

Paper Submission & Publication

Submitting paper, editor's decision, further reading...

Ming-Ming Cheng, Ning Sun

Nankai University

2024/11/03

Table of Contents

- 1 Submitting your paper
- 2 Checklist
- 3 Format
- 4 The Editor's Decision
 - Acceptance
 - Revision
 - Rejection
- 5 Further Reading



Fig.: Sections 6-8.

Submitting your paper: final check

Before submitting your paper for publication, you should give it a **final check**.

- **Proof-read** the paper to remove **spelling errors**, and **grammatical mistakes**.
- **Check** basic requirements: **length limits**, the publisher's house **style**, and any submission **deadline**.
- Submit the **same** paper (or similar papers) to **only one** conference or journal **at a time**.

Making multiple simultaneous submissions is considered to be an **unethical** malpractice.

- Lead to **rejection** and **blacklist**.
- **Credit bankruptcy**.

Outlet and Readership: outlet

Most journals and conferences have a **clear list of topics** which they consider to be **in scope**. (Section 1.4)

- Firstly, re-check that you are intending to send your paper to a **suitable outlet**, *i.e.* **conference** or **journal**.
- Then, re-check that you have written the paper with the **readership** of that outlet in mind.

For example, if a journal says

The Journal of Cactus Biology welcomes articles on the **anatomy, biochemistry and physiology** of cacti.

★ It is not a good idea to send articles on **cactus ecology** to it, even if the title sounds suitable.

Outlet and Readership: readership

Give your paper to a **colleague**, and ask them to read it and give you an **opinion**.

- The colleague should have the **same level** of knowledge as the **intended** readership.
- Do not forget to **thank** your colleagues for their contributions.
- Consider the **order** of **authors** in this paper.

Outlet and Readership: readership

If a paper is **first** sent to one outlet, but is **rejected**, and you later

- decide to send a **revised version** to a **new** outlet,
- do not forget to **re-check** your assumptions about the **background of the readers**,
- **reconsider** what needs explaining.

Reviewing Form: pretend to be a reviewer

There is a **stronger approach** which can be used to see if your paper is **likely** to be accepted.

- Journals/conferences use their own **reviewing form**.
- Asks the reviewer a **standard set** of questions, as well as providing space for free-form **feedback**.
- These standard questions focus on **aspects** of the paper which that outlet considers to be **important**.
- If the reviewer writes **negative** responses to several of these questions, the **chances** of your paper being **accepted** for publication are **low**.

Reviewing Form: pretend to be a reviewer

Try to get a copy of the corresponding **reviewing form**.

- If that is **not possible**, it is **important** to use one from the **same field**, as **different** subjects have **different** expectation concerning.

You should **pretend** to be the **reviewer** yourself.

- Read through your paper as **objectively** as you can,
- **Answering** the questions on the reviewing form.
- Any weak answer is a **cause for concern**, and is an issue that should be corrected **before submission**.

Checklist: general issues

Using such a reviewing form **after** you have written the paper is **inferior** to keeping the key questions in mind **while** you are writing it. **1. Does the paper address a topic of interest to the journal or conference?**

I.e., is your work in an area that the outlet covers?

It is **no good** sending a paper on **building** design to a design journal which **specialises in electronic** design, for example.

Checklist: general issues

2. Does it address an important topic?

- Your topic may **not** be **current**.

No one will be interested in a paper on improving **black-and-white** television now that **all** televisions have **colour** screens.

- **How** widely **useful** the results are likely to be?

Showing that some kind of large mechanical component will work better if it is made from **solid gold** is unlikely to be of interest, as it will be far **too costly** to make.

- Solving a **rare and narrow** special case is **unlikely** to be of great interest.

Checklist: general issues

3. Is it written in an appropriate style?

- Take into account **what** the readers are **likely to know**.
- **How** other papers in the outlet are **typically** written?
- **What** the readers **expect**?

Papers in **theoretical** journals typically have formal **mathematical proofs**, and if instead you simply demonstrate your ideas with **examples**, reviewers are likely consider the style to be **unsuitable**.

Checklist: general issues

4. Is it clear what the novel contribution is?

- **Clearly stated** which parts of the paper are **new** ideas.
- Should have an **explicit** statement of **novelty** in the **introduction** to your paper.
- Make clear what the **improvements** or **advances** are.

An example

The main contributions of this paper are:

- a **new** method for segmenting a car from the background in an image, which is **faster** than previous methods,
- a **new** method for tracking a car in a video, which is **more robust** than previous methods.

Checklist: general issues

4. Is it clear what the novel contribution is?

- Separate the **main work** & **main contributions**.

An example

Reviewer 1: ... replace “the main work” with “the main contributions” in the end of the Introduction. List your **contributions and innovations** and let readers see the value of this paper, **rather than** simply explain **what you did**.

- Reviewers are expected to be **conservative**.
- If an author does **not** make an explicit claim of **novelty** for some part of the paper, reviewers will assume that it is **not novel**.

Checklist: general issues

5. Is the paper technically sound?

- Are the assumptions **sound**, and **valid**?
(If not, **no** amount of correct reasoning will help, and the paper's conclusions will **not be meaningful**.)
- Do the steps in your argument **follow** sound **logical** principles?
- Are your computations mathematically **correct**?
- Have your experiments been carried out in a manner which allows **valid conclusions** to be drawn?
- Do you **correctly use** relevant statistical methods when **analysing** your results?
- Are your procedures **valid**?

Checklist: general issues

Here is an example of an unsound procedure.

Consider a machine learning system whose goal is to recognise different animals in images. Initially, some **training images** are presented to it, which it uses to learn the appearance of classes of animals, such as cats and dogs. To then **assess how well** the algorithm works, some test images are presented to it, with **known** ground-truth (*i.e.* containing animals of **known** classes), and the algorithm's **success** at recognising each animal's class is measured. Reusing any of the training images as test images is a **serious methodological error**. The **aim** is to know how well the algorithm works when given **unknown, new** images, not how well it can give the answer to a problem for which it has **already been told** the correct answer!

Checklist: general issues

6. Is the writing clear?

At the large scale,

- **nothing** important should be **missing**, and material should be presented in a **logical order**.

At the small scale,

- **terms** should be **defined**.
- **appropriate notation** should be used, and so on.

The writing of your paper should be clear and organized.

Checklist: general issues

7. Are the figures clear and useful?

- Are the figures, and any text within them, **large enough**?
- Have they been **prepared** at a **high enough resolution**?
- Is it easy to see in the figure what the **caption says** the figure **shows**?
- Have the figures been **explicitly referred** to at a **specific** place in the text?
- Do the figures **add** something to the text, and provide **extra information** to the reader?
- Do the figures provide information in a way which is **easy to understand**?

Checklist: general issues

8. Is the paper too short or too long?

- Many conferences and journals nowadays impose **length limits**, and any paper which **exceeds** them is **obviously too long**.
- This question is also asking whether the ideas
 - have been **adequately explained** (taking the **readership** into account),
 - have been tested.
 - Alternatively, **too much** may have been explained.

Checklist: general issues

For example,

the author may have used **several pages** to write out some **standard well-known** results in the field, or have given all the **small steps** in a **mathematical argument** when **larger steps** would have been **appropriate**.

Checklist: general issues

9. Could someone else reproduce this work?

(one of the most important questions)

- Whether the paper is **complete** and written in **sufficient** detail.
- Someone in the **same field** should be **able to implement** his own version of the ideas, allowing him to **run the same** experiments and **get the same** results.
- Not only requires the method itself to be **clearly and fully** described, but also that **all** assumptions are **stated**.

Checklist: general issues

9. Could someone else reproduce this work?

(one of the most important questions)

- **Any** parameter settings should also be **given**, or at least a **description** of **how to choose** them.
- An **adequate** description of the test data should also be **provided**, or a **clear description** of **how to prepare** such data or where to acquire it.

Others should be able to follow and confirm any proofs.

Checklist: general issues

10. Are the references adequate?

- This is not only a question of having **enough** references, but also whether they are the **right** ones.
 - Has any **important prior** work on this or some **closely related** topic been **missed out**?
 - Do the references **refer** to the **right** papers: the **first** on a topic, the significant **advances**, and the **currently best** approaches?
 - Avoid having **too few or out-of-date** references, or **failure** to refer to key papers.
- ★ It is likely to cause reviewers to **conclude** that you are **unfamiliar** with **important and current ideas** in your topic, making them **suspicious** of any claims you make about **novelty**.

Checklist: general issues

11. Is the title suitable?

- For a title, do **not** give an **impression** that a piece of work is **more** general than it **actually is**.

For example,

a paper might be entitled 'On the Conductivity of **Metals**' yet **only** consider the conductivity of **copper and aluminium**. Anyone who reads the paper expecting to get insight into the **conductivity of gold** will be **disappointed**.

Checklist: general issues

11. Is the title suitable?

- Avoid **unnecessary** phrases.

An example

Like 'An Investigation into...'

- Draw attention to the **novel or key** aspects of the paper.

An example title

Stronger Joints in Composite Materials

Checklist: general issues

11. Is the title suitable?

- Avoid giving your method a **fancy** name, and put it into the **title**.

An example title

Grasscut: an algorithm for finding grass in images

★ The **disadvantage**: if your idea does become a **big success**, it will always be **remembered** by the **fancy name**, instead of your name.

‘The **Grasscut** algorithm’ above might instead have become known as ‘**Wang’s** algorithm’. (As people in China share just a few surnames, perhaps **no-one** will be clear **which** Wang is referred to by Wang’s algorithm!)

Format: before writing

Every journal and conference has its own **house style** to be used when **preparing** papers.

- **Page** size
- Single- or double-**columned** format
- **Fonts** and font sizes
- How references are **laid out**
- ...

Format: before writing

Use a **document template**:

- **Microsoft Word** (word processing software)
- **L^AT_EX** (style file software)

The format should be obtained before you start writing.

Reasons:

- help you to ensure that your paper meets any **page limits**.
- avoid a **time-consuming** reformatting job.

Format: before writing

Do **not** be tempted to make your own **modifications** to the **house style**.

For example,

do not **shrink** spacings or text size to cheat the **page limits** if your paper is too long.

- The publisher's production staff will **notice**, and **revert** your modification back to the correct style.
- The result may be a request to **further revise** the paper to shorten it, causing a **delay**, or to pay **charges** for the additional pages.
- May even be **rejected** for being too long.

Revise the wording of your paper to reach the desired length.

Format: ways to shorten the length

- **Omit inessential** words such as '**basically**' and '**essentially**'.
- Look for **paragraphs** whose last line has **just** one or two words on it, and **reword** it slightly so that it **fits on one line** fewer.
- Slightly **reducing** the size of figures, but do **not** make them **too** small.

Format: L^AT_EX

Using a markup language like L^AT_EX has several significant **benefits**.

- The **commands** placed within the text describe the **logical structure** of the document, rather than its **appearance**.

For example, you indicate that a given piece of text is a *section heading*, not that it is to be printed in *24pt Times Bold*.

```
\section{Feature Optimisation}  
We now consider...
```

Format: L^AT_EX

- By simply **changing** the **style file**, much of a document can be changed from **one** publisher's requirements to **another's** with a minimum of effort.

Change style file

```
\documentclass[journal]{IEEEtran}  
\documentclass{ifacconf}  
...
```

Format: L^AT_EX

- **Readily** allow the references section and citations, as well as **cross-references**, to be **automatically** generated.
- If you find that you need to **reorder** the sections of the paper, for instance, the numbering will be **updated automatically**.
- Changing the numbering **by hand** is a **tedious and error-prone** job.

Give a section or page a *label*, and *refer* to it later by that label

```
\section{Feature Optimisation}
```

```
\label{featureopt}
```

In Section `\ref{featureopt}`, we showed that...

Format: \LaTeX

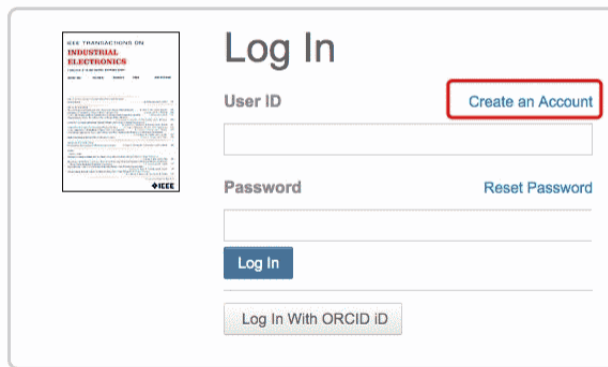
Other advantages:

- Do a really **good** job of **typesetting mathematics**.
- While it is **somewhat complex** and takes a while to learn, the results it produces are of a **high quality** when used correctly.
- Many **major** journals and conferences now **expect** papers to be submitted in \LaTeX ,

It is strongly recommended to learn \LaTeX .
(Especially involving equations/formulae.)

Format: Tips

Step 1: Register an account to enter the submission system before submitting your paper.



The screenshot shows a web interface for logging into a submission system. On the left is a thumbnail of a journal cover titled "INDUSTRIAL ELECTRONICS". The main heading is "Log In". Below it, there is a "User ID" label and a text input field. To the right of the input field is a blue link "Create an Account" which is highlighted with a red rectangular box. Below the "User ID" field is a "Password" label and another text input field. To the right of the password field is a blue link "Reset Password". Below the password field is a blue "Log In" button. At the bottom, there is a grey button labeled "Log In With ORCID iD".

Fig.: Register an account in advance.

Format: Tips

Step 2: Understand each step of the submission process clearly in advance, which can be organized into documents.

IEEE Transactions on Mechatronics

Home Author Review

Author Dashboard / Submission

Submission

- Step 1: Type, Title, & Abstract >
- Step 2: File Upload >
- Step 3: Attributes >
- Step 4: Authors & Institutions >
- ✓ Step 5: Reviewers & Editors >
- Step 6: Details & Comments >
- Step 7: Review & Submit >

⚠ Please fix the following

- Title is missing.
- Abstract text is required.

Step 1: Type, Title, & Abstract

Select your manuscript type by character, click the "Spec" button.

* = Required Fields

* Type:

xxx 期刊提交辅助信息

- Step 1
- Step 2
- Step 3
- Step 4
- Step 5
- Step 6
- Step 7

Fig.: Document the submission process.

Format: Tips

Step 3: Prepare all the required materials (e.g. cover letter, paper inf., etc.).

Step 4: Save every revised version of your paper.

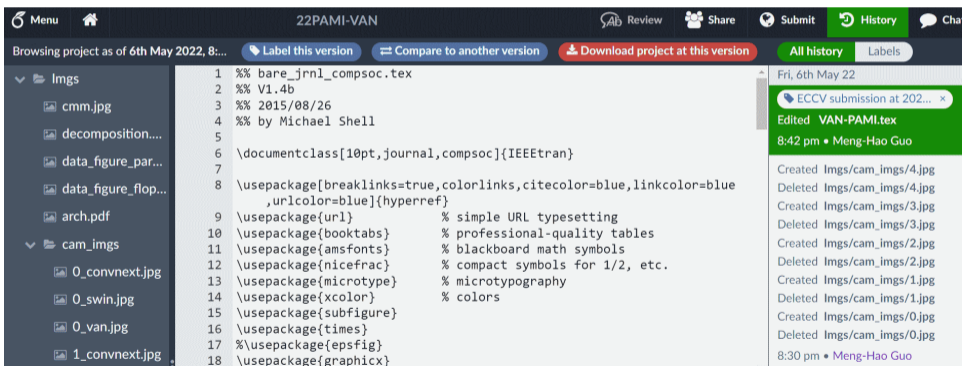


Fig.: Save every important version by simply label it in Overleaf.

The Editor's Decision

- For a **journal**, a decision may take **6 months or more**.
- For a **conference** it will usually take **much less**.
- The editor's decision: **accept**, **minor revision**, **major revision**, or **reject**.
- The decision will normally also be accompanied by **at least** two **reviewers'** reports on your paper.

Acceptance



Revision



Rejection



The Editor's Decision: notice

Any outlet which publishes papers **without** refereeing is to be avoided.

- It will include many **low quality** papers.
- Publishing in such an outlet will **not** be good for your **reputation**.

Keep your heart and do your best.

Acceptance: uncommon

- **Outright acceptance** of a paper on the first submission is **uncommon**,
- Improve your paper's level can **increase the probability** of acceptance.
- Even in this case you **may** be asked to **fix** typographical mistakes and other small problems.

Do not be disappointed for not to be accepted outright. (Normal!)

Revision: minor revision

Minor revision and **major** revision are really part of a **continuum**, and indeed, some outlets do **not** bother to make a **distinction**.

- A request for minor revision means that the paper is **generally sound**.
- Small points of detail need **clarification or correction**.
- Small **omissions** need to be addressed.

The first round of comments is rarely a minor revision.

Revision: major revision

A request for **major** revision can mean several different things.

- Your writing may be **unclear**, so the reviewers may wish to see **more details** before they can make a final decision.
- You may have **failed** to indicate which parts of the paper are **novel**.
- The reviewers may believe that your approach is **flawed** in some way, and requires **modification**.
- Your testing is **inadequate**, and that you need to do more **experiments**.

Revision: major revision

After **reading the reports** carefully, you need to **decide what to do** next. Unless some flaw pointed out by the reviewers is unfixable,

- you will normally **revise** the paper,
- carefully taking into account the reviewers' **comments**,
- **resubmit** it to the same outlet.

Major revision may require **further** research and **new or extra** testing to be carried out before the paper is revised.

Revision: response to reviewers

It is important to **prepare** a '**Response to Reviewers**' letter to accompany the revised paper.

- Summarise **each significant** query or request made by **either** the **editor** or a **reviewer**.
- Provide a **specific response** to each **in turn**.

This will usually be an **explanation** of how you have **modified** the paper in some way, to **clarify**, **correct**, or **add** extra material as requested.

Revision: examples

1. *At first, you should **thank** the reviewers for reviewing your paper.*

Some expression of thanks

- We **thank** the referees for their comments and suggestions. We have **modified** the paper as follows. In each case we summarise the referee's comment, and our response.
- Many thanks for your **professional comments** on our work. According to your **constructive** suggestions and comments, we have carefully revised the manuscript...
- **Thanks a lot** for this constructive suggestion.
- ...

Revision: examples

2. Reply to **every** reviewers' comments.

Referee 1

The description of the segmentation algorithm is unclear.

We have carefully reworded the first paragraph of the overview and added further detail at the start of Section 3.2. We have also given a pseudocode listing showing how it works.

...

How is the parameter λ chosen?

We have added Section 5.4 which gives details of an experiment used to find the optimal value of this parameter.

...

★ Read carefully and do **not omit** opinions.

Revision: examples

3. *Not only to **explain** what is modified, but also to indicate the **corresponding** revision in your revised paper.*

To make this point clearer, we have inserted the following explanations on Page 4 in the revised manuscript:

“which can be proven to be continuous (some brief analysis will be provided in Remark 1).”

“Considering (14) and (27), since $u_1(t)$, $u_2(t)$ are both continuous, the entire controller $u(t)$ is also continuous.”

Fig.: Remember to update the changes in the paper.

Revision: examples

3. *Not only to **explain** what is modified, but also to indicate the **corresponding** revision in your revised paper.*

- You should **not** do is to **give** explanations and clarifications as a **personal response** to the reviewer, **without** updating the paper.
- If the **reviewer thinks** that there is a **problem** with the paper, it is likely that other **readers** will also have the same **difficulty**.
- They **too** would **benefit** from seeing any clarifications, further details, and so on that you provide.

Revision: examples

4. Occasionally you may **rebut** what a reviewer says, in other words **disagree** with the reviewer's comment.

- **Type 1: Point out** a **factual error** made by a referee.

An example

Referee 1 **claims** that the problem we consider is already **addressed** by the work of Chen in [3]. **However**, Chen's approach requires reagents to be of high purity, to avoid poisoning the catalyst, **whereas** our approach works for standard-grade reagents, and is thus much **cheaper** to carry out. We have now emphasised this point in the paper.

Revision: examples

4. Occasionally you may **rebut** what a reviewer says, in other words **disagree** with the reviewer's comment.

- **Type 2: Explain** why you feel some request is **unreasonable**.
 - If different reviewers disagree, you **cannot** satisfy them **all**.
 - A reviewer may ask for an amount of new material to be **added** that is impossible given the **page limit**, or for an **irrelevant** reference to be added.

Explain the page limitation

We sincerely apologize for **only** including **part** of the above discussions, since there exists a **strict page limitation** (within 3 pages) for Letter papers of the journal.

Revision: benefits

The response letter provides **benefits** all round.

- For the **authors**, it acts as a **checklist** to help them **ensure** that they have addressed all issues raised.
- When the **reviewers** (usually the **same** ones) come to **reconsider** the revised paper,
 - it serves to **remind** them of what they said,
 - showing them **how** you have **addressed** their concerns.
 - They are much **more likely** to **re-review** your paper **quickly** if they can readily see **what** changes you have made, and **whether** you have addressed their concerns.

Revision: benefits

The response letter provides **benefits** all round.

- The **editor** may even **decide** that **no further** reviewing is necessary if he can **satisfy** himself that all requested changes were straightforward and you have **completed** them satisfactorily.
 - He can also see what **disagreements** there are between the **authors and reviewers**, and **judge** whose side to take.
- Finally, the **reviewers and the editor** can **satisfy** themselves that you have **not** simply **ignored** any issue raised.

Rejection: quality of the outlet

The chance of **outright rejection** varies with **quality of the outlet**.

- **All** authors want their publications to be in **prestigious** outlets with **high impact factors**, but **editors** also want to **keep** the quality up for such outlets.
- **Many** submissions but a relatively **high rejection rate** for the most prestigious outlets.

Rejection: your paper

If your paper is **rejected**, you should reflect seriously on **what** went **wrong**.

- Maybe there is a **significant flaw** in your **reasoning**, **analysis** or **experiments** which makes your results or conclusions **invalid**.
- Maybe you did **not** read the literature carefully **enough**, and did **not realise** that your results are **not new**.
- Maybe your results are **too similar** to earlier work, and thus **insufficiently** novel. This can be a problem if you only have a **minor contribution**, but have submitted it to a **leading outlet**.

Rejection: your paper

If your paper is **rejected**, you should reflect seriously on **what** went **wrong**.

- Maybe your ideas do **not** really provide any significant **new** insight, and are just a **straightforward application** of **known** methods and concepts which any competent practitioner would have **arrived** at.
- Maybe your writing is **too poorly** organised for the re-viewers to **understand** your ideas at all.
- Maybe your paper is **out of scope**, *i.e.* in an area **not covered** by the outlet.

Rejection: solutions

- **Honest self-appraisal** of your work should enable you to determine **why** your work was **rejected**.
- Your alternatives are to **resubmit** your work to a **less prestigious** outlet.
- Try to improve the work to a publishable standard
- Simply try to **learn** from your **mistakes** this time round, and **move on**.

Rejection: notice

Sending your work to a lesser outlet **without revising** it at all, or with **only simple** changes, may well **not work**.

- It may be sent to the **same referees** again, who **quickly** look at it and **dismiss** it, saying 'I have already **seen** this and **rejected** it'.

If the paper was **faulted** on **lack** of novelty or clarity.

- **Rejection** is likely to **again** be the outcome.

Even if you target a **less prestigious** outlet.

- **Try** to **fix** any problems identified by **previous** reviewers.

Rejection: notice

While the **shorter** time to publication of **conferences** may seem **attractive**, their **tight** time schedules also have a **negative aspect**.

- A paper which would be categorised as requiring major revision by a journal is more likely to be rejected outright by a conference.
- The reviewers may **conclude** that the time is **too short** for you to **make** the changes required.

Further Reading

Some recommended books:

- **How to Get Your SIGGRAPH Paper Rejected**

Jim Kajiya

www.siggraph.org/sites/default/files/kajiya.pdf

- **How to Run a Paper Mill**

John Woodwark

www.johnwoodwark.com/inge/docs/Pmill.pdf

- **Scientists Must Write (2nd Edition)**

Robert Barrass

Routledge, 2002. ISBN 0415269962.

Further Reading

Live and learn.

★ Read the **latest** literature in your field.

■ English articles

<https://scholar.google.com/>



■ Chinese articles

<https://www.cnki.net/>



Q & A?