
How to Get Published for Lawyers

Panel Presentation

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2 DOs and 1 1/2 DON'Ts

■ DO

- Know your Bluebooking
- Match the mission of the journal
 - i.e., Don't send a marketing law manuscript to an employment law journal

■ DON'T

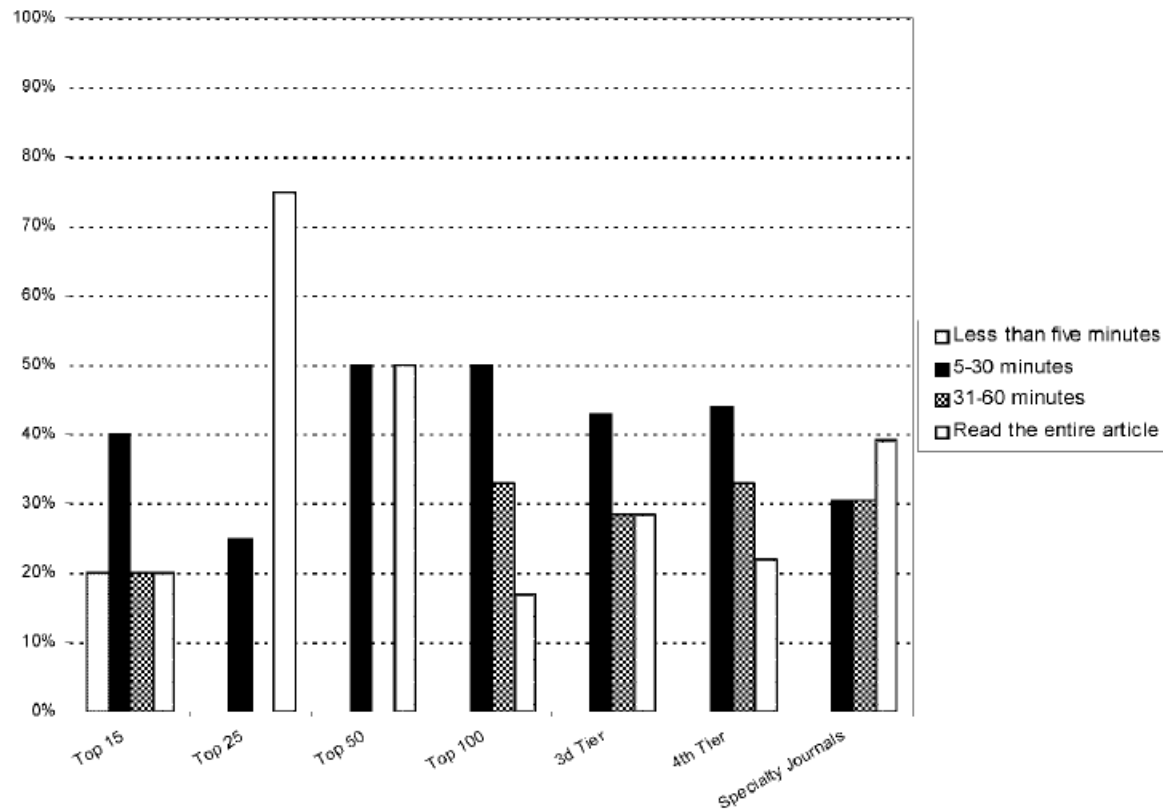
- Submit anything less than a well-proofed final version of your manuscript
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Approach Submissions Like a Job Hunt

- Good quality journals attract 1,000 – 2,500 unsolicited manuscripts each year
 - Usually room for only 12-15 unsolicited articles per year
 - Editors usually try to fill journal within 8 weeks
 - Mid-August through mid-October
 - Goal is to get editors to at least skim your manuscript
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Leah M. Christensen & Julie A. Oseid, *Navigating the Law Review Article Selection Process: An Empirical Study of Those with All the Power—Student Editors*, 59 S.C. L. REV. 175, 198 (2007)

Figure 3: Time Spent Reading an Article Before Making a Publication Decision

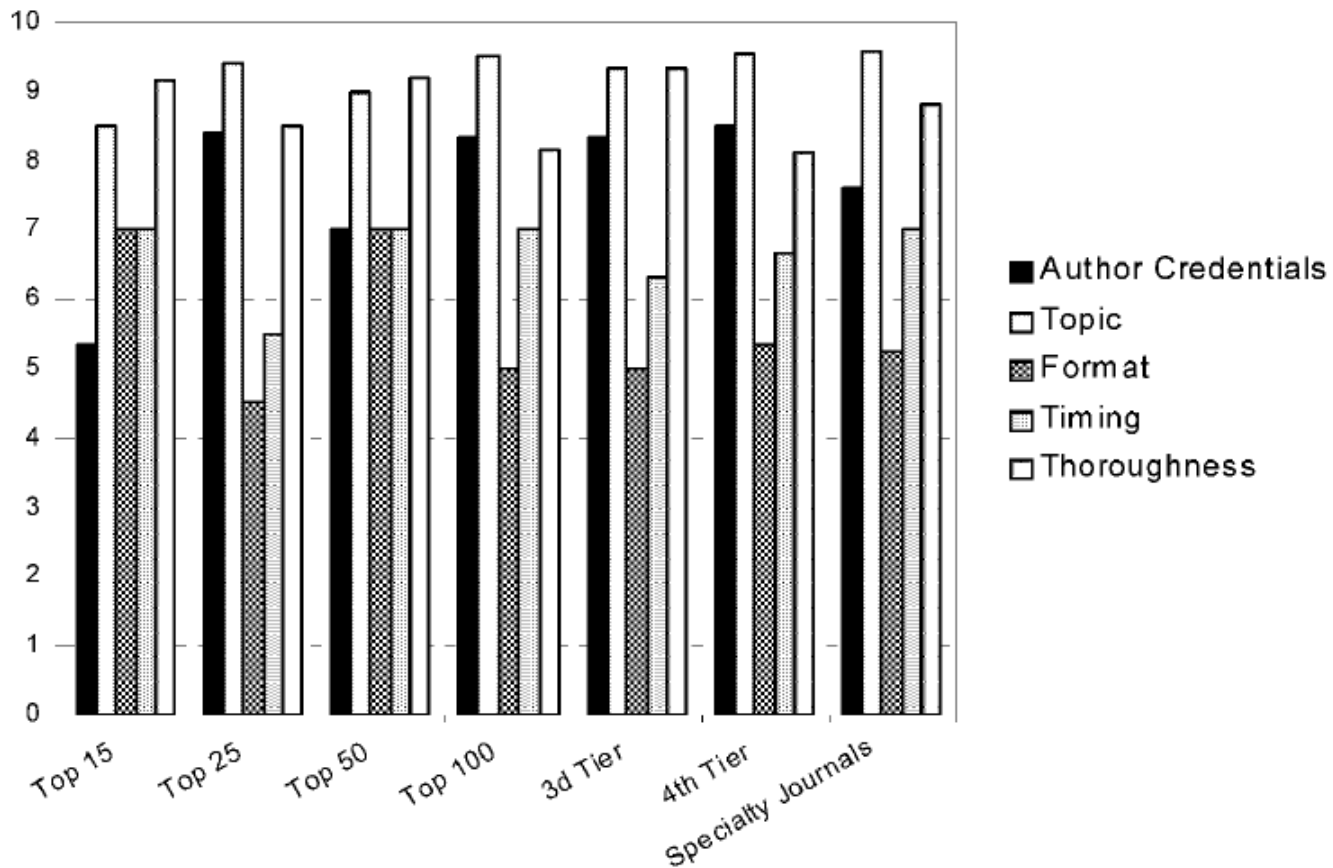


Time Spent Reading the Submission

- Most journals will not offer publication without first reading entire submission
- Well-written submissions have a good chance of being read in full
- Poorly written submissions will often be rejected within 5 – 30 minutes
 - “Most rejections involve less than 10 minutes of review”

Source: *Navigating the Law Review Article Selection Process*

Figure 4: Most Important Factors in Selecting Articles for Publication



Source: *Navigating the Law Review Article Selection Process*, at 200

Critical Factors that Influence Editors

- Persuasiveness
- Originality
- Quality of writing

Editor Comments

- Surprised by poor quality of submissions
- Interesting articles suggesting new legal theories are rare
- Paucity of truly creative new theoretical arguments
- Good articles are a pleasure to read
 - They are interesting, informative, and intelligent

Source: *Navigating the Law Review Article Selection Process*

Due to Volume of Submissions

- Editors first must decide how much of the submission to read
- Often initially focus on
 - First few pages
 - Especially the thesis statement
 - Roadmap paragraphs of each section
 - Conclusion

Approach Submissions Like a Job Hunt

- Tailor cover letter to individual journal
 - Explain why your manuscript will be of value to journal's readers
 - Have you significantly cited an article from the journal in your manuscript?
 - Use it as a reason for selecting this journal
 - "Continuing/expanding analysis in ..."
 - Mention your other publications
 - Make it easy for journal to review your CV
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You May Have No Choice but to Play the Expedite Game

- Many top journals use lower ranked journals to pre-screen
 - Won't even look at an unsolicited manuscript unless/until it has been accepted by another journal



Research Agenda

- Can take up to 3 years from first draft to print
 - Especially for peer-reviewed journals
 - A “quick” turnaround would be 1 year from draft to print
 - Keep a rolling inventory of manuscripts
 - 2 – 4 in various stages
 - From first drafts, to submissions, to revisions
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Credos

- I can fix a bad page, but I cannot fix a blank page
- Writing is thinking—thinking is writing
- Rejection is good for the ego
- The best article is a published article

Source: *Chronicle of Higher Education Forums*
