Fast-Add Manuscript System (FAMS) Case Study

Overview

In March 2016, I was assigned a research and strategy project with one of England's leading specialist training institutions. They wanted to replace an existing system that research staff used to submit manuscripts for internal review prior to submitting the manuscript for publication in a journal. To use the system, users would login with their institutional credentials and would complete a form that would ask for information about the manuscript, such as the title, co-authors, and which journals were being considered for publication. The contents of the form along with a copy of the manuscript were then sent to the Research Office team and the Knowledge & Impact team for review to ensure that the research followed ethical guidelines and to determine if the research output had any commercial or promotional opportunities. As part of the review, all co-authors listed on the manuscript were sent an email asking them to give their consent for the lead author to submit the manuscript for publication.

Research Process and Findings

I conducted a series of interviews and reviewed a report on the system that was written in 2015. I also researched current products on the market - I do so to better understand the publication process and how user needs change based on where the manuscript is within the process. Overall, my research found:

- Only 30-40% of all manuscripts were submitted for review prior to publication and there is no formal policy mandating that research staff use the system

- While some users felt that the system could be interpreted as a paternalistic way to manage research output quality, other users liked that the institution was concerned about research ethics – specifically the wording of ethics statements – and commercial opportunities

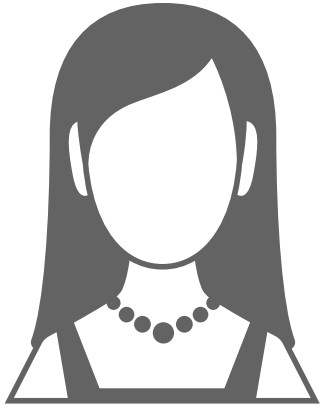
- Some users questioned whether the system was duplicating the work often done by journals and all said the best deterrent for committing research fraud or submitting work without approval of all co-authors are the professional repercussions (e.g. reduced co-author opportunities, discredited work, etc.)

- Users are embarrassed when emails are sent by the system requesting permission to submit for publication and this becomes a particular issue when the user submitting the manuscript is a middle author and is not responsible for handling the actual journal submission

- The approval number generated by the system is not used by journals and is often discarded

Recommendations

Based on my research, I recommended that the institution delay replacing the system and instead focus on developing policy to increase the number of manuscripts submitted for review. I also recommended that when the system is replaced, the new system should focus on meeting core user needs (e.g. the ability to not include all co-author emails if you already have their permission to submit the manuscript for publication). To assist the institution in understanding these needs, I built personas and low-fidelity wireframes to demonstrate key features requested by users. And while there are many other features that should and could be included based on the user research, I focused the wireframes on representing the minimum viable product (MVP) required to meet the majority of user needs. The institution did have a tendency to delay or scrap digital projects due to countless new feature and customisation requests and thus, by presenting them with an MVP, I also wanted to introduce them to a more agile delivery method.



DR. CAITLIN EVANS

AGE 36

JOB TITLE
Associate Professor, Politics
London School of Economics

BIOGRAPHY
Dr. Caitlin Evans is an highly-regarded and respected researcher who explores the intersection between development policy, foreign aid, and natural resource policy. Her work has been cited by many international organisations, including the UN and the World Bank. She attends multiple conferences every year to present papers that she has collaborated on with colleagues from Europe, Asia, and Africa. She also supervises 2-4 PhD students.

> **It's quite awkward when you have very senior colleagues in institutions around the world and you're being asked to ask them to allow the university to submit the manuscript.**

DIGITAL LITERACY

DEVICES

KEY STATISTICS

23 Number of articles published in the last 5 years where she was listed as a lead author

3 Average number of papers she publishes every year

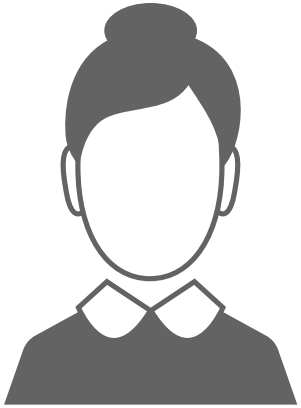
14 The largest number of co-authors she collaborated with on a published article

USER NEEDS

- An easy-to-use, single-page form to submit manuscripts and that reduces administrative workload
- An ability to indicate on the form that she has permission from her co-authors to submit the article for publication
- A system where her PhD students can submit articles on her behalf

FRUSTRATIONS / PAIN POINTS

- The current system sends an email to all collaborators, regardless of whether or not the author affiliated with the university has permission to submit the article for publication
- New government rules mandate that accepted manuscripts must be deposited into an institutional repository within 3 months from the date of acceptance



PATRICIA ANDERSON

AGE 43

JOB TITLE
Senior Lecturer, Data Science
King's College, London

BIOGRAPHY
Patricia Anderson specialises in analysing healthcare and patient data. She teaches 2 modules that are part of the MSc in Data Science degree and also provides support to students completing their thesis projects. She frequently collaborates with colleagues across the university when they are processing large volumes of data. Her name often appears as a co-author on papers where she has contributed to the analysis of experiment data.

> **Sometimes, colleagues will use datasets that I analysed. Before the article is submitted to the journal for publication, I want to review the data and research methodologies.**

DIGITAL LITERACY

DEVICES

KEY STATISTICS

9 The number of articles published last year where she was listed as an author - usually a middle author - or as a contributor

2 The number of articles published by PhD students where she was listed as an author but had serious concerns about the quality of the research methodologies and analysis

USER NEEDS

- A quick way to submit articles that are presented at conferences
- Fewer emails requesting her approval for an article written by a colleague to be published, especially if her colleague already has her consent
- An ability to keep track of research outputs where she hasn't been notified

FRUSTRATIONS / PAIN POINTS

- Often receives emails requesting approval, yet she is not responsible for submission of the article and often, when she has agreed to collaborate with her colleague, she consents to them handing the submission process
- Some research outputs submitted for publication lack the academic rigour she wants applied to her published work

Fast Add Manuscript System (FAMS)

Welcome, User Name

My Manuscripts | Logout

Submitted Manuscripts

Submit Manuscript

Sort by: Manuscript Title

Manuscript Title	Last Updated	Status	Approval Number
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor.	05 January 2016	Approved	FAMS-UNI-2016-001
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor.	16 May 2016	Pending Review - Media & Engagement Office	
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor.	17 May 2016	Approved	FAMS-UNI-2016-183
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor.	30 July 2016	Pending Review - Research Office	
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor.	27 October 2016	Not Yet Reviewed	

Prev. 1 2 3 4 5 Next Last

Draft Manuscripts

Manuscript Title	Last Updated	Actions
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor.	20 December 2016	Edit Submit
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor.	21 December 2016	Edit Submit

Fast Add Manuscript System (FAMS)

Welcome, User Name

My Manuscripts | Logout

Submit Manuscript For Review

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Manuscript Title

Co-Author Information

Please list all co-authors associated with this manuscript. This data will be transferred to the repository to create an initial record in accordance with HEFCE rules.

If you have approval from your co-authors to submit the manuscript OR if you are a middle author and are not responsible for the submission of the manuscript to the journal, please click one of the checkboxes below. You will not need to provide email addresses for your co-authors as co-author approvals are not needed, but

☐ I confirm that I have approval from my co-authors to submit the manuscript for publication

☐ I confirm that I am a middle author and am not responsible for submitting the manuscript to the journal for publication

Alternatively, if you do NOT have prior approval from your co-author(s) to submit the manuscript, you must provide their full name and email address. An approval email will be sent to each co-author and their approval will be recorded in FAMS.

First Name	Last Name	Email Address

Add more co-authors

Intended Publication(s)

Please list the publication(s) that you will be submitting the manuscript to for publication.

Publication

Add more publications

Project & Funder Information

If known, please provide the name of the project funder, the project ID nubmer, and the grant code.

Funder	Project ID	Grant Code

Add more funders

File Upload

Browse

Submit manuscript

Save and submit later

Fast Add Manuscript System (FAMS)

Welcome, User Name

My Manuscripts | Logout

Edit Manuscript Details

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Manuscript Title

Sample Manuscript Title Goes Here

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First Name	Last Name	Email Address
Author	Name	
Co-Author	Name	
Co-Author	Name	

Add more co-authors

Intended Publication(s)

Please list the publication(s) that you will be submitting the manuscript to for publication.

Publication
Journal of Academic Studies
Academia

Add more publications

Project & Funder Information

If known, please provide the name of the project funder, the project ID nubmer, and the grant code.

Funder	Project ID	Grant Code
Internal University Funding	UNI-FUND-2016-A-001	

Add more funders

File Upload

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Browse

Submit manuscript

Save and submit later