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Order of Authorship

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Before proposals for identifying authors' contributions began to be implemented, proposed guides for determining order of authorship ranged from simple alphabetical listings to mathematical formulas for assessing specific levels of individual contribution levels.

However, even the most systematic calculations of contribution levels will require some measure of subjective judgment, and determination of order of authors is best done by the authors' collective assessment of each other's level of contribution. Moreover, as Rennie et al have argued, attempts to provide information to readers by ordering authors in particular ways is not meaningful, especially if each author's contributions are not made public.