

ETHICAL DECLARATION

VISUALCOM Scientific Publications is committed to ethical publishing and applies ethics standards.

For all ethical matters that may arise in academic publication, the editorial team endeavours to act professionally and efficiently, to be fair and objective, to maintain a smooth communication with the accused party –and grant the necessary timeframes– in order to establish its position before reaching a decision, to keep all parties informed of the decisions and to protect the moral rights of the authors.

Basic principles

Authors who submit works to VISUALCOM Scientific Publications guarantee the following:

- The article is original and unpublished: it has not been previously published and it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. The authors guarantee the absence of plagiarism in their text, including self-plagiarism and duplicate publication.
- The work does not include defamatory, discriminatory or illegal statements.
- The work does not contain material that is defamatory, illicit, obscene, invasive of the privacy of another person or in disregard for the law, nor morally objectionable, abusive, threatening or injurious hate speech.
- The manuscript does not violate the copyright of any person; the author and co-authors are in a legal position to transfer the copyright of the paper to the journal.
- The authorship has been agreed and nobody has been given “gift authorship” or has been denied credit as an author (“ghost authorship”). Individuals who have provided support but have not contributed to the research should be given recognition in the acknowledgements section.

Authors who submit works to our journals understand that, should it be discovered that these basic principles have not been kept, measures will be taken following the guidelines of the COPE (<https://publicationethics.org/node/19631>), which may lead to issuing one of the following correction notices:

- **Error correction:** refers to an error prior to the submission of the article to the journal. It will appear in the abstract of the online version of the document, to guarantee its complete visibility.
- **Retraction:** a retraction notice will be issued for cases of gross ethical misconduct or when the research is gravely erroneous and deceptive. A retraction notice will appear on the online version of the document. In extreme cases, the editors reserve the right to remove the article from the journal.
- **Clarification note:** a clarification note will be used when a point in the text needs to be emphasized or explained, without it constituting a correction.
- **Expression of concern:** in cases in which a conclusion is not clear or when we are unable to reach a fair decision due to conflicts of interest or lack of information, we will publish an expression of concern with respect to the document. It will appear in the abstract of the online version of the document, to guarantee its complete visibility.

VISUALCOM Scientific Publications reserves the right to decline a case if the complainant gives a false name or affiliation, or acts inappropriately or menacingly toward the editors or the publisher staff.

Plagiarism, self-plagiarism and duplicate publication

VISUALCOM Scientific Publications requires that all research submitted to the journals be original, and the authors must accept these terms.

If any part of the work has been published previously, the authors must ensure it is correctly referenced and noted upon submission, to enable the editors to make a fully informed decision. It is only acceptable to repeat the presentation of research if it leads to different conclusions or it includes new relevant data.

The fact that original content has not been published previously is judged to be part of its quality. It is an unacceptable academic practice to submit the same article to more than one journal simultaneously. Authors must wait to receive a decision from a journal before submitting to another.

If a presumed plagiarism, self-plagiarism or duplicate publication is detected, the publisher will follow the procedures and measures proposed by the COPE in its flowcharts (<https://publicationethics.org/node/19631>).

Authorship problems

VISUALCOM Scientific Publications considers the following three types of authorship problems:

1. The exclusion of a collaborator from the list of authors (ghost authorship).
2. The inclusion of a named person who has not contributed to the work (gift authorship) or who does not wish to be associated with the research.
3. The order of appearance of the authors in the work and the extent of their contribution.

In case of authorship dispute, VISUALCOM Scientific Publications will endeavor to facilitate reaching a solution. This notwithstanding, given the nature of the conflict, we cannot comment on the extent of the contribution of each author. If it is not possible to resolve the dispute, we will refer the matter to the authors' institutions.

When a change of authorship is necessary, and all authors accept it, it will be presented as a correction of errors. A retraction will be published only when requested by the authors.

Coercive citation

VISUALCOM Scientific Publications regards coercive citation (that is, the inclusion of a citation as a condition of acceptance or without academic justification) as unethical and, therefore, does not approve of this practice.

We urge authors who feel they have been pressured to include a specific reference in their article to write to administracion@visualcompublications.es to inform us of the situation.

Fabrication of data

VISUALCOM Scientific Publications strives to publish only truthful and rigorous articles. Nevertheless, as the research is done before papers are submitted, the editors cannot guarantee the proper use of the data by the authors.

Where there may be suspicion that fabricated data have been used, we will make every effort to assist in resolving the matter, and will refer the case to the authors' institutions when appropriate. You may learn more about the process from the COPE's flowcharts.

Unethical research and testing

Authors must follow the appropriate international and national procedures regarding data protection, the right to privacy, the protection of minors and medical testing on humans and animals. Authors may request consent forms and any forms as may be required from the relevant regulatory bodies.

If it is determined that the research contravenes international or national procedures and this is confirmed by the relevant regulatory body, VISUALCOM Scientific Publications will publish a retraction.

Defamation

Should the authors make unfounded, emotional or inaccurate statements about individuals or organizations in their articles, VISUALCOM Scientific Publications reserves the right to request changes or to reject the document before publication. Critique and reviews are perfectly acceptable, but they must be done constructively.

If an article published in one of our journals is considered to be defamatory, a retraction will be published. In such cases as it may be legally required, the document will be removed from the online version of the journal and an apology will be published. In addition, should we consider that the work could be potentially defamatory, we will request proof of consent in writing before initiating the publication process.

Conflict of interests

VISUALCOM Scientific Publications considers the following cases of conflict of interests:

- Financial or personal interest in the results of the research.
- Undisclosed financial support for the research from an interested third party.
- Financial or personal interest to suppress the research.

If it is suspected that there may be a conflict of interest, the editor or the main point of contact of the journal must be informed, and they will then follow the flowcharts established by the COPE.

Complaints and appeals

The procedure to handle the authors' complaints against the journal, its staff, the editorial board or the editor is as follows:

1. The complaint should be sent in writing to administracion@visualcompublications.es
2. The journal's editorial team will consider the complaint and will send an acknowledgement of receipt within 10 days of its receipt.
3. The complaint will be resolved within 30 days of its receipt. The decision will be recorded in writing and will be final.