Readers Provide Journal Feedback

Thank you for responding to The Journal’s 2014–15 Reader Survey. We received feedback from readers worldwide in all facets of conventional weapons-destruction work. The results were overwhelmingly positive, and we are energized by the constructive suggestions for improvement.

by Lois Carter Crawford | Center for International Stabilization and Recovery |

Seventy-seven percent of the respondents are age 41 or older. More respondents work in North Africa and the Middle East (22 percent) than in other areas of the world. Your work covers everything from advocacy and survivor assistance to demining, information management and quality assurance/control.

It is essential for us to understand from our readers what we are doing well and areas for improvement.

Here are some of the things you like best about The Journal:

• It keeps me up-to-date in the sector.
• It’s consistent, professional and useful.
• The Feature articles and the Research and Development section are informative.
• It is easy to read, covers a wide range of topics and announces upcoming topics.
• It looks great; articles are curated well, and there is no subscription fee.
• It shares information worldwide and gives a good overview on worldwide activities.
• I like to read about updates and supporting services for survivors in my country.
• It is a very informative journal for the field.
• The authors are very knowledgeable.
• It provides current information and updates.
• I like the readability, breadth of articles and focused subject matter.
• I like the combination of topics and people covered in it.
• It has a global scope.
• It helps me keep up with developments in the field of explosive remnants of war (ERW)/mine action.
• I like that the contributors to The Journal are true experts in the field of demining.
• The lessons learned/best practices from the field, information on new technologies/techniques are helpful.
• It covers all aspects of mine action and informs about new technologies that are being used during operations.

According to the survey, current Journal topics are of continued interest to our readers.

- Mine action/explosive remnants of war: 93%
- Research & Technology: 74%
- Management issues: 61%
- Social issues: 61%
- Other conventional weapons: 58%
- Improvised explosive devices (IED)/counter-IEDs: 55%
- Country, organization or people profiles: 52%
- Legal and policy issues: 51%
- Chemical, biological or nuclear weapons: 34%
More importantly, you told us what you like the least about *The Journal*:

- It is not very technical.
- *The Journal* tends to be explosive ordnance disposal and demining biased.
- You might manage to get better or additional authors at times, possibly by contacting key people directly and asking them to mobilize.
- It contains highly academic articles that have no real influence on field operations.
- There is too much emphasis on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and their contracts.

Your suggestions for improving *The Journal* include:

- Allow some experts from the ERW and mine action or other relevant fields to give thorough and constructive criticism on some researched works before publishing them.
- Make online version easily printable.
- Include personal stories from victims of exploding mines and how they could have avoided them.
- Produce more issues per year.
- Have more articles from training institutions.
- Get more information from commercial companies on their contracts.
- Share more articles through social media.
- Report about the work in different places.

In addition, you identified new or emerging topics in mine action and post-conflict recovery that you would like to see covered in *The Journal*:

- Adaptive technology for mine/ERW victims; physical rehabilitation and prostheses for victims
- Ammunition-stockpile management
- Capacity building and the realistic transition from role of the U.N. to national ownership
- Conflict prevention and preparedness
- Counter-improvised explosive devices disposal
- Disability rights/humanitarian law/conventions
- Disaster recovery
- Explosives research
- Link between small arms/light weapons proliferation and terrorism in the Middle East as well as North and Sub-Saharan Africa
- Linking the need for mine clearance and post-conflict weapons and ammunition destruction to general economic development
- Methods of public education, awareness and funding
- Regional reports
- Risk management
- Use of drones, sensors and robotics

You also told us what new research and technology innovations you would like explored in *The Journal*:

- Biosensors
- Drones and unmanned aerial crafts
- Ground-penetrating radar
- New animal-detection techniques
- Personal protection-equipment development
- Regionally funded programs and developments
- Robotics
- Satellite technology
Lois Carter Crawford, associate editor of The Journal of ERW and Mine Action is an accredited public relations professional with more than 40 years of experience in writing, editing and publishing. Prior to joining CISR in 2005, Crawford worked in the advertising and publishing field, and she ran her own marketing-consulting company for 10 years. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (U.S.).

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Other interesting results from the survey include:

We are very pleased to learn from this survey that our readers value The Journal. As a journal of practice, it is our mission to share the latest information among professionals in the field, and we continually require your feedback to ensure the quality and timeliness of the publication. The Center for International Stabilization and Recovery will work to incorporate these findings and suggestions into The Journal. Thank you for your time and expertise, and be on the lookout for new and innovative information coming your way in future issues.

Note: All responses were edited for grammar, spelling and clarity of purpose.