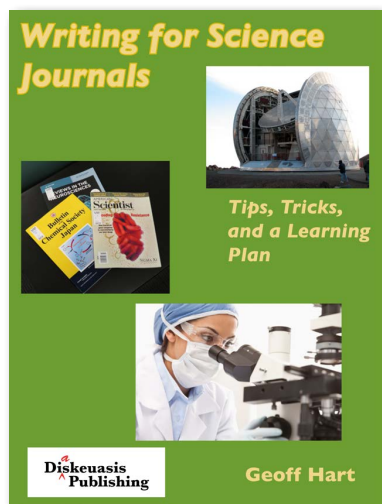


Book review

It aims to teach 'the thought process involved in planning, preparing, writing, revising, and publishing a paper in a peer-reviewed science journal'.



The 17th Biennial Copyright Law and Practice Symposium 2015.

Thursday 22–Friday 23 October
Australian National Maritime Museum
2 Murray Street, Darling Harbour, Sydney

This symposium is organised by the Copyright Society of Australia and the Australian Copyright Council. For more information on the symposium content, registration conditions, pricing, early-bird savings, and payment options, please see the Australian Copyright Council [website](#).

Writing for Science Journals: tips, tricks, and a learning plan.

Geoff Hart, 2014.

Pointe-Claire, Quebec, Canada: Diaskeuasis Publishing. 634 pp.

When Farid asked me to review this book and forwarded the files, I was vaguely daunted. The book is enormous! Absolutely huge. Closer inspection revealed it is intended as a reference book rather than one you might read from cover to cover. Accordingly, I did what I always do when a gigantic non-fiction book lands in my lap, and started at the back. This book has a gloriously comprehensive index. Spanning 47 double-columned pages, it includes every science publishing term imaginable and is well cross-referenced. Topics range from experimental design to nitty-gritty scientific and mathematical issues, to ethics, language and grammar. I was surprised that, in a book written by an editor, there were only two items indexed under 'editing' or 'editors'. There was one item listed under 'copyediting' and one under 'on-screen editing' but it would have been helpful for editing to have been covered in more detail. (That said, the author welcomes feedback—with a view to incorporating improvements into subsequent editions—so maybe, he'll take this on board for revisions.)

Geoff Hart started out as a forest ecology researcher before realising he preferred scientific editing to scientific research. Since then, he has spent over 25 years helping other researchers publish their work. This book is a distillation of what he has learned about scientific publishing along the way. It aims to teach 'the thought process involved in planning, preparing, writing, revising, and publishing a paper in a peer-reviewed science journal' (page 2). Indeed, the book tackles experimental design and statistics as well as writing and publishing as there's no point trying to publish the results of unsound scientific research. I liked the author's conversational writing style, and as a frequent reader of mystery fiction, enjoyed his comparison between the structure of a journal manuscript and that of a detective novel (chapter 6). The 'dirty secrets'—15 inset paragraphs dotted through the book providing tips and tricks to help inexperienced authors have their papers accepted by journals—were excellent. The book breaks journal manuscripts down into sections, considering how each section can best meet the journal's needs, and also provides valuable insights into what journal editors and reviewers are seeking. While in many ways this would be a good general reference text for any science writing, the author notes it is specifically geared to helping people publish in journals; he obligingly recommends different guides for those preparing theses, conference presentations, monographs, and science writing for the general public.

I'd recommend this book if you're actively involved in writing or editing for scientific journals. It would also be a handy reference for anyone involved more generally in scientific publishing or seeking BELS (www.bels.org) certification.

Where can I get a copy, you ask? Hard copies are available from Amazon.com for US\$32 (plus postage) at the time of writing. Both hard copies and electronic versions (PDF and EPUB) can also be purchased via the author's website for the same price. I received the electronic versions for this review but don't have any devices that can read EPUB format (alas, it is not available for Kindle), so read the PDF. Although the PDF is easily searchable and well hyperlinked, it would be worth buying a hard copy if you're after a science writing guide as it is easier to flick through a paper book than an ebook.

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