

Editorial: Two Planets and One Journal*

Dear Readers,

Number one of the sixth volume is now in your hands. On this occasion, may we sincerely thank all of our authors, members of the editorial board, reviewers, advertisers, subscribers, readers, and those involved in layout and production of the Journal. We think that the first five years have been fairly successful for LCA in general, and many readers assured that the same is true for Int. J. LCA. One never should, however, rest on ones laurels, and therefore we started a discussion on potential improvements and the future editorial policy by two editorials [1,2].

Essentially, we proposed giving more weight to case studies without neglecting methodological papers which were the backbone of the contributions during the first years of the Journal. The last editorial [2] caused controversial comments, some of which have been published as 'Letters to the Editor' (Patrick Hofstetter, Rolf Frischknecht, Williams Owens [3-5]). Other comments, communicated mainly by email, were submitted by Allen Astrup Jensen, Erwin Saouter, David Pennington, Edgar Hertwich, Reinout Heijungs, Arthur Braunschweig, José Potting, and others.

The positions put forward reflect different demands authors and readers may have toward a journal and toward LCA, which depends on their personal point of view, or, in other words, on the planet they inhabit: the planet of the Method developers (section A) or the planet of the Practitioners (section B). It should be noted that it is not exceptional to meet residents of both planets, especially in the consultancy area:

A) Method developers (Academic background)

- High level methodological papers
- Case studies should be published only if new methods are applied, to test the methods in real life ('Feed-back', not provided by grey literature)
- Other case studies should be published in sector-specific journals or on the web
- The results of such case studies are of no interest to people working in LCA, their target public is unclear
- Separation of the Journal into a (rapid) newsletter and a slower high-level Journal of **highest possible reputation and rating** (Science citation index, etc.).

B) Practitioners (Industry)

- The Journal should advance all aspects of LCA, not only methodology
- The Journal should help to provide sources of inventory data, improved sources of public data!
- The Journal should help provide the required data exchange format!

- No objection against a well-balanced share of methodology papers, but only few people are interested
- Case studies on a high scientific level should be the main focus, Life Cycle Management (LCM) gains importance
- Method development comes to an end (ISO finished), **but: new** methods to progress science (agreement seems to be that Life Cycle Impact Assessment belongs to this group) should be published.

The Questionnaire

To explore the opinion of our editorial board, we sent a questionnaire to all 53 members in December 2000. This questionnaire contained the following statements to be answered by 'yes' or 'no' and, optionally, by additional comments (which turned out to be very interesting):

1. I suggest a **separation of peer-reviewed contributions** (Methodology, Case Studies, Commentaries) and **non peer-reviewed contributions** (Letters to the Editor, New LCA Theses, Book Reviews, Conference Reports and Announcements)
2. The Journal should concentrate on **methodology papers**
3. The Journal should concentrate on **case studies**
4. The Journal should publish a **mixture** of methodology, case studies and other contributions (**status quo**)
5. The Journal should publish a **mixture** of methodology, case studies and other contributions, however, **separated within each issue**
6. Publishing **full LCA studies in the Internet** would increase the value of the Journal
7. The proposal was made to change the title of the journal from LCA to LCM or at least to identify LCM as a **subtitle**.

45 from 53 members responded to the questionnaire!

We also explored whether the board members may be prepared to continue working on the editorial board of 1. Int. J. LCA in the future (96% yes, two answers undecided or not valid) and 2. the new stand alone Internet Journal 'Gate to Environment and Health Science - Gate to EHS', Section 'Life Cycle Management' (47% yes).

Thank you for your trust and interest!

The Results of the Survey

In the following, we present the results of the inquiry, which, in our view, is truly representative for the LCA-community, and also for the two planets, since the board of editors consists of academic researchers as well as of consultants, industrial practitioners, members of governmental agencies and administrative bodies (EPA, UBA, MITI).

*The metaphor of the two planets has been coined by Sarah Cowell on the occasion of the 8th SETAC Case Studies Symposium (see the title page, the cover legend on page 3A, and the conference report on p. 53-54).

1. Separation of peer-reviewed and non peer-reviewed contributions: 76% yes, 18% no
2. Concentration on methodology papers: 20% yes, 69% no
3. Concentration on case studies: 4% yes, 84% no
4. Mixture of contributions (status quo): 64% yes, 22% no
5. Separation of contributions within each issue: 56% yes, 27% no
6. Full studies in the internet: 77% yes, 11% no
7. Life Cycle Management (LCM) as title or subtitle: 38% yes, 53% no

We interpret these results as approval for a multitude of contributions, especially for methodology papers and case studies. For the sake of scientific reputation, however, a clear separation of peer-reviewed and non peer-reviewed contributions seems to be desirable. The comments show that a separation in two journals, as was suggested previously [3,4], is not considered to be a good solution. Electronic publishing of comprehensive LCA-studies is considered to be promising by three quarter of the respondents. The inclusion of LCM in the title or as a subtitle polarized the board more than the numerical result can show (53% no, 38% yes): the comments expressed both clear refusal and enthusiasm. We shall observe the development and decide later about using LCM as a sub-title. Meanwhile, the electronic 'Gate to Environment and Health Science (Gate to EHS)', Section 'Life Cycle Management', stands wide open for peer-reviewed contributions on LCM. This section will be edited by the same team as in Int. J. LCA, which guaranties a coherent editorial policy and a smooth shifting of appropriate contributions from the Journal to the Gate, and vice versa.

The results of the inquiry should not be interpreted as a consent to all contributions published in the past. The comments clearly show weaknesses in the published case studies, which we – the editors and authors – have to improve. Authors of case studies may recall that

- the main interest of our readers concerns the application of new or modified methods, as Int. J. LCA is devoted to Life Cycle Assessment, not to any specific products
- of interest is also new data material which should be at a unit process level and not highly aggregated. Generic data from public databanks can be acquired by practitioners without the support of our journal
- specific results are of interest to competitors rather than to the whole LCA community. All colleagues, however, may be interested in surprising results obtained by LCA, changes in production processes, or even in policies on the basis of LCA
- extended versions of case studies can be published in 'Gate to EHS'
- please indicate the type of quality assurance, the source and language of the full study The peer reviewers of our editorial board cannot routinely perform a 'critical review' according to ISO 14040! If comparative assertions are performed, ISO strictly requires a critical review by a panel

according to 14040 §7.3.3. If such a review has not been performed, it should be stated that the study (which still may be scientifically interesting) has not been accomplished in accordance with the international standard.

Gate to Environmental and Health Science – Gate to EHS (www.scientificjournals.com/ehsonline)

This stand-alone Online-Journal will start in February 2001 (features and outline see p. 4 of this issue). It is a peer-reviewed journal. The tool 'Digital Object Identifier' (DOI) secures the appropriate citation of articles. Publications will be performed as PDFs. The subscribers of Int. J. LCA and of our other scientific journals will have free access at least through the year 2001. Later on, and maybe later than 2002, the six subject areas will be offered as single journals under the joint roof of 'Gate to EHS', and a special discount will be offered to the subscribers of our journals. 'Gate to EHS' will expand Int. J. LCA by

1. information that is too large to be published in Int. J. LCA (e.g. full case studies)
2. background information to the articles in the journal
3. new areas of subject [LCM, Life Cycle Costing (LCC), Design for Environment]
4. LCA-Software reviews with demo software
5. the continuation of the 'Global LCA Village' (discussion forum)
6. electronic versions of the 'LCA Documents'

As has already been mentioned, the editors of the different subject areas come from the Editorial Board or the authorship of Int. J. LCA, which secures scientific quality. May we invite you to contribute to 'Gate to EHS' and to submit further suggestions for LCA-related topics.

Separation of Peer-Reviewed and Non-Peer Reviewed Articles

To quickly react to the feedback of the inquiry, we demonstrate in this issue the separation of peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed articles, which means the separation of methodology, case studies and 'other contributions'. As can be seen, this structure requires 1. empty pages (p. 28, 34, 44) and 2. empty space below the articles (p. 12, 27, 43), at least in the scientific, peer-reviewed part. For the sake of reprint production, the articles should start on a right page. In the past we have used empty left pages and space below the articles for 'other contributions'.

1. Be aware that empty pages generally (not in the case of this demo issue) cannot be added to the regular number of 64 pages but are included, which means that our subscribers get less information than they have actually paid for.
2. We have provided examples of 'additional information' below two peer-reviewed articles (p. 18, 33) to use the remaining space without especially disturbing the requested structure. In the case of the article 'Environmental LCA with Support of Fuzzy Sets' (p. 13-18), we have asked the authors to provide a text that fits to the overall subject. In the case of the article 'Including Oxidi-

sation of Ammonia in the Eutrophication Impact Category' (p. 29-33), it happened that ESU-services submitted the announcement of an LCA case study.

Generally, authors are not too enthusiastic to invest further work once their papers are finalized.

3. We have continued identifying the articles that have been peer-reviewed by stars.

You, our Readers, are asked to check and comment this demo edition of Int. J. LCA.

References

[1] Klöpffer W, Heinrich AB (2000): How to Communicate LCA Results. Editorial in Int. J. LCA 5 (3) 125
 [2] Klöpffer W, Heinrich AB (1999): Can You Imagine the LCA World Without our Journal? Editorial in Int. J. LCA 4 (4) 183
 [3] Hofstetter P (2000): Comments to the Editorial in Int. J. LCA 5 (3) 125 (2000): Int. J. LCA 5 (4) 187
 [4] Frischknecht R (2000): Comments to the Editorial in Int. J. LCA 5 (3) 125 (2000): Int. J. LCA 5 (4) 187
 [5] Owens W (2000): Comments to the Editorial in Int. J. LCA 5 (3) 125 (2000): Int. J. LCA 5 (4) 188

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Anthology¹	
LCA vs. LCM	Methodology vs. Application
Let's not water down the meaning of LCA with the vagueness of LCM.	This would make the Journal for few Academics only and would limit usefulness. The Journal should spread the LCA word, not limit it.
I see LCM as a subset of LCA, just like LCIA, LCI, etc.	Publishing full LCA studies wouldn't hurt but the value of the Journal rests on its performance over 5 years and its new initiatives.
LCM is just one application of LCA (and often the re-invention of the wheel).	This is the world's best journal for methodology papers.
I favour mentioning LCM in the subtitle. LCM is a very broad and unspecific term to have as a journal title	Journal should include case studies which demonstrate new findings; AND, the methods papers should be encouraged to include real case study applications where relevant.
LCM is not just an official shift to include case studies as is suggested by position B5. LCM is also eco-design, cost-benefit analysis, policy instruments, and much more. These topics fit perfectly in existing journals, like J. Cleaner Prod., Env. Man., J. Industrial Ecology, and so on.	There is room for case studies, providing they provide a contribution to other researchers/practitioners in the LCA field – e.g. illustrate a new method, or the differences between existing methods or simply provide useful inventory data. Note that most case studies have not provided inventory data that can be used by others, hence their merit is strongly questioned.
LCM is much broader and includes fully different expertise as covered now (e.g. economics, company management, etc.). We can do it but we'll end up with a Journal with a fully different character as now. Means also probably extension of the ed. board.	The most interesting things are case studies and methodology; 'Other contributions' should usually be as short and sharp as possible! (e.g. no real text about a new regional society, just an address, a web-site and a few highlights.)
The Journal as such is well known under this name and the term LCM as such is less well known	The strong case-study focus gives Int. J. LCA her own position besides the rather heavy methodological stuff in JIE, but I feel Int. J. LCA should take care to remain the balance between both
I have no idea what LCM means. It has many meanings. I know what LCA means.	There is only one journal for LCA, so it should cover both research and application.
LCA + LCM illustrate the practical approach and the integration of LCA with other tools, which is the daily life in companies	Application goes hand in hand with methodology – the two should not be separated.
If we want to open the journal, the LCM extension is great.	For me and most of my colleagues the mixture is very important. We are not interested in an 'academic' journal.
if in the coming editions, enough articles on LCM issues will appear, then I would decide on that. Basically, I would prefer LCM-issues to be treated in the same journal	The journal should not focus on methodology developers only, but also on the people that actually apply LCA. To the scientists: They should also know and read, what the users of LCA in the real world are doing.
Nobody knows what LCM is, there is no clear definition. LCA is now understood and established. I do not see a need to confuse people with a new title.	I consider that Int J LCA has always been very open to various influences, without compromising with any of them, and that is its virtue.
LCM should be identified as a subtitle. Not so many persons know the word "LCM" in Japan.	Case studies on their own are only interesting for companies that are in exactly the same business. Of course case studies can be used to illustrate methodologies (in there wide sense)
We should not change the title all 4 years following the flavour of the last year	Every full LCA study that is moved from the 'gray literature' level to general accessibility is a gain for the LCA community
LCA is now mostly a methodological basis for several tools being used in Life Cycle Management. The title of LCM with LCA as a subtitle might thus be a good idea.	ISO is definitely not the end of methodology development and many parts remain controversial, even suggested terminology in some cases.
LCM is probably the future, but at present, the clear LCA focus should be maintained	The journal can not serve as discussion platform amongst a handfull of thought leaders. They could have their disputes in form of letters to the editor.
I believe LCM is the future trend. I am not sure if the change of the name is good.	A case study article should never give detailed data, but only the most interesting, even surprising, results.

¹ Anthology: selection of comments from the questionnaire