EDITORIAL

Advantages to Writing Shorter Articles

As the incoming Chief Editor of *Weather and Forecasting* (*WAF*), the other editors and I encourage authors to consider shorter article submissions, as appropriate (https://www.ametsoc.org/ams/index.cfm/publications/journals/weather-and-forecasting/). There are at least five reasons we have for this, but you may think of more. First, because WAF page charges are $120 per page, shorter articles will have lower page charges, reducing the cost to research budgets and funding agencies. Second, in our fast-paced, technology-driven world, many do not have the time—nor necessarily want to take the time—to read long articles. Third, shorter articles put less burden on the selfless volunteer reviewers; longer articles put more strain on this critical resource. Fourth, authors who might be intimidated by the "supposed requirement" to write long articles would be more likely to publish a shorter article in *WAF*. And fifth, the publication process could be beneficially shortened, which would aid students and early-career professionals trying to establish their publishing credentials, as well as those in professions where time commitments may not permit traditional manuscript lengths.

AMS articles have an upper limit of 7500 words, but there is no lower word limit (https://www.ametsoc.org/index.cfm/ams/publications/author-information/formatting-and-manuscript-components/). From 2012 to 2017, the AMS had a category called Expedited Contributions (ECs; Rauber 2017) that were capped at nine pages and six figures. However, these also required a shorter (2-week) review period; and if the editor decision was for major revisions, the EC was converted to an article. ECs ended up being rejected at a higher rate than articles (because reviewers perceived them to be too short) or they were converted into an article (because reviewers required additional information and/or major revisions). The ECs were discontinued at the end of 2017 because they no longer served their original purpose, which was to encourage concise submissions and accelerate the publication process; however, this does not mean that the AMS or *WAF* does not welcome shorter articles.

One should not get the impression that it is okay to sacrifice science in favor of shorter articles. The key is that each article still consists of a "publishable unit" that advances scientific knowledge in the areas of weather and forecasting, but these articles can be strategically shortened. For topics where research is fairly advanced, authors are encouraged to succinctly cite relevant literature (as opposed to writing lengthy introductions), and to provide concise methods sections if the work is building upon previously established methods. Avoiding self-plagiarism is necessary but straightforward in these situations (Schultz et al. 2015). Regarding data and methods, we recognize that it can be difficult to strike the right balance between concision and requiring readers to refer to other publications. Thus, we recommend that data and methods be described well enough to satisfy the majority of readers, while providing references for more technical details that are of interest primarily to practitioners of similar studies. The supplemental section should not be used as a repository for this type of material.

Reviewers are encouraged to carefully consider whether the additional material (if any) they are recommending is truly necessary for the article to be publishable, and to clearly distinguish between additions they consider to be mandatory versus suggestions for improving the article beyond publication standard. Moreover, it is common for new authors to be verbose, so we encourage authors to strive for conciseness (e.g., Trimble 2000; Schultz 2009).

Four examples of shorter *WAF* articles are those by Krocak and Brooks (2020, 2021) and Krocak et al. (2021, 2022).[1] The published page range for these four articles is 6–9 and the figure range is 4–6. The articles are cogent, provide pertinent information to *WAF* readers (especially operational forecasters), and are much shorter than the typical *WAF* article (e.g., 17.9-page average for all *WAF* articles in 2022). Certain topics (such as in these four articles) might be more amenable to shorter page lengths than others, but the point is that this is possible and acceptable. In summary, we encourage authors and reviewers alike to be open to shorter articles and to cite this editorial as support from *WAF* Editors and the AMS.

[1] These four articles were handled by M. Bunkers when he was *WAF* Editor from 2017 to 2021, and are used here as examples simply because of his familiarity with them as well as their common theme (convective watches and warnings) and clearly shorter lengths.

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