



online 

ELSEVIER EDITORIAL SYSTEM

A Guide for Journal Editors and Editorial Offices

"The online submission and editorial system is amazing in that it greatly reduces the time required for the review process without any sacrifice of quality. In addition, this system provides for instant electronic manuscript tracking and retrieval which greatly reduces the paperwork involved in journal management."
Mike Waalkes, Editor, Toxicology and Applied Pharmacology

"We started the online submission and editorial system in June 2003, since when we have received many comments, from authors and referees alike, full of praise for the efficiency, speed, effectiveness and ease of use of the system."
Professor David Williams, Editor-in-Chief, Biomaterials

"It will be very helpful to us all in tracking papers, finding good reviewers etc. It took about 10 min. to get the hang of the Section Editor stuff with assigning reviewers and then adding a decision once reviews are in (and adding my own comments to those of the reviewers) and I found that the most "difficult" part. The rest was a cake-walk. For reviewers, this is the best Web based system I have ever seen - real easy which makes me happy as I, like many of you, have struggled and even given up, on other journals web based review systems. I suspect 6 months from now we will wonder how we did without this in the past."
Dr. Andrew Saxon, Editor-in-Chief, Clinical Immunology

- ▶ What is it?
- ▶ What will this mean for me?
For my journal?

A Guide for Journal Editors and Editorial Offices

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Introduction

Welcome to your guide to the Elsevier Editorial System. This guide contains important information for journal Editors regarding Elsevier's new online submission system for journals. It will provide you with an outline of what the system does, the key benefits and features, the implementation procedures for the Elsevier Editorial System, the support services available and frequently asked questions.

Elsevier is committed to migrating its publication process to an end-to-end electronic workflow. The Elsevier Editorial System (EES) is the tool that Elsevier has selected to achieve this goal. It is an online tool that enables Authors to submit articles online, Reviewers to referee online and Editors to manage the peer-review process online.

- ▶ EES speeds up the publication process
- ▶ Provides Editors with a system to support the peer-review process
- ▶ Allows Reviewers to referee online
- ▶ Gives Authors access to up-to-date information on article status
- ▶ Has an excellent Customer Support network to deal with queries from Editors, Reviewers and Authors

Elsevier's online submission and editorial system is developed on the basis of Editorial Manager, a software program produced by Aries Systems Corporation. Extensive research over an eighteen-month period was carried out before Elsevier selected the Editorial Manager system. Elsevier ran pilots, involved Publishers and Journal Editors, carried out detailed product comparisons, and undertook market research on the online submission tools being used by competitors.



Example of a journal welcome page

Elsevier selected Editorial Manager due to the flexibility, usability and the customizability of the system. The major alternatives proved not to meet requirements for a number of different reasons e.g. not user-friendly.

Please read on to find out about the key benefits and features of EES, how it is implemented, the support services available and the frequently asked questions.

online



ELSEVIER EDITORIAL SYSTEM

Key Benefits and Features of the Elsevier Editorial System

A number of the benefits are relevant to Authors, Editors and Reviewers, but there are also specific benefits for Journal Editors.

BENEFITS FOR ALL

- ▶ It is an Internet-based tool that can be accessed from anywhere in the world and works on multiple platforms
- ▶ It provides online submission for Authors, which in turn provides a faster, more efficient seamless link from submission through the editorial and peer-review process, right through to publication
- ▶ It provides Editors with a system to support the peer-review process
- ▶ It provides online refereeing for Reviewers
- ▶ The convenience of the peer-review process being online saves time and makes the whole process quicker and more efficient
- ▶ It provides an automatic conversion of source files to one PDF file - a stable document that is guaranteed to look the same on any computer worldwide
- ▶ All Authors have their own homepage where they can view information on the status of their article within the review process (subject to Editors' configuration) without the need to contact the Editor
- ▶ EES provides Authors and Reviewers with step-by-step instructions, a help menu, invaluable tutorials and an excellent Editor, Reviewer and Author Customer Support network to deal with any queries that arise
- ▶ It provides just one tool with which Authors, Editors and Reviewers interact for submission, refereeing and tracking – and all online 24 hours a day

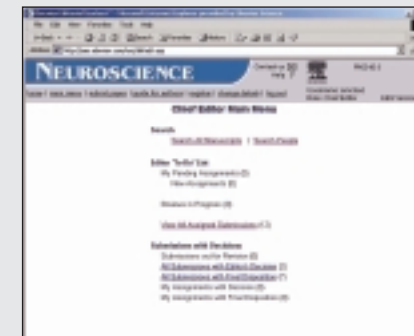
"I just want to say that the Online Submission tool is an excellent system, and from the many positive comments we have received from authors and reviewers, it is by far superior to other systems being used."

**Betty Schiefelbein, Managing Editor,
Remote Sensing of Environment**

BENEFITS SPECIFIC TO JOURNAL EDITORS

- ▶ The automation of workflow tasks and correspondence saves time and effort and makes the whole peer-review process quicker and more efficient
- ▶ Each submission site is specifically customized for each journal
- ▶ Each Journal Editor has a homepage where they can see at a glance an overview of the current status of workflow
- ▶ All correspondence and data for each submission is stored electronically on the system and regularly backed up on Elsevier's secure servers. It does not take up valuable space on Authors', Editors' and Reviewers' computers or laptops and removes the need for paper files
- ▶ Electronically stored correspondence avoids an overflow in e-mail inboxes
- ▶ Electronic correspondence saves on postage costs and time
- ▶ Existing people databases can be transferred into EES
- ▶ EES can use topical classification of Reviewers' specialties to suggest Reviewers for particular articles
- ▶ Provides Editors with automatic customizable e-mail correspondence
- ▶ It can produce a number of reports for Editors e.g. late Reviewers – a report highlighting Reviewers who have not yet responded

"I suspect 6 months from now we will wonder how we did without this [system] in the past."
Dr Andrew Saxon, Editor-in-Chief, Clinical Immunology



Example of an editor's homepage



Implementation and Training

The implementation of EES, and the training does take time, but your Publishing representative at Elsevier will work closely with you in the lead up to the implementation process and will be there to support you throughout.

Implementation

The EES site for your journal will be specifically customized to suit your editorial practices as closely as possible. However, before an EES site can be built we need to understand how you currently deal with submissions and the peer-review process – the journal workflow. Your Publishing representative will encourage you to think about your current editorial practices and will ask you to provide the following information:

- ▶ A brief description of your editorial practices for each step in the submission and peer-review process
- ▶ Details of the Editorial Office(s) that receives submissions
- ▶ Types of articles published in your journal
- ▶ Any particular instructions you require Authors to provide you with at submission
- ▶ A complete list of classifications used by the journal (if appropriate)
- ▶ Examples of all the current letters that are sent out from the Editorial Office to Authors and Reviewers

- ▶ Editor decision terms, Reviewer recommendation terms
- ▶ Details regarding any Reviewer database you currently use (see below for further information on this)

Reviewer/Referee Database

It is possible to import your existing Reviewer/Referee Database into the new system, but it is not a mandatory requirement. Should you choose to do this you will be requested to send a sample of your database to your Publishing representative for checking and feedback. The next stage will be to pass the full database to your Publishing representative so it can be prepared for uploading into the new system. After Go Live a 'Batch E-mail' can be sent from the system to all Reviewers advising them of their username and password and simultaneously asking them to update their details in the new system.

The Welcome Page

The Welcome Page is the first page that all users will see when they first enter the EES journal site. This page is created automatically for your journal when the training and test site is built. However, the Welcome Page can be specifically customized for each journal, within set guidelines, to provide an introduction to the site, e.g. the journal description, notes from the editor, news, links to society websites etc. You can work with your Publishing representative to customize this page to retain the journal's identity, within the set guidelines.



Example of a journal welcome page

Once all this information has been gathered your Publishing representative will request that a training and test site is built for the journal that will reflect the current work practices of the Editorial Office as closely as possible.

Training

Elsevier have a dedicated team of training specialists, *ESIS – Electronic Submission Implementation and Support*, who will actually train you and your Editorial Office staff in the use of the new system.

The Training Process

- ▶ When the site is ready your Training Manager will arrange a training session for the Journal Office. This training session will involve running through some test submissions and explaining to the Editors/Editorial Office staff what actions are required at each stage of the process
- ▶ Training can take place online, via telephone, e-mail or a personal visit from your Training Manager. Editors and Editorial Office staff are then encouraged to submit test submissions to the site with which they can practice assigning Editors, registering decisions etc

- ▶ Once the Editorial Office has had a chance to thoroughly test the site they will be able to run through any aspects about which they are unsure with the Training Manager, and clarify any other outstanding queries
- ▶ Throughout the training period, we would welcome any feedback you may have regarding the EES site that has been built for your journal, and will work with you to ensure that it meets your requirements

Go Live

Once you and your Editorial Office staff are satisfied that training is complete, a date will be agreed between you and your Publishing representative to go live. Your Training Manager will remain in contact with the Journal Office after Go Live until you are fully at ease with the new system.

It is important to note that after Go Live with the 'new' system the Journal Office will need to continue to use the 'old' tracking system in parallel until all articles from the previous system have been published.

"Throughout the process of customizing EES for our particular editorial processes, I was impressed by the system's power and flexibility. Our Training Manager offered us creative solutions to accommodate our journal's unique needs."

Tor D. Berg,
Managing Editor, Journal of Adolescent Health

Customer Support and Maintenance

Elsevier provide a centralized support service to Editors, Reviewers and Authors.

Editor Support

Editor Support is a centralized comprehensive helpdesk support service for Editors of online submission journals. Editor Support is the first point of call for any query an Editor may have. If the query can be handled by Editor Support a response will be provided within 24 hours. If second line support expertise is required it may take longer. However, the Editor will always be kept informed.

▶ editorsupport@elsevier.com

Reviewer Support

Reviewer Support is a centralized comprehensive helpdesk support service for Reviewers should they experience any technical difficulties when using EES. Any questions about the review process itself should be directed to the relevant Journal Editorial Office.

▶ reviewersupport@elsevier.com

Author Support

Author Support is the front-line link between Authors and Elsevier, offering a helpdesk function to Authors from the submission/pre-acceptance stage through to publication of their article.

▶ authorsupport@elsevier.com

Top FAQs

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q.How are journals prioritized for implementation on the Elsevier Editorial System?

A. The Publishing representative, in consultation with the Journal Editor, selects journals for EES based upon their suitability.

Q.How is the Elsevier Editorial System set up and implemented?

A. The Publishing representative will discuss the implementation procedures with the Journal Editor. Based upon the information supplied they will then request that a site is built. Elsevier have a team of specialists, ESIS – Electronic Submission Implementation and Support, who will train the Editorial Office. Throughout this process the ESIS Training Manager will also liaise with the Publishing representative and Journal Editor to customize the look and feel of the submission site. The journal will go live when the Journal Editor is comfortable with the system and is satisfied that the training is complete.

Q.Will the Editorial Office have to change their working procedures to fit in with the new system?

A. Some changes in working procedures will be necessary, however, we will use the current Editorial Office processes as a basis for the online workflow. We will work with the Editorial Office to customize the EES site to allow the journal to retain its own identity. Both the ESIS Training Manager and the Publishing representative will be able to support and advise the Editorial Offices throughout the implementation of EES.

Q.How long does the training take?

A. The training will take approximately 8 - 12 weeks. However, this is based upon the assumption that the Editorial Office will work through practice submissions between training sessions. **It is important to be aware that it takes time and dedication to implement the Elsevier Editorial System.**

Q.Can the system be used on a Mac?

A. Yes. The only system requirement is an Internet browser. It is a multi-platform tool.

Q.What are the system requirements for the Editorial Office?

A. The minimum specifications are as follows:

Internet Connection:

Effective use of EES requires a connection between each workstation and the Internet with a bandwidth of at least 128 Kbytes/second

Windows: 98 SE (Original Edition not supported), ME (not recommended), NT 4, 2000, XP Internet Explorer 5.5 and later Netscape 4.7 and later (Netscape 6.x not supported, Netscape 7 is supported) Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0 or later E-mail software

Macintosh: 8.x, 9.x OS X Internet Explorer 5.x and later Netscape 4.7 and later (Netscape 6.x not supported, Netscape 7 is supported) Safari 1.0 Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0 or later E-mail software

Linux: Red Hat 6.2 and later Netscape 4.76 Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0 or later E-mail software

Q.What difference does the Elsevier Editorial System make to a 'traditional' Editorial Office set up?

A. Initially the Editorial Office staff can be nervous about the implications of the system as it appears to take on significant parts of their role. However, evidence has shown that in reality this is not the case for a number of reasons:

- ▶ The system speeds up the review process
- ▶ It frees up time for the Editorial Office staff to concentrate on and expand other aspects of their role e.g. reporting

Q.How much does the Elsevier Editorial System cost?

A. Nothing! – The cost of the tool is borne by Elsevier

Q.Who provides technical support?

A. The first point of contact for Editors is Editor Support. They will assess the problem, respond where possible, and if necessary pass it on to second or third line support depending on the nature of the problem. The first point of contact for Reviewers is Reviewer Support. The first point of contact for Authors is Author Support.

Q.Who will maintain and monitor the system i.e. technical faults, system upgrades?

A. The Elsevier IT department provide 24 hour monitoring of the servers to ensure the system remains live. Editor Support is the first point of contact to report technical faults. ESIS will communicate and coordinate all system upgrades and provide appropriate training as necessary.

Q.What happens when a new version of the system becomes available?

A. The ESIS team will contact the Journal Editor or Editorial Office in advance of any upgrade to inform them of the new functionality that is available and any downtime that is necessary. The Editor or Editorial Office may be asked for additional information in order to configure the new features. Once the upgrade has taken place ESIS will provide full training as necessary on the use of any additional features.

Q.Is there a service level agreement outlining how long it will take for Editor Support to respond to the Editorial Office in the event of a query?

A. Yes, a service level agreement is in place. If the query can be handled by Editor Support the Editor or Editorial Office will receive a response within 24 hours. If second-line support expertise is required it may take longer. However, the Editor will always be kept informed.

Q.Will Authors be forced to use the Elsevier Editorial System or will journals still accept traditional print submissions?

A. Acceptance of traditional print submissions will be at the Editors' discretion.

Top FAQs

Q. Who do I contact if I want a new feature or new functionality added to the system?

A. If the Editor requires a new feature or functionality to be added to the system they should contact Editor Support. It may be that the feature required already exists within the tool but that feature is not 'switched on'. If the feature or functionality is not currently available Editor Support can present the proposal to the relevant Elsevier department for consideration. Two or three new versions of EES are expected to be released every year to accommodate change requests.

PEER REVIEW PROCESS QUESTIONS

What is the purpose of the Welcome Page?

A. All users will see the Welcome Page when they first go to the EES journal site. It provides access to information which users might find helpful such as the instructions for Authors, step-by-step guides on how to use the system and links to society websites.

Q. Can the existing database of Reviewers be imported into the Elsevier Editorial System?

A. Yes, people databases (e.g. Reviewers) can be transferred from other systems, including MS Excel, RMTS and PaperPath. Common demographic information, e.g. name, address, e-mail address, as well as topical classifications, can be converted with a high degree of fidelity.

Q. Can submissions from other tracking systems be migrated into the Elsevier Editorial System?

A. No, due to the complicated structure of different databases it is not possible to transfer old submissions into EES. Therefore, it is recommended that journals take a "from this day forward" approach to tracking actual articles. The journal would operate both systems for approximately 6 months, after which time any lingering articles in the old system could be manually entered into EES as the old system is retired. Of course, any one article would be handled by only one of the systems, so that the journal would experience no increase in workload. In addition, this strategy ensures no interruption in the handling of articles being processed in the old system.

Q. Can Editors send personalized correspondence?

A. Yes. When the submission site is initially customized the Editor provides copy for all correspondence that is sent out by the system. This correspondence can then be personalized by the Editor at any stage in the peer-review process before it is sent out.

Q. What tracking data is provided to Authors?

A. All Authors automatically have their own homepage on the EES journal site once they have registered. From the homepage they will be able to track the status of their article throughout the peer-review process. However, the level of information provided, e.g. submission received by Editorial Office, under review, decision in progress, dates etc

is at the discretion of the Journal Editor and is determined when the submission site is initially set up.

Q. Can Reviewers' comments be forwarded to the Author anonymously?

A. When a review is completed the Reviewer enters his comments into EES. The Reviewer form provides two options, a field where the Reviewer can give anonymous comments specifically for the Author and another field for confidential comments to the Journal Editor. The information provided for the Author is stored separately on the system and can be forwarded to the Author only if the Editor wishes to do so.

Q. Is it possible for the Editor to record confidential comments for other members of the Editorial team to view e.g. "please do not use this reviewer in future because..."?

A. Yes, there are a number of areas on the system where confidential comments can be recorded and viewed only by the Editorial team.

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

Q. How secure is the Elsevier Editorial System?

A. All site access is conducted through firewall HTTP sites and all data are regularly backed up on Elsevier's secure, central servers. All user interaction requires password access. Individual journals use totally distinct and separate databases, effectively 'firewalling'

one journal from all others. At application level, 'role-segregation' assures that users can only access information appropriate to their role. General users are assigned only the 'Author' role when they register, the journal office must specifically assign them permission before they may access the system in the role of a Reviewer or Editor.

Q. What assurances do Elsevier make regarding the stability of the system?

A. This is a very resilient system and every effort has been made to ensure that this remains so. The system is also duplicated on several identical servers which are automatically backed-up so even in the unlikely event of a major problem data loss should be negligible.

Q. What is being done to protect against computer viruses?

A. The servers on which the system is hosted are all protected by State-of-the-Art anti-virus protection software and all submissions will be screened for viruses before being stored on the server.

Q. Why does the Elsevier Editorial System use cookies?

A. EES uses session cookies. This means that the system will temporarily place a cookie on a user's computer when they log in to the system to enable it to recognize users as they navigate around the tool. If it didn't use session cookies users would be required to log in again each time they moved to a new page. These cookies automatically expire as soon as the user logs out of the system.

Who do I need to contact?

Pre-implementation

Prior to the implementation of EES please contact your Publishing representative if you have any questions regarding the new system.

Implementation and Training

During the implementation process any queries should be directed to your Publishing representative. If your queries relate to your training, please contact your ESIS Training Manager.

Post-implementation

Elsevier provide an excellent support service for Editors, Reviewers and Authors.

In the event of a query Editors should contact:

Editor Support
editorsupport@elsevier.com

Reviewers should contact:

Reviewer Support
reviewersupport@elsevier.com

Authors should contact:

Author Support
authorsupport@elsevier.com