

TO: MEMBERS OF I C A

FROM: GERRY MILLER

DATE: 5 OCTOBER 1973

RE: GUIDELINES FOR NEW JOURNAL

1. TITLE: The proposed title for this journal is *Human Communication Research*. The phrase "*Human Communication*" underscores the central concern with symbolic transactions between human beings. The word "*Research*" stresses a commitment to contributions that expand our knowledge and understanding of such transactions.
2. FOCUS OF JOURNAL: Contributors are encouraged to submit the following types of articles for consideration.
 - a. Reports of original research. Contributions reporting new data bearing upon our understanding of human communication are encouraged. Within the broad context of behavioral, or scientific, approaches to the study of human communication, the journal has no methodological biases. Reports of research conducted in a variety of settings and using a variety of methodologies are appropriate. Moreover, both research findings bearing primarily on theory building (so-called "pure research") or understanding or solution of practical communication problems (so-called "applied research") are welcomed.
 - b. Descriptions of methodological approaches. Contributions containing specific descriptions of new or extant, but infrequently, used methodologies are encouraged. Here the key term is "specific." The methodology, including assumptions and limitations, should be described thoroughly, and its application to human communication research clearly illustrated by specific examples. General exhortations for the field to conduct more research using a particular methodology are discouraged.
 - c. Critical syntheses of research literature. Contributions critically synthesizing extant research in a particular problem area are encouraged. Such papers should pull together the relevant research, specifically identify its strengths, limitations, and weaknesses, and point out promising avenues for future research. Totally descriptive, uncritical summaries of a body of research are discouraged.
 - d. Theoretical papers. Contributions centering on the development of a theoretical position which culminates in the logical derivation of research hypotheses are encouraged. Generally, such contributions should illustrate the derivation of hypotheses and contain data bearing upon one of the hypotheses, primarily to illustrate the empirical utility of the theory. Contributions stemming from a variety of theoretical perspectives—e.g., classical covering law models or systems paradigms—are welcomed. Theoretical or speculative papers that fail to clearly delineate specific empirical implications for research are discouraged.
 - e. Additional features. The following are guidelines for occasional features of the journal.
 1. Exchanges concerning articles. On some occasions, critical rejoinders to a particular article may be deemed of sufficient import to warrant publication. The general rule of one exchange will govern such transactions—i.e., dialogue will be limited to criticism of the original article and the author's response to the criticism. As with all other material appearing in the journal, critical rejoinders will be subject to the scrutiny and evaluation of the editorial staff.

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2. Book reviews. Books will be carefully screened and only those appropriate to the journal's focus will be reviewed. Even within the confines of this focus, reviewing will be on a selective basis. Synthetic reviews of bodies of related literature will be encouraged when possible. Brief reviews will be primarily descriptive; broad generalizations about a book's merits that are unsupported by careful analysis and argument are discouraged.
3. Thematic issues. Where quantity and quality permit, particular issues of the journal may be devoted entirely or largely to articles pertaining to a particular area of human communication research. Moreover, attempts will be made to group articles thematically whenever possible.
3. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING SUBMITTED MANUSCRIPTS: The appropriateness criterion has been spelled out in the preceding section. Besides appropriateness, the overriding criterion will be quality. Standard scholarly criteria of quality include cogency of argument, clarity of conceptual and operational definition, careful derivation of hypotheses or questions from the theoretical framework, soundness of research design, appropriateness of statistical reduction and analysis of data, defensibility of inferences drawn from data, and stylistic clarity and precision. Within practical confines of page limitations, length will not be a governing criterion; however, two comments about length are appropriate: first, the journal will welcome substantial manuscripts reporting the results of a series of studies conducted in programmatic fashion; second, succinctness will be encouraged for manuscripts reporting one or two findings of interest.
4. PROCEDURES FOR EDITORIAL SCREENING AND EVALUATION: The editorial staff is committed to competent, prompt screening and evaluation of manuscripts. To accomplish this end, the following procedural guidelines will be utilized.
 - a. Contributors will submit the original manuscript plus two copies. Since a policy of blind reviewing will be followed, the title page containing names of contributors should be separate and detachable. Contributors will be immediately notified of receipt of manuscript.
 - b. Each manuscript will be initially screened by the editor. In those rare cases where a manuscript is clearly inappropriate for the journal or is obviously deficient in quality, the manuscript will be returned to the contributor with an accompanying letter from the editor.
 - c. Following this initial screening, the manuscript will be forwarded to two editorial consultants: these consultants may be members of the regular editorial board or expert referees from other disciplines. Commitment to a maximum of four weeks for evaluation and return will be a clearly specified condition for accepting membership on the editorial board, and the editor will carefully monitor this time frame and communicate immediately with consultants who are delinquent in meeting this deadline.
 - d. When evaluations have been returned to the editor from the consultants, the comments will be forwarded to the contributor along with the editorial decision. Maximum time for editorial decisions will be two months, with most decisions reached in less than the maximum time.
 - e. The stylistic format employed will follow the American Psychological Association guidelines. A brief abstract of the paper should accompany the manuscript.