

How Do Online Manuscript Submission Systems Work?

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Post Url

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Many publishers now use electronic [manuscript submission](#) and peer-review systems to manage their publications and it is important for authors to get familiar with these as it could save them valuable time and help them communicate better with editors and referees.

Most of the programs available work in a similar way—be it [ScholarOne](#), used by SAGE and some of the journals published by the Nature Publishing Group, [Editorial Manager](#), used by Springer, Wiley, or PLOS, or Elsevier's new Evise®. All these systems have been designed to make [the publishing process](#) more efficient and [readily accessible to authors and reviewers](#) from all over the world.

Fast, Easy, and Convenient

There are many advantages associated with online submission systems. In general, they ensure a more rapid and convenient publication while saving authors, editors, and publishers time and money. Authors can submit their manuscripts electronically at any time and from any part of the world. Similarly, suitable referees can be contacted easily by e-mail. Access to the system (for both authors and referees) is controlled by login

and user privileges. The electronically conducted peer-review process allows for faster and easier communication between authors and referees.

Role of Editors in Security of the System

However, recent issues, such as the discovery of [peer-review rings](#), have exposed some [weaknesses in modern publishing systems](#). In several cases, unethical scholars have exploited features of the automated process to cheat editors into accepting manuscripts, often by doing their own reviews. In the end, it is the responsibility of the journals and their editorial teams to invite suitable referees for their papers. If the selection process is done in a proper way, by carefully checking the e-mail addresses, affiliations, and expertise of potential reviewers, such problems can be minimized.

In the past, other issues including poor password management and lax password protection were also discussed. In 2012, an Elsevier journal retracted several papers after an unknown person accessed an editor's account and assigned the manuscripts to fake peer reviewers. Fortunately, many of these security problems have been corrected and the benefits of electronic manuscript submission systems now outweigh the drawbacks.

Six Simple Steps to Online Submission

The online submission process is usually quite straightforward—and the software provided by most publishers is self-explanatory—so submitting a paper to a journal only [requires a few simple steps](#):

- *Preparing your manuscript:* To start with, make sure that your paper is ready for submission. Most journals have specific formatting and length requirements, so check the author guidelines on the publisher's site for more information. Some journals even have templates for the different types of publications, which you can download.
- *Registration and/or login:* The first time you use an online system, you must register for an account. You will need your login information each time you return to the site.
- *Entering manuscript information:* When submitting your paper, you must provide some basic information, such as title, authors, affiliations, abstract, cover letter, suggested and/or opposed reviewers (in some cases), conflicts of interest, keywords, etc. At this stage, you must also inform the editor of any related manuscripts submitted or in press at other journals.
- *Uploading your manuscript to the system:* Now it is time to upload the text and figure files of your paper. The manuscript will normally be converted to PDF for your review and approval.
- *Providing additional information:* Normally, you can also upload supporting information (images, movie files, or text) to the journal's database. In most cases, you will also be prompted to submit a completed copyright form provided by the publisher.

- *Reviewing and submitting your paper:* Finally, you must carefully review the converted PDF file to make sure that all the equations, tables, and special characters are shown properly. Once approved and submitted, the converted file will be viewed by editors and referees.

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