

How it's made

Reviews take a lot of work and involve many people. Here is a short story illustrating the process from idea to publication and all the players.

March 2017. Ellie Editor is preparing to present an idea at the journal's commissioning meeting. She is doing a thorough literature search: reading related reviews on the topic, checking conference websites and going through researchers' websites. With all this information at hand she is ready to make a case and convince her colleagues that it's a great commissioning idea. Editorial lore says that for a good review you need to have the right topic, the right author and have it ready at the right time. Ellie's proposal for a Technical Review on new snorkel-based techniques for underwater basket-weaving ticks all the boxes, and her team agrees. She invites Alice Author to write the article.

April 2017. Alice agrees to write and Ellie advises on the article length, number of figures and references and asks for a synopsis. Alice decides to team up with Tom Theorist and Emma Experimentalist, and they start discussing the scope and angle of the review.

May 2017. Alice, Tom and Emma finalize the outline of their article and send it to Ellie. Ellie gives them feedback and they agree to submit a first draft by August. Alice will meet Ellie at the annual Advances in Underwater Crafts conference in the summer where they will chat about how things are progressing.

June 2017. Alice, Tom and Emma are working on the article. Grant applications, teaching and other commitments slow down progress, but they press on.

July 2017. Alice meets Ellie at the conference and they discuss the article. Ellie suggests including a couple of text boxes to discuss key concepts and using a table to compare different snorkel types. Alice is confident they will finish the first draft in August.

August 2017. Emma goes on holiday and it does not look like they are going to finish before the end of the month.

September 2017. Alice thinks they are done, but Emma wants to check the manuscript again. She wants to add something, but Tom is unavailable to discuss because he is travelling. Alice just wants to submit and

be done with it. They are almost there, but as they are about to submit Tom finds some minor mistakes. Just before the end of the month the manuscript is ready.

October 2017. Ellie invites Rachel Referee, Peter Peer-Reviewer and Ernie Expert to peer-review the article. They agree to provide reports within 2 weeks. Rachel and Ernie are prompt, but Peter needs more time. Finally, Peter sends his report asking for lots of minor changes — after all, he is the infamous third referee. Based on the reports, Ellie makes suggestions for revisions.

November 2017. The referees were on the whole positive and made constructive suggestions. Alice, Tom and Emma revise and resubmit the manuscript. Ellie checks the revisions and starts editing the Technical Review for accuracy and clarity.

December 2017. Arthur Art Editor redraws all the figures, while Ed Editorial Assistant obtains permissions for the figures adapted from published literature. Ellie finishes editing the manuscript and returns it to Alice with a few queries. After a couple of rounds of modifications to the figures, everyone is happy. Ellie is about to accept the review for publication, but Tom has some last-minute changes. The manuscript is finally accepted and passed to Paula Production Editor.

January 2018. The manuscript is copy-edited and laid out. Paula creates proofs for the authors and editors to check. After incorporating the final corrections, Petra Proofreader double-checks everything before signing the article off.

February 2018. The Technical Review is published in the February issue. Alice, Tom and Emma are happy with the final product, as is Ellie. She starts looking for an idea for the next commissioning meeting.

All the characters are real, the names are fictional. We are not endorsing proposals on underwater basket-weaving techniques. This is the typical uneventful story of a *Nature Reviews Physics* article. For more dramatic accounts, ask one of our editors at a conference dinner.