

Petrophysics

Reviewers Guidelines

I know that you have been contacted by an associate editor of *Petrophysics* who has selected you based on your technical acumen to review the subject discussed in this manuscript. You have agreed to volunteer your time and expertise to review the attached manuscript for SPWLA and *PETROPHYSICS*. Thank you for making this valuable contribution to our society and to our industry.

We at *PETROPHYSICS* are trying to improve the feedback to the authors of manuscripts suitable for publication in our journal. You have been supplied with a review form that will be an aid to you, the associate editor, and the author in improving the paper you are reviewing. However, a perennial problem in most journals is what I like to call “the inscrutable article.” This is the article whose point is hard to ascertain, or is otherwise opaque. Surely everyone has seen such articles.

Our goal at *PETROPHYSICS* is to eliminate them from our magazine. Putting it a little too simply, to make the point clear: Please make sure that the author(s) clearly “tell the reader what they are going to tell him” in their introductory remarks, then that the body of the text clearly “tells the reader” what has been promised in the paper’s title and introduction, and finally concludes (usually in a conclusion section) by “telling the reader what he has been told.” If you as reviewer have to work to find these elements, so will the average reader. This is a signal the author(s) need to do work to make their point or points more transparent.

Manuscripts containing theory expressed in the form of equations can be especially troublesome. In our journal the purpose of a complicated formula derived in a complicated series of algebraic steps usually is to compute something that is the real subject of the article. Unless the subject of the manuscript is a new derivation of some mathematical truth or formulation, most mathematics except for results can be moved to an appendix and need not clutter up a paper. In this way the significance of the result (a formula and what is calculated from it) is separated from the scaffolding used to build formula, which is not of primary interest to most readers. This is not to say that the scaffolding should be omitted; some readers may want to use the authors method and it must be included in the manuscript.

Do not be too accepting of gratuitously unconventional notation; many academically oriented authors will feel that the quantities in equations can be represented by arbitrary symbols; for example I have seen porosity represented by ν even when ϕ is unused elsewhere in the paper. If author(s) want to appear in a formation evaluation journal they should make an effort to conform to the notational conventions used in formation analysis so that their audience can use minimum energy to understand the author’s point.

Petrophysics is now an international English-language journal. Native English speaking technophiles are notorious for poor technical writing; I observe that English-as-a-second-language authors are no better. I would prefer that the reviewers spend their time on technical reviewing than in correcting poor English. But *Petrophysics* is a labor of love. Since we have no paid copy editors, the quality of *Petrophysics* is a function of the dedication and time contributed by you. You should expect and demand high quality in the manuscripts that you approve for publication; don't settle for mediocrity just because it's easier and takes less of your time. If so inclined you should

not hesitate to make revisions to the manuscripts you handle where necessary. These include changes in grammar, punctuation, and syntax to improve readability, clarity, and conciseness and may involve rearranging (or recasting) words and phrases; the addition of prepositions to reduce or eliminate long noun strings, suggestions and changes to eliminate excess and unnecessary wordiness and ambiguity. Most authors will welcome efforts and gestures made to help improve their writing.

If you find an otherwise worthy paper expressed in egregiously poor English please make a note to the associate editor to that effect, and I will assume the chore of trying to improve the English before passing it back to the author for his revisions.

It is a rare paper that will not benefit from review. Please mark up your copy of the manuscript and return the marked up copy to the authors. If your manuscript contains mathematics, please follow it through step-by-step and comment to the author where he could be more brief, where he might expand for the sake of clarity, where a reference would be helpful, what might go to an appendix, etc.

Working together reviewers, associate editors, editors, and authors can eliminate inscrutability from articles published in our magazine, to the great delight of our subscribers and especially those who will employ the author's work in their research or apply it to their work.

Mike Lovell
Editor, *Petrophysics*