

Research

MIS research: Journal status assessment and analysis

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Abstract

The perceived status of journals in which MIS research is published is an important issue to academics. The number of IS-related journals has increased through the years, yet it is not obvious which are the “leading” journals or what criteria should be used to determine this. This article addresses these issues by: (1) evaluating and analyzing previous studies in which MIS related journals have been ranked; (2) determining top-ranked journals and placing them into two levels, or tiers, based on previous studies; and (3) establishing a profile, through a systematic analysis, of the nine journals in the first tier. This study identified 17 highly ranked journals for publication. Nine were placed in the first tier and eight in the second tier. In addition to IS-specific journals, publications included management science, computer science, and business-oriented journals.

Keywords: MIS journals; Journal ranking; Journal profile; Information systems publications; Information systems research

1. Introduction

Management Information Systems [MIS] has emerged as an academic discipline, yet questions still exist about the best publication outlets. Practitioners and academics alike use journals for acquiring information and disseminating new findings. In addition to a growing number of journals specifically dedicated to MIS, studies indicate that researchers in the discipline also publish in journals of related fields, including management science, computer science, and business-oriented publications.

Published research is a primary mechanism for evaluating an academic's scholarly performance for

promotion and tenure at universities. In numerous institutions, research and publication rank higher in importance for evaluation purposes than other criteria such as teaching and service. The perceived quality of a journal has also become a significant factor in this process. Although the degree of specificity of quantitative and qualitative criteria for promotion and tenure decisions may vary substantially from one institution to another, consensus about the ranking and importance of MIS related journals remains a crucial issue.

This article attempts to determine the top-ranked journals in the field of Management Information Systems based on the results of selected studies published between 1989 and 1993. Using previous rankings as a screen or filter, two tiers were established, including a profile for each of the journals in the first tier.

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2. Review of related research

Holsapple, Johnson, Manakyan, and Tanner [12] summarized studies that have ranked journals publishing research and scholarly discourse in portions of the field of business computing (e.g., MIS and DSS). Table 1 lists these. As noted, this list is representative of the diversity of approaches that have been used to evaluate journal rankings. A brief summary of various studies, along with the publications, authors' names, and years published, are listed in chronological order.

Although the motivation for each of these studies was similar, different methodologies were used. Hamilton and Ives [11] examined the changing nature of MIS research and ranked 20 journals that publish MIS research. Vogel and Wetherbe [24] determined journal preferences by examining nearly 400 articles in 15 journals, ranked by the authors' institutional affiliations. The other two studies listed, which employed some type of citation analysis methodology, were by Omar and Goodwin [20] and most recently the Holsapple, Johnson, Manakyan, and Tanner [12] study. These rankings were further used to identify two top tiers of journals.

The remaining studies employed a survey instrument to determine rankings and/or tiers. Three of

the four surveyed academics (MIS faculty and/or Department Chairs) [7,15,8] with one surveying practitioners [23] to assess the importance of journals based on the respondents' perceptions. Each of these studies provides academics, practitioners, and administrators indications of the relative importance of journals publishing MIS research.

3. Methodology

We have attempted to:

- (1) determine top-ranked journals for publishing MIS research and place them into tiers; and
- (2) establish a profile of the leading MIS journals.

The method was to:

- (1) evaluate and analyze previous studies in which MIS related journals have been ranked;
- (2) through this, identify how to determine two tiers of top-ranked journals; and
- (3) by analysing each journal in the first tier, establish a profile of the top-ranked journals.

The studies evaluated placed an emphasis on North American publication outlets and did not take into consideration European or other non-North American IS related journals. The importance and role of

Table 1
Summarization of existing studies

Year	Authors	Publication	Brief summary
1982	Hamilton and Ives	<i>MIS Quarterly</i>	Examined 15 journals (1970–79), 532 articles selected, 20 journals ranked
1984	Vogel and Wetherbe	<i>Data Base</i>	Examined 15 journals (1980) survey), Selected 389 articles published between 1970–1983, Ranked journals by specific universities
1987	Doke and Luke	<i>JCIS</i>	Surveyed CIS Department Chairs and Faculty, MIS Journals ranked on two criteria
1989	Koong and Weistroffer	<i>JCIS</i>	Surveyed MIS Academics, Over 30 MIS Journals ranked on two criteria
1991	Gillenson and Stutz	<i>MIS Quarterly</i>	Surveyed MIS Department Chairs Ranked 38 IS/IS-related journals
1991	Omar and Goodwin	<i>Interface</i>	Examined 22 journals (1980–1988), Ranked journals publishing DSS Research
1991	Tsai, Richards and Yellen	<i>Interface</i>	Surveyed 220 practitioners, Ranked 7 practitioner journals
1993	Holsapple, Johnson, Manakyan, Tanner	<i>Information and Management</i>	Citation Analysis (1987–1991), Used journal rankings to identify two tiers of top-ranked journals

these journals in the IS discipline should be addressed in a separate study.

In our analysis, because of the rapid change in MIS technology, we chose to include only the most recent studies (those published within the previous five-year period –1989–1993). Three studies were not included as a result of this. From the remaining studies, two were excluded. The Omar and Goodwin study focused only on a specific area (DSS), while this study is to rank journals that publish MIS research in general. The other study by Tsai, Richards, and Yellen was not included because the respondents were practitioners who only ranked seven journals.

The intent here was to determine MIS journal rankings among academics and to study an in-depth list of publications. Therefore, the other three studies were selected to be used for screening top-ranked journals and placing them into tiers.

In order to establish the top-ranked journals for publishing MIS research and tier placement, a rigorous methodology was adopted: to be placed in the first tier a journal must have ranked in the top 21 or the first tier of *all* three studies. To identify a second tier of journals, a journal must have been ranked in

Table 2

Koong and Weistroffer Study [15]. Journals used for publishing knowledge

Rank	Name of journal
1	<i>Management Information Systems Quarterly</i>
2	<i>Communications of the ACM</i>
	<i>Journal of Management Information Systems</i>
4	<i>Journal of Systems Management</i>
5	<i>Journal of Computer Information Systems</i>
6	<i>Information and Management</i>
7	<i>ACM Transactions on Database Systems</i>
	<i>Interface</i>
9	<i>Decision Sciences</i>
	<i>Management Science</i>
11	<i>Database</i>
	<i>Interfaces</i>
13	<i>IEEE Transaction on Software Engineering</i>
	<i>Journal of Information Systems Management</i>
15	<i>Data Management</i>
	<i>Omega</i>
	<i>Journal of Accounting and EDP</i>
18	<i>ACM Transactions on Office Information Systems</i>
	<i>Computers and Operations Research</i>
	<i>IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics</i>
	<i>International Journal of Man Machine Studies</i>

Table 3

Gillenson and Stutz Study [8] IS and IS-related journal rankings

Rank	Name of journal
1	<i>Management Science</i>
2	<i>MIS Quarterly</i>
3	<i>Communications of the ACM</i>
4	<i>Decision Sciences</i>
5	<i>Journal of Management Information Systems</i>
6	<i>Journal of the ACM</i>
7	<i>ACM Transactions on various subjects</i>
8	<i>IEEE Transactions on various subjects</i>
9	<i>ACM Computing Surveys</i>
10	<i>Harvard Business Review</i>
11	<i>Computer (IEEE)</i>
12	<i>Information and Management</i>
13	<i>Sloan Management Review</i>
14	<i>Journal of Information Systems Management</i>
15	<i>Information Systems</i>
16	<i>Information Resources Management Journal</i>
17	<i>Journal of Systems Management</i>
18	<i>Journal of Information Management</i>
19	<i>ACM Special Interest Group Publications</i>
20	<i>Journal of Computer Information Systems</i>
21	<i>Journal of Information Science</i>

the top 21 or the first tier of *two-thirds* of the studies. Holsapple et al. identified 19 journals in the first tier, but because they gave no ranking within tiers, it was not possible to identify two additional

Table 4

Holsapple, Johnson, Manakyan, and Tanner Study [12] First tier of journals publishing business computing research

<i>ACM Computing Surveys</i>
<i>ACM Transactions on Database Systems</i>
<i>ACM Transactions on Office Information Systems</i>
<i>Communications of the ACM</i>
<i>Data Management</i>
<i>Datamation</i>
<i>Decision Sciences</i>
<i>Decision Support Systems</i>
<i>Harvard Business Review</i>
<i>IEEE Transaction on Software Engineering</i>
<i>Information and Management</i>
<i>Interfaces</i>
<i>Journal of Computer Information Systems</i>
<i>Journal of Information Systems Management</i>
<i>Journal of Management Information Systems</i>
<i>Journal of Systems Management</i>
<i>Management Science</i>
<i>MIS Quarterly</i>
<i>Sloan Management Review</i>

journals for that study. Twenty-one journals were selected in the other two studies (because of a tie for the 18th through 21st ranking in Koong and Weistroffer).

Each journal placed in the top tier using this methodology was analyzed and a profile established through an interview with the editor or publisher of each journal and the information extracted from *Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Business and Economics* [2].

4. Results

The authors believe that the results from the identified studies establish a representative sample of journal ranking. In it:

- (1) a diversity in methodologies is represented,
- (2) the studies were conducted and published over a recent time period (1989, 1991, and 1993), and
- (3) the studies are published in three different highly regarded journals.

Table 5
Summarized listing of ranked journals and indication of ranking or tier placement

Name of journal	Koong and Weistroffer 1989	Gillenson and Stutz 1991	Holsapple, Johnson, Manakyan and Tanner 1993
ACM Computing Surveys	-	9	First tier
ACM Transactions on Database Systems	7 ^a	-	First tier
ACM Transactions of Office Information Systems	18 ^a	-	First tier
ACM Special Interest Group Publications	-	19	-
ACM Transactions on Various Subjects	-	7	-
Communications of the ACM	2 ^a	3	First tier
Computer (IEEE)	-	11	-
Computers and Operations Research	18 ^a	-	-
Database	11 ^a	-	-
Data Management	15 ^a	-	First tier
Datamation	-	-	First tier
Decision Sciences	9 ^a	4	First tier
Decision Support Systems	-	-	First tier
Harvard Business Review	-	10	First tier
IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering	13 ^a	-	First tier
IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics	18 ^a	-	-
IEEE Transactions on Various Subjects	-	8	-
Information and Management	6	12	First tier
Information Systems	-	15	-
Information Resources Management Journal	-	16	-
Interface	7 ^a	-	-
Interfaces	11 ^a	-	First tier
International Journal of Man Machine Studies	18 ^a	-	-
Journal of Accounting and EDP	15 ^a	-	-
Journal of Computer Information Systems	5	20	First tier
Journal of Information Management	-	18	-
Journal of Information Science	-	21	-
Journal of Information Systems Management	13 ^a	14	First tier
Journal of Management Information Systems	2 ^a	5	First tier
Journal of Systems Management	4	17	First tier
Journal of the ACM	-	6	-
Management Science	9 ^a	1	First tier
MIS Quarterly	1	2	First tier
Omega	15 ^a	-	-
Sloan Management Review	-	13	First tier

^a tie.

Tables 2 and 3, and Table 4 identify top journal rankings or tiers established in each study selected.

The targeted population of the Koong and Weistroffer [15] study was faculty members listed in the *Directory of Management Information Systems Faculty*, published by McGraw Hill Publishing Company. A random sample of 500 subjects was surveyed with a response rate of 27.8 percent. Respondents were asked to list the three most-used journals for acquiring (reading) MIS information and the three most-used journals for disseminating (publishing) MIS knowledge. Rankings were based on the number of indications per journal.

Results of the study by Gillenson and Stutz were obtained through a survey of the Computer/Management Information Systems Chairs in all AACSB accredited business schools. This survey resulted in a 50.2 percent response rate. Respondents were asked to rate 38 IS or IS-related journals with a check for “top, high, medium, low, or nil.” Respondents were also allowed to insert the names of journals not listed. Journals were then ranked based on weighted averages of the responses. The top 21 journals according to this study are listed in Table 3.

A citation analysis methodology was employed in the Holsapple et al. study to determine a relative ranking of journals. This was then compared with rankings from six other previous studies to establish two tiers of top-ranked journals in the field of business computing. The data collection produced over 25,000 citations for the years 1987–1991. Criterion for establishing tiers was quite rigorous, in that the first tier included fewer than 20 of the nearly 1,400 journals identified. To be accepted as a first-tier journal in this study, it must have achieved a top-25 placement in over half of the rankings of the seven studies. The results are listed in Table 4 in alphabetical order.

4.1. Establishing the tiers

Table 5 summarizes the rankings of journals in these three studies. A combined list of the top 21, or first-tier, journals is presented, with an indication of ranking or tier qualification for each.

The filtering process accepted 17 of the 35 journals in the combined studies. The potential for significant bias exists with both survey studies and citation

Table 6
First tier of MIS journals

<i>Communications of the ACM</i>
<i>Decision Sciences</i>
<i>Information and Management</i>
<i>Information Systems Management</i>
<i>Journal of Computer Information Systems</i>
<i>Journal of Management Information Systems</i>
<i>Journal of Systems Management</i>
<i>Management Science</i>
<i>MIS Quarterly</i>

analyses. Personal biases often pose a problem in studies involving perception in surveys where lists guide the respondents. Citation analysis rankings may be distorted when a few articles are highly cited, as well as by those journals publishing a large number of articles per year [4]. The methodology also eliminates journals that were ranked by one study only. Establishing two groups or tiers of top-ranked journals was the objective. Commonalities among the studies were used to identify the leading MIS journals rather than a ranking methodology. No attempt is made to rank journals within tiers.

Using the screening methodology, there were nine journals that were common to *all* three studies. This list comprises the first tier, alphabetized in Table 6. Eight journals ranked in the top 21, or first tier, of *two of the three* studies, providing a second tier of journals listed in Table 7.

It is interesting to note that *MIS Quarterly* and *Communications of the ACM* could be clearly identified as the top two journals. Other studies support the contention that the *Journal of Computer Information Systems* and *Management Science* are consis-

Table 7
Second Tier of MIS Journals

<i>ACM Computing Surveys</i>
<i>ACM Transactions on Database Systems</i>
<i>ACM Transactions on Office Information Systems</i>
<i>Data Management</i>
<i>Harvard Business Review</i>
<i>IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering</i>
<i>Interfaces</i>
<i>Sloan Management Review</i>

Table 8
Detailed analysis of leading MIS journals

Name of journal		DS	I&M	ISM	JCS	JMS	JSM	MS	MISQ	Criteria	
CACM	Blind	Blind	Blind	Editorial	Blind	Blind	Blind	Blind	Blind	Type of review	Review information
3-4	2	4	1	1	2-3	2-3	2	3	> 3	Number of external reviewers	
0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	In-house reviewers	
21–30% unsolicited	12–15%	40%	> 50%		10–11%		40%	11–20%	11–15%	Acceptance rate	
4–6 mo.	2-3 mo.	5–7 mo.	2-3 mo.	2-3 mo.	2-3 mo.	2-3 mo.	2-3 mo.	4–6 mo.	4-5 mo.	Time required for review	
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Available	Yes	Reviewer's comments	
-	\$25 mem	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Fees charged to review manuscript	
90%	\$50 nonmem	-	50–60%	-	-	-	5% or less	5% or less	5% or less	Percentage of invited articles	
Professional association	Professional association	-	-	-	-	-	Professional association	Professional association	MIS research center and professional association	Sponsorship	Circulation data
Businesspeople Academic	Academic	Academic	Businesspeople Academic	Businesspeople Academic	Academic	Businesspeople Academic	Businesspeople Academic	Academic	Academic	Type of reader	
Monthly 83,000 \$79	Bi-Monthly 5,000–7,000 \$56	Monthly 1,100–1,200 \$507	Quarterly 5,000 \$134	Quarterly 1,000 \$35	Quarterly 1,200 \$57	Monthly 8,700 \$48	Monthly 10,000 \$65	Monthly 10,000 \$80–nonmem	Quarterly 4,500 \$40	Frequency of issue	
120	54	60	64–70	60	36	72	120	120	24	Copies per issue	
12 mo.	None	4 mo.	4–6 mo.	9–12 mo.	6–9 mo.	2-3 mo.	15 mo.	15 mo.	< 6 mo.	Subscription price (individual)	
20–25 pages 5	20–25 pages 4	20–25 pages 5	12–15 pages 2	10–14 pages 3	> 20 pages 4	10–20 pages 2	> 20 pages 4	> 20 pages 4	> 20 pages 8	Number of articles published per year	
\$60 page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Backlog (acceptance to publication)	
37	25	17	11	34	11	45	40	40	18	Length of manuscript	
10 yrs	3 yrs renewable	open	open	open	open	open	3 yrs renewable	3 yrs renewable	3 yrs renewable	Number of copies required	
No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fees charged to publish manuscript	
Not important	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Somewhat important	Very important	Very important	Very important	Longevity (years in circulation)	Other information
Computers	Computers, Business, etc.	Computers, Information systems Management	Computers, Information systems Management	Computers, Information systems Management	Computers, Information systems	Computers, Information systems Business	Computers, Information systems	Computers, Operations research	Computers, Information technology, Management	Editor term	
										Special issue(s)	
										Importance of research based manuscripts	
										Manuscript topics	

Artificial intelligence, Total quality management	Decision analysis, Functional areas of business	New ideas	Better practices for running IS department Productivity quality IS	Traditional and emerging areas of IS that contribute to knowledge in the field	New and significant contributions to the field of MIS	Experience with new technologies, Converting legacy systems, Keeping technically current	Decision analysis, Marketing, Simulation, Accounting	Some relevance of management	Areas of special interest	
Technical	Management science – Decision analysis	Information systems	Information systems	Information systems	Information systems	Information systems	Management science	Information systems	Type of journal	Other information
Articles, Case studies	Article, Education notes and Short papers	Articles, Briefings, Applications technology, Case studies	Articles, Book review, Interview columns	Article, Technology/Book review, International perspective	Articles	Articles, Systems notes, Client server strategy, Retooling/Reengineering, Contest/Challenge	Articles, Notes	Articles, Research notes, Issues and opinions	Editorial sections/categories	
Redesign and restructure (shortened articles and number of references, 90% of articles from practitioners)	Redesign	Allowing more theory	Redesign, Title change from JISM to ISM	Redesign, International perspective section	40% Expansion	Redesign, Discontinue special issues, More encouragement to revise	Redesign format	Redesign, Add e-mail address for authors	Recent changes	

CACM: Communications of the ACM, DS: Decision Sciences, I&M: Information and Management, ISM: Information Systems Management, ICIS: Journal of Computer Information Systems, JMIS: Journal of Management Information Systems, JSM: Journal of Systems Management, MS: Management Science, MISQ: Management Information Systems Quarterly.

tently among the top ten [24,7]. Previous studies also indicate *Information and Management* and *Harvard Business Review* to be very influential in the discipline [11,24]. Unfortunately, many conflicts still exist, both in the identification of top journals as well as the ranking of these journals.

The method used to determine the two tiers of MIS journals characterize the reputation, longevity, and importance of journals across a widespread and diverse range of perceptions and viewpoints. It is important to note that the rankings used from previous studies involved more than two survey studies and a citation analysis. The most recent of these also used a comparison of rankings established by citation analysis with six other ranking studies to establish two tiers.

While the majority of journals appearing in the first tier of the Holsapple et al. study were accepted as either first-or second-tier journals for our study, there were a couple of interesting observations. *Datamation* failed to be accepted for our tiers. This is consistent with a contention made by Gillenson and Stutz that it has dropped, over time, in academic standing. *Decision Support Systems*, on the other hand, is an example of a highly regarded journal in a specialized area of MIS. *DSS* was ranked as one of the top two journals by the Omar and Goodwin study. Specialized journals, relatively new journals of high esteem devoted exclusively to MIS, and non-North American journals, i.e. European journals, should be given special consideration.

Although one could reasonably argue that other journals are highly regarded in the field, this method-

ology includes journals that pass the test of consistently being ranked among top journals for publishing MIS research.

5. Profile of leading MIS journals

A clear understanding of the field's nature helps researchers position their efforts relative to those of others, to systematically strike out in new directions and integrate their findings into the field's base of knowledge. It also helps those who evaluate these researchers by giving them a complete and coherent perspective from which to assess contributions to the field. [13]

Our study attempts to present such a perspective through an organized and detailed analysis of leading publication outlets for the field of MIS. Journals that qualify as first-tier journals were further analyzed to establish a profile of leading MIS publications. Twenty-seven criteria were established. These were categorized as review information, circulation data, publication guidelines, etc. Each is listed in Table 8.

Interviews were conducted with the editor, publisher, or a designated representative of each of the nine journals to obtain data related to the established criteria. Prior to conducting the interviews by phone, information was extracted from *Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities*, guidelines published in each journal, and published material requested from representatives of individual publications. This process was intended to save the interviewee's time in answering questions that are available in published

Table 9
Differences in academic and practitioner publications [13]

	Academic	Practitioner
<i>Primary audience</i>	Research community, some professional	Data processing, MIS and business professionals
<i>Authors</i>	Researchers from universities, corporations, and government	Staff writers, practitioners, and academicians
<i>Article types</i>	Contributions to field's basic knowledge	News, anecdotes, reviews, editorials, translations of basic knowledge
<i>Editorial policies</i>	Editor and peer review	Copy editing, editorial review
<i>Advertising academic journals</i>	Calls for papers, academic position announcements, other services	Products and job openings for practitioners, training
<i>Subscription</i>	Relatively high cost, low circulation	Relatively low cost, high circulation

form. The questions therefore could *not* be answered through a review of published literature, etc. There were many cases where published data was incorrect or had changed since it was published. Numerous inconsistencies and some distinct diversities were found among the nine journals.

It is not surprising that the review process for all but one journal is conducted through blind review with the majority of submitted manuscripts reviewed by two or more external reviewers and one in-house reviewer. A common practice by many editors is to send manuscripts that are classified as “revise and resubmit” or those that receive inconsistent reviews to an in-house reviewer or associate editor for further evaluation. A number of the journal representatives interviewed reported a trend toward rejecting a percentage of papers without those manuscripts going through the formal review process. This can perhaps be attributed to a growing number of submissions to top journals as the rewards for quality publications increase. The advantage to the author is timely feedback and avoidance of waiting two to seven months before being able to submit the manuscript elsewhere.

Reviewers’ comments are either sent to the author or available by all the journals analyzed. Two-thirds of the publications are sponsored by a professional association.

Four journals studied are published on a monthly basis, four on a quarterly basis, and one is published bi-monthly. The number of articles published per year ranges from 36 for *Journal of Management Information Systems* to 120 for *Management Science* and *Communications of the ACM*.

Because of the changing nature of the MIS field, backlog (length of time from acceptance to publication) is critical. Eight of the nine leading MIS journals publish accepted articles within 12 months, with five of those publications getting manuscripts in print within a six-month period. Two-thirds of the journals expect articles submitted to be 20 pages or longer, although a number of editors cited a need for flexibility regarding manuscript length, depending on a number of factors such as figures and references. As might be expected, there is a direct correlation between the number of copies required by each journal and the number of reviewers.

The collection of journals ranking in the top tier is

representative not only of different types of journals, but also includes journals that are targeted at two markets: academics and practitioners. Holsapple et al. indicate that this does not mean that academics have no interest in practitioner journals or that practitioners have no interest in academic journals. It is simply indicative of the primary audiences they serve. The differences in academic journals and practitioner publications are summarized in Table 9.

All journals have readers from the academic side, with two-thirds also attracting the businessperson or practitioner. The type of reader, however, does not clearly distinguish the academic from the practitioner journal. As is the case with this set of journals, a practitioner-oriented journal may publish articles submitted by academicians providing that they are geared toward the business professional. Based upon interviews with editors, etc., three of the nine journals are classified as practitioner rather than academic: *Communications of the ACM*, *Information Systems Management*, and *Journal of Systems Management*. The distinct diversities found among the journals’ characteristics seem to be attributed to whether the publication is marketed to practitioners or academics. For example, five of the six academic journals have an acceptance rate of 20 percent or less. Journals classified as practitioner oriented indicated higher acceptance rates, although the editor of *Information Systems Management* could not verify the acceptance rate published by *Cabell’s Directory*. Unlike academic journals, this statistic does not seem to be as important to the editors of practitioner

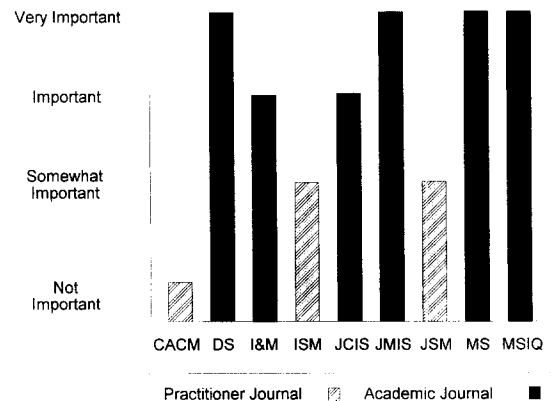


Fig. 1. Importance of research based manuscripts.

classified publications. It is interesting to note that academic journals have an extremely limited number of invited papers (5 percent or less), while ISM and CACM solicit 50 to 60 percent and 90 percent, respectively, of their published articles. Academic journals have a lower average circulation.

One of the most significant differences between the two classifications of journals is the importance of research-based manuscripts. All academic journals deem research-based articles to be important or very important to the acceptance of a manuscript. Practitioner publications, on the other hand, rate this characteristic as somewhat important or not important. Fig. 1 illustrates this.

The interdisciplinary nature and relative youth of the MIS discipline may contribute to the diversity of highly regarded journals in which MIS research is published. As illustrated in Fig. 2, journals were classified as information systems, management science, or technical. Although the editor chose to classify *CACM* as a “technical” journal, many feel that it really is more a computer science journal. Although the number of journals specifically dedicated to MIS is growing, previous studies support the contention that researchers in the discipline also publish in journals of related fields, such as management science, computer science, and organizational science [8,6].

The number of years a journal has been in circulation ranges from 11 years to 45 years. Some of these journals have been in existence much longer than MIS. It is not surprising that most surviving journals

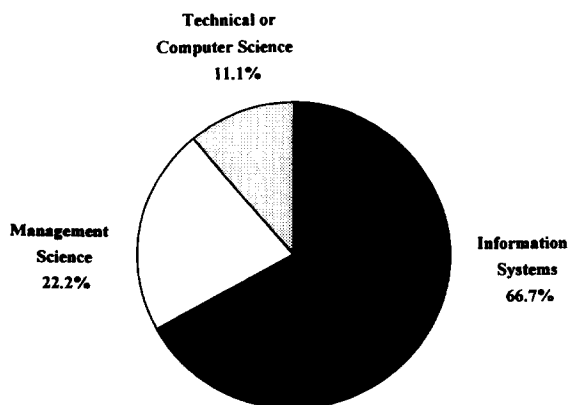


Fig. 2. Types of journals.

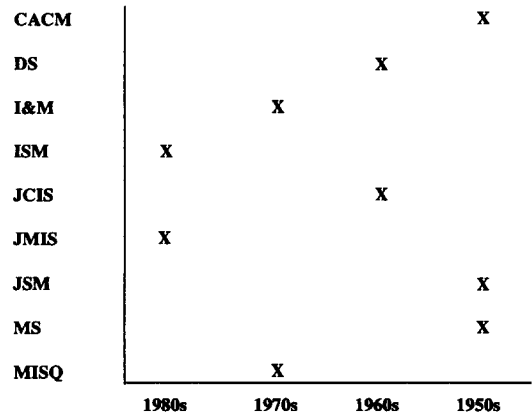


Fig. 3. Longevity (Decade journal was founded).

published for over a decade have gained more recognition and stature than recent journals. Fig. 3 illustrates the journal's longevity.

Over one-half of the journals analyzed have open terms for the editors. Three of the publications have three-year, renewable terms. The editors for *Information Management* and *Journal of Management Information Systems* have served since the journals' inceptions. Although seldom mentioned in the literature, the editor and editorial board (e.g., associate editors, assistant editors, reviewers, etc.) significantly contribute toward the success of a journal. The stability, dedication, and commitment required of these positions is critical. The majority of the editorial policy is the result of decisions made by the members of the editorial board of each publication.

Special issues are typically published as special themes in a regularly scheduled issue rather than in an additional publication. Overall, manuscript topics listed were broad-based, with the majority of journals listing computers and information systems. Areas of special interest varied with the underlying premise that manuscripts make a significant contribution to the field.

An assortment of editorial sections/columns can be found in the various journals. Finally, all of the editors/representatives interviewed indicated a number of recent changes. Numerous journals have undergone redesign. *Communications of the ACM* also has restructured its publication to include shorter articles and fewer references. Perhaps the *CACM* change with the most significant impact is the in-

Table 10
Summary of leading MIS journals

Review information		
Type of review	Frequency	Percentage
Blind	8	88.9%
Number of external reviewers	Frequency	Percentage
2–3	5	55.6%
> 3	3	33.3%
Number of in-house reviewers	Frequency	Percentage
0	3	33.3%
1	6	66.7%
Acceptance rate	Frequency	Percentage
10–20%	5	55.6%
Time required for review	Frequency	Percentage
2–3 months	5	55.6%
≥ 4 months	4	44.4%
Reviewer's comments	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	77.8%
Fees charged to review manuscript	Frequency	Percentage
No	8	88.8%
Percentage of invited articles	Frequency	Percentage
None	3	33.3%
5% or less	4	44.4%
Sponsorship	Frequency	Percentage
Professional Association	6	66.7%
None	3	33.3%
Circulation data		
Type of reader	Frequency	Percentage
Academic	3	33.3%
Academic/Businesspeople	6	66.7%
Frequency of issue	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly/Quarterly	4	44.4%
	4	44.4%
Copies per issue	Frequency	Percentage
1,000–2,999	3	33.3%
5,000–6,999	2	22.2%
Subscription price		
Range \$35 to \$507		
Publication guidelines		
Number of articles Published per year	Frequency	Percentage
41–60	3	33.3%
Backlog (acceptance to publication)	Frequency	Percentage
1–6 mo.	4	44.4%
7–12 mo.	3	33.3%
Length of manuscript	Frequency	Percentage
10–19 pages	3	33.3%
≥ 20 pages	6	66.7%
Number of copies required	Frequency	Percentage
2	2	22.2%
4	3	33.3%
5	2	22.2%
Fees charged to publish manuscript	Frequency	Percentage
No	8	88.8%

Table 10 (continued)

Other information		
Longevity (number of years in circulation)	Frequency	Percentage
10–15	2	22.2%
16–20	2	22.2%
36–40	2	22.2%
Editor term	Frequency	Percentage
3 years (renewable)	3	33.3 %
open	5	55.6%
Special issue(s) published	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	44.4%
No	5	55.6%
Importance of research based manuscripts	Frequency	Percentage
Very important	4	44.4%
Important	2	22.2%
Somewhat important	2	22.2%
Manuscript topics	Frequency	Percentage
Computer related		
Information	9	100%
Systems/Technology	5	55.6%
Type of journal	Frequency	Percentage
Information systems	6	66.7%
Management science	2	22.2%
Recent changes	Frequency	Percentage
Redesign	7	77.8%
Other changes	9	100%

crease to about 90 percent of its articles published from practitioners. This may affect its ranking in future studies by academicians.

Another important change is a recent title change to *Information Systems Management* (formerly *Journal of Information Systems Management*). There is also a 40 percent expansion in the number of articles published by *Journal of Management Information Systems*, the addition of e-mail addresses for authors in *MIS Quarterly*, and the addition of an International Perspective column in the *Journal of Computer Information Systems*.

Table 10 presents a summary analysis of the leading journals, including frequencies and percentages for the most frequent responses in each category.

6. Conclusions

A number of studies have focused on varying aspects of MIS research. A few of these have attempted to rank journals that publish MIS research.

The limited amount of research is perhaps attributable to the youth and interdisciplinary nature of the field.

This study established a tier ranking of journals and extended the analysis by obtaining information through phone interviews with the editors, associate editors, or other designated representatives of the publications.

Journals that change their focus (e.g., *Communications of the ACM*) and publications in related fields (e.g., *Management Science and Computer Science*) may change in academic standing in publishing MIS research as newer specific journals (e.g., *Information Systems Research*) establish recognition and stature in the discipline.

The identification, analysis, and evaluation of journals for publishing MIS research should solidify previous research results and serve to identify top journals in the field. Coupled with existing research, the profile of leading journals reveals information that should be of benefit to academic researchers and administrators.

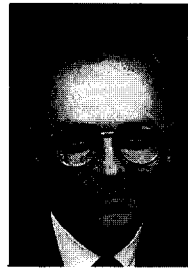
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