

Letter to the Editor

Re: Redundant Publishing of “Determining the Quality and Sustainability of Friction Ridge Deposits on Envelopes Sent Through the Postal System”. *J. For. Ident.* **2013**, 63 (3), 247–253 and *Fingerprint Whorld* **2014**, 40 (152), 34–43.

My manuscript “Determining the Quality and Sustainability of Friction Ridge Deposits on Envelopes Sent Through the Postal System” was recently published in the *Journal of Forensic Identification (JFI)* and then seven months later, an original version of the paper was published in *Fingerprint Whorld* (citations noted above).

This situation arose as follows: I sent my original manuscript simultaneously to both publishers once I had completed the research. The only positive response I received was from *JFI*. In November 2013, *Fingerprint Whorld* stated they intended to publish my research in their October issue. It was subsequently published in January 2014. I acknowledge that submitting a manuscript to two publications without notifying the editors of each publication has the potential to result in “dual publication” and is contrary to standard publishing protocols.

It was never my intention to seek dual publication. A lack of experience and naivety as a first-time author was the prime cause of this problem. I genuinely regret having caused this problem and apologize to the editorial staffs of both journals and their readers for my action.

As a result of my actions, I have been informed that I am subject to a three-year ban on submitting any manuscripts for publication. I have been informed that any future conduct of this type may result in a permanent restriction from submitting a manuscript to the *Journal of Forensic Identification* or to *Fingerprint Whorld*. I accept responsibility for my actions.

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Sydney, Australia

Editors' comment: Dual or redundant publication is a serious problem in the world of publication. Neither the *Journal of Forensic Identification* nor the *Fingerprint Whorl* will tolerate this type of behavior. The choice to publish some reprints or to publish only original material is an editorial decision for every publication. The *JFI* policy is to publish only original material; *Fingerprint Whorl* occasionally reprints selected material but, as an ethical standard, they provide proper attribution to the original source. If an author submits a manuscript to more than one publication, he or she should notify the editors of each publication. All authors (including Ms. Holt) who submit manuscripts for publication in the *JFI* are required to sign an authorization to publish form. This form assures the *JFI* that the manuscript is not under consideration elsewhere and will not be submitted to other publications.

The *JFI* and *Fingerprint Whorl* will provide more guidance regarding redundant publication in the hopes of avoiding this type of error in the future, but ultimately it is the author's responsibility to notify editors of any intent to submit a manuscript to multiple publications.

In the realm of forensics, in which we labor, ethical standards are of the utmost importance. Although Ms. Holt violated a basic standard and our collective trust by permitting her manuscript to be reprinted in *Fingerprint Whorl* without advising them of the prior publication of it in the *JFI*, we applaud her for acknowledging her error and accepting responsibility for her actions.

Alan McRoberts, Editor
Journal of Forensic Identification

Robert Milne, Editor
Fingerprint Whorl