

# Experiences from a Co-Editor

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# Co-Editor History

Co-editor for Acta D:       since 08/2002  
Co-Editor for Acta F:       since 04/2007  
Section Editor for F:       since 08/2008

~180 papers handled so far



# Role(s) of a Co-Editor

- Handling manuscripts
- Representing the journal
- Developing the journal



# Role(s) of a Co-Editor

- Handling manuscripts
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- Developing the journal
- Mentoring young(er) authors



# Role(s) of a Co-Editor

- Handling manuscripts
- Representing the journal
- Developing the journal
- Mentoring young(er) authors and referees



# Handling Manuscripts

- Reading the submitted manuscript
- Assessing the quality/suitability/language
- Identifying referees
- Inviting referees
- Making sure that referee reports arrive in time
- Evaluating the referee reports
- Contacting corresponding author
- Making sure that a revised manuscript arrives in time
- Reading the revised manuscript and the rebuttal letter
- Making a decision on the manuscript



# Initial Assessment

- Is the scientific quality sufficient?
- Is the work suitable for Acta D/F?
- Would it be more suitable for another IUCr journal?
- Have the Notes for Authors been met?
- Is the language of sufficient quality?



# Choice of Referees

- From friends and colleagues you know
- From previous experience
- From the Acta F review panel
- From author's suggestions
- From literature searches
- From authors of other papers you have handled



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- 
- Sometimes we are approached by researchers who would like to become referees



# Evaluating Referee Reports

- Has the referee read the manuscript thoroughly?
- Do the comments make sense?
- Are the comments and suggestions for improvement reasonable?
- Are they sufficient?
- What about the questions to referees?



# Editing Referee Reports (?)

- Do not edit for content!
- If appropriate insert a *Note from the co-editor* to qualify a certain statement!
- Do edit for language and speech!
- Preserve the anonymity of the referee!



# Asking for Revisions

- If you are not happy with the referee reports, make your own comments to the author or write a referee report yourself.
- Always ask authors to send a revised version of the manuscript with all changes highlighted in color and a letter, in which all answers to the referees' comments are listed and all changes are detailed.

# Author Compliance

- There are four categories of authors:
  - compliant
  - self-reliant
  - sneaky
  - unresponsive



# Assessing the Revised Manuscript

- Have all referee comments been addressed?
- Do the changes make sense?
- Is additional review necessary?



# Making the Final Decision

- Reject
- Ask authors to withdraw
- Ask authors for more revisions
- Accept and transfer
- Accept



# Some Final Remarks

- Co-editors and authors are on the same side of the game *(we want good publications and authors want to get their stuff published. This means we have to give the authors the feeling that we are working with them to their benefit)*
- Referees are there to help you make a decision. They do not make the decision for you.
- *A good decision today is better than a perfect decision tomorrow.*
- We try to be as objective as possible, but we are all humans and we will never be able to eradicate that last bit of subjectivity.

# Questions and Suggestions

