

**The publishing process: what happens to your paper after you submit it.
Panel Discussion at 2009 CMS winter meeting in Windsor**

Panelists

F :	Dr. Shaun Fallat,	University of Regina
D :	Dr. Ken Davidson	Editor of JOT, HJM, IEOT
H :	Dr. Kevin Hare	University of Waterloo
M :	Dr. Robert McCann	Editor-in-Chief of CJM

When is it time to publish?

M : When your supervisor stops coming back with corrections.

M : There are 2 main types of people: those who take time to polish their article and those who want to do it quickly. Circulate your articles to colleagues to get some feedback before submitting.

D : Introduction should be written last.

Which journal is right for the article we want to publish? How can one find out the rating of a particular journal? How important is it to select the right journal? Should you scan current contents of a journal to match the paper topic? Can the paper be rejected because it might not fit ideally with the scope of the journal?

D : It is important to choose the proper journal: in your area and at your level. Ask your supervisor for advice.

M : Go on AMS website for the rating. Also check how long it takes between time of submission and time of publication – if you're still a student and are looking into applying for jobs, you don't want to wait too long for your paper to appear in print.

F : Potential leadership of the journal has to be taken in account. Who will read the paper is important. Not a lot of people might look in a general journal.

M : General/specialized journal have both their advantages and disadvantages.

How many reviewers does an editor generally send a paper to? How long do the reviews take?

D : In general, there is only one reviewer.

M : It takes about 3 month for the reviewer to get back to the editor.

H : Contact the editor when it is taking too long and your supervisor thinks so as well. How long you can wait depends on where you are in your carrier: students and postdocs would like the publication to appear in print faster, so they can put "published" as opposed to "submitted" on their resumes, while faculty members can wait.

F : Some journals insist on 2 referees, which can result in some delay. It's difficult from editor's point of view to surpass the referee. So don't start e-mailing editors asking how long the process takes one month after submitting.

What are the main reasons for an instant reject?

M : Introduction does not give you a sense of the paper. Paper that is full of formulas and not much text is also a bad sign.

D : References that are just books published in the 60s are also a bad sign. Paper with only calculations is usually a bad sign.

F : Spelling mistakes: sometimes it's a minor issue but not always. If you sent your article to a specialized journal, then the area of your article must match the area of the specialized journal.

M : It is not acceptable to submit the same article to many journals at the same time! Never do this!

What happen after your article is sent? What if you don't agree with some of the reviewer's comments?

H : The referee might not accept the paper right away. He might give you some suggestions and things to correct and then re-submit it. Quite often the referee's advice is quite useful.

D : The editor has decided that the paper is acceptable for the journal. Revise your paper and write to the editor and if you don't agree with the referee's comments, explain why because the paper could be forwarded to the same referee.

F : The editor has to keep in mind that this process has to terminate eventually – the paper cannot be sent back for revisions infinitely many times.

H : For some journals reviewer's comments are the final suggestion, after which the paper is accepted or refused.

What are the most common causes and reasons for a paper to get rejected?

H : The article was not send to the right journal. The results are not interesting.

D : Even if it is rejected, the reports from the referees can be a good advice to correct the paper and re-submit somewhere else. Take these suggestions into account.

F : Even if the paper is rejected, more often than not there are reasons for the rejection. Use this constructive criticism. It is worthwhile to consider those recommendations. Rejection is unfortunate but it comes with some good.

What if your article is rejected and you fix it. Can you submit it to the same journal later?

D : Usually, the editor will tell you if they want a revised version. If not, don't re-submit to the same journal.

What happen after the paper is accepted? Does the author receive proofs?

M : The journal asks you to submit the final version. You will have to make sure your paper is formatted properly for this specific journal.

D : Most journals have a latex style file. They ask you to prepare your article with their file. There should not be any radical changes. This is just your last chance to check for typos.

H : Once the paper is accepted, you are fine. There is no big difference between "accepted" and "published". It looks the same on your CV. The only difference is it affects your score on *Citations*.

F : Every journal has instructions for authors, follow them carefully.

M : Keep your article in a generic format.

What happens if you submit a paper to a journal and it takes a long time to get a response, and in the meantime someone else has gotten their paper (containing similar work on the same topic) published? Will yours be deemed "unoriginal" and not published?

M : It means that you have been doing something interesting! The best thing to do is to contact the other person. You can also include a statement saying that after submission you discovered other similar articles and give reference to them.

D : Put a small section at the end of the paper saying what are the links with the other paper.

What is the volume of submissions?

F : Depends on every journal. For example, *Linear algebra and its applications* gets over 1000 submissions a year.