

October 2015



Peer review in 2015

A global view

A white paper from Taylor & Francis

The UKSG webinar

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(Author Relations)

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Senior Research Executive



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[authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/
peer-review-in-2015](http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/peer-review-in-2015)



1. Most important motivation to publish in peer reviewed journals: making **contribution to the field** and **sharing research** with others.
2. Most important motivation to review: playing a part in the **academic process** and **improving papers**.
3. The benefit of peer review: towards improving an article rated as **8 or above out of 10** (most important aspect in *ideal* and *real* world).

“If there is integrity it works well but we are dealing with people, and things go on.”

Researcher, Business and Economics, UK





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Methodology

2

Ideal world & real world objectives

3

Ethical concerns

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Timing discrepancies

5

Different models of peer review

October 2015



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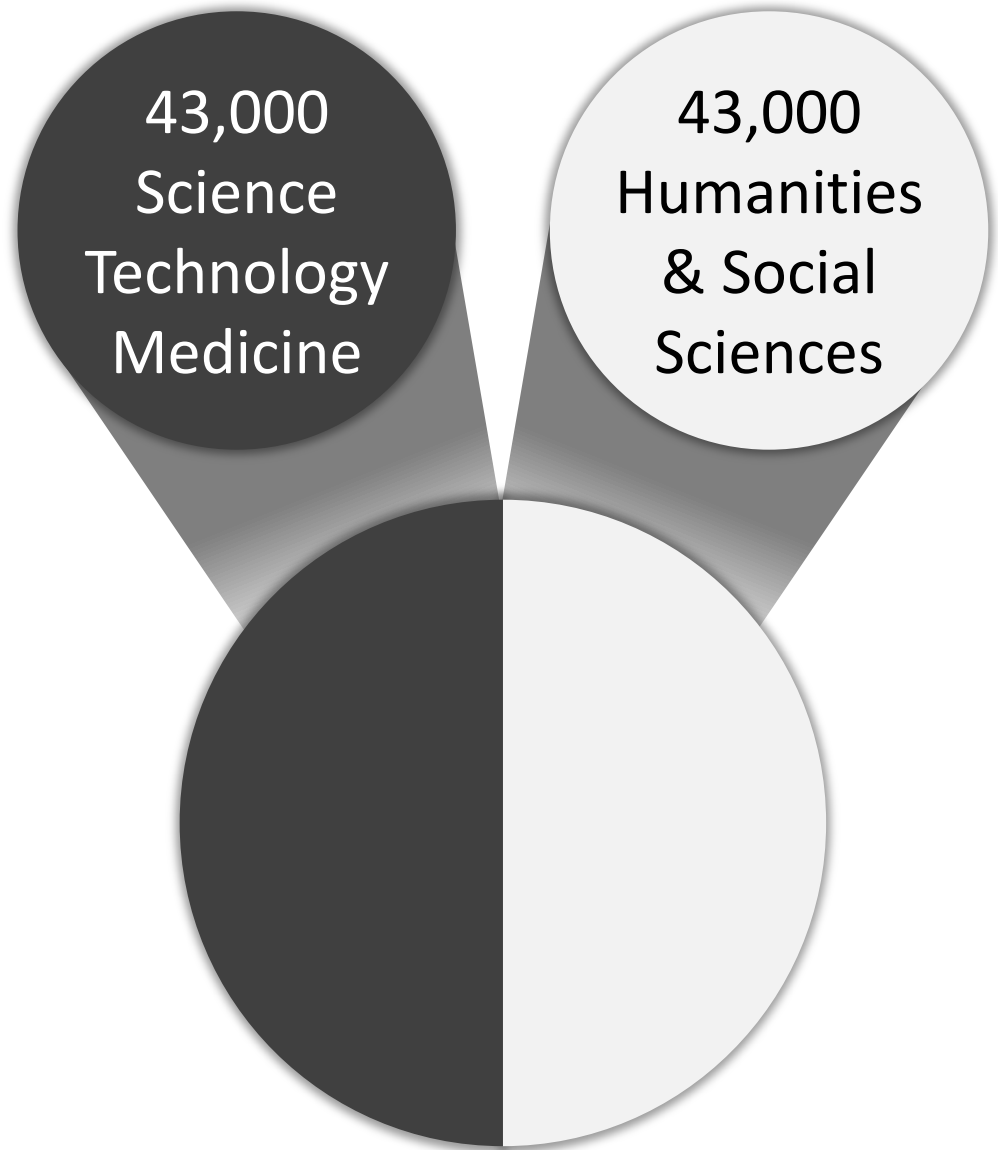


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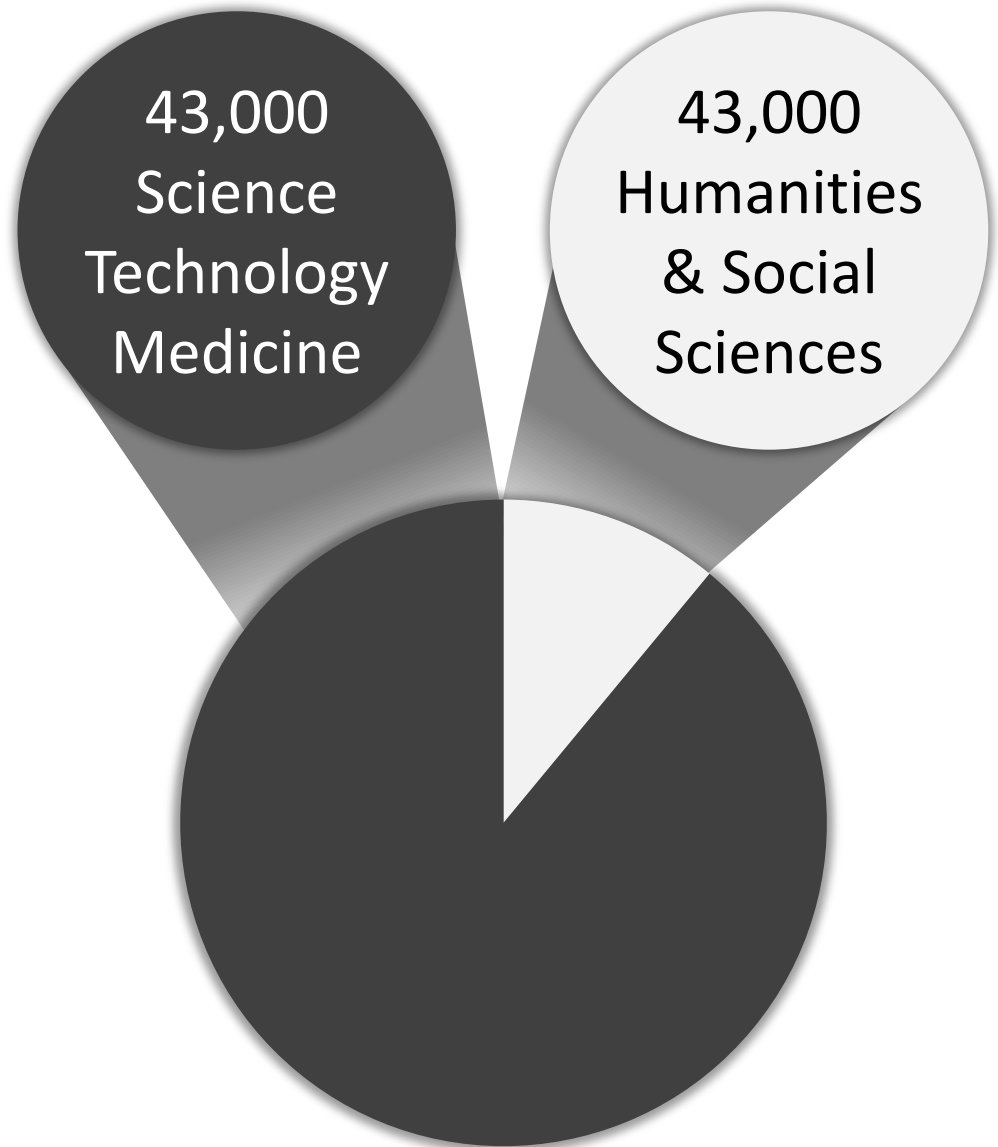




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2,398
STM
responses

4,750
HSS
responses

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2,398
STM
responses

4,750
HSS
responses

Confidence Interval:

1.95%

@

Confidence Level:
95%

Confidence Interval:

1.34%

@

Confidence Level:
95%



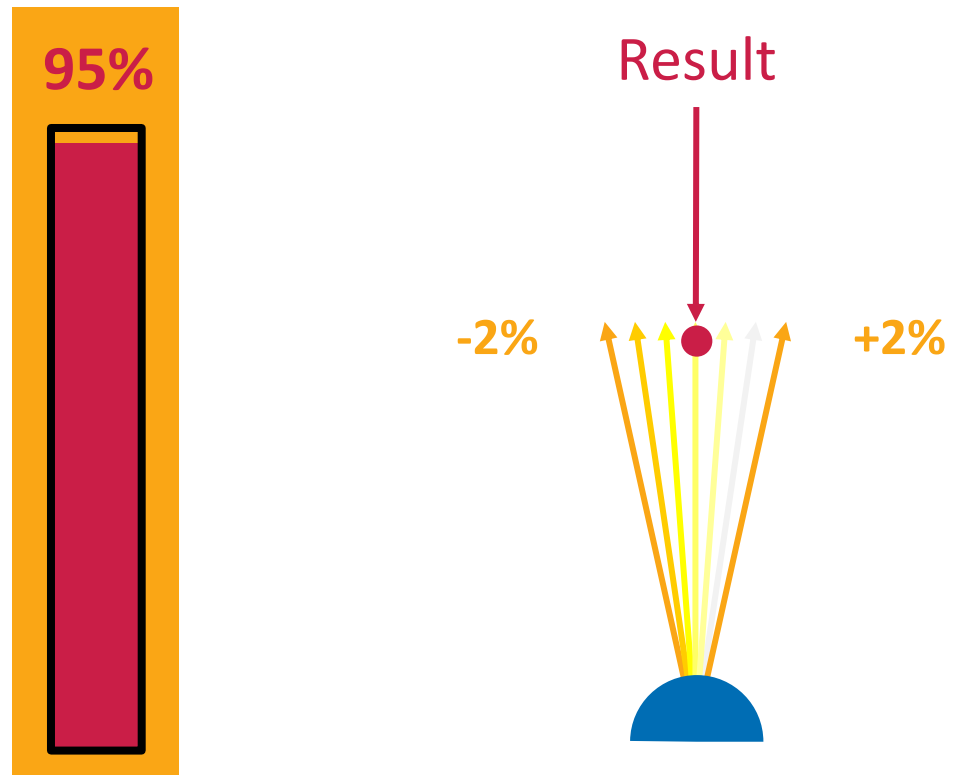


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2% confidence interval at 95% confidence level for the population of all 2013 published authors

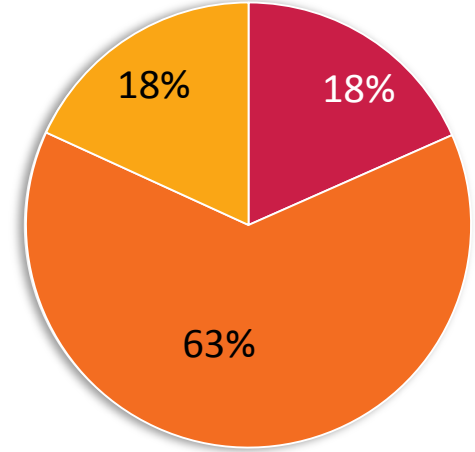
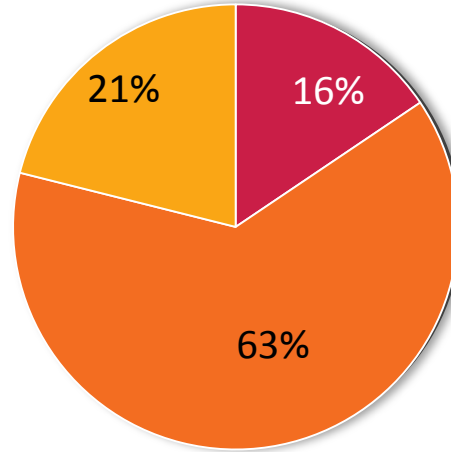


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All survey respondents:



STM

● Authors

● Reviewers

● Editors

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● Authors

● Reviewers

● Editors

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Qualitative research

Numbers: 6 focus groups, 46 participants

Locations: UK, China and South Africa (early 2015)

Participants: Editors, authors and reviewers
Minimum of two articles peer reviewed (with Taylor & Francis or any other publisher)

Disciplines: sciences, technology, medicine, social sciences, and humanities.



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In an **ideal world**...

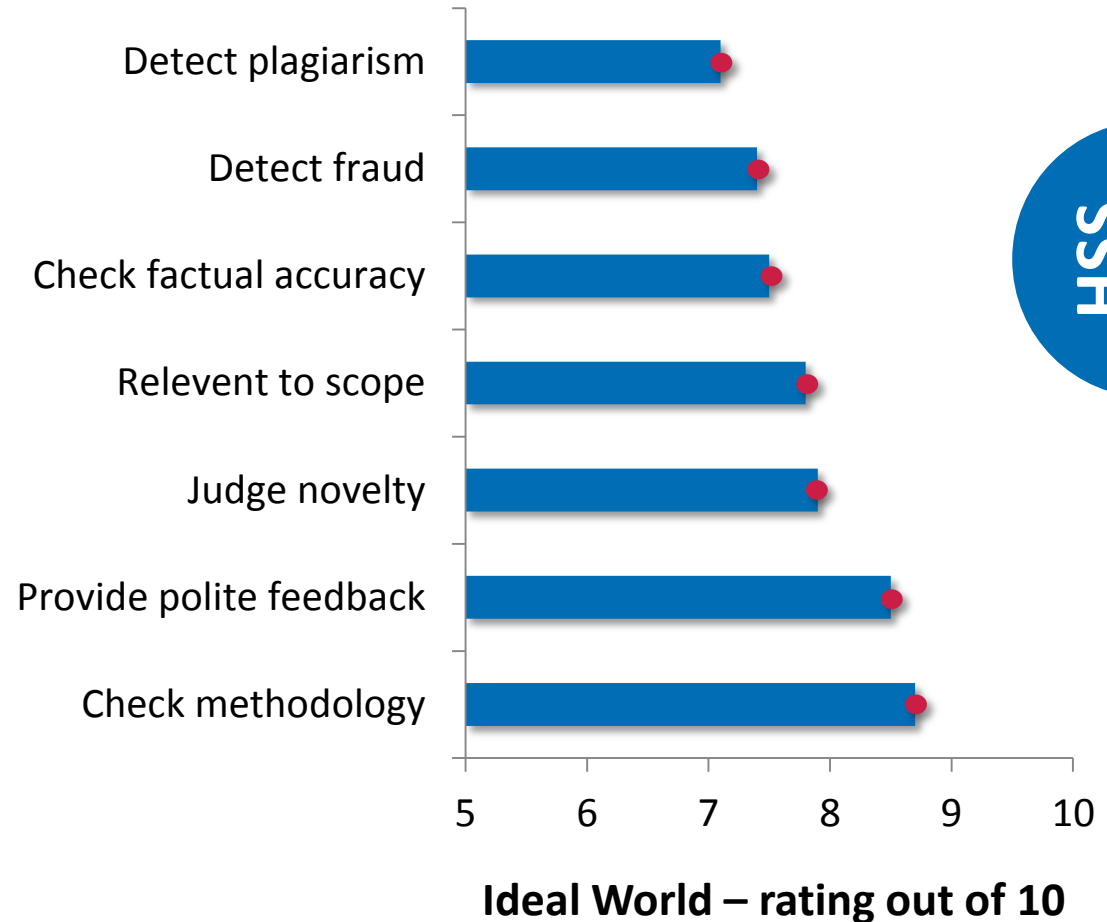
...to what extent do you agree or disagree the following objectives **should be** the purpose of peer review?



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In an **ideal world**...

...to what extent do you agree or disagree the following objectives **should be** the purpose of peer review?





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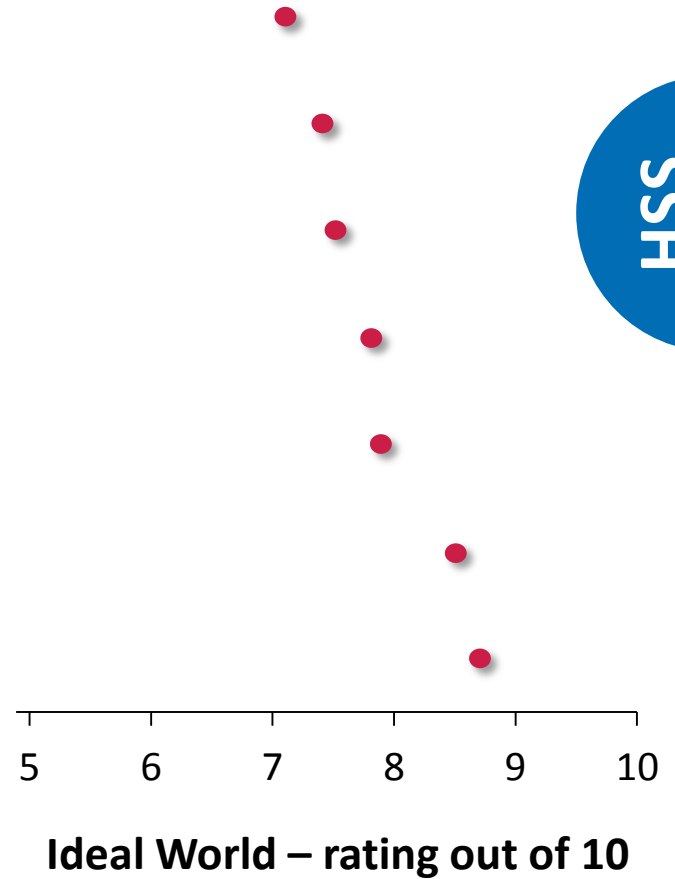
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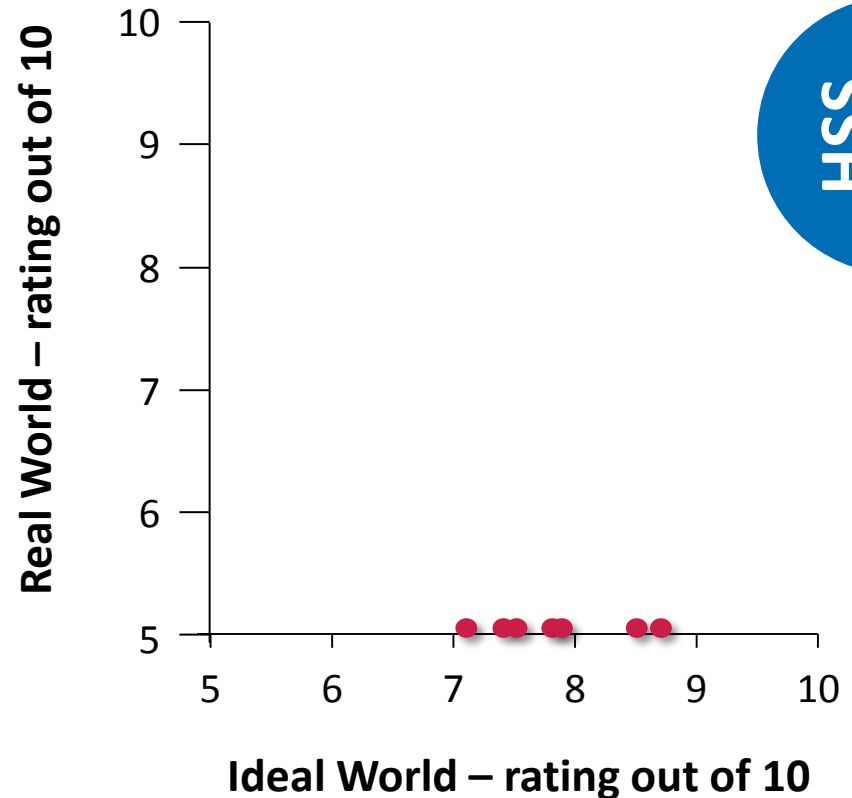




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In the **real world**...

...to what extent do you agree or disagree that peer review is **currently achieving** the following objectives effectively?

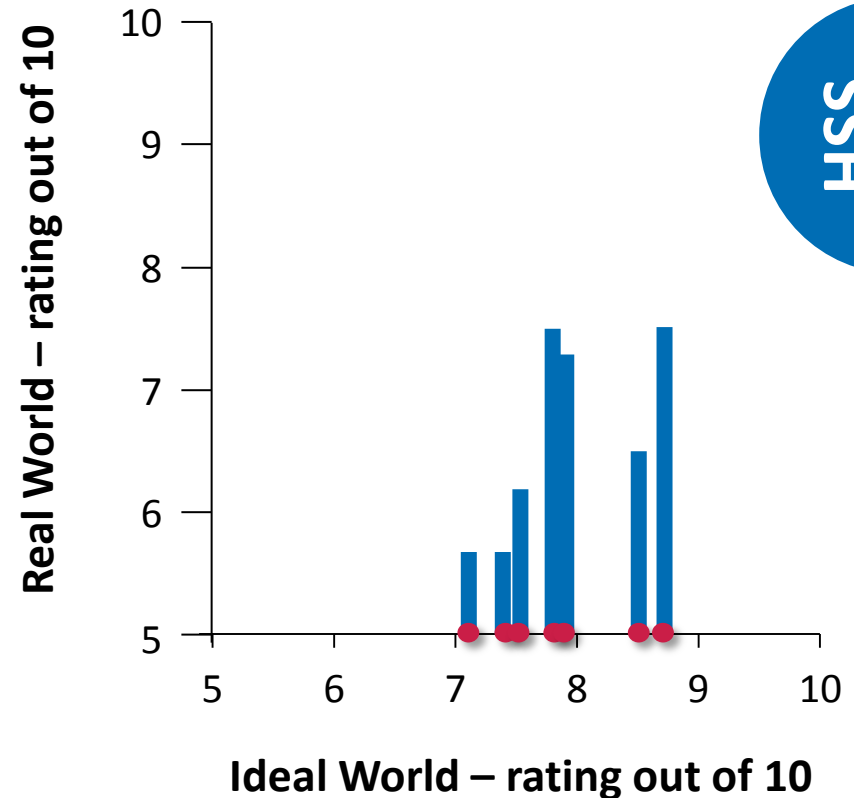




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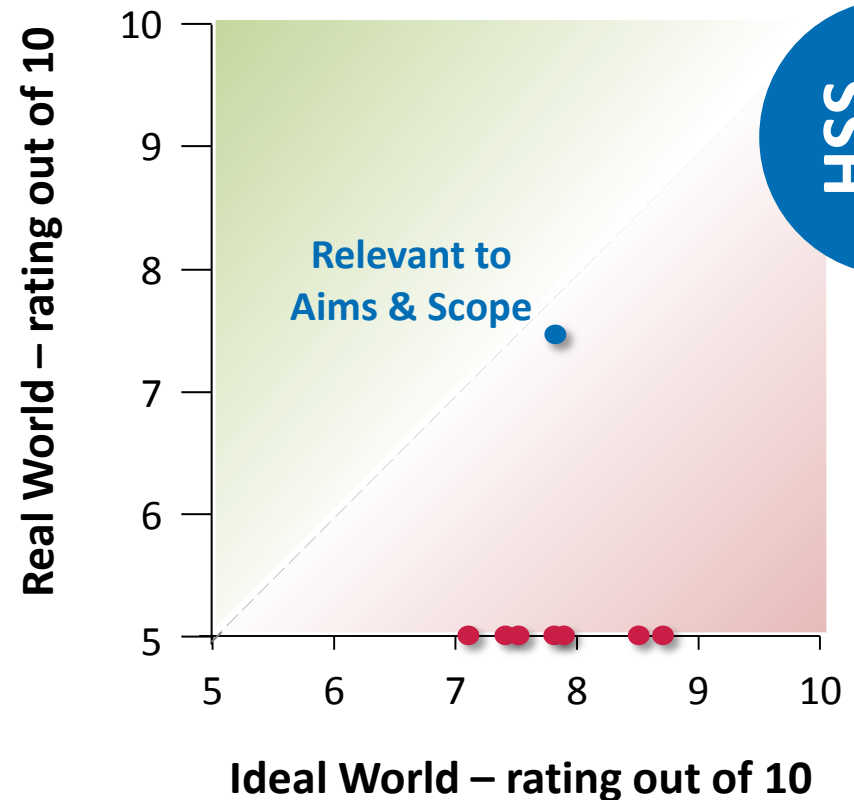




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In the **real world**...

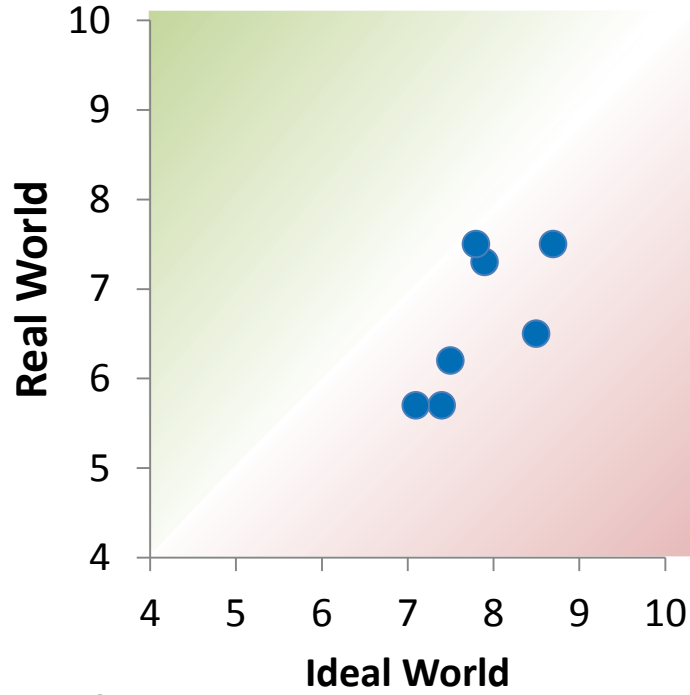
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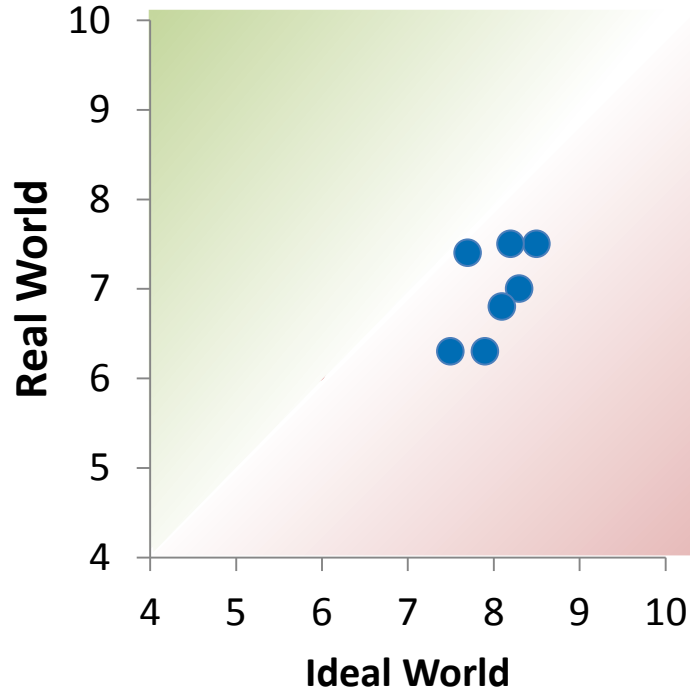


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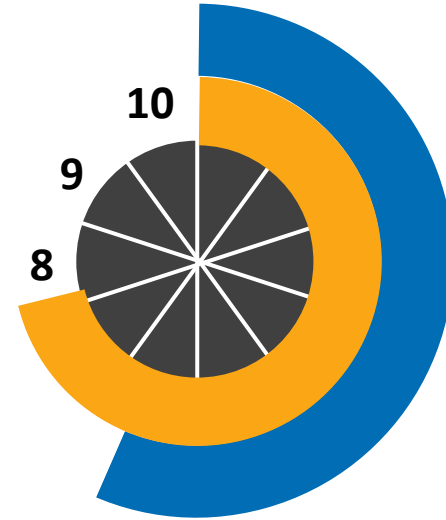
STM



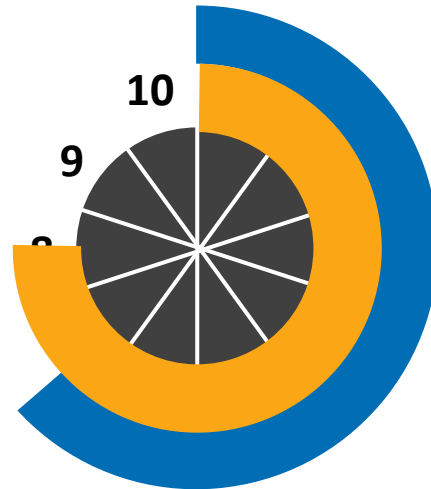
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Detect plagiarism



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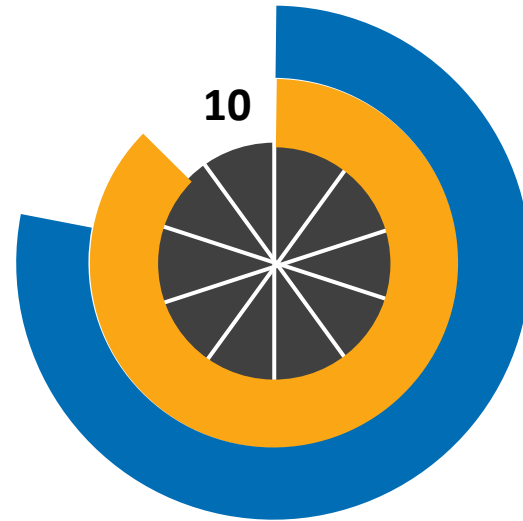
● Ideal world mean score ● Real world mean score



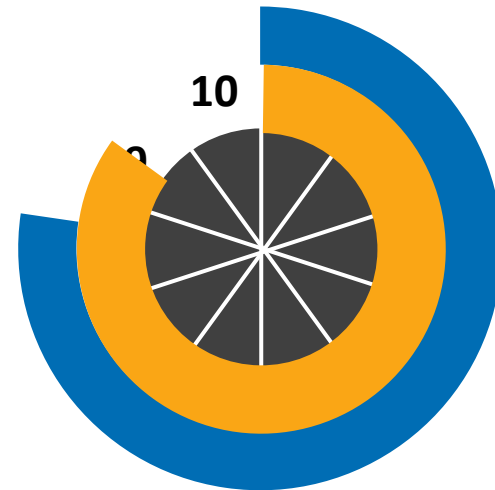
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Improve quality of published article



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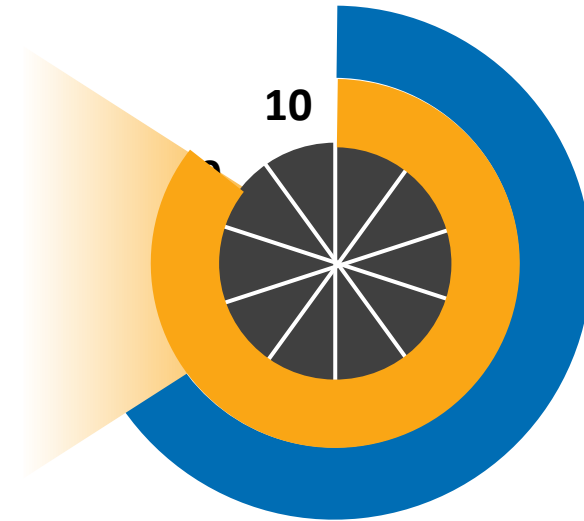
● Ideal world mean score ● Real world mean score



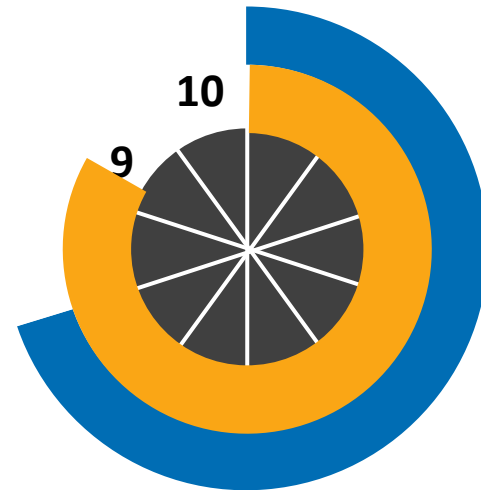
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Provide polite feedback



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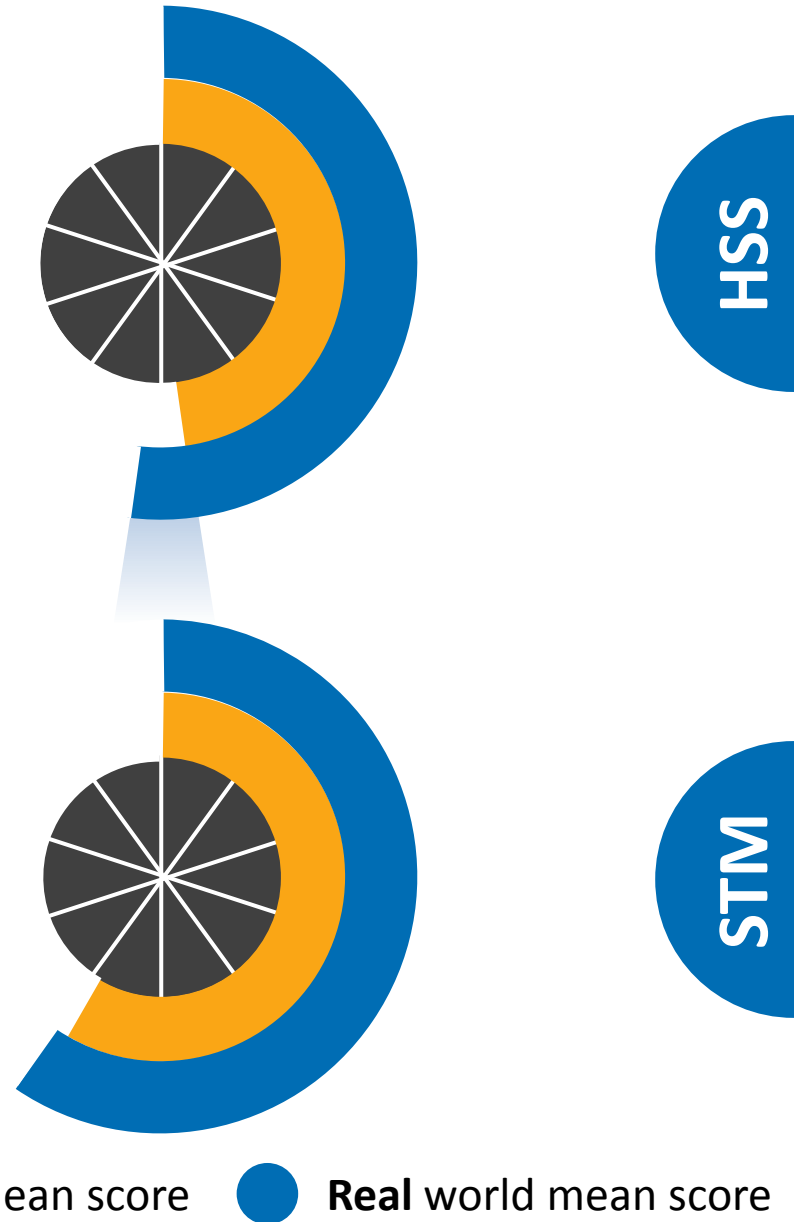
● Ideal world mean score ● Real world mean score



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Correct spelling, punctuation & grammar





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Most **important** objective...



Improve quality of published paper

Expectation exceeds reality...



Politeness

Detect Fraud

Expectation **matches** reality...



Relevant to the Aims & Scope

Reality exceeds expectation...



Correcting spelling, punctuation & grammar

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“The worst reviews are short, snitty, patronising and not remotely useful. The best are critically engaged, add something and improve the quality.”

Editor, Linguistics, United Kingdom

“Editors should be more pre-emptive in detecting plagiarism & other types of fraud.”

Researcher, Medical Research, United Kingdom

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How common are the following situations in peer review?

- ▶ Gender bias 
- ▶ Regional bias 
- ▶ Seniority bias 



1 Methodology

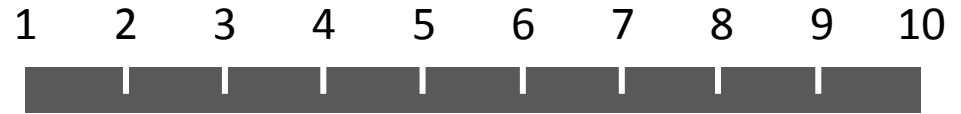
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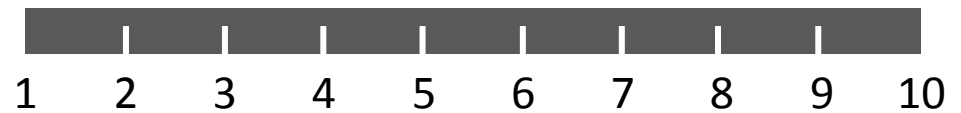
How common are the following situations in peer review?



▶ Gender bias ♀♂

▶ Regional bias 🌍

▶ Seniority bias 🎓





1 Methodology

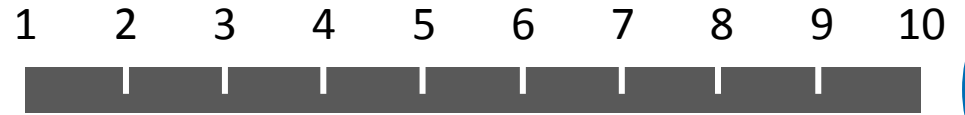
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How common are the following situations in peer review?



Gender bias



Regional bias



Seniority bias





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How common are the following situations in peer review?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Reviewers delay assessment



Reviewers take ideas



Reviewers use false identities



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10





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Lower frequency
of occurrences
reported



Higher frequency
of occurrences
reported





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“Peer review can be used as a gatekeeping mechanism to keep certain views out of circulation. In which article are there not personal views?”

Researcher, Anthropology, South Africa

“Some of the reviewers don’t exist. The author forges a name, creates an identity, applies for a new mailbox and reviews their paper themselves.”

Researcher, Healthcare, China

“I used to be at a university which is low ranking in my current field. When I was there I couldn’t get a paper accepted but now I am at a well-respected institution, I feel some papers are accepted too easily!”

Researcher, Environmental Science, UK



As an **editor**, what do you consider a realistic amount of time to expect reviewers to deliver their initial report?

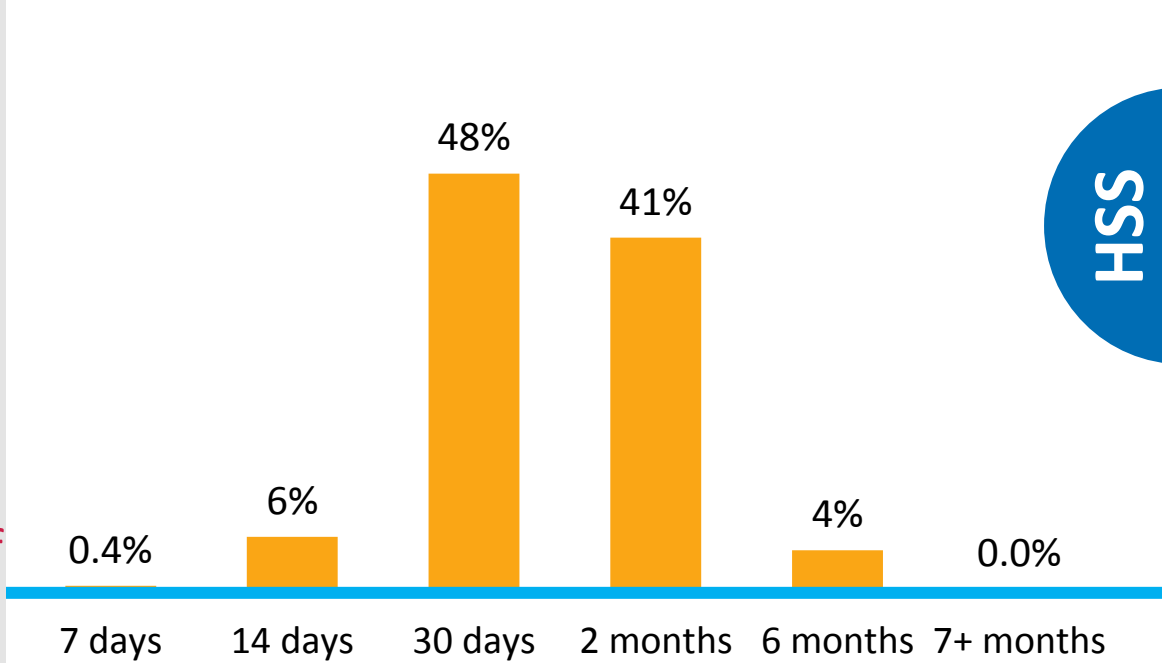
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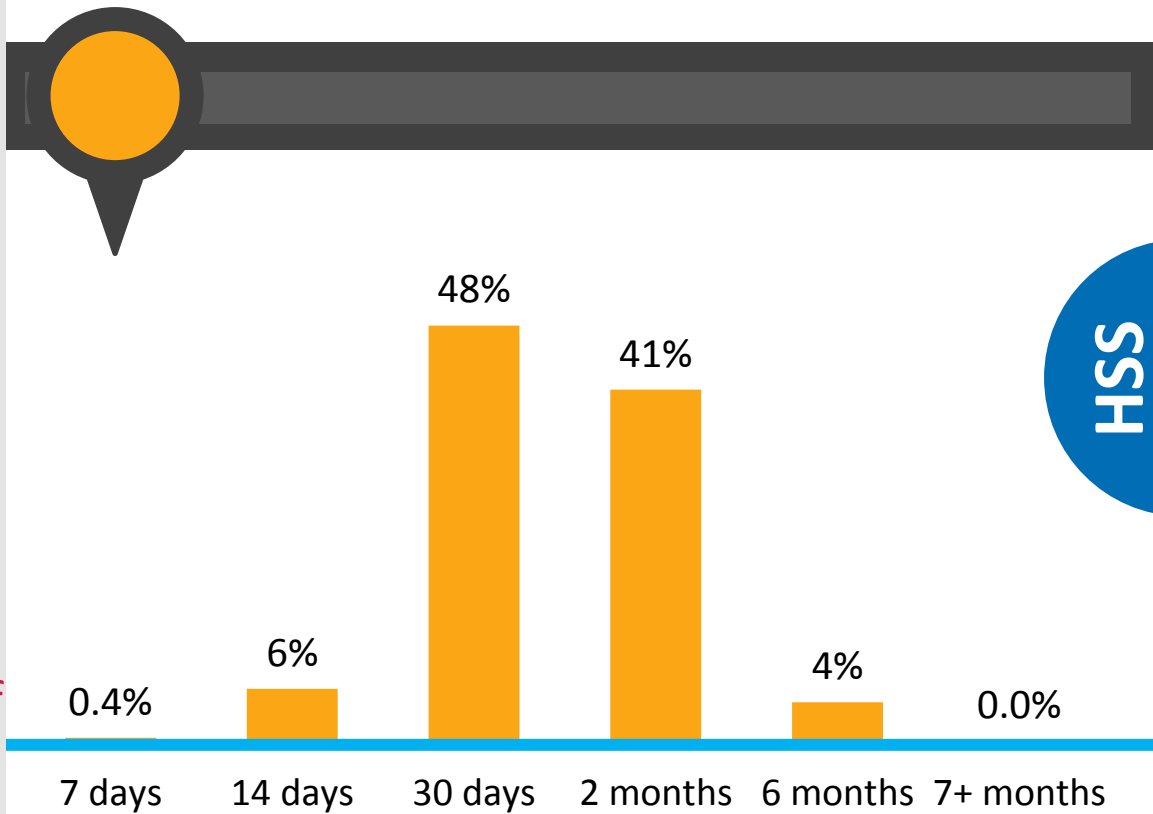
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As a **reviewer**, how long was the duration between your acceptance to review and the delivery of your initial report?

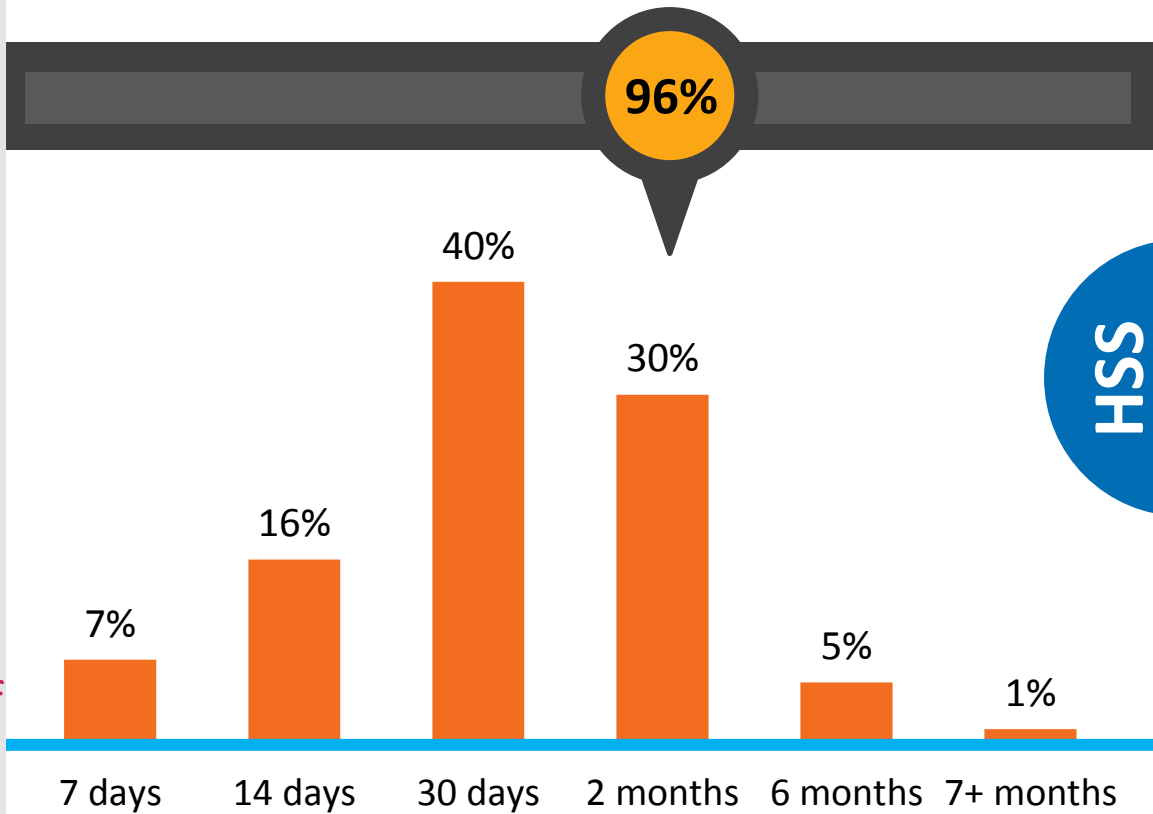
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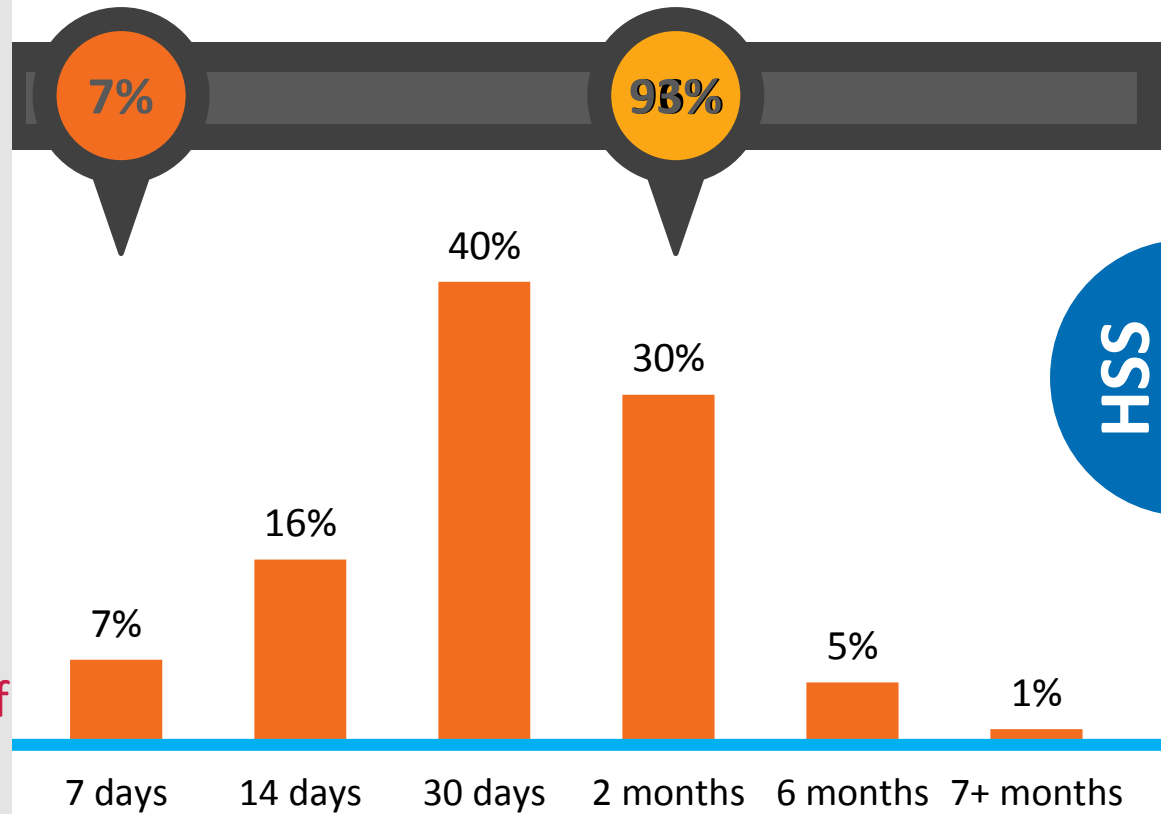
HSS





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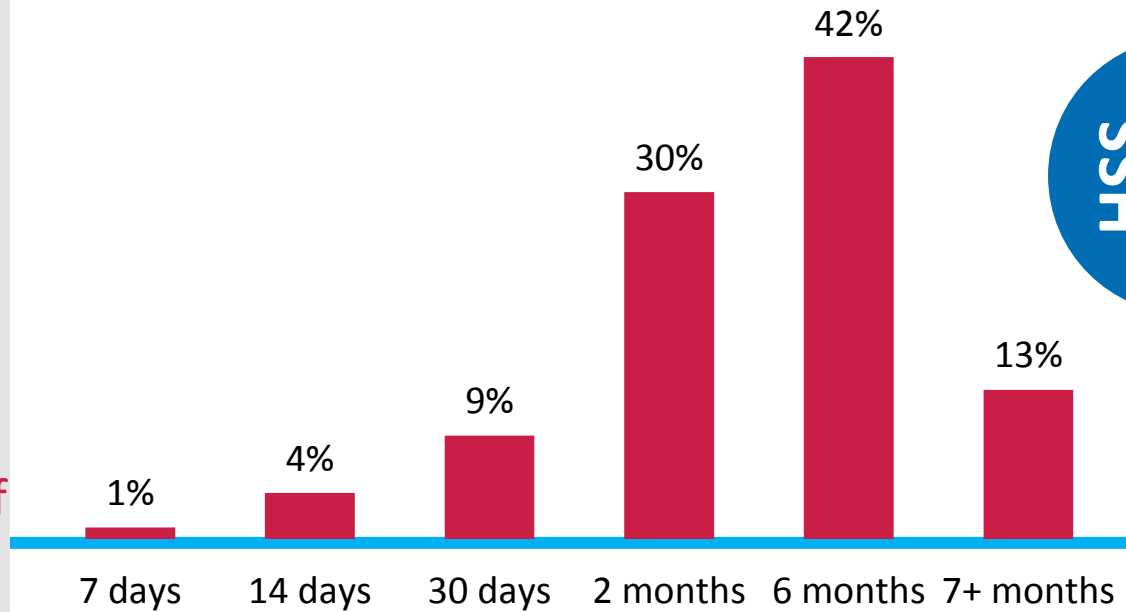
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As an **author**, how long did you wait after submission before you received the peer reviewer's initial comments?

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As an **author**, how long did you wait after submission before you received the peer reviewer's initial comments?

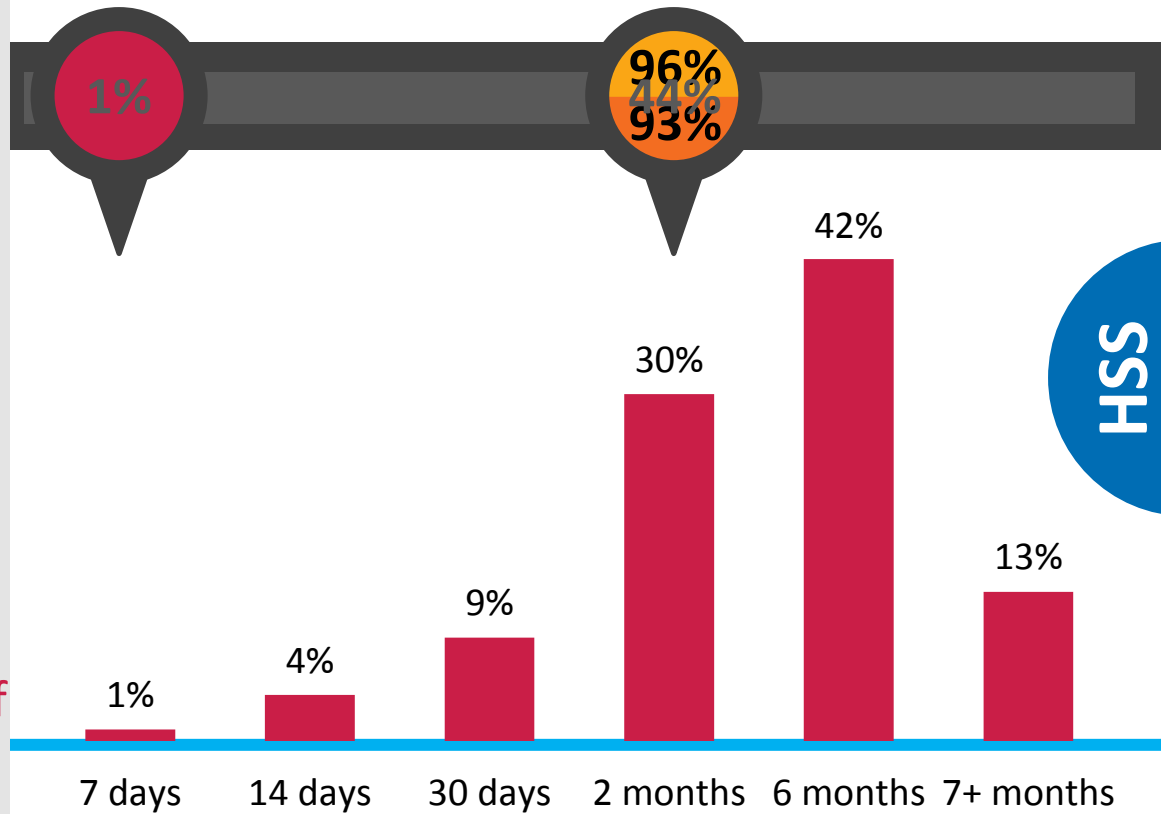
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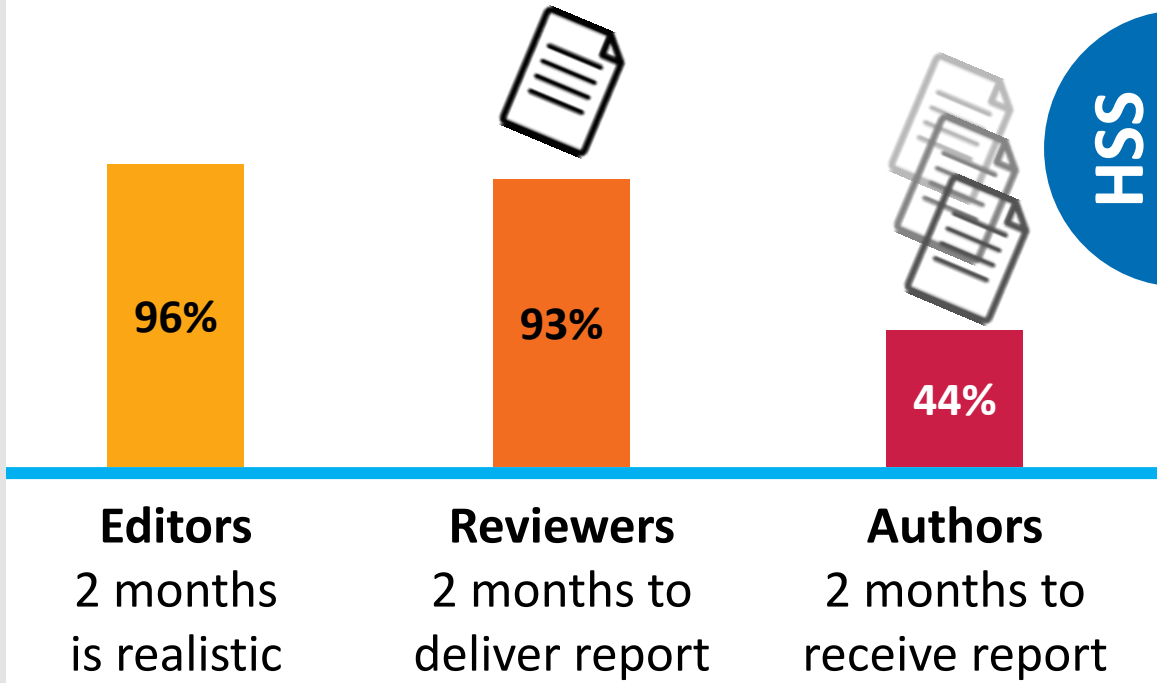


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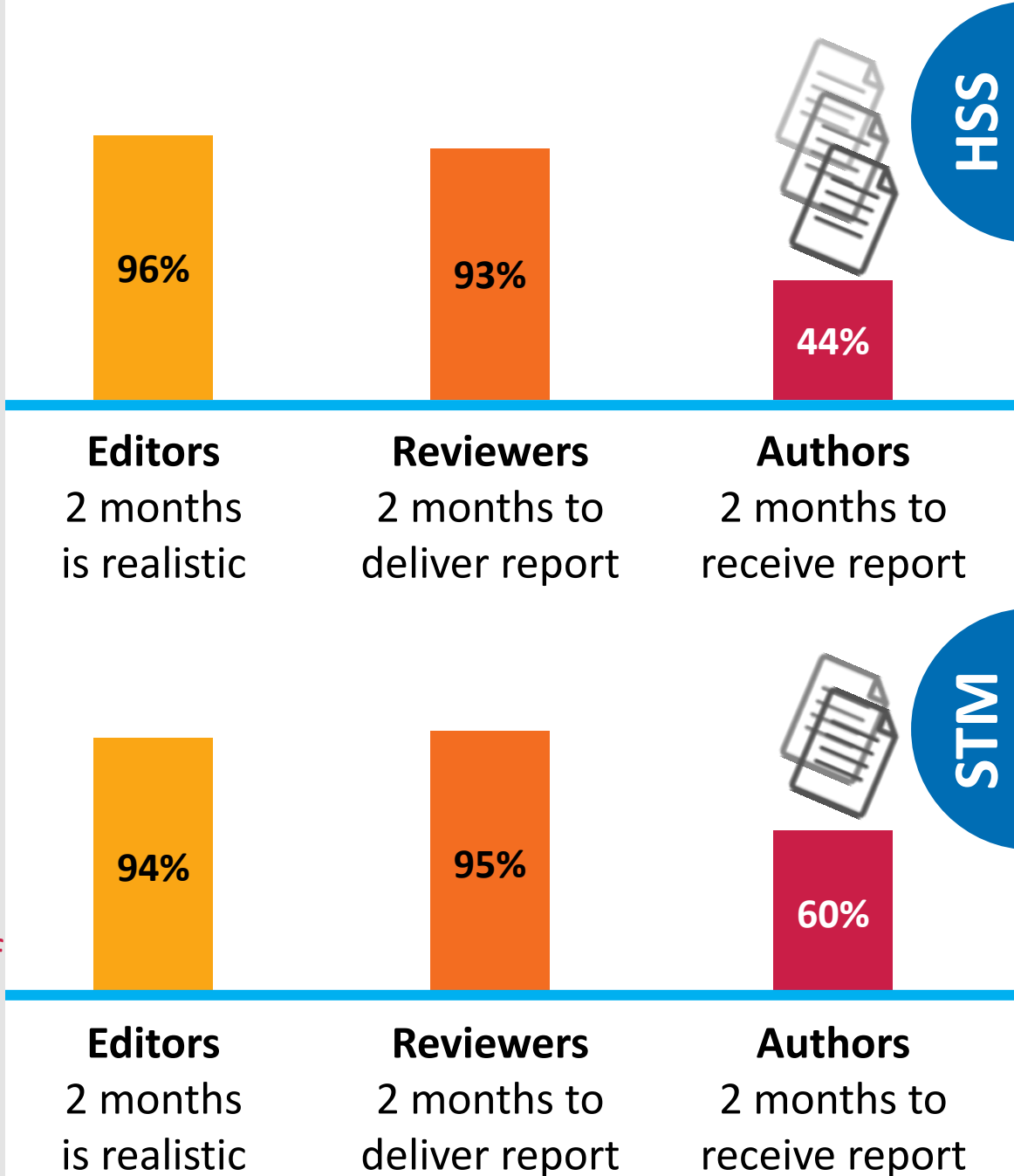


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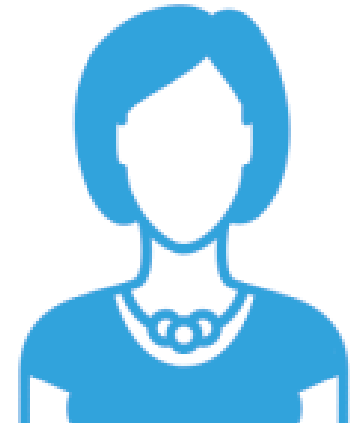


“An extremely lengthy and frustrating wait for your research to appear when administrative errors and issues hold it up - for two years in my case!”

Author, Psychology, South Africa

“There really is quite a difference between natural science and social science. Most economic journals to which I submitted often take six months for review.”

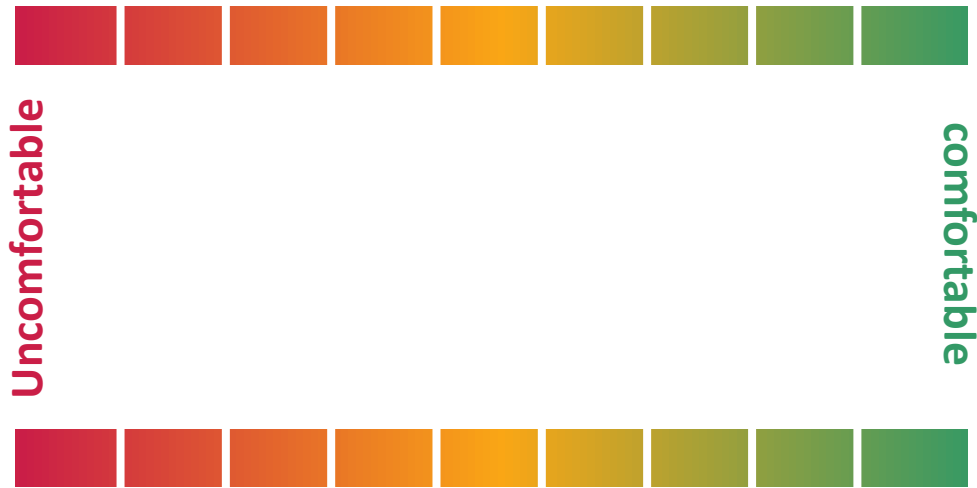
Researcher, Economics, China





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Authors



Reviewers



Editors

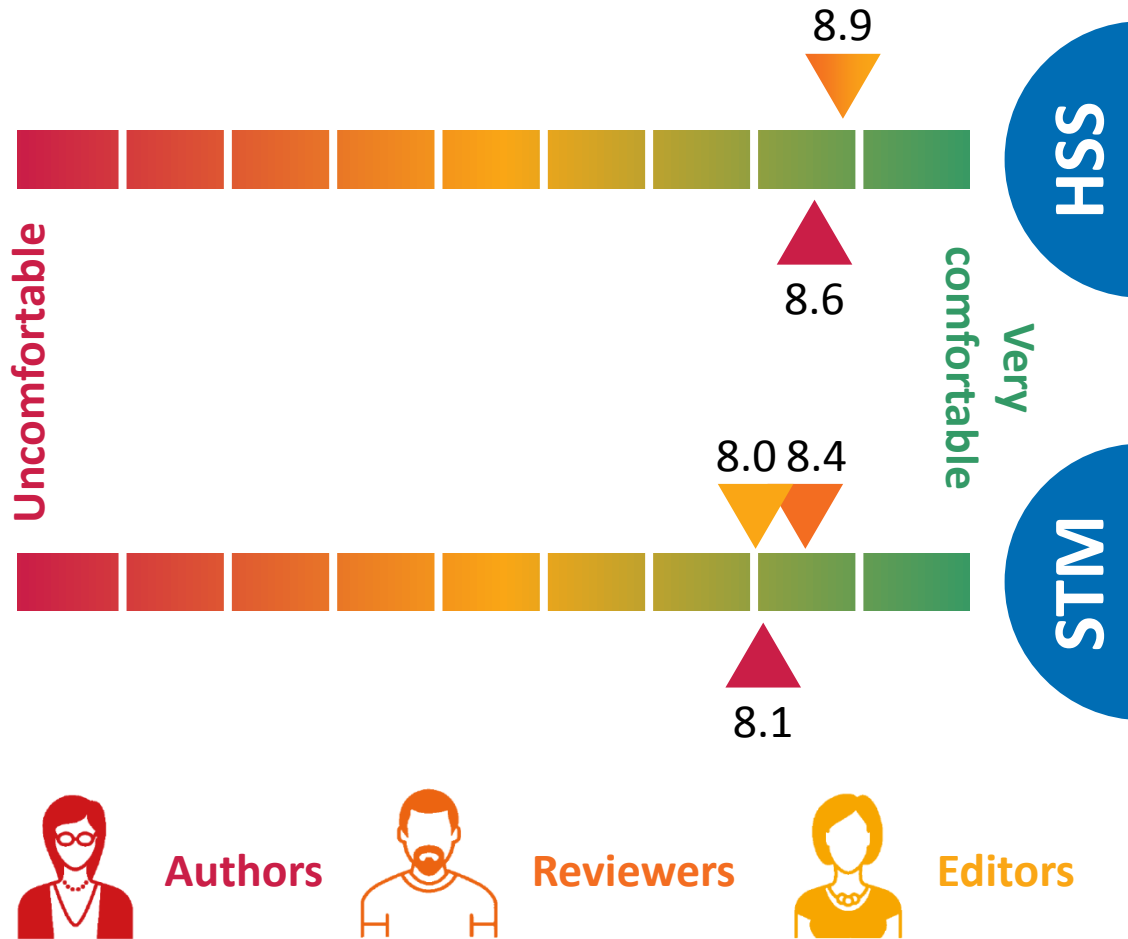


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Double blind:

Neither the author's nor the reviewers' names are known to each other





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Single blind:

Only the author's name is known to the reviewer, but the reviewers' names are not known to the author



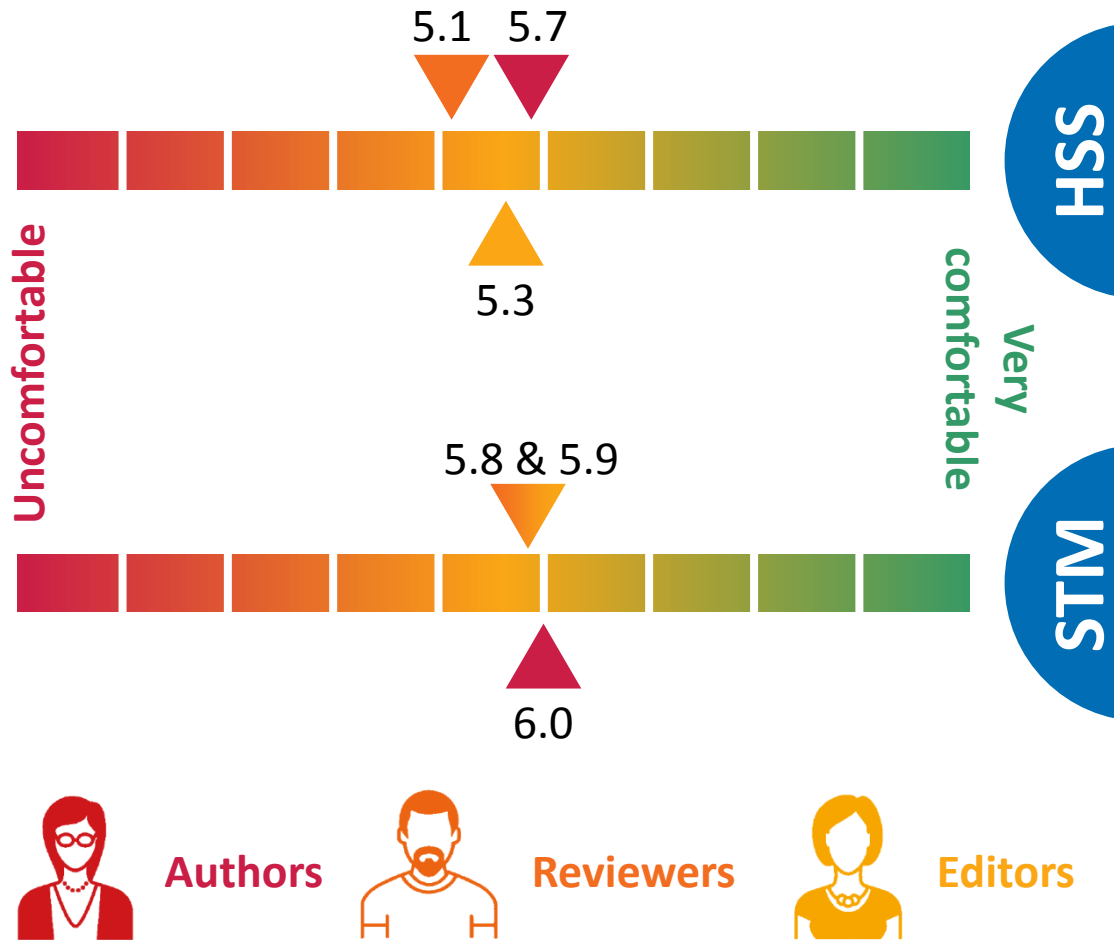
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Open:

Both the authors' and reviewers' names are known to each other

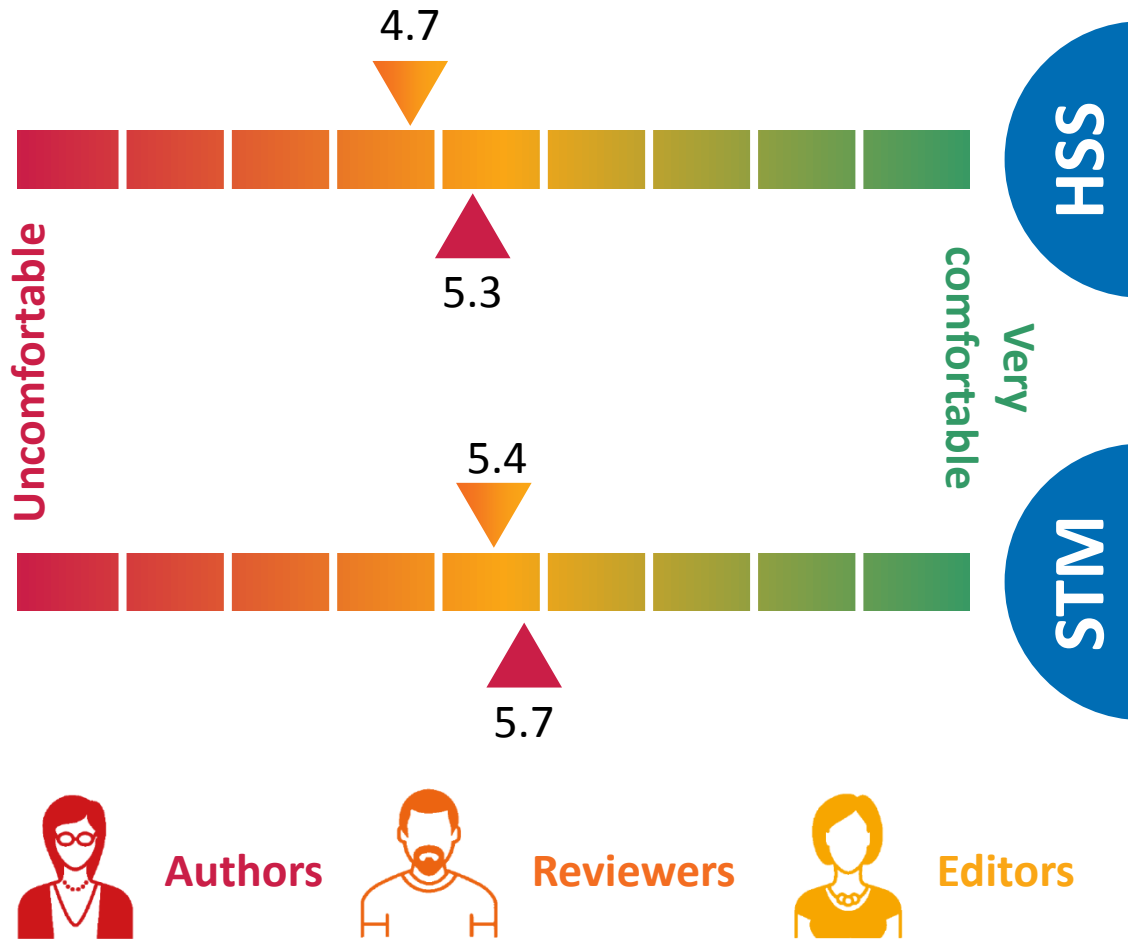




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Open and published:

Both the authors and reviewers' names are known to each other and the reviewers' signed reports are published



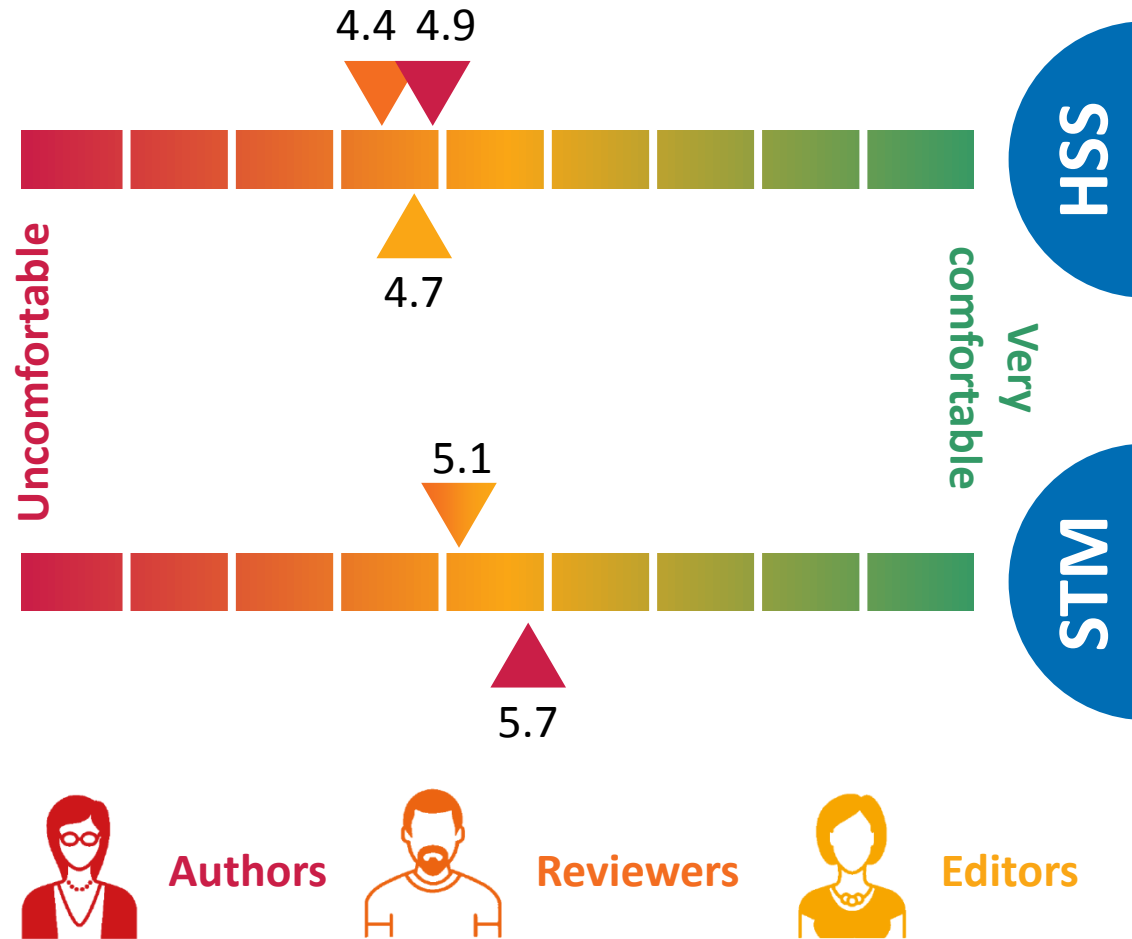


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Post-publication:

Online readers comment on, or rate the paper following publication





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On double blind

“You have to be quite secure about your career to un-blind yourself. I don’t want to offend a future employer or someone sitting on an interview panel...”

Researcher, Environmental Sciences, UK

On open and published

“I think this is the most transparent way... It may put some pressure on the reviewer, but it also gives him/her credit...”

Reviewer, Humanities, Lebanon

On post-publication

“This method is limited to those who can actually read the articles (are subscribed) online unless the articles are open access..”

Reviewer, Agriculture & Food Science, Zimbabwe





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peer-review-in-2015](http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/peer-review-in-2015)

To come:

1. Motivations to review
2. Training and support
3. Geographical analysis

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Authors



Reviewers



Editors