s sciendo   IRISH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT

Irish Journal of **Management**

Shaping Management Scholarship in Ireland - Editorial Perspectives on the Irish Journal of Management

Invited Contribution

David Collings[1], Edel Conway[2], Marian Crowley-Henry[3], James A. Cunningham[4], Margaret Heffernan[2,*], Jonathan Lavelle[5], Kathy Monks[2] and Michelle O'Sullivan[5]

[1]*Trinity College Dublin, Ireland*
[2]*Dublin City University, Ireland*
[3]*Maynooth University, Ireland*
[4]*Newcastle University, UK*
[5]*University of Limerick, Ireland*

Abstract: This paper reflects on the development of management research in Ireland through the lens of the *Irish Journal of Management* and its evolving editorial practices. Drawing on conversations with past editors, it explores how the role of the editor has changed since the journal's inception, alongside broader shifts in the publishing landscape. The paper is informed by an online panel discussion held with previous editors and additional contributions from editors unable to attend the live session. Rather than providing a chronological account, the discussion is woven into a set of reflections on editorial leadership, the challenges and opportunities of academic publishing, and the journal's contribution to the management research community in Ireland over time.

INTRODUCTION

This paper shares insights and reflections from the past editors of the *Irish Journal of Management* since its inauguration in 2001 to its final issue in 2025[1]. A range of topics were discussed, including the editorial role, changes in the publishing landscape over time, and the challenges endured, and opportunities offered as editor of the journal. The paper has attempted to incorporate all input received, balanced with ensuring the readability and flow of the paper. The aim is to share context and insights on the role of an editor which we hope is interesting and informative to our readers. The discussion took place online on 8th April 2025 and was moderated by the current Chair of the Irish Academy of Management, Dr Margaret Heffernan from Dublin City University Business School.

Participants consisted of (in chronological order of their period as editor of the journal[2]):
Professor Kathy Monks, Dublin City University, Ireland (editor from 2006-2008), email contribution;
Professor David Collings, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland (editor from 2010-2012), panel discussion contribution;

---

1   The precursor of the *Irish Journal of Management* was the *Irish Business and Administrative Research* (*IBAR*) journal, which commenced in 1979 and was renamed in 2001 to the *Irish Journal of Management*.

2   It should be noted that not all individuals who were editors could contribute to this discussion. We wish to acknowledge, in particular, the critical role of Dr. Teresa Brannick, University College Dublin, Editor-in-Chief in the early years of the journal, together with the many editors who worked under her leadership between 1979 and 2006. Also, Professor Kristel Miller, Ulster University, who served as editor from 2021-2023.

* Email: margaret.heffernan@dcu.ie

Professor James A. Cunningham, Newcastle University, UK (editor from 2010-2012), panel discussion contribution; Professor Edel Conway, Dublin City University, Ireland (editor from 2013-2016), panel discussion contribution; Dr Jonathan Lavelle, University of Limerick, Ireland (editor from 2013-2020), panel discussion contribution; Dr Michelle O'Sullivan, University of Limerick, Ireland (editor from 2016-2020), email contribution; and Professor Marian Crowley-Henry, Maynooth University, Ireland (editor from 2021-2025), panel discussion contribution.

The *Irish Journal of Management* (IJM) is affiliated with the Irish Academy of Management (IAM), which draws its members from higher education institutions across the island of Ireland. Two papers in this issue complement the present discussion by framing the *Irish Journal of Management* within its wider Irish scholarly and institutional context. Professors Felicity Kelliher, Paddy Gunnigle and Kathy Monks explore the links between the Irish Academy of Management and the Journal. Also in this issue, a paper by Professor Bill Roche and Professor Aidan Kelly traces the origins of the *Irish Journal of Management's* (*IJM*) predecessor, the *Irish Business and Administrative Research* (*IBAR*) journal and the wider trajectory of management scholarship in Ireland from the last century. In joining these contributions, the current paper reflects specifically on the experiences and perspectives of past editors of *IJM,* highlighting how it has evolved from more of a national, Irish-focused print journal to an online, open access, internationally recognised outlet, publishing research from international authors on international topics.

BECOMING AN EDITOR OF THE *IRISH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT*

In the discussions and correspondence for this paper, it was very apparent that the route to editorship of the *IJM* was informal and built on relationships. Participants reflected on how editors were approached to take on the role, though less was said about the criteria guiding those decisions. Implicit in the process, however, was the expectation that editors would be respected senior academics with recognised scholarly reputations in their discipline and established publication track records.

Professor Kathy Monks was editor of the Irish Journal of Management in 2006. She was initially involved in managing the transition from *IBAR* to the *IJM*, a process that unfolded over several years during her tenure as a member of the IAM Council. Up to 2001, *IBAR* was funded by the University College Dublin School of Business. Rather than trying to sustain two separate management journals within Ireland, those involved in the IAM saw a strategic opportunity to reposition *IBAR* as a dedicated management journal, the *Irish Journal of Management*, that would directly support and reflect the mission of the Irish Academy of Management. In its early years, *IJM* was jointly financed by UCD, the University of Limerick, the Irish Academy of Management, and Ulster University, with all four institutions' logos appearing on the journal's cover[3].

In 2001, when *IJM* came into being, the editorial team was led by Editor-in-Chief Professor Teresa Brannick (University College Dublin, Ireland, now deceased) and supported by a board of 11 editors drawn from all the major higher education business schools across Ireland, both North and South, all of whom were active in the IAM. The team also included a Book Reviews Editor, Professor Margaret Linehan (Munster Technological University, Ireland), and an Editorial Advisory Board composed primarily of members from Irish Business Schools. By 2005, the IAM Council decided to transition to a new editorial structure, with a primary editor, which was formally adopted in 2006. This was when Kathy was appointed to the editorial role.

 Following Professor Kathy Monks' tenure from 2005/6-2008, later editors described how they came to assume the editorial role. These reflections show a less formal appointment process focused on informal approaches, often initiated through the IAM network where the person's publication record and academic standing was known. Many recalled being approached initially over casual conversations at conferences or through collegial ties, a "tap on the shoulder," as Professor Marian Crowley-Henry put it. In Professor Edel Conway's case, the discussion began during an IAM conference dinner, while others linked their involvement to discussions with senior IAM figures

---

3   The more recent institutional sponsors (up to 2025) of the *Irish Journal of Management* are Dublin City University (DCU), University College Cork (UCC), National College of Ireland (NCI), Queens University Belfast, University College Dublin (UCD) and Trinity (TCD), as acknowledged on the Irish Academy of Management website.

such Professor Mike Morley, Professor Patrick Gunnigle, or Professor Anthony McDonnell, who all had significant involvement with IAM and its council.

The importance of institutional capacity to support taking on the role was highlighted. Professor James Cunningham and Professor David Collings noted that their editorship was made possible by the resources available from the Centre for Innovation and Structural Change (CISC) (later the Whitaker Institute) at the University of Galway, which provided essential administrative support for managing the journal. For David Collings, already an experienced editor through his work with *Human Resource Management Journal* and other guest editorials, the decision to take on *IJM* was initially met with hesitation. The journal had not published an issue for some time (e.g., dormant throughout 2009), and he was approached by Professor Michael Morley. As David reflects, "So, Mike came to me and said, 'Look, we want to try and get it back up and running'. So, I thought about it, and really in my head initially, I was going to say no." However, the possibility of partnering with Cunningham and bringing together different disciplinary perspectives was appealing and ultimately convinced Collings to take on the role as co-Editor-in-Chief with Professor James Cunningham: "James straddled entrepreneurship and strategy, and I was HRM and Organisational Behaviour", which helped extend the journal's reach, allowing for a broader scope of publications. This, along with access to CISC resources, made the role feasible at a time (circa 2010) when the journal was struggling to attract quality submissions.

Several editors also highlighted the link between *IJM* editorship and service within the IAM. Dr. Michelle O'Sullivan, for example, emphasised that many editors had prior involvement on the IAM Council and her own invitation came through existing relationships within this network. Similarly, the later move to rotate editorial responsibility across institutions and having co-editors from different institutions ensured shared responsibility and prevented the journal from being tied to any one university, reflecting the extended institutional membership of the IAM.

Taken together, these accounts suggest that editorship of *IJM* was less the outcome of any formal selection process than a combination of scholarly reputation, networks, and opportunity. Seniority and standing within the discipline were rarely mentioned explicitly, though editors reflected that they all had some prior experience which was developed gradually through roles on active editorial boards, as guest editors of special issues, as referees for a variety of journals and, in some cases, prior editorial experience in highly ranked ABS[4] journals. This credibility and experience underpinned who was invited to be editor and why.

EDITORIAL ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

While each editor came to the role with varying levels of editorial experience, many shared similar assumptions about what the role would involve. It is acknowledged that editorial work is both demanding and essential to support the missions of journals and to promote high-quality scientific publications (Louie et al., 2025). Most anticipated some administrative tasks such as managing submissions, overseeing peer review, and liaising with the publisher. What they encountered, however, was more complex, including challenges in maintaining the quality of submissions and challenges in the publisher relationship. Their reflections revealed the diverse demands of the editor role where they had to be part administrator, part academic guide and part networker.

As previously mentioned, Professor Kathy Monks took over as editor in 2006 with a new structure to the journal. Before this, Professor Teresa Brannick was editor-in-chief, a role Kathy confirmed as titular, with several editors sitting underneath her. Teresa was consistently kept informed of any changes to the journal and her advice was regularly sought on its operations, though she did not take a particularly strong or directive stance. The role of editor had a very clear job description. It involved sourcing high-quality articles for the journal and working closely with the Editor-in-Chief and the publisher on the development of each volume and issue. The editor was expected to promote the journal at major management conferences. A key responsibility was ensuring the timely delivery

---

4   The Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) Academic Journal Guide (AJG) or ABS ranking system is a leading international benchmark of the quality of business and management journals. Thousands of journals are ranked from 4* (internationally recognised top journals in the business and management discipline) to 1 (internationally recognised as meeting minimum quality criteria). See https://charteredabs.org/academic-journal-guide.

of content to the publisher, including managing the flow of manuscripts and coordinating with reviewers. The role also included managing the Editorial Board, maintaining effective communication with its members, and providing regular updates on journal operations to the IAM Council. This was a three-year appointment, requiring a strong commitment to academic publishing and to the strategic goals of the Irish Academy of Management.

Dr. Michelle O'Sullivan entered the role expecting the role to be primarily administrative work such as "managing the journal submissions, editing, and the publishing process…. The plan was to try to ensure a good throughput of papers", but quickly found herself pulled into broader intellectual and disciplinary challenges:

"The reality was close to expectation … though there were skills/areas of responsibility I hadn't previously considered. For example … the journal was multi-disciplinary, so as part of the desk review process, I had to spend extra time engaging with papers outside my immediate discipline to get a sense of their quality."

Some editorial teams aimed to broaden *IJM's* disciplinary scope. Collings and Cunningham both noted efforts to move beyond the traditionally dominant areas of Human Resource, Strategy, and Industrial Relations, extending into fields such as Management Information Systems and Operations, with associate editors appointed to represent these wider range of disciplines.

Others, like Professor Marian Crowley-Henry, focused on using targeted special issues as a means of attracting high-quality submissions: "We tried to target special issues and to get commitment from different institutions that they would filter papers through so that we'd get at least one special issue a year. The other issue was made up of ad hoc papers that were submitted… Despite these efforts, securing submissions from high-ranking authors proved challenging. Historically, early career academics and best paper winners at the IAM annual conference often submitted papers to *IJM* but, as Crowley-Henry observed during her tenure, "the authors tended to want to save those for ABS 3's which is fair enough. To get a best paper award, they were going to try and aim higher so that strategy of securing papers from the conference wasn't really working in my period [as editor]." Here, the challenge of journal rankings was highlighted.

Editors also sought to attract high-quality submissions through targeted special issues. Professor Crowley-Henry described this approach: "It was more trying to target special issues." As Crowley-Henry noted, authors often preferred to submit their strongest work to higher-ranked outlets, reflecting the pressures of the "publish or perish" system, where journals listed higher on the ABS list (or other equivalent national rankings) are rewarded in recruitment, promotion, and tenure decisions (Mingers and Willmott, 2013). For *IJM*, as an ABS1[5] journal, this created a structural limitation: while its ranking on ABS was sufficient to attract international submissions from authors not bound by ranking considerations within their institutions, many Irish scholars (our traditional target for publications) increasingly published elsewhere in higher ranked journals to strengthen their career prospects. As Marian put it, Irish academics were in some ways "victims of our own success": by gaining capacity to publish in higher-ranked international journals, they had fewer incentives to submit to *IJM*, even as they remained a part of its community through involvement with IAM.

These experiences underscore the paradox of editorial work under today's metrics-driven system. Editors are charged with enhancing the standing of journals, yet journal prestige is shaped by global ranking regimes which lay largely outside their control. They are tasked with broadening the scope of the journal and attracting quality submissions, yet we know also that authors are incentivised to submit to more strategically advantageous journals (see Aguinis et al., 2020 for a useful overview), thus privileging some journals and marginalising others, making the role of the editor more difficult.

BUILDING THE JOURNAL: VISION AND STRATEGY

When asked whether they had a particular editorial vision or plan in place when stepping into the editorial role, several editors spoke about the need to evolve the *IJM* in response to the changing academic landscape. Central to this evolution were strategies to expand the journal's reach, enhance its scholarly reputation, and diversify its content. Editorial reflections pointed to three main strategies: digitising the journal and securing a more viable publisher, broadening the range of disciplines that were published within the journal, and using special issues

---

5   An ABS1 journal is one that publishes research of a recognised, but more modest standard in their field. Often regional, emerging, or niche outlets.

to attract relevant, high-quality submissions. During their tenure, these editors were also navigating a period of significant change in scholarly publishing. The tensions associated with the emergence of standardised journal quality lists was already discussed. However other changes included shifts from print to online formats, the introduction of pre-publication access, the rise of open access, and the adoption of DOI numbers[6], which enable rapid article retrieval. At the same time, the volume of management research was expanding, making the publishing landscape increasingly competitive (Timothy, 2024).

A recurring priority for editors was transitioning *IJM* from a print-based model to an online platform. Professor Edel Conway recalled: "For me, at that time, the focus was to move the Journal online. That would have been the number one goal, to get it online in the hope that we might be able to attract more submissions as opposed to approaching people locally to submit articles." This was focused on accessibility and attracting more submissions but also had beneficial cost management implications. Professor David Collings described the context when he and Professor James Cunningham took over in 2009 and the move to looking for a new publisher with a plan to move to online: "When we took over [in 2009], it was Blackhall (Blackhall Publishing, Ireland) and they became Orpen Press. And a particular problem was that it was expensive. They published in hard copy. We had some library subscriptions … and copies used to go to all the members in those days in hard copy. And I think it was really costly. Cost and digitalisation were the two factors that involved the search for a new publisher."

Business models of publishers played a part in the evolution of *IJM* and in the key strategic decision of moving publishers. Beverungen et al. (2012), in their review, argue that:

> "*The business model of academic publishing is based on a double, or even triple, appropriation of public resources where universities pay for the research, writing, reviewing and even editing of journals, which they then have to buy back for their libraries. In both its political economy, and its concern with ranking the productivity of academics through their research outputs, the academic publishing industry is at the forefront of neoliberal strategies of privatization and accumulation of knowledge through intellectual property rights, as well as the measurement and exploitation of immaterial labour.*" (p. 930).

IJM opted to sit outside this model. As it was a journal owned by the Irish Academy of Management and in line with the journal's mission to disseminate research in an accessible way, a 'diamond' form of open access (OA) (i.e. a journal that does not charge for reading or publishing) was chosen over a commercially driven publication model. That choice came with challenges, however. Dr. Jonathan Lavelle noted the financial pressures and cost considerations that were considered when looking for a new publisher in 2013-2014: "We also had to manage the publishing costs as many publishers were well out[side] of our price range." This was due to *IJM* being "just too small, so that [it] wasn't likely to generate enough revenue for it to be realistic for a commercial publisher" (Professor David Collings).

Digitalisation also promised to increase submissions and visibility. As Professor James Cunningham explained, "Yes, digitalisation was a big driver at the time – in terms of submissions and the visibility of the journal." However, David Collings emphasised that the primary goal was making the journal accessible online, rather than streamlining submission management: "I think primarily the latter in terms of online availability. The scale of papers was always relatively small. The platform helped, if it worked, but the scale was small enough that that wasn't the primary driver."

Another key aspect of the editorial vision was to expand the journal's disciplinary coverage beyond its traditional focus on Human Resources, Strategy, and Industrial Relations. As mentioned earlier, Collings and Cunningham focused on broadening submissions from other disciplines during their tenure, and identified Associate Editors as one means to achieving this aim: "One of the things James and I did was to put in place associate editors in different disciplinary areas and try to broaden the scope… We also opened up to case studies, although we got very few of them. We really set out to try and broaden the range of papers that were submitted… including book reviews." (Prof David Collings). This strategic expansion aimed to include areas such as Management Information Systems and Operations Management, signalling an intent to make *IJM* more inclusive and reflective of the broader management field rather than being seen primarily as a publication for human resource management, strategic management, and industrial relations.

---

6   DOI, or Digital Object Identifier, is a unique string of letters and numbers that serves as a persistent link to an online scholarly article, book, or other document.

All editors highlighted that the nature of the academic career has fundamentally changed. There is increasing pressure nowadays on newer academics to publish in the highest-ranked journals as an esteem indicator when seeking to be hired, promoted, or to receive tenure (Timothy, 2024). Research evaluations such as Britain's Research Excellence Framework (REF) and many grant awarding bodies have created a value system that favours publishing more articles (Hay, 2016). Journal ranking measures such as Association of Business Schools (ABS) journal quality ranking typically comprise part of research evaluation exercises. Hay (2016) contends that research assessment exercises channel submissions towards a narrow group of prestigious journals, while other journals, often less highly ranked but still valuable, struggle to attract high-quality manuscripts. The result is a "an unappealing workload of excess for editors of one type of journal and an even less attractive workload of deficit for others" (p. 160). This question of high-quality, country-specific research, and its value for Irish policy and practice, is taken up in a later section of the paper.

Crowley-Henry expanded on rankings when she noted that "Irish academics… were getting published in internationally higher-ranked journals…   A lot of those that were attending the conference at the time and were being supervised were very familiar with the publishing landscape and knew what was needed to get jobs afterwards and with their supervisors, they were submitting elsewhere. So really what we were getting in besides those special issues was an eclectic mix of papers from international authors that were less concerned with the ranking number and were happy to publish in an ABS-ranked journal, the idea of it being ABS-ranked was enough."

WHAT MAKES A GOOD EDITOR?

The discussion explored the competencies that define an effective academic journal editor today. Editors stressed that editing is not simply about publishing scholarship, but also about cultivating a scholarly community within management. Editors drew on personal experiences across a range of journals and publishing contexts, reflecting on how the role has evolved, and expanding on the pressures editors now face. Themes such as developmental support, time pressures, credibility, decision-making, and the critical role of networks were seen as central to effective editorial practice.

The editors highlighted several competencies required of an editor: developmental support for authors, problem-solving, credibility, decision-making, and the effective use of networks. Running through their reflections was recognition of how the role has changed over time, shaped by increasing pressures on time, the growth in academic publishing, and the shifting expectations of authors and reviewers.

For Professor Edel Conway, being developmental remains "hugely important, especially for younger academics." She contrasted her earlier experiences as an author submitting papers, where editors would spend time carefully interpreting and helping reconcile divergent reviewer reports, with the present, where time pressures often mean that support or clarity through in-depth editor letters are no longer available: "You could end up with three very different reviews and you don't know where to go with it and the editor is giving you no direction due to being time poor. I remember years ago, I used to get really nice direction from an editor where they might recognise the conflicting suggestions of reviewers and offer guidance to authors."

This developmental role goes beyond simply sharing reviews: it involves translating feedback into clear, actionable advice through a carefully crafted editorial decision letter. Dr. Michelle O'Sullivan, similarly, highlighted the importance of encouragement and sensitivity: "A good journal editor is someone who can accurately discern the potential of a paper … and can communicate recommendations to authors in a way which is realistic … but does not damage their morale and does not discourage them from future submissions. … I think a challenge I hadn't previously given much thought to, was the role of the editor in trying to manage reviewers' comments … where they were conflicting or where I felt some reviews were somewhat abrasive. On reflection, I could have done a better job of communicating with authors to offer encouragement to them." Professor David Collings agreed, saying "it was important for editors to be developmental, and the ability to not just say, 'here's everything that's wrong', but rather 'here's how you can help fix it'". In terms of helping with this issue, the selection of editors and associate editors was identified as a critical issue by Collings: "the selection of a good editor is really critical to this enterprise and selection is obviously imperfect, but some of the indicators that I've seen that are really good insights into someone's potential [as an editor] is the quality of their reviews. I have yet to meet a good editor who isn't an exceptional reviewer."

Editors also stressed the less visible challenges of managing the review process. Dr. Jonathan Lavelle described the editorial role as being problem-solving in nature: "Across a whole range of things … trying to sort out issues with

publishers … managing the review process … particularly where you have different types of reviewers, very different in terms of their reviews. So, I think there's a lot of problem solving going on … and perhaps patience as well."

Several editors emphasised the importance of networks for sustaining the review process. As Professor Collings put it: "At the *Journal of Management*, we get prompted a list of reviewers for papers [by the online system] and I never use it … I still ask people I know at some level … because their likelihood of saying yes is higher. And you know what you're going to get." Collings noted that even at top journals, "goodwill" is vital, with requests often prioritised according to professional ties. Professor Edel Conway agreed and highlighted the need to personalise communications in terms of how you contact reviewers through the journal platform and also developing networks: "To get their commitment to review, you'd nearly need to have to go round the conference [delegates], eyeballing people to see who might be suitable to do a review for a paper you had on your desk. Or any opportunity you had if you met anybody, you'd be asking them if they could do a review for you."

Collings further stressed two qualities that distinguish effective editors: credibility and decisiveness. Credibility derives partly from an academic track record: "Credibility is important … that they have an academic profile that's appropriate for the journal they're editing. At a minimum that means they're published in it." Decisiveness, meanwhile, requires editors to resist "traffic light" approaches that simply tally reviewer recommendations: "Better editors make better decisions … the days of papers dragging on through 3, 4, 5 rounds of reviews and an editor still sitting on the fence are largely gone … one of the distinguishing characteristics of a really good editor: they make a decision on the paper. They give authors very clear direction."

Finally, editors pointed to the sheer breadth of skills required and reflected on the increasing scope of editorial responsibility, including organisation, stakeholder management, visibility, mediation between reviewers and authors, and strategic engagement with publishers and professional associations. David pointed out that one of the key challenges today is how many journals now exist: "if you go back 20 years ago, or 25 years ago when we started out in this, there were a heck of a lot fewer journals… a lot fewer papers. The challenge now is the number of submissions that journals get is so high that most journals have big editorial teams."

CHALLENGES ACROSS TIME

When reflecting on the challenges of their tenure, early editors concentrated their focus on securing a flow of quality submissions. Subsequent editors were more focused on navigating publisher relationships and managing reviewer dynamics. Other challenges have emerged more recently, linked to the expansion of global rankings systems and the intensification of reviewer fatigue.

For Kathy Monks, who took over in 2006, the central challenge was securing manuscripts of publishable quality. She noted that as far back as 2007, issues around the quality of submissions were emerging. As editor, there was a good deal of difficulty in obtaining articles that were of publishable quality. During her tenure, the *IJM* rejection rate was around 75%, and unfortunately, many of the articles being received were not at a publishable standard.

Over time, as several editors recalled, that trend continued. It was proving increasingly difficult to attract high-quality submissions As Dr. Jonathan Lavelle put it: "Especially from Irish scholars, from younger Irish scholars … Most of us have probably had our first publication in the *Irish Journal of Management* … but that stopped happening". This reflects broader structural pressures. As Professor Crowley-Henry and Professor Conway both observed, Irish academics, once reliant on *IJM* for early publications, increasingly targeted higher-ranked journals to satisfy performance metrics and career expectations. The *IJM*, as an ABS1 outlet, struggled to compete for submissions against ABS3 and ABS4 journals.

The recruitment of reviewers emerged as a consistent challenge, and one that has grown increasingly problematic over time. Monks recalled sending manuscripts to three reviewers in the hope that two may respond and described wide variations in review quality. For Edel Conway, drawing primarily on Irish and UK networks mitigated the problem somewhat, but she noted that this reliance reflected the journal's localised community. By the time Marian Crowley-Henry stepped into the role, however, reviewer fatigue had become acute: "It became incredibly difficult to get reviewers. Quite often the response was that 'I'm already doing X number of reviews', and it was then really relying on favours from people, or colleagues to try and get the reviews." DeLisi (2022) refers to this as the "crisis of the peer review process", emphasising the growing level of reviewer fatigue, caused by an increase in the number of peer-review requests from a larger number of publications. At the same time, researchers are accepting a lower number of review requests, leading to an increase in the time required per review. What was once

part of an academic's career responsibility is increasingly seen as having no tangible benefits to the academic who peer reviews more than average (Adema and Moore, 2023). This was also acknowledged by Dr. Michelle O'Sullivan who noted difficulties in "getting referees to agree to review papers and encouraging them to submit reviews in a timely fashion". This latter point was challenging because, as with the academic publishing model, many people are providing their labour for free, so editors are reliant on the voluntary contribution of reviewers. As discussed in the previous section, the increasing number of academic journals, combined with the overwhelming number of paper submissions, has led to a growing demand for academics to participate in the peer review process.

Yet this challenge in the peer review process also opened opportunities for capacity building. Crowley-Henry described how *IJM* became a training ground for early career scholars, with PhD students providing detailed and constructive reviews with guidance from experienced editors. This echoes recent calls (e.g. Petrescu and Krishen, 2022) to recognise peer review as scholarly labour, to train academics and to integrate it more systematically into academic development.

Editors also highlighted frustrations with publishers. For Jonathan Lavelle, responsiveness and functionality of the online submission system were ongoing irritants. For Edel Conway, difficulties went further: "Operationally, it was the publisher who sometimes drove us mad. Just basic instructions that weren't being implemented. So, we ended up rewriting stuff and doing stuff that we shouldn't ever have to do, and so it was very, very time-consuming."

Michelle O'Sullivan echoed these concerns, pointing to "delays in getting accepted papers published in a timely fashion" and "technical issues with the publisher." Such problems reveal how smaller journals, without the infrastructural support of major commercial publishers, often depend on fragile arrangements that place disproportionate burdens on editors.

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF ACADEMIC PUBLISHING

The discussion moved from specifics in relation to the role and experiences of the past editors during their respective periods as editor, to considering the academic publishing landscape more broadly, and the notable changes over the respective editor's time as editor of the *IJM*. Some of the issues explored were mentioned earlier including open access, journal metrics and technology and AI. The reflections reveal how academic publishing has shifted over the past two decades. Their accounts highlight both opportunities and tensions specifically around digitalisation, research integrity, methodological innovation, and the growing pressures on academics. These observations resonate with wider debates in the literature on the commodification of knowledge, the demands of research assessment, and the ethics of scholarly communication (Willmott, 2013; McKiernan and Tsui, 2019). Future trends were also discussed.

One of the most significant transformations has been the digitalisation of journals: the expanded global visibility this has enabled, and the challenges that this brings. Professor James Cunningham reflected: "For me, it was the whole digitalisation movement and changes in relation to the visibility of the journal." Edel Conway, similarly, recalled the rapid expansion in reach that came once the journal moved online: "We had a broader reach once the journal went online, so you were getting [submissions] from all parts of the world… Africa and China and India. A lot of them were good… But that also meant we were getting dubious submissions along with the good ones." Jonathan Lavelle echoed this, describing the growing editorial burden: "We were trying to attract submissions… and we were getting an awful lot more submissions from a lot of people that we didn't know. So, that part of the job increased - in ensuring and checking all of those submissions to make sure they were OK." Michelle O'Sullivan noted that several submissions appeared to recycle previously published research questions or duplicate earlier work. Jonathan Lavelle agreed that, during his period as editor of *IJM*, some authors were submitting papers already published in other outlets: "We found a number of submissions that had been published previously. Through a simple Google search, you found the same paper straight away…We had to do a lot more checking on the authenticity of the papers." Digitalisation therefore brought a double-edged sword: greater visibility, but also the need for more rigorous editorial filtering.

Today, such issues are further compounded by anxieties around AI-assisted writing and novel forms of misconduct, placing editors at the frontline of safeguarding scholarly standards (Gatrell et al., 2024). Quite a broad discussion took place among the editors regarding this rising concern with research integrity, particularly as the growth in AI and digital tools complicate questions of authorship and originality. Professor David Collings, in discussing AI, stated that journal editors had more of a role to play in validating the integrity of research nowadays, something "that was less so, maybe, previously…. certainly, when the *IJM* [or *IBAR* as it was previously known] was founded, and in those early years. And it has become more of a challenge."

Marian Crowley-Henry admitted uncertainty around the preparedness of journal editors and publishers for AI: "I'm not sure how prepared for AI the current publication systems are, in terms of flagging AI awareness or AI spotting." David Collings offered an example of his own experience of false attributions generated through automated systems: "I read a paper, and I didn't recognise those papers [cited], so I went through the reference list, and I identified three papers attributed to me that don't exist. Ten papers in total that I knew didn't exist because I knew the authors. So, I wrote to the editor and the publisher and informed them, and the paper was retracted. I think we are seeing an increasing concern around the role of AI and how we judge papers… The whole integrity focus and attention that editing a journal requires."

All editors acknowledged that AI and new technologies are reshaping expectations of transparency and accountability. James Cunningham noted the dual role of AI in both pushing methodological innovation and raising integrity concerns: "A lot of new methodologies come from computer science or health areas… also the use of AI… But then there's also the integrity issue in terms of how to manage that as well." David Collings agreed that while AI and open access can democratise knowledge - "It's good for equality and accessing science… people can access this research regardless of where they are" - but these tools also create new pressures for editors to act as arbiters of legitimacy in a changing landscape.

A second theme was the increased pressure on academics to publish in high-ranking outlets, particularly on early career academics. This was something which was brought up many times over the course of the discussions and mentioned earlier in the paper. Dr. Michelle O'Sullivan observed: "The primary change was not in academic publishing per se, but in the increased expectation in academia generally that academics, and especially young academics, should be publishing in high-ranking journals." This pressure, she noted, sometimes meant that *IJM* was receiving submissions from students or early-career researchers whose work was not yet publication-ready. Michelle also highlighted: "The increasing competitiveness in academia has meant that young scholars are given less time to develop research and writing skills and are expected to be the 'full package' much earlier in their careers… There is the expectation that they should be publishing in high-ranking journals early on."

Relatedly, this increasingly competitive academic publishing landscape (of academics needing to publish in high ranked journals) was becoming normalised, especially for UK-based academics with the REF (Research Evaluation Framework) and metrics that academics were expected to achieve to evidence their scholarship. Professor James Cunningham noted that: "The value proposition for authors in terms of career, and particularly with the REF in the UK…, you could see the start of that from 2009."

Thirdly, rapid methodological advances, particularly in data-driven research, are changing the publishing landscape, and have created new challenges in the review process. David Collings noted that, as an editor, "having the breadth to understand and make sense of all these different methods is no longer viable. It's no longer credible." As a response to these challenges, top journals are forming "methods review teams" or drawing from a pool of specialists to provide targeted reviews. Collings gave an example from his experience as editor of the *Journal of Management*, where any paper given a 'revise and resubmit' decision now also receives a dedicated methods review. This shift, he explained, is aimed at keeping up with methodological advances as well as addressing "integrity issues that... jump out when you really know what you're looking at."

Building on this, Professor James Cunningham observed that "a lot of new methodologies, like experiments, machine learning, text mining, come from computer science or health," and this is "pushing knowledge boundaries further." He also noted the increasing use of AI and new types of primary data, "irrespective of the source," create both opportunities and risks. As he put it, there's a clear tension between innovation and oversight: "it's the balancing of all these issues and how authors are upfront in terms of declaring all of that." This reflects broader debates about how to maintain rigour in an era of increasingly sophisticated methods (Aguinis et al., 2020).

James gave another example of how digital is impacting editors and publishing through digital platforms that now generate data to aid editorial decisions, including algorithmic reviewer suggestions and impact metrics which can also add to pressure on editors: "You look at the pressure, obviously that is placed on editors with manuscript handling systems that provides more functionality and data that pushes the digitalisation approaches of journals, particularly with respect to research integrity… You get a recommended list of reviewers, lots of data around their H-index, papers that they've published… It's the whole pressure that publishers are placing on the system to push through papers quickly… How many days to first decision, how many days to publishing, etc."

Another theme which the past editors of *IJM* discussed in relation to the changing publishing landscape concerned the growth in commercial publishing, particularly within academic publishing. James Cunningham highlighted how, in the current landscape, "there is intense competition between publishers. You look at the desk

transfer system that publishers put in place to retain submissions within their publishing ecosystem". Building on James' point. David Collings observed that "publishers are trying to own your paper from the moment it's submitted," and even if it's rejected by one journal, they aim to "keep it in the ecosystem and move it to another journal." He noted that it is "all about monetising that paper for those publishers. Right? It's about…ultimately this paper will be published, and we can monetise it through subscriptions or through Open Access. To me, that's a purely commercial decision. From an author's perspective, I don't really [see] benefit from that because it's considered completely ab initio [from the beginning] at the new journal." Collings cautioned that the commercial imperatives of publisher-owned journals create a very different trajectory than academy-owned outlets, raising concerns about the commodification of academic knowledge. The fact that *IJM* was not owned by a commercial publisher but rather sat within Irish Academy of Management was a key strength. Professor David Collings acknowledged that " having edited journals that are owned by academies - like the Irish Academy of Management or like the Academy of Management (AOM) journals are owned by AOM, the *Journal of Management* is owned by the Southern Management Association – is the important role that organisations (like the Irish Academy of Management or the Academy of Management) play in the governance of journals cannot be underestimated. Because to me, the trajectory of journals that are owned by publishers compared to the journals that are owned by professional academic associations is very different. It's almost entirely a commercial value proposition for the journal owned by publishers and, as an editor, I can say with my hand on my heart that I've never been pressured to accept or reject a paper based on those commercial realities."

Finally, open access emerged as both an opportunity and a challenge. David Collings reflected on how it represents one of the most significant macro-level changes currently influencing academic publishing: "The big changes… are the shift to Open Access… That kind of changes the business model for publishers too… really transforming how papers get disseminated and the visibility and access to research. I think, at a macro level, that's huge." This transformation, he noted, is reshaping not only how research reaches audiences but also how its value is constructed in increasingly commercial publishing ecosystems.

For Edel Conway, open access had been largely positive during her editorial tenure: "With De Gruyter as the publisher at the time, the articles were Open Access, so it was never a problem. If anything, it was attractive."

Editors also noted that institutional and funder-driven pressures are now playing a growing role in shaping open access uptake. In the Irish context, Professor Collings observed: "There's pressure from funders and from things like DORA [Declaration on Research Assessment, https://sfdora.org/] and some of the international agreements around it. I do think there are institutional pressures that are pushing us towards open access. If your research isn't funded, I think the universities, certainly in Ireland, at this stage, aren't forcing it. But... the percentage of papers that have been Open Access over the last number of years has increased... because of the publishing agreements. And that's good, for citations, for access, for equality... so people can access this research regardless of where they are."

James Cunningham echoed these dynamics in the UK context where he currently works. He explained that, in the UK, open access and data availability are often non-negotiable requirements: "It's a big deal with regards to Open Access in the UK... it is absolutely paramount, it's a must-have. A lot of funding bodies require Open Access publications and availability of data. And again, there's agreements for all of that."

FUTURE TRENDS IN SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING

The editors also reflected on the broader forces reshaping academic publishing, which ranged from institutional pressures to cultural trends within journals.

David Collings acknowledged movements to address the shortcomings of the persistent dominance of journal rankings, mentioning responsible research assessment as an example. Overall, he remained sceptical: "There's definitely a pushback on journal rankings… One hope is that there will be a greater recognition of the potential of less highly ranked journals… but I'm probably not convinced that we're anywhere close to it yet." James Cunningham agreed with this assessment: "In terms of recruitment/selection, your journal rankings matter. It is the currency that matters." However, he also noted signs of some gradual changes, particularly in the UK's REF process where "there is a growing emphasis on research impact… It's a small progress, but nonetheless very welcome."

This dual emphasis on rankings and impact led to a discussion about how scholars can craft publishing portfolios that speak to broader audiences. David Collings reflected on his own research and publications: "I'm pretty confident the things that most people have read have been in *Harvard Business Review*, not in *Academy of Management*

Journal or *Organization Science*. So, I think for any scholar to believe that it doesn't matter where you publish is going to be a challenging path… The audience is determining where you publish and being able to build a strong narrative around the impact of your work, that's the alternative."

Other trends highlighted included the rise of multi-author and international teams. As Crowley-Henry observed, "I see multi-authorship and a lot more international teams as a trend that I cannot see changing." She also pointed to growth in more accessible formats such as blogs, synopses, and even cartoons, that help make academic work "much more user friendly, much more accessible."

Both James Cunningham and David Collings identified transparency in authorship as a growing requirement. James Cunningham predicted that "the credit system for journal articles… is going to probably become the norm for all journals." David Collings welcomed this shift, arguing that ethical accountability is vital: "The workload to publish in top journals is so high that… people bring different things to projects and put together teams. The next step… is that we're transparent around what individuals brought to the table in terms of contributing to the articles." While journal rankings remain a stubborn force, there are signs of new directions: greater attention to impact, interdisciplinarity, accessibility, and transparency.

NAVIGATING THE CRAFT OF ACADEMIC PUBLISHING

In offering guidance to early-career scholars, the editors stressed that success in publishing is less about a single outcome and more about developing a long-term approach to crafting, writing and engaging with journals. David Collings emphasised that clarity of purpose and positioning are critical foundations: "The key is to be very clear what conversation you want to join and to frame your article with a very clear sense of where it's positioned… really thinking about why your paper matters and that starts with establishing what we know about an area and then creating some sort of tension or complication that we need to answer." In practice, this means authors should not only identify a gap but also articulate the motivation of their work. Collings cautioned against vague positioning, noting that too often "you're struggling to see where it's positioned relative to what's been written before."

Several editors reinforced this perspective by stressing the need to align the paper with a journal's scope. As Marian Crowley-Henry put it: "The very basic thing to get it off the editor's desk is to ensure that the paper targets a journal that engages in that kind of work… You don't want to get a desk reject." This pragmatic concern was echoed by Edel Conway, who highlighted the role of the introduction as both a scholarly and strategic act: "To nail it in the introduction… let the editor know how it contributes to the conversation. Actually, do your homework. Who else has published there? What conversation are you adding to?"

Michelle O'Sullivan suggested that early career researchers should not approach this alone but seek guidance: "They should try to seek feedback from experienced colleagues on their paper before submission." She also recommended drawing on published editorial advice, such as Lange and Pfarrar (2017), Editors' Comments in the *Academy of Management Review*, to learn "the core building blocks" of a strong article. Jonathan Lavelle brought a different but complementary insight: the importance of patience and resilience. He argued that younger scholars often underestimate how long the journey from first draft to final publication can be:

"Sometimes when people write something, they think 'what I've written now and I've submitted [it] and hopefully it gets published like that', and they are not aware that it's a journey. Your paper often looks very different to what it looked like when you submitted it… publishing is a journey."

Marian Crowley-Henry extended this notion of a journey back into doctoral training. She praised the move towards PhDs by publication as a structured way of preparing scholars for this iterative process, similar to professional doctorates/ DBAs where there is recognised value of a cumulative paper series in context.: "It's a good training ground for early career academics… they can leave their PhD training with a couple of papers maybe already published or at least ready for publication."

IJM's CONTRIBUTION AND LEGACY

This final section captures the past editors' reflections on *IJM*'s contribution to management scholarship, and on its legacy past this final issue. In response to the question, *"How do you feel the IJM has contributed to management research in academia, in Ireland and more broadly?"*, former editors commented on the journal's role as a vital part

of Irish academic life. This included offering a developmental space for early-career researchers, a platform for Irish-focused scholarship, and a means of fostering community and scholarly identity within the broader Irish business and management academic network. Beyond its publishing function, the journal created a sense of connection among scholars, with some expressing nostalgia for the earlier days of print, when receiving a physical copy of your published work felt like a meaningful academic milestone.

When asked to specifically reflect on their time as editors of the *Irish Journal of Management*, the editors consistently highlighted the dual rewards of personal development and the broader contribution the journal made to Irish scholarship. For some, the most rewarding moments were linked directly to supporting new scholars on their publishing journey. As Professor Edel Conway recalled, "when you're seeing newly qualified scholars getting their first publication in the journal and just realising how much that means to them", the effort of editing was worth it. Michelle O'Sullivan echoed this sense of satisfaction in helping emerging voices, noting how rewarding it was "when scholars were so appreciative and excited that their work was going to be published." Edel also mentioned pride in being the editor involved in moving the journal online, even if, she joked, the move to an online submission system had left both her and co-editor, Dr. Jonathan Lavelle, "nearly tearing [their] hair out."

Others emphasised the intellectual satisfaction of guiding papers through the review process. James Cunningham described the particular value of "seeing authors' work develop through the review process and ultimately getting published." Both James Cuningham and David Collings recalled the 2015 special reflective issue they curated (see Collings et al., 2015) which consisted of a series of papers on Irish research in the area of HRM, strategy, entrepreneurship and industrial relations. As James noted "we engaged with some of the key scholars at that time – Colm O'Gorman, Pat Gibbons... So that was special".

Several editors reflected on how their own academic practice was shaped by their time with *IJM*. Dr. O'Sullivan commented that the editorial role "helped me to better understand how to prepare a paper before submission and how to deal with reviewers' comments", while Dr. Jonathan Lavelle explained that sitting "on the other side of the table" made him far more attuned to the pressures facing editors, and taught him the importance of details such as writing "a good cover letter." Similarly, Professor Marian Crowley-Henry observed that her *IJM* experience gave her the confidence to act as "special issues' guest editor for *Gender, Work and Organization,* which I mightn't have done otherwise. I suppose being editor of *IJM* gave me the confidence of doing things like that and expanding your network."

Beyond individual benefits, the editors consistently returned to the *IJM*'s role in building and sustaining an Irish management research community. Dr. Michelle O'Sullivan highlighted how *IJM* showcased the "breadth of empirical and policy-based research being undertaken in management [disciplines] in Ireland, which would not necessarily be evident in specialised publications." Building on this, David Collings stressed *IJM*'s unique role as "an outlet for people who were doing research about Ireland, where Ireland was the story." He was sad that the journal was no longer viable and warned that with its closure, much of this Ireland-focused scholarship would lose a natural home.

Editors noted that the journal often attracted submissions from scholars who made significant contributions to management research in Ireland. Professor David Collings described *IJM* as "a key connective tissue for the Irish academic community," second only to the IAM conference as a forum for identity and collaboration. Cunningham similarly stressed the journal's community-building role, particularly "in capturing the evolution of business and management research in Ireland…and career development". The *IJM* also provided "an outlet for early career experience in an environment where there wasn't a huge amount of mentoring… which is now more the norm that PhD students have [access to mentoring] and as universities have progressed…….to learn the craft of writing good papers." Professor Edel Conway was particularly struck by the journal's developmental ethos: "You never sent anybody to the *Irish Journal of Management* where they got completely trashed out of it [aggressively rejected] … it was always kind and constructive and developmental."

For many, the physical presence of the journal itself was symbolic: James Cunningham remembered "seeing the journal in academic offices … it was a very visible artefact around different institutions." This was echoed by Marian Crowley-Henry, who recalled the impression it made on her as a Master's student in the late 1990s under the supervision of Professor Jim Walsh in University College Cork, who was a key member of IAM from its inception.: "It was cool to see this publication that had Ireland or Irish written on the cover page."

In terms of its legacy, the editors saw the *IJM* as both a vital record of Irish management research since 1979 and a launchpad for academic careers. David Collings reflected on the enduring contribution of the

journal: "there's a huge corpus of work there that will be there forever, that documents some key aspects of management in Ireland over that time. The legacy is that research will be there for future generations and scholars to access." Jonathan Lavelle emphasised that the journal "promoted Irish scholarship … and allowed people to kickstart their career and flourish after that…I think its legacy will be very much that it promoted Irish scholarship."

James Cunninghan agreed saying that the *IJM* "captured the evolution of management thinking, management practice and some of the big economic and business changes that have happened in Ireland over that period of time. …the influence of foreign direct investment; … the changing role of what it means to be a manager in an Irish context; … changes in HR practices;….the impact of new regulations. Those types of things were captured over the evolution [of the journal] and particularly in the earlier issues where maybe it was much harder to get data".

Finally, there was a strong sense of respect for those who had carried the journal forward over the decades. Edel Conway paid tribute to earlier editors and contributors such as Edel Conway paid tribute to earlier editors and contributors such as, in alphabetical order, Professor Teresa Brannick, Professor Paddy Gunnigle, Professor Aidan Kelly, Professor Kathy Monks, Professor Bill Roche, and Dr Jim Walsh, remarking that "they were so well regarded and there was that kind of a sense of a family amongst them that they passed the baton between themselves and did various things as it developed or evolved to make it what it is today." This was reinforced by James Cunningham, who acknowledged the huge contribution of those early scholars "who really pioneered a lot of the management scholarship in Ireland at that time and laid the foundations for what we take for granted now."

CONCLUSION

The *Irish Journal of Management* has had a lasting impact on both Irish management research and management academics - both its editors and contributors. By nurturing early-career scholars and promoting Ireland-focused research, *IJM* has established a legacy that endures. Its history as told here offers lessons not only about the evolution of management scholarship in Ireland but also about the enduring value of mentorship and community in academia and the changing academic publishing landscape which offers both challenges and opportunities that we are all working to navigate.

NOTE

All past papers from issues in *IBAR* and *IJM* are being digitised (including those published in print-only format up to 1996) and archived on the Maynooth University Mural archiving platform. Any readers searching for past papers may do so via the url: https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/, searching for the *Irish Journal of Management* or the *Journal of Irish Business and Administrative Research*, and narrowing the search further, as desired (by year, or author, or topic etc.). Additionally, the Irish Academy of Management website (https://iamireland.ie/) retains information for members on how they can access papers via the Mural platform.

References

Adema, J., and Moore, S. (2023). 'Just one day of unstructured autonomous time': Supporting editorial labour for ethical publishing within the university. *New Formations*, 110 & 111, 8-27. https://doi.org/10.3898/NewF:110-111.01.2024.

Aguinis, H., Cummings, C., Ramani, R. S., and Cummings, T. G. (2020). "An A is an A": The new bottom line for valuing academic research. *Academy of Management Perspectives,* 34(1), 135-154. https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2017.0193.

Collings, D. G., Cunningham, J., and Wood, G. (2015). Reflections on Irish management research: Past, present and future. *The Irish Journal of Management*, 34(1), 2-6. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijm-2015-0002.

DeLisi, L. E. (2022). Where have all the reviewers gone? Is the peer review concept in crisis?. *Psychiatry Research*, 310, 114454. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2022.114454.

Gatrell, C., Muzio, D., Post, C., and Wickert, C. (2024). Here, there and everywhere: On the responsible

use of artificial intelligence (AI) in management research and the peer-review process. *Journal of Management Studies*, 61(3), 739-751. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.13045.

Hay, I. (2016). Why edit a journal? Academic irony and paradox. *The Professional Geographer*, 68(1), 159-165. https://doi.org/10.1080/00330124.2015.1062704.

Lange, D., and Pfarrer, M. D. (2017). Editors' comments: Sense and structure – the core building blocks of an "AMR" article. *The Academy of Management Review*, 42(3), 407–416. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26395005.

Louie, A. K., Beresin, E. V., Coverdale, J., Balon, R., Castillo, E. G., Guerrero, A. P., Morreale, M. K., Aggarwal, R., Seritan, A. L., Thomas, L. A., and Brenner, A. M. (2025). Editorial work and scholarship: Would you thrive as a journal editor? *Academic Psychiatry*, 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40596-025-02170-2.

Mingers, J., and Willmott, H. (2013). Taylorizing business school research: On the 'one best way' performative effects of journal ranking lists. *Human Relations*, 66(8), 1051-1073. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726712467048.

Petrescu, M., and Krishen, A. S. (2022). The evolving crisis of the peer-review process. *Journal of Marketing Analytics*, 10(3), 185-186. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41270-022-00176-5.

Timothy, D. J. (2024). Why edit a journal? In *How to Edit and Manage a Successful Scholarly Journal* (pp. 9-18). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.