

How to publish in good journals

Round table discussion

moderated by Dmitri Vinogradov

HSE-Perm

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Background

My [relatively short] experience:

- ▶ most recent acceptance: 2 months ago
- ▶ most recent rejection: 2 days ago

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experiences of my colleagues + rumours

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"How to publish in top journals" by Kwan Choi
(http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~mdo738/teaching/how_to_choi.pdf)

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Joint editorial *JF*, *RFS*, *JFE*
(<http://jfe.rochester.edu/jointed13.htm>)

Choi's general observations:

- ▶ Average wait for an acceptance decision = 3 years.
- ▶ Average wait for a rejection = 6 to 8 months.
- ▶ Writing several papers in a very narrow area is risky
- ▶ Maintain a stock of papers under review constantly: If the acceptance rate of the top-ranking journals is 15%, one needs about 7 papers under review at all times to have one paper accepted per year at the targeted journals.
- ▶ Don't put two good ideas in one paper

Optimal length of the paper

If x = original length, and p = probability of acceptance, then

$$p\left(\frac{x}{2}\right) = 2p(x) + \alpha,$$

where $\alpha > 0$ and $x > 15$ pages.

The alpha (α) factor:

- ▶ Editors like short papers.
- ▶ The chance that a referee will detect a mathematical error declines.
- ▶ Referees will return the report faster.
- ▶ The chance that a referee will misunderstand the paper also decreases

Question: How to formulate a research question?

Answer: make it interesting to potential readers

- ▶ Devote half the writing time to the introduction and conclusion
- ▶ Provide evidence of why it is interesting (i.e., why it should be published) in the introduction
- ▶ most referees make up their mind at the first bite, i.e., within 15 minutes of reading a paper
- ▶ The introduction should be two pages or less
- ▶ Cite the papers of potential referees in the introduction.
- ▶ The chance that a referee will misunderstand the paper also decreases

- ▶ Did I say devote half the writing time to the introduction and conclusion?
- ▶ Write a stimulating conclusion. The referees may be interested in writing a related paper. If they are honest, they would need your paper as a basis, and hence are likely to recommend acceptance.
- ▶ **Stimulating** a reader to extend your research is your **contribution**.
- ▶ Write a provocative abstract. The referees read it more often than any other paragraph in the paper. In 15 seconds, you have to convince the referees (and readers) that they should proceed with the rest of the paper.
- ▶ Choose an interesting title

Question: how to choose a journal

Answer: present paper at conferences, send to friends/colleagues etc., ask for advice from those who comment on your paper

Question: may I submit to several journals simultaneously

Answer: NO, but you can submit to several conferences

Do NOT send your paper to top journals just in order to get feedback.

Be ambitious when you write the paper, not when you decide on the journal to submit to.

- ▶ Sit on the finished version for one week
- ▶ A typographical error on the first page of introduction or abstract indicates that the author is careless. - Referees are likely to favor rejection.
- ▶ Editors of journals that adopt the double-blind review procedure are not likely to send papers to persons mentioned in the acknowledgment.
- ▶ Do not submit two papers to the same journal in two months
- ▶ Try to find some related articles in the journal to which you wish to submit your paper.
- ▶ Use professional editorial assistance

Rejection and Revision

Question: what if the reviewer is stupid?

Answer: revise a paper to make your next reviewer smart

- ▶ If a "stupid" referee misunderstood your paper, it is your fault.
- ▶ There must be something valuable in those reports. Salvage and incorporate them freely in your paper.
- ▶ Do not get angry.
- ▶ REVISE before submitting to another journal: pool of referees is limited, editors happen to choose a referee who has previously reviewed the previous version.

Rejection and Revision

If you have an R&R:

- ▶ CONGRATULATIONS!
- ▶ Do not save your effort. Go the extra mile. You have a chance (about 50%).
- ▶ Write a detailed response to individual referees
- ▶ Indicate that you are doing everything possible and more. If you cannot accommodate the demands, thank the referee for the suggestion, but offer explanations why they are beyond the scope of the paper or why it is not possible at the time.
- ▶ Do not attack referees
- ▶ Resubmit the revised paper within three months. If you resubmit the revised version in one month, the editor may think that you have not devoted a sufficient amount of time to the revision.
- ▶ Listen to what the editor says.

So how much of this is true?

share your stories and anecdotes

this is time when you can openly speak about stupid referees