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Undergraduate Economic Review: Recent Trends Report

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Undergraduate Economic Review: Recent Trends Report

Abstract

The *Undergraduate Economic Review* is a peer-reviewed, internationally distributed open-access journal aimed at promoting high quality undergraduate research. It is supported by the Ames Library and the Department of Economics at Illinois Wesleyan University. The journal has been in existence for eight years, and has published many notable articles from a variety of undergraduate institutions. This report provides an overview and preliminary analysis of statistics and data from Berkeley Electronic Press and Google Analytics reports.

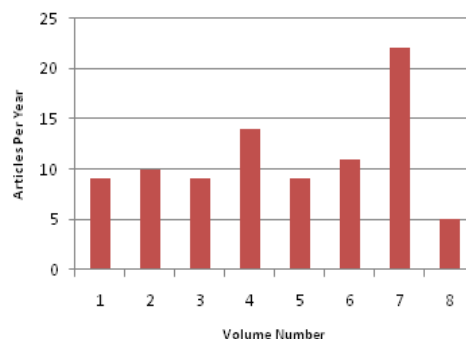
Undergraduate Economic Review - Recent Trends Report November 1, 2011

Authored by Editor-in-Chief: Jake Mann

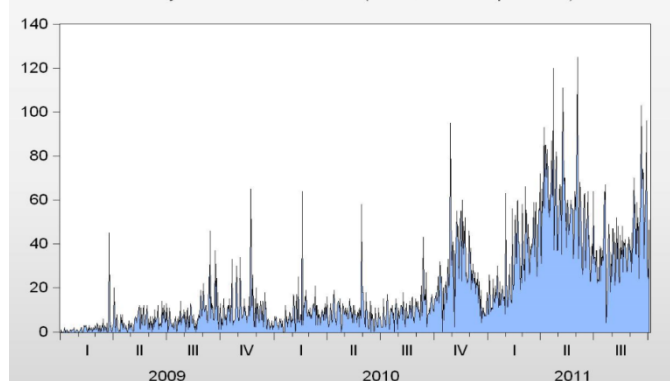
The *Undergraduate Economic Review* is a peer-reviewed, internationally distributed open-access journal aimed at promoting high quality undergraduate research. It is supported by the Ames Library and the Department of Economics at Illinois Wesleyan University. The journal has been in existence for eight years, and has published many notable articles from a variety of undergraduate institutions. To the right, a graph showing the number of published articles per year can be seen. It should be noted that while the size of each year's volume remained relatively steady between 2004 and 2009 (volumes 1-6); the size of the journal grew precipitously in 2010. In this 7th volume of the UER, the number of published articles reached 22; a value that was twice as high as the previous year.

This spike in published articles can be partially explained by the fact that readership has been steadily increasing since 2009. Below, a time series showing the daily frequency of full text downloads shows this upward trajectory. Until the opening of the 7th volume in the third quarter of 2010, daily FTD remain relatively stagnant averaging around 10 per day. It should be mentioned that during this pre-growth period, there are download spikes during certain points in the series. While, it is not known exactly what is causing these high fluctuations, it can be surmised that they are most likely a result of classroom exercises or common examination dates. After the third quarter of 2010, daily FTD begin to grow at a rate of 0.91 percent per day. In other words, the daily average doubles roughly each quarter. After four consecutive quarters of this "doubling-process" the growth of the series stagnates at this newly achieved stratum.

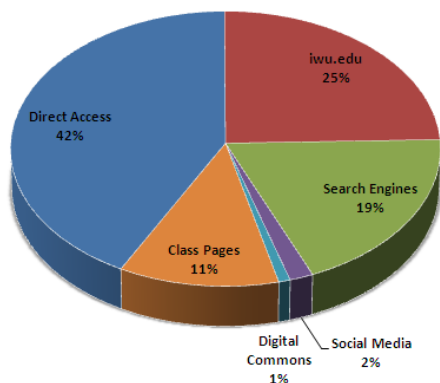
UER Published Articles



Daily Full Text Downloads (Jan. 2009 - Sept. 2011)



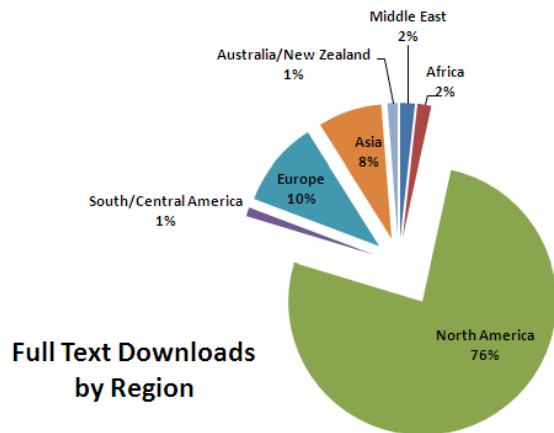
Entrance Sources



A related aspect of this trend that can be measured is how readers are reaching the *Undergraduate Economic Review's* website. In the pie chart to the left, a breakdown of readers' entrance sources can be seen. Not surprisingly, the majority of readers reach the journal by directly entering its uniform resource locator (URL) into their respective web browsers. Due

to the fact that the journal's URL is relatively easy-to-remember, it is not unexpected that 42 percent of all entrance sources occur through direct access. Twenty-five percent of all readers reach the UER's website through Illinois Wesleyan University-related links, 19 percent successfully reach the website through search engines, and 11 percent reach the page through class-related pages. Only 2 percent of readers visit the site through social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, or Google Plus. Thus, increasing viewership by use of social media is extremely important. To achieve this, a new marketing campaign has been established in the fall of 2011 that attempts to employ a greater use of social media networks. Additionally, just 1 percent of viewers

reach the journal through the Ames Library *Digital Commons* system. This deficiency can also be improved with increased marketing efforts.



The remaining 6 percent is divided between readers in the Middle East, Africa, Australia/New Zealand, and South/Central America. The largest South/Central American contributor is Brazil, while Pakistan and South Africa are the most active countries in the Middle East and Africa, respectively.

The final metric this report looks at is the amount of time readers spend on each site, arranged by hour. The graph below illustrates that readers spend a greater amount of minutes on the journal's website during the day. This is shown simply because the day-colored bars (orange and yellow) are more pronounced than the night-colored bars (blue). Adjusted for each reader's individual time zone, the hour that yields the longest time is between 13:00:00 and 14:00:00. The exact explanation for this is not known. Perhaps readers enjoy economics more after they have had lunch. This hypothesis would make intuitive sense and is supported by the fact that the hour with the second-highest yield is between 9:00:00 and 10:00:00 – after most students finish breakfast. This premise breaks down during dinnertime, however, as no boost in activity is seen during evening hours.

In conclusion, the *Undergraduate Economic Review* is fortunate to be experiencing record growth in size and readership. Moreover, readers of the journal are entering the website from a wide range of sources. The deficiency in social media as an entrance source is surely an opportune growth prospect. This diversity is not limited to entrance sources, as readers themselves are also geographically represented in six continents and 100 countries. It is encouraging that a quarter of all readership occurs in areas outside the United States. As a final point, it was discussed above that readers spend more time on the journal's site during the daytime hours.

The *Undergraduate Economic Review* truly is an international journal. The chart to the left demonstrates this fact. Notably, 29 percent of full-text downloads occur from readers living outside the United States (24 percent occur outside of North America). This "international quarter" is comprised of residents from a variety of regions throughout the world. Europeans account for 10 percent of download activity. The largest contributing countries in this region are the United Kingdom, Germany and France. Together, these three countries account for 80 percent of all European activity. Next, 8 percent of downloads are performed by residents of Asia. Somewhat surprisingly, the Philippines is the most active country in this region, with a yearly download total of almost twice that of China.

