# Getting Started with E-IR

(2016)

# Getting Started Checklist: Day 1 Essentials

1)      Click the link below to add yourself to our team mailing list:
http://madmimi.com/signups/179703/join

This list is used for important announcements - generally only around once a month or less. When/if you leave the team you should unsubscribe from the list (it's easy to do) as it is not actively monitored.

You will need to check your inbox to click a verification link. If you don't see that link, check your spam/junk folder.

2)      Check your inbox for an invitation to join E-IR's 'Slack' e-office system. If you don't see it, check your spam/junk folder. If it's not there, tell us.

Slack is used for all regular communications. For now, just check you have the email and read onwards as we explain Slack in this document from page 6-11. There, you can see how to set up your profile.

3)      Confirm to the editor that is on-boarding you that you have set up your Slack profile and confirmed your addition to the email list.

4)      Confirm that you understand our working practices, as outlined in the mutual expectations section. This is important so you know what we expect of you and what you can expect of us. This is also an opportunity to ask any questions as we're sure you will have some.

# Contents at a glance

If you think these guidelines can be improved please contact the Editor-in-Chief on Slack or via steve@e-ir.info

# E-IR 101

WELCOME

Congratulations on being appointed as a member of the E-IR Editorial team! On average only one in every four applications for our team is successful, so well done on getting this far. We are excited to add you to our ranks and we look forward to your contributions.

THE BASICS

E-International Relations (E-IR) is the world's leading open access website for students and scholars of international politics. The website was established in November 2007 and is recommended by leading academics and practitioners from around the world. We reached nearly 3 million unique readers in 2015 who read many millions of pages of our content. In addition to maintaining E-IR.info, E-International Relations publishes a range of open access books that are on sale worldwide in book stores and also available as free e-books on E-IR.info.

E-IR is owned and operated by 'E-IR Publications Ltd', a UK-registered non-profit org based in Bristol, England, that exists for the purpose of operating E-IR.info and our associated publishing operations. We are an independent publisher, unaffiliated with any institution or sponsor.

There are two ways E-IR raises funds to stay operational. Firstly, we sell advertising on the website. Secondly, we receive proceeds from print sales of our publications. As E-IR is a non-profit org every penny of income remains within the company to fund existing publishing operations, pay our bills and fund future growth and ideas.

OUR AIMS/MISSION

Our mission is best described by our two goals:

1) To be the leading open access scholarly publisher in our field, making high quality expert content free to view for all.
2) To provide the best source of freely available scholarly materials for students of International Relations.

Our open access spirit goes back to the founding of E-IR in 2007, when we felt that academia had largely misfired in the digital age. We wanted to create a middle ground between the deluge of unedited personal blogs and websites that soon appeared and the academic journals that had migrated online but were locked behind pay walls. So, E-IR created a new space that we now occupy proudly. Welcome to the vanguard!

It has taken us a while to get our approach right over the years, but essentially you could call it 'scholarship with a sense of brevity', presented in a modern way without unnecessary barriers such as excessive jargon. International relations affect everyone. So, everyone should be able to understand and access the debates that surround it. That simple message, and our ability to deliver it, makes E-IR (we hope) the best forum of its kind. The work that our volunteer team does ensures that we bring this message to each new wave of students and scholars.

What really makes us different is that we're also an active community. The Editorial team – which is truly global – volunteer hundreds of hours of their time each month, and the hundreds of academics and students around the world who support us kindly contribute their latest and best work for publication each year. Thanks to the generosity of this community, we can be really focused on what's best for our readership

# Our Operations

We appreciate that E-IR can be confusing to new volunteers. More information (as required) is given to you once you complete the onboarding process detailed on this document. As a basic introduction the operations of the website is best understood as broken down into 3 strands: **Core**, **Students**, and **Publishing**.

**1) Core**



The core of E-IR's output consists of purpose-written content split into 3 categories:

- Articles: http://www.e-ir.info/category/articles/
- Blogs: http://www.e-ir.info/category/blogs/
- Features: http://www.e-ir.info/category/features/

We commission the bulk of this material from experts, though we also accept submissions (unsolicited content sent to us) which we review for suitability. You can easily identify this expert content via the look of the page you are on, which always has the main E-IR logo at the top, as shown above.

The E-IR logo appears as a flag which is a prominent symbol in politics. But, it also has a prominent 'E' in it – visualizing a core part of our identity.

**2) Students**



An important goal of E-IR is to provide high quality resources to students. So, a section of the website is reserved just for our student audience. You can find it here: http://www.e-ir.info/students/. Through 2016 we are redesigning this page into a students portal, which will house free textbooks and a range of tailor made features and resources for students. Stay tuned for progress on this! A major part of the new students portal will be given to housing our student essays section, to continue to give students an experience of being published, see good examples of work from their peer group, and give our readers a personal link to E-IR.

You will notice the logo is different in this section. The flag remains, but is diagonally divided to resemble an 'S' (for students).

**3) Publishing**



The final strand is our publications arm. This is where we present our open access volumes via their e-books and their paperback companions. You can find it here: http://www.e-ir.info/publications/

You will notice (again) the logo is slightly different in this section. The flag remains, but is divided to resemble the pages of an open book. This reflects the change in format for material presented under this branding.

If you think these guidelines can be improved please contact the Editor-in-Chief on Slack or via steve@e-ir.info

# The Team

Volunteering with E-IR is not your typical 'work experience'. First, we have no office – everything is decentralized and we use a range of virtual tools to organize and coordinate our activities (including Slack, Google Docs, Skype and the odd email – all details will be given to you later). Second, editors are empowered to set their own agendas and develop their own projects. This ranges from pursuing personal interests to commission and edit content for the website, to having an idea for a new section and then working with the team to plan, test and build it. The result is that the more E-IR volunteers give of themselves, the more they take away from the experience. It's a place where people with a bit of initiative and drive really thrive. Yes, we need you to do the essential tasks that your role involves – but we also hope that as you do so you come up with ways we can improve things and share ideas for expansion and growth.

Once you complete your onboarding process and are all set up, you will be placed within the team you have asked to work with, and be given a direct line of contact to a senior team member. So, when possible use that point of contact when you need help. Hopefully this will give you an anchor as you get used to things, as we do understand entering an organization as dense and exciting as E-IR can also be daunting.

Every editor who contributes their time to E-IR is a volunteer, including E-IR's Directors and Editor-in-Chief. E-IR has *no* paid staff members. We all have studies and/or full-time jobs outside of the work we do here. Regardless, you can expect that senior editors will be helpful and timely in their correspondence with you.

There are approximately 100 editors contributing to E-IR. Most of our team members are students or academics. Our size presents unique challenges due to the fact that we all work remotely. To manage an operation of this size (without it resembling chaos!) we operate in smaller teams. Each team has a clear remit, contributing something distinctive to E-IR, and is led by a designated senior editor. The entire operation is overseen by the Editor-in-Chief and E-IR's Editorial Board who make sure everything is well resourced and keeps to the standards we set for ourselves. All editors who lead teams are present at the Editorial Board, making sure all concerns and experiences are fed upwards.

The editorial structure is as pointed out on our 'about' page which you may already have seen: http://www.e-ir.info/about. Once you are settled with us, we will list your name there.

- THE EDITORIAL BOARD (a committee of senior team members led by E-IR's Directors)
- THE ARTICLES TEAM   (who edit and publish all the articles on the website)
- THE COMMISSIONING TEAM   (who solicit and edit content from experts for the website)
- THE STUDENTS TEAM  (who select the best essays & dissertations we receive to publish)
- THE FEATURES TEAM   (who publish and commission reviews, interviews and other features)
- THE BLOGS TEAM  (academics and E-IR editors who curate our blogs)
- EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS (a team who assist with various projects across the website)

If there's anything on your mind, or an issue you need help with that falls outside of the usual contact points you are given, you are welcome to email the Editor-in-Chief: steve@e-ir.info though please try to contact your team leader first as it is often quicker and more effective.

CAN I WRITE FOR E-IR AS WELL AS BE AN EDITOR?

Yes, in principle. Each section of E-IR (see previous page) has clear expertise and benchmark requirements for content. We hold the same quality standards for our team members as we do for external authors. Read the Submit Content page carefully as it has all the guidelines/expectations/criteria: http://www.e-ir.info/write/

If you are submitting content do so via the official process outlined and leave a brief note (there is always a notes field/option) that you are an editor. Never send content directly to an editor, they will have to decline it.

If you think these guidelines can be improved please contact the Editor-in-Chief on Slack or via steve@e-ir.info

# Mutual Expectations

Volunteering with E-IR is, obviously, voluntary. However, if you do accept a position with us you should understand and accept our operational ethics/practices which we see as a set of basic mutual expectations between you, the rest of the team, and E-IR as an entity. Although we are all volunteers, we regard these mutual expectations as core to the successful operation of E-IR.

- Good communication is the bedrock of working as part of our team. You should expect to see it from us, and we expect to see it from you. Members of our team should always be respectful, appreciative and polite in their dealings with you. You should do the same in reverse. In general terms this means responding appropriately to emails and direct messages within a day or two.

- In addition to staying on top of private conversations, you should and stay apprised of important messages by reading them carefully and raising any questions if needed. Generally these are from senior team members and marked out on Slack (see the section of this document referring to 'Slack' for more info) by the broadcast sign **@channel** - depending on the location the message is posted - and more rarely **@everyone** for the most important announcements. If we don't see any replies we assume you have read and understood these. We will keep them to a minimum.

- When you interact with persons outside of the E-IR team (authors, publishers etc.) you do so as a representative of E-IR. So, you should be very careful to not act in a way that might damage E-IR's reputation which has been painstakingly cultivated by many volunteers past and present. We will never try to determine how you behave – we just want you to use your common sense.

- You will have applied for, and been accepted onto, a particular role. The basic expectations (of you) in that role are always expressed clearly on our 'Join the Team' page and reiterated on the recruitment correspondence you will already have had. These are the basics that you agree to and we expect that you will honour the spirit of those commitments. If you want a new challenge, we always encourage team members to expand their horizons. So if you are unfulfilled in the role you are in, please let the Editor-in-Chief know and we can find you a suitable position elsewhere on the team.

- The most valuable thing we all contribute is our time, so it is vital that you stay visible. If not, it creates work for others who may have to spend their valuable time (also volunteered, remember) chasing you up or picking up after you. So if things are getting a bit too much for you and you need help, or need to drop back, just tell someone and we can get ahead of things. The worst thing you can do is vanish. It's bad for everyone. It's always better to let us try to get on top of an issue than to let it burden you.

- If at any time you feel you are unable to contribute, we understand. These things happen. All it takes is a brief message to your team leader or a Managing Editor to explain the situation. Whatever the situation, we will make it work out however works best for you. There will never be any bad feelings regardless of what happens, so never be afraid to approach us if a situation like this arises.

- Any team member who we cannot see any activity from for more than a month will be assumed to have departed and we will remove them from our team and all editorial platforms / contact lists. We will try to chase such cases up before we take these steps - but note again that as we are all volunteers we do not always have time to do so (we wish we did!). Hopefully this will not happen – and it shouldn't if you stay engaged and/or tell us in advance of any sabbatical/holiday that you need, or of any problems you are facing. Remember how highly we value good communication… If you find yourself deactivated and you think this is in error, email the Editor-in-chief and we can get that sorted, no problem.

- If you have any problems with anything or anyone, you are encouraged and welcome to contact the Editor-in-Chief, Stephen McGlinchey: steve@e-ir.info

If you think these guidelines can be improved please contact the Editor-in-Chief on Slack or via steve@e-ir.info

# How We Work

Each team has their own way of working, tailor-made to reflect the tasks and operations they undertake. For any team that you are a member of you will be introduced to this once you get past the basic ways we all work and interact together, which we do via a tool called 'Slack'. As we do not have an office, think of Slack as our e-office. We understand picking up something new can be daunting, but hopefully you will find Slack intuitive and easy to use after you get used to it. We chose it for use with E-IR after extensive testing because it is the best tool of its kind and, due to how we use it, there is no escaping it when working with us!

WHAT IS SLACK?

Slack is an online collaboration platform designed for virtual teams. It's a bit like a private social network, with additional features including instant messaging. It also provides the basic information (via a profile) about each team member so editors can easily find someone if they need to email, phone, or Skype them.

Our team Slack account is here: https://e-ir.slack.com

Slack works from any web browser by loading up the address above. However, you are strongly encouraged to use the desktop application (mac and windows) and/or the smartphone app which you can get from the usual app stores for Android or iPhone. Lots more info is found on Slack's main website: https://slack.com/

WHY IS E-IR USING SLACK?

With around 100 volunteer editors based in over 25 countries working across seven teams, we need a platform that enables easy collaboration and connection between team members - regardless of their role. Slack enables this. We have invested a lot of time and effort tailoring it for our team - so we hope and expect that you will log in and check the platform regularly. We count regularly as at least three times a week. Anything less and you will fall behind. If you don't login for more than 4 weeks, your account may be deactivated automatically for security reasons meaning you lose access, so please don't let that happen.

HOW IS E-IR USING SLACK?

**1) Public Channels**

Channels enable conversations around topic areas to occur in a space that is visible to the whole team. You can join or leave a channel depending on your interests. By default, all E-IR team members will be joined to just the **#general-chat** public channel.

There are also other public channels that you can join if you have an interest in them (or if membership of a team requires it – if so we will let you know). You can see the range of channels by clicking on 'channels' at the top left of the sidebar on Slack. Each channel has its own purpose which you can see in its description.

**2) Notifications and 'Highlight Words'**

Slack has an extremely powerful notifications system. Here's what you need to know:

- Once activated, notifications display as a pop-up within your web browser and, if you have the slack desktop/mobile app, as a notification. You can also opt to receive notifications via email.
- You can customise the notifications you see from each channel and group you are in.
- You can set 'highlight words'. When these words are used by other team members, you will receive a notification. For example, perhaps you're doing your Masters/PhD thesis on Afghanistan. By

setting 'Afghanistan' as a 'highlight word', you will receive a notification whenever it is mentioned by another team member, enabling you to check what they're planning and collaborate if you wish to.

## 3) Private Channels

Private groups are visible only to the team members who have been invited to this group. We use these to coordinate various activities that smaller teams are working on and they act as private forums for those teams. 'Highlight words' only apply to groups that you are a member of (i.e. you won't be notified if someone mentions your highlight words in a private context).

## 4) Direct Messages

A direct message is a private, one-to-one, conversation between two team members. Direct messages are not visible to anyone except the two team members in the conversation. You can use the DM function as an instant chat function if you like. Especially handy if you have the smartphone version of Slack installed. You can also do group chats with up to 8 others – a great way to collaborate:
http://slackhq.com/post/131956541795/groupmessages

## 5) Directory

A listing of all team members, including their photo and role within E-IR, their email address, time zone, and optional contact information (Skype and phone – only add these if you want to). You can direct message any team member though if it is an important message it is best to email them as best practice – especially if you are contacting a member of the senior Editorial team.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO GET STARTED?

- You will receive an emailed invite "to join E-International Relations on Slack". Click on the link within the email to activate your account. Be sure to check your spam/junk folder if you don't see it.

- A new page will open in your web browser (see Figure 1). Please use the following format for your username: **firstname.lastname**. Create a strong password and click the 'create account' button.

*Figure 1: Account set-up screen, which appears after you click the activation link in your email.*



- Please complete your **profile** by adding these components (all are required):
  - ✓ your full name
  - ✓ your E-IR position under the 'What I Do' field (e.g. 'Commissioning Editor' / 'Associate Articles Editor' / Associate Students Editor / Editorial Assistant etc.)

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✓ a clear photo of yourself - we all like to see a friendly face :)
✓ and any other contact details that you wish to share (at the minimum an email address).

- See Figure 2 below for where you can locate how to access your profile and account (the arrow on the top left) of the menu bar. This will help other team members in their communications with you. Do *not* write a private or professional role like 'PhD student', or 'Policy Adviser'. Your 'What I Do' role should let the other team members know what you do on E-IR only.

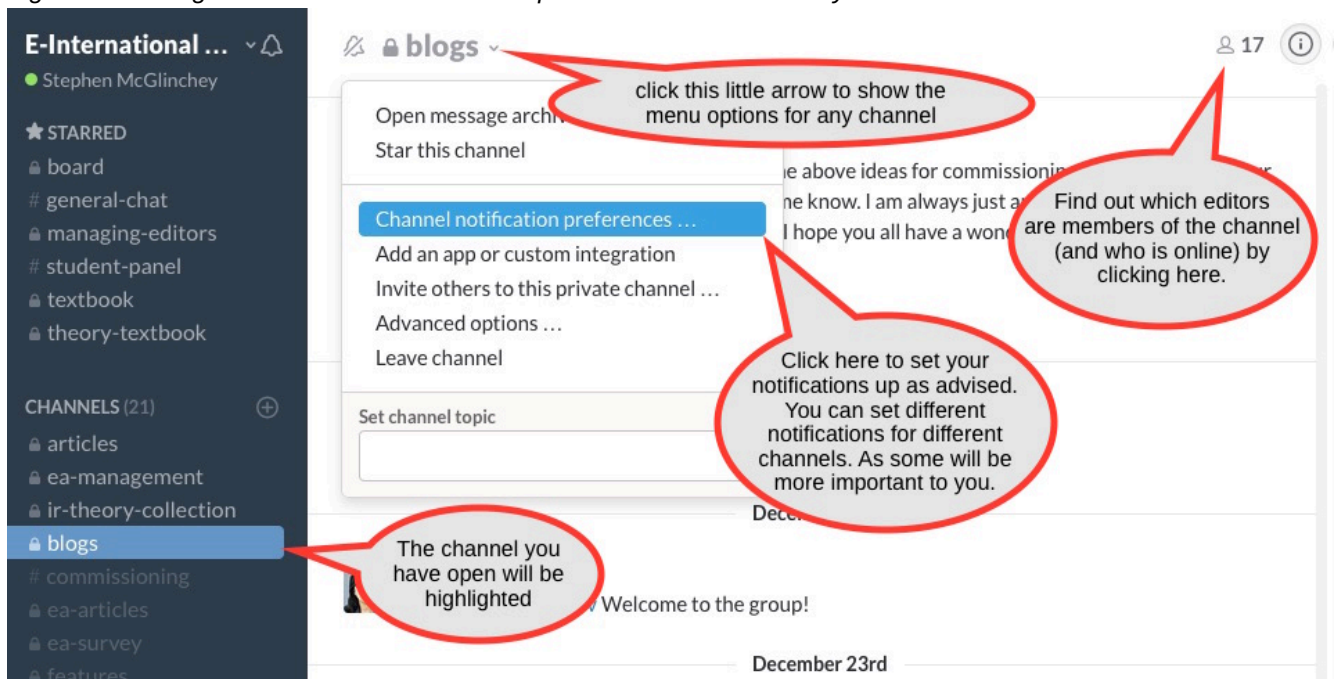*Figure 2: Where to find your profile and account settings*
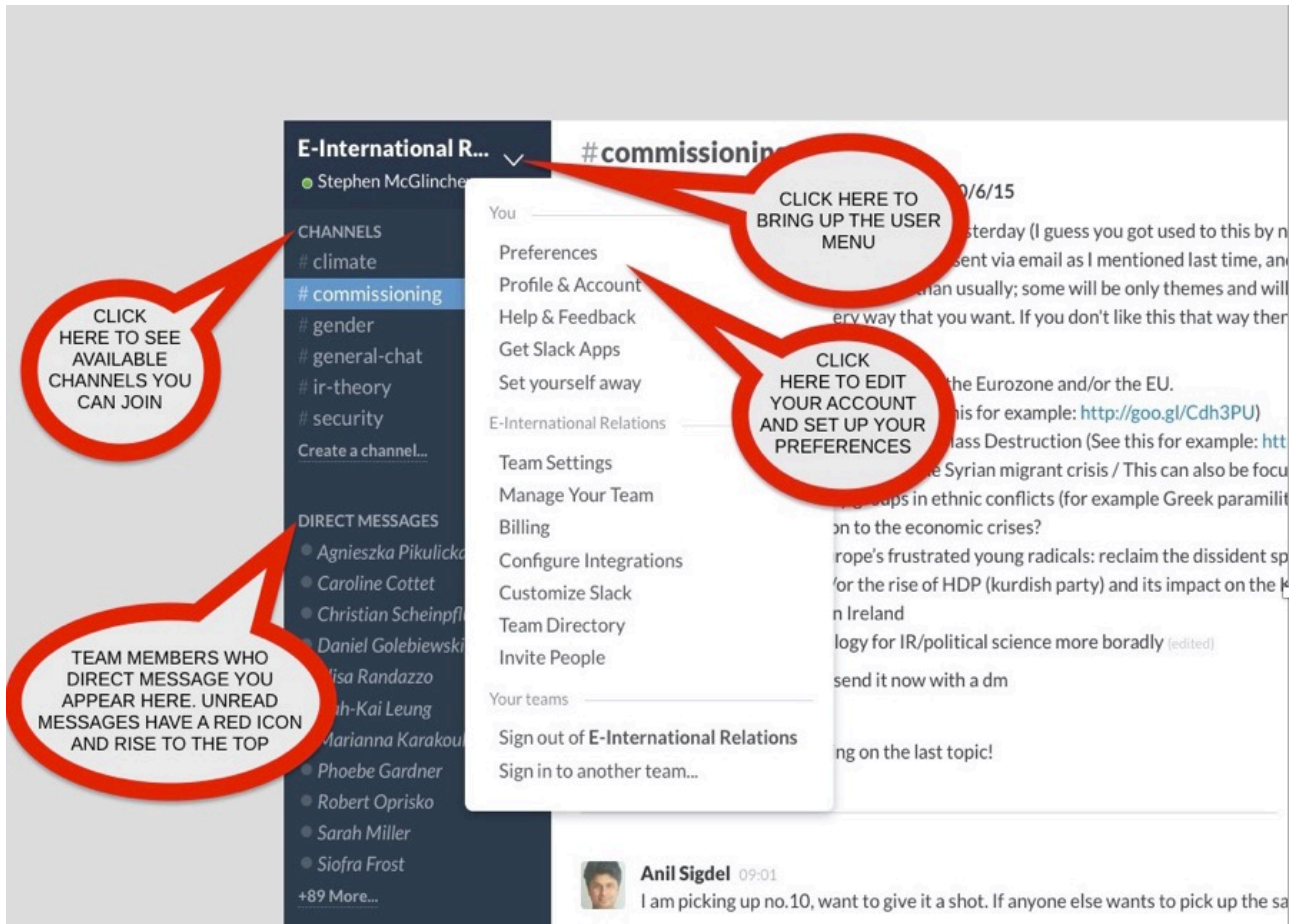


- Click on '**preferences'** (see where in figure 2 above). And, set up your notifications as advised in figure 3 below to notify you '**Only for Highlight Words and direct messages'**. If you don't set up your notifications properly, you will miss the entire point of how Slack works and you will either receive too many, or too few notifications. So, please set this exactly as shown. For everything else in preferences, set it up however you like and feel free customising Slack to your own preferences.

- Still under the notifications menu, in the box for **highlight words**, enter any specific words or phrases for which you wish to receive notifications (e.g. Afghanistan, feminism, just war) using commas to separate each word or phrase. You can see in the example in figure 3 that notifications are set for 'Iran' and 'Steve' (the user's name). This is a basic starting point and you can add as many as you like.

*Figure 3: Menu allowing you to set your notifications and adjust your personal preferences*
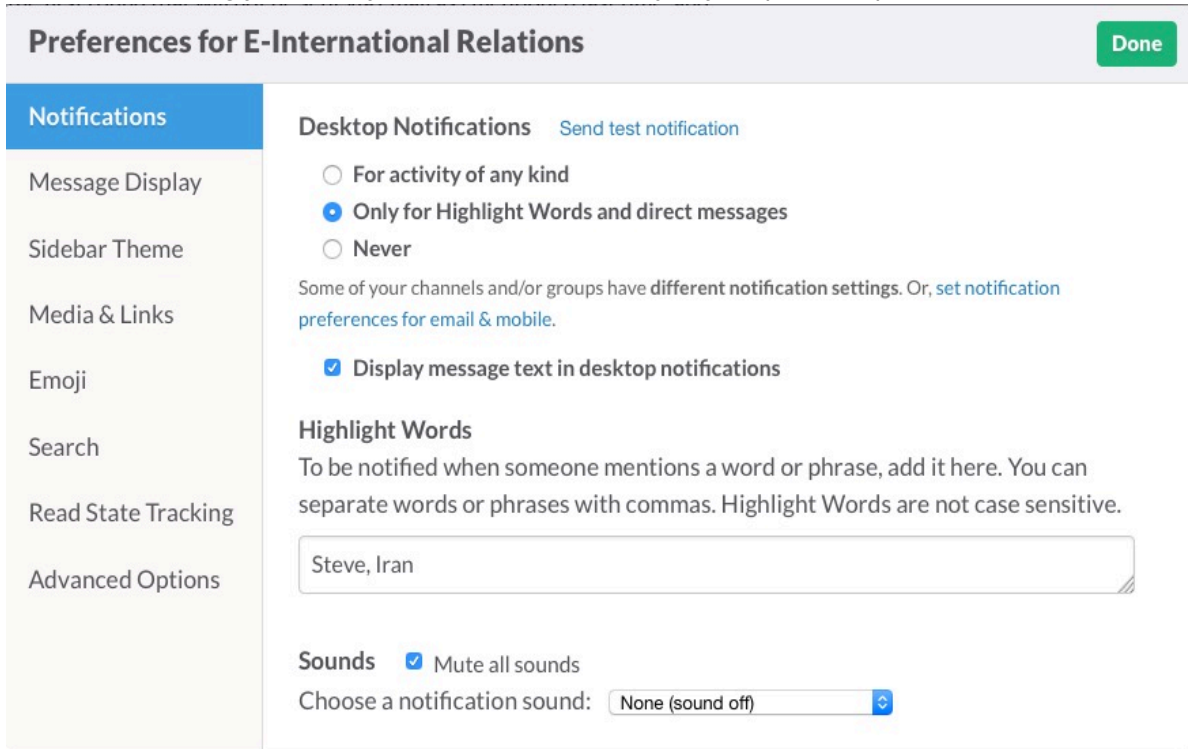


- Many private channels exist to help smaller teams organise their work efficiently. If you are made a member of one of these channels, it is advisable to customise your settings to receive notifications 'for all activity' (as it will all be relevant). If you are keen to follow general team discussions about E-IR very closely, you might decide to do the same for the **#general-chat** channel. To customise notifications for any channel, open it and then click its name at the top of the screen (see Figure 4 below). From the menu that appears select 'group notification preferences' and adjust accordingly.

*Figure 4: clicking on the name of a channel opens a menu that allows you to customise notifications*



If you think these guidelines can be improved please contact the Editor-in-Chief on Slack or via steve@e-ir.info

**CHECKLIST**: HAVE YOU GOT SLACK SET-UP CORRECTLY?

| 6 things … | Check it (and if necessary, do it!) |
|---|---|
| 1. Do you have a personal photo? | see figure 5 below |
| 2. Have you completed your personal profile? | see figure 5 below |
| 3. Have you set your notifications to 'only direct messages and highlight words'? | see figure 5 below |
| 4. Have you customised your notifications for private channels you are particularly involved in? | Read back carefully above |
| 5. You will certainly have questions! Spend some time looking around slack to see what makes sense, and what does not. | Direct message (Slack) the editor wo is on boarding you with your questions. They expect and welcome these, so never be afraid to ask! |
| 6. Please drop a short message introducing yourself to the team on the general-chat channel. | Go for it! We want you to feel part of the team and it's great to see a new face. |

*Figure 5: How to update/fix issues with your account*
*Click here for the direct link: https://e-ir.slack.com/account/settings*
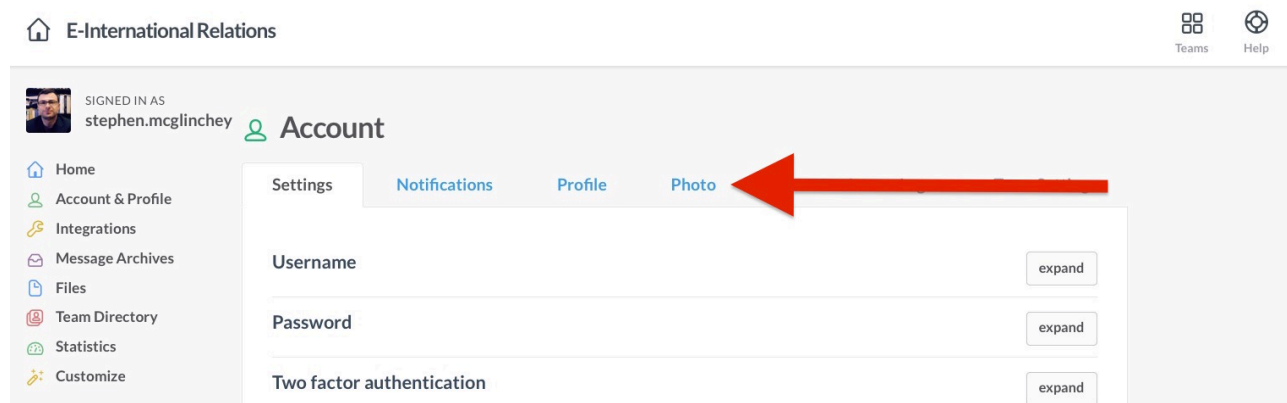


- You will also see on the 'Notifications' options via Figure 5 and the link above you can also access advanced options and (if you want) have Slack email you your notifications in addition to them appearing on Slack itself. Use this with caution. Some like it, some hate it! There are also other advanced options for the app versions of Slack if you are using those. Again, proceed with caution and when in doubt, refer to this manual for the basic setup for your notifications.

HOW MIGHT SLACK BENEFIT ME? SOME EXAMPLES

- If you think there might be a case for creating a new channel to house discussions of a particular topic, make a post in the **#general-chat** channel and ask if others are interested. If there is a small group of you that is keen, we can create a channel and alert those others to join it.

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- You're doing some research, or fieldwork, and think other E-IR team members might be able to offer some advice. Post your questions in the **#general-chat** channel.

- **@mention** any editor on a channel if you need to draw their attention. The general practice on Slack to respond/reference a person is much like facebook in that you type the '@' key then start typing their name. Better still, you can message someone directly, keeping that conversation private.

- You've noticed that someone is working on a topic that is of interest to you. You don't have time to collaborate right now, but would like to remember who it is, so you can follow up with them later. Click the 'star' icon that appears alongside their name - and then open your 'starred items' in the Flexipane to retrieve it at a later date.

- You can use the **@group** and **@channel** commands for the same purposes within the other groups / channels – though again use with appropriate care so you don't bug everyone and if you could get a result quicker and better by DM-ing or emailing your team leader or the appropriate person as noted on your team manual – then do that instead.

- Slack is a vibrant and ever-developing platform, and we can't always list the new features and changes it builds. Keep up to date with the new features by bookmarking their blog: http://slackhq.com/

PUTTING SLACK INTO CONTEXT

- We use the free tier of Slack, so don't expect anything there to be archived forever as we have a storage and bandwidth limit. Generally, Slack stores the latest 6 weeks of messages, then deletes the oldest ones. So, if you have important messages or documents that you would like to retain you should preference email communication and/or archive material on a cloud drive or your computer.

- Slack is best used for disposable short term communication and for our various check-ins that our team members all do in one fashion or another. Disposable, but important. **Don't forget to log in regularly!!** Remember we regard that as a few times a week.

FINALLY

- Please be patient as you get used to using Slack. If you ever need help, just email, or direct message (on Slack) your team leader or the Editor who is on-boarding you.

- It is normal to feel a bit disoriented at first with Slack… but spend a bit of time finding your feet and asking as many questions as you need to before you move on to your editorial role. We would not expect everyone to *love* using Slack, but we also would not expect that it is so awful that anyone would *hate* it either. It really is the best tool of it's kind (trust us we have experimented!!) and if/when a better tool arises we will move to that if possible. So hopefully now you can see how integral Slack is and at least be tolerable of it so that we can all maximise our time and effort when working on E-IR projects.

If you think these guidelines can be improved please contact the Editor-in-Chief on Slack or via steve@e-ir.info

# Editorial Structure

It helps to know where you fit, and more importantly where you can advance to. No position is closed-ended. So, here's how it works. Remember, *all* these roles are voluntary – no one takes payment for any editorial role on E-IR. All those currently at the right side of the box below started on the left, and they now run the website! So, we hope that you will take the opportunity and invest in E-IR to gain the rewards it can bring for yourself, and us. As, we need senior editors and board members more than ever as our operations deepen!

Generally, we expect team members to have 6 months of experience before they seek a more senior role, as those roles often come with duties that require mentorship of newer editors, or tasks that require deeper knowledge of our working practices. If you are happy doing what you are doing, then there is no pressure for you to move up/onward but if you do want to take on more responsibilities, we recommend that after 6 months you speak to your team leader or a Managing Editor about it. They are always happy to discuss and clarify what each prospective new role involves so you can choose wisely.

Outside of that process (you asking us to move up/on, which we recommend!) we will advertise vacant senior positions as they arise on Slack in the **#general-chat** channel and via email announcement. So, keep your eyes open as those positions are usually given to the editors who meet the criteria, and, respond early.

| Start > | 6-12 months > | 12-18 months > | By appointment > | By appointment. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Commissioning Editor | Senior Commissioning Editor | Editor-at-large | | |
| | Associate / Deputy Articles Editor | Articles Editor* | | |
| Associate Students Editor | Deputy Students Editor | Students Editor* | | |
| Associate Features Editor | Deputy Features Editor | Features Editor* | | |
| Associate Blogs Editor | Deputy Blogs Editor | Blogs Editor* | | |
| | Social Media Editor | | | |
| Editorial Assistant | After 6 months you can join one of the teams above at the start position. | | | |
| | | | Member of Editorial Board | Director of Editorial Board |
| | | Deputy Managing Editor | Managing Editor* | Editor-in-Chief* |

*\* These roles are only available when vacant. All others are always open to advancement.*

Editors are welcome to experience working another team. So if you are not fulfilled in one team and would rather move vertically rather than horizontally to another role listed on the table above, tell your team leader or a Managing Editor and they will make it happen and explain what the available roles expect of you.

We want to keep everyone motivated and fulfilled and allow people to rise up the ranks – but we do also need to consider the realities of what people are (or have displayed that they are) capable of achieving. We rarely say no to advancement as we always reward and value initiative and editors taking ownership by expressing a desire to do more, but if we do say no we will explain why in a transparent and respectful way.

**Once you are confident about how we work (chiefly via Slack), and understand and accept the mutual expectations between you and E-IR, you are welcome to contact the editor who is on-boarding you to get further information about how things work in the team you are going to be working in. Please only proceed to this point when you have read (and understood) everything in this document and/or asked any questions you need to.**

If you think these guidelines can be improved please contact the Editor-in-Chief on Slack or via steve@e-ir.info