

The Playing Field of Publishing – How do you Play Your Best Game?

Simulation & Gaming
2025, Vol. 0(0) 1–2
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DOI: 10.1177/10468781251325935
journals.sagepub.com/home/sag



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Keywords

games, rules, author's guidelines, reviewers, intellectual game, submission

When you play board or card games sold in retail shops, what steps do you take to prepare for the play? First, you open the box and then read the rulebook. Some games have rather complex game rules, while others have not. Whether complex or not, we cannot start a game without all players understanding the rules. If some players do not understand or interpret the rule correctly, gameplay will be compromised, less fun for all players, and chances are high that the uneducated player will lose the game. The important thing here is that everyone understands the game's rules before action, making the gameplay and player interaction smooth and enjoyable. But we all know some people are so eager to play that they sometimes forget to prepare well.

As researchers, we must play the 'submission' game to share our insights with the research community. With that, we mean that to give others the chance to benefit from your efforts and challenge or build upon your expertise, we – as editors – encourage you to share and try to publish your experience. And Simulation and Gaming, our journal, is all about that. Submitting an article for publication is not complicated but also requires respecting the rules. If you do not, you cannot play the submission game well. Hence,

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the authors must first read the submission rules before submitting. In the submission game, this rulebook is called ‘the author’s guideline’. The difficulty here is that the guidelines differ—depending on the journals you want to submit. For example, some journals adopt the APA7.0 reference style, while others adopt the Chicago style. If you submit your manuscript with Chicago-style references to a journal that adopts APA7.0 style, your manuscript is interpreted as not following the game rule, i.e., the author’s guideline, therefore, is desk-rejected.

For your reference, *Simulation & Gaming* adopts APA7.0 style; hence, the authors should learn and follow the style in addition to the reference style.

It’s a straightforward rule and easy to execute using a reference manager (ask for the correct style), but one many seem to forget. But you are blocked from the game if you do not know this. If you are aware of this rule and the other ones in the submission guideline, you may enjoy communicating with tutors worldwide. The tutors are called ‘reviewers’. They advise and may criticize your manuscripts to improve them for free, i.e., voluntarily. The comments are invaluable to improve your manuscripts, and they will contribute to offering hints at your future research. The reviewing process is a game, as reviewers are selected based on their expertise and are volunteering their time, so this playfield is not set and may take longer than we all aim for. And indeed, ‘You may lose.’ But even when your article is not accepted for publication, your thoughts will be strengthened, and chances to play the game again on another play field (e.g., with another journal) will be much higher.

So, when you play the submission game, please keep in mind that it has rules. If you follow them, the game will be much easier to play and more likely to have a timely and positive outcome. The game may not be easy, though if you join and play it, you will find out that whatever the outcome is, it is intellectually enjoyable.

As editors of *Simulation and Gaming*, we do encourage you and hope—writing this editorial—to help you play your best game!

Author Biographies

Marlies P. Schijven, MD PhD MHSc, is a professor of surgery with vast expertise in the simulation and gaming field for medical education. She is the former president of the Dutch Society for Simulation in Healthcare (DSSH), longtime member of SSH (Society for Simulation in Healthcare) and SESAM (European Society for Simulation) and president of the WATCH society (wearable technology in healthcare). She is the former Chief Medical Information Officer of the Dutch Government, and national lead on eHealth.

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