

Web-based peer review now standard for the MJA

On 1 July 2005, the MJA began using an online manuscript submission and peer review system called *Editorial Manager*. Provided by Aries Systems in the US, *Editorial Manager* is used by many journals throughout the world (including *Australian Health Review*, *American Heart Journal*, *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, and *Cell*). Indeed, many MJA authors and reviewers have already used *Editorial Manager* or a similar system.

Editorial Manager records manuscript submission and peer review in a database accessible via the world wide web. This administrative technique is very efficient. Authors enter their submissions directly into the database, receiving instant confirmation that their work has been received. Using *Editorial Manager*, authors are less likely to omit required information from their submission, and this reduces delays. *Editorial Manager* streamlines the communication between editors and potential reviewers, and makes it easy and quick for reviewers to receive a copy of the manuscript. The same streamlined method of communication is used to submit reviews, request manuscript revisions, and receive a final article. Journals using *Editorial Manager* commonly report that the administrative work and time taken to reach a decision on manuscripts are greatly reduced, and the number of manuscripts submitted rises.

Editors, authors and reviewers can log in at any time to check the status of their manuscripts. Because *Editorial Manager* is a web-based system, it is available wherever and whenever there is an internet connection, not just in the office. This accessibility also makes it easier for authors and reviewers overseas to contribute to the MJA.

So, we are expecting *Editorial Manager* to bring many benefits — benefits that should ultimately be expressed in better articles published more quickly in the MJA. We are also nervously prepared for the potential downside. New computer systems never appeal to everybody. The website provides plenty of written instructions, but we are also ready to spend time on the phone with new users answering their questions. We encourage all users of the system to give us feedback to guide future development of the system. And, although we are encouraging all authors to use *Editorial Manager*, no author will be discriminated against for not using the system. You can still post us a handwritten essay, if that is your *modus operandi*, and the editors (some with a thrill of nostalgic pleasure) will respond in like style. We do feel, however, that most authors will be much better served by the new system, and strongly urge them to take it up.

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How to submit a manuscript using *Editorial Manager*

Prepare your submission

To submit your manuscript online, you will need:

1. An electronic manuscript file that contains no identifying information (no author names or addresses, no acknowledgements).
2. An abstract of your manuscript. All articles except *Letters to the Editor*, *Obituaries* and *Book Reviews* require an abstract of some kind (see <www.mja.com.au/public/information/instruc.html>). Even an editorial requires a one- or two-sentence descriptive abstract.
3. Details of your co-authors: name, qualifications, position, institution, email address.
4. A disclosure statement completed for all authors. Our disclosure form is available at <www.mja.com.au/public/information/disclosure.doc>.
5. High-resolution copies of any figures or photographs in separate files (if your manuscript is illustrated).
6. A covering letter in support of your submission (not required for *Letters to the Editor*, *Book Reviews* or *Obituaries*) saved in a separate electronic file.

Register with *Editorial Manager*

Everybody needs a username and password to log in to the MJA's *Editorial Manager* site. If you haven't used *Editorial Manager* with the MJA before, you will need to register first. Go to <www.editorialmanager.com/mja/>, click on "Register", and follow the steps. We have registered all MJA reviewers already. If you are a reviewer, you should have received your username and password in an email.

Submit your article

Go to <www.editorialmanager.com/mja/> and click on "Submit a manuscript". There are several steps to making a submission. Each time you complete a step, the system saves your work. If your session is interrupted for any reason, you can come back and complete your submission at a later time.

Problems?

Call Kerrie Harding or Christine Hooper in the editorial office: +61 2 9562 6666.

No internet access?

Send your submission by post. We would appreciate receiving the manuscript on a disk as well as on paper, if that is possible. ◆