

From: Renée Marlin-Bennett, *ISA Compendium Project* General Editor  
To: ISA Executive Committee and Governing Council  
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Thank you for this opportunity to present my report on the *ISA Compendium Project*. In 2015 Wiley finally published the 2014 update, which was late even though we had met all of our deadlines. The 2015 update has not, as of this writing, yet been published due to technical problems with the website, according to our contacts at Wiley. We did, of course, submit our accepted essays on time. The Compendium at Wiley has turned out to be less than satisfactory. More information about the future of the Compendium will be provided at the Governing Council meeting.

Nevertheless, there is quite a bit that is positive to report. I will note the editorial organization of the publication, the submissions and the accepted new and revised essays for the 2015 update, and the essays in process for the 2016 update. I will also discuss the analytical data provided by the publisher concerning the usage of *International Studies Online*, and I will conclude with a brief consideration of possible changes.

## EDITORIAL ORGANIZATION

In 2015, the Compendium moved to an editorial structure that is similar to other ISA publications. Instead of the original “advisory board” structure that involved all prior living ISA presidents, we have now constituted an Editorial Board of 21 leading scholars, chaired by Robert Denemark, who previously served as general editor.<sup>1</sup> Section editors continue to manage their subfield-specific submissions, soliciting authors for approved topics, suggesting new topics, identifying essays to be updated, soliciting referees, and making initial editorial decisions. Final editorial decisions are made by the general editor.

Engagement with the Compendium and the extent to which new and revised essays are submitted in a particular subfield depends in large measure on the interest of the membership of the section along with the efforts of the section editor. These vary. Some sections have not recommended section editors. Other sections have been particularly active and a number of new essays have been submitted or are in the drafting stages.

## SUBMISSIONS AND ACCEPTED NEW AND REVISED ESSAYS FOR 2015

The Compendium is only updated annually (a situation I hope will change, as I describe below). To have been considered for publication in 2015, an essay would have had to have been submitted by the end of June, 2015 and would have to have been refereed, revised (if needed), and submitted in final, acceptable form by late August. Twenty-nine essays met the June deadline. Twelve essays were included in the 2015 update. Two of these are authored by women. Of the twelve, seven are wholly new essays. Of the remaining seventeen, eight authors did not complete the revisions (yet). Nine of the revised essays are in the re-reviewing process.

An area for improvement will be to reduce the time to decision, which is currently more or less bimodal, with some essays making it through the process beginning with time of submission (submission, review, revisions and resubmission if necessary, section editor decision, and general editor decision) in four

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<sup>1</sup> The Wiley website has outdated information regarding the Editorial Board. The publisher seems to have uploaded an older version of the site since at one point the current information had been displayed.

months or less. Other cases are taking more months, with the maximum being around 8 months. In general this is because of unresponsive referees and the difficulty of finding replacement referees.

Because of the current Compendium policies – papers are invited and then peer reviewed, and the anticipated outcome is that authors will revise and resubmit until the essay is good enough for publication – an acceptance to rejection ratio is not meaningful. In general, authors receiving editorial instructions for revision that are too extensive simply do not resubmit. On occasion a decision of “reject” is reached.

## ESSAYS FOR 2016

Thirty-two essays are currently in process for the 2016 update. One of these has been rejected. Nineteen of the thirty-two are original essays and thirteen are updated revisions of previously published Compendium essays.

## USAGE DATA

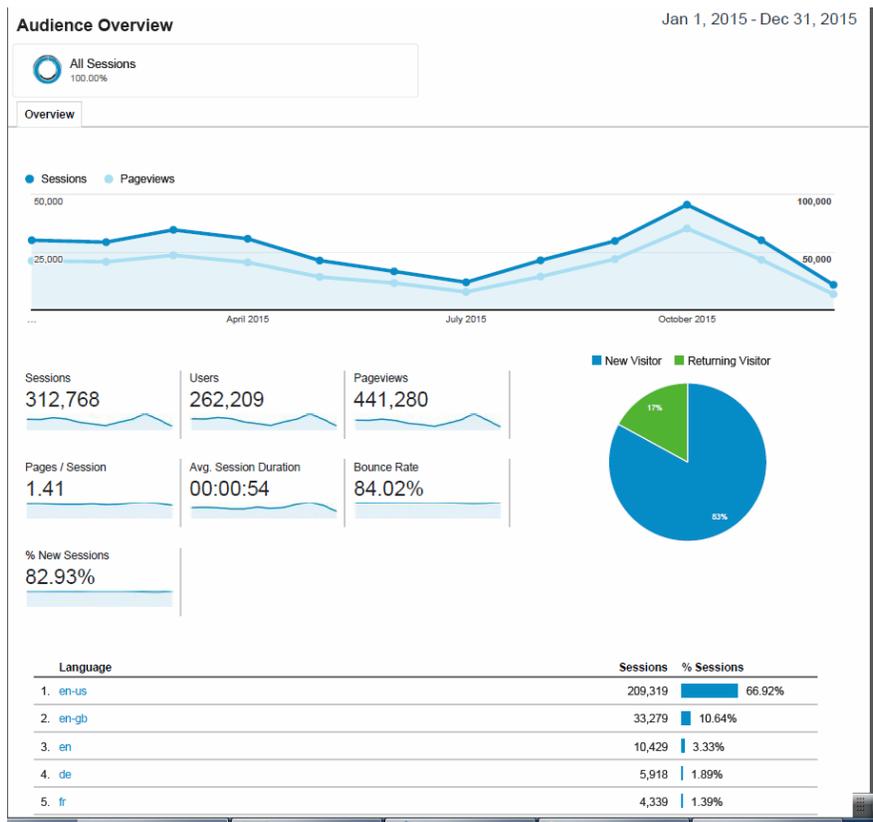


Figure 1. Wiley analytics.

A Wiley representative prepared Figure 1, which displays the usage data. Although almost all the website sessions were "bounces" (someone quickly arrives and then leaves as soon as they realize the site is not what they want or that they don't have access to the entries), 16% (over 50,000) sessions last long enough for the site visitor to use the resource.

I see one other notable piece of information in the analytics forwarded by Wiley. As Table 1 shows, a substantial proportion of sessions were conducted on a mobile device.

**Table 1. Operating System**

	Operating System	Sessions	% Sessions
1	Windows	174,106	55.67%
2	Macintosh	71,884	22.98%
3	Android	28,218	9.02%
4	iOS	24,673	7.89%
5	(not set)	5,807	1.86%
6	Linux	2,334	0.75%
7	BlackBerry	1,889	0.60%
8	Chrome OS	1,877	0.60%
9	Windows Phone	1,075	0.34%
10	Series40	428	0.14%

## LOOKING FORWARD

If ISA purchases the Compendium, which is now a possibility, exciting new possibilities will open. In my view, some elements should remain the same: whereas the *International Studies Review* publishes works that “[provide] a window on current trends and research in the field of international studies,” the Compendium is intentionally designed to be synoptic and historical: where has the research been and where is it now? I think this focus will continue to differentiate these two publications.

An area for potential change will be to break out of the model of inviting scholars to write on pre-approved topics and instead simply allow scholars to submit essays as they would submit manuscripts to any other peer reviewed journal. In addition, the prior Compendium convention against having more than one entry on the same or substantially overlapping topic could be relaxed and potential authors could be encouraged to provide alternative reviews that capture different elements.

Relaxing the by-invitation model will help alleviate a current problem: The current low rejection rate is a consequence of giving authors a chance to repeatedly revise and resubmit the essays on “their” topics. Multiple rounds of R&R – during which other scholars are, under the current system, unable to submit

on this topic – can result in an essay that is barely above the bar for publication rather than one which is truly excellent. An open submission system will allow us to hold authors to a higher standard.

Further, having one section editor per section may well be too unwieldy for this publication and a structure of an editor plus a smaller number of associate editors may well be better able to work energetically on the project.

Perhaps most importantly, a revitalized *International Studies Online* should truly take advantage of its web presence and use the technology to provide the best possible resource for the scholarly community and students. Making sure that the Compendium is fully optimized for use with mobile devices as well as traditional operating systems will be an important concern.

A more specific set of recommendations will depend on opportunities afforded by a publisher.