

The humble Table of Contents.

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With my holiday approaching, I thought it would be pleasant to talk about something less demanding, and which involved zero LaTeXing. So, I thought that I would speak up for the Table of Contents being included in journal articles. Of course its inclusion is commonplace in books, and one couldn't imagine a textbook or monograph being without one.

At one time it was quite usual in journal articles too, and Bob Kraichnan's pioneering paper, presenting the direct-interaction approximation, in the Journal of Fluid Mechanics in 1959 was a case in point [1]. In fact I have normally put in a table of contents in submitted manuscripts for many years now, and it can easily be removed once the paper has been accepted for publication. Some years back, I submitted a paper thus equipped to the JFM; and, still trying not to move with the times, I tried to avoid the web submission method and sent it as a pdf attachment in an email to an editor. His shocked reaction seemed not unlike that of a maiden lady in a Victorian novel encountering some coarse language. His complaints ended up with: 'and you have even put an index in it!'

Well, I removed the '\toc' command and submitted the MS through the website. However, worse was to come and the paper ultimately went elsewhere. The resulting transaction came under the heading of what someone has called 'The combination of lazy editor and biased referees which plagues turbulence research'. Actually, I don't think 'lazy' is quite the right word. Perhaps something like 'conformist' would be better?

Returning to the present time, my recent experiences as Guest Editor have made me aware of just how useful a table of contents is when one is assessing a new manuscript,

particularly when it is a review article. Indeed, even recently, certain review journals did require a list of contents for each article. For example, see reference [2].

So I wish to conclude with a plea. At least put a temporary table of contents in in your preprints and submissions. And, if we can persuade editors to allow them in the journals, rather than draw their skirts aside, then it should improve communication by making it easier for us all to get to grips with each other's work.

This is my last post for the moment. I hope to resume in September.

References.

- [1] R. H. Kraichnan. The structure of isotropic turbulence at very high Reynolds numbers. J. Fluid Mech., 5:497-543, 1959.
- [2] W. D. McComb. Theory of turbulence. Rep. Prog. Phys., 58:1117-1206, 1995.