

Editorial

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[See table of contents](#)

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EDITORIAL

Geoscience Canada has offered, during its twenty-year history, general interest articles to a broad spectrum of the Canadian geoscience community. This statement is, then, a paraphrasing of the mandate of the journal. This mandate has been accomplished by providing a mix of material: *research reports* (e.g., Cape Smith and Mt. St. Helens symposia), *articles of broad interest* (e.g., subdivisions of the Canadian Shield), *series* on related aspects of Earth science (facies models, ore deposit models, diagenesis, paleoscene), and *commentary* of interest to the profession here in Canada.

The journal has grown in breadth and stature over this twenty-year history. That growth has been, in some measure, unanticipated, and we now find we must do some minor reorganization, grouping the broad types of material we have been publishing in the recent past under headings reflecting the general types of material, and indicating the types of review each category will receive. Examples of the types of material are listed below.

Articles

(full peer review):

Research reports, Review articles

Issues in Canadian Geoscience

(full peer review):

Future Trends in the Earth Sciences,
Public Geoscience Education Issues

Conference Reports

Reviews:

Book reviews, Software reviews,
Video reviews

Series

(full peer review):

Machinations, Urban Geology,
History of Geology, Active Earth

Commentary: Pyroclasts

Comment and Reply

Letters to the Editor

Geoscience Canada had the luxury of starting out with a steady flow of excellent manuscripts, and the stated policy was not to have manuscripts refereed (v.1, p.4). Our readers should be aware, however, of the service *Geoscience Canada*, and indeed many other journals, provides in maintaining the peer review system. The peer review process helps improve the quality of almost any manuscript, consequently, peer review of contributions helps to maintain the quality and integrity of *Geoscience Canada* in the eyes of our readership, including the large

international audience for whom *Geoscience Canada* is a highly regarded journal. This earlier, stated policy of non-review was abandoned, by 1980, in favour of standard peer review of "Articles" and "Series". It is also imperative to reiterate to our readers the importance of peer review for our academic contributors (the majority) in the evaluation of research records and the partitioning of research funds at grant selection time.

Geoscience Canada, as a quarterly journal, is not, admittedly, deluged by contributions (which we would like to see change). Some contributors may be concerned that this means that *Geoscience Canada* has too low a rejection rate (11% in 1991). Two factors contribute to this rate: 1) Where another journal might simply reject a manuscript, our Editor, reviewers and Managing Editor may provide assistance to the author(s) in identifying ways to render the manuscript acceptable. 2) Series such as Facies Models represent solicited manuscripts from the leaders in the field. Obviously, the rejection rate for such a series will differ from general submissions to a journal.

For the reasons cited above, *Geoscience Canada* will continue to have refereed contributions of the sections "Articles" and "Series". *Geoscience Canada* will also arrange for refereeing of contributions to the "Issues in Canadian Geoscience" category to ensure that manuscripts reflect a balanced and informed point of view in accord with the mandate of the journal.

Geoscience Canada, in an historic sense, grew out of the "GAC Proceedings". Hence, for some time, *Geoscience Canada* included Geological Association of Canada (GAC) business items such as the Secretary-Treasurer's Report. This flavour of the journal has given some readers the perception that *Geoscience Canada* was more of a newsletter and perhaps not a journal. *Geoscience Canada* is now the journal of the GAC and *Geology* is the GAC newsletter. The *Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences* is a recommended publication vehicle for GAC members, dealing strictly with research articles of varying types, whereas *Geoscience Canada* attempts to provide both research reports and other material of interest to the broadly defined Canadian geoscience community.

Geoscience Canada is published by the GAC through income derived from subscriptions offered to GAC members (optional on dues notice), subscriptions to non-members, reprint sales, advertising and a grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Grants-in-Aid of Publication program. When expenses exceed income (the general case) revenue shortfalls are made up from the general reve-

nues of the GAC, which include sales of other publications. When Grants-in-Aid of Publication funds are disbursed, it is done on the basis of the perceived quality of the journal, assessed via an application to NSERC and review of the four most recent issues by an NSERC committee of reviewers (possibly none of whom may be Earth scientists). These reviewers gain their insight through examination of measures such as the proportion of research reports and the manuscript rejection rate of the journal. In a journal such as *Geoscience Canada*, both of these measures may seem abnormally low; however, we feel we fulfill a useful niche in Earth science in providing quality articles which make specialized work accessible to non-specialists. For example, how else will Quaternary specialists gain a sense of how major subdivisions of the Canadian Shield might affect their interpretation of till mineralogy?

The role of series such as the Facies Models series can be seen in their impact in the Science Citation Index, but as well in the excellent sales this series has had as the first of the *Geoscience Canada* reprint series. Series such as Machinations provide material of use in graduate Earth science education in analytical methods, and again allowing non-specialists an idea about potential applications for techniques outside their field of specialization. In this modern world of multi-disciplinary science the role filled by series of this sort should not be underestimated.

In summary, this editorial indicates clearly the types of material which fall within the mandate *Geoscience Canada* has always had. We attempt also to explain why things are done the way they are, in partial recognition of the changing audience for the journal. In a recent survey, *Geoscience Canada* was ranked 27th of 74 Earth science journals worldwide, in terms of impact of the material published in the journal. Interestingly, *Geoscience Canada* does not achieve its full citation level potential, as some of the most frequently cited articles have been collected into series reprint volumes, which are cited instead of the journal itself. The journal is well-regarded internationally, and indeed, we view it as no accident that, when given the choice this year, 57% of the 1993 GAC membership opted to continue subscribing to *Geoscience Canada*. We believe that letting you know how we perceive the mandate of the journal will help in developing continuing support from you, the readers, and the granting agencies.

Phil C. Thurston