

Why (and how) to publish in *Geologia Croatica*



Geologia Croatica

EDITORIAL

With the beginning of this year, the journal you have in your hand or read on internet, *Geologia Croatica* has (partly) changed Editors-in-Chief. The former editors Prof. Igor Vlahović and Dr. Ivo Velić resigned with January 2008, because the inflow of manuscripts declined in recent years due to the fact that articles published in our journal were not considered for scientific promotion in Croatia. They wanted, and have succeeded, in remotivating the Croatian geological and larger scientific community, and since January 2008, articles published in *Geologia Croatica* will be eligible for scientific promotion. In this way they have helped to maintain the journal. Dr. Ivo Velić agreed to be reappointed as editor in the transitional period to stress the continuity of editorial policy and to help the new incoming editor, prof. Mladen Juračić, and the new editorial board.

The editors and the editorial board are indebted to Prof. Igor Vlahović for all his effort and time he spent to improve *Geologia Croatica* to be as good and timely as it is now. He is, without any doubt, the person most responsible for the large improvement in the scientific content as well as the graphical editing, layout and web site of the journal. This can be seen in the acknowledgements that the journal and the Editors have been receiving over the last 15 years. A recent e-mail from the world renowned and esteemed Professor John G. Ramsay illustrates this very well:

I was sad to hear that you are both resigning as Editors of Geologia Croatica. When I received the journal on first becoming a member of the International Scientific Advisory Board I was extremely impressed with the quality of the Journal and its excellent modern format. However I do see your problems caused by the science citation bases not being willing to include Geologia Croatica in their coverage. However, I do hope that the journal continues because it has already published valuable scientific material.

Professor Peter W. Skelton from Open University, Milton Keynes, UK sent similar letter:

I should like to record my deep appreciation of the outstanding dedication of the previous Chief Editors, Dr. Ivo Velić

and Dr. Igor Vlahović, together with the support of the continuing Managing Editor, Ms. Alisa Martek, to the maintenance of consistently high editorial and production standards of the journal and their great efforts to enhance international access to its contents through various geoscience databases and the journal's excellent website. I am confident that, if given sufficient (and well-deserved) support from the national geoscience institutions and, indeed, international members of the geoscience research community with interests in the region, the new Editorial Board should be able to build on the solid foundations laid by their predecessors and continue to nurture the important place of the journal in the geological literature and the high regard in which it is held.

When referring to this period we would like to stress the importance of our language reviewer, Dr. Julie Robson whose efforts have contributed to the high language quality of the articles and journal, especially since most authors are not English native speakers.

Our journal *Geologia Croatica* has been continuously published since 1947 and is being indexed in almost all relevant databases for the Geosciences (*GeoRef*, *GeoBase*, *Geological Abstracts*, *GeoArchive*, *Geotitles*, *Scopus*, etc.). With this number, *Geologia Croatica* enters its seventh decade and we will make every effort to try to bring the journal quality and timeliness to the level needed to enter the *Web of Science* (*Thomson Scientific*). The scope of the journal will remain broad, and we would like to become a leading regional geoscience journal. However, we would like to receive more manuscripts concerning the Dinarides, the Adriatic/Mediterranean region, Pannonian Basin, and/or karst issues.

We plan to introduce an online submission system very soon and to strengthen the rules for the technical quality of the manuscripts received, in order to improve and shorten the handling period. Also, we decided to publish 3 issues per year and to shift our publication dates forwards the beginning of the year (February, June, October). Efficient and expeditious handling of manuscripts is constrained by: (i) the editorial system (which we will try to improve), (ii) the review process (identification of individuals prepared to provide detailed reviews in a reason-

nable time, is always difficult), and (iii) by authors' diligence in observing the publication rules of the journal.

Many authors carefully read the instructions to authors and submit manuscripts that are in accordance with the guidelines. They use a spellchecker. Such manuscripts are easily handled, as the editors can focus on the scientific content alone. However, some of the manuscripts may be scientifically sound, but suffer from problems which the authors should address. Consideration of the points below will considerably help authors with the presentation of their work. These have been adapted from another Editorial (BENNETT, 2007).

Include a testable hypothesis – Science is driven by hypotheses. Without one, a paper lacks focus and rigor. Open ended science is weak, often repetitive, and uninteresting. Generating a hypothesis (or well defined objective) in advance of doing the work tightens up the study and makes the results more meaningful.

Carefully document what you have done – So that your locations can be revisited, your observations confirmed, and/or your experiment can be duplicated by others.

Provide adequate statistical analysis of your data – If a study includes the collection of data, it is essential they be analysed statistically. Without statistics the reader will have no idea if the results mean anything.

Cite a reasonable number of references – We all know there are lot of papers on any subject, so there is no reason to cite them all. Only example papers need to be cited as well as specific papers that are critically addressed in the new study. Ideally somewhere between 30 and 40 references are needed for the average paper, no more. And obviously less than a dozen references is too few.

Keep it short – How many of us have actually read a 30+ page paper? Probably only the author and one or two colleagues working in the same field. Long papers suffer from verbosity and are tedious to read. The ideal paper length is so-

mewhere around a dozen printed pages, which is less than 2000 words on average.

Follow the journal style – Check the Guide for Authors and be sure to follow the journal's style for the various sections of your paper. Make sure your submission is also complete. Some leave out the keywords, abstract and title page.

Follow the Ethical Guidelines – Recent failures to follow the Ethical Guidelines for Authors have included multiple submission of a paper to more than one journal, and plagiarism of previously published work by another author. These are grounds for immediate rejection.

Make the English readable – If English is not your native language it is important to have a native English speaker/writer edit your submission so the English is readable.

If your submission follows these points there is a good chance that the manuscript will be accepted. Of course the final determination on a paper depends on the scientific content. Another important benefit is the overall improvement of the quality of our journal, so that reader frustration is reduced. We all know what a pleasure it is to read a good paper. With a little extra work, authors could write much better papers that would make significant contributions to knowledge and be of great help to readers and other scientists.

So when you decide to submit your next manuscript to *Geologia Croatica* please send mail to our Managing Editor Ms Alisa Martek (editorial.office@geologia-croatia.hr) or/and to us (editor@geologia-croatia.hr).

REFERENCES

- BENNETT, J.P. (2007) Simple guidelines to follow in preparing a manuscript for submission to *Science of the Total Environment* (Editorial). – *Science of the Total Environ.*, 387, 1–2

Mladen Juračić and Ivo Velić