

## Transcript for Expert View on Managing Reviewers Webinar – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**Moderator:** Our speakers today are Gareth Meager of Taylor & Francis, Dianne Dixon from the International Journal of Radiation Biology, Peter Gilroy from the Journal of Education for Teaching and Hervé Stolowy from the European Accounting Review Journal. We will now hand over to Gareth who will start off our presentation.

**Gareth Meager:** Thank you very much Emma. So, as you all know, the business of running a journal is an extremely busy one, and there are many areas to consider and work through every day. Sourcing reviewers, obtaining reviewers, and energizing reviewers, is one key element to keep the flow of content moving through the submission process and ensure the work submitted to your journal is given the best possible chance to be effectively and fairly evaluated in a timely manner. In this presentation, I hope to highlight some of the best ways to maintain and retain those reviewers that provide their time for you and your journal.

So the first one is to offer reviewers clear instructions and guidelines; a well-informed reviewer will feel more empowered to review effectively. Provide as much information as you can, just details of what blinding policy the journal operates and what ethical considerations the reviewer should adhere to. Taylor & Francis has resources aimed at reviewers to ensure they are aware of the different types of peer review and what is expected of a reviewer, should they agree to review. When the reviewer is clear on what they are being asked to do, they will do so more effectively.

Provide realistic timeframes. Be upfront about your preferred turnaround times on your journal, if you ideally want reviewers and reviews to be completed in, say, two weeks, then make this clear from the outset. It will allow reviewers to agree or decline more accurately, based on that level of information. Reviewers will appreciate that a timely decision process is important for certain journals, and if they get to know your preferred timescales, they'll work hard to meet these deadlines.

Send a thank-you letter. After a reviewer has completed a review for your journal, automatic emails can be set up in submission sites to allow for a thank-you letter to be delivered. Purely out of courtesy, because, let's face it, everyone likes to be told "thank you" and also it can be used to offer specific incentives such as vouchers for money-off Taylor & Francis books or discounted online access to your already published content. Peer review is, essentially, a voluntary pursuit, so

anything that can be used as an additional reason for a person give up their time, will always be a really useful way to retain the services of those that you invite to review.

Prompt reviewers to update their details and their keywords. Accurate user details is obviously a hugely important way to match people with papers. Accurate and updated keywords in user accounts can mean that using the keyword match function in the submission system is a far better way to assign the correct reviewers to papers and reduce the chances of a reviewer declining. Outdated information such as older institutional email addresses in the system could mean that you receive multiple bounce-back messages or maybe no responses at all. It might also be a good idea to consider using a pre-defined list of keyword terms, that way you can ensure that the list of terms being used by reviewers, and those chosen by submitting authors in their papers, are uniform and it reduces the chance of deviation.

Send reviewers information on the decision reached. At the end of the review process, regardless of the final decision reached, if you send reviewers information of that decision, it gives them a much fuller sense of the comments made and the observations of other reviewers. It will help better-inform reviewers for any future review requests and perhaps highlight to them areas they didn't think to consider the first time around. By making the review process as much of a collaboration as possible and with the appropriate levels of blinding, you can create a knowledge-sharing culture in your journal amongst those that review. It also ties up the whole process neatly for a reviewer – they have provided their report for you and their time and now they get to see the end result.

Automatic reminders. This is a big one, obviously, that the submission systems can generate automatic reminders for reviewers with the varying different parameters. This is a great way to keep things moving and ensure that there are as limited delays as possible in the review process by prompting reviewers at regular intervals. These can be added at varying times and as many as possible can be added if you wanted to. If you really wanted to, you could send automatic reminders every single day, but it's a fantastic way just to keep things moving and make sure there are no bottle-necks in the review process on your submission system.

They were the main points I wanted to cover today and I'll look forward to taking any questions at the end. They are the areas to, hopefully, help you retain and maintain those people that review for your journals.

**Moderator:**

Thanks very much Gareth for that, we'll now hand over to Dianne Dixon for peer review timeline strategy.

**Dianne Dixon:** So my journal is the *Internal Journal of Radiation Biology* and our board consists of one Editor-in-Chief, 15 Associate Editors and 20 advisory board members. The Associate Editors are primarily responsible for selecting and inviting reviewers that applied to each manuscript.

So as part of our review process, this is a workflow for how we invite reviewers. Day one, the reviewer would be invited, hopefully, the reviewer will accept or we count another five days and send a reminder for the reviewer to respond. Hopefully, the reviewer accepts or we send another reminder in another four days. If the reviewer doesn't accept after the ninth or the tenth day, we remove the reviewer from the list and then we invite the next reviewer on the list. We found that using this process, it would take 47 days to find two or more reviewers, and this is a long period of time as this is in addition to the amount of time we wait for the reviewer to come back and a decision to be made. So we've tried to find ways to reduce this particular time in our process so we can get a decision out sooner.

At our last board meeting in October, I brought this up with the entire board and we came to a decision that we would have a stricter timeline that all the associate editors would buy into. So our new workflow is, we invite the reviewer, if they don't accept, we send them one reminder in four days. And if they don't accept, three days after that, we just remove the reviewer, but we send them an email saying we acknowledge that they may be busy, if they had missed the original email, here's the abstract. If they would like to still review the paper, to get in contact with me. We've had in probably about 5% of the cases where reviewers will say "yes, I completely missed this" or "I've been away travelling, I would still like to complete this review". So we've gone back and we've sent them the invitation and that's actually helped streamline our process by keeping it very tight and not continually waiting for reviewers to say yes, we've been able to just keep going down the list and focusing on the people who will agree to review our papers.

Because we've started doing this, we've now reduced our time to 39 days to find two or more reviewers. While it's still a long period of time, we are hoping that it will get better to reduce the time.

So, because of this, we have a reduced time from submission to decision overall and our Associate Editors are paying more attention to finding reviewers if they know they have a shorter window to find them. But, the cons are, there's always an outlier AE who is on vacation or very busy and does not follow the four days plus three days and that does sometimes drag out the average time, but it's getting people to commit to this review process that will help.

**Moderator:** That's great, thanks very much Dianne for that.

**Dianne Dixon:** You're welcome.

**Moderator:** We'll now hand over to Peter Gilroy.

**Peter Gilroy:** Hello there, I'm the Executive Editor of the *International Journal of Education for Teaching*. I'm the Executive Editor of the journal which has been running for just over 40 years. So I took over the journal from somebody who had built up a very large database of reviewers, referees, and that's what I was working from initially. I found that recruiting referees, reviewers, is relatively straightforward; we tend to ask those who have written for us, so they know the process, they've had experience from the sharp-end, as it were, of our reviewing process. And every three issues or so, which is roughly six months, we contact authors who have written for us and ask them if they'd be interested in reviewing, particularly if they're in areas that we are short of reviewers in, statistical analysis, for example.

As Gareth said earlier, we spend a fair amount of time explaining exactly what we require of them, very, very carefully, particularly the ethical side. Teacher education, that's a fairly small field, at least nationally, and it would be difficult to find reviewers within the UK that didn't know each other, so that's an aspect that we pick up on quite thoroughly.

If we have problems identifying a reviewer for a paper, then we'll use a key authority that the author themselves have used and contact them, that way we can increase the size of our review panel quite considerably.

We run special issues, at least one per volume, sometimes more than one, there are lots and lots of advantages, I'm sure you can guess, for special issues, but one of the many that we find useful is that the special issue guest editors will have to identify their own reviewers, so we can then add them to the database. Obviously, we still go through the process of inviting them formally, but that way, we know that they have been identified as specialists in their subject area by somebody else.

In addition to the four aspects that I've mentioned for recruiting, I've got a very large network, both nationally and internationally. I attend a few conferences, so the networks and the conference presentations are another way of identifying and recruiting reviewers.

As I said, the journal has been running for some years so some of the reviewers that were there initially are getting on a bit and so we've often asked them to identify reviewers to replace themselves, early career researchers and so on, we

can give them an opportunity to do some reviewing.

We always send a formal email inviting reviewers to join our panel and we've found that the term "international review panel" is something that reviewers like to use on their CV's, it's a kind of ego-massage, I guess. Because they're not just associate reviewers, they're not referees, they're part of our panel, so that's so much for recruiting.

The difficult bit is retaining reviewers because, as Dianne and Gareth have said, and I'm sure Hervé will say as well, reviewers are extremely busy people, they're experts in their field, we need to treat them extremely carefully. So the first process we have is that the editorial board filter out papers that are obviously inappropriate, that means that the reviewers are not wasting their time reading a paper and then deciding that it's inappropriate, you can see very quickly, at least in my field, that a paper is inappropriate, so why waste the reviewer's time?

When we send the reviewer a paper, we explain why we've chosen them rather than just them receiving it blind, they know that there's a reason for it coming to them, it obviously connects to their keywords on our database. We also explain that they'll never have more than two papers per year, if that, to review. As a reviewer myself, it's very tiring ... very tiresome actually, to receive lots and lots of requests for reviewings from journals, it would nice to know that you'd never get more than two, if that.

If they're a new reviewer, recruited in the way I've mentioned earlier, then we'll always let them know the decision of the second reviewer, who will be an experienced reviewer, and the overall decision. And we usually add the T&F discount voucher, although sometimes they would have already received it.

Now, Taylor & Francis use a particular system for working through reviewers, we don't, we use a different kind of contact database. Initially, this wasn't a choice of mine but because the previous editor had this very extensive database, I found I had to use it, and I found it very useful. It's a much more personalized system, although I believe you can do that with the CATS system, personalize things, but our contact database is extremely personalized, very closely personalized, and for that reason, we use the personal touch in correspondence with reviewers. For example, there are 193 reviewers on the database and two of them are from New Zealand and two years ago, when New Zealand had an earthquake, I was able to contact them to check they were okay. Another one of my networks in Australia, I knew that their department was having problems and it was worth just staying in touch with them to make sure that things were okay. That's what I mean by the "personal touch", it's much more proactive on the database that we use ... I'll come back to that in a second. And we regularly ask reviewers to check that they're

happy to continue reviewing and their interests are unchanged by regularly, between 12 months and 18 months, we check that with them, it also gives us a chance to stay in touch with them.

So, as a result of that interaction, we have a very, very committed review panel, they very, very rarely refuse to review, usually because of holidays or conferences or something that they're going to, but they usually find a way to review. They ask often for more papers to review, which I find strange, but they will do that. Very few are late reviews and very few need reminding. Now it does happen but it doesn't happen very often, and if it does happen, we immediately ask them if they wish to continue reviewing with us. This approach is extremely time-consuming and I can understand why, if you are on a full-time contract (I'm not a full-time academic anymore) this approach would be very time-consuming and difficult to fit in. I think it's worthwhile in the long-run, but I would be interested to hear what other editors feel. Thank you.

**Moderator:** Thank you very much Peter. Please, if I can just remind everyone to keep typing your questions into the questions box, we've had a few come in already so thank you very much for those. We'll be getting to all those questions at the end of the presentation. Next, we'll hand over to Hervé Stolowy.

**Hervé Stolowy:** Thank you very much. So, I'm a professor for accounting at HEC Paris and the Editor of *European Accounting Review*. The *European Accounting Review* is the journal of the European Accounting Association, so I have a term of four years, now I'm in the second year of my term.

When I began my term, I decided to make a survey with the editorial board ... I should say that, in our organization, I have 21 Associate Editors, 83 editorial board members plus reviewers. So, I made a survey, so I used a system who are not here to do advertising but in my school we have something called Qualtrics, so it's very similar to what you probably all know SurveyMonkey, so this type of survey, so it's very easy to do. So, I designed it, I included ten topics, so for example, accounting, auditing, financial analysis, so that's the topics, 20 methods, quantitative methods, qualitative methods, survey, interviews, etc., and 162 keywords. So I decided to make a very, very long list of keywords, so I sent the survey to all the editorial members and they filled it, all of them. So the system generated an Excel file and now I have an Excel file which is very detailed with all these topics, methods and keywords chosen by the board members, and I will do the same for the associate editors and we share this file with all the associate editors and with all editorial board members.

I don't keep the papers for myself, my job is to assign the papers among the 21 associate editors, I keep some papers for myself and we all have these Excel files

so we can all use these Excel files to find reviewers. Why reviewers and the board? Because the board members, when they sign for being in the board, they're committed to review a few papers every year, so that's the first way to find reviewers, and because we have two reviewers per paper in our journal, we very often have at least one reviewer who is a board member, so that's the first way.

Now, we need a second reviewer, so the second reviewer can be a board member or can be outside the board, so outside the board, I use this very classical, we look at the reference cited in the submitted paper. So in the submitted paper I very often find names of authors of articles very close to the topic and sometimes I know the people, so it's a very easy way to find reviewers.

And the third way to find reviewers is the ScholarOne tool, because in ScholarOne there's the possibility to search for reviewers with topics. So with the combination of these different techniques, I don't think that we, the Associate Editors and myself, we don't really have difficulties at least to find the names. I share everything which has been said about retaining the reviewers, the difficulty to have reviewers, they are very busy, but now, and because I only have a few minutes, so I would like to focus on some elements which are in ScholarOne and that I use a lot.

So in ScholarOne, the editor, so Associate Editors and Editor, they are supposed to rate the reviewers, so to give a score. Every time a reviewer delivers a review, we are supposed to score and there are two scores, one is timeliness, so it's over three, it's one, two, three, and one is relevance of the review. So I know that some of my Associate Editors are a little bit reluctant to give a score to our colleagues, so I tell them that it's really necessary, it's very useful, especially when they have the problems with a reviewer. So in 99% of cases, the score is three over three, but in some cases, we have some difficulties, so we must be informed because all the editors have access to the same database so we must know, when we want to invite someone, we must know if this person had some problems in the past with reviewing, that's why the rate is important. I tell my Associate Editors that I give more importance to the relevance than to timeliness, timeliness is important but we all are busy so if the reviewers are a little bit late, a few weeks, one month, personally, I still give a three. However, I really pay attention to the content of the review, if the content of review was not really good, then I give, I would say, a two or maybe a one if it's really a very bad review, so that's one thing.

The second element which is in ScholarOne and very useful is the number of papers currently under review, so we have two numbers, we have one number then a slash and another number. The first number is the number of papers currently under review and the second number is the number of papers which have been reviewed and seen in the last 12 months. So the general idea in the



instruction that I give to all associate editors is we should not solicit a reviewer or board member who already has one paper under review, so we try to avoid that.

So sometimes we miss very good reviewers because we know we try to protect them and we know that they work for other journals. So this route doesn't work for re-submissions because for a paper re-submitted, the paper will be sent to the same reviewers so then a reviewer could get two reviews at the same time, but for a new submission, we try to avoid that. With the exception, maybe, if it's really a very, very specific topic and if the reviewer is the best in the world for that topic, so recently I had to do that, I apologize with the reviewer and I told the reviewer that I would still solicit him because I really needed him. So that's what I really use on an everyday basis with ScholarOne and I like this very much.

I like very much what Peter said about the personal touch, I think that reviewers are human beings so I like very much ScholarOne and all the emails, all the templates, that's very useful, but still these are people and I think that adding a few words, personal words, is very useful. So for all the papers that I handle directly, when I invite a reviewer, I always write a few words before the template, before the template he made, and these few words relate, in most of cases, it relates to a paper that the reviewer has published on the same topic. And I always begin "I know your paper, I like your paper published recently in this journal on that topic and that's why I'm inviting you, and that's why I think that you are the highly suitable reviewer". And in many, many cases it works, or at least if they are not available, they will reply, I notice that, they reply very quickly. They're much quicker than with a simple template, so I rarely, rarely send a simple template, so I think that's all for the moment, what I wanted to say about selecting and inviting reviewers.

**Moderator:** That's great, thank you very much Hervé and thank you to all of our speakers for their presentations. Now it's over to you for our Q&A session. We've already had a few questions come through, but please do continue to type your questions into the questions box. So the first question that we'll start with is really around how editors can benefit from projects such as Publons. Who would like to start with that one?

**Gareth Meager:** Yeah, I'm happy to go ahead with the Publons one. So Publons, possibly maybe for people who don't know what it is, it's an initiative where it's kind of giving reviewers credit for the work that they've done, so I mentioned it in my presentation that, obviously, reviewing is a voluntary pursuit and 99.9% of the time, reviewers are not paid, so they're giving up their time voluntarily. So Publons is an initiative where the reviewers can claim work and say "I reviewed for 'x' journal" and necessary blinding is still in place, but they can say "I reviewed for this journal" and then they can build up a sort of Publons profile. So there's an area



where they can then begin to create this profile and it gives them more of an online presence of their work that they've done and in some ways it actually records the fact that "yes, I was a reviewer on this journal".

So at Taylor & Francis, we're trialing it on a number of journals so it's a question that's in the reviewer score sheet, so when reviewers are reviewing a paper, there's a question that says would they like to have this connected to their Publons account and they can say yes or no. And then they're taken to the Publons page, a specific Taylor & Francis area with Publons where they can then claim their review. So yeah, how can editors benefit from projects such as Publons would be that it's just another incentive for reviewers, it's another opportunity to say to reviewers "if you give up your time to review for us, there's also an area now where you can begin to claim some recognition for the fact that you're doing this work for us".

And it will help other editors, I think, to go on to select reviewers. There's a real opportunity for Publons to then branch out to say "we're a good repository to help other editors find reviewers" because they could say "well reviewer 'x' over here has claimed that they have done reviews in accounting", for instance. So then maybe Hervé will think "okay, well I'll go and invite this reviewer over here, their Publons profile suggests that they'll be a good fit".

**Moderator:** That's great, thanks very much Gareth, has anyone else got anything else they wanted to add to that? No? Okay, great, we'll move on to the next question. This one is for all our editors really, and the question is, how long do you typically give reviewers to review a paper once they've agreed to do that? Who would like to start?

**Dianne Dixon:** I'll start. For my journal, we typically give 14 days, business days, to review a paper.

**Moderator:** Thanks Dianne.

**Peter Gilroy:** With us, it's slightly different because, as I said earlier, we have a preliminary review process that the editorial board take part in to check that a paper is appropriate. That is a 10-day process, maximum, usually much shorter than that, and then they go out to review and reviewers are given 14 working days.

**Hervé Stolowy:** For EAR, we also have a sort of initial screening process which I do, obviously, and this can lead in a virtual number of days, a few days, this can lead to what we call "desk rejections". So when the paper is not desk-rejected and we have about, I would say, a third of papers which are desk-rejected, so all the other papers which are sent out for review, we give 45 days to review it. And in our field, in our field of accounting, I know rather well many other accounting journals is very classical,

some journals have 30 or 45, that's very, very classical in our field.

**Moderator:** Great, thanks very much everyone. The next question here was aimed at Hervé, I think, and this says "when you're emailing reviewers asking them to update their keywords, what proportion of people actually do go on to do that after you've emailed them?"

**Hervé Stolowy:** Okay, it seemed that I mis-expressed myself. I did a survey only for editorial board members and Associate Editors, so it's about a group of 100 people. I didn't do that for all reviewers because we have, I don't know how many, we have maybe 200 or 300 of other people who are reviewers, not being board members or associate editors. So for this group of 100 people, I did the survey once, that was a year and a half ago at the beginning of my term. To be honest, I was not really prepared to do it again because I know that people can change their research topic, but still it's rather stable and if it happens that a keyword is not valid anymore and if the board member is invited for this paper, the board member is supposed to reply to decline the offer, to decline the invitation and say "I'm sorry, I don't work on this anymore". And this happens sometimes, it's rare, but this can happen, so that's it.

**Moderator:** Great, thank you very much. One questions for all of our editors now: as editors who are managing peer review processes yourself, do any of you do peer review for other journals?

**Peter Gilroy:** Yes, I certainly peer review for other journals and I've learnt from that experience what not to do as an editor. For example, you mentioned earlier about scoring reviewers, I sent a review in recently and within three minutes, four minutes of having the review go in, I received a standard letter saying what a fabulous review it was and thank you very much for doing it. It's quite clear it couldn't possibly have been read in that time.

**Moderator:** Thanks very much Peter.

**Hervé Stolowy:** So I would say that before the beginning of my term, I used to review a lot for many, many other journals. With this activity, with this leadership, I had to reduce this activity. I still review a little bit, but I had to explain to some journals that because of the editorship, it's very difficult to review too much for other journals, it's not a matter ... I don't see a problem, a political problem, I don't see a conflict of interest, it's only a matter of workload. But from time to time, I still kept a few journals, so from time to time, I still review and I try to review on-time for the other journals.

**Moderator:** Great, thank you very much. Our next question is around which model of peer

review you each prefer, whether that's single-blind, double-blind, or open peer review, or triple-blind. What's the type of peer review that you prefer?

**Peter Gilroy:** Well, I prefer double-blind review, which of course, takes place after the editorial board have seen the papers themselves, so at that point it isn't blind.

**Moderator:** Okay, thank you.

**Hervé Stolowy:** So the current system we have is two reviewers, double-blind, so I can explain some history. This was the system in the journal, then with one editor we have a change to one reviewer, double-blind, so it has always been double-blind, but during one editorship it was only one reviewer. So we can discuss that because I know that there are many different ideas, having one reviewer versus two reviewers. So having one reviewer has the content, it's easier to find one reviewer than two reviewers, so that's a bigger context. The difficulty for the editor is that the opinion of the editor is then based only on one report, so that's why, when I began my term, I decided to go back to the original system, which is two reviewers, double-blind.

So I spend more time to find two reviewers, that's certain, but then I gain, I save time and I receive the two reports, because with the two reports, it's easier to make a decision. Of course, with two reports, there can be divergences between the two reports, but still I find that I'm more comfortable with two reports, even if they are divergent, than with one report.

**Dianne Dixon:** On the managing perspective, my current journal is single-blind. I have worked on a double-blind journal and I find it's quite a challenge to make sure it's completely blinded. I think from the author's perspective, it's probably good because it will be less biased by the reviewers, but to, I guess, manage that process, my preference is single-blind.

**Moderator:** Great, thanks very much everyone. The next question is around how you deal with paper submissions that are proving difficult to locate appropriate reviewers from your database or via ScholarOne or Editorial Manager. So in that situation, how do you go about trying to locate new reviewers?

**Dianne Dixon:** So for my journal, I've set up a process where if the Associate Editor is having trouble finding two reviewers, we've asked the Associate Editor to act as a reviewer themselves. The advisory board members that we have, they are actually called upon to be reviewers on papers, so we sort of have a built-in pool of people in case we can't find external reviewers, we use them as reviewers in their field.

**Moderator:** Great, thank you.

- Hervé Stolowy:** I could say that different situations ... so because we want two reviewers, when it gets very, very difficult to find two reviewers, so an editor has found one but not two, for many reasons, then of course, I authorize, I accept the idea of having only one reviewer. So I say that the system is two reviewers, but with exceptions, we can have one, so that's one way to solve the issue, even though I prefer two, exceptionally, we can have one. But I notice that when we really have problems to find reviewers, it is often related to the nature of the paper, maybe the paper is out of the scope of the journal, maybe the paper is too specific. And that's why we had difficulties to find reviewers, so there is a very high relationship between the scope of the paper, the nature of the paper and the difficulty to find the reviewers. So often it's because I did not do my job of desk-rejecting the paper, in many cases I realize that because it's so difficult to find the reviewers, that I should have desk-rejected the paper, I didn't notice, I didn't realize well enough that the papers shouldn't have gone to the review process.
- Peter Gilroy:** I think I've already explained how I deal with it, so we don't seem to have a problem.
- Moderator:** Great, thanks very much everybody. The next question is, to what to extent, if any, do you edit reviewers' comments to authors and why would you decide to do this or not do this?
- Peter Gilroy:** I have edited but not for sense, more for emotion. Some reviewers can sometimes forget that they're writing about somebody's work and that's somebody might be quite new the process of writing and I wouldn't want cruel remarks to be passed on. So I do occasionally filter out some of the emotive side that you get in some reviewers' comments, but not the sense.
- Dianne Dixon:** I look at all the decision letters and yes, there are times when reviewers can be a little bit harsh about someone's paper, so those kinds of comments are edited out.
- Hervé Stolowy:** I think it's a very important question. In principle, I never edit the comments, which doesn't mean that I agree with everything which is written, because in the decision letter, I make a decision based on two pieces of advice and that's the decision letter. But concerning the wording, the reviewers, they receive clear instructions to be constructive, positive, not to be nasty, not to be harsh, with authors. So far, I never, never had the problem until a week ago, it was not a paper I was handling, so I discovered the decision letter and the review report at the same time it was to authors, because now in our organization, I do not interfere with the Associate Editors' decisions.

So I discovered at the same time as the authors and I discovered one review report which was really, really short, bad, not interesting and very brutal, very rude, but it was too late because the Associate Editor has made the decision, so it was too late to do anything. So now I'm thinking maybe I will try to do something, but it's very hard because we have a big group of Associate Editors and because we all work independently, so I should give instructions and tell them that if they face this situation, then they should edit the text of the review. But to be honest, it's one case, we have more than 300 papers per year and it's one case over, I would say, 400 or 500 decisions, so it's too much, one case, it's too much, but still it's only one case.

**Moderator:** Great, thank you everyone.

**Gareth Meager:** Well, it's an interesting point with one of the previous questions around double-blind, triple-blind, that double-blind, obviously, reviewers, because no one knows who they are, they're more likely or ... maybe "likely" is not the right term, but there's a chance the people might say more harsh things, less constructive if you don't know who they are.

**Hervé Stology:** What are you saying, the problem of being blind, from the resource point of view ... okay, it is not blind, in our work, we have a lot of activities when we make reports including recommendation letters, recommendation reports on colleagues, it's far from a review and it's not blind. So it also has these advantages, because when it's not blind, you can have a sort of game with people, so I think personally I prefer blind but with very, very strict instructions to reviewers, to be fair and to be nice in their writing. They can recommend a rejection, they can write about all the flaws of the paper, but in a nice way, always in a nice way.

**Moderator:** Great, thanks so much everyone. The next question is around how often you write to reviewers who have been suggested by the contributors, the authors, on a paper.

**Peter Gilroy:** Never.

**Hervé Stology:** Never.

**Dianne Dixon:** We do allow suggestions for reviewers, but the board decided to remove that.

**Moderator:** That's fair enough.

**Hervé Stology:** If I may add a few words on this. I said "never" like Peter, never for reviewers. However, we strongly encourage the authors to recommend an Associate Editor so in the submission system, when they submit a paper, they have a window

where they can select one or more Associate Editors plus me, so a group of 22 people, of course, based on the topics, based on the topics. And I always look at their suggestion, always, when I have to assign the paper, of course, I have to pay attention to the topic and I have to pay attention to the availability of the Associate Editors because the authors don't know the workloads of the Associate Editors. But I like the system, so in some cases, it's very straightforward, the choice of editor is very straightforward, very easy, some papers could be between different people and sometimes it helps me to see the recommendation made by the authors. But more than one half of the authors do not take advantage of this possibility, so do not recommend any Associate Editor.

**Moderator:** Great, thank you very much. Our next question is around what sort of incentives you've tried offering to reviewers, such as obviously there's Publons and reviewer certificates from Taylor & Francis, is there anything else that you've tried to get reviewers to review papers with you?

**Dianne Dixon:** No, we have not, no, we use the e-voucher that T&F provides.

**Peter Gilroy:** I've never actually offered this, but I have noticed that one or two reviewers have asked me for references and I think that might be because they are a member, formally, of the International Review Panel, so they're actually putting that on their CV and then suggesting that I could be a referee for a promotion or post elsewhere.

**Hervé Stolowy:** So I feel very guilty because, for reviewers, we give nothing, so we don't have the system, I know journals who do that, so we don't do anything. However, I fully agree with Peter, the number of recommendations I was asked to write for my Associate Editors or reviewers have significantly increased since I began my term. And I find this reasonable, I find this natural and I like to do that because it's the minimum I can do for the colleagues who work very hard for the journal.

**Moderator:** Great, thank you very much. Our next question that we've got in is around patient peer review where a non-scientist or non-specialist gives feedback to the researcher's work, does anyone have any opinions on that, has anyone tried that at all?

**Peter Gilroy:** I've not tried it so I'm not sure how it would work, because what you want is expert advice on the particular paper, academic advice. Although within the UK system of the research exercise, the REF, I can see why you might want to have some element of impact. I don't know whether Dianne does this, but I know in some medical journals, there is a section for the abstract where you identify the impact of your paper and I have thought of adding that to the journal that I edit.

**Dianne Dixon:** We actually don't have that currently in our journal.

**Hervé Stolowy:** No, like Peter, we only use experts in the field, academics.

**Moderator:** Great, thank you everyone. Our next question is around the idea of an internal review panel that was mentioned by Peter, so can you tell us a bit more about how that functions and how it's, perhaps, different from a list of reviewers that an editor might keep?

**Peter Gilroy:** A list of reviewers is just that, a list that you tap into. The panel know who each other are, it's more like a community, I suppose, but crucially, it gives them some sort of status other than simply being a reviewer. After all, a reviewer is central to the work that we do as editors and we can't give them very much, there's the Taylor & Francis 30% off flyer, but other than that, there isn't much we can do. To give them some sort of status by making them a member of a panel and communicating with each other, I think is quite useful, I'd certainly welcome it as a reviewer myself.

**Moderator:** Great, thank you very Peter. Our next question is really around systems, so it's probably aimed more at Gareth, this one, and it's about how ScholarOne is similar to or different from Editorial Manager, what differences are there?

**Gareth Meager:** In terms of sourcing reviewers?

**Moderator:** Yeah.

**Gareth Meager:** Really, there's not a lot of difference between the two systems, they are both fundamentally peer review management systems, so the typical journal workflow or a paper being submitted, it going through some form of initial check and potential desk-reject, then being assigned to a layer of editor, possibly being signed on to another layer of editors, so perhaps Editor-in-Chief, then Associate Editors. Reviewers then being invited, peer reviewers doing their work, submitting their scores and then, ultimately, a decision being reached, so they both fundamentally can facilitate that process.

And the sourcing, inviting, finding reviewers part of the process is, again, very similar in both systems, both systems have an external reviewer search tool that has been factored in, that people listening may have used on ScholarOne, it's called "Reviewer Locator", on Editor Manager, it's called "Reviewer Discovery". And again, they work in very similar ways, that they are externally-facing, they're going out to the internet to search for names and potential reviewers, and they're using metadata that's in the submitted manuscripts. So it's an algorithm really that's looking at terms, words in the abstract, keywords, words in the title and then



bringing back potential reviewers to say “well these people could potentially be good reviewers for this particular manuscript”. And again, the idea of those tools is to move away from something that, I think, Peter mentioned, the reviewer fatigue, that if you are continually using the same pool of reviewers and you’re asking individuals to review more than five, six papers in a given period, then you’re kind of burning them out, potentially, you run the risk of burning them out.

So those tools are aimed at spreading that net a bit wider and finding people that maybe you wouldn’t have considered before and they’re not in your journal’s database already.

**Moderator:** Great, thanks very much Gareth. Our next question is around how you select or recruit reviewers again, it’s asking what your general criteria is when you are selecting reviewers, is there anything in particular that you’re looking for or not looking for?

**Hervé Stolowy:** Okay, I could say a word. We have different criteria but they must have worked on the topic, they must have published on the topic, they can be senior or they can be young in their career, there’s no problem, we have a lot of young reviewers. Because we have two reviewers, we try to have a mix of one experienced researcher and one younger researcher, but we want to have reviewers who have already some publications in the field and on the topic. And after that ... so that’s the first criteria, but then we get to know the reviewers, so after a few months, after a few papers, we know how the reviewers work, so we know some reviewers, they write well, they write long reviews, very constructive, some reviewers we use are less interesting, so usually we tend to forget the second category in favor of the first one.

**Moderator:** Thanks Hervé.

**Peter Gilroy:** The only thing I’d add to what Hervé has said is that we would prefer reviewers to have written with us, it’s not always possible, but that is an ideal if we can get it.

**Dianne Dixon:** So, in addition, what usually happens is, someone who is a senior scientist in their lab, they might have students and they’ll email us and say “can we have one of our students review this paper? I will work with them” and we’re okay with that. That’s a way for them to be introduced to reviewing and then they’ll become one of our regular reviewers if they do well.

**Moderator:** Great, thanks very much everyone. I think we’ve just got time for one more question now. If your question hasn’t been answered, then don’t worry, we’ll be publishing a summary of your questions and our experts’ answers afterwards. So our final question is, do you have any tips or guidelines for new reviewers that

editors can share with their new reviewers when they first start on a journal? Top tips.

**Gareth Meager:** Well before, I've been part of a training scheme that Taylor & Francis have offered younger reviewers and early career researchers, and that touched on what we've already talked about this afternoon. So, this idea of making it a collaborative and a kind of conversation between a reviewer and the author of the paper, although in the case of double-blinding, they don't know each other, but as we've touched upon, writing things that you would happily say to someone face-to-face and being constructive. Making it a kind of dialogue and an open expression of how the manuscript could be improved and what areas were good and not so good. So certainly, we try to express that a good review is a full and frank one rather than a short, snappy one to think "okay, well I'll just complete this review and I'll get it done and I've met my deadline", that's something we certainly try to put across.

**Moderator:** Thanks Gareth.

**Dianne Dixon:** For my journal, I would encourage new reviewers to not be afraid to reach out to the Editor-in-Chief or the associate editors, these are the people that are going to be selecting you, so get to know them, have them get to know you so they will start using you more.

**Peter Gilroy:** Yes, all I was going to say was that I encourage reviewers, particularly new, younger reviewers, to see the process, as Gareth said, as a kind of discussion and to think of the paper as being written by themselves, what kind of review would they like if they had written the paper. After all, we're trying to open the door, not shut the door on publishing and some reviewers tend to think their job is to gate-keep by shutting the gate rather than opening it.

**Moderator:** Thanks Peter, anything to add Hervé?

**Hervé Stolowy:** Yes, I would say maybe two things, the first is to ask for advice from senior colleagues in a department when it's a first review, because in the department, many, many colleagues have very good experience about reviewing, so for the first time, to ask for examples of reviewers. And secondly, you said the word "discussion", many PhD programs train the students to discuss a paper already in public and through this training form, how to discuss a paper in public is very helpful to learn also how to review a paper, it's not so different to discuss in public and to write a review. So I think it's a very good thing to train our PhD students, especially PhD students, to discuss papers already in public.

**Moderator:** Thanks Hervé. Unfortunately, that's all we have time for now, but I hope you've all

found this session useful. I'd like to thank our experts again for sharing their knowledge with us today and I'd also like to thank you all for joining us. When I end the webinar, a short survey will pop up on your screen asking you a couple of questions about your experience of the webinar, so any feedback you have would be much appreciated. This webinar has been recorded and we'll be circulating the recording to you all by email, so do look out for that in your inbox. Thank you, again, for attending and we hope you can join us at another webinar in our Expert View series soon. The webinar is now over, please feel free to disconnect.