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Why Does It Take So Darn Long to Get Published?

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EDITORIAL

WHY DOES IT TAKE SO DARN LONG TO GET PUBLISHED ?

Have you ever wondered what happens during the review process of a manuscript that is submitted to a publication such as The Journal of Aviation/Aerospace Education and Research (JAAER)? The procedure is not mysterious and is fairly uniform from one journal to another.

Within a few days after receipt, the submission is logged in and given a file number. At JAAER, referees (a minimum of three persons) who are experts in the subject area are selected and sent a copy of the manuscript to review. Each referee evaluates the author's work in several areas. Based on their findings, they then recommend acceptance with or without revisions, or rejection. The editor considers the referees' comments and recommendations as well as his own judgments, then makes the final decision regarding the disposition of the article. A letter is then sent informing the author of that decision.

The lapse of time from our receipt of the manuscript to our disposition letter to the author is usually two to three months. By this time, a good number of working hours have been expended by both the JAAER staff and the referees. With a refereed journal such as JAAER there is little that can be done to shorten the process, but three factors readily come to mind that can lengthen it.

The first of these three that an author should not do is to submit

a manuscript to us that is also under consideration by another publication. This is called "multiple submission."

Although sending your article to one publisher at a time can be time consuming in that the review process takes months, it precludes simultaneous acceptance of your work by more than one journal when only one of them can rightfully publish it. Publishers and editors have a way of remembering these occurrences the next time they see that author's name.

A second factor concerns multiple authors. We would not publish a manuscript by multiple authors if we knew that those writers had not settled among themselves the matter of who is first author. Most journals communicate with the first author listed, and assume that the contributors have made an *a priori* decision as to who is the first author. Failure to appropriately credit colleagues or associates for their effort and contribution courts visions of plagiarism in many academic's and publisher's minds.

A third consideration is the submission of a manuscript that

has been previously published in its present form. Notwithstanding the possibility of copyright infringement, the editor now has the choice of returning your article to you or deciding if your submission is of strong enough interest to the readership of his publication that he is willing to spend the time and effort to pursue a release from the previous magazine or journal. Again, editors and publishers have long memories.

The *Journal* now requires authors to sign a statement to the effect that "This manuscript, (insert full title of the article), has not been previously published in its present form, and is not under consideration by any other publication." This statement should accompany the original submission to us. If it does not, we send a form statement to the author and take no further action until this statement is in our file.

If you have a manuscript you wish to submit to us, we will be pleased to review it, given the considerations stated above.

For the mechanics for articles submitted, you may also wish to review our author's guidelines on the preceding page. ■

HRL