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### From the Editors' Desks

#### **Subscription rates for 2011**

For the past three years, we have managed to hold the EASE subscription rate constant, but next year, we must implement a small price rise. Membership subscriptions are the major source of income for EASE. We are very encouraged by the continuing influx of new members but are losing many to retirement - a reflection of the age of the Association and its founder cohort. Please continue to support us by renewing your membership, encouraging others to join, and supporting EASE activities wherever possible.

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	4	"	£283			
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#### How to be a Successful Journal **Editor**

Another of the EASE Training Courses is set to run in Warsaw, Poland, in February 2011. Edward Towpik is hosting the course and Pippa Smart is running it - now, we just need the delegates to attend it! See the inside back cover for more information.

#### **Opportunities with EASE**

We are looking for two people to take up positions within EASE – a website editor and a secretary. See the inside back cover for further details.

#### Welcome to ...

... our new News Notes editors, Lionel Browne and John Hilton. Meet Lionel on page 69 and John on page 74.

#### **Location of next EASE Conference**

A beautiful and historic Baltic city is the venue for the 11th EASE Conference in June 2012; see page 92.

#### **Contributions for next issue**

The copy date for the November issue is 15 September. Please send your contributions to the relevant editor by then.

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## **Essays in Editing**

### Handling plagiarism at the manuscript editor's desk

#### **Mary Ellen Kerans**

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In our experience of freelance copyediting for small English-language science journals mainly based in Spain and Italy, peer review processes allow for the acceptance of manuscripts with a substantial amount of copy-paste writing of various types. The amount of such writing is often sufficient to open the authors to a charge of plagiarism. The number of manuscripts in which this problem appears is sufficient to increase the burden of work and stress for copy editors who worry about bringing such papers into the literature. One of us reported consistently finding textual plagiarism in around 30% of accepted manuscripts at one well-indexed medical journal over a two-year period,1 although the seriousness varied from manuscript to manuscript. We find that some copy-pasted prose is confusing and choppy, requiring a great deal of time to copyedit. The problem is sometimes more serious, however. In a few cases in our experience, plagiarism has involved as much as 90% of a manuscript or amounted to duplicate publication. These manuscripts reach copy editors because the chain of evaluation by editors and peer reviewers focuses on content and has not included assessment for plagiarism.

While the publishing community's awareness of plagiarism has grown, its ability to address the problem consistently has not. The reactions of editorial board editors on one listserve varied from surprise to indignation to awakening awareness,² and one formal study of attitudes confirmed editors' deep concern.³ Editors may even express surprise that textual plagiarism is improper. Open discussion on forums (see the many threads published by the World Association of Medical Editors [WAME]) suggests that there is some consensus, however, that a policy of "name and shame" may be disproportionate⁴ unless handled educationally, in a way that is "titrated" to "fit the crime".⁵ The assumptions are that offenses may be the result of poor or scant guidance and that authors can be educated by editors.

The need for consistent procedures has been recognized by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), which provides flowcharts showing how to handle suspected plagiarism appropriately, based on the degree of seriousness.<sup>6</sup> That editorial boards remain confused, however, seems clear from the 2009 controversy surrounding an accepted paper that was withdrawn from ahead-of-print posting after plagiarism was detected in the introduction section, but not before the author had complied with a request to rewrite the offending section.<sup>7</sup> That the paper was withdrawn anyway confused the author and suggested that the editorial board did not really have clear ideas about how to proceed. The

most ambitious effort from publishers and editorial boards to stem plagiarism has come from the CrossCheck project (www.crossref.org/crosscheck.html), which pools texts into a database that allows subscribing journals' staff to flag possible plagiarism or duplicate publication before editors' and peer reviewers' valuable time is wasted.

We think the CrossCheck approach, used before peer review, is ideal - but small journals are often not inside a well-informed or well-supported publication structure. We have worked for journals that receive and accept manuscripts with "patch writing" (see the table for terms used to talk about plagiarism) and have therefore become concerned about developing a way to proceed both ethically and helpfully in our work. The COPE guidelines start at a point when plagiarism has already been detected by a reviewer or, after publication, by a reader,6 yet we have found that peer reviewers do not notice signs of this practice in the text. Furthermore, in authors' editing, before submission of a paper to a journal, we have also had to counsel young scientists who find themselves in settings where copy-paste writing is encouraged by peers and mentors. In both these contexts, we have had to find ways of speaking to authors strictly without destroying their ability to proceed with a manuscript. Finally, within the activities of the association Mediterranean Editors and Translators, where many manuscript editors and translators share experiences, colleagues who have found plagiarism in the course of researching terminology sometimes ask for advice.

As a result, with support from the editorial boards and research directors who we have edited for, we have worked out a consistent approach, one that we have seen others have also been able to apply. Without access to sophisticated tools, we have been able to detect plagiarism before too much editing time has been wasted. For lesser-degree patch writing, we have consistently been able to obtain authors' rewrites of choppy, copy-pasted text before we complete the final edit. Finally, in cases of extensive plagiarism or duplicate publication, we have been able to argue for rescinding acceptance in a timely way before the journal was embarrassed. In this essay we will describe the main features of that approach for the benefit of journals that do not have plagiarism detection services such as CrossCheck.

#### Six-step guide for manuscript editors

Our stepwise approach starts with a preliminary look at the introduction and discussion sections of the manuscript for red flags of plagiarism. These include an uneven style or quality of writing, a mixture of British and American spelling, inconsistent terminology or abbreviations, repetitiveness or excessive detail, and a lack of cohesion between sentences or paragraphs.

**Step 1** then determines the amount of copied material. This can be done by pasting candidate phrases into Google

or Google Scholar and seeing if they come up positive (in bold type; figure 1). Googling for plagiarism can be time-consuming, but not more so than having to deal with plagiarism late in the publishing cycle. We therefore recommend googling as a way for copy editors to get started

#### Terms used when discussing plagiarism

Terms	Our definition	Comments	
Copy-paste writing, or cut-paste writing	The reuse of text published by others in one's own manuscript – usually for the sake of using "good, already-published English" or of producing a manuscript faster. The reused text may be substantial strings of words that may be sentence fragments, sentences, several sentences or whole paragraphs. Authors might do this with or without attribution.	We pay particular attention to the introduction and discussion sections of a manuscript. In contrast, as the phrasing in methods can be quite monotonous in some fields with established procedures, we need not be concerned with boilerplate language in this section. We also do not worry about very short copied phrases, provided they fit well with the new author's message and prose.	
Micro- plagiarism	A form of copy-paste writing in which the copied texts are consistently small (a clause or a sentence or two) but frequent in one or more sections.	If accomplished well (good interweaving of source-text phrases and the author's own voice, plus impeccable citing), this type of writing may even be considered good language-learner behavior. Certainly it is common, even for native speakers, to write this way in the sciences.  A problem arises for the author when his or her article seems stale because the phrasing seems too familiar. A problem arises for both the author and the copy editor when such writing is unskilled and the connections between ideas are unclear (see <i>patch writing</i> ).	
Patch writing, or mosaic writing	The end result of copy-paste writing. These terms convey the choppiness a text can have when copy-paste writing strategies are used.	These texts can be quite hard to copyedit if the sense is difficult to follow. Alternatively, they can also seem deceptively easy to copyedit if there are hefty blocks that flow well, even though serious writing problems, such as the lack of a hypothesis before an objective, might be masked in such fluent-seeming texts.	
Plagiarism	Copying of substantial amounts of text with an intent to deceive the reader into assuming that the writing and ideas belong to the author.	Many only use this word if large blocks of text or ideas have been appropriated and attribution has been omitted. Strict definitions, however, consider all the preceding types to be plagiarism.	
Self- plagiarism	Reuse of substantial portions of text from one's own previous work.	Consensus is lacking on whether or not this is an oxymoron; some insist that plagiarism must involve the appropriation of someone else's work. This practice also overlaps that of redundant publication.	
Duplicate or redundant publication	Reuse of one's own previous work that goes beyond text (ie, the use of wholly or substantially overlapping data).	Some claim that such redundant publication is of less concern when the article type is an editorial, review, or other non-research essay. <sup>8,9</sup>	
Translated plagiarism	The use, after translation, of strings of sentences, paragraphs, or even larger blocks of prose, with or without attribution, keeping the informational structure of the original intact.	Found in editorials, review articles, and discussion sections of research articles. Since all words have been changed through translation, some are surprised this is plagiarism. However, we have found paragraphs or chapters that are uncharacteristically easy to back-translate to English because the progression of ideas in the translated text is identical to that of an existing text in another language. We think this should be classified as plagiarism even if a citation is affixed.	



Figure 1: Google results that detect plagiarism in Step 1.<sup>10</sup> Note that full access to the article is not needed

immediately. We are currently testing inexpensive detection tools online, given that CrossCheck is unavailable to freelancers working for non-subscribing journals. One such tool, CheckForPlagiarism (www.checkforplagiarism. net), seems to be working well by screening manuscripts as a whole and giving a similarity report. Although this service is intended for use by universities who must check many texts, the developers were open to reducing access fees for a small user who needs to check only a few per week.

**Step 2** documents the plagiarism by identifying the original sources. Plagiarism detection software will do this automatically; when using Google, the editor must manually highlight the copied passages and indicate where they were found (figure 2). It is important to say that Steps 1 and 2 can be accomplished even if the freelance editor does not have access to subscription-protected full texts; the Google output (figure 1) is sufficient.

**Step 3** assesses the level of seriousness. A review paper that is 90% copied from a number of other publications

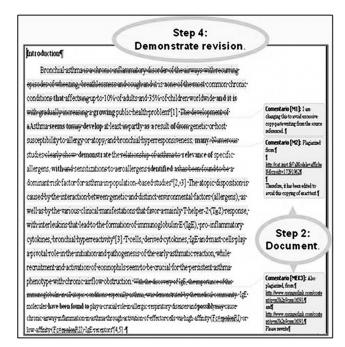


Figure 2: In Steps 2 and 4, we document the plagiarism detected and exemplify the type of revision we are requiring. Thus we take an educational approach and recognize that some authors may need to learn how to handle intertextuality<sup>10</sup>

must obviously be returned to the editor in chief with a recommendation for de-acceptance, given that simple rejection is no longer an option since the authors have already been sent an acceptance letter. When we find lesser plagiarism, such as the author's own writing interspersed with shorter copied fragments, we proceed to the next step, which will involve heavy copyediting and tactful education of the author.

Step 4 consists of rewriting one or more patch-written fragments. In doing so, our intention is not paraphrasing for its own sake, but rewriting to make the text flow better and clarify the author's message, placed in the context of the literature. If there turn out to be many such fragments, this revision will provide examples for the author to use in the next step. If there are only a few in the manuscript, the rewriting can be considered as part of heavy copyediting, although we do note for the author the reasons for rewording (better clarity and avoidance of plagiarism).

**Step 5** elicits revision by the authors themselves. We send the authors an email explaining that plagiarism has been detected in their manuscript (and documented as recommended in Step 2) and that this is not acceptable to the journal. We express the problem firmly, but in neutral, straightforward terms without being moralistic or accusatory (see de Jager and Kerans<sup>10</sup> for an example email). The authors are asked to rewrite the highlighted passages in their own words, taking the rewrites by the copy editor as a guide. They are reminded to add citations to the original sources if these are missing. If English is not their native language (E2 authors), we assure them that we will review their revised text for language mistakes before publication. It may be helpful to suggest they turn to a local language professional (a translator or author's editor) if revising is particularly difficult for them.

**Step 6** comprises the checking and editing of the revised manuscript. Papers that have been extensively rewritten may have changed so much that they will have to be re-examined by the editor in chief. In a few cases in our experience, such papers had to undergo a second peer review. In any case, publication may be delayed at least one issue.

The main goals of this approach are to assist with gatekeeping (prevent papers with more or less serious degrees of plagiarism from appearing) and with educating (show authors how to interweave information deriving from different sources, with due acknowledgement). Our experience has led us to recommend that editors in chief mention in the instructions for authors that plagiarism will be checked for. We also stress the importance of joining a plagiarism detection service like CrossCheck, so that plagiarism can be detected before peer review and copyediting. If for some reason it is preferable that copy editors do the screening, the extra work involved should be duly remunerated.

#### Discussion

In assessing seriousness, it may not always be clear where to draw the line between unacceptable and acceptable copy-

paste writing, but good judgement by someone familiar with the literature is essential. An approach based on automatically considering strings of a certain number of words to denote plagiarism will be misleading in some sciences in which sentences often carry terms that are several words long. In particular, the uncritical use of detection software should be avoided. Whoever screens for plagiarism should guard against indiscriminate rejection of a paper on the basis of a multi-sourced similarity report. Interweaving of information from other sources in a way a reader can follow easily, and proper citing, make all the difference. We have emphasized the importance of checking the introduction and discussion sections, where the reader wants to see the author's thoughts well differentiated from those of others. In contrast, the use of set phrases or boilerplate language in the methods section may be justifiable. 11 Similarly, in case reports, we have seen an author appropriate language that has been crafted by others and would not necessarily rule that out, especially if it helps an E2 author write a clear paper in English and if the discussion message stays firmly focused on the author's own conclusions.

Editors at different points in the publication process handle the issue in different ways. Pre-submission manuscript editors who help authors prepare texts in a setting where a microculture of copy-paste writing may have emerged can protect an author from the possibility of embarrassment (or worse) by pointing out that journal editors ask for original contributions and are becoming alert to ways of detecting plagiarism. Mention can be made of published WAME threads and COPE cases, showing that the issue is being taken ever more seriously. In-house copy editors may have access to tools such as CrossCheck, which makes screening for plagiarism easier, although – as mentioned above – each case will still have to be assessed individually. In-house copy editors may collaborate closely with journal editors and be more likely to have a say in the acceptance process. Freelance copy editors typically have varying degrees of autonomy and authority. Some will be instructed to flag copied text but let the chief editor decide how to deal with it. Others will be given almost complete freedom to approach authors in cases of microplagiarism along the lines described above. In all of these cases, it is our responsibility to make sure no false accusations are made.

Most, but not all, such manuscripts seem to come from E2 authors and it is often speculated that cultural differences influence perceptions of good practice. The Chinese, for example, have been said to engage in adulatory plagiarism. However, Chinese graduate students' patch writing has also been interpreted as a passing developmental strategy,<sup>12</sup> part of strategic drafting as they, like other young authors, strive for a voice and learn to distinguish their ideas from those of others. Another explanation given for the apparent greater frequency of patch writing by E2 authors is that they are practicing acceptable "appropriation of proper syntax" rather than of ideas.<sup>13</sup> Although this argument is persuasive, we warn authors in pre-submission editing that choppy copy-paste writing or overuse of boilerplate language may make their research seem less novel than it is. In any case, these arguments do not persuade us to change our approach

when we find patch writing in a text for publication, partly because we are facilitating authors' entry into a culture of international science, partly because we have seen patch writing even by native speakers of English, and partly because universities in Anglophone countries are also concerned about the problem, producing a body of literature on the topic (see McCabe, 14 McCabe and Treviño, 15 and Roig, 16 for example). Our experience coincides with the findings of McCabe and Treviño, who have shown that ethical writing is more or less likely to occur according to a research or educational setting's "microclimate" of ethics. 15 In authors' editing, where it is possible to see authoring practices close up, one of us (MEK) has observed that even within a single hospital department some research groups engage in more strictly ethical writing practices than others. In science, the spectrum of copy-paste writing - from relatively minor choppy patch writing all the way to deliberate, extensive plagiarism or duplicate publication - does not seem to be mainly a matter of national or linguistic cultural preference but rather circles of influence or individual aberration.

Textual plagiarism is misconduct that is relatively easy to detect, much easier than data fabrication or falsification. We have described a realistic role for manuscript editors, although we stress that screening for plagiarism and taking the necessary action after having detected it takes up precious editing time. We urge editorial boards to include specific statements about screening in the instructions to authors in the interest of discouraging copiers. Patch writing or more extensive copying may become a thing of the past within journals' discourse communities if consistent messages are given patiently. Failing to face the issue directly seems likely to encourage the belief that the practice is a normal, widely accepted one.

The poster presented at the 10th EASE Conference, Pisa, Italy, September 2009, is available on the EASE website (www.ease.org. uk/latest/index.shtml).

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# Scientific discourse and contrastive rhetoric: the Creating a Research Space (CARS) model

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Rhetorical analyses consider texts as social constructs and show how language reflects its institutional context and organizes human knowledge. Contrastive rhetorical analyses focus on the comparison of academic discourses written in English and comparable discourses written in other languages. They have received a great deal of attention mainly because of their potential pedagogical applications in courses on writing in foreign or second languages. These comparative studies have been concerned mainly with issues such as the structuring of the research article, to the concept of coherence, the use of hedges and modal expressions, the use of reporting verbs, the frequency of connectors and metadiscourse markers, the and the expression of criticism.

The majority of this research is directed toward comparing English with Asian languages (mostly Chinese, Korean, and Japanese) and Arabic languages, although some contrast English with other Western European languages – Finnish, Spanish, Italian, German, and, to a lesser extent, French. A decade or so ago the writing pattern characteristics of the Slavic language group (Russian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, Slovene, Hungarian, Ukranian) entered into the focus of contrastive rhetorical research.

Three features are particularly relevant to crosslinguistic or cross-cultural studies of scientific writing: the structuring of the introduction of research articles, more specifically the "Creating a Research Space" (CARS) model<sup>18,19</sup>; the socio-pragmatic phenomenon of hedges; and the use of meta-discourse – that is, discourse about discourse. This article focuses on the CARS model.

#### Moves and metaphor

Swales' "Creating a Research Space" model has been the most influential model in the textual analysis of the research article. It forms part of the introduction of most experimental research articles and consists of three moves: Move 1 (establishing a territory); Move 2 (the *critical* move where one establishes one's niche); and Move 3 (occupying the niche). Ocunter-claiming, indicating a gap, question raising, or continuing a tradition are the most frequently used options in Move 2. Here are two examples of Move 2 (establishing the niche) followed by Move 3 (occupying the niche) taken from articles published in the *BMJ* in 2008:

Whether these agents [peppermint oil, antispasmodics] are effective in treating irritable bowel syndrome is controversial. Results of randomised trials are conflicting and systematic reviews have come to different conclusions .... We carried out a systematic review and meta-analysis to determine the effect of fibre, anstispasmodics, and peppermint oil in the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome.<sup>20</sup>

[Cardiovascular disease and cancer] increase exponentially between ages 40 and 80 [yet] data on the incidence in the ninth and 10th decades are sparse, particularly in men. We estimated the age specific incidence and remaining lifetime risk of [these diseases] up to age 100 in a large prospective cohort of men with 23 years of follow up.<sup>21</sup>

The CARS model captures the ways in which academic writers justify and highlight their own contribution to the ongoing research profile of the field, by establishing a topic for the research and summarizing the key features of previous work, thus creating a gap of possible extension of that work that will form the basis of the writer's claims. The prevalent metaphor in this model has an unabashedly ecological colouring: populations of researchers competing for resources and visibility in tightly contested territories are

similar to populations of plants competing for light and nutrients. The model assumes antagonism and competition for research space among individual members, research groups, or schools within any given academic discourse community.<sup>22</sup> As Swales points out, using a controlling metaphor has produced conflicting effects: on the one hand, it has contributed to the model's "interestingness"; on the other, to its fallibility.<sup>19</sup>

These effects derive from the fact that the CARS metaphor privileges an environment in which originality (especially in theory) is highly prized, competition is fierce, and academic promotionalism and boosterism are strong.23 24 The CARS model primarily reflects, as Swales points out, research in a big world, in big and hard fields, in big languages, with big journals, big names, and big libraries within large discourse communities.<sup>19</sup> The same could be said of the sociological and anthropological accounts of such influential monographs as those of Latour and Woolgar<sup>25</sup> and Knorr-Cetina<sup>26</sup> that are all based on "big science" in North American scholarly communication with its superfast networks, concerns about "being in the loop", and competition for influence, power, resources, and prestige. Matters are quite different in other academic worlds where promotionalism and other forms of persuasive rhetoric may not have such a high priority.

#### **Eastern Europe and elsewhere**

The cultural, historical, and political proximity of languages in eastern Europe has allowed linguists to contrast Slavic languages to pan-Western written academic discourse written in English, and results obtained regarding the CARS model analysis in papers written in Slavic languages are quite different from those obtained from an examination of scientific papers written in English. Duszak<sup>27</sup> and Golebiowski,<sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> for instance, examined introductions to research articles written in English and in Polish and concluded that Anglo-American and Polish styles of scholarly writing are very different. The CARS model cannot be clearly identified in the introductions of research papers written in Polish, where writers tend to understate and marginalize the "occupying a niche" move so frequently present in introductions written in English.

Yakhontova saw no gap in research papers written in Russian and Ukrainian.<sup>30</sup> She noted a strong "promotional flavor" in conference abstracts written in English, whereas those written in Russian and Ukranian were characterized by the absence of self-advertisement. The influence of a market society with its great demands on competitiveness, attention winning, and recognition of a target for promotion of a research product inevitably influences academic discourse, making it persuasive and self-promotional. Yakhontova has argued that science is one of the most expensive goods on the market.<sup>31</sup>

The CARS model has also been analysed in other languages. López found that only 50% of the (Latin American) research papers written in Spanish she examined mentioned a gap in their introductions.<sup>32</sup> Similar conclusions were reached in research papers written in Arabic,<sup>33</sup> Malaysian,<sup>34</sup> and Swedish.<sup>22</sup> The papers written

in Swedish that Fredrickson and Swales examined had a story-like feature, carefully positioned at the beginning of the article as an attention getting device – as if writers were competing for readership, not for a space on the academic stage.<sup>22</sup>

#### **Cultural motivations**

Harwood and Hadley illustrate what may be considered a culturally motivated difficulty with writing academic texts in English. One of their informants complained that "in Nepal, our style of analysis is different, because people feel pretty bad about criticizing others. ... In order to succeed, I would have to change. I would have to learn to use a very aggressive style that would more or less – you know – slap the reader in the face."<sup>35</sup> This informant has been able to identify one problem with his scientific writing: his lack of critical attitude towards previous researchers' work. He is aware that in order to have better chances of success in the Anglo-American academic world, he would need to introduce a change that he is not comfortable with. Harwood and Hadley contend that this informant is not an isolated case.

Spanish scholars tend to feel uncomfortable about taking a critical stance<sup>36</sup>; Moreno cites a recent case study of successive manuscripts submitted internationally by an established Spanish scholar in the field of educational psychology and the responses given by the journal editor and peer reviewers to these drafts during a six-month revision period (the case study is to be found in Burgess et al<sup>37</sup>). One of the demands made by the reviewers – conveyed by the journal editor – was that the paper needed to "clearly articulate the contribution to the field". In technical terms, the problem with this writer's introduction was that it lacked an important move in its rhetorical structure, specifically CARS Move 2 (establishing a niche), whereby authors situate their current research in terms of its significance in the field established in CARS Move 1 (establishing a territory), before they show how they will occupy this niche in CARS Move 3 (occupying the niche).

Most of the options available for developing CARS Move 2 (counter-claiming, indicating a gap, question-raising, or continuing a tradition) involve evaluating the adequacy of others' work, the state of affairs, or existing research traditions. For Moreno's Spanish author to respond to the reviewers' demands, he would need to develop a more explicit critical attitude in relation to his discipline, in spite of his likely unwillingness to do so. Burgess argues that one of the reasons why Spanish researchers tend to omit Move 2 is their reluctance to criticize earlier work in the field, in order to foreground their own contribution.

Omitting Move 2 may be a feature typical of Spanish researchers' native writing culture, which may have been transferred to writing introductions in English to research articles for an international audience (that is, in English-medium journals). This hypothesis is supported by Mur Dueñas' cross-cultural results in connection to introductions in Spanish and American research articles in business management, where a generalized lack of Move 2 is observed in the Spanish sub-corpus.<sup>38</sup> A similar difference

is seen in the introduction to abstracts of research articles in experimental social sciences.<sup>39</sup>

#### On the Asian side

Discussions about contrasts between Chinese and English agree about the complexity of the issue. Taylor and Chen's research shows the methodological problems in contrastive studies that result from the complex interactions of variations in both regional and disciplinary cultures. These authors examined the CARS model in science papers (geology, metallurgy, mineral processing, geophysics, materials engineering) written in English by Chinese writers, in English by English-speaking writers, and in Chinese by Chinese writers. Differences were found across disciplinary lines, and a fairly consistent pattern of difference was found between the Anglo-American group and the two Chinese groups.

When writing in English, and even more so when writing in Chinese, Chinese scholars were less likely to elaborate the moves, wrote at less length, and de-emphasized the summary of previous research, a step they tend to omit or truncate. Chinese academics refrain from directly citing others whose work may subsequently be criticized as deficient or incomplete. Taylor and Chen offer two speculative explanations for their findings: that Chinese scientists do not have access to the bibliographical sources available in Western laboratories; and that disputation has been absent from the Chinese scientific tradition, the maintenance of relationship taking precedence over content in academic writing.<sup>41</sup>

Harrison also observed a lack of perception of a knowledge gap in the introduction of Japanese scientific writing. <sup>42</sup> He relates his findings to the fact that Japanese people in general wish to avoid confrontation, make great assumptions about shared background knowledge, and place a high value on allusion to events and situations, while the precise spelling out of the situation is regarded as crude. Such a concept of scientific writing causes problems when Japanese scholars fail to realize that more detailed information is necessary for being understood by people from other countries.

Swales remarks that the frequent absence of a literature gap in papers written in languages other than English could thus reflect a kinder, more gentle, and more relaxed academic world in which there is less competition for research space. <sup>19</sup> In this alternative world, there may be instead competition for readership, and the need of justifying doing any research at all may have higher priority than establishing some small gap in an extensive previous literature. In addition, writer-audience considerations are also an important factor to be taken into consideration when analysing and interpreting the rhetoric of scientific writing.

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#### Meet the new members of the Publications Committee

#### **Lionel Browne**



Lionel trained as a technical journalist after a degree in history and philosophy of science at Magdalene College, Cambridge. He joined IPC Science and Technology Press, Guildford, in 1967, as an editorial assistant and rose via positions as commissioning editor,

professional and reference publisher, and publishing director in Butterworths, Van Nostrand Reinhold, and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors to publishing manager at the Financial Training Company.

Lionel has been freelancing as Sandhurst Editorial since the beginning of 1991, offering editorial development and consultancy, project management, technical writing, rewriting, copy-editing, and proofreading. He specializes in science and technology (both professional and academic), together with education, but has handled projects as diverse as bibles, biography, military memoirs, travel guides, corporate reports and on-line documentation.

Lionel is an Advanced Member of the Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) and an SfEP-accredited proofreader. As a former member of the SfEP Committee he was responsible for PR and publicity. He is also a tutor for the Publishing Training Centre's distance learning course on proofreading.

Lionel and his wife, Janet, live in Sandhurst, Berkshire, with their two dogs and two cats. Their four grown-up children have all more or less flown the nest. In his spare time Lionel is a musician, playing bass guitar and singing with Fat Cat, a country rock band (www.fatcatcountry.net).

## **Editing around the World**

# Editorial processes in the Cochrane Collaboration: guiding the authors from beginning to end

#### **Dario Sambunjak**

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The Cochrane Collaboration is an international, independent, not-for-profit organization of over 27,000 contributors from more than 100 countries. It is dedicated to making up-to-date, accurate information about the effects of health care readily available worldwide. Contributors work together to produce systematic assessments of healthcare interventions, known as Cochrane Reviews, which are published online in the Cochrane Library. Cochrane Reviews are intended to help providers, practitioners, and patients make informed decisions about health care, and are the most comprehensive, reliable, and relevant source of evidence on which to base these decisions.

The Collaboration has a unique organizational structure to meet the needs of producing high quality information. Within this complex structure, Cochrane Review¹ Groups serve as editorial bases responsible for guiding the production of Cochrane Reviews in specific medical topic areas.

Dario Sambunjak, member of the EASE Publication Committee and the director of Croatian Branch of the Italian Cochrane Centre, talked with managing editors of two Cochrane Review Groups during his study visit to Canada in May 2010. Lara Maxwell is the managing editor of the Cochrane Musculoskeletal Group (CMSG), and Alain (Al) Mayhew is the managing editor of the Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care (EPOC) Group. Both groups are based in the Institute of Population Health at the University of Ottawa.

Dario: CMSG and EPOC are two of the 52 Cochrane Reviews Groups. For an outsider, the logic behind the categorization of Cochrane Review Groups is not easy to grasp. How did this categorization come to exist?

Lara: The Cochrane Collaboration is a very grass-roots organization. It started with just a few people with an amazing idea, and the support that has expanded over the last dozen years was beyond their wildest imagination. So, it was very much about the opinion leaders and their subject interests.

In the Cochrane Collaboration, the term "review" usually refers to systematic reviews as a specific type of research design or article. However, the same term can refer to the editorial process of peer reviewing, also known as "refereeing". Potential confusion stems from the fact that in the Cochrane Collaboration, the product of the editorial process (including peer review) is a systematic review, and both peer reviewers and authors of systematic reviews are often called simply "reviewers". To reduce this confusion, the Collaboration encourages the use of the term "author" to identify those who actually write the systematic review.

**Dario**: The collaboration wasn't first envisioned as a whole and then divided into groups?

Lara: No, it was very much grass-roots, bottom-up development.

#### Three phases of editorial process

Dario: Cochrane Review Groups process and edit a large number of systematic reviews during all stages of their production and in all areas of health care interventions. How are the editorial activities and processes organized in Cochrane Review Groups?

Lara: Editorial processes in Cochrane Review Groups flow through three phases. There is a title registration phase, the protocol development and publication of the protocol in the Cochrane Library, and finally development of the review and its publication in the Cochrane Library.

At the title registration phase the authors determine which of the 52 different review groups the title belongs to. Each review group has a title registration form, which they ask the review authors to fill in, addressing the PICO question – what Population are you interested in, the Intervention, the Comparisons, and the Outcomes – and also providing the review group with additional information about the team of authors. The editorial group then evaluates the title, determines whether it falls within their scope, and if there is any overlap with other registered titles.

Once the title is approved by the editorial group, it is registered and a version is put onto Archie, the central server used to manage the reviews across all 52 review groups. Once the title is registered, the author team prepares a draft protocol and this too is put onto Archie. The checking-in process informs the managing editor that the protocol is ready for editorial peer review.

It is here that some of the groups may differ. In CMSG we do an in-house editorial check first, so the managing editor reviews the first draft. If there are major issues to be addressed, the authors are asked to revise the draft before it is sent to peer review. In our group the protocol goes to our trial search coordinator, our statistical editor, our consumer editor (who sends it to one of our consumers), and also to our internal subgroup facilitator, who has specific disease content expertise. Then it goes to two external peer reviewers

**Dario**: And that is only for the protocol. The same process is later repeated for the full review?

Lara: Exactly. And whenever we get the reviewers' comments back, we go through them to check if there is anything that does not meet our editorial standards. If

there is, we just ask the authors to disregard that comment. We send that version, together with the comments, to our coordinating editor, so that he or she has a chance to read the first draft and all of the comments, and to add their own comments. Next, we send all of that to the authors, who then have three to four weeks to make the revisions. We ask authors to respond to each point, as most other journals would, and we review the revisions. Once we have decided that the review meets our editorial standards and is ready for publication we send it for copyediting by the Wiley editing service.

**Dario**: Al, is there anything specific in your group in this regard?

Al: There are two areas where we are different. First, because our group addresses the delivery of care and effective practice, our target audience is different. We are establishing connections with policy makers and people who would be using our systematic reviews.

The other difference in terms of the process is that we assign one of our editors initially to be the contact editor. This editor liaises directly with the authors' teams once the title is registered, and becomes a mentor or facilitator of the review process, working directly with the team. Once the contact editor is happy with the protocol he or she will contact the managing editor. At the review stage, we assign a referee editor to work on the review, because by this time the contact editor may be too close to the review to be able to evaluate the peer review comments appropriately.

So, our team of editors would have some systematic reviews for which they are contact editors, and others for which they are referee editors. The referee editors look at the peer review comments, feed them back to the authors, and reevaluate to see if they have been addressed, or if the authors have justified their decision not to address them.

#### Not just accept or reject

**Dario**: It seems that in many aspects Cochrane Review Groups function similar to the editorial team of a typical scientific journal?

Al: Yes. But the big difference is that journals get a project after it is completed, whereas with Cochrane reviews we start working with authors at the title stage. They are mentored all the way through, both by the managing editor and the contact editor. So, once we have accepted the title, we expect to take it all the way through to publication. Journals, on the other hand, will look at the finished article and make a decision whether to accept it or not. I think this is a major difference in the process.

Lara: Yes, it's not that we just accept or reject. If we accept a title, then we will work to eventually get the full systematic review published.

**Dario**: If I understand correctly, the coordinating editor in a Cochrane Review Group has the role of the editor-inchief in a regular journal?

Lara: Yes, they act as editor-in-chief of their review group. Dario: What is the role of the Editor-in-Chief of the Cochrane Library?

Lara: His role is overseeing quality – ensuring that all systematic reviews published within the mandate of the Cochrane Collaboration meet certain minimum standards of quality. Review groups differ slightly in the methods they follow, but there should be minimum standards, and one of the key roles of the Cochrane Library's Editor-in-Chief is to ensure this consistency across groups. Also, because people using the Cochrane Library don't necessarily understand that there are 52 different groups working semi-autonomously, we want to present a consistent face.

#### **Branching out**

**Dario**: Al, both you and Lara are the managing editors of your groups. Do all the submitted titles, protocols, and reviews go through your hands?

Al: Yes, they do. But, some groups – including both Lara's and my group – have satellites. So it is potentially possible, at least for our groups, that the submission goes to a different managing editor. We have a managing editor based in Australia, and another one based in Norway. If a group does not have a satellite, then it would only have one managing editor. But yes – we're the first point of contact: when an author has an idea of the project they want to do they email the managing editor.

**Dario**: And how do they decide which managing editor within a group they should contact?

Al: That depends on how the group is structured. Our satellite in Melbourne, Australia, provides support to authors in the Australasian region. But our Oslo satellite focuses on supporting the production and updating of Cochrane reviews that address health systems questions that are relevant to low-income and middle-income countries. So, there is some variation in how satellites function and who they support.

Obviously the satellites are very beneficial, because they spread the workload and also increase our profile around the world. They have funding, usually from a research organization, and the role of managing editor is a staff position. We hire on the basis of our research funding, so even though I'm employed by the University of Ottawa, my main task is to work for the Cochrane Collaboration.

Lara: We would help Australasian authors to contact our editorial base in Australia, which is responsible for Australasian authors, as well as content areas of soft tissue disorders. We are also actively looking to establish a new satellite.

Dario: That brings me to the next question – how are the editorial teams formed? How are people appointed to be editors in Cochrane Review Groups?

Al: Our (non-managing) editors do this either on their own time, or as part of their academic role in their institutions.

**Dario**: What are the qualifications required for a Cochrane Review Group editor?

Al: Editors are generally those who have written at least one Cochrane review, preferably as the lead author. And they need to have experience in the content area. It's not a decision that is taken lightly. Lara: Our expectations are quite similar. We have been adding new people to our editorial teams during the last couple of years. These are the people who have expertise in the area, have done a good systematic review, and have a methodological expertise. We also want people who have good credentials – those who are well recognized. Who to appoint is a decision made by the editorial team.

#### Working with RevMan software

Dario: All authors write their protocols and reviews in RevMan software, which makes their submissions much more uniform and structured than submissions to most other scientific journals. How does this affect the editorial work in Cochrane Review Groups?

Lara: I think it is really helpful to have a structured program to assist authors, especially new authors, walk through exactly what is needed. RevMan has standard headings to help structure the review, but there are also optional ones, and these prompt the authors to think about what we expect them to consider when they are writing their background or discussion. For some people the downside is that it's new software, you have to download it and learn how to use it, although RevMan has improved tremendously since the first version and is now much more user friendly.

Al: In the literature, structured reporting is recommended for articles, and RevMan allows authors to do that very easily. It is also easier for us in terms of the editorial process because we know where we should look for certain required elements, in particular some new components that we are starting to include in the Cochrane systematic reviews, such as risk of bias assessment and a summary of findings table. The only real downside is getting familiar with the software – some people seem to be afraid of it because it's new, but once they start using it they find it to be straightforward.

#### Helping the authors

**Dario**: What are the challenges and rewards of working as an editor in the Cochrane Collaboration?

Al: It is rewarding to work with authors from the title registration stage and to see their systematic reviews come to fruition. You actually see people develop skills and expertise, and you understand more about the challenges they have faced to get there. Also, it is very satisfying to be able to help the authors – to see them develop from having a title and a general idea of what they want to do, and to finish with a very good product. I think that's also one of our biggest challenges – when you get a title proposal, you also have to try to get a sense of how much help the authors need.

Dario: What forms of help can you actually offer?

Al: If someone sends a title, our expectation is that at least one member of the author team has done a review before or at least that they would attend a workshop to get some training in producing a Cochrane review. But we often get questions from authors about the eligibility of studies, or about extracting data, how to do quality assessment, and how to interpret some of the items in the protocol or review.

We never hear from some authors until they submit the review, but others contact us frequently throughout the process, asking very important questions about how to deal with some of the difficult issues. Alternatively these authors may contact the trials search coordinator, who is our librarian and will help with designing the search. It really depends on the team of authors.

**Dario**: And do you help authors to find people who could join their review teams?

Lara: Sometimes authors ask for that if they feel that they need another person with different expertise. On the title registration form we ask if there is somebody in the team with statistical expertise and with content expertise, and we offer librarian and methodological expertise. So, if the authors have trouble finding somebody we do try to put them together, and occasionally we have been successful.

Sometimes, out of the blue, two different groups of people from two different parts of the world inquire about the same topic at the same time, or someone may have just registered a title, and someone else contacts us with the same title. In these cases we try to link them up. It doesn't always work out, but occasionally it does.

Al: To give a different example, when a team is looking into a reimbursement scheme or a delivery of care scheme, and all the members of the review team are from one country the international perspective is not taken into account. For example, the important issues in Canada may differ from the important issues in the UK or in Sweden. In these cases we would encourage the authors to consider inviting international collaborators, either by searching the literature to see who has published in the area, or we may suggest that they contact a particular person in, for example, the USA because they could provide a North American perspective. Usually such suggestions are well received. This would probably also be considered at the peer review stage in cases where the team appears not to have an international perspective. We would find international peer reviewers who could look at the review and say "yes, but that's not how the things are done in my region".

Dario: Can you think of any other challenges in your editorial work?

Al: One great challenge is the expectation that Cochrane systematic reviews should be updated every two years. While I think that's a very good goal to have, it is also a challenging goal to reach as many authors need a lot of encouragement to revisit the review for an update. The Cochrane Collaboration has started to evaluate the whole updating process and is asking what is the best way to approach that challenge.

Lara: I think another challenge is that Cochrane Collaboration is a volunteer-based organization. The majority of people do this work without funding for specific reviews, and so much of it is done during evenings and weekends, maybe on a sabbatical, or even during holiday time. You know that authors want to do the systematic review, but it can be hard for them to find time to do it.

Dario: Thank you very much!

## **Reports of Meetings**

### A Golden Opportunity: Society for Scholarly Publishing

San Francisco, 2-3 June 2010

This year's SSP (Society for Scholarly Publishing) annual meeting started with a networking reception of librarians, assorted publishing types, web hosts, and providers of all manner of publishing-related services. Seemingly "quiet types" by definition, they turned out to be some of the dynamic mavericks who have been shaping the US scholarly publishing landscape for several years—and not particularly quietly. "Lessons learnt and lessons learning," a session on the first day gave a few examples of their career paths; all seem to have started out doing copyediting, later acquiring business skills. The take-home message? Don't assume that there is a job in publishing that has your name on it. Keep learning, keep expanding your skills, and embrace change.

In the keynote address, digital librarian Brewster Kahle, talked about his vision of distributed vending and lending on the internet for books. The idea is to move from accessing a single source from a single device to a "distributed model", which would enable readers to find books across the web to read on whatever device they have – Kahle's proposed BookServer, a system in development by many publishers, libraries, and software developers. It would benefit all stakeholders rather than merely Google, Amazon, and Apple. Authors, publishers, readers, book sellers, device makers, and libraries, but especially readers, would have universal access to all knowledge.

A panel session considered whether applications (apps) were the future of science communication. The panel was a medical publisher (Steve Welch from *Chest*) and the developer who designed the required app (SiNae Pitts from Amphetamobile), alongside Keir Mierle from Google on "starfield search", a scientific app for a project mapping the stars that had not been built for a commercial publisher. The publisher focused on the device. For a medical app, the iPhone/iPad was the preferred choice, but the developer had good news that, whichever device you design for, 50% of the work is done in adapting it for another device. Among the things SiNae Pitt wanted to know was why you wanted to build apps for medical/scientific content: does your community need an app for that?

Above all, the product should be regarded as a work in progress, for an app is never finished but is a work in progress. So, too, is the publishing landscape ever changing – the tools, technologies, media, skills required, delivery

modes. What it needs above all is people with outstanding skills, talent, and curiosity who embrace change rather than try to avoid it.

On the second day people turned their attention to the looming gap between new and established researchers in their technological savviness and its effect on the tools publishers offer scientists.

Molecular biologist Helen Andrews-Polymenis discussed the challenges of incorporating new media in the communication of basic science. The rise of blogs has introduced greater informality into science communication – but the jury's still out about what that may mean for people's professional reputations (many science bloggers seem to use pseudonyms). Established scientists are asking why they should adopt the new media. A tension is developing between what the younger generation demand and what the established generation will accept and use.

Industry analyst and content specialist John Blossom termed the younger generation "millennials", or the fully published generation, and highlighted their use of the second web – the real-time mobile communication of content available via a multitude of devices and accessible from anywhere. What's content? "If people don't benefit it's not content." His example of using Google Wave to create the American Declaration of Independence showed how in a new medium a project can go through peer review, keep records, record attributions, and document the process for posterity.

The consensus was that age alone does not determine whether people adopt new technologies and media. Whereas last year's SSP meeting seemed to focus on employing young people, this year's emphasized flexibility, individual career development, curiosity, and readiness to refine and move on. That's a relief.

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### Third European Conference on Scientific Publishing in Biomedicine and Medicine

Leiden, 28-29 May

The small, but highly engaged, audience assembled in Leiden heard that the printing press made scribes obsolete, and these days librarians fear extinction by computers. But librarians seem to be very much alive, having taken on new roles as information scientists – because someone has to manage the floods of information coming at us.

There is too much information now: Ben Goldacre, medical writer in London, told us that a general practitioner would need 600 hours a month to read all the relevant literature that appears. A month has only 720 hours. He elaborated on the idea put forward by Richard Smith and Ian Roberts that results of clinical trials should not be published in journals, but rather the data should be published in a central database. Eventual interpretations could then be published in journals. This would speed up dissemination of knowledge and decrease the spin that authors (and their funders) often put on their work.

Barend Mons, an information scientist in Leiden, took this idea further and argued that publications now contain a lot of redundant information: "All malaria papers contain at least one sentence saying that malaria is transmitted by mosquitoes." He proposed nanopublications in the form of critical assertions, preferably in threes, that can be easily transferred to machine language. He calculated that this could decrease the amount of newly emerging research communications more than 1000-fold. Scientific work can then be appraised by counting how many critical assertions a researcher has published. This went a little too far for the audience, who agreed that this would probably be feasible for the exact sciences such as physics and computational biology but less so for sciences that are more context-dependent, such as the humanities.

Appraising research efforts remains a hot topic. Philip Purnell of Thomson Reuters (they of the impact factor) introduced InCites, which calculates the number of citations per paper, corrected for averages of particular fields, countries, or whatever you wish. This system, he claimed, enables you to compare researchers across various disciplines. More publishers are working towards these kinds of comparators (Elsevier has SNIP); could the impact factor, which now works to strengthen the status quo among journals, soon be out of date?

The demise of the impact factor would certainly favour journals with open access. Carrie Calder, head of marketing with BioMedCentral, gave an overview illustrating that open access (OA) publishing is now firmly established as a business model for research publications. OA journals keep emerging, and Stevan Harnad, an information scientist in Southampton, confirmed that OA papers are cited more often. He attributed the unusually high research ranking of the University of Southampton mainly to the fact that it was an early adopter of OA publishing.

We can have too much information, but there is also the problem of too little information. Fiona Godlee, editor-inchief of the *BMJ*, gave (by video from her London office) a historical overview of non-publication of unwelcome trial data by pharmaceutical companies. The Vioxx story with its suppressed data on cardiovascular side effects is one of the prominent recent examples. A priori registration of trials is a possible solution, but research has shown that most negative trials are never published. Ben Goldacre has launched an initiative that monitors publication of all registered trials in an effort to make this more transparent. It is sad, for example, that one of the largest trial registers, that kept by the European Medicines Agency (EMEA), is not open to the public.

The last speaker was Ségolène Aymé of OrphaNet, who spoke before a depleted audience, as most delegates had already left. OrphaNet is the highly sympathetic and successful initiative to stimulate European research in orphan diseases. It is now coordinating 1200 trials for 210 diseases in 24 countries. "OrphaNet," said one of the conference's organisers, "are, through their information and data management, a fantastic example of the new librarians." Even so, Ms Aymé admitted that she still publishes annual reports with thousands of printed pages—because "that impresses people".

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Wim Weber European research editor, BMJ wweber@bmj.com

### Meet the new members of the Publications Committee

#### **John Hilton**



John's career in science editing started in 1999, when after seven years in academia (Durham and Southampton universities) and two years in Australia, he realized was never going to stick with scientific research. John joined Current Drugs Ltd as an editor, working on the Investigational Drugs Database and various

journals, and spent an enjoyable year as a magazine editor.

In 2002 John moved on to join the BMJ Group, where he worked in the BMJ Knowledge division, more recently known as the BMJ Evidence Centre, as copy editor and manager. Since escaping from the BMJ in 2009, he has worked as a freelance writer and editor, working mostly in medicine and specializing in gastroenterology. John recently joined the Department of Health's e-Learning for Healthcare project (www.e-lfh.org.uk) as QA copy editor.

John lives in the beautiful town of Petersfield, Hampshire, with his wife and two young children.

### **Book Reviews**

**Academic Writing and Publishing: A Practical Handbook**. James Hartley. Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2009. 205 pp, softbound. £19.99, \$37.95. ISBN 978-0-415-45322-6.



James Hartley, EASE member and contributing ESE author, is a professor in the School of Psychology of the University of Keele in England. Reviewing a writing book by a scholar who himself studies book-reviewing seems daunting, especially as this particular handbook even includes a chapter on book-reviewing. Add the

fact that this reviewer, who has been teaching writing since 1961, began compiling her own university writing manual in 1986 – and is accustomed to much criticism.

The first enviable virtue of James Hartley's volume is its reader-friendly layout: short chapters full of subtitled sections, a lesson to those of us authors who cram all available white space with words. Another is its unrushed conversational style, making it accessible to those most in need of aid. As a writing teacher for medics in Finland, I demand minimal length, not one extra word, and so yearned to shrink some of Professor Hartley's sentences. Such condensation might, however, hamper many readers, especially non-native English-speakers.

This handbook includes numerous boxes, lists, tables, and figures, most of them useful and interesting – only a few, in my opinion, too brief or too obvious. Each short chapter has its own list of references, and often suggestions for further reading. Indices are to author and subject.

Although Hartley omits current hot topics such as plagiarism and reprint permission, the book is not aimed specifically at researchers in science. Its broader scope encompasses writers in the humanities and social sciences as well as in the hard sciences. Listed at random to show their diversity, its topics include the following: theses, footnoting, key words, types of titles, authors' collaboration (a rich lode), the IMRAD sections of an article, referees' approaches, delays in the publishing process, information storage and retrieval, composition of literature-review articles, gender issues, and types of procrastination. It has short sections on productivity, including that of Nobelists,

and even a list of current abbreviations for US states.

In part based on the author's own journal articles published from the 1980s to 2007, this book benefits from Hartley's career-long investigation, innovation, and empirical testing. He has frequently sought his subjects' opinions on various approaches to writing and page layout, and is still, in 2010, exploring readers' reactions to evolving academic styles.

The structured abstract receives valuable attention, based on several of the author's research articles. I note his solution to the always-confusing distinction between Aim and Background: he provides model abstracts including both.

The section on figures deserves to be longer, but threedimensional graphics do receive a needed thwack on the head.

Six months after publication, burgeoning electronic technology makes any writing handbook sound old-fashioned. Hartley's mention of the world wide web, word processors, electronic typesetting, and the controversial novelty of PowerPoint reminds me of my over-long section on snail-mail letters (his book does not include these) and my tardy inclusion of email tips. Electronic submission of articles merits his attention, as do electronic theses.

The trick of leaving a writing task not at a clear break in content or inspiration but *in medias res* in order to make resumption easier, and the practice of pouring out junk in one's first draft and delaying revision are essential to every writer, as Hartley convincingly argues. His final list of 20 guidelines for writers is unbeatable. Other pearls include a list of poster tips that could well be copied and posted over one's desk.

I recommend this book especially for non-native English speakers and those aiding them, and for those in a broad spectrum of academic fields.

**Carol Norris** 

Teacher and author-editor, University of Helsinki carol.norris@helsinki.fi

How to Write, Publish, and Present in the Health Sciences: A Guide for Clinicians and Laboratory Researchers. Thomas A Lang, Washington, DC: American College of Physicians, 2010. 389 pp. £53.50, \$59.95. ISBN 978-1-934465-14-1.



Tom Lang's latest book receives my enthusiastic compliments. As Tom says in the preface, "We take for granted our abilities to write and to speak, but to do either with great skill requires ... specific training and practice." This book contributes to this training by detailing the preparation of five types of scientific documents: abstracts,

grant proposals, scientific articles, posters, and slide presentations. In a chapter on "Writing Effectively", he also tells us how to make reading easier.

Tom provokes our thinking in two ways. In the margins, he presents "gems" of inspiring and confronting quotations from well-known authors, such as:

"I'm all in favor of keeping dangerous weapons out of the hands of fools. Let's start with typewriters." (Frank Lloyd Wright) "A drug is any substance that when injected into a rat results in a scientific article." (An unknown but cynical journal editor)

Also thought-provokingly, Tom discusses ethics in scientific writing. We demand that authors be ethical – much depends upon this, especially in the health sciences. Unfortunately, the intent to do the right thing is not enough. Tom shows us what to be wary of when reading as well as when reporting, and, by extension, the ethical issues in research itself.

For three reasons, I love "how-to-write-and-present" books: I hope to read something I already believe in, thereby reinforcing my own beliefs and ego; I hope to learn something useful that I didn't already know; and I hope to exercise my critical "double". Tom Lang's book is very satisfying on all three accounts.

Tom and I share many beliefs about effective scientific writing. Authors and presenters of science should make life easy for their readers and audiences. The science is complex enough, and its audience wants to easily understand that complexity. Not only *should* authors make it easy to understand, they *can*, and Tom shows authors *how*. We also believe that presentations should be – and can be – easy to understand, and should not waste the audience's time. Slides and posters must present clear messages and be easy to see and understand, even for that poor fellow at the back who forgot his glasses. Here again, Tom shows us how.

To satisfy my wish to learn something, Tom showed me how to more effectively design tables and figures. In this excellent section, he gives us strategies to display data in such a way as to help the reader to focus on specific aspects of the data. This section is especially useful to trainers and editors. And, a section entitled "A Brief History of Scientific Publications" gives a nice overview of the evolution of scientific writing and publishing from antiquity up through recent developments.

I also gained insight into a problem that often comes up in courses on scientific writing. Most medical students write review articles early in their educational career, but quite often I find that they do not understand the value and purpose of writing review articles. This causes them confusion, and usually results in rather poor articles. In an article in the appendix, Tom presents *The Value of Systematic Reviews as Research Activities in Medical Education*. This article should be a "must-read" for all medical students – as well as their supervisors.

My critical double was, as always, very alert while I was reading and has several comments. Parts of the book present rather abstract and general ideas that do not fit the "how to" theme of the book. In the subsection "Moving from Practice Writing to Applied Writing", for example, we learn five general differences between practice and applied writing, but we do not learn *how* to "move from practice writing". The subsection on "Qualities of Effective Writing" is even more abstract and offers little that an "applied" writer can use.

Although the book gives useful details for writers, it only weakly addresses the problem of fuzzy focus that many researchers have when reporting their work. Fuzzy focus makes us – the readers – do the work of understanding the key messages. I find three problems that often cause this:

- The point of the research. If this is not clear right at the top of the Introduction, the reader has to guess at the focus, relevance, and value of the research. Journal editors reject articles for this reason. Unfortunately, I found only one example in the section on "Writing the Introduction" of how to clarify the point of the research. I would have liked to see more emphasis on this.
- Vague research questions or hypotheses. Science is based on stating and answering research questions and testing hypotheses. Readers look often in vain for clear research questions/hypotheses in the Introduction. The book, although mentioning the "importance" of research questions/hypotheses, gives no guidelines or examples of how to specifically formulate or answer them.
- Poor linking. If consecutive sentences and paragraphs
  do not clearly link to each other, the "chain" of logic is
  broken and readers get lost. Although "coherence" in
  paragraphs is briefly mentioned, readers of the book
  will acquire little practical help in logically linking
  sentences, paragraphs, and the entire text together.

Authors, editors and educators in the field of scientific communication will find *How to Write*, *Publish*, *and Present in the Health Sciences* inspiring, interesting, and an excellent source of how-to-do-it details. Although the many examples focus on the health-related sciences, those involved in other fields will find the many practical tips useful. I highly recommend it.

*Ed Hull* edhull@home.nl

#### Liaison with sister organizations

EASE Council is looking for volunteers to liaise between EASE and similar organizations.

An example is IUGS, the International Union of Geological Sciences. A copy of the IUGS journal, *Episodes*, can be sent to whoever volunteers as liaison representative. IUGS says: "IUGS is interested in increasing its involvement in education, standards and management of information

in geosciences; mainly through bodies such as the Commission on Education Training and Technology Transfer and the Commission on the Management and Application of Geoscience Information." It advises EASE to look at the possibility of collaborating with these bodies

Interested? Contact Joan Marsh (jmarsh@wiley.com).

## **EASE-Forum Digest: March to June 2010**

You can join the forum by sending the one-line message "subscribe ease-forum" (without the quotation marks) to majordomo@helsinki.fi. Be sure to send messages in plain text format; the forum software does not recognize HTML-formatted messages. More information can be found on the EASE web site (www.ease.org.uk). When you first subscribe, you will be able to receive messages, but you won't be able to post messages until your address has been added manually to the file. This prevents spam being sent by outsiders, so please be patient.

#### **Effect of frequent but thinner journals**

Climate Policy is becoming more frequent but thinner. The journal's editor, Richard Lorch, wrote that the publishers intended to increase the journal's frequency from six to eight issues a year while retaining the same annual page count. Richard wanted to know if there had been any research on reader preferences for issue frequency or if there were benefits from increased frequency.

Pippa Smart quoted research on author preferences undertaken by the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP), which had found that authors favour faster publication of research. Anecdotally, readers also perceive more frequent issues as reporting more current research and therefore consider frequent journals

of more value than infrequent ones. Angela Turner confirmed that authors had liked the faster publication times when her journal, *Animal Behaviour*, had changed from two-monthly to monthly issues. Will Hughes saw the ruse as an opportunity for the publisher to hike the price for subscribers but thought that more frequent issues had the advantage of keeping the title in the eye of the reader.

Richard was also keen to hear from editors who had experienced an increase in frequency and could advise about the impact on the editorial office. The consensus was that each issue carries its own work with compilation and planning, and editorials, which would increase proportionately regardless of the number of pages and result in more work for the editorial office.

Another consideration raised by Pippa was the increased burden on the environment and journal finances with more paper, printing, and distribution. Another solution would be to publish more issues online. Angela agreed that when only a couple of extra issues were planned, alternatives should be explored. *Animal Behaviour* supplemented its print edition with an online comment and discussion section.

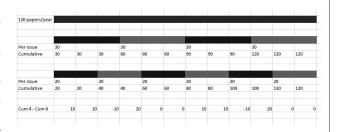
I was interested in this discussion because I thought there might be an effect on the journal's impact factor. I raised the question with Iain Craig, a bibliometrics analyst at Wiley-Blackwell publishers, who kindly explained the effect a change in journal frequency – with the number of pages remaining constant – might have on its impact factor (see box).

#### Effect of journal frequency on the impact factor

Assuming you publish 120 papers per year, then this works out as 30 papers per issue in a four-issue scenario, but 20 per issue in a six-issue scenario. If we assume each issue is published exactly three or two months apart, then on the first day of the month we can work out how many papers are in published issues at the start of each month in each scenario. The quicker you publish your papers, the quicker they can be cited, so the quicker you get your papers into issues the better. As an extreme example, if you published 120 papers in issue 1 and then nothing for the rest of the year, you would almost certainly end up with more citations than if these papers were equally spread throughout the year.

Looking at the cumulative paper counts at the end of each month, in six of the 12 months the four-issue scenario has more papers out than the six-issue scenario; in four of the 12 months there are the same number of papers in each; and in the remaining two months, there are more papers in the six-issue scenario than the four-issue scenario.

So in actual fact there is a potential citation disadvantage in going from four issues to six issues, as more often than not you end up with having fewer published papers at a given moment in time. This may be offset by additionally publishing news items, editorials, etc, which are non-



denominator items (they are not included in the number of articles used to calculate the impact factor, but the citations from the articles nevertheless contribute to the impact factor). But bear in mind that there is a practical limit to how many extra items such as these you can publish in the two additional issues, and that these items are generally not well cited.

You do also have the question of how EarlyView [Wiley's version of articles online ahead of print] will influence this. My opinion is that EarlyView accelerates citation, but that the mechanics of citation allocation by the Web of Science suggest that you make the transition from EarlyView to an issue as soon as possible to reduce the risk of any resulting citations being discarded because they were unable to match it up to the target article.

Iain Craig (Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, UK)

# Rejection for failure to comply with instructions to authors

An editorial office had returned a manuscript to Marcin Kozak's group with a note: "Reviewer's comments: Journal guidelines have not been followed. Therefore I recommend rejection." He replied, acknowledging that there had been some minor mistakes in the reference list and text layout and asking if the submission could be reconsidered when the mistakes were corrected. The collegial reply was: "Your submission will not be considered any more in our journal."

Marcin felt that the rejection and refusal to consider a resubmission was unfair, especially on non-native speakers of English who are already disadvantaged. Diana Epstein saw compliance with author instructions as a basic commodity and advocated more training for authors.

Karen Shashok had also found a dentistry journal which stated in its instructions to authors that manuscripts that did not follow all format rules correctly would be rejected immediately – but no mention was made of whether there would be an option to resubmit. Angela Turner felt that rejecting submissions on such minor technical grounds ran the risk of journals missing scientifically good papers. Will Hughes thought that, as journals tend to have specific requirements, most of which are incompatible with each other, it is unnecessarily aggressive to force every author to format a paper in every detail before the content can be reviewed for its scientific contribution.

In general the reaction from Forum participants was that most journals return submissions if the errors are such as to distract from the review process but allow a resubmission once the errors have been corrected. Correction of minor errors is normally not required until the revision stage. Diana Epstein reported that the editorial offices she works with check each submission prior to processing to the editor-in-chief and return about 80% of the submissions to the authors for correction for reasons such as authorship form not signed by each named author, no title page, no abstract, reference order incorrect, usage of et al in references, no figure legends, incorrect figure or table labels. Diana said authors want a quick turnaround time, so they need to assist in preparing their papers in accordance with the guidelines.

Mention was made during the discussion of the increasing workload of editorial offices. This increase is equalled only by the increase in the author's burden in preparing manuscripts that need to comply with the whims of individual journals. I recently had a manuscript returned from Blood (a journal which charges a submission fee of \$50 and requires a copyright transfer), with a request for resubmission because certain information (number of figures and references), although included in the electronic submission, had not been listed on the title page and the references had been placed at the end of the manuscript rather than before the tables, figure legends, and figures. An author might be forgiven for thinking that these transgressions would not have hindered a reviewer in considering the manuscript (especially one used to seeing references at the end of papers).

# Inconsistent use of non-English characters in reference lists

Say you are compiling a reference list and you want to include two articles by an author named J Kosiński. The journal that published one of the articles published the name as it is written in Polish, but the journal that published the other article simply ignored the accent on the *n* and wrote J Kosiński. Do you write J Kosiński for both references or use the names as printed in the respective journals – one reference with Kosiński and the other with Kosiński? This question was raised by Marcin Kozak. Publishers have no universally accepted procedure for "foreign" names.

Marge Berer, who frequently faced this problem, called for indexes to agree a common policy [along with all the other common policies they should be developing]. In the meantime – which will probably be a long time – Liz Wager thought you should stick to the spelling used by the original journals because if a journal can't cope with non-English characters it is unlikely that their search engines would be able to cope with them either.

By contrast, Will Hughes would certainly use the correct spelling in each case as he would worry about the adverse effect on the author's citation counts. He thought a sensible person making a search would try repeating the search without the special character.

Andrew Davis felt that journals should spell the name as provided by the author but noted that some authors tended to use the English language version of their names themselves. Helle Goldman, editor of *Polar Research*, reported that their solution is to use the spelling of the author's name as it was given in the original reference and then insert the alternative spelling in brackets.

#### **Useful macros for editors**

Paul Beverley mentioned two macros that other editors had found useful. The first is for when you are reading through a text – it looks on from the cursor position to the next number that is in figures, and converts it to words, so "3" would instantly become "three", and "56" would be turned into "fifty-six".

The second macro is more useful before you start reading: it allows you to create a list (in a Word file) of a series of find-and-replace items that you want to apply globally to your text. You can choose to highlight (in a range of colours) various changes, and the latest version allows you to have some find-and-replace items done with track changes ON and others with it OFF.

These two macros are available (along with another 100+ macros) in his free electronic book, *Macros for Editors*, available at: http://www.archivepub.co.uk/TheBook.

Elise Langdon-Neuner (compiler)
langdoe@baxter.com

Discussion initiators

Richard Lorch: r.lorch@ukonline.co.uk Marcin Kozak: nyggus@gmail.com Paul Beverley: paul@archivepub.co.uk

## My Life as an Editor - Maeve O'Connor



Life is not a metaphysical entity
The scientist said,
But a precisely patterned material structure
On an atom bed.
(MO'C)

The scientist mentioned in those unpublished lines was J D Bernal, opening a Ciba Foundation symposium I edited in 1965. My 30-year editing career at the Foundation began in 1957 after I had spent five years working as a secretary. (Back in those days secretarial work was about all that was available to arts graduates who didn't want to teach or nurse.) My "career path", if it can be so dignified, had included three years' work as a departmental secretary at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine. This experience and my school education in science subjects as well as arts encouraged me to apply for the Ciba Foundation job as an editorial assistant.

#### **Conference proceedings**

The proceedings of the Foundation's small residential conferences, held at its house in Portland Place, central London, were edited and prepared for publication by the Foundation staff and published by various publishers as the Ciba Foundation symposia series. These symposia of 25 people or so, meeting usually for three days, were unlike many other conference proceedings in that the discussions after each paper were printed in full, after being edited. The discussions were tape recorded and transcribed with the help of notes the editors took.

The proceedings were very informal and the high-powered participants (many of them past, present, or future Nobel Prize winners) didn't have to announce their names during the discussions. This meant that the editors' first job as each meeting began was to memorise who was who when people introduced themselves before the first paper of the day. We then took down as many words as we could to help our typist-transcribers to make what sense they could of what was on the tapes. Most of the meetings were on what seemed like very abstruse subjects, so the note-taking and transcribing weren't exactly easy. The rest of the work consisted of copy-editing, corresponding with authors and speakers, and proof-reading.

#### **Travelling to meetings**

The job was hard work for a non-scientist but always interesting, especially when it provided travel opportunities. I went to Foundation meetings in France, Egypt, Ethiopia, and possibly other places that I've forgotten. One year CIBA Ltd borrowed me to go to the opening of a new lab

near Bombay and edit the six lectures presented in honour of the event. Other travel opportunities came when I joined EASE's predecessor, ELSE, in the early 1970s and went to its meetings. I also went to meetings of the Council of Biology Editors (now the Council of Science Editors) in various cities in North America.

Perhaps my most interesting travel experience came when UNESCO asked me to give a writing course to agricultural students at BIOTROP in Bogor, Indonesia, early in 1983. This allowed for some sightseeing in Java and 10 days in Australia afterwards, before I had to report back to UNESCO in a very icy Paris.

#### **Writing for scientists**

Back in 1973 an ELSE meeting in Norway decided that a book on "the mysteries of writing an acceptable paper in English" was needed. Peter Woodford co-opted me as his co-author for the book, which was published by Elsevier in 1975 as Writing Scientific Papers in English: an ELSE-Ciba Foundation Guide for Authors. I later inflicted three more books on the world of science editing and writing: Editing Scientific Books and Journals (1978), How to Copyedit Scientific Books & Journals (1986), and Writing Successfully in Science (1991). Writing for scientists doesn't make one rich, but the first book sold well and provided ELSE with some useful cash for a while, which the authors later shared.

#### Changes, changes

The changes in editing since I first started work have been enormous. In 1957 our tape recorders were reel-to-reel and copies of typed material were made using carbon paper or occasionally some strange jelly-like substance. Even electric typewriters were rare or non-existent in the editorial offices, and the first massive word-processing machine, which cost some £5000, appeared only a year or so before I retired in 1987. There was of course no internet and we relied on the postal systems of the world to get edited discussions and proofs back from the symposium contributors.

#### "Retirement"

When I retired from the Foundation I became Secretary-Treasurer of EASE and spent 10 enjoyable years coping with all the things the job then involved, which included producing the bulletin/journal and, a bit later, constructing the association's first website. After the 10 years were up I was production manager for the journal for a while. Other activities in retirement had included giving a few courses on writing in science in Rome and Venice, but I am now fully retired, except that at present I am editing a book-length manuscript for a family friend. Otherwise I enjoy a fairly quiet existence in North London, campaigning against privatisation of the NHS, transferring a large collection of ancient slides of long-ago travels to disk, reading, resting, and feeding the cat.

### This Site I Like

# Untangling the chemical web with ChemSpider: a new search engine community for chemists from the Royal Society of Chemistry

#### www.chemspider.com



ChemSpider is the latest evolution of web-based search tools from the Royal Society of Chemistry. It aims "to aggregate into a single database all chemical structures available within open access and commercial databases and to provide the necessary pointers from the ChemSpider search engine to the information of interest."

At first glance the search tool itself is pretty comprehensive, trawling multiple commercial and public databases to provide the latest, impressively large, range of data associated with each compound, from basic properties to predicted properties, from patents based around that molecule to suppliers of the compound, as well as spectroscopic data and journal articles.

Although it is initially rather clunky and non-intuitive (possibly the nature of a database that is trying to collate so much varied data in a coherent way), attempts have been made to make it more user friendly, such as explanations of key identifiers and a help manual.

However, what we have here is more than just a search tool. With links to Wikipedia wherever possible, ChemSpider has embraced the community-editing generation into which it has been born, and rightly so ChemSpider encourages the ethos of Wikipedia by allowing members to upload new data and supplement existing data

with their own information. Enabling chemists to network and build their professional knowledge and connections, with a real-time interactive tool, might just be this tool's most important function.

It is also nice to see that biochemical structures are well represented. With the modern move towards interdisciplinary networking and information sharing becoming ever more important, a developing database ought to reflect this, and this one does.

ChemSpider's setup, with its open access, interdisciplinary, and community editable content, all point towards a very forward-thinking way of developing a repository, which should help it develop into a very comprehensive and even more useful tool than it already looks to be.

What should they aim to include next? Add information on existing molecules from other forms of spectroscopic analysis, particularly from x-ray crystallography? Expand the catalogue to include larger molecules such as full proteins? Or introduce connections between compounds in the database in the form of reaction pathway information (X + Y = Z)?

Though its logo might hark back to the bygone days of early computer game graphics, this search tool is far from dated. ChemSpider is adopting the most modern of approaches. We look forward to seeing the next generation of developments.

Kate Whittaker kfwhittaker@gmail.com

Elizabeth Milway elizabeth.a.milway@gmail.com

#### **Nurse Author & Editor**

#### www.NurseAuthorEditor.com

Nurse Author & Editor, published by Wiley-Blackwell, first appeared in 1991 as a print publication with inaugural editor and publisher Suzanne Hall Johnson. Now, it is published online at www.NurseAuthorEditor.com. The publication is free to subscribers and appears quarterly. One registers online and with a user name and password can access issues of the publication from 2006, and can sign up for alerts of the next issue posting via email.

Nurse Author & Editor is edited by Charon Pierson, who assumed the role in 2008. Dr Pierson also is the editor of the Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. Articles focus on writing for publication,

strategies to avoid rejection of manuscripts, locating opportunities for publishing, peer review of manuscripts, and the editing and publishing processes.

An international editorial board supports the publication. Authors too provide an international perspective. The March 2010 issue (vol 20, no 1), features topics such as:

- Developing qualitative research analyses
- Detecting and preventing plagiarism in publishing
- Peer review: good for all purposes?

In addition to the publication, the website hosts pages exclusively for authors, reviewers, and editors. On the

authors' page, subscribers are invited to access the *Writing for Publication* booklet written by Christine Webb (2009). Articles targeted toward authors include:

- · You use APA and I use AMA
- · Secrets of successful writers
- The role of editors as mentors.

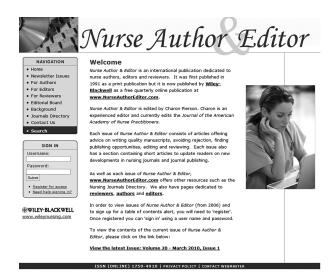
The reviewers' section features an invitation to access the *Guidebook for Manuscript Reviewers*, written by Charon Pierson and published by Blackwell in 2007. Articles for reviewers include:

- Peer review survey 2009
- Make your voice heard: how to present editorial comments verbally
- Best review practices: support nurse authors with compassionate critique.

The editors' page provides a listing of articles that may be of use to both novice and experienced individuals, such as:

- · Citation behavior
- Self-reflection along the path to writing, reviewing and editing
- Getting nurses to write: conducting writing for publication workshops.

Although it is devoted to nursing, the publication contains content of value to other professionals as well, whether in health care or not. *Nurse Author & Editor* is a useful reference on a variety of topics and can save a busy editor a lot of time. It's also a "must read" for editorial



board members and other manuscript reviewers.

Since Dr Pierson's appointment, the publication has undergone some changes, not least of which is the international perspective. The website offers many useful, free features, the best of which is probably the Journals Directory. This directory offers in one convenient location a listing of all nursing journals, both in the US and internationally, with the editor's name and email address listed, as well as access to the journal's Information for Authors.

**Belinda E Puet**z Staff Development

Editor-in-Chief, Journal for Nurses in Staff Development BEPuetz@aol.com

#### **News from EASE members**

#### Citation and website usage to assess journal emerging topics

Knowledge of emerging topics in science is of paramount importance for universities to plan new research, and for journal editors to define their publication strategy. In the era of publication on paper it was rather tedious to study emerging science. Now several electronic tools provide rapidly unprecedented information on the evolution of science topics.

We studied emerging topics in the journal *Agronomy for Sustainable Development* using ISI citation analysis, journal website usage (pdf downloads), and journal search engine (hits). The results allowed us to identify mainstream and emerging topics. We defined a new factor, the mean emergence date (MED), which makes it possible to order topics by speed of emergence.

Lichtfouse E, Hamelin M, Navarrete M, Debaeke P, Henri A. (2010) Emerging agroscience *Agronomy for Sustainable Development* 2010;30:1-10.

#### Abstract (abridged)

To analyse topic emergence we studied three data sets: most-cited articles from 1999 to 2009, topic hits in article text from 1999 to 2009, and most-downloaded articles in 2009. We found the following major points. Most-cited articles show that transgenic plants and biofuels are clearly emerging topics from 2007, whereas soil carbon and climate change are the major mainstream topics of the last 10 years. Topic hits analysis allows one to rank topics by mean emergence date (MED), e.g. 2008.3 for 'genetically modified' and 2005.3 for 'irrigation'. Accordingly, the 10 most emerging topics over 1999–2009 are biofuels, genetically modified, conservation agriculture, urban agriculture, sociology, organic farming, carbon sequestration, phytoremediation, mulch and biodiversity. Analysis of most-downloaded articles in 2009 shows the predominance of topics such as carbon, climate, biodiversity, biofuels, pollutants, beneficial microbes, transgenic plants and organic farming.

Open access URL: <a href="http://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00442308/fr/">http://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00442308/fr/</a>

Eric Lichtfouse (Eric.Lichtfouse@dijon.inra.fr)

### **News Notes**

News Notes are taken from the EASE Journal Blog (http:// ese-bookshelf.blogspot.com). Please email items for inclusion to John Hilton (hilton.john@ gmail.com) or Lionel Browne (lionel.browne@sfep.net), with "News Notes" as the subject.

TinyURLs may be given to save space and aid reading; full URLs (clickable links) can be found on the EASE Journal Blog.

#### Style guide search engine

How many style guides do you own – and/or use? Do you ever find that none of them answer your query? OnlineStylebooks.com (http://www.onlinestylebooks.com) is the place for you. Created by Mary Beth Protomastro, founder of *Copyediting* newsletter (http://www.copyediting.com), this elegant website has indexed more than 50 style guides that are available on the internet, and made them searchable via a Google-like interface. The website also gives a useful list of style guides, categorized by subject.

#### **Summer submissions**

For one leading psychology journal, Psychological Science, submissions of articles peak in the summer. A study by a group of psychologists at the University of Amsterdam, published in the April 2010 issue of Learned Publishing, tested whether this seasonal bias decreased the likelihood of a paper being accepted in that period. There was no evidence that most of the accepted publications were originally submitted in the summer, confirming that contributors submit to the journal when the likelihood of acceptance is the lowest. As this bias was not seen in a similar journal, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, the authors of the article suggest that the journal's rejection policies are the main influence. They advise authors to "write when it is hot but submit when it is not".

#### **Nature Communications**

Nature Communications (http:// www.nature.com/ncomms), a new online-only open-access journal from Nature Publishing Group, officially launched on 12 April with the aim of publishing papers that "represent important advances within specific scientific disciplines, but that might not necessarily have the scientific reach of papers published in Nature and the Nature research journals." Nature Communications has a similar approach to PLOS One, the openaccess general journal from the Public Library of Science (PLoS). Both publishers emphasize that their journals are making best use of the opportunities of open-access publishing, amid criticisms that such journals represent lower-quality bulk publishing under a respected brand umbrella.

# Guidelines for publishing acupuncture studies

The Standards for Reporting Interventions in Clinical Trials of Acupuncture (STRICTA) guidelines have been updated (http://www. stricta.info). First published in 2002 in the form of a checklist with explanations for authors and editors, these guidelines were designed to improve reporting of acupuncture trials, particularly interventions. The new guidelines, jointly developed by the STRICTA Group, the CONSORT Group, and the Chinese Cochrane Centre, have been published in PLoS Medicine, the Journal of Evidence-Based Medicine, and four acupuncture journals. The new STRICTA checklist is an official extension of CONSORT and sets out reporting guidelines for the acupuncture rationale, treatments, practitioner background, and use of controls or comparators. Examples of good reporting are also provided.

# Misconduct prompts multiple retractions

Up to 17 scientific papers published in nine journals between 2002 and 2009 will be retracted, following an investigation into scientific misconduct

by the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, USA. The papers all relate to studies of a cancer vaccine strategy, led by Mayo researcher Suresh Radhakrishnan. Concerns were raised by other researchers, who had tried unsuccessfully to replicate the work. Radhakrishnan does not contest the retractions but does insist the evidence against him is circumstantial, saying "there are multiple reasons within the realm of biology" that could explain the non-replicability, some of which were described in comments to a retraction letter in PLOS One.

#### Nature v University of California

The University of California has strongly criticized Nature Publishing Group (NPG) for journal price increases "of unprecedented magnitude". A war of words has broken out between the two organizations, with the university threatening to ask all faculty to stop submitting papers to NPG journals and to resign from NPG editorial boards if NPG didn't reconsider its pricing. NPG responded, expressing shock and accusing UC of misrepresentation and sensationalist use of data. Whatever the outcome, the argument has raised questions about who adds the most value to published research: the researchers or the publishers.

#### Library outsources proofreading

"Real" libraries are struggling for survival in the digital age - but some are fighting fire with fire. The National Library of Wales, for example, is scanning in all its documents relating to Wales. These scans are converted to OCR (optical character recognition) and then need to be proofread. For proofreading, there's the money-saving possibility of repeating a "crowdsourcing" experiment used by an Australian library, which got the public to proofread scanned texts, and found many people competing to make the most changes. (http://www.dlib.org/ dlib/march10/holley/03holley.html).

#### Science papers in South Africa

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has increased its research output and its scientific collaboration with other countries, savs an article in Science Watch (http://sciencewatch.com/ana/ fea/10mayjunFea/). In March 1995, the country's scientific profile reflected its isolation from the world community. Since then, its number of published papers and citation impact in various fields has climbed steadily, from 3300 in 1989 to over 6600 in 2008. Collaboration with authors from other countries has also increased. In plant and animal sciences, South Africa contributed 1.55% of the world's output in 2008, and it beat the world average for citations-per-paper in computer science, environment/ecology, space science, immunology, and clinical medicine.

#### Making referencing too easy?

The Open University and its partners have developed a free, open source software - MyReferences - to help students and universities manage academic references more easily. It is part of the Technology Enhanced Learning supporting students to achieve Academic Rigour (TELSTAR) project. Any institution can download it, customize it to their own needs, and integrate it into their own learning environments. This resource takes the usability of available tools a step further by integrating them into online courses so the materials students commonly need to reference are already available in the format they need. Students simply select the sources they need to reference and the referencing style their institution requires, and then copy and paste the result into their assignment. How will students ever learn to comply with journal guidelines?

#### The perils of plagiarism

A beautifully made video from the University of Bergen, Norway, illustrates the perils and pitfalls of plagiarism. Aimed primarily at students, this funny and touching film drives home the message that plagiarism can only result in humiliation and failure, while originality leads to acclaim and riches! The video, available at http://tinyurl.com/plagiarism-movie, is in Norwegian but English subtitles are available (make sure you select the caption option).



# Learn a language, adopt a national stereotype?

The multicultural membership of EASE might be interested in national stereotyping present in the language learning materials prepared by the US Foreign Service Institute. Swedish nationals are depicted as cartoon Vikings. Native Americans only appear in full traditional headdress. The countries that comprise the African francophonie are described primarily in terms of natural resources on offer. And it would be generous to say that the portrayal of Belgium is odd, says blogger Chasing Dragons (http://tinyurl. com/29wphtu). He wonders if the stereotypes are consistent in other language-learning materials, or if they have become more subtle over time. Materials that are in the public domain are available at http://www. fsi-language-courses.org/Content. php.

#### Video trumps article

The winners of *The Scientist* Video Awards (http://www.the-scientist.com/videoawards) include:

"Synaptic Cleft", a parody of rap group Wu-Tang Clan's "Gravel Pit" about neurotransmission, and "Fencing Flamingos", which follows the work of a PhD student in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, studying flamingos in the rugged High Andes of Bolivia. The harsh conditions made it challenging to make the video, but it's been worth it: "We've had more people see the video than I'll ever have reading a journal article that I write."

#### Libel law: the real fight lies ahead

Reformers need to keep up the pressure to reform English libel laws, says an editorial in Nature (22 April 2010, doi:10.1038/4641104a). Simon Singh's recent libel result is a victory for science, and the court's judgment itself may offer wider protection to scientists and writers (see http://go.nature.com/EQFfg3). But the real fight lies ahead, and the use of English libel law to stifle debate should concern all researchers. For every case that comes to court, say campaigners for reform, there are many more in which scientists who lack the resources to fight just quietly back down, or worse, censor themselves even before publishing.

#### **Authors by the gross**

After Times Higher Education reported a physics paper with 144 authors (a phenomenon familiar to EASE members), readers of THS reported even more gross examples (15 April, p29). The "HOPE study" published in the February 1996 issue of the Canadian Journal of Cardiology had a total of 718 authors. A sevenpage article in *The Lancet* in 2002 listed more than 900 authors, but the one that takes the cake is a medical report by Topol, Califf, Van de Werf, Armstrong and their 972 co-authors, published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1993 – it has 100 times as many authors as pages. For this, the four named authors shared the 1993 Ig Nobel prize for Literature.

Thanks to Margaret Cooter

### The Editor's Bookshelf

Please write to paola.decastro@ iss.it or pennylhubbard@gmail. com if you wish to send new items or become a member of the EASE journal blog (http://ese-bookshelf. blogspot.com) and see your postings published in the journal.

#### **ECONOMICS AND FUNDING**

Henderson KS, Bosch S. Seeking the new normal: periodicals price survey. Library Journal 2010; April 15. Libraries may not see a "return to normal" once the economy improves. A "new normal" requires varied approaches to services and collections. The delivery of information might become more important than ownership. Open access business models might become more attractive to avoid the costly venues of commercial publishers. Much of the data reported in the article outlines the issues that are shaping the journals marketplace. Some publishers froze 2010 prices at 2009 levels, others froze 2010 prices only for the electronic format. A quarter of academic publishers reported a 1-5% decline in orders, in particular for print format; the already rapid move from print journals to online accelerated; open access initiatives had only a modest effect on the publishing industry.

Jakobsen AK, Christensen R,
Persson R, Bartels EM, Kristensen
LE. Open access publishing;
and now, e-publication
bias. BMJ 2010;340:c2243.
"E-publication bias" is identified in
this small study of articles published
in Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases.
The research shows that author-paid
open access publishing preferentially
increases accessibility to industryfunded research, perhaps favouring
distribution of pro-industry results.
doi:10.1136/bmj.c2243

#### **EDITORIAL PROCESS**

Editorial. Exploding the myths surrounding how and why we select our research papers. Nature 2010;463:850. Nature provides some insights into its process of selecting papers, and debunks three myths about the process: (1) editors seek to boost the impact factor by selecting papers likely to have a high citation rate; (2) one negative referee will determine the fate of a submitted paper; (3) journals rely on a small number of privileged reviewers. http://www.nature.com/nature/ journal/v463/n7283/full/463850a. html

Kravitz RL, Franks P, Feldman MD, Gerrity M, Byrne C, Tierney W. Editorial peer reviewers' recommendations at a general medical journal: are they reliable and do editors care? PLoS ONE 2010;5(4):e10072 The relation between reviewers' publication recommendations and editors' decisions over a five-year period (2004-2008) at the Journal of General Internal Medicine was examined. Among the 2,264 manuscripts sent out for external peer review, just under half received reviews that were in complete agreement *not to reject*; less than 10% received reviews that were in complete agreement to reject. Reliability of reviewers' recommedations at JGIM is low vet reviewers' recommendations seemed to influence the JIGM editor's decisions significantly. Efforts are needed to improve the reliability of the peer-review process while helping editors understand the limitations of reviewers' recommendations. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0010072

Krimsky S, Sweet E. An analysis of toxicology and medical journal conflict-of-interest polices. Accountability in

Research 2009;16:235-253. A comparison of journals' conflict of interest policies can provide insight into published reports of low compliance rates and inconsistencies in disclosures by the same author in different journals. The policies of 227 medical and toxicology journals were examined for competing interest criteria, types of submissions covered, monetary or time thresholds for reporting, and penalties for violations. About 85% of journals had written policies, but for more than 75% of these, the level of specificity was minimal or non-existent, and more than 80% had minimal or narrow scope.

Pitak-Arnnop P, Sader R, Rapidis AD, Dhanutha K, Bauer U, Herve C, Hemprich A.

Publication bias in oral and maxillofacial surgery journals: an observation on published controlled trials. Journal of Cranio-Maxillofacial Surgery 2010;38(1):4-10. Publication bias compromises evidence-based practice. This study looked for publication bias in 53 published controlled trials in leading oral and maxillofacial surgery journals. Journals preferentially published controlled trials with a positive outcome (77%) and from high-income countries (74%). Single-centre trials with low sample size were published more frequently. Results suggest the possible existence of publication bias in the oral and maxillofacial surgery literature. Journals in this field should establish measures to eliminate publication bias. This was an observational study of published articles; an analysis of all submitted manuscripts would provide more accurate data. doi:10.1016/j.jcms.2009.10.005

Resnik DB, Peddada S, Brunson W Jr. Research misconduct policies of scientific journals. *Accountability in Research* 2009;16:254–267. A random sample of 399 journals were contacted, asking for details of

policies on research misconduct. Of the 197 journals that responded, 55% had a policy, but most policies didn't define misconduct and most weren't created by the journal. The existence of a misconduct policy was positively (but not significantly) associated with the journal impact factor.

Wager E, Barbour V, Yentis S, Kleinert S, COPE Council. **Retractions**: guidance from the Committee on **Publication Ethics.** *Journal of Critical* Care 2009;24:620-622. Journal editors should consider retracting a publication if the findings are unreliable (due to misconduct or honest error), inappropriately duplicated, plagiarized, or based on unethical research. In cases of inconclusive evidence, noncooperation of institutions, inability to conduct a fair investigation, or a delayed judgement, journal editors should consider issuing an expression of concern. Retractions are not usually necessary in cases of authorship changes or if small portions of the publication need correction. These guidelines also discuss the form, instigation, and timing of the retraction, and possible legal ramifications. http://publicationethics.org/ guidelines

#### **ETHICAL ISSUES**

Grant, B. Plagiarism retracts review. The Scientist 2010;1 April. A review paper was retracted from Nature Reviews Genetics because the author modified a paragraph from a manuscript she was peer reviewing for the journal Plant Science and inserted it into her own manuscript. The author said that the mistake was not intentional and partly caused by a medical condition that affected her memory and cognition. The retraction was the first ever made from any of the 15 Nature Reviews journals published by Nature Publishing Group. Editors' comments are reported, as well as the original and the paraphrased paragraphs. http://www.the-scientist.com/blog/ display/57267/

Blaustein, JD. Fraud: who is responsible? *The Scientist* 2010;29 April.

"Who is responsible for the fraudulent data making its way into publication?" asked the editor of *Endocrinology* as a paper published in his journal was being retracted due to fraud. The allegations that led to action by the US Office of Research Integrity did not come from the editors or the editor-in-chief of the journal, nor from its reviewers or readers. If a researcher simply changed a value or two in a spreadsheet, no sign might be visible to the head of the laboratory, collaborators, the journal reviewers, or the editors; discovering the fraud depends on replication of the study. Another type of fraud, plagiarism, does get discovered. The digitalization of science has made some types of fraud easier to perpetrate, but only marginally. Scientists who commit fraud believe they will get away with it, and some do, in the short term. Everyone must be vigilant; when data are suspect, they must be investigated by the appropriate body and not swept under the rug. "The system works, but sometimes too slowly," this editor

http://www.the-scientist.com/news/display/57386/

Hutchinson L, DeVita VT. Conflict of interest disclosures. Nature Reviews Clinical Oncology 2010;7:1 Although the ICMJE uniform requirements for disclosure of competing interests are welcome, all journals still rely on authors to disclose all information that may be perceived as relevant. If an individual does not wish to disclose information, there is no universal form that will avoid this problem. Journals can experience harsh criticism if an author is discovered not to have disclosed competing interest, but how do journals police this? Disclosure forms also do not prevent scientific fraud. The best deterrent to fraud is the scientific process itself. doi:10.1038/nrclinonc.2009.215 http://www.nature.com/

nrclinonc/journal/v7/n1/full/nrclinonc.2009.215.html

#### INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

Hrynaszkiewicz I, Norton ML, Vickers AJ, Altman DG. Preparing raw clinical data for publication: guidance for journal editors, authors, and peer reviewers. *Trials* 2010;11:28.

Many journals require authors to make their raw, unprocessed data available to other scientists, but there is little information on how these data should be prepared for publication and sharing. In clinical research, patients' privacy and consent for use of personal health information are key considerations, but definitions of anonymized patient information have not been agreed. The authors propose a minimum standard for de-identifying datasets for the purposes of publication in a peerreviewed biomedical journal, or for sharing with other researchers. Basic advice on file preparation is provided along with procedural guidance on prospective and retrospective publication of raw data, with an emphasis on randomized controlled trials.

doi:10.1186/1745-6215-11-9

# Kramer D. Roundtable participants find near-consensus on free access to results of publicly funded research.

Physics Today 2010; March. With the recommendations of an advisory committee on scientific publishing in hand, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy has begun moving toward a policy that will require all federal agencies to provide free access to all scholarly articles based on the research they fund. One outstanding question that will have major economic ramifications for the publishers of scientific journals is just how long an exclusivity window publishers will have before significant contents of their journals become freely available on online platforms.

http://ptonline.aip.org/journals/doc/PHTOAD-ft/vol\_63/iss\_3/26\_1.shtml?bypassSSO=1

#### **LANGUAGE AND WRITING**

Mungra P, Webber P. Peer review process in medical research publications: language and content comments. English for Specific Purposes 2010;29(1):43-53 This study analyzes the peer review comments of articles written by Italian medical and clinical research scientists and submitted to reputable English language journals. It is aimed at establishing the most frequent types of comments to identify the most frequent linguistic problems by Italian researchers. Comments were mainly about scientific and methodological content, followed by lexical and grammatical errors, clarity, and verbosity or repetition. The ability to describe procedures and to express concepts clearly is of prime importance to peer reviewers. These results can be helpful for preparing courses or materials for training future researchers, and to improve authors' chance of publishing in journals with high impact factors. doi:10.1016/j.esp.2009.07.002

#### **PUBLISHING**

Blessinger K, Hrycaj P. Highly cited articles in library and information science: an analysis of content and authorship trends. Library & Information Science Research 2010;32(2):156-62 Thirty two high impact journal articles, published in the period 1994–2004 and influential to scholarly communication in library and information sciences, are identified and examined. Journal distributions, major subject themes, and general authorship characteristics of these articles are compared to the majority of scholarly articles published in the field during the same period. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2009.12.007

Vlachaki A, Urquhart C. Use of open access journals in biomedicine in Greece. Library Management 2010;31(1/2):19–26 Examines the impact of open access initiatives on biomedical scientific publishing and scholarly communication in Greece. Findings

are preliminary as they come from a longitudinal study that uses bibliometrics, questionnaire surveys, and interviews to examine knowledge, awareness, and attitudes towards open access. The bibliometric research indicates that Greek biomedical publications are increasing, but that coverage of Greek medical journals in databases as Medline is decreasing. doi:10.1108/01435121011013368

#### RESEARCH EVALUATION

Buela-Casal G. Scientific journal impact indexes and indicators for measuring researchers' **performance.** Revista de Psicodidactica 2010;15(1):3-19 Scientific productivity is a key factor in granting funding for projects. In most cases, productivity indicators are based on data extracted from the Institute for Scientific Information's database. The paper describes and classifies the most relevant indicators for measuring the output, productivity, and impact of researchers' performance: journal impact factor, impact factor of papers, weighted impact factor, accumulated impact factor, impact factor of author, immediacy index, h-index, and others. The paper also advises on using different indices.

#### **SCIENCE**

Bacchetti P. Current sample size conventions: flaws, harms, and alternatives. BMC Medicine 2010;8:17. The widespread belief that, to be scientifically sound, medical research studies need a statistical power of at least 80% is seriously flawed. Standard calculations are unreliable, and move focus away from studies' more important results: estimates and confidence intervals. Current conventions may harm the research process in many ways, including promoting misinterpretation, giving reviewers inappropriate powers, and inhibiting innovation. Medical research would benefit from alternative approaches. Peer reviewers should consider whether or not to raise issues of "inadequate" sample

size, and reports of completed studies should not discuss power. http://www.biomedcentral. com/1741-7015/8/17/abstract

Fanelli D. "Positive" results increase down the hierarchy of the sciences. PLoS ONE 2010;5(4):e10068 The hypothesis of a hierarchy of the sciences - with physical sciences at the top, social sciences at the bottom, and biological sciences in between is nearly 200 years old, but whether disciplines really differ in hardness and can be ranked accordingly is still controversial. Does a hierarchy of sciences exist? This study compared 2434 scientific papers published in all disciplines and that stated to have tested a hypothesis and adopted the hypotetico-deductive method of scientific inquiry. Results support, on one hand, the existence of a hierarchy, in which scientific rigour and objectivity are roughly inversely proportional to the complexity of the subject matter. On the other hand, results also support the scientific status of the social sciences: when they adopt a scientific approach to discovery, they differ from the natural sciences only by a matter of degree. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0010068

Sigfried T. Odds are, it's wrong. Science fails to face the shortcomings of statistics. ScienceNews 2010;177:7 Science has long been married to mathematics, and mathematical methods have secured science's fidelity to fact and have given reliability to findings. Then science was seduced by statistics. The author says that even when performed correctly, statistical tests are widely misunderstood and frequently misinterpreted. The standard statistical system for drawing conclusions is, in essence, illogical. Statisticians themselves caution against mistaking statistical significance for practical importance, but scientific papers commit that error often.

Thanks to Anna Maria Rossi, John Hilton, Massimo Antonucci, and Margaret Cooter.

### Forthcoming Meetings, Courses, and BELS Examinations

#### SfEP 21st annual conference: Succeeding through Innovation

4-6 September 2010; Glasgow, UK http://www.sfep.org.uk/pub/confs/conf10/conf2010\_advance.asp

# ALPSP International Conference 2010

8 September 2010; Wyboston, UK http://www.alpsp.org/ngen\_public/ article.asp?aid=131503

#### Technical Communication UK Annual Conference

21–23 September 2010; Thame, UK http://www.

## technicalcommunicationuk.com

#### Association of Earth Science Editors Annual Meeting

20–23 September 2010; Victoria, BC, Canada http://www.aese.org/shell.html

## International Society of Managing

#### and Technical Editors (ISMTE) European Conference

19 October 2010; Oxford, UK http://www.ismte.org/

#### **Berlin 8 Open Access**

25–27 October 2010; Beijing, China http://oa.mpg.de/openaccess-beijing/ index.html

#### Mediterranean Editors and Translators Meeting 2010 (METM10)

28–30 October 2010; Tarragona, Spain http://www.metmeetings.org/index.php?page=metm10\_call

# National Association of Science Writers: Annual Meeting

4–9 November 2010, New Haven, USA http://www.nasw.org/meeting/

# **Knowledge Globalization Conference 2010**

5–7 November 2010, Boston, USA http://www.kglobal.org

#### 11th Annual EMBO/EMBL Science and Society Conference: The Difference between the Sexes – From Biology to Behaviour

5–6 November 2010; Heidelberg, Germany http://www.embo.org/events

#### 31st European Medical Writers Association Conference

11–13 November 2010; Nice, France http://www.emwa.org/Conferences.

#### **Society of Editors Annual Conference**

14–16 November 2010; Glasgow, UK http://www.societyofeditors.co.uk

#### Eastern Mediterranean Medical Journalism Conference

3–5 December 2010; Karachi, Pakistan www.emro.who.int/EMAME

#### American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting: Science without Borders

17–21 February 2011; Washington, DC, USA http://www.aaas.org/meetings

#### **COURSES**

# ALPSP training courses, briefings and technology updates

Half-day and one-day courses and updates. Contact Amanda Whiting, Training Coordinator, Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, Tel: +44 (0)1865 247776; training@ alpsp.org; www.alpsp-training.org

# Publishing Training Centre at Book House, London

Contact: The Publishing Training Centre at Book House, 45 East Hill, Wandsworth, London SW18 2QZ, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 8874 2718; fax +44 (0)20 8870 8985, publishing. training@bookhouse.co.uk www.train4publishing.co.uk

#### **Society for Editors and Proofreaders**

SfEP runs one-day workshops in London and occasionally elsewhere in the UK on copy-editing, proofreading, grammar, and much else. Training enquiries: tel: +44 (0)20 8785 5617; trainingenquiries@sfep.org.uk Other enquiries: SfEP, Erico House, 93-99 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, London SW15 2TG, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 8785 5617; administration@sfep. org.uk; www.sfep.org.uk

#### **Society of Indexers workshops**

The Society of Indexers runs workshops for beginners and more experienced indexers in various cities in the UK. Details and booking at www.indexers.org.uk; admin@indexers.org.uk

#### **University of Chicago**

Medical writing, editing, and ethics are among the many courses available. Graham School of General Studies, The University of Chicago, 1427 E. 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, USA. Fax +1 773 702 6814. http://grahamschool.uchicago.edu

# **University of Oxford, Department** for Continuing Education

Courses on effective writing for biomedical professionals and on presenting in biomedicine, science, and technology.

Contact Leanne Banns, CPD Centre, Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, Littlegate House, 16/17 St Ebbes Street, Oxford OX1 1PT, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1865 286953; fax +44 (0)1865 286934; leanne.banns@ conted.ox.ac.uk www.conted.ox.ac.uk/cpd/personaldev

# BELS - Board of Editors in the Life Sciences examination schedule

See: www.bels.org/becomeeditor/exam-schedule.htm

5 September 2010, Toyko, Japan; register by 15 August

10 November 2010, Milwaukee, WI; register by 20 October

20 November 2010, Park Ridge, NJ; register by 30 October

# Instructions to Authors contributing to European Science Editing

European Science Editing welcomes contributions related to the editing and management of publications in the sciences. Submissions in the categories listed below are accepted, as well as suggestions about articles, books for review or websites of interest to editors in the sciences.

#### **Contributions**

Contributions should be sent to the appropriate section editor, listed below. A copy should also be sent to the Chief Editor (MoiraAJohnson@googlemail.com).

Contributions should be sent by email (see File format below).

Duplicate publication (publication of items that overlap substantially with any already published) is to be avoided. Where a contribution is based on previously published material this should be declared at the time of submission; it does not preclude publication, provided that original analysis or opinion is offered. In particular, authors are requested to consult the Chief Editor if the same or very similar work has been published elsewhere in a language other than English.

Data contained in contributions are assumed not to have been falsified. Current codes of ethics in appropriate professional fields apply.

All material is subject to editing.

Copyright in contributions belongs to the author.

#### **Journal sections**

*Editorials* are usually commissioned, but spontaneous submissions are also welcome. Editorials should represent the opinions of the author and not suggest that they are those of EASE. Editorials should be submitted to the Chief Editor (MoiraAJohnson@googlemail.com).

Original articles will be subject to review. Final acceptance or rejection is decided by the Publications Committee. Articles should be up to 3200 words long and should include an abstract of up to 200 words. If articles report research data, they should follow the IMRaD format (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) and include a structured abstract with four headings: Background, Methods, Results, and Conclusion. Original articles should be submitted to Stuart Handysides (stuart\_handysides@hotmail.com).

*Essays* on topics of editorial interest are welcomed. These may be up to 2400 words long, and should be referenced as appropriate. They should be sent to Marcin Kozak (nyggus@gmail.com).

*Viewpoints* represent the opinions or personal experiences of the author. Items of up to 800 words should be submitted to the Chief Editor in the first instance (MoiraAJohnson@googlemail.com).

*Editing Around the World* focuses on specific aspects of editing in a particular country. Suggestions for contributions should be sent to Dario Sambunjak (dario.sambunjak@mef.hr).

**Correspondence** is welcomed on items that have appeared in recent issues of the journal and matters related to the editing and management of publications (mcooter3@gmail. com).

**Reports of Meetings** are coordinated by Sharon Davies (sdavies@bmj.com) and should be planned before the meeting. All proposals for such reports are welcome. *Meeting reports: suggestions for presentation* 

- A report should be between 100 and 800 words, depending on the length of the meeting and the novelty of the material.
- Describe only those presentations and other contributions that you believe will interest *ESE* readers.
- Concentrate on new information rather than opinion.
   If you quote numbers, please check them. If you can supply references, so much the better, but please limit these to about five.
- If discussion of a paper reaches a consensus, record it.
- Give the names and brief institutional addresses of contributors whose presentations you report.
- Be prepared for your report to be edited for length and style; the organizational delights and downfalls of conferences are particularly vulnerable. You will be sent an edited text.
- Write up your contribution as soon as the meeting ends, to capitalize on its impact.

The EASE-Forum Digest is compiled by Elise Langdon-Neuner (langdoe@baxter.com). The objective is to summarize the discussions of recent months. The compiler may ask initiators of some discussions to provide a concise summary or rewrite their contributions for other sections of European Science Editing.

**Books for Review** should be sent to Moira Johnson, who commissions reviews and coordinates the review process (MoiraAJohnson@googlemail.com).

*This Site I Like* aims to present readers with on overview of useful web-based resources., and can focus on one or several related websites. Contributions should be sent to the Chief Editor (MoiraAJohnson@googlemail.com).

**News Notes** is compiled by Lionel Browne (lionel.browne@ sfep.net) and John Hilton (hilton.john@gmail.com), who will be glad to receive short news items related to editing, publishing, and managing journals, including items from non-English-speaking countries.

*News from Editing Societies* is under the editorship of Sharon Davies (sdavies@bmj.com).

Forthcoming Meetings and Courses: information for inclusion in this list should be sent to Sharon Davies (sdavies@bmj.com).

The *Editor's Bookshelf* is coordinated by Paola de Castro (paola.decastro@iss.it) and Penny Hubbard (pennylhubbard@gmail.com). Details of suitable articles or books should be sent to one of the compilers. Details of publications in European languages other than English are welcome. The *EASE Journal Blog* (http://ese-bookshelf. blogspot.com) can be accessed via the EASE website. For an invitation to join the blog (which enables you to post to it directly) please contact the coordinator.

#### File format and text style

Longer items such as articles should be sent as email attachments; other items may be sent either as attachments or in the body of an email message. All files must be checked for viruses before being submitted.

*Text* should be sent in Microsoft Word (.doc extension), preferably in 12-point Times New Roman. Do not use any special styles.

For Word documents, accents and text in italics or bold lettering will be recognized by the desktop publishing software. Remove any endnotes, running heads, page numbers, or page divisions before saving the final version of the file.

*Headings*: use bold type for a level 1 heading and italics for a level 2 heading. Avoid level 3 headings.

*Tables* should be sent in a separate file from the text. Please submit tables in Microsoft Word documents (not as spreadsheets or .tif). For guidance on the presentation of Tables please refer to chapter 2-2.3, "Editing and design of tables", in the *Science Editors' Handbook*.

*Figures* must be in sharp focus and of high resolution (300 dpi, minimum width 12 cm). Each figure should be sent in a separate file saved in .tif or .jpg format. For guidance on the presentation of Figures please refer to chapter 2-2.1, "Illustration basics", in the *Science Editors' Handbook*.

#### Style

Use the spelling of the Oxford English Dictionary (Concise or Shorter), including -ize, -ization where appropriate. Use inclusive language (non-sexist, non-racist).

Avoid footnotes and avoid abbreviations other than

SI units and any others that are widely accepted and understood. Explain all abbreviations when they are first mentioned.

Write numbers one to nine in full in the text, except when they are attached to units of measure. Use double quotation marks, with single quotation marks only for quotations within quotations.

#### Citations in the text

For citations in the text, use consecutive numbers, given as superscripts.

#### Reference list style

Please use Vancouver style (see www.icmje.org, sectionIV.A.9). Journal titles should be written in full, as should page ranges:

Adam A, Eve Z. Eating apples can be dangerous. *Journal of Food Information* 1997;8(1):51–59.

Adam A, Eve Z. Eating apples can be dangerous. In: Smith J (ed). *The Wisdom of Eating Fruit*. Eden: JC Publications, 2000 BC:1-99.

References to electronic sources should include the web address (URL) and the date the reference was accessed:

Adam A, Eve Z. Eating apples can be dangerous. *Journal of Food Information* 1997;8(1):51–59. www. jfi.org.il/volume8(1)/Adam/apple.pdf [accessed 2005 January 1].

Accuracy of references is the responsibility of the author(s).

#### **Deadlines and proofs**

Deadline dates for contributions other than articles, review articles and viewpoints are December 15, March 15, June 15 and September 15, for the February, May, August and November issues, respectively. Articles, review articles and viewpoints should be submitted one month earlier than those dates.

Proofs (PDF files) will be sent to authors.

#### **EASE** website

All material published in *ESE* will be reproduced on the EASE website. The current issue of *ESE* will be located in the members-only area; older issues will be generally available. The version of any item on the website will reflect exactly the content of the printed issue, and no changes will be permitted to the pdf after uploading; this includes changes to contact details, which should be submitted for inclusion in the Membership List Additions and Changes section of each issue.

### **EASE Business**

### EASE Ninth Annual General Meeting, Turin, Italy, 3 July 2010

The 2010 AGM was held in Turin on 3 July as several members of Council were representing EASE at the EuroScience Open Forum. In addition to Council, we were delighted to welcome Silvia Maina, Judy Baggott, and Frans Meyman.

Joan Marsh gave the President's Report of Council activities since the AGM in Pisa, last September. Arjan Polderman presented the accounts on behalf of Rod Hunt, the Treasurer, and Moira Johnson reported the work of the Publications Committee.

We were delighted that Philip Campbell, Editor-in-Chief of *Nature*, accepted our invitation to give a short talk after the AGM, at which EASE members were joined by some of the students attending ESOF. Two views of his talk follow.

# **Key communication challenges for scientists and for** *Nature*

The Editor-in-Chief of *Nature*, Philip Campbell, outlined the benefits of modern technology for science publishing, particularly the increased accessibility it has brought journals for the presentation of important data.

Citing the case of the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella vaccination) debate in the UK and how this had influenced parents, Dr Campbell underlined the need for balanced reporting of science which would affect the general public. He said: "If you're going to craft messages to the public, you need to work with the public."

He discussed several areas of science publishing that editors could make more use of. He feels that blogging is an area underused by academics, who prefer to continue to use more traditional methods of communication. Interestingly for many of us at EASE, Dr Campbell informed us of *Nature*'s i-phone application. This allows readers access to both the journal and its magazine section, and also allows his publishing group to track the way the publications are accessed. So far this application has been downloaded by 45,000 i-phone users.

Dr Campbell said that a method of identifying authors who might be cited differently in various sources would be of great value to editors and scientists in ensuring their absolute identity. ORCID (http://www.orcid.org/) aims to do this.

*Nature* is becoming increasingly known for conducting and publishing its own original research, for example on the accuracy of information databases. This is a way in which the journal has been proactive in undertaking research and at the same time enhancing its reputation.

Dr Campbell's willingness to accept new ideas and technologies was thought-provoking and encouraging, especially in a field where academics tend to be conservative in their outlook. –Samantha Jeffery (secretary@ease.org.uk)

#### **Rambling with Phillip Campbell**

In a talk immediately following the AGM, Philip Campbell, the Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Nature*, invited his audience to join him for a ramble – a relaxed, informal, convivial stroll through an editorial landscape characterized by a number of interesting challenges.

One was described as the challenge of being understood. Research shows that scientists are the most trusted source, along with family and social networks, but according to Campbell scientists' most important messages will work only "if they are crafted together with the public". He gave the example of the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccination campaign, which pitted the authoritative Centres for Disease Control (CDC) against a noisy antivaccination lobby in vying for parents' attention. The anti-vaccination lobby proved to be much more adept at harnessing the new media and tapping directly into the public's anxieties and concerns. He chided academics for being reticent about using such powerful communication tools as blogs.

Campbell said he is eagerly exploring the opportunities for *Nature* to improve science communication and outreach, using some of these new media and technologies. He said a new, dedicated *Nature* iPhone applet has been extremely successful, totaling 45,000 downloads in a short period, compared with a print circulation of 55,000 copies, and he indicated the iPad would be the next conquest. As he put it, the print format is alive and well, but printing itself is dying.

The ramble concluded with some miscellaneous observations. Open Access is already a reality, Campbell said, and willing authors can pay \$5000 to have their papers published by *Nature* under the open access rules. A bigger challenge is the lack of centralized storage and access to shared databases. In this context, he cited CrossRef as a successful cooperative effort among publishers to enable linking of citations across online journals, irrespective of the publisher. At present, there are no similar plans concerning databases.

We also learned that *Nature* has been looking at surveys and other research that might help it better understand its readership and how to hold readers' interest. Surprisingly – or perhaps not so surprisingly – a peer-reviewed comparison of articles from Wikipedia and the Encyclopaedia Britannica showed that both reference works were rated about the same. It wasn't clear exactly what this might mean, but it certainly caught the public's attention. The same applies to this little nugget: 30% of academics polled (1400 responded to the survey) said they use cognition enhancing drugs. Campbell's point was that even highly serious and well-known journals like *Nature* may need the occasional "scoop" to keep themselves imprinted on and visible in the public's mind. –Alison Clayson (alison@clayson.org)

#### **Innovative guidelines**

We recently nominated the EASE Guidelines for Authors and Translators of Scientific Articles to be Published in English (http://www.ease.org.uk/guidelines/index.shtml, issued in May 2010 and updated in June), for the ALPSP Award for Publishing Innovation 2010.

In late June, the judges for this award considered "the originality and innovative qualities of each application, together with its utility, benefit to its community and long term development prospects". Afterwards, Lesley Ogg of ALPSP informed us that the judges "were not sure that the Award for Publishing Innovation was the right place for the guidelines. They do, however, recognise that they meet a very real need and very much hope that EASE will be able to secure sufficient endorsement from editors for the guidelines to become a recognised standard."

The guidelines are currently available as downloadable PDFs in English, Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Italian, and Estonian, and translations into Polish, Romanian, Vietnamese, Czech, and Dutch are in progress. The lead author, Sylwia Ufnalska (sylwia.ufnalska@gmail.com), invites volunteers to translate the guidelines into other languages or to submit new short appendices on selected subjects. In the future we plan to add more appendices on specific subjects and to review all the recommendations annually.

In the first six weeks after publication, there were over 1800 visits to the guidelines page on the EASE website. We have received positive comments from many members and non-members. In July our members distributed printed copies of the guidelines (mostly sponsored by Waleria Młyniec) at the EuroScience Open Forum in Turin and at the 18th International AIDS Conference in Vienna.

If authors and translators follow these guidelines before submission, their manuscripts will be more likely to be accepted for publication. Moreover, the editorial process will probably be faster, so authors, translators, reviewers, and editors will save time. All this should improve the efficiency of scientific communication worldwide.

#### Elsewhere in this issue

See page 81 for "News from EASE members", and meet the new members of the Publications Committee on pages 69 and 74.

#### **EASE workshop at EuroScience Open Forum in Turin**

We ran a highly successful workshop during the Careers section of the recent ESOF meeting in Turin. "Misconduct in science communication and the role of editors as science gatekeepers" opened with an introductory overview by Arjan Polderman on the various roles of editors. Reme Melero then gave more details of types of misconduct, introducing characters such as Mrs Redundancy and Mr Ghost, complete with entertaining illustrations. Plagiarism and how editors should deal with it was covered by Ana Marušić. The session closed with a personal account by Sylwia Ufnalska of her experience as an author's editor and translator.

The session was attended by 30 delegates, who posed several questions at the end and stayed to talk with the individual speakers. The session generated advance publicity in the form of an article by Núria Llavina Rubio on the ESOF website (www.en.globaltalentnews.com/esof/4182/Avoiding-more-than-just-plagiarism.html#), and Ana gave an interview to a journalist after the session.

#### More visibility for ESE – now indexed in Scopus

*European Science Editing* is now indexed in Scopus - the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature and quality web sources. It has tools to track, analyze and visualize research. (For a more detailed description go to http://info.scopus.com/scopus-in-detail/facts.)

The Journal analyser shows results for *European Science Editing* (in February 2010, to the end of 2009):

Year	SJR*	SNIP*	Citations	Documents
2007	0.030	0.250	3	43
2008	0.032	0.125	15	42
2009	0.049	0.025	12	42

Increasing numbers of citations according to the two measures (SJR and SNIP) since 2007 mean that the profile of *European Science Editing* has increased, with more authors citing work published in our journal.

\*SJR – the SCImago Journal Rank indicator – expresses the mean weighted citations received in the selected year, according to the number of documents published in the journal in the previous three years; SNIP is the ratio of a journal's citation count per paper and the citation potential in its subject field. SNIP is based on the idea that the probability of an n-year old paper in a particular field being cited is directly proportional to the frequency at which articles in the field cite other n-year old documents.



EASE members with speaker Philip Campbell after the AGM in Turin, 3 July 2010

#### Tallinn 2012 – EASE goes to the Baltic

The venue for the 11th EASE Conference will be the beautiful historic city of Tallinn in Estonia. Mare-Anne Laane will be our local representative. She developed an excellent proposal, covering the conference venue, locations for a reception and the conference dinner, accommodation possibilities and transport connections to Europe – accompanied by a detailed budget.

The conference will run from Friday lunchtime to Sunday lunchtime: this is based on feedback from members and involves minimal time away from work and requires only two nights' accommodation. The provisional date is June 2012 – watch the EASE website for details.

We welcome suggestions for topics, speakers, or even an overall theme. Please send ideas to Arjan Polderman (a.k.s.polderman@pw.nl).

Council also received an excellent proposal from Eva Baranyiová to host the conference in Brno in the Czech Republic. Tallinn "got the nod" as it has better transport links. We thank Eva for her hard work in preparing the proposal and hope that EASE may be able to visit Brno for an event in the future.



#### Paris luncheon draws EASE members

Twelve members of EASE/France gathered during early May for an informal luncheon at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, overlooking the Eiffel Tower and the Ecole Militaire, where cadets could be seen exercising their mounts. Hervé Maisonneuve, former president of EASE, and Susan Schneegans of UNESCO helped to organize the meeting. Other attendees came from as far away as Nantes and Dijon.

The luncheon was primarily a get-acquainted occasion, but members were pleased to discover their common concerns and expressed interest in making such gatherings a regular event. A second luncheon has been provisionally scheduled for November 2010, with the possibility of holding an editorial discussion on a specific topic beforehand.

Eric Lichtfouse of France's Department of Environment and Agronomy displayed a book he has recently published on scientific writing, and later he circulated a PowerPoint he uses in training. It was agreed that EASE members in France have much valuable experience to share, and the luncheon may be the start of a new EASE tradition.

#### **Membership changes**

#### **New Members**

Individual
 Dr Rachel J Carol
 Juvisy-sure-Orge, France

#### Dr Bikal Ghimire

Lalitpur, Nepal *Editor, Journal of Institute of Medicine* bikalghimire@gmail.com

#### Dr David A Cruikshank

SIPRI, Solna, Sweden Managing Editor, SIPRI Yearbook; Director of Publications

#### Professor Roya Kelishadi

Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran Editor-in-Chief, International Journal of Preventive Medicine & Journal of Isfahan Medical School kelishadi@ijpm.ir

#### **Professor Ines Konestra**

Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, University of Rijeka, Croatia Fluminensia- Journal for Philological Research ines.konestra@ri.t-com.hr

#### Ms Suzanne Lapstun

Paris, France *UNESCO Publications* s.lapstun@gmail.com

#### Ms Anne Murray

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#### **Ms Janine Treves**

Charenton-le-Pont, France *UNESCO Publications* janine.th@worldonline.fr

#### Dr Theresa Visarius

Hasle b. Burgdorf, Switzerland theresa@visarius.ch

Corporate

SENSE
Ms Susan Bos
Hoorn, The Netherlands

• Change in details

#### Ms Marian Kent

marian.everett.kent@gmail.com

### Opportunities with EASE

#### **New Website Manager required**

EASE needs a volunteer to join the Publications Committee and take responsibility for the website. This is not a technical post: it involves loading and managing content, not building the site. Emma Campbell has been running this for a few years but now has a new full-time position: we are very grateful to Emma for all her work on the website and wish her luck with her new job. If you are interested, please contact Joan Marsh (jmarsh@wiley.com).

#### EASE Secretary - 2011

We need a new Secretary to start next year. As you know, Sheila Evered did a fantastic job for three years, then has continued to manage the membership this year as an interim arrangement. Samantha Jeffrey has been covering the general adminstrative duties and has provided excellent support but now has to focus on a full-time career. We will miss them both, though I'm sure they will stay in contact with EASE.

The position involves managing the membership subscriptions, handling all general enquiries and supporting the President and Council in various EASE activities. It should take about two days per week and there is an honorarium attached. Please contact Joan Marsh (jmarsh@

wiley.com) for further details. We would like the position to be filled by an EASE member but that is not essential, so please forward details to any friends/colleagues who might be interested in a part-time job working from home.

#### **EASE training course, February 2011**

One frequent request from our members is for more training events. We are therefore very pleased to announce that Pippa Smart (an EASE member) has offered to run her course, "How to be a successful journal editor", for EASE members. Pippa teaches this course annually for ALPSP in the UK. For EASE, she has kindly agreed to travel to Warsaw, Poland, where Edward Towpik will host the course on behalf of the National Cancer Center and the Nowotwory Journal of Oncology. We hope that this will make the course more accessible to our members, particularly those in central and eastern Europe.

The course will be held the weekend of 5th/6th February 2011. Accommodation will be available in a nearby hotel but will not be included in the course, so that people may make their own arrangements if they prefer. More details will be circulated soon by email. Anyone interested in attending should contact the EASE secretary (secretary@ease.org.uk).

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