



# Journal of Cyber Policy, Guidance for peer reviewers

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## Objective

The objective of a peer review is to give the editorial team the benefit of the peer reviewer's expertise on the subject matter, their views on whether or not the paper should be published, and what steps need to be taken to bring the article up to the standard required for publication. All the Journal's articles are reviewed on a double-blind peer review basis which means that neither the reviewers of the paper nor the author(s) are informed of each other's identity. The peer reviewers contribute to the Journal on a pro-bono basis.

## The Journal of Cyber Policy and its audiences

The audience of the Journal of Cyber Policy is not limited to an academic readership, but is aimed at a wider audience including policy makers, government officials, and stakeholders from the military, law enforcement, business and technical communities. To match the diversity of readership, the Journal actively seeks peer reviewers and authors from academia and from the policy space (practitioner papers).

The Journal aims to reach people who may be interested, but not expert, across the full range of cybersecurity or internet policy subjects. It is therefore important that articles are accessible to a general readership.

Latest issue: <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rcyb20/current>

Aims and scope: <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rcyb20>

## Three types of article

There are three broad types of paper: policy, practitioner, technical.

**Policy papers** are aimed primarily at an academic audience. Articles are rigorously structured and referenced. Typically, there will be an abstract, an introduction which describes the problem perhaps with reference to relevant events or key facts, a literature review which looks at the key sources and offers a critique of them, analysis of the subject matter and possibly the introduction of academic theory or analysis, followed by conclusions and, if appropriate, recommendations.

**Practitioner papers** may not have such a rigid structure and we don't expect the same level of literature review or academic referencing. We still expect a high standard from practitioner papers. Practitioner papers need to be clearly structured, provide references from the literature (academic, respected news sources, respected commercial research sources), and a balance between description and analysis. Practitioner papers can focus on good practices or case studies, but should not simply be anecdotal, advocacy or manifestos. They should provide more depth and rigour than, say, a newspaper op-ed. Practitioner papers may also include practical recommendations for policy makers.

**Technical papers** may tackle a new, emerging or established technology, internet standards, or other issues which have a bearing on policy. Articles need to have a sound basis in the technology, while still being accessible to non-technical readers. The aim is to explain the technology to a sufficient level so that readers (especially policy makers) can gain the key issues which are relevant to cyber policy. The difference between the Journal of Cyber Policy and dedicated technical publications is that we are looking for technical articles which explain the policy issues that emerge from technology. Articles should therefore have a good balance between description / explanation of the technical issues, and analysis of the policy issues.

## What do we expect from peer reviewers?

We ask all peer reviewers to consider their availability before taking on a review, and to communicate proactively if it will not be possible to meet the deadline. **We fully understand that peer reviewers are busy people, with many other commitments, and that it is not always possible to commit the time required for a peer review. We do ask**

that you let us know if you're not available, or if your plans change. Where this is the case, we do welcome suggestions for alternative peer reviewers. This enables us to appoint someone else to review the article in a timely way.



We expect peer reviewers to do the following:

- Read the article (either 4,000 or 8,000 words).
- Write a short report (one or two paragraphs minimum, plus some more detailed comments if necessary) based on the checklist below.
- It is also helpful to provide constructive confidential comments to the editorial team which are not shared with the author. This, however, is optional.

## Checklist

Here is a checklist of issues for peer reviewers to consider:

- ☐ Is the paper well informed, and does it refer to relevant sources for the subject area?
- ☐ Does the paper make a novel contribution to the subject area?
- ☐ Is the paper well written, well structured, and the main thesis clearly expressed?
- ☐ Does the paper include the right balance of description and analysis (there should be enough, but not too much description, and the analysis should engage with the issues and say something original about them)?

## Recommendation to the co-editor

Each peer review makes a recommendation to help guide the co-editor. The range is:

Accept  
Conditional Accept  
Minor Revision  
Major Revision  
Reject & Resubmit  
Reject

## Matters out of scope for peer review

The peer reviewer is not there to highlight typos, grammatical errors etc (there is a separate copy-editing phase for that), but it is relevant to know whether the article is well-written, or to flag in general if there are language issues.

## Timeline

Peer reviewers will be given a deadline of 3 weeks from the point of agreeing to review the paper. A reviewer can ask the editorial team for an extension of 1 week where needed.

- Time to complete review = 21 days
- A reviewer will receive reminders from ScholarOne to complete the review after the above deadline has passed.
- Where peer reviewers have agreed to review a manuscript but have not submitted any recommendations after 31 days, the Journal's Editorial team could remove the reviewer from the manuscript to ensure the timeliness of the process

## Recognition for peer reviewers

To respect the confidentiality of the peer review process, the identity of the peer reviewer will not be revealed to the author. However, in recognition of the significant commitment shown by peer reviewers, and the reliance of the journal ecosystem on the pro-bono efforts of peer reviewers, our publisher Routledge, Taylor & Francis has recently introduced a scheme to recognise peer reviewers through a generalized acknowledgement. For more information, see <https://publons.com/in/tandf/>



## Practical tips

To accept the invitation to peer review, a peer reviewer should click on the link given in the editorial team's email, and create an account in ScholarOne. Peer reviewers should enter each review into the ScholarOne system, so that it can be included in the audit trail for the relevant article, and communicated to each of the editorial team.

As mentioned, the process is double-blind, so we ask the reviewers to kindly avoid marking up the document if possible, as this can risk revealing the identity of the peer reviewer and undermines the double-blind process.

## Further guidance for peer reviewers

Ethical guidance: <http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/ethical-guidelines-for-peer-reviewers/>

Step by step guide to peer review: <http://editorresources.taylorandfrancisgroup.com/reviewers-guidelines-and-best-practice/>

Please contact the editorial team with any queries not addressed above.