

Journal of the Royal Statistical Society

Guidance for Book Reviewers

Above all, book reviews should be informative. The reader wants to know whether this book could be of interest to them, or to a colleague. Space for book reviews is limited, so every word used must earn its place. A small minority of books will merit a very full review, about 600–800 words; most reviews are expected to be about 300–400 words; for some books, including those that are little changed from a previous edition, 150 words will suffice. Please try hard not to include formulae or complex mathematical expressions in the text.

Do not hold back from offering fair and defensible (but not offensive) criticism where it is deserved. If your review exposes a book as outdated, inaccurate or unsatisfactory in other ways, you will have earned the gratitude of many. And, when the book has a refreshing perspective, or is particularly useful (even in a few chapters), your enthusiasm will similarly be appreciated. Of course, you should not review books in which you have a pecuniary or similar interest!

Avoid simply quoting from the publisher's blurb, without comment, or merely listing the titles of chapters, unless this is the best way to describe the content succinctly. Your review should offer more than can be found by a reader stumbling across the book in a bookshop, or advertised on a Web site. If the authors have offered to make publicly available a list of misprints and corrections, it will be more useful to send your list of slips directly to them than to take up the space in your review. But, if you find errors that are likely to mislead, then point them out.

Sometimes, two or more books on the same topic can be reviewed together; in general, comparisons of new books with the existing literature can be most helpful. We want reviews published in our journals to read well, to be authoritative, and to be useful to the statistical community. If you refer to other published work, give precise details in the conventional manner, listing such references at the end of your review.

The division between publication in Series A of the journal and *Significance* is now established: reviews of books aimed at the general public, undergraduate texts and historical surveys now appear in *Significance*, whereas more technical books, research monographs and postgraduate texts will be reviewed in Series A.

Head your review with the standard information on (in this order) title, author(s), publication year, publisher, length, price and ISBN and type it with a generous line spacing; end it with your own name and your affiliation (or simply town or city where you live), and your e-mail address if you are happy for it to appear in print.

The Book Reviews Editor and/or the copy editor might edit your review mildly, mainly to put it into 'house style', but also to correct typographical errors etc.; if the Book Reviews Editor wishes to make any alteration of substance, he or she will run it past you first. You will, of course, also receive proofs of the text to check before publication, but the review cannot be published unless you can return a signed copy of the copyright form that will accompany the proofs.