

Editorial Policy for JSCI's Special Issues

(Working draft)

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to briefly describe the general editorial policy regarding the publications done by the International Institute of Informatics and Systemics (IIS), for the special issues of the Journal of Systemics, Cybernetics, and Informatics, especially from January 2018 on. The main purpose of this editorial policy is to *minimize the intersection between content and form editing*, i.e. between 1) *content reviewing* (according to our two-tier reviewing methodology) and 2) other editorial activities, including (visual and expressive) *form editing* and/or design and implementation of “form editing” processes. Examples of the latter are: identifying means to assure that authors are meeting with their responsibility regarding “print editing” their respective articles, identifying means of “light editing” potentially via an Editorial Board, sharing other editorial activities with the Editorial Board or with some of them volunteering to do so.

Editor's responsibility:

Reviewing is part of the editing process, but both kinds of activities should not be confused. This is why IIS's policy is to differentiate between both notions and to minimize the intersection between the associated activities.

In general, an editor should design, implement, and supervise the reviewing process, but an editor is not a reviewer. He/she might play the role of a reviewer, but it is not recommended in the context of IIS publishing. The scholars, researchers, and professionals playing both roles should be minimized.

The IIS has been for many years designing and implementing new methodologies of reviewing in order to minimize the weaknesses of peer reviewing. A multiple-tier methodology has been implemented in the organization of its conferences and, consequently, for the publications of the respective proceedings. Two of these tiers (two simultaneous reviewing methods, in parallel,) are mandatory and two are optional. An additional tier is added for selecting papers to be published in the Journals of the IIS. These five-tier reviewing methodology (three mandatory and two optional tiers) has been briefly described at www.iiisci.org/journal/SCI/IntegRevProcesses.asp?var and two mandatory reviewing tiers are briefly described and reasoned at <http://www.iiisci.org/journal/SCI/PeerReviewMeth.asp?var>

Regarding the acceptance or rejection of a proposed article, the IIS has been following a previously established and published selection policy based on the majority rule when there is no consensus among the reviewers. The purpose of the previously established and published policy is to remove, or at least minimize, the weight of biases from the respective conference organizers and/or editors. This meta-policy is oriented to minimize the intersection of reviewing with

editing activities while maintaining that the editor should supervise the editorial process if it is already established, or to also design and implement it, if it is not established and there is no information system to support it. Another way to reduce the impact of biases is the random selection of the double-blind reviewers for an article submitted to an area; where there are several possible options for selecting the respective reviewers.

An editor is not a co-author of the article being reviewed and edited. According to the *Oxford Guide of Style – The style bible for all writers, editors, and publishers*, “Editing is a Zen-like discipline, since ***the result of all editorial efforts should be invisible on the printed page. Most often the only time a reader notices editing is when it is lacking***, obtrusive, inconsistent, or awkward: *that editor is best who changes—or appears to change—least. Strictly speaking, subjective modifications are not a copy-editing responsibility.* To take the narrowest view—which can be enlarged only within reason—if something is not inconsistent, grammatically wrong, or factually incorrect, it need not be changed. It is vital to think through the ramifications of all changes, and *ensure that alterations do no violence to the author's intended meaning.*” (*The Oxford Guide Style*, 2002, p. 43) [Italics and emphasis added]

Consequently, an editor should not require, as a necessary condition, to add or remove text if the respective author does not agree. The editor may ask the author to add as a footnote, or as an appendix, the reasons why the editor wanted to add or remove text and 2) the author decided not to follow the suggestion. This would be an adequate alert for the potential readers. This recommendation is based on the intellectual perspective of a plural science and epistemology, which is the general orientation of IIS publications; it is a consequence of the IIS’s orientation to a *multidisciplinary audience for interdisciplinary communication*. It is recommended to keep in mind that an editor does not play the role of a co-author, dissertation adviser, or professor of the author. Accepting or rejecting a paper belongs to the reviewing process, which the editor may design, implement, and supervise. It also applies to the reviewers she/he might select, but this certainly does not make him a reviewer or a professor of the author.

An editor or co-editor of IIS publications should accept the two-tier reviewing methodology, as a minimum, or propose another reviewing methodology for its potential acceptance. In any case, *the editor should minimize the intersection between reviewing and editing activities* regarding the accepted paper. If an editor happens to be also a reviewer of a given article, his/her review and recommendation should have the same weight as those of other reviewers.

According to this orientation, it is strongly advisable for an editor to comply with the following guidelines:

1. To accept the articles that should be accepted according to a) the previously announced selection policy, which is based only on the reviewers' recommendations, and b) the reviews generated by a given article, according to the reviewing methodology that has been used.
2. If an article acceptance is based on a majority of authors that might have some suggestions, but did not condition the acceptance to complying with the suggestions, the editor should not condition the acceptance of the article to fulfilling some of these

suggestions, but presenting them as suggestions to improve the article. The editor should not transform recommended suggestion into necessary conditions for acceptance. This helps in minimizing the intersection between content reviewing and form editing.

3. If one of the reviewers (on whose review the article was accepted) recommends accepting the article conditioned to the changes the reviewer is making, then the editor may or may not condition the acceptance of these changes. In this case, an editorial judgment would be required. In any case, the author should be allowed to address the changes, making them, or preempting similar critiques that the readers might have. This can be made in the main text of the article, as footnotes or as an appendix. This would alert the potential readers and leave to them any judgment regarding the intellectual perspectives of 1) the anonymous reviewer or 2) the author.
4. *Editors of special issues of the journal should supervise the fulfillment of authors' responsibility regarding proofreading and copy editing the final version of the article.* The editor may design a process oriented to support this supervision, including
 - a. An editorial board of the special issue and/or
 - b. A certification from a proofreading and copy editing service hired by the article's author and/or
 - c. Requiring the author to ask a colleague, who is a native English speaker, to proofread and copy edit the article, no matter if the author is a native English speaker or not and/or
 - d. Ask other authors of the special issue of the journal, or of the multiple author book, for their support in editing some papers, and/or
 - e. Get the support of an Editorial Board.
5. The editor should also ensure that the authors are following the format and the referencing style required. This is especially important and critical for special issues which might be provided to readers in a printed version, or distributed via Amazon or other book outlets. This issue is mandatory for publications of multiple-author books, In this case, APA format and referencing style should be followed.

Author's responsibility:

Authors have the following responsibilities during the submission and the publishing process:

1. The article submitted to be considered by the reviewers should have had, at least, ***English Language Checking***, which should ensure that the article is written in correct American or British English before its submission for its being considered by the respective reviewers. Otherwise, the article might be rejected because of its lack of legibility and not because of the quality of its intellectual content. The reviewers are volunteering for the reviewing process; consequently, it is even an ethical obligation to submit a legible article that should minimize the time needed for the voluntary reviewing they are making. Consequently, it is a matter of both: fairness and ethics on behalf of the authors. The fairness is even with the same article being submitted because it might get rejected in spite of the intellectual quality

of its content. A native English speaker should handle this kind of language checking for grammatical, spelling, and other common errors. Even authors who are native English speakers should have a colleague or friend read the article before its submission, especially if it is being submitted to a special issue of the journal. There are many freelance people and organizations that provide this kind of service.

2. If the article is accepted by the reviewers for its publication, then the editor might ask to make some changes suggested by the authors that recommended the acceptance of the paper. With the (conditioned or not-conditioned) acceptance of the article, ***the responsibility of the authors, in addressing the raised issues, is with the potential readers, with the impact of the paper, and even with himself or herself.*** They should make the suggested changes, or if they do not agree with a suggested change, then they should address the issues raised in order to preempt or anticipate a similar reaction from the readers. This might be made in the main text, as a footnote or in an appendix to the article. Addressing all issues raised by the reviewers (by making the suggested changes or explaining why they are not being made) improves and increases the readership of the article and, consequently, its potential impact. The responsibility of the author is with 1) the reader, 2) with the potential impact of the article, and even 3) with himself or herself.
3. Before submitting the final version of the accepted paper the authors should copy edit them. The *Oxford Style Manual* affirms that the goal of copy editing is to create “a text that is as easy as possible to read and understand.”

The objective that needs to be met is to “Ensure consistency; good grammar, spelling, and punctuation; clarity of expression; and a clear and sensible structure for the book [or the article]. *The result should be a text that is as easy as possible to read and understand.*” (The Oxford Guide Style, 2002, p. 43)

Final language revision

This editing activity refers to the final corrections of a text that has already been corrected after being fully copy edited. This activity might be made via an Editorial Board of the Special Issue or of the multi author book and/or with the support of other authors as long as an author is not making this last revision of his/her own article.