

Peer Review Manual

All submitted manuscripts received by the Editorial Office will be checked by a professional in-house *Editor* to determine whether they are properly prepared and whether they follow the ethical policies of the journal. Manuscripts that do not fit the journal's ethics policy or do not meet the standards of the journal will be rejected before peer-review. Manuscripts that are not properly prepared will be returned to the authors for revision and resubmission. After these checks, the *Editor* will consult the journals' *Editor-in-Chief* to determine whether the manuscript fits the scope of the journal and whether it is scientifically sound. No judgment on the potential impact of the work will be made at this stage. Reject decisions at this stage will be verified by the *Editor-in-Chief*.

Peer-Review Process

Once a manuscript passes the initial checks, it will be assigned to at least two independent experts for peer-review. A double-blind peer-review process is applied, where authors' identities are not known to reviewers.

In the case of regular submissions, in-house assistant editors will invite experts, including recommendations by an academic editor. These experts may also include *Editorial Board Members* and/or Guest Editors of the journal. Potential reviewers suggested by the authors may also be considered. Reviewers should not have published with any of the co-authors during the past five years and should not currently work or collaborate with any of the institutions of the co-authors of the submitted manuscript.

Reviewers should consider the following key points related to scientific content, quality and presentation of the papers:

- Technical Criteria
 - Scientific merit: notably scientific rigor, accuracy and correctness.
 - Clarity of expression; communication of ideas; readability and discussion of concepts.
 - Sufficient discussion of the context of the work, and suitable referencing.
- Quality Criteria
 - Originality: Is the work relevant and novel?
 - Motivation: Does the problem considered have a sound motivation? All papers should clearly demonstrate the scientific interest of the results.
 - Repetition: Have significant parts of the manuscript already been published?
 - Length: Is the content of the work of sufficient scientific interest to justify its length?
- Presentation Criteria
 - Title: Is it adequate and appropriate for the content of the article?
 - Abstract: Does it contain the essential information of the article? Is it complete? Is it suitable for inclusion by itself in an abstracting service?
 - Diagrams, figures, tables and captions: Are they essential and clear?
 - Text and mathematics: Are they brief but still clear? If you recommend shortening, please suggest what should be omitted.
 - Conclusion: Does the paper contain a carefully written conclusion, summarizing what has been learned and why it is interesting and useful?

All reviewers' comments must be impartial, well-founded, and respectful avoiding any personal criticism of the authors. Sticking to the facts and avoiding personal attacks is imperative.

Editorial Decision and Revision

All the articles, reviews and communications published in JDS go through the peer-review process and receive at least two reviews. The in-house editor will communicate the decision of the academic editor, which will be one of the following:

Must Accept: Candidate for outstanding submission. Suggested improvements still appropriate

Clear Accept: Content, presentation, and writing meet professional norms; improvements may be advisable but acceptable as is

Marginal Tend to Accept: Content has merit, but accuracy, clarity, completeness, and/or writing should and could be improved in time

Marginal Tend to Reject: Major effort necessary to make acceptable but content well-covered in literature already

Probable Reject: Basic flaws in content or presentation or very poorly written

Reject: Content inappropriate to the journal

The final acceptance decisions will take into account paper novelty, technical depth, elegance, practical or theoretic impact, and presentation:

- ✓ ***Soundness:*** The contributions should be supported by the rigorous application of appropriate research methods.
- ✓ ***Significance:*** The authors are expected to argue the relevance and usefulness of their research and discuss the novelty through a comparison with related works.
- ✓ ***Novelty:*** The contributions should be original and explained clearly and correctly concerning state-of-the-art.
- ✓ ***Replicability:*** The contributions will take into account the extent to which sufficient information is available to support the full or partial independent replication of the claimed findings.
- ✓ ***Presentation Quality:*** The submissions are expected to meet high standards of presentation, including the English language, avoiding ambiguities, clearly readable figures and tables, and respect of the formatting instructions.

The final acceptance for the publication in JDS takes after the Authors comply with the reviewers' suggestions for the paper quality improvement. Publishing fees or waiving status should not influence final decision-making.

Author Appeals

Authors may appeal a rejection by sending an e-mail to the Editorial Office of the journal. The appeal must provide a detailed justification, including point-by-point responses to the reviewers' and/or Editor's comments. The *Editor* of the journal will forward the manuscript and related information (including the identities of the referees) to the Editor-in-Chief, or Editorial Board member. The academic Editor being consulted will be asked to give an advisory recommendation on the manuscript and may recommend acceptance, further peer-review, or uphold the original rejection decision. A reject decision at this stage is final and cannot be reversed.

In the case of a special issue, the *Editor* of the journal will forward the manuscript and related information (including the identities of the referees) to the *Editor-in-Chief* who will be asked to give an advisory recommendation on the manuscript and may recommend acceptance, further peer-review, or uphold the original rejection decision. A reject decision at this stage will be final and cannot be reversed.

Production and Publication

Once accepted, the manuscript will undergo professional copy-editing, proofreading by the authors, final corrections, pagination, and, publication on the <https://ics.events/journal-of-digital-science/> website.