Description

In this age of information overload, there are several ideas that can be considered innovative or can lead to a new scientific development. Given the extent of information that is being accessed, there are several potential ideas that can be considered; however, there is no medium to record this.

The Journal of Brief Ideas, the beta format of which was launched in 2015, publishes short ideas within 200 words. Their objective to record ideas in such a form is drawn from the old tradition of European journals, where scientists primarily published short letters outlining their ideas and on-going research, rather than in extensive papers that are written after years of work.

This journal was co-founded by David Harris, a former astrophysicist, who was also previously the founding editor-in-chief of Symmetry magazine and the founding magazine section editor of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and Arfon Smith who is a scientist at GitHub and co-creator of the Zooniverse. Their aim is to provide a space for scientists to archive and maybe start discussions about the unformed, early, and small ideas that they are considering while conducting large-scale research. Harris argues, "Good scientists have far more ideas than they know what to do with," and this journal provides a platform for scientists to do something, albeit something small, with these ideas.

Archiving Intellectual Capital

Harris and Smith call these early ideas "intellectual capital" and hope that *The Journal of Brief Ideas* will allow that intellectual capital to be placed in a searchable, citable, and archivable format. Other researchers can then explore the ideas that have been uploaded by searching category tags, comment on them, and start new conversations.

The ideas can be submitted in less than 200 words, as long as the users have an ORCID profile. Ideas are written directly within the journal's online platform and can be instantly submitted and approved. The users do not need to add references, although they can be included with an embedded link function. The ideas, therefore, are quickly and easily uploaded onto the site by just about anyone, and with very little effort.

The journal does not have a peer review process, as the editors argue that peer review reports would likely be longer than the ideas themselves. Thus, they encourage readers instead to "review" ideas through the user rating button or to respond with critique and suggestions in the comments section that is attached to each submitted idea. Their aim is to encourage researchers to submit their ideas and brief thoughts with the least effort possible and to remove any barriers to submission. They aim to stimulate conversation and potential collaboration, not act as gatekeepers of appropriate ideas. To facilitate this, researchers can also create *Collections* to help them track interesting ideas, save them for the future or follow conversations that occur in the comments section of each idea.

Benefits for Researchers

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First, the primary and most immediate benefit of publishing in the journal is, of course, credit for your ideas. Every idea that is submitted is archived has to be given an ORCID reference, which means that it is immediately added to your ORCID profile and can, therefore, be cited and added to your CV. So, by publishing in the journal you could demonstrate a list of ideas that you have thought of to various hiring committees and collaborators with whom you would like to work in the future.

Second, submitting an idea to *The Journal of Brief Ideas* helps form a list of ideas that you may have considered. In particular, when a long project is coming to an end or when it comes time to explore new research possibilities, the ideas that you have submitted to the journal could act as a convenient way to start new research collaborations.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, submitting an idea to the journal opens it to critique and conversation much earlier in the research process than is usually possible. Moreover, it opens the idea to a much wider range of readers at a very early stage, which means that more perspectives and voices can be heard and potential collaborators can be immediately found, no matter where they are in the world. This means that the potential (or lack thereof) of an idea can be demonstrated early, those that have no potential can be immediately discarded, and researchers who may be able to help can be identified.

Thus, *The Journal of Brief Ideas* can function as a form of collaborative, open notebook for the individual researcher, where “intellectual capital” is shared, cited, and developed.

Quality Control

There are, of course, challenges in this extremely open model. When anyone can submit anything, there is always the possibility that ridiculous, offensive, or pseudo-scientific ideas will overwhelm sincere ideas that are being discussed. Thus, the journal tracks the overall content that is being published and ideas that do not meet the necessary logical flow or seem silly or offensive are taken off to ensure that the target audience continues to use the platform.

Category

1. Industry News
2. Publishing News

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