

# An author-friendly experience

The purpose of the *PCI Journal* is closely tied to the purpose of PCI, which is to develop, maintain, and disseminate the body of knowledge related to precast/prestressed concrete. In the summer issue I wrote about peer review, the vetting process by which we accept, reject, and refine manuscripts. Even more fundamental to developing and disseminating high-quality information is obtaining that information in the first place.

We have been improving our processes to make contributing to the *PCI Journal* as rewarding an experience as possible for authors. In the summer issue we published new guidelines for authors to make the instructions clear and straightforward. We have eliminated the backlog of manuscripts awaiting peer review and are monitoring the peer-review process more closely so that authors will not have to wait so long to hear whether their manuscripts have been accepted. We are sending acceptance notices earlier in the process so that assistant professors and graduating students can cite their *PCI Journal* papers as “accepted for publication” as soon as possible. We are making our rejections constructive so that authors get something more helpful than just “no.” We are assigning manuscripts for publication in specific issues much earlier in the process. We are also seeking to make our whole publication process more transparent to authors.

As part of our plans for the new PCI website, we are incorporating content management software. This is a means of keeping track of documents and images so that we can make sure that whoever works on a document has the latest version, images have the correct copyright agreement attached, and the status of any given manuscript can be readily determined. Although many of its benefits may not appear directly to our readers, it will help us work more efficiently and effectively. We hope eventually to allow authors to track the status of their own manuscripts through the publication process and to allow our members to use images owned by PCI. The content management software will help all of us find what we need quickly and easily.

Beginning with the winter 2012 issue, we will be expanding on our theme for each issue. More about that next time. ▮

Please send  
correspondence to [journal@pci.org](mailto:journal@pci.org) or Precast/Prestressed  
Concrete Institute, c/o *PCI Journal*, 200 West Adams Street,  
Suite 2100, Chicago, IL 60606.



Rachel J. Detwiler, PhD, P.E.