

ASAPbio

How to label a preprint

- 1 State clearly that it is a preprint and show server name and logo.
- 2 Label withdrawn or removed preprints as described in the ASAPbio report '[Building trust in preprints: recommendations for servers](#)' where appropriate.
- 3 Show version information about the preprint as described in the ASAPbio report '[Building trust in preprints: recommendations for servers](#)'.
- 4 Highlight the peer review status of the preprint prior to posting on the server.
- 5 Display a brief statement about the criteria used to screen preprints in advance of posting and link to a page showing the full screening criteria.
- 6 Include recommended cautions for readers where appropriate.
- 7 Highlight the need for independent expert opinion.
- 8 Clearly indicate when a preprint has been published in a peer reviewed journal when that information is available and link to the published article.

Guiding principles for preprint servers on preprint labelling



Preprint Server Archive

This preprint has been withdrawn. Click here to see the withdrawal notice.

2

Title of Manuscript

Author 1, Author 2 and Author 3

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1000/xyz123>

3

Version 1

1

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This is a preprint It has not undergone peer review prior to posting on this server. The criteria used to determine whether a submitted preprint will be posted on this server can be found here. The presence of a manuscript on this server should not be interpreted as an endorsement of its validity or suitability for dissemination as established information or for guiding clinical practice.

6

Readers should use their own judgement and seek expert opinion before using this research to inform their own writing, reporting or behavior.

7

This preprint has been published in Journal X. View article [here](#).

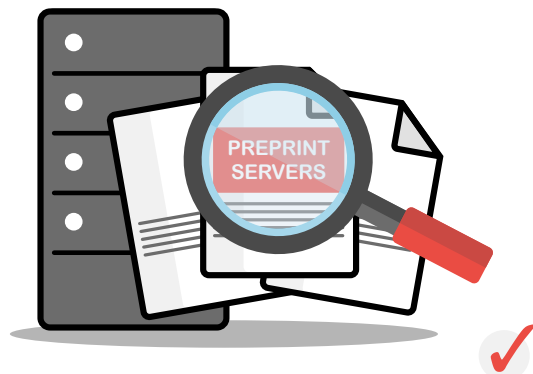
8

ABSTRACT

On a page dedicated to describing server policies, preprint servers should include the following points, designed in an easily noticeable and understandable way for readers:

1 Content

Make transparent and noticeable the criteria used to determine what content is posted on that preprint server.



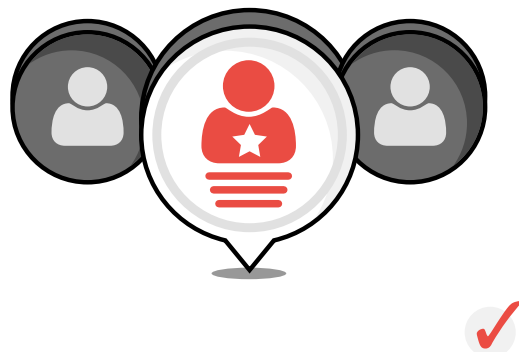
2 Peer review

Highlight that the server does not conduct peer review and that readers should not assume that a preprint has been peer reviewed unless stated otherwise.



3 Expert opinion

Highlight that, as with all research, readers should use their own judgement and seek expert opinion themselves before using the research posted to inform their own research, writing, reporting or behavior.



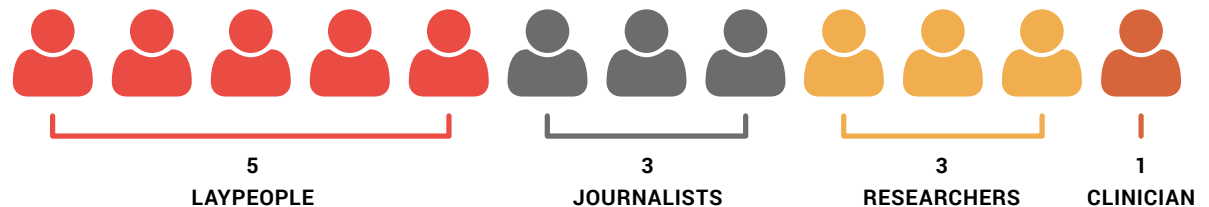
4 Disclaimers

Include additional disclaimers relevant to specific disciplines. For example, for clinical research, state that the content of the preprint should not be used to inform clinical practice.



The aim of the project was to determine whether readers notice the labels that currently exist on preprint servers, whether they can distinguish between a preprint and a peer reviewed article and what would make the labels more noticeable and easier to understand.

Twelve users were asked to look at research related to Covid-19 posted on a preprint server ([Research Square](#), [medRxiv](#), [bioRxiv](#) and [SSRN](#)) and comment on what they noticed.



Three users did not notice the labels stating that the preprints had not been peer reviewed.



Five users wanted to get a better understanding of the preprint process and selection. For example, one said,

“ I don't know what they are doing to validate their articles. ”

Suggestions to make the labelling more noticeable included:



This project highlighted the need for noticeable labelling and clarity about the screening criteria used to determine what is posted on a preprint server.

Preprint: A form of scholarly communication that has been made publicly available by its authors. Most preprints are deposited on preprint servers and are generally permanently available. They are accompanied by metadata such as a list of authors and date of posting. Many preprint servers allow preprints to be versioned and some offer more advanced functions, like commenting, community endorsement, and direct submission of preprints to scholarly journals.

Preprint server: A digital archive for preprints. Most preprint servers screen preprints for adherence to straightforward criteria before they are posted. While meeting these criteria is not an indication of scientific validity, posting a preprint on a preprint server can facilitate its scrutiny by the scientific community. The level of such scrutiny for a given preprint can vary from none at all to extensive impartial evaluation by a number of experts in the field; it can vary between preprints on the same server.

Peer review: The formal invited assessment of the scientific validity of a piece of research by independent experts in the field.

Community review: Public feedback on a preprint.

Published: In this document, 'published' refers to a version of work that is made publicly available in a journal after it has undergone peer review.

The full document is available to download at asapbio.org/public