

# Instruction to editors of *Entropy*

By Peter Harremoës, Editor-in-Chief

Although the editorial office takes care of most of the administration of the publication process as editor you need to know what your role is. In this instruction will write editor as short for associated editor, guest editor or editor-in-chief. The assistant editors should also read this instruction but are mainly instructed by the editorial office.

## **MDPI**

Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute is an organization that now has publication of scientific journals as main activity. MDPI publishes 45 journals and the overall editorial procedures are the same for all journals. MDPI decides editorial procedures, price policy, and questions about style. You are welcome to give your suggestions, but the decisions are up to the publisher. As scientist your job is to make scientific decisions, and the publisher will normally not interfere with your decisions.

## **The editorial offices**

MDPI has two offices. The main office is in Basel, Switzerland. The other office is in Beijing, China. The editorial staff consists of assistant editors, proof readers etc. They are employed by MDPI and work at the offices. The editors are typically employed at academic institutions located all over the world. Your contact with the editorial staff will mainly be by e-mail. The members of the editorial staff normally work for several journals.

## **Price policy**

The *Entropy* journal is published as open access so the publisher has no income from the readers. The editorial office is entirely financed by publication charges paid by the authors. The production cost per article is low compared with other publishers due to efficient editorial procedures. Normally the authors do not see the production costs because they are covered by subscriptions of libraries and not by the individual scientists. Some open access journals do not have publication charges because the editors' salaries are paid by public money. Therefore many scientists are not aware of the production costs of normal journals.

An editor is allowed to invite a number of authors to publish free of charge. All other authors have to pay the full publication charge that is decided by the publisher. The editorial office can help the author with extensive English correction, style issues and completion of bibliographic entries for an extra charge.

All editors are expected to have accepted the way the *Entropy* journal is financed.

## **Editorial board**

The editorial board consists of the Editor-in-Chief, associate editors, present and past guest editors and some other scientists that have been invited for other reasons. The members of the editorial board are expected to be active. Activity could be to review a manuscript, to write a paper for *Entropy* or to be editor of a special issue. Members of the

editorial board can write one paper per year to *Entropy* free of charge. To keep being member of the editorial board one are expected to have at least one activity per year.

### ***Response time***

Members of the editorial board are expected to respond within a working week on any question send by the editorial office. If an editor does not respond the editorial office may decide to let a decision be made by another editor or by the publisher.

### ***Special issues of Entropy***

These are normally edited by a guest editor. Papers that belong to a special issue are published over a period of time and not published in the same volume and month of *Entropy*. On the *Entropy* website there is a list of which paper that belongs to a certain special issue.

The guest editor's main job is to make decisions on acceptance of manuscript submitted for the special issue. For each special issue there is a description on the Entropy website. The guest editor may request the editorial office to changes in this description. Authors that have questions regarding a special issue may be directed to the guest editor.

A guest editor is allowed to invite five authors to get a paper in the special issue free of charge.

Often the guest editor will write an editorial paper for the special issue. Editorial papers are submitted according to the same procedure as other papers, and reviewed by the publisher or Editor-in-Chief.

### ***Peer-review process***

The *Instruction for Authors* tells how a manuscript should be submitted. The submission is received by the assistant editor. The assistant editor will make a preliminary style and spelling check of the manuscript so that reviewers don't waist time on this.

Then the assistant editor will send review requests for a number of reviewers.

When the assistant editor has received a sufficient number of review reports the assistant editor will send a decision request to the editor. The editor may postpone decision until more review reports have been received or may send further review requests if the editor is not satisfied with the expertise of reviewers that have already made review reports. The editor will write the decision into the editorial system or send the decision to the assistant edito that will forward the decision to the author. The assistant editor may send review reports to the authors before decision of the editor or together with the editor's decision.

The decision of the editor typically falls into one of the following categories:

- Accept.
- Conditionally accept with a detailed list of what should be changed.
- Another round of peer-review is needed.
- Reject.

There are many variations of this, but the editor should make clear what the status of the manuscript is. Note that we do in general not want rejected manuscripts to be resubmitted. The editor could give his own comments along with the decision. If possible the editor should avoid giving comments that will lead to a dispute with the authors.

Note: authors only complain when a manuscript is rejected.

Revised version of a manuscript is submitted to the editorial office. If the decision was that another round of review was needed the assistant editor will by default send the revised manuscript to the reviewers that recommended revise. Those that recommended Accept with minor changes or recommended reject will by default not see the revised manuscript. When new review reports have been received the assistant editor will notify the editor.

The review process may run in any number of rounds. At each round new review reports may be taken into consideration. A manuscript may be rejected at any stage in the review process until it is accepted. The editor should only let the review process run in many rounds if the manuscript contains some really valuable results. Our general observation is that the time we spend on a manuscript is inversely proportional to its quality.

### ***Decision criteria***

The editor decides whether a manuscript should be published or not. In making the decision the editor should balance the interest of:

- The potential readers.
- The author.
- The editorial office.

The reader is interested in the scientific quality of the manuscript. The author is interested in getting the manuscript published in a recognized journal. The editorial office gets the publication charge but only if the manuscript is published.

The most important is the interest for the potential reader. It is crucial for the reputation of a modern journal that the papers are read and cited. Only this will increase the impact factor of the journal.

An author that has had a good experience with publishing in Entropy may submit other manuscripts to the journal and recommend the journal to colleagues. In this way one submission may generate many more submissions, but this is only of interest if the papers are of good scientific quality so that they get read and cited. That means that the emphasis should be on efficient handling of good manuscripts. If one has several decision requests and lack of time the best manuscripts should have the highest priority. It is much less important that inferior manuscripts are rejected fast and only the submission history of accepted papers will appear on the Entropy website.

The editorial office has a short term interest in getting manuscripts accepted because it generates publication charges. In the long run the reputation of the journal and the impact factor is what generates submissions and the publisher is fully aware of this, which is also the reason why the publisher leaves the decisions to editors that are independent of the publisher.

Entropy is an interdisciplinary journal. Therefore the editor should push in the direction of some uniformity in terminology and notation. Otherwise the papers will not be read by a wider audience. Therefore the editor should check that manuscripts do not contain outdated terminology or notation. Similarly the editor may point at modern standard textbooks in the field to ensure that the papers do not represent outdated ideas.

### ***After acceptance***

The editorial office will take care of publishing accepted papers. This includes:

- Final style check by the editorial office.

- Proof reading by professional English proof reader from the editorial office.
- Payment of article processing charge.
- Assigning DOI and page numbers.
- Sending the paper to authors for final proof reading. The author has to respond within two working days.
- Uploading the paper to the homepage.

The editor may send a note to the editorial office if there is something the editorial staff should be especially aware of. This might be for instance problems with typesetting of certain equations or a note that a certain paper was invited to be free of charge.

### ***Comments and question***

Any questions related to this instruction could be addressed to the editorial office ([entropy@mdpi.com](mailto:entropy@mdpi.com)) or to the Editor-in-Chief ([entropeter@mdpi.com](mailto:entropeter@mdpi.com)). Comments on the editorial procedures are also most welcome.