News notes

NewsNotesarecompiledbyJohn Hilton (hilton.john@gmail.com)

Some of these items are taken from the EASE Journal Blog (http://esebookshelf.blogspot. com) where full URLs may be found

Springer/Macmillan merger
Macmillan Science and Education, which includes Nature Publishing Group (NPG), has agreed a merger with Springer Science+Business Media. Macmillan's owners, Georg von Holtzbrinck Publishing Group, will retain 53% of the new company, with the remainder held by BC Partners, a private equity group that bought Springer in 2013. Springer's CEO, Derk Haank, will head the new company, which will include *Nature*, *Scientific American,* Palgrave Macmillan books, Macmillan Education textbooks, and Adis drug information services, alongside a wide range of NPG, Springer, SpringerOpen, and BioMedCentral journals. Other Macmillan companies, such as Digital Science, will stay with Holtzbrinck.

NIH reproducibility guidelines
Following a consensus workshop with editors of 30 leading journals, the US National Institute of Health (NIH) has published Principles and Guidelines for Reporting Preclinical Research (www.nih.gov/about/ reporting-preclinical-research.htm), now endorsed by many journals. The guidelines are explored in more detail in an editorial published in *Nature* (2014;515;7) and *Science* (2014;346:679) and cover five areas: (1) ensuring rigorous statistical analysis; (2) transparent reporting; (3) data and material sharing; (4) consideration of refutations; (5) establishing best practice guidelines. As one commentator noted: "Science isn't science if it isn't reproducible" (*American Journal of Pathology* 2015;1:2).

Open annotations
The Helmsley Trust's Biomedical Research Infrastructure program (see helmsleytrust.org/our-programs) "strives to remove roadblocks to research collaboration where possible through the creation and adoption of open technologies". In its first round of funding, a $2.1 million grant has gone to Hypothes. is (hypothes.is), the Neuroscience Information Framework (neuinfo. org) and ORCID (orcid.org) with the aim of developing open annotations. Annotations are a new standard for digital 'notes' applied on top of an existing webpage. They are one type of 'micropublication', enabling a more granular and rapid approach to research communication, and potentially linked to individuals via ORCID profiles.

European research funding
The European Commission is proposing to divert €2.7 billion from the Horizon 2020 research programme (ec.europa.eu/programmes/ horizon2020) into a fund to support economic stimulus. The European Parliament is expected to approve the legislation, despite opposition from research and education organisations, enabling the stimulus package to operate from 2014 to 2020.

Authorship framework for clinical trials
The findings of an authorship research project led by the Medical Publishing Insights and Practices (MPIP; www.mpip-initiative.org) have been published (*BMC Medicine* 2014;12:197). The project looked at ways to improve and standardise the transparency of authorship disclosure in publications of industry-sponsored clinical trials, and involved clinical investigators, editors and medical writers, and industry representatives. The result was a five-step authorship framework: (1) establish an authorship working group early in the trial; (2) determine substantial contribution criteria; (3) document trial contributions; (4) determine those making a substantial contribution; (5) ensure authors meet remaining authorship criteria.

More peer review manipulation
In November 2014, BioMedCentral discovered that about 50 manuscripts in their editorial system were linked to fake peer reviewers. An alert in-house editor spotted some suspicious names and email addresses, leading to the discovery of an organised attempt to subvert the peer review system, apparently mediated by a third-party agencies. Only five of the papers had been published, but this is the latest in a series of such incidences. The Retraction Watch team (retractionwatch.com) has calculated that more than 100 papers from various publishers have been affected by fake peer review. Writing in *Nature* (26 November 2014), they discuss the challenges facing editors and the exploitation of flaws in editorial processes and manuscript submission systems. In December 2014 the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE; publicationethics.org) issued a statement (tinyurl.com/ease-news31), announcing that is working with publishing organisations and national bodies address the situation and seeking input from interested groups.

101 Innovations
A poster presented at the recent FORCE2015 conference (www. force11.org/meetings/force2015) proved very popular with its elegant exploration of innovation in the scientific research workflow. The poster (available on figshare.com) and its accompanying interactive website (innoscholcomm.silk.co) are the work of Jeroen Bosman and Bianca Kramer at Utrecht University Library, Netherlands. They looked at 101 innovations across six phases of the research workflow (data collection, analysis, writing, publishing, outreach and assessment) and compared traditional, innovative and experimental approaches.

New Elsevier megajournal

Elsevier has announced its intention to launch a general science open-access 'mega-journal', following a similar model to *PLOS One*, *Scientific Reports*, *SpringerPlus*, and others. Elsevier is developing a publishing platform for the journal and plans to integrate its other technologies to improve search and discovery. You can read more on Elsevier Connect (elsevier.com/connect; 8 January 2015).

DOI Chronograph

CrossRef has been developing a service to gather information about how DOIs are used on the open web over time and has launched the DOI Chronograph (chronograph.labs.crossref.org) to display the data. The project is in development, but you can use it to track referring domains and numbers of resolutions for DOIs of interest over time.

FORCE2015 1K Challenge

At the recent FORCE2015 conference, held in Oxford, UK (www.force11.org/force2015), the organisers asked participants: 'What would you do with £1000 today to make research communication better?' The 2015 '1K Challenge' is inviting proposals, which will be voted on by FORCE11 members: www.force11.org/force2015/1k-challenge-vote.

CHORUS update

CHORUS (Clearinghouse for the Open Research of the United States), the publisher-led response to mandated public access to research, has announced that IEEE and IOP Publishing have joined the organisation, and that it will be working to explore connections with data repositories and collaborate with data initiatives. You can find out more at chorusaccess.org.

Academic Karma

A new peer review management system, called Academic Karma (academickarma.org), has been by a scientist and a software engineer from Brisbane, Australia. Every paper you peer review earns 50 karma. Every time you have a paper peer-reviewed, the authors of the paper collectively spend 50 karma per reviewer. The system should also help editors with the ever-present challenge of locating efficient peer reviewers.

Support for retraction database

The MacArthur Foundation (macfound.org) is supporting the development of the first comprehensive database of retractions. The database will be developed by the Retraction Watch team (retractionwatch.com), supported by a grant of £400,000 over two years.

arXiv: milestones and mining

After more than two decades of publishing preprints, *arXiv* (arxiv.org) has now reached one million papers. In 2014 there were about 100,000 new submissions and 80 million downloads. The success has led to developers adding an extra digit to identifiers so that the repository can handle more submissions. Cornell University Library, which hosts *arXiv*, has produced a video to celebrate the milestone (available at arxiv.org/new). The size of the database lends itself to research, and *arXiv* founder Paul Ginsparg has led a study to explore 'text overlap' in papers in *arXiv* (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2014;112:25). The authors inferred a "baseline for accepted practice, perhaps surprisingly permissive compared with other societal contexts, and a clearly delineated set of aberrant authors." Papers with the most text overlap were also the least cited.

Collabra

Collabra (collabraoa.org) is a new open-access journal developed by the University of California Open Press. But what makes it different is that the journal plans to pay academic editors and peer reviewers for their efforts. And those that don't want to accept payment can choose to have the money paid into a 'waiver fund' to support researchers who can't afford the article-processing charge ($875) or into their own institution's open-access fund. The publisher has also launched a program for monograph publishing called Luminos (luminosoa.org).

Editors as gatekeepers

How good are editors at making decisions on what to promote and what to reject? A recent study of 1008 articles submitted to three major medical journals compared citation outcomes with acceptance/rejection decisions made by the journal editors (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2015;112:360). While editors and reviewers generally seemed to make good decisions, based on citations of accepted and rejected articles, this didn't seem to be the case for the top 2% of articles that were eventually published. Of the 14 most popular articles, 12 were rejected by the journals. Lead author Kyle Siler, was interviewed about the study for the Science Sessions podcast (pnas.org/podcasts).

Disambiguating abbreviations

Abbreviations often raise challenges for editors. Use them or avoid them? Expand once or more often? Expand very common ones? It is especially important to take care with abbreviations that have multiple uses in different contexts. This aspect is especially important for text mining systems. A paper in the *Journal of Biomedical Informatics* (29 December 2014) describes a model for determining the meaning of an abbreviation using semantic links, with more than 98% disambiguation accuracy.

Erratum

The November 2014 issue of News Notes stated that the conversion of Nature Publishing Group's journal *Nature Communications* to full open access had enabled the publisher to join OASPA. This was not correct. Nature's application to join OASPA was based on the journal *Scientific Reports*.

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