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EDITORIAL

We Editors Are Authors, Too

"*Oh No, Reviewer 3 got our paper rejected again!*", remains a popular phrase that is often used to vent frustration with negative editorial decisions. As practicing scientists, we work on our manuscripts like other authors and submit our papers to see them published quickly. Like every author, we also live with anxiety during the review process. We experience the joy of acceptance and the pain of rejection of our papers. Furthermore, we devote time to review papers for various other journals and upload our comments in a timely fashion. Being editors of *ACS Energy Letters* is just an additional task in which we are engaged but one we take as much pride in as publishing our own work.

As editors, we are empathetic to our authors' sentiments and their desire to publish in *ACS Energy Letters*. We also have a responsibility to check the scientific quality and see whether a paper meets the journal's criteria. Manuscripts that do not meet the urgency, novelty, significance, or scope requirements are returned to the authors after the editorial review. When the manuscript does not match the journal scope well, we make a recommendation to transfer to another suitable ACS journal for consideration. Decisions made on the remaining papers are based on peer reviews, as well as our own evaluations. We balance our roles as author, reviewer, and editor on a daily basis by treating these tasks separately (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Balancing the role as an author, reviewer, and editor in scientific publishing.

We would now like to share our experiences as authors and discuss how we manage the manuscript preparation, submission and revision process.

Scope of the Journal: When preparing a manuscript, we have to decide which journal targets the appropriate readership. Understanding the reader community of each journal and their research interests can be helpful. Ignoring the journal scope and submission and making a selection based predominantly on journal impact factor is likely to lead to editorial rejection. In other words, a journal with a high journal impact factor might not necessarily help us reach readers who will most likely be interested in our work. Keeping the journal scope in mind, we compose the manuscript and ensure that the author guidelines are followed. (Tip: Usually cited references point out the journal that might make a better fit and attract the appropriate readership.)

Title: A carefully written title is key to attracting readership. Selecting an attractive title that accurately reflects the scientific content of the manuscript often seems to be a daunting task. We often come up with 4−5 different versions of the title and then seek the opinions of co-workers to capture the attention of readers. Shorter titles are often more effective. It is also crucial to strike a balance between keeping the title succinct and ensuring that it is scientifically meaningful. Avoid the use of acronyms (particularly those that are not widely adopted by the energy field), as well as inclusion of superfluous buzzwords and phrases such as "novel", "one-pot", and "highly efficient", among others. The first part of the title has more weight than the later part. If you need examples, take a look at the titles of the *Most Read* articles of the journal to which you are submitting.

Abstract: The abstract should be short and explicitly highlight the major or most important findings. We try to avoid excessive experimental details or material/device characterizations. The abstract should conclude with the importance of the study or potential applications that could emerge from this study. Including one sentence that places the work into context in the field and/or makes clear the major novelty claim captures readers' attention immediately.

TOC Graphics: Because the TOC graphic should tell the story of your paper at a glimpse, a simple color scheme or illustration works well. We try to avoid too much text, too many graphic elements, or displaying figures from the main text. By being creative in designing TOC graphics, we can draw the attention of readers to our paper.

Introduction: Once we decide on the journal, we try to provide a thoughtful background discussion in the introduction to draw the attention of the broader readership of that journal. Brief discussions of the prior relevant work as well as the motivation for the current work are included. Identifying gaps in our present understanding or conflicting viewpoints in the existing literature helps to justify the motivation and its relevance in an effective way. A coherent and engaging introduction supported with key references cited in a scholarly fashion can allow us to highlight the novelty and significance of the current work and set the stage for effective discussion of the research results.

Discussion of Results: We discuss results centered on the main theme of the research story and provide sufficient justification for the arguments made in the presented data. A well-composed scientific discussion centered on a coherent theme makes a good scientific story. We avoid the use of superlative words (very important, highly efficient, novel, first

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time, etc.) while discussing a phenomenon or observation and, instead, let the results speak for themselves. The overuse of these words can detract from the main theme and undermine the importance of the study.

Graphics: Perhaps the most important features of any paper are the figures, schemes, and illustrations. The quality and accurate representation of the data are key to the successful composition of the paper. To make clear to the readers that the data are accurate and reproducible, inclusion of error analysis in plots and noting the number of times a particular measurement has been validated are useful. The choice of color, proper font size, and full description of the data in the figure captions are essential elements of good graphics. (Before submission, it is important to carefully check whether the description in each figure caption accurately describes the panels and data points/traces and figure panels are correctly called out in the manuscript text.)

Supporting Information (SI): In recent years, SI has become an important part of publication as it can contain methods, protocols, detailed analysis, and materials characterization. The SI helps to support the key data presented in the main text by providing access to additional results. Because there is no page limit for the SI, it is a convenient way to include additional data. Data that are critical for understanding the work, however, should be included in the main text. Sufficient information should be provided in the SI such that those trained in the art can reasonably repeat the experiments.

Cover Letter: We write a cover letter that succinctly highlights the novelty and importance of the study and, more importantly, why the paper is well suited for the journal readership. Just copying and pasting the abstract or part of the introduction into the cover letter is a missed opportunity to draw the attention of editors to the broader significance of work. We select and suggest preferred reviewers based on their expertise and their likely availability to review papers. Scientists are likely to review manuscripts if their scientific interest matches that of the article. We also make an attempt to suggest reviewers from different countries. Recommending reviewers from a pool of collaborators, former students, and close associates creates a conflict of interest, and hence, such names are not useful.

Manuscript Submission: After completion of the manuscript, we make sure all coauthors have read and approved the written text. We check figures and figure captions one last time to make sure everything is properly represented and their reference in the text is correct. We go through the quick checklist (*ACS Energy Letters* provides a Check List on the journal webpage http://pubs.acs.org/paragonplus/submission/aelccp/aelccp_checklist.pdf). We gather information on coauthors, funding agency, copyright permissions, and conflict information, if any. Having these details in hand makes the manuscript upload rather smooth and convenient.

ACS Energy Letters is now publishing its fourth volume. Our rapid publication time (an average publication time of 35 days for Letters and 21 days for Energy Express) has made *ACS Energy Letters* a *go-to* journal for publishing the latest advances in energy research. The additional collection of Energy Focus, Viewpoint, Perspective, and Review articles provides a discussion platform for energy researchers around the world.

We welcome two new Senior Editors, Yong-Sheng Hu from the Institute of Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing and Nam-Gyu Park from Sungkyunkwan University, Suwon, Korea. Their expertise in energy storage and solar cells will help us to further expand our editorial expertise. Finally, we would like to thank our authors, reviewers, and readers for their continued support and for the success of *ACS Energy Letters*. We will continue to publish new advances in energy research with rapid speed.

Wishing all our authors, readers, and reviewers a happy and productive new year!

■ ADDITIONAL READINGS

(1) Kamat, P.; Schatz, G. C. How to Make Your Next Paper Scientifically Effective. *J. Phys. Chem. Lett.* **2013**, *4*, 1578−1581. (Link: http://dx.doi.org/10.1021/jz4006916.)

(2) Kamat, P. V.; Buriak, J. M.; Schatz, G. C.; Weiss, P. S. Mastering the Art of Scientific Publication. *J. Phys. Chem. Lett.* **2014**, *5*, 3519−3521. (Link: http://dx.doi.org/10.1021/jz502010v.)

(3) Kamat, P.; Hartland, G. V.; Schatz, G. C. Graphical Excellence. *J. Phys. Chem. Lett.* **2014**, *5*, 2118− 2120. (Link: http://dx.doi.org/10.1021/jz500997e.)

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Notes
Views expressed in this editorial are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the ACS.

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