# How to Review a Paper

# What’s the point behind peer reviewing?

- Maintain standards of quality
- Improve performance
- Provide credibility to results

# Elements of a Review

- Short summary of the text
- Contribution statement
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Typical questions to ask
  - How relevant is this work?
  - How is the argument flow?
  - What is new about this work?
  - Which problem is this work trying to solve?
  - Which other works does it extend?
  - What did the authors do?
  - How did they do it?
  - How valid is their approach?
  - How relevant are the results?

# Critical Review

- A review is NOT about personal interests or personal criticism of the author
- The review should focus on content and presentation

**Ethics in Scientific Communication**

- It is ok to consider a contribution to be superfluous or of no need for the scientific community.
- It is not ok to personally judge or insult the author.

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REJECTED

# Shit My Reviewers Say

Collecting the finest real specimens of reviewer comments since 1456

@yourpapersucks

REJECTED

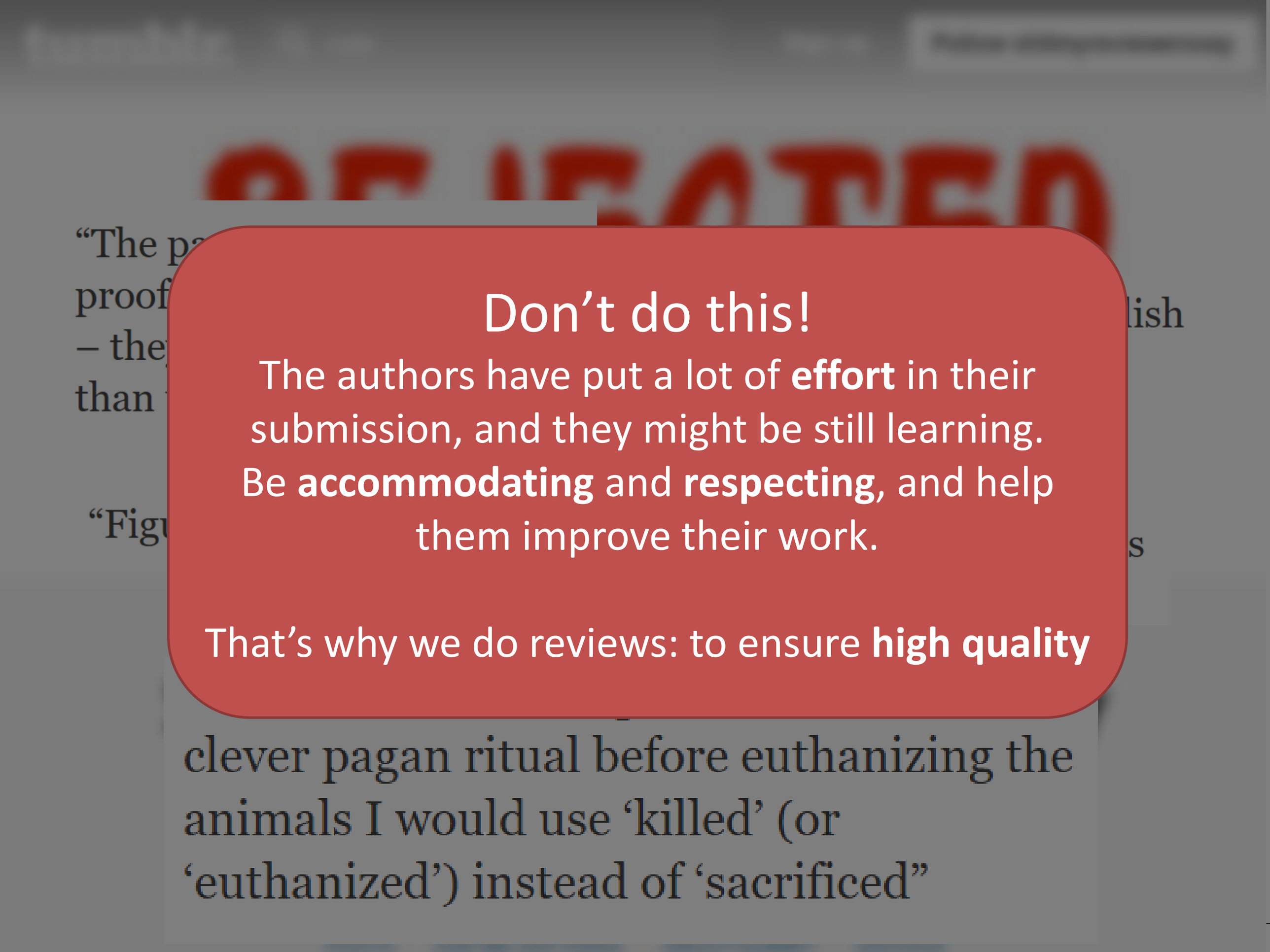
"The paper comes with proofs, but – at a first glance – they seem to be more cute than useful."

"Recommendation: Publish elsewhere
Comments: [none]"

"Figure 6. This figure is silly."

"Why chase a gene in this ridiculous organism?"

"Unless the authors performed some clever pagan ritual before euthanizing the animals I would use 'killed' (or 'euthanized') instead of 'sacrificed"




# Don't do this!

The authors have put a lot of **effort** in their submission, and they might be still learning.

Be **accommodating** and **respecting**, and help them improve their work.

That's why we do reviews: to ensure **high quality**

# Tasks of a Reviewer

- Analyse for
  - Correctness → did the authors design a valid study?
  - Originality → is this work novel? What's new in this work?
  - Significance → is this work useful? Does it have an impact?
  - Quality → is the analysis well done? Are the conclusions justified?
  - Improvements → Does it improve over what's already out there?

# When does a paper merit publication?

- A paper merits publication if there is a scientific contribution
- Examples:
  - new and significant results
  - new knowledge through synthesis of known results
  - helpful surveys and tutorials
  - combinations of these categories

- Worth to publish: small, surprising results that stimulate a new direction for future research or has interesting applications
- Not worth to publish: results with flaws in methodology, repetition of previous work without significant improvement (debatable!)

# Reviewers provide the following

- Decision in the form of a recommendation
  - accept
  - (accept with minor revision)
  - (accept with major revision)
  - reject
- Justification for the recommendation
- Ways for improvement (particularly in case of rejection)

# Typical Review Report

- Overall judgement (usually scale from 1-5)
- Summary (1-5 sentences)
- Strengths and weaknesses in:
  - Originality and significance
  - Quality (methodology, precision, errors, presentation)
- Justification for the rating

A so-called “meta reviewer” revises all reviews, and summarizes them

# Possible Verdicts (Smith, 1989)

- Major results - very significant
- Good, solid, interesting work; a definite contribution
- Minor, but positive, contribution to knowledge
- Elegant and technically correct but useless
- Neither elegant nor useful, but not actually wrong
- Wrong and misleading
- The paper is so badly written that a technical evaluation is impossible

# Some Final Issues

- Multiple submissions at different conferences is not allowed
- Plagiarism results in immediate rejection (and possibly banning)
- Anonymity  is sometimes important
- Conflict of interests: Reviewers should not review papers of people they worked with
- Reviewed papers should remain confidential

# You’re going to be a reviewer!

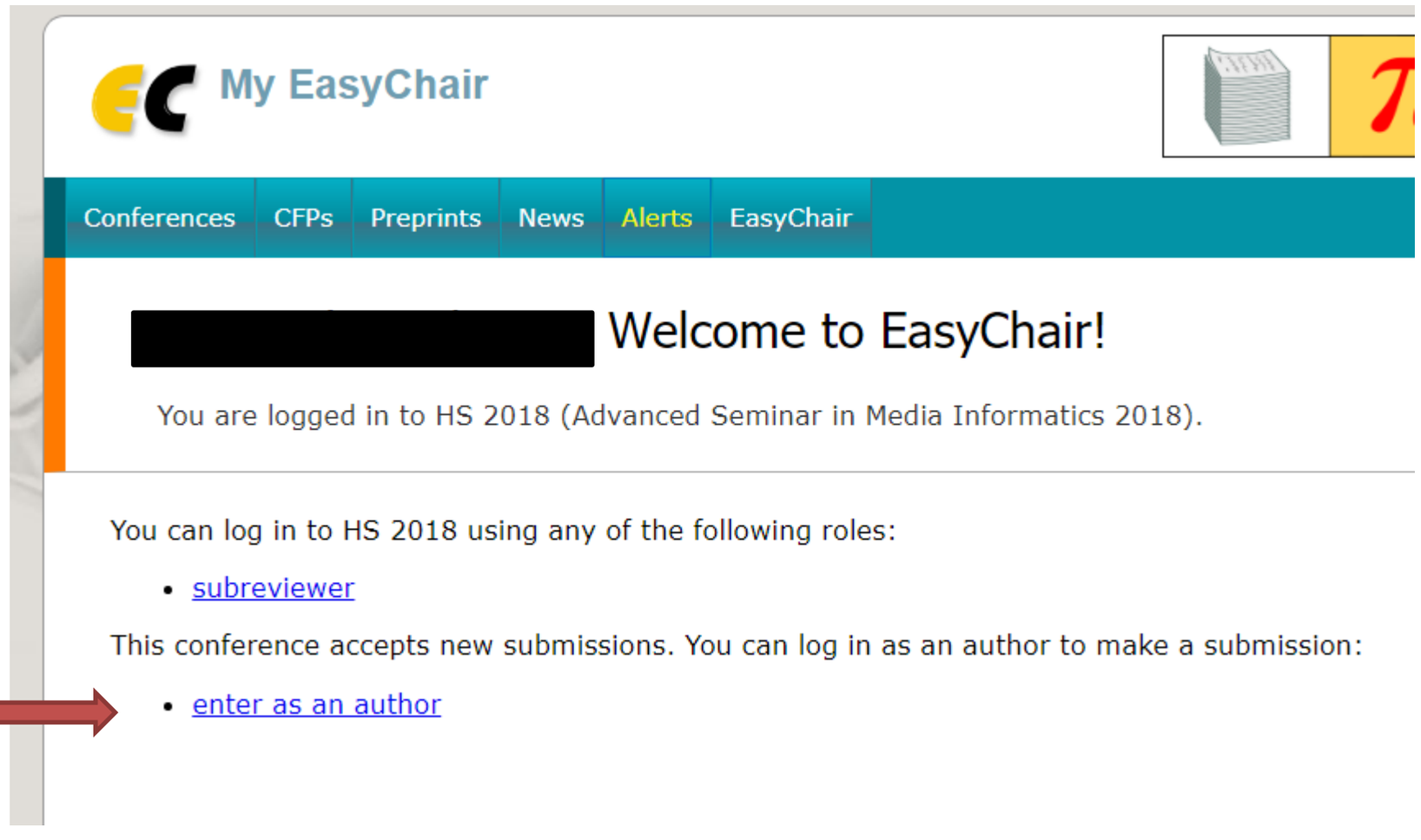
- Read the paper you are asked to review
- Write a review, guided by these slides and your own intuition on how to improve the paper you are reading
- Don’t worry! Your review won’t influence any grades! It will only help the authors improve their work.
- Be nice ☺

# Schedule

| | |
|---|---|
| 10.04.18 | Introduction and Topics |
| 8.05.18 | Submission deadline: 1. paper draft |
| 11.05.18 | Submission deadline:  one slide for  60 seconds presentation |
| 15.05.18 (s.t.!) | 60 seconds presentation / Input: How to write good reviews |
| 29.05.18 | Submission deadline: 2. paper draft (for peer-review) |
| 08.06.18 | Submission deadline: Reviews |
| 12.06.18 | Q & A & Feedback **(optional)** |
| 13.07.18 | Submission deadline: Final paper |
| 17.07.18 | Submission deadline: preliminary presentation slides |
| 17-24.07.18 | Mock presentations |
| 24.07.18 | Submission deadline: finale presentation slides |
| **30-[31].07.18** | Final presentations (to be confirmed) |

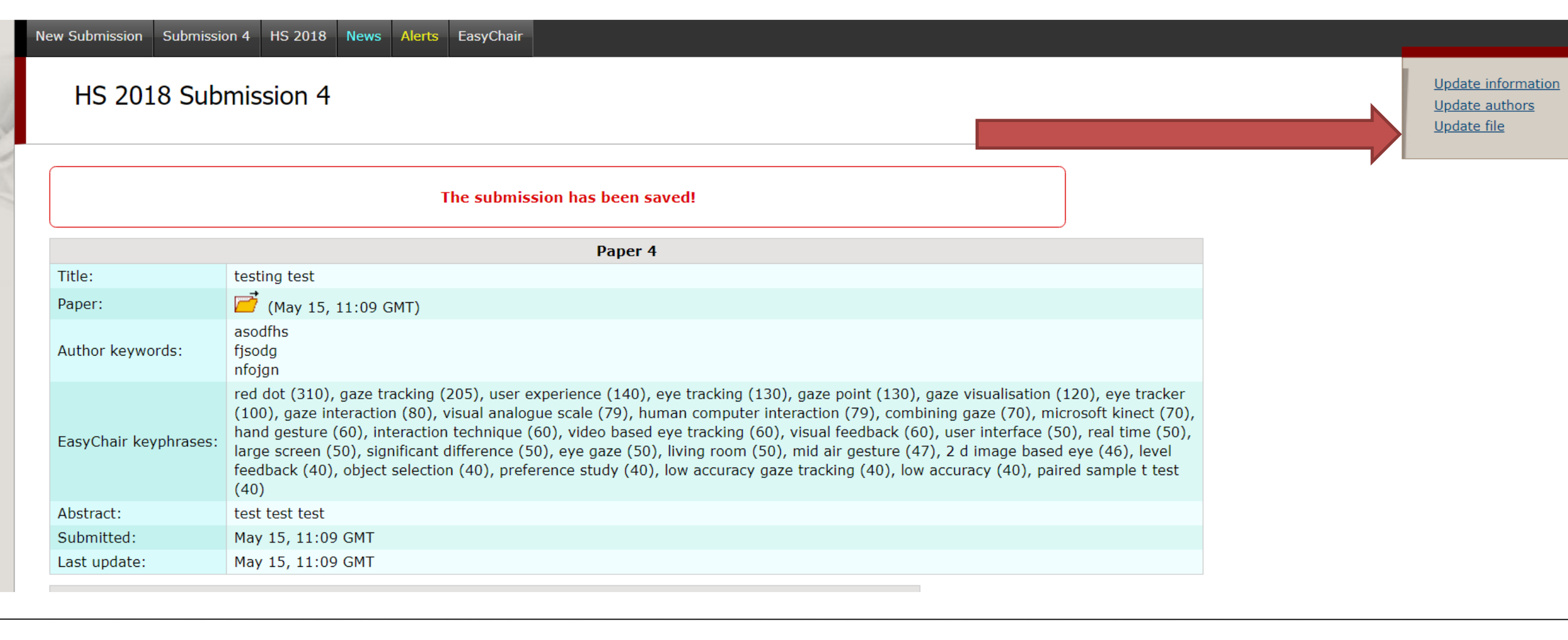
# How to submit your paper?

- Go to https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=hs2018
- Create an account
- Click on “**enter as author**”



# How to submit your paper?

- Fill in the form with your information, and upload your submission (there is only one author for your submission, and that is you)
- You can update the submission as many times as you like before the deadline



# How to submit your review?

- You will receive a “**review request**” after the paper submission deadline
- Click on the link below to access the paper you should review

**EasyChair** <noreply@easychair.org>
to Student

Dear [redacted]

I am a PC member of HS 2018. Could you please write
a review for me on the following paper submitted to HS 2018:

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Paper id: 2
Title: Testing

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The instructions on how to answer this review request
can be found at the bottom of this letter.

I need to receive the review by ...

If you cannot review this paper, could you please suggest names and
email addresses of 2-3 possible reviewers?

Best regards,
Mohamed Khamis [redacted]

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This email was sent to you by the HS 2018 PC member
Mohamed Khamis in connection with a review request.

To answer this review request please visit the Web page
https://easychair.org/conferences/revrequest_offline.cgi?code=x56ioSOE2sCAhuhi2ohD
You will have to create an EasyChair account first unless you
have one already.

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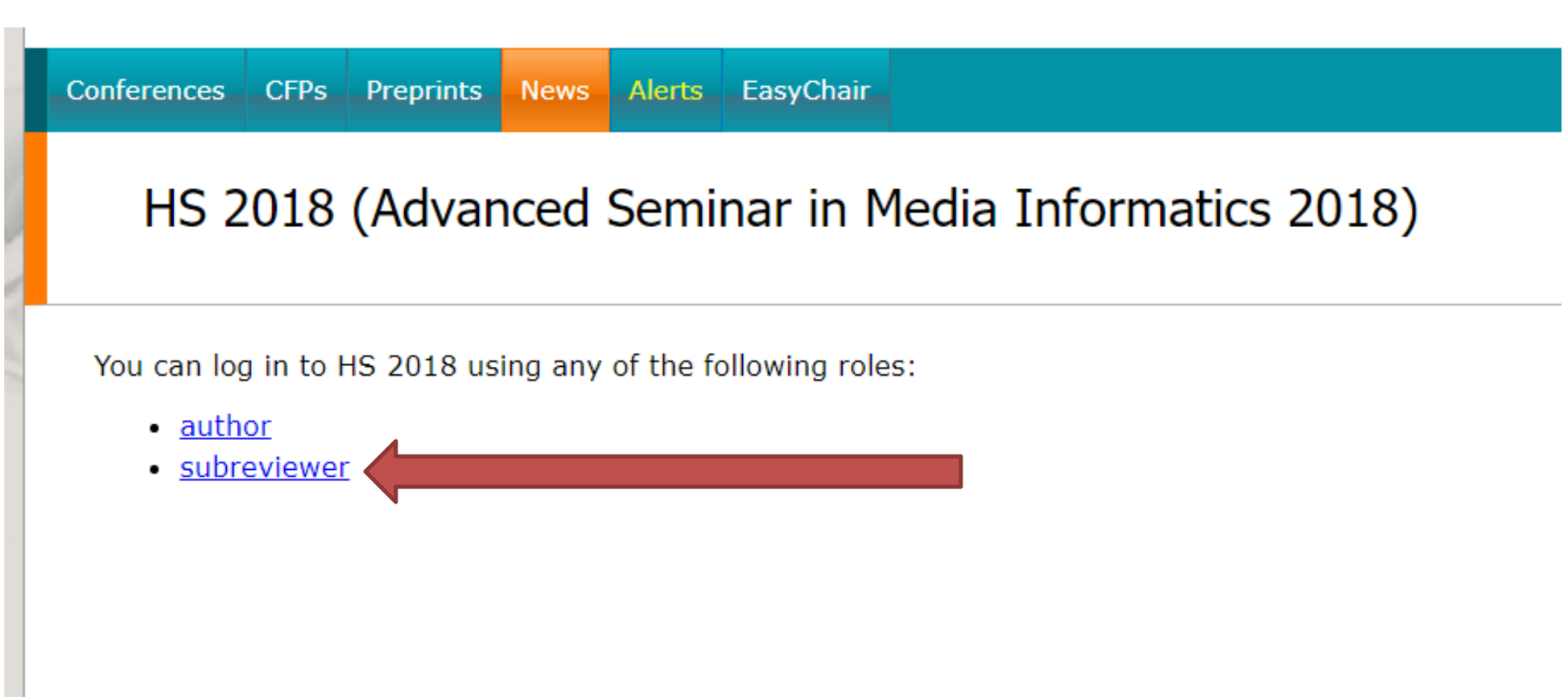
Please be aware that this is an unmonitored email alias,
so please do not reply to this email.
To contact EasyChair use the EasyChair contact Web page
https://easychair.org/contact.cgi

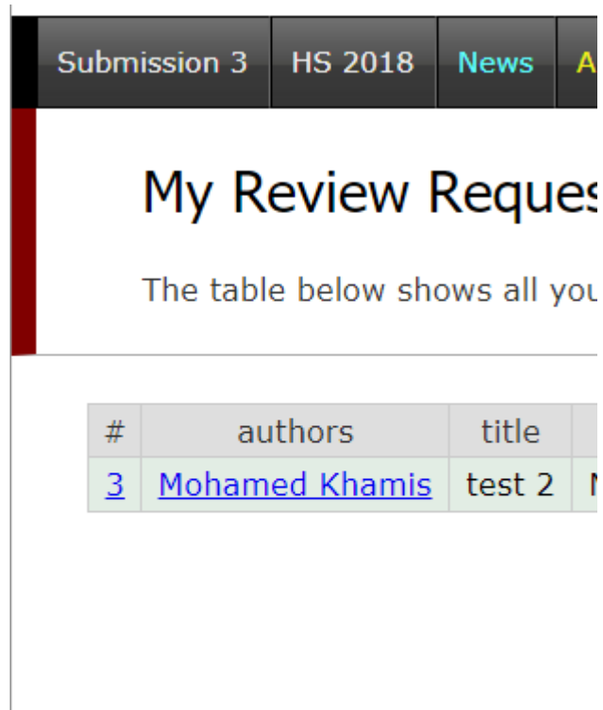
# How to submit your review?

- This time, enter as a “**subreviewer**”

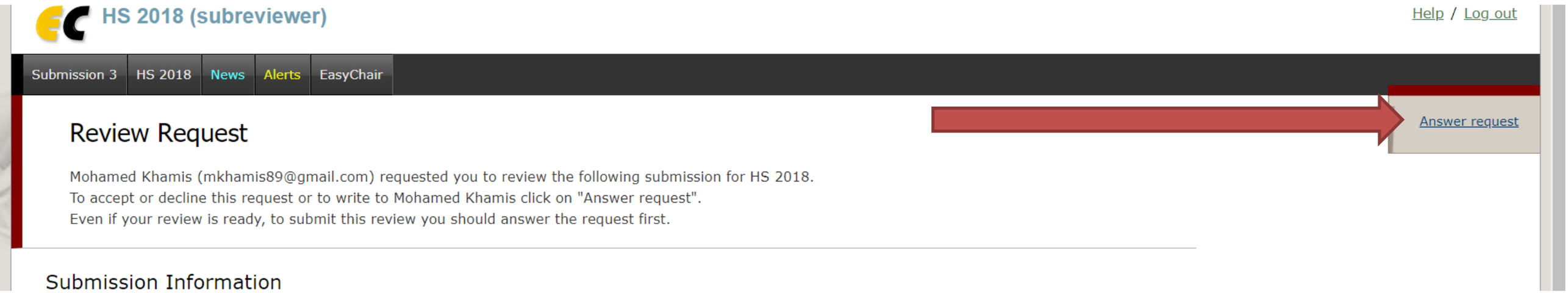


# How to submit your review?

- Click of the submission's ID (in the screenshot, it is 3)

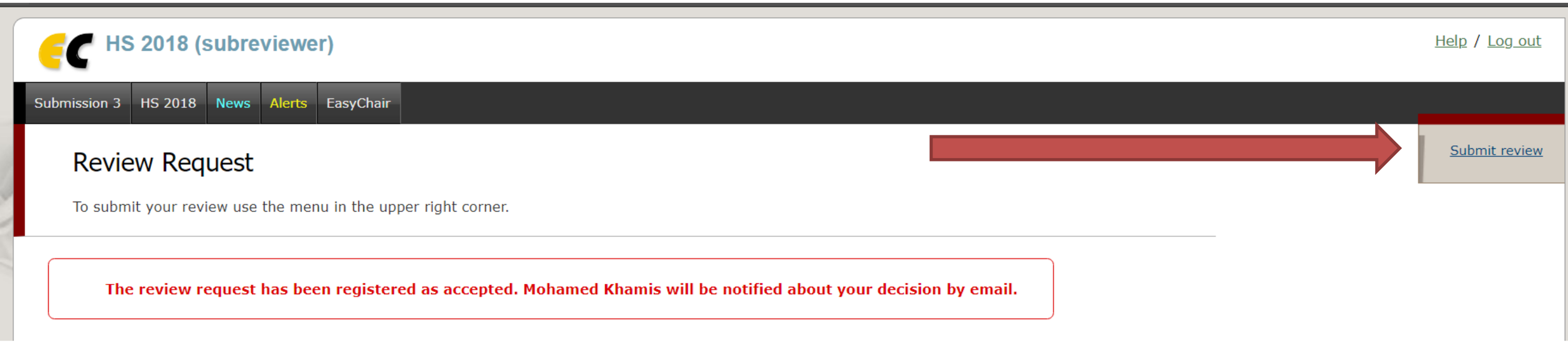



- Click on "**Answer request**"
- Then click "I agree to review this submission", and submit



# How to submit your review?

- Click on “**submit review**” then fill the form



# Recap

- Today you learned about reviewing and how to write a review
- Submit the second (complete) draft on easychair before 29.05 @ 23:59
- You will be assigned to review one of your colleague’s papers, accept the request and submit your review on easychair.org before 08.06 @ 23:59