



Revista Internacional de Ciencia y Tecnología de la Información Geográfica  
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Geographical Information Technologies Working Group (AGE)

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## Guide to good practices and ethical commitment for the publication of articles in GEOFOCUS

GeoFocus has adopted the Guide to Good Practices for Publication, elaborated by the Spanish National Research Council, CSIC, through which we intend to establish a code of conduct directed to the concerned parties in the management and publication of scientific results: the Editorial Team, authors and reviewers of articles.

I. **The Editorial Team.** The Editorial Team of GeoFocus is composed of the Editorial staff and the Editorial and Advisory Boards. The Editorial staff is composed of the Director and Editor-in-Chief, the Associate Editors and the Technical Team; they are responsible for the published contents of the journal, and hence must ensure its scientific standards, avoid bad practices in publishing the results of research and editing the articles in due time. The composition of the Editorial Team can be seen at <https://www.geofocus.org/index.php/geofocus/about/editorialTeam>. This responsibility includes the following principles:

1. **Impartiality.** The Editorial Team must be impartial in the treatment of papers proposed for publication, must respect the authors' intellectual independence, and must recognize their right to a response in case their work has been evaluated negatively. Papers which present negative results of research will not be excluded whenever these results can be useful to the journal readers.

2. **Confidentiality.** The individuals who are part of the Team are obliged to maintain confidentiality on the texts received and their content until they have been accepted for publication. Furthermore, neither a member of the Team, nor anyone involved in the evaluation process will use data, arguments or interpretations of unpublished papers in their own research, unless given explicit written consent from the author. This includes unaccepted papers.

3. **Review of the papers.** The Team must insure that the research papers published have been evaluated by at least two specialists in the field and are fair and impartial. GeoFocus uses the double-blind process (anonymity of those who have elaborated the paper and of the evaluators). When there is no reasonable agreement between the reviewers, additional reports maybe solicited. Evaluators are aware that they need to check for the originality of the articles and to detect plagiarism, redundant articles, as well as falsified or manipulated facts.

4. **Acceptance or rejection of manuscripts.** It is the Team's responsibility to accept or reject papers for publication, and this decision must be based on the received reports of evaluation. These reports must base their judgement on the quality of the articles and their relevance, originality and clarity in their presentation. The Team may directly reject submitted papers without having to seek external advice if they consider them inappropriate for the journal for not meeting up to the required standards and the scientific objectives of the journal, for not adapting to the norms of the publication, or due to evidence of scientific fraud. Likewise, the Team will do everything possible to speed up the review process in a timely and efficient manner and will ensure that each author is informed of the acceptance or rejection of their article within a reasonable time, usually about five months.

5. **Retraction and notice of irregularity.** The Team reserves the right to retract those papers that have been published, but have later been determined to be unreliable as a result of involuntary errors or of fraud and scientific misconduct: fabrication, manipulation or copying of facts, plagiarism of texts and publishing redundant or duplicated material, omission of references of the sources used, use of contents without permission or justification, etc. The objective that guides the process of retraction is to rectify the scientific production already published, ensuring its integrity. The issue of duplicity caused by the simultaneous publication of an article in two journals must be resolved by establishing the date of reception of the paper in each one of them.

If only one part of the article contains an error, this may be rectified later through means of an editorial note or an erratum. The journal reserves the right to publish a notice of retraction of a given text along with the reasons for such an action in order to distinguish between an involuntary error and a misconduct. Retracted articles will remain in the journal with a clear and unequivocal warning that it has been retracted, in order to distinguish it from other corrections or commentaries. The notice of irregularity will be kept during the necessary minimum period, and will conclude with its withdrawal or a formal retraction of the article. COPE's guidelines will be followed in dealing with allegations.

6. **Conflicts of interest.** A conflict of interest arises when a paper submitted to the journal is signed by a person who belongs to the Team, by one that has a direct personal or professional relationship, or who is closely related with the research, past or present, of the members who are a part of the Team. Those who are affected by any of these cases must abstain from intervening in the evaluation process of the proposed article.

## II. On the Authorship of articles

1. **Norms of publication.** The texts submitted for publication must be the result of original and unedited research. They must include the data obtained and utilized, as well as an objective discussion of the results. They must bring forth sufficient information so that any specialist may repeat the research realized and confirm or refute the defended interpretation in the work, except when this is objectively impossible (*e.g.*, doing fieldwork in the past). The authors must adequately mention the source of the ideas or literal phrases taken from other previously published papers according to the norms indicated by the journal.

If images are included as part of the research, they must adequately explain how they were created or obtained, if it is considered necessary for comprehension. In case one uses graphic

material (figures, photos, maps, etc.) that is partially reproduced in other publications, the authors must cite their source along with any pertinent permits if deemed necessary.

The unnecessary fragmentation of papers should be avoided. Nevertheless, if a very extensive text is received, it may be published in several parts, where each one may develop a certain aspect of the general study. Various related papers should be published in the same journal in order to allow readers to better follow its interpretation.

2. ***Originality and plagiarism.*** The authors must assure that the data and results presented in the work are original and have not been copied, invented, distorted or manipulated. Plagiarism in all its forms, multiple or redundant publication, as well as invention or manipulation of data constitutes a serious ethical misconduct and will be considered scientific fraud.

Authors must not submit original texts that have been previously evaluated in other journals, nor must they send the same original to another journal until they are notified of its rejection or them withdraw it voluntarily. However, it is admissible to publish a paper that expands one that has already been published as a brief presentation, communication or summary in the proceedings of a congress, only if it adequately cites the original published text on which it is based and that it includes substantial modifications. Secondary publications are also acceptable if they are directed to a totally different readership: For example, if the article is published in different languages or if there is a version for specialists versus one directed to a general readership. These circumstances must be specified and the original publication must be accordingly cited.

3. ***Authorship of the paper.*** In case of multiple authorship, the person responsible for the paper with respect to the journal must guarantee the recognition of those that have contributed significantly to the conception, planning, design, creation and collection of data, interpretation and discussion of the results in the paper. In all cases, those who sign the article share in the responsibility of the presented paper. The contact author must ensure that no known author has been omitted from the paper and fulfils all the above-mentioned criteria of co-authorship, in order to avoid fictitious or ghost authorship that would constitute scientific misconduct. Moreover, the contribution of other collaborators who do not figure as authors, nor are responsible for the final version of the paper, must be acknowledged in a note in the article.

If the journal or the authors should request it, it is recommended that the individual contributions of each author of a collective authorship be distinguished in a note in the published version.

4. ***Sources of information.*** Publications that have influenced the research must be recognized in the text: It is necessary to identify and cite in the bibliography the original sources which have contributed to the content of the paper. However, the authors must not include irrelevant citations in their paper or those referring to similar examples and should not include excessive references to well-known research in the scientific corpus.

Authors should not utilize information obtained through private conversations, correspondence or through a debate on the issue between colleagues, unless they have obtained explicit permission in writing from their source of information, and have been received as scientific advice.

5. **Significant errors in published papers.** When authors discover a serious error in their work, they are obliged to communicate it to the journal as soon as possible in order to modify the article, to withdraw it, to retract or to edit an erratum. If the suspected error is detected by any member of the Editorial Team, authors will be obliged to demonstrate that their work is correct.

The resolution process of these issues is described in section I.5

6. **Conflict of interest.** The text of the article must come accompanied by a statement in case there is any commercial, financial or personal link that may affect the results and the conclusions of the paper. Moreover, it is mandatory to state all sources of funding that have been granted for the study. This information will appear in the published version of the article.

**III. Evaluation of the papers.** The individuals that participate in the evaluation play a fundamental role in the process that guarantees the quality of the publication. They must assist the members of the different departments of the journal in editorial decision-making and help improve the articles.

1. **Confidentiality.** Those who carry out an evaluation must consider the paper to be reviewed as a confidential document until its publication, both in the course of the review process and afterwards. In no way must they unveil, or use any information, details, arguments or interpretations contained in the text that is being reviewed in their own benefit or for others, or to jeopardize third parties. Only in special cases should reviewers seek the advice of other specialists in the field, a circumstance that must be accordingly informed to the editor of the journal. This includes unaccepted papers.

2. **Objectivity.** The individuals that carry out an evaluation must objectively judge the quality of the whole paper, this is to say, it must include information concerning the hypothesis on which the work is founded, the theoretical and experimental data and its interpretation, without neglecting the presentation and redaction of the text. Reviewers must specify their critiques and be objective and constructive in their commentaries. They must justify their judgements without adopting hostile positions and must respect the intellectual independence of the author of the paper.

Reviewers must warn the Editor of any substantial similarities between the paper presented for evaluation and other articles previously published or in the process of evaluation at another journal (redundant or duplicate publication). As well, they must notify of any plagiarized, falsified, invented or manipulated texts or data.

3. **Promptness of response.** Reviewers must act with promptness and must hand in their report by the established deadline; otherwise, they must notify the Editor of any possible delay. Furthermore, in case a reviewer does not believe to be capable of judging the entrusted paper or cannot accomplish it for the deadline, he or she must notify the Editor as soon as possible.

4. **Recognition of the sources of information.** Reviewers must verify that the most relevant literature on the topic is cited in the paper. With this objective in mind, they will review the bibliography found in the text and suggest the elimination of superfluous or redundant references or the inclusion of other neglected ones.

5. **Conflict of interest.** Reviewers must reject this role when they have a professional or personal relationship with the authors of the paper. Conflicts of interest may also occur when the paper evaluated is closely related with a project the reviewer is developing at the moment or with a previously published one. In such circumstances, in case of doubt, the reviewer should refuse the proposed task and return the paper to the journal indicating motivations for such a decision.

**References:**

CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas). (2022). *Guía de buenas prácticas para la Publicación*. [accessed 26-10-2022]. Available at [http://revistas.csic.es/public/guia\\_buenas\\_practicas\\_CSIC.pdf](http://revistas.csic.es/public/guia_buenas_practicas_CSIC.pdf)

COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics). *Promoting integrity in scholarly research and its publication*. [accessed 26-10-2022]. Available at <http://www.publicationethics.org>

EASE (European Association of Science Editors). [accessed 26-10-2022]. Available at <http://www.ease.org.uk>