

Advice for NCEJ Authors:

This document is provided to help NCEJ authors to avoid some of the most common issues found in reviewing submissions for NCEJ. Authors are advised to consider the issues raised in this document before submitting their paper. Avoiding these common problems can speed the review process and lead to a better paper.

Common Problems

1. Insufficient technical content or long-term reference value – roughly 35% of rejections
 - a. Simply submitting a four to six-page conference paper is probably not of significant enough to be published in NCEJ. First, there is the concern about copyrights and plagiarism. You cannot publish an identical paper in two different places. Even a good conference paper typically only deals with one specific aspect of an issue and this is not enough for NCEJ. Often conference papers can be augmented with other work and made acceptable, but this should be done before submission, not as a result of reviewer comments. Adding experimental validation to a conference paper about modeling an important noise issue is a good example of how this can be done.
 - b. Authors submitting purely numerical or analytical work with no experimental validation will face a lot of resistance from reviewers. Even a simple validation is better than none. NCEJ is focused on noise control and there is a desire by most reviewers to see that the proposed new technology or analytical methods can be practically applied.
 - c. Submissions focused on a single application may be better submitted as a Case Study as opposed to a Technical Paper. It is important in a Technical Paper that the technology and concepts developed can be generalized to a wider range of noise control issues than the specific problem of the paper. It is important that authors realize this and address this important concept.
 - d. Does your paper provide enough new technology or deal with unique applications for it to be included in NCEJ? Does it have long term reference value – will people find value in your paper five or even 10 years from now? A paper that slightly refines current practices or techniques probably does not provide this value. A paper that documents modeling or experimental evaluations of one machine or configuration probably does not have long term value unless it introduces new technology or approaches.
2. Duplication of previous work or insufficient innovation compared to previous work – roughly 30% of rejections
 - a. In some ways this is a special case of Item 1. Insufficient technical content or long-term reference value. It may be good technical content, but it has been done before.
 - b. There is no substitute for a good literature review and knowing what has been done in the area before. Too often papers are submitted that duplicate what has been done by someone else. This may be because the authors were simply unaware of the previous work. In some cases, it happens because the authors made small changes from the previous work or applied the technology in a different way. The reviewers may find that these differences are not of enough significance to support a journal paper.
 - c. It can help to take the time to consider whether the difference between your paper and what has been done previously is enough to have long term reference value. Will it be referenced by researchers working in this area five years from now?
3. Poorly written papers – roughly 20% of rejections
 - a. A paper may be judged poorly written in a lot of different ways. It may be poorly organized and hard to follow, it may be poorly worded, there may be problems with English usage, and it may just be hard to read because of awkward wording or the lack of explanation of certain aspects.
 - b. A submission that is poorly written will be difficult to review and approve. The authors should realize that their paper will be reviewed by people who do not have the time to spend trying to understand unclear sentences or logic. If your paper is well written, logically organized, and well supported with clear tables and graphs it will be helpful to the reviewers.
 - c. Don't assume English usage is not important. You must make sure that the English grammar, word usage, sentence structure, and phrasing is appropriate and clear. A little time spent improving the

English can have a big impact on the review process. If the authors are non-native-English speakers, it is highly recommended that they employ a native-English-speaking editor prior to submission to NCEJ.

- d. Take the time to review your paper and ask yourself if it is logically organized from the point of view of a reader, not from the point of the view of you as the researcher. Are the steps logically arranged? Is it easy to see how one step leads to the other?
 - e. Make sure the Conclusions segment provides more than a reiteration of what was done. This should be the section of the paper where the implications and the wider scope of the impact of the paper are made clear. A Conclusions segment that merely repeats what was presented in the paper is of little value and very disappointing for reviewers and ultimately readers.
 - f. It is important to remember it is up to the authors to explain the value of the work being presented. This is done by reviewing previous work and the current state of the science in the Introduction and describing the impact of the work presented in the Conclusions. Doing this well will help the reviewers to understand the impact of what you have done and not leave them wondering if this is worthwhile.
 - g. Don't explain your work from the point of view of one who did the work or the process of building the model or doing the experimentation. The reviewer and reader want to understand what you did, but they do not need to be taken through all the issues and processes you worked through to get to the final method or results. Explain the methodology and techniques used or developed, but do not overwhelm the reviewer/reader with minute detail. Remember you are trying to provide an explanation that explains the best procedure, modeling technique, or whatever that resulted from your work. Spending pages describing all the trials and errors to find the best measurement positions is probably not valuable to the reader. Your task is to provide the clearest possible explanation of what works and why it works.
 - h. Authors are sometimes so happy to get the paper ready for submission that they do not stop and take a critical look at the result. Before you submit your paper, read through it as if you were seeing it for the first time. Is it clear, easy to follow, does it demonstrate what is important, are the figures easy to read and understand, and do the conclusions say something and place your work in context?
 - i. Do not write chronologically. For example: We did test A, then we did test B, then we did test C. Often in research, the order in which we conduct the research is not reflective of the final story we want to tell. Tell a story with your paper that lays out the motivation for the work, and the new findings without a chronological account of all the unsuccessful things you did along the way.
4. Plagiarism - roughly 15% of rejections
- a. As noted above, NCEJ cannot publish a paper that has been published elsewhere. Submitting a conference paper that has been published in a proceeding is plagiarism and it will not be accepted.
 - b. Copying the work of others (including tables and figures) without proper reference or in large quantities will not be accepted. Every paper submitted to NCEJ goes through the SimilarityCheck software package to evaluate its similarity to other publications. Each is rated from 0-100% on the amount of duplication.
 - c. Submitting a paper that was rejected from another publication without making changes will most likely lead to rejection. The number of reviewers in the field is small and it is highly likely that a previous submission will be known to one of the reviewers.