How to write great papers and get published
Understanding and benefiting from the publishing process

Presented by: Anthony Newman, Senior Publisher
Location/Date: 19 April 2017
Workshop Outline

*Alfred Stein:*
- Scholarly publishing overview
- What to publish
- Choosing the right journal
- Peer Review explained

Questions and Answers

*Anthony Newman:*
- Using online tools to help journal selection
- Typical article structure
- Open Access or not
- Promoting your research using social media
- Publishing ethics

Questions and Answers

Elsevier Publishing Campus
Why are you here?
Identifying the right journal
And writing for it
Select the best journal for submission

- Look at your references – these should help you narrow your choices.

- Review recent publications in each “candidate journal”. Find out the hot topics, the accepted types of articles, etc.

- Ask yourself the following questions:
  - Is the journal peer-reviewed to the right level?
  - Who is this journal’s audience?
  - How fast does it make a decision or publish your paper?
  - What are the various Impact metrics for the journal?
  - Do you want/need to publish Open Access?
  - Does it really exist or is dubious? (check for example archived version of Beall’s List of Predatory Open Access Publishers)
Choose the right journal

Investigate all candidate journals to find out

- Aims and scope
- Accepted types of articles
- Readership
- New paper types
  - go through the abstracts of recent publications
Bibliometric indicators

Impact Factor
Eigenfactor
SJR
SNIP
H-Index
What is the Impact Factor (IF)?

Impact Factor

*the average annual number of citations per article published*

For example, the 2014 impact factor for a journal is calculated as follows:

- \( A \) = the number of times articles published in 2012 and 2013 were cited in indexed journals during 2014
- \( B \) = the number of "citable items" (usually articles, reviews, proceedings or notes; not editorials and letters-to-the-Editor) published in 2012 and 2013
- 2014 impact factor = \( A/B \)

- e.g. 600 citations = 2.000
  150 + 150 articles
Impact Factor and other bibliometric parameters
Influences on Impact Factors: Subject Area

- Fundamental Life Sciences
- Neuroscience
- Clinical Medicine
- Pharmacology & Toxicology
- Physics
- Chemistry & Chemical Engineering
- Earth Sciences
- Environmental Sciences
- Biological Sciences
- Materials Science & Engineering
- Social Sciences
- Mathematics & Computer Sciences

Mean Impact Factor

Elsevier Publishing Campus
Identify the right audience for your paper

- Identify the sector of readership/community for which a paper is meant
- Identify the interest of your audience
- Get advice from your university library team on where to publish
- Ask your supervisor or colleagues for recommendations
Your Journals list for this manuscript

So you now have a list of candidate journals for your manuscript……

✔ All authors of the submission agree to this list and the sequence of journals

✔ Write your draft as if you are going to submit to the first journal on your list. Use its Guide for Authors - these differ per journal

✗ DO NOT gamble by submitting your manuscript to more than one journal at a time.
  
  International ethics standards prohibit multiple/simultaneous submissions, and editors DO find out! (Trust us, they DO!)
Read the ‘Guide to Authors’- Again and again!

- Stick to the Guide for Authors in your manuscript, even in the first draft (text layout, nomenclature, figures & tables, references etc.). In the end it will save you time, and also the editor’s.

- Editors (and reviewers) do not like wasting time on poorly prepared manuscripts. It is a sign of disrespect.
Read the ‘Guide to Authors’- Again and again!
Common problems with submissions:

An international editor says...

“The following problems appear much too frequently”

- Submission of papers which are clearly out of scope
- Failure to format the paper according to the Guide for Authors
- Inappropriate (or no) suggested reviewers
- Inadequate response to reviewers
- Inadequate standard of English
- Resubmission of rejected manuscripts without revision

– Paul Haddad, Editor, Journal of Chromatography A
Why is language important?

Save your editor and reviewers the trouble of guessing what you mean.

Complaint from an editor:
“[This] paper fell well below my threshold. I refuse to spend time trying to understand what the author is trying to say. Besides, I really want to send a message that they can't submit garbage to us and expect us to fix it.

My rule of thumb is that if there are more than 6 grammatical errors in the abstract, then I don't waste my time carefully reading the rest.”
Scientific Language – Overview

Write with clarity, objectivity, accuracy, and brevity.

Key to successful scientific writing is to be alert for common errors:

- Sentence construction
- Incorrect tenses
- Inaccurate grammar
- Not using English

Check the Guide for Authors of the target journal for language specifications
Scientific Language – Sentences

✓ Write direct and short sentences – more professional looking.

✓ One idea or piece of information per sentence is sufficient.

✗ Avoid multiple statements in one sentence – they are confusing to the reader.
Authorship: Who is allowed to be an Author?

- Policies regarding authorship can vary
- Most common example: the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (“Vancouver Group”) declared that an author must:
  1. **substantially contribute** to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data;
  2. **draft** the article or **revise** it critically for important intellectual content; and
  3. **give their approval** of the final full version to be published.
  4. agreement to be **accountable for all aspects of the work** in ensuring that questions related to accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

**ALL four** conditions must be fulfilled to be an author!

All others would qualify as “Acknowledged Individuals”
Authorship - Sequence & Abuses

• General principles for who is listed first:
  - **First Author**
    - Conducts and/or supervises the data generation and analysis and the proper presentation and interpretation of the results
    - Puts paper together and submits the paper to journal
  - **Corresponding author**
    - The first author or a senior author from the institution.
    - Particularly when the first author is a PhD student or postdoc, and may move to another institution soon.

• Abuses to be avoided:
  - ✗ **Ghost Authorship**: leaving out authors who should be included
  - ✗ **Gift Authorship**: including authors who did not contribute significantly
Typical article structure
Typical Structure of a Research Article

- Title
- Abstract
- Keywords

- Main text (IMRAD)
  - Introduction
  - Methods
  - Results
  - And
  - Discussions

- Conclusion
- Acknowledgement
- References
- Supplementary Data
  - Reviews, MicroArticles etc different layout.
  - Social sciences more discussion and less data.

Make them easy for indexing and searching! (informative, attractive, effective)

Journal space is not unlimited.
Your reader’s time is scarce.
Make your article as concise as possible - more difficult than you imagine!
The process of writing – building the article

- Title & Abstract
- Conclusion
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Figures/tables (your data)
Title

A good title should contain the fewest possible words that adequately describe the contents of a paper.

Effective titles

- Identify the main issue of the paper
- Begin with the subject of the paper
- Are accurate, unambiguous, specific, and complete
- Are as short as possible
  - Articles with short, catchy titles are often better cited
- Do not contain rarely-used abbreviations
- Attract readers - Remember: readers are the potential authors who will cite your article
Keywords

In an “electronic world”, keywords determine whether your article is found or not!

Avoid making them
× too general ("drug delivery", "mouse", "disease", etc.)
× too narrow (so that nobody will ever search for it)

Effective approach:
Look at the keywords of articles relevant to your manuscript
Play with these keywords, and see whether they return relevant papers, neither too many nor too few – a good guideline.
Abstract

Tell readers what you did and the important findings

• One paragraph (between 50-250 words) often, plus Highlight bullet points
• Advertisement for your article, and should encourage reading the entire paper
• A clear abstract will strongly influence if your work is considered further

Graphite intercalation compounds (GICs) of composition CₓN(SO₂CF₃)₂ · δF are prepared under ambient conditions in 48% hydrofluoric acid, using K₂MnF₆ as an oxidizing reagent. The stage 2 GIC product structures are determined using powder XRD and modeled by fitting one dimensional electron density profiles.

A new digestion method followed by selective fluoride electrode elemental analyses allows the determination of free fluoride within products, and the compositional 𝑥 and δ parameters are determined for reaction times from 0.25 to 500 h.
Introduction

The place to convince readers that you know why your work is relevant, also for them.

Answer a series of questions:

- What is the problem?
- Are there any existing solutions?
- Which one is the best?
- What is its main limitation?
- What do you hope to achieve?
Pay attention to the following

✔ Before you present your new data, put them into perspective first

✔ Be brief, it is not a history lesson

✖ Do not mix introduction, results, discussion and conclusions. Keep them separate

✖ Do not overuse expressions such as “novel”, “first time”, “first ever”, “paradigm shift”, etc.

✔ Cite only relevant references
  • Otherwise the editor and the reviewer may think you don’t have a clue what you are writing about!
Methods / Experimental

- Include all important details so that the reader can repeat the work.
  - Details that were previously published can be omitted but a general summary of those experiments should be included
- Give vendor names (and addresses) of equipment etc. used
- All chemicals must be identified
- Do not use proprietary, unidentifiable compounds without description. State purity and/or supplier if it is important.
- Present proper control experiments
- Avoid adding comments and discussion
- Write in the past tense
  - Most journals prefer the passive voice, some the active.
- Consider use of Supplementary Materials
  - Documents, spreadsheets, audio, video, ...

Reviewers will criticise incomplete or incorrect method descriptions, and may even recommend rejection
Results – what have you found?

The following should be included

✔ the **main findings**
  - Thus not *all* findings. Decide what to share.
  - Findings from experiments described in the Methods section

✔ Highlight findings that **differ** from findings in previous publications, and **unexpected** findings

✔ Results of the **statistical analysis**
Results – Figures and tables

Illustrations are critical, because:

• Figures and tables are the most efficient way to present results
• Results are the driving force of the publication
• Captions and legends must be detailed enough to make figures and tables self-explanatory
• Figures and tables should not need further explanation or description in text. Less writing and less reading. Let your figures do the work instead of words.

"One Picture is Worth a Thousand Words"
Sue Hanauer (1968)
Results – appearance counts!

✓ Un-crowded plots
  ✓ 3 or 4 data sets per figure; well-selected scales; appropriate
    axis label size; symbols clear to read; data sets easily distinguishable.

✓ Each photograph must have a scale marker of professional
  quality in a corner.

✓ Text in photos / figures in English
  ❌ Not in French, German, Chinese, Korean, ...

✓ Use colour ONLY when necessary.
  ❌ If different line styles can clarify the meaning,
    then do not use colours or other thrilling effects.

✓ If used, colour must be visible/distinguishable
  when printed in black & white.

❌ Do not include long boring tables!
Discussion – what do your results mean?

• It is the most important section of your article. Here you get the chance to SELL your data! Many manuscripts are rejected because the Discussion is weak.

• Check for the following:
  ✅ Do your results relate to the original question or objectives outlined in the Introduction section?
  ✅ Do you provide interpretation for each of your results presented?
  ✅ Are your results consistent with what other investigators have reported? Or are there any differences? Why?
  ✅ Are there any limitations?
  ✅ Does the discussion logically lead to your conclusion?

• Do not:
  ✗ Make statements that go beyond what the results can support
  ✗ Suddenly introduce new terms or ideas
Conclusions

✅ Present global and specific conclusions
✅ Indicate uses and extensions if appropriate
✅ Suggest future experiments and indicate whether they are underway
⚠️ Do not summarise the paper
  • The abstract is for that purpose
⚠️ Avoid judgments about impact
  • Others can comment, you should not.
References: get them right!

✓ Please adhere to the Guide for Authors of the journal
✓ It is your responsibility, not of the Editor’s, to format references correctly!
✓ Get help, save time - use Reference management software
✓ Check
  ▪ Referencing style of the journal
  ▪ The spelling of author names, the year of publication
  ▪ Punctuation use
✗ Avoid citing the following if possible:
  ▪ Personal communications, unpublished observations, manuscripts not yet accepted for publication
  ▪ Articles published only in the local language, which are difficult for international readers to find
Reference Management Software helps

- Many journals are helpful in formatting the journal reference style for you (e.g. Elsevier’s Your Paper Your Way service).

- If the publisher is not offering this service it is your responsibility to format references correctly!

[References to Mendeley, BibSonomy, Zotero, Reference Manager, EndNote]

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_reference_management_software
Supplementary Material

• Data of secondary importance for the main scientific thrust of the article
  ▪ e.g. individual curves, when a representative curve or a mean curve is given in the article itself

• Or data that do not fit into the main body of the article
  ▪ e.g. audio, video, ....

• Original figure before color correction or trimming for clarity

• Not part of the printed article
  ▪ Will be available online with the published paper

• Must relate to, and support, the article
Cover Letter

January 1, 2008

Professor H. D. Schmidt
School of Science and Engineering
Northeast State University
College Park, MI 10000
USA

Dear Professor Schmidt,

Enclosed with this letter you will find an electronic submission of a manuscript entitled "Mechano-sorptive creep under compressive loading - a micromechanical model" by John Smith and myself. This is an original paper which has neither previously nor simultaneously in whole or in part been submitted anywhere else. Both authors have read and approved the final version submitted.

Mechano-sorptive is sometimes denoted as accelerated creep. It has been experimentally observed that the creep of paper accelerates if it is subjected to a cyclic moisture content. This is of large practical importance for the paper industry. The present manuscript describes a micromechanical model on the fibre network level that is able to capture the experimentally observed behaviour. In particular, the difference between mechano-sorptive creep in tension and compression is analysed.

John Smith is a PhD-student who within a year will present his doctoral thesis. The present paper will be a part of that thesis.

Three potential independent reviewers who have excellent expertise in the field relevant to this paper are:

Dr. Fernandez, Tennessee Tech, email1@university.com
Dr. Chen, University of Maine, email2@university.com
Dr. Singh, Colorado School of Mines, email3@university.com

I would very much appreciate it if you would consider the manuscript for publication in the International Journal of Science.

Sincerely yours,

A. Professor

Final approval from all authors

Explanation of importance of research

Suggested reviewers
Do everything to make your submission a success

• No one gets it right the first time!
  ✔ Write, and re-write ….

• Suggestions
  ✔ After writing a first version, take several days of rest. Come back with a critical, fresh view.
  ✔ Ask colleagues and supervisor to review your manuscript. Ask them to be highly critical, and be open to their suggestions.
  ✔ Make changes to incorporate comments and suggestions. Get all co-authors to approve version to submit.

*Then it is the point in time to submit your article!*
The peer review process
The Peer Review Process is not a black hole!

First Decision: “Accepted” or “Rejected”

**Accepted**
- Very rare, but it happens

- Congratulations!
  - Cake for the department
  - Now wait for page proofs and then for your article to be online and in print

**Rejected**
- Probability 40-90% ...
- Do not despair
  - It happens to everybody
- Try to understand WHY
  - Consider reviewers’ advice
  - Be self-critical
- If you submit to another journal, begin as if it were a new manuscript
  - Take advantage of the reviewers’ comments and revise accordingly
  - They may review your manuscript for the next journal too!
  - Read the Guide for Authors of the new journal, again and again.
The Peer Review Process – revisions

http://dbis.rwth-aachen.de/~derntl/papers/misc/paperwriting.pdf
First Decision: “Major” or “Minor” Revision

• Major revision
  ▪ The manuscript may finally be published in the journal
  ▪ Significant deficiencies must be corrected before acceptance
  ▪ Usually involves (significant) textual modifications and/or additional experiments

• Minor revision
  ▪ Basically, the manuscript is worth being published
  ▪ Some elements in the manuscript must be clarified, restructured, shortened (often) or expanded (rarely)
  ▪ Textual adaptations
  ▪ “Minor revision” does NOT guarantee acceptance after revision, but often it is accepted if all points are addressed!
Manuscript Revision

• Prepare a detailed Response Letter
  ✓ Copy-paste each reviewer comment, and type your response below it
  ✓ State specifically which changes you have made to the manuscript
    ✓ Include page/line numbers
    ❌ No general statements like “Comment accepted, and Discussion changed accordingly.”
  ✓ Provide a scientific response to comments to accept, ..... 
  ✓ ..... or a convincing, solid and polite rebuttal when you feel the reviewer was wrong.
  ✓ Write in such a manner, that your response can be forwarded to the reviewer without prior editing

• Do not do yourself a disfavour, but cherish your work
  • You spent weeks and months in the lab or the library to do the research

......Why then run the risk of avoidable rejection by not taking manuscript revision seriously?
Increasing the likelihood of acceptance

All these various steps are not difficult.

✓ You have to be consistent.

✓ You have to check and recheck before submitting.

✓ Make sure you tell a logical, clear, story about your findings.

✓ Especially, take note of referees’ comments. They improve your paper.

This should increase the likelihood of your paper being accepted, and being in the 30% (accepted) not the 70% (rejected) group!
What leads to acceptance?

✔ A ttention to details
✔ C heck and double check your work
✔ C onsider the reviewers’ comments
✔ E nglish must be as good as possible
✔ P resentation is important
✔ T ake your time with revision
✔ A cknowledge those who have helped you
✔ N ew, original and previously unpublished
✔ C ritically evaluate your own manuscript
✔ E thical rules must be obeyed

– Nigel John Cook
Editor-in-Chief, Ore Geology Reviews
Elsevier Publishing Campus

Open access publishing
Why publish in an open access journal?

- Want community to access my research without restriction: 67%
- Want to increase readership of article: 66%
- Less time between submission and publication than for subscription journals: 37%
- Have published in open access journals before and had a good experience: 36%
- Other researchers in my specialty publish in open access journals: 25%
- Funding body mandate: 10%
- Institutional mandate: 5%
- Other reason (please specify): 5%
- No reason/ prefer not to say: 3%

14% have been asked by their departmental head or funding organization to publish open access.
Tips for publishing gold open access

- **Find the right journal:** Look for reputable journals
- **Collect key info:** Check your funding body and institution’s policies
- **Make your article OA:** Select a license and pay an OA fee
- **Publish OA:** Share the final version of your article!

Much more information may be found online at Elsevier Publishing Campus
And your library has great resources too:
https://www.utwente.nl/en/lisa/service-manuals/l/product/p908815/open-access-publishing
Promoting your article
Your Paper is Published – What now?

• Your paper becomes visible online in the journal website, such as ScienceDirect, Springer Link etc. and in databases as SCOPUS, PubMed, etc.

• There are many things you can also do to draw attention to your great research just online…

• Think Social Media! Check out the Publishing Campus for suggestions.
More information

- [www elsevier com/promote-your-work](http://www.elsevier.com/promote-your-work)

  Animation video (YouTube)
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRXnbKtHkHM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRXnbKtHkHM)

- [www.publishingcampus.com](http://www.publishingcampus.com): College of Networking / Getting Noticed

Brochure  Factsheet  Online lectures and interactive courses
Author Responsibilities

As authors we have lots of rights and privileges, but also we have the responsibility to be ethical.
Ethics Issues in Publishing

Scientific misconduct
- Falsification of results or images

Publication misconduct
- Plagiarism
  - Different forms / severities
  - The paper must be original to the authors
- Duplicate publication
- Duplicate submission
- Appropriate acknowledgement of prior research and researchers
- Appropriate identification of all co-authors
- Conflict of interest
Plagiarism

- A short-cut to long-term consequences!
- Plagiarism is considered a serious offense by your institute, by journal editors, and by the scientific community as a whole.
- Plagiarism may result in academic charges, but will certainly cause rejection of your paper.
- Plagiarism will hurt your reputation in the scientific community.

Elsevier Publishing Campus
Duplicate Publication

- Duplicate Publication is also called Redundant Publication, or Self Plagiarism
- Definition: Two or more papers, without full cross reference, share the same hypotheses, data, discussion points, or conclusions

✗ An author should not submit for consideration to another journal a previously published paper.

✓ Published studies do not need to be repeated unless further confirmation is required.
✓ Previous publication of an abstract during the proceedings of conferences does not preclude subsequent submission for publication, but full disclosure should be made at the time of submission.
✓ Re-publication of a paper in another language is acceptable, provided that there is full and prominent disclosure of its original source at the time of submission.
✓ At the time of submission, authors should disclose details of related papers, even if in a different language, and similar papers in press.
✓ This includes translations
Plagiarism Detection Tools

Elsevier is participating in 2 plagiarism detection schemes:
- TurnItIn (aimed at universities)
- iThenticate (aimed at publishers and corporations)

Manuscripts are automatically checked against a database of 30+ million peer reviewed articles which have been donated by 200+ publishers, including Elsevier.

More traditional approach also happens:
- Editors and reviewers
- Your colleagues
- Readers
- "Other" whistleblowers
  - "The walls have ears", it seems ...
Publication ethics – Self-plagiarism

2003

Same colour left and right = Same text

2004

Elsevier Publishing Campus
An article in which the authors committed plagiarism: it will not be removed from ScienceDirect ever. Everybody who downloads it will see the reason for the retraction…
Figure Manipulation – some things are allowed

As long as they don’t obscure or eliminate info present in the original image

- Brightness
- Contrast
- Colour Balance
- Nonlinear adjustments

Must be disclosed in the figure legend

- Enhanced
- Obscured
- Moved
- Removed
- Introduced
Figure Manipulation:
Example - Different authors and reported experiments

Am J Pathol, 2001

Images worked on, added to, rotated 180°, to become:

Life Sci, 2004

Rotated 180°
Zoomed out ?!
Elsevier Publishing Campus

Packed with free online lectures and interactive courses, together with expert advice and resources to help on your way to publishing a world-class book or journal article.

- **College of Skills Training**: Boost your publishing skills in journals and books
- **College of Big Ideas**: Discuss trending topics in publishing and academia
- **College of Networking**: Make the most of every opportunity
- **College of Research Solutions**: Training for effective and efficient research skills
- **College of Career Planning**: Get ahead in your academic career
- **College of Recommended Organizations**: Reach your potential with support from global resources

[publishingcampus.com](http://publishingcampus.com)
More resources are available from your university library! Use your campus tools and colleagues

- Information around journals such as impact factor, time to first decision, is a journal in SCOPUS or Web of Science?

- Some Graduate Schools help by giving writing courses.

- The policies on Open Access are changing rapidly and your library is the best place to go to find the current situation.

- Remember most universities have some journal editors or editorial board members on campus who, if approached in the right way, will give you help and advice.

- UK VITAE have downloadable information to help in developing research projects and the papers that come from them.
Download your personalized Certificate of Completion for this workshop now!

- Go to [www.publishingcampus.com](http://www.publishingcampus.com) and **sign up** to the Publishing Campus (enter your first and last name carefully as your certificate will be created using those details) or **log in** if you already have profile.

- Go to [www.publishingcampus.elsevier.com/workshops](http://www.publishingcampus.elsevier.com/workshops)
- Enter the claim code: **KMCTBH**
- Fill in the survey

- You will be redirected to a page where you will be able to download your certificate.

Need help?
Send email to [publishingcampus@elsevier.com](mailto:publishingcampus@elsevier.com)
Questions?

For questions later, please contact
Alfred Stein  a.stein@utwente.nl
or
Anthony Newman  a.newman@elsevier.com

This set of slides as a PDF will be available through the institute. There is full permission granted to distribute them as long as they are not edited.