

# IOP Publishing | Academy

## Top tips on writing a paper and getting it published

Simon Harris – 3 September 2018, ICEC27-ICMC, Oxford



## Topics covered in this talk

- Introduction to IOP and IOP journals
- Why publish at all?
- Choosing your journal
- Writing your paper
- Top 10 tips for getting published
- English language tips and pitfalls
- Peer review process
- Publication ethics
- Post-acceptance
- Post-publication

# Introduction to IOP

## About IOP Publishing



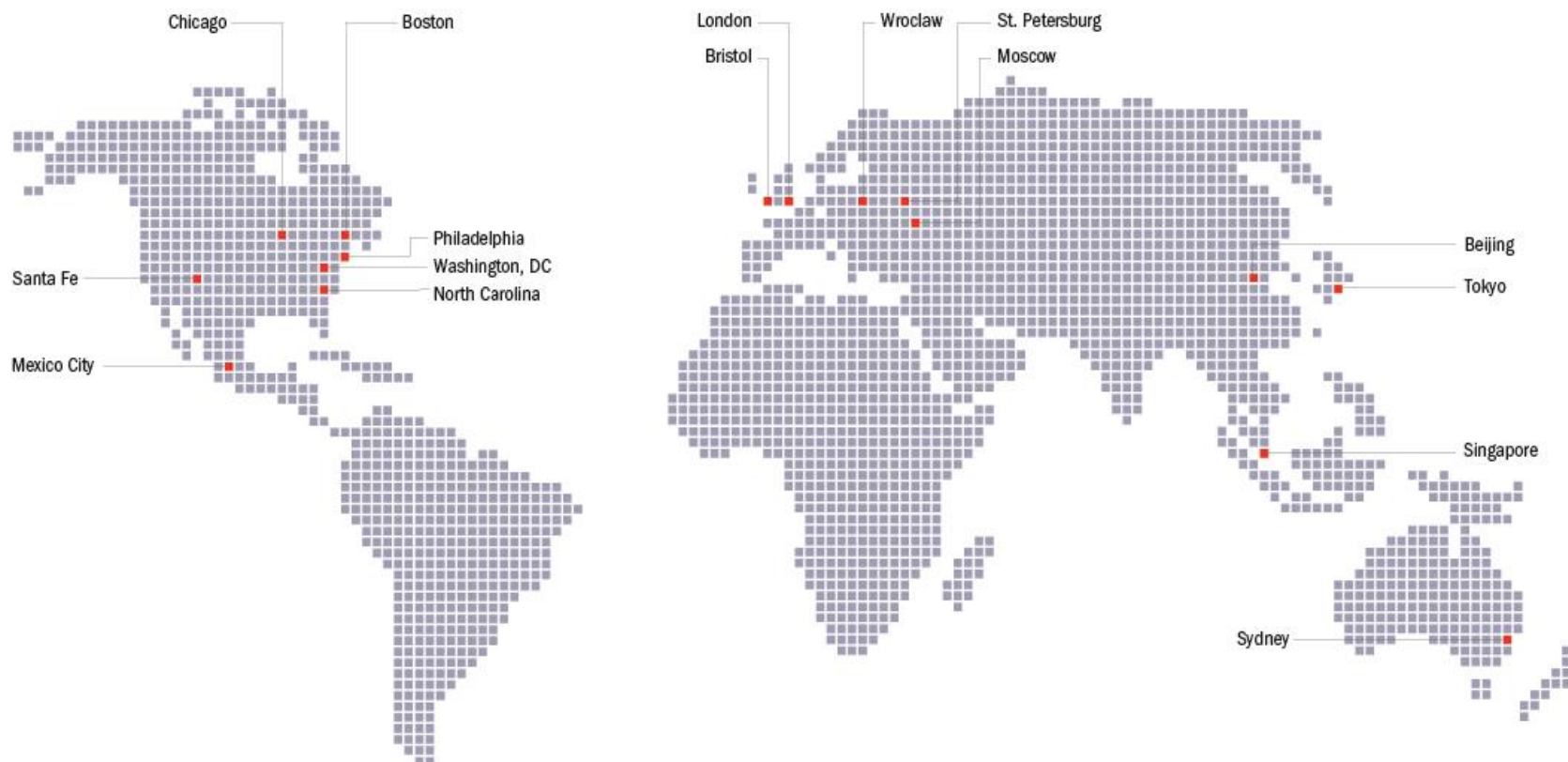
- The wholly-owned for-profit publishing subsidiary of the Institute of Physics
- All the money we make funds IOP activities
- A society publisher embedded in the community we serve
- Mission: to deliver **impact, recognition and value** to the scientific community
- Over 300 staff worldwide (HQ in Bristol, UK)
- Publisher of >80 physical science journals
- eBooks programme
- Award-winning science journalism (including *Physics World*)
- **[iopscience.iop.org](http://iopscience.iop.org)**

## About the Institute of Physics



- A leading scientific society promoting physics and physicists since 1874
- Worldwide membership of 50,000+
- Headquarters in London, UK
- Mission to advance **physics research, application and education** globally
- Engages with policymakers, schools, universities, and the general public to develop greater awareness and understanding of physics
- Most funding come from IOP Publishing
- **iop.org**

## IOP around the world



## IOP journals

- We publish more than 80 titles, many for partner organisations/societies
- Our **Journal of Physics** series is now 50 years old!
- Our publishing portfolio focuses on the following areas:
  - Applied Physics
  - Astronomy and Astrophysics
  - Atomic, Molecular and Optical Physics
  - Condensed Matter
  - Engineering/Measurement Science
  - Environmental Science
  - High Energy and Nuclear Physics
  - Materials Science
  - Mathematical Physics
  - Medical and Biological Physics/Engineering
  - Physics Education
  - Plasma Physics

## Why publish at all?

- To share your knowledge (take field forward)
- To validate your research
- To help your career and reputation
- Publishing a paper in a **peer-reviewed reputable academic journal** is the universal way in which scientists communicate their research

*“Connaître, découvrir, communiquer—telle est, au fond, notre honorable destinée”*

**“To get to know, to discover, to publish—this is the destiny of a scientist”**

— François Arago, French physicist and astronomer

*From 'De L'Utilité des Pensions', Œuvres complètes de François Arago (1855), Vol. 3, 621.*



# Choosing Your Journal

## Deciding on the right journal for your paper



- Not a decision to take lightly
- Have to work with someone you trust (not all publishers/journals can be trusted!)
- Many considerations affecting your choice (scope, reputation, visibility, speed etc)
- Affects how you put together your paper: decide **before even starting on your paper!**
- IOP mission to make it as easy as possible for you to publish your work with us
- Options to meet the needs of authors at every stage of their career (back-up journal)

## Deciding on the right journal for your paper



- Considerations:
  - Audience (your peers?)
  - Scope (niche vs broad scope?)
  - Editorial Board (recognise?)
  - Reputation
  - **Impact/visibility**
  - Quality standards/criteria
  - Likelihood of acceptance
  - Speed of publication
  - **Open access or subscription model**
  - Costs (pages/figures/APCs etc.)
- “Think, Check, Submit!” [thinkchecksubmit.org](http://thinkchecksubmit.org)

## Deciding on the right journal for your paper: Impact/visibility

- Measure of “quality”: Impact Factor

Impact Factor (2017) =  $\frac{\text{No of citations in 2017 to articles published in 2015 and 2016}}{\text{Number of articles published in 2015 and 2016}}$

e.g. *Journal X* publishes **175** articles in 2015 and **212** in 2016

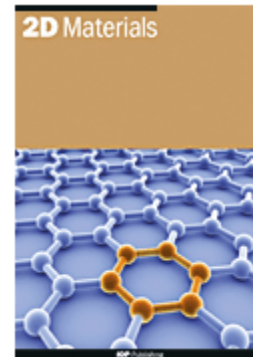
In 2017 it receives **943** citations to these articles (from across the entire literature)

**943 / (175 + 212) = 2.437** Impact Factor for 2017

- Measure of utility: download levels
- Other metrics (social media, blogs etc)



IF = 14.311



IF = 6.937



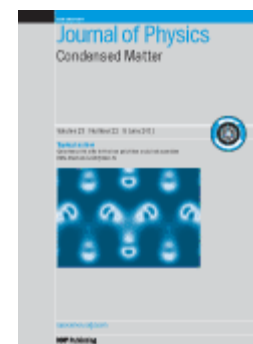
IF = 5.533



IF = 3.786



IF = 1.068



IF = 2.649

## Deciding on the right journal for your paper: Open Access

- Traditionally journals operate the **subscription model**
- (Usually) free to publish, libraries pay for access
- Authors are generally allowed to self-archive their accepted MS on a public repository (embargo period?) – **Green Open Access**
- Increase in number of pure **Gold Open Access** journals
- Final published article is made freely available upon payment of an article processing charge (APC)
- APC paid to the publisher by the author/funder
- Published under a CC-BY licence, allowing reuse
- Many journals (all IOP's subscription journals) are now "hybrid" – option of fully OA article in a subscription journal

## Once you've decided on your journal you will need to consider:

- The journal's submission requirements:
  - File formats and layout of paper
  - Article info (article type etc)
  - Author details (including co-authors), e.g. ORCID
  - Keywords for your article
  - Referee suggestions
  - Funders
  - Charges (OA, page charges?)
  - Other information (cover letter)
  - Supplementary files, e.g. data
  - Video files
  - Anonymization? (if required)

**TOP TIP: Check the journal guidelines!**

## IOP's submission requirements

- IOP aims to make the submission process as simple as possible for authors:
  - No set submission format for your manuscript
  - Any relevant supplementary data allowed
  - Can upload a file direct from the arXiv
  - **PDF only submission.** Source files (TeX/Word) only required after revision
  - Send us your compressed and archived (zip) files
- Every journal should have full information on its homepage

TOP TIP: Check the general Author guidelines!  
(<https://publishingsupport.iopscience.iop.org/>)



## Author guidelines for IOP journals

At IOP Publishing our commitment is to streamlined and efficient processes for article submission and publication, fair and impartial peer review, high standards of author service and high standards in publication ethics and scientific quality. Here we provide comprehensive guidelines covering everything from choosing the right journal, writing and submitting your article, right the way through to what happens after publication.

These guidelines apply to all [IOP owned journals and some partner journals](#). To see guidelines for other journals we manage on behalf of our partners, please see <http://iopscience.iop.org/journalList#js-tab-pubpart>.

### Step by step guide

1

#### Choosing the right journal for your work

It may be tempting to begin writing a paper before giving much thought to where it might be published. However we explain here the importance of choosing the right journal first and the key factors to consider.

+ Choosing the right journal to target before you write your paper

+ Article transfer service

2

#### Writing your journal article

If you are thinking of writing an article for submission to a journal published by IOP Publishing, please read this section first. It may save you time formatting your article and improve your chances of being published.

+ What we look for in your article

+ Can I submit an article that has been posted as a Preprint?



#### 1. Choosing the right journal for your work

2. Writing your journal article

3. How to submit your journal article

4. The review process on our journals

5. Getting a first decision on your article

6. Writing and submitting your revised article

7. From acceptance through to publication of your article

8. After publication of your article



## Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter



*Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter* covers the whole of condensed matter physics including soft condensed matter and nanostructures. Papers may report experimental, theoretical or simulation studies.

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[Number 44, 8 November 2017 \(440301-449501\)](#)

Issue in progress

[Number 43, 1 November 2017 \(43LT01-439501\)](#)

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<input type="radio"/>	<b>Special Issue Article</b>	Invited articles which will form a special collection of papers on a specific theme.
<input type="radio"/>	<b>Topical Review</b>	Written by leading researchers in their fields, these articles present the background to and overview of a particular field, and the current state of the art. Topical review articles are normally invited by the Editorial Board.
<input type="radio"/>	<b>Tutorial</b>	Background knowledge for an audience unfamiliar with the subject. Aimed at young researchers or more experienced researchers moving into a new field, tutorials give an introduction to the topic and are more didactic than a review.

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# Writing Your Paper

## Writing Your Paper



- Before you start:
  - Assess your main results – are they **novel and important** enough? Do they fill a gap in the research literature?
  - Consider what your choice of journal requires
  - Decide on the key message of your paper
  - Prepare an outline/structure: headings, topics

## Writing Your Paper



- Structure should include:
  - Title
  - Abstract
  - Introduction
  - Methods
  - Results
  - Discussion
  - Conclusion
  - Acknowledgments
  - References
  - Figures
- Optional extra:
  - Supplementary material

## Writing Your Paper



- **Title :**
  - The **most visible** part of your paper
  - **Title:** Concise yet informative; draws attention of the reader
  - Easily **discoverable** via a Google search?

Do	Don't
Keep it simple	Be ambiguous
Be clear and descriptive	Use phrases or “jokes” that may not translate
Use key terms	Use acronyms

## Writing Your Paper

### X-ray spectromicroscopy investigation of soft and hard breakdown in RRAM devices

D Carta, P Guttman, A Regoutz, A Khiat, A Serb, I Gupta, A Mehonio, M Buokwell, S Hudziak, A J Kenyon and T Prodromakis

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Resistive random access memory (RRAM) is considered an attractive candidate for next generation memory devices due to its competitive scalability, low-power operation and high switching speed. The technology however, still faces several challenges that overall prohibit its industrial translation, such as low yields, large switching variability and ultimately hard breakdown due to long-term operation or high-voltage biasing. The latter issue is of particular interest, because it ultimately leads to device failure. In this work, we have investigated the physicochemical changes that occur within RRAM devices as a consequence of soft and hard breakdown by combining full-field transmission x-ray microscopy with soft x-ray spectroscopic analysis performed on lamella samples. The high lateral resolution of this technique (down to 25 nm) allows the investigation of localized nanometric areas underneath permanent damage of the metal top electrode. Results show that devices after hard breakdown present discontinuity in the active layer, Pt inclusions and the formation of crystalline phases such as rutile, which indicates that the temperature increased locally up to 1000 K.

doi:10.1088/0957-4484/27/34/345705 [References](#)

- **Abstract:**
  - Your shop window!
  - **Summarises whole paper** into one paragraph (<300 words)
  - Should include your key result:  
**What did you achieve?**

Do	Don't
Include key words and phrases	Copy your introduction
Be clear about what makes this paper worth reading	Use jargon, undefined acronyms or words not commonly used
Summarise aims, methodology and findings	Exaggerate or mislead



## Writing Your Paper



- The **introduction** should:
  - Establishes the **background** to your study
  - Describe the **main goals** and advances
  - Give an overview of methods
  - Set the work in the **context** of previous research
  - Cite all **relevant** references
- **Methods** need to:
  - Give enough information about what you did to allow **reproduction** of your results

## Writing Your Paper



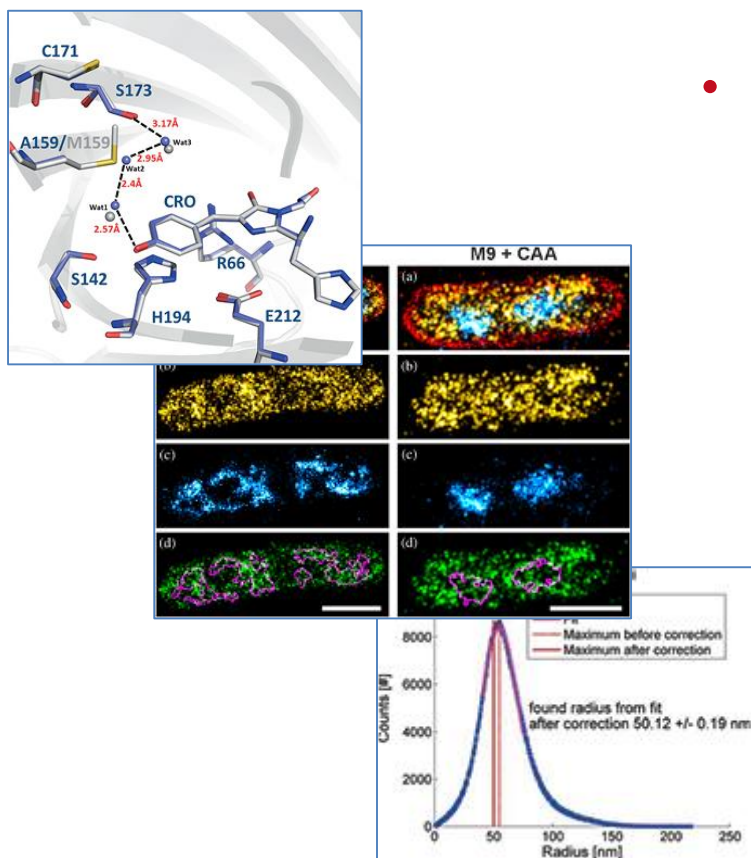
- **Results and discussion** need to:
  - State the **main** findings/results
  - Show the **significance and impact** of your results
  - **Compare** results with other published work
  - Discuss the **implications and applications**
- Your **conclusion** needs to:
  - **Summarize** your major points
  - **Highlight** the novelty and significance of your work
  - Include your **plans** for future work

## Writing Your Paper

- **Acknowledgements:**
  - **Must** recognize the **contribution of funders** or other assistance
  - Declare any **ethical approval** for use of animals, stem cell etc.
- **References:**
  - Cite the **right** references (relevant to the work; what you have built on)
  - Original works both historical and recent
  - Check for **accuracy**
  - Follow the reference **style** of the journal; if there isn't one, just be consistent



## Writing Your Paper



- **Figures, tables, diagrams, charts:**
  - Representative, **clear**, well designed
  - Use caption to ensure figures are **self-contained**. Include key terms and avoid acronyms if possible.

**TOP TIP** – consider how the figures could be used post-publication

- Possible journal cover image
- To illustrate a news item
- On Twitter, Facebook, blog
- Posters and marketing materials

## Writing Your Paper



- **Get feedback and comments on your paper before submission**
  - Your supervisor
  - Other colleagues
  - Internal review
- Make changes following their input
- This will save time in peer review process!
- Get help from a fluent English speaker if you need it
- <http://editing.iopscience.iop.org>

# IOP's TOP 10

**Tips for successfully writing up your research**

## Do...

1. Check the literature for similar results in your field at the outset.
2. Use references that show context of your work and why it is new and significant
3. Decide whether you are writing for a specialist or non-specialist audience (your paper must be easy for that audience to understand)
4. Choose which journal you want to publish in before writing your paper
5. Spend a lot of time on your title and abstract (write this last) – this will be what most people will see first. And judge your work on!

## Do...

6. Keep **abbreviations** or technical terms to a minimum or clearly define them at first use
7. **Avoid speculation**, exaggeration or anecdotes – keep to the facts and clearly state your conclusions
8. Keep it clear and **concise** – even when there are no word limits – and **use your own words**
9. Allow plenty of time for **rewriting**
10. Get **feedback** from colleagues before submitting your article



# English language tips and pitfalls

## Elements of good writing (plain English):

1. Know what you want to say first!
2. Be **clear**; use good grammar (it doesn't need to be perfect, but does need to be **understandable**!)
3. Use short, **concise sentences** to hold the readers attention, and **everyday words** (plain English)
4. Should be **accessible** to the (international) audience (important to avoid colloquial terms)
5. With more international collaborations, language is becoming more standard

## Top plain English tips:

1. Avoid big words (e.g. say “end” instead of “terminate”; “tiny” instead of “miniscule”)
2. Avoid wordy phrases (e.g. say “during” rather than “during the course of”; say “if” rather than “in the event that”!)
3. Remove **redundant** words (e.g. say “essential” rather than “absolutely essential”; “history” instead of “past history”!)

## Example:

“During the course of the election the two campaigns combined into one, clearly affecting the final outcome.”

“During the election the two campaigns combined, clearly affecting the outcome.”

## Often confused words:

Affect	(v) to change or influence
Effect	(n) result or outcome

Accept	receive willingly; consent to
Except	to exclude; not including

Ability	power to do something
Capacity	the amount that something can contain or produce

Include	have as a part (typically an incomplete listing)
Comprise	consist of (implies a complete listing)

e.g.	for example
i.e.	that is; in other words

Data	is plural, so takes the plural verb form (e.g. “the data show that...”)
------	---

## Verb tenses in journal papers:

Use the **present tense** for established facts, **general** statements about the whole field, descriptions of figures, and **generalisations** based on results, e.g.

*“Childhood obesity **is** known to be one risk factor for adult obesity. ”*

*“This study **suggests** changes to how behaviour modification therapy **is currently being used** in the treatment of PTSS.”*

Use the **past tense** to refer to **specific** experiments/results, works and references, e.g.

*“Of the 500 subjects who **were** originally in the study, 385 **were** observed in a follow-up study.”*

*“Chemical, electrical and structural modifications of the implant surface at the nanoscale level **were** shown to alter cell attachment [21].”*

## Use of prepositions (precede a noun and express a relation):

Complete the sentence using: [in/from/on/by/with/of](#)

1. As can be seen \_\_\_\_\_ figure 4, earnings have decreased.
2. As revealed \_\_\_\_\_ figure 2, the lightweight materials performed best.
3. As described \_\_\_\_\_ the previous page, there are two common types.
4. As can be seen \_\_\_\_\_ a comparison of the two tables...
5. As is often the case \_\_\_\_\_ materials \_\_\_\_\_ this type, small cracks pose a serious problem.

## Preposition use:

Complete the sentence using: **in/from/on/by/with/of**

1. As can be seen **in/from** figure 4, earnings have decreased.
2. As revealed **in/by** figure 2, the lightweight materials performed best.
3. As described **on** the previous page, there are two common types...
4. As can be seen **by/from** a comparison of the two tables...
5. As is often the case **with** materials **of** this type, small cracks pose a serious problem.

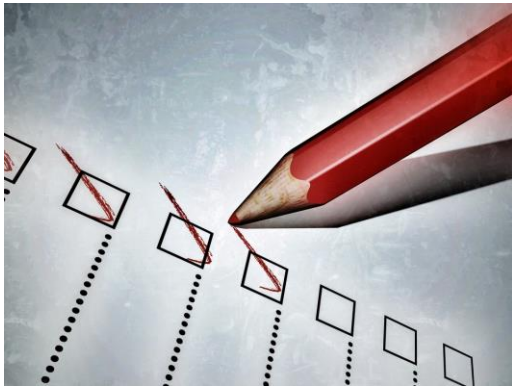
<http://editing.iopscience.iop.org> (IOP editing services)

<https://www.editage.com/insights> (support materials)

# Peer Review Process



## Peer Review



- *The process whereby experts in the field assess an academic paper before deciding whether or not it should be published*
  - **Vital** part of publishing
  - Critical filter for millions of research papers written every year
  - Gives the scientific community and the public a **reliable indicator** on what to believe
  - Gives authors feedback that can help to **improve a paper**
  - Helps editors decide what to publish

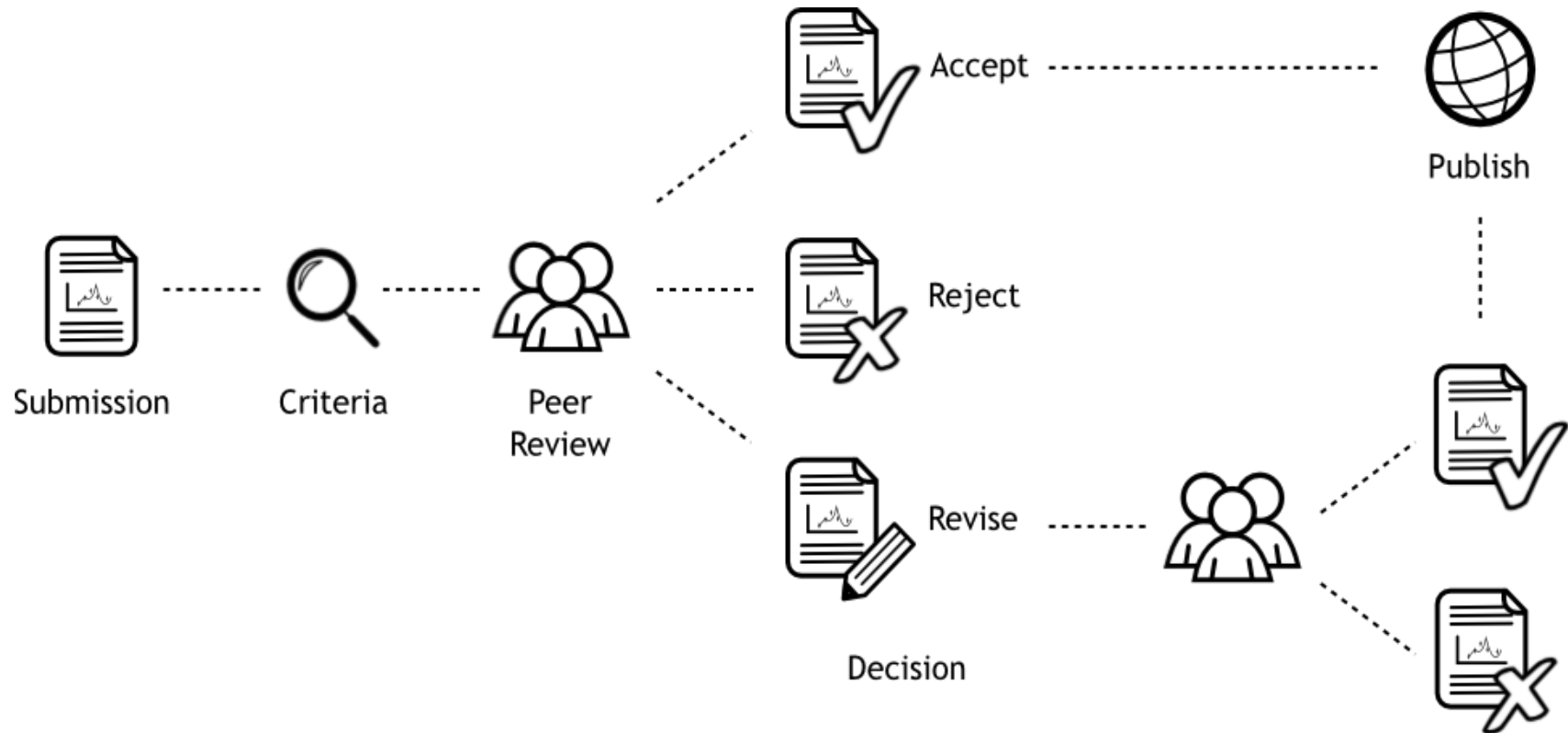
## Peer review models

### Different types of peer review


- Single-blind (most common in physics)
- Double-blind
- Open review/open reports
- Collaborative
- Post-publication

**Check what type of peer review your chosen journal offers!**

## Peer review process

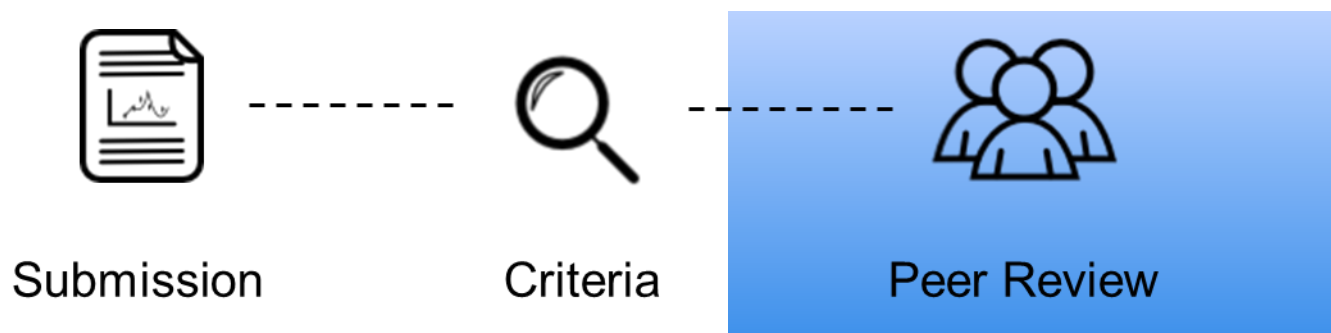


## Peer review: 'Pre-refereeing'

- The IOP editorial team review **all** submissions first
  - Check English, scope, quality of content and novelty (incremental?)
  - Use  **iThenticate**® to detect plagiarism or duplication
  - Consult the journal's Editorial Board if necessary
  - If the paper is not suitable it will be rejected (**or a transfer offered**) at this stage
  - Otherwise it will be sent to referees

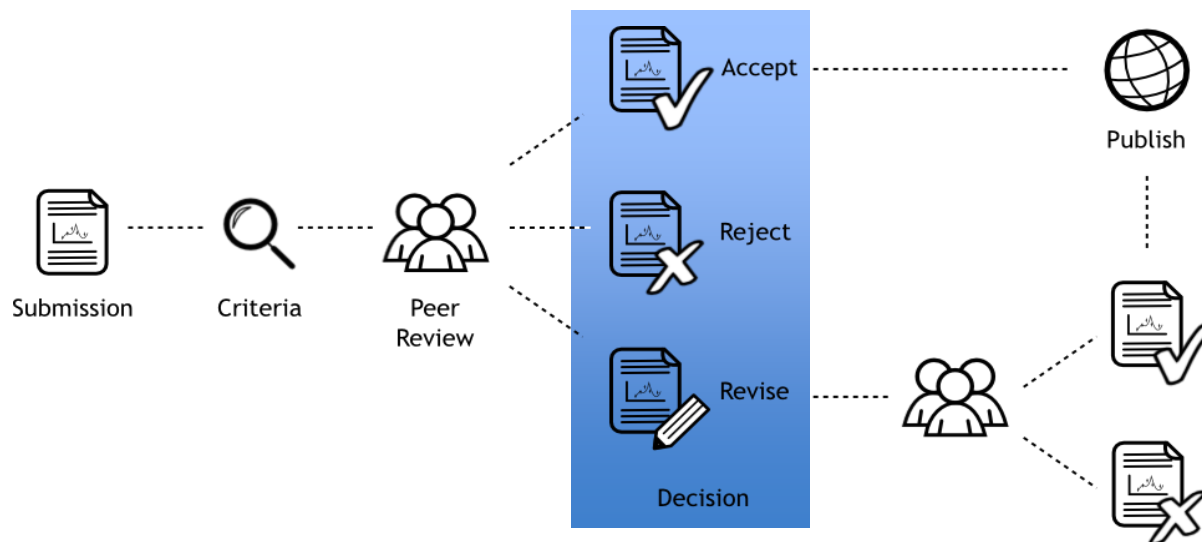


## Peer review: referee selection



- Referees are chosen based on:
    - Subject expertise
    - Independence
    - Availability
    - Reliability (previous record)
    - Author suggestions considered
  - Authors don't know who the referee is
  - Referee knows who the author is
  - Double-blind option for our Express titles
- } Single-blind

## Peer review: Making a first decision

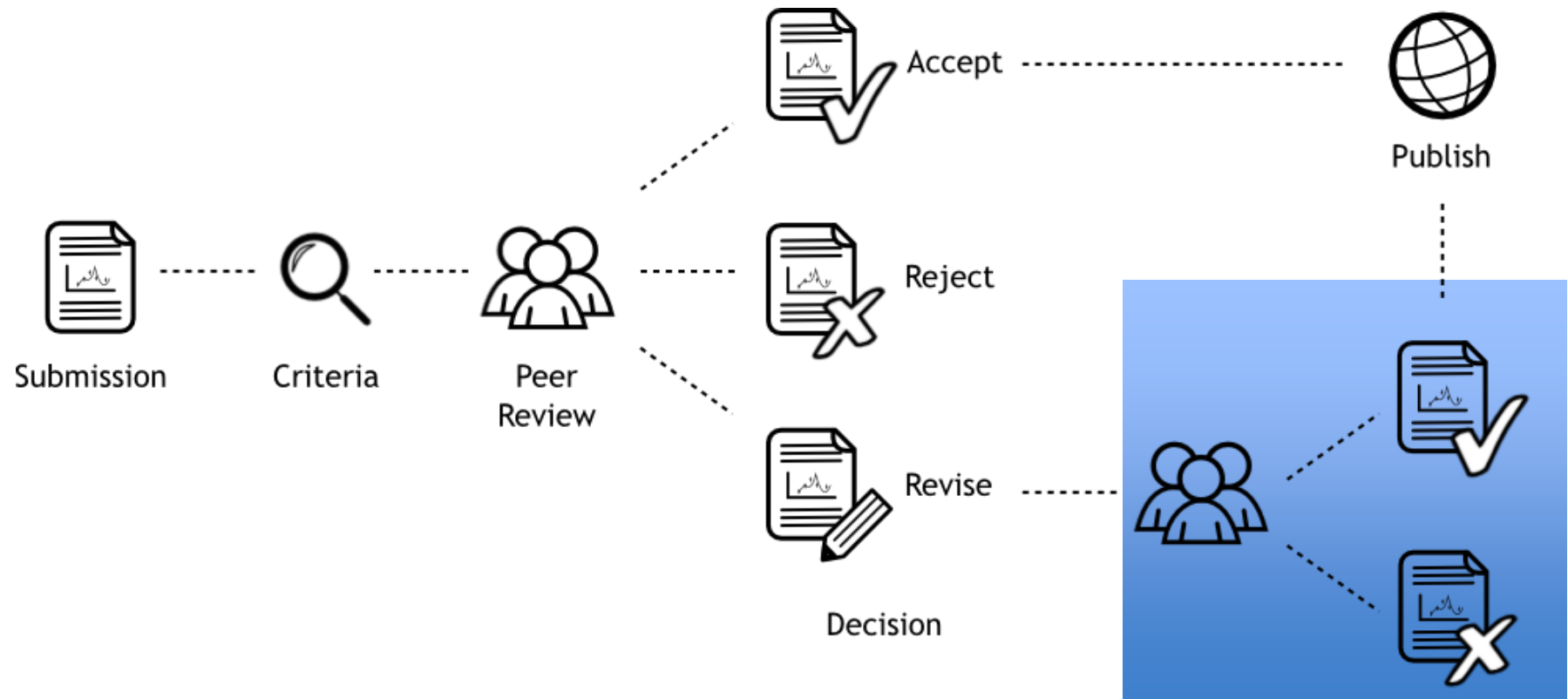


- Normally require at least **two referee reports** (Adjudicator consulted if the two referees disagree) – typically takes a month or two
- IOP referees are asked to rate **Scientific rigour**, **Novelty** and **Significance**
- Decision is made by the IOP editorial team based on the referee reports
- Immediate acceptance is unusual but does happen
- Often ask authors for revisions based on the referees' comments/requests
- **Rejection rate can be high** - 50%+ common in high-quality journals (**transfer?**)

## Peer review: responding to referees' comments

- **Being asked to revise is a great sign!** It means the referees see merit in your work and it fits this journal
- Read each referee's report carefully (**take some time!**)
- Respond to each and **every** comment specifically
- Keep a list of all your changes and **highlight them in the revised manuscript**
- If you disagree with the referees, clearly (and politely!) explain why
- Never ignore a comment (if don't understand then raise a query with editorial office)
- This is free advice - use it!

## Peer review: following revision



- Paper will be accepted if the referees are satisfied with the revisions
- ...or may be rejected if the revisions are not strong enough
- ...or you may be asked to make further revisions!



## Peer review: what if your paper is rejected?

- Almost **everyone** has experienced this!
- Use the advice you received to improve your paper
- You can re-write your paper and re-submit it to another journal (assuming the science is correct!)
- Different tiers of journals are available
- If you think the decision was wrong most journals give you an opportunity to appeal (within 1 month?)

## What if your paper is accepted?

- You will receive an acceptance letter - congratulations!



- Check if the journal needs you to do anything now; **you may need to:**
  - Sign copyright form (assigns copyright to the publisher)
  - Provide proof of permissions for any reproduced figures
  - Upload the source files (TeX/Word) for your manuscript

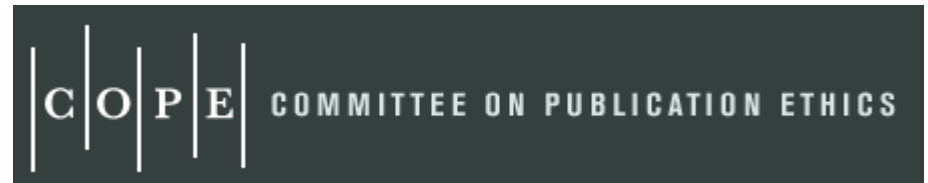
# Publication ethics

## Publication ethics

- Examples of serious misconduct: plagiarism, falsification/fabrication of data
- We routinely use iThenticate, a plagiarism detection tool, on submissions



- IOP is a member of COPE, the Committee for Publication Ethics – gives advice on handling misconduct cases



- Read our ethical policy for authors at:  
<https://publishingsupport.iopscience.iop.org/ethical-policy-journals/>
- Top ten tips on publishing ethically...

## Do

- Be honest in making claims for the results and conclusions of your research
- Credit all those that have made a significant contribution
- Check your funder's copyright/open access policy
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest
- Get permission to re-use anything you haven't created yourself
- Respond to all reviewer's comments, even if you don't agree

## Don't

- Fabricate, falsify or misrepresent data or results!
- Submit an article to more than one journal at a time
- Add someone as a co-author without their permission
- Sign any forms on behalf of your co-authors unless you are authorized to do so
- Copy and paste text from other articles (including your own) – this may be classed as (self) plagiarism or duplicate publication
- Take any criticisms of your work from referees personally!

# Post-acceptance

## What happens after acceptance?

- Your Accepted Manuscript will be made available online within 24 hours of acceptance (if opted in)
- So you can promote your work to your peers as soon as it is accepted (email, social media etc)!
- An earlier opportunity for your research to be read **and cited** (citable DOI)



## Proof stage through to publication

- Your paper will be edited to meet the format of the journal (usually including an edit for English)
- You will be asked to **carefully check** the proof of your paper
- This is your **last chance** to make any (minor) corrections!
- Your corrections will be made and the **paper published online**; final version replaces Accepted Manuscript (same DOI)
- You will be informed and sent a link to your published paper
- Print publication will follow some time later (if the journal is printed!)

# Post publication: Impact and visibility

## Post publication: author promotion


There are things **you** can do to help your paper be read and cited more!

- **Contact colleagues** in your field and people you've referenced (send link to paper) – they'll be delighted!
- Use your **social media** (Twitter is recommended)
- **Blog**
- Update your institutional **homepage**
- Use your institution's **press office**
- Promote your publication at **conferences**
- Engage with **Kudos** - [www.growkudos.com](http://www.growkudos.com) - it's free!
- We also play our part...



## Post publication: publisher promotion

Examples of things IOP may do to help your paper be read and cited more:

- Promote as part of subject **collections** and annual highlights collections
- Highlight interesting work using **social media** (e.g. Twitter) 
- **Journalistic coverage** of high-interest papers, including in Physics World
- We also **press release** newsworthy papers – great publicity for authors!
- Here's a nice example ...

## Post publication: Video Abstract

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## Quantifying the consensus on anthropogenic global warming in the scientific literature

John Cook<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Dana Nuccitelli<sup>2,4</sup>, Sarah A Green<sup>5</sup>, Mark Richardson<sup>6</sup>, Barbel Winkler<sup>2</sup>, Rob Painting<sup>2</sup>, Robert Way<sup>7</sup>, Peter Jacobs<sup>8</sup> and Andrew Skuce<sup>2,9</sup>

Published 15 May 2013 • 2013 IOP Publishing Ltd

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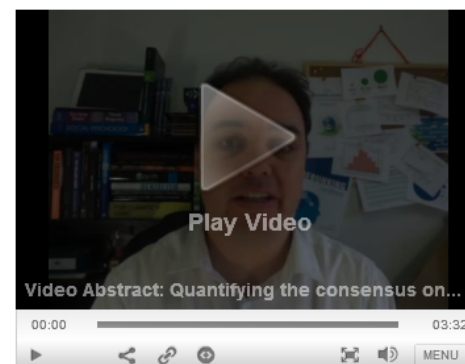
Mendeley

A perspective for this article has been published in 2013 *Environ. Res. Lett.* **8** 031003

### + Article information

#### Abstract

We analyze the evolution of the scientific consensus on anthropogenic global warming (AGW) in the peer-reviewed scientific literature, examining 11 944 climate abstracts from 1991–2011 matching the topics 'global climate change' or 'global warming'. We find that 66.4% of abstracts expressed no position on AGW, 32.6% endorsed AGW, 0.7% rejected AGW and 0.3% were uncertain about the cause of global warming. Among abstracts expressing a position on AGW 97.1%

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#### Abstract

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### Study reveals scientific consensus on anthropogenic climate change

16 May 2013 | Source: [Environmental Research Letters](#)

A comprehensive analysis of peer-reviewed articles on the topic of global warming and climate change has revealed an overwhelming consensus among scientists that recent warming is human-caused.



The study is the most comprehensive yet and identified 4000 summaries, otherwise known as abstracts, from papers published in the past 21 years that stated a position on the cause of recent global warming – 97 per cent of these endorsed the consensus that we are seeing man-made, or anthropogenic, global warming (AGW)

Led by John Cook at the University of Queensland, the study has been published today, Thursday 16 May, in IOP Publishing's journal *Environmental Research Letters*.

The study went one step further, asking the authors of these papers to rate their entire paper using the same criteria. Over 2000 papers were rated and among those that discussed the cause of recent global warming, 97 per cent endorsed the

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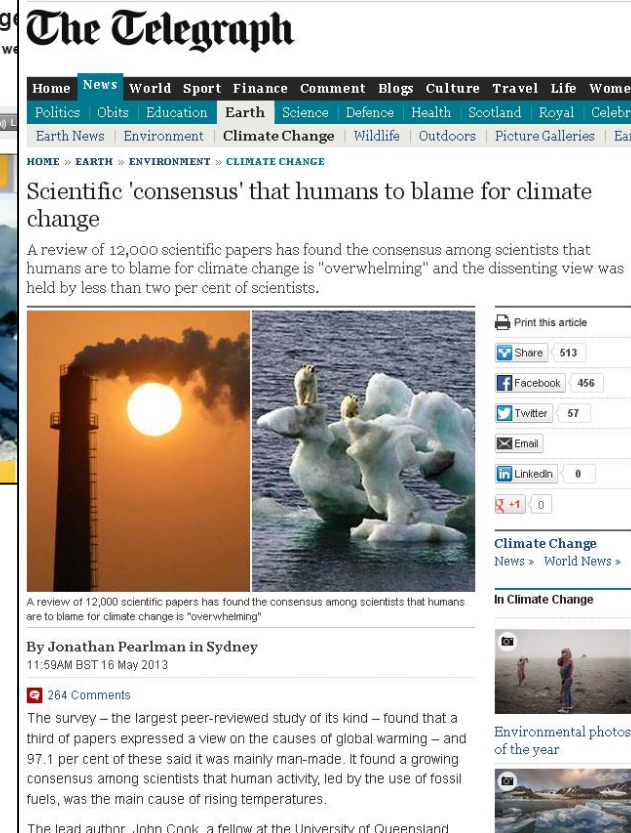
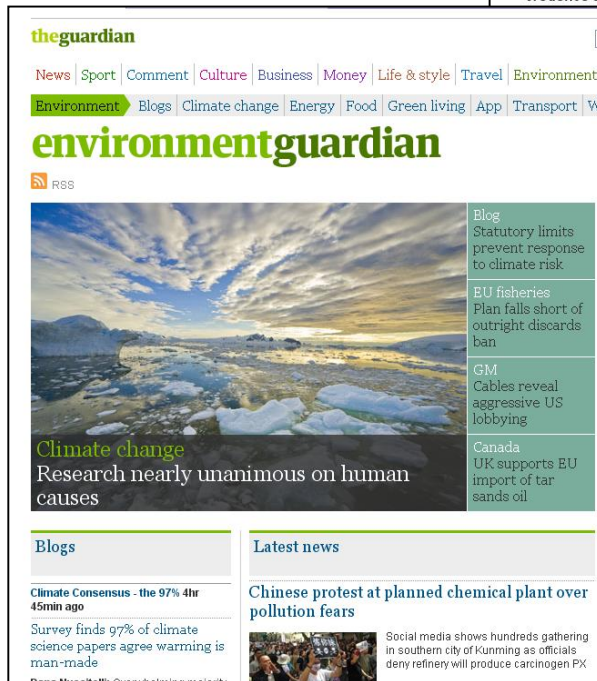
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