

Looking back now over the last four years, this journal has undergone many minor improvements or least changes, including a redesign, a modest increase in the number of pages, the addition of a table of contents for *Latin American Antiquity*, and a new on-line style guide. Most significantly, since early 2002 our full text has been available on-line through JSTOR, with a five-year lag. The most recent data from ISI's *Journal Citation Reports* (2002) show that the frequency of citation for our "average article" in a given year has been trending gratifyingly upwards (Figure 1). Perhaps some of this trend may be due to longer bibliographies (so that all journals get cited more), but my casual perusal of the impact factors for other journals in anthropology suggests that such an effect, if it exists, is not very strong.

SAA's recent member needs assessment (ARI 2003) is a surprisingly rich source of information on how our publications are received. I was intrigued to discover, for example, that 6.5 percent of all respondents claim to read *American Antiquity* from cover to cover. Canadians are almost twice more likely to do so (it's those long winter nights?) than are SAA board members or committee chairs! Personally I'm looking forward to rejoining the 30 percent of regular members who are simply satisfied to "read most articles."

Respondents list receiving our professional journals as the most important reason for joining the society or renewing their membership (ARI 2003:i). "These publications were also rated at or near the top of the valuable and satisfying hierarchies generated by respondents" (ARI 2003:ii). Interestingly, JSTOR was ranked as the next most valuable and satisfactory of SAA's products and services, but also as the least familiar and most unused. This suggests a schism between a significant number who find on-line availability extremely useful, and another rather large number who are either unaware of the possibilities, or not interested in them.

Somewhat puzzling then is the finding that fully 81 percent of this journal's readers would rather see *American Antiquity* in print only than on-line only (7 percent), although 11 percent would be willing to pay extra for both. In an unexpected show of affinity that defies interpretation given their different reading habits, Canadians and board members/committee chairs are the two groups who are most fond of print only.

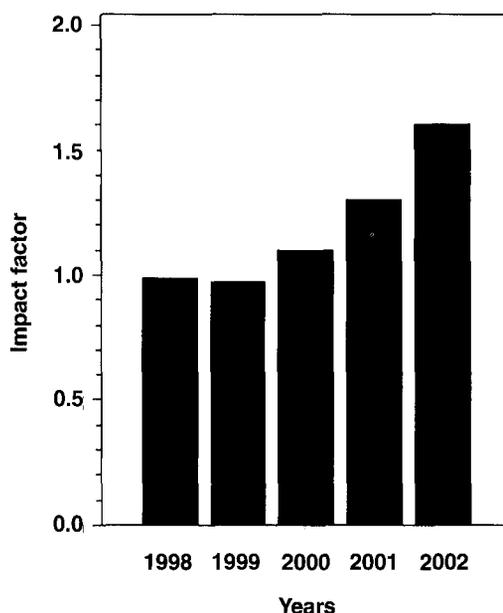


Figure 1. Recent impact factor trends for *American Antiquity*. The journal impact factor measures the citation frequency for an "average article" in a particular year by journals for which data are collected by ISI. Source: ISI *Journal Citation Reports* (2002).

A few years ago, a colleague in our libraries told me that the average engineer won't go more than 150 feet to get information. I don't have the exact citation, but I believe this colleague because we're married. Archaeologists try to be better, goodness knows, but even more than three decades ago Diana Amsden (1968) noted that anthropologists are plagued with particular "information problems" that included a superabundance of literature that was unusually fragmented in its classification (i.e., via the Dewey or the Library of Congress subject headings) and often obscurely published. There were also, at that time at least, relatively few indexes providing access into the anthropological literature, and those that existed (e.g., the *Social Sciences and Humanities Index*) tended to be little used. The two most common sources of information for anthropologists were the professional literature and other colleagues (distance unspecified). Anthropologists then spent an average of 12 hours per week getting information.

In most ways I think our information-getting is vastly easier and quicker now, though I shudder to think how much more of it there is than in 1968. Yet as every professor knows, the internet is increasingly both the first and last stop for undergraduate research. Deplore them though we may, under these circumstances I do not believe that *American Antiquity's* impact can trend upwards much longer unless we move to simultaneous print and e-versions. It is all the more difficult for the board to take this step because the need's assessment finds little appetite for it among most members. But I believe that we marginalize ourselves as a profession unless we make our primary literature accessible on the web. Interestingly, the members most keen to see this journal on-line only (27 percent) or most willing to pay more for both print and e-versions (20 percent) are the associate members (ARI 2003:A-148), who are often professionals in other fields. So the conundrum is this: we may provoke few complaints from fellow archaeologists by not moving quickly towards simultaneous print and on-line versions, but we will, eventually, lose mind-share in the broader community of researchers and the educated public—both as a journal, and also (to the significant extent that this journal stands for North American archaeology) as a discipline. In a recent issue of *American Scientist*, Roald Hoffmann writes that "every society uses gifts, as altruistic offerings but more importantly as a way of mediating social interactions. In science the gift is both transparent and central. Pure science is as close to a gift economy as we have.... Every article in our open literature is a gift to us all" (Hoffmann 2003:11). Let us not keep our gifts to ourselves.

As my service ends with this issue, I wish to thank several people and groups who helped greatly over the last four years. Diane Curewitz, Judson Finley, Lance Wollwage, and Stephanie VanBuskirk filled the role of editorial assistant conscientiously and with class. John Neikirk in SAA's Washington, D.C. office works mostly behind the scenes but is especially critical to the success of the SAA publications program. The Publications Committee (and yes, the board too!) has been most supportive of my editorship and this journal. The Media Relations Committee helps get the word out on our excellent articles and may be partly responsible for the upward trend in Figure 1. Here at WSU, William Andrefsky, Barbara Couture, Karen DePauw, Howard Grimes, and William D. Lipe made it possible for me to take on and complete this job; I suspect that most readers do not realize that editors' employers make significant financial contributions to our journal program, which in turn help keep journal costs low. Thanks to you all, and best wishes to Michael Jochim and Douglas Bamforth as they move *American Antiquity*—that grand old lady—forward.

—TIMOTHY A. KOHLER

References Cited

- Amsden, Diana
1968 Information Problems of Anthropologists. *College & Research Libraries* 29:117-131.
- ARI [Association Research, Inc.]
2003 2003 Member Needs Assessment, Conducted for the SAA. Electronic document, <https://ecommerce.saa.org/saa/static-content/staticpages/survey/index.cfm>, accessed February 19, 2004.
- Hoffmann, Roald
2003 Why Buy That Theory? *American Scientist* 91:9-11.
- ISI Journal Citation Reports
2002 *JCR Social Sciences Edition*. Electronic document, <http://isi4.isiknowledge.com/portal.cgi?DestApp=JCR&Func=Frame>, accessed February 19, 2004.