

Report of the Editor

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics

The *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* (*AEJ: Applied*) was launched by the American Economic Association in July 2007.

As shown in Table 1, the number of submissions increased to 387 for the year ending October 31, 2011 (from 347 in 2010).

TABLE 1—MANUSCRIPTS SUBMITTED AND PUBLISHED,
2007–2011

Year	Submitted	Published	Previously submitted to the <i>AER</i>
2007	69	0	5
2008	228	0	36
2009	350	34	36
2010	347	40	40
2011	387	36	33

Notes: Submissions to the *AEJ: Applied* for each year include all new submissions from November 1 of the previous year through October 31 of the stated year. Publications include the January, April, July, and October issues of the stated year.

The *AEJ: Applied* publishes papers covering a broad range of topics in applied economics, with a focus on empirical micro-economic issues. In particular, it covers labor economics, development microeconomics, health, education, demography, empirical corporate finance, empirical studies of trade and industrial organizations, and empirical behavioral economics. Table 1 gives the distribution of fields covered by the papers. It reflects the broad diversity of papers received. The papers have different empirical approaches (from descriptive studies and lab experiments to structural estimation), and address a broad array of topics. They are united by the fact that they make a substantive and empirical (i.e., not purely methodological) contribution to important economic issues.

Editorial Process

Manuscripts submitted to *AEJ: Applied* are handled by an editor (Esther DuFlo) and two coeditors (Liran Einav and Thomas Lemieux). After being processed by the Pittsburgh office staff, the manuscripts are allocated by the editor to herself, Liran Einav, or Thomas Lemieux. All subsequent responsibility for handling the manuscript, including the decision to summarily reject papers, choice of referees, and the ultimate disposition of the

paper rests with the person to whom the manuscript has been assigned. However, this person consults with at least one more member of the editorial team before reaching a “revise and resubmit” decision, and generally in marginal cases as well. The decision letter specifies which coeditor was consulted, if one was. The journal has a policy of avoiding conflicts of interest, and papers are not assigned to an editor if the author is a colleague, coauthor, or recent student.

AEJ: Applied no longer follows the double-blind process previously followed by the AEA journals. As other AEA journals now do, *AEJ: Applied* now discloses the author’s name to referees. As before, referee names are not revealed to the author. Papers are often rejected without a formal review when the editor in charge of the paper believes the paper is unlikely to be finally accepted in the *AEJ: Applied*. The author’s submission fee is refunded when papers are rejected without formal review.

For manuscripts previously submitted to the *AER*, authors can choose to have the *AER* file forwarded to the *AEJ: Applied*. That file includes the editor’s decision letter, the referee reports, and, with the referee’s permission, the cover letter to the *AER* editor. The majority of referees agree to have their cover letters made available, and this information is sometimes sufficient to reach a decision on the paper. The additional information usually expedites the review of a paper even when an immediate decision isn’t possible. This feature has been used for 33 papers submitted in 2011 (Table 1).

Editorial Board

The journals editorial board is Jerome Adda, University College London; Joshua Angrist, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Peter Arcidiacono, Duke University; Abhijit Banerjee, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Marianne Bertrand, University of Chicago; John Bound, University of Michigan; David Card, University of California at Berkeley; Amitabh Chandra, Harvard University; Gordon Dahl, University of California at San Diego; Raymond J. Fisman, Columbia University; Andrew D. Foster, Brown University; Matthew Gentzkow, University of Chicago; Gordon H. Hanson, University of California at San Diego; Brian A. Jacob, University of Michigan; Seema Jayachandran, Stanford University; Chinhui Juhn, University of Houston; Dean Karlan, Yale University; Jeffrey R. Kling, Congressional Budget Office; Michael Kremer, Harvard University; David S. Lee, Princeton University; Alan Manning, London School of Economics; Robert Margo, Boston University; Edward Miguel, University of California at Berkeley; Sendhil Mullainathan, Harvard University; Luigi Pistaferri, Stanford University; Antoinette Schoar, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Jesse Shapiro, University of Chicago; Duncan Thomas, Duke University.

Editorial Data and Process

For the year ending October 31, 2011, the journal received 387 new submissions. For papers submitted in 2011, the breakdown of decisions is the following: 2 accepts; 297 rejects (including 100 rejected without referees); 41 revise and resubmits; and 44 pending. The average acceptance rate for manuscript is 11 percent.

AEJ: Applied has established a tradition of quick and efficient service for authors, which we are very proud of. The mean decision time for first decision continues to be very low: 41 days in 2011. As shown in Table 2, we are particularly attentive to avoid long tails: no paper submitted in 2011 had a decision time of more than 3 months. As of December 6, 2011, the oldest paper without a decision was 60 days old.

TABLE 2—DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST DECISION TIMES, BY SUBMISSION YEAR

Months to response	2010		2011	
	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent
1	40	40	33	33
2	32	72	32	64
3	27	99	33	97
4	1	100	0	100
5	0	100	0	100
6	0	100	0	100
7	0	100	0	100
8	0	100	0	100
9	0	100	0	100
10	0	100	0	100
11	0	100	0	100
12	0	100	0	100

Notes: Submission year denotes period from November 1 of the preceding year to October 31 of the stated year. The 2009 and 2010 distributions are the actual distributions. The 2011 distribution is projected from Kaplan-Meier hazards computed from the right-censored distribution of decision times of manuscripts submitted between November 1, 2009 and October 31 2011. Percents are rounded to the nearest integer. Figures in this table supersede those contained in previous *AEJ: Applied* reports.

We are also keen to offer authors a relatively “complete” contract, and the vast majority of papers that are sent for revision are ultimately accepted, usually without returning to referees. The few papers that were rejected after a first revise and resubmit were usually papers first sent to the AER, were not sent to referees the first time around, and thus have not wasted much of the authors’ time. In very few occasions, we had to reject a revision when the robustness checks requested showed the results not to be robust.

The average lag from initial receipt to acceptance was 13 weeks, and the average lag from acceptance to publication was 32 weeks.

TABLE 3—AVERAGE PROCESSING LAGS BY YEAR OF PUBLICATION
(in weeks)

Year of publication	Number of weeks		
	Receipt to acceptance	Acceptance to publication	Receipt to publication
2009	10	38	48
2010	12	32	44
2011	13	32	44

Notes: Average receipt to acceptance is the mean number of weeks in the editorial decision process at the *AEJ: Applied* for published manuscripts. Lags for acceptance to publication and receipt to publication are for all papers published in the indicated year.

Table 4 gives the average page length for manuscripts published in 2011. This remained stable.

TABLE 4—AVERAGE PAGE LENGTH OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Year of publication	Number of articles	Average page length
2009	34	27
2010	40	26
2011	36	27

Note: The table refers to the January, April, July, and October issues of *AEJ: Applied Economics*.

AEJ: Applied has the same data posting policy as the *AER*, requiring authors of accepted papers that employ data in econometric analysis, simulation models or experiments post their data and programs on the journal website. Table 6 gives the statistics on data posting for 2011. What is notable is that every single paper published had data, and all of the papers have posted at least some of their data or programs on the website (exceptions are granted for data that cannot be posted).

TABLE 5—SUBJECT MATTER OF PUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS

JEL Codes	2009	2010	2011
A—General economics and teaching	1	0	0
B—History of economic thought, methodology, and heterodox approaches	0	0	0
C—Mathematical and quantitative methods	3	0	2
D—Microeconomics	11	19	11
E—Macroeconomics and monetary economics	1	0	5
F—International economics	1	7	1
G—Financial economics	1	5	0
H—Public economics	7	8	10
I—Health, education, and welfare	20	36	24
J—Labor and demographic economics	31	44	31
K—Law and economics	4	2	3
L—Industrial organization	5	5	5
M—Business administration and business economics; marketing; accounting	3	2	3
N—Economic history	2	4	5
O—Economic development, technological change, and growth	15	24	30
P—Economic systems	2	1	0
Q—Agricultural and natural resource economics; environmental and ecological economics	3	7	13
R—Urban, rural, and regional economics	0	4	6
Y—Miscellaneous categories	0	0	0
Z—Other special topics	3	5	3
	Total	Total	Total
	113	173	152

Notes: Includes all *JEL* codes reported for each manuscript submitted to *AEJ: Applied Economics*. Entries represent totals for January, April, July, and October issues.

TABLE 6—2011 DATA-POSTING POLICY STATISTICS

Issue	Number of papers	Papers with data	Exemptions	First-round compliance	Second-round compliance	Noncompliance
January	10	10	0	9	1	0
April	8	8	0	8	0	0
July	9	9	0	9	0	0
October	9	9	0	9	0	0

The editors and the two coeditors are extremely grateful to the work of many referees, who have continued being extremely responsive to requests, and provide timely and useful reports.

The journal has also benefited tremendously from the behind the scenes work of Managing Editor Michelle DeBlasi and Editorial Assistants Kelly Markel and Kelly Andrews. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

Esther Duflo, Editor