

COMUNICAZIONI SOCIALI.
RIVISTA DI MEDIA, SPETTACOLO E STUDI CULTURALI

Ethical Standards

Comunicazioni Sociali is published by Vita e Pensiero, the publisher of Catholic University of Milan, on behalf of the Department of Communication and Performing Arts and the Graduate School of Media, Communications and Performing Arts (ALMED).

The Department and the School appoint the editor in chief and identify a suitably qualified scientific committee and editorial board who can actively contribute to the planning and development of the journal, and editorial staff in charge of the procedures of article selection and review.

The scientific committee and the editorial board have a mandate of three-years. At the end of three-year mandate, they can be renewed.

The editorial staff should provide new members of the scientific committee with guidelines on everything that is expected of them, and keep existing members updated on new policies and developments relating to the journal.

Publication of an article in an academic peer-reviewed journal serves several functions, one of which is to validate and preserve the minutes of research. It is therefore of immense importance that these minutes are accurate and trustworthy. The act of publishing involves many parties, each of which plays an important role in achieving these aims. It therefore follows that the author, the journal editors, the editorial board and staff and the peer-reviewers are required to meet ethical standards at all stages in their involvement, from submission to publication of an article.

Vita e Pensiero is committed to meeting and upholding standards of ethical behaviour at all stages of the publication process. Below is a summary of our key expectations of editors, peer-reviewers, authors, the scientific committee, editorial board and staff.

1. ETHICAL EXPECTATIONS

The Editors' Responsibilities

- The editor-in-chief and the editors of each issue of a peer-reviewed journal are responsible for deciding which of the articles submitted to the journal should be published. The validation of the work in question and its importance to researchers and readers must always drive such decisions. The editors may be guided by the policies of the journal and constrained by such legal requirements as shall then be in force regarding libel, copyright infringement and plagiarism. The editors may confer with other editors, members of the scientific committee or reviewers in making this decision.
- An editor should act in a balanced, objective and fair way while carrying out their expected duties, without discrimination on the grounds of the gender, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, ethnic or geographical origin of the authors.

- The editors should handle submissions for sponsored supplements or special issues in the same way as other submissions, so that articles are considered and accepted solely on their academic merit and without commercial influence.
- The editors should inform readers about who has funded research or other scholarly work, whether the funders had any role in the research and its publication and, if so, what this was.
- The editors and any editorial board should adopt and follow reasonable procedures in the event of complaints of an ethical or conflict nature. The editor-in-chief should give authors a reasonable opportunity to respond to any complaints. All complaints should be investigated no matter when the original publication was approved. Documentation associated with any such complaints should be retained.

The Reviewers' Responsibilities

- Peer review assists the editors in the decision-making process, and in improving the quality of the published paper by reviewing the manuscript objectively, in a timely manner.
- Any manuscripts received for review must be treated as confidential documents. The reviewer should maintain the confidentiality of any information supplied by the editor or author.
- Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate. Referees should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.
- Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. A reviewer should also alert the editor-in-chief to any published or submitted content that is substantially similar to that under review.
- Reviewers should be aware of any potential conflicts of interest (financial, institutional, collaborative or other relationships between the reviewer and author) and to alert the editor-in-chief to these, withdrawing their services for that manuscript where necessary.

The Authors' Responsibilities

- A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behaviour and are unacceptable.
- Authors should maintain accurate records of the data associated with their submitted manuscript, and to supply or provide access to these data, upon reasonable request.
- An author should confirm/assert that the manuscript as submitted is not under consideration or accepted for publication elsewhere. Where portions of the content overlap with published or submitted content, he/she must acknowledge and cite those sources.

- Authors should confirm that all the work in the submitted manuscript is original and to acknowledge and cite content reproduced from other sources. They should obtain permission to reproduce any content from other sources.
- Authors should declare any potential conflicts of interest (e.g. where the author has a competing interest, real or apparent, that could be considered or viewed as exerting an undue influence on his or her duties at any stage during the publication process).
- Authors should notify promptly the journal editor-in-chief or publisher if a significant error in their publication is identified. They have to cooperate with the editors and publisher to publish an erratum, addendum, corrigendum notice, or to retract the paper, where this is deemed necessary.

The Scientific Committee and Editorial Board's Responsibilities

- Scientific Committee members will serve a variety of functions. These may include:
 - acting as ambassadors for the journal;
 - supporting and promoting the journal;
 - seeking out the best authors and best work and actively encouraging submissions;
 - reviewing submissions to the journal;
 - attending and contributing to editorial board meetings.
- The Editorial Board shall meet regularly (at least twice a year) to gauge their opinions about the running of the journal, define any changes to journal policies, and identify future challenges.
- The Editorial Board must monitor the performance of peer reviewers and take steps to ensure that it is of high quality). It should encourage academic institutions to recognise peer-review activities as part of the scholarly process.
- The Editorial Staff shall develop and maintain a database of suitable reviewers, and update this on the basis of reviewer performance; use a wide range of sources (not just personal contacts) to identify potential new reviewers (e.g. author suggestions, bibliographic databases). It shall encourage reviewers to ensure the originality of submissions and be alert to redundant publications and plagiarism
- The Editorial Staff must publish (on the journal's website) the names of the reviewers who have worked for the journal at intervals that guarantee the respect of their anonymity.

2. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Misconduct and unethical behaviour may be identified and brought to the attention of the editor-in-chief and publisher at any time, by anyone.

Whoever informs the editor-in-chief or publisher of such conduct should provide sufficient information and evidence in order for an investigation to be initiated.

All allegations should be taken seriously and treated in the same way, until a successful decision or conclusion is reached.

An initial decision should be taken by the editor-in-chief, who should consult with or seek advice from the editorial board and the publisher, if appropriate.

Evidence should be gathered while nevertheless avoiding the spread of allegations beyond those who need to know.

In any event, the author should be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations.