

Editorial Preface

Thoughts on Reviewing

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Evaluating manuscripts is a crucial step in the peer-review process without which the whole system shuts down. Most of us have had the privilege of evaluating manuscripts, so it is irritating when an expert declines an offer to share her expertise. I hear often from those turning down requests that they are too busy. Well, we are all busy. I just politely move on, but deep down I wish I were on their tenure and promotion committees to add my two cents. I have been the E-i-C of the *International Journal of Applied Geospatial Research* for almost 10 years now (currently I am co-editor with Dr. Samuel Adu-Prah). During that time, IJAGR has received 1,000 evaluations, more or less. I have never had one evaluation submitted that I felt was sarcastic, pompous, or condescending. Hats off to IJAGR reviewers, and thanks for taking the time to review! In recent years, I have had the opportunity to submit manuscripts to about a half-dozen international journals. While the editors of these journals have been for the most part professional, prompt and helpful, I have found some of the reviewers to be full of themselves. For example, one reviewer seemed more intent on recounting his knowledge rather than reading what I had to say. If only the evaluator had read more closely, he would have found his comments or critiques were actually addressed. Other reviewers said things they might not say face-to-face. Ah, they are hiding behind the curtain of anonymity. I recommend that one should not say anything you would not feel comfortable saying face-to-face. There is no reason to use condescending language with statements that this or that is pompous, foolish, or false. Such language is demeaning and identifies an evaluator as conceited and full of himself or herself. Editors should screen evaluations for humiliating and pejorative language, as it is not helpful. Once a reviewer literally crossed out 90% of a manuscript, and on another occasion said that a manuscript set back transportation geography 50 years! While that might have been true, such brutality is unwarranted. So here is some advice for reviewers: 1) if possible accept requests to review manuscripts as others have done for you, 2) don't make excuses like I'm too busy, we all are, 3) be timely in completing evaluations, and 4) provide constructive comments. One can recommend rejecting a manuscript without resorting to abusive and pejorative language. Next time an editor asks you to be a reviewer, please consider saying yes.

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