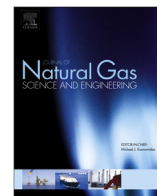




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Publication trends in natural gas research (2013–2014)

Keywords:

Natural gas research topics
 Publication trends
 Publication strategy
 Editorial decisions
 Manuscript submissions
 Countering plagiarism
 Improving English
 Special issues
 Review papers

The past year has seen quite major developments for this journal following the strategic initiatives taken, and clarification of objectives, identified a year ago. Significant positive progress has occurred in all five of our then stated (Wood, 2014) editorial priorities, which are restated below:

1. Continue to attract high quality papers from the frontiers of the industry with novel content that is improved by the robust constructive criticism from Associate Editors working closely with specialist reviewers;
2. Strive to reduce the time it takes from paper submission to publication without compromising on the quality of the review and decision-making procedures;
3. Convince authors from both industry and academia to consider the journal as the first port of call for innovative natural gas studies ranging from theoretical to practical applications and case study reviews;
4. Persuade more authors of theoretical and modelling studies to accompany their manuscripts with open-source computer code with worked examples of their equations;
5. Improve the information we hold on the specialist knowledge of the journal's large database of reviewers, so that all our Associate Editors have the ability to rapidly match manuscripts with suitable reviewers.

1. Impact factor received

In July 2014, the journal also received its first Impact Factor of 1.406 (for Thomson Reuters Journal Citation Reports):

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-natural-gas-science-and-engineering/news/natural-gas-science-and-engineering-first-impact-factor/>

This has also undoubtedly raised the profile of the journal and its interest to authors from across the industry.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jngse.2015.02.015>

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2. Growth in submissions – more efficient editorial process

The number of manuscripts submitted to the journal soared in 2014 and, as shown in Fig. 1, the editorial review and decision making process successfully adapted to cope with this increased influx of manuscripts. Indeed the Editorial Team did better than just cope, it managed to reduce the average time to first editorial decision to some 5 weeks and the overall editorial speed to some 10 weeks. Such editorial speeds mean that, with accepted articles now typically appearing in print within two weeks of final acceptance, authors can on average expect to see their accepted manuscripts published online within 14 weeks of their initial submission. Accepted publications take some 25 weeks from initial submission to appear in a printed journal volume.

These publication speeds are highly competitive for peer-reviewed scientific journals and are the result of hard work and diligence by the JNGSE Editorial Team, which involves the JNGSE Associate Editors working together with us. Without the efforts of the Editorial Team coordinated with the manuscript reviewers these publication speeds would not be possible.

3. Structured reviewer database established

We have continued to build the journal's reviewer database and more carefully classify and assess those reviewers. This has made it easier for Associate Editors to find appropriate reviewers to match specific manuscripts, and for the Editorial Team to target reviewers with manuscripts that better match their areas of expertise. The growth in submissions means that we need to find additional competent reviewers on an ongoing basis. We therefore invite professors and researchers at academic institutions, and professional engineers and scientists working in the industry, to act as additional reviewers.

With this in mind we are also happy to announce that from March 2015 Elsevier's Reviewer Recognition Platform will be active for Reviewers on the Journal.

We know from Reviewer feedback that while Reviewers acknowledge their importance in the peer review process, they can feel their work is near-invisible to the outside world and is hardly rewarded. The Reviewer Recognition Platform aims to change that. The platform provides participating reviewers with a personalized profile page where their reviewing history is documented. Moreover, reviewer statuses are awarded based on the number of high-quality reviews they have completed for a specific journal; a reviewer who completes at least one high-quality review within a two-year time period becomes a 'Recognized Reviewer', while those in the top 10th percentile become 'Outstanding

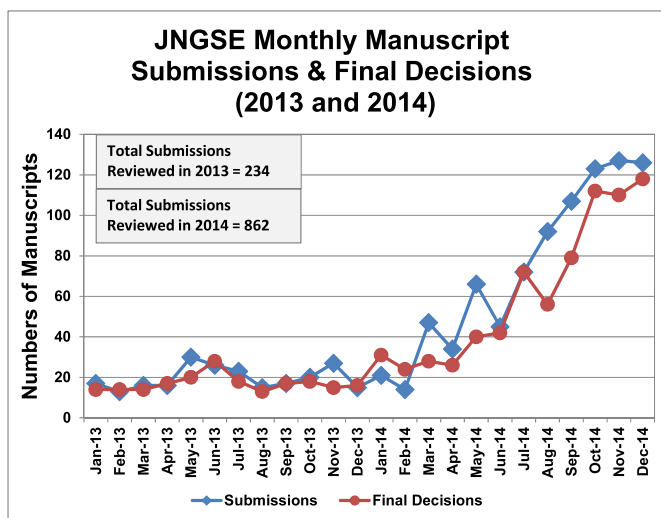


Fig. 1. Number of manuscripts submitted and final decisions taken on manuscripts under review on a monthly basis by JNGSE during 2013 and 2014.

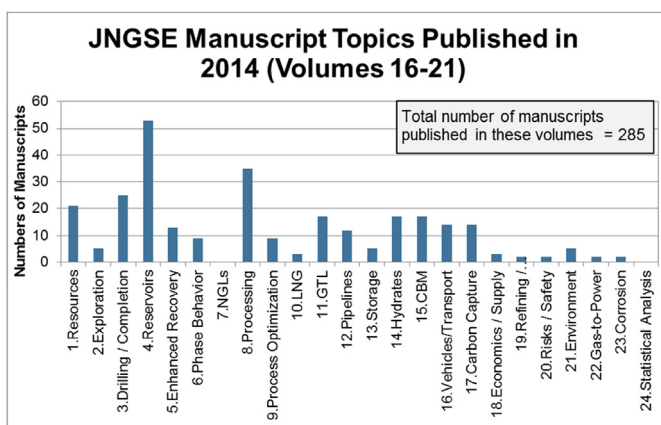


Fig. 2. Manuscripts published in JNGSE printed volumes during 2014 span the wide scope of interests in the natural gas sector covered by the journal. For a more detailed breakdown of the journal's scope of interest see Appendix 1.

Reviewers'. The platform also offers various discounts for Elsevier services, such as the Elsevier WebShop, and reviewers can download a variety of certificates.

We hope that the platform will go some way towards acknowledging the great work that our reviewers undertake as they look to develop their careers.

4. Diversity of topics published

Through the invitation for review articles from industry experts, the initiation of several special issues on topical issues for the industry and the rigorous peer-review process, the journal has also managed to ensure that the quality of articles published is sustained at a high level. Fig. 2 provides a breakdown by topic category of the articles published in JNGSE volumes 16 to 21, i.e. those volumes printed in 2014. The topic categories identified in Fig. 2, and a more detailed breakdown of sub-categories the journal uses to classify manuscripts and reviewers, are listed in Appendix 1.

Fig. 2 reveals that more than twenty articles were published in JNGSE volumes 16 to 21 for each of the topics: resources; drilling/

well completion; reservoirs and gas processing. In addition, more than ten articles were published in those volumes for the topics: enhanced recovery, GTL, pipelines, hydrates, coal bed methane, natural gas vehicles and carbon capture and storage. What is particularly clear for the manuscripts published in 2014, and currently under review, is that shale gas and tight reservoir behaviour, horizontal drilling and fracture stimulation of such reservoirs continues to be the focus of much of the upstream research being conducted. In the gas processing sector it is acid gas treatment that is commanding much research attention along with process optimization. The mix of manuscripts published has a truly international flavour, with authors from China and the Middle East currently contributing most submissions. JNGSE welcomes more manuscripts from authors based in these regions, but we are also taking steps to attract more submissions from Africa, Europe and the Americas. We thank all authors published by JNGSE for the high-quality of their submissions and their help in building and maintaining the reputation of the journal.

JNGSE is pleased that it is receiving quality articles from such a wide range of topic areas. We intend to make efforts to continue to build contributions in its core areas of interest, i.e., unconventional reservoirs, drilling, processing and liquid conversion. JNGSE is targeting review articles and special issues, due for publication in 2015 in these areas. We are also keen to stimulate contributions in sectors not yet significantly represented in recently published issues, e.g. natural gas liquids, liquefied natural gas, gas-to-power and studies linking technologies with improved commerciality, environmental footprint reduction and supply chain economics.

5. Countering plagiarism

A key development in July 2014 was the introduction by JNGSE of the "ithenticate" (CrossCheck) plagiarism analysis of every new manuscript submitted to the journal. We use this software to filter every submission received. Sadly, between 10% and 20% of all new submissions have some plagiarism issues. Depending upon the severity such manuscripts are either rejected immediately, or, for milder cases, returned to authors for revision prior to technical review. The software is not infallible, but ultimately saves peer-reviewing unpublishable submissions.

6. Quality of English

As many of the manuscripts we receive are written by authors that are not native-English speakers, the quality of English in a number of submissions is poor. We now try to filter out manuscripts with very poor English, and issue a revise or reject decision, prior to peer-review. Unfortunately it is not always possible to identify such problems before peer review.

For those manuscripts filtered at an early stage in the editorial process we point out to authors that the English in their manuscripts is below publication standard. We suggest that they use professional English services to help them to improve their manuscript and point out that Elsevier offers, for a modest fee, English language services and support to authors, for example:

<http://www.elsevier.com/journal-authors/editing-checklist>.

<http://webshop.elsevier.com/languageediting/http://webshop.elsevier.com/languageediting/>

There are, of course, many other third party English-language-support services available online that can help authors in this regard, if their English-speaking colleagues are unable to do so. When inviting authors to revise poorly-written manuscripts, we ask them to ensure that the English in their manuscripts is up to publication standards before resubmitting revised manuscripts. JNGSE will then review its technical content.

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