Editorial

Peer Review and Plagiarism

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Since we started the online platform for Journal of Optical Communications with the software ScholarOne each author has the possibility to recommend reviewers. One would expect that this opportunity is used by most of the authors since it is more likely that a reviewer who knows the author’s work will be more positively acting than somebody who is not familiar with the author: he may review the manuscript more critically. So it is somewhat surprising for me that only about 50% of the authors use this opportunity. However, this is not the only surprise: If we use the recommendations of the reviewers given by the authors about only 20% of the reviewers respond. It even happens that the recommended reviewer cannot be reached through the email address given by the author. This is also one of the main reasons that a review can last for several months since we have to contact one new reviewer after the other. So for me it would be very helpful if the authors check the address of the recommended reviewer and may even inform him that he has been recommended. And it would be also an advantage for the authors since then a decision can be made faster.

Another topic is plagiarism. I do not mean that authors “steal” the results of other researchers, but they try to publish older own published results again. We now check each manuscript for plagiarism with a special software and if there are too many paste and copy parts in the manuscript it will be rejected (There was just a case: a paper was submitted which was 80% identical (not similar!) with parts of three older published papers. It also happened that a 10-year old paper was submitted again by using just another example with some changed parameters.). This is also true in a special case: In former times the newest research results were first published in conferences and printed in the conference proceedings. It then was usual to publish the contents of this conference paper in a renowned scientific journal since the conference proceedings were not distributed worldwide (usually they were available mainly to the conference participants). However, since the internet era everybody has access to conference proceedings. Therefore also in this case we will not accept the paper.

So two pleas from my side:

– Recommend several potential reviewers and check that the email address is correct and that they are willing to do a review.

– Submit papers with new and unpublished research results only and avoid paste and copy papers. Also serial papers (80% of the paper is the end of the last paper) should be avoided.

Thank you in advance, this would help a lot.

Sincerely yours

Ralf Kersten
Editor-in-chief