

International Journal of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (IJTMB): A Third-Year Retrospective Reflecting Google Analytics and Open Journal System Sources

Glenn M. Hymel, EdD, LMT
Executive Editor, IJTMB

Professor and Former Chair, Department of Psychological Sciences, Loyola University, New Orleans, LA, USA

KEYWORDS: Massage research, massage education, massage practice, open-access publishing, Open Journal Systems, Google Analytics, journal webstats, journal statistics, CIM research, fascia research, bodywork research, clinical reasoning, health care taxonomy, PubMed Central, Quertle, outbound reference linking, CrossRef, editorial board succession

The third-year mark since the launch of the inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork* (IJTMB) occurred on August 20, 2011. During that 3-year period, 12 issues of the journal were published spanning the follow dates: August and December 2008; March, June, September, and December 2009 and 2010; and March and June 2011. This editorial continues the practice established in September 2009 and 2010 of identifying information sources and pertinent data that profile the journal's progress and presumed impact thus far.

The principal data source is still the IJTMB's Google Analytics web statistics site, accessible to interested colleagues through either the hyperlink just cited or <http://www.google.com/analytics/>. In either case, once the Access Analytics option is activated, the complete database can be examined by entering info@massagetherapyfoundation.org (username) and [ijtmstats](#) (password). Various sectors of this database provide information such as the extent of site usage, a visitor overview, a traffic sources overview, a map overlay with visitors' countries ordered by rank, a content overview, new and returning visitors, visitor loyalty, and keywords used in accessing the journal. For understanding certain terminology specific to the Google Analytics reporting format, the Glossary, available through a standard Help option while navigating the site, is particularly useful.

Table 1 displays several selected excerpts from the IJTMB's Google Analytics database specific to the August 20-to-August 20 periods ending in 2009, 2010, and 2011. For each of these three time frames, the table highlights the top 10 ranked countries in terms of number of visitors; however, it is of particular note that colleagues who have visited the IJTMB's site represent as many as 151 countries.

This statistic alone gives encouraging testimony to one of the major objectives of immediate, open-access scholarly publishing—namely, the expansive availability of a professional resource that might otherwise be quite limited because of any one or a combination of financial, political, geographic, and logistical constraints.

A second important data source that provides valuable information regarding the progress of the IJTMB is the Statistics sector of the journal's own website. This feature is a component of the Open Journal Systems software used by the IJTMB and acknowledged in the journal's very first editorial ([Hymel^{\(1\)}](#)) as part of Canada's Public Knowledge Project. Although pertinent information from this database is readily accessible to readers through the About the Journal option at the top of the home page, the journal's editorial board will periodically highlight certain statistics for the readership. Relevant data provided on an annual basis include the number of issues and items published; the total number of manuscripts submitted; the submissions that have been peerreviewed, accepted, declined, and resubmitted; the days to review; the days to publication; and the number of registered users and readers. Table 2 shows the aforementioned categories of data spanning the IJTMB's 12 issues published through and including June 2011.

Although not publicly accessible, another information source available for periodic dissemination to the journal's readership is the number of views per entry in each issue of the IJTMB. These data span not only articles per se appearing in the journal, but also editorials and entries in the Commentaries and News/Announcements sections. In the context of the 12 journal issues published through June 2011, Table 3⁽²⁻¹¹⁾ displays—as of September 8, 2011—the 10 most frequently viewed IJTMB articles since the journal's inaugural issue in August 2008. Of particular note is the article by [Zalta^{\(2\)}](#)—the Massage Therapy Foundation's 2007 Practitioner Case Report Contest Gold Award Winner—that has elicited by far the most views with 21,142 counts. Also of interest in this top-10 listing is the inclusion of three entries related to the 2009 Fascia Research Congress

TABLE 1. Year-Over-Year Web Statistics from Google Analytics for the *International Journal of Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork*

Statistic	August 20 to August 20					
	2008–2009		2009–2010		2010–2011	
Overview of site usage and visitors (<i>n</i>)						
Visits	18,124		27,891		37,710	
Unique visitors	13,531		21,101		28,125	
Page views	77,920		95,422		121,016	
Average page views per visit	4.30		3.42		3.21	
International scope (<i>n</i>)						
Countries/territories						
Visitors from top 10 countries/territories						
	United States	10,999	United States	15,348	United States	19,815
	Canada	3,584	Canada	3,976	Canada	4,843
	United Kingdom	732	United Kingdom	1,743	United Kingdom	3,510
	Australia	671	Australia	1,134	Australia	1,721
	New Zealand	249	New Zealand	537	India	830
	India	186	Germany	418	New Zealand	635
	Philippines	92	India	382	Germany	438
	Germany	91	Brazil	311	Netherlands	394
	Spain	68	Netherlands	257	Philippines	333
	Malaysia	68	Philippines	225	Brazil	265
New and returning visitors [<i>n</i> (%)]						
New	13,296 (73.36)		20,702 (74.22)		27,517 (72.97)	
Returning	4,828 (26.64)		7,189 (25.78)		10,193 (27.03)	
Overview of traffic sources [<i>n</i> (%)]						
Direct traffic	7,693 (42.5)		11,981 (42.96)		14,380 (38.13)	
Referring sites	5,277 (29.1)		6,199 (22.23)		6,148 (16.30)	
Search engines	5,083 (28.1)		9,704 (34.79)		17,172 (45.54)	
Other	71 (0.3)		7 (0.03)		10 (0.03)	

TABLE 2. Publication-Year Statistics from Open Journal Systems for the *International Journal of Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork*

Statistic	2008	2009	2010	2011
Issues published (<i>n</i>)	2 ^a	4 ^b	4 ^b	2 ^c
Items published (<i>n</i>)	15	25	25	7
Total submissions (<i>n</i>)	26	36	41	27
Peer reviewed (<i>n</i>)	21	28	35	18
Accepted [<i>n</i> (%)]	16 (76)	25 (89)	26 (74)	12 (67)
Declined [<i>n</i> (%)]	5 (24)	3 (11)	9 (26)	6 (33)
Resubmitted [<i>n</i> (%)]	4 (19)	4 (14)	4 (11)	4 (22)
Days to review (<i>n</i>)	47	23	38	50
Days to publication (<i>n</i>)	62	48	80	17
Registered users (<i>n</i>)	1,139	1,912	4,760	9,622
Registered readers (<i>n</i>)	1,115	1,869	4,699	9,542
Article view counts (<i>n</i>)	41,639	40,141	40,251	7,151

^a August and December.

^b March, June, September, and December.

^c March and June.

TABLE 3. Ten Most Frequently Viewed *International Journal of Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork* Articles Since Inaugural Issue in August 2008

<i>Author(s) and reference</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Number of views</i>
Zalta ⁽²⁾	Massage protocol for post-anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction patellofemoral pain syndrome: a case report	21,142
Minasny ⁽³⁾	Understanding the process of fascial unwinding	8,455
van der Wal ⁽⁴⁾	The architecture of the connective tissue in the musculoskeletal system: an often overlooked functional parameter as to proprioception in the locomotor apparatus	7,710
Findley ⁽⁵⁾	Fascia research II: Second International Fascia Research Congress	6,582
Grant et al. ⁽⁶⁾	Steps toward massage therapy guidelines: a first report to the profession	6,547
LeMoon ⁽⁷⁾	Clinical reasoning in massage therapy	6,000
Kania et al. ⁽⁸⁾	Value of qualitative research in the study of massage therapy	5,133
Porcino and MacDougall ⁽⁹⁾	The integrated taxonomy of health care: classifying both complementary and biomedical practices using a uniform classification protocol	5,066
Adams et al. ⁽¹⁰⁾	The effects of massage therapy on pain management in the acute care setting	4,080
Moyer ⁽¹¹⁾	Affective massage therapy	4,080

held in Amsterdam: [Minasny^{\(3\)}](#), [van der Wal^{\(4\)}](#), and [Findley^{\(5\)}](#). And garnering “hits” in the approximate range of 6,500 to 5,000 are articles that focused on the Massage Therapy Foundation’s Best Practices Committee efforts to formulate massage therapy guidelines ([Grant et al.^{\(6\)}](#)), clinical reasoning in massage therapy ([LeMoon^{\(7\)}](#)), qualitative research as a viable methodological option in the study of massage therapy ([Kania et al.^{\(8\)}](#)), and a taxonomy for integrating both complementary and biomedical health care practices ([Porcino and MacDougall^{\(9\)}](#)).

Several data-based trends and experientially informed conclusions can be identified. Among the most important—from a formative evaluation perspective, and against the backdrop of the journal’s third anniversary reached on August 20, 2011—are the following six:

- *Continued expanding international scope:* The international scope of the journal continues to broaden, as evidenced by the 151 countries from which readers are accessing one or more issues of the journal. This fact is indeed quite encouraging with respect to the potential for the journal’s content to increasingly reflect the contributions of colleagues from diverse regions of the globe. Across the 12 issues published through June 2011, contributing authors have presented work originating from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the United States.
- *Increased number of visits and unique visitors:* In a year-over-year comparison based on the journal’s anniversary date of August 20, Table 1 shows visits progressively increasing in numbers from 18,124 (2008–2009) to 27,891 (2009–2010) and, currently, to 37,710 (2010–2011). Also noticeable is an elevated number of unique visitors

expanding over the same time span from 13,531 to 28,125. These increases continue to be encouraging at this stage in the journal’s evolution. And as noted in last year’s retrospective editorial ([Hymel^{\(12\)}](#)), however, the practical significance of these data in the broader context of what should be expected of an open-access journal at the end of its third year is still difficult to determine. With this in mind, input from readers is strongly encouraged if one is aware of available data sources against which the IJTMB’s apparent progress may be compared.

- *Increased manuscript submissions:* Table 2’s display of 130 total submissions through and including those published in the June 2011 issue include manuscripts spanning all six sections of the journal: contributions of an editorial, article, letter to the editor, and news/announcements nature. This continuing increase in manuscript submissions is indeed a welcomed trend for any scholarly publication effort, yet the slightly progressive increase since 2008 is far from the desired number that would make possible the journal’s ongoing goal of publishing three to four entries per Research, Education, Practice, and Commentaries sections in every quarterly issue. Viable submissions of any genre are of course invited, but we particularly encourage the obvious—namely, a greater number of manuscripts relating to potential articles per se and letters to the editor that highlight reader responses—be they pro or con—to published articles. And as a reminder, the three principal sections of the journal that emphasize research, education, and practice were intended from the journal’s inception to encourage and make possible author input that is as diverse, multifaceted, and extensive as possible. Prospective contributing

authors are encouraged to contact any member of the Editorial Board for assistance in manuscript preparation and submission. Additionally, this type of assistance is available through the journal's publishing firm—Multimed—and can be coordinated in conjunction with any Editorial Board member.

- *Most extensively viewed journal entries:* The journal's top 10 articles cited in Table 3 as eliciting the most views by readers (74,795 in toto) appeared in the journal's Editorial ($n = 2$), Research ($n = 3$), Education ($n = 1$), and Practice ($n = 4$) sections. Please keep in mind that this top-10 listing is obviously only a subset of a grand total of 129,182 views of journal entries recorded since the inaugural issue in August 2008.
- *Needed qualitative input on journal impact:* As an invitation to our readership—or perhaps more accurately a well-intended professional challenge—please keep in mind that both the PDF and HTML versions of each journal entry include an “Add Comment” feature intended to encourage reader response to any given article. This particular feature, in tandem with the option of submitting a letter to the editor regarding any article published, has the potential to provide the type of dialectical professional exchange of pro and con views that is so critical to the advancement of any profession. Furthermore, this type of dialog would provide a form of qualitative data that could be quite informative as we try to augment the preponderance of quantitative data as represented in Tables 1–3 in this editorial. Additionally, each member of the journal's Editorial Board encourages feedback from our readers regarding not only those entries published in our quarterly issues, but also recommendations of topics and themes for future entries that would seem to address the continually evolving needs of our profession.
- *PubMed Central inclusion, Quertle indexing, and outbound reference linking:* This attempt at a three-year retrospective view of the journal's progress would be grossly incomplete if our readership were not reminded of three major developments over the past year: the IJTMB's PubMed Central inclusion, Quertle indexing, and outbound reference linking feature as first acknowledged in our March 2011 editorial (Hymel⁽¹³⁾). These first two milestones bring the number of databases in which the journal is indexed to a total of eight. The outbound linking feature is included in the HTML version of each journal entry and provides a direct outbound link from a referenced citation in an IJTMB editorial or article to CrossRef, PubMed, and/or PubMed Central if indeed that cited source in the reference list is included in one or more of the aforementioned databases.

With a prospective view to the future, the IJTMB will once again serve as one of two principal publishing venues—in tandem with the *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*—for the Third International Fascia Research Congress scheduled for Vancouver on March 28–30, 2012. In a similar manner, both journals are preparing to provide comparable publishing options for participants at the Massage Therapy Foundation's 2013 International Massage Therapy Research Conference scheduled for Boston on April 25–27, 2013.

The IJTMB's progress during its first three years as reported in this retrospective editorial should provide an encouraging base from which to accelerate the journal's impact among colleagues involved in the research, education, and practice aspects of the massage and bodywork professions. Your continued involvement with the journal is critical whether it be in terms of contributing author, respondent to journal entries, or readership. Your input in whatever form is strategic to our assessing not only the journal's successes, but also those areas needing improvement.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST NOTIFICATION

The author declares that there are no competing interests.

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