

Reports of meetings

The 2016 Meeting of the Asian Council of Science Editors (ACSE 2016)

10–11 August 2016, Deira, Dubai

The pressure to publish is known to be particularly intense in Asian countries, where researchers and journals struggle to meet international publication standards, increase the discoverability of their research, or adapt to global publication trends. This was also the general theme of discussions at the 2016 meeting of the Asian Council of Science Editors (ACSE), held on 10–11 August at the Carlton Palace Hotel in Deira, Dubai, and attended by 180 participants including ACSE members, industry experts, journal editors, researchers, and publishing professionals. The 2-day programme consisted of short courses on the first day and learning sessions on the second, with the aim of stimulating discussion and debate on topics relevant to academic publishing in Asia.

In his keynote address, Professor Gazi Mahabubul Alam, Vice President of ACSE, spoke passionately about the need for the publishing community in Asia to openly discuss and find solutions to its problems. The meeting began with a short course on bibliometrics by Philip Purnell, Director of Research & Publishing Services at Knowledge E, a provider of knowledge and consultancy services to publishing professionals in the Middle East. Philip covered everything journal editors needed to understand about bibliometrics. He emphasised that, in Asia, the publish-or-perish culture has led to an impact factor chase and limited understanding of alternative metrics. This session elicited substantial participation from journal editors.

In the next session, Pippa Smart, an experienced independent publishing consultant, urged journal editors to improve their journal quality by publishing high-quality content, improving visibility, and increasing impact. Pippa encouraged attendees to understand authors' expectations and adhere to established reporting guidelines, eg, the EASE Toolkit for Authors. She also addressed the queries of journal editors who wanted to know how their Asian journals could become more competitive. The day ended with interesting discussions on authorship and journal processes.

Day two began with a learning session by Lars Bjørnshauge, Managing Director of the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), who emphasised that open access is inevitable and publishers need to adapt to the changing scenario. Lars stated that real open access culminates in the ultimate discoverability of research papers and extensive re-use rights and spoke of the implications of open access publishing for journals in Asia and the Middle East. He also discussed the concepts of academic freedom and academic responsibility.

In the next session, UNESCO Laureate Professor Zabta Khan Shinwari discussed the hot topic of research and publication ethics. He stated that publishers must balance business and ethics and emphasised the dire need to reform research, teaching, academic evaluation and scientific communication systems in Asia and the Middle East.

This was followed by sessions on Knowledge E, CrossRef and ORCID, led by Philip Purnell, Rachael Lammey (Product Manager, CrossRef) and Matthew Buys (Regional Director, Africa, Middle East, and Canada at ORCID) respectively. Philip introduced Knowledge E as an upcoming open access publishing platform in the Middle East; Rachael explained how CrossRef supports publishers and helps solve their problems; and Matthew discussed the importance of ORCID's persistent digital identifiers.

In the next session, Clarinda Cerejo, Editor-in-Chief, Editage Insights – a web-based knowledge and learning platform for the global scholarly publishing community – demonstrated how the platform bridges the gap between authors and editors. Editage Insights provides useful resources including manuscript preparation and journal submission tutorials, a Q&A forum for researchers, tips for ethical publication and best publication practices, and publication advice through interviews with industry experts. Clarinda also mentioned how Editage Insights collaborates with journals, publishers, and institutions to help build a stronger and more robust academic publishing community.

In the concluding session on peer review trends, Pippa Smart spoke about how post-publication peer review and reviewer recognition are being discussed globally. She also shared some tips on how journal editors can incentivise reviewers. The panel discussion that followed highlighted the main topics covered during the meeting. Despite publishing high-quality research, local journals struggle to get international visibility either because they do not have an impact factor or because they are not easily discoverable. Publication ethics, open access, and tools for researchers (eg ORCID) and publishers (eg CrossRef) are emerging as main discussion points in Asia and the Middle East.

Attendees were highly participative during and between all sessions, which made the 2016 ACSE meeting highly productive and informative.

Jayashree Rajagopalan
Senior Writer and Editor, Editage Insights
jayashree.rajagopalan@editage.com

