the previous years (Figure 9). The number of review and update papers remains low, and we need to solicit actively for such papers.

1.4 | Editorial board update

I thank all the associate editors for their efforts and commitment to VZJ. The AEs play a key role for the success of the journal, and their network of connections to reviewers is essential for ensuring a rapid and high-quality review process. Thank you also to the editorial team at the headquarters in Madison, Kaitlin Miller, Abby Morrison, Lauren Van Driel, and Matt Wascavage for their relentless support of the publication process. Without their continuous hard work, the review and publication process would not proceed as smoothly as it does. A special thank you also to our consulting editors Harry Vereecken and Michael Young who have provided invaluable input during our quarterly board meetings, and to Kate Smits and Manoj Shukla for their outstanding work as science communications and book review editors.

I also would like to thank our co-editors Insa Neuweiler, Venkat Lakshmi, and Jan Vanderborght, who did a great job in handling manuscripts and assuring a high quality review process.

Changes in the editorial team for 2021 include the following: Insa Neuweiler is retiring as co-Editor after serving for two terms as co-Editor and several terms as associate Editor. Insa Neuweiler will remain on the editorial board as consulting editor. Michael Young is retiring as consulting editor after serving in the capacity for several terms. Kate Smits will take over as co-Editor from Insa Neuweiler, and Yusong Li will become the new science communications editor.

A special thank you to the outgoing AEs: Olivier Bour, Peter Lehmann, Budiman Minasny, Maria Dragila, and Kate Smits. All of them have served several terms as AE and their efforts are very much appreciated. The following AEs have completed their term in 2020 and have agreed to continue another term: Andrew Binley, Todd Caldwell, Karsten Jensen, Scott Jones, Naftali Lazarowitch, Helen Dahlke, Behzad Ghanbarian, and Clare Robinson.

We welcome the incoming group of AEs: Christoph Darnault, Jianying Shang, Steffen Schlueter, Guanglong Feng, Emmanuel Arthur, Eva Kroener, Nima Shokri, and Indra S. Sen. These new AEs bring essential and critical expertise to VZJ.

We congratulate the 2019 recipients of the Excellence of Associate Editor Award (Naftali Lazarowitch, Majdi Najm, Ute Wollschläger) and the Excellence in Review Award (Andrew Binley, Qiuping Fu, Gerard Heuvelink, Harry Schomberg).


1.5 Board meetings, promotion and improvement to VZJ

The Editor, Co-Editor, Consulting Editors, Science Communications Editor, and Book Review Editor, and the managing staff headquarters hold quarterly meetings to discuss VZJ promotion and improvements of the review process. A full editorial board meeting was held virtually at the annual SSSA meeting, but the meetings and dinners at EGU and AGU were cancelled due to COVID-019.

2 MANAGING EDITOR’S REPORT | KAITLIN MILLER

2.1 Production

In 2020, we began producing articles in partnership with Wiley. Although we retain control over copyediting, our typesetting and other production processes are handled by their team. Total published pages and papers are shown for 2020, Vol. 19, and for the previous 5 yr (Table 1). We’ve seen a slight drop in the total published articles from this time last year. This is likely due to the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. VZJ has not seen a significant drop in submissions: we’ve received 104 papers as of 30 September, compared with 108 papers at the same time last year (Table 2). Total downloads up to 30 Sept. are shown in Table 3.

The 2-year impact factor of VZJ decreased by 31.1% from last year (Table 4). Although we did see a small increase in total IF citations (from 596 to 606), this did not outweigh the increased IF denominator from the large number of articles published in 2018. Our 5-year IF showed a 2.7% decrease (from 2.839 to 2.761).

Table 1

| Contribution                  | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Special Sections              | 16   | 12   | 19   | 119  | 15   | 13   |
| Review & Analysis             | 0    | 4 (1 invited) | 0    | 1    | 1    | 0    |
| Updates                       | NA   | 3    | 4    | 1    | 1    | 0    |
| Original Research             | 63   | 55   | 51   | 35   | 81   | 58   |
| Priority Communications       | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Technical Notes               | 8    | 4    | 6    | 5    | 7    | 6    |
| Reproducible Research         | –    | –    | –    | –    | 1    | 0    |
| Opinion & Policy              | 0    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    |
| Book Reviews                  | 3    | 7    | 3    | 3    | 2    | 1    |
| Comments/letters              | 1    | 2    | 2    | 0    | 0    | 2    |
| Total                         | 92   | 88   | 87   | 165  | 108  | 80   |
| Open access                   | 4 (4%) | 32 (36%) | 16 (18%) | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Total pages                   | 1,030 | 966 | 991 | 2,141 | 1,415 | 1,179 |
| Avg. page length (excludes short types) | 11.6 | 11 | 11.4 | 16.2 | 13.5 | 15.5 |

Table 2

| Year   | U.S. submissions | Intl. submissions | Total | % Intl. | % Accepted |
|--------|-----------------|------------------|-------|--------|------------|
| 2020   | 37              | 108              | 145   | 74%    | 63%        |
| 2019   | 31              | 113              | 144   | 78%    | 62%        |
| 2018   | 60              | 152              | 212   | 72%    | 70%        |
| 2017   | 43              | 173              | 216   | 80%    | 57%        |
| 2016   | 82              | 164              | 246   | 67%    | 59%        |
| 2015   | 53              | 114              | 168   | 68%    | 58%        |
| 2014   | 44              | 140              | 184   | 76%    | 56%        |

We have two special sections in development, both of which are partially published. The section “Transdisciplinary Contributions and Opportunities in Soil Physical Hydrology” is expected to be completed by the end of the year. This will feature an invited review article from Dr. Jan Hopmans, whose work this section honors. The second section, “Agrogeophysics: Geophysics to Investigate Soil–Plant–Atmosphere Interactions & Support Agricultural Management,” will appear in two parts across the 2020 and 2021 volumes.

2.2 Social media and promotion

The Vadose Zone Journal Twitter account (@vadosezonej) currently has 757 followers and continues to grow. Six articles and a 2019 special section were promoted in our magazines in 2020. Journal content was also promoted to the general public through our Science Communication Department as web stories. Thanks to these stories and additional promotion by Wiley, we had two 2020 articles (Guiltinan et al., 2020; Barnes & Nicholl, 2020) that were shared across...
### TABLE 3  
Total usage for 2019 and usage to date for 2020 among selected ACSESS publications

| Journal                                      | 2019 Full-text downloads | 2020 Full-text downloads (to 9/30) |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Agricultural & Environmental Letters         | 36,308                   | 33,693                            |
| Agronomy Journal                             | 516,819                  | 248,208                           |
| Agrosystems, Geosciences & Environment       | 15,926                   | 38,739                            |
| Crop Science                                 | 567,069                  | 227,295                           |
| Crop, Forage and Turfgrass Management        | 23,207                   | 19,933                            |
| Journal of Environmental Quality             | 462,129                  | 196,199                           |
| Journal of Plant Registrations               | 25,240                   | 11,962                            |
| Natural Sciences Education                   | 19,759                   | 14,479                            |
| Soil Science Society of America Journal      | 502,103                  | 175,394                           |
| The Plant Genome                             | 133,557                  | 108,552                           |
| The Plant Phenome Journal                    | 5,779                    | 14,121                            |
| Urban Agriculture                            | 4,323                    | 6,187                             |
| Vadose Zone Journal                          | 160,582                  | 94,034                            |

### TABLE 4  
Impact factor

| Year | CS  | AJ  | SSSAJ | JEQ  | VZJ  | JPR  | TPG |
|------|-----|-----|-------|------|------|------|-----|
| 2008 | 1.325 | 1.532 | 2.207 | 2.098 | 1.441 | –    | –   |
| 2009 | 1.735 | 1.416 | 2.179 | 2.291 | 1.991 | 0.564 | –   |
| 2010 | 2.02 | 1.797 | 1.866 | 2.236 | 2.133 | 0.573 | –   |
| 2011 | 1.641 | 1.794 | 1.979 | 2.324 | 1.647 | 0.726 | –   |
| 2012 | 1.513 | 1.518 | 1.821 | 2.353 | 2.2  | 0.496 | 2.463 |
| 2013 | 1.478 | 1.542 | 2     | 2.345 | 2.412 | 0.48  | 4.659 |
| 2014 | 1.575 | 1.441 | 1.721 | 2.652 | 1.778 | 0.64  | 3.993 |
| 2015 | 1.55 | 1.464 | 1.752 | 2.238 | 1.737 | 0.474 | 3.509 |
| 2016 | 1.629 | 1.614 | 1.844 | 2.344 | 1.932 | 0.616 | 2.756 |
| 2017 | 1.635 | 1.897 | 1.92  | 2.405 | 2.71  | 0.62  | 2.923 |
| 2018 | 1.644 | 1.805 | 1.997 | 2.579 | 3.634 | 0.692 | 4.042 |
| 2019 | 1.878 | 1.683 | 2.311 | 2.142 | 2.504 | 0.59  | 3.847 |

*VZJ is included in ISI’s Science Citation Index Expanded (SciSearch) and Current Contents/Agriculture, Biol., and Env. Sci.

multiple news outlets, earning Altmetric scores in the top 5% of all research scored. Questions regarding web stories can be directed to the Science Communication Editor or Susan Fisk, Public & Science Communication Director (sfisk@sciencesocieties.org). Special thanks to Kathleen Smits for serving as an outstanding Science Communication Editor and writing article summaries.

In spring of this year, VZJ associate editor Naftali Lazarovitch produced a series of four “video magazines” that were promoted on the journal Twitter account. These videos highlighted recent VZJ research and have received several hundred views on YouTube. With permission from the authors, several of the clips have also been posted as video abstracts on the associated articles pages (see our Highlights tab to view these). We are hoping to expand this project in the future, giving authors the opportunity to record video abstracts for their articles. Special thanks to Naftali Lazarovitch for his outstanding work on this project.

#### 2.3  |  What’s new?

The headquarters publications staff have continued working to facilitate a smooth transition into our Wiley partnership. In addition to transferring our content from the ACSESS Digital Library (DL) to the Wiley Online Library (WOL), we have been focused on standardization across journals and addressing new and unforeseen issues in the publication process. While much work has been done, we anticipate that it will continue into 2021.

Most recently, VZJ has identified a delay in articles posting to Web of Science. This was due to a change in the way our content was delivered to Clarivate. Wiley Delivery Operations is not able to deposit content before the close of an issue, which prevents Clarivate from indexing our content in the middle of the year. To avoid a similar delay in 2021, we will be switching to a more frequent issue structure at the start of next year, which will allow regular indexing in databases.

Another major focus has been our time to publication. As of our transition to the WOL, our open access journals no longer pre-publish author PDFs. Authors who would like their articles pre-published are encouraged to submit to preprint services. Our team is working to increase production efficiency to compensate for this change, and we have seen an overall decrease in the time from acceptance to final publication, as well as a decrease in the overall time from submission to publication (Table 5). Looking at our post-acceptance milestones (Table 6), the step currently delaying publication
TABLE 5  
Time to publication

| Year | Avg. time from acceptance to publication†(days) | Avg. time from submission to publication‡(days) |
|------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 2018 | 77.64                                         | 215.8                                         |
| 2019 | 78.69                                         | 220.8                                         |
| 2020 | 44.6                                          | 173.7                                         |

†This refers to the publication date of the typeset article. For articles prior to 2020, a PDF of the article was also pre-published within about one week of acceptance. The journal no longer pre-publishes articles.

is the author/institutional response to the open access invoice (on average, this takes longer than the entire post-acceptance production process). We will continue monitoring these steps and work with Wiley to reduce time where we can.

As of September 2020, the name of the corresponding Associate Editor will be published in all VZJ articles. This decision was made after a discussion at the Editor’s Conference in May. The goal of this initiative is to recognize the work that Associate Editors put into manuscripts, contribute to accountability, and to make the review process more transparent overall. By 2021, all ACSESS journals will have adopted this initiative.

Also beginning in September, all ASA–CSSA–SSSA journals have adopted the CRediT system to describe each author’s contribution. During the submission process, the submitting author is required to choose the appropriate role(s) for each coauthor from a list of 14 defined roles: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing–original draft, and Writing–review & editing. Contributor roles will appear with the published article.

In 2020, we introduced the VZJ Outstanding Paper Award. As with the flagship journal awards, articles that are eligible for the VZJ Outstanding Paper Awards are published during the preceding two years. The articles undergo a selection process based on evaluation of how the article has advanced knowledge in the profession, the effectiveness of communication, methodology, originality, and impact. Winners are determined by a committee appointed by the Editor, who will be provided citation and usage data from the past two years. Outstanding Paper Awards are presented at the Publications Reception during the Annual Meeting. The awardee(s) receive a certificate and recognition in the Annual Meeting “Hall of Fame” poster awards area. The winner of our 2020 Outstanding Paper Award is “Measuring and Modeling Stable Isotopes of Mobile and Bulk Soil Water” by Sprenger et al. Due to the virtual 2020 meeting, this award will be presented at the 2021 annual meeting. More information about our awards can be found at https://www.agronomy.org/publications/awards.

3  | DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS | MATT WASCAVAGE

3.1  | Editor changes

Ending term:
- Marilyn Warburton – CS Editor
- Gary Muehlbauer – TPG Editor
- David Clay – AJ Editor
- Dan Sweeney – ASA Editor-in-Chief

Reappointment:
- Jerry Hatfield – AGE Editor

New appointments:
- Paul Scott – CS Editor
- Henry Nguyen – TPG Editor
- To be determined – AJ Editor
- To be determined – ASA Editor-in-Chief

3.2  | Wiley partnership update

In early 2020, all journal content launched exclusively on Wiley Online Library (WOL) and the ACSESS Digital Library (DL) platform was decommissioned. Links to the old DL are now forwarded to the WOL. An initial quality control check was completed for the journal and magazine content and a check of the books content is currently under way. The Methods of Soil Analysis (MSA) content has been split on the WOL. The MSA books are included with the books, but the individual MSA articles could not be integrated with books and are in a new section in SSSAJ. Future MSA articles will be published in SSSAJ. A link to the articles section will also be added to the MSA web page for the book content.

The Managing Editors and journal Editorial Boards have adjusted to article style and process changes with the goal of improving time to decision and time to publish metrics. Additionally, AJ is currently piloting the Wiley HTML online proofing system. Authors make edits directly to the HTML article file, which cuts down time to publication and reduces errors introduced during typesetting. Thus far we’ve received positive response, and hope to expand this program to additional titles.

The Most Read journal articles tab has returned to the journal home pages on the WOL, but the data used to determine the most read articles begins with our launch on the WOL earlier this year and is updated monthly.

Wiley, in cooperation with ACSESS, is continuing management of institutional marketing, sales, licensing, and
customer service. Marketing plans were established for each journal for 2020, but many activities have been altered due to the Covid-19 pandemic with the cancellation of in-person meetings and conferences. A September journals marketing reception organized by Wiley, in cooperation with the British Soil Science Society, took place in China featuring an introductory video by Nick Goeser and in-person participation from Editorial Board members. Preliminarily reporting has been very positive and we would like to extend further opportunities to promote publications.

I am also sharing a snippet of new reporting from Wiley, Key Journal Metrics, for the journal titles that receive a Journal Impact Factor from Clarivate. Please see the additional information for the qualifying journals.

### 3.3 Diversity, equity, and inclusion

Publications has acknowledged the current ACSESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Statement on the journal policies web pages. This addition provides additional visibility in support of our commitment to DEI for our authors and readers and directly aligns the publications to the Society and ACSESS policy.

### 3.4 Downloads summary

In 2019, the journals and magazines totaled just shy of 2.5 M downloads and the book library had 320,600 downloads. Through August 2020, there were over 1.24 M journal and magazine article and downloads on the WOL according to Wiley Journal Insights. This number is underreported from actual due to the time in January through March where content was available on the old DL platform as well as the WOL. We were not able to capture the usage on the DL in 2020. The 2020 year-end usage statistics will be a statistical anomaly, but we will have full visibility into usage in 2021.

### 3.5 Editors conference

In May, the ACSESS-hosted Editor’s Conference was held virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic. With a reduced timeframe, the agenda was developed to be tightly focused on critical issues. In the meeting, the committee unanimously agreed on a timeline to implement the CRediT Taxonomy as required at submission. Additionally, regarding Open Science, the committee agreed to publish Associate Editor names with each journal article to increase transparency in the journal publishing process. JEQ and CS have published the AE name with articles for many years. Very positive reaction and input was received from Editorial Board members as part of this move towards transparency in our publications. Lastly, the group reviewed mismatched guidelines and adopted a standardized Scientific Misconduct Statement for all 13 journals to create uniformity across the journal collection.

### 3.6 Impact factors and metrics

ACSESS currently has 7 of our 13 journals receiving Journal Impact Factors (JIF) from Clarivate. Two ACSESS journals experienced gains and five declined for 2019. SSSAJ moved to 2.311, an increase of 0.314 and CS moved to 1.878, an increase of 0.234. The six journals that do not receive a JIF are all in process with Clarivate. Wiley has taken over management of this task on behalf of ACSESS and follow up regularly to share any changes. The JIF is a measure of the frequency with which the average article in a journal has been cited over a year. The JIF is one tool used to evaluate a journal’s relative importance when compared with other journals in the same study area. Through new annual Bibliometrics reports recently received from Wiley, ACSESS now has multiple key journal metrics to track performance. Reports were provided for the seven journals currently receiving a JIF. A summary of the key metrics will be provided to the seven journals with expanded visibility to the Bibliometrics after the annual meeting.

### 3.7 Journal reach and exposure

Through our partnership with Wiley, our hybrid subscription journals are now available in more than 650% more institutional sites on average than in 2019. See the Table 7 for details.

### 3.8 Journal editorial development

Earlier in 2020, many journals launched a Review Paper Initiative to commission review papers on a regularly-scheduled basis and to potentially form a year-end special section of commissioned and non-commissioned review papers published through the year.
TABLE 7  Journal reach and exposure

| Journal                                      | 2019 Number of sites | 2020 Number of sites | Percent increase |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Agronomy Journal                             | 589                  | 4,155                | 705%             |
| Crop Forest & Turfgrass Management           | 432                  | 3,336                | 772%             |
| Journal of Environmental Quality             | 690                  | 3,762                | 545%             |
| Journal of Plant Registrations               | 444                  | 3,762                | 847%             |
| Natural Sciences Education                   | 455                  | 3,348                | 736%             |
| Soil Science Society of America Journal       | 770                  | 3,787                | 492%             |

TPPJ and UA are in the process of refocusing editorial aims and scope as well as identifying regional gaps to improve submissions and quality using data and reports furnished by Wiley. Reporting also includes detailed funding data to provide an opportunity to identify new authors and research trends. Additional journals will undergo this exercise in 2021 with the goal of all journals participating.

AEL has started a pilot program accepting graphical abstracts with submitted manuscripts from corresponding authors. The main purpose of the graphical abstract is to convey to the reader the meaning of an article visually and quickly. Graphical abstracts are peer reviewed with the manuscript and will be published with the online article, electronic Table of Contents, and may also be used in promotion. A successful pilot may expand this opportunity to additional journal titles.

To increase visibility of published research, the Publications group is also starting a program to encourage author development of video summaries for journal articles. The videos will be posted to the Science Societies YouTube web page and linked from the article page on the WOL. VZJ has already posted and linked several videos. We are working to expand this program to include recorded webinars.

Through the year, all publications adopted revised editorial style, design, style, processes, and procedures to streamline workflows. In our efforts to improve time to publish, the Managing Editors have adjusted traditional processes to adopt best practices with Wiley. Efforts will continue to improve time to decision and time to publish metrics. All journals are strongly encouraged to develop special editions, special section, virtual editions to increase visibility of the journals within developing and underserved areas of research. Please coordinate plans with your Managing Editor.

3.9  New open science initiatives

The journals are taking advantage of several Wiley transformational agreements developed with funders and institutions worldwide to assist researchers in complying with various Open Access mandates. Article licensing fees may be covered in full or in part for qualifying authors.

CRediT, the Contributor Roles Taxonomy, was launched as mandatory to the journals this year. CRediT is a high-level taxonomy used to represent the roles played by contributors to research articles. CRediT’s 14 standard roles, help reduce the potential for author disputes, provide structure for author/contributor policies, and improve the ability to track the contributions.

The Publications Committee expanded the Open Science practice of publishing the name of the Associate Editor with each journal article to increase transparency in the journal publishing process. JEQ and CS have published the AE name with articles for many years and the committee voted in favor of standardizing and extending this practice to all journals. The Publications Committee also reviewed mismatched guidelines and adopted a standardized Scientific Misconduct Statement for all 13 journals to create uniformity across the journal collection. The new statement can be found in the online journal author resources.

3.10  New publications initiatives

In 2020, we launched an expansion of the awards and recognition program with new awards added to the three awards presented in previous years. In addition to ASA, CSSA and SSSA will also recognize an Outstanding Paper starting this year. Also, the Journal Outstanding Paper Awards have been expanded to include AEL, AGE, CFTM, NSE TPG and VZJ. Lastly, CS is expanding recognition by awarding more Divisional awards in 2020 with the goal of further expansion in 2021.

Implementation of Publons, a service of Clarivate providing credit for peer review was adopted by the journals as a feature of our partnership with Wiley. Of the more than 3,650 reviews completed in the first two quarters of 2020, more than 33% of the reviewers have used the Publons service to highlight their contribution to the journals, indicating a significant adoption of the service.
For 2020, the Publications group expanded our relationship with the Dryad Data Depository to offer free data deposit to all authors publishing in our journals. Also, in 2020, we restarted Publications Updates in CSA News to engage society members through news and journal developments. In 2021, we will be working to further develop uniform reporting/metrics, simplify and promote journal transfers and work with the societies to leverage the changing role and responsibilities of the Editors-in-Chief.

3.11 | Long range publications outlook

The Publications group will be working in the coming year to:

- Identify and implement additional open science initiatives
- Grow and strengthen publications use and impact
- Develop opportunities to translate research for new audiences
- Consider opportunities for advertising
- Review the journal Social Media Editors pilot
- Support preprint server education and value

3.12 | Sales and marketing development

Full implementation of coordinated journal marketing plans from Wiley and ACSESS were reduced by the Covid-19 pandemic, but multi-touch email promotions were completed by Wiley along with promotional videos for some journals. Additional collateral materials have also been developed. The goals for 2020 were to build distribution and awareness of the journals, increase journal submissions and focus on author development. Our journals now participate in numerous transformational agreements Wiley has developed with funders and institutions worldwide to assist researchers in complying with various Open Access mandates when submitting and publishing in our journals. Article publication charges may be covered in full or in part for authors affiliated with these funders and institutions.

In late September, Wiley organized an in-person marketing reception in China in partnership with the British Soil Science Society to promote our publications in this strong research market. A select group of Editorial Board members attended the reception to promote the journals and Nick Goeser, CEO, provided an introductory video for the event. Also, in September, Peer Review Week was recognized by Publications via new web content featuring testimonial videos from society members to promote awareness and spark participation in our journals. An article in CSA News along with social media postings were also released during Peer Review Week. Lastly, I contributed a blog post focusing on Peer Review to The Wiley Network and provided our testimonial videos to Wiley to include in Wiley’s international recognition campaign.

Development of 2021 marketing plans is underway in consideration of the continuing Covid-19 crisis and we plan to share more details shortly after the Annual Meeting.

3.13 | Books

The books program continued to draw readers and researchers to the Digital Library, with 320,600 book, Table of Contents, and chapter downloads across more 330 titles in 2019. The books library content completed the Wiley transition later than the journals and magazines and is undergoing an in-depth quality control check through the fourth quarter of 2020. Additionally, ACSESS recently hired a new Managing Editor for Books in October with the goal of expanding book offerings and utilizing Wiley’s assets in the development of new titles and redevelopment of earlier titles.

Fall continues to be a very busy time for books, with three new books slated to debut before the end of 2020. The titles are: Fieldwork Ready: An Introductory Guide to Field Research for Agriculture, Environment and Soil Scientists, Guidelines for Analysis and Description of Regolith Thin Sections, 2nd Edition, and Harlan’s Crops and Man: People, Plants and Their Domestication, 3rd Edition.

3.14 | Magazines

Both magazines (CSA News and Crops & Soils) were redesigned with a fresh, new look this year which has been well received by society members. Also, the creation of new video content was published with select articles and posted to social media to better promote our sciences, several article series, cross promotion with the podcast and webinars, and expanded CEU offerings to CCAs. For more details, please see the “Magazine and Podcast Promotion” report.

3.15 | Podcasts

Led by staff member Abby Morrison, ACSESS will release 23 new podcasts in 2020, up from 13 in 2019. The podcast promotes the science published in our journals through audio interviews. Since show’s beginning in June 2018, there have been more than 30,000 downloads (~700 per episode) on iTunes and “listens” on Spotify. All Field, Lab, Earth podcast episodes available online are now linked to journal articles used as subject and topic matter to increase visibility of the
content and CEU quizzes were added earlier this year. Since then, we’ve had 600 CEU registrations related to the podcast. In addition to the CEUs, we have also picked up our first sponsor starting in September.

3.16 Advertising

ACSESS retained all responsibility for advertising sales for the magazines as well as online space on the WOL as part of the Wiley partnership. Eric Welsh manages this responsibility in cooperation with the Publications department. Sales in 2020 are tracking to budget and online advertising is starting to increase on the WOL.

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On behalf of the Society, sincere thanks are extended to the Editorial Board members who are completing a term of service as of 31 Dec. 2020. Your volunteer service of time and effort has made an important and measurable impact on our journal. We greatly appreciate your support of our Society publications.

Thanks are also extended to the Guest Associate Editors of our special sections. These include Ole Wendroth, Scott Bradford, and Thomas Harter of our “Transdisciplinary Contributions and Opportunities in Soil Physical Hydrology” special section, and Sarah Garré, David Hyndman, Benjamin Mary, and Ulrike Werban of our “Agrogeophysics: Geophysics to Investigate Soil–Plant–Atmosphere Interactions & Support Agricultural Management.” These sections will be great contributions to the journal.