

Supplemental Materials for Journal Articles

NISO/NFAIS Joint Working Group

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Supplemental Material: The Problems

It's just messy!

- No clear consensus on what constitutes supplemental material
- To peer review or not to peer review
- Missing journal article connections
- Poorly identified materials—just what is the context for this table or figure?
- No recommended citation
- Lack of descriptive metadata

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Two Preludes

- The NFAIS Working Group on Best Practices for Articles included some guidelines in 2008.
- Sasha Schwarzman from AGU wrote a paper reflecting the situation in 2009, based on responses he received from his survey on practices.

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Gist of NFAIS Best Practices

- Clarity on connection between article and supplemental materials
- Part of the journal's archival record
- Recommended citation
- Descriptive metadata
- A&I Service record including file types

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Sasha on Definitions of Supporting or Supplemental

- Print as the Version of Record (VoR)
- Electronic VoR less clear
- Anything that cannot be printed—
 - Dynamic medium
 - Page limits
 - Typesetting problems
- Elsevier's take—
 - Evidence provides deeper support
 - Large datasets and multimedia
 - Detailed methods information

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Sasha on Varying Practices

- Some restrict number of components (Cell: not >2x number of figures and tables).
- Some only non-printable; some don't differentiate.
- No consensus on in-article Appendix vs. online Supplemental.
- Then there is readability, usability, preservation, and reuse.

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Let's talk about it. . .

- Todd suggested to NFAIS that NISO and NFAIS sponsor joint meeting
- January 22, 2010 in Washington, DC
- About 35 people in the room and nearly as many on the telephone for several hours
- 3 speakers to stimulate discussion
- Then much discussion/consensus

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Sasha Schwarzman, AGU

- Need for assurance that scientific articles as a literary genre preserve integrity. Fit for supplemental?
- Costs and benefits of adding value.
- Need to know what is supplemental and what is core.
- What are the business models?
- How implement uniform policies?

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Efke Smit, STM, on EU PARSE

- PARSE (Permanent Access to Records of Science in Europe) 2-year project.
- Highlight vulnerability of digital content.
- Datasets/supplemental least organized for preservation.
- Ideal: Good linking system, reliable metadata, certification of repositories, registration of datasets.

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Scott Dineen, OSA, Interactive Science Publishing

- Partnership with NLM.
- Dspace architecture (MIDAS) for datasets.
- Created viewing software allows readers to rotate, crop, zoom, analyze.
- Can view 3D lung cancer datasets in context.
- Technical issues, funding for infrastructure, licensing models, business models at yet unclear.

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Problem 1: Content Types



- Datasets
- Figures (including high-resolution figures)
- Tables
- Movies
- Software/scripts (or network files in format)
- Videos
- Appendices
- Audio files
- Images
- Text

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Problem #2: How Use?

- Some say should not be anything reader needs to make basic conclusions.
- Some say only that materials may further understanding.
- Some designate as supplemental materials essential to the scientific integrity of the article.

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Problem #3: Peer Review

- All agree supplemental materials should be peer reviewed.
- But most believe current peer review often haphazard or non-existent.
- Real question of how to cover costs of peer review.

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Problem #4: Roles

- Authors need education re what to include and how to frame it.
- Peer reviewers need education on how to evaluate content.
- Editors set policy and make decisions; need to learn potential outcomes.
- Publishers need to educate all.
- Libraries/Data Center likely to curate datasets.

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Problem #5: Definitions

- How do we define the following?
 - Dataset
 - Supplemental materials
 - Supporting materials
 - Related materials
 - Article
 - Essential materials
 - Citation



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Some Questions to Consider

- What exactly is supplemental material?
- What impact for preservation, citations, and copyright agreements?
- How work with supplemental material shared across articles and maybe across authors?
- How factor supplemental materials into horizontal versions—that is, print, electronic, special audience?

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And more questions. . .

- How are sensitive data handled?
- What about growing requirements for sharing data?
- How do publishers respond to competing user needs? (Some want all, some want only a summary or article.)
- What expectations should be set for peer review?

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Other Considerations

- Clear, consistent indicators of content
- Metadata Needs
- Archiving
- Specific responsibilities for all parties
- And costs. . .



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Developing Recommended Practices—A Joint Effort

- NISO-NFAIS Working Group Effort
 - Business Working Group to consider the semantics—definitions, roles, business practices
 - Technical Working Group to consider issues such as syntax, linking, interoperability, metadata, and so on
 - Stakeholder Group to provide feedback and vet the outcome

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Business Working Group

Co-Chairs: Linda Beebe, APA, and Marie McVeigh, Thomson-Reuters



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Technical Working Group

Co-Chairs: Dave Martinsen, ACS, and Sasha Schwarzman, AGU



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Work in Progress

- Groups will begin meeting post ALA.
- Status reports and related documents will be posted.
- A thorny problem—will take a year or so to develop recommendations.
- Vetted by both NISO and NFAIS.

Stay tuned!

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Thank you!

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