

Interactive comment on “Characterization of ambient aerosols in Mexico City during the MCMA-2003 campaign with Aerosol Mass Spectrometry – Part I: quantification, shape-related collection efficiency, and comparison with collocated instruments” by D. Salcedo et al.

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As the editor guiding the review process for the two companion papers by Salcedo et al. (ACPD, 5, 4143 and ACPD, 5, 4183) I would like to add a few clarifying remarks to the referee comments published so far in the interactive discussion of these papers:

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1) Since the submitted manuscripts appeared to be well written and within the scope of ACP, I had little doubt that they would merit review and discussion in ACPD. Thus I had waived the optional access review by referees prior to publication in ACPD.

In most cases, i.e. for papers which do not turn out to be particularly controversial, the waiving of the optional access review is appreciated by all involved parties (authors and referees), since it reduces the workload for the referees and the time delay from submission to publication in the discussion forum.

2) In this case, it turned out that the referees do not consider the manuscripts (in their present form) suitable for publication in ACP. In particular, they expressed objections against the splitting of the reported results into multiple papers and questioned the suitability of technical information for publication in ACP.

ACP highly values the views and opinions of its referees, and by publication in ACPD the referee comments gain more weight and visibility than in the closed review process of traditional journals. In fact, this is one of the key aspects of the interactive open access journal concept of ACP.

http://www.copernicus.org/EGU/acp/poeschl_learned_publishing_2004.pdf

On the other hand, the different and sometimes opposite views expressed by referees clearly show that scientific publications can be and frequently are perceived quite differently by different readers.

3) Technical information: While the scope of ACP is certainly not focused on purely technical papers, it does not exclude them either, but explicitly offers the option to publish technical notes reporting "significant advances and novel aspects of techniques and methods relevant for scientific investigations within the journal scope".

http://www.copernicus.org/EGU/acp/manuscript_types.html

Particularly within special issues, such as the MCMA 2003 special issue to which the papers by Salcedo et al. belong, it can be appropriate to present technical information

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which might not be suitable for a standalone paper.

4) Splitting of papers: In principle, the splitting of scientific results into unnecessarily many papers is not in the interest of the scientific community, and the interactive open access journal concept of ACPD is designed to counteract tendencies of diluting scientific information by inappropriate splitting, duplication, or multiplication of manuscripts.

http://www.copernicus.org/EGU/acp/poeschl_learned_publishing_2004.pdf

In practice, however, the number of papers required to properly and efficiently publish and disseminate a certain amount of information can be and frequently is perceived quite differently by different readers. Personally, I tend to prefer reading and publishing a few comprehensive rather than many short papers. On the other hand, I have frequently experienced that referees dislike comprehensive manuscripts and prefer short and tightly focused ones. Actually, one of the many discussions I have already had with referees criticizing what they deemed excessive comprehensiveness and length of the manuscripts I have (co-)authored in atmospheric and chemical journals is just going on in parallel in ACPD:

http://www.cosis.net/members/journals/df/article.php?a_id=1863&

Along these lines, I welcome the open discussion about the appropriateness of publishing a given amount of scientific information in the form of one comprehensive (and thus long) manuscript or in the form of multiple tightly focused (and thus short) manuscripts. Based on the experience with a steeply increasing number of manuscripts published and discussed in ACPD over the past couple of years (currently well over 500), I expect that the ongoing discussion will contribute to the promotion of science by clarification and synthesis of different points of view.

Interactive comment on Atmos. Chem. Phys. Discuss., 5, 4143, 2005.

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