Getting published in the peer-reviewed literature

Joanne White
Canadian Forest Service

Nicholas Coops
Editor – in – Chief CJRS
UBC

Valencia, Spain November 2016

UBC | a place of mind

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

STRATEGIES FOR PUBLISHING IN PEER REVIEW

- **Before you write**
- **When you write**
- **When you submit**
- **When you re-write and re-submit**
- **Miscelleneous**

In a nutshell

- 26,746 peer-reviewed scholarly and scientific journals[1]

- ~1.5 million research papers each year[2]

- Competition is increasing, particularly for "elite" journals

[1]As of December 1, 2011. Source: http://pages.cmns.sfu.ca/heathermorrison/appendix-c-how-many-active-scholarly-peer-reviewed-journals/

[2]Björk et al. (2008) (Assuming 2.5% increase per year). http://elpub.scix.net/data/works/att/178_elpub2008.content.pdf

Editors do not want zero-cited articles

"The statistic that 27% of our papers were not cited in 5 years was disconcerting. It certainly indicates that it is important to maintain high standards when accepting papers…"
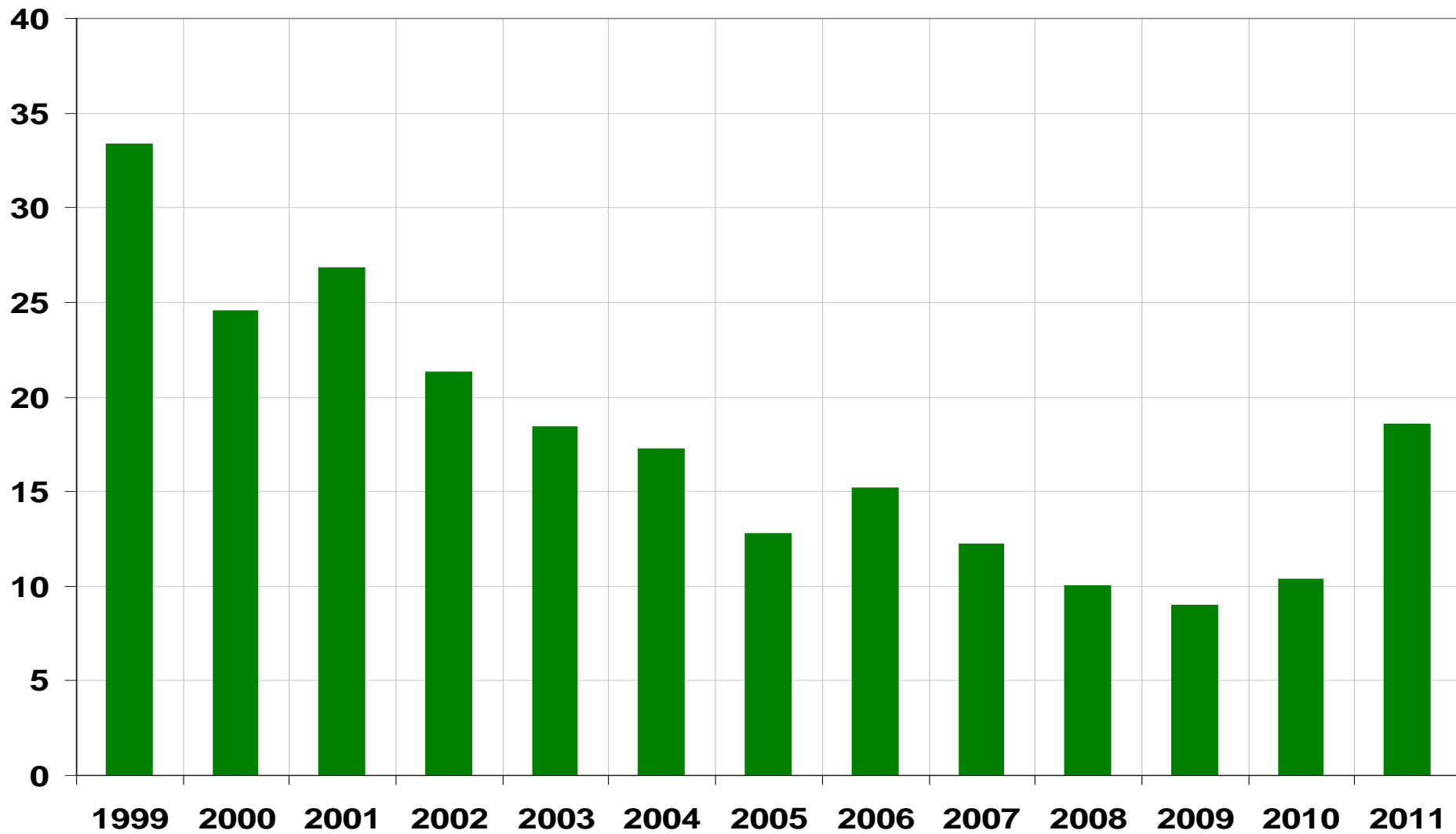
– Marvin Bauer, Editor, Remote Sensing of Environment

% of documents in RSE published in past 3 years that have never been cited

Source:

Editorial Decisions

1.   Editorial rejection

2.   Referee rejection

3.   Revision (minor or major)

4.   Acceptance

WHY DO PAPERS GET REJECTED?

1. Topic is not well matched to the focus and interests of the journal.

2. The research is clearly not significant with common problems being:
- results for only a single image, location, and date
- lack of accuracy assessment and validation
- flawed analysis methods
- the work and paper are well done, but it is nothing that is not already well known and has been published many times

WHY DO PAPERS GET REJECTED?

3. The paper is poorly prepared (structure, figures, language, inappropriate citations)
Even if it can be fixed, it makes editors and reviewers question how well the research was done.

REJECTION RATES

Remote Sensing of Environment:

- 30% topic is not appropriate for RSE or the paper is clearly not sufficient (i.e., = rejection without full peer review)

- 35% rejected following peer review or authors fail to submit a revised paper
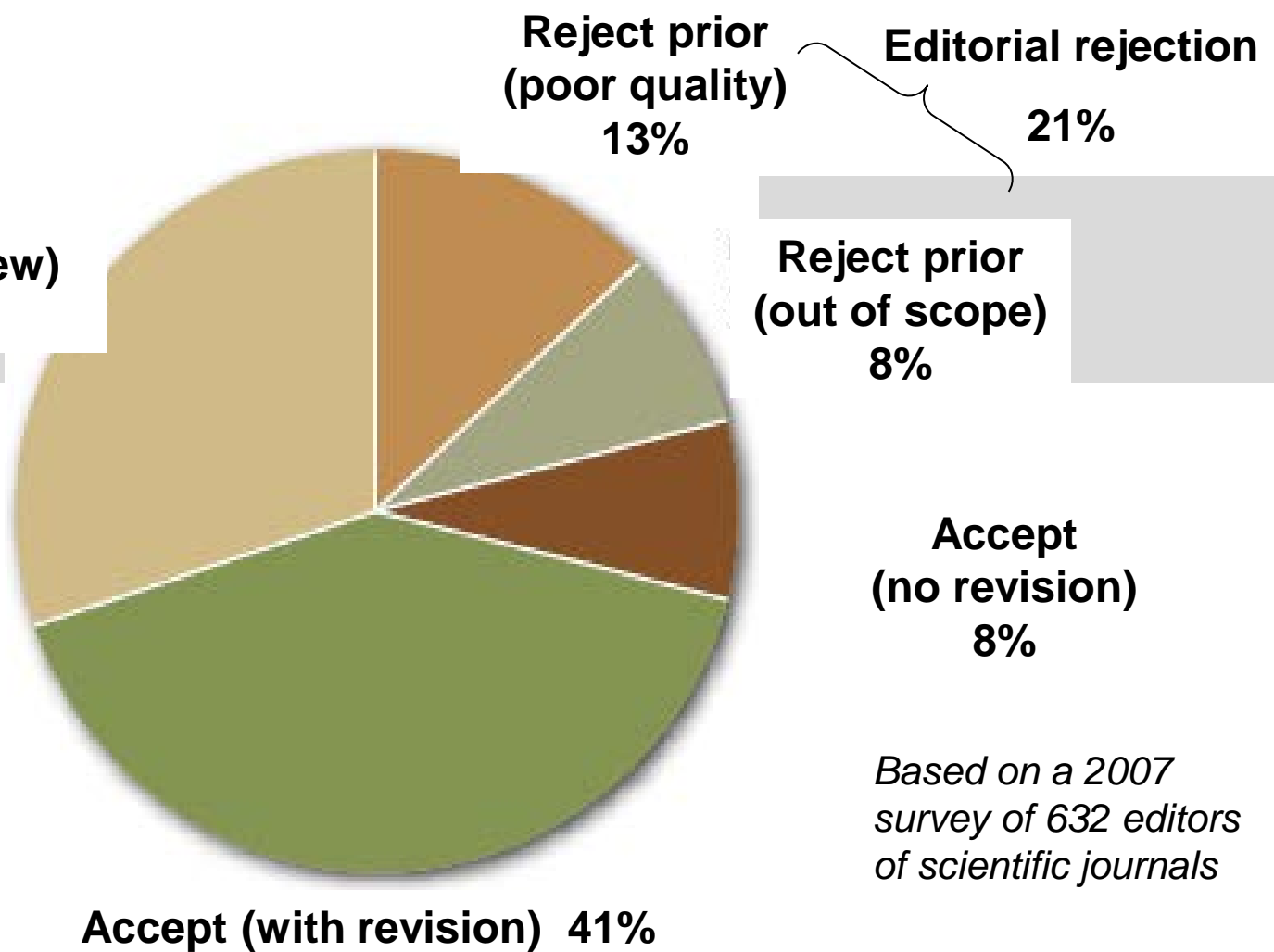
- 35% accepted (with revision)

Canadian Journal of Remote Sensing:

- 50% rejected

International Journal of Remote Sensing:

- only a small number get rejected without review

Reject prior (poor quality) 13%

Editorial rejection 21%

Reject (after review) 30%

Reject prior (out of scope) 8%

Accept (no revision) 8%

Rejection rates:

Nature = 92%

Science = 93%

Based on a 2007 survey of 632 editors of scientific journals

Accept (with revision) 41%

Ware, M. and Monkman, M. (2008). *Peer review in scholarly journals: perspective of the scholarly community – an international study*. Publishing Research Consortium. Available online: www.publishingresearch.org.uk

Schultz, D.M. (2010) Rejection rates for journals publishing in the atmospheric sciences. *American Meterological Socieity.*

BEFORE YOU WRITE

- Select an appropriate target journal

- Know your target
  - read the journal
  - check out guidelines for authors

SELECT AN APPROPRIATE TARGET JOURNAL

- Relevance
  - Aims and scope; types of articles; readership
- Impact
- Turnaround time
- Open access

http://www.scopus.com
http://apps.webofknowledge.com
http://www.scimagojr.com
http://www.journalmetrics.com
http://www.harzing.com/pop.htm

WHEN YOU WRITE: A process, _not_ an afterthought

- Make an outline

- Consult the literature:
  - background/context
  - methods
  - discussion

- Plan your analysis; acquire appropriate data; do the analysis

- Identify appropriate figures and tables

- Keep writing

- Involve and include your co-authors; make sure you take advantage of their experience and expertise

Joanne White. Canadian Forest Service

BEFORE YOU WRITE

- Formulate an interesting research question

- Ensure the aim of the paper is clearly defined:
  - specific
  - original
  - relevant to readership

- Select an appropriate target journal

- Know your target (read the journal, check out guidelines for authors, think about journal impact (all journals are not created equal))

- Consult the literature:
  - background/context
  - methods
  - data requirements

Joanne White. Canadian Forest Service

ELSEVIER

Building Insights.
Breaking Boundaries.

Home | Site map | Elsevier websites | Alerts

Product information
All Elsevier sites

Search
Advanced Product Search

Products

Remote Sensing of Environment

Journal information
Product description
Editorial board
Audience
Abstracting/indexing
Special issues and supplements

Subscription information
Bibliographic and ordering information
Conditions of sale
Dispatch dates

Journal-related information
Contact the publisher
Impact factor
Most downloaded articles
Other journals in same subject area

Support & contact

About Elsevier

Select your view

REMOTE SENSING OF ENVIRONMENT

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Editor-in-Chief:
Marvin E. Bauer
See editorial board for all editors information

Description
Remote Sensing of Environment serves the remote sensing community with the publication of results on theory, science, applications and technology of remote sensing of Earth resources and environment. Thoroughly interdisciplinary, this journal publishes on terrestrial, oceanic, and atmospheric sensing. The emphasis of the journal is on biophysical and quantitative approaches to remote sensing at local to global scales. Areas of interest include, but are not necessarily restricted to:
– agriculture, forestry and range
– biophysical-spectral models
– ecology
– earth and environmental science
– geography and land information
– geology and geoscience
– hydrology and water resources
– image processing and analysis
– atmospheric science and meteorology
– oceanography
– sensor systems and spectral-radiometric measurements

In addition to original research papers, comprehensive review articles are welcome. Brief papers containing significant new data or techniques may be published as *Short Communications*.

Bibliographic & ordering information
ISSN: 0034-4257
Imprint: ELSEVIER
Commenced publication 1969

Subscriptions for the year 2008, Volume 112, 12 issues

Institutional online access: ScienceDirect eSelect
For purchase of online access to this journal on ScienceDirect.

Institutional price: Order form
EUR 2,778 for European countries and Iran
JPY 369,000 for Japan
USD 3,106 for all countries except Europe, Japan and Iran

Associated personal price: Order form
EUR 141 for European countries and Iran
USD 158 for all countries except Europe, Japan and Iran
JPY 18,600 for Japan

Conditions of sale & ordering procedures, and links to our regional sales offices.

For an overview of recently-dispatched issues, see the Journal issue dispatch dates
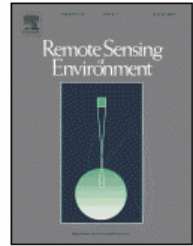
For Readers
Free Tables of contents and abstracts
Full text in ScienceDirect
Sample issue
Free volume/issue alert

For Authors
Guide for authors
Submit your article
Track your accepted article

For Editors
Tracking for Editors

Related websites
Artwork Instructions
Publishing Ethics Resource Kit (PERK)

Search through the articles of this journal powered by Scirus

Search by keywords
Search by author
Search

Bookmark this page
Recommend this publication
Overview of all journals

REMOTE SENSING OF ENVIRONMENT

An Interdisciplinary Journal

Guide for Authors

Remote Sensing of Environment serves the remote sensing community with the publication of results on the theory, science, applications, and technology of remote sensing of Earth Resources and Environment. Thoroughly interdisciplinary, RSE publishes on terrestrial, oceanic and atmospheric sensing. The emphasis is on biophysical and quantitative approaches to remote sensing at local to global scales. In addition to original research papers, comprehensive, state-of-the-art review articles are welcome. Brief papers containing significant new data or techniques may be published as Short Communications.

Before Submission. Please carefully check the latest issues of Remote Sensing of Environment to see whether your article is appropriate for the journal.

Submission of Papers. Contributions are accepted on the understanding that authors have obtained the necessary authority for publication. Submission of an article must be accompanied by a statement that the article is original and unpublished and is not being considered for publication elsewhere. Upon acceptance of an article by the journal, the author(s) will be asked to transfer the copyright of the article to the publisher. This transfer will ensure the widest possible dissemination of information.

Manuscript Preparation. All material should be typed, double-spaced, allowing ample margins using 8½ x 11 paper size format. Pages must be numbered; in addition, line numbering is preferred. Flexibility of presentation is allowed, but authors are asked to arrange the subject matter clearly under headings such as *Introduction*, *Methods*, *Results*, *Discussion*, etc. All contributions should include a concise, informative **Abstract.** All **equations**, **tables**, and **figure legends** should be numbered consecutively and separately throughout the paper. The International System (SI) of units should be used. Language: Papers are to be submitted in and will be published in English. Table numbers and captions should be placed directly above each table. Figure numbers and legends, if possible, should be placed directly below each figure.

All manuscripts are to be submitted electronically; no hard copies should be submitted. Editorial Manager accepts files in the following formats: Word, Wordperfect, LaTeX2e, TIFF, GIF, JPEG, EPS, Postscript, Excel and Powerpoint. **Submit your original files. DO NOT upload your manuscript in PDF file format**; the system builds one PDF file from all of your submitted files, and your original files are stored on the server for editorial office and publisher access. When you upload your manuscript, you will be required to upload your abstract separately. Please upload your title page and abstract under the ABSTRACT category. The MANUSCRIPT category should include the rest of your manuscript, including references. Tables and figures can be included in the entire manuscript, or uploaded separately under the TABLE and FIGURE categories. If you are unable to upload the figures as one file because of size, you can upload each one as a separate file.

For revised manuscripts, a "Response to Reviews and Summary of Changes" is required. Upload this file under the category "RESPONSE TO REVIEWS AND SUMMARY OF CHANGES".

Before building your PDF file, put your files in the following order: Response to Reviews and Summary of Changes (only for revised papers), Abstract, Manuscript, Tables, Figures. View your submission for accuracy, and approve it.

Illustrations. Line drawings should be in a form suitable for reproduction. If color figures are included, the publisher will forward an estimate of cost to the author before beginning color reproduction. Further artwork preparation guidelines can be found at: http://www.elsevier.com/artworkinstructions.

References. References should be cited in the text by the name(s) of the author(s), followed by the year of publication in parentheses, e.g., Baret and Guyot (1991). When the same author and year are cited again, these references should have the year followed by (a), (b), etc. The reference list should be typed alphabetically, according to the following examples:
Journal: Baret, F., & Guyot, G. (1991). Potentials and limits of vegetation indices for LAI and APAR assessment. *Remote Sensing of Environment, 35*, 161-173
Book: Schott, J.R. (1997). *Remote Sensing: The Image Chain Approach*. (pp. 52-62). New York: Oxford University Press
Edited Book: Kaufman, Y.J. (1989). The atmospheric effect on remote sensing and its corrections. In G. Asrar (Ed.), *Theory and Applications of Optical Remote Sensing* (pp. 336-428). New York: Wiley

Move beyond "remote sensing" journals alone

- A lot of what is submitted to RS journals may be better considered by more application focused journals, such as:

  - vegetation science,
  - forestry,
  - ecology,
  - resource management

WHEN YOU WRITE: A process, _not_ an afterthought

- Make an outline

- Consult the literature:
  - background/context
  - methods
  - discussion

- Plan your analysis; acquire appropriate data; do the analysis

- Identify appropriate figures and tables

- Keep writing

- Involve and include your co-authors; make sure you take advantage of their experience and expertise

Section	Function	Preferred Style	Rules of Thumb
Title	Indicates content.

Attracts the reader's attention. | Short and simple (but not too short).

Purposive (i.e., targets a specific audience/journal). | Avoid redundancy.

Include keywords. |

Too short: *Remote sensing of foliar chemistry*

Too long: *Predisposition assessment systems (PAS) as supportive tools in forest management-rating of site and stand-related hazards of bark beetle infestation in the High Tatra Mountains as an example for system application and verification*

Purposive: *The Data Uncertainty Engine (DUE): A software tool for assessing and simulating uncertain envrionmental variables*

Catchy? *Ground truth: an underview*

Gerund: *Analyzing dune dynamics   vs.   An analysis of dune dynamics*

Characterizing forest vertical structure with lidar   vs.

Characteristics of forest vertical structure measured with lidar

Section	Function	Preferred Style	Rules of Thumb
Abstract	State the principal objectives and scope of the investigation. Describe the methods employed. Summarize the results. State the principal conclusions.	Past (perfect) tense. Active/passive voice. First person or not? Short concise sentences. No jargon. No citations.	What was done? What was found? What are the main conclusions? Important summary numbers. Should stand alone. **KEYWORDS**

Less than 5% of research papers are read in detail, but more than 50% of abstracts are read.

Remote sensing of small and linear features: Quantifying the effects of patch size and length, grid position and detectability on land cover mapping

Alex Mark Lechner, Alfred Stein, Simon D. Jones, Jelle Garke Ferwerda

Context
The accurate mapping of small, often fragmented and linear vegetation patches is of key importance for natural resource management because of their ecological significance...

Objectives
This paper investigates the effect of patch area and patch elongation on the accurate mapping of these vegetation patches.

Methods
Using synthetic images to simulate sub-pixel patch location, we investigated classification accuracy and extraction probability resulting from differences in the geometric properties of the raster grid and the feature alone.

Results
The mapping error was highest when the scale of the feature and the raster grid coincided. The spatial resolution of the grid should be many times finer in order to extract these features accurately.

Conclusion

A more precise estimate of the size of the smallest discernable feature was generated, taking into account the random position of the remote sensing grid with respect to the feature as well as its shape. An understanding of this phenomenon is critical for making good land management decisions based on a thorough understanding of the limitations of remote sensing data.

Active Voice / Passive Voice

- Subject is doing the action:
  - *Why did the chicken cross the road?*
  - *This programme focuses on…*

- Object becomes the subject:
  - *Why was the road crossed by the chicken?*
  - *The programme is focused on…*

- Awkward, vague:
  - *Why was the road crossed?*

- When to use?
  - Emphasize an object.
  - De-emphasize an unknown/irrelevant subject (i.e. Methods)

a place of mind

Section	Function	Preferred Style	Rules of Thumb
Introduction	Introduces the topic and defines the terminology.

Relates to current knowledge: What has been done?

Indicates the gap: What needs to be done?

Provides the focus of the paper (purpose) and the research objectives. | Present tense for referring to established knowledge.

Past tense for literature review.

Active voice.

Focussed overview of literature. | Use state-of-the-art references.

Follow logical sequence.

Emphasize why the topic is important. |

Characterizing 23 years (1972-95) of stand replacement disturbance in western Oregon forests with Landsat imagery (Cohen et al., *Ecosystems*, 2002)

Introduce the topic. Emphasize why the topic is important.

Regional forest dynamics influence a variety of ecosystem functions, including terrestrial and aquatic species habitat (Harris and Silva-Lopez 1992; Csuti and others 1997), water quality and flows (Saunders and others 1991), and the carbon cycle (Houghton 1993; Cohen and others 1996).

Relate to current knowledge. What has been done?

Since 1972, it has been possible to monitor forest resources using satellite imagery (Goward and Williams 1997).

Monitoring of both forest disturbance and succession is possible with satellite-image data (Foody and others 1996; Rignot and others 1997).

Characterizing 23 years (1972-95) of stand replacement disturbance in western Oregon forests with Landsat imagery (Cohen et al., *Ecosystems*, 2002)

Indicate the gap. What needs to be done?

Local to regional monitoring of forest disturbance using satellite imagery has largely focused on the derivation of methods (Sader and Winne 1992; Cohen and others 1998).

Pose research question. Give purpose and objectives.

In this study, we characterize the relationships among disturbance rates and patterns, geoclimatic gradients, and land ownership to determine the impact of land management activities and wildfire across the 4.6 million forested hectares of the three major forest provinces in western Oregon between 1972 and 1995. Our objectives are:

Characterizing 23 years (1972-95) of stand replacement disturbance in western Oregon forests with Landsat imagery (Cohen et al., *Ecosystems*, 2002)

Introduction = 650 words

Topic sentences = 150 words   ~ 25%

Section	Function	Preferred Style	Rules of Thumb
Methods	Provides enough detail for *competent* researchers to be able to repeat the study. Describe data. Describe methods used. Who, what, where, when, why.	Past tense. Passive/active voice. Correct and internationally recognized style and format (for units, variables, materials, etcetera).	Mention everything that is important to the results. Do not create a bull's-eye for the reviewer (i.e., "*some data was ignored*"). Do not explain accepted techniques. Flow diagram.

Section	Function	Preferred Style	Rules of Thumb
Results	Gives summary results in graphics and numbers. Compares different results. Gives quantified proofs (statistical tests).	Past tense. Active voice. Use tables, graphs, illustrations.	Present summary data related to the objectives (not all the research results). Call attention to the most significant findings. No methods! No analysis of results.

Section	Function	Preferred Style	Rules of Thumb
Discussion	Explains discrepancies and unexpected findings. Agreement (or not) with previously published work. States the important implications of results.	Present tense. Past tense if referring to results. Active voice.	Do not recapitulate results. Make strong statements (i.e., avoid "*It may be concluded*"). Do not attempt to hide unexpected results–they can be the most important ones. No new results.

Section	Function	Preferred Style	Rules of Thumb
Conclusion	Answers research questions/ objectives. State limitations of the study. State importance of findings. Announce future research.	Past tense (for referring to this study). Present tense for musings of future work.	Summarize concisely. Describe how it represents an advance in the field. Avoid repetition with other sections. Avoid speculation. Do not overemphasize or overstate the impact of your work.

Section	Function	Preferred Style	Rules of Thumb
References	Provide a list of related literature and sources of information. Support the ideas in the paper.	Depends on journal. Check journal requirements for formatting.	Cite primary source rather than review papers. Make citations count.

Miscellaneous Issues (continued)

Contractions
    The difference wasn't statistically significant.
    The difference was not statistically significant.

Ambiguity
    This method was applied to the time series data.
    The Morton method was applied to the time series data.

Data are plural
    Image data was selected at random.
    Image data were selected at random

Numbers
    Spell out numbers between zero and nine:
    The model requires eight input layers.
    **Except when grouping with larger numbers:
    Only 8 of the 49 input variables were selected by the model.
    Use numerals for numbers ≥ 10.
    The model requires 16 input data layers.
    **Except when the number begins a sentence:
    Sixteen input data layers were required for the analysis.

Miscellaneous Issues (continued)

e.g. vs. i.e.   e.g. = *exempli gratia*, "for example"   << GENERAL

i.e. *= id est,* "that is", "in other words" << SPECIFIC

Don't italicize, use comma following.

dash vs. colon   Dash parenthetical, amplifying, or explanatory.

In some instances—although no one will admit it—the police overreacted to the problem.

Colon introduces a formal list, definition, quotation, or equation. An independent clause precedes the colon.

The reaction of the crowd signified only one thing: apathy.

which vs. that   Which (non-restrictive clause), that (restrictive clause).

My new iPhone, which I took on vacation, was stolen.

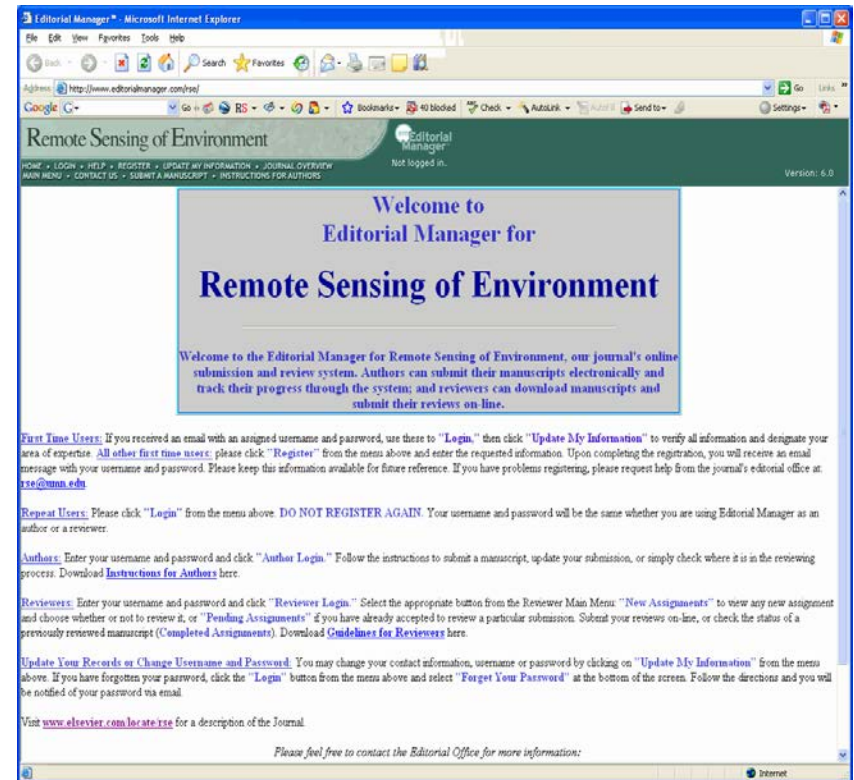*My new iPhone that I took on vaction was stolen.*

Plagiarism

- Unacknowledged use of other people's ideas or work.

- Misrepresentation of someone else's ideas or work as your own.

- Changing words, but copying sentence structure.

- Use of specific facts without attribution to the source.

- Paraphrasing without citation.

- Improper use of quotations.

WHEN YOU SUBMIT

- Follow the submission guidelines explicitly

- Draft a cover letter to the editor if required and/or appropriate
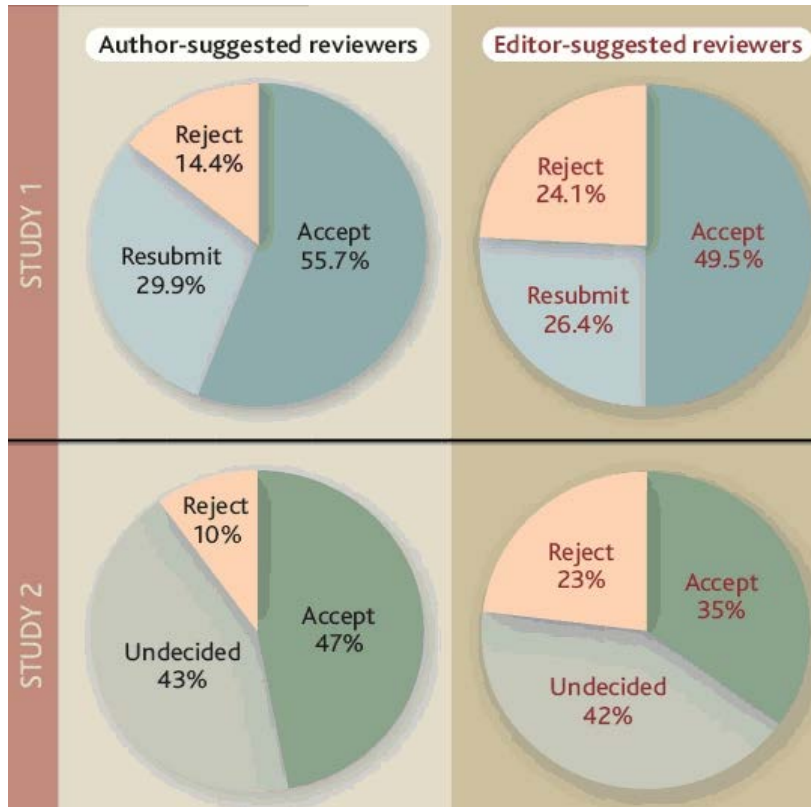
- Suggest reviewers if given the option

http://www.editorialmanager.com/rse/

"Suggesting or excluding reviewers can help get your paper published"

	Author-suggested reviewers	Editor-suggested reviewers
STUDY 1	Reject 14.4%, Resubmit 29.9%, Accept 55.7%	Reject 24.1%, Resubmit 26.4%, Accept 49.5%
STUDY 2	Reject 10%, Undecided 43%, Accept 47%	Reject 23%, Undecided 42%, Accept 35%

- Suggesting or excluding reviewers significantly increased a manuscript's chances of being accepted

- No difference in quality or timeliness of reviews

a place of mind

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Corruption of Peer Review Is Harming Scientific Credibility

- In July last year, Sage Publications retracted 60 papers from Journal of Vibration and Control

- The authors had exploited peer review so that certain papers were sure to get a positive review for placement in the journal.

- They listed preferred reviewers, who were fictitious and added made up email addresses. When then invited to review the paper they did so.

WHEN YOU RE-WRITE

- Don't underestimate the importance of the rebuttal process.

- Prepare a rebuttal document:
    -make it easy for the editor/reviewer to accept your revision!

- Respond to all points, even if you disagree.

- If you disagree with particular points present your argument.

- Be constructive, positive, and tactful.

- Cross reference to other reviewer comments for the same issue.

Paper RES 106-052:

An accuracy assessment framework for large area land cover classification products derived from medium resolution satellite data.

Reviewer 1:

1. Page 10, line 20: Cite Don Steven's work

An addition has been made to the text (page 10, line 10):

"Ideally, the sampling frame will match the target population; however in natural resource applications it is common for the sampling frame to contain many non-target elements, and for many of the target elements to be inaccessible (Stevens and Olsen, 2004). Sampling frames are usually list frames or area frames. In an ecological context, both forms of sampling frames may be implemented, depending on the nature of the sample units (Stevens 1993)."

2. Page 10, line 23: The frame most appropriate for large area land cover validation is not necessarily an area frame – could be a list frame. Depends on the nature of the features (are they extensive or discrete)?

The text has been clarified as follows (page 10, line 19):

"The type of sampling frame that is most appropriate for large area land cover validation depends on the nature of each land cover class and whether the class is discrete or extensive."

3. Page 11, line 3: Check that it was the air photo grid that was used as the sampling frame in Zhu et al. 2000.

The reference to the photo grid has been made more explicit in the text (page 11, line 1):

"A sample frame may be defined by a specific spatial dataset, such as the National Air Photo Program coverage (Zhu et al. 2000) or the entire landmass of a country (if evaluating a national product)."
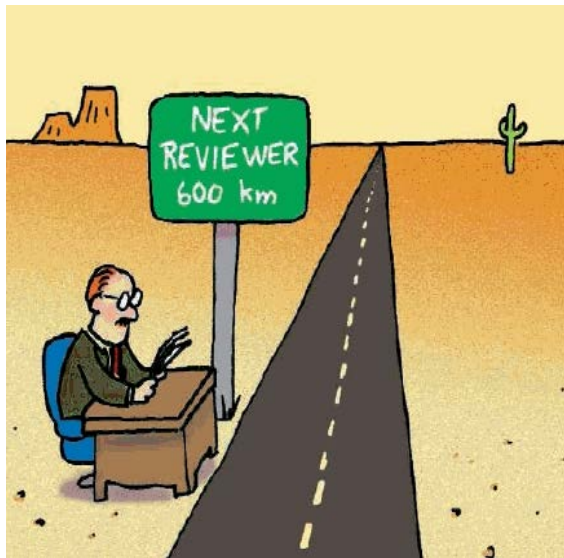
5. Page 11, line 9: Sampling units can be discrete features as well.

Change implemented as suggested by reviewer (page 11, line 6):

Use different font style to distinguish your responses from reviewer's comments

"Publish <u>and review</u>, or perish"

W.F. Perrin, 2008, *Science,* Vol 319, p. 32

- Review 4 times as many papers as you publish per year

Otherwise:

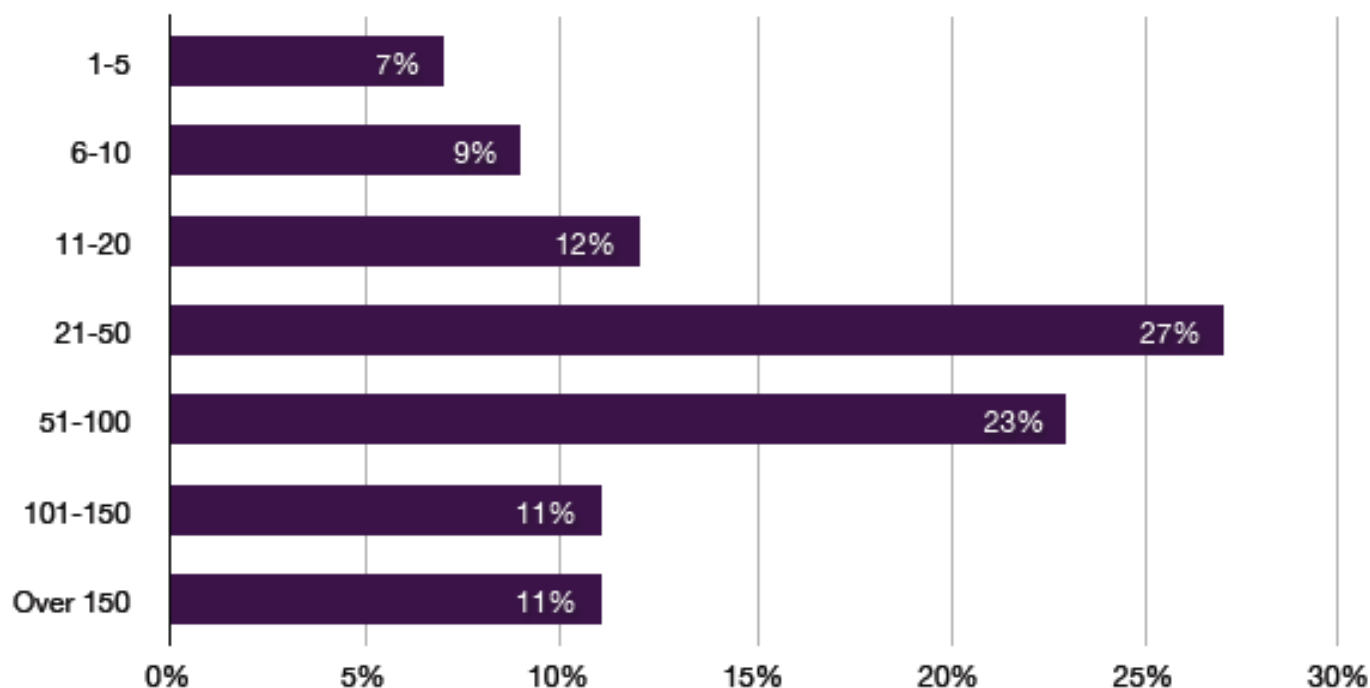- Less knowledgeable reviewers
- Reviews of lesser quality

REVIEWERS ARE MORE PRODUCTIVE

Figure 14: Total number of papers published in career to date (n = 3040)

Average # of papers = 60

Active reviewers (i.e., who had reviewed 6 or more papers in past 12 months) were more productive authors with an average of 85 papers).

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

[1]Ware, M. and Monkman, M. (2008). *Peer review in scholarly journals: perspective of the scholarly community – an international study*. Publishing Research Consortium. Available online: www.publishingresearch.org.uk

Publication patterns of award-winning forest scientists and implications for the Australian ERA journal ranking

Jerome K. Vanclay*

Southern Cross University, PO Box 157, Lismore, NSW 2480, Australia

"...prominent scientists increase their impact through coauthorship of a larger number of papers rather than by publishing in journals of higher impact."

decade before and two decades following their first major award. An analysis of their 1703 articles in 431 journals revealed substantial differences between the journal choices of these elite scientists and the ERA classification and ranking of journals. Implications from these findings are that additional cross-classifications should be added for many journals, and there should be an adjustment to the ranking of several journals relevant to the ERA Field of Research classified as 0705 Forestry Sciences.

Welcome any comments / discussion at this meeting or anytime.

Nicholas.coops@ubc.ca