Getting Your Paper Published: A Workshop for Authors

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Overview

- Choosing the right journal
- How to write a good paper
- Submitting to MNRAS
- How the review process works
- Responding to referee reports
- How to be a referee
- Post-acceptance – copy-editing, proofing
- Online publication, Dissemination, Promotion

Choosing the right journal

- Look at scope and audience of journal
- Quality of peer review, publication speed, reputation/Impact Factor, charges
- MNRAS scope: “publishes the results of original research in astronomy and astrophysics, including work which is observational, theoretical or concerned with astronomical instrumentation”
- Instructions to Authors Code of Practice

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MNRAS

- First published in 1827
- 2014 Impact Factor 5.107
- Published 3 times a month and no longer publishes the notices of the Society
- Welcomes submissions from any astronomers anywhere, 80% content originates outside UK

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MNRAS

- Main Journal – print and online, no page limit
- Letters – online only, 5-page limit
- No charges for authors (unless they want colour printing)
- ~4000 submissions a year, accept >80%
- Green and Gold open access options
- Over 3000 subscribing institutions worldwide

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Before writing a paper

- Novelty – is this new science? How does it build upon previous work?
- What are your key results? What you want to include in the paper (data etc.)? What conclusions do you draw?
- Which journal? Format (Letter, paper), page charges
- Who contributed/author list
- Develop outline

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General outline

- Title and author list
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Observations/models/methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Acknowledgements
- References
- Appendices

Structure -Title and Abstract

Important as they are what people search for and look at first

Title

- Short!
- Indicate the main result
- Attract the reader's attention

Abstract

- Allows readers to quickly see what your paper is about and whether to read the full paper
- Length 200 words Letter, 250 words Main Journal paper
- Single paragraph, no references
- Should be understandable to all astronomers
- Briefly summarize the goals, methods and new results

Introduction

- State the main aims and reason for your work
- Indicate the problem or question to be addressed
- Provide background/context and acknowledge relevant previous work
- Clarify how this work differs from previous work
- Don’t pad – this is not a review article (MNRAS does not publish reviews)
- Define abbreviations

Observations/Methods

- Describe how the work was done
- Include details of observations or methods such as which telescope/instrument/software programs were used
- Explain how you analysed the data
- Include enough detail so that an expert could reproduce your work if required
- Use subsections when necessary, these should be numbered (this applies to other sections too)

Results & Discussion

Results

- Decide what data you want to present and how to present it (you can present some material online)
- Present results clearly, then follow with discussion section

Discussion

- Include interpretation, implications and applications of results
- Compare your results with other work
- Discuss significance and limitations of this work
- Make suggestions for future work

Tables and figures - provide numbers and captions and cite in text in order

Conclusion

- Summarise the content and key results of paper
- Highlight major points
- Answer any questions posed in introduction
- Nothing should appear in the conclusion that is not in the paper

Acknowledgements & References

Acknowledgements

- Include funding, people not in author list who have contributed, facilities and equipment (there may be specific text), referee (if they've been helpful; even though anonymous)
- Do not include non-research contributions - parents, friends, pets

References

- Follow Harvard reference style, e.g. Smith & Jones (2014)
- List all citations in the text alphabetically at end of paper
- Cite papers that have been influential in the work

How to write a good paper

- Be concise
- Limit jargon
- Avoid fragmentation of papers - ‘salami slicing’
- Figures should be clear, with good captions, axis labels etc
- Write in good scientific English
- Be objective – report results, not an opinion piece
- Language is important. Don’t make it difficult for the reader!

"I am a great sinner but I don't think I have deserved the cruel and unusual punishment I have been subjected to through reading this paper”

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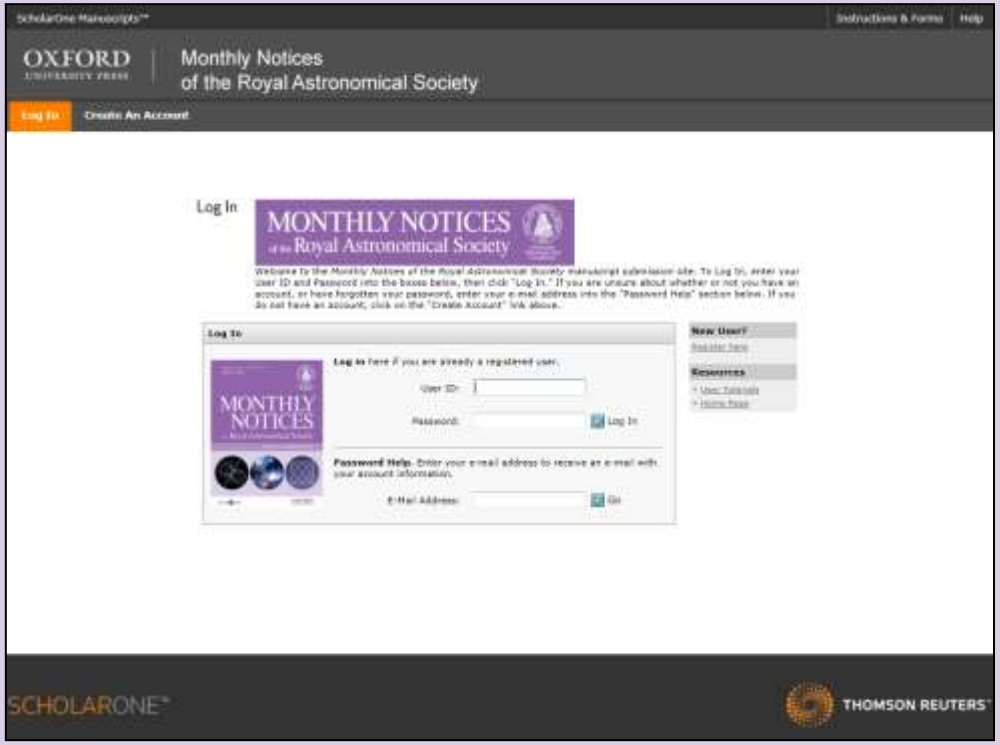
Submitting to MNRAS

- LaTeX is best but MS Word also accepted
  - MNRAS LaTeX style available
- British English
- Requirements in the journal instructions to authors (ITAs)
- Approval from all co-authors
- Submit your manuscript to one journal only
- Online submission and tracking system
  - No paper submissions

Submitting to MNRAS

- ScholarOne Manuscripts – online manuscript submission and peer-review system
- http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mnras
- Log in or create an account
- You will have an Author Centre and a Reviewer Centre



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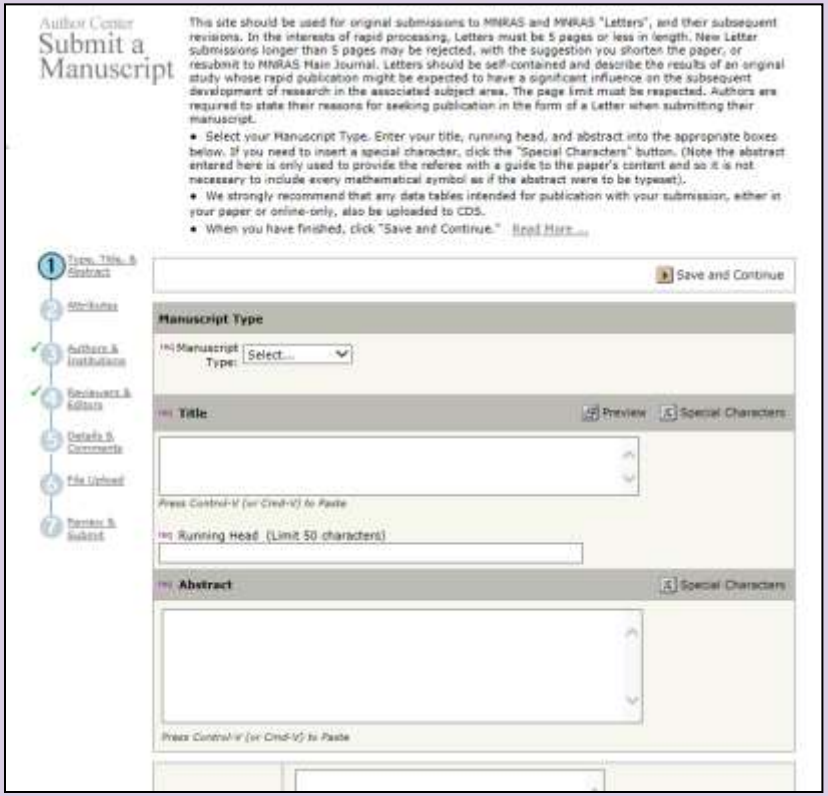
Submitting to MNRAS



- Fill out online form, instructions on each page
- Manuscript types: Main Journal, Letter, Erratum
- Letter – need to state reasons for seeking this format
- Submission steps can be done in any sequence

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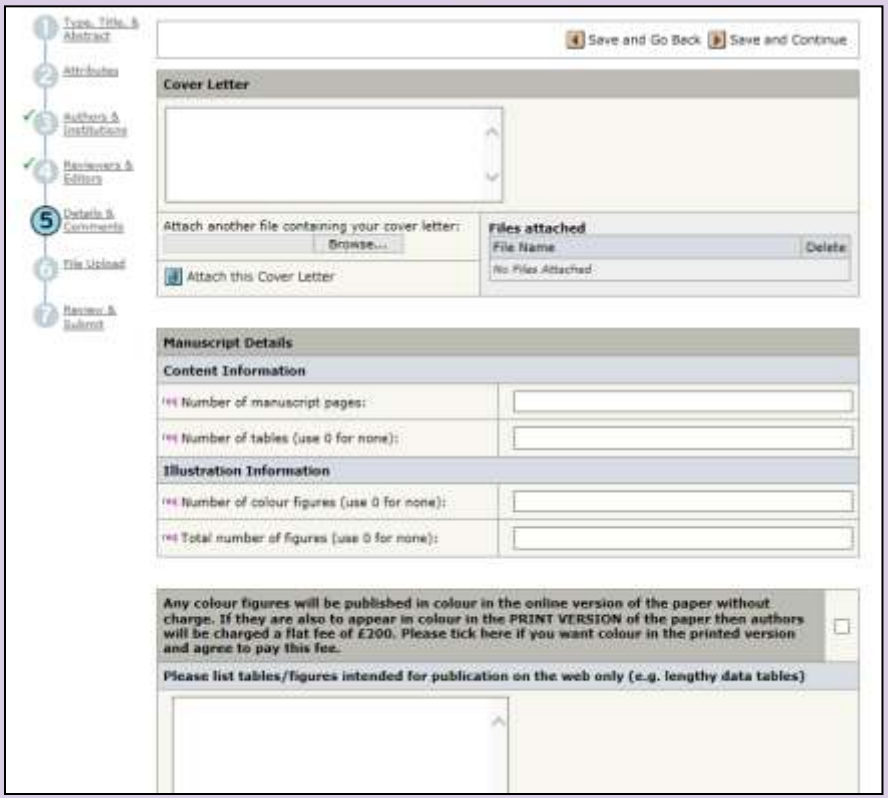
Submitting to MNRAS



- Cover letter seen by editor, not referee
- Highlight special requests, reasons for non-preferred referees, additional information such as companion papers
- Options for colour printing, online-only material, press releases

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Questions so far?

How the review process works

- Peer review by the Royal Astronomical Society
- Editorial board:
  - 20 Scientific Editors
  - Senior researchers in different subject areas
  - Located worldwide, appointed by the RAS
- RAS editorial office in London:
  - 6 Assistant Editors
- Office checks papers before assigning to a Scientific Editor, usually within 24 hours

How the review process works

- A few immediate rejects:
  - Out of scope
  - Clearly unsuitable
  - Obvious errors
  - Duplicate submissions etc.
- Check for plagiarism
- Editorial office handles all correspondence

How the review process works

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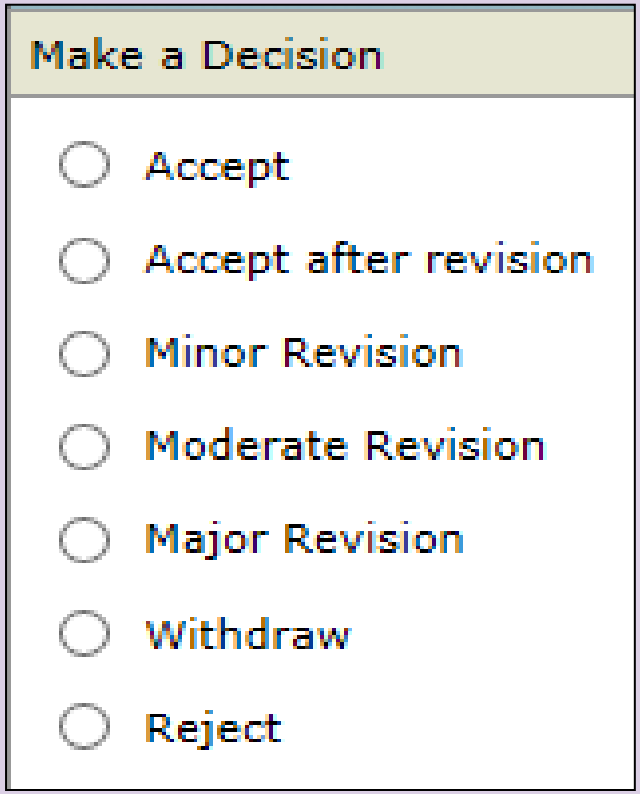
How the review process works

- Editor picks a referee (usually one)
- Referees are independent experts in the field who:
  - assess the paper
  - point out errors, suggest improvements
  - recommend whether to publish or not
- Referees provide their time freely as a service to the community
- Editor uses the report(s) and own judgement to make a decision to accept, reject, or ask authors to revise
- Single blind review – editor and referee anonymous

How the review process works



- Reviewer recommends, Editor decides
- **Accept** – passed straight to publisher
- **Accept after revision** – very minor corrections, usually then accepted without further review
- **Major/moderate/minor revision** – you will have to address some shortcomings in the paper, may need more research
- **Withdraw** – referee is opposed to publication, but the editor is allowing you to respond or revise
- **Reject** – two editors agree that the paper is unsuitable and will not be considered any further

How the review process works

- Expect to have to make revisions before acceptance
- Median time from submission to first decision:
  - 31 days for Main Journal
  - 21 days for Letters
- Median time from receipt to acceptance:
  - 14 weeks for Main Journal
  - 8 weeks for Letters
  - Mostly author revision time
- Any delays are usually caused by late referees. We have limited options for dealing with this…

Responding to referee reports

- The vast majority of papers undergo at least one round of revision
- Respond explicitly to each comment in the report, explaining what you changed and why
- Highlight changes in bold/colour
- Be polite! Peer review is not an argument
- Any confidential comments to the editor should be in your cover letter

Responding to referee reports

- If the referee didn't understand something, you need to make it clearer
- If you think the report is unfair, you can request a second referee but:
  - Not always granted
  - May or may not see report of first referee
  - Should be your last resort option
- Time allowed for revisions:
  - 2 months for Letters
  - 6 months for Main Journal

Rejection

- Reasons for rejection:
  - Out of scope
  - Major errors
  - Salami-slicing
  - Plagiarism
  - Not novel
  - Unwilling to revise
- Not always because it is bad research!
- Don’t take rejection as a personal attack or insult
- Re-assess approach, consider other options e.g. different journal, extend the research, change method etc.

Accepted papers

- If accepted, production and publication handled by Oxford University Press
- Discussed in the last section of the workshop

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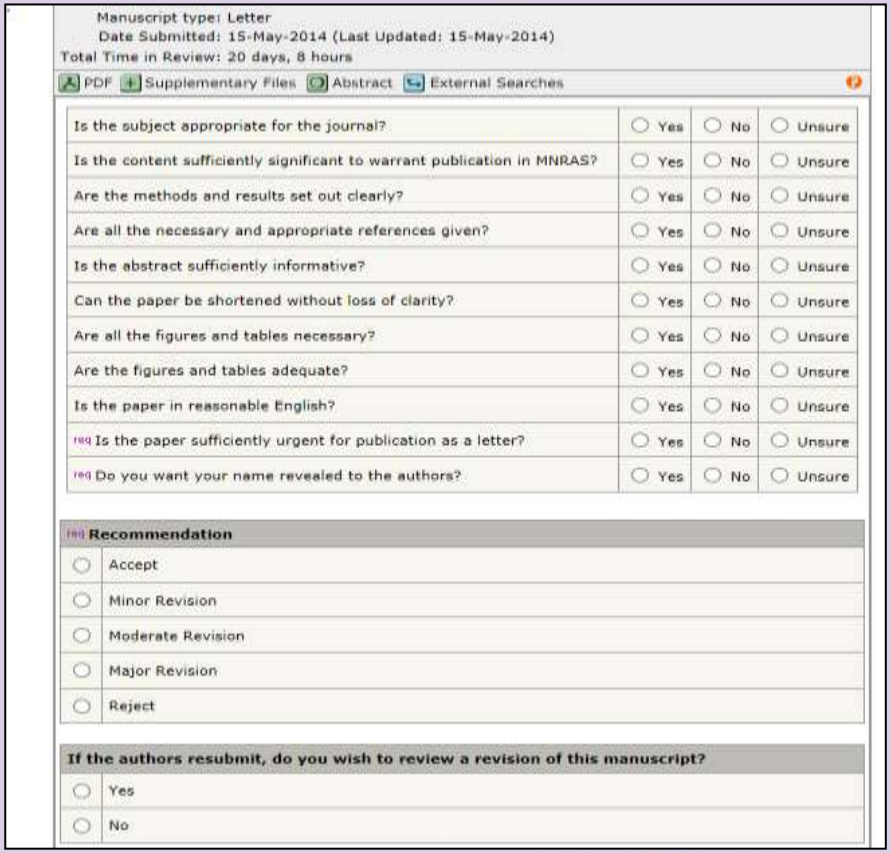
How to be a referee

- Are you an expert on this field? Do you have time to review the paper (and any revisions)?
- Respond to all correspondence promptly
- Suggest alternatives if unable to review
- Follow ethical guidelines:
  - Keep all information confidential
  - Declare any possible conflict of interest e.g. competing research, personal or professional connection with one of the authors, same institution etc.
  - Be objective: assess the paper, not the authors

How to be a referee



Manuscript type: Letter
Date Submitted: 15-May-2014 (Last Updated: 15-May-2014)
Total Time in Review: 20 days, 8 hours

PDF | Supplementary Files | Abstract | External Searches

Is the subject appropriate for the journal?	Yes	No	Unsure
Is the content sufficiently significant to warrant publication in MNRAS?	Yes	No	Unsure
Are the methods and results set out clearly?	Yes	No	Unsure
Are all the necessary and appropriate references given?	Yes	No	Unsure
Is the abstract sufficiently informative?	Yes	No	Unsure
Can the paper be shortened without loss of clarity?	Yes	No	Unsure
Are all the figures and tables necessary?	Yes	No	Unsure
Are the figures and tables adequate?	Yes	No	Unsure
Is the paper in reasonable English?	Yes	No	Unsure
req Is the paper sufficiently urgent for publication as a letter?	Yes	No	Unsure
req Do you want your name revealed to the authors?	Yes	No	Unsure

req Recommendation	
○	Accept
○	Minor Revision
○	Moderate Revision
○	Major Revision
○	Reject

If the authors resubmit, do you wish to review a revision of this manuscript?	
○	Yes
○	No

- Comment on:
- Context/referencing
- Methods and assumptions
- Any errors or mistakes
- Interpretation
- Clarity of language, figures, length etc.

- Make suggestions for improvement
- Report on time!

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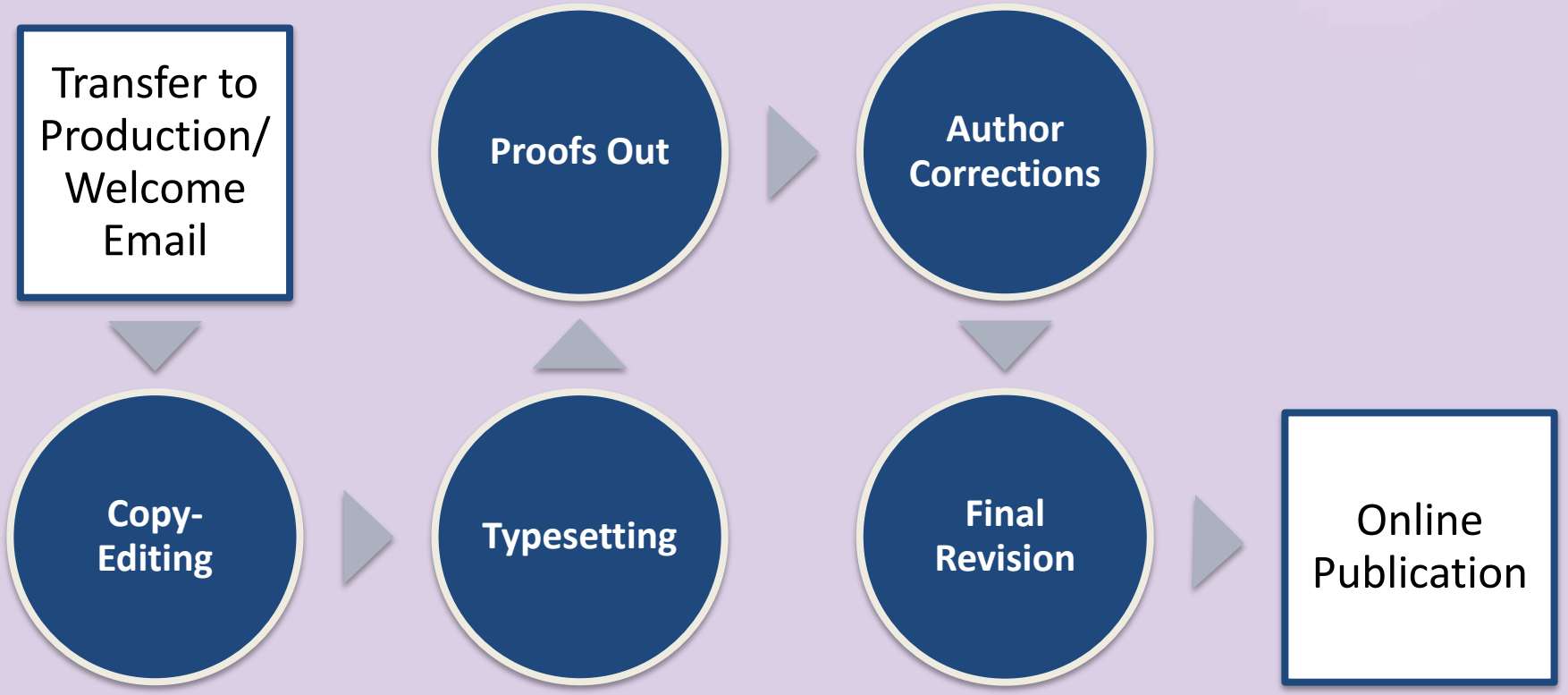
Questions so far?

Overview

- The Production process
- Copy-Editing and Proofing
- Online Publication
- Promotion – OUPblog, social media
- Author Services

Production



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Copy-Editing and Proofing

- Minor changes only – nothing that affects the science
- Layout and formatting; Figures and Tables
- Spelling in UK English – MNRAS style
- Be available - check emails regularly
- 3 days to respond!
- Author Queries – Respond to ALL!!
- Last chance to make corrections

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Online Publication

- ‘Version of record’: 3–6 wks
- Final citation details
- Indexed in NASA ADS
- Indexed in Web of Science
- Search-Engine-Optimised
- Mobile-Optimised
- Author toll-free links
- Dissemination to libraries;
  Access for developing nations
- Support embedded video /
  3D-interactive figures
- RAS press office – provides
  support for press releases

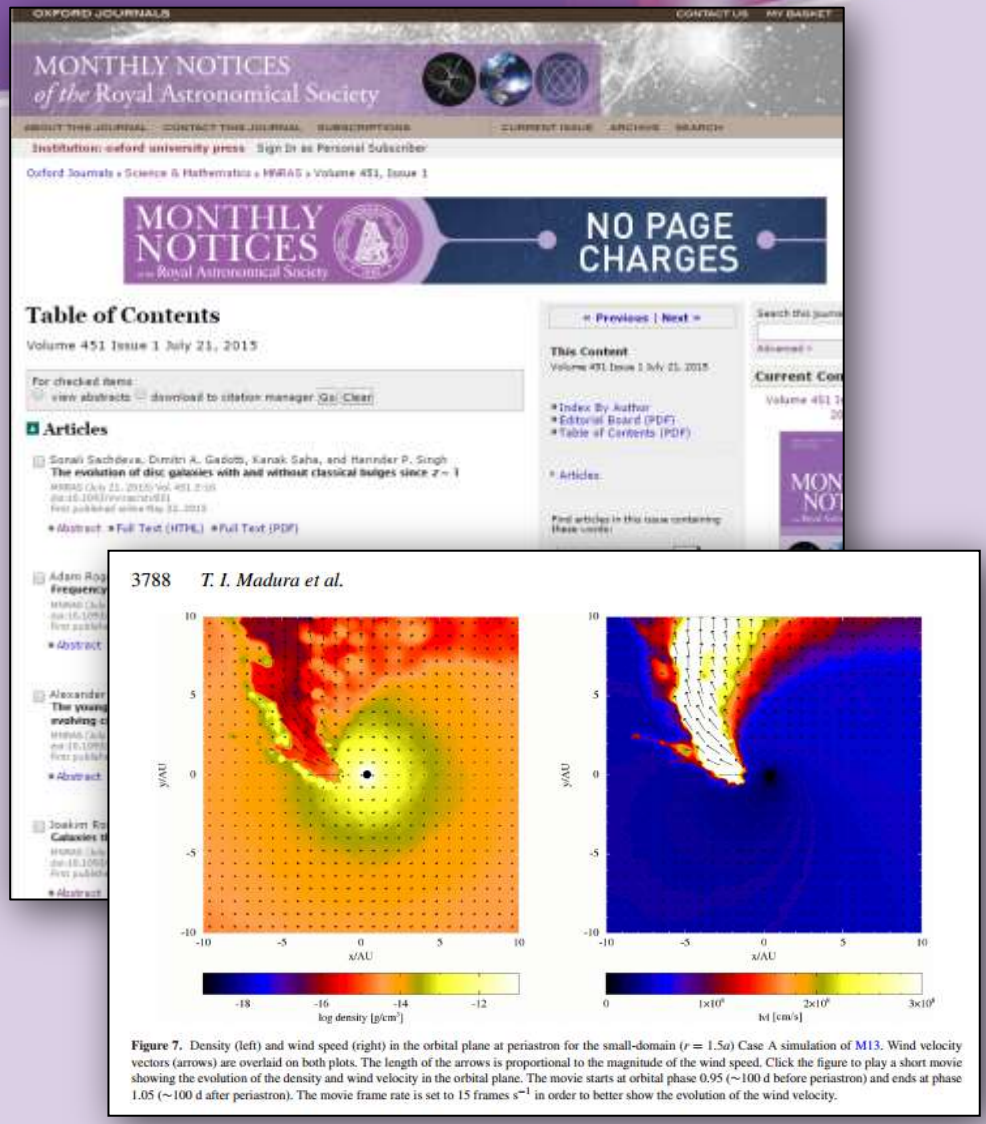

Figure 7. Density (left) and wind speed (right) in the orbital plane at periastron for the small-domain ($r = 1.5a$) Case A simulation of M13. Wind velocity vectors (arrows) are overlaid on both plots. The length of the arrows is proportional to the magnitude of the wind speed. Click the figure to play a short movie showing the evolution of the density and wind velocity in the orbital plane. The movie starts at orbital phase 0.95 (~100 d before periastron) and ends at phase 1.05 (~100 d after periastron). The movie frame rate is set to 15 frames s^{-1} in order to better show the evolution of the wind velocity.

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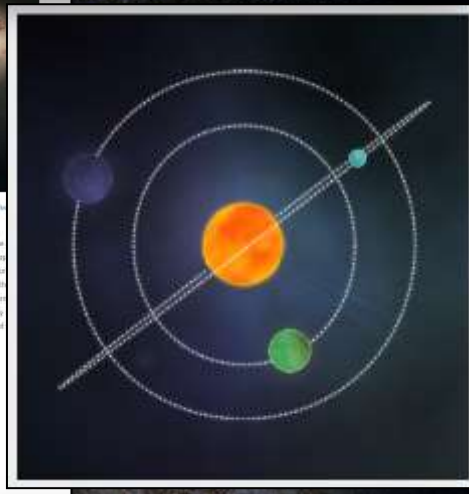

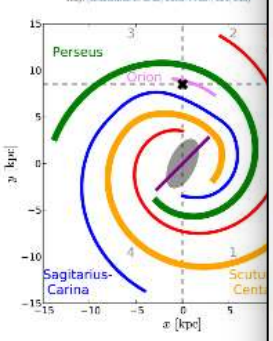

Did dark matter kill the dinosaurs?

BY MICHAEL R. RAMPINO

In 1980, Walter Alvarez and his group at the University of California, Berkeley, dis
layer of clay in the geologic record, which contained an anomalous amount of th
iridium. They proposed that the iridium-rich layer was evidence of a massive con
66 million years ago, at the time of the extinction of the dinosaurs. The Alvarez group s
global iridium-rich layer formed as fallout from an intense dust cloud raised by the impa
of dust covered the Earth, producing darkness and cold, and lead to the extinction of 75% of life on the

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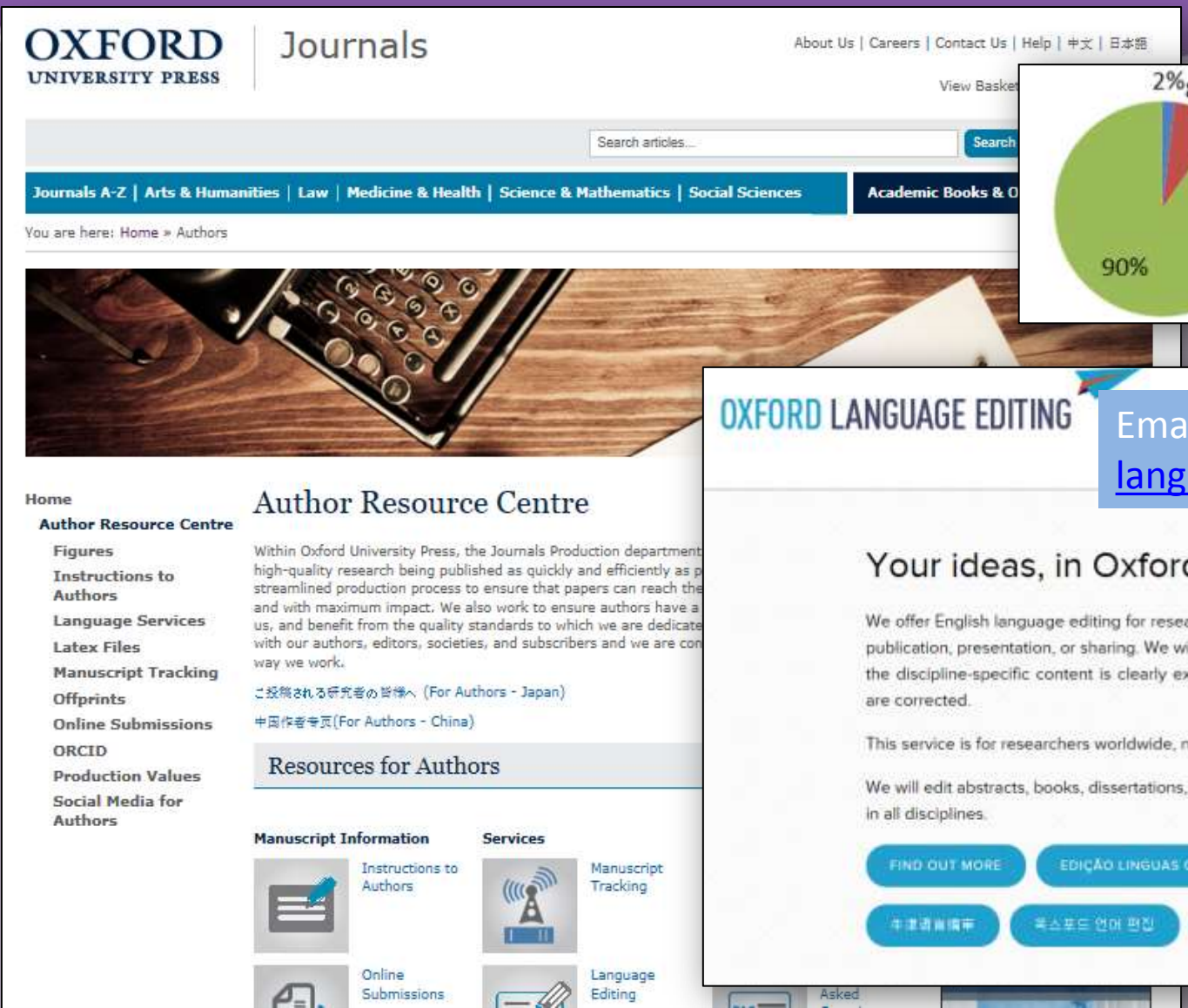

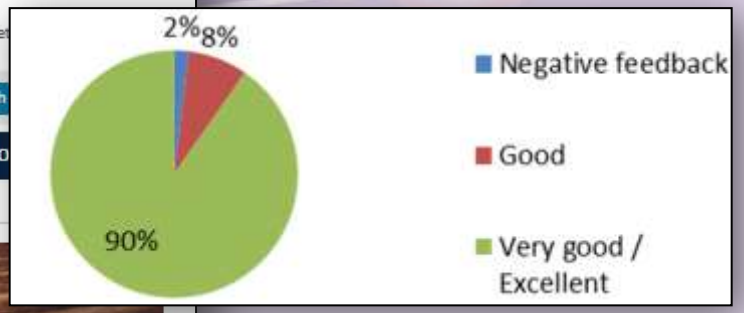

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