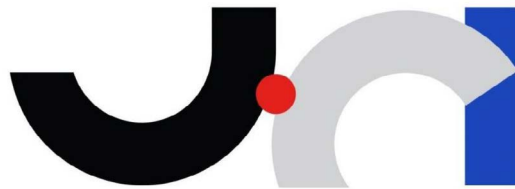




Publishing Without Boundaries: JAMS & the Journal of Controversial Ideas



JOURNAL OF CONTROVERSIAL IDEAS

The Journal of Controversial Ideas, founded by Francesca Minerva from the University of Milan, Jeff McMahan from the University of Oxford, and Peter Singer from Princeton University, is a pioneering open-access academic journal that provides a unique platform for publishing thought-provoking, often contentious work. Over the past three years, the journal has established itself as a rare venue where challenging topics can be explored freely, garnering significant readership and a reputation for quality and independence.

JAMS is a journal management system designed for small / medium and independent academic publishers. It streamlines the entire publishing process—from submission and peer review to production and publication—saving time and reducing complexity. Backed by MDPI's expertise in open access, JAMS combines reliable tools with expert support to help journals thrive. Its scalable platform adapts to growing needs, while flexible pricing ensures accessibility for all. Beyond software, JAMS offers consulting services to enhance quality, visibility, and impact. With JAMS, smaller publishers gain the tools and guidance they need to succeed.

Objectives

A Vision for Uncompromised Academic Freedom

From the outset, the journal's founders had a clear mission: to create a platform that would prioritize academic freedom and that would also be open access. They envisioned a space where researchers could publish controversial or challenging ideas without the usual restrictions or pressures from commercial publishers.

This ambitious goal came with essential requirements: full editorial independence to maintain content control, financial accessibility to allow all researchers to publish for free, a professional presentation to ensure academic credibility, and an efficient workflow that a small editorial team could manage sustainably.

Challenges

Overcoming Obstacles

Creating a journal with these high standards posed significant challenges. The search for a platform that respected their need for independence proved challenging.

“Independence was non-negotiable for the founders. It was difficult to find a publisher that would allow us editors to be completely in charge of what gets published.”

The editors were also determined to avoid any publication fee for the authors. The small, volunteer-led editorial team required a simple-to-use platform that wouldn't overburden them technically, and establishing academic credibility through a professional and structured presentation was essential to overcoming initial skepticism from the scholarly community.

Solution

The Solution: JAMS as the Ideal Partner

After consulting with a Princeton librarian, the editorial team discovered JAMS, a platform specifically designed to support independent academic journals. JAMS met the journal's unique requirements, offering editorial control without interference and enabling the Journal of Controversial Ideas to uphold its mission of unrestricted academic discourse.

“JAMS provided an editorially independent, user-friendly platform that aligned perfectly with the journal's vision.”

The platform supported open access without charging authors, thereby aligning with the journal's vision of an inclusive and accessible platform for both contributors and readers alike. Its user-friendly interface empowered the small editorial team to manage submissions, peer reviews, and the publication process smoothly, while JAMS's professional layout reinforced the journal's credibility, helping it attract respected submissions and achieve recognition within the academic community.

Notable Progress and Achievements

Since partnering with JAMS, the Journal of Controversial Ideas has achieved remarkable success, a testament to the platform's ability to support a mission-driven publication. The journal maintains a selective 13% acceptance rate, demonstrating its rigorous academic standards and placing it on par with top philosophy journals.

"With JAMS, the Journal of Controversial Ideas has flourished, maintaining a selective 13% acceptance rate and engaging a global readership."

Its open-access model on JAMS has greatly expanded its visibility, allowing some articles to receive thousands of views, which is particularly notable for a humanities-focused journal. The journal's editorial process has also become significantly more efficient, allowing for timely publication and reducing the last-minute stress previously experienced by the team. With a professional presentation and a rigorous peer-review process, the journal has built trust and credibility within the academic field. JAMS's support for editorial independence aligns with the journal's core mission, giving the editorial team the freedom to publish challenging topics without external interference.

13% Acceptance Rate:

Demonstrates rigorous editorial standards, matching leading philosophy journals.

High Engagement:

Certain articles receive thousands of views, and in one case, after publicity in the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal, more than 100,000 underscoring the demand for open access controversial ideas.

Smooth Editorial Workflow:

Francesca described JAMS as "simple and intuitive," allowing her to manage submissions efficiently despite her limited technical resources.