From the Editors' Desks

In this issue

If you didn't attend the Pisa conference, you now have a chance to catch up with what went on. Three of the presentations are reprinted in the Essays section (p4), and among the Reports of Meetings (p14) you can read about the workshop for managers of journal editorial offices.

In the Viewpoints section, Michael Jubb reports on the Research Information Network's attempts to provide a standardized format for acknowledging the funders of research – why are publishers not taking up these recommendations?

Also, on p17 the Correspondence on improving the format of posters continues, and on p22 you can learn how to get to grips with your PDFs.

EASE Website

The website is continually being developed so do visit it for the latest information and job advertisements. Newsletters of past conferences are now on the website, on the "EASE Conference" page.

Changes in the EASE office

As you know, Sheila Evered planned to give up being EASE Secretary at the end of 2009, but we are delighted to say she is staying on as Membership Secretary. As from 1 January 2010, Samantha Jeffery became EASE Secretary with responsibility for everything EXCEPT:
- Membership
- Subscriptions to European Science Editing
- Purchases of the Science Editors' Handbook

These remain Sheila's responsibility.

The address of the Association will remain the same, but contact details are now:
EASE Secretary:
Samantha Jeffery
secretary@ease.org.uk
+44 (0)800 098 8853
Membership Secretary:
Sheila Evered
membership@ease.org.uk
+44 (0)118 970 0322

Contributions for next issue

The copy date for the May issue is 15 March. Please send contributions to the appropriate member of the publications committee (see the list on the left) by then.

Editorial

The President's outlook

In the United States the President delivers a State of the Nation address, while in the UK the Queen's Speech describes planned legislation for each forthcoming parliamentary session. This editorial, written near the start of my term as EASE President, reviews our current activities and outlines plans and opportunities for the next three years.

I decided to begin by assessing how we were performing against our aims, only to discover that these are not explicitly stated anywhere! Our tagline is "Skills - Communication - Fellowship" and we claim to represent those "who share an interest in science communication and editing". This suggests that our aim is to improve the quality of science communication through enhancing skills and disseminating best practice, while facilitating networking among all those working in our field. So, how do we do this, and are we succeeding?

Communication—the journal

We publish a quarterly journal, *European Science Editing (ESE)*, with a mixture of original articles and viewpoints plus many special sections. The journal has evolved over the years, graduating from a bulletin that comprised a few pages stapled together, to a thoroughly professional publication. One aim for 2010 is to digitize our complete archive of *ESE* and its predecessor, *Earth Science Editing*, going back to the first issue in 1975.

Membership surveys show that *ESE* is regarded as one of our strongest assets, and the feedback we have received is all positive. In order that we don't become complacent, I am hoping to instigate a competitor analysis (spot the book commissioner!) so that we can see what similar journals are publishing, benefit from their good ideas, and be warned by their weaknesses. We will also review our institutional subscriptions and see whether we can increase the number of libraries that take *ESE*, either in print or electronically.

Communication—the website

Our website continues to expand as we try to accommodate members' requests and provide more services, which means more and more work for our Website Editor, Emma Campbell. Until now, only Emma has been able to add content but we are extending this facility to our new Secretary, Samantha Jeffrey, who will be able to load general information and news from Council directly. This should enhance our communication with both our members and the outside world.

Emma has introduced several new sections over the past two years: Jobs (one of the most frequently visited pages,

and a service we plan to publicize more widely); Register of Trainers and Training Courses (this is poorly supported, so we need to think about how this can be developed into a more useful service); and, most recently, a site for members' publications pertaining to science editing – we will be interested to see how this develops. It was proposed by Armen Gasparyan, a new member from Armenia, currently working in the UK. We welcome further suggestions from our members regarding all EASE activities.

Communication—social media

Last year, we resolved a problem with our database and gained the ability to send emails to all the membership, allowing the Secretary to send news alerts keeping people in touch between issues of *ESE*. Now we have taken a further step with the creation of the EASEeditors Twitter account. We appreciate that "tweeting" is not for everyone: we will use it to complement our traditional means of communication, not replace them. It may prove useful for a section of our membership and should bring us to the notice of a wider community interested in science editing and publishing.

We have also launched EASE accounts on Facebook and LinkedIn. The first should be known to all of you, by name if not as users. LinkedIn is a professional networking site that I hope will bring EASE to the attention of a wider range of professionals in science editing and publishing. As with our Twitter account, the aim will be to reach people interested in our activities who may not have heard about us in other ways. In all cases, users are directed to the EASE website, and any important developments will be summarized in *ESE*. I would encourage all of you who have accounts with any of these sites to link to the EASE one and to contribute to the conversations thereon. Don't forget we also have entries for EASE and the journal on Wikipedia: all helping to raise our profile.

Fellowship

Traditionally, many of us felt that one of the major benefits of EASE was the chance to get together every three years, to exchange views and learn about editing – but most importantly to make new friends and meet people who faced similar challenges and frustrations to ourselves in their working lives. However, only about 20-25% of the membership has attended any given conference. With the enhanced means of communication described above, fellowship can be achieved without people physically meeting.

One of my favourite mental images is of one of our Hungarian members, Miklos Kazmer, reading *ESE* at home in Budapest, thereby keeping informed of best practice and developments within science communication and feeling part of the editing community.

We also received a message from Maria Craig after the

Pisa conference: "For the first time in quite a while I didn't attend the EASE meeting this year. But the membership fee is worth it to me just to be able to follow what's going on on the EASE Forum. The very experienced sharing graciously with those new at it (I still recognize lots of names from having attended meetings), and the very experienced also feeling they can ask about fine points themselves. A nice atmosphere of sharing there ... as it should be."

The EASE conference

Which brings me to the role of the EASE conference. Our past two meetings, in Krakow and Pisa, have featured excellent programmes and speakers, but in each instance attendance has been disappointing, with about 110–120 participants. There are several reasons for meetings being smaller than the glory days of Tours, when about 250 EASE members headed for France. We have fewer members, so there is a smaller pool from which to draw, although the triennial conference is itself an important source of new members. Competition from related organizations means we have to work with our sister societies and see how we can collaborate to our mutual benefit. Far more demands are made on people's time, and budgets, whether for freelancers or employees of major companies, are tighter. The Council is therefore carefully reviewing the optimal format for the conference: we are considering a shorter meeting, concentrated over two full days, so that time away from home (or the office) is minimized, accommodation costs are lower, etc. Our aim will be to deliver an excellent programme at an affordable price: more details will follow later this year.

What can we do better?

On the positive side, EASE consistently delivers high quality materials to enable members to enhance their skills through our conferences, seminars, website, journal, and the *Science Editors' Handbook* (soon to be updated and expanded, under the direction of Petter Oscarson). On the other hand, training is one of our perennial goals and an area in which I feel we underperform, admittedly because delivering a comprehensive, well planned educational programme is a huge undertaking, particularly for a voluntary organization. The courses we have conducted have always been well received, and we need to find a way of expanding these activities that is self-financing and not too onerous for the members of our new Training Committee, led by Reme Melero.

Watch this space

I am honoured to be President of EASE* and fortunate to be supported by a Council in which experienced members mix with new faces, who bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm. I was worried when Sheila Evered informed us that she felt unable to continue as Secretary and am delighted that we have found a compromise, at least for this year, with Sheila managing our membership and other routine tasks while Samantha brings her energy to supporting the Council and Publications Committee. I have described some of our initiatives above, and we hope to introduce more in the coming months.

As always, your feedback is welcome. If we're doing well, please tell others; if we're not, please tell us.

Joan Marsh
President of EASE
jmarsh@wiley.com

*Regarding the picture of me above, I may have been raised to the grand status of EASE President, but the halo proved to be only temporary, courtesy of the light above the lectern in Pisa.

Stop Press from the President

Author Guidelines in preparation

Since April 2009, Sylwia Ufnalska has been developing a set of simple Author Guidelines suitable for use by authors who do not have much experience of publishing in English-language journals. She presented the draft guidelines at the Pisa conference and since then, she has refined them, particularly by adding references to other EASE materials, such as the Handbook and an Author Toolkit that is also being planned.

The guidelines will be submitted to the Council for formal approval, then published on the EASE website. The hope is that, in time, these will be translated into various languages to help authors prepare and write articles for international journals.

EASE at ESOF in Turin

EASE has been awarded a session at the next Euroscience Open Forum to be held in Turin, Italy, in July 2010. We will present a series of talks relating to careers in science editing, probably followed by a panel discussion.

We hope to hold the annual general meeting in Turin at the same time - details will be provided in the May issue or earlier on the website.

We also applied to organize a scientific session on integrity in science communication, building on our experience in Pisa, but unfortunately this was not accepted.

Essays in Editing

From hermit to Hermes: a researcher learning the media game

Tarja Ketola

Associate Professor, University of Vaasa, PO Box 700, 65101 Vaasa, Finland; tarja.ketola@uwasa.fi

Charles Chaplin's film *Modern Times* caricatured the plight of a factory worker in the grip of the 20th century Industrial Age. This essay will portray the plight of an academic researcher in the grip of the 21st century Information Age. The dark-haired Englishman with a moustache, Charlie Chaplin, is succeeded by a fair-haired Finnish woman, Charlize Girlin (no comment on her moustache) of *Post-Modern Times*. The following film script is based on a true story. The characters are non-fictional, but their names have been changed to protect their real identities.

Scene 1

A bird's-eye view of a beautiful small seaside resort in Finland. The sun is shining from the clear blue sky and the brilliant blue sea is inviting happy tourists for a swim. Zoom in on a window of the top floor of a block of flats, where a tiny studio is packed with books and papers: piles lie all over the tables, chairs, and floors. In the corner, Charlize is sitting on her bed, also covered with books and papers, in her blue tee shirt and shorts, her hair sticking out in all directions, writing intensively on her laptop. A close-up shot of the computer screen shows the text: Global virtue ethics are needed ….

The phone rings. Charlize answers absent-mindedly, absorbed in her virtue ethical world, and hears: "Good morning! This is Sinead O'Doherty from Dublin Radio X. You are live on air! You wrote an article on corporate psychopathic behaviour. Can you give our listeners some examples of psychopathic leaders of companies?" Caught unawares, Charlize mumbles something about the difference between corporate and individual psychopathic behaviour, but the radio journalist keeps on pushing for examples of psychopathic leaders. Resigned, Charlize mentions the top management of Enron, hastens to add that she is very busy, and hangs up on the journalist before she has time to ask more irrelevant questions.

Scene 2

A popular science journalist phones Charlize, who again is sitting on her bed in her blue t-shirt and shorts, busily drafting a grant application for her research group. The journalist starts asking questions about environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Charlize explains that she is currently occupied, but will be happy to answer the questions in the evening, if the journalist emails the questions. This happens. The questions are good and Charlize enjoys answering them. The journalist acknowledges the receipt of the answers the next morning and says that it will be easy to write an article based on that information.

The article turns out to cite Charlize's words accurately, which would hardly ever happen on the phone or in a face-to-face interview. Hence the email interview works in favour of Charlize, whose scientific mind craves accuracy and who is frightened of phone interviews after the incident of having landed on a live radio show.

However, the journalist has picked a sentence here and there, choosing the most pointed and critical views and disregarding all the positive and sympathetic views that made the original text balanced. Consequently, under the sensational title "Greed for Power and Glossy Image Threatening" – chosen by the journalist – readers learn that environmental NGOs are hobnobbing with corporate and political leaders and becoming more like them, but they do not learn that environmental NGOs have outstanding expertise and experience in their speciality area with global networks providing up-to-date information and that companies have realized that they can get much more accurate and practicable advice from NGOs free of charge than from consultants at a high price.

Charlize complains about all this injustice to Grey Eminence, who is a science editor and the head of communications at Charlize's university, and empowers academic researchers to deal with the media. Grey Eminence explains to Charlize: "The media is in a continuous race for news. It needs to write what others write about and join the debate, but at the same time, it must find novel news before others, scoops that differentiate it from others. The media's rhythm is fast: morning news is used up by the afternoon. A researcher's rhythm has a longer time span: it may take years before you can say anything essential about your study. The media often wants intermediate results and information in advance, which you do not want to give. You want to discuss the important final results of your study, but the media is more interested in trivial details. But through details you can gain access to tell more widely about your study. In order to get a research topic through to the media, you must simplify and repeat its message. You do realize that the media publicity of science does not equal its scientific merit. The scientific significance of your research is evaluated on a different forum from the media, but remember that these fora are inevitably approaching each other because, as you know, competition over research financing is becoming tighter."

Charlize agrees, to some extent. It often takes her months, even years, to collect the data and analyze the findings, during which time she is unwilling to talk about the study in order to preserve its validity and reliability and to protect it from copycats and other plagiarists. Once the research report is finally published in a scientific journal, she would

be free to discuss it with the popular media – which is not interested any more. However, this does not upset Charlize because her research article will remain available to a wide international audience in the scientific journal for decades, perhaps centuries, and is easily accessible through the online version of the journal. She feels that one morning of daily media publicity is nothing compared to being perpetuated in an esteemed journal, like the great scientists. Grey Eminence points out that, sadly, most of the citizens whose taxes pay a great part of scientific research will then never hear about these research findings. Charlize answers defensively that, fortunately, some popular science journals and programmes provide alternative routes to the general public. They respect research and do not try to change its message to create scoops.

Grey Eminence affirms that any researcher, even hermit-like Charlize, can transform into Hermes in her relations with the media. The idea of becoming Hermes, the messenger of gods, appeals to the ambitious, grandiose mind of Charlize, who believes that science is the well of wisdom. She decides to do her best to learn how to deal with the media constructively, to learn the media game. Until now, when the media walked in, her common sense walked out. Grey Eminence organizes media training for academics at the university; Charlize willingly participates.

Scene 3
Aggravated by the biased article and inspired by the encouraging media training, Charlize decides to write a newspaper article of her own; then, at least, no one can misrepresent her views. On her bed, in her blue t-shirt and shorts, she writes an article on the identity crisis of Finnish universities. After some manoeuvring by Grey Eminence, it ends up in a local newspaper. Having learnt from her previous experience, media training, and Grey Eminence's advice, Charlize asks the news editor to send her the proofs well in advance – and thereby gets a chance to correct the mistakes and exchange the sensational photo text, chosen by the editor, for a constructive one.

The article is published on the leading articles page on a Sunday in March, international women's day, both in print and online. Excited Charlize wakes up early to read the paper. The print version is fine, but the online version does not give Charlize's name and affiliation. Charlize gets upset. She tries to phone the editorial office and sends them several email messages, but no one answers until 4 pm. The shift manager understands the problem, adds the personal details online and promises to keep the article online for the next few days, so that readers will have time to read the article in its complete form. Charlize thanks him gratefully. The addition and extended availability online are very important to her because her article concerns all Finnish universities, not just the local university. Fellow researchers and other interested parties can access the article only online.

However, the next morning the article has disappeared from the online version of the newspaper. Charlize makes yet another anxious phone call and the news editor promises to find out about it. A few hours later the original

editor sends a harsh email message, saying that the paper has done everything it can, and that he will not place the article online any more.

Charlize complains bitterly to Grey Eminence: "When an article appears on the leading articles page without the writer's name, it is assumed that the writer is one of the editors-in-chief. If a researcher publishes in her name an article written by another researcher, she commits the most serious offence of the scientific world, plagiarism."

Grey Eminence tries to calm Charlize down, but Charlize continues her one-woman war against popular media – resembling Chaplin's Great Dictator in her dramatic raving and ranting: "Messy media contacts consume all too much of a researcher's time and energy with little or no reward in the form of getting one's message through to the public. The journalists of popular media expect a researcher to give bold, flashy statements on her research, and become impatient when, in their opinion, the researcher remains cautious and hesitant. Yet such conduct is vital to scientific reliability and validity. The journalists do not want to understand that, unlike popular media, the researcher is held responsible for the scientific accuracy of the statements made on her research results. If a newspaper, radio, or television presents unreliable, invalid or inaccurate research findings, the researcher loses her scientific credibility, which may end her research career, while the journalist giving this flashy, false information gets a moment of glory and escapes unharmed. Perhaps this is the goal of some journalists: eliminate as many academics as possible? At least there seems to be deep-rooted hostility towards scientists among the journalists of popular media. The humiliating experiences with journalists make researchers even more cautious and reluctant to have anything to do with them again. This does not happen between researchers and science editors because they understand and respect each other. They have similar ethical values, which are totally different from the "morals" of the popular media "

Charles Chaplin wrote a beautiful song called Smile; its lyrics at first irritate Charlize for their obvious pretence, but gradually start appealing to her for their simple problem solving. Can Charlize Girlin do what her idol, Charles Chaplin, suggests – "Smile though your heart is aching"?

Scene 4
Charlize organizes an international conference at the university and, with Grey Eminence's help, prepares a press release. The local newspaper publishes its shortened version and sends a journalist to interview Charlize and one of the foreign participants. The journalist spends half an hour with the foreign participant and five minutes with Charlize, and then takes many photos of them together. Both smile for every photo shot, but the journalist tells them to be serious, as the topic, corporate responsibility, is a serious issue. The next day there is an article in this local paper with a long interview of the foreign participant, a couple of bland words from Charlize, and a grim photo of both. Charlize remembers Chaplin's advice; she stays quiet and keeps on smiling at her conference guests – and, naturally, provides the foreign participant with a copy of the article.

Scene 5

A bird's-eye view of a picturesque seaside industrial town in Finland: the sun is shining from the clear blue sky and the brilliant blue sea invites the happy inhabitants to swim. Zoom in on a window of a redbrick university building, where the large auditorium is packed with an audience of corporate managers, including a director of the university's biggest donor, company Z, and the media.

Charlize has been invited to give a 15-minute presentation in this Bright Bulbs seminar. She has spent the morning writing a journal article in a different language. Now she is waiting for her turn in her black funeral clothes, the only neat and tidy outfit she possesses. The presenter before her is fluent and wordy.

When Charlize's turn comes, only five minutes is left for her. She panics, starts talking fast, gets all mixed up and forgets words. The flashlight of a camera makes her jerk. Her slides show only pictures and few keywords, and in her confusion, she cannot elaborate. She does go into detail about her research ethics and explains how to avoid getting involved in corruption during field studies in Africa. She sees Grey Eminence flinch and dead silence falls upon the room. Baffled, Charlize hastens to end her presentation with clumsy closing words. (Next morning the newspaper has no mention of the Bright Bulbs seminar, but front-page news about company Z being sued for corruption for its business dealings with an African country.)

Scene 6

The following morning. The bedroom at sunrise: Charlize tosses and turns, sweating; she changes her wet blue nightshirt and shorts for dry ones, and returns to bed to toss and turn.

Three hours later: the sun peeps into the bedroom and people outside start going to work. Charlize lies in her bed in foetal position with her head buried under the pillow. She is startled by the rattle of the letterbox and staggers to fetch the paper. She sees the headline news and, growling, goes back to bed.

Another three hours later: the sun shines brightly in the bedroom, and travels across Charlize's body. Charlize lies in the crucified position. The sun reaches her face, which is wet, with tears pouring from her closed blue eyes. The phone rings ....

Errors in the science literature: avoidance and correction

David L Vaux
Committee for Freedom and Responsibility in the conduct of Science (CFRS, a subcommittee of ICSU, the International Council for Science), La Trobe University, VIC 3086 Australia; d.vaux@latrobe.edu.au

Errors can arise in the scientific literature innocently, due to the statistical nature of science, or not so innocently, either because of incompetence or deliberate falsification, fabrication, or plagiarism. Using statistical arguments, John Ioannidis showed that more than 50% of claimed research findings are false.[1] In addition, large numbers of papers have been incompetently written or reviewed, or are the result of scientific misconduct. For science editors this raises two important issues: how can the number of errors that enter the literature be reduced, and how can errors that have been published be efficiently corrected?

ICSU, the International Council for Science, has a subcommittee called the Committee for Freedom and Responsibility in the conduct of Science (CFRS). CFRS is concerned with the freedom of scientists to travel and collaborate without restrictions based on nationality, religion, sex, or race. It fosters the responsible conduct of science, so that research is performed ethically, in accordance with guidelines for human and animal research, and is carried out honestly, without fabrication and falsification of data or plagiarism, collectively termed "scientific misconduct".

Science is new knowledge gained through repeated observation and experiment. Because of sampling error, observer error, and biological variation, sometimes the data lead to erroneous conclusions that subsequently appear in the scientific literature. Use of statistical significance (p<0.05) as the criterion for publication, without regard to the magnitude or importance of the result, has contributed to a large number of conclusions that have subsequently been found to be false. These errors are both inadvertent and unavoidable, but it is important that they are corrected as rapidly as possible so that as few resources as possible are wasted following up on false leads.

Errors in the scientific literature can also be due to sloppiness, selective use of data, or incompetence. Papers continue to appear in even the most respected journals such as *Nature*, *Science*, and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (USA)* showing figures with error bars but without a description of what they are; or show errors, p values, and statistics where N is only one; or confuse replicates with independent experiments; or show and make conclusions from a selected "representative" experiment, without providing results of the others. This indicates that many authors do not understand such issues, or have not read the papers on which their names appear, and suggests that the reviewers of the papers have either not read them thoroughly or do not understand the data.

Errors can also arise from deliberate falsification or fabrication of data – scientific misconduct. Although

plagiarism does not necessarily introduce errors into the scientific literature, it steals credit from the researchers who deserve it, undermining confidence in the practice of science, and is therefore another form of scientific misconduct.

Competition for fellowships, promotions, and grants provides the motivation for scientific misconduct. Digital imaging and word processing software has made it easier for an individual to manipulate images or copy text. On the other hand, computers have provided tools that facilitate the detection of illegitimate image manipulations and plagiarism.

Role of editors

Journal editors are in a key position: they can act as gate-keepers to limit the entry of errors into the scientific literature, and to facilitate correction of errors when they occur, whether they are inadvertent or deliberate.

Practical measures could be adopted by all journals:

- Comprehensive guidelines for authors and reviewers on what is acceptable for image manipulation, statistics, authorship, conflicts of interest, provision of data to databases
- Requiring all authors to sign an authorship statement that they have adhered to the guidelines, that they fulfil the criteria for authorship, and no authors have been omitted
- Monitoring these guidelines to ensure compliance
- Making compliance a prerequisite for acceptance
- Making provision of primary data (upon request) a condition of acceptance
- Performing routine analysis of images and data prior to publication
- Publishing an annual report that lists incidence of matters of concern, the type of concern, action taken, and outcome
- Adopting policies and procedures to handle concerns raised by authors, reviewers, editors, or readers of papers
- Facilitating procedures for reporting of errors, for example by allowing concerns to be raised on the web
- Setting a low threshold for publication of retractions, corrections, and expressions of concern
- Ensuring that readers and those searching databases are alerted that papers have been corrected or retracted.

The standards adopted by journal editors will differ, depending on the norms of the particular field of the journal. It is therefore appropriate that the research community takes responsibility for setting the standards, rather than it being a task for the editors. In coming up with appropriate policies, editors will also need to take into account national codes of research conduct. Organizations such as the Committee for Publication Ethics (COPE), the Council for Scientific Editors (CSE), and the European Association for Science Editors (EASE) can act as important resources. They can help provide protocols and advise when papers should be retracted rather than corrected, and when reports should be made to other bodies, such as the host institution or the relevant ombudsman or office for research integrity.

By setting simple, practical, enforceable guidelines based on research community standards, using screens to monitor compliance with those guidelines, and setting a low threshold for publication of rebuttals, corrections, and retractions, journal editors can help protect and maintain the integrity of the scientific record.

References

1. Ioannidis JPA. Why most published research findings are false. *PLoS Medicine* 2005;2(8):e124.

Promoting integrity in scientific publications at the Istituto Superiore di Sanità

Paola De Castro, Federica Napolitani, Elisabetta Poltronieri, Anna Maria Rossi, Sandra Salinetti
Publishing Unit, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy; paola.decastro@iss.it

The integrity of science is a topic of utmost importance. As a goal, it is approachable, but very difficult to achieve. Starting from the meaning of integrity from the Latin "integer" (something intact, pure, complete, untouched), Arjan Polderman recently underlined that "when the concept of integrity is applied to science you obtain the reliability of scientific data".[1] In this context, the crucial role of scientific editors is to ensure the best possible quality of data presentation, clarity, and correctness in dissemination of scientific information. Therefore, editors should convey an "intact" message, as they are supposed to guarantee the integrity of the author's contribution in terms of both quality of content and editing. Editors need to adhere to the fundamental attributes of any publication that reports scientific results — correctness, completeness, accessibility, retrievability, and durability.

The integrity of science is also a question of trust, as reported by the European Science Foundation: "Progress in science depends on trust".[2] This concept applies not only to authors and editors but also to the relationship between science and society, between funding agencies and research institutions, and among scientists themselves.

Supporting editors in their thorny task

In this scenario, editors' work requires delicate, but not soft, handling and their role is not easy to perform. Honesty and consistency in publishing become fundamental in order to guarantee scientific integrity. To comply with this thorny task, editors should set a reliable and sound editorial policy on the basis of existing guidelines and be consistent with good practice. Many are the "thorns" in the editors' side in strictly following the guidelines, keeping up to date, and above all having the courage to say "no" to whoever tries to behave in a fraudulent way, in order to prevent misconduct. Editors must be able to cope with falsified and fabricated data, plagiarism, and sometimes even public scandals. According to a recent systematic review, 2% of scientists admit to have falsified research at least once, and up to 34% state other questionable research practices[3]; it appears likely that this is a conservative estimate of the true prevalence of scientific misconduct.

In order to check the literature produced on publication ethics, a simple query on PubMed was launched by the authors of this article on 1st December 2009. We used the following MeSH terms combined with the Boolean operator AND: *editorial policies*; *ethics, research*. The research retrieved only 69 articles dating back to 1976, mainly concerning conflict of interest, fraud, plagiarism, and other kind of scientific misconduct. Most (61) of the articles are related to the period 2001–2009, and this can be explained by the recent increase in awareness of these topics among the scientific community, fostered by international congresses, debates, and so on.

In recent years many tools have been developed to help editors in their delicate job: from style guides (by WHO, World Health Organization, and OECD, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, for example) to other more complete guidelines issued by organizations such as WAME (World Association of Medical Editors), COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics), CSE (Council of Science Editors), and EASE (European Association of Science Editors).

In particular the "Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals" (URM)[4] – the first edition of which appeared in 1978 from the ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) – is noteworthy for its completeness and thoroughness. The URM, informally known as Vancouver style, was initially considered to be a reliable tool to help authors submit their papers for publication, and it has since developed into an essential reference document for editors. It is based on the shared experience of a number of editors and authors, collected over many years, rather than on the results of methodical and planned investigations, and nowadays about 700 biomedical journals formally adopt it. Its importance stems from its contents, as it considers all aspects of the editorial flow from the ethical principles related to the process of evaluating, improving, and publishing manuscripts to the relationships among editors and authors, peer reviewers, and the media. Thus it assists authors and editors in their mutual task of creating and distributing accurate, clear, easily accessible reports of biomedical studies.

The URM aims to promote the integrity of an article as a whole through the control of ethical problems (authorship and editorship, peer review, conflicts of interest, privacy, etc), publishing and editorial issues (including copyright and duplicate publications), and technical aspects (preparing and submitting manuscripts).

To reach the ambitious goal of integrity, editors should not miss the important opportunity to educate potential contributors, raising awareness on the role of all stakeholders about the implications lying behind "apparently redundant" requirements of a journal. This will help to reduce both deliberate or non-deliberate misconduct and to improve the accuracy, fairness, and transparency of the writing process. As a result, the URM also serves different "educational" purposes: it is a concise reference tool for editors in defining their Instructions to Authors and a valid guideline in scientific writing courses to train inexperienced authors and editors.

Small journals may encounter major difficulties in trying to adapt articles to the URM. Their Instructions to Authors are often not as strict as those of big or core journals, due to the small number of manuscripts submitted and to their frequently lower quality. This has a substantial influence on the selection and peer-review processes, which might be simplified and have weaker acceptance criteria. A low rejection rate has been registered among these journals. Small journals also have great difficulties in complying with some of the URM criteria, for example qualification for authorship: an author should make substantial contribution to the work by meeting all three of the following conditions: (i) conception and design, data acquisition, analysis and interpretation of the data; (ii) drafting or critically revising the manuscript to contain important intellectual content; and (iii) final approval of the version to be published.

Nevertheless the URM is still a very useful tool with which to improve the editorial process and to reach the goal of a better quality standard of articles. Its translations are welcome as they can be of help to small journals whose editors and authors may not be fully familiar with the English language.

Towards sound editorial practice

Authors and editors of biomedical publications have special responsibilities in reporting their studies, since misleading reporting of medical research could harm patients.

The Publishing Unit of the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS, the National Institute of Health in Italy) is committed to complying with the recommendations regarding integrity in scientific editorial products. The ISS scientific community currently consists of 900 researchers out of a total of 2000 staff members, who produce about 1800 publications per year. This figure includes external (mainly journal articles) and internal production (a journal, a newsletter, scientific and technical reports), as the ISS acts as producer of scientific literature and publisher of institutional series. ISS editorial practice benefits from privileged contacts with internal authors, who can discuss controversial editorial issues with the staff of the Publishing Unit and help them to identify suitable solutions.

To encourage the highest possible standards of correctness and completeness in its publishing activities, the ISS has:

- Adopted URM in its publications;
- Elaborated recommendations for the production of grey literature[5];
- Promoted the use of international editorial guidelines in training courses;
- Started a translation programme of useful documents to help Italian authors and editors become familiar with best editorial practices.

The ISS translation programme of editorial documents includes the translation of: URM last edition (2008) and COPE flowcharts (2008)[6]; the GLISC (Grey Literature International Steering Committee) guidelines on the production and dissemination of grey literature,[7] and CSE's White Paper (in preparation).

To guarantee and improve accessibility and retrievability the ISS has implemented different activities:

- Its publications are freely available in full-text on the ISS website (the journal *Annali* is also accessible through the LinkOut service of PubMed);
- Its scientific production is indexed in DSpace ISS (http://dspace.iss.it), the cross-institutional repository OAI compliant, which is increasingly populated by Open Access papers;
- A training programme for authors on the advantages of OA publications has been developed[8];
- An e-mail service informs all registered users on the availability of new publications.

To ensure durability to its heritage, the ISS is digitizing both past issues of its publications and historical photographs; 6000 are already available online.[9]

The editorial task is continuously being affected by the challenging scenario of technological innovation. Guidelines need to keep pace with the times, taking also into account the new applications of Web 2.0, which have a direct impact on the publication process as a whole. A question remains: will Web 2.0 tools supplant old media?[10]

References

1. Polderman A. Editorial. *European Science Editing* 2008;34(3):62. http://www.ease.org.uk/easeconfdocs/editorial-august2008.pdf [accessed 2/12/2009].
2. European Science Foundation. *Good scientific practice in research and scholarship*. Strasbourg: ESF; 2000. (ESF Science Policy Briefing, 10). http://www.esf.org/publications/science-policy-briefings.html [accessed 2/12/2009].
3. Fanelli D. How many scientists fabricate and falsify research? a systematic review and meta-analysis of survey data. *PLoS ONE* 2009;4(5):e5738. http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0005738 [accessed 2/12/2009].
4. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. *Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals: writing and editing for biomedical publications*. ICMJE; 2008. http://www.icmje.org/urm_full.pdf [accessed 2/12/2009].
5. De Castro P, Salinetti S (Ed.). *La letteratura grigia nella comunicazione scientifica: il "Nancy style" per garantire la qualità editoriale dei rapporti tecnici*. Roma: Istituto Superiore di Sanità; 2006. (Rapporti ISTISAN 06/55). http://www.iss.it/binary/publ/cont/06-55%20WEB.1175081126.pdf [accessed 2/12/2009].
6. De Castro P, Napolitani F, Rossi AM, Salinetti S, eds. *Requisiti di uniformità per manoscritti presentati a riviste biomediche: scrittura e redazione di pubblicazioni biomediche. Edizione 2008 dell'International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Traduzione italiana*. Roma: Istituto Superiore di Sanità; 2009. (Rapporti ISTISAN 09/16). http://www.iss.it/binary/publ/cont/09_16_web.pdf [accessed 2/12/2009].
7. Grey Literature International Steering Committee. *Guidelines for the production of scientific and technical reports: how to write and distribute grey literature. Version 1.1*. GLISC; 2007. http://www.glisc.info; [accessed 2/12/2009].
8. De Castro P, Poltronieri E, Carattoli A, Granata O. Educating authors of biomedical publications to the benefits of OA journals. In: EAHIL Workshop 2007. Pathways to New Roles: the Education, Training and Continuing Development of the Health Library & Information Workforce. Proceedings; September 12-15, 2007; Krakow. 2007. http://eprints.rclis.org/12681/1/De_Castro_EAHIL_Cracovia_2007_1.pdf [accessed 2/12/2009].
9. De Castro P, Di Benedetto M, Modigliani S, Napolitani F, Rossi AM, Salinetti S, Spurio A, Bedetti C. Preserving historical memories in scientific institutions: the experience of the National Institute of Health in Italy. In: *10th Conference of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries. Europe as an Open book. Oral and poster presentations*; September 11-16, 2006; Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2006: 60-1
10. Brumfiel G. Supplanting the old media? *Nature* 2009;458(7236):274-277. http://www.sciencemediacentre.ca/smc/docs/Nature_on_the_decline_of_science_writing%5B1%5D.pdf [accessed 2/12/2009].

CUT OUT AND KEEP QUOTES

On simplicity

If you can't explain something simply, you don't understand it well. Most of the fundamental ideas of science are essentially simple, and may, as a rule, be expressed in a language comprehensible to everyone. Everything should be as simple as it can be, yet no simpler

Albert Einstein

Editing around the World

Scientific, technical, and medical journal publishing in China – issues and prospects

Qian LIU
MD, Chinese Journal of Lung Cancer, Tianjin Medical University General Hospital, 228 Nanjing Road, Tianjin 300020, China; liuqian@lungca.org
Tzu-Heng CHIU
Associate professor and associate director of library, Taipei Medical University, Center of General Education, University Library, 250 Wu-Xin Street, Taipei City 110, Taiwan
Jianrong YU
Professor, Shanghai Information Center for Life Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai 200031, China
Jack JIA
MD, Hong Kong STM publishing, Hong Kong SAR, China

Academic journal publishing in China has developed rapidly during China's recent high-speed economic growth, sharing some of its features, such as massive volumes and low efficiency. It also has amazing speed and high potential. Indeed the development of academic journal publishing and China's economy are closely correlated.

There are 4,794 scientific, technical, and medical (STM) journals and 2,339 social science journals in mainland China, numbers second only to those in the USA.[1] According to the statistics of *Journal Citation Reports* 2008, only 88 journals are indexed (83 by the Science Citation Index, six by the Social Science Citation Index, and one by both), among which *Cell Research* has the highest impact factor at 4.535. These data indicate that Chinese academic journals have limited impact in the world.[2]

Chinese academic research outcomes have increased dramatically in the last 10 years, from more than 20,000 papers in 1998 to almost 112,000 in 2008, and the output has doubled since 2004. In 2006 China surpassed Japan, the UK, and Germany, and was second only to the USA. With this speed of growth, China will catch up with and then surpass the USA in terms of publication output within the next decade.[3]

Potential and imbalance

In line with China's economic growth and the development of scientific research, academic journal publishing in China shows great potential and also some imbalance. Of the 42,859 papers published by scientists from mainland China in 2003 that are listed in the Web of Science, only 10,990 were published in Chinese journals, about 26% of the total.[4] More and more Chinese scientists prefer to submit high-quality articles to overseas journals, creating some discomposure in the Chinese STM publications.

Several factors may be related to this phenomenon.

- Guidance provided by the Chinese Science and Technology Evaluation System – Due to increasing research and development investment, a scoring system is needed to evaluate output. There has been no better choice until now than the Science Citation Index, resulting in Chinese scientists trying to publish their articles in overseas journals with higher impact factors.

- Language issues – Most academic journals in China are published in the Chinese language, and have both local authorship and audience. English is the dominant language in current STM publishing, and around 200 English STM journals are published in mainland China. Journals published in Chinese have relatively low visibility because they fail to follow the standards of international indexing systems. Therefore, most Chinese articles are published in the international journals.

- Shortage of editors with international scope – Experienced editors are essential for successful academic journals. In China, editors' work is often thought to play a minor role in scientific career development. Editorial positions are less attractive for competent researchers, which leads to inactivity in Chinese STM journals.

Opportunities

In Chinese, the word "crisis" means both danger and opportunity. The issues that are outlined above have topped the agenda and a series of measures is being implemented to reform the Chinese publishing system. Hopefully, the following could give fresh impetus to Chinese STM journals.

- An updated evaluation system is to be established for Chinese scientific researchers. The ideal solution is that the merit of published articles should be assessed, not the impact factor of the journals. An example of such an approach is The Faculty of 1000 (http://facultyof1000.com), whose recommendations and interpretations are based on the article's merits, not the journal's.

- International journals in English are receiving more attention by the policy-makers. Increasing numbers of English-language Chinese journals with international scope are to be inaugurated, some of which aim to become the top journals in their fields. Converting outstanding Chinese-language journals into English-

Dr Dangsheng Li honed his editorial skills at the US journal *Cell*

language journals could be another option. After a recent period of collaboration with international publishers, Chinese publishers have gained enough experience to run leading journals in the same way as the giant publishers. Encouraged and driven by the new policies, thousands of publishers will combine to form a number of competitive groups which may challenge the world leaders in the future, for example Science Press, Higher Education Press, and Chinese Medical Association Publishing House.

- Training projects are being conducted by some Chinese publishers. Rapid development of Chinese journals owes much to well-trained editorial staff. For example, Dr Dangsheng Li acquired his editorial experience in the high-profile international journal *Cell*, which helped him to improve the quality of the Chinese

journal *Cell Research*, for which he currently serves as the deputy Editor-in-Chief. Other journals have made similar plans for recruitment and training.

Although there are problems for publishers in non-English speaking countries, these problems can sometimes offer the opportunity to move in the right direction. Fortunately, there are encouraging signs of change in Chinese academic journal publishing. As the international influence of Chinese academic publishing increases, it will contribute more to global scientific and technological development.

References

1. General Administration of Press and Publication of the People's Republic of China. *General status of press and publication in People's Republic of China, 2008.* http://www.gapp.gov.cn/cms/html/21/464/200907/465083.html [accessed 9 January 2010].
2. Liu XZ, Bao ZJ. International development of China's sci-tech periodicals selected by JCR in recent five years. *Journal of Library and Information Sciences In Agriculture* 2007;19(3):146–149.
3. Thomson Reuters. Science. Global Research Report: China, November 2009. http://science.thomsonreuters.com/info/grr-china/
4. Jin BH, Loet Leydesdorff, China academic journal citation map: analysis of international influence and national influence. *Chinese Journal of Scientific and Technical Periodicals* 2005;16(2):141–146.

CUT OUT AND KEEP QUOTES

Good advice to authors!

An enormous number of different experiments are possible, but only a tiny proportion will be really worthwhile. Choosing well requires great thought and creativity, and it involves taking risks.

Bruce Alberts, Science (13 November 2009)

Vague forms of speech have so long passed for mysteries of science; and hard words mistaken for deep learning, that it will not be easy to persuade either those who speak or those who hear them, that they are but a hindrance to true knowledge.

John Locke, 1690

Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret.

Matthew Arnold

Viewpoints

Making it into Medline – a case report

Life outside Medline is hard, for any medical journal. Excluded, a journal finds it difficult to attract good quality papers from busy authors. Yet without those good papers, a journal lacks the chance to improve its content, and is held in its excluded position, in a vicious cycle from which it can be difficult to break out. Add to this the challenge of publishing in a language other than English, and the problem is multiplied.

Deutsches Ärzteblatt is the journal of Germany's national Medical Association, the Bundesärztekammer, and of the umbrella organization for privately practising doctors, the Kassenärztliche Bundesvereinigung. Its weekly print version is circulated to 400,000 doctors, and its online version (available on an open access basis since 1996) receives about 4 million page impressions per month. It is by far the most widely read German language medical journal, and these figures place it among the journals with the highest circulations worldwide. Between 1990 and 2007, under two different editorial teams, *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* made three unsuccessful attempts to be included in Medline. On the fourth attempt, in 2008, it was accepted. How did this happen? And what might other journals keen to gain access to Medline infer from our anecdotal experience?

History
The time taken for *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* to become accepted in Medline relates to its history as a publication. Founded in 1792, it first developed as a medical association newsletter in a journalistic tradition, publishing medical news, political comment, and reportage of medical scientific developments. Only in the 1950s was a medical scientific section created within the journal, comprising largely non-systematic review articles on topics of educational interest for clinicians. This section was popular with readers, and by the 1970s it made up 30% of the journal's editorial pages. In addition to about 60 editorial pages, *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* contained around 50–100 pages of classified job advertising and display advertising for anything from medications and practice equipment to cars and holidays.

Rejection
Hence when *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* first applied for inclusion in Medline in 1990, its application was rejected with the argument that its dominant appearance was that of a political magazine, and not of a scientific journal. A second attempt in 2003 delivered a similar result.

New beginnings
When the current editorial team took over in 2004, it was clear that *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* had a scientific image problem. With Christopher Baethge, an academic psychiatrist, in the key role of Chief Scientific Editor, the senior editorial team set about improving the journal's scientific quality and presentation. One early decision was to appoint Sandy Goldbeck-Wood, formerly an editor at the *BMJ*, to collaborate on improving the scientific section of the journal. Because exclusion from Medline is such a block to attracting the best research, inclusion was high on our list of priorities.

Editorial reform
We began in early 2005 with a series of thoroughgoing editorial reforms that affected content, presentation, and editorial policy, on both a small and a large scale. A complete layout reform created a clearer distinction between the scientific and political sections. Regulations on referencing, authorship, and conflict of interests were made tougher and clearer, and brought into conformity with the ICMJE's requirements, and unstructured summaries became structured. Referenced papers became the rule where they had been the exception in earlier years. Our pool of reviewers expanded, as did the number of peer reviewers per paper and the number of editing cycles per paper. We also succeeded in increasing the total number of papers submitted, thereby increasing our rejection rate and our scope for choosing better papers.

We were particularly keen to attract more original research, which we did by soliciting good quality material from the areas of German public health, epidemiology, and health services research, and building relationships with organizations that regularly produce such research.

Editorial reforms

Referencing made compulsory
Authorship requirements clearer and stricter
Conflict of interest form introduced
Layout reform distinguishes science from politics
Pool of peer reviewers expanded
More reviews per paper
More revisions per paper
More papers and greater choice
Greater clinical focus
Greater international focus
More original research, especially health services research
Relationships forged with researchers and research organizations
Full text English pdfs made available on website (2007)
Launch of separate English language, science only, online edition (2008)

We also approached authors at medical conferences. New members were appointed to the editorial board as long-serving members retired. Across the board, greater emphasis was placed on the quality of evidence, the clarity and accessibility of presentation, and the clinical and international relevance of material presented. And from 2007, we made English-language pdf versions of all our articles available on the website.

Reapplication

Hopeful that these improvements would increase our scientific standing, we made another application to Medline in 2006 but received another rejection. The refrain was the same as before: Deutsches Ärzteblatt seemed too much like a political magazine and not enough like a scientific journal. The advertising section was thought to be "overwhelming." It was hard to see what more we could do to improve the medical scientific section, within the scope of *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*'s other aims and objectives. And to make matters worse, we looked likely to be subject to a "lockout" phase, whereby reapplication within two years of a failed application is not allowed. The time seemed to have come for more radical measures.

Radical measures

The intervention that seemed most promising and achievable was to create a separate English language online edition of only the scientific section of *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*. An English language version, we reasoned, would be both a service to our authors, whose work stood to reach a far wider audience bilingually than in German alone, and a service to the international scientific community, who would gain access to material that, in German, was inaccessible. The project received the backing of the Medical Association and the Kassenärztliche Bundesvereinigung, and in 2008 *Deutsches Ärzteblatt International* was born (www.aerzteblatt-international.de). This was a very different looking publication, containing identical content to the equivalent section of the parent journal, but free of political material and advertising; bearing all the hallmarks of a national scientific journal, but presented, for the sake of wider accessibility, in English. On the basis of this radically new publication (with its own ISSN), we sought and received permission to reapply to Medline a year later.

In the meantime, the journal was indexed in Science Citation Index and other key databases – EMBASE, SCOPUS, PsycINFO, CINAHL, and PubMed Central.

What made the difference?

Who knows what finally led to *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*'s acceptance by Medline in November 2008? As with all case studies, we should interpret with caution. Certainly, we made inclusion a top editorial priority over a three year period, committed resources to it, and met regularly to discuss our progress. Though necessary, this effort was not sufficient. It may have helped that we compared favourably with other German language journals already listed in Medline, so that the underlying arguments for our inclusion were strong. Also we took seriously the comments made at each Medline rejection, and worked hard to address them constructively. It seems likely, though not certain, that the launching of *Deutsches Ärzteblatt International* was a key step in addressing the core criticism about overall balance and image.

Other potential influences seem even more speculative. Did our inclusion in other databases by the time we last applied to Medline create added credibility, or pressure? And what about letters of recommendation from opinion leaders sympathetic to our cause, sent with our third and fourth attempts? We were grateful for this support, but cannot assess its influence on the final decision, particularly in that Medline explicitly discourage this. We sought and received helpful advice on several occasions from Medline's Executive Editor, Sheldon Kotzin, and it is just possible that polite persistence may also have played its part.

Sandy Goldbeck-Wood, Christopher Baethge
Deutsches Ärzteblatt International
goldbeckwood@doctors.org.uk

Thanks for your help with *European Science Editing*

Many thanks to EASE members who have reviewed papers submitted to ESE in 2009: Ines Steffen, Mary Ellen Kerens, Charles Sides, Margaret Cooter, Ed Hull among them. If you would be willing to offer your services to the journal from time to time as a peer reviewer of articles, please contact our Articles editor, Stuart Handysides (stuart_handysides@hotmail.com), stating your particular areas of expertise and also what journal(s) you work for, the nature of its/their subject matter, and what role you perform there. We are looking for a wide range of reviewers, including some who will comment on statistical analyses.

Thanks also to members who have helped with proofreading the journal: Sandra Child, John Glen, Maeve O'Connor, Sheila Evered, and other members of the Publications Committee. If you can spare a few hours to proofread occasionally, please contact Margaret Cooter (mcooter3@gmail.com).

Reports of Meetings

Managing a journal editorial office

Workshop at 10th EASE Conference, Pisa, Italy, September 2009

Nine delegates, most of whom manage small international journals, participated in this workshop. Workshop organizers Joan Marsh (Associate Publishing Director, Wiley-Blackwell, UK) and Linus Svensson (Managing Editor, *Oikos*, Sweden) led them through the labyrinth of editorial management.

Contracts

Contracts constituted the first part of the workshop. What contracts does an editorial office need? Think of a typesetter, a printer, freelance desk editors, designers, indexers, etc. Large publishing companies are now outsourcing almost all production work to India and similar countries, thereby significantly reducing their costs while maintaining or even improving quality. If the journal is owned by a society, the contract with the publisher is of paramount importance. Journals may be completely self-sufficient, but usually marketing is the first task that is entrusted to publishers, followed by production, distribution, and XML coding of papers. It is wise for societies to discuss the contract with the publisher regularly (say every five years) and to obtain competing quotations. Small journals lack a strong position in negotiations with publishers, but they may band together to offer a more attractive package.

Managing editors must be aware that they may be sued for libel and of other legal matters. It must be clear who is responsible for what, and adequate insurance is a good investment. Also editorial independence (from owner-societies, publishers, or universities – where one may be dependent on the professor who is the chief editor) must be laid down. Terms of reference may be helpful, but a standard document seems to be lacking.

Editors too must have contracts. This applies not only to the managing editor (who may have an undetermined term) but also to outside editors, including the editor-in-chief. It is wise to contract all your editors, including unpaid members of the editorial board, for fixed terms (open for prolongation, if you wish). To ensure continuity, take care that not all contracts end simultaneously. Editorial office managers should be prepared for worst cases: sometimes an editor-in-chief suddenly becomes ill or even dies, and it is useful to have an emergency plan for such situations. Also think of what might happen if the managing editor has a breakdown.

Editorial boards

Many journals work with an editorial board, but some boards never meet. Meetings may be useful for generating new ideas. Distribute routine information in advance and use the "precious" face-to-face time in the meeting for contributions from board members. New journals may benefit from having prestigious scientists on the board to attract papers, but do not expect much other input from them. For input, it is better to rely on people who have more time to commission and review papers. Developing an active and supportive editorial board takes time and energy but is worthwhile.

Manuscript flow

The process of peer review was dealt with in the second section of the workshop. The standard procedure in the *Oikos* editorial office is:

1 Author sends manuscript to editorial office (EO)

2 EO sends manuscript to chief editor

3 Chief editor rejects the manuscript or assigns a handling editor (associate editor)

4 EO sends manuscript to associate editor

5 Associate editor designates reviewers

6 EO sends manuscript to reviewers

7 Reviewers send comments to EO

8 EO forwards comments to associate editor

9 Associate editor decides: acceptance, rejection, or revision

10 EO informs the authors of the decision

11 In case of revision, the author submits a revised manuscript to the EO

12 EO sends the revised manuscript to associate editor

13 Associate editor decides on acceptance.

Steps 6-13 may be repeated several times.

Quite a lot of discussion was devoted to the pampering of reviewers. The general opinion was that they deserve some kind of reward for their efforts, ranging from free access to some articles in their field of interest to payment, depending on the speed of the review. It is possible to register the promptness and quality of reviewers, although quality is subjective. Regarding the speed of editors, presenting comparative data tends to stimulate the slower editors. Other aspects discussed were open, single-blinded, or double-blinded review; conflicts of interest; and whether to report to reviewers what was done with their comments.

None of the participants used commercially available manuscript tracking systems. Such systems may be helpful, but their standard email letters are impersonal and may need some adaptation.

Digital or paper?

Several other aspects were dealt with as well. Print will stay here for quite some time, and paper copies of journals are indispensable as a marketing tool. One might consider producing some special issues consisting of selected articles

for distribution at conferences. Some authors do not even notice that their article has been published electronically.

As always, some questions remained unanswered (or were answered only in part):

- If an author has been proven to be fraudulent, how long do you exclude him or her from submitting papers?
- What are good methods to review the reviewers?
- If authors suggest reviewers (or suggest excluding certain reviewers), is it wise to follow their suggestion? At least one case was known where the suggested

reviewer wrote only favourable reviews on the papers in question.

We cannot expect a three-hour workshop to provide answers to questions that have not been solved in the many large conferences that have been held during the past decades. In any case, there are plenty of topics left for a future workshop.

Arjan Polderman
Past president, EASE
a.k.s.polderman@pw.nl

METM09: Translation, editing, writing: broadening the scope and setting limits

Mediterranean Editors and Translators Meeting 2009, Barcelona, 29-30 October 2009

This report is a story about blurring distinctions between language support services. Translating and editing, editing and technical writing, teaching English for specific purposes and training academics in public speaking: members of Mediterranean Editors and Translators (MET) are typically engaged in hybrid activities. Something else they have in common is that they offer English language support to non-native speakers, mostly in the Mediterranean area. MET was set up five years ago to meet the professional development and networking needs of these multifunctional language professionals. With its annual meetings and workshop programme, the association is providing a lively forum for peer-to-peer training among English language consultants of the hybrid type.

The theme of this year's meeting in Barcelona – translation, editing, writing: broadening the scope and setting limits – was a clear reference to these mixed activities, and the opening panel discussion, "Defining roles in writing support services: a look at the full spectrum" was highly pertinent to the theme. The panel, composed of a teacher of academic writing, a translator, an author's editor, a medical writer, and a biomedical scientist who has moved to science communication, presented a wide range of services, from teaching authors how to write academic articles, to translating for academics and giving them their own "voice" in English, to doing a major overhaul of a poorly drafted paper, up to writing on the author's behalf. The panel explored the scope and limits of each type of service, and considered some of the challenges that may arise when hybrid services are offered.

Pricing

When providing such services, language professionals have a market to follow. Whereas translation rates are usually fixed – although they vary between one geographic area and the other – pricing editing jobs is more problematic because the quality of texts may differ enormously and clients may have diverse expectations. This issue was addressed by a panel on the dynamics of pricing editing jobs. Should pricing be by the word or by the hour? And in either case, how much should one charge? While the number of words is an objective measure, a word rate for a poor-quality text could be very unprofitable. The panelists explained what works best for them and why, suggesting websites that give price indications and sharing their own rates with the audience.

"Non-native" editing

What the editing of texts by non-native speakers of a language entails was entertainingly explained by Joy Burrough, an author's editor based in the Netherlands. In a lecture with props (among which a tiny Union Jack, a lab coat, clogs, an academic cap) she illustrated the diverse roles of an editor. First of all there's the native reader of English, who looks for an appropriate story line and knows what native-speaker readers expect. Then there's the subject-expert reader, who's familiar with the appropriate jargon, knows what the target reader expects, and can suggest more substantive improvements than just language correction. The copy editor checks the text with great attention to detail and improves its readability. The translator, who translates the text from broken English to proper English, recognizes and corrects transfers from the author's native language, and globalizes where necessary. The acculturated reader empathizes with the author and is familiar with the

Subgroups discussing sensitive language: how correct is correct enough?

author's writing culture. And finally the teacher educates the author by giving feedback. All of these roles turn the language professional into a "composite editor". Burrough also pointed out how important it is to have the author's trust and be their friend.

Journal editing

Another session focused on aspects of the editing and production of science journals. It started off with a talk about quality assurance in translation as practised at a bilingual medical journal, *Deutsches Aertzeblatt International*. This was followed by two presentations on plagiarism, particularly the microplagiarism or "copy-paste writing" often encountered in English-language journals from countries where English is not the first language. As the speaker of the first of these talks, Dado Čakalo (secretary and copy editor of *Archives of Industrial Hygiene and Toxicology*) put it, "Authors who are not native speakers tend to resort to non-selective copy-pasting to overcome insecurity in producing texts in English."

I followed this up with a sequel to Mary Ellen Kerans' presentation at the EASE conference in Pisa, where we discussed what a copy editor can do when detecting more or less serious degrees of plagiarism in manuscripts already accepted for publication. While the emphasis in the EASE presentation was on educating authors and teaching them to interweave information from different sources without copy-pasting, here I underlined the importance of educating journal editors and publishers so as to ensure that papers with plagiarism don't get accepted in the first place.

Also of interest

Other highlights for editors were a presentation on sensitive (non-biased, inclusive or "politically correct") language and a talk on ergonomics for pain-free computing. The programme also included literary and historical threads, especially in its two plenary talks. Literary translator Peter Bush spoke about re-translating the classics and his own recent translation of the *Celestina*, the great Spanish novel by Fernando de Rojas published in 1499, which had been translated into English many times before. The historian Thomas Glick discussed the importance of translation in the spread of scientific knowledge in the Middle Ages, explaining how ancient science came to western Europe through translation and how those early translations (from Greek into Arabic and subsequently from Arabic into Latin, Hebrew, and Romance vernacular) were produced. The historical thread was pursued further by a panel discussion on issues and approaches in translating historical texts.

The meeting proper was preceded by a workshop day offering a choice of eight workshops on punctuation in English, correct citation practices, corpus-guided translation and editing, strategies to increase readability, and study designs in medical research, to name a few. You may want to take a look at the full programme plus abstracts on the website, www.metmeetings.org. Next year's meeting, METM10, will be held in Tarragona, Spain, on 28-30 October. Any chance of seeing you there?

Marije de Jager
Freelance copy editor and translator, Rovereto, Italy
dejager@tin.it

Do you recognise these editors?

Now that the newsletters from past conferences have been scanned and uploaded onto the EASE website, we can bring you a "blast from the past" every now and then – a challenge of recognition. On-site print production being what it was in the 1980s and '90s, photographs derived from these newsletters are not going to be up to the standards of today's high-res digital output. You'll be able to see them better on the website – look under "Meetings and Courses – EASE Conferences".

Holmenkollen, Norway, 1985

(left) Stephen Lock and Ole Harlem

(right) Nancy Morris and Nadia Sloe

Correspondence

On turning posters upside down

The Viewpoint by Carol Norris, "Let's turn posters upside down!", which appeared in the August issue of *European Science Editing* (2009;35(3):75), and the Correspondence from Moira Johnson than followed (*European Science Editing* 2009;35(4):108) have generated some renewed interest in the concept of reorganising posters as we currently know them.

The big question now is: what to do about it?

Yes, do count us in, into the revolution!

It's to Robert Verpoorte that we owe most of our wisdom on the subject of posters. On his many travels round the world, he sees hundreds of posters per year, and his teaching on them goes a good bit further than simply "turning posters upside down".

Posters were originally developed as a form of quick communication - but have become anything but quick. Struggling to read a turgidly worded A0-format abstract off a wall is slow enough, but having to read a key part by bending down and peering between people's knees is not only uncomfortable, it's crazy. Is this the best model for quick communication scientists can come up with?

Science is supposed to be about asking questions, but how many scientists question whether conventional posters actually work? Does the person who writes and designs a poster know how much of it will be read, and which parts of it? How do they themselves read other people's posters - by starting at the top and plodding to the bottom, or by hopping about? If they hop, *how* do they hop? Which parts do they ignore – and why? Are the parts they ignore necessary?

At Erasmus University, we ask our students how they read other people's posters, and then how they expect other people to read theirs. For some people, it's a shock to realise that their poster will get as little respect from other people as other people's posters get from them - and that the time spent designing a poster may be disproportionate to the value others get out of it.

Our poster campaign is still at a relatively early stage – medical faculties are often remarkably conservative, and it can take a long time before you know you've started to make an impact. Some posters have moved a long way in the right direction, but it's too early for triumphant fanfares.

If you're looking for an unruly bunch of loud, wild-eyed rabble-rousers to join this particular revolution, we're probably just the people you need.

Over to EASE!

David Alexander (david@waywords.nl)
Joy Burrough (j.burrough@telfort.nl)
Daphne Lees (d.lees@chello.nl)
Teachers in biomedical writing, Erasmus University Medical Centre, Rotterdam, Netherlands

Robert Verpoorte (verpoort@lacdr.leidenuniv.nl)
Professor of Plant Metabolomics and Pharmacognosy, Leiden University, Netherlands

---

A few guidelines for better posters

- If it is to command and maintain a reader's attention, a poster has to anticipate its readers' questions, and then satisfy them:
  - as quickly as possible
  - in the right sequence.

- Because it is vital that all the essential information is as near as possible to eye-level, a poster should have:
  - a well-focused title that invites us to read on (if it doesn't, we probably won't)
  - a question (at eye-level)
  - the answer to that question (at eye-level)
  - the answers to whatever the reader is likely to ask next – all as near as possible to eye-level.

- As it's impossible to put everything at eye-level, the rule is simple: the less important the information, the lower down the poster it should go.

- Thus, as people tend to read tables and diagrams before text (why? Because they yield their information faster!) these tend to be placed higher rather than lower.

- Few people should expect others to read the entire content of their poster. But the longer it holds their attention, the more likely it is to lead to one-to-one contact and dialogue with its writer – the whole purpose of putting up a poster in the first place?

- All of the prose used in posters must be both accessible and brief. There is no space for waffle. Tortured scientific verbiage should be slashed ruthlessly.

– David Alexander and Robert Verpoorte

The "2 minute, 2 metre" rule, and another recruit

Please add me to your underground movement! In my course for students I include a small piece on posters. For the last 15 years I have recommended putting the conclusions at the centre top, omitting all "boring" parts if they are not crucial, and focusing on selling the message. Authors should include a photo of themselves and attach an handout which can expand upon the information in the poster. The rule could be "2 minutes and 2 metres": don't expect anyone to spend more than 2 minutes viewing a poster, and every item on it should be readable from a distance of 2 metres.

Linus Svensson
University of Lund, Sweden
oikos@ekol.lu.se

Who can resist the logic?

I am delighted and quite bowled over that two groups of teacher-editors, from different countries (the Netherlands and Sweden) have for 15 years been arguing for the sort of poster layout with which Finnish doctors have fallen in love in a poster-judging course exercise.

Linus's "2 metres and 2 minutes" rule sums it up in just five words; that rule and the robust point-by-point justification by David and colleagues is something else destined for my 2010 Conference Presentation course book.

Who can resist their logic? And if it is true that posters originally developed from trade-fair booths, opened out, who would buy anything from a booth decorated with scores of tightly printed lines of small-font text?

Carol Norris
University of Helsinki
carol.norris@helsinki.fi

Textual familiarity, structured abstracts, and reading performance

Several papers have appeared lately in *ESE* about the quality of medical research paper abstracts.[1-3] I would especially like to comment on the following sentence drawn from Sylwia Ufnalska and James Hartley's paper: "Separating the components of abstracts under subheadings (to create structured abstracts) can make them more readable." I want to comment on that specific sentence because it is formulated as a hypothesis by means of the modal verb/hedging "can".

A few years ago, I conducted some psycholinguistic research on structured abstracts with the aim of determining how abstract structure influences readers' comprehension across different levels of L2 competence (competence in a second language), conceptual knowledge base, and passage familiarity.[4-6] Thirty-six Spanish-speaking medical graduates of two different L2 proficiency levels – 18 advanced and 18 high-intermediate students – took part in the study. These two groups were each divided into two subgroups of nine students each.

I selected three abstracts (of different levels of familiarity to the readers) from leading medical English-medium journals. I structurally manipulated them: the conventional abstract was rewritten in a highly-structured format (with explicit subheadings), the highly structured abstract was re-written in a conventional format (without subheadings), and the third abstract was rewritten in a deficient fashion (illogical move ordering).[7] Each subgroup received one of either version and completed a reading test written in Spanish. The participants replied in Spanish. A questionnaire, also written in Spanish, elicited background information on the subjects. Self-generated comments on the abstracts were welcome but optional.

I recorded the number of correct answers for each abstract and applied between-group one- and two-way ANOVAs. Then, I both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed the questionnaires and self-generated comments.

The results showed that familiarity exerted a strong influence on the reading performance of both groups. However, in the familiar abstract, a deficient structuring did not affect the reading scores of either group. In the moderately familiar abstract, the deficient structuring exerted a negative effect on the reading outcomes of only the less skilled readers. In the unfamiliar passage, the highly structured format did not improve the reading performance of either group (as compared to the score reached for the conventional format).

In conclusion – and here is the reply to Ufnalska and Hartley's hypothetical statement – whereas textual familiarity plays a fundamental role on reading performance, structural variables seem to operate differently according to word and domain knowledge and to textual familiarity, their role being more crucial in conceptually difficult materials and for lower ability readers. In other words, in an L2 setting, the influence of structure differs according to the readers' familiarity with the text, their L2 competence, and their conceptual knowledge.

Françoise Salager-Meyer
Graduate School of Medicine,
Universidad de Los Andes, Mérida, Venezuela
francoise.sm@gmail.com

References

1. Ufnalska S. Abstracts of research articles: readers' expectations and guidelines for authors. *European Science Editing* 2008;34(3):63–65.
2. Peacock P, Peters TJ, Peacock JL. How well do structured abstracts reflect the articles they summarize? *European Science Editing* 2009;35(1):3–6.
3. Ufnalska S, Hartley J. Can we evaluate the quality of abstracts? *European Science Editing* 2009;35(3):69–72.
4. Salager-Meyer F. Reading academic prose in a foreign language: the influence of structural variable and text familiarity on processing time. *Health Information and Libraries*. 1992;3:73–98.
5. Salager-Meyer F. Reading expository prose at the post-secondary level: the influence of textual variables on L2 reading comprehension (a genre-based approach). *Reading in a Foreign Language* 1993;8(1):645–661.
6. Salager-Meyer F. Reading medical English abstracts: a genre study of the interaction between structural variables and the reader's linguistico-conceptual competence (L2). *Journal of Research in Reading* 1994;17(2):120–146.
7. Salager-Meyer F. Medical English abstracts: how well structured are they? *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 1991;42(7):528–531.

EASE-Forum Digest: October to December 2009

The forum has been very active over the last months of 2009 and its menagerie of discussions illustrated the broad spectrum of knowledge covered by forum participants.

Call-outs and pull-outs cause confusion

What do you do if revision instructions state "Centre your call-outs"? Olga Kuminova received such a request from a journal editor and posed the question to EASE forum participants. Liz Wager understood "call-outs" to be quotations from the main text displayed again in a larger font and used to break up text and highlight interesting statements. They were more common in magazine formats than academic journals but she did not quite understand how you could centre the call-out. John Taylor found a similar definition in *Merriam-Webster's Manual for Writers and Editors*, except the word used was pullquote (without a hyphen) rather than call-out. After much confusion and discussion Kersti Wagstaff came up with the answer. "Call-outs" as defined by the 14th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* are marginal notations inserted by an author or editor to indicate where figures and tables should be placed in the document. "Centre your call-outs" therefore means centring the call-out line rather than having it left-justified, as might be the default. "Pull-outs", short for "pull-out quotes" are the correct term for Liz's "call-outs". Even so, Liz pointed out that some publishers and printers in the UK do refer to "pull-out" quotes as "call-outs" – and this was confirmed for *Learned Publishing* by its brand new editor, Alan Singleton. In the meantime John Taylor provided some URLs of printer's terminology, of which he thought http://www.print4biz.org.uk/glossary.htm was the best.
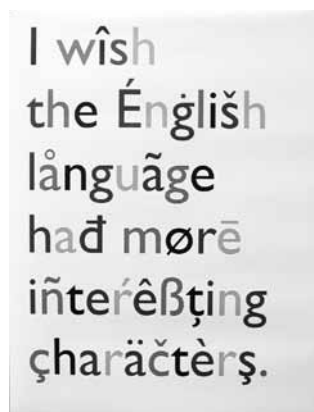
Are editors allowed to edit reviewers' comments?

Marcin Kozak asked the forum if it is permissible for editors to edit reviews written in poor English before sending them to the author. His concern was that the meaning could be changed, so he was wondering if the reviewer would need to approve the editing. Angela Turner's answer summed up the general consensus. She said she often tidied up the English, but if the meaning was unclear she would go back to the reviewer and ask for clarification. More importantly, she would take out anything that was rude or derogatory.

The reviews were also edited sometimes to remove a recommendation of acceptance or rejection because it is the editor's job to make the decision, not the reviewer's. Angela had found that reviewers whose native language was not English were usually happy to have some help and sometimes even asked her to edit their reviews. Rhana Pike pointed out that publishing the reviews online was becoming more common. Would the reviews be published unedited?

What to do about diacritic marks

Aleksandra Golebiowska's problem was where to put words starting with letters with diacritic marks in a list of references. She knew that different languages go about this in different ways. She was dealing with Swedish, and according to Wikipedia the Scandinavian languages treat the characters with diacritics (ä, ö, and å) as new and separate letters of the alphabet and sort them after z. Jørgen Burchardt liked the Wikipedia solution, as A and Å are two different letters and readers from the Nordic countries would *not* look for the Å names among A names in an English list. Even names with AA would be in the last section among the Ås.

Sylwia Ufnalska pointed out that Polish also had letters with diacritic marks, but she felt that when publishing in English, authors should adjust to the needs of the international scientific community, and although diacritic marks should be used, references should be sorted as if there were no diacritic marks in them. This was supported by Carol Norris's investigations of the reference lists in some Finnish PhD theses written in English, where Ä and Ö names were integrated with the A and O names. Andrew Davis from Germany advised authors to follow the practice of the language of the journal they wrote for – that is, ignore the diacritics if it's an English language journal but follow Wikipedia's convention if it's Swedish.

The question of whether names should be anglicised was also raised. Some of Andrew's colleagues spelt their names without diacritics if writing for an English publication; for example, they would write "Mueller" rather than "Müller". His practice was to change the names back to the German spelling and list them accordingly, but really he felt there was little logic in not transliterating the letters as one would with a Russian or an Arabic letter. Kersti Wagstaff was in the middle of copy-editing a big book where the publisher used

Poster designed by Michael Ciancio, available (in colour) from www.mciancio.com

a computer program to style all the references and check all the journal articles against the PubMed entries. Any variations in the list from the PubMed entry were altered so that they matched exactly. Accordingly she had both Jürgens and Juergens in the same list. Andrew rounded off the discussion with some good advice to authors: stick to the same form of name throughout your career.

Which date to use in a text citation to a website

Liz Wager had been confronted by a journal that used the author-date system as opposed to the Vancouver style for indicating references. She was wondering what to do about references to websites on which there was no indication of the date on which the web pages had been created. Elisabeth Heseltine followed the WHO rule for citing websites, which is to put the date it was last accessed because websites can change and its date of creation is not really pertinent.

Karen Shashok referred Liz to the International Standards Organization (ISO) standard, (http://www. collectionscanada.gc.ca/iso/tc46sc9/docs/sc9n386. pdf), which needed updating, and said that the Cornell University Library Citation Management had information about electronic reference formats from the MLA manual at http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/ mla#styles in the section "Citing materials from online sources". Finally, James Hartley wrote that the APA Manual suggests putting "(n.d.)" [no date] after author's name (or entry on the website), then the website address, and then the date the writer accessed at the end. On reflection he thought that "(no date)" or "(date unknown)" would be clearer than "(n.d.)".

How exact should translations between languages be?

In the course of editing an Italian nephrology journal, Marije de Jager was surprised to find that the English abstracts

Information on electronic reference formats from the MLA manual is available on the Cornell University Library website, www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/mla#styles

often diverged substantially from their Italian counterparts. She asked the forum if anybody knew of an authoritative reference that would confirm that abstracts should be the same in the two languages. John Benfield assured Marije that English abstracts should express the exact meaning, or as close as one could come to it, of the abstract in the other language. Sylwia Ufnalska agreed, except that she would add information that was not obvious to a foreigner, for example to describe the location within the country where the study took place.

Karen Shashok likewise agreed and commented that if there are differences in the actual content of the abstracts, this may cause confusion about the "version of record". On the other hand, sometimes editors insist on translations that are too literal. Good translation almost never follows the original text's sentence structure slavishly because languages are different in how sentences are constructed. But the two versions can "say" and "mean" the same thing without imitating each other's grammar, syntax, structure, etc.

John thought that parity could best be achieved if the translator worked with a peer who is a subject expert. Karen thought that this scenario was idyllic but unrealistic for economic reasons. She doubted that money to pay for high-quality translation and revision by both a scientist and a translator separately would appear out of the authors' own pocket, from grants, the publisher's budget, the not-for-profit scientific society's budget, or a charity.

Mary Ellen Kerans offered an explanation as to why Marije might have encountered substantial differences between abstracts. In her experience of Spanish authors, an abstract generated for a conference may be used for the translation because the authors know that it's been corrected by an editor, but a new Spanish one would be written for the article. She felt authors did not always understand that abstracts have the role of documenting the article's content on databases. They seemed to think of abstracts on databases as promotional material for their article. Mary Ellen did not know of a consensus-creating authority that stated abstracts should have the same content across languages; possibly none existed because no one had ever explicitly addressed the creation of good-practice guidelines for bilingual publication in the sciences.

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

Discussion initiators
Olga Kuminova: olga.kuminova@gmail.com
Marcin Kozak: nyggus@gmail.com
Aleksandra Golebiowska: algol@ciop.pl
Liz Wager: liz@sideview.demon.co.uk
Marije de Jager: mfh@marijedejager.eu

My Life as an Editor - Elisabeth Kessler

For longer-standing members of EASE, Elisabeth, as former President, will be a familiar figure. Here, Elisabeth reflects on her career as an editor at the Swedish Academy of Sciences, and on her involvement with and various contributions to EASE.

I am currently employed by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm, as Editor-in-Chief for the Academy's environmental journal *Ambio – A Journal of the Human Environment*, which was started in June 1972 at the time of the United Nations' first major environmental conference in Stockholm. I have been with the Academy since 1986 and I am a member of its Environmental Committee, the International Reference Group, and the Organizing Committee for His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf's Royal Colloquia.

It goes without saying that in my everyday work I have very competent backing from the journal's associate editors, who adequately cover most of the subjects that are published in *Ambio*. The members of this group are hard-working academics who devote a great deal of their time to *Ambio* for very little financial return. I am sure that this is the case for many of the journals and editors represented in EASE.

Early working life
Before coming to the RSAS, I worked for Professor Lars Friberg at the Karolinska Institute, Institute for Environmental Medicine, as editor of two major works, "Cadmium in the Environment" and "The Toxicology of Metals".

I was not initially attracted to editing. Returning to Sweden from Australia in 1965, and after many years in Sweden and Australia as a laboratory technician working on toxic metals, and then as the mother of two children, I was enjoying being at home, meeting old school friends and having time for my children, horse riding, skiing, being out in the woods, and studying at university in the evenings. All of that came to an end when I was asked to do some freelance editing of academic theses and eventually found myself employed full time.

My job at RSAS has given me the opportunity to broaden my knowledge across a whole range of subjects and also to meet an enormous number of interesting people in practically every country of the world. Among the countries I have visited I rank Greenland as the most exciting. Icebergs outside your bedroom window are one of life's bonuses.

The Chinese connection
I am especially pleased that I could engage the Chinese Academy of Sciences in the publication of *Ambio* in Chinese (Mandarin) as early as 1993. This publication cooperation between the Academies terminated in 2008 when our Chinese colleagues decided to publish an English-language environmental journal of their own. We are looking forward to seeing the first issue of this new journal in 2010, and I am honoured by being asked to assist in the start-up of this journal and to serve on the editorial board.

There are many decisions I have to make in my everyday work, but I particularly dislike having to refuse reports and articles that come from the countries in transition and which I know could be turned into good publishable papers if they were edited by a native English-speaking science editor. However, *Ambio* is receiving so many good papers today there is simply no possibility for us to allocate the time and effort to accept papers that are not readily understandable because of faulty presentation of the science involved and/or language difficulties.

It is my honest opinion that there is no "perfect" job, all jobs become just jobs. There are however many ways and means by which to enjoy what you are doing. Decide from the very beginning that "this is what I get paid for so I will give it my best, and whenever possible just a little bit more". I cannot imagine a life without being involved in what goes on in the society I am a part of. Perhaps I'm just one of those extremely lucky people who find work stimulating, even it is just mowing the lawn or painting the fence around my house.

I first joined EASE in 1988 and was Vice President in 2000-2003 and President in 2003-2006. The challenges entailed in becoming the first female President of EASE were mainly related to the inertia among the organization's members. The financial position was precarious, but the appointment of a permanent official Secretary-Treasurer provided Council with much-needed adequate and timely information about our position. The introduction of a seminar coordinator to organize and run interesting seminars similar to those successfully run by ALPSP was also something which I had hoped would add some dynamism to EASE. It was disappointing that attendance by our members was poor, even when the programme included excellent speakers. As luck had it, these speakers did, in many cases, contribute articles to *ESE*. Despite some minor opposition, Council and the Publications Committee succeeded in increasing the attractiveness of *ESE* and its content, thanks to the new logo and layout.

As in all Councils, some members work harder than others to benefit the organization and this was the case during my own presidency. However, it is all of the members of EASE who can and must move the organization forward. Council cannot do it alone.

"If we don't change direction soon we might get where we are heading" – Chinese proverb.

Elisabeth Kessler
Elisabeth@ambio.kva.se

This Site I Like

Getting to grips with your PDFs

How many PDFs of journal articles do you think you have on your computer? If your collection is anything like mine, you'll have about 1100, and you'll have attempted to organize them in a number of ways over the past few years.

Initially, I tried organizing them by author. Then I tried organizing them by discipline or subject – but then what do you do with author A who produces work in subjects B and C? Finding that vital piece of information among all those PDFs can be a slow and frustrating process as you search and open various files.

Mendeley is a new, free, piece of software which aims to solve all these problems (http://www.mendeley.com). It includes desktop software for PDF archiving, a research management system for all your references, and a linked website for collaboration and networking.

The desktop

The desktop software runs on Mac, Linux, and Windows and is the main PDF archiving and reading section of the system, allowing users to build up a "research library" or database. Mendeley takes vital details from imported PDF files for indexing and organization (and will notice if there are any duplicates). This metadata can be used to create citations and bibliographies via a plug-in for Microsoft Word or a Bibtex export facility. If Mendeley has problems reading the PDF file, it will automatically search PubMed, CrossRef and the DOIs, or you can direct it to search online. Out of the 150 files I imported, about 40 needed review (to say "yes that's correct") and only about 20 needed manual entry.

If you don't have the PDF of the article, you can still import the citation information manually, via online facilities, or from other research management software such as Zotero and EndNote. Once files and references have been archived, they can be added to personal collections, with multiple tags for future filtering. This definitely solves that multi-disciplinary filing issue!

In addition, you can do a full-text search within and across all available files. Mendeley has its own tabbed reader for viewing, where the PDFs can be highlighted and annotated.

The website

Users can synchronize their desktop library to their Mendeley website profile, uploading only the citation reference, or the PDF file as well. This provides a back-up facility and access to your library whenever you are away from your desktop – very useful when you are at a conference or meeting. You don't need to worry about privacy issues, as you are the only one who can access your online library and information – unless you choose to put some references or papers in a shared collection – which is when the fun really starts.

Sharing and network facility

Shared collections can be managed on both the desktop and on your website profile. You can put papers in these collections and then invite colleagues to see, highlight, and annotate them, and add more. The Mendeley website also acts as a social networking site, where you can search for and connect with scientists in your field.

Downsides

I had a few initial problems with Mendeley. Most of these would have been solved if there had been more extensive documentation. The software is still in development, and thus has a few things to iron out. The experience would be improved with a better facility to merge libraries across multiple desktops, and notification of locations of duplicate files. The initial read of your PDF files and the website syncing facility can be quite slow. Thus, I recommend syncing fairly regularly as you make changes. The system would also be improved if it was more independent of this internet syncing facility, and if there was a version of the site tailored for mobile phones.

Finally

Several new and old research management systems are available (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_reference_management_software). These include Papers for Mac, which can archive and search PDF files (http://mekentosj.com/papers/) and Zotero, which is a FireFox extension allowing you to collect, manage, and cite your research sources (http://www.zotero.org/). However, only Mendeley seems to provide both a research management and a web collaboration tool. The software is free, but not open-source. Additional features will be introduced on a user-pays system.

Mendeley is still in development, and it seems that bugs are fixed very quickly. The website encourages constant feedback via direct bug reports and separate software improvement suggestions. This means that there are always exciting new features on the horizon. For example, they plan to introduce a feature where Mendeley recommends papers based on your library's contents – what a fantastic way to keep abreast of all the exciting research out there. Personally, I feel this software could revolutionize the way I do my science.

Emma E Doyle
Postdoctoral fellow, Massey University, NZ
emmadoyle79@gmail.com

News Notes

News Notes are taken from the EASE Journal Blog (http://ese-bookshelf. blogspot.com). Please email items for inclusion to Richard Hurley (rhurley@bmj.com), with "News Notes" as the subject.

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

Journals lack policies on animals

Journal editors need to revisit their editorial policies concerning research on animals, a study in the *American Journal of Bioethics* has concluded (2009;9:55–59). Researchers assessed the policies of a random sample of 288 English-language peer-reviewed journals that published original research between July 2005 and June 2006 involving the use of animals. They scored editorial policies, with a top total score of 12. No relevant information could be found for 52 of the journals, and 83 did not have any relevant editorial policies. The highest score achieved was 9, and this was achieved by only one journal.

Uniform competing interests

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) has agreed a standardised format for reporting competing interests in biomedical research papers, to better help readers understand the relationship between authors and commercial entities that may have an interest in the information reported. The goal is to make the process of disclosure uniform and easy; a new form should eliminate the need to reformat disclosure information for specific journals. The form also asks for non-financial associations that may be relevant. The form is at www. icmje.org/coi_disclosure.pdf and includes instructions to help authors provide the information; a sample completed form is at www.icmje.org/ sample_disclosure.pdf.

Retraction and extortion

Two papers retracted by *Science* (2004;303:371–373) and the *Journal of the American Chemical Society* (2004;126:15654–15655) have been linked to an extortion attempt, *Nature* reports (2009;462:969). Documents seen by *Nature* show that in 2007 the police in San Diego considered a former postdoctoral fellow as a possible suspect after another received an anonymous email demanding a $4000 payment and threatening to reveal alleged fraud. The author, Zhiwen Zhan, received an email that read, "You have fraud on at least 3 papers and you stole library material." Zhang decided not to press charges and says that he stands by his work.

Arab world is far from being a knowledge society

Arab states have made progress in technology and research, but there is still a long way to go before the region becomes a knowledge society, says a report described in a scidev.net article. *Arab Knowledge Report 2009: Towards Productive Intercommunication for Knowledge* (www.mbrfoundation.ae/ English/Documents/AKR-2009-En/ AKR-English.pdf) proposes ways of filling what it says are many gaps in the Arab knowledge landscape. Many Arab countries now understand the importance of science and technology in promoting development, and some Arab institutions, such as the Qatar Foundation, are pioneers in this knowledge revolution, but Arab countries still have some of the lowest levels of research funding in the world (tinyurl.com/yc8f4o6).

Open access is good for Africa

"The open access movement removes barriers to academic literature and offers opportunities to participate in the wider research and teaching community, ensuring that Africa does not end up on the wrong side of the 'digital divide'," writes Joseph Juma Musakali in an article on scidev. net. There are also many open access journals, including those in the Public Library of Science (PLoS), as well as others listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), a project set up by Lund University Libraries in Sweden. To encourage the use of open access resources, faculty and students need training, especially in information search and retrieval. (tinyurl.com/yj22orr)

Rap about physics

On 30 November experiments resumed at the Large Hadron Collider, and although the *LHC Rap* has been around for some time, it seems apt to flag it up now. The rap is the creation of Katherine McAlpine, at the time working in the CERN press office. When Michigan State University announced that it would be building a new particle accelerator, the physicists there asked McAlpine to mark the occasion with another rap. Since then she's written the *Black Hole Rap*. See www.katemcalpine. com/scirap.html for the videos and links to other science rappers.

Backslash backslash: a mistake

Tim Berners-Lee, the UK scientist who created the World Wide Web, has admitted that two slashes at the front of a web address is pointless, the *Telegraph* reports. Sir Tim, now director of the World Wide Web Consortium, which oversees the web's development, said that if he had his time again he would leave them out. "Look at all the paper and trees that could have been saved if people had not had to write or type out those slashes on paper over the years—not to mention the human labour and time spent typing those two keystrokes countless millions of times." (tinyurl.com/yhpvngn)

The end of impact factors ... and journals?

"Something has just happened that will almost certainly end the tyranny of impact factors and may well mark another step towards the extinction of most scientific journals," the former editor of the *BMJ*, Richard Smith, has blogged on bmj.com. He thinks that "article level metrics," information attached to each article in the publications of the Public Library of Science, shift attention from journals to articles, particularly for those anxious to find a convenient and cheap way of ranking academics. "The metrics give a . . . much broader measure of the influence of an article," he says. (tinyurl.com/y9y6ks3)

Scientific American's new editor

Scientific American, the 164 year old magazine, appointed Mariette DiChristina, its first female editor-in-chief, in December, the *Guardian* reports. She is the eighth editor-in-chief at the magazine, which has published articles by more than 140 Nobel laureate authors, including Albert Einstein and Francis Crick, and was acquired by Nature Publishing Group last year. DiChristina joined the magazine in 2001 as executive editor, after nearly 14 years at its rival *Popular Science*, and launched its spin-off title *Scientific American Mind*. She is also president of the 2500-member National Association of Science Writers. (tinyurl.com/yfcgyc9)

Living in a world of euphemism

Pre-emptive editing by lawyers "forces us to live in a world of euphemism," said Tracey Brown, managing director of Sense About Science, at a recent panel discussion about English libel law. "Even if you win you could still lose £100,000 and a year or two of your career," said the science writer Simon Singh, who is embroiled in a case brought against him by the British Chiropractic Association (tinyurl.com/ye9pajo). The Index on Censorship has published a report on the current situation, with recommendations for reform (www.libelreform.org). The UK home secretary Jack Straw has pledged to end libel tourism, the *Times* reports (tinyurl.com/ybpukwl).

Tweeter satirises top stylebook

A user of Twitter, the microblogging site (www.twitter.com), has amassed more than 80,000 followers by satirising the *AP Stylebook*, dubbed "the journalist's bible" by Associated Press (www.apstylebook.com), wired.com reports. The user @FakeAPStylebook has amused followers with tweets such as "While it's tempting to call them 'baristi' because of the Italian roots, the plural of 'barista' is 'journalism majors'" and "Robots should only be referred to by gender-neutral pronouns, no matter how sexy they may be." The Twitter presence of the real stylebook has only 30,000 followers. (tinyurl.com/yhsos8q)

New words are not awesome

"The stickler-advocated rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation slow the speed of change and allow the language to remain united," writes David Mitchell in the *Guardian*, dismissing the annual list of new words that have entered the Oxford English Dictionary (www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jan/03/david-mitchell-english-language-grammar). "Staycation", "tweetup", "bossnapping", and "unfriend" are some of the new entries. But Mitchell argues for conservatism: "If you start describing everything as 'rambunctious' or 'celestial,' you end up with sentences like meals in expensive ethnic restaurants—all flavoursome sharing plates and no bloody chips. Slagging people off for saying 'nice' and 'good' is what leads to their resorting to 'awesome.'" See tinyurl.com/yen4ner.

Write for peer reviewers

"The real readers that matter are the peer reviewers. Peer reviewers are specialists and for them to get excited, you're going to be speaking a language that is not necessarily accessible to the average reader," Judith Swan tells Bob Grant, in the *Scientist* (2009;23:65). Other tips include starting with the results section, and getting the tables and figures perfect first before moving onto the discussion section and the introduction. "You can do the methods anytime, really," says the communications consultant Margaret Cargill. Grant also recommends writing every day for 15 to 30 minutes, logging your time, and reading your manuscript out loud. (www.the-scientist.com/article/display/56104/)

European university presses fold

University presses in Europe are facing funding cuts, with one press having closed and others cutting back on the number of titles they're publishing, and a European university press association is being planned, reports Kent Anderson in the blog the Scholarly Kitchen (tinyurl.com/yb7vzke). Middlesex University Press closed at the end of last year (www.mupress.co.uk). Forty academic presses, including 12 from the United Kingdom, are to create a Europe-wide association. Twelve countries are represented. Andrew Peden Smith, at Northumbria University Press, said, "As part of this focused European approach we will also be looking at possible funding from the EU."

Cell highlights proteins and genes

The journal *Cell* has piloted technology that highlights proteins, genes, and small molecules in research articles. Clicking on these entities opens pop-up windows that contain relevant contextual information, with additional links (http://beta.cell.com/index.php/2009/11/reflect). The project was developed at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory, Heidelberg, Germany. Sean O'Donoghue, coordinator, said, "We wanted to design a system that would enhance the reading of scientific papers on the web." This follows Elsevier's recent launch of an "article of the future" prototype with *Cell*, where the traditional linear journal article is displayed in a more useful format (http://beta.cell.com/index.php/2009/07/article-of-the-future).

Richard Hurley

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.

EDITORIAL PROCESS

Blum JA, Freeman K, Dart RC, Cooper RJ. **Requirements and definitions in conflict of interest policies of medical journals.** *JAMA* 2009; 302(20):2230–2234.
It is still unclear whether medical journals have consistent policies for defining and soliciting disclosures of conflicts of interest. Of 256 medical journals, 89% had author COI policies on authors' conflicts of interest, 54% required authors to sign a disclosure statement, and 77% provided definitions of conflicts of interest. In 2008, most medical journals with relatively high impact factors had policies on authors' conflicts of interest available for public review. Journals' policies for solicitation of authors' conflicts and their definitions of conflicts of interest varied substantially.

Editorial. **Uniform format for disclosure of competing interests in ICMJE journals.** *Lancet* 2009;374(9699):1395–1396.
doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(09)61796
Disclosure of conflict of interest by authors of articles published in biomedical journals helps the reader to understand the relationships between the authors and various commercial entities that may have an interest in the information reported in the article. Many journals ask authors to provide a disclosure of conflict in different formats. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), therefore, has recently provided a new disclosure form that has been adopted by all its member journals (http://www.icmje.org).

Through this editorial, also published in other journals (*BMJ*, *NEJM*, etc), editors are encouraged to adopt this uniform reporting format, which is available in the public domain.

Rand DG, Pfeiffer T. **Systematic differences in impact across publication tracks at *PNAS*.** *PLoS ONE* 2009;4(12):e8092.
Citation data can be used to evaluate the editorial policies and procedures of scientific journals. This analysis in *PNAS* (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*) explores the consequences of differences in editor and referee selection, and demonstrates that different editorial procedures are associated with different levels of impact, even within the same prominent journal. It raises interesting questions about the most appropriate metrics for judging an editorial policy's success.

Trebino R. **How to publish a scientific comment in 1 2 3 easy steps.** *Physics World* 2009;22(11):56.
The history of an ultimately unsuccessful attempt by Trebino to comment on a paper which "proved" that his life's work was wrong. His comment was caught between a limit of one page and reviewers' insistence on more detail, and finally the reviewers rejected the author's official reply. For the full story see the link on www.physics.gatech.edu/frog

ETHICAL ISSUES

Collier R. **Prevalence of ghostwriting spurs calls for transparency.** *CMAJ* 2009; 181(8):e161–e162.
doi: 10.1503/cmaj.109-3036
It's no secret that the names at the top of articles published in medical journals aren't always a good indication of who actually wrote them. What may be surprising is how prevalent ghost-writing appears to have become. Between 50% and 100% of articles on drugs that appear in journals are said to be ghostwritten,

and the effect of ghostwriting on the quality of medical publishing is difficult to assess.

Editorial. **A slippery slope.** *Nature* 2009;462(7274):699.
After what appears to be an "arbitrary and ad hoc" decision to cancel a funding committee-approved, animal-use committee-approved study using baboons to test an anthrax vaccine by Oklahoma State University president Burns Hargis, the influence of the university's wealthy donors on research decisions is questioned.

Editorial. **A question of integrity.** *Nature* 2009;462(7274):699.
Highlights allegations of plagiarism against the authors of research papers in which members of the Iranian government were co-authors. The possible causes of this are speculated upon, one being the strong cultural expectation that officials have a strong academic background. Importantly it is noted that, "The actions of a few must not be allowed to soil the reputation of the majority of Iran's scientists."

Fanelli D. **How many scientists fabricate and falsify research? A systematic review and meta-analysis of survey data.** *PLoS ONE* 2009;4(5):e5738.
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0005738
How often scientists fabricate and falsify data or commit other forms of scientific misconduct is a matter of controversy. This systematic review considered several surveys asking scientists about misconduct; the differences in their results are largely due to differences in methods. Only by controlling for differences in methods can the effects of country, discipline, and other demographic characteristics be studied in detail. Many sociological factors are associated with scientific misconduct and surveys should adopt standard methodologies to be usefully compared. On average 2% of scientists admit to having falsified research at

least once, and up to 34% admit other questionable research practices, but the actual frequencies of misconduct could be higher than this.

Molnar FJ, Hutton B, Fergusson D. **Does analysis using "last observation carried forward" introduce bias in dementia research?** *CMAJ* 2008;179(8):751–753 doi:10.1503/cmaj.080820.
"Last observation carried forward" is widely used in dementia research drug trials. Patients affected by dementia who are in drug trials are followed over a period of time. When there is a drop-out this statistical technique is applied. Using the last result of the observation period eliminates the actual state of the patient's progress or decline after the interruption of the evaluation test; it creates an artificial analytical result. At the end of the trial the data have been "stretched" to obtain a fake outcome of a drug trial that should realistically measure the ongoing test to its completion and for its eventual benefits to such patients.

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

Angevaare I. **Taking care of digital collections and data: 'curation' and organisational choices for research libraries.** *Liber Quarterly* 2009;19(1):1–12.
This useful introduction to digital curation and preservation explores the types of digital information that research libraries typically deal with and factors that might influence libraries' decisions to take on the work of data curation themselves, or to leave the responsibility to other organizations. Editors might be unaware of the complexities of these issues.

Morrison H. *Scholarly communication for librarians.* Cambridge**:** Woodhead Publishing, 2009
This book covers the current landscape of scholarly communications and publishing and potential futures, outlining key aspects of transition to best possible futures for libraries and librarians.

It explains complex concepts in a clear, concise manner, designed to quickly bring the reader up to speed on scholarly communications, and is written by a well-known international expert on scholarly communications and open access.

Poor ND. **Pushing beyond the social science citation index.** *International Journal of Communication* 2009;3:853–879.
A study using factor analysis, principal component analysis, and clustering, that examined "2,776 citations from 305 articles … collected from a multinational sample of 17 open access communication journals … published over three years" (2006, 2007, and 2008). It looked at connectivity and citations between open access journals and mainstream open access journals as measure of "the state of health of a discipline", and lack of citation of foreign publications due to the domination of American authors and of the English language on the overall spectrum of scientific publications, together with a criticisms regarding the insufficient inclusion of foreign language works by the ISI. Other concerns were the subject themes of publications and their relation with data skew, revealing convergence and divergence within a field through citation analysis and more specific issues. As the author states: "If we wish to study global linkages between communication studies journals, we must push beyond the Social Science Citation Index".

Renear AH, Palmer CL. **Strategic reading, ontologies, and the future of scientific publishing.** *Science* 2009;325(5942):828–832.
doi: 10.1126/science.1157784
Since the "unsuccessful" launch of the *Online Journal of Current Clinical Trials* in 1992, information gathering has become more and more sophisticated. Progress is such that more than 15 years later, technical, medical, and scientific journals nearly all have an online version. Software now allows a more structured, fast, and detailed search for data on the web and has become

an essential tool to aid researchers and scientific publishing. Scientific articles have become not just an electronic representation of text: thanks to "strategic reading" scientists can work simultaneously with many articles without needing to read them individually– dramatically changing reading practices among scientists. This is possible through ontologies, which the author describe as "structured terminology for representing scientific data … speaking a language that can also be understood by computers".

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

George S, Moreira K. **Publishing non-research papers as a trainee: a recipe for beginners.** *Singapore Medical Journal* 2009;50(8):756–758.
Practical tips for trainee doctors, who are novice researchers and who have few or no published papers, on how to publish (not how to write) non-research papers. They may not be relevant to all trainees aspiring to publish, but should be useful to most trainees. Very few will start their publishing career with a publication in *JAMA* or the *BMJ*; it is advisable to start with lower impact factor journals, master the art and science of writing and publishing, and then set your goals higher.

Jana N, Barik S, Arora N. **Current use of medical eponyms-a need for global uniformity in scientific publications**. *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 2009;9:18.
doi:10.1186/1471-2288-9-18
Eponyms are widely used in medicine – for example, Alzheimer disease, Williams syndrome. Nonetheless there are no standardized guidelines to assure uniformity. Is it more exact to write Down syndrome, Down's syndrome or to identify the disease with its descriptive name (trisomy 21)? Can we interchange "Susac syndrome" and "retinocochleocerebral vasculopathy"? A uniform use of nomenclature of clinical disorders is not only important for stylistic reasons but is essential for correct classification in biomedical databases. Taking "Down syndrome" and

"Down's syndrome" as an example, this article assess the current use of medical eponyms, underlines the importance of uniformity, and suggests using the non-possessive form.

Sidhu R, Rajashekhar P, Lavin VL, Parry J, Attwood J, Holdcroft A, Sanders DS. **The gender imbalance in academic medicine: a study of female authorship in the United Kingdom.** *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 2009;102(8):337–342. Career progression depends on measures of esteem, including publication in prestigious journals. A shortfall exists of female doctors in senior academic posts in the United Kingdom. This study investigates gender differences in first and senior authorship in six peer-reviewed British journals (including *BMJ* and *Lancet*) in 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2004 and analyses factors that are associated with publication rates. UK female first authors have increased since 1970, but there is considerable lag and in some specialties a decline in female senior authors. Factors that could narrow the gender gap in authorship should be sought and addressed.

RESEARCH EVALUATION

Calver MC, Bradley JS. **Should we use the mean citations per paper to summarise a journal's impact or to rank journals in the same field?** *Scientometrics* 2009;81(3):611–615 doi:10.1007/s11192-008-2229-y As criticism of the journal impact factor as a standard for ranking journals increases, other measures that include the mean citations per paper have been proposed or used. Mean citations per paper can be calculated easily from data in many databases, removing dependence from the limited list of journals covered in Thomson Reuters' ISI Web of Science and Journal Citation Reports. But mean citations per paper has limitations, given the highly skewed distributions of citations per paper in a wide range of journals.

Hartley J, Betts L. **Common weaknesses in traditional abstracts in the social sciences.** *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 2009;60(10):2010–2018. One hundred traditional abstracts from 53 journals in social science were evaluated for information and accuracy. The authors also refer to other studies of abstracts on the base of their presentation, readability, density of information, briefness, and completeness of information. The method highlights the general inaccuracy of traditional abstracts presented in a "single-block" format compared (but not in depth) with structured abstracts. A checklist of Background, Aims, Method, Participants (sex and age), Place (country of study), Results and Conclusions was used. Overall, traditional abstracts were poor in content and sometimes also lacked useful and even crucial information. Switching from a traditional abstract format to a more accurate one (structured format), and having no word limit, can improve quality as well as the chance of being cited.

Hyett M, Parker G. **Can the highly cited psychiatric paper be predicted early?** *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 2009;43:173–175. Can the citations of an article after two years be predicted three weeks after publication, as reported in a recent study (Lokker C, McKibbon KA, McKinlay RJ, Wilczynshi NL, Haynes RB. Prediction of citation counts for clinical articles at two years using data available within three weeks of publication: retrospective cohort study. *BMJ* 2008;336:655-657)? The authors sampled 1274 articles from 105 top medicine journals on the basis of 20 potential predictors, applying a multiple regression analysis over a longer review period. The conclusions are not consistent with the *BMJ* report, and including lower impact journals would give a better understanding in predicting future citation success.

Lyon L. *Open science at web-scale: optimising participation and predictive potential.* November 2009. http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/documents/opensciencerpt.aspx An in-depth report on data-intensive open science and its implications. A host of questions (aided with some pictorial examples) related to the impact, development, future, and potentials of participating science on research and research practices, communities, higher education institutes, and funding organizations. Raises awareness of "institutional senior management teams of the strategic implication of this potentially transformational agenda", costs and skills required to implement it; a wide range of evaluations and questions/proposals.

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

Edwards PJ, Roberts I, Clarke MJ, DiGuiseppi C, Wentz R, Kwan I, Cooper R, Felix LM, Pratap S. **Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires.** *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2009;(3): MR000008. doi:10.1002/14651858.MR000008.pub4. To increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires, people can be contacted before they are sent a postal questionnaire. Postal questionnaires can be sent by first class post or recorded delivery, and a stamped-return envelope can be provided. Questionnaires, letters, and emails can be made more personal, and preferably kept short. Incentives such as a small amount of money can be offered with a postal questionnaire. One or more reminders can be sent, including a copy of the questionnaire, to people who do not reply.

Penny Hubbard and Paola de Castro, compilers

Forthcoming Meetings, Courses, and BELS Examinations

American Association for the Advancement of Science: "Bridging Science and Society"
18–22 February 2010; San Diego, USA
http://www.aaas.org/meetings

British Society for Literature and Science (BSLS) 2010 Conference
8–10 April 2010, Newcastle-on-Tyne, UK
http://www.bsls.ac.uk/?page_id=714

UKSG 33rd Annual Conference and Exhibition
12–14 April 2010, Edinburgh, UK
http://www.uksg.org/event/conference10

Knowledge Globalization Conference 2010
11–13 May 2010, Dhaka, Bangladesh
http://www.kglobal.org

30th EMWA conference: "Medical writing in an electronic era"
11–15 May 2010, Lisbon, Portugal
http://www.emwa.org/

Council of Science Editors (CSE) annual meeting: "The changing climate of scientific publishing–the heat is on"
14–18 May 2010, Atlanta, USA
http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/events/annualmeeting10/index.cfm

2nd ESP/EAP (English for specific/academic purposes) conference: "ESP/EAP innovations in tertiary settings: proposals and implementations"
21–23 May 2010, Kavala, Greece
http://www.teikav.edu.gr/folapec/espeap/

Science Communication Conference: "Audiences for engagement"
24–25 May 2010, London, UK
http://www.britishscienceassociation.org/ScienceCommunicationConference

American Association of University Presses (AAUP) Annual Meeting
17-20 June 2010, Salt Lake City, USA
http://aaupnet.org/programs/annualmeeting/index.html

2010 Joint Annual Meeting: "Revolutionary ideas in biocommunications"
2–5 June 2010, Boston, USA
http://www.bioconf.org/

IEEE Professional Communication Society: International Professional Communication Conference (IPCC 2010)
7–9 July 2010, Twente, Netherlands
http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/

ALPSP International Conference 2010
8 September 2010, Wyboston, UK
http://www.alpsp.org/ngen_public/article.asp?aid=131503

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

COURSES

How to be a Successful Journal Editor
25-26 March, Oxford, UK
A 1.5 day course for Editors-in-Chief, Editorial Board members and Managing Editors
http://www.pspconsulting.org

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

EASE Business

From January 2010 the EASE secretarial roles will be shared by Sheila Evered and Samantha Jeffery. Sheila will be Membership Secretary and Samantha will be secretary to Council and the Publications Committee. All matters regarding membership, ESE journal subscriptions and the Handbook should be referred to Sheila. All other matters should be addressed to Samantha.

Please note the changes to contact details:

Sheila Evered
Telephone: +44 (0)118 970 0322
Email: membership@ease.org.uk

Samantha Jeffery
Telephone: +44 (0)800 098 8853
Email: secretary@ease.org.uk

Samantha Jeffery

I am taking on the role of Secretary for 2010, having edited the conference newsletter in Pisa. I am studying part-time for a BA (Hons) degree in History with the Open University in England, where I have researched Renaissance art, the cultural influences of Roman emperors, medieval literature, and the history of science during the Enlightenment. For two years I worked for the UK's top regional newspaper group in their circulation and display advertising departments. In my spare time I enjoy learning European languages, reading Shakespeare, researching the history of fashion, and ice dancing.

Membership Changes

New Members
Individual

Dr Bilal Munir Ahmad
Mayo Hospital
Kind Edward Medical University
Lahore, Pakistan
Associate Editor

Ms Fiona M L Curlet
WHO/EMRO, Cairo, Egypt
Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal
curletf@emro.who.int

Ms Rowan Douglas
Willis Research Network
London, UK

Dr Alex Edelman
Malakoff, France
alex@alexedelman.com

Ms Marjolaine Hamelin
INRA-UR50 LBE
Narbonne, France
Editorial Assistant, Agronomy for Sustainable Development

Dr James Herbert
Pierrelatte, France
Freelance translator, editor and proofreader with medical background
jimherbert48@yahoo.com

Dr Geoffrey Kemball-Cook
London, UK
geoffrey.kemball-cook@csc.mrc.ac.uk

Ms Marian E Kent
Rome, Italy
marian.kent@fastwebnet.it

Mrs Jemma Lough
Yaxley, UK
jemma@jscarter.net

Dr Janine Martins
Southampton, UK
Journal - University of Oxford
jmartins@doctors.org.uk

Ms Jacinta M Miller
Wycheproof, Victoria, Australia
Australian and New Zealand Continence Journal
jacmil@bigpond.com

Ms Jaya Ramchandani
Mumbai, India; Leiden, Netherlands
Editor
jayar@siriusinteractive.co.in

Mr Rene Tetzner
Letchworth Garden City, UK
Proofreading service (www.proof-reading-service.com)
rene.tetzner@gmail.com

Dr Walter W van den Broek
Rotterdam, The Netherlands
wvdbroek@wvdbroek.org

Miss Charlotte J Wills
Les Deux Alpes, France
vetmedtranslations@gmail.com

Ms Linda J Worland
Melbourne, Australia
linda@oz-brij.com

Corporate

European Centre for Disease Control & Prevention (ECDC)
Dr Kathrin Hagmaier
ECDC, Tomtebodavägen 11 A
SE-171 83 Stockholm, Sweden
Assistant Editor, Eurosurveillance
kathrin.hagmaier@ecdc.europa.eu

Ms Kim Hutchings
ECDC, Tomtebodavägen 11 A
SE-171 83 Stockholm, Sweden
Publications Manager, Eurosurveillance
kim.hutchings@ecdc.europa.eu

Dr Ines Steffens
ECDC, Tomtebodavägen 11 A
SE-171 83 Stockholm, Sweden
Managing Editor, Eurosurveillance
ines.steffens@ecdc.europa.eu

Scandinavian J for Work, Environment & Health
Ms Lisa O'Donoghue-Lindy
Helsinki, Finland