

Geosci. Commun. Discuss., referee comment RC1
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Comment on gc-2021-14

Anonymous Referee #1

Referee comment on "About right: references in open-access EGU (European Geosciences Union) journals" by Andrea Pozzer, Geosci. Commun. Discuss.,
<https://doi.org/10.5194/gc-2021-14-RC1>, 2021

The manuscript reports an interesting point of information, regarding the number of references in geoscience journals. However, I have a few critical comments:

- I find the manuscript quite long and detailed in relation for the resulting information given. Is it really necessary to go into so much detail? At the end the information gleaned is, while interesting, rather limited. To cut this in half would retain the information, without the need for extensive statistics and figures.
- The study is limited to only online journals of one publisher; this excludes a large number of other journals from other publishers. Not everybody in the geosciences community publishes in these sorts of journals.
- The point is made that these online journals do not have length limits -- this might be part of the reason or problem in itself; there is a good reason why some of the high-profile journals ("Geology" comes to mind) have length limits. It might be interesting to look at the statistics there. In that context I always have to think of the saying, often ascribed to B. Pascal, that "I am sorry to have written a long letter because I did not have enough time to write a short letter". Long is not always better, and being verbose does not necessarily convey more information, or do it better. The current paper is a case in point.
- I am also missing a clear statement what the scientific question or working hypothesis is here? With which scientific goal was this study done? And in the end... what came out of it? Surely the recommendation to not limit the length of a paper can be all of it?

Even though these are major recommendations they would only result in minor revisions (to the content/conclusions) so I recommend minor revisions, but consider shortening the paper, give more widely reaching reasons, and maybe consider other publication(s) too.