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## **Editorial: Content editing and improving clarity in academic publishing**

Content editing, a type of copy editing, is a little discussed phase in a journal's publication process. It takes place after the review process is completed and an article or review is accepted for publication in the journal. From 2024, at the *UCR*, we use the term *content editing* instead of *copy editing* to better reflect the kind of work that is done by the *UCR* Team to support the development of academic publishing. *Copy editing* generally refers to editing by *copy editors* for accuracy, clarity and consistency in language. It involves corrections of grammatical errors, editing for syntax and checking for conformity with applicable style of referencing. In contrast *content editing* includes copy editing but also involves editing academic publication for improvement in scholarly argumentation. Consequently, content editors seek clarity in choice of words, comment on the logical sequence of the argument and request for additional references to support claims made. Content editing, therefore, is undertaken to improve the scholarly contribution made through the article and is not limited to improving its language. Examples of comments made by a content editor may include requests to expand on the literature review offered in an article, further explanation to explain a substantive argument and to provide references for specific claims.

The *UCR* publishes work not only from multiple disciplines, but from authors in different stages of their research or academic trajectory and fluent in multiple languages of which English is only one language. As our current and previous issues illustrate, we publish the work of novice authors as well as seasoned researchers. Authors in a country such as ours, where resources related to research publishing are scarce, need more support. At *UCR*, we found that content editing was a more accurate description of the quality of editorial work carried out by the *UCR* Team. Typically, each submission goes through at least two rounds of content editing and includes comments and suggestions by the assigned content editor as well as the editor. The line by line engagement with the work submitted by our authors is intensive and time consuming but is often rewarding. Working on submissions in different disciplines, as a multidisciplinary team, this process often generates internal debates on style, process and structure of academic publication. These debates provide feedback into our editorial process, often helping us to remain self-reflective and critical of our own work.

On March 22, 2024 the *UCR* Team conducted a half-day workshop on content editing with participants from several disciplines at the University. We identified content editing as a timely topic based on our past experience and its significance was confirmed by the feedback we received from our participants. This was our first workshop on academic publishing. Based on the Team's experience in editing submissions post peer-review, the *UCR* Team had identified this as a need and had aimed to conduct a workshop in 2024. Colleagues working for other journals of the University of Colombo were invited to participate. We hope the workshop will encourage us to discuss this invisible but important phase that is needed to sustain the quality of a journal.

### **Issue 5(1)**

In keeping with our publication format the *UCR* now publishes under three sections: articles, reviews and symposia. A highlight of this issue is the article titled 'The challenges of writing the history of localities that were under colonial rule in the early phase of European expansion: An investigation into writing the history of Negombo (Sri Lanka) in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries' by Chandra R de Silva. We are pleased to publish this article as an invited submission and we include an editorial note with the article to provide an introduction to the author and his contribution to the study of history. In 'Power implicit in language: A case of the Sri Lankan government's securitization of the Covid19 pandemic' Shaneendra Amarasinghe presents an analysis of the state's response to the arrival of the Covid19 pandemic in 2020. Using news coverage encompassing audio, video and textual data and using a discourse analytic method, he illustrates that the state responded to the pandemic as if it was a security threat rather than a public health crisis. The article shows us how securitized discourses work beyond immediate security concerns.

In 'A Legal Empowerment Approach to Improving Access to Justice for Victim-Survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence' the author, Michelle Handy, examines the relationship between legal empowerment and access to justice. While her focus is on victim-survivors of sexual and gender based violence, the article may have wider implications for improving access to justice more generally in Sri Lanka and similar jurisdictions. In 'An Analysis of Privacy Policies in Sri Lanka' Tavini Nanayakkara offers an empirical analysis of several privacy policies in four sectors in Sri Lanka. Her aim in this analysis is to identify the influence of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union on policy making by private actors in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's Data Protection Law is to be operationalized in two stages, December 2023 and March 2025. Therefore, a study of privacy policy of private actors assumes significance. Finally, in the articles section we publish "'Big Data Breaches,' Sovereignty of States and Challenges in Attribution' by Shannel Gunatileka. This article too focuses on digital data but from the perspective

of international humanitarian law and its application to significant breaches in ‘big data.’

We publish two reviews in this issue. In ‘Recent advancements in lipid nanoparticle technology for oral insulin delivery’ authors Induwara Welengodage and Nuwanthi Katuwavila offer a review of the methods of delivery of oral insulin using nanotechnology. In ‘The impact of herbal treatments for Vitiligo disease’ the authors R. M. D. S. Rathnayake and Damayanthi Dahanayake review research on herbal plant extractions that may help the treatment of this skin disorder. It provides an evaluation of the efficacy of such treatment for melanocyte re-pigmentation.

This issue’s Symposium section features three keynote speeches made at the University’s Annual Research Symposium in 2023. By publishing all three keynote speeches, on the topics of inflation, health policy and the uses of Artificial Intelligence respectively, *UCR* highlights once again the importance of multidisciplinarity. Our purpose in placing these three keynote speeches in conjunction is to encourage scholars to think of collaboration across their disciplinary boundaries on these pressing issues of our time.

*Dinesha Samararatne*  
*Editor*  
*31 May 2024*

*Kaushalya Perera*  
*Assistant Editor*