

# Writing and Publishing Journal Papers: *Why, How, Tips, Techniques and Targets*

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# Outline

- 1 Editors and the Editorial Board
- 2 Getting Started
- 3 Writing a Journal Paper
- 4 Submitting your Paper
- 5 The Review Process
- 6 The Re-Review Process
- 7 Dealing with Rejection

# Are you ready to write a paper for a refereed journal?

## A Checklist

Are you ready? Ask yourself:

- Is the State-of-the-Art clear to me?
- Can I write a brief review of my research area?
- Do I have a contribution to the State-of-the-Art now?
- Have I agreed authorship with any collaborators and my supervisor? Ethics!

If the answer is yes to all the above then you may proceed!  
Start by sketching out the structure of your paper: sections, subsections and title

# Are you ready to submit a paper to a refereed journal?

How does it work?

What are:

- Editors
- Editorial Board Members
- Publishers
- Journal Status and Pecking Order
- Reviewers
- Review Times
- Reviewing the Status of Journals

What do Editors' do?

# Editor's Role

Before you even start

The Editors' role is to:

- 1 Encourage submission of high quality papers
- 2 Decide and Revise the "Aims and Scope" of the journal
- 3 Act as the Journal "Gatekeeper" to:
  - Ensure papers are within the "Aims and Scope"
  - Improve or maintain the Journal's indices
  - Maintain the Journal Editorial Board
  - Manage the journal review process generally using an online system
  - Liase with Co-Editors to achieve the above
  - Liase with the Journal Publisher and the Journal Manager to ensure that the process runs smoothly

# What is the role of the Editorial Board

## Board members

- 1 Are appointed by the Editors
- 2 Listed on the journal homepage - typically between 40 and 100 members
- 3 Selected for their knowledge in areas included in the "Aims and Scope" of the journal
- 4 Review papers for the journal (typically 20 a year)
- 5 Advise Editors on current research matters in their areas of expertise

Before you begin writing

# Important Questions

Before you even start

Ask yourself why you are writing this paper?

- 1 Who asked you to write a paper?
- 2 What are your time scales?
- 3 Who do you want to read your paper?
- 4 Can you contribute to the State-of-the-Art?
- 5 You are making an investment in time. Make sure you give enough time and attention to detail to be successful!

Keep your answers in mind throughout the writing and submission process.

Where can I get the exposure that I need?

# Selecting a Journal

## Making a Start

- Look where other related papers have been published
- If there are no related papers do you have an audience?
- Ask supervisors, co-workers, colleagues and mentors
- Look at journal indices found on the paper homepage:

Computers and Structures	CAS - 2018	CAS -2019
Impact Factor	2.887	3.354
Cite Score	3.55	3.91
5 year Impact Factor	3.362	3.575

  

Advances in Eng Software	ADES - 2018	ADES - 2019
Impact Factor	3.198	4.194
Cite Score	4.06	4.93
5 year Impact Factor	2.948	4.251

Do not be either concerned or too encouraged by **slight** falls/rises in the level of these indices on an annual basis



Where can I get the exposure that I need?

- Read the aims and scope of journals as published on the journal homepage.
- Check that the journal is still publishing papers in your area
- Look at some sample issues in print or online

*Selecting your target journal is an important part of the process: Get it wrong and you could waste weeks or months.*

From the Authors' perspective

# Selecting a Journal

## Getting it wrong

- 1 Many papers do not make it to the review stage
- 2 Many are submitted to the wrong journal - "Out of Scope"
- 3 There are many careless submissions with mistakes in content and the submission process  
e.g. Not completing the online submission forms and fields fully and correctly
- 4 Read and digest the home pages of the journals  
e.g. ADES is "Advances in Engineering Software" not "Advances in Software Engineering"
- 5 Special Considerations relating to "null" research :  
<https://www.statnews.com/2017/11/10/null-research-findings/>

Read the Aims and Scope of journals as published on the journal homepage.

From the Authors' perspective

# Ethics are important

## Getting it wrong

- 1 Do not submit the same paper to more than one journal at the same time?
- 2 Self Plagiarism: republishing content
- 3 Plagiarism: republishing the content of others
- 4 Copyright: Figures, Photographs, Data: Ask for permissions from the copyright holder
- 5 Committee on Publication Ethics: COPE:  
<https://publicationethics.org/>
- 6 Warning: Paper withdrawal after publication is a disaster!

From the Editor's perspective

# Selecting a Journal

## Reviewers and Editors Overloaded

Journals, Editors and Reviewers are overloaded with papers doing the rounds of numerous journals:

<b>Computers &amp; Structures</b>					
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Submissions:	1192	1317	1395	1379	898
Accepted Papers:	203	175	186	131	84
Percent:	17	13	13	9.5	9.4
<b>Advances in Engineering Software</b>					
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Submissions:	1090	1040	937	1083	638
Accepted Papers:	108	133	148	131	53
Percent:	10	13	16	12	8.3

If we allocate referees to all papers then we would need, for just these two journals, around 5,000 reviews for the rejected papers. Editors seek to avoid this and the consequent delay by making many "desk rejects".

From the Editor's perspective

# Selecting a Journal

## Common Submission Faults

Common Submission Faults that can cause delay:

- Failure to enter full address into the submission system
- Failure to make an appropriate claim in the abstract
- Failure to select appropriate keywords
- Failure to give enough attention to the highlights
- Problems with English so paper is not ready for review; non-native speakers should be aware that lack of definite and indefinite articles can make papers unreadable!

"Your Paper - Your Way" frequently misinterpreted as a green-light for anything goes! It goes nowhere other than "desk rejects" and "longer reviewer times". If your paper is not in tip top condition then reviewers simply decline to review or give up after reading a few pages.

Reviewers do not like to be used as "Copy Editors"!

# Parametric Studies

Is my paper suitable for Journal Publication?

- Parametric Studies are not suitable for journals such as ADES and CAS
- More suitable for Society Journals (ASCE, ICE, ASME, IMechE, etc.)
- and Conference Presentations

Not all conference papers make journal papers.

Check the journal aims and scope!

# Hints, Tips and Ideas

## Making a Start

Think about your overall structure in terms of the aims and scope of your target journal

- review and re-read your drafts
- ask colleagues to review and read the draft before you submit
- put the draft in your desk draw and rest the paper - then review again with fresh eyes prior to submission.

Spend more time on this and you can reduce the review and revision times significantly!

# Hints, Tips and Ideas

## Some overall hints

- Avoid Salami slicing - it rarely works!
- Avoid Submissions in multiple parts
- Make sure your paper is as perfect as it can be!
- You may not be a native English speaker - but get help if you need it
- Make sure that you show respect for the process - if you cannot then don't bother submitting
- Avoid referring to work that has not been published or is under review - reviewers will question if the paper is novel or part of some other paper that is being considered at the same time elsewhere



# Style is everything

## Some overall hints

Some recent examples:

- "The finite element analysis was brought up"
- "We put forward a finite element method which" - what does "put forward" mean
- "This paper deals with..." - dealing is something else
- "This paper attempts to ...." - papers do not attempt anything - not interested in attempts only contributions to the relevant state of the art

Register and Style are important! If your paper sounds and looks scientific then you have passed the first hurdle!

# Hints, Tips and Ideas

## Essential Paper Parts -1: Title & Names

- Paper Title: Make sure the title clearly encompasses your topic
  - Succinct but clear
  - Good English - the best!
  - Not flippant or asking a question (Titles that ask a question directly are not appropriate for journals, only conferences)
  - The title should not be used to define acronyms - avoid undefined abbreviations
  - Avoid words like "novel" and "new" save these for the abstract
- Author Names:
  - Make sure that you have all the names and in the correct order before you submit.
  - May be difficult and time consuming to change after review! Sometimes impossible!

# Hints, Tips and Ideas

## Essential Paper Parts -2: Abstract

- Abstract:
  - Probably the most important part of your submission
  - Will be read by potential reviewers to see if they would like to review, then by readers who may cite your paper!
  - Will be read by Editor and if the claim for journal publication is not clear then may end up as a "Desk Reject"
  - English must be tip-top: Near perfect
  - Do not put text that should be in the introduction in the abstract! This is a common fault! Do not pad out your abstract!
  - If the contribution to knowledge and the state of the art is not clear then the submission will be rejected.
  - Please Ask Yourself: "Have I made it absolutely clear what I am claiming is the justification for journal publication?"
  - Have I said what is new, innovative or novel?

# Hints, Tips and Ideas

## The Claim

When drafting "the claim":

- Avoid talking about aims
- Do talk about your achievements - contribution to knowledge  
- new methods - contribution to the State-of-the-Art
- New domains of applications for existing techniques where some innovation has occurred
- Must demonstrate that any solutions presented are correct!  
(Not possible to say - "that the modelling is unique and therefore no method is available for comparison")
- No parametric studies! But maybe uncovering new knowledge with an existing method

# Hints, Tips and Ideas

## Essential Paper Parts -3: Highlights & Keywords

Think about your overall structure in terms of the aims and scope of your target journal:

- Highlights:
  - Very Important to encourage readers
  - May significantly increase the possibility of being cited by other authors
- Keywords:
  - General to specific
  - Do not use abbreviations or acronyms in the keywords - makes searching for your paper easier
  - Do test your key words in Scopus to see if they identify other papers on similar topics
  - Important to ensure that your paper can be found and then cited!

# Hints, Tips and Ideas

## Essential Paper Parts -4: The Paper

This is the most important part of your submission. The paper structure is generally of the form:

- Introduction:
  - Include a up-to-date review of previous work
  - Discuss the content of your paper with other publications:  
Where were they published? Is your target journal correct?
  - Explain (in general terms) how your method (or contribution) etc. is new with respect to the State-of-the-Art
- Method and Problem Details: New problems solved with new procedures and methods that have not been addressed before!
- Results: Verification of new methods by comparison with existing techniques, model or full-scale tests on prototypes.
- Discussion: Must relate methods to results and possibly the State-of-the-Art
- Conclusion: Most important - should link back to the Introduction

# Hints, Tips and Ideas

## Essential Paper Parts -5: End Matter

Remember: If the structure is not appropriate your contribution will not be clear. If the English is not good the reviewers may give up and abandon their review resulting in delays - or rejection of the paper

- Make sure you refer to every figure in the text: If you do not refer to a figure it is not required and should be deleted.
- If you want to include a figure then it should be important enough to mention it in the text
- References: complete and sufficient details, so that the referee can find them if required.
- Acknowledgments: Ethics!

Take care to cite your own recent papers and declare any overlap in contents, which should be kept to an absolute minimum!

# Hints, Tips and Tricks

## Online Submission

- 1 Fill in the online submission form fully, correctly and honestly (Ethics!)
- 2 Referee Suggestions: Do take this seriously! Some ideas:
  - You should not have published papers or books with the persons proposed
  - Ideally two of the persons should be members of the CAS editorial board
  - The reviewers proposed should not be Editors of the journal or any other journal
  - International journal and therefore international referees
- 3 Make sure you enter the highlights into the online form: Draft these carefully beforehand!
- 4 Number the pages but not the lines (for an Elsevier system)
- 5 Do complete your account details in full for the submission procedure

*Don't make your submission stand out in an inappropriate way! Don't be sloppy!*



# Procedures and Targets

## How it works

How the review procedure works:

- 1 Three referees selected from the Editorial Board, Experts and possibly your recommendations
- 2 Referees given 10 days to agree to (or decline to) review
- 3 Then a further 25-30 days to provide review - if reviewers fail to review then can take longer
- 4 Please don't hassle the Editor: the system generally does that in real time
- 5 Problem occurs when the reviewers fails to review - why?
- 6 Outcomes: Accept (very rare), Major Revisions, Revise, Minor Revisions, Reject (may resubmit), Reject (no re-submission)
- 7 Please read the decision letter very carefully: Even if your paper is declined it will say if this is a final decision or your paper can be extensively revised and then resubmitted
- 8 If one reviewer recommends rejection then this usually results in a rejection: Unless the review is flawed for some reason

# Strategy for the Re-review Process

## How to proceed

Remember: Very few papers are accepted outright so expect the reviewers to find something for you to fix!

- 1 Respond to the reviewers fully: Attitude is everything!
- 2 Include a narrative with copies of the reviews indicating where every change has been made in the paper (ie. page 4, line 3....)
- 3 Include a marked-up copy of the paper with the changes highlighted
- 4 Include a final unmarked (clean) copy of your paper
- 5 The Editor will usually allocate the same reviewers if possible.

# What if the paper is finally rejected

## Review and Re-write

How to deal with rejection:

- 1 Do study the reviewer and editor comments carefully
- 2 If not invited to resubmit then try another journal. Try the Elsevier Journal Finder:  
<https://journalfinder.elsevier.com/>
- 3 But please remember you may get the same reviewers: so do fix all the reviewer points in your next version before resubmitting
- 4 Review and re-write, Review and re-write, Review and re-write,
- 5 Check, Check and re-check

# Presentation and Special Issues of the Conferences

- Some information on publishing including ethics can be found here:  
<https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com/>
- The pdf of this presentation can be found here:  
<http://www.bhvt.uk/cc2019.pdf>
- For these conferences you may submit your full paper to the special issues of either:
  - ★ *Advances in Engineering Software*:  
<https://www.journals.elsevier.com/advances-in-engineering-software>
  - ★ *Computers & Structures*:  
<https://www.journals.elsevier.com/computers-and-structures>
- Not to both journals!
- For more information on submitting papers to the special issues please see: <https://www.bhvt.uk/si2019/>