

Editorial

by Roger Iovand

This new issue, Volume 9, Issue 1, of the R Journal contains 33 contributed research articles, like the second issue of 2016. Most of the articles present R packages, and cover a very wide range of uses of R. Our journal continues to be critically dependent on its readers, authors, reviewers and editors. Annual submission numbers have grown markedly, but the rate of growth is less than that of the number of CRAN packages. Table 1 shows the outcomes of submitted contributed articles by year of submission. The proportion of submissions reaching publication has been roughly half since 2012.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Published	26	26	26	22	31	36	51	58
Rejected	11	14	11	24	29	32	53	64
Under review	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
Total	37	40	37	46	60	68	104	141

Table 1: Submission outcomes 2009–2016, by year of submission.

In order to try to restore some balance to the inflow of submissions, the kinds of articles solicited were clarified in January 2017. Articles introducing CRAN or Bioconductor packages — the most common kind of submission — should now provide broader context. We would like to encourage the submission of reviews and proposals, comparisons and the benchmarking of alternative implementations, and presentations of applications demonstrating how new or existing techniques can be applied in an area of current interest using R.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Page count	109	123	123	136	362	358	479	895
Article count	18	18	20	18	35	33	36	62
Average length	6.1	6.8	6.2	7.6	10.3	10.8	13.3	14.4

Table 2: Published contributed articles 2009–2016, by year of publication.

Not only has the number of submissions increased, but the length of published articles has also increased (see Table 2). The apparent jump from 2012 to 2013 may be associated with the change from a two column to a single column format, but page counts have risen, increasing the workload of reviewers and editors. We only have consistent records of the time taken to process accepted contributed articles for the 2013–2016 period. Again, the excellent work done by our generous reviewers and my very hard-working predecessors and especially Michael Lawrence last year, is evident in holding median times from receipt to publication online to a little over 200 days, as Table 3 shows.

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Median	347.0	225.5	212.5	212.0

Table 3: Median day count from acknowledgement to acceptance and online publication 2013–2016, by year of publication.

Using `gender` (Blevins and Mullen, 2015; Mullen, 2016) and `genderizeR` (Wais, 2016a,b), it is also possible to use author given names¹ to try to monitor author diversity; affiliation

¹The articles describing the packages used here stress the uncertainty involved in binary assignment.

location has not yet been successfully examined. Table 4 shows that there remains plenty to do to reflect the strengths of our community adequately².

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Women	5	9	8	6	10	18	27	32
Men	32	30	33	27	62	55	55	121
Unknown	3	5	3	3	7	4	9	10

Table 4: Authors of published articles 2009–2016, by year of publication; male/female split based on author given names.

In addition to re-framing the description of the kinds of articles we invite authors to contribute to our journal, work has been done on our website. Its appearance has been brought into line with that of the main R project website, and articles are reached through “landing” pages containing the abstract and citation information as well as listings of CRAN and Bioconductor packages cited in the article. So far very few contributed articles associate themselves directly with CRAN Task Views, so these are inferred from cited CRAN packages and listed on the landing pages. Further progress in helping to make work published in our journal more accessible is planned.

I hope you continue to enjoy and benefit from reading work published in our journal.

Bibliography

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²Although relative binary proportions do not differ greatly from those shown by a recent survey of useR participants (<https://forwards.github.io/blog/2017/01/13/mapping-users/>), the Norwegian context of the editor suggests that complacency or change of focus are unhelpful.