

# Journal of Sedimentary Research

## What Makes a Good Contribution to JSR?

Any editor will be quick to say that "you can only publish what is submitted", and what is submitted is governed by the authors' perceptions of the readership and whether the journal is the best venue for the paper. A quick look through issues of JSR over the last few years reveals a very broad range of topics, with only ~ 50% of the paper contributed by authors from the U.S. despite the location of the Society headquarters and the publishing house (Allen Press). JSR is clearly an international journal. Thus, papers must be written with that in mind. Parochial research results that are only presented and discussed relative to the immediate geological area are not appropriate. However, many studies could have application elsewhere; it is a matter of how the paper is framed in the introduction, and how the results are presented and discussed.

- In the introduction, develop a clear explanation of the importance of the study so that its relevance to broader research questions is apparent to all readers. Revisit the importance in the discussion and summarize it in the conclusions and abstract. If the broad importance of the work cannot be adequately stated, then the manuscript is probably better suited for a regional journal.
- Keep results (the data) separate from interpretation.
- Clearly explain the reasoning behind interpretations; that is, describe how the data support the interpretation.
- Consider alternative hypothesis and explain why they are rejected.
- Keep the manuscript focused on the main topic; eliminate data or ideas that are not germane to the topic.
- Provide high-quality photographs and diagrams, and size them as you expect them to appear in the published article. Photocopies of photographs are generally inadequate for the review process and are legitimate reasons for reviewers to recommend against a paper.

**Conveying the wider significance:** More and more, these days, geoscientists are relying on internet search engines and online access to literature. This means that they are making spur-of-the-moment decisions about papers based solely on the title and abstract. If the title is obscure, they don't call up the abstract. If the key implications are at the end of the abstract, or are not emphatically stated, they may not get the message and will move onto something else rather than read the paper.

A common review comment made about abstracts: "The phrase "So What?" sums up my feeling about this. There is far too much detail here, yet it is still poor at explaining the relevance to Joe Geologist in Asia or Jane Bedrock in Canada."

**What subjects are appropriate?** Any aspect of sedimentary geology is acceptable. The focus can be on the inherent characteristics of sediments themselves, their origin or post-depositional changes, or the impact that the sediments have on other aspects of the sediment record (fossils, geochemistry, geophysical characteristics, fluid flow) and larger scale properties (physical and biostratigraphy, cyclicity, etc.). Papers on applied aspects of sedimentary geology (such as, hazards, groundwater, petroleum resources, geoarchaeology, and environmental geology) are encouraged if there is a clear research component.

All papers submitted should have new and significant information. Shingling is strongly discouraged; papers with more than minimal overlap (10%) will be returned to author (see editorial in January 1999 issue for the negative impacts of shingling).

Many contributions come from non-native English speakers. The acceptance of a paper is based strictly on science, not quality of English, but the review process works more efficiently if the English is readable. The science may be difficult to evaluate if the paper is poorly written. It is highly recommended that manuscripts be pre-reviewed by a native English speaker before initial submission.

Graduate student research results breathe new life into the Journal providing fresh material. But papers should be written with the Journal readership in mind, and a cut-and-paste version of a long thesis is obvious to both reviewers and editors. Major revisions at this point are painful for everyone, and if the writing is too turgid, rejection may be the only recourse.

The average paper published in JSR is ~24 double-spaced pages (plus references and captions) and approximately 12 figures. To save space, authors should carefully review and limit the amount of information placed in Tables and Appendices for publication with the article. Authors now have the option of archiving relevant data on the SEPM data archive. These data can then be accessed on the internet by interested researchers (see Archiving the Data on the Guidelines to Authors web page).

You do not have to be a member of SEPM to publish in JSR, but we welcome and encourage authors to become active members of the Society.

In summary, the current philosophy of the Journal is to encourage the broadest scope possible in the field of Sedimentary Geology. Each manuscript must make a new and significant contribution that is important to others beyond those working on the next outcrop.

