

Publishing

TSW 2018

The Process

1. Dear colleague letter (optional)
2. The arXiv
3. Choosing a journal
4. Submitting to a journal
5. The referee process
6. Revisions (maybe)
7. The decision
8. After acceptance

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Dear colleague letter

- Write a Dear Colleagues email in order to advertise your paper to the people who will care the most (those working in that exact area, those that might write you a letter of reference, etc.) and post your article on your web site.
- There do exist mathematicians who do not like receiving such emails
- Wait for comments to come in. (Add acknowledgements as appropriate.)

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The arXiv

- Submit paper to arXiv.
- Check over paper very carefully first!
- Maybe time posting so you are at top of list of new papers(?)
- Check paper after posting (but before paper is released)
- Your source code is available!
- If your collaborator posts then they can send you a password to associate paper to your account.
- Don't revise immediately unless there is a real problem (but when there are real changes update the paper)
- Wait a week or so for comments (add acknowledgements as appropriate)

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Choosing a Journal

- Get some idea of the level of your paper, and restrict to journals of that level.
- Look at any obvious comparison papers to see where they are published.
- Find a journal with an editor that you trust to handle your paper.

Some finer points are:

Choosing a Journal

- Opinions about the level of a journal will vary surprisingly widely from field to field, from person to person.
- Unless you are under time pressure, aim a little high instead of a little low.
- Find an editor that is sympathetic to your subfield and will be able to find the right referee.
- Publications in general interest journals can be more valuable than publications in subject-specific journals of similar stature.

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Submitting to a Journal

- Depending on the journal, there are various ways you might be expected to submit your paper.
 1. Web page
 2. E-mail editor
 3. Submit paper copies(?)
- If a cover letter is required (ie e-mail submission) be professional and polite (even if you know the editor well).
- If you don't get a formal reply from the editor or journal after a few days (weeks) then e-mail the editor to make sure they go the paper.

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The referee process

- The process usually consists of
 1. Quick opinions (one or two).
 2. Full referee reports (one or two or...). More on this later.
- Tired of waiting?

The referee process

It is not the referee's job to verify that your paper is actually correct.

The referee's job is to read the whole paper, verify that the theorem seems correct, make a judgement about how qualified the paper is for the specific journal, and write one or two reports (if two then one for the editor's eyes and one for the authors' eyes).

The referee process

- Referee report for editor contains
 1. State the main results simply and comment on the quality.
 2. Explain how the paper connects to other papers or mathematicians.
 3. Describe what goes into the proof and try to identify any new or unique phenomena in the theorems or the proofs.
 4. Identify the level of interest.
 5. Comment on the quality of the exposition.
 6. *Sometimes* there is a comparisons to other papers that were published in the same (or similar) journal on the same (or similar) subject.
 7. *Sometimes* a final yes/no opinion as to whether or not I think the paper deserves publication in that journal.

The referee process

- Referee report for the author contains
 1. Some nice words, explaining what is good about the paper.
 2. Some overall comments, such as: use more signposting, avoid spaghetti code, too much notation, too sloppy, not scholarly, etc.
 3. Some general math questions, like why do you need this hypothesis in the main theorem, did you try to ...
 4. Line-by-line comments, with mathematical comments and questions, and grammatical/style comments.
 5. Might or might not include any discussion of whether I think the paper is appropriate for the journal in question.

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Revisions

- Once the editor gets the referee report(s) if they think they might want to accept the paper but the referee has questions for the author you will be asked to revise your paper according to the referee report.
- Once you do this you should return the paper along with a **detailed list of changes** (and reasons you did not make a change the referee asked for if you disagree with a suggestion) made to the journal.
- This may be repeated many times.

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The decision

- Eventually you will get an e-mail that says
 1. Your paper is accepted! Yay!!!
 2. Your paper is not accepted...sometimes with a vague reason and sometimes with feedback (from a referee).

Only under extreme circumstances should you write to appeal a rejection.

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After acceptance

- You might be asked to make some more changes to the paper (usually minor). Upload this version of the paper to the arxiv.
- You might be asked to latex the paper in the journal style.
- Sign a copyright form.
- The journal will copy edit your paper (this can introduce errors!).
- You will be asked to proof read the edited version of the paper (do this very carefully).
- After your paper is published update your website and CV.
- Check out your MathSciNet review when it comes out!
- Do it all again (and again, and again,...).