



# The challenges of making post-publication corrections



## For journals and publishers

- 1. Establishing contacts**  
Can be complicated if authors have relocated or multiple institutions are involved.
- 2. Time required**  
Interactions with multiple contributors takes time, especially if further investigation is needed either from the publisher or institution.
- 3. Communication**  
Need to interact with multiple contributors to reach an outcome (authors, editors, institutions, societies, legal counsel, publishing colleagues).
- 4. Resource constraints**  
Managing large-scale paper mill investigations needs to be balanced against existing investigations.
- 5. Legal threats**  
Assess legal threats from authors and engage further legal advice.
- 6. Competing priorities**  
Balancing paper mill investigations with existing case load.
- 7. Evidence**  
What is the level of evidence necessary to reach an appropriate decision?
- 8. Setting deadlines**  
Limited ability to influence the response time of another contributor.
- 9. Restrictions**  
There are restrictions on the level of confidential information able to be shared.



## For institutions

- 1. Establishing contacts**  
Can be difficult to find the relevant contact at journal/publisher.
- 2. Time required**  
Investigations take time especially if multiple contributors are involved or independent expert advice needed.
- 3. Communication**  
Liaising with other institutions and journals/publishers to reach an outcome.
- 4. Resource constraints**  
Managing investigations is resource intensive especially across multiple articles and may involve examining lab records.
- 5. Legal threats**  
May face legal threats if in breach of employment conditions.
- 6. Complex investigations**  
Typically involves preliminary assessment, interviews, securing evidence, seeking further advice, forming an independent panel, multiple rounds of panel discussion and decision-making.
- 7. Lack jurisdiction**  
If an individual is no longer affiliated with the institution or there are multiple authors affiliated with different institutions and countries.
- 8. Setting deadlines**  
Limited ability to influence the response time of another contributor.
- 9. Restrictions**  
When sharing outcomes need to balance privacy of researchers involved and any legal or policy-based constraints.



## For third parties

- 1. Establishing contacts**  
Can be difficult to find the relevant contact at journal/publisher.
- 2. Time required**  
Investigations take time and meanwhile readers may be unaware that concerns have been raised.
- 3. Communication**  
There is no standard way to communicate potential concerns to a journal/publisher especially for multiple articles at numerous journals/publishers.
- 4. Resource constraints**  
If the journal does not reply there are limited ways to raise awareness of the integrity concerns.
- 5. Legal threats**  
Face legal threats from authors.
- 6. Lack of recognition**  
Contributions of those raising the concerns are not recognised or credited in a manner visible to their employers or funders.
- 7. Confidentiality breaches**  
Some journals may copy in the third party in follow up emails to authors.
- 8. Vague deadlines/responses**  
No indication of when to expect an update/outcome; auto-responses or no response.
- 9. Restrictions**  
Some journals refuse to process anonymous allegations.