



# NITheCS

National Institute for  
Theoretical and Computational Sciences

## COLLOQUIUM

# Challenges and opportunities in academic journal publishing in and from South Africa

Prof Leslie Swartz (Stellenbosch University)

**DATE:** Monday, 14 October 2024 | 16h00–17h00 SAST

**VENUES:**

- Neelsie Cinema, Stellenbosch University
- Online

--- A recording of the talk will be published on the NITheCS YouTube channel afterwards ---

### ABSTRACT

2024 is an exciting year for academic publishing in South Africa – it marks 120 years of uninterrupted publication of the *South African Journal of Science*. It is also a challenging year for academic publishing globally. We continue to face a highly skewed pattern of academic publishing on the basis of race, gender, class, geography, language and disability, to name a few; despite attempts to rectify the situation. We are excited and enlivened by the potential contributions of Large Language Models and AI to improve matters, but we are unsure about where new technologies will take us. Peer review is, and has for a long time been, in crisis. In higher education metrics, it is difficult to count and reward peer review, and editors are commonly exhausted by the toll it takes to try to find reviewers for articles. Academic book publishers, even those with very good reputations, are not always rigorous with assessment and editing of manuscripts. Output-driven incentive systems (such as the DHET subsidy system and NRF rating system) are in danger of conflating quantity of easily measurable outputs with scientific quality. In this talk, I consider the effects of these pressures and opportunities, and offer some survival tips.

### BIOGRAPHY

Leslie Swartz is a clinical psychologist and professor of psychology at Stellenbosch University. He holds a PhD in psychology from UCT and a PhD in English from Stellenbosch University. He is editor-in-chief of *South African Journal of Science* and of *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*; he was founding editor-in-chief of *African Journal of Disability*. He holds an A rating from the NRF and has won a number of awards for his work, including the Academy of Sciences of South Africa Gold Medal for Science-for-society. Much of his current work is focused on supporting emerging researchers, through the Early Career Academic Development (ECAD) programme at Stellenbosch University, and other avenues. His largest current research project focuses on addressing language barriers to mental health care, and he is working on a book reflecting on the academic landscape in South Africa through a lens of care ethics, and dealing, amongst other things, with the politics of epistemic exclusion.



**REGISTER  
TO ATTEND**

<https://bit.ly/4gT0Nyu>



**SUBSCRIBE  
TO THE  
NITheCS MAILING LIST:**

