

Manuscript Central™ Feature Highlights

Even if you are already using e-mail to transmit manuscripts and editorial correspondence, Manuscript Central offers more savings by integrating article solicitation, manuscript submission, submission fee collection, author file conversion, correspondence, tracking, reviewer selection, review completion, decision making, reporting, issue planning, user data management, broadcast e-mail, XML metadata transformation, and post-acceptance integration with print and online production...all in one easy-to-use system.

A dramatic departure from out-of-date systems that require editors and staff to scroll through screens of instructions and irrelevant fields, Manuscript Central features an intuitive, graphical user interface that changes dynamically according to manuscript status, user role, and even individual user preferences, showing a specific subset of data and functions matched to the task at hand. The Manuscript Central interface is designed to guide even inexperienced users through tasks step by step and represents a new generation of usability in peer review systems.

This document summarizes a few key features of Manuscript Central and how these streamline both peer review management and downstream production processes.

Standardizing Processes with Best Practice Workflows

From our experience modeling the workflows of >2,300 publications in varying disciplines and of widely varying sizes, ScholarOne has designed 8 best-practice peer review workflows in Manuscript Central. By working with one of these pre-defined workflows in Manuscript Central, you can take provide a proven editorial management structure for your editors and gain centralized control over the entire process. In addition, you can take advantage of ScholarOne's standard, rapid, implementation schedule and set-fee configuration.

Within each best-practice workflow there are nearly unlimited opportunities to address your naming, user instruction, correspondence, data gathering, decision making, and reporting requirements. Editors have a system that feels custom-built just for them (for a standard price!). One journal editor has reported that before Manuscript Central the editors just had to "figure out" a way to manage their journal work, which created dozens of different processes for the central office to monitor. Manuscript Central provided a standard workflow and set of correspondence, which has greatly reduced the administrative overhead for these valuable volunteers and streamlined central office management.

Creating Subject-Specific Submission Portals

For publishers who need to launch multiple Manuscript Central systems, ScholarOne suggests linking related journals in a Manuscript Central portal site. By creating a single Manuscript Central log-in screen, a portal site

- Streamlines promoting Manuscript Central to users; one URL applies to all publications in the portal.
- Simplifies users' ability to find the right Manuscript Central system for each title.
- Advertises the full breadth of your publishing program to every user of every publication.

The aggregated user database underlying a portal site

- Allows system users to maintain only one set of contact information and one user ID and password combination. Different levels of rights for each publication can be attached to the one account.
- Enables better balancing of manuscript assignments across your entire publishing program. Editors will see a reviewer's overall workload (while not seeing manuscript-level detail for the "other" titles).
- Reduces user database maintenance tasks for staff.
- Creates a subject-specific list of users that can be exported for marketing or other purposes.

An additional feature of a Manuscript Central Portal Site is the ability for an administrator to easily transfer a submitted manuscript from one journal within a publisher's Manuscript Central portal site to another.

Simplifying Online Submission

Selecting an easy-to-use system is one of the most important elements of achieving the benefits promised by online publication management. If online submission and review are difficult, your authors and referees may send documents in hard copy, forcing your staff to spend time digitizing and uploading information. Some authors may even submit their papers elsewhere; reviewers may decline your invitations. Many publishers tell us that their most sought-after authors and reviewers are also those least likely to tolerate a complicated system.

Manuscript Central is designed to balance the needs of the editorial office for comprehensive information gathering, with authors' and reviewers' desires to submit their work quickly. Your users' tasks are made as easy as possible by customizable on-screen instructions; a submission status indicator showing progress (eg, "Step 4 of 6"); easy-to-use pull-down menus and data fields that automatically populate from user accounts; intuitive graphical screens that are easy to navigate and that can be completed in any order; and flexible and fast file upload and conversion functions.

Authors complete a journal-defined set of submission questions and upload any type of file you allow. Manuscript Central on-the-fly creates *both* HTML and PDF manuscript proofs from the most common file types, including Word, WordPerfect, Excel, PowerPoint, RTF, HTML, TIFF, JPG, BMP, and more. The system also hot-links properly formatted references to supplementary files and PubMed. ScholarOne's manuscript upload and conversion processes are proven to be robust and stable, completing conversions in a matter of seconds. And, perhaps most importantly, our technical support team is on call for authors who would like personal assistance.

In addition, Manuscript Central features a complete set of tools for inviting authors to submit manuscripts. These invitations may be made one at a time (eg, for a single editorial) or in large batches (eg, for a journal supplement). These invitations may be tracked separately from submitted manuscripts and even re-assigned to new authors as needed.

The Manuscript Central submission process is proven author-friendly by >60,000 submissions every month! Dr. Robert Frank, Editor of *Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science*, and user of Manuscript Central for nearly a year attests that Manuscript Central is easy to use: "Most of [our] authors and reviewers mastered the system in a very short time, indeed, from the first time they used it."

Authors are attracted to journals that have reduced manuscript preparation and submission costs and improved decision turnaround. Joy Moore, former Technology Development Manager for Blackwell Journals, told us that "Blackwell journals have seen increased submission volume and dramatically faster time to decision" with Manuscript Central.

Guaranteeing Collection of Submission Fees

The Manuscript Central E-commerce Module can be used to collect author fees at the time of submission, eliminating administrative effort to collect charges and moving manuscripts more quickly into the editorial process. You specify acceptable payments types, including Visa, MasterCard, American Express, check, or purchase order. If configured to allow only credit card transactions, the E-commerce Module could stop any submissions where payment was not received. The tool also provides reports on manuscripts according to payment status, helping you to collect on manuscripts where the check or purchase order was promised but not received. The credit card payments are processed by our partners VeriSign and Wells Fargo and require accounts with both companies. ScholarOne sets up the VeriSign account as part of the module configuration. The society would make arrangements with Wells Fargo, using guidelines provided by ScholarOne, and Wells Fargo would charge banking fees directly to the society.

Automating Task Management

Manuscript Central is a wholly integrated task management system. What we mean by this is that you do not have to perform a task in one place and then go to another screen to log that you just performed a

task; this process is completely automated. For example, when you send a decision letter to the author, the decision is logged; the manuscript status is changed; the letter is stored to the database; reviewers may be notified; the Author Center is updated to show the decision and the letter; and the date, time, and performer of the task are captured in the database. These actions, and many others, all happen simultaneously according to the rules defined by the best-practice workflow you have chosen and your custom letters. This level of automation significantly decreases the repetitive administrative tasks traditionally associated with peer review management and cuts much of the cost and time out of the process.

Accessing Your Personal “To Do” List

Manuscript Central not only tracks articles for the editorial office but also tells every user of the system what needs to be done for each assigned manuscript and when their work is due, highlighting overdue tasks in red letters. The system moves manuscripts from one user’s “to do” list to the next, based on task statuses and due dates, and can be set up to send automated e-mail reminders to tardy reviewers and editors. The end result is faster delivery of manuscripts to editors and reviewers around the world and a greater emphasis on timeliness of review and decision. But administrative overhead is actually reduced.

Improving Review Turnaround

Manuscript Central can improve review turnaround by improving the reviewer selection process, speeding the delivery of manuscripts to assigned reviewers, and simplifying the capture of reviewer comments.

By using Manuscript Central editors will have access to the same comprehensive reviewer database used by the staff. (ScholarOne understands that confidentiality is the cornerstone of peer review for many journals, so editors are blinded to the details of papers that they themselves authored.)

Giving editors detailed information about potential reviewers can positively affect their choices and improve the quality and timeliness of reviews received. The Manuscript Central “auto-suggest” feature will automatically match reviewers to manuscripts by their areas of expertise, and you can ask Manuscript Central to suggest a reviewer who was a reviewer or author in the past of a similar paper. Your editors and staff will be able to use multiple other search criteria to identify potential reviewers, and search results include detailed reviewer workloads and performance histories. Editors may find new reviewers by searching other systems, including PubMed and Google, with key metadata elements, such as manuscript titles, author names, and key words, which Manuscript Central captures and passes automatically to the external search engine.

Once invited, reviewers can accept the task by simply clicking a link in the invitation e-mail. This will log their acceptance in the manuscript record and automatically grant them access to the manuscript in the Manuscript Central Reviewer Center. This process completely eliminates the current overhead for

sending manuscripts to reviewers. Even e-mail transmission is slower and less reliable and can occur only during working hours.

Allowing Complex Review Comments

Reviewer comments cannot always fit into a plain text form. Manuscript Central allows reviewers to submit comments both in an online form and as separately attached files. These files may include complex equations, figures, data sets, and even annotated manuscript files for the author.

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Automating Editorial Correspondence

Manuscript Central allows you to create your own custom letter templates, associate these templates with specific tasks or process milestones, and track all correspondence sent. Much of the correspondence can be automated based on task status (eg, a late review notice is sent behind the scenes when a pending review misses its due date). Another convenient feature is creating and sending broadcast e-mail to selected lists of contacts in the user database. This is great for sending a call for papers, asking users to update their contact records, or advertising related products.

All letter templates are mail merge technology in that specific data in the e-mail templates (such as manuscript title, author name, reviewers' comments to the author, and editor signature lines) is placed in the letter automatically according to database fields you specify in the template. System administrators can add new letters to existing actions and edit all letters at any time, and creating these letters could not be easier. One click adds the needed data field directly into the letter template. In addition, Manuscript Central allows you to edit letter templates offline for later upload.

Integrating Peer Review with Production

Manuscript Central can also improve the handoff of accepted manuscripts to, for example, copyeditors, composition vendors, and printers. ScholarOne understands publication production because we were once publishers ourselves as the Publishing Technologies division of Carden Jennings Publishing, a custom medical communications company. Today, we work with all of the leading scholarly journal compositors, printers, and online aggregators to facilitate the smooth transfer of metadata and files from Manuscript Central. The result for our clients has been to reduce the cost and time associated with publication production as well as peer review. Manuscript Central gives you the ultimate flexibility in integrating data and manuscripts with any number of downstream processes, including

- **Issue management.** You can use Manuscript Central to create volumes and issues, assign manuscripts to these issues, calculate pages, sort the assigned manuscripts in table of contents order, and export the table of contents and files for assigned manuscripts.
- **Metadata sharing.** You may finely categorize people, articles, and individual files with custom questions and hierarchical attributes (eg, key words) collected during article submission or account creation. Attributes that authors supply to categorize figures, for example, could be used as search terms in an online image database that complements the print journal. All manuscript data is formatted in XML, which can be exported at any stage of review or decision for immediate online publication or sharing with an abstracting and indexing database. Special characters captured in the Manuscript Central database are exported in Unicode for ease of migration among computing systems.
- **Copyediting and composition.** Files submitted by authors can be accessed via the Manuscript Central interface or exported to a production team. Immediate access to these electronic files can shave days to weeks from the production cycle. In addition, the word processing file uploaded to Manuscript Central by the author is the same file used to create the PDF for peer review. Eliminated are the days and dollars lost comparing the hard copies approved by the editor to the electronic files sent by the author for production. The Manuscript Central batch export tool automates repetitive tasks such as keying in the export target (eg, a compositor's FTP address) and ensures that manuscripts are sent to their destinations on schedule and with the proper transmittal data.
- **Image management.** Manuscript Central offers DigitalExpert, the image preflighting tool from The Sheridan Group, as an optional module for Manuscript Central. DigitalExpert reports can help authors create digital images that meet the quality criteria for publication, cutting the cost and time spent by your production staff manipulating poor quality files.
- **Publication planning.** A real challenge for many publishers is knowing how many pages are being prepared for print publication at any one time. Manuscript Central can estimate the number of pages to be published for each article well ahead of page proof stage and improve print budget planning.
- **Publish ahead of print.** The HTML and PDF manuscript proofs displayed online by Manuscript Central are Web enabled and can be moved into an online publishing system at any time. The process to publish directly to HighWire Press from Manuscript Central is already well established with several major journals with the optional First Look module.
- **DOI capture.** Manuscript Central assigns every manuscript a perpetually unique identifier, which can be integrated into your digital object identifier (DOI) strategy. Manuscript Central has a field for capturing the DOI and includes this field in the XML exports.
- **Other exports.** Various manuscript and user data can be exported at any time in standard formats for integration with other processes such as production tracking, invoicing, reporting, and marketing, eliminating costly re-keying of data.

File and data exports from Manuscript Central can be performed manuscript-by-manuscript at any stage of review or publication; accepted manuscripts may also be assigned to pre-scheduled batch exports from the Manuscript Central Production Center. These batch exports automate repetitive tasks such as keying in the export target (eg, a compositor's FTP address) and ensure that assigned manuscripts are sent to their destinations on schedule and with the proper transmittal data.

Reporting on the Process

A major purpose of Manuscript Central is to provide a strategic overview of how a journal stands with respect to its performance objectives and to help managers identify bottlenecks in the workflow. Within the system there are several ways to view and build lists and statistical reports.

From the Admin Center "dashboard" (your main working menu) the following quick statistics are accessed: Manuscripts Submitted by Type, Average Time From Submission to First Decision, Editor and Reviewer Turnaround, Acceptance Ratio, and Disk Usage in Mb. An unlimited number of custom manuscript lists can be built from the dashboard using the advanced search features in Manuscript Central. Within individual user records, there are also statistics on reviewer performance, which are consulted typically at the time of manuscript assignment.

The Manuscript Central ad hoc reporting tool contains pre-built templates that make these powerful reports easy to use. These templates analyze data related to

- **Submissions**, filtered by submission date and grouped by article type, editor, month of submission, country of submission, or current status
- **Decisions**, filtered by submission and decision date and grouped by article type, editor, month of submission, country of submission, or decision
- **Final dispositions**, grouped by article type, editor, country of submission, month of submission, or decision
- **Time spans** (up to 5-task comparison) for measuring the time lapse between workflow tasks, grouped by article type, country of submission, editor, decision, and month of submission
- **Decision ratios** grouped by article type, editor, or month of submission, and limitable to only the most recent decision on the paper
- **System users**, including reviewer and editor turnaround performance

The selection filters for each of these templates can be saved for future use, ensuring consistent report results and reducing time spent re-creating custom reports.

The Manuscript Central ad hoc reports can be viewed through your Web browser or exported to a comma-separated value file or in XML. The online viewer allows you to drill down into report categories, such as

article type, and view individual article details. Some of the reports also create their own graphs as part of the standard function (see below).

