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Rewarding your peer review and editorial contributions: Publons

By: [Chantal Hukkelhoven](#) · 7 August 2019

Category: [Open Science](#), [Publons](#)

Researchers like you spend much time and effort peer reviewing others' manuscripts, but are generally not rewarded for this activity as the reviews are often anonymous.

Are you curious how this can be changed?

Nowadays, several platforms have been developed that help you to record, verify and showcase your peer-reviewing and editorial contributions. This blogpost introduces [Publons](#), the most commonly used platform with more than 500,000 reviewers and editors worldwide. How does it work and why is it useful? Are there any alternatives? All these questions will be answered below.

What is Publons?

Publons is a platform that creates and displays verified profiles of a researcher's pre-publication peer review and editorial contributions for academic journals. These profiles can then be included in, amongst others, curriculum vitae, funding applications, and promotion and performance evaluations. Publons also creates an overview of the quality of your reviews compared to your peers. It is also possible to import and showcase your own publications in Publons.

How to register?

You can register for Publons via the websites of Web of Science and Publons itself. Both registrations are free.



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2. Select 'Sign In' in the headline at the top of the page and register for a Web of Science account. A registration invitation with a code will be emailed to you.
3. Select 'Publons' in the headline at the top of the page and sign in to Publons using your Web of Science credentials.

Via [Publons.com](#)

1. Go to the [registration page of Publons](#)
2. Enter your name and email address and a registration invitation will be emailed to you. You can also use your Publons credentials to sign in for Web of Science and EndNote.

Publons gives you a unique and persistent ID number, which you maintain by yourself.

How to add peer reviews to Publons?

There are four ways to add peer reviews to your profile on Publons:

1. Add reviews performed for partnered journals
2. Send review receipts to reviews@publons.com

Below you can watch a short demonstration on how to add reviews to your profile by sending review receipts.



1. Enable auto-updates
2. Add reviews through the forms on the site

More information on these four ways for adding peer reviews can be found on this [page](#).

What are the main advantages of a Publons profile?

Make your contributions visible

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Platforms such as Publons give you a verified referee and journal editing profile, which you may use in your curriculum vitae and funding applications. For example, your profile may help you to be invited for joining a journal's advisory board or to be recognised as an expert in your field.

Go from publication to impact

Furthermore these platforms show that you are an active member of the research community. The latter may become increasingly important, as major organisations – such as the [San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), the [Leiden Manifesto](#), and also VSNU, NWO, NFU and ZonMw – have been calling for a change in how institutes recognise and reward researchers, with a shift in emphasis from publications to impact. These developments align with worldwide discussions on '[science in transition](#)' and the emergence of [Open Science](#).

Work more efficient

The profile may also be helpful because it is easy to use and will save you time and effort. You can export your verified reviewer profile and use it as a proof of your service as a reviewer or editor.

Compare yourself to your peers

Furthermore, in Publons you can track metrics of your reviewing and editing activities, such as the number and length of your reviews. In this way you can compare yourself to others in your field and in your institution.

What is displayed and what not?

At Publons you can keep your profile private or you may show various levels of details about each individual review, such as the year, publishers name, journal name or even the full text of the review – although journals can choose to override the latter. Review content is shared using a Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license. Also the mean length of your review compared to others in your field or institution is displayed, which serves as an indicator of the quality of your work.

Are there any alternatives for Publons?

Yes, there are alternatives for Publons to register your pre-publication reviewing and editorial activities. About six months ago [ORCID](#) launched a [feature](#) that adds this information to your ORCID profile. Also other lesser known platforms, such as [Peerage of Science](#), exist as an alternative for Publons. In addition, platforms that register your reviews *after* publication exist – for example [F1000Research](#).

When comparing Publons with ORCID, why would you use one above the other? This depends on your preferences. In general, researchers consider Publons as slightly more user-friendly: you can just tick a journal's box at the end of the review and then this review is automatically forwarded to Publons. In addition, you can submit reviews by yourself – this cannot be done at ORCID. On the other hand, some researchers have more confidence in the motives and actions of ORCID, which is a community-based and non-profit platform compared to the commercial Publons.

Publons and ORCID are official partners, you can permit to [synchronise](#) your Publons and ORCID records.

More information

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- Image Collections
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- Open Access
- Open Education
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- Policy
- Publication strategy
- Publons
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[Contact the library](#) if you have any questions or would like to receive more information.

If you would like to learn how to review a manuscript you can follow the [WGS course 'Reviewing a scientific manuscript'](#). The course consists of both lectures and interactive sessions where challenges and examples of reviews will be discussed. Publons will be introduced in this course.

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