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EDITORIAL

AMS Discontinuing Expedited Contribution Article Type

Expedited Contributions (ECs) have been a feature of American Meteorological Society (AMS) journals for six years. The twin goals of ECs when they were established were to reduce the time from submission to publication of research papers and to encourage authors to develop short, concise contributions to the journals. When ECs were created, the time to initial decision was nearly 80 days, and the production time (the time between acceptance and appearance online in final form) was approximately 160 days.

Since then, the time to initial decision has been reduced to 60 days, and also the production time has decreased to around 70 days. In addition, with the introduction of Early Online Releases, papers appear online with a digital object identifier (DOI) within 10 days of acceptance. With these dramatic improvements in the efficiency of peer review and production, the AMS Publications Department has succeeded in achieving the first goal above. While the second goal will always remain something to strive for and to encourage our authors to meet, it was not the primary driver in creating ECs—reduction of production time was.

With this greater efficiency in the publication process, author interest in ECs has declined. Currently, only 6.1% of submissions arrive as ECs. One of the criteria that the AMS Publications Commission (PC) has for ECs is that they

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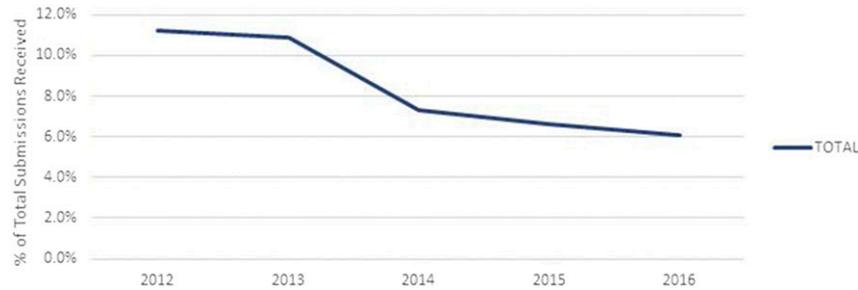


Figure 1. Trend in EC submissions by authors from 2012 to 2016.

undergo review with only minor revisions. Those with major revisions are converted to articles and moved into the regular workflow. In 2016, 34.6% of the submissions were converted or rejected. After these papers are accounted for, only 4% of all submissions are now processed through the workflow as ECs. This processing comes with a large amount of overhead in finding reviewers who are willing to return reviews in 2 weeks, a need to separate papers into two classes, and a need for AMS staff to give special attention to the ECs.

To assess the value of EC submissions, the PC undertook an analysis of the six-year history of ECs. Figure 1 shows the trend in submissions of ECs since 2012. There is clearly a declining interest in ECs from our authors. The PC also examined the difference in time to initial decision between standard articles and ECs (Figure 2). This difference declined from 29.2 to 17 days. The PC also analyzed other statistics, such as the number of reviewers who had to be invited to obtain sufficient reviewers for a manuscript, the number of days required to obtain reviewers, and the rejection rates for ECs versus standard articles.

From all of this information, the PC concluded that ECs were no longer a feature that the vast majority of AMS authors used and that they no longer served the purpose of significantly reducing the time from submission to publication of

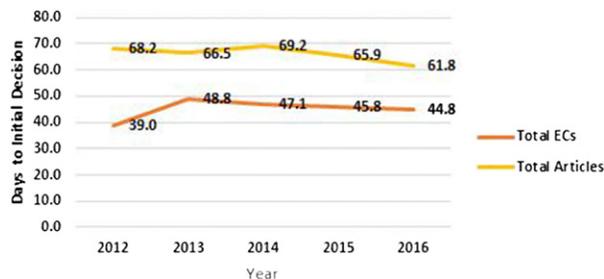


Figure 2. Trend in time to initial decision for articles and ECs from 2012 to 2016.

research papers. On the basis of the analysis, the PC voted unanimously to eliminate Expedited Contributions beginning in January 2018. All papers submitted as ECs prior to January 2018 (and accepted as ECs) will continue as ECs throughout production.

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AMS Publications Commissioner

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