Homework Assignment #6, Peer-Reviewing

The purpose of this assignment is to practice writing peer reviews for a scientific article. Before beginning your referee reports, please review “Introduction to refereeing.”

For the assignment, you’ll be given copies of two of your colleagues’ general-audience articles. For each article, you will write a one-page evaluation of the suitability of the article for the Physics Illinois homepage (http://physics.illinois.edu). Do not simply edit the document; write a report.

Your review should incorporate the following elements:

1. A summary of the main ideas presented in the article.
2. An evaluation of the correctness of the physics explanations.
3. An assessment of the extent to which an undergraduate physics major would be interested in the research being reported. Is the article written at an appropriate level (language, concepts) for the intended audience?
4. An evaluation of the article’s conformance with journalistic style conventions (headline, byline, location, funding acknowledgment).
5. A comment on the effectiveness of the article’s title, subtitle (if any), and lede.
6. An evaluation of the hyperlinks. Do they present useful supplementary material consistent with the level of expertise of expected readers?
7. An evaluation of the figures. Do they clearly communicate and enhance the main ideas of the article?
8. Specific suggestions for how the author might improve the article.

Be specific! Back up your opinion with examples. Point out where language is ambiguous or unclear.

Be collegial and constructive. Do not make personal comments or criticize the author directly.

Due: Friday, March 10, 9:00 p.m. Email your assignment to phys496@physics.illinois.edu. Late submissions will be downgraded and will be ineligible for rewrite points.

Total—50 points (25 points for each review)