Welcome and thank you for your support of *PLOS Computational Biology* and the Open Access movement.

*PLOS Computational Biology* is one of the four community run, Open Access journals published by the Public Library of Science. The journal features works of exceptional significance that further our understanding of living systems at all scales—from molecules and cells, to patient populations and ecosystems—through the application of computational methods. Readers include life and computational scientists, who can take the important findings presented here to the next level of discovery.

Since its launch in 2005, *PLOS Computational Biology* has grown not only in the number of papers published, but also in recognition as a quality publication and community resource. We have every reason to expect that this trend will continue and our team of Associate Editors play an invaluable role in this process.

Associate Editors oversee the peer review process for the journal, including evaluating submissions, selecting reviewers, assessing reviewer comments, and making editorial decisions. Together with fellow Editorial Board members and the PLOS CB Team, Associate Editors uphold journal policies and ethical standards and work to promote the PLOS mission to provide free public access to scientific research.

*PLOS Computational Biology* is one of a suite of influential journals published by PLOS. Information about the other journals, the PLOS business model, PLOS innovations in scientific publishing, and Open Access copyright and licensure can be found in Appendix IX.

Table of Contents

*PLOS Computational Biology* Editorial Board Membership ........................................................................................................ 2

Manuscript Evaluation .................................................................................................................................................................... 3

Overview ......................................................................................................................................................................................... 3

Independent Evaluation .................................................................................................................................................................... 4

External Peer Review ...................................................................................................................................................................... 5

Decisions ........................................................................................................................................................................................ 7

Revisions ......................................................................................................................................................................................... 10

Appeals on Decisions .................................................................................................................................................................. 10

Editorial Support ........................................................................................................................................................................... 11

Appendices .................................................................................................................................................................................. 13
PLOS COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Over 140 members of the computational biology community serve on the Editorial Board of *PLOS Computational Biology*, making decisions about whether submitted manuscripts meet the journal's publication criteria. The editorial process is run as a partnership between a group of academic experts who serve as Associate Editors and the Senior Editors, including the Editors-in-Chief and a team of Deputy Editors. A full organizational chart can be found in Appendix VI.

Associate Editors play a key role on the Editorial Board, and are indispensable to the overall publishing process. Currently, there are around 100 Associate Editors serving on the *PLOS Computational Biology* Editorial Board. The journal acknowledges their work by publishing the Associate Editor’s name alongside every accepted manuscript.

All editorial roles are unremunerated, save for the satisfaction of a job well done in the context of a worthwhile mission and the chance to have a first look at breaking research.

Initial appointments to the Editorial Board are for 3 years, with an informal review after the first six months. During that time, the PLOS CB Team are on hand to provide guidance and assistance.

Getting Started
- Complete the survey provided with your Welcome Letter
- Log into the journal’s Editorial Manager manuscript submission system.
- Create a personal profile, including all contact details, classifications of scientific disciplines and areas of expertise, and keywords.
- Review all information in this Handbook and the *PLOS Computational Biology* Editorial Board Knowledge Base.
- Contact the PLOS CB Team with questions about manuscripts or our systems.

Going Away and/or Unavailable
In advance of an absence, Associate Editors should email the PLOS CB Team with the following information:
- Unavailability dates;
- Confirmation on whether they will be able to continue handling your existing assignments.

Our Top Tips for Editing Submissions
1. **Respond to invitations to edit papers within 24 hours** to enable the timely assessment of all new submissions.
2. Remember to **line up three initial reviewers, with another three set up as alternatives**. This will save you time later on and helps to ensure an efficient review process.
3. **Notify the journal staff of any ethical or data availability concerns** that arise during your assessment of the work; we’re here to help!
4. Please be sure to **enter your comments to the authors within the decision letter** as comments from the editor. Associate Editors should not act as an additional anonymous peer reviewer, as advised by COPE.
5. Conflicting reviewer comments? **Open a discussion with the Deputy Editor** who invited you to edit the manuscript for advice.
MANUSCRIPT EVALUATION

Associate Editors oversee the peer review process for the journal, including evaluating submissions, selecting reviewers and assessing their comments, and making editorial decisions. This section provides a high-level overview of the steps of this process. Appendix II describes how to complete specific tasks during this process in Editorial Manager, the journal’s manuscript management system.

OVERVIEW

- **Invitation**: Associate Editors aim to respond to the initial invitation to handle a manuscript within 24 hours.
- **Independent Evaluation**: Within 2–3 days of accepting the invitation, the Associate Editor should make an initial decision as to whether the manuscript is suitable for review. The Associate Editor is not required to send the paper out for review.
- **External Peer Review**: Associate Editors are expected to manage the peer review process, soliciting and monitoring reviews. All reviews should be received within 2–4 weeks.
- **Decision**: Associate Editors aim to submit their decision and accompanying decision letter for approval by the Deputy Editor within 2–3 days from receipt of the last review.

INVITATIONS

Each manuscript is assigned by the PLOS CB Team to a Senior Editor, who then invites an Associate Editor based on their area of expertise.

Associate Editors may receive invitations to handle General and Methods Research Articles, as well as Front Matter Articles such as Reviews. The article type will be specified within the invitation email. Further information about each of these article types can be found in Appendix II.

When responding to invitations to handle manuscripts Associate Editors should:

When to Accept or Decline

Accept the invitation if:
- The submission is in your field.
- You have time.
- You have no competing interests.

Decline the invitation if:
- The submission is not in your field.
- You are not available (e.g. holiday, sabbatical, already handling several manuscripts).
- You have a competing interest.
• Aim to respond within 24 hours of receipt.
• Use the links within the email to accept or decline (see Appendix II for further details).
• If declining, provide alternative suggestions for Associate or Guest Associate Editors with the appropriate expertise to handle the manuscript.

Associate Editors who regularly receive invitations outside their area of expertise should contact the PLOS CB Team at ploscombiol@plos.org

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

Editorial Board members are responsible for the content of the journal and must fully evaluate each submission throughout the period of their editorial oversight.

• After agreeing to handle a new submission, the Associate Editor should conduct an independent assessment to assess whether the manuscript fits within the journal scope, and make their initial decision within 2–3 working days.

At this stage, the Associate Editor can:

1. Reject the manuscript without review.
2. Assign reviewers.
3. Open a discussion session with other members of the PLOS Computational Biology Editorial Board.

Associate Editors should carefully evaluate a manuscript before sending it for peer review; about one third of the submissions PLOS Computational Biology receives are rejected before review.

The full PLOS Computational Biology scope and publication criteria can be found in Appendix I.

General criteria against which to measure each submission includes:

• Originality
• Innovation
• High importance to researchers in computational biology
• Significant biological insight and general interest to life scientists
• Rigorous methodology
• Substantial evidence for conclusions

Additionally, Associate Editors should consider any specific requirements related to the category of Research Article they are handling:
### Research Article Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Research articles designated as General papers should model aspects of biological systems, demonstrate both methodological and scientific novelty, and provide profound new biological insights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Research articles specifically designated as Methods papers should describe outstanding methods of exceptional importance that have been shown, or have the promise to provide new biological insights. The method must already be widely adopted, or have the promise of wide adoption by a broad community of users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software</td>
<td>Research articles specifically designated as Software papers should describe outstanding open source software of exceptional importance that has been shown to provide new biological insights, either as a part of the software article, or published elsewhere. The software must already be widely adopted, or have the promise of wide adoption by a broad community of users.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For further information about each type of Research Article and guidance for evaluating a submission see Appendix IV.*

### EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW

If an Associate Editor believes a paper to be at or near the level required for *PLOS Computational Biology*, they should send it out for external peer review within 2-3 working days.

#### Selecting Suitable Reviewers

The selection of appropriate and, equally as important, responsive reviewers is paramount for the success of a review process judged on its rigor and timeliness.

Any qualified researcher with strong expertise in the topic of the submission can serve as a reviewer. Good reviewers:

- Are usually at postdoctoral level or above.
- Are actively conducting research and publishing work in the field of the manuscript.
- Do not have any competing interests that would bias them either for or against the manuscript.

Associate Editors should consider the sum total of the expertise of all the reviewers invited to ensure that all aspects of the manuscript are fully evaluated.

> **Associate Editors should not act as an additional anonymous peer reviewer.**

If an Associate Editor would like to include additional comments, or their own review of the submission, they should include this within the decision letter as comments from the editor.

To identify experts to assess the manuscripts they handle, Associate Editors:

- Apply their knowledge of qualified experts to objectively evaluate the manuscript.
- Search the Internet for related literature; the authors of these papers may be good reviewer candidates.
- Consider the suggested reviewers provided by the author, taking into account potential competing interests between these individuals and the authors. Research shows author-suggested reviewers tend to be less critical in their assessments of the work.
- Search within EM, using the reviewer search tool: “Reviewer Discovery from Pivot”. *Instructions for this tool can be found here.*

**Inviting Reviewers**

All contact with potential and engaged reviewers – invitations, reminders, and editorial correspondence -- occurs through Editorial Manager (EM). Detailed instructions for working within EM can be found in Appendix II.

After logging in and accessing the “Invite Reviewers” link on the manuscript action links, Associate Editors should extend invitations to three reviewers (‘Inv’), and set up at least three alternate reviewers (‘Alt’), with the aim of securing three submitted reviews. If one of the first invitees declines an alternate reviewer will be automatically invited.

Many reviewers will already be listed within EM. In these cases, simply check the email address to make sure it is the correct person and proceed to invite them. If the desired reviewer is not registered within EM, Associate Editors should contact the PLOS CB Team to have the reviewer added to our system.

Please note reviewers will be automatically uninvited after 8 days if we’ve received no response. During this time they will have received two in addition to the initial invitation.

Alternate reviewers will be invited automatically if one of the original reviewers declines or fails to respond within the allotted time.

**Changing the Number of Reviewers**

The required number or reviewers can be altered from the standard three from the Reviewer Selection Summary screen.

Guidelines for updating this can be found in Appendix II.

**Monitoring the Review Process**

The main focus of the Associate Editor during the review process is to:

- Monitor the reviewers agreed and completed.
- Invite additional reviewers if needed.
- Ensure evaluations are obtained from a collection of reviewers with relevant expertise.
- Evaluate reviews as they are returned to make sure they are appropriate and address the important aspects of the manuscript.
- Notify the PLOS CB Team of any ethical concerns that arise during the assessment of the work.

If Associate Editors are experiencing difficulties securing reviewers, we encourage them to make use of the collective knowledge across the Editorial Board by opening a discussion.
The standard review deadline is 10 days. If a reviewer requests an extension:

- The PLOS CB Team will grant extensions at a reviewers’ request.
- For longer extensions, the Associate Editor will also be asked to approve the request.

Reviewers will receive a series of automated reminder emails from the journal. If papers experience delays, the PLOS CB Team will then contact the Editor with reminders and offers of assistance. At this stage, editors are encouraged to email the reviewers themselves via Editorial Manager to find out the status of the review. Please see Appendix II for more details.

*Reminder emails continue until the Editor responds, so prompt replies are recommended.*

### DECISIONS

Once the expected number of reviewers has been received, Associate Editors will receive a confirmation email. At this point, the Associate Editor can find the paper in the “Submissions with Required Reviews Complete” on their Editor Main Menu.

If papers experience delays, the PLOS CB Team may also email following the receipt of two reviews to see whether the Associate Editor has sufficient comments to proceed with a decision. In this case, the Associate Editor may need to terminate assignments for late reviewers. Please do not terminate open reviewer assignments if the deadline has not yet passed.

### Making a Decision

On receipt of the expected reviewer comments, Associate Editors should read them carefully and consider all points raised in order to inform your decision on the submission.

Associate Editors should carefully consider the specific comments made by the reviewers as well as their decision recommendations, as it is possible that when a reviewer suggests “Major Revision” their comments may actually highlight reasons for rejection in line with the scope of *PLOS Computational Biology*.

There are several decision types and associated template letters available:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Render this decision if:</th>
<th>After the decision is made:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Editor Accept** | - The authors have fully addressed all points you and the reviewers raised.  
    - The manuscript is ready to publish. | - The manuscript is sent to production for publication.  
    - The Authors do not have a chance to revise. |
- There is no need for you to check over the manuscript another time.

**Minor Revision***
- The clarity of the presentation needs improvement.
- The science is solid and well presented, with the evidence fully supporting all conclusions made.
- Authors have 30 days to revise.
- Upon resubmission, Associate Editors reevaluate the manuscript and author’s response to reviewers to decide whether further review is need or if a final decision can be made.

**Major Revision**
- The stated scientific conclusions require additional experiments.
- Fundamental reworking of the presentation is required to ensure the science is sound and fully presented.
- Authors have 60 days to revise.
- Upon resubmission, Associate Editors reevaluate the manuscript and authors’ response to reviewers, and usually return to the previous reviewers.

**Reject (Before or After Review)***
- The manuscript has insurmountable scientific deficits.
- The subject matter is outside the scope of this journal.
- No action required unless authors request an appeal.

**PLOS ONE: Accept As Is (After Review)**
- The manuscript has undergone peer review and is scientifically sound.
- The subject matter is outside the scope of the journal or does not meet PLOS Computational Biology’s standards for novelty and impact.
- The manuscript meets the PLOS ONE submission requirements.
- The manuscript is ready to publish.
- The DE will check the decision and may consult further with the Associate Editor and/or PLOS ONE if they have any concern of the manuscript’s eligibility for PLOS ONE.
- Authors have 3 weeks to accept the transfer to PLOS ONE.
- The Associate Editor receives an email confirming that the transfer is complete.
- The Associate Editor is named Editor on the published article in PLOS ONE.

**PLOS ONE: Revise Before Accept**
- The manuscript has undergone peer review and is scientifically sound.
- The subject matter is outside the scope of the journal or does not meet PLOS Computational Biology’s criteria for novelty and impact.
- The manuscript meets the requirements for publication in PLOS ONE.
- The clarity of the presentation requires minimal revisions.
- Authors have 3 weeks to revise and accept transfer to PLOS ONE.
- Upon resubmission, Associate Editors reevaluate the manuscript to see if it satisfies the editorial revision requests and is ready for acceptance into PLOS ONE.
- The DE will check the decision and may consult further with the Associate Editor and/or PLOS ONE if they have any concern of the manuscript’s eligibility for PLOS ONE.

**PLOS ONE: Accept Revision**
- You have previously issued a PLOS ONE: Revise Before Accept decision.
- The authors have successfully addressed all points you and the reviewers have made.
- The manuscript meets the PLOS ONE submission requirements.
- The DE will check the decision and may consult further with the Associate Editor and/or the PLOS ONE journal team if they have any concern of the manuscript’s eligibility for PLOS ONE.
- Authors have 3 weeks to accept the transfer to PLOS ONE.
### PLOS ONE: Reject Revision

- The editors previously issued a **PLOS ONE: Revise Before Accept** decision.
- The editors determine that the revisions are not adequate.
- The manuscript is not ready to publish.

- The DE will check the decision before sending it to the authors.

---

### Requirements for Publication in PLOS ONE

Submissions in the following areas are not eligible for transfer to or acceptance in **PLOS ONE**:

- Non-primary research; e.g., reviews, opinions, study protocols, rebuttals
- Tobacco-funded research

**PLOS ONE** has specific editorial policies with regards to submissions in the following areas:

- Research using vertebrate animal models in which death is an endpoint
- Clinical trials

For additional information on the Accept to ONE process, see the **Accept to PLOS ONE** Manual on the Knowledge Base.

---

### Submitting a Decision

To submit a decision, Associate Editors log in to EM and select the “Submit Editor’s Decision and Comments” link on the manuscript action links. The Associate Editor can then choose their decision type from the drop-down menu, and proceed to the editable, draft decision letter.

When preparing the decision letters, Associate Editors should take time and care to:

- Give context to the overall review comments to help authors understand the decision.
- Indicate which of the reviewer comments are essential to address to meet the journal criteria, and which are optional (e.g., changes that might improve the paper but are not required for publication).
- If reviewers make contradictory requests, acknowledge the discrepancy and confirm which advice the authors should follow.

---

**Uncertain About a Decision?**

Utilize the wealth of expertise across the Editorial Board by opening a discussion with:

- The Deputy Editor on the paper.
- Other members of the Editorial Board.
- The Editors-in-Chief or relevant Deputy Editors for serious scientific or ethical issues.
- A **PLOS ONE** editor for questions about a manuscript’s suitability for acceptance into **PLOS ONE**. See the **Accept to PLOS ONE** Manual for details.
• If rejecting the submission, make clear why the manuscript does not meet the criteria for publication, and refer to the pertinent reviewer comments (when reviews have been received).

*Please note that PLOS encourages referrals of Research Articles not within the scope for PLOS Computational Biology and rejected before review to PLOS ONE. If the manuscript is not scientifically sound, the Associate Editor should remove the recommendation to PLOS ONE.*

Once ready to proceed, click **Submit Decision with Draft Letter** to pass the draft letter onto the Senior Editor.

The Deputy Editor handling the paper will then view and comment as appropriate and forward the decision letter to the authors under both the Associate Editor’s signature and their own.

Deputy Editors acting as an Associate Editor should click “Submit Decision without notifying author” so the acting Deputy Editor can approve and send the decision.

Detailed instructions for submitting a decision within EM can be found in **Appendix II**.

### Resources for Writing Decision Letters

Associate Editors can find tips for writing decision letters as well as sample letter templates in the [Editorial Board Knowledge Base](#).

### Revisions

Manuscripts returned after minor or major revisions are automatically reassigned to the same Associate Editor. The Associate Editor should then:

- Evaluate the revised manuscript and response to reviewers.
- Determine whether additional external peer review is necessary, or if a decision can be made.

When manuscripts are resubmitted after Major Revision, we recommend returning the revised work to all or some of the same peer reviewers as before to ensure their concerns have been appropriately addressed by the authors.

To invite reviewers, Associate Editors should follow the same process as for the initial round of reviewers. Please note, however, that the letter selection should be changed to "**Reviewer Invitation on Revision**".

### Appeals on Decisions

*PLOS Computational Biology* encourages input from all community members regarding editorial and publishing policy. Appeals of manuscript decisions should, however, be:

a) Limited to the specific manuscript in question,

b) Made only by the corresponding author.

c) Sent by email to [ploscompbiol@plos.org](mailto:ploscompbiol@plos.org)
If an Associate Editor receives an appeal directly, we ask that they forward this onto the PLOS CB Team, who can respond on their behalf.

All appeal requests are first evaluated by the PLOS CB Team, who decide whether the appeal should proceed based on our appeal criteria. If it is unclear whether the appeal meets our criteria, the PLOS CB Team will respond to the authors to request further information.

Appeals of decisions made before review will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appeals will only be considered when a) a reviewer or editor is thought to have made a significant factual error or b) when his/her objectivity is compromised by a documented competing interest, and when a reversal based on either of these grounds would change the original decision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If an appeal meets the criteria above, the PLOS CB Team will open a discussion with the Associate Editor and Deputy Editor. This discussion post will highlight the grounds of the appeal and include the author's letter at the bottom.

Associate Editors, along with Deputy Editor, should consider the appeal and respond to PLOS CB Team to confirm whether they would like to accept or reject the appeal.

If a reject decision is made (the original decision is upheld), the Associate Editor should draft a short paragraph to outline the reasons for this decision. The PLOS CB Team will send the final decision onto the authors.

If an accept decision is made (the original decision is rescinded), the PLOS CB Team will consult with the editors to determine the appropriate next steps.

Please note that if the authors have cited a competing interest as the grounds of the appeal, the PLOS CB Team may decide not to include the Associate Editor in the appeal discussion. We will, however, notify the Associate Editor that an appeal is being processed on the grounds of competing interest. In such cases, the Editors-in-Chief or relevant Deputy Editors may be invited to comment on the appeal instead. This is not a reflection on an editor's editorial judgment; rather, it reflects a precautionary approach to avoiding any perception of a conflict. You can access our full policy on competing interests here: http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/competing-interests

**EDITORIAL SUPPORT**

As Associate Editors handle manuscripts, they may encounter situations where they feel that additional editorial input is needed. We strongly encourage Associate Editors to work with the other members of the PLOS Computational Biology Editorial Board and the PLOS CB Team in such cases.
Working with the Editorial Board

Associate Editors are encouraged to consult with each other and take advantage of the breadth of expertise and experience across the PLOS Computational Biology community. A searchable list of Editorial Board members can be found at: [http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/editorial-board](http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/editorial-board)

- For manuscript-specific concerns, communicate with other Editorial Board members and the PLOS CB Team via the Editorial Manager “Discussion” function.
- For general discussions of PLOS Computational Biology policies and procedures, participate in the Editorial Board Knowledge Base discussion forums.

Working with Staff

If Associate Editors experience any problems or complications handling manuscripts, the PLOS CB Team are on hand to assist with a broad range of issues, including technical problems with Editorial Manager and dealing with substantive scientific and policy issues for specific manuscripts.

The PLOS CB Team can be reached either via:

- Telephone: +44 (0)1223 442 824
- Email: ploscompbiol@plos.org

Please note that the journal office is based in the UK and the PLOS CB Team are therefore only available during UK office hours.

Staff members may also contact Associate Editors to provide assistance if they become aware of any concerns around a manuscript or if a manuscript is delayed in the peer review process.
WELCOME TO THE PLOS COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY ASSOCIATE EDITOR HANDBOOK APPENDICES

In the preceding Handbook (pages 1 - 11), we reviewed the Associate Editor’s role, providing an overview of the editorial process from the time the Editor agrees to handle a submission to the final decision, including essential steps and the most important factors to bear in mind. The Handbook can be read chronologically and is designed to provide the fundamental information needed to participate in the peer review process as an Associate Editor.

In the Appendices (pages 12 -59), we’ll go into greater depth on a range of subjects including the PLOS Computational Biology scope, our publication and editorial policies, and detailed instructions for the use of Editorial Manager. Unlike the Handbook, the Appendices need not be read in order. Consult appropriate sections when specific questions or issues arise.

APPENDIX I. THE PLOS COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY SCOPE and PUBLICATION CRITERIA ............................................ 15

APPENDIX II. WORKING WITH EDITORIAL MANAGER ................................................................................................. 16
  Getting Started ...................................................................................................................................................... 16
  Registering and Signing In with ORCID ............................................................................................................. 19
  Setting Unavailable Dates ................................................................................................................................... 19
  The Associate Editor Main Menu ...................................................................................................................... 20
  Responding to Invitations .................................................................................................................................. 22
  Viewing Submissions and Related Information ................................................................................................. 23
  Initiating a Discussion ........................................................................................................................................... 24
  Inviting Reviewers ............................................................................................................................................... 28
  Monitoring the Review Process ......................................................................................................................... 31
  Submitting a Decision .......................................................................................................................................... 34

APPENDIX III. AN OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLICATION PROCESS ........................................................................ 37
  Submission ............................................................................................................................................................ 38
  Editorial Process .................................................................................................................................................. 38
  Production and Publication ................................................................................................................................ 39
  Post-Publication Activity ................................................................................................................................... 39

APPENDIX IV. ARTICLE TYPES .............................................................................................................................. 42
  Presubmission Inquiries ....................................................................................................................................... 42
  Research Articles .................................................................................................................................................. 42
  Front Matter ........................................................................................................................................................ 45
  Collections ........................................................................................................................................................... 45
  Focus Features ...................................................................................................................................................... 46
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX V. EDITORIAL AND PUBLISHING POLICIES</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competing Interests</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewer Exclusions</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Manuscripts</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing of Data, Materials and Software</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication and Research Ethics</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Ethics</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX VI. THE PLOS COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY EDITORIAL BOARD</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Org Chart</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial Advisors</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Editors</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Editors</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Matter Editors</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX VII. PLOS PROFILE</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Started</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commenting</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Alerts</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX VIII. THE PLOS JOURNAL FAMILY</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The PLOS Journals</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferring Submissions between Journals</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The PLOS Business Model</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Access</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovations in Publishing</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX IX. FURTHER READING</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX I. THE PLOS COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY SCOPE AND PUBLICATION CRITERIA

PLOS Computational Biology features works of exceptional significance that further our understanding of living systems at all scales—from molecules and cells, to patient populations and ecosystems—through the application of computational methods. Readers include life and computational scientists, who can take the important findings presented here to the next level of discovery.

Research articles must be declared as belonging to one of the following categories: General, Methods or Software. More information about the categories of Research Articles can be found in Appendix IV.

Research articles should model aspects of biological systems, demonstrate both methodological and scientific novelty, and provide profound new biological insights. Research articles with limited novelty may be more appropriate for PLOS ONE.

Generally, reliability and significance of biological discovery through computation should be validated and enriched by experimental studies. Inclusion of experimental validation is not required for publication, but should be referenced where possible. Inclusion of experimental validation of a modest biological discovery through computation does not render a manuscript suitable for PLOS Computational Biology.

Research articles specifically designated as Methods papers should describe outstanding methods of exceptional importance that have been shown, or have the promise to provide new biological insights. The method must already be widely adopted, or have the promise of wide adoption by a broad community of users. Enhancements to existing published methods will only be considered if those enhancements bring exceptional new capabilities.

For all submissions, authors must clearly provide detail, data, and software to ensure readers' ability to reproduce the models, methods, and results.

Methods articles and Software articles require presubmission inquiries. Presubmission inquiries for general research articles are encouraged, but not essential.

To be considered for publication in PLOS Computational Biology, any given manuscript must satisfy the following criteria:

- Originality
- Innovation
- High importance to researchers in the field
- Significant biological and/or methodological insight
- Rigorous methodology
- Substantial evidence for its conclusions
APPENDIX II. WORKING WITH EDITORIAL MANAGER

The *PLOS Computational Biology* submission system is called Editorial Manager (EM). In this appendix, we provide detailed instructions for performing tasks as an Associate Editor within this system, including:

- **Getting Started**
- **Registering and Signing In with ORCID**
- **Setting Unavailable Dates**
- **The Associate Editor Main Menu**
- **Viewing Submissions and Related Information**
- **Initiating a Discussion**
- **Inviting Reviewers**
- **Monitoring the Review Process**
- **Emailing a Reviewer**
- **Submitting a Decision**

The *PLOS CB Team* are also on hand to help and provide additional guidance.

### Getting Started

1. **Go to:** [https://www.editorialmanager.com/pcombiol/default.aspx](https://www.editorialmanager.com/pcombiol/default.aspx)
2. Use the **Editor Login** button to access the tasks for your editor role

If an Associate Editor is logged into EM as a reviewer or author, they can **change their role to Associate Editor** using the drop down menu in the top-right hand corner of the screen.

3. **Click** **UPDATE MY INFORMATION** from the navigation links in the top-left corner of the page to verify that all profile information is correct.

4. **We require a full institutional name, country, phone number and your preferred email address(es).**
e) Associate Editors are highly encouraged to select subject areas of expertise by completing the **Select Personal Classifications** section.

The more specific information we have regarding an Associate Editor’s expertise, the more likely it will be that they are invited to the appropriate submission.

i. **Click Select Personal Classifications**

ii. In the new window, use the **Search** function to identify classification within the PLOS taxonomy to represent your areas of expertise.
iii. Select the tick box next to the relevant classifications and click **Add** to list these as your personal classifications.

![Select Personal Classifications](image)

To save changes, you must click “Submit” before you leave this window.

iv. To rank your keywords, click **Submit and Continue to Rankings**

v. On the following page, you can select your experience ranking as **Low**, **Medium** or **High**.

![Rank Personal Classifications](image)

vi. When you’re ready to proceed, click **Submit**

Associate Editors can also add keywords by completing the **Editor Personal Keywords** section. Keywords are useful for covering subject areas not included in the classification taxonomy. **Keywords should not be used as a substitute to classifications, and all relevant classifications must also be added.**
f) Once you have entered all the relevant information, click **Submit** at the bottom of the page to save the additions to the account.

Registering and Signing In with ORCID

In an effort to simplify our publications process and create a more thorough, networked picture of our community, PLOS is encouraging all Associate Editors to update their profiles in Editorial Manager (EM) to include an ORCID. PLOS now requires corresponding authors to provide their ORCID when submitting a manuscript.

ORCID is a unique digital identifier that differentiates your work from that of other researchers with similar names across a variety of platforms including grants, publications, online notebooks, data sets, citations, and more. It can save you time in identifying yourself, and help you avoid entering the same information over and over on different websites.

To submit an ORCID, Associate Editors can sign in to EM at [https://www.editorialmanager.com/pcombiol](https://www.editorialmanager.com/pcombiol) and navigate to their personal profile by selecting the “Update my Information” link in the upper left of the screen. The space for the ORCID appears about halfway down the page, just below the email field.

Ensure the changes are saved before leaving the profile page. If Associate Editors do not have an ORCID yet, they can obtain one using the link on the EM profile page, or by visiting the website directly at [orcid.org](http://orcid.org).

Once an ORCID is entered in EM, it can be used to sign in to the system any time.

Setting Unavailable Dates

In advance of an absence, Associate Editors should enter their unavailability in EM. To do this:
a) Click UPDATE MY INFORMATION from the navigation links in the top-left corner of the page.

b) Scroll down to the Additional Information section and click Unavailable Dates

c) Click Add New Unavailable Date
d) Enter the Start Date and End Date
e) Within the Reason: field Associate Editors should specify whether they are available to handle revised submissions.

f) Click Submit and then Submit again from the Update My Information page.

The Associate Editor Main Menu
When an Associate Editor logs in they will see their Associate Editor Main Menu. From this menu, the Associate Editor can view all their assignments.
Submissions with:
These folders display all submissions assigned to the Associate Editor by the number of reviews received.

Search
Search Submissions: From here, the Associate Editors can search submissions using a variety of different criteria including the manuscript number, DOI, title and author name.

Editor 'To-Do' List
My Pending Assignments: Displays the total number of submissions currently requiring attention from the Associate Editor.

New Invitations: This folder contains submissions with open invitations. The Associate Editor can either agree or decline to handle the submission from this folder.

New Assignments: This folder contains any submission or revised submissions that are waiting for the Associate Editor’s initial decision. From here, the Associate Editor can either submit a decision or invite reviewers.

Submissions with Required Reviews Complete: This folder contains all submissions for which the required number of reviews has been submitted. The Associate Editor can access the submission here to submit their decision, or invite additional Reviewers.
Submissions Requiring Additional Reviewers: This folder contains submissions under review that have fewer than the required number of reviewers invited and/or assigned. The standard required number of reviewers is set to three within EM.

Submissions with One or More Late Reviews: This folder contains any submission that has one or more late Reviewers.

Reviews in Progress: Displays the total number of submissions currently under review.

Reviewers Invited – No Response: This folder contains submissions with one or more outstanding Reviewer invitation.

Submissions Under Review: This folder contains any submission that has one or more Reviewers who have agreed to review, but have not yet submitted their review.

Submissions with Decisions
My Assignments with Decision: This folder contains the submissions handled by the Associate Editor on which a decision has been made.

My Assignments with Final Disposition: This folder contains the submissions handled by the Associate Editor, which have had a final disposition set (either accept or reject).

Responding to Invitations
From the Associate Editor Main Menu an Associate Editor may:

a) Click on New Invitations to find a list of all the manuscripts for which they have received an invitation.

b) From the manuscript action links click Yes I will take this Assignment or No I will not take this Assignment to accept or decline the invitation.

i. If an Associate Editor declines an invitation, they should provide the reasons for this on the following screen in the free text box and click Submit.
Viewing Submissions and Related Information

Once an Associate Editor agrees to handle a submission, it will appear in the New Assignments folder on their Associate Editor Main Menu.

To learn about the work:

a) Click **New Assignments** to access the submission.

b) Click **View Submission** from the manuscript action links.

   i. High-resolution versions of each figure can be accessed by selecting the blue link at the top of the page each figure appears on.
   ii. The Supporting Information files and Related Manuscripts (if included) can be accessed via blue links at the end of the submission file.

c) It is also possible to view the author-submitted files independently through the File Inventory action link, which will provide direct links to each component of the submission.

d) Check the Details page by clicking **Details** from the manuscript action links.

   i. Within the Reviewers section, Associate Editors can view the Author Suggested Reviewers and Opposed Reviewers.
ii. By scrolling further down, Associate Editors also have access to the Additional Information provided by the authors on submission, including the Financial Disclosure, Competing Interests, Ethics Statement and Data Availability Statement.

Initiating a Discussion
Throughout the editorial process, Associate Editors are able to call on their fellow Editorial Board members and the PLOS CB Team via Editorial Manager’s discussion feature.

To open a new discussion
   a) Click Initiate Discussion from the manuscript action links.
   b) Enter a Topic at the top of the page.
   c) Enter your discussion message in the field Initial Comments.
   d) Select the other editors or staff with whom to discuss these comments, ticking all the boxes to allow participant access to the manuscript, reviews and draft decision letter.
      i. Check that the display option is set to 250 results per page and use Ctrl F in order to easily find editors or staff with whom to discuss these comments.
      ii. Check that the participant is Available during next 7 days by checking the far right column. This will state Unavailable if the participant has entered unavailability dates within EM.
      iii. Include a member of the PLOS CB Team on the discussion, or the journal office by searching for CompBiol Staff on the second page.
   e) Once all participants are selected, click Proceed to Customize Letters.
f) On this page, Associate Editors have the option to **Customize** the discussion invite if they wish.

  g) Finally, click **Confirm Selections and Send Letters** to open the discussion.

If there is an existing discussion, Associate Editors can open a new discussion by:

a) Selecting **Discussions** from the manuscript action links.

b) Clicking **Start New Topic**.

c) Following the same procedure as before.

To continue an existing discussion:

a) From the Profile page in EM, navigate to **Submissions with Active Discussions**. A blue icon with a number will appear here to indicate new responses to open discussions.

b) From the manuscript actions links, select **Discussions**.
c) Click **View**.

d) To respond to a discussion comment:
   i. Enter comments within the field **Comments** and click **Post**.

e) To add new participants:
   i. Click **Add Participants**.
      ii. Select the other editors or staff with whom to discuss these comments, ticking all the boxes to allow participant access to the manuscript, reviews and draft decision letter.
      iii. Once all participants are selected, click **Proceed to Customize Letters**.
      iv. Click **Confirm Selections and Send Letters**.

f) To conclude the discussion:
   i. Click **Conclude Discussion**.
To reopen a discussion:
  a) Select **Discussions** from the manuscript action links.
  b) Click **View**.
  c) Click Re-open Discussion.

d) Enter the discussion message in the field **Comments**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Example Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Enter Comments Here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e) Select the other editors or staff with whom to discuss these comments.
  i. Tick all the boxes to allow participant access to the manuscript, reviews and draft decision letter.
  ii. Note that the original participants will not be included and will therefore need to be selected again at this stage.
  iii. Once all participants are selected, click **Proceed to Customize Letters**.
  iv. Click **Confirm Selections and Send Letters**.
Inviting Reviewers

If an Associate Editors decides to send a manuscript out for review, they should do so within EM. To invite reviewers, Associate Editors should:

a) Click Invite Reviewers from the manuscript action links.

b) Click Go under Reviewer Search.

c) Search for reviewers by current email address (this is the most reliable way of getting an up-to-date profile).

i. List the Criterion as E-mail Address, the selector as Contains and the Value as the email address.

ii. To search for multiple reviewers in parallel, put OR at the end of the line and fill in the next line for the email address of the next reviewer.

iii. To search by name, list the Criterion as Last Name, the selector as Equal to and the Value as the last name, and then on the next line list the Criterion as First Name, the selector as Equal to and the Value as the first name.

iv. Searching by Classification is not recommended.

d) Select the box in the Inv. column to invite a reviewer immediately, or select the box in the Alt. column to line up the reviewer as an alternative. Alternate reviewers are automatically invited as reviewers decline.
Having made the selection, Associate Editors can continue to find reviewers using the search fields. EM will remember previous selections.

f) Having made reviewer selections, click **Proceed**.

g) From the following page, Associate Editors can change the **Letter** selection and **Customize** each letter if they would like to add anything to the default text.

h) Once ready, click **Confirm Selections and Proceed**

---

**Letter Selections**

- Associate Editors will need to change the letter selection for revisions to **Reviewer Invitation on Revision** to ensure reviewers are aware that they have previously reviewed the article for the journal.
- There is a customized invite for use in inviting reviewers to Methods Articles, entitled **Reviewer Invitation for Methods Articles**.
- Specific reviewer invitations are also available for Education and Software Articles.

---

**Finding Reviewers**

Pivot is a system originally designed to connect researchers to funding opportunities, meaning it has a broad database of researchers and their specific expertise and fields of interest, as well as previous publications. **Editorial Manager** (our submission system) makes use of this database to locate researchers in the same field as our manuscripts. This tool is useful for times when the usual group of reviewers for a particular field have been exhausted, or the editor is unfamiliar with current experts in a specific subject.

To find reviewers using Pivot:

a) Select **Invite Reviewers** from the manuscript action links.

b) Under the **Reviewer Search** tab, select **Reviewer Discovery from pivot ProQuest Community of Scholars**

c) Click **Go** to launch the search, which will give a green loading message.
The next page returns a list of reviewer candidates from the ProQuest database based on the title, classifications, keywords and abstract of the manuscript. Basic metadata about the scholars are returned, as well as matching keywords.

To the right is a link to View Researcher Profile and Publications. Clicking this will bring up a new window containing the scholar’s articles, book chapters, grants, conference papers, abstracts and a basic CV as listed in Pivot.

To proceed within inviting one of the search results, select the box in the Inv. column to invite a reviewer immediately, or select the box in the Alt. column to line up the reviewer as an alternative.

A pop up in red will notify you that the scholar will be proxy-registered in EM once you proceed.

Clicking Proceed will bring up a green box as this process is completed.

If the profiles have previously been proxy registered, text above the name will certify it as a Confirmed EM Match, and red text below give the date stamp of when they were proxy registered.

If the reviewer has a potential EM match (they may have been previously registered in the system), a second row beneath the “Information from Reviewer Discovery” will display the “Possible EM Match” profile.

Once this is done, you are taken to the normal letters screen, where the specific invitation can be selected and customized as needed.
Monitoring the Review Process

During the review process, Associate Editors can find further information about the status of the reviews from the Reviewer Selection Summary and Details pages. They will also be able to see if a reviewer has been granted an extension from the submission itself:

If an extension has been granted by the PLOS CB Team will add a submission flag, like the ones above, to signify which reviewer has been granted an extension.

Details

Further information about the status of the reviews can be found from the Details page:

- Select **Details** from the manuscripts action links.
- Scroll down to the **Reviewers** section to find a list of reviewers.
- From here Associate Editors can view information such as:
  - **The Review Status**
  - **The Date Review Due**
  - **The Elapsed Days**

If the PLOS CB Team have granted a reviewer extension, they will update the **Date Review Due** in this section.

Reviewer Selection Summary

The **Reviewer Selection Summary** provides further information about the reviewer invitation status and the number of expected reviews.

- Select **Invite Reviewers** from the manuscript action links.
- From the top of this page, Associate Editors can alter the number of required reviews from the standard three:

Appendix II
Further down, Associate Editors can find the Selected Reviewers menu. From here they can:

i. View the status of the reviewer invitations.
ii. Un-assign agreed reviewers or Un-invite reviewers with open invitations.
iii. View the reasons for a reviewer declining, by clicking Decline Reason.
iv. Check whether there are any outstanding Alternate Reviewers.

Emailing a reviewer

If a reviewer is delayed in submitting their review, an email from the Associate Editor can often be more effective than one from the PLOS CB Team. Associate Editors can email reviewers from EM:

a) Select Send E-mail from the manuscript action links
b) Select Editor Email to Reviewer from the drop-down menu and then click Customize Letter

![Send Ad Hoc Email](image)

- **Send Ad Hoc Email**
  - The journal has pre-configured one or more letters which you may use as a starting point. Select a letter, then click 'Customize Letter' to open the letter, insert your comments, and send the letter.
  - **Editor Email to Reviewer**
  
  ![Customize Letter](image)

  - **Cancel**
  - **Customize Letter**

- **Send Email**
  - **Editor Email to Reviewer**

  ![Select Email to Reviewer](image)

  - **Agreed to Review**
  - **Reviewer Invited**
  - **Reviewer Invited**

- **Enter Comments within the draft letter below, retaining the existing merge fields.**

  ![Draft Letter](image)

  - **Enter Comments Here**

  ![Enter Comments Here](image)

  - **Please use the following link to view the manuscript and submit your comments as soon as possible:**
  - **Send E-Mail**

- **e) Click Preview and Send and then Send E-Mail**
Submitting a Decision

Once the expected reviews have been received, the Associate Editor will be notified via email, which will contain a link to the manuscript. Within EM, they can now find the submission within the folder **Submissions with Required Reviews Complete** on their **Associate Editor Main Menu**.

To view the reviews, Associate Editors should:

a) Select **View Reviews and Comments** from the manuscript action links.

b) On this page, the Associate Editor can view the reviewers, their suggested decision and whether any reviews have been uploaded as attachments.

c) To view the reviewer comments, click the suggested decision type for each reviewer individually.

d) The following page, shows the reviewers **Comments to Editor** and **Comments to Author**.

Note that reviewer recommendations are for the use of the editor and senior editors only; the authors will see the comments within the review, but not the recommendation itself.
i. If the reviewer has uploaded an attachment as part of their review, the document can be downloaded from this page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>File Name</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Last Modified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachments:</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Manuscript.docx</td>
<td>12.4 KB</td>
<td>Jul 14 2014 12:19PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the system scrubs Microsoft files of meta data automatically, so that it is safe to send these reviews on to the authors without breaking confidentiality.

Once an Associate Editor is ready to make their decision, they can submit this by:

a) Select **Submit Editor's Decision and Comments** from the manuscript action links.

b) Select the Decision from the drop-down menu at the top of this page.

c) DO NOT enter your comments into the **Confidential Comments to Editor** or **Comments to Author** fields. These fields display the reviewers’ comments only.
d) Click **Proceed** and then **Proceed** again

e) This takes you to the editable decision letter:

i. For **Reject after Peer Review** or **Reject Before Peer Review**, Associate Editors should insert their reasons for rejection.

**Associate Editors should not enter their comments as an additional review.** Associate Editors should enter any editorial comments within the body of the decision letter.

f) If there are reviewer attachments, check that the **Allow Author Access** box is ticked for the attachment towards the bottom of the page.

g) When ready to submit the decision, click **Submit Decision with Draft Letter.**

h) The draft decision will be sent to the Senior Editor’s desktop to review, and the Senior Editor will send it onto the authors.
APPENDIX III. AN OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLICATION PROCESS

The Publication Process

Submission → Internal Checks → Evaluation by Deputy Editor → Discourage → Encourage

Presubmission Inquiry

Submission → Internal Checks → Deputy Editor Evaluation → Final Decision → Reject Before Peer Review

Research Article

Submission → Internal Checks → Deputy Editor Evaluation → Associate Editor Invited → Associate Editor Assigned → Associate Editor Initial Evaluation → Deputy Editor Review & Sends Decision → Final Decision

Further Consideration

Could be publishable with revision → Deputy Editor Review & Sends Decision → Final Decision

Peer Review Process

Associate Editor Evaluates and Submits Decision

Final Decision

Reject Before Peer Review

Reject After Peer Review

Accept

Production Process → Publication
Submission

All submissions to *PLOS Computational Biology* first undergo an initial technical check by journal staff, during which we consider whether the authors have included all the necessary materials for submission. If the manuscript passes this step, the PLOS CB team then assigns it to a Senior Editor for editorial consideration.

Preprints

PLOS encourages authors to post preprints as a way to accelerate the dissemination of research. Authors of manuscripts in biology and the life sciences have the option to concurrently post their manuscript to the bioRxiv preprint server as part of *PLOS Computational Biology* initial submission.

Editors will be notified via email if handling a manuscript with an associated bioRxiv preprint.

*PLOS Computational Biology* encourages editors to consider comments and feedback available on the preprint record to inform their editorial decision, and where relevant, editors may incorporate those comments in their editorial feedback to authors.

Editorial Process

Our aim is to provide all authors with an efficient, courteous, and constructive editorial process. To ensure the fairest and most objective decision-making, the editorial process is run as a partnership between the *PLOS Computational Biology* Editors-in-Chief, a team of Deputy Editors and a group of academic experts who serve as Associate Editors. These individuals are leaders in their fields and represent the full breadth of expertise in computational biology.

Initial Evaluation

Submitted manuscripts are first reviewed by a Senior Editor, who may decide to reject the paper or send it on to an Associate Editor for further review. The Associate Editor is most often a member of the *PLOS Computational Biology* Editorial Board, but occasionally a guest of the Board is invited to serve in this capacity. The Associate Editor evaluates the paper and decides whether it describes a sufficient body of work to support a major advance in a particular field. If so, the paper is sent out for external peer review, at which stage the technical and scientific merits of the work are carefully considered.

Peer Review Process

If the manuscript is sent for external review, the Associate Editor must then identify and invite suitable reviewers and monitor the review process, and evaluate the reviews when they are submitted to determine when it is time to make a decision. Associate Editors work to secure three reviewers, however, if they have sufficient comments having received two reviews they may proceed with a decision.

Decisions

Once the reviews have been received and considered by the Associate Editor, they will submit their decision, along with a draft decision letter, to the Senior Editor for approval. The Senior Editor will then send this decision letter to the corresponding author. The decision will be within one of the following categories:

- Reject
- Major revision
Minor revision
Accept

Revisions
If a minor or major revision decision is selected, the authors will have 30 or 60 days to revise their manuscript respectively.

On resubmission, the PLOS CB Team will perform a series of in-depth technical checks, considering issues such as:

- Ethical requirements
- Potential copyright and data availability issues
- The financial disclosure and competing interests statement

The PLOS CB team assigns manuscripts that pass this step directly back to the Associate Editor for further editorial consideration. The cycle of manuscript review and revision will then continue until the manuscript is accepted or rejected.

Production and Publication

Before formal acceptance of the article for publication, the manuscript and all related files will be checked by PLOS staff for a final quality control check, to ensure that they comply with all essential formatting and manuscript preparation requirements. The PLOS CB Team may send requests to authors to reformat their manuscripts to address issues including data availability, figure quality, table formatting, and equation and algorithm formatting.

Once formally accepted, the authors’ files are transferred into our production system and will be carefully tagged to generate XML and PDF files. Manuscripts are not subject to detailed copyediting, however, *PLOS Computational Biology* authors will have the opportunity to proof the PDF files.

*PLOS Computational Biology* will publish an early version of the manuscript in advance of the final article at the same time that the author receives the proof. The date the early version is posted will be the article’s publication date and the final version will be published with the same URL and DOI.

*PLOS Computational Biology* publishes on a daily basis at 11am PST/2pm EST. Authors are sent notification on the day of publication.

Our articles are archived in PubMed Central, usually within about 48 -72 hours.

Post-Publication Activity

Post-Publication Discussion
We encourage post-publication discussion at *PLOS Computational Biology*. Editors and readers should feel free to post a comment and share their thoughts about the strengths and weaknesses of the paper.
Associate Editors can initiate a discussion on a paper by logging into the PLOS Computational Biology publication website (which is independent of the journal submission system), and adding a comment via the Comments tab on the article page. Comments from the paper’s Associate Editors help to promote reader participation and can add critical insight and interpretation to the published paper.

We also appreciate tweets (follow us @PLOSCompBiol) and are happy for editors to write blog posts about published papers, either on their own blog or on one of the PLOS blogs. If you would like to contribute a blog post, please contact the PLOS CB Team.

Members of the PLOS CB Team take it in turn to tweet for a week on recently published manuscripts, PLOS and Open Access news, and much more. We encourage our actively tweeting Editorial Board members to keep an eye out for these and retweet!

The PLOS CB Team are also active on PLOS Biologue, the community blog from PLOS Biology, PLOS Genetics and PLOS Computational Biology. Of particular note are the monthly blogs highlighting the editors’ top picks from the issue.

Corrections
In some cases, errors or concerns about misconduct arises after publication. Such issues may come to the attention of the PLOS CB Team via the authors, a member of the Editorial Board, or readers through various mediums, including email and the online commenting system.

In cases of error, PLOS Computational Biology staff individually evaluate each case to determine the type of correction based on the nature of the error and consider how it would best be corrected on the PLOS journal website as well as in the external archives and databases with which PLOS shares records (e.g., PubMed Central and PubMed/MEDLINE). If a requested correction might affect (or appear to affect) the results of a manuscript, the PLOS CB Team will consult the editors who handled the paper for their advice on the severity of the error and how to proceed.

Corrections take the following forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error</th>
<th>On PLOS site</th>
<th>PubMed, PubMed Central, &amp; MEDLINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note</td>
<td>Does not significantly affect scientific understanding of article or publication record</td>
<td>Author submits online comment attached to article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher’s Note</td>
<td>Does not significantly affect scientific understanding of article or publication (introduced by PLOS)</td>
<td>PLOS submits online comment to article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Correction</td>
<td>Significantly affects scientific understanding of article and/or publication record</td>
<td>PLOS publishes correction linked to original article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of Concern</td>
<td>Cannot clearly determine whether concerns affect scientific understanding of article or indicate potential misconduct</td>
<td>PLOS publishes expression of concern linked to original article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retraction</td>
<td>Overall findings of the article are not reliable, either for genuine error or misconduct</td>
<td>PLOS publishes retraction linked to original article</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLOS participates in the CrossMark service, a multi-publisher initiative to provide a standard way for readers to locate the most up-to-date version of an article. The CrossMark logo is displayed both on the HTML and the PDF version of the article. Clicking on the CrossMark logo will tell you if there have been any updates (e.g. corrections, retractions, or expressions of concern) to the version of the work you are viewing. In addition, formal corrections, expressions of concern, and retractions are published in the PubMed Central archive (PMC) and reflected in the PubMed/MEDLINE databases.
APPENDIX IV. ARTICLE TYPES

Presubmission Inquiries
Submitting a presubmission inquiry enables authors to receive a fast response from a Senior Editor as to the suitability of the article for *PLOS Computational Biology*. All the author needs to provide is a cover letter and abstract.

The Senior Editor may decide to consult with an Associate Editor via a discussion before making a decision. Associate Editors should aim to respond to a discussion invite within 24 hours.

In some circumstances, a Senior Editor may invite an Associate Editor to handle a Presubmission Inquiry. There are two decisions an Associate Editor can make at this stage:

- **Presubmission Encourage**: If an Associate Editor would like to send the article for review, they should not invite reviewers, and should instead submit the decision “Presubmission Encourage”.
- **Presubmission Discourage**: If an Associate Editor does not view the article as suitable for *PLOS Computational Biology*, they should proceed by submitting the decision “Presubmission Discourage”.

Further information about presubmission inquiries can be found [here](#).

Please note, an encouraged presubmission inquiry does not indicate an obligation to proceed further with the full article, and an Associate Editor can therefore reject the full submission before review if appropriate.

Research Articles
*PLOS Computational Biology* publishes original research that clearly demonstrates novelty, importance to a particular field, biological significance, and conclusions that are justified by the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Originality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High importance to researchers in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Significant biological and/or methodological insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rigorous methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Substantial evidence for its conclusions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On submissions, authors will designate their Research Article as belonging to one of the following three categories: General, Methods or Software.

Associate Editors will receive notification of the Research Article category in email notifications, and can also view this within Editorial Manager by looking within the column entitled “Section/Category”. Additionally, a red or blue diamond will appear alongside the action links of Methods and Software papers respectively.
General Research Articles
Research articles designated as General papers should model aspects of biological systems, demonstrate both methodological and scientific novelty, and provide profound new biological insights.

Additional criteria to consider when evaluating a research article include:

- Are all datasets, resources and software or code used available for public use?
- Are established conventions for nomenclature followed wherever possible?
  - Use of SI units
  - Species names in italics
  - Genes, mutations, genotypes, and alleles in italics; gene prefixes in roman
  - Recommended International Non-Proprietary Name (rINN) of drugs provided
- Are the relevant accession numbers (and version numbers, if appropriate) provided in parentheses after the entity on first use?
- Do microarray experiments, where present, conform to the MIAME guidelines?
- If the study involved human participants, has informed consent been obtained, as outlined here: http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/human-subjects-research?
- Has any copyrighted material been incorporated? If so, please alert the PLOS CB Team since everything will need to be publishable under the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/licenses-and-copyright).
- Clarity of presentation: is the title appropriate; are the abstract and author summary concise and accurate; and is the main text clear, accessible, and easily readable, with a high attention to detail paid to grammar, punctuation, and spelling?
Methods Research Articles

The *PLOS Computational Biology* Methods Section, launched in March 2013, is managed by Methods Editor, Thomas Lengauer.

Research articles specifically designated as Methods papers should describe outstanding methods of exceptional importance that have been shown, or have the promise to provide new biological insights. The method must already be widely adopted, or have the promise of wide adoption by a broad community of users.

Enhancements to existing published methods should only be considered if those enhancements bring exceptional new capabilities.

Presubmission Inquiries are a compulsory part of the submission process for Methods Articles:

- Methods Editors Thomas Lengauer and Mona Singh handle the majority of Methods papers as the Senior Editors. (In certain subject areas, e.g. Neuroscience, they are handled by other Deputy Editors.)
- Associate Editors are frequently asked for advice via a discussion forum and should respond promptly.
- Associate Editors may be asked whether they will handle the full submission at the Presubmission Inquiry stage. We request that Associate Editors honor this agreement.

Software Research Articles

*PLOS Computational Biology* publishes articles describing outstanding open source software of exceptional importance that has been shown to provide new biological insights, either as a part of the software article, or published elsewhere.

The software must already be widely adopted, or have the promise of wide adoption by a broad community of users. Enhancements to existing published open source software will only be considered if those enhancements bring exceptional new capabilities.

The software must be downloadable anonymously in source code form and licensed under an Open Source Initiative (OSI) compliant license. The source code must be accompanied with documentation on building and installing the software from source, as well as for using the software, including instructions on how a user can test the software on supplied test data.

Software Articles are handled by the Software Editors and if accepted for publication, are added to the Software Collection: [http://www.ploscollections.org/software](http://www.ploscollections.org/software)
Front Matter

*PLOS Computational Biology* publishes a range of front matter articles. No publication charges apply to these article types.

**Front Matter at PLOS Computational Biology**

- **Editorials** — Editorials typically introduce new and changed features to the journal, discuss issues of professional development, and highlight developments in the field relevant to the readership.

- **Education Articles** — The goal of the Education section of *PLOS Computational Biology* is to provide both practical and background information on important computational methods and approaches used to investigate interesting biological problems.

- **Reviews** — Reviews reflect rapidly advancing or topical areas in computational biology research that are of broad interest to the entire biology community and have not been covered significantly by other journals. A review should not be a mere summary of the field; it should be a critique with new points of view which are supported by existing literature from a variety of authors.

- **Perspectives** — Perspectives in *PLOS Computational Biology* typically reflect an author’s viewpoint on a particular development in science and how, based on current knowledge of the field and the progress in it, this development evidences or can lead to change in how science is conducted or interpreted. Perspectives are intended to be more prospective than retrospective but require sufficient background to place the points made in context.

- **Topic Pages** — Topic Pages are intended to increase the coverage of computational biology in Wikipedia. The Topic Page becomes a published copy of record of a dynamic version of the article as found in Wikipedia.

- **Messages from ISCB** — As an official journal of the International Society for Computational Biology (ISCB), *PLOS Computational Biology* publishes in this section short informational articles invited by the ISCB Editor as well as announcements from the Society.

- **10 Simple Rules** — 10 Simple Rules provide a quick, concentrated guide for mastering some of the professional challenges research scientists face in their careers.

Contributions to the front section of the journal are subject to peer review. This peer review process is generally handled by a dedicated Senior Editor, although Associate Editors may be asked to give advice via a discussion forum.

Associate Editors may, however, be invited to handle Reviews. In such circumstances, the invitation letter will differ from the standard research article invitation. We are working hard to improve the quality of Reviews, so we ask that Associate Editors be highly selective and consider whether the article goes beyond a mere summary of the field and offers new insights.

**Collections**

In order to highlight specific topics, from time to time, *PLOS Computational Biology* gathers together collections of articles on a theme. These can contain both research and front matter articles, although the criteria for inclusion differs between collections.

There are also several cross-journal collections, containing articles from across the suite of PLOS journals, which are managed by the PLOS Collections Team.
For a current list of *PLOS Computational Biology* collections visit our collections page:
http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/collections

**Focus Features**

The aim of a Focus Feature is to encourage community engagement and discussion as well as to provide a useful resource on the selected topic. The Focus Feature is chosen by an editor/editors in order to ‘shape a debate’ on a topic of interest to the computational biology community.

Editors shepherd a Focus Feature from start to finish: from proposal to publication. A Focus Feature consists of two to five articles, including a covering Editorial. Focus Features can also contain research articles, reviews, and/or perspectives which have been previously published as well as newly published articles.

**Requirements**

- Proposal submitted to Editor-in-Chief Ruth Nussinov prior to submission
- One paper (excluding the forming editors’ Editorial) is newly published.
- Maximum of five articles

**Proposals**

Associate Editors interested in forming a Focus Feature should submit a proposal to the journal office for consideration by Editor-in-Chief Ruth Nussinov prior to invitation to form the Focus Feature.

**Further Information**

All articles submitted to a Focus Feature are subject to the standard *PLOS Computational Biology* editorial processes, editorial policies and publication charges (http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/editorial-and-publishing-policies). The *PLOS Computational Biology* Author Guidelines can be found here: http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/submission-guidelines.
APPENDIX V. EDITORIAL AND PUBLISHING POLICIES

This appendix is designed to give an introduction to the *PLOS Computational Biology* editorial and publishing policies. We highlight specific issues and policies that Associate Editors may regularly encounter.

This is not designed to be a complete guide and Associate Editors are encouraged to review the full list of editorial and publishing policies here: [http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/editorial-and-publishing-policies](http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/editorial-and-publishing-policies).

Associate Editors should notify the PLOS CB Team immediately if they become aware of a breach of an editorial or publishing policy.

Competing Interests

PLOS defines a competing interest (also known as a conflict of interest or COI) as any relationship that interferes with, or could reasonably be perceived as interfering with, the complete and objective presentation, peer review, editorial decision-making, or publication of a manuscript. Competing interests can arise in relationship to an organization or another person. Such relationships may be:

- Professional
- Personal
- Financial

The following are examples of possible competing interest-related breaches of publication ethics:

- An author does not fully declare a competing interest
- A reviewer submits a review for which he or she has a competing interest
- An Associate Editor handles a manuscript for which he or she has a competing interest

Associate Editors should consider whether they have a competing interest and if so decline to edit a submission, including the reason for this in their response. If an Associate Editor discovers they have a competing interest whilst evaluating a submission, they should notify the PLOS CB Team and recuse themselves.

Associate Editors are also responsible for considering author and reviewer competing interests when making editorial decisions.

The full competing interest policy can be found here: [http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/competing-interests](http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/competing-interests)

Reviewer Exclusions

Upon submission of a manuscript, authors are asked whether they wish to exclude any specific Associate Editors or reviewers from the peer review of their article. We ask that Associate Editors respect these requests so long as this does not interfere with the objective and thorough assessment of the article.
Associate Editors can find the list of opposed reviewers by selecting the manuscript action link Invite Reviewers and the clicking Author’s Reviewer Preferences. This information can also be found on the Details page of the manuscript.

If evaluation by an opposed reviewer is required for thorough assessment, Associate Editors should contact the PLOS CB Team prior to inviting this reviewer.

Confidentiality
Editors are required to treat all submitted manuscripts in strict confidence.

Related Manuscripts
When submitting an article, author are asked to indicate whether a related manuscript is under consideration (or accepted) for publication elsewhere. The PLOS CB Team will notify the Deputy and Associate Editor if there is a related manuscript, and a copy of this should be included within the submission.

When handling submissions with a related manuscript, Associate Editors should ask any reviewers to comment on the overlap between the related manuscripts.

If both papers are under consideration at PLOS Computational Biology:

- Each manuscript should stand on its own.
- Related manuscripts should be handled in a coordinated manner, for instance Associate Editors should consider choosing similar reviewers.
- Their fates are, however, not tied, and Associate Editors are at liberty to reject one submission and accept the other.

If an Associate Editor has any questions about the handling of related manuscripts, please contact the PLOS CB Team.

Sharing of Data, Materials and Software
Publication at PLOS is conditional upon the agreement of the authors to make freely available any materials and information described in their publication that may be reasonably requested by others.

On submission, authors are asked to complete a Data Availability Statement, which will be included on the published articles, if accepted. Whilst performing their technical checks, the PLOS CB Team will check whether a submission meets the journal’s requirements and may request the advice of the Associate Editor as a subject matter expert.

Associate Editors are encouraged to ready the full policy in full, along with its FAQs which cover questions such as “To what data does this policy apply?” and “What are the exceptions to making the data publicly available?”
When evaluating a manuscript, we ask that Associate Editors keep in mind whether the authors adhere to standards in their field for data availability, and whether all materials and information that could be reasonably requested by others has been made freely available. Associate Editors should contact the PLOS CB Team if they identify any problems.

Publication and Research Ethics

Maintaining high ethical standards is a collaboration between the PLOS CB Team and Editorial Board. In many cases the Associate Editor’s expertise and subject area knowledge makes them better suited to identify potential misconduct.

Associate Editors should consider all aspects of publication and research ethics when considering a manuscript for publication.

If an Associate Editor becomes aware of potential problems, they should contact the PLOS CB Team.

Publication Ethics

All PLOS Journals are members of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), abide by its Code of Conduct and aim to adhere to its Best Practice Guidelines. In cases of suspected or alleged misconduct, the PLOS CB Team will contact the handling editors and Editors-in-Chief, and work with them to resolve the issue following the relevant COPE flowchart.

Further information about our Publication Ethics Policies can be found here: http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/ethical-publishing-practice.

Suspected Plagiarism:

PLOS has incorporated Similarity Check, powered by iThenticate, into its journal-wide submission system in order to screen submitted content for originality before publication. PLOS Computational Biology screens a subset of articles at the first revision stage. Not all articles are, however, screened and Associate Editors should therefore contact the PLOS CB Team if they have any concerns.

Assessing Cases of Suspected Plagiarism

If the PLOS CB Team identifies an issue with a manuscript following the screening process, they will bring this to the attention of the handling editors to ask whether they think the overlap is at a sufficient level to require further action.

The PLOS CB Team will provide their notes as well as a report produced by Similarity Check, to enable the editors to make this decision. The following points should be helpful when interpreting this report:

- In the first section of the PDF, entitled 'Paper text', the abstract and article text are provided, with each instance of overlap with other sources highlighted in a different color.
- In the second section of the PDF, entitled ‘Sources’, details the paper’s degree of overlap compared with the various sources. Each source is numbered and color coded to match the instances of overlap highlighted in the ‘paper text’ section.
- We don’t generally find the ‘similarity index’ provided at the top of the second section of the PDF to be all that useful; examining the individual instances is a more realistic indicator of the degree of overlap.

Editors may find the COPE Guidelines on text recycling and plagiarism helpful when considering a potential case of plagiarism.
Research Ethics
On submission, authors are asked to submit an ethics statement if their study involved human participants, specimens or tissue samples, or vertebrate animals, embryos or tissues. The PLOS CB Team will check that the statement provided meets the journal requirements during their technical checks. Associate Editors should, however, consider research ethics whilst evaluating a submission and notify the PLOS CB Team if they identify a problem.

Associate Editors can view an author’s ethics statement from the Details page of the manuscript. Authors should also include it at the start of their Methods section.

The PLOS policy on human and animal research can be found here: http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/animal-research

Biosecurity and Dual Use Research of Concern
PLOS recognizes that certain research may fall into the category of "dual use research of concern". This is defined by the NSABB as any "biological research with legitimate scientific purpose that may be misused to pose a biologic threat to public health and/or national security." As an Open Access publisher, PLOS remains committed to the widespread dissemination of research while being sensitive to the issues of responsible publication standards. We expect that the potential risks of publishing a scientific paper will outweigh the benefits in only the rarest circumstances. On occasion, PLOS reserves the right to consider manuscript submissions within this context. In addition to the usual scientific scrutiny, such submissions may also be referred to an internal PLOS Dual Use Committee for further deliberation.

When handling a manuscript describing such dual use research of concern, the Associate Editor should contact the PLOS CB Team to discuss how to proceed.
APPENDIX VI. THE PLOS COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY EDITORIAL BOARD

Editorial Advisors

Our Editorial Advisors play a unique part in the leadership of PLOS Computational Biology and help shape the journal to meet the needs of the scientific community. They are rarely invited to handle papers directly, but rather provide advice on high-level decision required by the journal.

Senior Editors

Senior Editor is the collective name for the editors who handle manuscripts as the first editor in the chain. The PLOS CB Team assigns papers directly to a Senior Editor, who will make an initial evaluation of the manuscript. The Senior Editor will then either reject the manuscript before review, or invite an Associate Editor if they believe the manuscript warrants further consideration.
Senior Editors hold an important leadership role and help guide the development of the journal in their areas of expertise.

### Senior Editors

| Editors-in-Chief (EiC) | • Nominate and appoint new members of the editorial board.  
|                       | • Responsible for the management of the activities of the editorial board.  
|                       | • Oversee editorial operations, including ensuring high standards for published articles and the editorial service offered to authors, in conjunction with the journal office and the editorial board.  
|                       | • Act as an advisor for DEs and AEs in or close to their subject area.  
|                       | • Undertake the initial assessment of papers assigned to them and contact suitable AEs if suitable for further consideration. |
| Deputy Editors (DE)   | • Undertake the initial assessment of a paper.  
|                       | • Contact suitable AEs if a paper is worthy of further consideration.  
|                       | • Available for consultation. |
| Methods Editor        | • Responsible for handling Methods Research Articles.  
|                       | • Direct the development of the Methods Section. |
| Software Editors      | • Responsible for editorial process for Software Articles.  
|                       | • Direct the development of the Software Collection. |

### Associate Editors

*PLOS Computational Biology* regularly uses a combination of formal board members and guests to edit papers. The Senior Editors will invite an AE or GE to make an initial decision on a paper and then oversee any review process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associate Editors</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Editor (AE)</td>
<td>• Oversee the peer review process for the journal, including evaluation submissions, selecting reviewers and assessing their comments, and making editorial decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Guest Associate Editor (GE or GAE) | • Not formal Editorial Board members.  
|                                   | • Invited to manage the review of papers which suit their particular field of expertise on an ad hoc basis |

### Front Matter Editors

Front Matter Editors are responsible for editing submissions to the front section. Front Matter Editors vary in whether they serve as a Senior or Associate Editor when handling manuscripts. For several of the article types, the Editor-in-Chief retains oversight of the editorial process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Front Matter Editors</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Education Editors    | • Oversee the editorial process for Education articles.  
|                      | • Manage the Education and Bioinformatics: Starting Early collections. |
| Reviews Editors      | • Serve as a Senior Editor on all Review articles. |
| ISCB Editor          | • Oversees the peer review process from the Message from ISCB articles. |
| Topic Pages Editors  | • Oversee the editorial process for the Topic Pages articles.  
|                      | • Manage the Topic Pages collection. |
Ten Simple Rules Editors

- Oversee the editorial process for Ten Simple Rules articles.

A complete list of members of the *PLOS Computational Biology* Editorial Board can be found on the journal site and on the Editorial Board Knowledge Base.
APPENDIX VII. PLOS PROFILE

Getting Started
A PLOS profile will be set up for you when you join the Editorial Board, unless you already have one under the same email address we have on file. Your login information will be the same for the Editorial Board Knowledge Base, and will be included in your Welcome email along with information on how to select a password.

Once you have a profile and have selected a password, sign in and out of your account by clicking the “sign in/out” link at the top right of any of the journal pages. To update your profile and adjust your preferences, click the Profile at the top right of any journal page or the following link:

https://community.plos.org/account/edit-profile

A PLOS profile allows users to access the different PLOS websites using the same login information. Currently, editors can use their profiles to login to the password protected portions of the journal websites (http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/ for example) and the editor Knowledge Base websites (http://compbiol.editors.plos.org/). In the future, we will be expanding the PLOS profile system to include more of the tools we use every day.

Commenting
Associate Editors are encouraged to participate in post-publication discussion by commenting on articles they handled, as well as other articles published in their field.

To submit a comment, click the Post a new comment link on the Comments tab. If you are not signed in to your PLOS Profile, you will be asked to sign in before proceeding.

Email Alerts
To set up alerts for newly published content, click the Profile link at the top right of any of the journal pages and then select Alerts & Notifications. Updates about new content published in all of the PLOS journals may be received weekly or monthly.

It is also possible to conduct an advanced search within any of the journals and save the query to receive alerts for this specific search. Perform an advanced search by clicking the advanced search link below the search bar on any of the journal pages or at the following link:

http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/search

When the search is completed, click the Search Alert button on the right side of the screen to set up either a weekly or monthly email alert for new articles that meet the search criteria. These search results are also available as an RSS feed by clicking the RSS button next to the Search Alert button. You can manage all existing search alerts by clicking Alerts & Notifications on the Profile page.
APPENDIX VIII. THE PLOS JOURNAL FAMILY

The PLOS Journals

PLOS publishes a suite of influential journals from all areas of science and medicine. Each journal has unique publication criteria and editorial models. In addition to *PLOS Computational Biology*, we publish two flagship journals, *PLOS Medicine* and *PLOS Biology*, that aim to publish high impact research in their respective fields, and three further “community journals”: *PLOS Genetics*, *PLOS Pathogens*, and *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*; and *PLOS ONE*. The table below highlights the differences between these journals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas covered</th>
<th>ONE</th>
<th>Community journals</th>
<th>Medicine, Biology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial selection considers impact?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish articles other than primary research?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional staff editors</td>
<td>Provide assistance to Academic Editors when needed</td>
<td>None; Publication staff support volunteer Editors</td>
<td>Collaborate with volunteer Editors to manage review process and make decisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transferring Submissions between Journals

Authors may submit work to any PLOS journal, and yet there may be another PLOS journal for which it is more appropriate. For instance, work that is out of the scope of *PLOS Biology* may be appropriate for *PLOS Computational Biology*. Another example might be if work that is not considered a significant advance by *PLOS Computational Biology* may be best considered by *PLOS ONE*. In such instances, editors can recommend that the authors transfer the work to one of the other PLOS journals. Note, however, that some article types differ between journals and therefore cannot be transferred. In particular, no type of article other than primary research can be considered at *PLOS ONE*.

If the authors agree to transfer their submission between PLOS journals, they may move forward with a direct transfer, in which the manuscript, along with any reviewer or editor comments, is transferred to the receiving journal for consideration. Note that direct transfers should only be encouraged if the manuscript is technically sound and is being rejected by the original journal because it is out of the journal’s scope or does not have high enough perceived impact.

Accepting into PLOS ONE vs. Suggesting a Transfer

The aim of the Accept into PLOS ONE decisions process is to expedite the publication of rigorous research without the need for additional cycles of review. As such, only manuscripts that have already undergone peer review and describe a study reported to the highest standards are eligible for acceptance into ONE.

Associate Editors may still recommend manuscripts for transfer to PLOS ONE if they are rejected before peer review, but the manuscript’s acceptance into ONE will take place at the discretion of the journal.

For more information on how to use this new process, see the Accept to PLOS ONE Manual on the Knowledge Base.
Alternatively, the authors may be advised to first revise their submission based on reviewer and editor feedback before resubmitting to another PLOS journal. They may then submit the revised version to the other journal, along with a response to reviewers, as they would for a typical revision. This revised manuscript will then be reconsidered at the new journal.

The PLOS Business Model
PLOS is a not-for-profit Open Access publisher. Among other things, this descriptor means that all of our content is free to readers. We never charge subscription fees to read our papers. When a manuscript is accepted for publication, authors must pay a publication fee. There is no submission fee. Further information regarding the publication fees for all journals can be found here: https://www.plos.org/publication-fees.

Global Pricing Initiative
PLOS is committed to the widest possible global participation in Open Access publishing. To this end, authors’ research that is funded primarily (50% or more of the work contained within the article) by an institution or organization from eligible low- and middle-income countries will receive partial (group 2 countries) or full (group 1 countries) fee funding paid by the PLOS Global Participation Initiative (GPI).

PLOS Publication Fee Assistance
PLOS believes that lack of funds should not be a barrier to Open Access publication. The Publication Fee Assistance (PFA) program is intended for authors who are unable to pay all or part of their publication fees and can demonstrate financial need. Authors must apply for Publication Fee Assistance at time of submission through the manuscript system. Further information about the PLOS Publication Fee Assistance Program can be found here: https://www.plos.org/fee-assistance.

Editorial Independence
All editorial decisions are made completely independently of any financial considerations. None of the authors’ financial information is shared with any editor before, during, or after the peer review process.

Open Access
PLOS applies the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license to works we publish. This license was developed to facilitate Open Access – namely, free immediate access to, and unrestricted reuse of, original works of all types. Under this license, the authors retain ownership of the copyright for their content but agree to make articles legally available for reuse, without permission or fees, for virtually any purpose. Anyone may copy, distribute or reuse these articles, as long as the author and original source are properly cited. As such, we cannot publish any previously copyrighted materials, with few exceptions.

Open Access encompasses a number of issues, including author rights, reader rights, and machine readability. Learn more about the spectrum of Open Access with the “HowOpenIsIt?” pamphlet.

Innovations in Publishing
PLOS aims to develop innovations in scholarly publishing that will improve scientific communication. These efforts are ongoing; a subset of our projects are discussed below.
Post-Publication Interactions
Publishing the article is the beginning of an ongoing conversation about the work. We aim to capture some of that activity through article-level metrics – data about the number of times the article was viewed, downloaded, bookmarked, and shared in various ways – and public comments.

Article-level metrics, or ALMs, offer a mechanism to determine the real significance of an individual article instead of relying on coarser measures like in which journal it was published. Our “Search” feature allows users to filter their results based on certain ALMs. We are constantly working to improve our ALMs by adding new types of usage to track and providing benchmarking measurements that allow users to compare ALMs across different articles more accurately.

Users may post comments on any of our published articles. With this feature, we aim to give readers from around the world a way to communicate about work in their fields and so foster a productive, collaborative space for critical discussion of the literature. Users may post questions for the authors, to which the authors frequently respond, or general comments or feedback about the work. We hope that this public discussion forum about published work will help make scientific communication more effective and efficient.

PLOS Currents
PLOS Currents is our rapid micropublication platform that aims to minimize the delay between the generation and publication of new research. Authors submit small pieces of work that may be valuable for rapid sharing with the research community, including research in progress, single figures or experiments, protocols, datasets, and negative results. Submissions are peer-reviewed within days of submission and published immediately upon acceptance.

PLOS Currents currently covers six areas:

- **Disasters** (any content relevant to disasters, natural or manmade, local, regional or global)
- **Outbreaks** (all aspects of infectious disease outbreaks with impact or potential impact on human health, including respiratory pathogens and foodborne and travel-related outbreaks)
- **Huntington Disease**
- **Muscular Dystrophy**
- **Tree of Life** (phylogenetic research that informs our understanding of organismal evolution)
- **Evidence on Genomic Tests**
APPENDIX IX. FURTHER READING

**PLOS Computational Biology**: [http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/](http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/)

**Journal Information**: [http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/journal-information](http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/journal-information)

**Open Access License**: [http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/licenses-and-copyright](http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/licenses-and-copyright)

**HowOpenIsIt?**: [https://www.plos.org/how-open-is-it](https://www.plos.org/how-open-is-it)


**Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)**: [http://publicationethics.org/](http://publicationethics.org/)

**PLOS Computational Biology Editorial Board**: [http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/editorial-board](http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/editorial-board)

**Author Guidelines**: [http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/submission-guidelines](http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/s/submission-guidelines)

**Article-Level Metrics Information**: [https://www.plos.org/article-level-metrics](https://www.plos.org/article-level-metrics)
