

During a recent virtual writing retreat, we used a peer-review framework to review your abstract. We then had an open discussion and noted down all the feedback and compiled the following. We reviewed your Abstract using a structured worksheet with the following advice in mind: “The abstract is a condensed and concentrated version of the full text of the research manuscript. It should be sufficiently representative of the paper if read as a stand-alone document”. We looked for important elements of a research abstract and we comment on them below. We hope the following is helpful for your revisions.

It’s important to note that Geoscience Communication puts a lot of emphasis on evaluation of communication practice and ensuring that the practice is based on a solid foundation and research question. The articles need to tell the story of *research* on geoscience communication and not just tell the story of geoscience communication that’s been done.

Overall: The project sounds very interesting and it’s great when artists and scientists work together like this. The Abstract excited many of us, and we wish we would have seen the exhibition in real-life. The Abstract touches on some very interesting elements and issues, which made us want to read on. However, there are a few things we believe should be improved for this to be relevant for a research journal like Geoscience Communication.

Title: The title matches the abstract, but not necessarily the objective of the study, which we did not manage to grasp. It’s a clear title, but we wondered if the location needs to be mentioned. Why not simply write “geological boundary”? Also, if you include the location in the title, then this should match how you describe the location in the Abstract itself. At the moment, they do not seem to match, which makes it difficult for readers not familiar with these places.

Need and relevance:

We failed to clearly identify what the need or relevance of this work from the Abstract. If it is to “interrogate the human practice of dividing the Earth for social, political, scientific and aesthetic reasons” then could you add a short sentence to explain why. We also didn’t quite understand what these “social, political, scientific and aesthetic reasons” might be. We have a feeling that the second and third paragraphs on touching the relevance of the project, but the ideas need to be drawn together. For example, we thought that the “dialogue with the land and environment” sentence in the third paragraph seems connected to the projects need and/or relevance, but we’re unsure exactly how.

Hypothesis/Objectives:

This is where we had difficulty. We can’t see any research objectives, questions or hypotheses. If the aim is to interrogate human practice, then what is the question related to that and how does one evaluate it?

Methods:

The method was not clear probably because the research question was also absent. The authors included a description of the process itself including the construction and destruction of the artwork, and also the exhibitions, and book that came thereafter. This makes a nice story about the art itself, but lacks a method for the evaluation, which it needs to be a full story about research.

Results and conclusion:

From our understanding, the results were the exhibition and book which were explained well and placed towards the end. However, this is not enough. The results of the research process need to explain the results related to the research question itself and the evaluation that's been carried out. We are left wondering about the impact of the project. Did it contribute to the collaboration between artists and scientists for example? Did it make people talk (or interrogate) the human practices mentioned in the beginning?

Take home message:

A take-home message will ideally mention how the research contributes to a wider perspective. The last sentence should sum up the essence of the paper. At present the final sentence does not do this. We would have loved to see the resulting book, but we have to ask if a "limited" edition book helps to extend the reach of the project more than just in a "limited" way.

Clarity and conciseness:

The abstract is mostly easy to understand. The authors should consider reformulating the second sentence of the second paragraph which is particularly difficult to follow. And maybe the authors would consider splitting or editing some of the longer sentences to shorter forms. Our main issue concerns the flow in the abstract which is quite challenging to follow. It is challenging to pick out the main elements of the paper. We hope the authors consider restructuring the Abstract in an order like this: Need/relevance, research question/hypothesis, methods, results, conclusions and take-home message. In this way the abstract should mirror your paper and include all the important elements that your paper likely already contains.

Hopefully all the elements we felt are missing in the Abstract can easily be extracted from the paper itself. Since we were peer-reviewing the abstract as a *stand-alone* piece of writing, we did not investigate the rest of the paper, so we cannot comment on whether or not these elements are there.

A lot of our comments stem from the lack of a clear research question. Overall this seems like a very nice story about geoscience communication, and we hope that you can add the needed information to make it a nice story about *research* into geoscience communication.

Mathew Stiller-Reeve (Thematic Editor of Geoscience Communication) and 11 anonymous reviewers.