



TAPPI JOURNAL's new online peer review system goes live

By definition, “peer review” is a “process by which something proposed (as for research or publication) is evaluated by a group of experts in the appropriate field.” Though not always without controversy, it is a widely accepted way to communicate, validate, and advance science in a variety of fields.

This important process is at the heart of *TAPPI JOURNAL* (*TJ*), and TAPPI has recently implemented a new web-based system — PeerTrack by Allen Press — to expedite and improve this process for authors, editors, and reviewers. After researching various software packages of this type, TAPPI PRESS Manager Jana Jensen identified this one as a good solution for the *TJ* process. Now, after customization by the vendor to mirror *TJ*'s workflow, along with testing by Jana, myself, and members of the Editorial Board (Brian Brogdon, Peter Hart, Scott Rosencrance, and J.Y. Zhu), the system is configured and live.

Powered by Allen Press's Editorial Manager technology, PeerTrack helps automate the submission, tracking, and peer review process. It is available via the TAPPI website at <http://www.tappi.org/Publications-Standards/TAPPI-Journal/Submit/>. Using the system, authors submit original and revised manuscripts, Editorial Board Members (EBMs) send manuscripts out for peer review, reviewers conduct reviews and return comments, and EBMs make final decisions.

Users are assigned editorial, author, or reviewer roles — or multiple roles. Here are some of PeerTrack's benefits for users:

Authors – Intuitive interface is easy to use and manuscript turnaround is expedited through streamlined internal and external handling and access to status information.

The screenshot shows the 'TAPPI Manuscript Submission & Peer Review' page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like HOME, LOGIN, HELP, REGISTER, etc. The 'REGISTER' link is circled in red. Below the navigation bar is the 'TAPPI JOURNAL' logo. The main content area has a form titled 'Please Enter the Following' with fields for Username and Password. Below the form are buttons for 'Author Login', 'Reviewer Login', 'Editor Login', and 'Publisher Login'. The 'Register Now' button is circled in red. To the right of the form, there's a 'First-time users' section with instructions on how to register and a 'Registered users' section with instructions on how to login. At the bottom, there's a footer with the Allen Press logo and copyright information.

Reviewers – Delivery of information is reliable, and reviewers can provide their comments and recommendations online. They also receive automatic reminders when feedback is due.

EBMs and editorial staff – With PeerTrack, editors can see where manuscripts are at any stage of the reviewing process. Like reviewers, they receive automatic reminders of material that is due and can automatically send reminders to authors and reviewers.

An author will need to register (circled in the figure) the first time he or she uses the new system. Reviewers will need to register the first time after receiving an EBM invitation from the new system. However, the new system is pre-populated with the names of many past *TJ* reviewers and will check to see if any information exists on that user.

TAPPI and the *TJ* staff are very excited about the efficiencies the new PeerTrack system can provide. Again, it is available at <http://www.tappi.org/Publications-Standards/TAPPI-Journal/Submit/>. **TJ**