

AFTE Reviewer Guidance Manual

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As a peer reviewer for AFTE, you serve a critical role in the peer review and publication process¹. When acting in this role you should consider yourself to be one of the gatekeepers of what information is acceptable for consideration by the international community of firearm and toolmark examiners.

Any information published in the AFTE Journal must be factually accurate and/or grounded in sound scientific method or reasoning. If you feel you need any assistance or guidance, do not hesitate to reach out to the rest of the Editorial Committee; we all have a vested interest in your success.

Overview of the Editorial Process²

All papers published in The AFTE Journal are reviewed for scientific validity, logical reasoning, and sound methodology, where applicable. The editor, assistant editors, and the editorial review panel conduct a detailed review of all papers prior to publication. Papers in which the author engages in experimentation or testing from which conclusions are drawn, or those that present an opinion, technique, or method having scientific significance are all subject to post-publication peer review by the members of the Association of Firearm & Toolmark Examiners. The “AFTE Peer Review and Letters to the Editor” section of the Journal provides a forum for post-publication peer review.

The review process starts with the submission of an article to the Editor. After recording when the article was received, author’s name and title of the submission, the Editor assigns the article to a member of the Editorial Review Panel. An email is sent to both the author and the reviewer informing both of the assignment and how the two can contact each other.

Once in the reviewer’s hands, the article is reviewed for grammatical and technical correctness. Only major revisions are addressed with the author. Minor revisions include corrections to grammar or spelling and slight rewording for clarity.

If a reviewer accepts a manuscript with only minor revisions, it is returned to the Editor. The manuscript is then assigned to one of the Assistant Editors for a secondary review of grammar and technical content.

If the manuscript is approved by the Assistant Editor, it is returned to the Editor for formatting and publication.

Once the article has been electronically formatted, it is assembled in a journal with other approved articles. The assembled journal undergoes one last review by all four Assistant Editors. Final corrections are made by the Editor and the journal is sent to the printer.

In most cases, if major revisions are required, the reviewer will contact the author and the two will attempt to rectify the problem. If the problem cannot be resolved between the two, the Editor is contacted and other members of the Editorial Review Panel may be contacted for suggestions on how to proceed. If the problem is resolved, the article moves to an Assistant Editor for secondary review. If the problem cannot be resolved, the Editor informs the author via email that their submission has been declined and if they would like to revise the article and resubmit, the article will be received as a new submission and will be subject to the same process. In most cases, the author will

¹ For an excellent overview of the peer review and publication process, read the following article by John Collins, former editor of the AFTE Journal: Collins, J., “Scientific Reliability – Publication, Peer Review, and the AFTE Journal,” *AFTE J.*, Vol. 32, No. 2, Spring 2000, pp. 132-135.

² Clow, C., “Message from the Editor: The AFTE Peer Review Process,” *AFTE Journal*, Vol. 41 No. 3, (Summer 2009), p. 203, < <http://www.afte.org/Journal/PeerReviewProcess.htm> > . Used with permission.

be supplied with a copy of the Editorial Panel's critiques.

Upon secondary review by an Assistant Editor, if a major problem has been overlooked by the assigned reviewer during the preliminary review, the reviewer is notified and, in most cases, the author is contacted to try to resolve the problem. If the problem is resolved, the article is returned to the Editor for formatting. If the problem cannot be resolved, the Assistant Editor informs the Editor and other members of the Editorial Review Panel may be contacted for suggestions on how to proceed. If the problem cannot be resolved, the Editor informs the author via email that his/her submission has been rejected and if he/she would like to revise the article and resubmit, the article will be received as a new submission and will be subject to the same process. In most cases, the author will be supplied with a copy of the Editorial Panel's critiques.

In some cases, at either level of review, a manuscript may be deemed as needing too much revision of technical content and may be rejected. In these cases, there is no attempt to resolve the problem with the author. The article is simply rejected and the author is sent an email. The author is informed that if he/she would like to revise the article and resubmit, the article will be received as a new submission and will be subject to the same process. In most cases, the author will be supplied with a copy of the Editorial Panel's critiques.

The Initial Review Process

Accessing Assignments:

Assignments will normally be sent by email, where possible, as it seems to be a less problematic process, but some submissions will be too large, and will be transmitted via the AFTE FTP.

PC Instructions:

On PC, one can normally download through an internet browser, but cannot usually upload. Both can be done by using Windows Explorer (not Internet Explorer), by going to the windows start menu, clicking on "computer" or "my computer" (depending on the version of windows), and typing the address into the bar at the top.

Firefox can be used with the FireFTP add-on (<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/fireftp/>). Some members have used Filezilla (<https://filezilla-project.org/>), though the Editor has not and cannot give feedback on it.

Mac Instructions:

From the Finder, select "Connect to Server" from the "Go" menu. Type the FTP address into the appropriate field in the subsequent window and click "Connect". Enter the username and password when prompted, and click "Connect". The FTP server on the desktop may now be treated like any other folder on the computer.

When finished, eject the server by using control+click and selecting "Eject" or highlighting the FTP server icon and choose "Eject" from the "File" menu in the Finder.

Due to suspected issues with the Mac OS's built-in FTP client, it may be preferable to use a third party program, such as FileZilla (<https://filezilla-project.org/>) or Cyberduck (<https://cyberduck.io>). The Editor has not used these programs and cannot provide feedback on them.

Additional Note:

Sometimes certain network/firewall settings (e.g. those of some agencies) don't allow access by any of the aforementioned methods. This site: <http://www.downforeveryoneorjustme.com>, can be used to see if a problem is local or not. Let the Editor know if you have any problems accessing the FTP.

Timelines for Reviews:

There is not currently a hard and fast deadline for reviews. As a rule of thumb, try for about a week and a half per page. Take more time if needed, especially if there are issues that need to be resolved in the submission. It's a lot better if a submission takes a while to get through a careful and thorough initial review that ensures it is in good shape before the final review, than it is for it to receive a quick and cursory first review, only to find out that it needs major work within a few weeks of its planned publication. If you really can't get to a review for a few weeks, let the Editor know and they will see about reassigning it, and coming back to you for the next one.

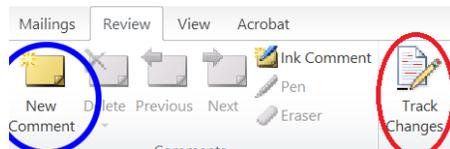
Assignments and Field of Expertise:

If you are assigned a submission with a subject that is somewhat unfamiliar, such as a type of examination not used at your particular lab, you could either consult with someone that is more knowledgeable on the subject or, if you don't know anybody or aren't comfortable consulting with them, you can let the Editor know that you don't feel knowledgeable enough about the subject to do an adequate review. But, there is the caveat that aspects of many of the articles, being experimental, are going to be a bit outside of or at the edge of most reviewers' expertise, so we'll have to do the best we can with what is available.

Reviewing the Manuscript

Read through the paper, looking for technical accuracy, grammar, punctuation, etc. Note that of these, technical accuracy is of the most importance.

Track any changes made using the "track changes" button under the "review" tab in Word (circled in red).

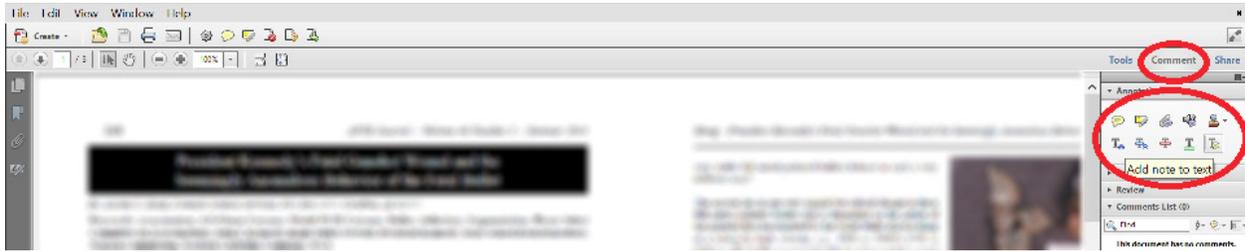


Also, the "New Comment" button (circled in blue) can be used to record comments and questions for the author.

It's uncommon, but not impossible that you may be called upon to do mark-ups on a .pdf file. The following image shows where the most useful buttons should be (though your version may vary). From right to left: the first button is for inserting text, the next is to cross-out and replace, the next is for just crossing out, next is underline, and the last is to highlight/make a note. Click the appropriate button and highlight the text of interest.

If only minor changes are made (spelling, punctuation, slight rewording, etc.), return it to the Editor. If it requires additional info, has an issue with technical correctness, or needs other major changes, contact the author and try to resolve them. If a submission has considerable shortcomings (e.g. so vague that it can't be determined what they did, the author doesn't generally seem to understand what they're talking about, a lot of clearly incorrect information, etc.), let the Editor know and it will be evaluated to determine if it merits rejection. (Note: "Rejection" here is not necessarily permanent. Submissions that have had the major issues corrected can be re-submitted.)

If the reviewer feels that significant revisions need to be made before the manuscript is ready for publication, it is incumbent upon the author(s) to make the needed corrections. It is not the responsibility of the reviewer to rewrite portions of a manuscript to bring it up to publishable standards; however, the author(s) should be notified if any significant edits are made by the reviewer so the author(s) can approve the changes prior to publication. It is appropriate, however, for the reviewer to suggest alternate and/or additional wording for some passages if they feel the changes improve clarity and will shorten the length of time in review by minimizing the back-and-forth correspondence between reviewer and author over wording or content changes. If there is a significant disagreement that cannot be resolved between the reviewer and author, the AFTE Editor should be notified.



Once finished with your review, please append your initials and date to the end of the document file name, so it can be distinguished from previous versions of the file.

Matters to Consider During Review

Constructive Criticism of Content:

Disclaimer: All examples of editorial corrections included herein are provided for instructional purposes only and are not intended in any way to disparage the work of the original authors.

The most important thing that must happen during a review is the consideration of validity of the content of the submission, including appropriateness of subject matter, scientific and logical soundness, factual accuracy, etc. Some questions to consider during the course of a review:

- Is this information that is already available? (But, keep in mind that the replication of previously-published experimental results is desirable.)
- Is the information useful or potentially useful to someone working in the field of firearm and toolmark examination? (It doesn't have to be immediately or greatly useful, just more than not at all useful.)
- Does all of the information pertain to the topic stated? (Some information may be interesting but irrelevant to the topic at hand. It may be better covered in an additional submission.)
- Are the stated facts correct?
- Were the right questions asked by the author(s) in the experimental design? If appropriate, has the author defined the problem or issue under study, and have they clearly stated the hypothesis (tentative explanation) to be tested? Can the experiment be expected to meaningfully test the hypothesis?
- Do the conclusions make sense, and does the information presented support them?
- Are the reasons that the author gives for why an observed occurrence happens the only reasons why such an occurrence could happen? Are there potentially alternative explanations? Is the certitude with which they are stated justified? (Speculations about why something happened are valuable, but it is best to discuss all reasonable explanations, and not to overstate their certitude. Narrow discussions of possible explanations with an unreasonable degree of certainty are often an indicator of presupposition of the outcome.)
- Are the claims made too broad?
- Are the limitations of the experiment stated?

- Ask yourself: In light of recent challenges to the field, how do you think a critic of our field would view this paper (from a scientific standpoint)? How do you think the article will be received by the relevant scientific community (firearm & toolmark examiners)?

A few additional notes:

Keep in mind that the reviewer's goal is to be constructive; to help make the paper the best it can be.

Some of the most insidious errors are the least noticeable, which is why they may get missed by reviewers. Beware of fallacies of thought, or what could be called the "passing assumption". This is an assumption that is mentioned only briefly by the author or not mentioned at all. This may be because the author believes it to be undoubtedly true (and without need for scrutiny) or because they believe it is probably true and are not aware of any information to the contrary (or have not done their due diligence to try to find such information). Some such assumptions can be relatively harmless to the ultimate conclusions presented in a paper; however, if the assumption is critical to the thesis of the paper and happens to be untrue (or very possibly untrue), the conclusions that are built on it are not valid. Example: Statements that ascribe apparent subclass markings on a test-fired projectile to likely be from a (assumed) button-swaged barrel, when 1) the authors were not able to ascertain the actual rifling processes used by the manufacturer and made no indication that they attempted to do so, and 2) it has not been well established by previous studies that button-swaged barrels leave significant subclass markings of the type described by the authors.

The reviewer should also try to anticipate logical questions that readers might have if they had read the initial draft and, to every extent possible, have the author address these questions before the article is forwarded for publication. This may not always be possible or practical if, for instance, significantly more work would be required to answer a question that may not be of critical importance to begin with, but a simple note to this effect in the body of the paper would suffice to satisfy any lingering questions that might otherwise occur to the attentive reader. Sometimes a quick call or email to the manufacturer can clear up questions that may linger in research regarding manufacturing processes (e.g. consecutive barrel studies, etc.). Contacting other relevant subject matter experts may be similarly useful for other questions.

Bias:

While bias by the reviewer is not necessarily a conscious act, and therefore there is only so much that can be done by conscious effort to mitigate it, keep in mind that such things as the reputation of the author(s), personal opinions regarding the topic, and things of this nature can have a negative effect on one's objectivity. Bear in mind that no individual or organization, no matter how well-respected, is infallible, and that findings that contradict established thought in a subject area may still be correct. The science should speak for itself, regardless of any potential negative outcomes for the discipline of firearm and toolmark identification. If you have any concerns that personal feelings may cloud your judgement on a submission, contact the Editor.

Spelling and Grammar:

While the subject is far too broad to cover comprehensively here, here is a reminder about a few things to look out for:

Watch out for words that may not be caught by automated spell checkers, such as the wrong tense or form of words and homophones (e.g. "where" vs. "were", "then" vs. "than", "to" vs. "too" vs. "two", "affect" vs. "effect", "your" vs. "you're", "there" vs. "their", etc.).

Check to make sure that the appropriate grammar rules are used consistently throughout the paper. Remember that there are tricky (and often overlooked) grammar rules: use of hyphens (e.g. "test-fired" vs. "test fired"), use of serial comma ("Oxford comma" or "Harvard comma"), use of commas in general, apostrophes with words ending in "s" (plural possessives, names ending in "s", its vs. it's), use of quotation marks, use of capitalization, convention

regarding single vs. multiple-digit numbers, semicolons before “however” when it is used to join two independent clauses, etc.

Keep in mind that some grammar conventions may fall in or out of favor over the years.

When in doubt, there are many useful grammatical guides available online that can be found using a Google search. Also see section entitled, “Additional Useful Resources for Reviewers”, below.

Writing Style:

There is no “one true style”. The reviewer should refrain from imposing their own style preference when editing, but it is appropriate to suggest alternate wording if the reviewer thinks it will improve the paper. When in doubt, clarity should be the guiding rule. If you understand what the author is trying to say in a particular sentence but think the wording could be clearer, it probably should be reworded for ease of reading/understanding. However, when suggesting alternate wording, the reviewer needs to be careful that they are not changing the author’s original intended meaning (unless it needs to be changed). If in doubt, communication with the author is extremely important.

Passive voice and third person point of view is generally preferred for AFTE submissions, but not strictly required. Active voice and first person is more acceptable for technical notes and case reports than they are for articles. As a general rule, let the author’s submission stand as submitted, unless the voice used proves to be distracting. Also, whichever voice or tense is used, it should be used consistently throughout the submission. (see: <http://www.afte.org/Journal/AuthorInstructions.htm>, for descriptions of technical notes, articles, etc.)

Ideally, the tone should be professional and not too casual. Some final questions to ask yourself: Does it read well? Does it flow?

English Use by Non-Native Speakers:

Some submissions from non-native English speakers can be questionable, with regard to proper English. Although we like to keep the author’s own style as much as we can, if the clarity can be improved with a little retooling, go ahead. Experience indicates that most such authors are aware that their English could use a bit of polish and are glad for the assistance.

Spelling Variations due to Dialect:

Some English-speaking countries (UK, Australia, Canada, etc.) use spellings that are uncommon in the US, such as the use of “re” in place of “er” in words like “calibre”, “centre” and “metre”. Or, the use of ‘s’ in place of ‘z’ in words ending in -ize like in “familiarize” and “customize”. In these cases, let the spelling conventions used by the author stand. In cases where the author has been inconsistent in using a particular convention, use whichever will require the fewest changes.

Technical Terms:

When possible, terms from the AFTE Glossary should be used. Non-standard terms should be changed to those found in the AFTE glossary. For example, the use of “Land Engraved Area” should be changed to the AFTE term “Land Impression”. Note: When a term from the AFTE Glossary is referenced, it should not be listed among the references as simply “current version”; the author should give an edition and year.

Use of the term “inconclusive” should be qualified by using one of the (a), (b), or (c) descriptions contained in the AFTE Range of Conclusions.

Units of Measurement (use of US Customary and SI):

Because the AFTE Journal is an international publication, and due to the variations in the types of measurements used by the firearms industry, weights and measures should be denoted in both US Customary and Metric Units.

Useful resource: NIST Guide to the SI <http://physics.nist.gov/Pubs/SP811/sec07.html>

Abbreviations and Acronyms:

Acronyms and abbreviations (even those that are common in the field) should normally be spelled out at their first usage in the submission.

Photographs, Tables, and Graphs:

The Editor will normally take care of issues with images during formatting, but if you can keep these issues in mind, it may save the need for last-minute changes and requests for information. At the least, please check if the figures referenced in the text were actually submitted and are the figures referenced.

Landscape-oriented images tend to use the available space more efficiently, so it is easier to make the subject a reasonable size without a lot of cropping or empty space on the page.

Submitting multiple images combined into a single image generally makes it more difficult to fit the image onto the page with all subjects displaying at a desirable size.

The more characters a caption has, beyond 80, the more likely it will need to be cut down. This isn't a hard rule; submissions with sparse photos can often accommodate more, while those with lots of images are more likely to need cuts. It usually best to keep it to a simple description of the subject of the image.

Using captions to introduce new information should be avoided, with the exception of annotated images. Annotated images can be problematic, though not impossible, to deal with. Annotations are often better put in the caption, if practical. Arrows and highlighted areas are usually not a problem. Note the relevant section in <http://www.afte.org/Journal/AuthorInstructions.htm>.

If an image already looks fuzzy or pixelated on screen, it is not likely to be significantly improved during the formatting process.

Previously-Presented Papers:

If a paper has previously been presented at a scientific meeting, this should be noted in the paper, preferably in a footnote on the front page or near the "Acknowledgments" section.

Parts of a Research Paper and Potential Issues During Review:

Title:

The title should include enough information that the reader can get a reasonable idea of the main topic covered by the article. Concise titles are preferred when possible, but the title needs to be long enough to fully convey to the reader the subject of the article. Uninformative and clever titles should be avoided for submissions. Edits to the title are often best addressed after reading the article completely.

Example #1:

Title as Submitted: *Cartridge Interchangeability: "38 Sig & Wesson"*

Edited: *Cartridge Interchangeability: 38 Smith & Wesson Caliber Cartridges Fired in 357 Sig, 40 S&W and 10mm Caliber Firearms*

Submitted title was potentially confusing and did not clearly convey the contents of the paper.

Example #2:

Title as Submitted: *Atmospheric Corrosion of Bullets and Cartridge Cases*

Edited: *Atmospheric Corrosion of Bullets and Cartridge Cases as an Indicator of Time since Discharge*

The original title did not fully convey what the article was about. What is significant about the atmospheric corrosion of bullets and cartridge cases? If I am a busy firearms examiner who may not have time to read every article in the Journal, why might I be interested in this? The edited version is concise, yet it gives the reader an accurate idea of the article's scope.

Keywords:

The purpose of keywords is to assist readers in finding an article related to their area of interest by searching for words or terms referred to in the text of the article that are closely related to the subject(s) addressed by the article. Add or modify the keywords based on the content of the article. A good approach is to read the keywords before you read the body of the article, and then read them again after reading the article. Try to think of any words or terms that are mentioned in the body of the article but are not included in the keyword list (or variations of words or terms that are included) that might assist someone doing a blind search for an article that covers the same topic. This is often one of the most neglected areas by authors and reviewers alike.

Abstract:

The purpose of the abstract is to give the reader a summary of the contents of the article or report, consisting of the major points (background, brief description of methods and results, and conclusions). It should emphasize new and important aspects of the study in light of previously published research, if relevant. It serves to give the reader an idea whether or not the paper is relevant to their needs, and sometimes to refresh their memory of the contents. It is especially important for the proper use of indexing services. It is important that the abstract not contain information that does not appear elsewhere in the paper, and that the abstract reveals the conclusions. Authors and reviewers should bear in mind that scientific literature requires an abstract which fully summarizes conclusions. The abstract can be viewed as a promise to the reader of the content of the article; the reviewer must make sure that the content that is alluded to in the abstract actually exists in the body of the article. For example, if the author states in the abstract that their paper will address the value of bullets for examination or identification after firing them through a particular medium, then you would expect to find a detailed discussion of this evaluation in the paper. The abstract is best evaluated after reading the rest of the paper.

Body:

Depending on the specific project, a scientific paper should generally be organized in the following manner: Introduction, Materials/Methods, Results, Discussion, and Conclusions. Or, more or less, background information, what was done and why it was done, how it was done, what happened, significant aspects of what happened, and why the author thinks it happened that particular way.

The introduction should not contain excessive introductory information. If the paper deals with something that is common knowledge in the field, such as the Griess test, it should definitely give a brief overview of what the Griess test is, for the uninitiated, but shouldn't recount its entire history. It should not expound on tangential aspects of the subject. For example, if the research deals with distance determination, but not specifically with the effects of wind on gunpowder particle deposition, there need not be a literature review of existing research of the effects of wind on gunpowder particle deposition. This is frequently an issue with papers from NFEA students. More can, of course, be said if it is something new, such as an adaptation of technology from a different field to firearm examination.

Methods and results should generally be presented in chronological order, but if multiple types of analyses have been employed and have produced different types of results, it's often easier to understand if similar types of information are grouped together (i.e. combine Results and Discussion sections, present one set of results with discussion, present subsequent sets of results with discussion, then tie them together).

Materials and methods should normally contain enough information that the procedure can be replicated by other researchers.

Excessive recounting of methods should be avoided. If the author used an established method that is documented elsewhere, a citation of existing literature should be used rather than recounting the whole method. If the method is significantly changed or is entirely new, that will warrant additional detail.

If the reader will need to know X to understand Y, make sure X comes before Y in the paper.

Redundant information will often need to be removed. References can be made to previous parts of the paper, if it supports or explains a different point that is currently being made, but if the better part of a paragraph says things that have already been said, it probably needs to be cut. It's also often a sign that the paper isn't presenting ideas in a readily comprehensible order.

Data points generally should not be communicated in text form. Paragraphs that read in this fashion: "Shot one was measured to be 1050 ft/s. Then, shot two was measured to be 1054 ft/s. Shot three was measured to be 1048 ft/s..." should be replaced with a table or graph.

Use of examples for complex concepts may be helpful.

Acknowledgements:

The author(s) should be specific about what they're thanking the person for. Acknowledgements should not be so reverential to vendors that they give the impression that the integrity of the author may be compromised.

Conflict of Interest Financial Relationship Statements and Statements:

Though the AFTE Journal does not currently have a formal Conflict of Interest policy (a solution is forthcoming), authors should disclose any relationships or situations (*either directly or through immediate family*) that could reasonably affect or appear to affect the authors' ability to perform or present work objectively.

Conflicts of interest may include: financial interests (such as, but not limited to: grants and research funding, travel grants, patent ownership [including pending patents and applications], stock ownership, consultancies, honoraria, writing fees, or speaker's fees related to the subject matter under consideration), as well as some personal, political, or religious interests.

References:

Quotes and information being recounted from other sources must have a reference. The preferred reference format

can be found in the Instructions to Authors. References should be listed in order of their first mention and noted in text with corresponding number.

Internet resources are more acceptable when they can be attributed to a party that presumably stands to suffer some sort of damage to their reputation if the information is incorrect (e.g. industry websites, government websites, online peer-reviewed journals, etc). The reliability of references is especially critical when it is a source of technical information. Anonymously-authored websites and those of hobbyists/enthusiasts, etc. should generally be avoided. Less rigorous websites may be acceptable for information that is essentially common knowledge, but the availability of a better resource or need for a citation at all should be evaluated.

A note regarding Wikipedia: Since Wikipedia is an open-source, web-based, encyclopedia that can be changed by virtually anyone who cares to write an entry on a particular subject, it is not considered an authoritative source of information for research articles. Wikipedia entries often have other references cited; these references should be considered as an alternative to the citation of the Wikipedia entry itself, if such an entry is referenced.

Suggest any additional relevant references you may be aware of, if appropriate.

As noted above, when a term from the AFTE Glossary is referenced, it should not be listed among the references as simply “current version”; the author should give an edition and year.

Potential Authorial Misconduct

While it would seem likely that most of those submitting are earnest and upright in their submissions, it should be noted that not all submissions to the AFTE Journal have been without questionable content. While it would appear that in most cases it is a matter of honest error/misunderstanding, it cannot be said with certainty that all cases were not without suspicious intent on the part of the submitter. Regardless of intent, all violations of copyright, lack of proper permissions, plagiarism, and other dubious content will reflect poorly on the integrity of the AFTE Journal. While no reviewer can be expected to deduce the original sources of all content, the following are some potential issues to watch out for:

Improper use of Images:

There are many who seem to think that if it is for a scholarly work, then anything goes with images. The idea that one can use anything they find, so long as they give credit to the source (or sometimes not even that) is doubtful. Even if this were true, the best practice for authors is to be sure that they have the appropriate permission to use images produced by another. While it is ultimately the burden of the author and it is not really the place of the editorial committee to act as the “permissions police”, it is still a good idea to be aware of this and advise authors about questionable images.

Most in the field do not have the resources or training to make very high end photographs or drawings, and very good images are additionally suspicious if they are coupled with notably lower-quality images.

Questionable images can be checked with image search engines (<https://images.google.com/>; <https://www.tineye.com/>), but even if the images don't show up, it is probably best to ask the authors about them.

Plagiarism:

While text plagiarism can potentially happen anywhere, the greatest risk lies in non-research submissions and in the introductory materials of research papers. Warning signs may include passages that sound familiar and inconsistencies in eloquence, especially detectable among non-native or less-eloquent English speakers. If a passage seems suspicious, paste it into a Google search to see if it appears elsewhere. It might also be a good idea to search electronic resources noted in the references (especially internet resources).

Image Manipulation:

This may be a tricky problem to detect. Note that not all manipulations are necessarily a problem (e.g. minor adjustment of brightness/contrast, white balance correction, redaction of case numbers/serial numbers, annotations, callouts, etc.). But some alterations of an image (e.g. toolmarks, relevant features of a firearm, brightness adjustments that cause dropout of individual characteristics, etc.) are not appropriate. Some warning signs may include: abrupt changes in color or gradient, straight edges on an object where there wouldn't normally be a straight edge (or normally so straight, or at the wrong angle relative to the rest of the object), suspicious uniformity of color in an area, inconsistency of apparent location of light source, repetition of areas within an image, suspiciously high degree of similarity between areas of different images, or anything that seems "not quite right".

Though not directly applicable, interested reviewers may wish to peruse this article for more information: <http://jcb.rupress.org/content/166/1/11.full> .

Gift Authorship:

Gift authorship is listing individuals as authors who did not make an authorial contribution (their contribution may be more appropriately listed in the acknowledgements). This is something of a grey area at the moment as the AFTE Journal has not officially defined what is considered an author (a solution is forthcoming). As a rule of thumb, a submission should have more pages than authors (particularly as the number of authors becomes greater than two). If gift authorship is suspected, it is suggested that the reviewer send a comment to the authors along the lines of: "This is quite a few people. Did all of them contribute in the capacity of an author, or did some of them contribute in a capacity that would be more appropriately noted in the acknowledgements?", and allow them to reevaluate the appropriateness of the list.

Other Problems:

The preceding is not a comprehensive list of possible misconduct, but is a list of what are perceived to be some of the more likely potential problems. Any suspected authorial misconduct should be reported to the Editor.

Additional Useful Resources for Reviewers:

The Chicago Manual of Style. 15th ed. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Strunk, W., and White, E. B. *The Elements of Style*. 3d ed. New York: Macmillan, 1979.

Scientific Style and Format: The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers. 8th ed. Reston, VA: Council of Science Editors in Cooperation with the Rockefeller University Press, 2014.

<http://www.bibme.org> Automatic citation formatting website (free)