

# **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 identify suitably qualified scientific committee and editorial board members who can actively contribute to the development and good management of the journal.

The scientific committee is in charge for a three-years mandate and nominates the editor-in-chief. At the expiration of three-years mandate, the scientific committee may be renewed.

The editorial board should provide new scientific committee members with guidelines on everything that is expected of them and should keep existing members updated on new policies and developments.

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 peer-reviewer and the publisher have responsibilities to meet expected 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 and scientific committee.

### **1. ETHICAL EXPECTATIONS**

#### **Editor-in-chief, editorial board and editors' responsibilities**

- The editor-in-chief and the editors of each issue 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 editor-in-chief and 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 grounds of 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 and whether the funders had any role in the research and its publication
- The editor-in-chief 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.

### **Reviewers' responsibilities**

- Peer review assists the editor-in-chief and 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, if necessary withdrawing their services for that manuscript.

### **Authors' responsibilities**

- A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable. Review and professional publication articles should also be accurate and objective, and editorial 'opinion' works should be clearly identified as such.
- Authors should maintain accurate records of data associated with their submitted manuscript, and to supply or provide access to these data, on 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 has to 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.

### **Scientific Committee'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 Scientific Committee should meet regularly (at least once a year) to gauge their opinions about the running of the journal, define any changes to journal policies, and identify future challenges
- The Scientific Committee in cooperation with the Editorial Board shall monitor the performance of peer reviewers and take steps to ensure this is of high quality; 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 publication and plagiarism
- It shall encourage academic institutions to recognise peer-review activities as part of the scholarly process

## **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, the scientific committee and the publisher, if appropriate.

Evidence should be gathered, while avoiding spreading and allegations beyond those who need to know.

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