



History and Vision Behind the Journal of Science, Humanities and Arts

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Submitted: 20. November 2025
Published: 12. January 2026
Volume: 13
Issue: 1
Affiliation: Journal of Science, Humanities and Arts (JOSHA), Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany
Languages: English
Keywords: History; Vision; Science; Humanites; Arts
Categories: News and Views
DOI: 10.17160/josha.13.1.1110

Abstract:

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History and Vision Behind the Journal of Science, Humanities and Arts

Interviewee: Gerhard Steinmann, Co-Founder & Co-Editor-in-Chief of JOSHA.
JOSHA & IASHA, Freiburg, Germany
Date: 11.08.2025

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The History and Vision of JOSHA: An Interview with Founder and Co-Editor-in-Chief Gerhard Steinmann

Since its first publication in December 2014, the Journal of Science, Humanities and Arts (JOSHA) has established itself as an open-access platform dedicated to interdisciplinary research. In this conversation, Gerhard Steinmann — one of the journal's founders and current Co-Editor-in-Chief — reflects on JOSHA's origins, guiding principles, challenges, and aspirations for the future.

Origins on the Slopes

The idea for JOSHA was born far from academic conference halls — on a ski trip in Flims, Switzerland.

“Roland and I met there with our families for a week of skiing. I was close to retirement, and Roland had this idea to found a journal that would embrace all disciplines — not only science but also the humanities, music, and the arts,” Gerhard recalls.



The concept resonated with a belief Gerhard had carried for years, inspired by the German pathologist Rudolf Virchow: “The truth is between the disciplines.” This conviction that knowledge emerges at the intersections of fields became a defining pillar for the journal.

Why Science, Humanities, and Arts Together?

From the start, interdisciplinarity was non-negotiable.

“Roland wanted to call it the Journal of Science, Humanities and Arts — JOSHA. It’s a friendly-sounding name, like a first name, but it also signals openness to all fields.”

The founders initially set up JOSHA as a for-profit company, pooling personal funds to create a GmbH under German law. However, generating revenue proved unfeasible.

“We quickly realized it was impossible to make the journal financially self-sustaining through subscriptions or advertising. So Roland brought it under the umbrella of the Biothera-Roland-Mertelsmann Stiftung, transforming it into a nonprofit.”

Today, JOSHA’s operations are funded by the foundation, with additional support from the International Academy of Science, Humanities and Arts — an association that helps finance initiatives like the Demetrios Awards.

A Mission Shaped by Scientific Gatekeeping

One formative influence on JOSHA’s philosophy came from historical cases of innovative research being suppressed by mainstream thinking.

Gerhard points to Ignaz Semmelweis, the Hungarian physician and scientist who discovered the link between hand hygiene and reduced maternal mortality.

“His colleagues refused to accept his findings because it implied their own culpability. His work wasn’t published in time, and he died tragically in a psychiatric



ward. This ‘Semmelweis effect’ — rejecting groundbreaking ideas because they challenge the norm — still happens.”

For Gerhard, similar gatekeeping has occurred in geology, economics, and other fields. JOSHA’s mission is to give unconventional yet rigorous research a fair chance.

Key Principles

From day one, the journal has adhered to four guiding characteristics:

1. **Open Access** – Articles are freely available to readers worldwide.
2. **Interdisciplinarity** – Submissions are welcome from all scientific, artistic, and humanistic disciplines.
3. **Author Copyright Retention** – Authors keep the rights to their work.
4. **Editorial Review, Not Peer Review** – Articles are evaluated by the editorial board for clarity, relevance, and originality, but ultimate judgment is left to the readers.

“Peer review is valuable, but it is not the ultimate arbiter of truth. We trust readers to critically assess content themselves.”

Ensuring Quality in an AI Era

With the rise of Artificial Intelligence, Gerhard acknowledges new challenges for all academic publishers.

“We have to be vigilant against plagiarism, fabricated research, and nonsense submissions. While we don’t chase impact factors, we maintain editorial standards and focus on publishing serious, original work.”

Looking Ahead: Building Bridges Between North and South



Gerhard envisions JOSHA as a bridge connecting scholars from around the world, particularly between the Global North and South.

“We receive many submissions from India, China, South America, and Africa. It’s important to give these researchers visibility and integrate their work into global discourse.”

One initiative that embodies this vision is the **Demetrios Awards**, which supports outstanding theses from early-career researchers, including those from underrepresented regions.

Personal Reflections

For Gerhard, leading JOSHA has been both intellectually stimulating and personally fulfilling.

“It’s exciting to see how interesting and diverse the articles are. I learn about questions and problems far outside my own fields of medicine and psychology. Working with such a dedicated editorial team makes it even more rewarding.”

He admits that he never imagined himself leading a journal:

“I enjoyed producing data, but I never liked writing them down. Now I get to read and curate the work of others — it’s the perfect role for me.”

Advice for Young Academics

Gerhard’s guidance to aspiring researchers is pragmatic yet hopeful:

“Research is hard work and not always well paid, but it can yield results of great importance. There are so many unanswered questions in every field — it’s work worth pursuing.”

His message to JOSHA readers is equally clear:



“Open your mind to disciplines beyond your own. See what others discover and think. Interdisciplinarity can enrich your own work in unexpected ways.”

From a conversation on a snowy Swiss slope to a platform reaching over three million readers, JOSHA’s journey is a testament to the power of curiosity, openness, and collaboration. In Gerhard’s words, as long as the journal stays true to its mission, it will continue to grow, bridging disciplines and connecting scholars across the globe.



About the Interviewee

Prof. Dr. Gerhard G. Steinmann is co-founder and Co-Editor-in-Chief of JOSHA. He is also Chair of the International Academy of Science, Humanities, and Arts (IASHA e.V.), a non-profit association. He is a pathologist, psychologist, and professor at the Medical Faculty, University of Kiel, Germany. He graduated from the University of Hamburg, Germany. At the Department of Pathology at the University of Kiel and at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY, USA, he focused his research on the aging of the immune system. In 1985, he joined Boehringer Ingelheim, Germany and held management positions in Research and Development, International Project Management, Pharmacovigilance, and Drug Clinical Research in the Oncology, Immunology, and Virology therapeutic areas.

About the Interviewer

Cinthya Souza Simas is a psychologist graduated from the University of Amazonia (UNAMA), with additional cross-cultural studies at the Evangelische Hochschule Freiburg in Germany. She is currently specializing in Clinical Behavior Analysis at the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUCPR), and has completed training in Behavior Analysis, Psycho and organizational diagnosis, Human Resources, Legal Psychology, Suicidology, Neuropsychology, among other areas. She currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Science, Humanities and Arts. Her main areas of interest include intersectionality, resilience, and human behavior from a transcultural perspective.

Acknowledgements

ChatGPT 5.0 was used during the editing process as part of JOSHA's policy of experimentation with AI tools. However, JOSHA takes full responsibility for its content.