

May 2024

Working Group 2: Improve post-publication corrections**Recommendations for improving the process of making post-publication corrections****Feedback**

We welcome feedback on this initial draft, especially from funders, institutional representatives, third parties who raise concerns, and journals who do not have the support of a publisher's research integrity or publication ethics group. Please email feedback to Ruth King, Project Manager, United2Act on contact@united2act.org. We will take this into consideration for a revised version to follow later in 2024.

Executive summary

The timely and transparent rectification of the scholarly record is crucial for maintenance of trust in scholarly communication, particularly in cases involving systematic manipulation of the publication process by paper mills where the concerns involve fraudulent, fabricated, or otherwise unreliable content. However, the scope of work and other compounding challenges in these cases can result in a delay to post-publication correction, leaving articles of concern unmarked in the published record long after concerns have been raised. This has caused frustration among some contributor groups and places researchers at risk of relying upon problematic content.

In this document, we outline the key challenges faced by the various contributor groups interacting within the scholarly communication ecosystem to address paper mill concerns and correct the scholarly record. We outline recommendations for each contributor group to address known pain points. Cross-cutting themes in these recommendations are the need for proactive and timely action and for improved communication between groups.

A note about this project's scope

This document aims to support journals, publishers, institutions, and third parties who raise paper mill concerns, by (i) providing recommendations as to how to improve responses to paper mill cases, and (ii) increasing cross-industry understanding as to the perspectives of the different contributor groups.

We acknowledge that this is only a subset of contributor groups involved in and affected by paper mill cases. For example, the cooperation and timely input of authors, reviewers, editors and other experts is highly valued in most publication ethics cases and can have major impacts on case resolution. For paper mill cases, concerns or common features linking a series of articles may call



into question the provenance of the article content and the reliability of author, reviewer or editor input. Additionally, given the nature of the underlying concerns in these cases, author, reviewer, or editor input pertaining to an individual article is often insufficient to resolve issues that apply across a series of articles.

Specific decisions about process, policy, and case outcomes are outside the scope of this document and lie with the journal or publisher responsible for the affected content. To support improved cross-industry consistency, we provide an Appendix with recommendations and sample policies pertaining to editorial notes, corrections, Expressions of Concern, and retractions.

Introduction

[United2Act](#) is a cross-industry initiative dedicated to addressing specific issues associated with [paper mills](#) and systematic manipulation of scholarly publishing. Research fraud and publication manipulation have become major issues in recent times, and we have seen numerous large-scale cases in which paper mill content has evaded detection until after publication. Identified causes are multiple, including the pressure on researchers to publish, efforts to use aspects of the publishing process for financial gain, challenges at detecting publication misconduct at scale, and over-reliance on published research outputs as a metric across all contributor groups. To effectively tackle this systemic problem we need [collaborative action](#) from all involved in raising, investigating, and addressing these root issues.

Many individual [efforts](#) are already being made to address the problem of paper mills by awareness raising, development of new screening tools, and strategies taken by research institutions, publishers, funders, and governments. However, to maximize success, it is vital to coordinate these activities. This motivated the formation of the international group United2Act, supported by the [STM Association](#) and the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#).

A joint [Consensus Statement](#) was published in January 2024 outlining key areas of action for each of five United2Act working groups. This document addresses the aim of Working Group 2 to:

“Improve post-publication corrections” i.e., “to investigate and agree on ways to improve communication with those who report misconduct to journals, and to agree on ways in which the correction of the literature can be speeded up when misconduct is discovered”.

In this guidance, we discuss the challenges around communications and post-publication corrections in follow-up to paper mill concerns, drawing on experiences of working group members who represent journals and publishers, institutions, and third parties who raise concerns. By being transparent about the challenges facing those involved in post-publication correction, we also aim to support the activities of the related United2Act [Working Groups](#) particularly Working Group 1 (Education and awareness) and Working Group 5 (Facilitate dialogue between contributor groups). We also provide recommendations for different contributor groups to address specific issues raised in working group discussions.



Journals and publishers

RECOMMENDATIONS

See also COPE guidance for [Addressing concerns about systematic manipulation of the publication process \(https://doi.org/10.24318/x0mN3xfd\)](https://doi.org/10.24318/x0mN3xfd).

- Post information on journal and/or publisher websites about how to raise concerns about published content or submitted research, and provide an email address. For example, see approach taken by [PLOS](#), [Springer Nature](#), [Taylor and Francis](#), [Karger Publishers](#) and [Wiley](#).
- Have public-facing policies on the usage of different types of post-publication amendments and any appeal policy (for example, [PLOS](#), [Taylor and Francis](#) and [Wiley](#)) and an established process for responding to complaints about handling of integrity cases (see COPE guidance on [Dealing with concerns about the integrity of published research \(https://doi.org/10.24318/9cdeTy2t\)](https://doi.org/10.24318/9cdeTy2t)).
- Provide an initial response (e.g., within two weeks) to acknowledge receipt of any new concerns or other contributions to integrity investigations, and inform parties who have raised concerns of the final case resolution(s).
- When concerns are raised and will take time to investigate due to the complexity of the case, consider posting a neutral notification on the article(s) alerting readers to the potential concerns.
- Consider whether author and/or institutional input is needed to inform the editorial outcome and frame communications accordingly. If seeking an author's or institution's input, explain clearly what is needed and have a process in place whereby you can proceed independently if the requested input is not received in a timely manner.
- Share information about paper mill cases with affected journals, publishers, societies, and institutions, and where appropriate consider sharing relevant information confidentially with the COPE Publisher's Forum or the [STM Integrity Hub](#).

CHALLENGES FACED BY JOURNALS AND PUBLISHERS IN ADDRESSING PAPERMILL CONCERNS

Journals and publishers addressing [paper mill issues](#) often face resourcing constraints and struggle to balance the priorities of providing fair and thorough investigations with timely rectification of confirmed issues. Substantial resources are needed to investigate paper mill concerns. While cases vary considerably, these investigations typically include a deep analysis of 10s, 100s or even 1000s of articles and follow-up discussions with all affected authors and journal leads. In many cases, authors engage legal counsel to challenge editorial processes or decisions, which places additional resource burden on the journal/publisher and can substantially prolong case resolution. The demands that paper mill cases place on a journal's/publisher's resources depend on case volume and complexity, and cases involving unpublished or new incoming submissions can necessitate urgent prioritization. These unpredictable fluctuations in the demands on the journal's/publisher's publication ethics resources can be very difficult to manage and have negative consequences for other areas of work.

The time needed to resolve paper mill cases often depends heavily on the interactions with the parties involved, including authors, editors, societies, institutions, subject area experts,



legal counsel, and others. Although efforts can be made to set firm timelines, there is often limited scope for a publisher to influence the response time of another party for whom there may be competing priorities or other factors limiting their availability. The duration of an investigation may also be affected by the time required for researchers to compile the records and data necessary to address concerns raised about their work. Geographical relocation and career transitions, which are common in academic research, can introduce additional barriers and complexity, thereby further prolonging the time needed to complete an investigation.

While not always required, publishers may seek support from institutions to investigate or resolve an integrity issue. Several guidelines have been published to designate publisher versus institution responsibilities, and to support effective collaboration between these two groups. See, for example, the work of [CLUE](#), these [recommendations](#), and guidance from COPE (e.g., COPE guidance on [Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity and publication misconduct cases \(https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2018.1.3\)](#), COPE guidance on [Sharing of information among editors-in-chief regarding possible misconduct \(https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.7\)](#) and COPE guidance for [When institutions are contacted by journals \(https://doi.org/10.24318/GvV9U5HC\)](#)). While institutional investigations can be instrumental in informing the outcome of a publication ethics case, publishers often have difficulties finding contact information or establishing two-way communication with the institutional official responsible for research integrity oversight. If a publisher succeeds in establishing contact with the relevant individual, there can be a further delay due to the time required for an institution to complete a thorough case review and/or investigation. These [challenges](#) are amplified in paper mill cases, wherein it may require input from numerous institutions to fully clarify issues that apply across the series of articles. The work required to request and follow-up on large-scale multi-institution investigations may far exceed the scope of what a journal or publisher can support and could substantially delay case resolution. These cases can be further hampered in situations where there are questions around author or reviewer identity or fake institutional affiliations. In such cases it can be impossible to secure reliable institutional input.

For these and other reasons, the journal or publisher may choose to take pragmatic action based on the evidence in hand rather than spending a significant amount of time and resources into the ideal scenario of securing input from all affected institutions. This provides the advantage of providing readers more timely notification of problematic content. However, without institutional involvement, the academic and publishing communities are at higher risk that problematic content will be submitted to another journal after rejection/retraction, continuing to threaten the integrity of the published record even after one journal has completed an investigation.

When investigating paper mill cases, journals and publishers also struggle with determining the extent of article-level follow-up required to constitute 'due process', the level of evidence or certainty required to support decisive editorial action (e.g. retraction or an Expression of Concern), and the balance between providing clear information to authors and readers and withholding confidential information that could be used by 'bad actors' to evade journals' integrity checks.

To help address these challenges, COPE published supplementary [practical guidance](#) for addressing large-scale cases of systematic manipulation using an adapted approach. An [evidence-informed approach](#) as discussed by Wiley's method of tackling systematic manipulation at scale can also be helpful.



Institutions

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Post information on your website regarding how concerns can be raised about research conducted at your institution or by researchers affiliated with your institution, and provide an email address. For example, see the approach taken by [RMIT University](#).
- When a third party, journal, or publisher raises concerns, provide an initial response (e.g., within two weeks) acknowledging receipt and indicate whether the institution will review the case and/or conduct an investigation.
- Employ a designated team to conduct independent investigations and ensure impartiality and thoroughness when concerns are raised. Share outcomes of investigations with publishers, and facilitate sharing of raw data if necessary to amend the published literature.
- Consider implementing a framework whereby the institution verifies research output (for example, verifying primary data, authorship, or replicability) before it is submitted for publication or for funder review.
- Educate researchers as to data management practices for curating and retaining raw data in accordance with subject-specific guidelines and enforce good data stewardship practices (including for research records and data) at the institutional level.

CHALLENGES

Institutions that employ researchers are responsible for investigating and resolving any complaints that may arise about the conduct of that research. This may be covered by a Research Integrity Office or by other officials responsible for research oversight (e.g. Vice Chancellor, Dean or Head of Department) who follow [institutional procedures](#) and/or national codes (e.g. see these [guidelines](#)) to enforce integrity standards for responsible research practice. Institutional procedures for addressing research misconduct cases are underpinned by principles of procedural fairness to ensure parties involved are given an opportunity to be heard; they provide impartial and evidence-based decision-making. See for example, this [guide](#) to managing and investigating potential breaches of the Australia Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Institutions must also have due regard to confidentiality, transparency, and timeliness in managing concerns. Unfortunately, many institutions around the globe, especially in resource-limited countries, lack formal institutional procedures for investigating misconduct and imposing sanctions which poses a challenge for research integrity.

There can be several steps involved in managing and investigating concerns involving potential research misconduct. Similar to investigations overseen by publishers, cases can vary in complexity and the steps taken to manage a concern are often unique to each case. Institutions may conduct preliminary assessments to determine the seriousness of a breach or departure from accepted research practice. This can involve interviewing relevant parties, securing evidence, and seeking independent expert advice. Where concerns are assessed as serious and potentially constituting research misconduct, institutions may need to convene a research misconduct panel, which may involve additional interviews, assessment of evidence, multiple rounds of panel discussions and



decision-making. The means of investigation can be very labor and resource intensive, for example, involving originality software analysis or image forensic analysis across multiple publications.

The institution's ability to conduct a full investigation can be substantially compromised if a journal/publisher contacts the authors before making the institution aware of the concerns; the timing of the journal-level versus institutional investigation can be critical to the preservation of relevant laboratory records. A cross-industry project and upcoming COPE guidance will be addressing this issue.

When concerns are raised about published work, institutions can be restricted in the steps they can take to manage and investigate a concern. This is particularly true when a researcher is no longer affiliated with an institution or where publications involve multiple authors affiliated with different institutions based in different countries. In these cases, institutions may not have jurisdiction to engage with all the authors involved to assess their respective contributions and responsibilities and/or they may not have access to the research data to independently evaluate the truthfulness or accuracy of allegations or statements presented. Where appropriate, institutions may need to notify other affiliated institutions to seek this information, or rely on authors liaising with multiple other authors. These factors can further compound the timeliness of managing and investigating concerns and can limit the extent of Institutional findings. This applies to publication concerns involving paper mills where the [varied "signs" and patterns of paper mill](#) activity can be difficult to detect and further assistance may be required from publishers or other institutions.

Communicating investigation outcomes to publishers can also be challenging. It can be difficult for institutions to find contact information for the relevant contact person at a publisher or journal. When navigating these communications, institutional officials need to balance the privacy of the researchers involved, legal or policy-based constraints, and the need to report sufficient information to support a journal/publisher response. Some institutions can report summary findings or excerpts of redacted investigation reports, whereas others are more restricted in what they can divulge even to journals/publishers. Where findings are limited due to a lack of independent means to assess the veracity of the data, institutions can report outcomes relating to the publication's trustworthiness and can make recommendations for an immediate Expression of Concern or a retraction of the article, for consideration with the publisher's own investigations or consideration of the matter.

Third parties raising concerns about paper mills and other integrity issues

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Contact the journal/publisher directly and clearly communicate the scope of the concerns; in addition, consider noting the concern on third-party sites such as [PubPeer](#). If the concern involves multiple articles across many journals/publishers notify all involved, preferably at the same time. Contact information for members of COPE are available [here](#).
- Maintain professional tone and language in all communications with the journal/publisher. Avoid inflammatory language and language that may be considered defamatory. Bear in mind that any communication to the journal could be requisitioned in legal proceedings or personal data requests.



- If you do not receive a response from the journal/publisher or if you cannot find contact information for the journal/publisher, consider contacting the authors' institution as well as other means of informing readers of your concern(s), for example, [PubPeer](#), comments linked to the article's webpage or letter to the editor.
- If you do not receive a response or have concerns about the process by which a case has been handled or about a journal's adherence to COPE recommended practices, consider raising your concerns to [COPE's Facilitation & Integrity committee](#) if the journal is a COPE member.
- Limit requests for case updates to no more than once every four months. Recognize that time spent by the publisher/journal providing updates detracts editorial resources from case resolution work.
- Recognize that cases may be handled in order of priority/severity and not necessarily in chronological order of receipt. Some cases may require months to years to resolve depending on case-specific details and availability of key contributors. Journals/publishers may not provide substantive updates until the case is resolved.

CHALLENGES

The main challenge for third parties raising concerns about research is communication. To start, there is not a standard way to communicate potential concerns to a journal or publisher and it can be difficult to reach journal/publisher staff responsible for investigating concerns. Per [COPE guidance](#) all journals and publishers should be contactable by third parties, and journals and publishers should at least respond to third party concerns. However, not all journals provide information on their websites as to how to raise concerns. Some provide an email address for a publication ethics group, some only provide contact details for the editor-in-chief or other senior editors. Some journals direct the third party to a text-only web form with which it is difficult to effectively communicate concerns about figures or data. Worst, some provide no method to contact the journal and the third party is left to search the institutional webpage of the editor-in-chief or handling editor in the hope of finding an email address. Sometimes this too yields nothing. In cases where the person raising concerns is unable to reach a journal or does not receive a response, they have limited avenues by which to raise awareness of the integrity issue(s). These communication issues are magnified in paper mill cases where concerns often affect numerous journals and publishers.

Another frustration for third parties raising concerns is that journal/publisher investigations can be very [prolonged](#), and meanwhile readers may continue to rely on articles unaware that concerns have been raised. Once concerns are communicated, responses from publishers and journals vary widely. There may be no response, or a templated response saying that the concerns raised will be investigated following COPE guidelines. In some cases, the response may be automated. There is almost never an indication of when, if ever, the third party should expect an update on or the result of the investigation and it is not standard practice for journals/publishers to provide status updates in the interim. Even if/after a journal concludes an investigation, the result of the investigation may not be communicated clearly to the third party who raised the concerns. Sometimes retraction notices appear [cryptically worded](#) about the concerns and/or the outcomes of the investigation and may provide only limited information.



Some journals refuse to engage on the concerns unless the third party identifies themselves and/or their institution. This also contravenes COPE guidance on responding to concerns raised on a published article, either anonymously or not, and whether [indirectly via social media](#) or [directly to the editor or publisher](#). On some occasions, editors may also inappropriately copy third parties into the follow-up emails with authors of papers which are the subject of the concerns raised. These issues can introduce legal, personal, and/or professional risks to the person raising concerns and serve as strong deterrents to reporting integrity issues.

It has also been raised that those helping to surface concerns about submitted or published work provide their integrity services on a voluntary basis. These contributions - which can require substantial time investment - are not formally recognized by the academic or publishing communities or otherwise credited in a manner that would be visible to their employers or funders.

Concluding remarks

The issues that surfaced in this working group's discussion from the perspective of each contributor group underscore the needs for:

- (i) improved communications across contributor groups;
- (ii) improved cross-industry knowledge of processes, challenges, and constraints that impact different contributor groups' work in addressing large-scale integrity issues; and
- (iii) updates to industry-wide standards to improve how different contributor groups work with one another when raising or responding to paper mill concerns. The above recommendations and discussion represent initial steps toward achieving these goals.



Author contributions:

This document was developed by members of United2Act Working Group 2 after several discussions from January to May 2024.

Anna Abalkina: conceptualization; writing - original draft; writing - review & editing.

Rebecca Barber: conceptualization; writing - review & editing.

Jana Christopher: conceptualization; writing - review & editing;

Tilla Edmunds: conceptualization.

Theresa Fucito: conceptualization.

Renee Hoch: conceptualization; writing - original draft; writing - review & editing.

Svetlana Kleiner: conceptualization.

Gráinne McNamara: conceptualization; writing - original draft; writing - review & editing.

Stefania Mondello: conceptualization.

Elizabeth Moylan: conceptualization; writing - original draft; writing - review & editing.

Ana Marušić: conceptualization; writing - review & editing.

Daniel Stuckey: conceptualization; writing - review & editing.

Anne Walsh: conceptualization; writing - original draft; writing - review & editing.

Nicholas Wise: conceptualization; writing - original draft; writing - review & editing.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to Ruth King, Project Manager, United2Act for facilitating our discussions and keeping us on track. Thank you to members of the Steering Committee of United2Act and Jodi Schneider (Communication of Retractions, Removals, and Expressions of Concern “CREC” Working Group) for their feedback.

Appendix:

This appendix has recommendations and sample policies pertaining to editorial notes, corrections, Expressions of Concern, retractions, and removals/withdrawals. All amendments should be clear, transparent, appropriate, free to access and neutral in tone. The purpose is to amend the published literature and ensure its integrity rather than to punish authors. Publishers/journals should have clear policies in place about their usage of different types of post-publication notice, which may include use cases to address editorial and policy issues in addition to ethics and integrity issues. Culpability of specific individuals should only be indicated in published notices if supported by findings of an institutional investigation. For further resources see [STM guidance](#), [ICMJE guidance](#), [National Library of Medicine guidance](#), [NISO journal articles versions](#), [CSE guidance](#), and [NISO CREC guidance](#). For further information on publisher policies see [Elsevier](#), [Karger](#), [PLOS](#), [Taylor & Francis](#), and [Wiley](#).



Appendix: Amendment matrix

Type of Amendment	Purpose	When to use?
<p>Retraction</p>	<p>There is a significant issue such that the journal no longer stands by the article; the article is thereafter not considered as part of the published record.</p>	<p>COPE guidelines explain various situations when retraction could be used: e.g. COPE Retraction guidelines (https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.4) Inappropriate image manipulation in a published article (https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.2.21) May also be used if content was published in error, or if it comes to light after publication that an article does not meet the journal's/publisher's core requirements.</p>
<p>Elements to include (descriptive)</p>		
<p>Who is retracting (Authors, editor, publisher, on behalf of the authors, on behalf of an institution) Reason for retraction Published on date The authors' response to the concern (Optional) Who brought the issue to the Editor/journals attention (Optional) The specific parts of the article that are flawed/problematic/unreliable (Optional) Linked post-publication notices, e.g. a previous EoC (Optional) Did the authors agree or disagree with the retraction or not respond (Optional) Date of retraction (Optional)</p>		
<p>Examples</p>		
<p>https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ijgo.14281 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21655979.2021.2001219 https://karger.com/bpu/article/doi/10.1159/000537697/895590/Retraction-StatementPaper-by-Cong-Meng-Lin-Cun https://febs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/1873-3468.14743</p>		

Continued →



Appendix: Amendment matrix

Type of Amendment	Purpose	When to use?
<p>Removal/Withdrawal</p>	<p>There is a significant issue with an article AND the article itself should no longer be available.</p>	<p>Removals/withdrawals are rare and used in exceptional circumstances; in most cases retracted work should remain available online. However, they can be used where there has been a breach of confidentiality, or publication of libelous content, or copyright/IP has been infringed, or the authors did not have (and do not obtain) the requisite permissions to publish the content, or the work was not lawfully conducted, or a court or government has requested removal, or the editor concludes that the published content may present a substantial risk even if marked as retracted.</p>
<p>Elements to include (descriptive)</p>		
<p>Who is retracting (Authors, editor, publisher, on behalf of the authors, on behalf of an institution) Reason for retraction Published on date The authors' response to the concern (Optional) Who brought the issue to the Editor/journals attention (Optional) Linked post-publication notices, e.g. a previous EoC (Optional) Did the authors agree or disagree with the retraction or not respond (Optional)</p> <p><small>*Note that key article metadata should remain online and available after the removal: Author list, title, publication date, DOI</small></p>		
<p>Examples</p>		
<p>https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ange.202006717?af=R https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0271107 https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0277977</p>		

Continued →



Appendix: Amendment matrix

Type of Amendment	Purpose	When to use?
<p>Expression of Concern</p>	<p>Expressions of Concern are used where there are serious unresolved concerns about an article but the editor/publisher concludes that there is not sufficient grounds to retract.</p>	<p>Expressions of Concern are typically authored by the Editor/Publisher. Where there is inconclusive evidence of a research/publication issue (e.g. specify what the concern is); there are concerns about the content or underlying data but the level of evidence and/or concern do not meet the threshold/criteria for retraction; institutional input is needed on an issue but the authors' institution will not investigate or cannot be reached; there is a breach in the journal's/publisher's policy that cannot be resolved. Expressions of Concern may also be used as interim notices to inform readers of serious concerns that have been raised but for which follow-up or investigation by the journal/publisher or institution is pending. An Expression of Concern can be followed by another Post-publication notice including a Correction, a Retraction or a Note. A resolution of an Expression of Concern can be indicated by the publication of a separate note on the article that refer to the EoC and describes the resolution. In all cases both the EoC and any following post-publication notices are retained for transparency.</p>

Elements to include (descriptive)

- Who is issuing the EoC
- The specific concerns (e.g., parts of the article that are flawed/problematic/unreliable, any breach of policy issue(s))
- Whether the EoC is an interim notice for a pending case or reflects an editorial decision after case follow-up there is an ongoing investigation (i.e. as opposed to a perpetual EoC)
- Published on date
- Who brought the issue to the Editor/journal's attention (Optional)

Examples

- <https://wires.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/widm.1386>
- <https://karger.com/ajp/article/doi/10.1159/000536261/894477/Expression-of-concern-Agonists-of-Peroxisome> (Perpetual)
- <https://karger.com/jvr/article/61/1/50/871781/Expression-of-concern-Glycyrrhizin-Attenuates> (Active investigation)
- <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14767058.2022.2156860> (Active investigation)
- <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ajps.12455> (Resolution of an EoC)
- <https://www.cellphysiolbiochem.com/Articles/000363/> (Resolution of an EoC)

Continued →



Appendix: Amendment matrix

Type of Amendment	Purpose	When to use?
<p>Note (also referred to as Notification, Publisher Note, Editor Note)</p>	<p>A mechanism to quickly flag a potential issue with an article or provide an update to readers.</p>	<p>Where a concern has been raised about an article and verified by the editor, but the case outcome is not available yet because further investigation (either with from the publisher and/or the institution) is necessary. The publisher may use an EoC or a Note in such cases depending on case-specific details and potential impacts of the issue(s) and/or content.</p> <p>May also be used to flag issues that are relevant to readers' interpretation of the work, but that do not meet the criteria for Correction, EoC, or retraction.</p>
<p>Elements to include (descriptive)</p>		
<p>The specific parts of the article that are in question Whether the note is an interim notice (there is an ongoing investigation) or reflects an editorial decision after case follow-up; Published on date Who brought the issue to the Editor/journals attention (Optional)</p>		
<p>Examples</p>		
<p>https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ijgo.14895?af=R https://journals.plos.org/plosone/search?filterArticleTypes=Editorial%20Note&q=Editorial%20note&page=1</p>		

Continued →



Appendix: Amendment matrix

Type of Amendment	Purpose	When to use?
<p>Correction (may also be referred to as erratum, corrigendum)</p>	<p>To correct an error in an article</p>	<p>Where a portion of an otherwise reliable publication proves to be misleading; there are errors or issues that have been satisfactorily addressed in post-pub discussions; the author list is incorrect (i.e. an author has been omitted or an author needs removing).</p>
Elements to include (descriptive)		
<p>The specific parts of the article that are incorrect Published on date Was this a publisher error (Optional) Who brought the issue to the Editor/journals attention (Optional) State whether the original article has been republished (Optional)</p>		
Examples		
<p>https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jocd.13391 https://karger.com/ooop/article/doi/10.1159/000537728/895888/Erratum-When-Is-the-Optimum-Radiological-Response https://karger.com/neo/article/doi/10.1159/000536368/894810/Erratum-Clinical-Features-Diagnosis-and-Treatment</p>		

Continued →



Resources (in order of mention in text):

United2Act: [Home - United2Act](#)

Paper mills research: [Paper mills research | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics](#)

Science's fake-paper problem: high-profile effort will tackle paper mills,
Nature news 19 January 2024

[Science's fake-paper problem: high-profile effort will tackle paper mills \(nature.com\)](#)

Scholarly Kitchen blog: [United2Act Against Paper Mills: Fighting Fraud that Corrupts the Scholarly Record - The Scholarly Kitchen \(sspnet.org\)](#)

STM: [About STM - STM \(stm-assoc.org\)](#)

COPE: [COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics | Promoting integrity in scholarly research and its publication](#)

Consensus Statement: [Home - United2Act](#)

United2Act working groups: [Working groups - United2Act](#)

Addressing concerns about systematic manipulation of the publication process:
[Addressing concerns about systematic manipulation of the publication process – Supplemental Guidance \(publicationethics.org\)](#)

Dealing with concerns about the integrity of published research:
[Dealing with concerns about the integrity of published research | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics](#)

STM Integrity Hub: [STM Integrity Hub - STM \(stm-assoc.org\)](#)

Tackling publication manipulation at scale: [Tackling publication manipulation at scale: Hindawi's journey and lessons for academic publishing \(wiley.com\)](#)

CLUE: [Cooperation & Liaison between Universities & Editors \(CLUE\): recommendations on best practice | Research Integrity and Peer Review | Full Text \(biomedcentral.com\)](#)

Partnerships between institutions and journals: [Enhancing Partnerships of Institutions and Journals to Address Concerns About Research Misconduct: Recommendations From a Working Group of Institutional Research Integrity Officers and Journal Editors and Publishers - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

COPE guidance on Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity and publication misconduct cases: [Cooperation between research institutions and journals on research integrity and publication misconduct cases | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics \(https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2018.1.3\)](#)

COPE guidance on sharing information among editors-in-chief: [Sharing of information among editors-in-chief regarding possible misconduct | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics \(https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.7\)](#)

COPE guidance: When institutions are contacted by journals:
[When institutions are contacted by journals | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics \(https://doi.org/10.24318/GvV9U5HC\)](#)

PLOS Publication Ethics: A frank discussion on handling difficult cases: [PLOS Publication Ethics: A frank discussion on handling difficult cases - The Official PLOS Blog](#)



Resources (in order of mention in text):

Ethics and Integrity RMIT University: [Ethics and Integrity - RMIT University](#)

Research Misconduct Procedure, St George's, University of London:

[Research Misconduct Procedure \(sgul.ac.uk\)](#)

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity:

[The Concordat to Support Research Integrity \(universitiesuk.ac.uk\)](#)

Guide to managing potential breaches: [Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(nhmrc.gov.au\)](#)

Potential Paper Mills: [Potential paper mills | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics](#)

PubPeer: <https://pubpeer.com/static/about>

COPE Members: [Search results for " | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics](#)

COPE Core Practices: [Core practices | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics](#)

Procrastination and inconsistency: Expression of Concern for publications with compromised integrity: [Procrastination and inconsistency: Expressions of concern for publications with compromised integrity: Accountability in Research: Vol 31, No 3 - Get Access \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

Timeliness and content of retraction notices for publications by a single research group: [Timeliness and content of retraction notices for publications by a single research group: Accountability in Research: Vol 29, No 6 - Get Access \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

COPE flowchart responding to whistleblowers when concerns are raised via social media: [Responding to whistleblowers when concerns are raised via social media | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics](#)

COPE flowchart responding to whistleblowers when concerns are raised directly: [Responding to whistleblowers when concerns are raised directly | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics](#)

STM guidance: preservation of the objective record of science: https://www.stm-assoc.org/2017_09_05_STM_Guide_Preserving_the_Record_of_Science_5_September_2017.pdf

ICMJE recommendations on corrections, retractions, republications and version control: <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/publishing-and-editorial-issues/corrections-and-version-control.html>

National Library of Medicine Errata, Retractions and other linked citations in PubMed: <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/policy/errata.html>

NISO Journal Article Versions: <https://www.niso.org/publications/niso-rp-8-2008-jav>

Council of Science Editors Section 2.1.9 Errata, Retractions and Expressions of Concern: <https://cse.memberclicks.net/2-1-editor-roles-and-responsibilities#ErrataRetractionsandExpressionsofConcern>

NISO CREC draft recommended practice: <https://www.niso.org/standards-committees/crec>