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How to successfully contribute to the world of scientific publishing

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Editor-in-Chief Applied Surface Science

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U of I, Urbana-Champaign - July 17th, 2019

Publish or Perish or is it Publish until you Perish?

The (self) imposed pressure to publish

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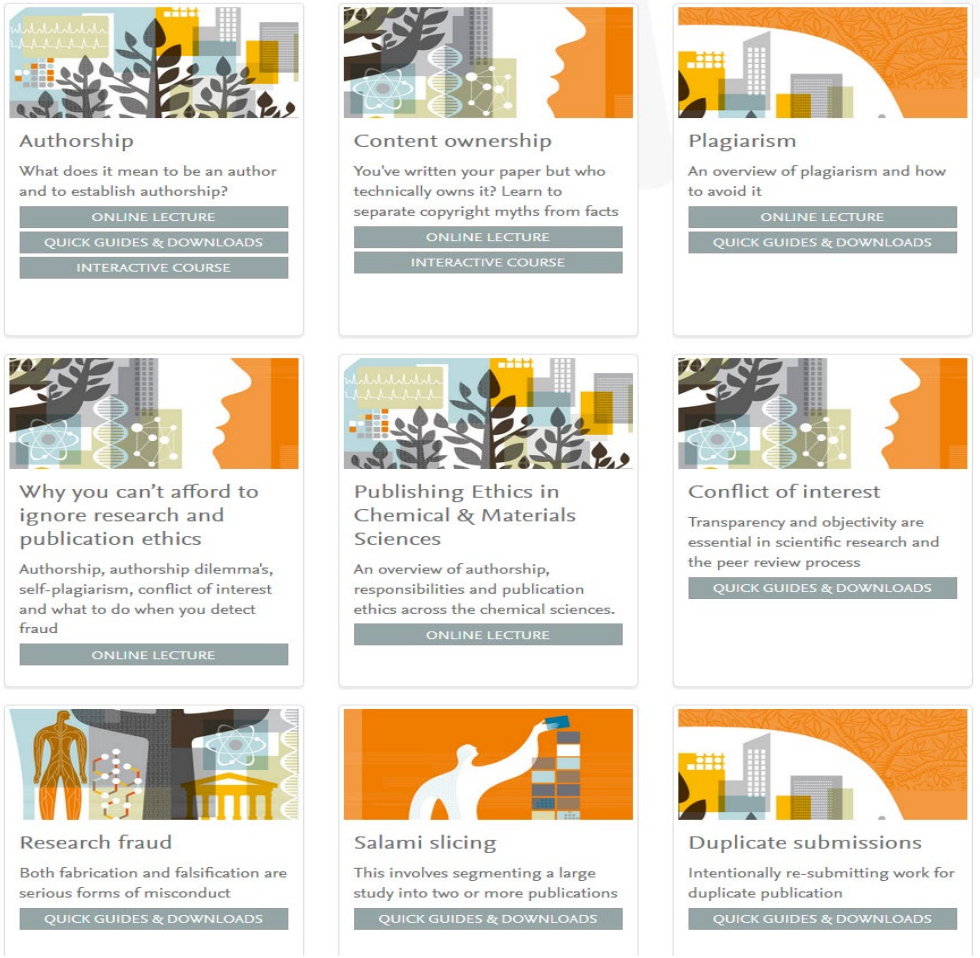
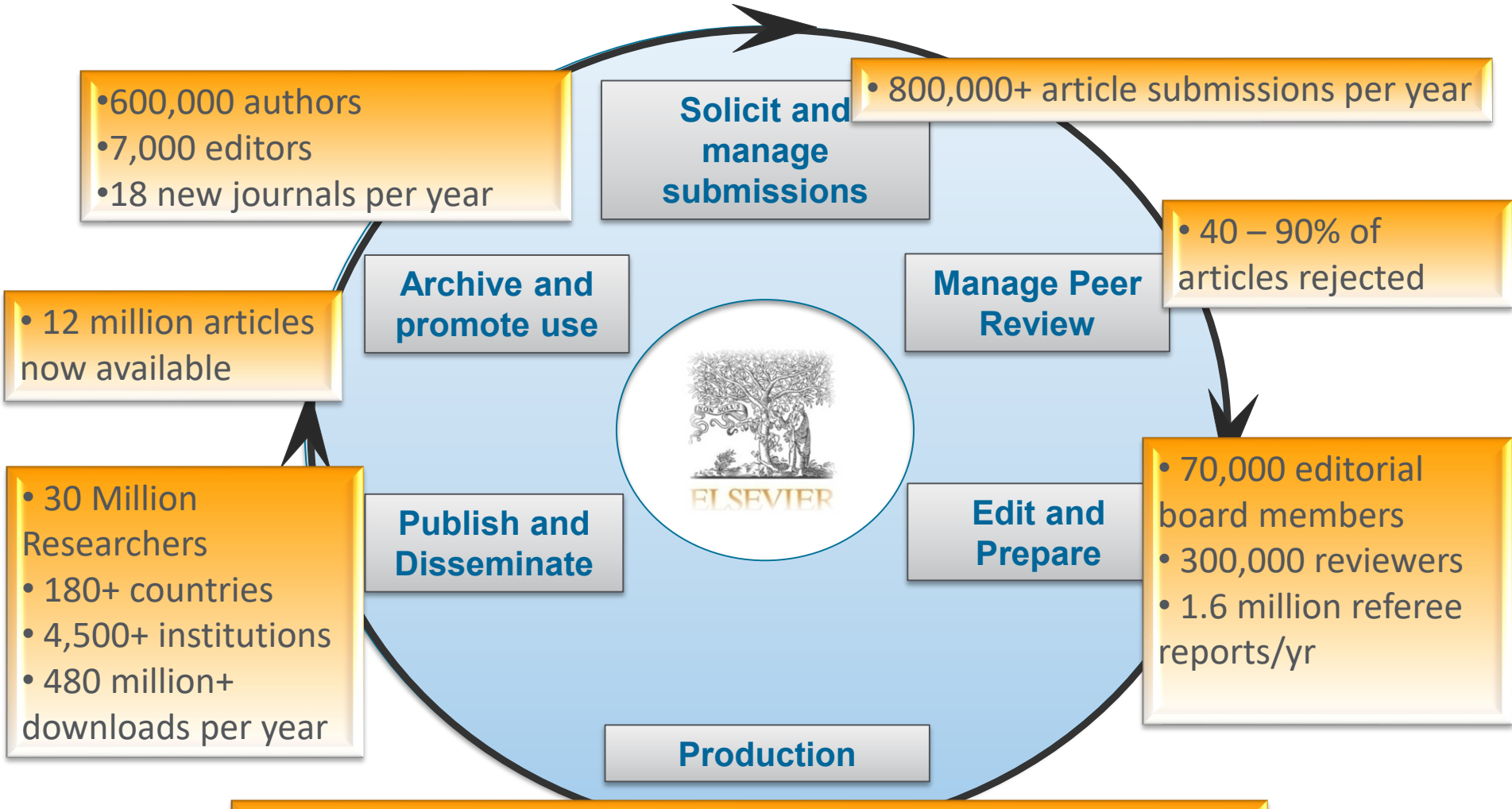
The “ground rules” of scientific publishing

https://www.publishingcampus.elsevier.com/pages/63/ethics/Publishing-ethics.html

(Good) science
Science ethics
Authorship
Ownership of material
Conflict of interest
Publishing ethics
Salami publishing
Duplicate submissions
Fair peer reviewing
Research fraud



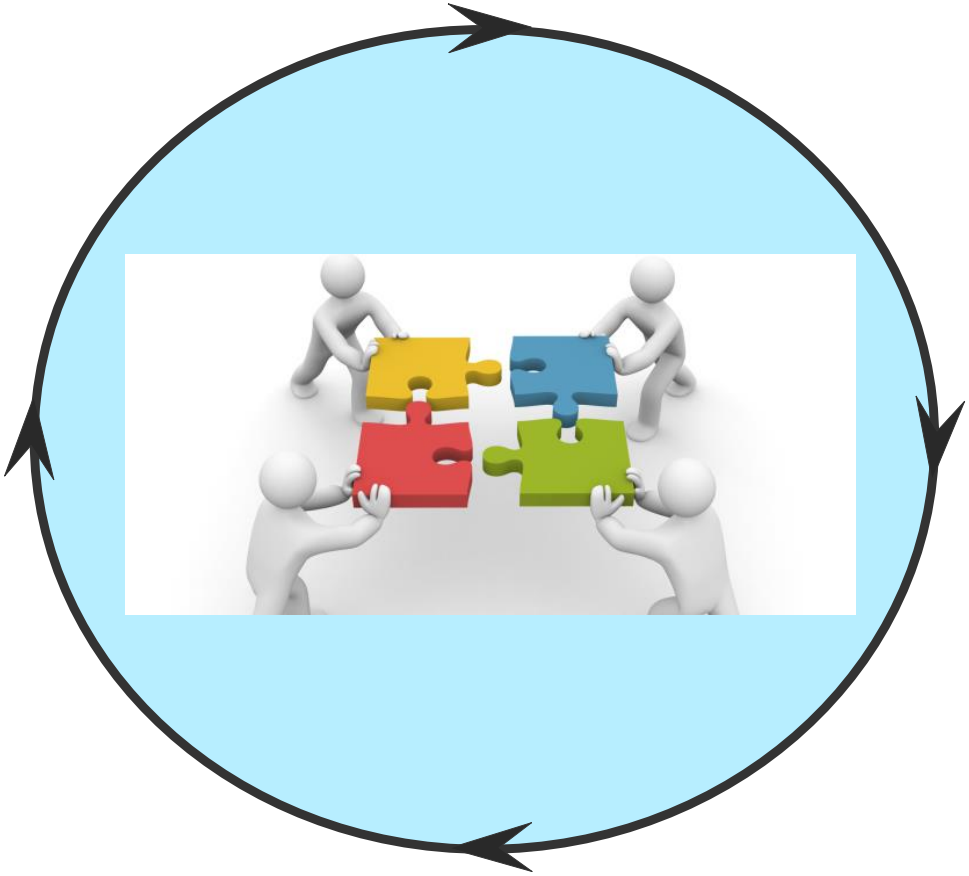
Publishing in the 21st century – the publishing circle



Stakeholders in the publishing circle

They all have a responsibility in the process

1) Funding “agency”
2) Academic institution
3) Author and co-authors
4) Publisher
5) Editor
6) Reviewers
7) Libraries
8) Readers



How to publish in a scientific journal

Becoming the (first) author of a manuscript

- What steps do I need to take before I write my paper?
- Type of manuscript
- How can I ensure I am using proper manuscript language?

- How do I structure my article properly?
  - Process
  - Article Construction

Publishing a paper: step 1

Choosing the right journal !

A journal always has an “Aims and Scope”, a text that describes the goal of the journal:

- Subject
- Audience
- Type of articles
- Quality or coverage of field
- Association with group

The right journal – only the best for you

The role of quality indicators

-Quality of journal can be reflected by its impact factor (IF): the average number of times articles from a journal published in the past two years have been cited in the current year

-Example: IF of a journal in 2017:

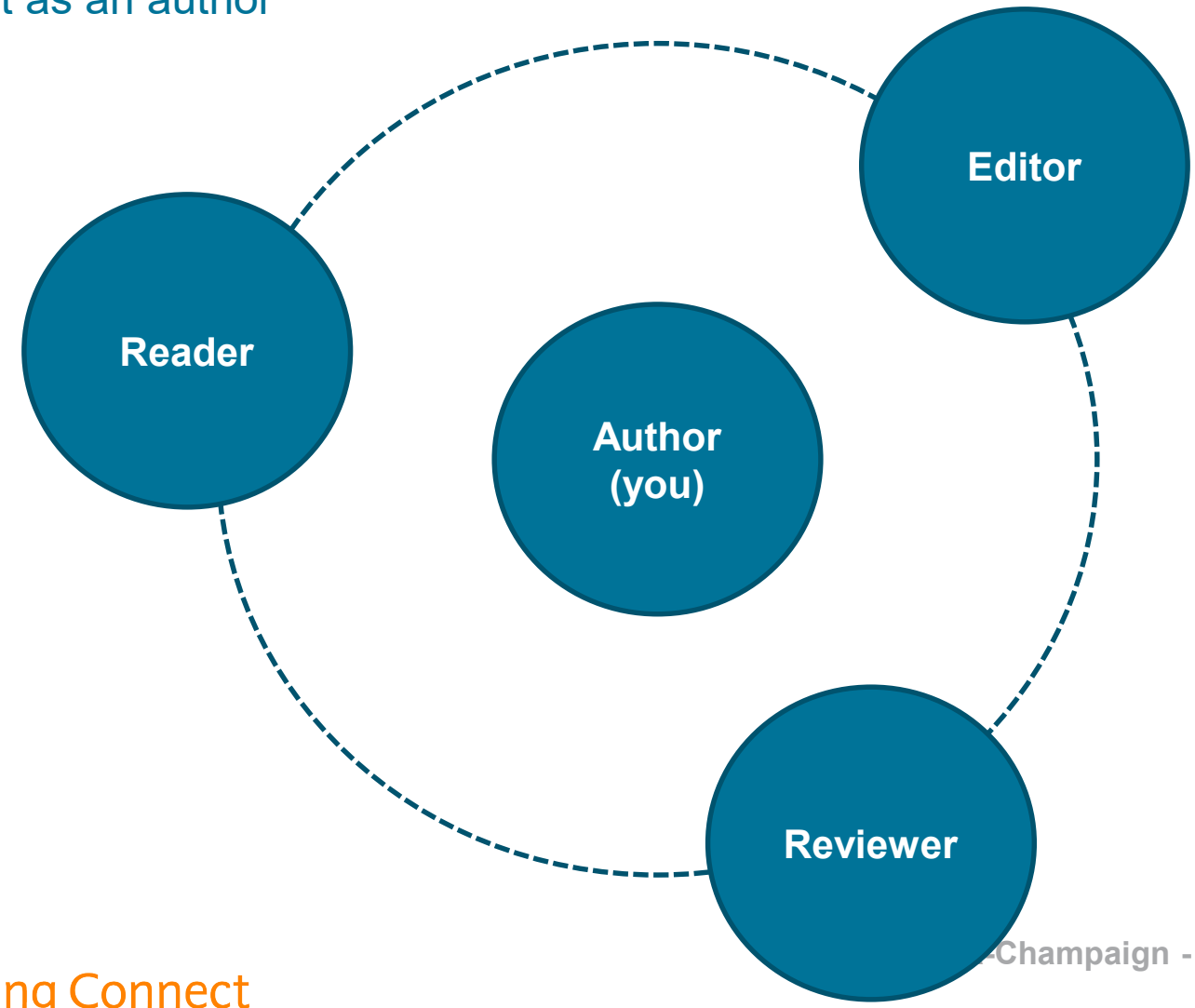
$$= \frac{\text{All citations in 2017 to articles published in 2015 and 2016}}{\text{Number of source items published in 2015 and 2016}} = 3.456$$

1339 + 1467 = 2806

350 + 462 = 812

Publishing a paper: Step 2 prepare the paper

Mindset as an author



Publishing – what constitutes a strong paper?

- Has a clear, useful, and exciting message
- Presented and constructed in a logical manner
- Reviewers and editors can grasp the significance easily

Editors and reviewers are all busy people – make things easy to save their time

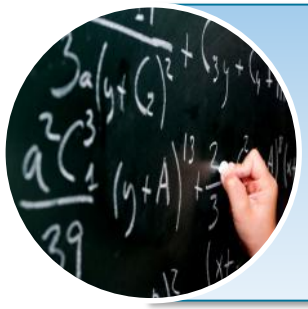
Decide the most appropriate type of manuscript

The many flavours of paper types

- Conference Papers
- Short communications/letters
- Full articles/Original articles
- Review papers (often only by invitation)
- Perspective papers (often only by invitation)

General structure of a research paper

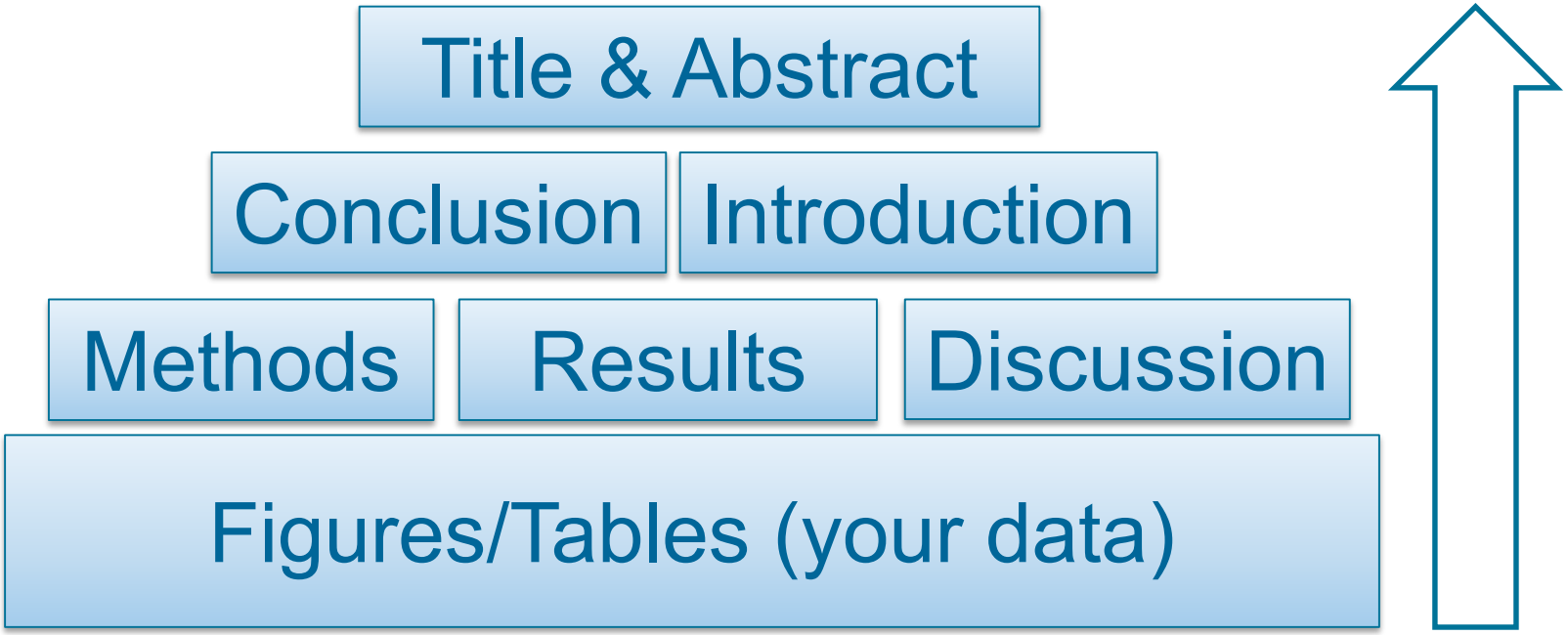
Title
Affiliations
Abstract
Keywords



Introduction
Methods Results
AND Discussion

Conclusion
Acknowledgements
References
Supporting Materials

Building the manuscript – bottom up



Preparing for submitting the paper

- Check the manuscript as thoroughly as possible before submission
- Ask colleagues and supervisors to review your manuscript

Finally - SUBMIT your manuscript with a proper cover letter and await a response…

After submission – the waiting game

- Generally editors do a first check (topic, language, completeness,...). They are allowed to desk-reject.
- After initial check, they will send out for review, usually to a few reviewers. Review process takes several weeks. Many invited reviewers decline invitation, adding to review times.
- Editor receives reviewer reports and takes a decision based on them.
- In case of doubt, they may consult another referee or review themselves.
- Editor informs author

Editorial decision

Accepted

- Very rare, but it happens

Revision major/minor

- There is a chance that the paper will be published eventually

Rejected

- Probability 40-90% ...
- Do not despair
- If you submit to another journal, begin as if it were a new manuscript

Editor decision: revision (minor/major)

- Carefully study the reviewers' comments, adjust your manuscript and prepare a detailed letter of response
- Respond to all points; even if you disagree with a reviewer. Provide a scientifically solid rebuttal, not ignore their comment
- State specifically what changes you have made to address the reviewers' comments, mentioning the page and line numbers where changes have been made
- Perform additional experiments, calculations or computations, if required; these usually serve to make the final paper stronger

Author responsibility – academic misconduct

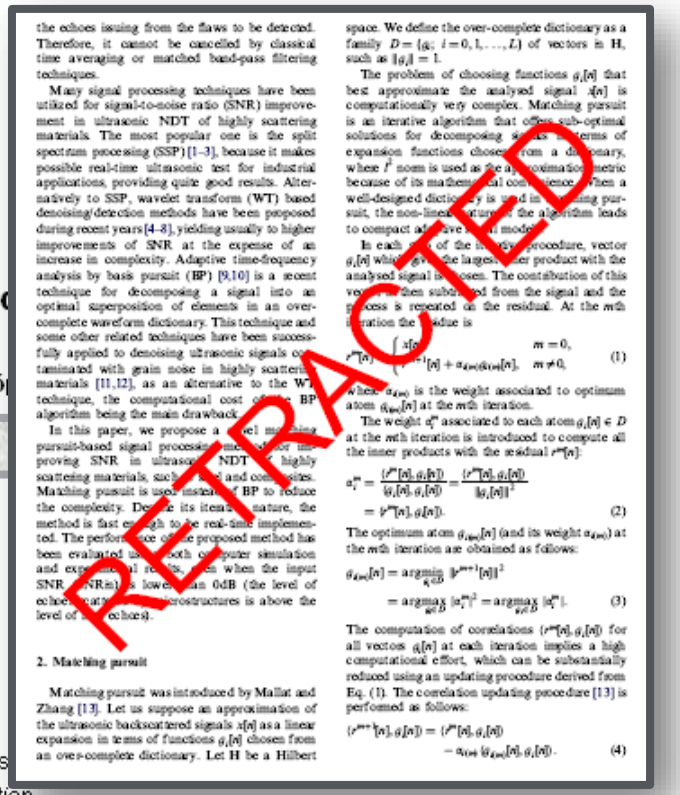
ScienceDirect

doi:10.1016/j.sigpro.2005.07.019 Cite or Link Using DOI

RETRACTED: Matching pursuit-based approach for ultrasonic flaw

N. Ruiz-Reyes[a], P. Vera-Candeas[a], J. Curpián-Alonso[a], J.C. Cuevas-Martinez[a] and F. Ló

Available online 24 August 2005.



This article has been retracted at the request of the Editor-in-Chief and Publisher. Please see http://www.elsevier.com/locate/withdrawalpolicy.

Reason: This article is virtually identical to the previously published article: "New matching pursuit-bas algorithm for SNR improvement in ultrasonic NDT", *Independent Nondestr... ...nd Evaluation International* volume 29 (2006) 453 – 468 authored by N. Ruiz-Reyes, P. Vera-Candeas, J. Curpián-Alonso, R. Mata-Campos and J.C. Cuevas-Martínez.

The article of which the authors committed plagiarism: it won't be removed from ScienceDirect. Everybody who downloads it will see the reason of retraction…

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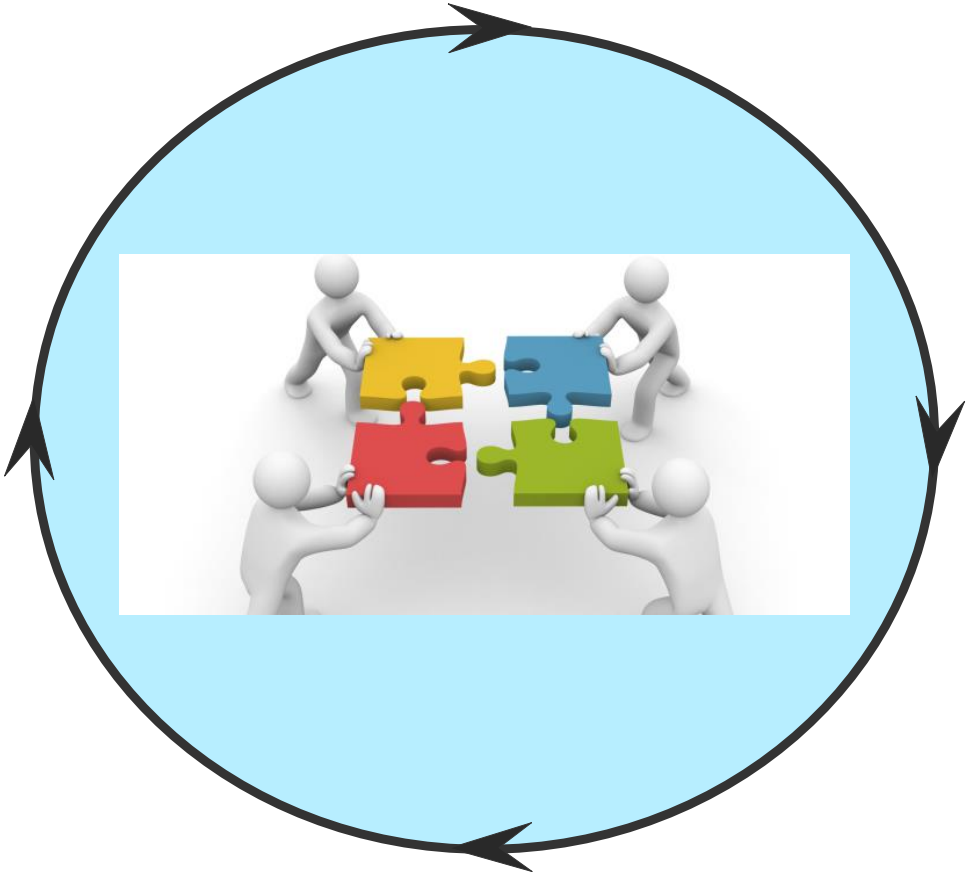


Why do we need peer-review?

Peer review is the evaluation of work by one or more people of similar competence to the creators of the work (peers)

Peer-review is used to assess the quality, significance and originality of scientific research before publication.

- provide credibility
- improve the record of science
- control in scientific communication
- ensures that previous work is acknowledged

Step by Step

A guide how to become a good peer reviewer

Before accepting the invitation, you should ask yourself

- Am I truly a peer, i.e., do I have the necessary expertise in the field
- I don't have a possible conflict of interest
- Will I be able to make the review in time

If the answer to all of the above is yes, then you should accept the invitation to review

So why should I be a reviewer

It takes valuable time away from my own science, right?

- ✓ Academic duty – expect to review about two times as many papers as you publish yourself
- ✓ Access to new results prior to publication
- ✓ Networking within the scientific community
- ✓ Influence on the science and scientific quality
- ✓ Recognition by (some) governments
- ✓ Access to Scopus/Science Direct for a month (Elsevier specific)

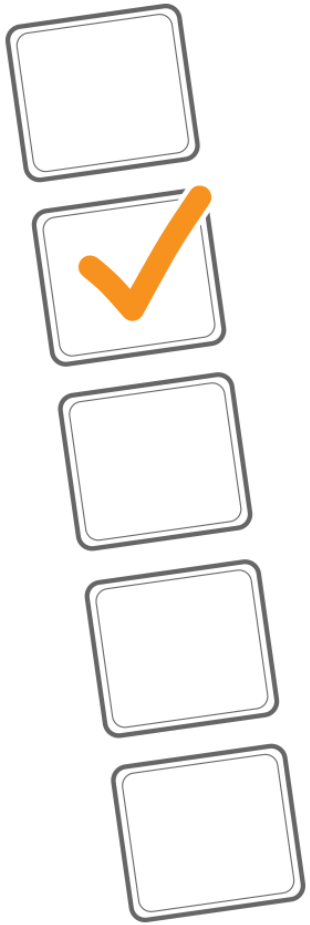
General impression and abstract

- Look at the manuscript as a whole
  - General comprehension of the manuscript
  - Language/style/grammar
  - Structure
  - Reviewer's general level of enthusiasm
- Is the Abstract included?
  - Is it a real summary of the paper?
  - Does it include the key results
  - Does it contain unnecessary information?
  - Is it too long? Journals set a limit for the number of words

Introduction

- Is it effective, clear, and well organized?
- Does it really introduce and put into perspective what follows?
- Suggest changes in organization and point authors to appropriate citations if necessarily
- Be as specific as possible when giving feedback
  - Don’t just write “the authors have done a poor job”

Assessing the methodology



- Would a colleague be able to reproduce the experiments and get the same outcome?
- Is the description of new methodology complete and accurate?
- Did the authors include proper references to previously published methodology?
- Is the sample size large enough and was it selected in an appropriate way?
- Was the data collected in accordance with accepted practice?
- Could or should the authors have included supplementary material?

Results and discussion

- Suggest improvements in the way data is shown
- Comment on general logic and on justification of interpretations and conclusions
- Comment on the number of figures, tables, and schemes
- Write concisely and precisely which changes you recommend
- List suggested style/grammar changes and other small changes separately
- Suggest additional experiments or analyses
- Make clear the need for changes/updates
- Ask yourself whether the manuscript is worth being published

Assessing the conclusions

- Comment on importance, validity, and generality of conclusions
- Request toning down of unjustified claims and generalizations
- Request removal of redundancies and summaries
- The Abstract, not the Conclusion, summarizes the study

References, tables, and figures

- Check accuracy, number, and appropriateness of citations
- Comment on tables and figures, and their quality and readability
- Comment on any footnotes
- Assess completeness of legends, headers, and axis labels
- Comment on need for color in figures
- Check presentation consistency

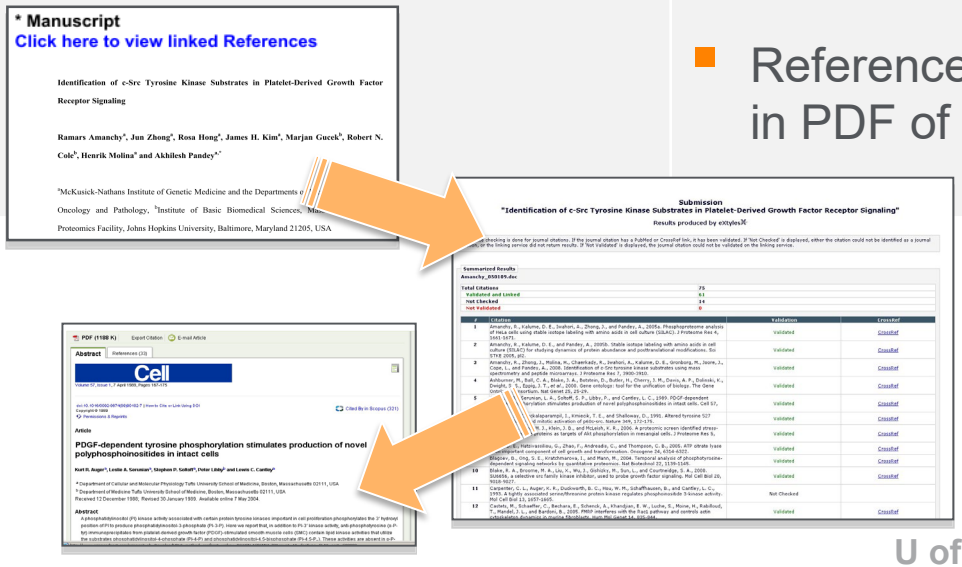
Tools for reviewers (and editors)

For Editors

- Plagiarism detection tool at time of submission
- Tool based on Scopus database to identify potential reviewers

For Reviewers

- Free access to *All content published by Elsevier*
- Free access to *The world's largest abstract and citation database*
- Reference-linking and resolution in PDF of the manuscript



Publishing Connect

Editors' view: what makes a good reviewer?

- Provides an objective, thorough, and comprehensive report
- Provides well-founded comments for authors
- Gives constructive criticism
- Provides a clear recommendation to the Editor
- Submits the report on time

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