CASE – Annual Conference

Promotion of Asian journals to international levels

Helping publishers get closer to authors:

Perspectives from a global survey of academic authors

Presented by:

Basil D'Souza
VP Publisher and Academic Relations,
Editage / Cactus Communications

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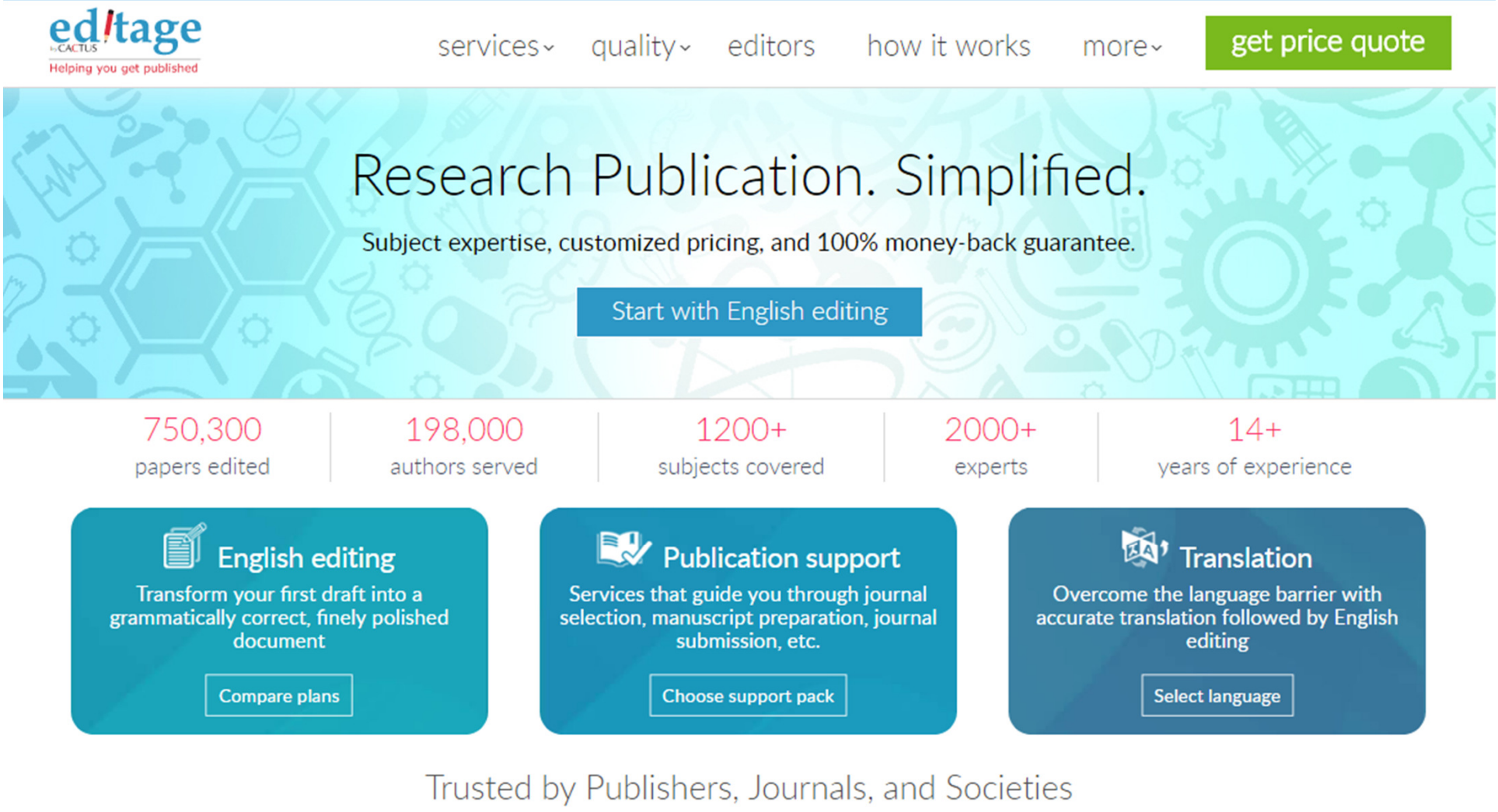
EDITAGE: Helping authors get published



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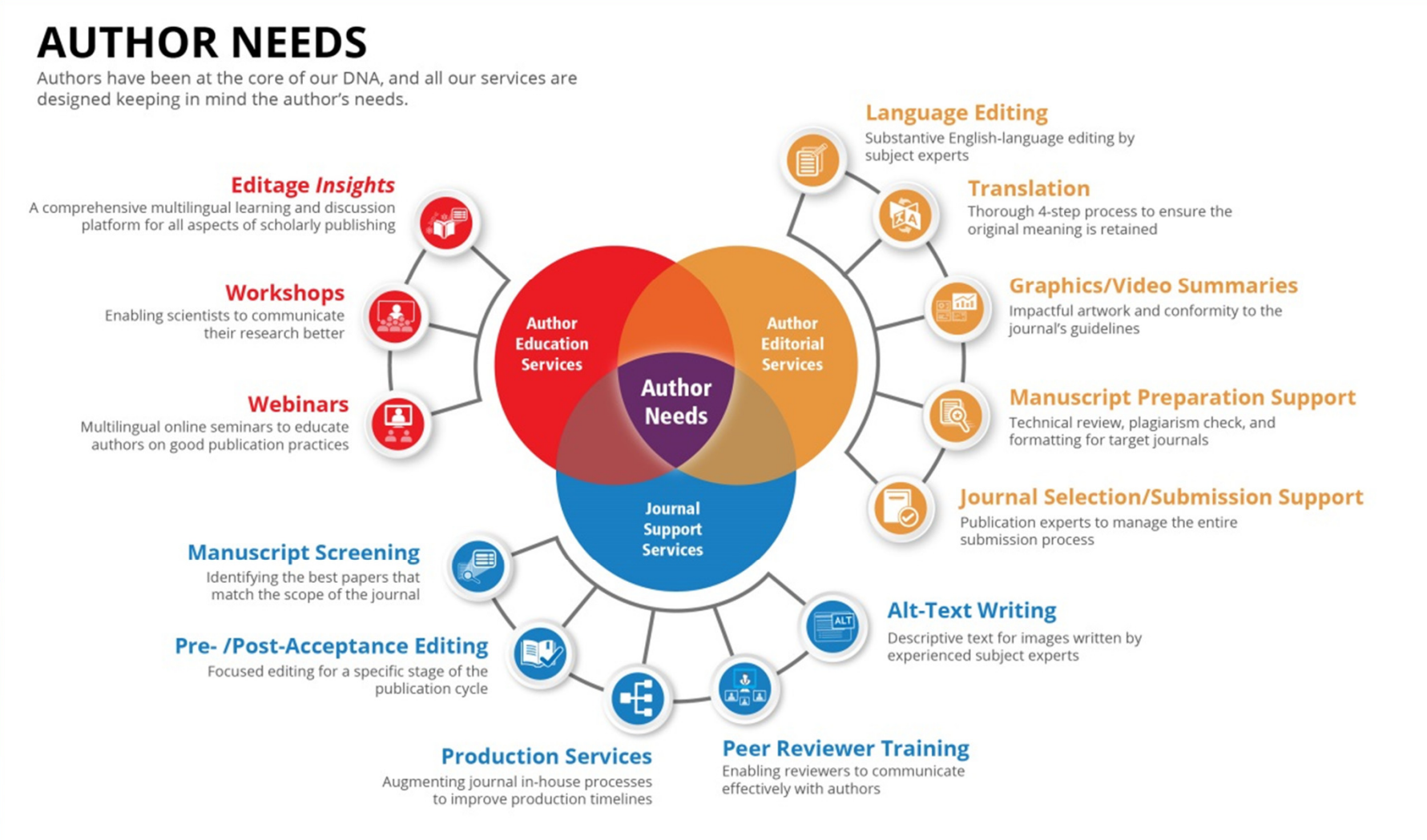
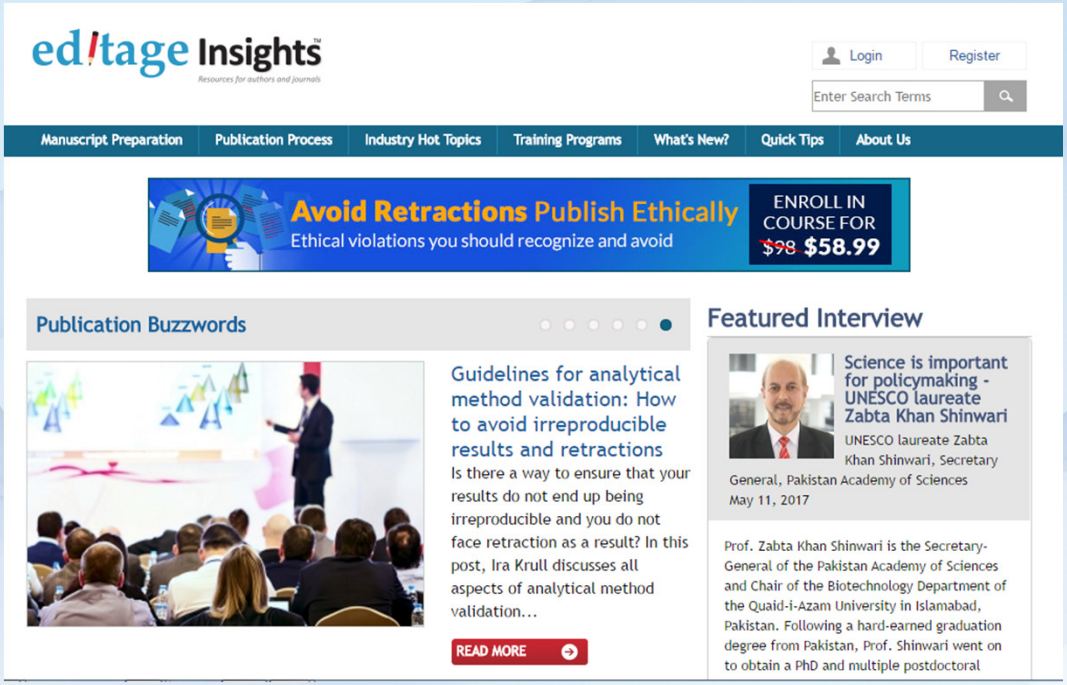
EDITAGE: Author's needs are first



EDITAGE: An educational resource

- Editage Insights (www.editage.com/insights)



- ✓ Tutorials on all aspects of academic publication
- ✓ Guidance at every stage of the publication process
- ✓ Answers to all questions researchers ask
- ✓ Interviews and videos giving practical advice
- ✓ News, updates, and trends from the publishing industry

INDUSTRY SURVEY

ed!tage Insights

Author perspectives on the academic publishing process

- ✓ First of its kind in the industry
- ✓ Target of 20,000 respondents
- ✓ Global distribution in 5 languages

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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We've all seen the headlines

SCIENCE

Is the Peer Review Process for Scientific Papers Broken?

NATURE | RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS: SOCIAL SELECTION

Online debate erupts to ask: is science broken?

Panel discussion about the shortcomings of science sparks chatter about possible remedies.

Scholarly publishing is broken: Is it time to consider guerrilla self-publishing?

THE CONVERSATION

The scientific publishing culture is broken - can it be rescued?

The Scientist » News & Opinion

Opinion: Academic Publishing Is Broken

Academic research publishing is a broken system that needs to be fixed

NOVEMBER 1, 2015 ~ DIGITALBIOLOGIST

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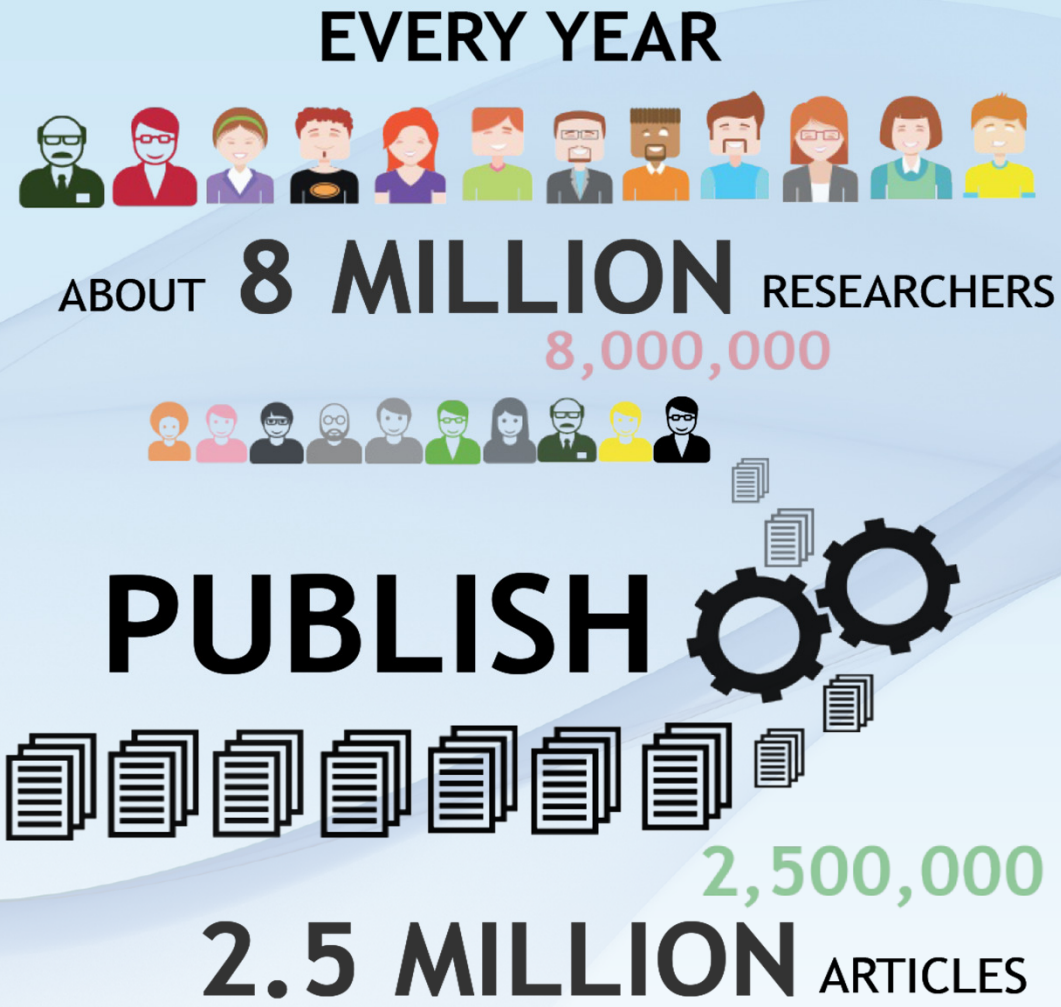
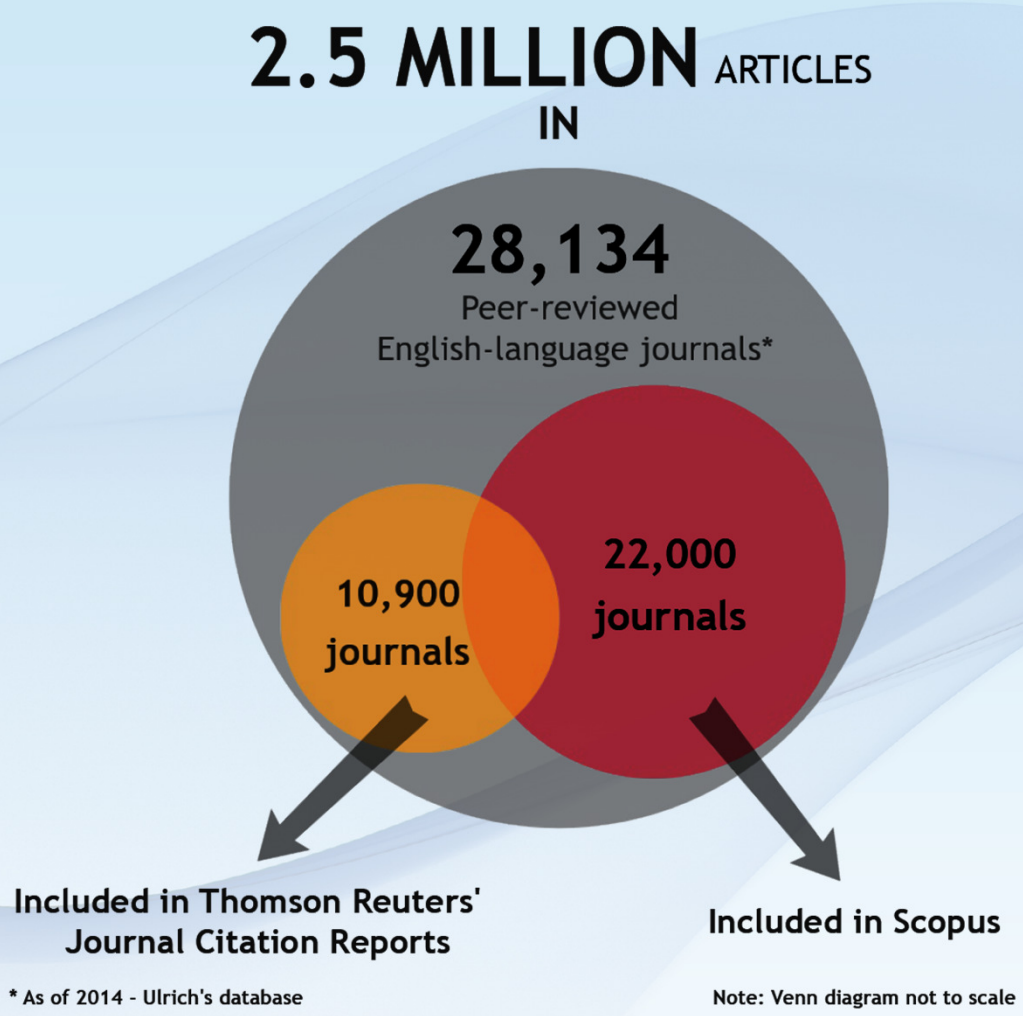
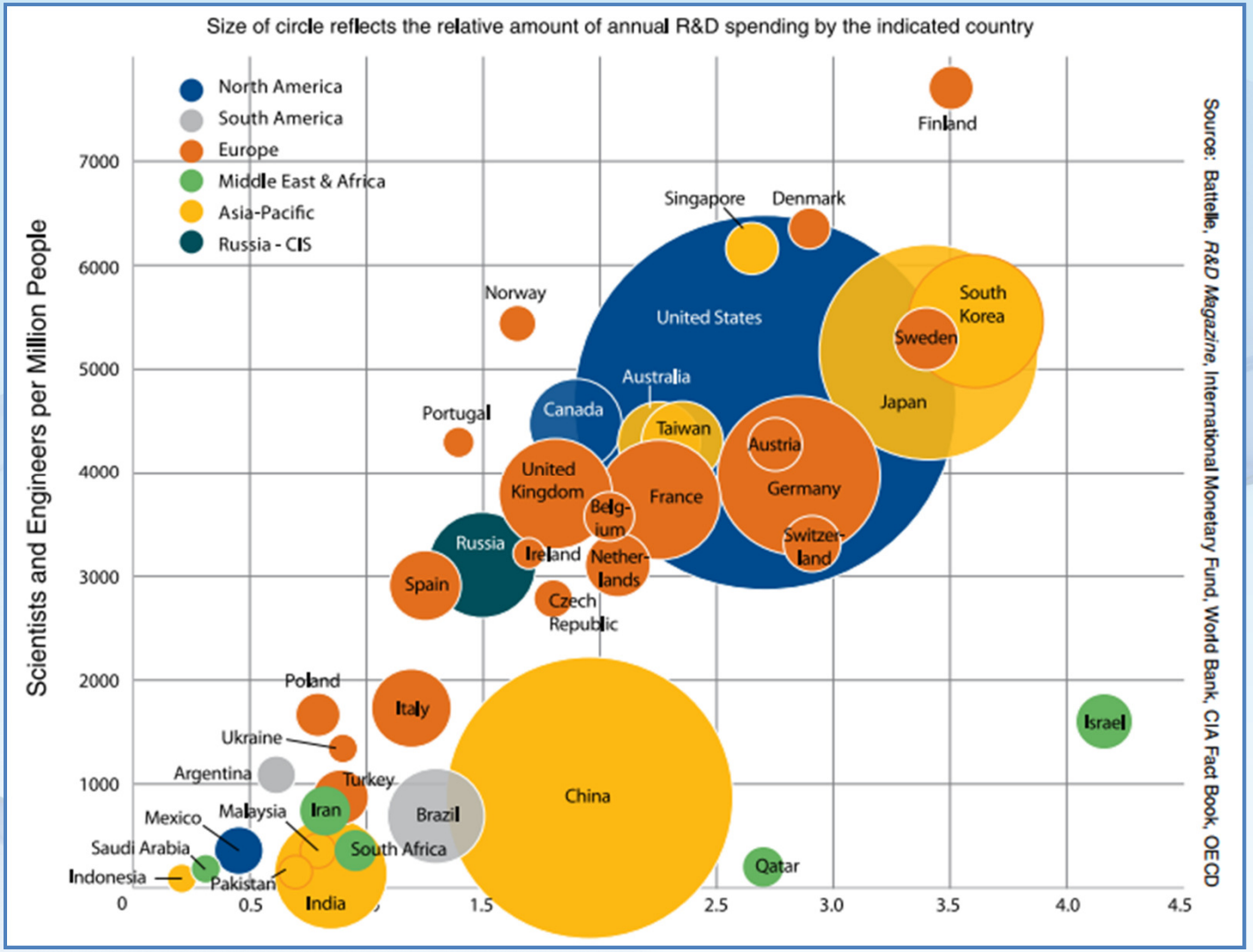
Let’s begin with some facts for perspective…



Let's begin with some facts for perspective…

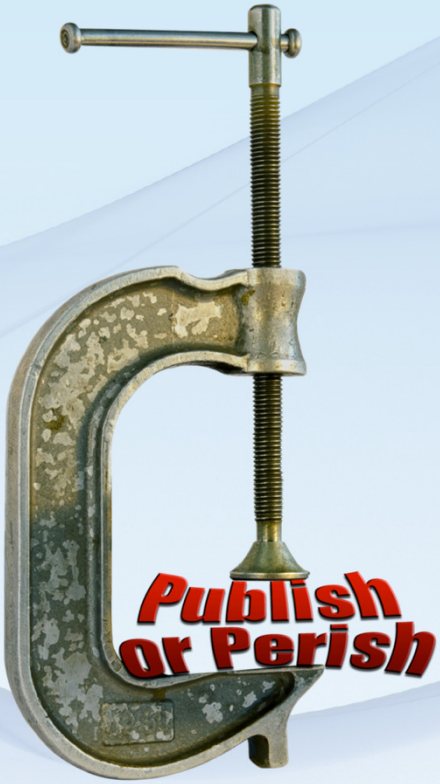


More research output from ESL countries



This causes a lot of pressure…

For authors



And for journal editors

Previously identified gap in perspectives between authors and editors

Authors think…

- They understand publication ethics and do the best they can to adhere to standard guidelines
- They address and respond carefully to all peer reviewer comments
- Journal instructions for authors are often incomplete and unclear

Editors think…

- Authors don't realize the importance of publication ethics
- Authors only address the peer reviewer comments they find agreeable
- Journal instructions for authors are generally clear and complete

Previous survey of ~300 East Asian authors and ~100 international journal editors

SOURCE: C. Cerejo. International journal editors and East Asian authors: two surveys. *Learned Publishing* 27(1) 63-75.

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Please mind the gap!

So we asked authors globally for their opinions

- Ongoing survey by **Editage Insights**, a global learning and resource platform for researchers
- Survey being run in English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Portuguese

Seeking authors' opinions on all aspects of the journal publication process

- Manuscript preparation
- Journal selection
- Journal processes
- Peer review
- Open access
- Publication ethics

Supported by the industry

editage Insights™

SciELO

Council of Science Editors

Scholastica

Wolters Kluwer

Aries systems

American Society for Microbiology

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group

ECS The Electrochemical Society
Advancing solid state & electrochemical science & technology

SSP

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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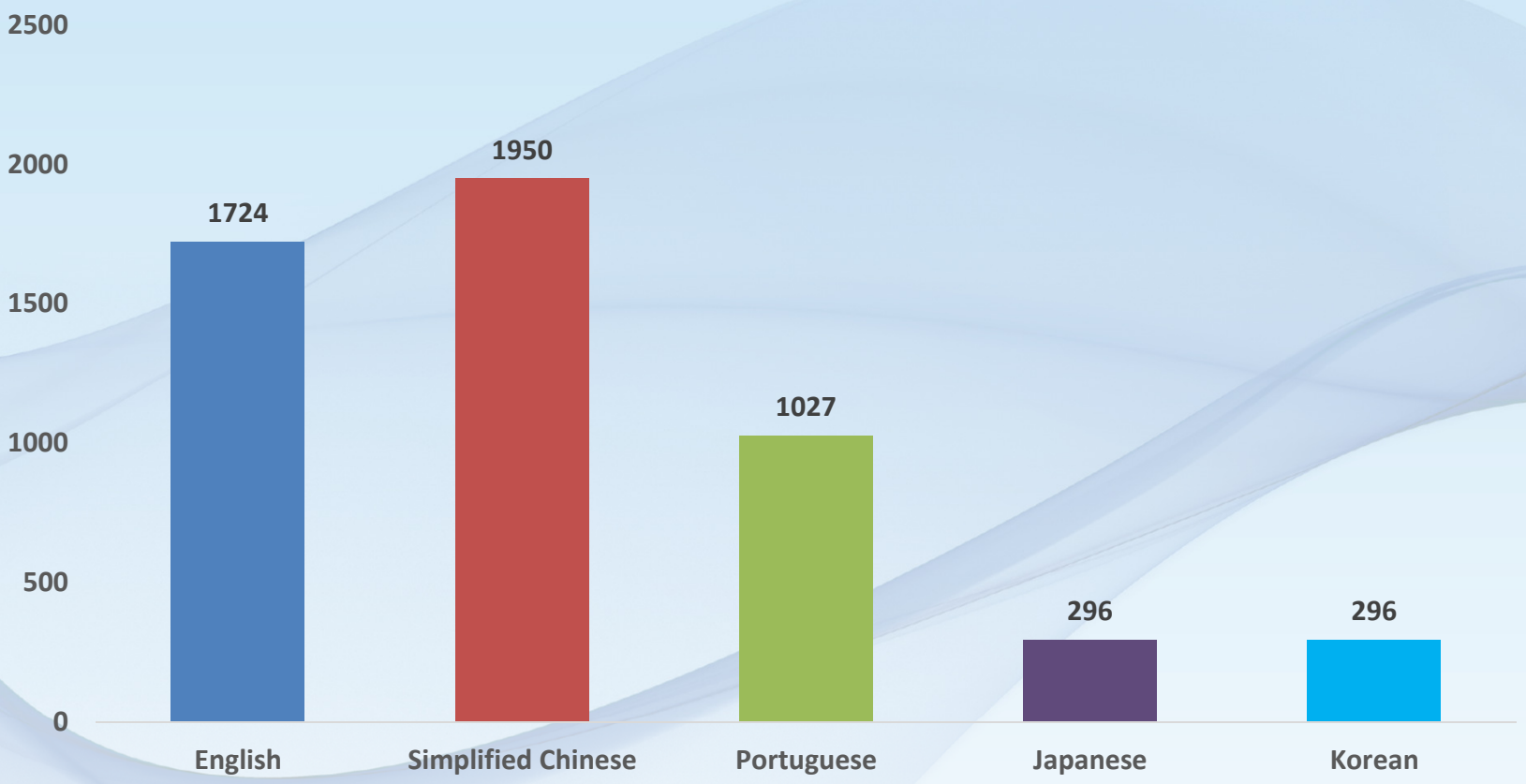
Interim results: 5293 respondents

Respondent demographics

Total number of respondents for each survey language



n = 5293

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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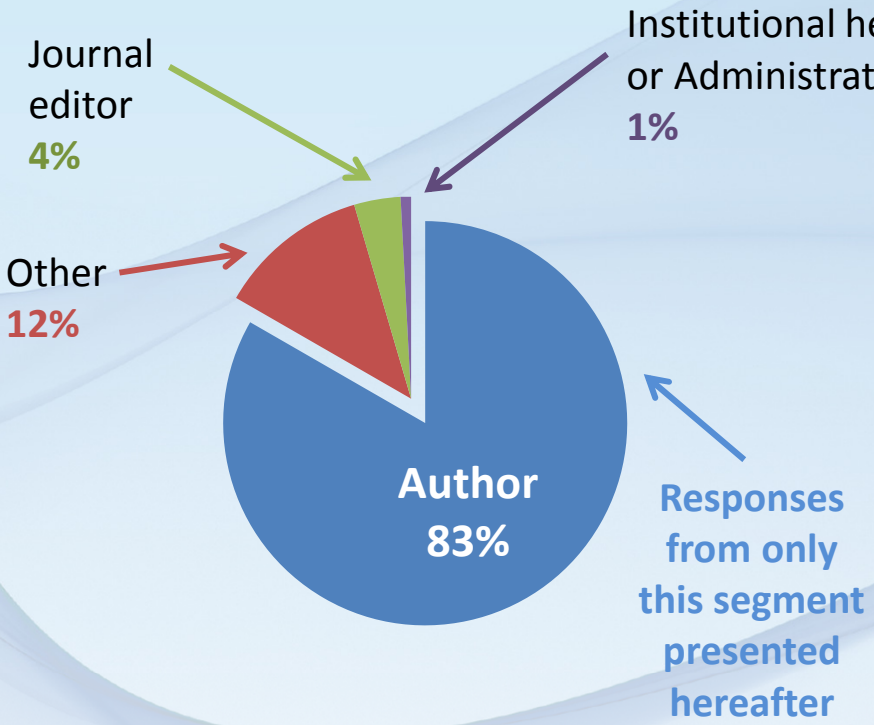
Respondent profile

Which of these primary roles do you identify yourself with as a researcher?

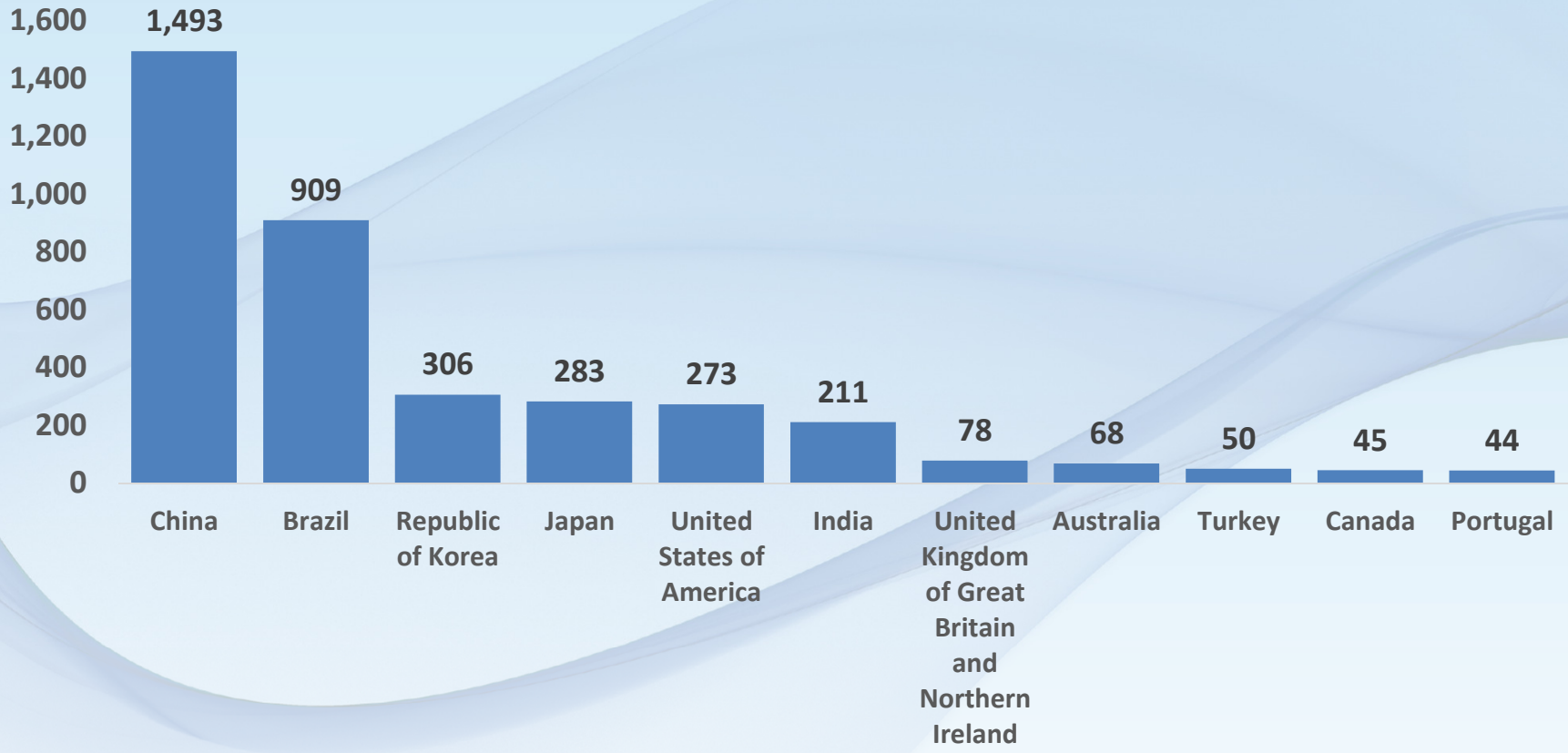


Roles identified when selecting "other"

n = 5259

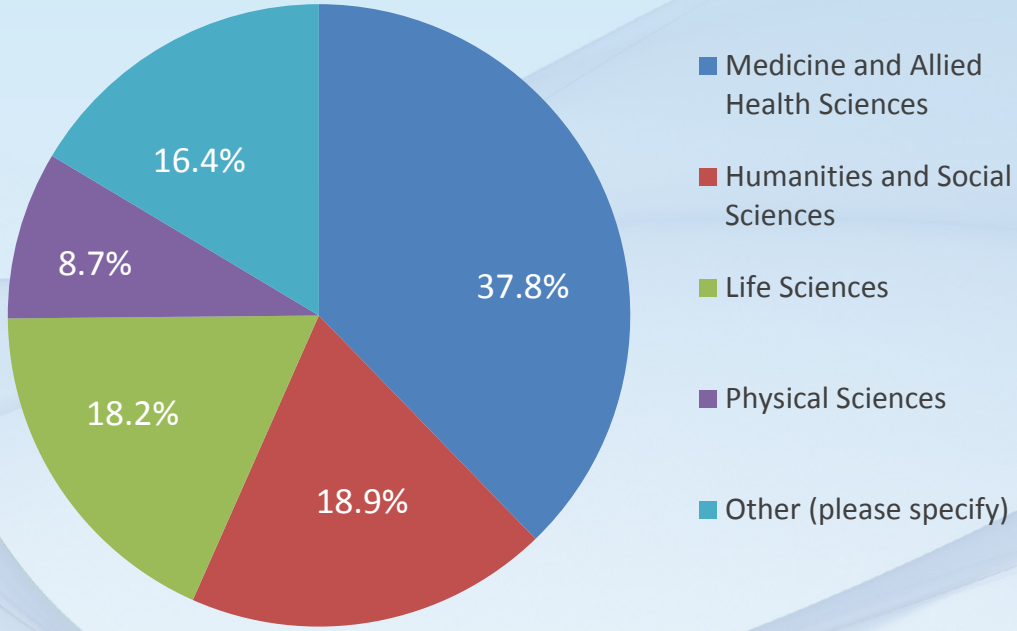
Top 10 countries represented (current location)

Number of authors currently working in these countries



n = 4299

Author respondents by field of study



Fields identified when selecting "other"

Architecture Information Technology Development Human Business Law Mathematics Teaching Chemistry Research Engineering Interdisciplinary Science Public Health Education Arts Management Psychology Applied Test Economics Veterinary Medicine Nursing Energy

n = 4299

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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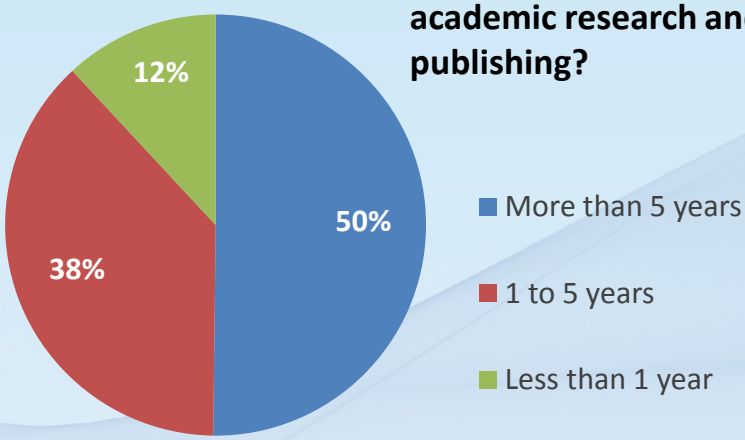
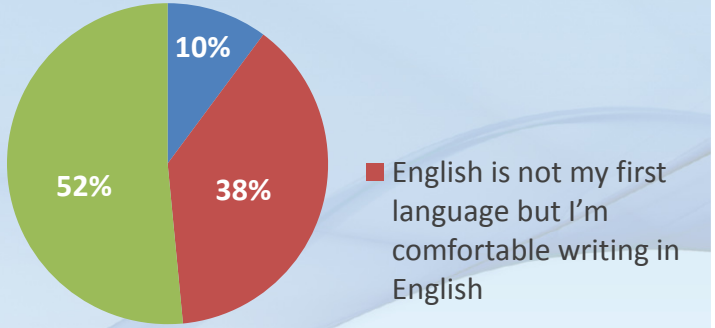
Experience and English proficiency of author respondents

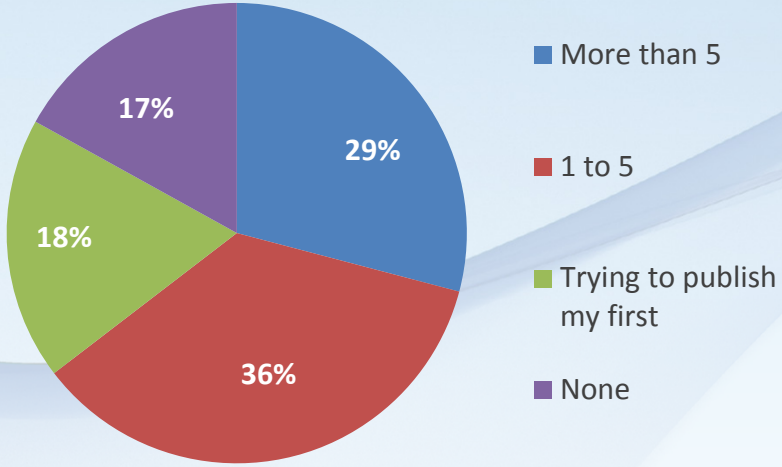
How long have you been involved in academic research and/or journal publishing?



What is your written English proficiency?



How many papers have you published in an international English-language journal?



n = 4298

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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Publication-related challenges authors face

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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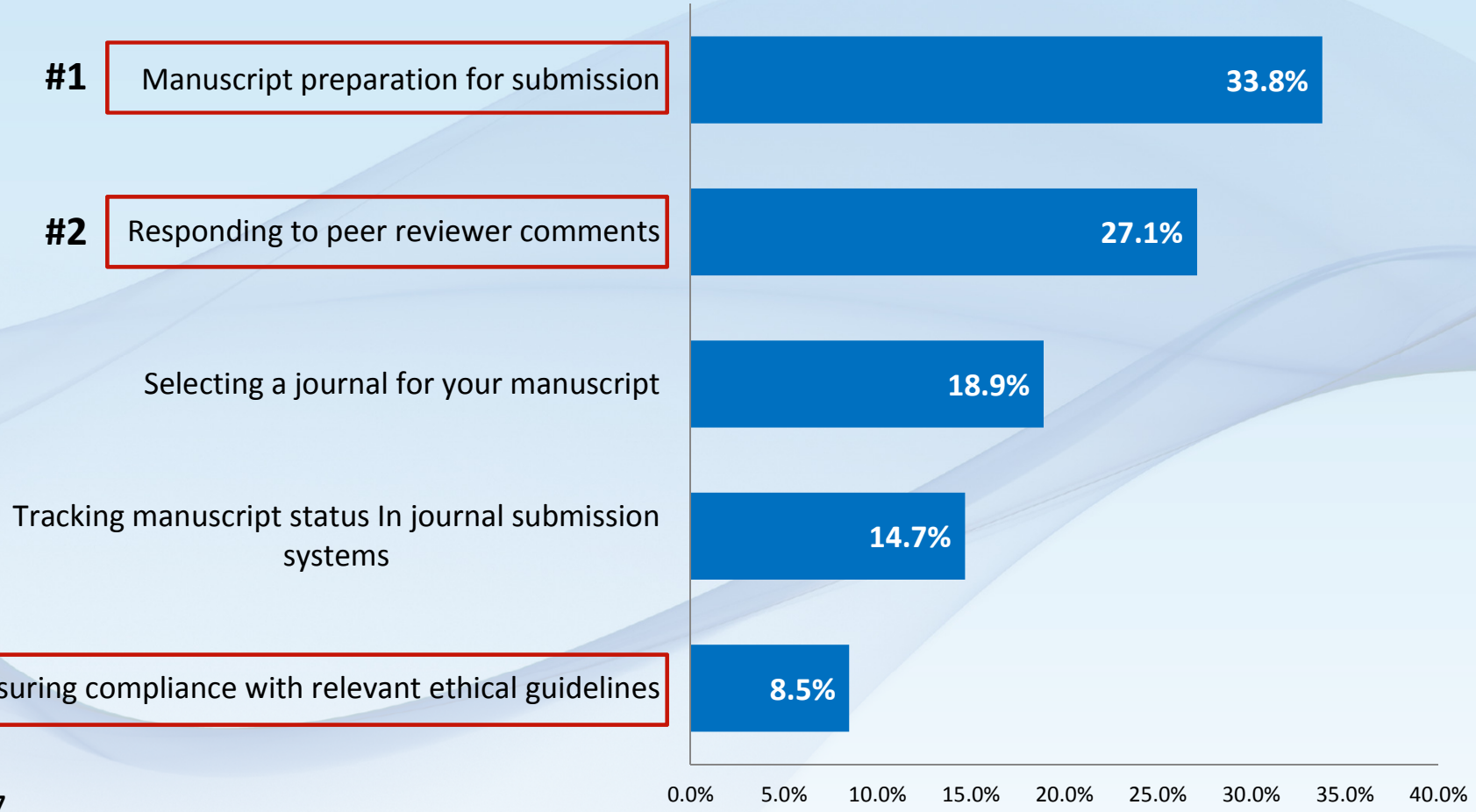
What do authors struggle with most in the whole process?

Percent authors who find specific stages of the publishing process "VERY DIFFICULT"?



n = 4427

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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Throwback to our previous survey study

Which is the most challenging stage of the publication process?

What authors find challenging vs. what journal editors think authors find challenging

Scores indicate the average rank assigned to each parameter on a 1-to-5 scale, where 5 = most challenging

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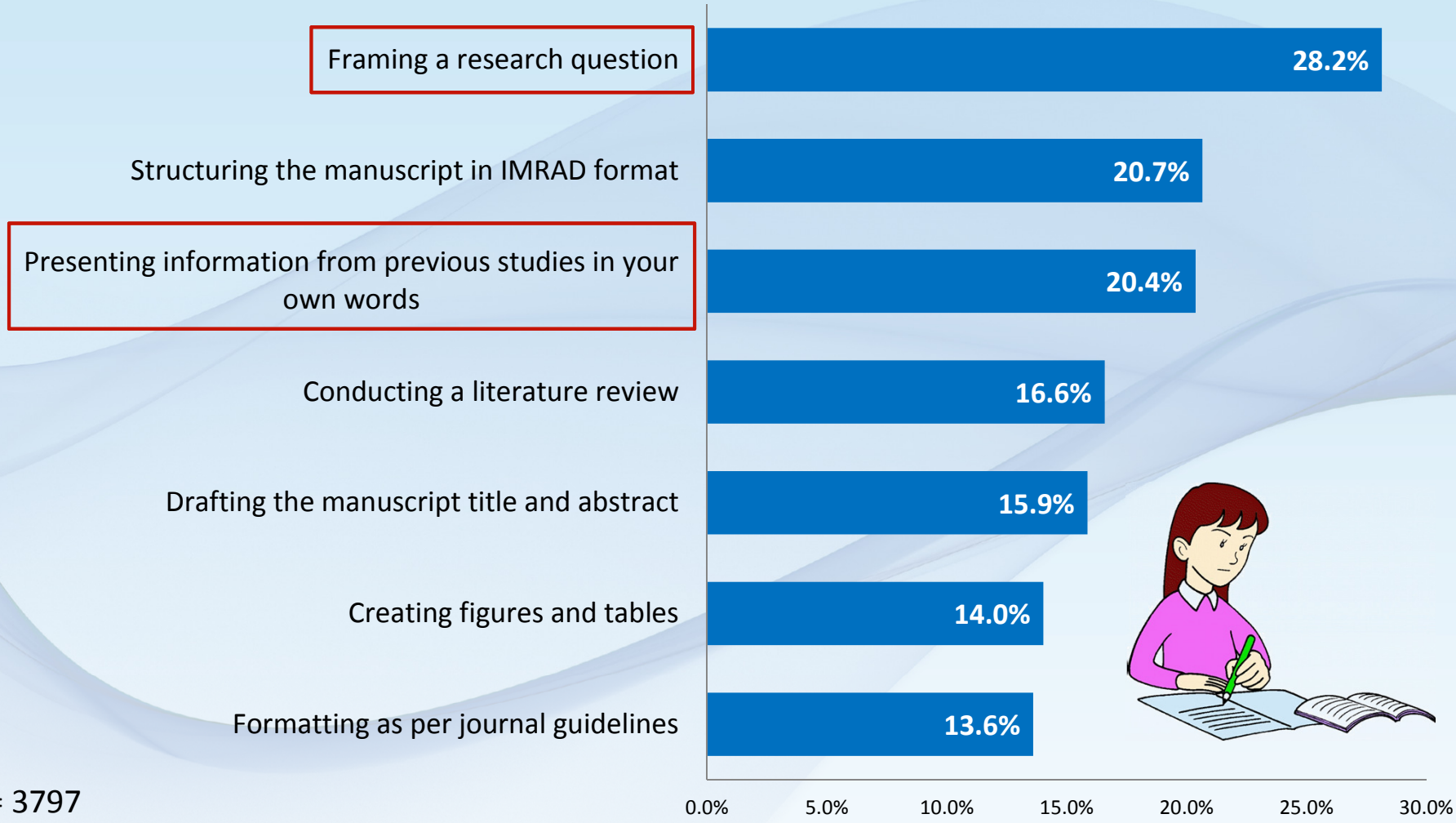
What aspects of manuscript preparation are "VERY DIFFICULT"?



n = 3797

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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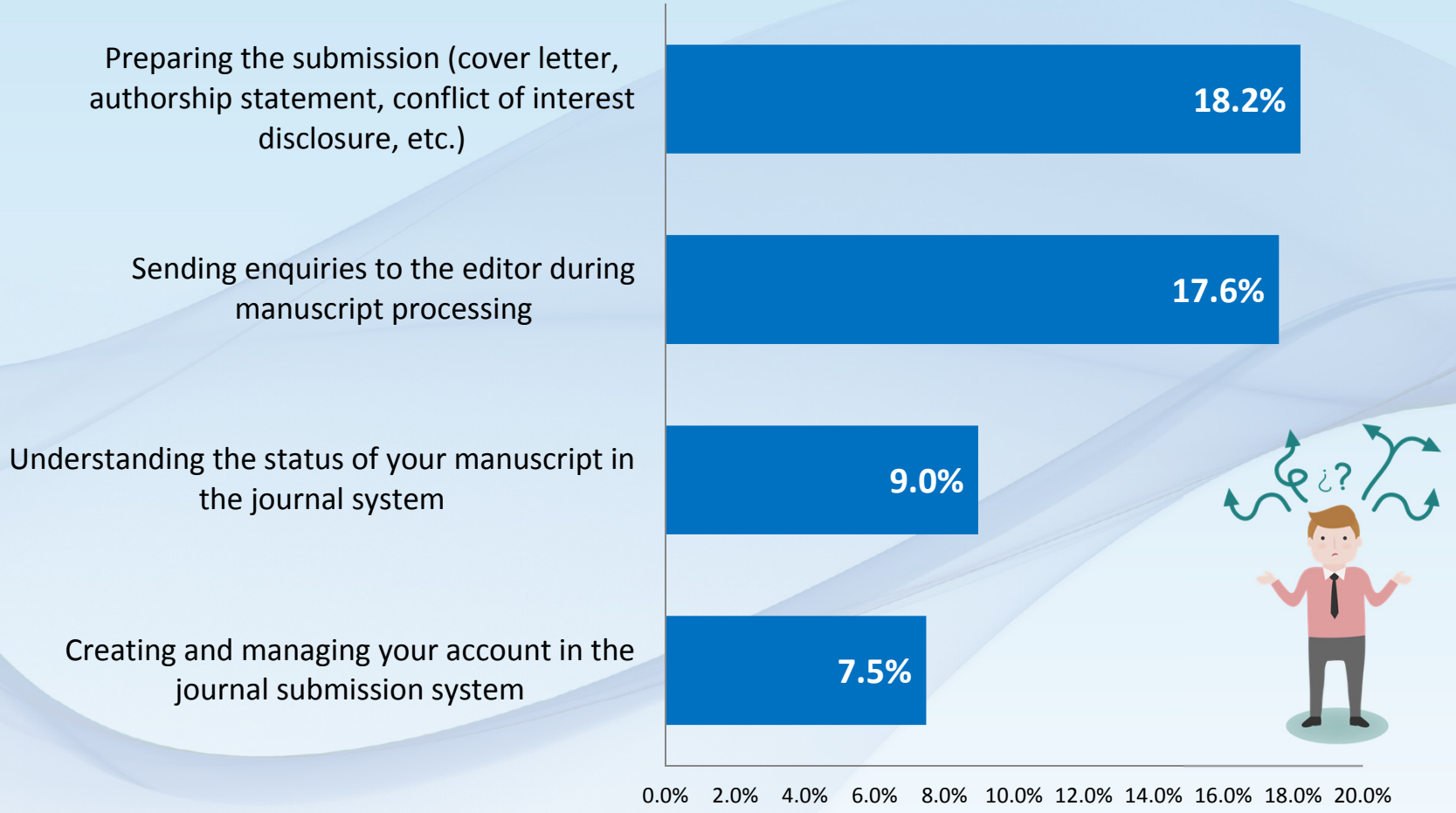
What aspects of manuscript submission are "VERY DIFFICULT"?



n = 3743

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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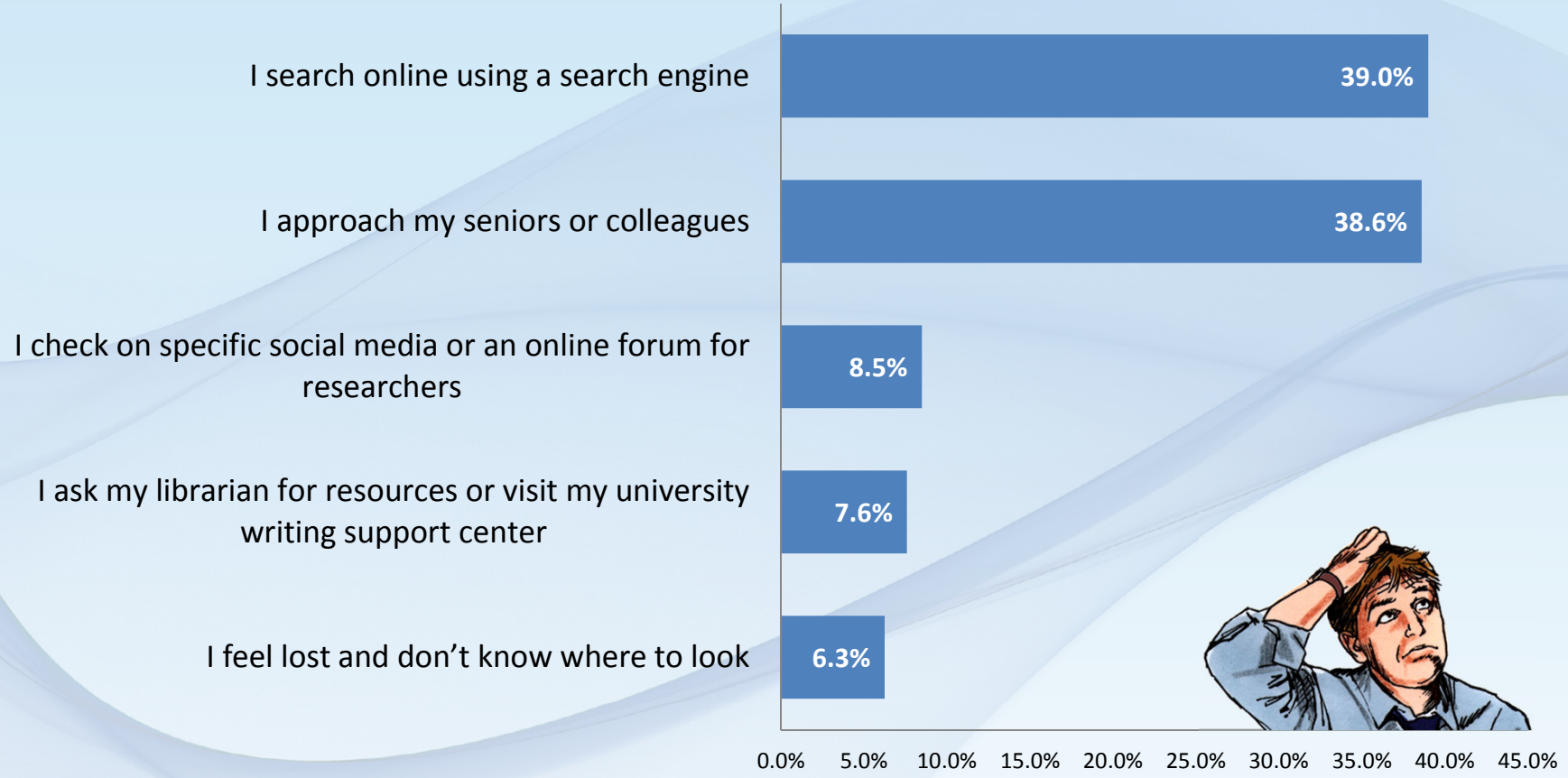
Where do authors seek help when in doubt during the publishing process?



n = 4277

***Multiple selections allowed**

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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Perspective-based questions for authors

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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How do authors choose a journal for their manuscript?

Factors considered, ranked from most important (1) to least important (7)

1. The journal should have a **high impact factor** for my field
2. The journal should have published **similar papers**
3. The journal should offer a **short time-to-publication** or have a rapid publication option
4. My **colleagues and seniors** should be reading the journal regularly
5. The journal should have a clear and professional-looking **website**
6. The journal should be **open access** or have an open access publishing option
7. The journal's **submission process and charges** should be clearly mentioned on its website

n = 3876

Again, this broadly matches our previous survey findings

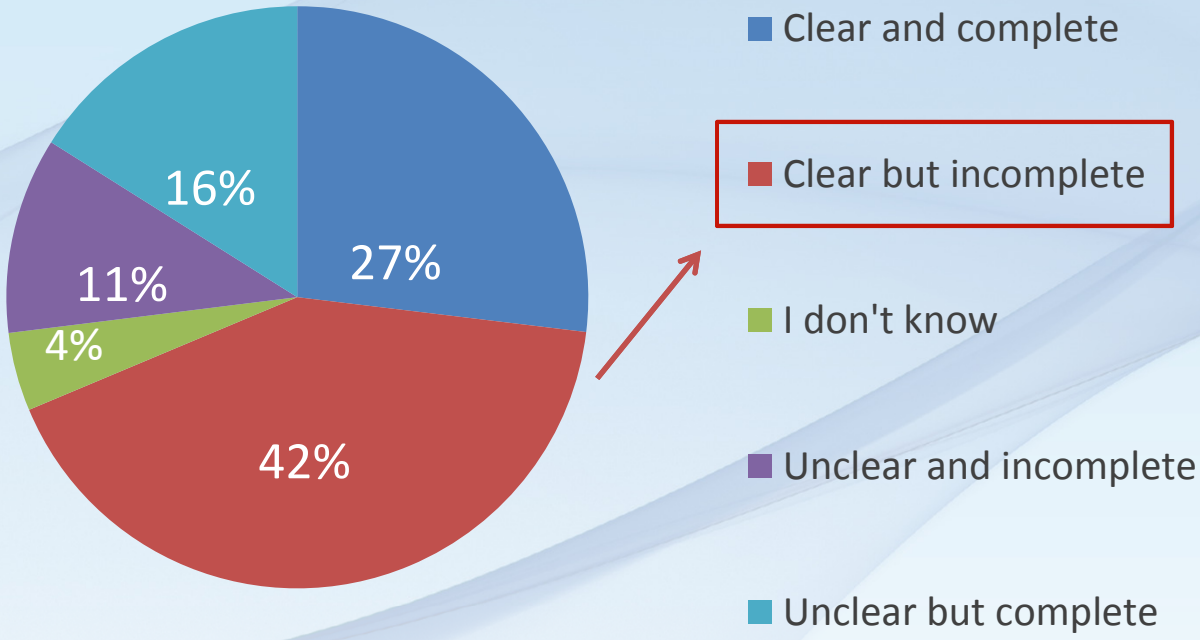
What authors consider versus what journal editors *think* authors consider

Parameters: A-topics & types of articles generally published; **B**-Journal impact factor or prestige; **C**-Target audience; **D**-Review time; **E**-Editorial board members; **F**-Country of origin; **G**-Open access status

Scores indicate the average rank assigned to each parameter on a 1-to-7 scale, where 7 = most important

Perspectives on journal instructions for authors

In general, how well do you think journal guidelines for authors are framed?



n = 3799

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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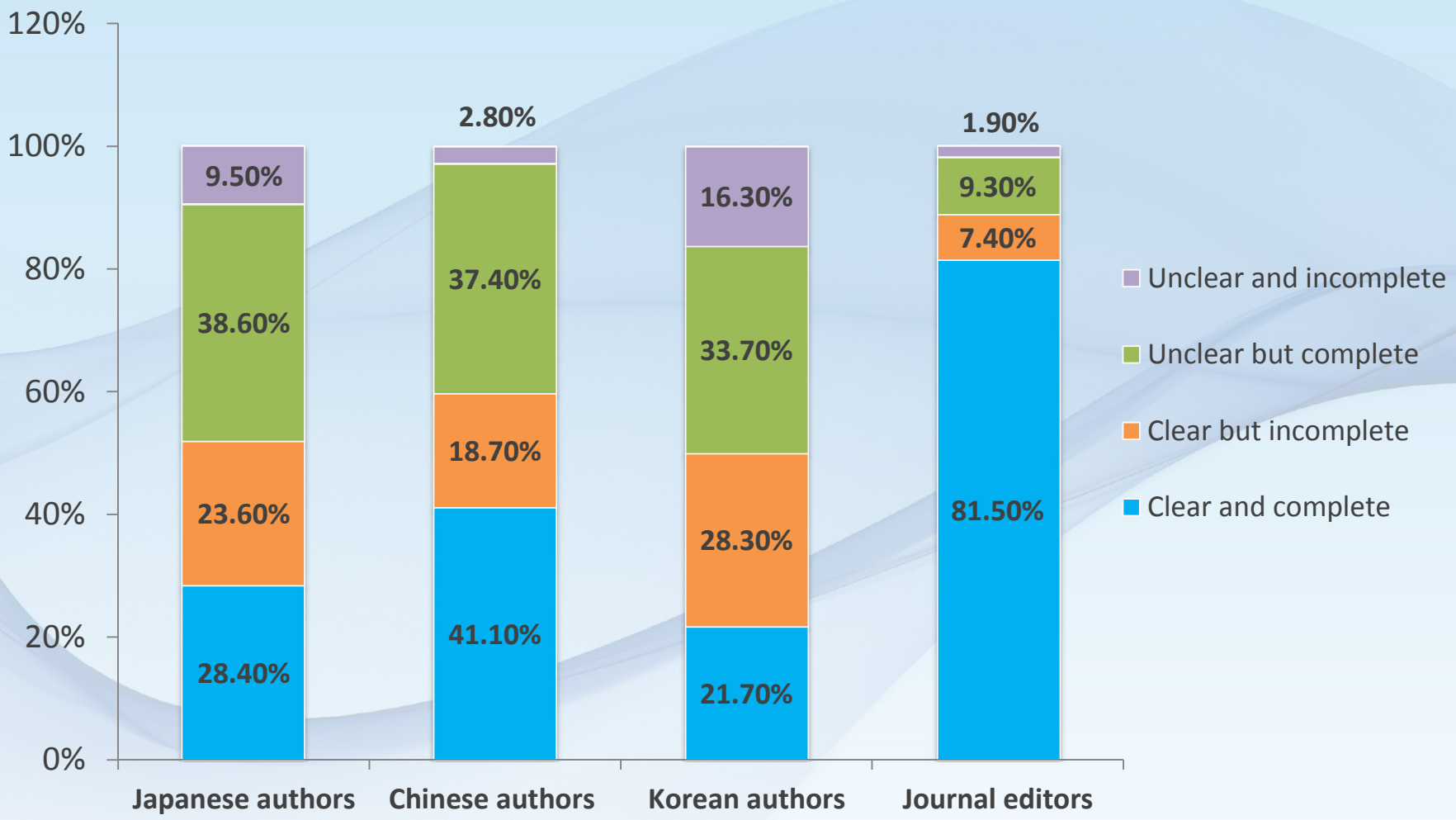
And in our previous study…



SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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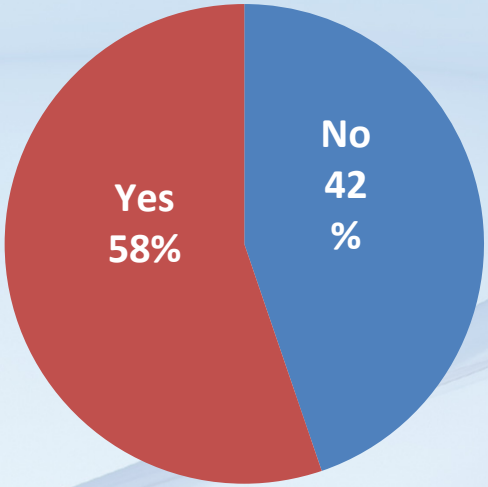
Perspectives on open access publication

Have you ever published in an open access journal, or chosen to make your paper open access in a subscription-based journal?

Reasons for publishing open access (% respondents)*

- Increase research reach **(34.3%)**
- Coincidence **(29.5%)**
- Preference for OA **(15.3%)**
- Publication guarantee by the journal **(13.6%)**
- Institutional/funding body mandate **(7.3%)**



Reasons for not publishing open access (% respondents)*

- Coincidence **(34.3%)**
- Affordability **(29.5%)**
- Lack of understanding **(15.3%)**
- Mistrust in quality of OA journals **(13.6%)**
- No adequate benefits of OA seen **(7.3%)**

n = 3875

***Multiple selections allowed**

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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Author-Journal communication

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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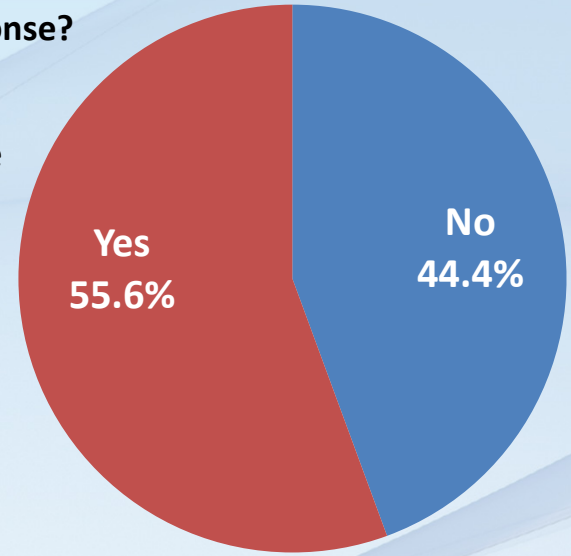
Do authors approach journals without hesitation?

Have you ever written to the journal for queries or clarifications during the publication process?

If yes, how did you find their response?

- Prompt and clear **(42.7%)**
- Delayed but clear when it came **(28.4%)**
- Prompt but not clear **(17.7%)**
- I didn't get any reply **(7.8%)**

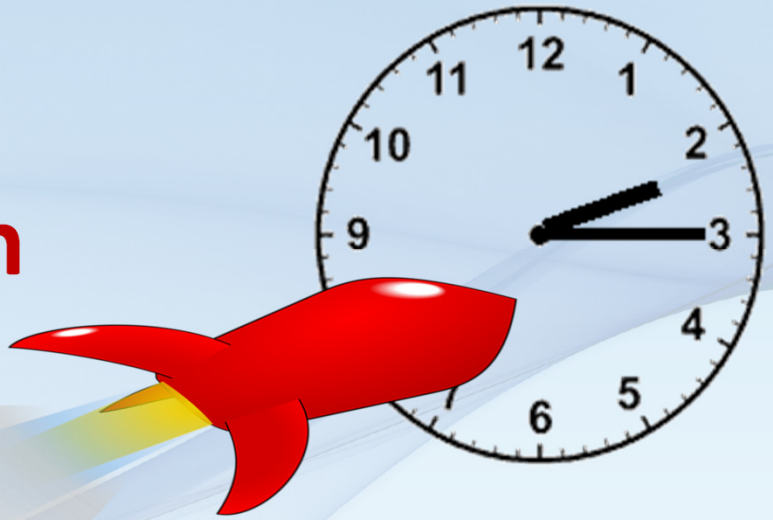


If no, why not?

- I didn't have a query **(51.1%)**
- I didn't know how to contact the journal **(14.8%)**
- I didn't know I was allowed to contact the journal **(16.6%)**
- I was scared to contact the journal **(17.4%)**

n = 3760

Time to publication



SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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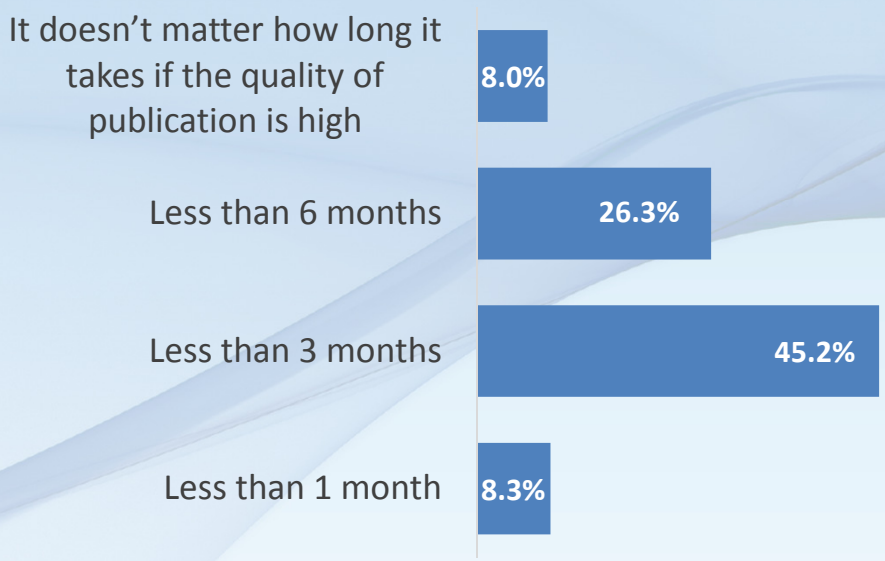
Perspectives on time to publication

What is the shortest time in which you've had a paper published (from submission)

n = 3775

How long do you think it should ideally take to publish a paper in a journal (from submission)?



n = 3775

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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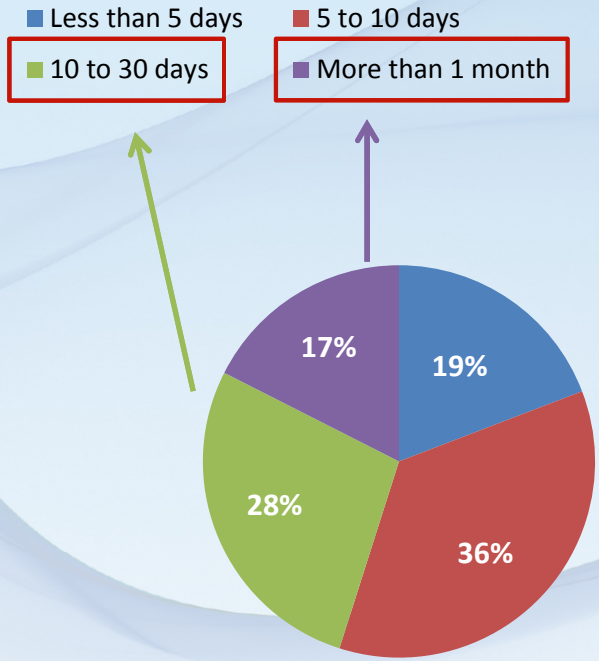
Duration of manuscripts at different stages in the journal workflow

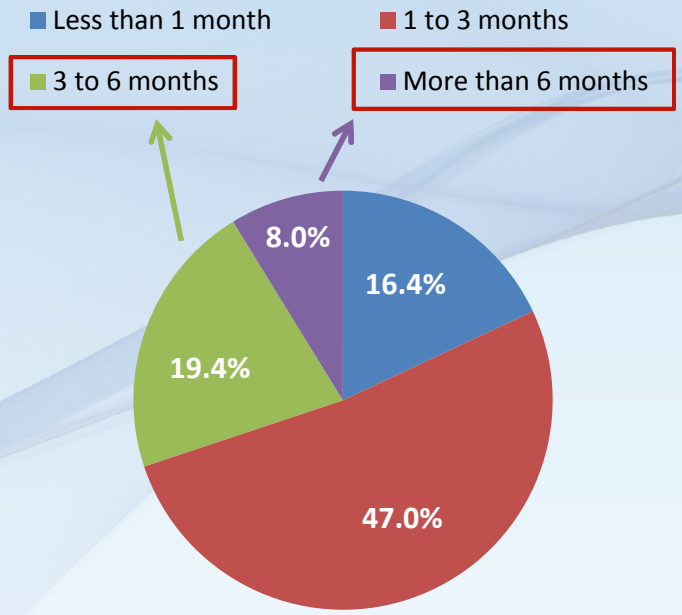
"In your experience, how long does a manuscript remain at the following status points on the journal submission system?"

"WITH EDITOR"



n = 3764

"UNDER REVIEW"



n = 3766

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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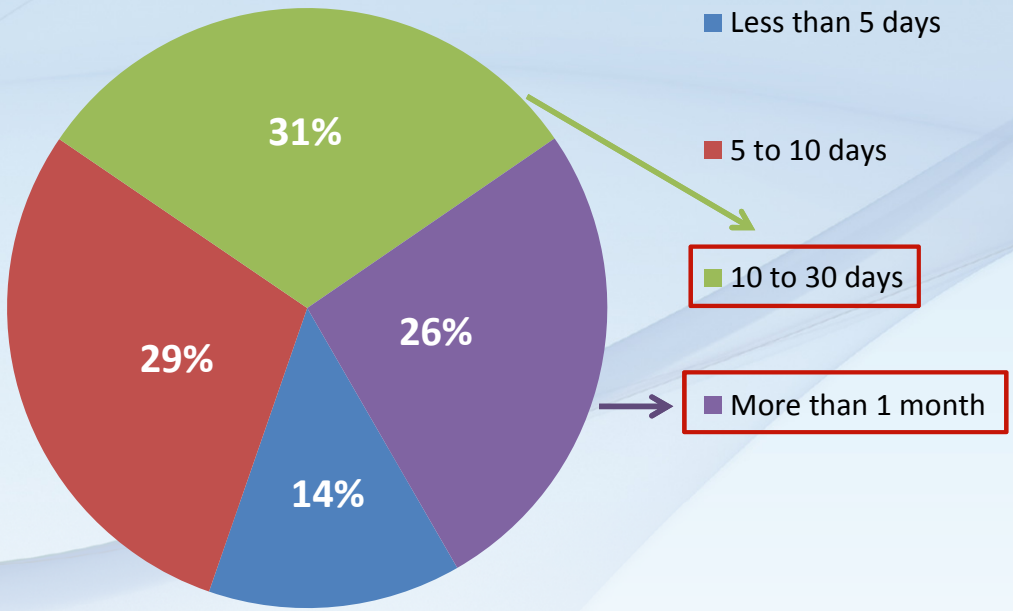
Duration of manuscripts at different stages in the journal workflow

"In your experience, how long does a manuscript remain at the following status points on the journal submission system?"

"DECISION IN PROCESS" OR "AWAITING DECISION"



n = 3766

Authors' understanding of ethical issues and best publication practices

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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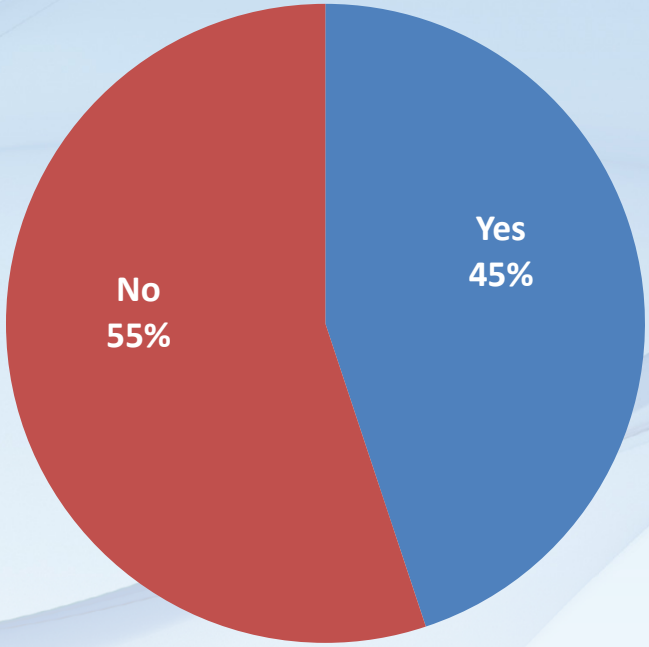
Authors' awareness of potentially predatory journals

Has a journal ever contacted you guaranteeing publication or promising rapid publication?



n = 3875

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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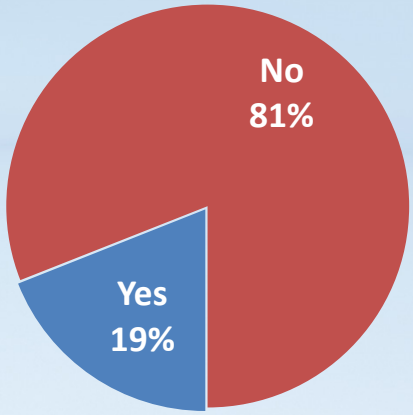
Experience with potentially predatory publishers

If yes, have you ever submitted to such a journal?

If yes, what was the outcome?

- My manuscript was accepted and published as promised **(68.3%)**
- The journal demanded unexpected article processing charges **(14.4%)**
- The journal stopped responding to my queries after I submitted my manuscript **(6.6%)**
- Other **(11.3%)**



If no, why not?*

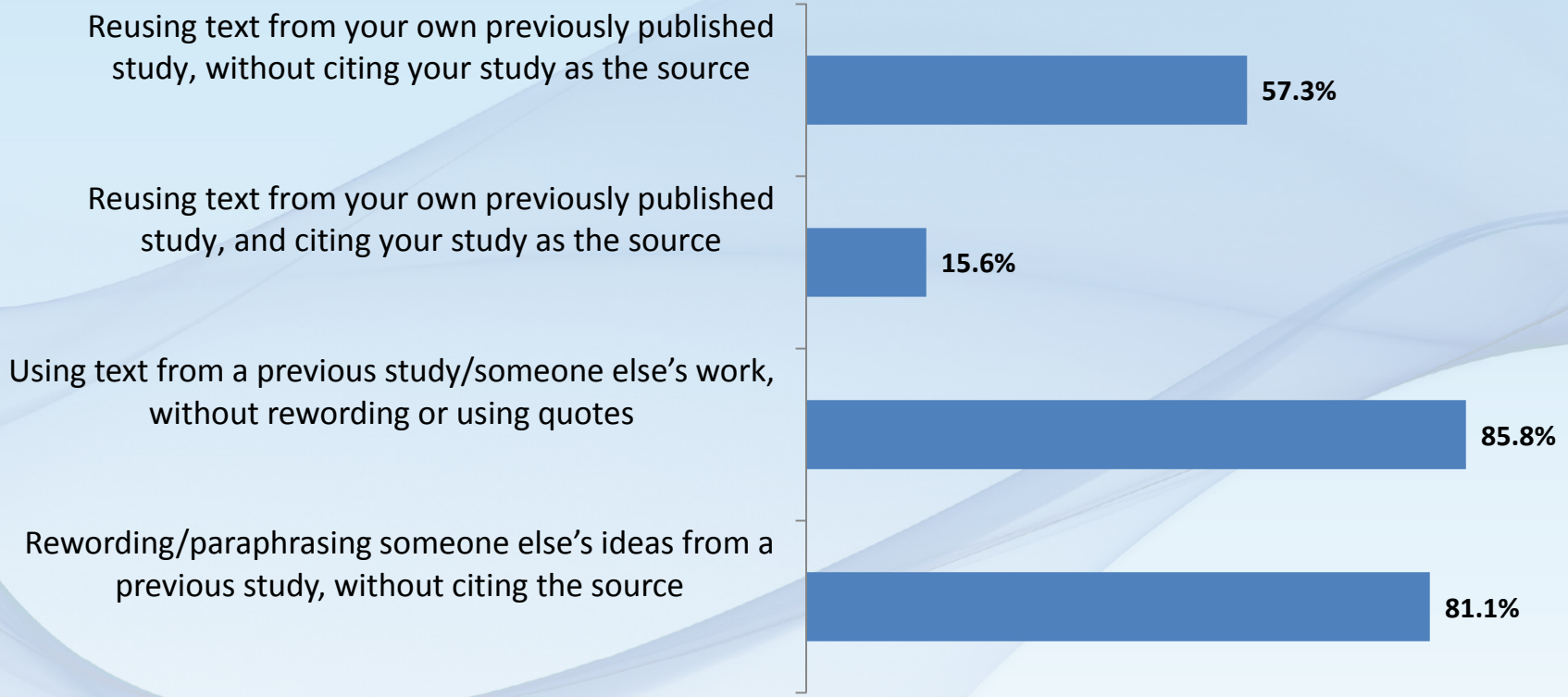
- I didn't trust the journal **(67.8%)**
- I didn't recognize the journal **(40.4%)**
- I already had another journal in mind for my paper **(21.8%)**
- I'm not sure **(4.8%)**
- Other **(0.1%)**

n = 1726

***Multiple selections allowed**

How do authors define plagiarism?

Which of the following, in your opinion, constitutes plagiarism?*



n = 3637

***Multiple selections allowed**

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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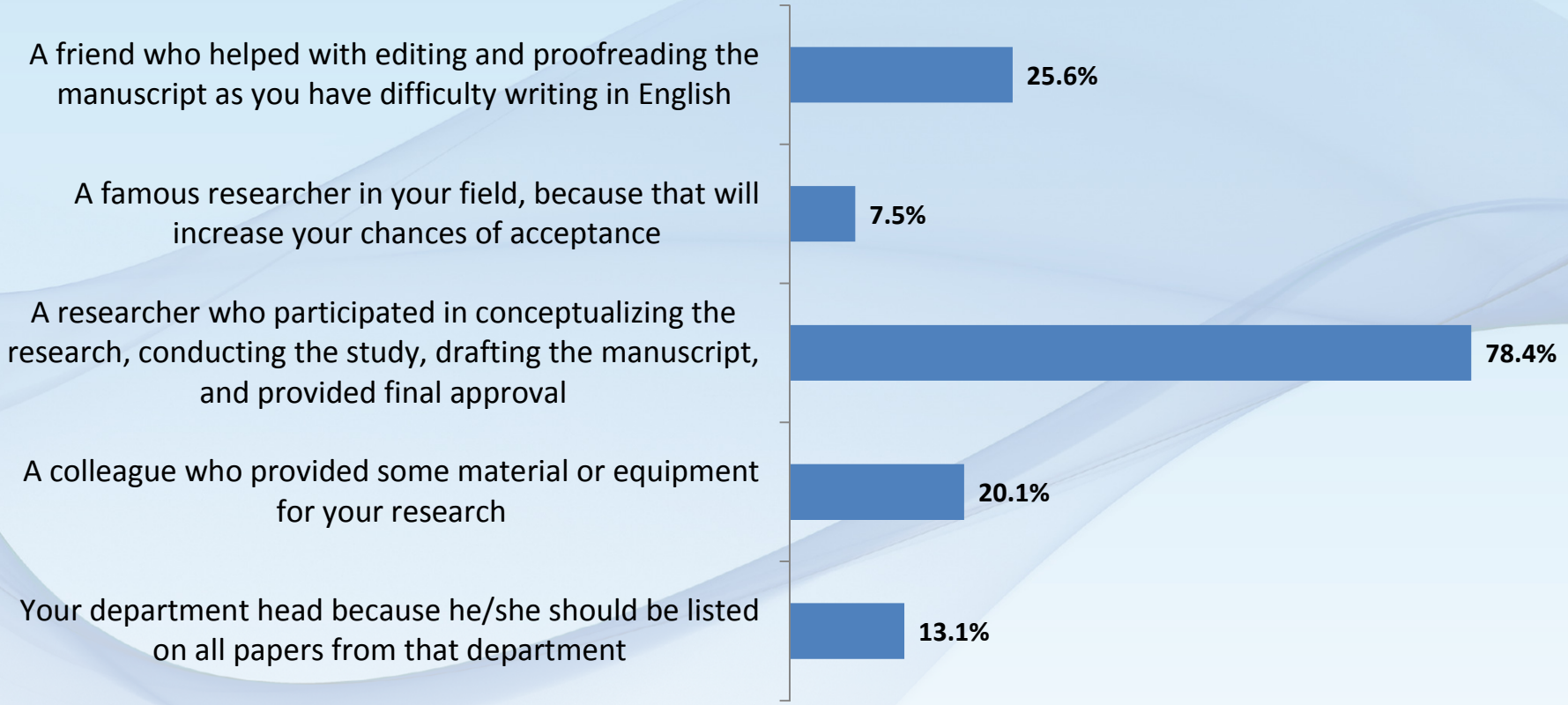
How well do authors understand authorship criteria?

Which of the following, in your opinion, should be named a co-author on your paper?*



n = 2708

***Multiple selections allowed**

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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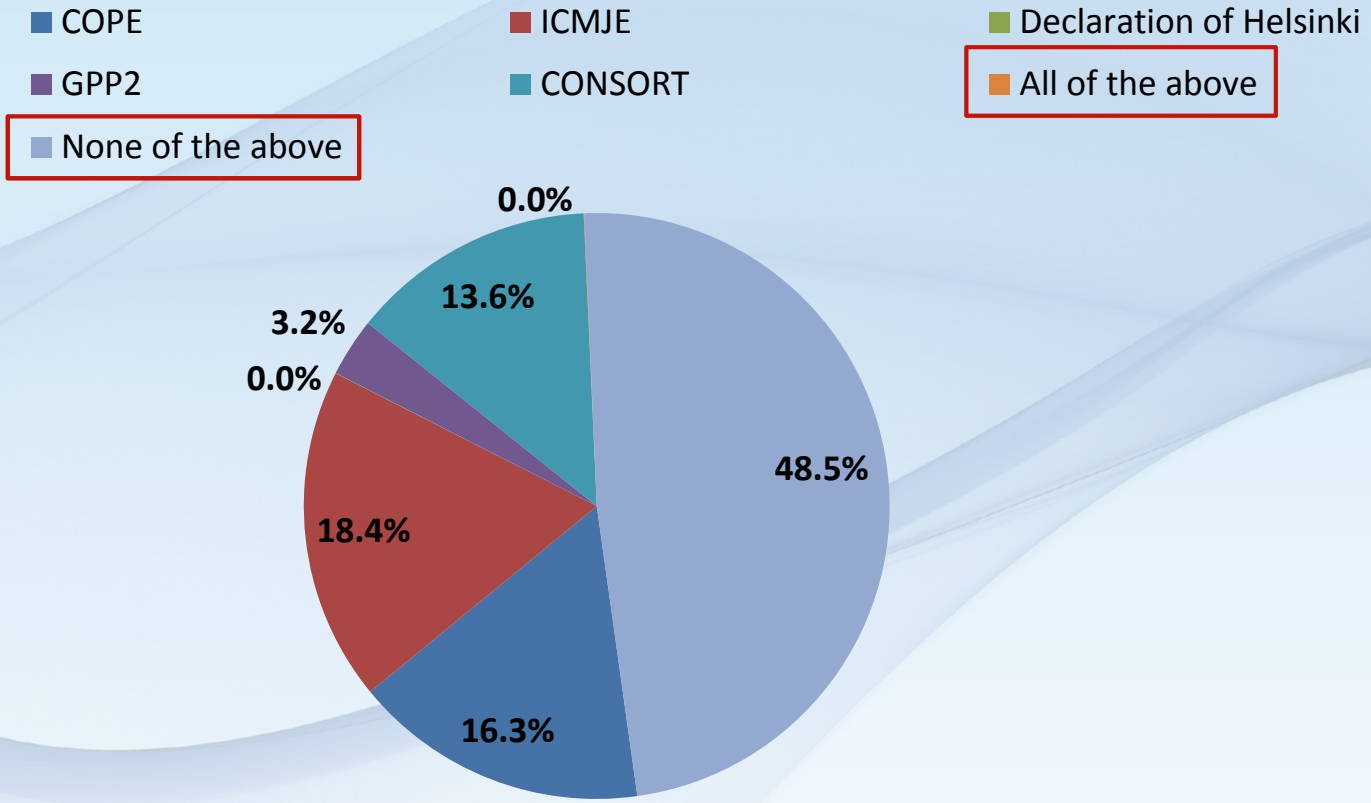
Familiarity with good publication standards

Which of the following bodies/guidelines are you familiar with?



n = 3733

What would authors like to change in the system?

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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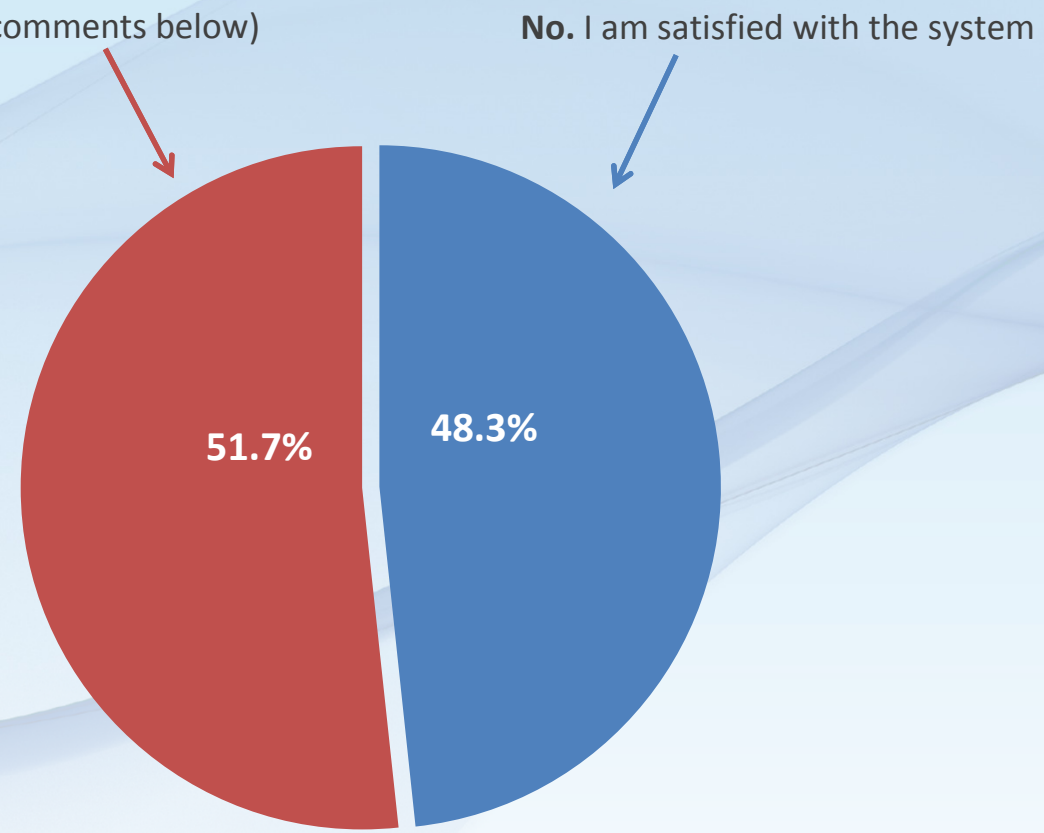
What aspects of journal publishing do authors want changed?

Would you like to change something in the publishing system?



n = 3712

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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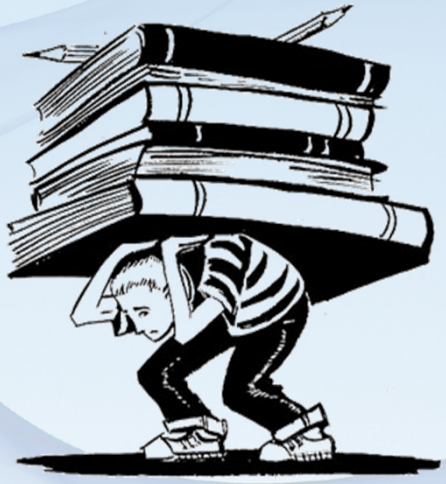
What aspects of journal publishing do authors want changed?

Main pain points and author-suggested areas of improvement



1. Time to publication
2. Peer review process/quality
3. Fairness/objectivity/bias
4. Affordability (costs/charges)
5. Pressure to publish
6. Process standardization

n = 3712

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD

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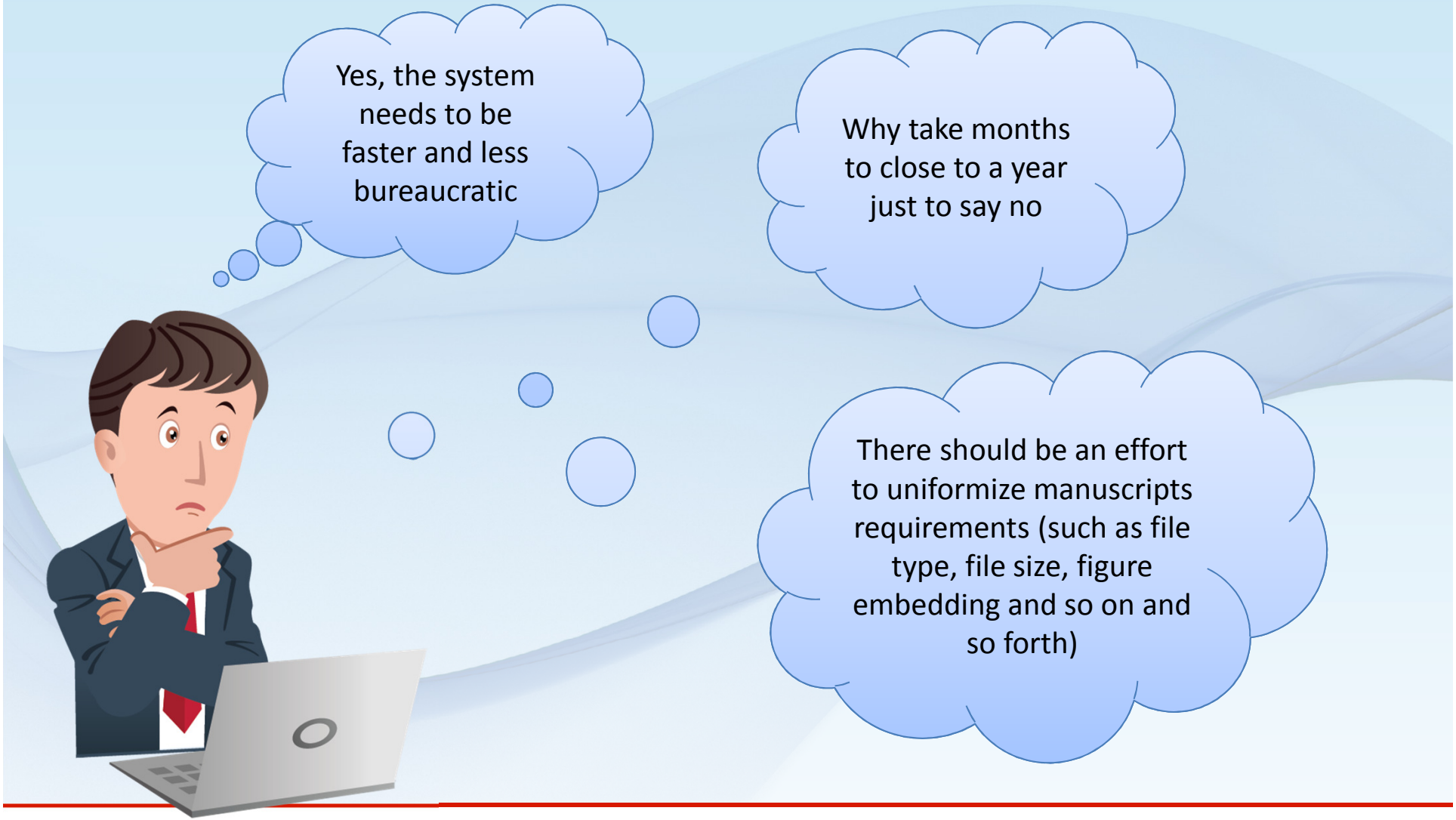
Sample author comments about the journal publishing system



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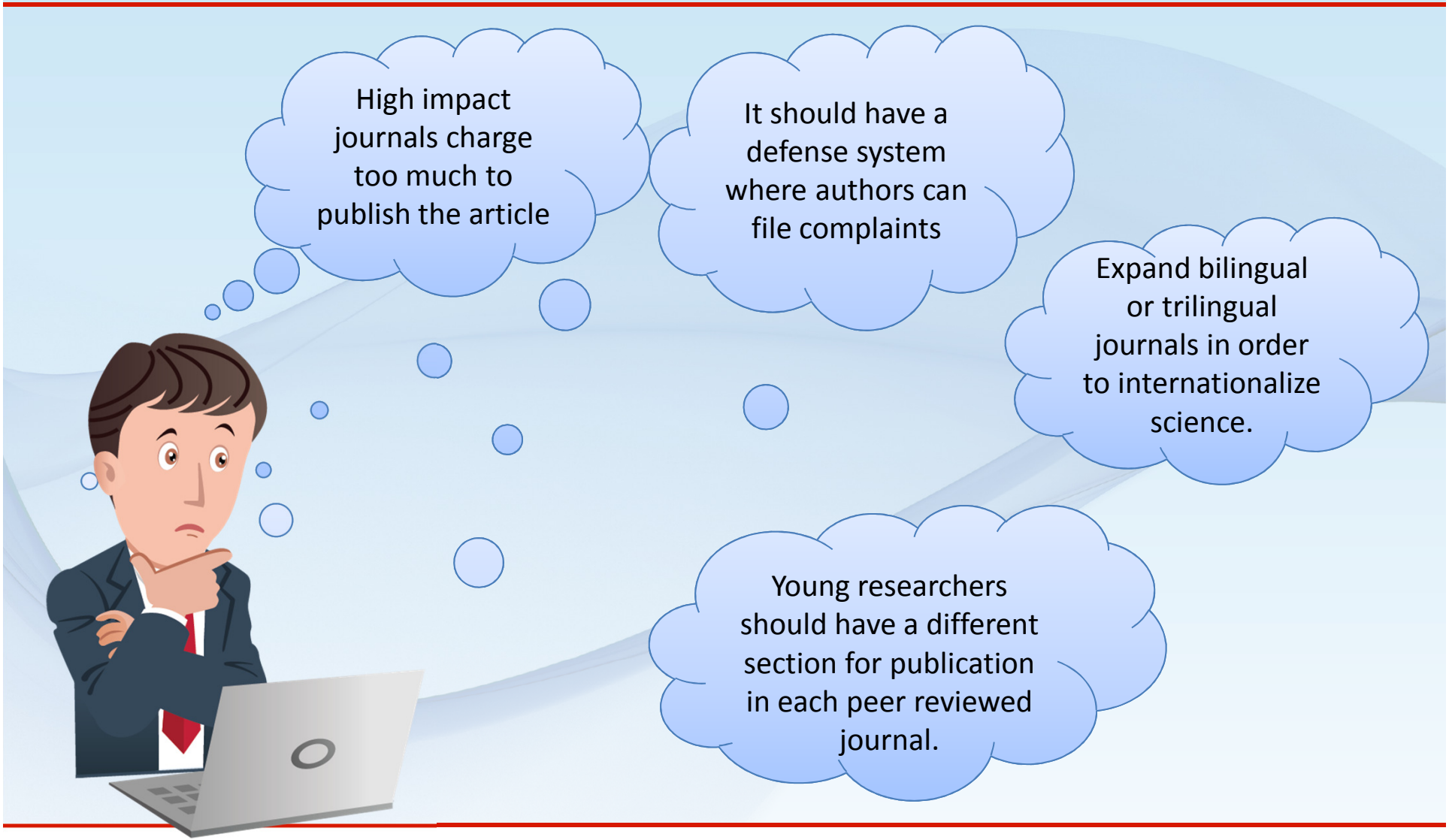

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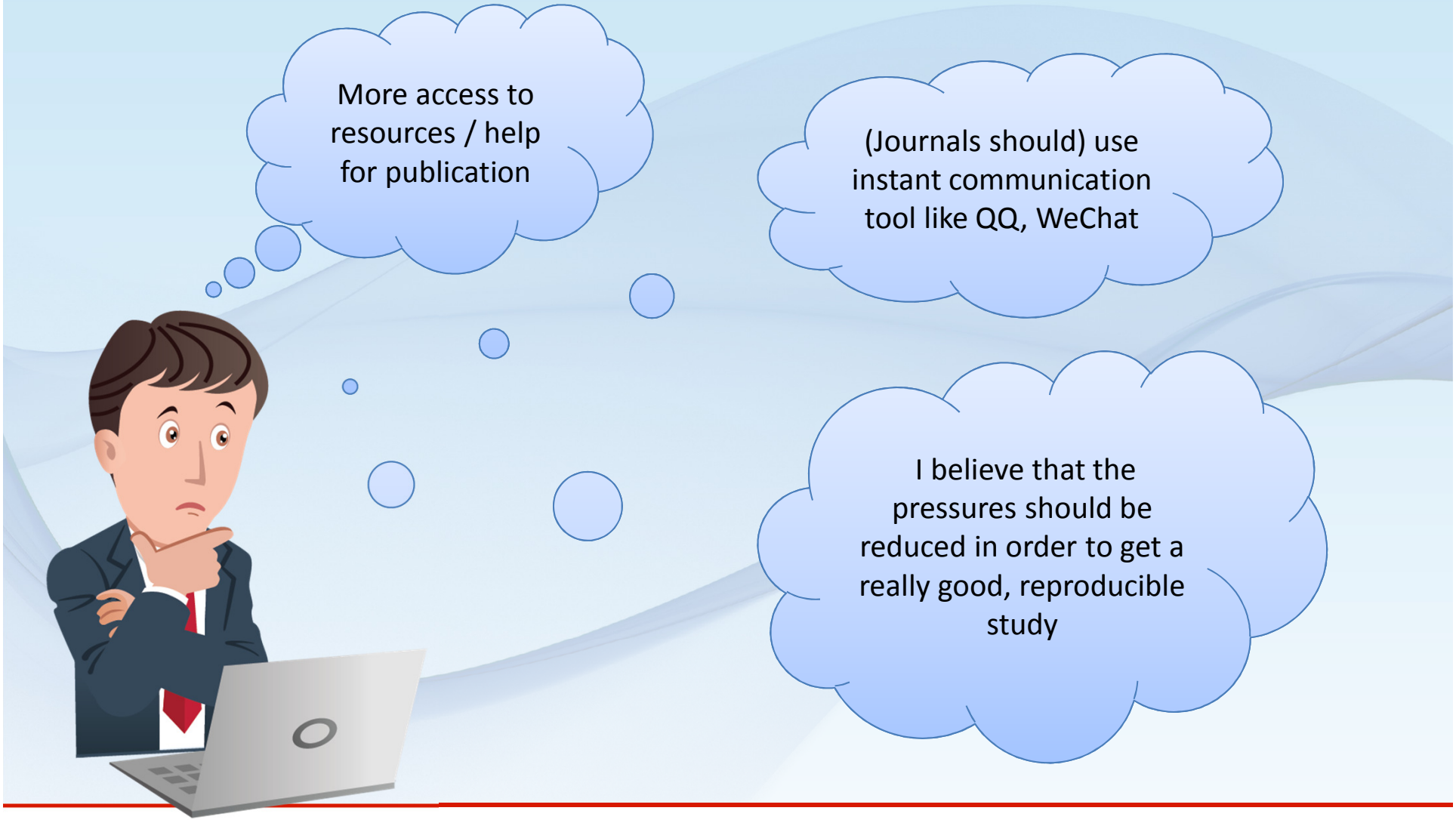

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Key takeaway… There's a lot that's broken!

Let's begin by fixing the basics!

1. Understand author perspectives
2. Reduce time to publication
3. Increase transparency in peer review
4. Eliminate bias
5. Communicate effectively with authors
6. Create new opportunities for young researchers
7. Offer learning resources on good publication practices

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Get involved!

Participate in the Editage Insights survey and share it with your authors!

https://www.editage.com/survey-author-perspectives-on-academic-publishing

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Question period / Open discussion

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