

Editorial Team Descriptions & The Hidden Rulebook

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My experiences with *Hypothesis* started a decade ago, when I served as the Community Manager of the Medical Library Association (MLA) Research Caucus. My first foray into Editorial work started with uploading new issues to the Caucus website and marketing the latest issue to Caucus members. In 2019, I began peer reviewing for *Hypothesis* and in the Summer of 2020, I resigned as Community Manager and joined as the Co-Editor of *Hypothesis*¹. This editorial will describe the role(s) and functions of the *Hypothesis* Editorial Team, Editor, and Peer Reviewers and it unveils the Editor's Hidden Rulebook!

Peer Reviewing

Acting as a peer reviewer is an excellent way to learn about the inner workings of the journal. It is not uncommon for a peer reviewer to get experience and then later submit manuscripts to the journal. For this journal, peer reviewers commit to reviewing one submission per issue. The experiences and other commitments of the peer reviewer are major factors used by this Editor to determine review assignments. To minimize deadline requirements around the holidays and during the summer, peer reviews are not assigned from December 15-January 5. Extra peer review time is allocated for Summer submissions and submissions received between November 1-December 14. *This sort of information is rarely posted on the journal website.*

Tip(s): Chat with current peer reviewers to get an idea of the time commitment²⁻⁵. Keep the Editor or point person, who assigns reviews, informed about your training, areas of expertise, and interests.

Associate Editors

Associate Editors of *Hypothesis* work directly with the Editor to define submission categories, create and update peer review forms, and frequently perform a second round of peer review for manuscripts. This Editor selects experts and people, who have an administrative role or are tenured faculty and full professors. Starting with September 2024 issue, Associate Editor submissions to *Hypothesis* are discouraged and they are not allowed to serve as corresponding author or first author on any submission to *Hypothesis*. The exceptions to this rule are the Introductions to new submission categories,

Research Mentor, and Data Bytes.

Copy Editors

Copy Editors are detail oriented and they review each manuscript to identify grammar and punctuation issues. They both polish and assist author(s) in getting articles to conform with the article structure. Typically, they get between 4-6 weeks to for each submission – all peer reviewed submissions for each issue go through Copy Editing. Because the work is both intensive and frequently includes tight turnarounds, *Hypothesis* Copy Editors are usually given a 2-3 month reprieve to recharge between issues.

Note: This Editor will consider granting an extension to author(s), who have communicated research leave and/or provide a good reason for delays, in returning comments during Copy Editing.

Tip: Be professional, considerate, and timely when responding to any member of the Editorial Team.

Production Editor

The Production Editor joins the publishing process around 6-8 weeks before an issue is published – they do not complain, though, when additional time is allocated! They create the final version or “galley” of the article in two ways. First, they use the publishing standard LaTeX coding⁶ to create the PDF files. Starting with the September issue, *Hypothesis* will publish HTML versions of each article.

Tip: Authors should only pick out major issues, if they are given a chance to review the “galley” of an article pre-publication.

Digital Team

The Digital Team markets the issue and works closely with the Editor to make sure the content on the website makes sense to new and long-standing readers of *Hypothesis*. They create and publicize special events, such as the webinar series,

and March Madness. When the Editor gets an idea, the Digital Team assists in making the well thought out or “ideas that require some additional work” actionable. They are working with Editor to revise peer reviewer forms and to update all aspects of the website in preparation for applying to be listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals.

Tip: If you have a background in communication and enjoy promotion, consider joining the publicity or marketing team of a journal.

Editor

The role is responsible for crafting and revising policies, soliciting new volunteers (Peer Reviewers, Associate Editors, Editorial Team, Editorial Board), growing the journal, and improving visibility by applying to be indexed or listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals. It is full-time position – in most cases it is a volunteer position. Personally, I would not apply for or consider, if asked, to take a paid position as an Editor. It adds a level complexity, potential for bias, and additional “layers” to navigate.

The purpose and content of the Editorial⁷ varies – usually, Hypothesis will highlight pertinent issues, provide a glimpse of future plans or directions, and it could take a question-and-answer approach.

The “hidden editor rulebook” governs what an Editor can or cannot do. In theory, the Editor will be familiar with the Committee on Publishing Ethics and the requirements for Authorship. These provide some guidelines for how the Editor crafts policies and creates peer reviewer guidelines. But – the “hidden editor rulebook” speaks to the understood but not frequently discussed topics of how and Editor can recruit submissions or continue developing both as an Editor and as a professional

Hidden Rule 1: Editors are not allowed to approach Paper or Lightning Talk presenters – but they can, and frequently do, approach poster presenters.

Conferences frequently include language in the speaker release stating that the association (conference) journal should receive first consideration for

publication. This requires the Editor of the conference journal to be present during the annual conference. This rule limits independent and non-conference journals to soliciting ideas from poster presenters.

To address the above issues, I avoid taking leadership roles in professional associations such as President, Chair, etc. When presenting a paper, I disclose my role as the Editor. When submitting a manuscript for publication, I do not disclose that I am an Editor.

Hidden Rule 2: Editors can only solicit ideas for columns or specific types of submissions – they cannot solicit research submissions.

Authors have both the right and responsibility to select the journal. For newer authors, this can be a daunting process. To assist with improving the visibility of *Hypothesis* and to ease the path of finding and selecting an appropriate journal, we created March Madness. This event include the Journal Showcase, where editorial team members get a few minutes to pitch their journal to attendees! As one of the coordinators/facilitators, I do not present. If I did, this would break Hidden Rule 2.

Tip:Newer authors should consult the Instructions to Authors area and the Aims and Scope of a journal to see if they offer mentorship or provide a New and Emerging Researcher submission category⁸.

As *Hypothesis* formed the inaugural Editorial Board, the Hidden Editor Rulebook burdened and delayed my ability to make decisions. After chatting with a former Editor, who faced similar challenge, of an LIS journal last Fall, I formed a small listserv – members of this group are current or former Editors and Editors-In-Chief.

When I begin to question the future direction of *Hypothesis* or ponder the feasibility of adding additional issues, I will ask the Editor listserv for input.

Serving as an Editor improved and shaped my writing, reviewing, selecting journals, choosing collaborators, and submitting and revising manuscripts. As the Editor, your journal comes first.

Tip: Before considering an Assistant, Associate, Junior, or Senior Editor position, get experience with all aspects of publishing and commit yourself to establishing a consistent pattern of reading literature from the top journals in both your field and other fields.

I thank you for choosing to read this Editorial – I encourage you to browse the September issue of *Hypothesis*!

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