

Plain Language Summaries Required for Submission to the Space Weather Journal

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Abstract

The Space Weather editorial board is mandating Plain Language Summaries to enhance access and create new ways for the information to be shared.

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Plain Language Summaries Required for Submission to the *Space Weather* Journal

Noe Lugaz¹

Space Weather has gone through a number of recent changes, the most notable being the move to fully open access in 2020 but also the end of the Space Weather Quarterly, the print edition of the journal, which has been replaced by the online quarterly digest. Space weather affects numerous industries and sectors and has important consequences for policy as related to preparedness and mitigation. The role of the Quarterly was partially to reach professionals and policy makers to let them know of recent developments in space weather research that may have consequences beyond the research sphere. Replacing this role takes multiple venues and format. The move to open access implies that any person interested or curious about space weather or about a specific article can now read it without a subscription or membership to AGU. With nearly as many submissions to the journal in 2020 as in 2019, the transition has been successful. The journal continues to publish articles regarding all aspects of space weather, from forecasting schemes using machine learning, studies of the geospace and upper atmosphere using the ever-increasing fleets of satellites, discussions of new and future heliospheric missions and instrumentation to fill gaps in space weather research, monitoring and exploration, to commentaries and discussion of new initiatives, roadmaps, and international teams to tackle space weather and its effects. While each article can be read by anyone, the question is how to ensure that potentially interested or affected individuals are aware of the journal and specific articles.

In addition to the digest and mailing list, we also now have the space weather twitter account (@AGUSpWx), but the editorial board also felt that requiring plain-language summaries for *Space Weather* will enhance access and potentially create new ways for the information to be shared. Plain-language summaries became optional at submissions about five years ago throughout AGU journals and they are already required for a number of AGU journals, including *GRL*, *AGU Advances*, and *JGR: Planets*. In my own experience as an author and editor, abstracts are primarily aimed at other researchers within the fields of space weather and space science and engineering. It is typically full of jargon ("coronal mass ejections", "geomagnetically induced currents", "thermosphere"), and while it summarizes the content of the articles for other space science or space weather researchers, it typically does not provide an easy way to access the article for non-specialists. The 200-word Plain Language summaries are not meant to replace the abstract or the key points but to provide an accessible summary of the manuscript. Authors should think about it as an opportunity to provide a short outline of their work for people outside of space weather research. Target audience may include journalists, science writers, policymakers, and satellite, airline, or electrical company professionals. More than 40% of manuscripts submitted to *Space Weather* in the past two years already include a plain-language summary, so making this a requirement now is a natural evolution. While crafting a concise and informative Plain-Language Summary is yet another skill that we shall now expect of authors, there is clear value for our (primarily) publicly funded research in making sure that our research can be accessed by the largest possible readership.

More information about Plain Language Summaries can be found on AGU's website:

<https://www.agu.org/Share-and-Advocate/Share/Community/Plain-language-summary>

Plain Language Summaries on new and ongoing submissions will be required as of March 31st, 2021. Please write the support staff with questions: spaceweather@agu.org

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