

Various facets of scientific publishing: from becoming an author to how a large journal works behind the scene

Prof. Dr. Henrik Rudolph

Netherlands Defense Academy Faculty of Military Sciences, Breda, Netherlands
Editor-in-Chief, Applied Surface Science

You may have, at some point, heard the expression “Publish or Perish”. It is true that a scientist, who does not publish his or her scientific results in a reputable (electronic) journal, will not receive the necessary recognition or scientific respect as a scientist. It is often a major hurdle for a young scientist to get the first paper accepted in a scientific journal. This submission will, most likely, be related to a PhD thesis and the aspiring author will benefit from the support from their advisor and other senior scientists.

In this presentation I will discuss the consequences of this pressure to publish and the resulting pressure on the editorial system at one of the larger scientific journals: Applied Surface Science from the Elsevier group (more than 16000 submissions per year and an impact factor of 5.155). I will also give the aspiring author or reviewer some tips and suggestions, that will improve your chances of having your submission accepted in a reputable journal. However, I will also dwell on the shadow side of this pressure to publish and the possible ethical pitfalls. I will also try to convince you to participate fully in the whole process of scientific publishing, including reviewing papers for scientific journal or helping others with their papers. The tips and tricks are not discipline specific and are applicable in most areas of the sciences.

Henrik Rudolph (Frederiksberg, Denmark 1958) received a Ba in Chemistry and a MSc in Physics from the University of Copenhagen and subsequently obtained a PhD from California Institute of Technology (USA). In 1990 he joined Utrecht University (the Netherlands) as an associate professor of physics and in 2001 he became full professor in atomic and molecular physics. Since 2012 he is employed by the Ministry of Defense of the Netherlands. His research interests include plasma surface interactions, functionalization of surfaces as well as detailed chemical reactions at surfaces.

