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Journal of Zhejiang University (SCIENCE): a new journal for the 21st century

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ABSTRACT: *The first issue of a quarterly international scientific journal published in English by Zhejiang University, in the People's Republic of China, appeared early in 2000. The background to its establishment, its aims and objectives, and its progress to date are described.*

Introuction

As China opens up within the global arena, its activities in the sphere of scientific communication are widening. At present, there are more than a thousand universities in China. Only about 30 English-language journals are published, most of which are broad-based journals in the natural sciences.

Zhejiang University, established over 100 years ago, has, since its merger with the former Zhejiang Agricultural University, Zhejiang Medical University and Hangzhou University, become China's largest research institute and is ranked among the top five in China. Thus, as in most of the best universities in the world,¹ publishing an English-language academic journal is a priority. In 2000, Zhejiang University launched the *Journal of Zhejiang University (SCIENCE)*, a brand new English-language, international academic journal.

The Journal of Zhejiang University (SCIENCE)

Journal of Zhejiang University (SCIENCE), ISSN 1009-3095 was launched in the first quarter of 2000 with a total of 120 pages and a format of large 16 mo (21 × 27.5 cm). At the time of writing, the journal has published seven issues: vol. 1 (1, 2, 3, 4), and vol. 2 (1, 2, 3). It is published quarterly in January, April, July and October.

Aims and objectives

The journal aims to present the latest development and achievements in scientific research in China and overseas to the world's scientific community.

The objective of publishing this journal in English is to strengthen international exchange in academic research.



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Coverage

The journal mainly covers the subjects of science and engineering, including the fields of information and electronic engineering, chemical engineering, energy engineering, civil engineering, industrial control systems engineering, bioengineering, etc.

Contributions are received from scholars and scientists all over the world. Currently, the contributors are predominantly Chinese, with only a few international authors. However, as the journal grows and develops, it will attract a broader spread of international contributors.

Editorial board

The journal is edited by an international board of distinguished foreign and Chinese scientists.

The Editor-in-Chief, Pan Yun-he, was proud that scholars of the calibre of Dr T.D. Lee, Walter Kaminsky, J. Carl Hsu, H.J. Eichler, Reinhard H. Dennin, Ryoichi Yamamoto, Masahiro Yoshimura, Nalson Yuan-sheng Kiang, Fanhua Lin and Ian Ferguson, among others, accepted his invitation to join the editorial board. A complete list is printed on the inside front cover of the journal.

The goals set for JZU(S)

The following goals have been set for achieving excellence in the publication of the *Journal of Zhejiang University(S)*.

An international editorial board for controlling the quality of the journal

We recognize the importance of having a high standard and authoritative editorial board. It is also one of the selection criteria for inclusion in the *Science Citation Index (SCI)*.²⁻⁵ Therefore our Editor-in-Chief, Pan Yun-he, gave very serious consideration to the problem of who should be invited to join the board of our new journal. After discussion with the Associate Editor-in-Chief, Cheng Jia-an, two selection targets were set:

- Invited members should have published more than three of their theses in SCI since 1998. For example, Professor Ding

Haojiang, a member of the board, received the 'ISI Citation Classic Award' issued on 25 Sep. 2000 by Adam Klein, Senior Director ISI Asia-Pacific Division

- Authoritative scientists and scholars from overseas, like Dr T.D. Lee, the Nobel Prize winner, and Dr Walter Kaminsky, an internationally recognized scientist, would be invited to assist the editorial board from the start.

The replies from the invited scholars and scientists were positive and they accepted our invitation to help us to publish the journal. Because of this encouragement from scholars from all over the world, we aim to do our best for the journal at every stage, from drafting to publishing. We want every thesis we publish to be a quality piece that we can recommend to academia worldwide with the hope of advancing knowledge, and the exchange of ideas and technology between countries.

We are also very grateful that Dr Kaminsky, Pan Yun-he and Dr H.J. Eichler were among the first scientists to publish their work in our journal, thus setting the highest academic standards.

The practice of peer review for the journal's success and credibility

Our editorial board firmly maintain that peer review is an essential tool for ensuring academic standing and consistency in a journal and they proposed that each paper be reviewed by two or three experts outside of the author's unit. They also proposed that submissions should not only be reviewed by the Chinese, but also by overseas professionals (usually contacted via email or regular mail). We list both Chinese and foreign reviewers' curriculum vitae. And, finally – on the basis that a slim good journal is better than a fat journal full of poor papers⁶ – the journal is developing a policy (see Table 1) of gradually raising the rejection level. We plan to fix the rate at about 70%.

Although peer review is costly, representing 21-24% of the journal's total costs in 2000, we consider the practice to be essential to the journal publishing process.

*peer review is
an essential tool*

Table 1. The rejection rate of JZU(S) from May 1999 to June 2001

Submissions	1999 (May–Dec.)	2000 (Jan.–Dec.)	2001 (Jan.–Jun.)
Total papers received (no.)	105	175	143
Papers rejected (no.)	34	59	61
Rejection rate (%)	32	33	43

International recognition by conforming to SCI requirements

Timely and regular publication is one of the requirements of SCI, so we set ourselves to publish the journal in the first month of every quarter. The last three quarterly issues were published on 28 Jan., 29 Apr. and 24 Jul. At the same time, the journal was put on the internet. The journal is edited to an international format and includes a table of contents and 'information for authors', while articles include abstract, authors' address, summary and keywords. We also display the diagrams, graphs and footnotes in the format required by international editorial rules. We are trying to follow the format required by the SCI in every detail, and have adopted the style of many European and American journals for references, using 'author-year' in the text and alphabetical order for presentation. We also check proofs very carefully before publication.

Use different media to expand our influences in the world

As already mentioned, apart from publishing the print journal, we have also started to publish online (www.chinainfo.gov.cn/ periodical and www.zjupress.com). In addition our website is linked with www.zju.edu.cn and www.lib.zju.edu.cn/English of the library of Zhejiang University. The *Bulletin of the European Association of Science Editors* (vol. 27:2) has issued a news note of the journal's publication.

Increase publicity and broaden the subscription list for the journal

We have contacted most of the libraries, universities and research centres in China and also in many other countries, and introduced them to our new journal, and now we are receiving encouraging replies from abroad. Also, to extend the journal's international influence, we hope to establish relationships with an overseas distributor. Our website www.zjupress.com is free to subscribers.

Promote international exchange

On the recommendation of Professor Zhu Cheng, Consultant of the Chinese Society of University Journals in Natural Science, we have made contact with some authoritative research index publishers, such as *Chemical Abstracts*, *SCI*, *Engineering Index(EI)*, *Index Medicus*, etc., in the USA, *JST* in Japan, *Science Abstracts* in the UK and *AJ* in Russia. Responses have been encouraging: we have received an email from Jodi L. Schneider of *Chemical Abstracts* which said, 'We are pleased to report that this periodical has been evaluated and found suitable for abstracting and indexing in *Chemical Abstracts* . . .'; *AJ* in Russia is abstracting the journal; Rodney Chonka, editor of *ISI*, emailed us in July to say 'The *Journal of Zhejiang University (SCIENCE)* is no doubt a journal of high quality which is doing well in meeting certain criteria which we consider in our evaluation, including timeliness, composition of the editorial board, bibliographic standards and scope of subject areas . . .'; and *EI* is currently evaluating the journal for coverage beginning in 2001 (see Note).

Our website is free to subscribers

Guarantee of full financial support for the publication by Zhejiang University

Financial considerations are always important in maintaining publication of a quality journal. As the founder of our journal, Zhejiang University is playing a most important role and has promised to give full support and funding to the journal. In return, we, the working team of the *Journal of Zhejiang University (SCIENCE)*, will do our best to maintain and improve the

quality of the journal and to make it a well-respected and internationally acknowledged publication.

In the 21st century, with the rapid growth of science and information technology, publishing an academic journal is a challenge for any publisher. For us, this is a positive challenge to work even harder and to make this journal an even better and more up-to-date communication vehicle for our fast-changing world.

Note

We have now (November 2001) been informed that the *Journal of Zhejiang University (SCIENCE)* has been accepted by EI Compendex, USA for abstracting and indexing from Jan. 2002 and has also been accepted for coverage by INSPEC.

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