

Publishing

TSW 2024

The Publishing Process

1. Email experts (optional)
2. Post to arXiv
3. Choose a journal
4. Submit to a journal
5. The referee process
6. Revisions
7. The decision
8. After acceptance

The Publishing Process

- 0. Write the paper**
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Write the paper

I'm just beginning, the pen's in my hand, ending unplanned...

- Natasha Bedingfield

- Most people who open your paper will only read your introduction (including people giving quick opinions!).
 - State your main results in the first few pages.
 - Indicate up front what the main new ideas and difficulties are.
- Make your paper as easy to read (and to skim!) as possible.
 - Can the reader tell how the paper is organized? Are there transitions?
 - Are there signposts telling the reader what's going on?
- Motivate your main result, cite any relevant literature.
 - Generally, need to include much less background than in a talk.

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Email experts

Dear Sir or Madam, will you read my book? It took me years to write, will you take a look?

- The Beatles

Dear Colleague,

Coauthor and I have written a paper called "Title". It is available on my website:

<http://www.math.school.edu/~name/paper.pdf>

Abstract inserted here.

Any comments would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Name

- Send to the people who will care the most (working in exact area, letter writer, etc.)
- Post your article on your web site.
- Wait for comments if any (~1 week). Update acknowledgements as appropriate.
- (!) Some people don't like receiving these emails.

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Post to arXiv

Start spreading the news...

I want to wake up and find I'm king of the hill, top of the heap.

- Frank Sinatra (Betty Comden and Adolph Green)

- Paper must be finished!
- Check paper after posting and before it's released.
- After released, don't revise immediately unless there's a real problem.
- Send collaborator password to associate paper to their account.
- Wait for comments (~1 week). Update acknowledgements as appropriate.
- (!) Your source code is available!
- Time posting so you are at top of list of new papers (2pm EST)

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Choose a Journal

*Eeny meeny decisions, with precision I pick
or make my selection on who I choose to be with.*

- Outkast

- Determine the level of your paper. (Advisor, your bibliography/comparison papers, mathscinet journal pages, ...)
- (!) Opinions on journal level vary widely from field to field, from person to person.
- Aim higher if you have time. See AMS backlog data.
- Find an editor that is sympathetic to your subfield and will be able to find a good referee, or a journal that has published similar things in the past.
- General-subject journal $>$ subject-specific journal (if all else equal).
- Possibly consider: Open access/related publishing fees, other ethical considerations.

Dan's tiers (see TSR)

| | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| 1 Annals | 2 Acta | 3 AJM | 3 JDG | 5 J Top |
| 1 Inventiones | 2 Advances | 3 GAFA | 4 Commentarii | 5 Math Z |
| 1 JAMS | 2 Duke | 3 G&T | 4 Compositio | 5 PLMS |
| 1 Pub. IHES | 2 JEMS | 3 Crelle | 4 Math. Ann. | 5 TAMS |
| 6 AGT | 6 Israel JM | 6 Michigan MJ | 7 JTA | 7 Top Appl |
| 6 BLMS | 6 J Alg | 6 PAMS | 7 NYJM | 8 Glasnik |
| 6 GGD | 6 JLMS | 7 GD | 7 Pacific JM | 8 JKTR |
| 6 IMRN | 6 MRL | 7 Glasgow MJ | 7 PEMS | 8 RMJM |

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Submit to a Journal

Let's get together yeah yeah yeah. Why don't you and I combine?

- Hayley Mills (The parent trap)

- Read journal webpage for instructions on how to submit.
- Double check all information (e.g. collaborator email).
- If a cover letter is required be professional, polite, and concise.
- Confirm receipt. 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 got the paper.

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The referee process

How long must I wait... how much more must I take?

- Phil Collins

Process includes:

- Quick opinions (one, two, or several).
- Full referee reports (one or two or ...).
- Double/single blind.
- Sending emails to check status (after 6-12 months and periodically after that). It may depend on length. You don't want to jinx it, but also don't want your paper lost in limbo.
- (!) Referee's job is *not* to check that every detail is correct. That is the authors' responsibility. (More on referee's job on next slide.)

The quick opinion

Okay, so you're a rocket scientist — that don't impress me much.

-Shania Twain

- Editor often asks someone mentioned in intro/references.
- Quick opinion referee may only read the abstract.
- (!) The opinion may be false or insulting. (Just move on..)
- You might not get any information. (Submit to similar level journal?)
- Opinion might suggests place to resubmit.

Possible selling points (should be stated clearly and early in paper):

- Solve a conjecture
- Answer question from another paper
- Applications
- Novel or surprising
- Complete answer rather than few cases
- “Hot” topic

Referee reports

- Report to editor may contain:
 1. Main results and context (briefly).
 2. Identify the level of interest.
 3. Word about proof and what's new.
 4. Overall correctness.
 5. Quality of the exposition.
 6. Comparisons to papers in similar journal or on similar subject.
 7. Overall quality, suitability for journal.
 8. Yes/no for publication in that journal.
- Report to authors may contain:
 1. Something nice (well-written, proof is expert)
 2. General readability comments (organization, style, more signposting, less notation, etc).
 3. Line-by-line spelling/grammar mistakes and math comments. (Page 3, line -4: can you give a proof or a reference for this fact?)
 4. General math questions/comments (e.g. why do you need Hypothesis X in Theorem Y, can Theorem A be generalized?).

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Revisions

I can change, I can change, I can change for you.

- John Legend

- After referee report, may be asked to revise your paper before any further decision.
- When sending a revision, you should also send detailed list of changes. If you do not make a change suggested by the referee, you should explain why.
- Your paper is not accepted yet, so accommodate the referee as much as possible.
- Multiple rounds of revisions are possible.

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The decision

Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo, here comes the sun, and I say it's alright
- The Beatles

Eventually you will get an e-mail that says, either

- Your paper is accepted. (Yay!)
- Your paper is not accepted ... sometimes with a vague reason and sometimes with feedback (from a referee). Take any concrete feedback seriously, possibly incorporating it to your draft, and go back to step 3.
- Reassess where to submit your paper. Should you aim lower? Switch to a subject-specific journal from a general one?
- You should not appeal a rejection.

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After acceptance

Although we've come to the end of the road, still I can't let go.

- Boyz II Men

- Upload final version of the paper to the arxiv.
- Compile paper in the journal style.
- Copyright form.
- Journal copy-editing (can introduce errors!). Proofread carefully.
- Update your website and CV.
- Check out your MathSciNet review (eventually).
- *Do it all again (and again, and again,...).*