

CODE OF ETHICS AND PUBLICATION MALPRACTICE STATEMENT

Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems (hereinafter referred to as INDECS) is an interdisciplinary scientific journal, published by the *Croatian Interdisciplinary Society*. This Code of Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement (hereinafter referred to as Code) outlines the general ethical principles of the INDECS editorial policies, as well as the more specific issues of the policies on:

- authorship and contributorship,
- handling complaints and appeals,
- conflicts of interest / competing interests,
- data sharing and reproducibility,
- ethical oversight,
- intellectual property,
- options for post-publication discussions and corrections, and
- withdrawal of articles in press, and retraction and removal of already published articles for which serious violations of the principles of scientific integrity are identified.

This Code is based on the following documents:

- the *Committee on Publication Ethics* (COPE) “Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing” (Version 3, January 2018, https://publicationethics.org/files/Principles_of_Transparency_and_Best_Practice_in_Scholarly_Publishingv3.pdf),
- Elsevier’s “Publishing Ethics Resource Kit (PERK) for editors” (<https://www.elsevier.com/editors/perk>),
- the Council of Science Editors “White Paper on Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications” (2012 Update, https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/wp-content/uploads/entire_whitepaper.pdf), and
- the *Committee on Publication Ethics* (COPE) “Retraction Guidelines” (Version 1, September 2009, https://publicationethics.org/files/retraction%20guidelines_0.pdf).

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

PUBLICATION DECISION

The INDECS publishing policy is based on double-blind peer review process. The INDECS Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board deliberate on the acceptability of manuscripts submitted for publication, following the procedure described in a separate document. The INDECS Editor-in-Chief is responsible for the final decision, which is then communicated to the author who has been designated as the corresponding author of the manuscript.

EQUAL TREATMENT

All authors are guaranteed equal treatment by the INDECS Editor-in-Chief, the Editorial Board and the reviewers, regardless of the authors’ race, gender, age, religion, political orientation, ethnicity, nationality, geographic origin or other status.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All authors are guaranteed confidentiality prior to the publication of their work. The INDECS Editor-in-Chief and the members of the Editorial Board are not allowed to use the knowledge of the content of the submitted manuscripts for any purpose unrelated to the review process. The INDECS reviewers are allowed to discuss the content of the manuscripts they have been invited to review exclusively with the INDECS Editor-in-Chief and/or the members of the INDECS Editorial Board. The reviewers are not allowed to use the knowledge of the content of the reviewed manuscripts for any purpose unrelated to the review process. The INDECS Editor-in-Chief and the members of the Editorial Board are not allowed to disclose any information about the assigned or prospective reviewers to any third parties.

AUTHORSHIP AND CONTRIBUTORSHIP

Identification of authors and other contributors is the responsibility of the person who submits a manuscript. Prior to the acceptance of the manuscript for publication, the person who submits the manuscript is required to explicitly confirm that:

- all individuals who qualify for authorship have been listed as authors of the manuscript;
- every person listed as an author has indeed qualified for authorship;
- all individuals listed as authors have read and approved the manuscript for publication.

Individuals who contributed to the work but whose contributions were not of sufficient magnitude to warrant authorship should be identified by name in the Acknowledgments section.

The individuals listed as authors will be held accountable for the completeness, accuracy and scientific integrity of the published material.

HANDLING COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

In handling complaints and appeals INDECS adheres to *Elsevier's* "General guidelines for handling allegations" (<https://www.elsevier.com/editors/perk/general-guidelines-all-decision-trees>). In particular, the main questions attempted to be resolved first are:

- Who is making the complaint or raising the issue?
- Who should then become involved?
- Who is the decision-maker regarding how to resolve and handle the complaint?

When the complaint is made against an INDECS author, the INDECS Editor-in-Chief contacts the author about whom a complaint has been made, and the author is given the opportunity to respond. The INDECS Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board then decide on further steps on the basis of the author response.

The course of action for the most frequent types of complaints is generally determined by *Elsevier's* "Publishing Ethics Resource Kit (PERK)" decision trees (<https://www.elsevier.com/editors/perk>). These decision trees cover the following cases:

- authorship complaints,
- plagiarism complaints,
- multiple, duplicate, concurrent publication / simultaneous submission,
- research results misappropriation,
- allegations of research errors and fraud,
- research standards violations,
- undisclosed conflicts of interest, and
- reviewer bias or competitive harmful acts by reviewers.

In any of these cases, the INDECS Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board will follow the procedures outlined by the PERK decision trees. If a complaint does not belong to any of the cases covered by the

PERK decision trees, the INDECS Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board will look for additional resources pertaining to the case in hand (e.g., by consulting the Committee for Publication Ethics – COPE; <https://publicationethics.org>), and then decide on the most appropriate course of action.

In many cases, the communication of the complaint to the author and/or the authors' institution will in and of itself be considered a remedy. Other remedies (which are not exclusive) may include (in order of severity):

- publication of a notice, corrigendum or erratum in a future issue (which may also take the form of an 'expression of concern'),
- formal retraction of the article and publication of a notice as to the reason,
- formal removal of the article, only for material that invades a subject's privacy or could cause serious harm,
- decision by the INDECS Editorial Board on future submissions by the author or author group.

All sanctions will be considered and weighed carefully by the INDECS Editor-in-Chief.

In the most serious cases, the INDECS Editor-in-Chief may, after consultations with the INDECS Editorial Board, ask for legal review and/or support, particularly if:

- a formal legal complaint or brief has been filed in court,
- a letter from attorney representing an interested party has been received,
- a complaint is made about the infringement of a legal right such as copyright, moral rights, or a right of privacy,
- there exist plausible conflicting claims from several parties which cannot be resolved by the Editor-in-Chief through the methods and procedures outlined herein, suggesting that significant further factual investigation would be required,
- a comment is made in a notice, expression of concern, corrigendum, or retraction that might be considered defamatory.

The INDECS Editor-in-Chief is responsible for documenting the entire process of handling each particular complaint/appeal.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST / COMPETING INTERESTS

Every person included in the process of processing the manuscript will declare existing or possible conflict of interest in the first instance of finding or becoming aware of it. That includes authors, Editor-in-chief, members of the Editorial Board, scholars and experts after being asked to review manuscripts as well as the representatives of the publisher. The corresponding statement is sent to the Editor-in-chief who is responsible for avoiding the declared conflict in further processing of the manuscript.

The exceptions are cases for which Editor-in-chief declared the conflict of interest. Then the processing of the manuscript will conduct one of the Associate Editors.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Published articles are covered by the license Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0).

By submitting the manuscript the authors of the submitted manuscript are considered to accept the aforementioned licensing of their works, if published in the INDECS.

DATA SHARING AND REPRODUCIBILITY

Sharing and reproducibility of other texts and parts of the journal INDECS are treated separately. That includes, but is not limited to, posts on publicly available physical or virtual places in any format or media as well as texts which are published in the journal INDECS but are not scientific articles.

ETHICAL OVERSIGHT

The person who submits the manuscript is, at the time of submission, required to confirm whether the research reported in the manuscript adheres to the legal requirements of the study country, as well as whether all necessary approvals for carrying out the research reported in the manuscript have been obtained from the authorised bodies. For all research involving human subjects, authors are expected to have obtained the relevant ethics committee approval and to have reported on its acquisition in the manuscript.

OPTIONS FOR POST-PUBLICATION DISCUSSIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Despite the greatest efforts at publishing material of highest quality, errors may appear from time to time. When authors or any other persons discover errors or inaccuracies in articles published in INDECS, it is their obligation to promptly notify the INDECS Editor-in-Chief. If only a small part of an article reports flawed data, and especially if this is the result of genuine error, the INDEX journal will publish corrections in the form of *errata/corrigenda* as soon as reasonably possible. The term *erratum* refers to a production error, caused by the journal's production process. The term *corrigendum* refers to an author error. As a general rule, an *erratum* would be written by the INDECS Editor-in-Chief, while a *corrigendum* would be written by the authors themselves.

The INDECS journal encourages responsible post-publication discussions about published articles. Comments on published articles are subjected to editorial review. Comments are printed on numbered pages, listed in the table of contents, and published with separate DOIs.

ARTICLE WITHDRAWAL, RETRACTION AND REMOVAL

Articles in press or published may later be withdrawn, retracted or even removed. Such actions can only occur under exceptional circumstances, when serious infringements of professional ethical codes are determined, such as multiple or concurrent publication, bogus claims of authorship, plagiarism, fraudulent use of data, etc. In all such cases, the INDECS journal official archives at the Croatian National and University Library in Zagreb will retain all article versions, including withdrawn, retracted or removed articles. The INDECS journal fully complies to Elsevier's "Policy on article withdrawal" (<https://www.elsevier.com/about/our-business/policies/article-withdrawal>).