

## WIT Press Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement (updated September 2022)

Our publication ethics and publication malpractice statement is mainly based on the Code of Conduct and Best-Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors (Committee on Publication Ethics, 2011).

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### *Publication and Authorship*

- ❖ WIT Press adheres to the highest standards and ensures that all papers are subject to a strict review process from at least two international colleagues/experts in the field.
  - ❖ WIT Press takes into account the originality of the work, its significance, sound underlying principles and relevance. Reviewers also take into account its readability and language.
  - ❖ The research work reported in the paper should not have been published or have been submitted to another journal. It should be included in only one publication.
  - ❖ The Editors' decisions are: acceptance, acceptance with revision, or rejection.
  - ❖ Authors that agree to revise and re-submit their paper should be aware that there is no guarantee that the revised version will be accepted.
  - ❖ Rejected articles will not be re-reviewed.
  - ❖ The paper acceptance may be constrained by legal requirements, including legal copyright infringements and plagiarism. All submitted papers are routinely run through plagiarism detection software.
  - ❖ Fees or charges that are required for manuscript processing are clearly stated on the journal web-page that is easy for potential authors to find prior to submitting their manuscripts for review or explained to authors before they begin preparing their manuscript for submission.
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### *Authors' Duties*

- ❖ **Reporting standards** – Authors of original research reports should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the paper. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behaviour and are unacceptable.
- ❖ **Author data archiving and sharing** – WIT Press encourages all authors to make the data, computational models, and other materials that were collected, used, and/or derived in the preparation of a submitted paper publicly available. Data should be easy to discover online, cited, and specified in a Data Availability Statement. For all journals, authors are required to specify the availability of data, computational models and other electronic materials used in manuscripts submitted to the journals. When submitting a manuscript, authors must include a section titled “Data Availability Statement” before the Acknowledgments, or before the References if no Acknowledgments section is present, if applicable.

Available data must be cited in the References section. Authors may update or change their statement if information changes during the course of peer review. NOTE: Changes to the Data Availability Statement cannot be made after acceptance.

- **Where should data go?** Data associated with a paper may appear in the following places:
  1. Within the text of the paper

2. As Supplemental Materials to a paper, which will be posted in the WIT Press eLibrary
3. In a data repository

Authors have many choices for where they deposit data. Ideally, the repository chosen will provide authors with a DOI for the data. DOIs provide a persistent link to the data and avoid link rot. Many academic institutions have data repositories and may have policies requiring authors to deposit the data there. Authors should check with their institutions.

There are subject-area specific repositories as well. The Registry of Research Data Repositories offers a searchable list by data type and subject area. WIT Press will host supplemental materials on our eLibrary; however, the file types are limited and not appropriate for large data sets or code. Further, supplemental materials do not have their own DOI and cannot be cited on their own. Access to supplemental materials is the same as for the paper attached to it.

- **What should be shared?** Authors should share all data, mathematical models, and materials that were used to develop the results and conclusions in the paper. In many cases, the data used in a paper may be a subset of data collected. Data used to generate figures or tables should be included. Only the data analysed as part of the paper need to be included; however, authors should review the requirements of their institutions and funders to determine if a broader data sharing policy is required.

All data deposited in a repository should contain enough metadata to explain to a user what the data is, how it was generated, and how a reader can reproduce the work. Authors should also ensure that they have the rights to share the data publicly. Citation information should also be included in the metadata.

Ideally, authors should review the [FAIR Data Principles](#) and try to comply with those recommendations.

- **Will data be peer reviewed?** No. If authors make data and models available, reviewers and editors may or may not review those files and provide feedback. Nowhere should authors lead users to believe that the data was reviewed and approved by WIT Press.
- **How should data be cited?** References for data sets should include author name, year of publication, titles (followed by edition or version number) in quotation marks, publisher or distributor, access date, and electronic identifier (DOI or URL). Examples:

Ansolabehere, S., M. Palmer, and A. Lee. 2014. "Precinct-level election data. V1." Harvard Election Data Archive. Accessed January 20, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/YN4TLR>.

Thernstrom, S. 1986. "Boston mobility study, 1880." ICPSR 7550. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. Accessed November 28, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR07550>.

- **What if data are proprietary?** All proprietary data should be identified in the Data Availability Statement as proprietary. The statement should further describe restrictions on use and/or reuse. WIT Press understands that there are times when data are used that may be proprietary to the authors' organizations or funding institutions. Authors may not claim that data are proprietary just because they do not want to share it. WIT Press encourages authors who enter agreements to collect or analyse proprietary data to negotiate terms for making the data used in a paper available to readers (e.g., publish anonymously or without identifying information).

- ❖ If the work involves chemicals or unusual hazards, the author must clearly identify these in their paper.
- ❖ If the work involves animals or human subjects the author must ensure that their paper states that all procedures were performed in compliance with relevant laws and a statement **must be** included in the manuscript that informed consent was obtained. Both consent to participate and consent to their data being published should be obtained. The privacy rights of human subjects must always be observed.

- ❖ **Originality, plagiarism and acknowledgement of sources** – Authors will submit only entirely original works, and will appropriately cite or quote the work and/or words of others. Publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work should also be cited.

WIT Press is a member of Crossref and employs the Similarity Check tool, powered by Turnitin, to evaluate the originality of work submitted to the journals. Similarity Check evaluates the text of a submitted paper against a large database of published journal content and non-journal content on the internet. A similarity report is provided to WIT Press staff and the editors in evaluating the originality of work, any manuscript that has more than 30% overlap will be returned to authors.

Papers that are found to have excessive overlap with the author(s)' previous work may be returned to the author with a request to revise the overlap and/or verbatim sections. (Please see the section about text recycling.)

Papers that are found to have excessive and unattributed overlap with published works authored by others will be subject to review by the editors and possibly the corresponding author's institution.

- ❖ **Text Recycling.** Text recycling is defined as “the reuse of textual material (prose, visuals, or equations) in a new document where (1) the material in the new document is identical to that of the source (or substantively equivalent in both form and content), (2) the material is not presented in the new document as a quotation (via quotation marks or block indentation), and (3) at least one author of the new document is also an author of the prior document” (Texrecycling.org).

Text recycling is ethically and morally ambiguous depending on the context in which it occurs. Text recycling is **generally acceptable** if it does not violate copyright agreements, is used to build from existing works, and employed to clearly communicate ideas. Text recycling is **generally unacceptable** if it infringes copyright agreements, violates publishing contracts, or hinders communication.

WIT Press considers text recycling acceptable if the author:

- Creates a new work using unpublished sources
- Reuses previously published content to create a paper that is novel in its contribution to the body of knowledge
- Reuses previously published material to produce a paper that might not necessarily be novel in its contributions to the body of knowledge but does so make the material presentable for a different genre or audience.

- ❖ **Multiple, redundant or concurrent publication** – In general, papers describing essentially the same research should not be published in more than one journal. Submitting the same paper to more than one journal constitutes unethical publishing behaviour and is unacceptable.
  - Manuscripts which have been published as copyrighted material elsewhere cannot be submitted. In addition, manuscripts under review by the journal should not be resubmitted to copyrighted publications. However, by submitting a manuscript, the author(s) retain the rights to the published material.
  - In case of publication they permit the use of their work under either a CC-BY license or an Open Access Publishing Agreement.

- ❖ **Fabrication and falsification of data – Definition:** According to the US Office of Research Integrity, fabrication of data is “making up data or results and recording or reporting them” and falsification is “manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record” ([ori.hhs.gov/definition-misconduct](http://ori.hhs.gov/definition-misconduct)).

**Action:** Fabricating or falsifying data is a major violation of proper scientific conduct. Authors accused of either violation will be asked to supply all supporting data and results for evaluation. If WIT Press and its editors find cause for further investigation, the issue may be referred to the author(s)' institution and/or funding agency for investigation. WIT Press journals may issue an Expression of Concern during

any investigation. If wrongdoing is determined, the offending paper(s) will be rejected or retracted and the authors may be banned from publishing with WIT Press in the future.

❖ **Authorship of the paper**

- Authorship should be limited to only those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors.
- The lead author ensures that all contributing co-authors and no uninvolved persons are included in the author list.
- Where there are others that have participated in certain aspects of the work they should be recognised in the acknowledgements section.
- The lead author will also verify that all co-authors have approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication.

❖ **Disclosure and conflicts of interest** – A Conflict of Interest or Competing Interest is defined as a set of conditions in which professional judgment concerning a primary interest, such as the validity of research, may be influenced by a secondary interest, such as financial gain. All authors should include a statement disclosing any financial or other substantive conflicts of interest that may be construed to influence the results or interpretation of their manuscript. All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed.

❖ **Proofing** – To ensure a fast publication process of the article, we kindly ask authors to provide us with their proof corrections within seven days. Please use your proof only for checking the typesetting, editing, completeness and correctness of the text, tables and figures. Significant changes to the article as accepted for publication will only be considered at this stage with permission from the Editor. It is important to ensure that all corrections are sent back to us in one communication. Please check carefully before replying, as inclusion of any subsequent corrections cannot be guaranteed. Proofreading is solely your responsibility.

❖ **Third party repositories** – authors are free to post a copy of their accepted paper on their institution's, or similar, repository. We ask that the pre-publication version is subsequently replaced with the final version upon publication, and that a link is included back to WIT Press's eLibrary.

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## *Editors' Responsibilities*

**Definition** – Editors are the stewards of journals. They usually take over their journal from the previous editor(s) and always want to hand over the journal in good shape. Most editors provide direction for the journal and build a strong management team. They must consider and balance the interests of many constituents, including readers, authors, staff, owners, editorial board members, advertisers and the media.

- ❖ Editors' decisions to accept or reject a paper for publication should be based only on the paper's importance, originality, and clarity, and the study's relevance to the remit of the journal. The editor is responsible for deciding which of the papers submitted to the journal or transaction will be published. Editors have ultimate responsibility for the acceptance or rejection of any papers.
- ❖ Studies that challenge previous work published in the journal should be given an especially sympathetic hearing.
- ❖ Studies reporting negative results should not be excluded.
- ❖ All original studies should be peer reviewed before publication, taking into full account possible bias due to related or conflicting interests. The editor shall ensure that the peer review process is fair, unbiased and timely. The editor shall select reviewers whom have suitable expertise in the relevant field

taking into account the need for inclusive and diverse representation. Editors should ensure that peer reviewers and authors have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and will preserve their anonymity.

- ❖ The editor will evaluate manuscripts without regard to the authors' race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy. The decision will be based on the paper's importance, originality and clarity, and the study's validity and its relevance to the publications scope. Current legal requirements regarding libel, copyright infringement, and plagiarism should also be considered.
- ❖ Editors must treat all submitted papers as confidential.
- ❖ When a published paper is subsequently found to contain major flaws, editors must accept responsibility for correcting the record prominently and promptly. Similarly, if an editor is presented with evidence of misconduct, they should work with the publisher to arrange a prompt publication of correction, retraction, or other correction to the paper as may be relevant.
- ❖ When nominating the potential editorial board, including members of the International Scientific Advisory Committee, the editor should take in to account the need for inclusive and diverse representation.
- ❖ The editorial policies of WIT Press shall encourage transparency and complete honest reporting.
- ❖ Editors are responsible for the contents and quality of the publication.
- ❖ Editors should guarantee the quality of the paper and the integrity of the academic research.
- ❖ Editors should not reverse their decision nor overturn the ones of previous editors without a special reason, in which case further reviews may be required.
- ❖ Editors will act promptly if they suspect misconduct and endeavour to make all reasonable attempts to resolve the matter.
- ❖ Editors will ensure that the material published conforms to internationally accepted, ethical guidelines including having a clear picture of research funding sources.
- ❖ Editors should not allow conflicts of interest to take place between authors, reviewers and other Board Members.
- ❖ **Confidentiality** – The editor and any editorial staff must not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.
- ❖ **Disclosure and conflicts of interest**
  - Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted paper will not be used by the editor or the members of the editorial board for their own research purposes without the author's explicit written consent.
  - Any potential editorial conflicts of interest should be declared to the publisher in writing prior to the appointment of the editor, and then updated if and when new conflicts arise. The publisher may publish such declarations in the journal.
  - The editor must not be involved in decisions about papers which s/he has written him/herself or have been written by family members or colleagues or which relate to products or services

in which the editor has an interest. Further, any such submission must be subject to all of the journal's usual procedures, peer review must be handled independently of the relevant author/editor and their research groups, and there must be a clear statement to this effect on any such paper that is published.

- ❖ **Fundamental errors in published works** – When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/ her own published work, it is the author's obligation to promptly notify the journal editor or publisher and to cooperate with the editor to retract or correct the paper in form of an erratum.

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## *Reviewers' Responsibilities*

This journal operates a single anonymized review process. All contributions will be initially assessed by the editor for suitability for the journal. Papers deemed suitable are then typically sent to a minimum of two independent expert reviewers to assess the scientific quality of the paper. The Editor is responsible for the final decision regarding acceptance or rejection of articles. The Editor's decision is final. Editors are not involved in decisions about papers which they have written themselves or have been written by family members or colleagues or which relate to products or services in which the editor has an interest. Any such submission is subject to all of the journal's usual procedures, with peer review handled independently of the relevant editor and their research groups.

- ❖ **Contribution to editorial decisions** – The peer-reviewing process assists the editor and the editorial board in making editorial decisions and may also serve the author in improving the paper.
- ❖ **Promptness** – Any selected referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and withdraw from the review process.
- ❖ **Confidentiality** – Any manuscripts received for review must be treated as confidential documents. They must not be disclosed to or discussed with others except as authorized by the editor.
- ❖ **Standards of objectivity** – Reviews should be conducted objectively. Reviewers should be aware of any personal bias they may have and take this into account when reviewing a paper. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate. Referees should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.
- ❖ **Acknowledgement of sources** – Reviewers should identify cases in which relevant published work referred to in the paper has not been cited in the reference section. They should point out whether observations or arguments derived from other publications are accompanied by the respective source.
- ❖ Reviewers will notify the editor of any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper of which they have personal knowledge.
- ❖ **Disclosure and conflict of interest** – Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage. Reviewers should consult the Editor before agreeing to review a paper where they have potential conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions connected to the papers.
- ❖ If a reviewer suggests that an author includes citations to the reviewer's (or their associates') work, this must be for genuine scientific reasons and not with the intention of increasing the reviewer's citation count or enhancing the visibility of their work (or that of their associates).
- ❖ Reviewers should express their views clearly and indicate the reasons for them.

- ❖ Reviewers should comment on the clarity of the manuscript as well as the scientific contents.
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### *Authorship complaints and appeals*

- ❖ It is important that every author of a contribution be credited as such. It is equally as important that a person not be named as an author when he or she is not.
  - ❖ WIT Press's preference is for authors to resolve such matters amongst themselves, although that is not always possible.
  - ❖ The complainant must be made aware that the matter cannot be investigated unless the journal editor informs the corresponding author or author about whom a complaint has been made (as a matter of “due process”) and possibly the institution or company at which the research took place (the complainant may not wish to make the complaint at such a formal level).
  - ❖ In that communication the editor should indicate that the matter may be referred to the institution or company where the research took place or any other relevant institution or agency (for example a funding agency) unless the author provides a reasonable explanation (accepted as reasonable by the editor). NOTE: some agencies such as the NIH’s Office of Research Integrity, will not consider disputes that are solely about authorship.
  - ❖ It may be advisable for the editor in this fact-finding process to request the views and comments of third parties who may be expected to have knowledge of the facts alleged by the complainant.
  - ❖ If the corresponding (or complained-about) author accepts the position of the complainant the publication of a correction, corrigendum or retraction procedures are the normal remedies. Note that there may still be disagreement concerning the appropriate classification of the complainant’s contribution to the paper or how the complainant is identified.
  - ❖ If the corresponding (or complained-about) author rejects the position of the complainant the editor will have to consider whether the author’s explanation is reasonable. Normally, the editor would also inform the complainant of the author’s explanation and seek comment.
  - ❖ If the corresponding/complained-about author has not responded to the editor’s correspondence the editor may want to refer the matter to the institution or company at which the research took place.
  - ❖ If the institution or company respond and indicate they will investigate and mediate the result the editor should inform the corresponding author and complainant that the journal will seriously consider the decision of the institutional review. Note, however, that the editor may still determine that the result of the institutional review is insufficient or inaccurate.
  - ❖ If the institution responds negatively or does not respond, this should be reviewed with the complainant (perhaps the complainant is better placed to make the complaint directly with the institution).
  - ❖ If a funding agency is involved, to determine this, you should review the disclosure statements or acknowledgments in the article. If so, then the editor may wish to consider contacting the agency.
  - ❖ If the authors, employing institutions and funding agencies fail to reach consensus or fail to act in a reasonable time or manner, the editor will be expected to make a determination, in his or her reasonable judgment, as to the underlying facts and to make a recommendation to the publisher, which WIT staff will implement, normally through a corrigendum or retraction.
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## *Article withdrawal*

WIT Press recognizes the importance of the integrity and completeness of the scholarly record to researchers and librarians and attaches the highest importance to maintaining trust in the authority of its electronic archive.

- ❖ **Article retraction** – Infringements of professional ethical codes, such as multiple submission, bogus claims of authorship, plagiarism, fraudulent use of data or the like. Occasionally a retraction will be used to correct errors in submission or publication. The retraction of an article by its authors or the editor under the advice of members of the scholarly community has long been an occasional feature of the learned world. Standards for dealing with retractions have been developed by a number of library and scholarly bodies, and this best practice is adopted for article retraction by WIT Press:
  - A retraction note titled “Retraction: [article title]” signed by the authors and/or the editor is published in the paginated part of a subsequent issue of the journal and listed in the contents list.
  - In the electronic version, a link is made to the original article.
  - The online article is preceded by a screen containing the retraction note. It is to this screen that the link resolves; the reader can then proceed to the article itself.
  - The original article is retained unchanged save for a watermark on the .pdf indicating on each page that it is “retracted.”
  - The HTML version of the document is removed.
- ❖ **Article removal: legal limitations** – In an extremely limited number of cases, it may be necessary to remove an article from the online database. This will only occur where the article is clearly defamatory, or infringes others’ legal rights, or where the article is, or we have good reason to expect it will be, the subject of a court order, or where the article, if acted upon, might pose a serious health risk. In these circumstances, while the metadata (Title and Authors) will be retained, the text will be replaced with a screen indicating the article has been removed for legal reasons.
- ❖ **Article replacement** – In cases where the article, if acted upon, might pose a serious health risk, the authors of the original article may wish to retract the flawed original and replace it with a corrected version. In these circumstances, the procedures for retraction will be followed with the difference that the database retraction notice will publish a link to the corrected re-published article and a history of the document.

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## *Journal’s options for post-publication discussions and corrections*

- ❖ **Discussions** – Discussions present significant comments or questions about the technical content of a technical paper, technical note, or case study published in a WIT Press journal. Discussions may be submitted during a 5-month period following the date of online publication of the paper and may not exceed 4 double-spaced manuscript pages including references, figures, tables, and captions. Discussions should not contain matter readily found elsewhere, advocate special interests, contain obvious commercial intent, controvert established fact, or be purely speculative. Discussions follow the requirements for other manuscripts except that they do not have abstracts, introductions, or conclusions. Separate discussions must be submitted for companion papers (a study presented as multiple parts in the same issue). The title of the Discussion should begin with “Discussion of” followed by the title and authors of the original paper. The DOI of the original paper should be included below the title. Numbering of author footnotes, figures, tables, and equations should begin with one (1) and continue sequentially making it clear when a table, figure, or equation being discussed is from the original paper or the discussion or closure. Discussions and Closures should be submitted in Microsoft Word format only.
- ❖ **Closures** – Closures are responses written by the author(s) of the original manuscript in response to an accepted discussion. The author(s) addresses and clarifies issues raised in discussions and provides conclusions to the issues. Closures and Discussions are published together. Please make sure that those

authors involved in the writing of the closure are included in the byline. Not all of the original authors need to be listed.

❖ **Corrections**

- *Errata*: Corrections of published errors. If errors are serious enough to impair understanding or mislead readers, authors should submit errata for review by the managing editor and production manager. Errata are published in the earliest available issue.
- *Notice of Redundant Publication*: Notification to the readers that significant content in the paper may have already been published in the authors' previous published work.
- *Expression of Concern*: Notification to the readers that the paper is being investigated.
- *Retraction*: Notification that the paper is no longer considered a viable contribution to the journal. Retracted papers are noted with the word "Retraction" added to the title. Retracted papers are not removed from WIT Press publications.

**Reference**

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). (2011, March 7). Code of Conduct and Best-Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors. Retrieved from [http://publicationethics.org/files/Code\\_of\\_conduct\\_for\\_journal\\_editors\\_Mar11.pdf](http://publicationethics.org/files/Code_of_conduct_for_journal_editors_Mar11.pdf)