



SCHOLARONE
MANUSCRIPTS

Unusual Activity Detection User Guide

Updated March 2025

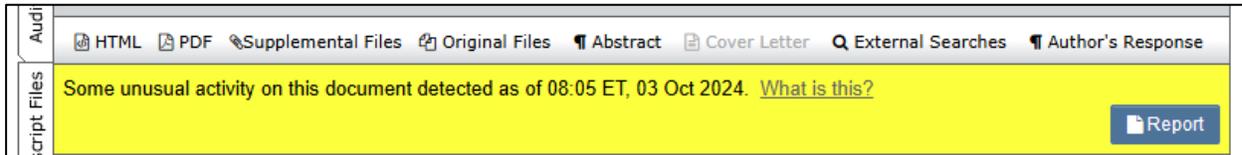


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UNUSUAL ACTIVITY DETECTION

Unusual activity detection identifies unusual activity by accounts during submission and review. Journals will see a risk indicator on the manuscript header just below the html and pdf icons.



The risk indicator is derived from using proprietary algorithms based on existing web traffic and server data such as when Reviewers are suggested by the Author and when Reviewers use a non-institutional email address. By themselves, these factors may not trigger an alert, but combined with other actions they could increase the risk level of a submission.

Visibility of this feature is limited to the publisher, Editor role types, and Admin role types. Authors, and Reviewers will not know it is in place unless you decide to announce its use by your organization.

Unusual Activity Detection		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Turn on the Unusual Activity Detection UI		
Role	View Warning	Access Report
Associate Editor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Editor-in-Chief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Admin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

VIEWING THE REPORT

Journal accounts with full access will be able to view a detailed report of the actions which elevated the risk level of a submission. The report has tabs which include the report, instructions, and linked submissions (when applicable).

Unusual Activity Report

[Report](#) [Instructions](#) [Linked Submissions](#)

The following submission should be evaluated by the journal staff due to unusual activity.

Report Date: 08:39 ET, 03 Oct 2024
Manuscript ID: ██████s-2024-32801
Title: Enhanced Reliability and Security

[Print](#)

Reviewing computer(s) has been linked to multiple reviews and/or submissions by different Reviewers

[Edit](#)
Review Computer 1

Reviewer: Bhavya Kadi

REPORT TAB

The report tab can contain several sections of alerts that need to be reviewed or investigated.

Unusual Activity Report

[Report](#) [Instructions](#)

The following submission should be evaluated by the journal staff due to unusual activity.

Report Date: 07:51 ET, 18 Feb 2020
Manuscript ID: MN-20-03
Title: DUST LEVITATION ON AIRLESS BODIES:

[Print](#)

Reviewer email address may not be from an institution

1. Reviewer, Mahe Sodh ha@rediffmail.com

Author suggested Reviewer

1. Reviewer, Mah

Review turnaround time was unusually short

1. Reviewer, Mah (0 days, 2 hours)

IP Addresses

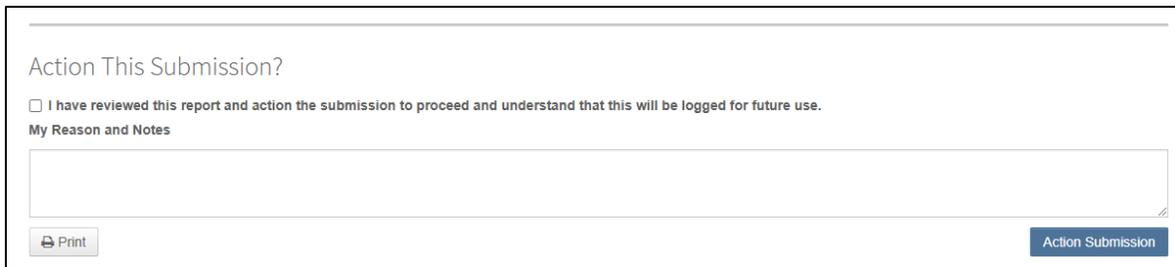
1. Reviewer, Mah | Review IP: 49.34.72.107

Clicking on the question mark next to a report header will give you the definition.



The screenshot shows a report header with the text "Reviewer email address may not be from an institution" followed by a question mark icon. Below this is a list item: "1. Reviewer, Mahenha@rediffmail.com". A tooltip box is open over the question mark, titled "Reviewer Email Address" with a close button (x). The tooltip text reads: "This account uses a web-based email address and not an officially recognized institutional domain name." A "Print" button is visible in the top right corner of the report area.

Once the report has been reviewed, notes may be added, and the report may be actioned by a user with full access. You can also print out the report if needed.



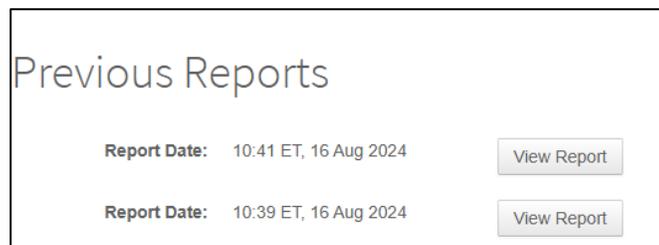
The screenshot shows a form titled "Action This Submission?". It contains a checkbox with the text "I have reviewed this report and action the submission to proceed and understand that this will be logged for future use." Below the checkbox is a text area labeled "My Reason and Notes". At the bottom left is a "Print" button, and at the bottom right is an "Action Submission" button.

Once the report has been actioned, a message will appear at the top of the Report.



The screenshot shows the header of an "Unusual Activity Report". There are two tabs: "Report" (selected) and "Instructions". Below the tabs is a blue message box that says: "✓ Actioned on 05-Feb-2025 by Gwen Baker" and "Notes: The account has been verified."

If you are viewing a report on a revised paper, you may see a list of previous reports which you can view.

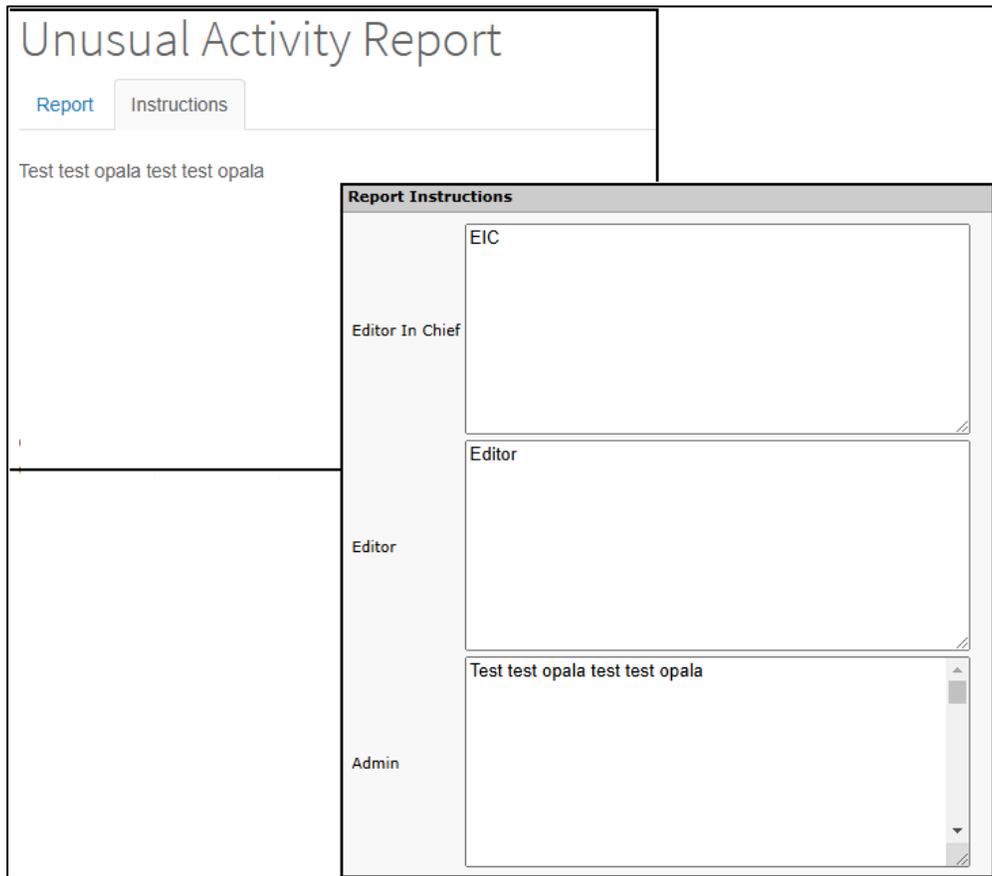


The screenshot shows a section titled "Previous Reports". It lists two reports with their respective dates and "View Report" buttons:

Report Date	Action
10:41 ET, 16 Aug 2024	View Report
10:39 ET, 16 Aug 2024	View Report

INSTRUCTIONS TAB

The instructions tab can be configured by an account that has access to the configuration center. The instructions can be different for each role that is allowed to view the report. In the configuration center you will find this option in the **Manuscript Details** section.



LINKED SUBMISSIONS TAB

Linked Submissions are other submissions that share the same computer, either by submission or review, across various journals within a publisher's portfolio. This tab gives you the opportunity to review this information by Author names as well as reviewers and title.

Unusual Activity Report

Report
Instructions
Linked Submissions

Search:

Device Id ▲	MS ID ▲	Author ▲	Reviewer ▲	JOURNAL ⇅	Submitted Date ⇅	Title ⇅
5329b3(R)	ess-2023-35719	"Miao, Di(0911...);	Ghuohua Liu (liughn@nankai.edu.cn)	Access"	05-Nov-2023	"Longitudinal tear detection
5329b3(R)	ss-2023-39015	"Miao, Di; Wang, Yi...;	Hong Wu (...)	Access"	30-Nov-2023	"Longitudinal tear detection of conveyor

Note: This option is not on by default, and you will need to reach out to your publisher or our ScholarOne support team for implementation.

REPORT SCENARIOS

The following scenarios show alerts you may see in reports.

SHORT REVIEW TURNAROUND TIME

Severity: Low

Determination: Journal site average + other proprietary factors

Scenario 1: The Reviewer of the paper is the Author using a fake alias as a legitimate Reviewer. The goal of this person is to provide a positive review and, since there is no true “review,” the amount of time taken is short.

Scenario 2: The Reviewer of the paper is colluding with the Author (e.g., An Author’s friend or colleague). The goal of this person is to provide a positive review and, since there is no true “review,” the amount of time taken is short.

Considerations & Exception(s): In some journals, a short turnaround time is considered a positive thing, and they encourage Reviewers to provide reviews quickly.

What to Look For:

- Check to see if the review turnaround time is consistent with journal guidelines /norms.
- A quick, positive review may indicate that the Author is involved in the review process.
- Consider this trigger when accompanied by any other trigger, especially when the Author suggests the Reviewer.

NON-INSTITUTIONAL EMAIL ADDRESS

Severity: Medium

Determination: A list of the top-most public email domains (e.g. Gmail, Yahoo, Tencent, etc.)

Scenario Using a free email service, Joe Author created the account, Jane.Reviewer@gmail.com, in order to pose as Jane Reviewer. Jane Reviewer’s name is familiar to the Editor, and she is well-known in her field, so Joe suggested her as a potential reviewer. Looking closer, an Editor would know that Jane uses jane.reviewer@organization.com as her email instead.

Considerations & Exception(s): Some researchers keep a public email for all their accounts. A researcher may have recently changed institutions and lost their institutional email account.

What to Look For:

- Check your references to see if the Reviewer in question uses the email displayed in the Unusual Activity report for their correspondence.
- Search for the Reviewer online to see if there is another way to contact them and verify their email. Do not use the email address in the Unusual Activity report for confirmation.
- Consider this trigger when accompanied by any other trigger, especially when the Author suggested the Reviewer with the email address in the report

AUTHOR SUGGESTED THE REVIEWER

Severity: Medium

Determination: Suggested (a.k.a. “preferred”) Reviewers fields are filled out during the submission process on ScholarOne. The question(s) must be configured on for the journal site.

Scenario 1: During submission, the Author, Joe Author, suggests a legitimate Reviewer, Jane Reviewer, for their paper but provides an email address for her that he controls.

Scenario 2: During submission, the Author suggests a friend or colleague that they know will provide a positive review.

Considerations & Exception(s): Half of ScholarOne journals have turned this feature off due to the risk. Finding Reviewers can be difficult so Author suggestions may help expedite the process. Consider using a service like Web of Science Reviewer Locator, in order to find qualified Reviewers.

What to Look For:

- Check your references to see if the Reviewer in question uses the email displayed in the report for their correspondence.
- Search for the Reviewer online to see if there is another way to contact them and verify their email. Do not use the email address suggested by the Author.
- Consider this trigger when accompanied by any other trigger, especially when the Reviewer uses a non-institutional email address.

COMPUTER HAS MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS OR REVIEWS BY OTHER ACCOUNTS

Severity: Extremely High

Determination: Proprietary means + ScholarOne database shows the same computer has been used for multiple submissions and reviews by multiple ScholarOne accounts.

Scenario: A company solicits Authors to use their service for a fee. In return, the company promises quick submission and acceptance. The Author provides the manuscript and payment to the company. The company then submits the paper on behalf of the Author. The company uses the same computer or bank of computers to process submissions and/or reviews.

Considerations & Exception(s): This service is not to be confused with legitimate language processing companies

What to Look For:

- This is a very rare occurrence and should be taken seriously
- Check to see if the submission used a legitimate language processing company
- Consider this trigger when accompanied by any other trigger. It may appear as the only trigger on a submission but should still be taken seriously, nonetheless.

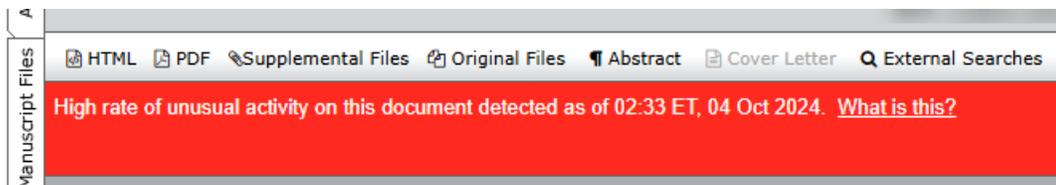
UNUSUAL ACTIVITY INDICATORS AND REPORT ACCESS

A red or yellow status indicator will appear below the HTML and PDF icons on the manuscript header when unusual activity has been detected.

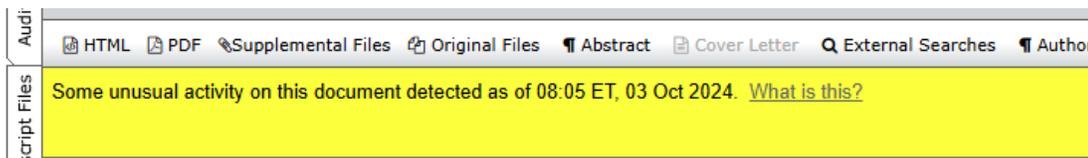
STANDARD ACCESS (EDITOR ROLES BY DEFAULT)

Editor and Admin roles with standard access will see the indicator while users with full access will have a link to a report. By default, Editors will have standard access.

Example of High Risk Alert, shown on Manuscript Details



Example of Medium Risk Alert



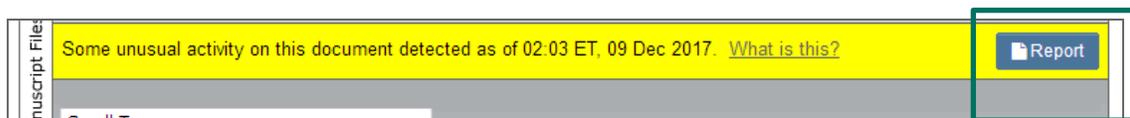
FULL ACCESS (ADMINS BY DEFAULT)

A red or yellow status indicator will appear on the manuscript header when unusual activity has been detected. Users with full access will see the indicator with a link to the report.

Example of High Risk Alert

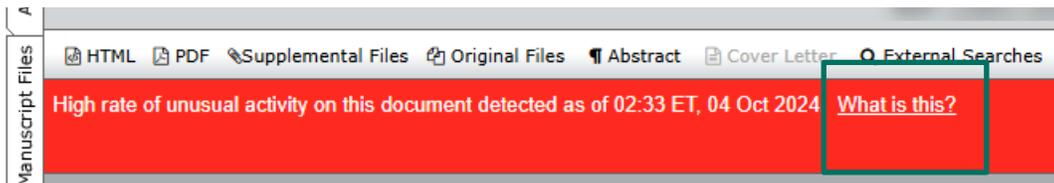


Example of Medium Risk Alert



SUBMISSION “WHAT IS THIS?” INFORMATIONAL POP-UP

All of the unusual activity indicators will have a link to the informational pop-up via the hyperlink, “What is this?”



This pop-up will provide the following:

- Information and explanation of the feature
- Why it is important to the industry
- Next steps for the journal when they suspect unusual activity
- Legal disclosures

Journal Name

Unusual Activity Detected

WHAT IS THIS?

In order to prevent unusual submission and peer review activity, ScholarOne has developed a program to detect actions that may warrant further investigation by the journal.

Journal staff can see a risk indicator on all submissions and reviews. This indicator status is calculated using proprietary algorithms that analyze web traffic and server data such as when Reviewers are suggested by the Author and when Reviewers use a non-institutional email address.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The integrity and trust of journals is at risk when Authors and Reviewers “game the system”. Peer review, in particular, is the key element in ensuring the quality and validity of published papers. Peer review relies on impartial opinions given by suitably qualified and experienced peers. As with any system, there are opportunities for unethical practices. The new algorithms help to thwart these practices.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT UNUSUAL ACTIVITY

Consult guidelines provided by the journal and/or publisher of the content on this site. You may also want to speak to with the journal Admin about details.

For more information, go to the [Committee on Publication Ethics: COPE](#) web site.

LEGAL

[Terms of use](#) | [Privacy Statement](#) | [Cookie policy](#)

ADMIN DASHBOARD

Administrators have the ability to see all of the currently flagged submissions in a queue called Unusual Activity. There is also a queue that will show all cleared reports in the past 2 years.

Unusual Activity

[21 Medium and High Risk](#)

[45 Cleared reports \(past 2 years\)](#)

When looking at either queue, Administrators will have the ability to sort on UAD Score

Medium and High Risk		Manuscripts 1-10 of 1464		
Manuscript ID	Manuscript Title	Date Submitted	Status	Take Action
UAD Score	Submitting Author			
Manuscript Type				

SENSITIVITY SETTINGS

In some circumstances, it is perfectly normal for one or more of these categories to trigger an alert that isn't considered unusual activity by the journal's standards. And for those journals, they receive more yellow and red alerts in the process.

In the configuration center, is the ability to adjust the algorithm's sensitivity settings.

Unusual Activity Scoring				
Parameter	Sensitivity			
	Off	Low	Med	High
Submission and Review Shared Device	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Submission and Review Shared Network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Review and Review Shared Device	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Review and Review Shared Network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Submission and Decision Shared Device	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Submission and Decision Shared Network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Review and Decision Shared Device	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

The definition of “Sensitivity” is defined as how much the algorithm will weight a trigger. A journal can configure the sensitivity (a.k.a. the “weight” of the algorithm) setting for various categories to: off, low, medium, or high.

Please note that, in the case of the Close Proximity trigger, it does not change the distance used.

Scenario: A journal may accept and encourage quick review turnaround times. They accept the risk that it may indicate unusual activity and would like to see less alerts from this trigger. Within Configuration, they adjust the sensitivity settings of the trigger to low.

Considerations & Exception(s): Setting a trigger to high may not always create an instant red alert but it will at least cause a yellow alert to appear. The previously mentioned categories are noted with severity levels. Please consider this as you adjust your sensitivity settings.

GLOSSARY

Report Header	Definition
Author(s) added by journal staff	The following Authors were added by the journal staff, not the submitter.
Author(s) added during the latest revision by the submitter	The following Authors were added during the latest revision by the submitter, not the journal staff.
Shared the same computer	These accounts used the same computer during the processing of the submission for this journal.
Shared the same network address	These accounts had the same IP address regardless of their account information.
Based on the geolocation of the IP addresses, the following users are in close proximity	These accounts share the same general location regardless of their account information.
Author suggested Reviewer	This reviewer was recommended by the Author during the submission.
Reviewing computer(s) has been linked to multiple reviews and/or submissions by different Reviewers	Multiple reviewer accounts used this computer.
Submitting computer has been linked to multiple submissions and/or reviews by different Authors	Multiple author accounts used this computer.
Review turnaround time was unusually short	A short review turnaround time relative to other reviews for this journal.
Review turnaround time was less than 24 hours	Completed review under 24 hours based on journal reviewer task workflow.
Reviewer's email address may not be from an institution	This account uses a web-based email address and not an officially recognized institutional domain name.
IP Addresses	These are the IP addresses associated with accounts on this submission.

For Assistance contact our support team at: s1help@silverchair.com

About Silverchair

Silverchair is the leading independent platform partner for scholarly and professional publishers, serving our growing community through flexible technology and unparalleled services. Our teams build, maintain, and innovate platforms across the publishing lifecycle—from idea to impact. Our products facilitate submission, peer review, hosting, dissemination, and impact measurement, enabling researchers and professionals to maximize their contributions to our world.

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