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“The publication process”

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# Plan

- Presubmission
- Submission
- Review process
- Revising / resubmitting
- Rejection
- Acceptance

# Presubmission

- Draft, get feedback. Repeat. Repeat.
  - Minimize chances of “triage” or annoying editor and reviewers
    - Don’t submit unclear text!
    - Don’t submit typos!
    - Be careful of style / voice changes
    - Be painstaking in your citations
    - Design your manuscript to help the editor
- Read the guide for authors. Conform to it!

# Submission

- Most (all?) journals now have on-line submission systems
- Many can be difficult to navigate – it may take a surprising amount of time!

# Submission

- Cover letter + manuscript (+ tables) (+ figs)
- Cover letter
  - Say directly or clearly imply why you are submitting to this journal
  - *Briefly* describe your major findings and their implications (one sentence may suffice; more than a couple of paragraphs is perhaps too much)
  - Suggest reviewers to invite
  - You can suggest reviewers *not* to invite, but there has to be a solid rationale – they have made ad hominem remarks about you in past reviews, for example – it can't just be that you know they will disagree with you!

# Submission

- Manuscript (+ tables) (+ figs)
  - Make sure you have conformed to journal guidelines!

# Now wait... ...and wait... ...and wait...

- Most journals specify the turn-around goal time
- Few achieve it routinely!
- Some systems let you check manuscript status
  - “editor assigning reviewers”, “awaiting review”, “with editor”
- But there’s little you can do when reviews are behind schedule
- Remember: reviewers are volunteers, and editors may be as well (if not, they are paid a pittance). Be patient.
- What if things are WAY behind schedule?
  - Polite, friendly email to the editor (or better, to any email address that came with the submission confirmation email)

# Action letter

- Some AEs just keep score, others act as the  $n^{\text{th}}$  reviewer
- Letters that just tell you to address everything in reviews are not very helpful...
- But often, the editor highlights the most important issues to address
  - If editor does not mention something, this does *not* mean you don't need to address it

# Reviews

- Take a deep breath. Many reviewers seem not to have heard of the Golden Rule.
- Read the reviews. If you are angry / depressed, leave them alone for a day or so.
- Make a plan: what would it take to satisfy the AE and the reviewers?

# Revising

- You do not **have** to do everything *every* reviewer suggests
  - But when you don't, you need to provide a clear rationale for why you didn't in the resubmission letter (more soon)
  - Reviewers may still disagree, and an “accept with revisions” recommendation may turn to “reject” if they think you are not taking them seriously!
- What if the things the reviewers + editor say are crucial are unreasonable (either wrong or would require unrealistic / impossible additional effort)?
  - Submit elsewhere
  - ...or try to make a compelling case against that point

# Resubmitting

- Cover letter + response to reviews + revised manuscript
- Some journals request that changed passages be indicated with, e.g., vertical rules

# Resubmitting

- But the “response to reviews” is your most formidable tool
  - One easy approach: put the AE/reviewer text in one font, and your response in another
  - For each point, acknowledge the AE/reviewer (“The reviewer makes an excellent point”, “We thank the reviewer for pointing out this issue”) even when you want to say “the reviewer is a colossal ass who obviously never took stats!”
  - Say how you have addressed the change (citing page numbers in the revised ms) or justify why you have not made a particular change
- If you do this well, the AE may not even read the revision and might accept the paper
- Most often, however, the paper goes back out for review

Now wait... ...and wait... ...and wait...

- It could be several more weeks or even months. That's just the way it is (for now – work to change it!).

# Rejection

- First or second (or third or fourth!) submission may be rejected
- Go ahead and mourn for a bit...
- But then use the reviews to improve the paper and submit elsewhere (unless reviewers have identified fatal flaws!)

# Acceptance!

- First or second (or third or fourth!) submission may be **accepted**
- Remember mourning rejection?
- **Turvey's Rule:** Celebrate successes as long and often as you would have mourned a failure!
- Proofs: you need to carefully read every word on every line to make sure you agree with changes
- Tell people about it: local community, but also email it to other researchers interested in your topic (or even better: email them a link to the paper on your website)