

## Report

# ***Article Usage Analytics for the Canadian Journal of Communication 2015–2018: A Guide for Authors, Publishers, and Readers***

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background** *The historical context for this article is the embrace by the Canadian Journal of Communication of emerging technology and, most recently, article analytics.*

**Analysis** *The article focuses on four years of usage data for articles published since the 1974 founding of the CJC. It is intended to assist the journal, authors, and readers in understanding the potential for usage of articles published in CJC. The article details overall usage; explores journal penetration of global, national, and special markets; depicts the range of subject matter published; outlines the performance of the journal website and two secondary aggregators; summarizes usage levels throughout the journal's collection; and reports on the year of publication and age of article data.*

**Conclusions and implications** *The details of the findings provide insight into the nature of usage of articles in the field. In general, but of less interest than the detailed findings, one can surmise that usage is influenced by subject matter, presentation style, editorial vision, an initial quick rise to peak usage, access dynamics, but not authorship in and of itself.*

**Keywords** *Scholarly journal publishing; Communication; Scholarly communication; Online publishing; Usage analytics*

### **RÉSUMÉ**

**Contexte** *Le contexte historique pour cet article est l'adoption par le Canadian Journal of Communication de technologies émergentes et, tout récemment, d'analyses de données sur les articles.*

**Analyse** *Cet article porte sur des données d'utilisation recueillies sur quatre ans pour tous les articles publiés dans le CJC depuis son lancement en 1974. L'objectif de l'article est d'aider les revues savantes, leurs auteurs et leurs lecteurs, à mieux comprendre le potentiel pour l'utilisation d'articles parus dans le CJC. Cet article recense l'utilisation globale; explore la*

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*pénétration de revues dans les marchés mondiaux, nationaux et spéciaux; indique l'éventail des sujets traités; expose les grandes lignes de la performance du site de la revue et de deux agrégateurs secondaires; résume les niveaux d'utilisation pour l'ensemble des numéros de la revue; et présente des données sur l'année de publication des articles.*

**Conclusion et implications** *Les données recueillies illuminent le type d'utilisation d'articles dans le domaine. Bien qu'il soit préférable pour le lecteur d'examiner les données en détail, on peut tout de même les résumer en suggérant que, parmi les influences sur l'utilisation, il y a le sujet de l'article, son mode de présentation, la vision éditoriale, un laps de temps avant l'utilisation maximale et une certaine dynamique d'accès. Quant à l'identité de l'auteur, celle-ci ne semble pas avoir autant d'influence.*

**Mots clés** *Édition de revues scientifiques; Communication; Communication savante; Édition en ligne; Analyse d'utilisation*

## Background

In 1994, reflecting enthusiasm for the internet's capacity to make information available around the world at minimal cost, the *Canadian Journal of Communication* (CJC) became one of the first established journals in the world to upload its back issues to the internet and make them freely accessible. It also developed a subscriptions management module so the journal could publish online and maintain the necessary revenue to staff its operations. Upon completion, CJC shared its subscription module with what became Open Journal Systems (OJS); CJC then began using OJS's manuscript management software, thereby bringing its entire operations online while maintaining a print version.

The *Canadian Journal of Communication* reported on these developments to the Canadian Association of Learned Journals with regularity and encouraged other journals to take advantage of emerging technology. In 1997, CJC was involved in co-convening "Scholarly Communication in the Next Millennium," a conference that discussed not only emerging technology-based administrative and dissemination opportunities but also explored what librarians were calling the "scholarly communication crisis." This "crisis" was brought about in the late 1970s and early 1980s by library budget increases that fell short of providing their clients with access to the quickly expanding body of scientific research combined with the increased costs of maintaining subscriptions brought about by post-war price-, profit-, and title-maximizing practices of first some, and then many, international science, technical, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) journal publishers.

While CJC initiatives were demonstrating how technology could ease administration and vastly expand dissemination, the librarians were giving notice that, as consumers, they expected technology-facilitated price drops. Indeed, in the late 1990s and 2000s both librarians and publicly minded scholars questioned the need for publishers and even journals themselves, a question that was taken up by some authors who felt that the peer review process was a too stringent barrier to sharing research results. This questioning became a dominant theme in the open access movement, and it is reflected in the success of predatory journal publishers.

These developments laid the foundation for a fundamental transformation of the realities of scholarly communication over the past two-and-a-half decades, which has unfolded in two streams. One stream, led by journal innovators, emphasized techno-

logical facilitation. A second stream, led by libraries, claimed partial if not total rights to the benefits of technology on behalf of their institutions.

Setting the streams aside, consider a brief history of journal publishing. In the print world, articles have been disseminated in three ways: personal subscriptions, mailing off-prints, and library subscriptions. Conferences also played a role, as they do today. In the years following World War II, a war that was won, at least partially, by the application of theoretical physics, demand for access to such knowledge soared. Every university wanted access to expanding research activities in physics and chemistry, education was seen as a valued investment, and the participating countries had to cope with returning soldiers and the ensuing baby boom. This quick and dramatic expansion of the research literature devalued personal journal collections because they were increasingly inadequate. The circulation of research results via off-prints was clumsy, reflective of small-club dynamics, and often required out-of-pocket expenses by researchers who rarely saw any benefit sharing off-prints with people they had not and never expected to meet. And while, for researchers, libraries were increasingly essential in staying current with one's sub-discipline, there was little central coordination of singular collections via interlibrary loans. Most importantly, the exchange that did exist was far too slow and not necessarily reliable. In short, the circulation of print-based research reports was constrained: only the richest universities could fully serve their researchers and students.

A case in point: At its print zenith, *CJC* had only approximately 600 subscriptions. Many went into libraries and claims for the "non-receipt" of issues, often a library worker's euphemism for lost or stolen, together with the establishment of hour-based lending "reserves," suggested that those copies were used frequently. Duplicate subscriptions by departments also suggested that use was extensive. High-quality photocopying, then called Xeroxing, which was introduced to universities around 1967, further increased article usage. But still, the system was both slow and clumsy.

Usage of print-based publishing content was also opaque. Both authors and publishers were quite blind to the readership levels. In this environment the founder of the Institute for Scientific Information, Eugene Garfield, developed the Impact Factor. It measures the sum of the citations the articles in a particular journal receive in a year, a crude aggregative measure of readership to be sure. For social sciences and humanities (SSH) journals there was no parallel metric.

Print-based journal publishing may have resulted in hundreds of readers for an average article and perhaps thousands of annual readers for an average journal. No doubt some prestigious titles reached the tens of thousands. And in certain disciplines other mechanisms ensured the flow of necessary knowledge. But, for the most part, researchers were blind to the size and nature of the readership of any of their published articles.

In 2020, established journals are seeing hundreds of thousands of article views. Internationally prestigious journals have reached the millions. In short, the transition from print to internet- and digital technology-facilitated publishing has created a fundamentally different information universe. Production management has been eased substantially; usage far beyond levels in the print era is now entrenched, and opacity has been replaced with an emerging transparency. We can see how often an article is

seen, where, for how long, and, in some instances, by whom. Usage data can be crunched with relative ease to gain “big data” insights into the nature of knowledge production and acquisition. As a result, there has been an explosion of meta-publishing initiatives—some legal, others semi-legal, and still others clearly illegal.

The most obvious example is social network sites such as Academia and ResearchGate. They have sprung up to capitalize on informing authors about usage of their articles. As they build their databases, these social networks provide additional community-building information. However, their metrics are based on workarounds to gain access to articles and recirculate them. They measure the usage of their copy version of an original article by those who sign up as members. Next come “preprint” servers, usually not-for-profit academic-run operations that attempt to work around cost of access and delays in publishing by accepting non-peer reviewed work. Then there is Digital Science, an organization owned by an international publishing conglomerate that has developed a rich meta research ecosystem operation, the tentacles of which are ever evolving. Joining the mix are university- and field-based repositories often run by university libraries. And joining them are other organizations such as Crossref, an organization that administers Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs). This list could continue almost indefinitely. It would include Google Scholar and its analytics services, a slew of indexing and abstracting services—including Elsevier’s Scopus, the Publisher Analytics Reports from the Web of Science Group—and the pirate site Sci-Hub. Indeed, the field is becoming so populated with various initiatives that its complexity is threatening the exclusion of small-scale operations and even major efforts in less developed economies.

This explosion is a dramatic demonstration of the unanticipated value of the digitization of the generation, funding, carrying out, reporting, disseminating, and derivative exploitation of research. It calls for thoughtful, inclusive design and strategic participation. Ironically, digital was supposed to be cheaper.

The *Canadian Journal of Communication* believes there is an opportunity, perhaps even a necessity, for independent scholar- and society-run journals to extend their efforts to include collecting and analyzing metrics that reflect the usage of the actual site of publication. This would parallel the analytical efforts that are *de rigueur* with commercial journal publishers. It would also help keep the benefits of publishing research in the research community by providing an alternative to a shift from financially exploitative publishing to financially exploitative meta-publishing. The challenge is to create a joint analytical initiative by independent scholar- and society-run journals that is of sufficient size to match private-sector initiatives. Thus, in keeping with its embrace of technology, *CJC* has entered the world of usage analytics.

The analytics reported in this report are a beginning. It is intended that the first beneficiaries of these analytics be authors. Thus, this report is cast with that perspective in mind. We also believe that, more broadly, journal workers, other researchers, and students can benefit from gaining greater insight into article usage and the digital dynamics of scholarly communication. Finally, the following analytics are intended to spur the interest of other journals. The next step, already in motion, is to assemble a small group of journals and provide a group report.

## Data overview

This article provides descriptive data drawn from three sources: the *CJC* website and two secondary aggregators with which *CJC* has contractual arrangements: EBSCO and ProQuest. It does not include data from other sources that carry *CJC* content, including course management systems, ResearchGate, and Academia.

In overview, it appears that a number of major factors influence article usage. These factors are suggested as heuristics to assist in understanding the data presented:

1. Subject matter is clearly relevant. Article usage often reflects social and policy relevance and scarcity (i.e., the availability of other articles on the same topic). Relevance to course curricula also appears to contribute to usage.
2. The manner in which the content is explored is important, as, in some cases, is emphasis on quantitative measures and whether the article is a research report or an analytical commentary.
3. Editorial vision or curation is important: certain thematic issues as a whole appear to have enhanced appeal.
4. An apparent lag in initial usage appears in the publication year data as a result of articles being published and added in each of the four first years under study. The age-of-article data correctly reflects a quick rise to peak usage by year one of availability.
5. Access is obviously important. This includes open accessibility, journal website awareness and availability, placement with indexing and abstracting services (*Canadian Journal of Communication*, n.d.), and ease of use; in short, a retail presence that may include being made available in the aggregations of journals that librarians and/or professors tend to recommend.
6. Somewhat surprising is that, overall, the influence of authorship is not immediately discernable. In four years of data, no single author has more than one article in the most frequently accessed articles. Nor was it apparent that there was above-average usage of articles written by a single author. This is not to say that such an influence might not be teased out of the data in the future.

## Overall market penetration and reach of *CJC*

In 2018, the following performance measures (see Table 1) describe the market penetration and reach of the collection of articles published by *CJC*.

Of all the article views on the journal website, 86 percent were HTML views and 14 percent were PDF views. On the ProQuest site, 78 percent were HTML views and 22 percent were PDF views. There is no differentiation between HTML

**Table 1. Market penetration, 2018**

Total article views and downloads, <i>CJC</i> website	452,944
Total views and downloads, secondary sites	116,679
Total title and abstract views	213,890
Total content views (from all data sources, full-text views plus title and abstract views)	783,513
<b>Total article views</b>	<b>569,623</b>

and PDF views on the EBSCO site. As a percentage of the total views, PDF views have been declining over the past four years (2015 to 2018). Articles are available in both formats on the *CJC* website.

The reach of *CJC* articles in 2018, facilitated by indexing and abstracting services, was 216 countries. The top ten countries according to usage values are listed in Table 2.

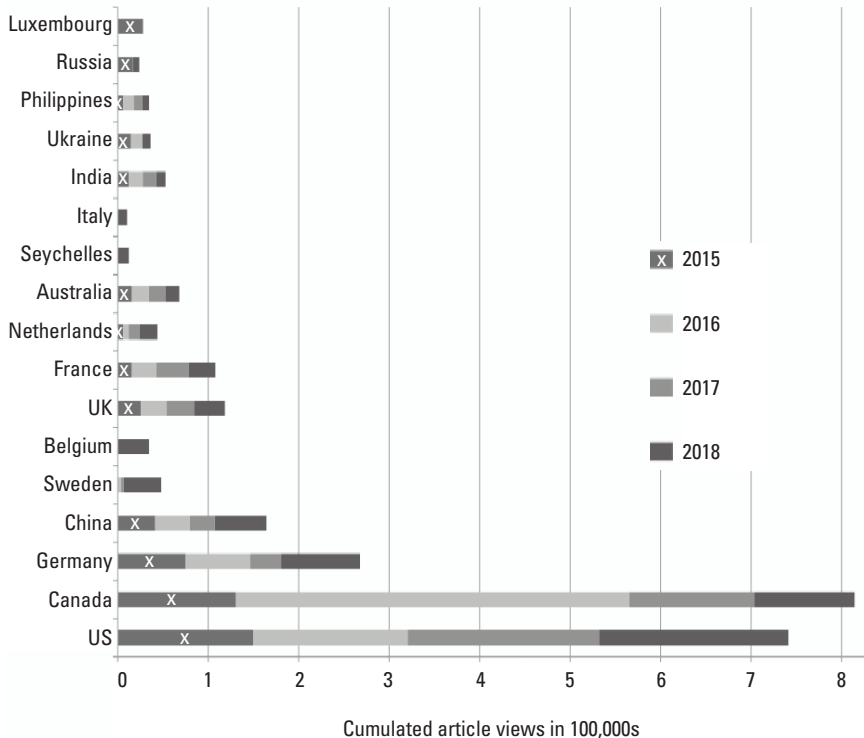
Figure 1 depicts the data from the highest-use countries over four years, from 2015 to 2018. Note the 2016 data for Canada brings it into first place in usage.

Articles in *CJC* are used across Canada. As Table 3 shows, setting aside Québec, generally speaking, the greater the provincial population, the greater the *per-capita* usage of *CJC*. The presence of post-secondary communication programs within provinces also appear to stimulate usage.

**Table 2. Most frequent use by country (top ten), 2018**

US	209,321
Canada	111,032
Germany	87,210
China	57,080
Sweden	41,182
Belgium	34,607
UK	34,210
France	29,728
Netherlands	19,813
Australia	15,117

**Figure 1. Article views in the countries with the highest viewership, 2015–2018**



**Table 3. Percent of Canadian usage by province**

Order by population	% of population	% of usage
Ontario	38.3%	54.5%
Quebec	23.2%	15.2%
BC	13.2%	13.4%
Alberta	11.6%	8.5%
Manitoba	3.6%	1.8%
Saskatchewan	3.1%	2.1%
Nova Scotia	2.6%	2.3%
New Brunswick	2.1%	1.3%
NL	1.5%	0.7%
PEI	0.4%	0.1%
Other population	0.3%	

Interestingly, but not shown in the table, the ratio of HTML to PDF usage varies slightly from province to province. University library acquisition policies appear to account for some of this variation.

### Frequently accessed articles

An examination of the 20 most frequently accessed articles in 2018 on the journal website (which, in general, accounts for 80 percent of usage) gives a sense of both the content and the number of times each of these high-usage articles was accessed. There are several elements to note in Table 4.

1. The first two columns give a sense of the content and the usage levels, that is, their uptake with readers.
2. Column 3 reports the year in which each article was published. The most used articles are not the most recently published—cutting-edge content—but rather range over 26 years, from 1989 to 2015. This range is a little larger than in most years, but a 20-year usage range for the top 20 articles would be normal.
3. Column 4 captures their general subject-matter focus and level of attention.
4. To assist in understanding how typical these top 20 articles are, column 5 presents the 20 most frequently used words in article titles over the four years for which there are data: 2015 to 2018.
5. Notably, although the table does not show this, while there is a certain continuity in the most frequently accessed articles from year to year—about two-thirds remain in the top 20 year over year—change in the make-up of the list is also apparent.
6. The pattern and extent of usage suggests that the dominant users are not researchers (faculty and dissertation-active PhD students). It would not

be unreasonable to suggest that the predominant users are course-taking students writing essays and looking for relevant research to inform a topic.

**Table 4. Title content, usage level, and publication year of most used articles (2018)**

Article title	Aggregate total views	Publication year	General focus	Most frequent words
Commentary A Schlemiel Is the Elephant in the Room: The Framing of Stéphane Dion	321,394	2009	political media-based framing	media
Éther 2.0 : Révolutions sans fil	40,950	2008	technology and practice	communication
The Progressive Construction of Communication: Toward a Model of Cognitive Networked Communication and Knowledge Communities	38,747	2003	technology/theory	Canadian
Missing and Murdered Women: Reproducing Marginality in News Discourse	32,714	2006	media practice/social issue	Canada
Looking at Shirley, the Ultimate Norm: Colour Balance, Image Technologies, and Cognitive Equity	28,740	2009	influence of technology	television
Media Coverage of Acts of Terrorism: Troubling Episodes and Suggested Guidelines	22,977	2005	media practice/social issue	public
Mass Communication: Some Redefinitional Notes	22,941	2002	technology/theory	culture
Introduction: The Social Effects of Culture	21,558	2006	culture and society	news
'EA Spouse' and the Crisis of Video Game Labour: Enjoyment, Exclusion, Exploitation, and Exodus	16,076	2006	technology/theory	cultural
'Gendering' the Self in Online Dating Discourse	13,341	2013	media practice/social issue	social
'Engaging Class Struggles': Preparing Students for the 'Real World' by Teaching 'Activist' Cultural Production in the Classroom	13,311	2017	media/social activism	policy
Relations Between Journalists and Public Relations Practitioners: Cooperation, Conflict and Negotiation	13,145	1989	professional communication	research
Interpersonal Surveillance on Social Media	12,305	2012	technology/surveillance	information
The Role of the Media in Promoting Images of Disability- Disability as Metaphor: The Evil Crip	11,862	1993	media framing	politics
The Technology is not the Cultural Form?: Raymond Williams's Sociological Critique of Marshall McLuhan	11,477	1998	technology and culture	political



**Table 4 (continued)**

Article title	Aggregate total views	Publication year	General focus	Most frequent words
Millennials' Media Use: It is A Matter Of Time	10,620	2015	influence of technology	digital
Towards a Cybervictimology: Cyberbullying, Routine Activities Theory, and the Anti-Sociality of Social Media	10,458	2015	influence of technology	studies
The Dialectical Methods of Marshall McLuhan, Marxism, and Critical Theory	9,139	1996	theory	communications
Céline Dion, the ADISQ Controversy, and the Anglophone Press in Canada	8,999	1999	professional communication	technology
Reality TV, Big Brother and Foucault	8,938	2001	media framing/theory	world

The overall percentage of usage accounted for by the secondary aggregators (20%) is another aspect of understanding the nature of usage. For a small subset of social issue-oriented articles, the percentage of usage attributable to secondary aggregators was much higher. It is important to know that the target population of the secondary aggregators is undergraduates and this may account for this “data anomaly.” The data are presented in the Table 5.

**Table 5. Percentage of usage of secondary sites for a small subset of articles**

Article titles (short form)	Highest secondary usage 2015–2018	Usage 2018
<b>All CJC articles</b>	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>20.5%</b>
Missing and murdered women	50.8%	29.8%
Gendering the self in online dating discourse	73.0%	36.5%
Interpersonal surveillance on social media	53.0%	33.4%
Towards a cybervictimology	85.5%	39.1%
Millennials' media use	81.2%	42.2%

### **Contribution to usage by secondary aggregators**

Not yet shown in any of the data reported are the different levels of access to *CJC* articles gained in various countries through secondary aggregators. Generally, as Table 6 indicates, the aggregators used by *CJC* are active in large English-speaking countries and less so in non-Anglophone markets. The high use by readers of aggregators within Canada is, from a business perspective, disappointing. The revenue the journal receives from secondary aggregators per article view is woefully inadequate to pay its employees and other operational costs.

**Table 6. Percentage of usage attributable to secondary sites by country**

Country	All article views	Share secondary sites
US	209,321	21%
Canada	111,032	38%
Germany	87,210	0.5%
China	57,080	3%
Sweden	41,182	2%
Belgium	34,607	2%
UK	34,210	23%
France	29,728	1%
Netherlands	19,813	3%
Australia	15,117	54%

### Frequently used articles contrasted to the collection as a whole

A focus on the top 20 articles neglects the performance of the totality of articles published by *CJC*. Such a focus provides certain insights that would be lost if an attempt was made to include even 100 of the 1,000 or so of the articles *CJC* has published since its beginning in 1974. But, by no means does a focus on the most frequently accessed articles tell the whole story. A sense of that story can be gained by Table 7, which details the usage levels of the top ten, then the following ten, and the following three tens, up to the top fifty articles, as well as the remainder of the total published collection of the journal. While the top ten do stand out, all the articles that go mildly viral are within the top ten, the usage levels of the top 11 to 50 drops dramatically. Most dramatic is the usage of the remainder of the collection. Those “remaining” 900 or so articles account for over 50 percent of website usage of *CJC* content and over 90 percent of the usage on ProQuest’s presentation of the articles. This finding was unexpected, and its significance is that, in general, the entire collection is being accessed. This appears to reflect curiosity-driven, subject-oriented behaviour rather than a narrow focus on “outstanding” articles, which is a real plus from an educational perspective.

**Table 7. The usage of articles on the journal website and via ProQuest by frequency of access, 2015–2018**

Website	2018	2017	2016	2015
Top 10	29.5%	34.4%	42.8%	18.2%
Top 11-20	4.5%	4.0%	4.0%	6.1%
Top 21-30	3.4%	4.4%	3.0%	4.6%
Top 31-40	2.9%	3.4%	2.5%	3.5%
Top 41-50	2.5%	2.8%	2.2%	3.4%
<b>Remaining ~1,000</b>	<b>57.2%</b>	<b>52.7%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>64.2%</b>

**Table 7 (continued)**

ProQuest	2018	2017	2016	2015
Top 10	4.8%	4.9%	4.8%	1.4%
Top 11-20	1.0%	1.1%	1.0%	0.8%
Top 21-30	1.3%	0.7%	1.2%	2.2%
Top 31-40	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%	3.5%
Top 41-50	1.4%	2.7%	1.1%	1.0%
<b>Remaining ~1,000</b>	<b>90.3%</b>	<b>89.3%</b>	<b>90.4%</b>	<b>91.0%</b>

### Relationship between country reach and usage

One measure of market reach is the number of countries from which readers accessed content. It would be reasonable to expect that there might be a close correspondence between usage levels and the number of countries reached by any particular article (the more countries, the more views). As Table 8 shows, there is some relation but not a close correlation. This suggests that, at least for some articles, the audience may be very small but widespread. There is also room for follow-through research. An exploration of which countries were reached by which articles might show interesting patterns that could suggest expansion opportunities for journals.

**Table 8. Usage and usage rank of the ten articles with the highest country reach**

Title (short term)	Number of countries (2015–2018)	Usage (2015–2018)	Usage rank within top 50 (2018)
Intro: Social effects of culture	180	20,673	8
Progressive construction of communication	170	38,380	3
Mass communication redefinition	163	22,091	7
Media coverage of terrorism	146	21,924	6
Excellence in journalism	146	7,629	27
Marketing, management and competition in cultural industries	140	7,890	26
Looking at Shirley: Tech design bias	135	14,698	5
Journalists and PR professionals	135	11,832	11
Images of disability	129	11,236	13
McLuhan dialectical method	128	8,571	18

### Overall usage, usage by year of publication, and usage by article age

Moving back to the bigger picture, and furthering an effort to frame the usage of the whole collection, the following table indicates that, in the years 2015 to 2018, there

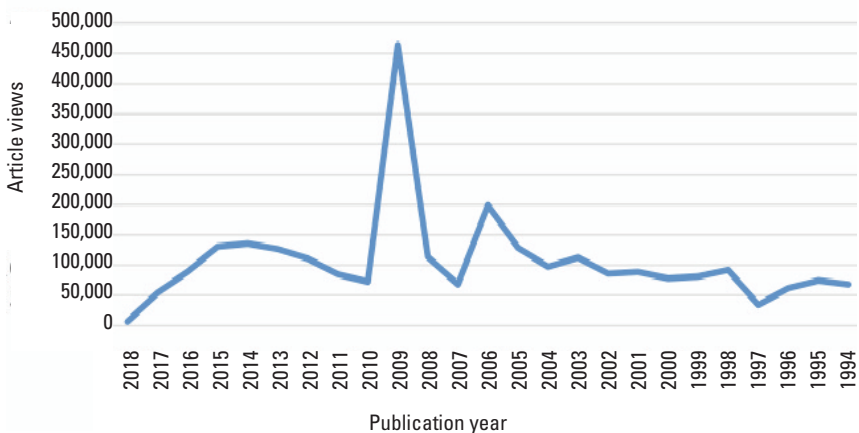
have been just over three million article content views—that is full-text views plus titles and abstracts. Table 9 provides the data, and Figures 2 and 3 present them in two different ways. Table 9 also indicates a steady annual increase in all views of the growing collection of articles and the presence of a substantial viral article. This three million-plus level of use is not only reassuring for *CJC* authors but also represents a considerable effort by journal staff and a substantial contribution to knowledge in Canada and around the world.

**Table 9. Total article content views by publication year 2015–2018**

Year	2018	2017	2016	2015	4-year total
2018	6,688				6,688
2017	48,319	5,889			54,208
2016	36,507	31,329	19,919	1,297	89,052
2015	37,697	40,121	32,709	20,207	130,734
2014	34,665	33,435	35,797	31,676	135,573
2013	29,018	30,965	39,486	27,285	126,754
2012	26,788	27,582	30,274	26,277	110,921
2011	20,867	20,659	24,470	18,868	84,864
2010	19,022	18,672	21,285	13,453	72,432
2009	33,199	35,852	359,268	36,180	464,499
2008	56,087	20,315	19,686	17,603	113,691
2007	16,361	16,395	17,910	17,249	67,915
2006	48,282	47,734	45,891	57,221	199,128
2005	30,434	31,433	30,580	36,351	128,798
2004	26,508	21,135	23,822	25,844	97,309
2003	16,563	19,226	29,991	46,894	112,674
2002	17,825	15,707	24,423	27,962	85,917
2001	22,940	18,265	21,769	25,701	88,675
2000	21,377	17,137	18,969	20,570	78,053
1999	22,301	16,594	19,654	22,681	81,230
1998	25,373	21,865	20,551	24,287	92,076
1997	12,318	7,284	6,653	7,857	34,112
1996	15,971	14,882	14,484	16,572	61,909
1995	25,460	17,392	14,574	17,091	74,517
1994	18,740	14,847	14,006	20,524	68,117
< 1990	99,679	94,366	93,508	92,763	380,316
N/A	12,224	27,818	2,406	5,643	48,091
<b>Total</b>	<b>781,213</b>	<b>666,899</b>	<b>982,085</b>	<b>658,056</b>	<b>3,088,253</b>

Figure 2 presents article and journal performance by highlighting the frequency of use over four years of articles published between 1994 (when, 20 years after it was founded, *CJC* began its online backlist open access operation) and 2018. Notably, there are two spikes, one for articles published in 2009 and one for articles published in 2006. The highest spike (over 450,000 in 2016) and unmatched in the history of the journal) is attributable to a sudden interest in 2016 in an article that was published in 2009 (Basen, 2009). It appeared in a lengthy issue entitled “Rethinking Public Relations” and the article dealt with political framing (a.k.a. branding in a commercial context). The article explored how the Conservative Party of Canada framed the ultimately unsuccessful Liberal candidate, Stéphane Dion, in the lead-up to the 2008 Canadian election. Nearly two years before the election, February 4, 2007, the Conservatives aired a Superbowl attack ad portraying him as a weak leader. As the election grew closer, the Conservatives, inspired by American politics, attacked Dion not for his weaknesses but calling into question his strengths.

**Figure 2. Usage of 2015–2018 article content by publication year**

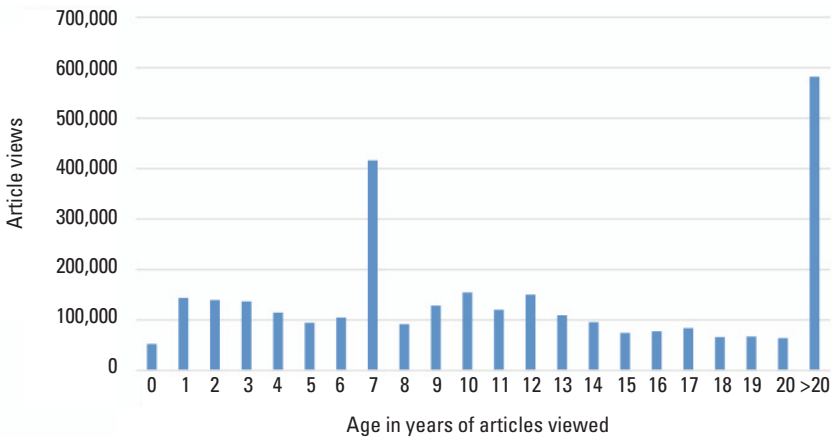


The second spike is attributable to a number of strong articles published in 2006 that generated considerable usage in the ensuing years. Three appear in various top 20 listings. Particularly notable was a special issue (31.1) (*Canadian Journal of Communication*, 2006), which reported a number of studies resulting from a 2004 conference focused on the social impact of culture. The conference was funded by Canada’s Department of Canadian Heritage, along with others, and its title was “Examining the Building Blocks of Cultural Citizenship.” The conference concluded that more research on the social effects of culture was needed in six main areas to accompany economic analyses and to provide the foundation to warrant policy development. The issue contained some of the resulting studies.

While the four-year snapshot of usage depicted in Figure 2 provides some interesting data that suggest the long-term value of published articles and some outstanding performances in certain years, Figure 3 portrays growth, delay, and the duration of usage.

Figure 3 presents usage data by the age of article. For example, one-year-old articles, five-year-old articles, and seven-year-old articles. Thus, the usage in 2015 of all articles published in 2010 is combined with all 2013-published articles in 2018 and so forth. In contrast to Figure 2, Figure 3 depicts an immediate rise of usage within a year of publication that is sustained for three years. Demand appears to decline slightly for four to eight-year-old articles (excluding the demand spike of the 2009 “framing” article in its seventh year). Nine to 12-year-old articles then see some resurgence in demand, but 13-year-old articles begin to see a slow decline in demand through to year 20, where demand rests at 64,000. Within those trends are various ups and downs that are probably less important than knowing that the average level of annual usage of all articles from their year of publication to year 12 is 142,314, and from year 13 to year 20, the average usage is 79,969. The latter is far from nothing.

**Figure 3. Usage by article age in years**



The last column on the chart underlines this “far from nothing” element. Articles more than 20 years old published in *CJC* from 1974 up to 1998 attracted over 582,000 views between 2015 and 2018.

## Conclusion

As noted in the abstract, in general, usage is influenced by subject matter, presentation style, editorial vision, an initial quick rise to peak usage, access dynamics, but not authorship of multiple articles. However, the particulars, which themselves are overviews, are far more interesting. Each of the findings opens possible tentative insights, and more research on more journals is required to begin to draw conclusions about usage. However, *CJC* authors can conclude that they are in good company in terms of single article usage level, the length of time usage can be anticipated, and a reach of over 200 countries, including all Canadian provinces. This applies not just to a few, frequently used articles but to many. Authors can be confident that their articles live alongside complementary articles spanning a substantial breadth of topics in Canadian communication; that their articles can reach subsets of readers in substantial numbers; and that usage is widespread among many published articles—readers are not artificially

pulled to high-use articles, celebrity authors, or a narrow set of topics. Readers can also be assured that they are tapping into a well and widely used body of research. Those who contribute in other ways to the *CJC* can take pride in these various elements, alongside *CJC*'s financial management and its record of innovation. This history of innovation started with *CJC* being the first established Canadian journal to make back-issue content available online without charge and extends to making its performance public in this article.

### Websites

Academia, <https://www.academia.edu/>

Canadian Journal of Communication, <https://cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal>

Crossref, <https://www.crossref.org/>

Digital Science, <https://www.digital-science.com/>

EBSCO, <https://www.ebsco.com/>

Google Scholar, <https://scholar.google.com/>

Open Journal Systems, <https://pkp.sfu.ca/ojs/>

ProQuest, <https://www.proquest.com/>

ResearchGate, <https://www.researchgate.net/>

Sci-Hub, Sci-Hub is a pirate site with a changing URL

Scopus, <https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus>

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