

European Science Editing

Contents

Vol. 31(2)

May 2005

Editorial

- 40 Elisabeth Kessler: Editing in a changing world: continuing education opportunities for editors

Articles

- 41 Elisabeth Heseltine: EASE workshops on science communication
45 James Hartley: Improving that title: the effect of colons

Editing around the world

- 47 Eugene V Roitman: Development of the biomedical press in modern Russia

From the literature

- 49 Liz Wager: What can editors do if they suspect research misconduct?

Report of meeting

- 51 Committee on Publication Ethics: Seminar 2005 (Pritpal S Tamber)

Correspondence

- 52 Marie-Louise Desbarats-Schönbaum: Editorials . . . and controversy
53 Maeve O'Connor: EASE on the internet
53 **EASE-Forum digest:** December 2004–March 2005 (compiler: Elise Langdon-Neuner)

Book reviews

- 54 Thomas F Babor, Kerstin Stenius, Susan Savva (eds): Publishing addiction science: a guide for the perplexed (reviewed by Bob Huggan)
55 Albert Jack: Red herrings and white elephants (reviewed by John Kirkman)
55 Joaa Magueijo: Faster than the speed of light (reviewed by RB Gwilliam)

Regular features

- 58 The Editors' WebWatch (Maira Vekony)
59 News Notes (Margaret Cooter)
60 News from editing societies (Jane Sykes)
61 Forthcoming meetings, courses and BELS examinations
62 The Editor's Bookshelf (Jane Moody)
65 Membership list additions and changes
66 Membership of EASE [membership information]



Looking for online peer review solutions?

ScholarOne® Manuscript Central®
is chosen MOST by your peers!

Organization: ScholarOne, Inc.

Audience: Non-Profit Societies, Associations, Universities, and Commercial Publishers

Manuscripts: From 25 to thousands of manuscript submissions annually

Pricing: Flexible pricing structure to fit the needs of small and large journals

Overall Recommendation	Accept	Reject	
	✓	—	
Rating	Exceptional	Average	Poor
Flexible workflow tools deliver journal defined sites in as little as 2 weeks	✓	—	—
Selected by journals in more than 130 content areas	✓	—	—
Currently processing over 30,000 submissions per month	✓	—	—
Over one million global users registered, including authors, reviewers, and editors in your field	✓	—	—
Reputation for continuous product innovation	✓	—	—
Service delivery options for training, support, and site implementation	✓	—	—
Questions	Yes	No	N/A
Author friendly submission process with progress indicators?	✓	—	—
Enforceable limits and field requirements during manuscript submission?	✓	—	—
Automated reminders to <i>individual</i> overdue reviewers and editors?	✓	—	—
Extensive anonymity and conflict-checking to provide completely unbiased review process for all users, including your own editors?	✓	—	—
E-Commerce availability for securely collecting fees at the time of submission?	✓	—	—
Support includes online guides and help, video tutorials, training, and dedicated help desk professionals?	✓	—	—
Integrates with your production systems as part of your fully digital workflow?	✓	—	—

Increase your submissions and reduce your costs with
Manuscript Central™, the most proven online application for the
submission, review and tracking of scholarly manuscripts.

ScholarOne

Ask for a free product demonstration:

www.ScholarOne.com

01 (434) 817-2040

LearnMore@ScholarOne.com

Editorial

Editing in a changing world: continuing education opportunities for editors

Elisabeth Kessler, President of EASE

Ambio, Royal Swedish Academy of Science, PO Box 50005, Stockholm, Sweden; elisabet@ambio.kva.se

The world of editing has changed. It will continue to change and at times the pace of this change may appear mind-boggling. But, as any self-respecting editor will tell you, you just can't let go. You ride with the times or fall off the horse in the effort. As Karen Shashok said in her article in *Learned Publishing*, "There are no standard models for author's editors" — and there are certainly no quick fixes whatever editing skills one possesses [1].

The impact of technological change on the production of paper and electronic publications has been with us for some time now, but how often do we find time to think about, let alone analyse, in what ways we ourselves have been affected by the changes. For many editors the very language of editing has changed. Together with authors and reviewers the editor/copy editor now needs to deal with electronic files, new ways of editing online, new display techniques, etc. However, looking in the mirror, I believe most editors would agree that the changes have been to the advantage of the editing profession. Given time, the speed of communication between the editor and author can be turned into an ally rather than an enemy and "intelligent guidelines can ease the burden of an experienced editor" [2]. But, where will the guidelines and expertise come from? EASE has made a good step forward with the publishing of the *Science Editor's Handbook*, which was reviewed positively by KF Phillips in the latest issue of *Science Editor* [3] as well as being given top marks by many of our own members. More can be done.

Any journal editor will inform you, and you will have noticed yourself, that there is an ever-increasing volume of primary published information and most of this material relies on the services of editors/copy editors/authors' editors and others. Editing is an important service, one that is performed by a large number of EASE members, and thus a major driving force of the organization. However, the services required of individual editors may often go beyond the simple ability to edit a scientific paper. Editors also need skills in addressing the myriad minor conflicts that can arise from the simple act of editing: things like tackling the misunderstandings about editing style, language use and what have you. Freelance editors also need negotiating skills when dealing with pricing their services correctly, and much more.

Where do we/can we learn these skills? Do science editors need regular updating courses and training in their chosen profession? Today, capacity building and competence training are areas that are seen as necessary for most professions and editing should be no exception. How is editing competence evaluated and by whom? Editors (authors' editors, copy editors, technical and substantive editors) are not necessarily experts in the

fields of the science papers they are requested to edit. Where can/do they turn to with their queries? Many of course turn to colleagues, but I believe most search through their own editing literature and literature on the specific subject they are engaged in. There are large numbers of books on editing practices available, some very good and some questionable. We all have our old favourites, and most of us attempt to update what we have. An excellent source of inspiration is, of course, the Book Review section in each issue of *ESE*.

As an organization we need to ask ourselves if we are doing enough to help and improve the editing skills and the status of our members. What can we improve on? Is this an area that should be addressed in a series of EASE training programmes for already established editors who wish to advance their skills and those who have recently entered the profession and need guidance? Could EASE also offer consultative services to our members? A brief comparison with other similar organizations shows that training programmes are indeed often on offer. Of course, there is always the question of whether EASE members and their colleagues would be willing to pay for such courses. I think they probably would if the courses resulted in a certificate of their editing skills. For each step forward made by our organization we can or should see growth in the expectations of EASE members. Competence and career training courses are only two examples of how we can continue to move forward.

Over the many years I have been an EASE member I have never really heard any voluble demands from members. Are you completely satisfied with what you get from the organization today, and does EASE live up to your expectations? Council needs and wants to hear more from members, especially in relation to what they expect from the organization. Organizations are created by their membership and will in the long term survive or collapse depending on how either party fails or succeeds in living up to the expectations of the other.

EASE is investing more in creating new opportunities for members, and further efforts are being made in this direction. The EASE Seminar, "Habits in Scientific Publication", in Barcelona on 29 April 2005, is only one example of what we can do and are doing. More can be done, but Council needs to hear from every one of our members.

References

1. Shashok K. 2001. Author's editors: facilitators of science information transfer. *Learned Publishing* 14: 113–121.
2. Orlans H. 1999. Fair use in US scholarly publishing. *Learned Publishing* 12:235–244.
3. Phillips KF. 2005. Reviews. *Science Editor* 28:23–24.

Article

EASE workshops on science communication

Elisabeth Heseltine

Lajarthé, 24290 St Léon-sur-Vézère, France;heseltin@club-internet.fr

Abstract

Exchange of information is a two-way process. EASE has tried to help the beneficiaries of open access and others to have their voices be heard by organizing workshops in eastern Europe on writing manuscripts for submission to biomedical journals. The programme, instituted in 1996, resulted in 16 workshops being given in various countries. Now, however, the demand appears to have dried up, a result that is inconceivable to the workshop leaders involved, who were told how extraordinarily useful the workshops were. If EASE continues this activity, financing will have to be found from outside the EASE coffers. Several attempts have been made to raise funds, but none has been successful. Readers are requested to provide suggestions on how both the demand for workshops and sources of funding for them could be found.

It is all very well for British and US journals and publishers generously to provide "open access" and free online versions of journals, but does this mean that the research produced in the receiving countries is not worth reading?

What has been done so far

EASE approached the other side of the equation by offering to sponsor workshops in scientific writing in countries where scientists find it difficult to have their results published in either national journals or "international" (i.e. British and US) journals.

In 1996, in response to a proposal made at the EASE Assembly in Budapest in 1994, the Council announced in *European Science Editing* (nos. 58 and 59) that courses in science writing in the countries of what was then "eastern" Europe would be financed by EASE. EASE would pay the travel costs and an honorarium for the workshop leader, while the host country would provide a suitable locale for the workshop and accommodation and expenses for the workshop leader.

The first workshops were held in 1997. The first was at the Croatian Medical School, Zagreb, Croatia, at the request of Dr Ana Marusic, now well known to all EASE members and currently President of the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME). The second was given by Chuck Hollingsworth at the Institute of Ecology in Dziekanow Lesny, Poland, and the third by Liz Wager in conjunction with a national congress on family medicine in Moldova, Romania. Two two-day workshops were conducted by Vivian Wyatt at the Zootechnical Department of the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. The participants in these

workshops varied from young researchers who had never published a paper, even in their native language, to deputy directors of institutes.

The November 2001 issue of *European Science Editing* (vol. 27, no. 4) published brief reports by individuals who had requested workshops at their institutes. These three further workshops were held in Warsaw, Poland; Brno, Czech Republic; and St Petersburg, Russian Federation [1]. The reports all indicated the importance of such courses to research in the host countries. Other EASE-sponsored workshops have been held in Warsaw and St Petersburg and in April 2004 a course on scientific writing for PhD students was given by Pehr Enckell and Linus Svensson at the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, China.

The surprising response to the initial announcement was that a large number of persons willing to give such courses enthusiastically presented themselves, but there was very little demand from institutes in eastern Europe. This was all the more surprising as, in the experience of persons who regularly give courses in science writing, there is a huge and recognized need for such instruction. The situation has changed little in the 10 years since the idea was first put forward.

The EASE programme now seems to have stagnated. Requests have been received for workshops in 2005 from our two faithful "subscribers", the Oncology Centre in Warsaw and the Medical Academy of Postgraduate Studies in St Petersburg, but no further expressions of interest have been received.

Eliciting demand

How is the clear need for courses of this kind to be transformed into requests for workshops? Vlatko Silobrcic, in charge of the workshops at the time, noted that the interest in training testified to the need for quick, appropriate answers. He suggested that Council and other members of EASE in various countries be contacted to determine interest in the courses. After receiving the reports, Council could decide on the modalities of EASE participation and organization. If wide interest existed in only some countries, interested individuals from other countries could be told to contact the training organizing group that was closest geographically and by date. If there was little interest in a country, a regional organizing group could be set up to enable participants from several countries to attend. In selecting the trainers, Vlatko Silobrcic said that the most important consideration was their experience in conducting such courses. In his view, the person should be able to

communicate with the participants in the local language, because it is more important to convey the principles of good scientific writing than proficiency in English (which can be achieved in regular English courses).

In order for the programme to be successful, the workshops should be advertised more widely, stressing the huge, albeit serendipitous, demand that those who run such workshops have experienced. Then, there will have to be some coordination of all those who have or would be capable of running such workshops in EASE's name, with perhaps some criteria to ensure quality. There should be feedback in the form of answers to a detailed questionnaire and also submission of work by persons who have attended the workshops.

Funding for workshops

EASE has funded two to four workshops per year since the inception of the programme. If the association is to continue this line of assistance, it has two tasks: to find ways of eliciting demand and to find funding to support the workshops.

In March 1997 EASE contacted Dr TM Empkie, Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe for Project Hope, a project financed by George Soros to improve communication among scientists in eastern Europe and with the rest of the world. Unfortunately, no reply was received.

In 1997, a meeting was held between EASE and what was then the Council of Biology Editors to discuss joint planning and financing of short workshops in writing a scientific paper. The combined proposal was as follows: "The overall aim is to provide short workshops (lasting less than one week) on writing scientific papers, to be given by members of EASE and CBE to scientists around the world, in order to expand the possibilities of all scientists to get good results published." The workshops would undergo quality checks before and after they were held. Funding would be sought by EASE and/or CBE for workshops at institutes or organizations that were unable to pay. The workshops would be aimed mainly at scientists whose mother tongue is not English and whose tradition of scientific writing is different from that considered acceptable by British and US scientific journals. The aim of the workshops would be to teach the scientists the structure of a scientific paper that would make it more likely to be accepted by the journal of their choice; the emphasis was not to be on language.

The steps necessary for setting up the workshops were outlined as follows:

1. A list of EASE and CBE members who are potential workshop leaders would have to be drawn up by a specific mailing. [A questionnaire about this] should be [mailed] separately from the journals of the two organizations, as an announcement [in a journal] would not suffice. The questionnaire sheet should request information from interested members on any short workshops that have been, are being or are being planned to be given. Details of their content, length and a list of sites where they have been given could be asked for.

2. A list of potential clients would have to be drawn up. This would be quite easy for EASE members, many of whom may have contacts with foreign scientists and other countries.

3. The workshops should be evaluated. Initially, a detailed plan of the workshop could be assessed by a committee of people experienced in giving such workshops, communicating electronically. Any evaluations that the potential workshop leader has received previously could be requested and examined. References could be asked for. An evaluation form to be distributed to participants at the end of a workshop should be designed, for post hoc evaluation.

4. The lists of workshop leaders and of clients would then be "matched", on the basis of course content and clients' expectations and geographical location.

5. Once the leaders and clients have been matched, they would work out all practical details between themselves. The workshop leader would be responsible for ensuring the availability of the necessary handouts, audiovisual tools, etc.

6. At the end of a workshop, the leader would distribute the evaluation forms, collect them and send the originals to the EASE-CBE evaluation committee.

7. The client (institute or organization) would also be asked to send the committee an appreciation of the workshop.

The financial arrangements would be as follows:

1. A standard daily fee would have to be set, on the basis of the experience of the workshop leaders. Clients would be asked to pay the honorarium and travel expenses and provide accommodation and meals.

2. Clients that can pay for a workshop to be held would reimburse all expenses of and pay the honorarium to the workshop leader.

3. In return for having evaluated the workshop and having brought the workshop leader and the client together, CBE and/or EASE would receive a percentage of the honorarium (to be decided upon).

4. For clients who cannot pay, owing to currency problems or lack of funds, funding should be sought to pay the travel expenses and honorarium of the workshop leader. A member of EASE or CBE should be sought who would undertake to find funds for this purpose from foundations, etc that promote scientific exchanges.

The legal considerations are as follows:

- responsibilities of workshop leaders and EASE-CBE

- legal relationships with funding organizations

- basis of royalties to EASE-CBE

- EASE-CBE's right to approve or disapprove a workshop

- copyright on materials used

- non-liability of EASE-CBE in any dispute arising from arrangements made by the workshop leader

- responsibilities of workshop leader, EASE-CBE and client if a workshop is cancelled.

Despite the detailed consideration that was given to this joint project with what is now the Council of

Science Editors, there has been no further news from CSE, and no follow-up.

In 2003, at the EASE General Assembly in Bath, England, a proposal was submitted to the "Grand Challenges in Global Health Initiative" of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The basis of that initiative was that "health systems constraints are impeding the implementation of major global initiatives for health, including the attainment of the UN Millennium Development Goals, and research could contribute to overcoming these barriers to progress. An independent task force has been convened by WHO to suggest topics where international collaborative research could help to generate the knowledge necessary to improve health systems." Annette Flanagan of *JAMA*, Ana Marusic, Faith McLellan of *The Lancet* in New York, and myself, with the approval of EASE, put together a proposal for funding for a large programme of workshops in science writing and other aspects of biomedical communication for scientists whose native tongue is not English, in the interests of global health. Our proposal was as follows:

Grand challenges in global health: building information bridges: educating authors and editors in science communication

"... an innovation to break through the roadblock that stands between where we are now and where we would like to be in science, medicine, and public health."

Most of the information necessary for making advances in global health through research and clinical practice is published in English.

Only 10% of published studies address the health problems that affect 90% of the world's population.

Researchers whose native language is not English are at a disadvantage in getting their results published in English-language biomedical journals.

Therefore, important studies for global health are not available to the international scientific community.

The quality of research papers by non-native English speakers must be improved to diminish the current publication bias.

The problem must be addressed by:

- training non-native English-speaking researchers;
- training non-native English-speaking copy and journal editors; and
- improving the quality of journals published in English in non-native-English-speaking countries.

Training courses for non-native-English-speaking researchers and editors

What is already being done:

Courses have been organized occasionally by various editors' organizations (e.g. the European Association of Science Editors, the Council of Science Editors, the World Health Organization, several universities in the USA and the United Kingdom). These represent a drop in the ocean.

What should be done:

Fund a consortium of editors' associations to organize workshops for researchers and editors and to train trainers who will disseminate the information locally.

Training courses for native English-speaking and non-native-English-speaking copy editors:

What is already being done:

No systematic training; some volunteers have made sporadic efforts, as finances allow.

What should be done:

Fund the consortium to organize workshops, train trainers and publish a practical course.

Improve the quality of journals published, in print and electronically, in English in non-native English-speaking countries:

What is already being done:

Workshops in journal management are run regularly by the BMJ in England and the Council for Science Editors in the USA.

What should be done:

Fund the consortium to organize workshops and train trainers in the countries where the journals are, so that more people can participate and address their problems in their own settings. The workshops should cover:

- study design
- journal management
- editorial procedures
- manuscript quality
- peer review.

How does this proposal meet the criteria for projects submitted for the Global Challenge?

The magnitude of the health problem being addressed and its alignment with the scope of the programme

The problem is global. Important knowledge is not available on the health problems of most of the population of the world. Publication, dissemination and incorporation of best evidence into practice are all critical for changing health status throughout the world.

The identification of the scientific or technical roadblock to achieving a solution and why this roadblock is limiting on a critical path to achieving the solution

Researchers whose native language is not English have more difficulty than native speakers in having their articles accepted by "core", prestigious, high-circulation, high-impact journals.

Many journals published in English in non-native English-speaking countries are not indexed on the databases that most English-speaking scientists use. They may nevertheless contain essential information for public health.

The soundness of the scientific and technical foundation for the proposed Grand Challenge, not merely the ease or likelihood of success

The workshops that have been run have been proven to improve the quality of papers submitted by non-native English-speaking researchers and to assist editors in running better journals.

The impact of solving the Grand Challenge on the health problem, including indirect benefits such as those on income or environment

Global health will improve as the publication bias is reduced. More information on the diseases and other health problems that affect the large majority of the people of the world will be made available.

The existence of stronger, better-quality, internationally recognized journals will help to halt the brain drain of scientists to developed countries.

The feasibility of widely implementing any solution to the Grand Challenge in the context of the developing world

There are editors' associations all over the world, including Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. Some have extensive experience in running educational workshops, but these have depended mainly on volunteers, and there is sometimes overlap of efforts in certain areas with inadequate attention paid to others. A consortium of these editors' associations would provide the opportunity to establish a systematic, consistent program of workshops that address the real needs in each country of the world where scientists are doing useful work. The associations represent a large pool of trainers.

There are biomedical journals all over the world, which would welcome assistance in making themselves more visible.

"This joint proposal is submitted by:

WAME – the World Association of Medical Editors

FAME – the Forum for African Medical Editors

EASE – the European Association of Science Editors

CSE – the Council of Science Editors

AMERBAC – Asociacion Mexicana de Editores de Revista Biomedica

COPE – the Committee on Publication Ethics"

The follow-up to the proposal

An acknowledgement was received from Ulysses Panisset, Scientist, Research Policy & Cooperation, World Health Organization, who offered to circulate it among the participants of the Ministerial Summit in November 2004. There has been no further news.

It is essential that efforts to seek funding for workshops be pursued. Elisabeth Kessler, as President of EASE, has tried to enhance the reputation of EASE by organizing courses at Chinese universities and institutions in the name of EASE, on the basis that it is easier to apply for further funding of projects once something is up and running successfully and has become established. Subsequently, funding could be sought from the European Commission or a national development agency such as SIDA for financing for a two- to three-year project. Elisabeth Kessler's connections with the Chinese Academy of Sciences and several universities throughout China might

provide the type of leverage needed to get things off the ground.

Aims of the EASE project

One of the aims of the workshops that are currently given is to emphasize the essential role of national journals: to break the monopoly of "international" journals on subjects of international interest; to provide information on international priorities that are not covered by "international" journals; and to provide information on subjects of national importance for a national readership. National journals can fulfil their essential role by publishing scientifically reliable, well-organized papers, which are accessible to all people who need them.

The workshops could help to improve science, on the premise that "good writing leads to good science." They emphasize the importance of ensuring the quality of a study, ensuring that articles in a national language meet national standards of good science writing, and ensuring that articles written in English comply with standards of good scientific English.

One kind of workshop

The workshop I give is based on the principle that, although communication is an integral part of scientific research, scientists rarely receive instruction in how to write a paper. They often rely on example – that is, they look at other papers in scientific journals written by equally untrained scientists. The purpose of the workshop is to help scientists communicate more effectively and help them present the results of their research in a way that will best convince the reader that their work is important and reliable.

The workshop is given in English, as English has become the international language of science. It is *not*, however, intended to help scientists improve their English, which would be impossible in a short workshop. It is designed to help scientists who already have a good command of English (or for whom English is the native language) to *structure* their papers – that is, to arrange the necessary material into sections in a logical order so that the reader will be led through the arguments of the writer and thus understand the relevance of the results. If a manuscript contains all the necessary information, written in a clear, logical order, without unnecessary detail, any linguistic anomalies can easily be cleared up by a copy editor or reviewer.

The emphasis of the workshop is on the standard scientific manuscript for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. It is a workshop and not a course. Participants are expected to contribute to the discussion at all times. The participants are all scientists, and they therefore have information and experience in writing papers that they can share with their colleagues. The workshop consists of discussion of each step in the writing of an article, illustrated with a series of handouts and exercises and by discussion of articles provided in advance by the participants.

I have given such workshops over the past 20 years in institutes and other research centres in over 20

countries, including Australia, China, eastern and western Europe, India, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom and the USA.

Other teaching forms?

On the basis of a proposal by Vlatko Silobrcic, Jenny Gretton put forward an idea which might meet some of the requests for individual training from eastern Europe. This is a distance-learning scheme that would be run by e-mail and on the web, with an individual tutor appointed to look after a student, and a set course to work through in, say, an academic year, with examples and guidelines in a folder. A tutor could probably look after about six students at a time. There might be a live workshop during the annual general meeting of EASE, with some form of accreditation for those who completed all the modules of the course. All the chapters of the *Science Editors' Handbook* could be included in the folder, with a good "suggested reading" list. If a native speaker

with good editorial English could be found in the country in which the student lived, the scheme should work.

EASE might also consider publishing a hands-on teaching module for use by experienced trainers in countries where there is a demand for such training. Another possibility would be an interactive CD-ROM, although production of this platform is extremely expensive.

The future

I urge other EASE members who give workshops to write to EASE, outlining their activities and their experiences in this field. Any thoughts by readers on the problems posed in this article should be sent as letters to either ESE or Reme Melero (rmelero@iata.csic.es), the Council member currently in charge of this activity.

Everyone concerned is convinced that the workshops are useful. How are we now to extend this activity? And how are we to find financing?

All suggestions are welcome!

Improving that title: the effect of colons

James Hartley

School of Psychology, Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG, UK; j.hartley@psy.keele.ac.uk

Abstract

This article reviews the findings of two strands of research on titles in journal articles: one assesses their effects upon comprehension, and the other examines the ways in which they are written. The author concludes that comprehension might be improved by using colons when writing titles.

Copy editors frequently have problems with the titles of articles submitted for publication. In their eyes such titles are often dull and/or uninformative. There is a temptation, therefore, to "sex up" the titles, but this may upset the author (who should have the last word?). I was not amused last year, for example, when the editor of *The Psychologist* changed my title, "Were there any sex differences? Missing data in psychology journals" to "More sex please, we're psychologists" and refused to change it back [1].

So what is a good title? In my view titles should attract and inform [2]. "More sex please" certainly attracts, but it does not tell the reader that the article is about how psychologists often fail to report the ratio of males to females in their studies, even when it might be important to do so. Any search engine alighting on the revised title is unlikely to do so for the right reasons.

The box on the right lists some of the titles of journal articles that I have recently come across. They all attract: but do they inform? (See explanations of their meanings at the end of this article.)

Most style guides on scientific writing have useful sections on writing titles [e.g. see 3–5] but in point of fact there is very little research on titles and their effects. What research there is can be grouped into

two rather different concerns: the first is interested in how titles influence readers' comprehension and recall, and the second on the ways in which they are written.

Comprehension and recall

There have been a number of studies on the effects of titles on comprehension and recall but few that I know of where the titles in question have been those in scientific journals. Comprehension and recall have been discussed more in the wider context of research on reading. Here some studies [e.g. 6] have used titles to clarify the meaning of ambiguous passages, and

Panel 1: Are these titles informative?

1. More sex please, we're psychologists. (*The Psychologist*)
2. Is October Brown Chinese? A cultural modeling activity system for underachieving students. (*American Educational Research Journal*)
3. Outside the whale. (*Information Design Journal*)
4. How do you know you've alternated? (*Social Studies of Science*)
5. Scented memories of the literature. (*Memory*)
6. Leading with the heart. (*Northwest Education Magazine*)
7. When a bottom up innovation meets itself as a top-down policy: The AVID untracking program. (*Science Communication*)
8. Going for the burn dreaming of the short walk. (*ASLIB Proceedings: New Information Perspectives*)
9. James Bond and citations to his books. (*Scientometrics*)

others [e.g. 7] have used passages from children's stories, factual accounts, or narratives in order to study their effects.

Niegemann [8] summarized the results of eight such enquiries and included three more of his own to investigate whether titles influenced the subsequent recall of instructional text. In Niegemann's studies college and university students received copies of texts from a correspondence course in history or a science periodical with or without titles. The students receiving the texts with titles were further subdivided into two groups that received separate titles — each emphasizing different aspects of the text. The participants were then asked to recall the information provided. The results showed no significant differences between the mean overall scores but that recall was differentially affected by the titles that the students had been given. Table 1 shows schematically what this kind of result looks like. (Similar results have been obtained in studies of headings in text [e.g. see 9].)

Table 1. A schematic representation of the effects of titles

	Recall of material (%)		
	A	B	Total
No title	25	25	50
Title A	35	15	50
Title B	15	35	50

Ainley, Hidi and Berndorff [10] show how these sorts of findings can be made more relevant to writing titles for journal articles. These authors studied the choices of 14-year-old students for four expository texts that varied in their interest for these readers, and where the titles given to these texts reflected these concerns. Specific topic interest (e.g. body image) and general concerns (e.g., personal health) determined the sequence of the students' choices.

It is possible that appealing to specific interests first and then to general concerns (e.g. *I feel ill: what is it like to suffer from AIDS?*) or the reverse (e.g. *Suffering from AIDS: a student's view*) might lead to more effective titles for journal articles. Note that in both of these examples I have used a colon to separate the parts.

Sentence structure and titles

Titles come in many different forms — statements, quotations, questions, puns, etc. And, although there has been some work on the effects of subheadings written in these different formats [9, 11, 12], I know of no such work with titles.

There has, however, been a considerable amount of work on the frequency of colons in titles, with almost a dozen published articles [see 2 and 13]. One recent study in this regard was carried out by Lewison and myself [13]. Here we used computer-based retrieval methods to study the structure of the titles of 216 500 UK papers in science journals and 133 200 inter-

national papers in oncology.

Table 2 shows some typical results drawn from our study of UK science papers. It can be seen that the length of the titles varies with the number of authors (as previously reported [see 14–15]) — but of particular interest here is how the use of colons varies with the different disciplines as well as with the number of authors. It has been reported that authors in computer science use fewer titles with colons than authors in psychology (about 7% compared with about 50%) [2, 16], and Table 2 shows more interdisciplinary differences within the sciences. More surprising is the new finding shown in Table 2 that single authors use colons in their titles more frequently than do groups of authors. This remains the case until the groupings get very large, e.g., 12 or more [13]. Our data also show that the authors of scientific articles rarely, if ever, use a question mark in their titles — a finding also observed by others [e.g. 16, 17].

Table 2. Length (number of words: W/t) and use of colons (%C) in journal article titles in seven fields with varying numbers of authors (A). (Data from best fit regression equation reported by Lewison & Hartley [13].)

Field	W/t		%C		
	A=1	A=4	A=1	A=4	A=8
Biology	12.0	14.5	14.1	8.0	11.6
Biomedical	9.9	13.8	22.9	13.9	13.2
Chemistry	9.4	14.2	25.8	21.3	27.4
Clinical medicine	8.7	12.5	34.5	23.2	23.2
Earth and space	10.0	11.8	16.7	13.6	15.9
Engineering and technology	8.8	10.9	12.7	6.3	7.6

Concluding remarks

It is tempting to draw these two strands of research together and to suggest that authors can clarify the meanings of their titles, and thus aid comprehension, retrieval and recall, by the use of colons. The following example shows how an uninformative title can be made more explicit and allow more useful database searches.

Original title: Students' perspectives on constructivist learning.

1st revision: Constructivist learning in higher education: students' perspectives.

2nd revision: Constructivist learning in higher education: postgraduate students' perspectives.

3rd revision: Constructivist learning in higher education: eight postgraduate interviews.

References

- Hartley J. 2004. More sex please, we're psychologists. *The Psychologist* 17(2):80–81.
- Hartley J. 2005. To attract or to inform: what are titles for? *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* (in press).

3. Davis M. 1997. Scientific papers and presentations. San Diego: Academic Press.
4. Day RA. 1998. How to write and publish a scientific paper, 5th ed. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood.
5. Turk C, Kirkman J. 1989. Effective writing, 2nd ed. London: E. & F.N. Spon.
6. Bransford JD, Johnson MK. 1972. Contextual prerequisites for understanding: some investigations of comprehension and recall. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 11:717–726.
7. Schwartz MNK, Flammer A. 1981. Text structure and title — effects on comprehension and recall. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 20:61–66.
8. Niegemann HM. 1982. Influences of titles on the recall of instructional texts. In: Flammer A, Kintsch W (eds.), *Discourse processing*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co, 392–399.
9. Lorch RF, Lorch EP. 1995. Effects of organizational signals on text-processing strategies. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 87(4):537–544.
10. Ainley M, Hidi S, Berndorff D. 2002. Interest, learning and the psychological processes that mediate their behavior. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 94(3):545–561.
11. Hartley J, Trueman M. 1985. A research strategy for text designers: The role of headings. *Instructional Science* 14(2):99–155.
12. Huhmann BA, Mothersbaugh DL, Franke GR. 2002. Rhetorical figures in headings and their effect on text processing: the moderating role of information relevance and text length. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* 45(3):157–169.
13. Lewison G, Hartley J. 2005. What's in a title? Numbers of words and the presence of colons. *Scientometrics* 63(2) (in press).
14. Kuch TDC. 1978. Relation of title length to number of authors in journal articles. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 29(4):200–202.
15. Yitzhaki M. 1994. Relation of title length of journal articles to number of authors. *Scientometrics* 30:321–332.
16. Anthony L. 2001. Characteristic features of research article titles in Computer Science. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* 44(3):187–194.
17. Hyland K. 2002. What do they mean? Questions in academic writing. *Text* 22(4):529–557.

Answers for Panel 1

1. This paper is about the lack of data in many psychology journal articles on the sex distribution of the participants in the study being reported.
2. October Brown turns out to be the name of a teacher in a segregated African American elementary school.
3. "Outside the whale" refers to the fact that the author is describing a typographic design course that was run for over 20 years independently of, and not swallowed by, the requirements of fine art schools in the UK.
4. This paper is about the problems sociologists have when alternating between presenting an accurate description of the groups they study, and then presenting their interpretation to readers.
5. Something Proustian here. The authors report on an experimental study of the effects of reading two passages involving positive subject matter and two involving negative subject matter whilst sniffing pleasant or unpleasant odours.
6. This article describes a charismatic teacher of reading who places books at the heart of the classroom.
7. Readers need to know that AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination.
8. A personal view on the problems of managing and juggling the digital information flow.
9. This paper is about James Bond the ornithologist.

Editing around the world

Development of the biomedical press in modern Russia*

Eugene V Roitman

Russian Research Centre of Surgery, Abrikosovsky per., 2, Moscow 119992, Russia; roit@mail.med.ru

Russia is one of the world's leaders in per capita number of doctors and scientific officers engaged in biomedicine. Medical science is concentrated in research centres, universities, institutes, and clinics.

The opportunities for conducting research to modern standards at the cutting edge are dictated by the economic situation. Professional competition is therefore increasing and research is published on a

*Extended version of an article published in *The Write Stuff* (2004;13(2):46–47); reprinted with permission.

priority basis. In modern Russia we are seeing the evolution of a "write or die" approach.

Formerly in the USSR, publication was state-managed by the unique publishing houses, *Medicina* (Medicine), and *Nauka* (Science). *Medicina* published most medical books and journals, which included some 10 to 12 medical journals covering various fields. The journals were well known worldwide and quoted in many databases (e.g. PubMed). They were maintained by specialized centres where (as a rule) the editor-in-chief worked. For example, the anaesthesiology and reanimatology journal was sponsored by the Russian Research Centre for Surgery. Publication followed a precise plan, which was affirmed by biomedical officials, and also laid down the sequence of publication. A private individual could not publish a book or journal because publishers did not accept orders from private individuals. Furthermore, serious complexities hindered publication in the foreign press because coordination and sanctions from officials and different heads of the Communist party had to be overcome. On the other hand, the government provided a high standard of publication because published material was subjected to strict review (but not censorship!). The government also provided publications through databases.

After the disintegration of the USSR the number of biomedical publications decreased due to economic problems and difficulties facing both researchers and publishers. But by the middle of the 1990s new conditions for biomedical publications evolved. Many of the "old" (Soviet) journals resumed publication as the "Medicine" and "Science" publishers overcame financial difficulties. Simultaneously, new publishers were established. Business development and civic freedom created opportunities for faster and more diverse distribution of scientific ideas and research results. Opportunities for "independent" (not state) books and journals also appeared. This does not mean that the state has lost control, but there is more liberalism. The other side of the coin is loss of quality because not all published material is peer-reviewed, resulting in some publications containing frank nonsense and plagiarized items.

The biomedical press is rapidly developing in Russia. Publishing is now mainly in private ownership. But by tradition the majority of journals are supported by scientific organizations, clinics, or local authorities. Some publishers command greater authority because they are staffed by a large panel of advisory experts. Publication in their journals and books is prestigious. The journals are indexed in international databases and adhere to international authorship guidelines. These publishers are found in the provinces as well as in Moscow. A system has developed for rating journals, which defines their popularity and, as a consequence, circulation. To be rated, a journal must appear in a list compiled by the Top Certifying Commission. This organization awards scientific degrees to researchers based on a written dissertation and articles published in the journals on the list. Accordingly publishers and editors strive to have their journals included in the list.

Barriers to publication in foreign journals still exist. These are no longer connected with obtaining authorization but with proficiency in a foreign language. Present times demand freedom of communication and from the middle of the 1990s an accent on studying foreign languages, particularly English, has emerged in schools. Accordingly this problem will resolve as the new generation of researchers grows. The corollary is that foreign colleagues who cannot read Russian are unable to familiarize themselves with Russian research. Some Russian journals have bilingual editions but in the majority of these only the abstracts are in English. Russian scientists also frequently have contracts with other countries but remain in Russia, unlike 10–15 years ago when the brain drain was a problem. In the meantime the economic situation has improved and financing of science is increasing. Thus Russia is integrating more closely into the world biomedical press.

The history of *Thrombos, Hemostas i Rheologia*

No journal specializing in thrombosis and homeostasis was published in the Soviet Union or during the early post-USSR period. There had therefore long been a need for such a journal when I established *Thrombos, Hemostas i Rheologia* in 1999. The time was also ripe because the previous high fees for registration with the Russian Mass Media Ministry and the charges for copying contracts had been rescinded.

I offered the journal to one of the Russian scientific societies that focused on thrombosis. The society established an editorial board and as owner of the journal I retained the role of gatekeeper between the editorial board and publisher. Unfortunately, after a short time the editor-in-chief started to engage in a policy that conflicted with recognized world ethics on publication freedom. Because the journal had been created as a democratic tribune for experts with varying opinions I felt compelled to intervene. After this the editorial board changed for the better and a leading Russian expert became editor-in-chief. The journal is now completely independent.

In addition the journal's reputation was enhanced through the changes. Within the last two years the number of pages per volume and the number of issues per year have increased. Distribution has widened and currently extends to Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Israel. Articles cover research and clinical practice and are published in Russian. Most articles also have abstracts in English. The authors and readers are scientists, clinicians and doctors in general practice.

The journal's prospects for continuing success are good, with article submissions steadily increasing and circulation expanding. The journal is quoted in Russian indexes and we ensure that it is accessible, with moderate subscription charges, making it attractive to libraries as well as to clinical and research centres.

From the literature

What can editors do if they suspect research misconduct?

The recent code of conduct for editors of biomedical journals from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) states that "If editors suspect misconduct . . . then they have a duty to take action" [1, 2]. It also explains that this duty extends to both published and unpublished papers. COPE recommends that editors should first seek a response from those accused but, if they are not satisfied with the response, "they should ask the employers of the authors . . . or some other appropriate body (perhaps a regulatory body) to investigate." This seems a reasonable expectation, and not unduly burdensome, but the next clause outlines the extent of editors' responsibilities. According to COPE "Editors should make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a proper investigation is conducted" and if this does not happen "editors should make all reasonable attempts to persist in obtaining a resolution to the problem". As the COPE code notes "This is an onerous but important duty".

Prompted by discussions with various editors, the World Association of Medical Editors' Ethics Committee, and experience of the *BMJ*'s Ethics Committee, I decided to try to discover what actually happens when editors attempt to pursue cases of suspected misconduct. COPE's annual reports from 1998 to 2003 (all available at www.publicationethics.org.uk) detail 79 cases involving author misconduct. Over half of these (42 cases) relate to redundant publication (e.g. duplicate submissions). Although covert redundant publication can skew the literature and waste journal resources, I consider that it represents publication misconduct rather than research misconduct *per se*, and the acceptable degree of overlap between papers is a matter for debate, so I have chosen to focus on the other cases. I have also ignored 16 cases involving authorship problems which proved hard to categorize. The main outcomes

of the remaining cases are summarised in Table 1.

Cases of plagiarism were uncommon (seven cases) but tended to be resolved fairly quickly (most within one year). In two cases, the editor reached an impasse and could not get a reply from the author. Of the two cases where the editor contacted the author's institution, one produced a satisfactory enquiry (and the submission was withdrawn) while the other provoked prolonged correspondence from the author, who clearly felt aggrieved by the editor's action. (The latter case was first referred to COPE in 2000 but re-referred to the committee because of further difficulties and was not closed until 2003.) One case was resolved with a reprimand for the relatively junior and non-native English speaking author.

Cases of suspected medical (as opposed to research) malpractice which came to light from journal submissions were also relatively uncommon (just 10 cases) but tended to take longer to resolve (70% took over a year). Most involved the use of unorthodox treatments and concerns about patient consent. The editor contacted the author's employer or regulatory body in 6 out of 10 cases. The author had already been disciplined in two cases and had retired in another. One case relating to the treatment of a single individual was discussed with the patient, who decided to take it no further. One of the regulatory bodies chose not to act, and two organizations (including a European national medical association) did not reply to the editor despite repeated letters.

After redundant publication, the largest category of cases referred to COPE concerned possibly unethical research. In some cases, these involved authors who had not sought appropriate approval; in others, journal editors were concerned about the research despite formal approval having been granted, or despite the authors being informed that such approval was not necessary.

Table 1. Outcome of cases involving author misconduct, from COPE reports 1998–2003

Type	Total (closed)	Author(s) exonerated	Impasse	Contacted institution	Lasted >1 yr
Plagiarism	7	2	2	2	1 (14%)
Redundancy	33	7	3	4	16 (48%)
Unethical research	16	5	4	7	4 (25%)
Medical negligence	10	0	4	6	7 (70%)
Fraud/fabrication	13	2	2	4	8 (62%)
Total	79	16	15	23	36

Note: Outcome categories are not exclusive, e.g. cases could involve contacting the institution and also exoneration; outcomes that do not fit these categories are omitted but are discussed in the text.

A series of such cases prompted the *BMJ* Ethics Committee to prepare guidelines for editors and a discussion document about the difficult borderlines between acceptable innovation, or routine audit, and research [3]. Of the 16 cases presented at COPE, five produced satisfactory reassurances from the authors, and one institution responded promptly, agreeing that supervision of undergraduate projects had been inadequate but had now been improved. In one case it turned out that the fraudulent author had already been struck off the medical register but the journal was able to work with the co-authors (who had alerted the editor to a problem over forged ethics committee approval) and publish the paper. However, in four cases, the journals reached an impasse and the issues could not be resolved.

COPE has discussed 13 cases of suspected fraud (i.e. falsification or fabrication of results) since 1998. The majority took over a year to resolve, and several have lasted many years. Surprisingly, considering the seriousness of the allegations, editors seem to have contacted the authors' institution in only a minority of cases. From these contacts, the outcome of one was not reported, one editor got no reply, and one received an unsatisfactory response (stating that the university could not take responsibility because the author no longer worked there). One hospital instigated an enquiry but only after stating that this would be impossible unless the journal would fund it. The persistent editor managed to persuade the institution to look into the case, and it turned out that the author had already been suspended for other misdemeanours. In another case involving published material, investigation revealed that the doctor had already been struck off the medical register for similar offences, so the journal issued a retraction. In a case involving submitted data, the journal rejected the paper without taking any sanctions against the authors. Another long-lasting case could not be pursued because the journal had lost the correspondence.

The *BMJ* published an article outlining its concerns about one author, despite threatened legal action [4]. Another case submitted to the *BMJ* lasted over 10 years, partly because the author produced raw data which proved very difficult to analyse and occupied a statistician for over two years. Various national authorities were slow to reply or passed responsibility on to other bodies. The *BMJ* was keen to alert readers to its concerns but the author threatened legal action, which involved further discussions with the journal's insurers and legal advisers. Richard Smith (the editor at the time) commented that "the process can be extremely time consuming and may take up significant resources" [5].

Lessons to be learned

What lessons can journal editors learn from these cases? The first is that, even though editors are not expected to carry out investigations themselves, just getting a response from authors, institutions and regulatory bodies can consume considerable time and resources. This is particularly true for authors outside the journal's national base and in countries where the

infrastructure for investigating research misconduct is poorly developed or non-existent.

The second lesson is the importance of keeping good records. Many of these cases extended over several years and, unfortunately, at least one case was dropped simply because the journal did not have proper documentation. Cases involving threats of legal action are rare, but accused authors must be treated with due process. The COPE guidelines emphasize the need to contact the alleged miscreant first, but in several cases authors responded only when the journal threatened to contact their institution or employer.

Journals might consider publicizing what they will do if they suspect misconduct. Such information might appear in the Instructions to Contributors or as part of a more formal agreement with the author. The US Office of Research Integrity recommends that, if carefully worded, such statements might reduce the risk of legal action [6].

Journals appear reluctant to retract published articles and editors may be unsure of the best approach for minor misdemeanours. One editor has noted that a Medline retraction "does not distinguish between honest errors and fabricated data" [7] and it can be difficult to balance the needs of readers and other journal editors with fair play for accused authors. Publishing an account of specific concerns may be helpful but can provoke threats of legal action [4]. Another option is to publish a piece focusing on a topic such as plagiarism without identifying actual cases. Some journals have blacklisted authors for attempted duplicate publication, but COPE advises against indefinite bans.

The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) runs a system whereby member companies can register concerns about research misconduct by investigators and can be told whether other companies have registered concerns about that individual. The complete register is never made public, and it is up to the companies to decide whether or not to investigate. Perhaps journal editors (or COPE) might consider a similar system to register suspicions, since, in the most serious cases, authors have usually published fraudulent data in several journals and it takes some time to investigate each case, during which time the author may continue to submit work to other journals.

As the COPE code notes, investigating suspected author misconduct is indeed an onerous responsibility and editors may be frustrated by their inability to resolve cases. It is disquieting to note that 15 of the 79 COPE cases (i.e. 19%) were not satisfactorily resolved. Fiona Godlee (the Chair of COPE) observes that "Rather than embark on a potentially troublesome and protracted investigation, an editor may be tempted simply to reject the paper on other grounds" but she then states, unequivocally, that "COPE takes the view that this is not acceptable".

This informal review has focused on biomedical journals but editors outside medicine may face an even harder task, since there may be fewer professional and regulatory bodies governing

practice if institutions or individuals do not respond satisfactorily. Doctors can be struck off, but it may be harder to discipline other scientists. In the February issue of *ESE* (2005;31(1):4) Tom van Loon proposed an Ethics Committee covering all scientific disciplines to investigate misconduct by journals [8] — perhaps we also need a similar body to help editors faced with suspected misconduct by authors.

Liz Wager
Sideview
liz@sideview.demon.co.uk

References

1. Godlee F. 2004. Dealing with editorial misconduct. *BMJ* 329:1301–1302.
2. COPE code of conduct: www.publicationethics.org.uk/guidelines/code (accessed 17/02/05).
3. Wade DT. 2005. Ethics, audit, and research: all shades of grey. *BMJ* 330:468–471.
4. White C. 2004. Three journals raise doubts on validity of Canadian studies. *BMJ* 328:67.
5. Minutes of BMJ Ethics Committee meeting, October 2003 http://bmj.bmjournals.com/advice/bmj_ethics.shtml (accessed 23/2/05).
6. Office of Research Integrity. 2000. Managing allegations of scientific misconduct: a guidance document for editors. http://ori.dhhs.gov/documents/masm_2000.pdf (accessed 23/2/05).
7. Tobin MJ. 2000. Reporting research, retraction of results, and responsibility. *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* 162:773–774.
8. van Loon AJ. 2005. Editors are human: what should we do if they fail? *European Science Editing* 31:4.

Report of meeting

Committee on Publication Ethics

Seminar 2005
11 March 2005; London

The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE; see www.publicationethics.org.uk) was set up in 1997 to provide a sounding board for editors who were struggling to cope with possible breaches in research and publication ethics. The committee meets every quarter to discuss cases, and holds an annual seminar at which current issues are discussed in detail. The focus of this year's seminar was COPE's recently finalized code of conduct for editors [1].

Code of conduct for editors

The code is designed to help editors to be fair to authors, researchers, and readers [1]. Its first draft underwent a lengthy consultation and further evolution is intended. Fiona Godlee, chair of COPE and newly appointed editor of the *BMJ*, began the seminar by presenting the results of a survey of COPE's member journals' current adherence to the code.

One hundred and eighteen of COPE's 346 journals (32%) responded to the survey, which consisted of 12 questions around key points in the code. Fifty-nine per cent of responding journals had no declared mechanism for authors to appeal against editorial decisions, 60% had no declared complaints procedure, and 64% had no declared policy for pursuing misconduct — this latter result is worrying given that the journals surveyed were members of COPE and their editors have presumably thought about misconduct. How would non-COPE journals have responded?

On the positive side, journals published descriptions of their peer review processes and had policies for corrections, keeping material confidential, and dealing with conflicts of interest. One result presented as positive was that only 9% of journals had no mechanism for publishing critical

responses (such as a letters section). It alarmed me, however, to realize that almost one in ten journals that are COPE members were unable to provide this post-publication peer review facility.

UK panel for health and biomedical research integrity

One of the problems for journals considering articles from researchers in the United Kingdom is that there is no national body overseeing research integrity, as there is in mainland Europe and the United States. An editor who suspects that some form of misconduct has been perpetrated by a UK-based researcher cannot inform a central organization with the power to investigate. A potential solution, the development of a "UK panel for health and biomedical research integrity", was described by one of its set-up team, John Pritchard.

The idea was first considered in 1999, but appears to have remained in limbo until Michael Farthing (the previous chair of COPE) and Universities UK backed it in early 2004. The panel will aim to work with research institutions to promote good practice so as to prevent misconduct, provide guidance, train and develop staff, and, if required, listen out for whistleblowers. Extensive consultation is in progress with numerous stakeholders, including the Association of UK University Hospitals and the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI).

The idea of the panel was welcomed in general, but some delegates were sceptical about the role and possible influence of the stakeholders. Some editors and researchers felt that they had witnessed too many cover-ups in the past by certain stakeholders to believe that they would not try to subvert the work of the panel. Exasperation was expressed at the idea that the

ABPI had offered funding for the panel. John Pritchard acknowledged that COPE members should probably have been consulted earlier, and said he would feed comments back to the rest of the set-up team.

The ethics of audit and research

Research may be said to use prospective methods, driven by a hypothesis, to suggest “gold standard” practice, and audit to compare existing practice with that standard. Many researchers, and ethics committees, believe that research needs approval, whereas audit does not. Iona Heath, chair of the *BMJ*'s ethics committee and a general practitioner, dismantled this belief, basing her presentation on a recent article in the *BMJ* [2].

Iona felt that, although some ethics committees did a good job, they all had the potential to ossify behind their processes, and thus inhibit innovation. She argued that every clinical encounter, whether in research or audit, had three parts: an epistemic part when potential actions are identified; a pragmatic part, which identifies which actions are possible; and an ethical part, which identifies which actions are morally acceptable. She argued that the ethical part would vary according to the exact nature of the clinical encounter. Thus the need for ethics committees' approval should be proportional to it — the lower the risk or burden imposed on patients, the easier the paperwork should be.

For editors, Iona reiterated a favourite COPE maxim — ethics committee approval does not make the study ethical. She suggested that editors needed to think beyond asking for evidence of approval from ethics committees, and start judging for themselves whether a study was ethical.

COPE cases 1997–2004

Sabine Kleinert, a member of COPE Council and an editor of *The Lancet*, summarized the 212 cases discussed since COPE's inception, showing that editors presented “evidence of misconduct” in 163. The commonest problem was duplicate/redundant publication (58), followed by authorship issues (26), the absence of ethics committee approval (25), no/inadequate informed consent (22), falsification/fabrication (19), and plagiarism (17). One hundred and thirty-two of the 212 cases were discussed before publication, which shows that editors can spot trouble. Sabine described how each issue could be dealt with, but conceded that editors lacked the time and often got no or an inadequate response from the authors and/or institutions, and that there was no institution to report misconduct to because the authors were in private practice.

Liz Wager, a publications consultant, presented editors' updates on cases discussed previously. Unfortunately, the data are a little haphazard, but the take-home messages were as follows: 19% of cases were not satisfactorily resolved, many authors do not respond at first, the response from employing institutions can be disappointing, many cases last over a year and sometimes over three years, and journals seem reluctant to publish retractions or concerns, possibly due to a fear of legal action.

Pritpal S Tamber

Medicine, BioMed Central
prtipal@biomedcentral.com

References

1. A code of conduct for editors of biomedical journals: www.publicationethics.org.uk/guidelines/code.
2. Wade DT. 2005. Ethics, audit and research: all shades of grey. *BMJ* 330:468–471.

Correspondence

Editorials . . . and controversy

I am delighted that my query as to what editorials should be about finally got an answer (Mark Powlson, *ESE* 2005;31(1):15). If this answer applies to most of the *ESE* readership, we are indeed ready to set out on “tours d'horizons”. The tours will get more and more exciting, or maybe bumpy, if the contents of the recent issue of *ESE* (vol. 31(1)) are any indication.

The story by Ren in the section on “Editing around the world” (Shengli Ren, *ESE* 2005;31(1):8) is fascinating. How many EASE members realized that China's large science editing community is served by so many societies and journals?

Ren reminds us that IFSE held its 11th Annual Conference in Beijing. This brings me to the Viewpoint subtitled “Interference with science information transfer”, based on much information gathered by Karen Shashok (*ESE* 2005;31(1):11–14), who suggested that EASE should “reaffirm its support for editorial independence”. What better support than to make it clear that contributions are welcomed by *ESE*, no matter where the author lives? Peer review is the only hurdle that articles will have to contend with.

Marie-Louise Desbarats-Schönbaum
desbarats@planet.nl

EASE on the internet

In my short history of EASE and its predecessors in the February issue of *ESE* (2005;31(1):7–8) I failed to say anything about EASE's entry into the electronic world, apart from mentioning the existence of the web site. So I'd like to remedy that now, for the record.

An Amstrad computer reached the Secretary-Treasurer's desk in (I think) April 1987, when I began to take over the job from Nadia Slow and her predecessor, Nancy Morris. A membership database was set up and it also became easier to set the bulletin with a desk-top publishing program (Ventura). The computer of course changed as time went by, but the next major step was acquiring an e-mail address in summer 1994, when EASE subscribed first to Cix and

Compuserve, then to Cix alone. By October 1996 EASE had acquired its own domain name (ease.org.uk) and by February 1997 the web site had appeared too. The EASE e-mail forum was announced in July 1997, when it was set up with the help of Markku Löytönen.

Another stride may have been taken by the time you read this: the web site has been completely renovated by Linus Svensson and if the new streamlined version hasn't already gone live it very soon will.

What next?

Maeve O'Connor

mavee.oc@blueyonder.co.uk

EASE-Forum digest: December 2004–March 2005

Computer techniques and questionnaires have dominated the conversation on the forum over the last three months but there has been something about how to get into scientific publishing too.

What would you say to a university student who asked you how to get into scientific publishing?

This was the question Margaret Cooter asked. From the freelance perspective Mary Ellen Kerans would try and ferret out where the interest came from and correct the misconceptions the student probably had. Then she would suggest trying for summer or part-time jobs — and if that didn't put the person off — she thought the best way for a starry-eyed youngster to find out about the tough freelance world would be through attending a conference held by the Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP). To help the student along she thought concentrating on becoming a good writer during university years would be beneficial, but wondered if that was still possible. Marjorie Monnickendam thought the MSc course in Science Communication at Imperial College might be of interest (www.imperial.ac.uk/p4627.htm) and Terry Clayton noted a recent informative article on "Career opportunities in science publishing" in *Science Editor* (27(6):184).

Autocorrection keyboard short cuts

Liz Wager had noticed that when she typed a confidence interval in Word it automatically provided an en dash for the first minus sign and a hyphen for the second. On Timothy DeVinnney's advice Liz switched off the autocorrecting/autoformat function for converting symbols, with the result that hyphens appeared but no automatic en dashes. Tricia Reichert suggested that Liz should delete the en dash from the autocorrection feature by finding that combination in the dialogue box and clicking on the delete button. In this way the other autocorrect functions would still function. Tricia also gave detailed advice on how to assign combinations

of keystrokes to insert characters you often use, e.g. a Greek alpha. Margaret Cooter agreed that keyboard short cuts save time compared with having to click on the menu bars. Her favourite is Control-Q for yellow highlighting (in Word XP) and she gave the procedure for assigning the keystroke (copy of these instructions from the original e-mails available from langdoe@baxter.com). Kathleen Lyle (kathleen.lyle@sfep.net) also offered to provide copies of her macro functions, including those for changing or removing highlighting.

Joy Burrough-Boenisch found the track changes facility in the 2003 version of Word a nuisance (as I do in any version, preferring to highlight my editing changes) because changes are shown in the margin with a red arrow leading to the text, leaving a horrid mess when making the many changes that might be necessary in texts by novices or non-native speakers of English. The solution was provided by Julian Phillips. Choose Options at the bottom of the Tools drop-down menu, click on Track changes and adjust the settings, particularly clicking on "Never" if that is an option under "Use balloons". Mary Ellen Kerans added that you could choose to see the balloons only for formatting, which still showed the tracking in the text but with nothing in the margin.

Keywords

Obviously we are all selecting and using keywords without a clue about how to choose them. Will Hughes had searched the internet to no avail because he could only find advice on choosing keywords for web pages. Liz Wager responded with a source of information: an article entitled "How useful are key words in scientific journals?" (Hartley J, Kostoff RN. 2003. *Journal of Information Science* 29(5):433–438). Will Hughes has subsequently written an article, "Keywords: their choice and their importance", which appeared in the newsletter produced by the Association of Researchers in Construction Management (ARCOM) (download free of charge from the publications area at www.arcom.ac.uk).

Questionnaires

A few questionnaires have been posted on the forum recently. Responses have ranged from none in one case to around 20 for James Hartley's questionnaire in preparation for his presentation at the EASE seminar in Barcelona, on how scientists read and write book reviews.

There were three questionnaires related to English as a second language. Joy Burrough was investigating editors' and translators' views on this in Europe. Her questionnaire asked if English is now the second language in Europe. Is "Europeanization" of English acceptable? Are non-native English speaking authors becoming more assertive about their English? She received seven responses from EASE and the results of her survey are available on request (burrough@bos.nl).

Sonia Vasconcelos from Brazil was conducting doctoral research on the influence of the language barrier for non-native English speakers on publication and time to publication. One aim of the study was to encourage policy makers in Brazil in education, science and technology to help scientists with language. Disappointingly she only received one response but her research is still ongoing so it is not too late to help her cause by answering a few questions (sonia@peq.coppe.ufrj.br).

Mamoon Alabbasi also asked for help with his MA thesis in Applied Linguistics, which is examining citation practices in medical research articles published by non-native speakers of English. His questions were interesting in themselves because they went to the core of some of the ailments of manuscripts, e.g. failure in the Introduction to point out a gap in knowledge, failure to remark on study limitations in the Discussion, and citing old studies

and textbooks. Mamoon has promised to let us have the main conclusions of his study as soon as they are available.

Joining the forum

You can join the Forum by sending the one-line message "subscribe ease-forum" (without the quotation marks) to majordomo@helsinki.fi. Do not include a subject line or signature or any text. To stop receiving messages from the forum, send the message "unsubscribe ease-forum" to majordomo@helsinki.fi. Once you have joined, you should send messages for the forum to ease.forum@helsinki.fi. Please keep messages short. If you reply to someone else's message, make sure to delete those parts of the original message that are not essential for understanding your response. To keep other forum participants informed, check that your reply (or a copy of it) is sent to ease.forum@helsinki.fi. If your e-mail software has a "reply to all" possibility, this will probably do the job. Do not use the "reply to" or "reply to sender" facility unless your message is intended for the original sender only.

Anyone who loses contact with the forum, or is unable to establish a new subscription, will be able to find information on the EASE web site (www.ease.org.uk).

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

Discussion initiators

Margaret Cooter: mcooter@bmj.com
Liz Wager: liz@sideview.demon.co.uk
Joy Burrough-Boenisch: burrough@bos.nl
Will Hughes: w.p.hughes@reading.ac.uk

Book reviews

Thomas F Babor, Kerstin Stenius, Susan Savva (eds). 2004. **Publishing addiction science: a guide for the perplexed**. International Society of Addiction Journal Editors and World Health Organization. USD10.53 (includes shipping and handling in US). 203 p. ISBN (WHO) 92-4-159224-9; ISBN (ISAJE) 0-9548575-0-X.

The editors, who have extensive experience in addiction science publishing, introduce this book by pointing out that addiction science and addiction publishing have increased greatly in the past two or three decades, with more than 75 journals in 18 languages devoted to addiction and health problems associated with it. They offer two main reasons for presenting the book: (1) to inform prospective authors of publishing opportunities in such specialty publications and in more general journals; and (2) to educate authors about issues that affect scientific integrity, such as authorship disagreements, scientific misconduct, and ethical decision-making.

After the introductory chapter the book falls into three main sections: how and where to publish addiction-related articles; the practicalities of publishing; and ethical issues.

The first section begins by demonstrating to authors how to choose the right journal, and what are the

major steps involved in this selection. These include making choices such as national or international audience; language of publication; generic, disciplinary or specific-area journals. It suggests that authors check the journal's mission statement for potential interest in and compatibility with the submitted article, and it helps them to evaluate their chances of acceptance. It also shows them how to gauge their article's prospective exposure by reviewing the publication's circulation and abstracting services. Much of this section will be of particular value for authors from developing or non-English-speaking countries.

The second section comprises three chapters. The first deals with citation procedures and indexes, with some emphasis on the factor of impact that is used to evaluate journal importance. It is followed by a chapter that examines the difficulties that can arise when deciding appropriate credits in multi-authored

articles. Not only are recommendations made on how to avoid such pitfalls, but also provided is a 27-item checklist for conducting an inventory of major and minor contributions. The third chapter takes aim at the peer review process, covering elements such as editors' criteria for manuscript evaluation and how to respond to referees' reports.

On ethical issues in the third section, Chapter 7 reviews what the authors call the "Seven deadly sins in scientific publishing" — types of scientific misconduct such as carelessness (citation bias, understatement, negligence), redundant publication (same tables or literature reported without a note giving the prior source), unfair authorship (failure to include eligible authors), undeclared conflict of interest, human or animal subjects violations, plagiarism, and other frauds (falsification or fabrication of data, misappropriation of others' ideas or information given in confidence). The advice is supported by Chapter 8's review of "moral reasoning" behind such misconduct, while Chapter 9

is an essay on "Addiction publishing and the meaning of (scientific) life".

Of the three appendices, Appendix A is perhaps the most valuable and, for new authors, is alone worth the price of the book. A resource listing of addiction speciality journals, it provides, for each publication, all the essential information for submissions, plus mission statements and abstracting/indexing information. Appendix B provides ethical practice guidelines for "authors, journal editors and other partners" in addiction publishing, while Appendix C is a useful glossary of terms related to the book's topic.

The book benefits from very accessible language and an easy, readable style that should make it much appreciated by young researchers and those in developing countries where English is not the primary language. However, even experienced addiction scientists will find it a valuable guide to keep at hand.

Bob Huggan
bobhuggan@wanadoo.fr

Albert Jack. 2004. **Red herrings and white elephants**. London: Metro Publishing. 256 +xiii p. Hardback. GBP9.99. ISBN 1-84358-129-9.

This book is a treasure trove of explanations of English "idioms" — forms of expression understood by native speakers of the language even though their meaning is not predictable from an understanding of the separate words. It consists of 17 chapters, each a collection of idioms related to everyday activities such as sport, work and trade, literature, food and drink, and politics. You can look up a puzzling idiom either by going straight to what you think will be the appropriate chapter, or by searching in the alphabetically ordered index.

For some readers of *ESE*, the book will be an entertainment rather than an aid to skilful writing and editing of scientific texts. After all, it is generally desirable to avoid idioms in scientific writing. Expressions such as "keep tabs on" or "in and of themselves" may puzzle some readers of international journals — not only readers for whom English is a foreign language but also readers whose native version of English is not the same as the version in the text. Nevertheless, I have *come across*

(idiom: should I have written "found"?) those two examples in scientific texts, and it is easy to let elements of metaphor and idiom *creep in* unobserved if we do not *keep up our guard* constantly.

Albert Jack has obviously searched widely for origins of common idioms, and sometimes he offers several alternative explanations from varying backgrounds. Occasionally, some of those explanations seemed *a little far-fetched*, but what does that matter? They will encourage speculation about our language, and perhaps stimulate readers to research of their own. He invites readers to contribute new information for subsequent editions. It would be interesting to see a chapter on idioms with scientific origins in the next volume, so send him examples of expressions that have left you wondering "Where did that expression come from?", and send in, too, expressions that you know are common sources of misunderstanding for readers working in English as their second or third language.

John Kirkman
kirkman.ramsbury@btconnect.com

Joaa Magueijo. 2003. **Faster than the speed of light**. Cambridge, MA, USA: Perseus Publishing. 277 p. Hbk. USD26.00. ISBN 0-7382-0525-7.

"Light seeking light doth light of light beguile." (Shakespeare: *Love's Labour's Lost*)

During the past hundred years we have come to accept the idea that the velocity of light is a constant, not a variable. Indeed this idea is a cornerstone in Einstein's special theory of relativity. Magueijo challenges this idea and says that if the velocity of light is treated as a variable, many of the paradoxes arising from big bang theory and quantum mechanics could be solved. He has revised the mathematics of

special relativity to reflect the variable speed of light (VSL) theory and developed a new version of that most famous equation $E=mc^2$ which relates mass and energy. These are the only two mathematical equations throughout the book.

The author takes us on a tour through his life as a theoretical physicist, from his graduate years at Cambridge to his position as Chair of Theoretical

Physics at Imperial College. He has a fine sense of humour, describing his views of the English-speaking world through the eyes of a Portuguese. His comments about the establishment in the academic and publishing communities are both perceptive and amusing. For example, he says that the whole process of "peer review" is just short of farce and that the internet is already undermining the power of the major journals. The book is an easy read for those who do not wish to stumble over obscure mathematical expressions.

The titles of the chapters indicate the nature of his writing. Among the titles are: "Very silly", "Einstein's bovine dreams" and "The morning after". Magueijo leads us through the last century of theoretical physics as he joins a growing group of scientists who have the desire and skills to express themselves to the general public. He does this well.

RB Gwilliam
106/865 Main Street
Penticton, BC, Canada V2A 5E3

Visit beautiful Kraków with EASE in 2006 (15–18 June)



Town Hall Tower

Unlike the rest of Poland, Kraków sustained little physical damage during the Second World War. Its magnificent old quarter is listed in UNESCO's register of world cultural and heritage sites. Its historical district — the medieval city established in 1257 — boasts numerous world-class monuments, charming vistas, a delightful atmosphere, and the best restaurants.

In its long history Kraków has undergone many ups and downs. The proud capital city of a mighty kingdom for centuries, it was turned into a sleepy border town while part of the Austrian empire in the 19th century. Then it became a vital centre of Polish national awakening at the turn of the 20th century, the cradle of Poland's rebirth — only to be reduced to a backwater under communism. Now Kraków has nearly a million inhabitants and Poland has joined the European Union. Kraków's beautiful Old Town area remains its vibrant hub with numerous landmarks, museums, art galleries, music venues, theatres, university colleges, etc. as well as myriad boutiques, cafes, and restaurants.

"Must-see" landmarks in Kraków include the Grand Square, hub of the medieval city; the Basilica of the Virgin Mary, with its sculptural treasures; the Town Hall Tower, from which the trumpet signal known to every Pole is sounded; the Wawel Hill, with its castle and cathedral, a microcosm of Polish history and culture; and scenic Kanonicza Street, which has mostly preserved its exquisite Renaissance air and shape and is among Europe's finest streets.

Leonardo da Vinci's *Lady with an Ermine* is held in the Czartoryskich Museum, and the Basilica of the Virgin Mary contains the largest Gothic sculpture in the world, consisting of 200 fine limewood sculptures treated with colour and gold leaf. The gold-plated dome of the Sigismund Chapel crowns arguably the best example of Renaissance art and architecture outside Italy. The Wawel cathedral contains one of the world's largest bells and in the crypt are the royal tombs. Another treasure is a 23,000-year-old hairy rhino that may well be the envy of every museum of natural history in the world; it can be found in the Muzeum Przyrodnicze.

If shopping is always on your agenda, Kraków has many elegant boutiques selling stylish clothing and shoes. The world's oldest shopping mall — the Cloth Hall — has been in business in the middle of Kraków's central Grand Square for 700 years.

Kraków is a good base for excursions to nearby sites — Wieliczka (15 km), site of a medieval salt mine with over 2000 caverns ("a subterranean wonder world"), Auschwitz/Birkenau concentration camps (60 km), and in the Tatra mountains is Zakopane, the biggest mountain resort north of the Alps (100 km, 2.5 hours by bus). Ojcow National Park, which ranks among the most attractive recreational areas in Europe, is just a 15-minute drive northwest of Kraków; it contains variously shaped limestone rocks, some 50 m high, as well as crumbling castles and caves. Large woodlands, the 27,000-acre Puszcza Niepolomicka, stretch some 25 km east from the city centre and contain forest bison (zubr) reintroduced to the area in 1936, while stray deer — and foxes — can be seen anywhere on the outskirts of Kraków. Swans swim on the Wisla (Vistula) as it flows past the castle, north to Gdansk.

Some useful web sites:

www.Kraków-info.com

www.itisnet.com/english/e-ce/e-poland/e-Kraków/e-c-krak.htm

www.warsaw1.net/Kraków-night.htm

Register your interest in the EASE meeting via www.ease.org.uk/ease2006prelim.html