

EDITORIAL

The Importance and Responsibilities of Reviewers

Scholarly publishing depends on careful evaluation of manuscripts. While editors can check the basics of a submission, they do not have the expertise to assess every manuscript that crosses their desks. Peer reviewers are subject-matter experts who volunteer their time both to advise editors on the suitability of a manuscript for publication and to provide guidance to authors in improving the accuracy and readability of their study (Schultz 2022). For these services, we as editors are truly grateful: we could not publish high-quality journals without you.

Recently, the American Meteorological Society (AMS) analyzed data about peer reviews in some of our journals. The impetus for doing so was the concern among many editors that finding willing reviewers was becoming harder and taking longer. To our pleasant surprise, the data do not show any trend about reviewer acceptance rates or the time taken to complete reviews over the past decade. Our perception appears to have been tainted by recency, confirmation, and perhaps other biases. With the data in hand, we are again grateful to all the scholars who continue to uphold the finest traditions of our field by reviewing papers when asked to do so—for no other reward than being an active and contributing member of the scientific community.

At the same time, we note that all authors need to uphold their responsibilities as part of the scholarly publication world. The peer-review process is, after all, an essential service undertaken by the community, for the community. Simply put, if you write papers, you should review papers. Since most papers submitted to AMS journals receive three reviews, simple math suggests that authors should review three papers for each one they submit. With most papers having multiple coauthors, one can debate the details of that calculation, but the fact remains that taking part in scholarly publication by writing papers should be matched by participation in peer reviewing the work of others as well.


As members of the AMS Publications Commission deeply invested in the peer-review process, we fully recognize the time, effort, and commitment that is involved. We do not ask for reviews lightly, and we recognize that not every invitation can and will be accepted. Reviewing can be yet another demand in a busy schedule, manuscripts may not be fully within one's field, and there are always reasons why preparing a review is inconvenient. Those who have to decline a review invitation should do so as quickly as possible so that the handling editor can move to the next reviewer candidate on their list. Taking the time to suggest alternative reviewers is also a huge help from recognized subject-matter experts.

We remain grateful to the more than 4000 individuals each year whose reviews make our work, and AMS journals, possible. And we encourage those who have not yet embraced their importance and responsibilities as reviewers to do so by volunteering at <https://www.ametsoc.org/index.cfm/ams/publications/editors-and-reviewers/volunteer-as-a-reviewer/>. We, your colleagues, and all AMS readers will be grateful.

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REFERENCE

Schultz, D. M., 2022: How to be a more effective reviewer. *Mon. Wea. Rev.*, **150**, 1201–1205, <https://doi.org/10.1175/MWR-D-22-0102.1>.

 Denotes content that is immediately available upon publication as open access.

DOI: 10.1175/JTECH-D-24-0109.1

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