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Not too late to register

If you haven't registered yet for the Ninth General Assembly and **Conference**, to be held in Kraków on 15–18 June, it isn't too late. Check www.ease.org.uk for updates and for the programme and registration/hotel instructions.

Promotion in action

Thanks go to everyone who has put the new promotion leaflet to use. Several have been returned and new members recruited. If you need more leaflets, please contact the secretary (ease@pp.inet.fi).The leaflets are light and easy to carry, so why not take them with you for distribution when you attend your next meeting? And Council has taken another step: everyone recruiting a new member will be given a music CD in appreciation of his or her efforts.

Committee meetings

The Council and Programme Committee met in Kraków in March, as reported in this issue (p. 47-48).

New EASE secretary appointed

Sheila Evered has been appointed by Council to take over as secretary to the new Council in June. Sheila graduated from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, in 1973 with a degree in anthropology and linguistics. For several years she ran a small family business and then for nine years worked as PA to of the Ciba the Director Foundation (now Novartis Foundation), where her work involved organizing symposia. She has been secretary, treasurer and chairman of various voluntary organizations and has wide experience of freelance administrative work. She has just returned to the UK from France, where her husband was working for two years, and now lives in Berkshire (UK). Her interests include choral singing, reading, tennis, theatre, crosswords, and travel.

Science Editors' Handbook still expanding

Once again, you will find two new of the Handbook chapters accompanying this issue. A few more are on the way. If you have any ideas for new chapters or would like to write a chapter, contact Moira Johnson-Vekony (ESE@DunaScripts.com).

One editor found: more needed

Vlahovic (geologia-Igor croatica@zg.htnet.hr) has joined the Publication Committee. To begin with he will work with John Glen in handling articles. As several members of the Publication Committee have or will step down this year, volunteers are needed to take over book reviews and, due to Jane Moody's resignation, the Bookshelf. Editor's Anyone interested in working with ESE or Science Editors' Handbook should contact the chief editor (hervemaison@ wanadoo.fr), or the EASE secretary (ease@pp.inet.fi).

Contributions for August issue

Contributions for the next issue are invited and should be sent to the appropriate member of the Editorial Board (see left, and see instructions to authors at www. ease.org.uk). Deadline: 15 June.

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Editorial

Do you need a local reviewer?

Igor Vlahovic

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One of the major tasks of a scientific journal editor is to enable high-quality peer review of each paper. This task is, of course, much easier if you are the editor of a major journal, dealing with high-quality papers written by well-known scientists from a major scientific discipline.

But life is not always perfect, as we all know . . .

Is there a potential problem?

Let us imagine a different situation: you receive a paper originating from a small or distant or not very well known scientific community, which might be of potential interest for your journal. You make a general overview of the paper, hold all necessary discussions with members of the Editorial Board, and conclude that you may proceed with the peer review. Of course, you will try to cover all different facets presented in the paper by finding the most appropriate reviewers. And you will probably consider whether you should contact some local scientists, who should be familiar with the authors and the study presented in the paper. But here we come to the slippery ground.

Why? There are several issues that you will probably think about. (a) How to find the appropriate local reviewer? E.g. if a potential reviewer is cited in the paper he or she may be subjective and biased, either positively or negatively. (b) How do you recognize whether the potential reviewer is familiar with recent knowledge in the field? You definitely do not have enough time to investigate this in detail. (c) How do you contact local reviewers, when in your personal experience you have already sent a bunch of similar e-mails without any responses. (d) Dealing with local reviewers might be a time-consuming task, and you cannot afford it right now.

You can probably add numerous other concerns.

Why bother?

Yes, there are many problems regarding local reviewers that can really make your life quite complicated. So why bother? The answer is that you will face some potential dangers if you decide to avoid those problems.

For example, you may publish a paper which contains findings that are not well founded, as would be easily recognized by a local scientist (our small though regionally acknowledged journal rejected some papers which contained problematic data, yet some of those papers were later published in larger journals, the only possible explanation being that none of the local scientists were asked for an opinion). This could potentially result in a series of unnecessary Discussion and Reply articles, and you will definitely not be very happy about this.

A much worse possibility is that you will publish a major scientific fraud and become famous as the editor of a journal that published such a paper (e.g. to have the name of your journal featured in www. famousplagiarists.com or a similar place). Yet a local reviewer would probably know if Author A has never worked in any of the five institutions he claims in papers published in several major journals (and that he is, after all, just a private practitioner, not a "Professor", as claimed), and if someone finds that out in time that author would not be able to publish fabricated data for years. A local reviewer would also probably know that Author B could never have found his fossils at the locations described in his numerous papers, simply because there are no such rocks and fossils there: the author just scanned images from different papers published all over the world, modified them using (e.g.) Photoshop, and published them as his own findings for several years a perfect way to avoid high field-work costs.We could discuss many cases like these; names are really not necessary here. And, by the way, large journals are much more likely than small journals to become fraud victims, because publishing in them provides a much easier way for professional recognition or an academic promotion.

Until now, we have more or less tended to believe that data presented in a manuscript are true and nothing but the truth, and we have paid more attention to other sections of the paper. Unfortunately, today we have to be much more cautious, and here local reviewers might really help.

Give local reviewers a chance

Our world is running very fast, and the clock in the scientific community is running even faster. But take the time to consider once again whether a local reviewer might help you. Yes, maybe you will have some problems with finding the appropriate one: maybe the local reviewer will not be familiar with the latest scientific knowledge (which leads to further questions, including inequality in dissemination of scientific information today - however, for the state-of-the-art scientific level you may find other reviewers); maybe the potential local reviewers will not respond immediately (but do the others always respond immediately?); and maybe, and maybe . . . However, if you have to deal with a couple of unnecessary Discussion and Reply articles caused by dubious data (for which you might be at least partly responsible), or if you become a collateral victim of a major scientific fraud, you will definitely ask yourself whether you could have avoided the situation.

So, please give local reviewers a chance, would you?

Article

Habits in information seeking*

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Abstract

Information-seeking habits are formed as a result of many different influences. At times, context may shape behaviour, while in other instances the individual's own preferences may take precedence. This overview of scientists' information-seeking behaviour information habits to the academic discipline, the stage of the research process, the task at hand, the learning style of the individual, and that individual's personality traits. The final information-seeking behaviour pattern develops through a complex interaction between all of these factors. Information technology professionals may benefit from an awareness of the variety of information-seeking strategies and the possible explanations behind them.

Information seeking is a dynamic and changeable process despite its formal problem-solving characteristics. An information need is the spur for "search activities", which are then adapted to the surrounding context and situation. Within this framework the ways each information seeker chooses to handle the task at hand are varied and somewhat unpredictable. This article relates habits in scientists' information-seeking behaviour to the contextual influence of their discipline and the work task and research stage, as well as personality characteristics of the individual, such as learning style and personality.

Discipline

Information-seeking behaviour within a particular discipline tends to be quite standardized, because it has evolved over time and according to experiences of best practice. The newcomer to the field is trained in suitable information-acquisition strategies and consequently carries on the tradition. Informationseeking patterns within disciplines highlight the differences in knowledge creation between academic fields. The knowledge base in sciences is cumulative new discoveries are grounded on former ones and this tends to induce a sequential pattern of knowledge development in which certain basic facts are needed as fundamentals in the creation of new insights. Information seeking generally tends to be structured, and focused on one specific aspect at a time (Becher 1989, Brittain 2000). In the arts and social sciences new understanding is built in a more holistic

way — individual interpretations are less bound by the laws of science. Accordingly, gathering of information within the social sciences tend to be more intuitive (Brittain 2000). One way of describing the patterns of information need and information seeking within academic fields is in terms of specificity and exploration.

Research stage

Independent of discipline, each research project through a series of stages with correspondingly different information needs. These stages can be described as initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection and presentation. The process starts when the need for information is recognized, identified and begins to be explored. The investigator then tries to focus on an essential aspect of the problem. When the focus is found, information is collected and reported (Kuhlthau 2004). Through these stages researchers tend to adopt certain information-seeking strategies, which usually take place in a certain order but can occur at any time during the research process. These features of information behaviour have been described as starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring and extracting (Ellis et al. 1993). In the initial phase of a research project, personal contacts, reviews and secondary material are important. Search behaviour then continues with chaining, as references that are cited in the material are followed up. Abstracts or journals are browsed in order to find relevant information, and differentiating takes place through the researcher choosing the most relevant sources and those of best quality. By monitoring particular sources such as journals, one can keep up to date with the subject and able to extract the most relevant information. Information is then verified by checking details from other sources or by re-checking the cited source. The process ends with a final literature search, which relates the researcher's own work to that of others (Ellis et al. 1993).

Work task

The complexity of the work task for which information is sought often influences the choice of information-seeking strategy. In routine tasks researchers usually turn to the information source they consider most appropriate, based on prior experience. Tasks that are perceived as more complex tend to induce a need to consult information from multiple sources. When information acquisition is

^{*}Based on a presentation at the EASE seminar "Habits in science communication and science publishing", held in Barcelona, 29 April 2005.

particularly problematic the importance of people as information sources increases. Particularly in decision-making situations, information is preferably sought through meetings or by consulting experts (Byström 2002).

Information search behaviour is influenced by the task itself or by individual characteristics, or by both of these factors. If the situation is sufficiently motivating, contextual variables influence search behaviour more, but in less motivating situations — such as neutral tasks — personal preferences are more likely to be influential.

One personal characteristic that has been shown to people find and organize "learning style". The influence the way information is "wholist-analytic" dimension refers to two basic ways of processing information. People who are "wholists" start with a good overview before they go into detail, relying on analogy and associations; in database searches they tend to depend on the structure of the search programs, and they build up a broad overview by widening the search concepts and amassing as much information as possible by searching for information frequently and in a broad manner. On the other hand, "serialists" or "analytics" build their knowledge brick by brick, by establishing supporting detail and argument in small logical steps; the overall picture emerges relatively late in their learning process and serialists usually have a narrow approach to their information seeking and try to avoid irrelevant information by using a very precise strategy (Ford et al. 1994).

Personality traits

Personality traits may be another influence behind information-seeking habits. Responsible and persistent individuals with low self-confidence have been shown to exaggerate information acquisition in order to compensate for what they perceive as a lack in topical understanding. Risk-taking, self-confident, dominant and social individuals tend to use significantly less new information in their problem solving and have a great distaste for routines (Kernan and Mojena 1973).

Adaptors are prone to accept generally recognized theories, policies and paradigms whereas innovators want to construct their own models and question the present paradigms (Kirton 1989). Risk-taking, charismatic, achievement-oriented, enduring, and confident individuals dispositions that make them likely to be innovators (Howell and Higgins 1990). Innovators tend to seek information widely and enthusiastically and use many different sources of information (Palmer 1991) conferences, workshops and web sites are essential in their quest for the latest breakthroughs (Jacobsen 1998). Adaptors are generally more vulnerable to social pressure and authority, prone to conformity and to doubting their abilities. Their information-seeking behaviour tends to be controlled, methodical and systematic (Palmer 1991).

Learning style

Certain combinations of personality traits seem to induce characteristic information-seeking styles that

may be depicted along a dimension of exploration versus specificity. An explorative search pattern — in which information is sought from a variety of sources and in which inspirational information content is preferred — is typical for open, curious and competitive individuals. Striving for a precise search outcome may be induced by a need for quick answers, often related to low motivation and time pressure. Preference for precision may, however, also be related to a focus on high-quality information that is typical for highly motivated conscientious individuals (Heinström 2002). While conscientious and methodical researchers may have an aptitude for planned and structured searching, creative and spontaneous individuals often gather information in a less controlled way. Methodical information seeking is an efficient way to retrieve the aimed-for information, while exploration may give birth to new insights. Structured information seekers may prefer publications that are strictly on target, while exploratory seekers may be inspired by more obscure or creative approaches. One way to enhance the likelihood of unexpected discovery would be to link together texts that incorporate new viewpoints or aspects of an area that fall outside the most central focus of the publication.

Conclusions

Research shown has that scientists' information-seeking behaviour is related to a variety of factors. Their discipline moulds information seeking towards strategies that have previously proved to be particularly relevant for that discipline. Within this framework, the stage of the research process, and the actual work tasks at hand form the basis of relevant information-seeking behaviour at any particular moment. The researcher's own preferred information-seeking style is grounded in his or her learning style, and together with personality traits gives a personal touch to information acquisition. Information-seeking behaviour in a particular situation is influenced by all of the factors mentioned above, as well as a variety of others ranging from practical issues such as availability and access to inner abilities such as knowledge and motivation. The wide range of information-seeking behaviour poses challenges for information providers, and also indicates that there is a range of possibilities to be considered when organizing material.

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Editing around the world

A survey of medical journal publishing in Japan: language of publication and trends in publishing formats

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In order to clarify the current state of medical journal publishing in Japan, we developed and conducted a questionnaire in Japanese, with replies received from 33 (73%) of the 45 journals approached. We have previously reported the methods used and presented the results concerning editorial boards and staff, attitudes towards review systems, and perceived problems in publishing ethics and peer review (Barron et al. 2005). This paper presents our results and conclusions regarding attitudes to the language of publication and trends in publishing formats.

Language of publication

Results

Fifteen of the journals that replied to the questionnaire currently publish all issues in one language only, with a slight majority publishing in English (English 9/15, 60%; Japanese 6/15, 40%). (These figures include one society which publishes two separate journals, one in English only and one in Japanese only). None of the journals surveyed stated that they varied the language of publication according to issue, although we do know of previous cases in which a journal might publish three issues a year in Japanese and one issue in English. (One of the journals covered in this survey stated that until 2004 they had sometimes published issues that included a mixture of English and Japanese papers). In nine cases, journals published the main manuscript in Japanese but included an abstract in English; however, only one journal published the main manuscript in English with Japanese abstracts. Various other language combinations were also reported (Table 1).

Only two journals (2/31, 6.5%) stated that they had definite plans to change language policy, one

Table 1. Language policies reported by journals*

- The manuscript, figures and tables can be in either English or Japanese
- The manuscripts are in Japanese, but the abstracts, figures and tables (plus legends) are in English
- The manuscripts are in Japanese, the abstracts in both English and Japanese, and the figure legends in English; however, it is acceptable to have everything in English
- 4. In principle the manuscripts are in Japanese with the abstracts and legends for figures and tables in English, but manuscripts in English are also accepted (and account for approximately 20% of the papers)
- Virtually all are in Japanese, but if an English manuscript is submitted it will be published
- In the current year some issues are in English and some are a mixture of English and Japanese, but from next year all manuscripts will be in English (a Japanese edition will be published separately)
- 7. The manuscripts are in Japanese, but the abstracts, figures and tables are in English
- 8. The manuscripts and abstracts are in Japanese; figure and table legends and an abstract are in English
- (Generally) there is only Japanese, but occasionally figure and table legends and references are in English
- 10. Manuscripts are mainly in Japanese, but English manuscripts can be accepted.

*Entries represent our translations of comments made in Japanese by the journals.

planning to publish separate English and Japanese issues, the other planning to publish articles in both languages within the same issue. Twenty-nine journals (94%) indicated that they had no plans to

change language policy; two journals did not respond.

It is worth noting that none of the journals that have published in English have later stopped those publications. However, in one case a journal which had planned to publish in English later decided that the linguistic difficulties were insurmountable. One other journal stated that an English journal was established separately.

A clear majority felt that the pressure on authors to publish in English is increasing (22/30, 73%), whereas only eight journals felt that the pressure is decreasing (27%); three journals did not reply.

Of the 24 journals that publish manuscripts wholly or partially in Japanese, only one stated that the number of original papers submitted in Japanese had risen in the last 10 years, while 18 (75%) had registered a decrease. (One journal stated that they ceased publication of original articles in 2004, with authors publishing instead in a separate English-language journal. One other journal stated that they stopped publishing Japanese papers in 2002.) Five journals (5/24, 21%) had not noticed any change. No clear trend was observed in the quality of the Japanese submitted papers; five (21%) had noticed an increase in quality, seven (28%) had seen a drop in quality, and 12 (50%) no change.

When similar questions about case reports over the last decade were asked, there was a large divergence of opinion, with approximately equal numbers stating that the number of submissions in Japanese had increased (8/24, 33%), decreased (9/24, 38%) or remained the same (7/24, 29%). (Five journals either did not answer the question or indicated that they do not, or rarely, publish case reports.) There was also a split of opinion concerning the quality of case reports in Japanese. Of the 22 journals that answered the question, five (23%) felt that the quality had improved, four (18%) felt that it had deteriorated, and 13 (59%) believed the quality had remained constant.

The response to questions about submissions in English overwhelmingly indicated an increase in both quantity and quality (this applied to both original manuscripts and case reports). Most of the respondents reported an increase in the quantity of English original papers (11/15, 73%); only one (7%) registered a decrease, while three (20%) did not detect a change (one of these noted that this applied to the last five years). Similar results were obtained concerning quality; 10/16 (63%) noted an increase in quality; only one (6%) found a decrease; five (31%) stated there had been no change. (The apparent discrepancy in the totals of responding journals arises because one journal did not reply to the question about number of submitted papers, but did reply to the question about quality.) With respect to case reports, most journals had recorded an increase in submissions (9/14, 64%), only one (7%) had registered a decrease, and four (29%) had detected either no change or almost no change. Half the journals believed that the quality of English case reports had improved (7/14, 50%), only one (7%) felt there had been a decrease in quality, and the others (6/14, 43%) believed there had been no change.

Discussion

Historical background

The first foreign language to play a dominant role in Japan was Chinese. In the 6th and 7th centuries, some Japanese doctors went to China to gain knowledge, which required corresponding linguistic skills. Over 1000 years later (in the late 18th century), the first major text to introduce European medicine to Japan (*Kaitai Shinsho*, "New Book of Anatomy") was published in Japanese-style Chinese, even though it was translated from the original Dutch by two Japanese physicians (Maher 1986, p. 208).

Chinese was replaced by German, and in 1886 Japanese medical schools had an elective postgraduate programme which required a presentation that was usually given in German (Maher 1989, p. 301). German then remained the dominant foreign language for a few decades, with the maximum influence probably being felt in the 1930s. This was presumably due not only to the esteem in which German medicine was held, but also because of the close ties between Japan and Germany, particularly in the military field (the two becoming war allies) (Maher 1989, p. 303).

After the war, English soon assumed a major role. This partly resulted from the growing influence of Western scientific research (especially North American research), but was also strongly affected by the American occupation of Japan. The most dramatic evidence of the change in the relative fortunes of the various languages is perhaps shown by the shift in the favoured language for the abstracts accompanying medical papers. In 1927–28 there was roughly an equal number of abstracts in Japanese and German; by 1947 all abstracts were in Japanese; but a decade later almost all abstracts were published in English (Maher 1989, p. 302–303).

The number of full articles written in English by Japanese doctors then began to increase, and by 1980 it exceeded the number of all papers published in each of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Maher 1986, p. 211).

The trend has continued, as shown by the number of English medical articles from Japanese institutions which are indexed in Medline. There has been a steady rapid and continued growth from 17 303 in 1990 to 33 317 in 2004. (A direct comparison cannot be made with earlier years because of the way in which data compilation was performed [M. Conway, personal communication].)

Recent situation

The results of our survey seem to indicate a continuing and increasing need for Japanese medical researchers to publish in English. It is perhaps useful to place this within the context of what has been happening in Japanese society in general.

In early 2000, an advisory body named the *Nijuuisseiki Nihon no Kousou* (A framework for Japan in the 21st century) proposed a debate on the adoption of English as a second official language in Japan (Funabashi 2000a, p. 22) The 16-member advisory body, which had been commissioned by the late prime minister, Keizou Obuchi, submitted the

proposal in a report entitled "Nihon no furontia wa Nihon no naka ni aru (Japan's frontier is inside Japan)" (Funabashi 2000b, p. 10–12) The proposal sparked a controversy over whether the adoption of English as a second official language in Japan would be advisable, feasible or economically attractive. One of the authors (BH) has argued that the important point is not whether the government proclaims that English is an official language or not, but whether business and academia believe it is in their own interests to adopt English as a working language (Harrison 2005). We are aware that in promotion and hiring issues in Japan, great emphasis is now sometimes being placed on the publication of original papers in English, with papers in Japanese being attributed a lesser significance. With academic institutions increasingly placing emphasis on publications in English, and with news reports of certain companies introducing English proficiency requirements for promotion or for participation in overseas business trips, there seems to be a steady trend towards English becoming a "working language" (as opposed to an "official language").

In the biomedical field, other factors are also likely to increase the importance and quality of English. In recent years, Japan has adopted a residency matching programme, and a number of prestigious medical schools include a medical English section in their entrance examinations; this marks the first time that knowledge of medical English has been specifically tested (the entrance exams taken to enter medical schools after high school do include an English examination, but these merely cover general English). In addition, the Japan Society for Medical English Education is currently devising a "Test in Medical English" which aims at establishing a benchmark of ability for Japanese medical professionals. There have also been discussions (although no commitment as yet) about introducing a medical English section to the National Medical Licensing Examination.

Given all the above pressures, we expect that the emphasis on the publication of papers in English will increase further in the future. We also feel that there will be a rise in both the number and quality of English manuscripts written by Japanese researchers.

Publishing format

Results

Of the journals responding to questions about publishing format, a slight majority stated that they published electronically (17/30, 57%). Of these, almost all published on the internet (16/17, 94%); two distributed copies of the journal by e-mail (one of these being in addition to the internet); none distributed the journal on a CD-ROM.

We asked those journals publishing on the internet about their payment policy, with multiple answers accepted. Seven (41%) distributed the journals free of charge (three required registration, four did not). The most common method of charging (9 journals, 53%) was to allow free access to abstracts, but to restrict access to the full manuscript to subscribers (one journal commented that this meant to society members only). Two journals have adopted a

"pay-per-view" policy for downloading individual papers, with one journal allowing access to all articles for a fixed period after payment. Two journals allow access to subscribers only. One journal stated that free access was available only to society members; another indicated that it intended to allow access via the society's web site.

Thirteen journals indicated that they were planning to publish electronically in the future, with distribution via the internet being by far the most popular option (11/13 journals, 85%); two journals (15%) are planning to distribute by e-mail, but none by CD-ROM. Regarding payment, four (31%) plan to allow free access, but all will require registration. Four (31%) will allow free access to abstracts, but will allow only subscribers to access full papers. One (8%) plans to introduce a "pay-per-view" system for downloading individual papers, with one journal (8%) allowing access to all articles for a fixed period after payment. Two journals (16%) will allow access to subscribers only. (The above includes two multiple responses).

Less than one-third of the journals surveyed replied that they were aware of open access publishing (10/32, 31%); one did not reply. Of the journals that responded to a question about the possible effect of open access publishing on the journal, half (6/12) stated that open access was likely to benefit the society's journal (one respondent stated the effect would be "extremely" beneficial). Two journals felt the effect would be rather negative, with a further four believing that the effect would be negligible.

When asked about the future outlook for the journals, approximately two-thirds (20/33, 61%) believed that circulation would increase. Two (6%) expected a decreased circulation, and 10 (30%) expected no change; one indicated uncertainty as to whether circulation would decrease or remain steady.

With regard to the method of submission of papers (multiple answers possible), the most common response was to accept hard copy plus floppy disk (20 journals); eight journals stated they would accept only hard copy submissions. Eight accept submissions by e-mail, and four accept online submission. One journal replied that they required initial submission as hard copy, with a later submission on floppy disk after the completion of the review process.

Almost all the surveyed journals managed the publication process using office staff (30/33, 91%). Only one used management software to handle this task. One journal stated that this work was performed by the publishing company, and another stated it was the task of the editor-in-chief.

Conclusions

For the past few decades, there has been steadily increasing pressure on Japanese researchers to publish in English. The results of our survey indicate that this tendency is continuing to increase. In order to advance their careers, medical researchers need to publish more in English, and by moving to an all-English publication a journal can feasibly raise the status of the journal and hence value to the contributing authors. Barriers to this could be

difficulties in having papers corrected linguistically, or because the authors/readers feel it is too much of a burden to have to read or write in a foreign language. However, given the ongoing trends in Japanese society for increased English ability in general, and the recent (and continuing) trends in the biomedical field for increased publication in English, we believe that the number and quality of English manuscripts from Japanese authors will continue to rise.

Regarding publishing formats, there appears to be a trend for journals in Japan to make their products available electronically. The internet seems to be by far the most popular option, with the largest number of journals opting to allow free access to abstracts but to charge for access to full papers. There also seems to be a trend for journals to increasingly allow (or require) electronic submission. As the internet continues to expand, we believe that these trends will continue. At present, though, it is clear that editing management software has not yet become popular in Japan.

Only one-third of the journals surveyed were aware of open access publishing, with half of these believing the effect would be beneficial, and a considerable number of the rest believing that there will not be much change. These figures, together with our personal experience, make us feel that not only are relatively few Japanese aware of open access, but that very few have seriously considered the implications for journals. We previously reported that in the overwhelming majority of the journals surveyed, the post of editor-in-chief was a part-time position (Barron et al. 2005); indeed, based on our extensive experience, as far as we are aware there is not a single Japanese-language medical journal in Japan which employs an administrative academic editor-in-chief on a full-time salaried basis. We thus suspect that the lack of awareness concerning open access publishing may be a reflection of the lack of full-time editors. We believe that there is a need for much greater debate about this issue, without which many journals may find themselves in a difficult position. Unfortunately, as we noted earlier (Barron et al. 2005), only four of the journals surveyed indicated that they knew of a possible forum suitable for such discussions with editors of other biomedical journals; the chances of a fruitful discussion in the near future thus do not seem high.

Acknowledgements

The authors are indebted to Mr Kentaro Shimizu and Mr Hiroyuki Fukuchi of Kyorinsha for their help in collecting the questionnaire from various journals for this survey.

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From the literature

Popularity versus prestige

Impact factors (IFs) produced by Thomson Scientific (previously known as the Institute for Scientific Information, or ISI) exert a fascination for many journal editors. But researchers from Los Alamos National Laboratory suggest that IF rankings do not necessarily reflect the relative prestige of different journals, especially those in physics and computer science.

Bollen et al. (2006) use analogies with film stars and novels to remind us that popular success does not always equate with expert appreciation or prestige. Books on the bestseller lists rarely win literary prizes. A journal's IF is calculated from the total number of citations over a two-year period but does not take account of where those citations occurred. A "popular" journal might receive a large number of citations, but in relatively low-ranking journals, while a "prestigious" journal would be cited by other highly regarded titles.

The Los Alamos team therefore calculated a weighted PageRank (wPR) for journals, based on the type of system used by the popular search engine Google, which lists web pages according to the number of links to that page from other sites. They refined this model by adding weightings according to the IF of the citing journal. They then compared journal IFs with their wPRs. Only three journals (Nature, Science and the New England Journal of *Medicine*) appear in the top-ten lists for both IF (i.e. popularity) and wPR (i.e. prestige) when all journals listed by Thomson/ISI are considered. To obtain a combined measure of popularity and prestige, Bollen et al. calculated the so-called Y-factor by multiplying the IF with the wPR. The top ten Y-factor list is dominated by biomedical journals.

The researchers then split the journal list according to discipline to see why biomedical journals had such high Y-factors. They found that biomedical journals had different properties from physics or computer science journals in that, within medicine, there was a much stronger correlation between IF and wPR, while for physics and computer science, although there was some correlation between popularity and prestige, it was less marked. Pearson correlation coefficients for IF and wPR were 0.91 for the medical journals, 0.5 for the computer science journals but only 0.24 for the physics journals.

Only two journals (*Physical Review Letters* and the Journal of High Energy Physics) feature in the top-ten listing for both IF and wPR in the physics category. Those with high IFs tend to be applied physics journals that frequently publish background material. When the computer science titles are considered, just one journal (*Bioinformatics*) features in both top-ten lists, while in biomedicine nine journals occur in both lists, suggesting that IF is strongly correlated with journal prestige. (The top five medical journals in terms of Y-factor are the New England Journal of Medicine, JAMA, The Lancet, Nature Medicine and the Journal of Experimental Medicine.) One reason for the difference between medical journals and those reporting physics and computer science is that there appears to be a higher degree of specialization in the non-medical journals, with a corresponding lack of interdisciplinary citation. The most prestigious computer science journals (i.e. those with the highest wPRs) often specialize in highly focused research areas, while the most prestigious medical journals are general titles covering the entire discipline.

Scatter plots show outlying titles which have high IFs but relatively low wPRs. Journals that are highly cited but do not have a particularly high wPR tend to publish review articles, data tables or methodology. These are often cited for background material but are not considered particularly prestigious. Journals with high wPR but relatively low IF may be likened to the books that win literary prizes but are not bestsellers. These journals are highly regarded by experts in specialist fields but not necessarily cited as often as others.

This paper by Bollen et al. provides interesting food for thought for journal editors, and may be reassuring for editors of physics or computer science journals who like to think of their titles as prestigious although they have disappointing IFs. Sadly, for editors of biomedical journal there is probably no escaping the IF (if you are lucky enough to have one), and it seems that IF is pretty well correlated with journal prestige.

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EASE-Forum digest: January to March 2006

Authorship for better or for worse, until discredit do us part?

We all knew *Science* had retracted an article by Hwang et al. originally published in its June 2005 issue. Karen Shashok drew our attention to a summary investigative report on allegations of possible scientific misconduct on the part of Gerald P Schatten, a co-author of that paper. The report was published in February 2006 by the University of Pittsburgh, where Schatten is a professor of obstetrics (www.postgazette.com/downloads/20060210pittreport_schatten. pdf). The university adheres to the ICMJE definition of authorship (www.icmje.org).

Anyone who is interested in defining authorship should read this report. It states that Dr Schatten had volunteered to help steer an earlier manuscript through acceptance at Science by providing input into revising the manuscript and by phoning Science to lobby for acceptance of the paper. In that 2004 paper he had not been listed as an author. In the June 2005 paper, in which he was listed as an author, he had composed every draft of the paper and advised on what was to be included in the tables and figures. He was the sole signatory to the covering letter submitting the manuscript, in which as corresponding author he agreed that all the authors had read and approved the paper. This was a false statement for which the committee held Schatten responsible. It was he who responded to the reviewers' comments too. Nevertheless he contended that he did not "write" the paper because he did not generate the data or figures and tables underlying the text. It is not clear, however, if he inspected the sources of the raw data. Certainly he failed to make critical enquiry when he received messages from South Korea changing the reporting of data from one draft to the next.

In Karen's posting she quoted from the report's conclusion that Schatten had engaged in "research misbehaviour" and quoted its recommendation that the University of Pittsburgh "consider amending its Guidelines for Ethical Practices in Research to include a specific statement regarding the responsibilities of senior or corresponding authors of scientific publications. While these responsibilities may be generally recognized as routine procedures within the community, this investigation discovered how easily this responsibility can be disregarded, and the sad and unfortunate consequences that can result." Among the "sad and unfortunate consequences" Karen pointed out were the receipt of large sums of money and "reputational enhancement". The report referred to Schatten's inconsistent statements as to whether or not he wrote the paper as a "discrepancy in the subtlety of interpreting the word 'write'". In other words, Karen concluded, problems in determining this co-author's exact roles were caused by the lack of or disregard for clear definitions of authorship. Would a professional author's editor or translator or other provider of editorial assistance have committed this sort of authorship abuse? She would say "no", and she added

that the story speaks for the roles of authors and editorial assistants to be clearly distinguished and appropriately credited.

Refusal to allow acknowledgements could shift departmental chairs into authorship

In a second discussion initiated by Karen she reported an incident in which a journal as part of its online submittal process for a revised manuscript had precluded "personal acknowledgements". Karen considered that this policy was outdated and unfair. It also made the journal vulnerable to authorship abuse if contributors who do not meet the ICMJE criteria for authorship, e.g. department chairs, were added as authors instead. Pippa Smart thought a journal concerned about unauthorized personal endorsements should require the authors to show they had obtained permission from the person quoted.

Permission to reprint excluded electronic publication

Carol Norris wrote that she guides doctors in Finland who are writing their compilation PhD theses. A student made an online request to a large publisher for permission to reprint a figure. The publisher responded that permission to reprint "excludes electronic publication" but added that reapplication for permission should be made if a specific electronic project was in mind. The student reapplied, explaining that the University of Helsinki provided electronic publication of summaries of theses on a site that was freely readable and printable through the internet. Permission was granted. Carol emphasized that only summary sections are included in theses provided on this site.

What is oral?

Is it really logical to call a treatment applied by intragastric intubation an oral treatment? I asked this question and Liz Wager responded that she could see some logic as the drug would land up in the gut. The same would apply to a drug given via a nasogastric tube and it certainly would not be called a "parenteral" application. Stuart Handysides added his expertise with the term "enteral", which would apply to feeding through a nasogastric tube and through gastrostomy.

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. More information can be found on the EASE web site (www.ease.org.uk).

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Book reviews

Noah Lukeman. 2006. **The art of punctuation.** Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press. vii + 192 p. Hardback. GBP10.99. ISBN 0-19-861454-8.

Two years ago I reviewed Lynne Truss's enormously successful book Eats, Shoots & Leaves, which reviewed punctuation in a masterly way. Do we need another book on punctuation so soon? Well, yes. This book is aimed at a different audience and is about a different aspect of punctuation. Whereas Truss's book is about the correct grammatical use of different punctuation marks, Lukeman's is aimed at creative writers and is concerned with the frequency of use of the marks and the effect they can have on the reader's feeling about the text. Chapter by chapter he considers each mark in turn, with subsections entitled "how to use it", "danger of overuse", "how to underuse it", "danger of underuse", "context", and "what your use of the S reveals about you". He then ends each chapter with "end-of-chapter exercises", which ask such questions as "Choose a paragraph where all of the sentences are of drastically varying length. Adjust the sentences (either by shortening or lengthening) to make them all of uniform length. How does it read now? What do you gain by this? What do you lose? Can you apply this technique elsewhere in your work?" There then follows a question the other way round (changing from uniform length to radically contrasting lengths) with the same subsequent questions.

These chapters are grouped into three "Parts"; The Triumvirate (full stop, comma, semicolon), Into the Limelight (colon, dash and brackets, quotation marks, paragraph and section break), and Proceed with Caution (a single chapter dealing with the question mark, the exclamation mark, italics, the ellipsis, the hyphen, and a final "Don't use at all" which includes square brackets, underline, and bold). He ends with an epilogue entitled "the symphony of punctuation" in which he explains his whole thesis

that punctuation, when properly done, seems seamless, invisible, at one with the text, that studying how you use it can help you to find out something about yourself, and that if you are willing to listen to what the page is telling you about yourself, and humble enough to change, you will become a better writer.

From this you will realize that this book is not aimed at scientific editors, or even scientific writers, though some of the lessons creative writers may learn from this book have applications to scientific writers also. In fact the only reference to our kind of writing comes in his section "How to use paragraph breaks", where he says: "Every paragraph must have an argument or thesis, must begin with an idea, carry it through and conclude with it. The opening sentence should set the stage, the middle sentences execute, and the final sentence conclude. This is easy to do when writing essays or academic papers, but when it comes to fiction or creative non-fiction, you cannot allow your work to progress so neatly"; and he then goes on to say just how creative writers can deal with this quandary. It is interesting to note that he does deal with paragraph and section breaks, and by inference chapter breaks, as a form of punctuation, and by so doing forces us to think of whether they are being used appropriately.

This book, therefore, while aimed specifically at creative writers, may help editors to focus on how our authors construct their work and set it out and whether a change in punctuation, including these wider considerations of paragraphs and sections, could help the readability of the papers before us.

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Herbert Grüttemeier and Barry Mahon (eds). 2003. **Open access to scientific and technical information: state of the art and future trends**. Amsterdam etc.: IOS Press. 152 p. USD108/EUR98/GBP69. ISBN 1-58603-377-8/Tokyo: Ohmsha. 13700 yen. ISBN 4-274-90616-7.

This book is a collection of the presentations and discussions at seminar by ICST/INIST/INSERM (international and institutes for scientific and technical information) in Paris in 2003. It comes at the right time, as it addresses real concerns of the scientific community and publishers. The idea of open access (OA) has been around for a decade, but it was officially formulated in 2001, with the Open Society Institute's backing, as the Budapest Initiative for Open Access. It will certainly prove beneficial to scientists, especially those from poorer parts of the world. The internet enables many people to gain access to scientific results — but it also opens many questions.

Between the introductory and the closing addresses in this volume, five topics are discussed: effects of OA on scientific and technical information distribution; economic models and legal implications of OA; the challenges OA imposes on the scientific community; issues specific to developing countries; and future developments. While some concerns were expressed by the publishers at the meeting, the OA initiative was mostly greeted with enthusiasm.

At present, most scientific publications with a high impact factor are commercial. They are also often available online, but not for free. Although Thompson Scientific evaluates only about 5% of journals published worldwide, scientists prefer their work to be published in those journals, in order to be included in all the major databases. OA would therefore give more visibility to the remaining 95% of journals. The question is, at what cost? But because many of these other journals enjoy government support, problems of cost may not be insurmountable.

Classical publishing has an extended infrastructure, and print journals, as opposed to web-only journals, lend a feeling of permanence to the authors and also to readers. However, handling an ever-increasing scientific output is difficult for libraries. While this obstacle may be solved by implementing a good digital library scheme, access to old material remains a problem. Publishers would probably be unwilling to provide free access to an archive that might cost millions of euros to create — and even if fees were applied, they might never cover the cost of archiving and supplying (rarely accessed) older materials.

The question of how digital archiving of published papers is going to be efficiently handled by individual scientists has not been fully solved yet, especially for younger people who are just starting their careers and may find obtaining older materials difficult.

Highly rated non-OA journals of today ensure top-ranked peer reviewing (the quality of which, however, is sometimes open to discussion). Those journals are also able to limit the publication of similar — often recycled — articles, and so control, at least partially, the problem of over-publication, or "flooding".

Free publishing, while potentially bypassing the conventional process and therefore the publisher, would still require a peer-review process, at least to maintain credibility. Because journal quality depends

on editors and on the quality of peer review, the performance of OA journals need not be worse than that of traditional journals. Also, the nature of the internet allows an open peer-review process in terms of both quality and selectivity, with both reviewers' comments and authors' responses posted online. A new scheme may arise, one relying on such standards as personal- and usage-oriented impact factors instead of journal impact factors.

The internet also allows easy publication of raw data and so provides greater numbers of scientists and others with the raw materials. This, of course, raises ethical issues for those "consumers" in terms of obtaining permissions and of properly crediting sources, as well as raising concerns regarding intellectual property rights.

The internet has opened up a number of opportunities for distribution, publication and exchange of scientific information, though not without producing its own set of problems. It has certainly opened a new era in the exchange of ideas, but its potential is far from being realized yet.

As a final point I would like to suggest that the publisher should have provided a glossary of acronyms to make this book easier to read.

Mira Zore-Armanda mira.zore-armanda@st.htnet.hr

More on fraud in science: footnote to a book review

Late last year, as I was writing my review of Horace Freeland Judson's *The Great Betrayal: Fraud in Science* (European Science Editing 2006;32(1):20–21), world media began to explode with stories about a possible major scientific fraud regarding what had been hailed as a breakthrough on human embryonic stem (ES) cells. As I read the reports I realized that this incident could only add to the relevance of Judson's book.

Professor Woo Suk Hwang of Seoul National University, South Korea, startled the scientific world in March 2005 by reporting that he and a team of collaborating scientists had created 11 human ES cell lines by somatic cell nuclear transfer from the DNA of patients who were diseased or injured. The findings were described in a paper submitted to *Science* and published there last June.

This was considered to be a landmark paper in its field, for eventually such ES cell lines could conceivably provide replacement cells genetically matched to people with a variety of diseases or other conditions. Then, in early December, allegations about irregularities in the paper, posted on an internet web site, resulted in an investigation by the university that announced that Hwang's data were derived from only two cell lines and that what had taken place had been "a deliberate manipulation, in other words a fabrication of research results."

The international media have detailed the events that followed: Hwang's apology and resignation, the retraction of the article and a previous one in *Science*, the South Korean government's stripping of Hwang's national honours (a "top scientist" title, state funding

of USD3 million per year, and a permanent police bodyguard), and potential criminal prosecution. And many of the scientific media have been asking themselves how this fraud might have been caught before publication, raising questions about the peer review system.

In an editorial on 13 January 2006, Science editor Donald Kennedy had this to say: "We believe strongly in the peer review system, but we have never thought it infallible. Carefully reviewed studies sometimes turn out to be wrong because later attempts at repetition fail. But peer review requires authors to provide more data and more confirming material, making it likelier that careful efforts at confirmation will follow. Fraud is something quite different, and very hard to detect. Of course, reviewers or editors might be sent to the authors' labs to look at the notebooks, imposing costly and offensive oversight on the vast majority of scientists in order to catch the occasional cheater. That's a bad idea. The reporting of scientific results is based on trust. It's better to trust our colleagues, despite the fact that on rare occasions one of them might disappoint other scientists and those hoping for cures.

Earlier, on 6 January, *Science* staff news writer Jennifer Couzin noted that "*Science*, like other highprofile journals, aggressively seeks firsts: papers that generate publicity and awe in the scientific community and beyond. The practice comes with some risks, critics say, because by definition firsts haven't been replicated."

Couzin also quoted Martin Blume, editor-in-chief of the American Physical Society: "Peer review doesn't necessarily say that a paper is right. It says that it is worth publishing."

In personal correspondence, Couzin informed me that *Science* is currently reviewing its procedures and handling of the Hwang case. "My understanding is that the journal may have findings/changes to report towards the end of March," she wrote. "*Science*'s editorial staff has said it will make those public, such

as in an editorial. We may also report them separately in the News section." I have now learned from Donald Kennedy that the target date for publishing such changes is mid-April.

EASE members may have had similar situations to deal with in the past. If so, lessons learned from such events might make interesting and helpful reading in *ESE*.

Bob Huggan bobhuggan@wanadoo.fr

News from committees

EASE Council update

The EASE Council chose Kraków for its most recent meeting, held on 11 March 2006, in order to get a preview of the forthcoming conference venue. It was felt that conference attendees will be pleased with the venue.

First on the agenda was the consideration of the e-mail list services used by Council, the Publication Committee, and the Programme Committee. The services have been extended to cover 2006, but it was felt that their use has not yet reached its potential. Therefore, they will be discontinued at the end of the year if no additional progress has been made.

The results of the returned ballots for Council membership were then presented. No additional names had been submitted, so the slate submitted at the Annual General Meeting will be as follows: President: Arjan Polderman (Netherlands); Vice President 1: Linus Svensson (Sweden); Vice President 2: Joan Marsh (UK); Members of Council: Alison Clayson (France/USA), Ricardo Guerrero (Spain), Remedios Melero (Spain), Eva Baranyiova (Czech Republic), Mare-Anne Laane (Estonia), Volodymyr Lysenko (Ukraine), Mercedes Piqueras (Spain), Witold Zuchiewicz (Poland). Elisabeth Kessler (Past President), Rod Hunt (Company Secretary and Treasurer), and Jenny Gretton (consultant) will be co-opted as ex-officio members. Council appointed Sheila Evered as secretary for the next Council term (2006–2009). She will act as an ex-officio member of Council.

The financial report for 2005 and the budget for 2006 followed. The year 2005 showed a slight deficit. It was suggested that some reduction in costs could be obtained by having the complete Publication Committee meet only once a year, with its executive members meeting twice a year. This suggestion will be passed on to the new Council for consideration.

The final project related to the new logo is a new cover for *European Science Editing*. Council picked their favourite three to be submitted to the

Publication Committee. The entire package will be introduced at the conference in June.

Ideas for promotion were considered, and it was decided to offer a music CD to members who recruit a new member.

There was some discussion of the dates chosen for the post-conference courses to be held in conjunction with the June conference. Council agreed to ask the Programme Committee to consider a compromise.

Rod Hunt summarized EASE's presentation at the CER 2005 meeting in Brussels on 14–15 November 2005 (CER: Communicating European Research). One result has been additional requests concerning EASE contributions, one possibility being participation in the European Science Fair.

It was reported that work on obtaining EU funding for the next triennial conference in 2009 had not yet begun, but the objective would be to apply for funds under Framework 7. This activity will be taken up and extended by the new Council.

Council was next brought up to date on plans for the June conference and the budget for the meeting was presented and approved.

As attempts to obtain funding may affect the venue for the Tenth General Assembly and Conference in 2009, no definite venue was chosen. It was decided that the next conference would be held somewhere in Mediterranean Europe unless the site is regulated by any EU funding obtained.

Finally, Sheila Evered, the next secretary, was introduced to Council, and plans were made for the changeover with the current secretary. One important development that came out of the discussions was Linus Svensson's offer to set up a web-based database on his server that could be accessed by, for example, both the secretary and treasurer. Its use would automate much of the secretary's work and eliminate many of the problems that have existed throughout the last three years.

Georgianna Oja ease@pp.inet.fi

Programme Committee: 7th report

Kraków: cold in March, warm in June

A further visit to Kraków has done nothing to blunt the enthusiasm committee members felt the first time we explored the venue for the conference in June last year. In March the courtyard of the Collegium Maius had piles of frozen snow where the roof had decided to shed its unusually heavy load. It was hard to imagine we might be standing in the same courtyard, enjoying a glass of wine perhaps, at the reception on Thursday 15 June, but it will happen, and hopefully the weather will be warm and dry.

The Council meeting and the Programme Committee meeting were both held in the Palac Larischa, which is in the centre of the old part of the city, only a few minutes' walk from most of the hotels. The Palace houses the Law School and as a former grand house has some wonderful original features to enjoy. At the same time, all the facilities have been updated recently, and we feel sure you will all find it comfortable.

Reme Melero has organized two post-conference courses: Two roads to open access, and Statistics for editors. These courses, which are free to conference registrants, will run on Monday 19 June 2006. Spaces are limited, so apply early, please. See link from EASE web site (www.ease.org.uk) for more information.

While in Kraków, Rod Hunt and Jenny Gretton visited the offices of Orbis Travel. Orbis will have a desk in the Palac Larischa at all the break times during

the conference. They are standing by to receive your enquiries and bookings for trips in and around the city on Saturday afternoon, and perhaps further afield before or after the conference. You can contact them via a link from the EASE web site (www.ease.org.uk). If you can find time to go on the tour of Kazimierz, the old Jewish quarter of Kraków, we are sure you will find it fascinating. Another "must" is the Wawel Castle, just a short walk from the conference centre. The trip up the bell tower to visit the great bell is worthwhile on its own.

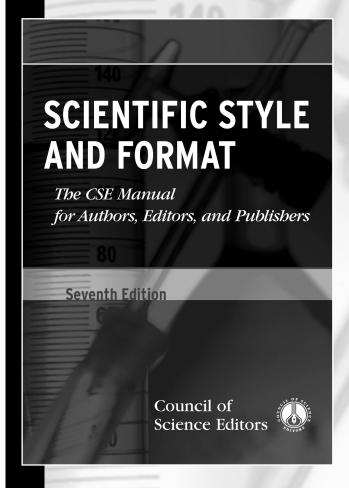
The main square is called the Rynek, and half of it was without paving in March, but they have promised it will be back to its former glory by June. The delay was due to something interesting being found under the paving as it was being replaced — perhaps we will learn more about this in June. The Rynek is the place to hear the famous trumpeter, whose mournful sounds can be heard on the hour. We will leave it to the authors of the conference newsletter to tell you why his sounds are so sad. Those writers will also tell you about the dragon, the mammoth and the whale, but you will have to come to Kraków to find out more. See you there, and please remember to bring sensible shoes!

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News Notes

CMAJ editors sacked — who's next? The science press provided much coverage on the sacking of the editors of CMAJ (the journal of the Canadian Medical Association), following sackings not all that long ago at the New England Journal of Medicine and JAMA. The editorial board of CMAJ is petitioning the Canadian Medical Association (www.chaps.ucalgary.ca/ cmaj.htm), saying that the president of CMA Media, who fired John Hoey and Anne Marie Todkill, refused to provide a reason for the firings when contacted by a board member, but the *New York Times* of 22 February quoted him as saying the firings occurred because he "felt it was time for a fresher approach." The editorial board finds this statement implausible because the *CMAJ* is experiencing unprecedented success and growth; the firing is sudden, without a clear plan of succession; and an explanation at the time of the firings was lacking. The New England Journal of Medicine (www.nejm.org, 15 March) quotes the CMA board member who chaired the journal oversight committee until mid-March as saying: "The issue is . . . not about editorial independence . . . it's about a relationship between parties and their ability to work together." But to many observers the primary issue seems to be editorial independence.

Old journals don't just die

 Nor are they pulped when computer terminals replace the shelves they once filled, letter writers to The Times (London, 10 February 2006) insist. Manchester University, for example, has more recent issues of journals — up to when they go electronic — on open shelves and the remainder in store. The terminals mentioned are vehicles through which members of the academic community can access an array of electronic resources. At Exeter, the older journals removed from libraries are to be placed on internet access services such as JSTOR and Ingenta, which are easily accessible. The subscription is worth the money, says a student.

Indian OA gateway launched

Informatics India has launched Open J-Gate, an e-gateway to global journal literature in open access domain, providing seamless access to journal articles available online. Informatics India provides scientific and research information from across the globe to the country's scientific community and academia. Open J-Gate indexes

articles from 3000 academic, research and industry journals, 1500 of which are peer-reviewed scholarly journals. (*UKSG Serials e-News* 10 March 2006)

ICMJE's Oslo meeting highlights: trial registration . . .

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors feels it has been effective at increasing trial registration - drug companies' registrations are now running high. When the New England Journal of Medicine turned down a trial without registration, it told the authors to tell their (drug company) sponsors how upset they were. JAMA also turned down that trial. (NEJM has a person checking the registry entry before the trial is accepted.) The meeting decided that it should be WHO's job to vet and bless registers, and to link those that pass their criteria. In the interim, the ICMJE web site will list those that meet its criteria. At the moment these are: clintrials.gov, ISRCTN register, and a Japanese, a Dutch and an Australian registry that have opened up to all trials.

... access to electronic articles ... The discussion about electronic publishing and access was less about the threat this poses to existing journals and more about how they can help establish norms and standards for institutional repositories, which are increasingly taking on the role of journals. Over the past two years, 6% of all Elsevier articles and 11% of all Lancet articles have become freely available, either as author manuscripts or as published journal articles. The proportion is growing at a rate of about 2% per year.

... ghost authorship

The Annals of Internal Medicine has had a recent case of spectral authorship; in their editorial they say that they have adopted the WAME (World Association of Medical Editors) statement on ghost writing, and altered their instructions to authors and their conflict of interest forms. The BMJ plans to be more proactive in asking people whether they had help with the writing, who from, and who funded the work. The ICMJE uniform requirements will be changed to include something on acknowledging medical writers and their funding source. There was a question of whether editors should be concerned with the person who prepares the illustrations, especially in light of the stem cell fraud.

African Index Medicus reactivated Several options have been added to the African Index Medicus: AIM database publication on the web, a virtual space for African medical editors and a collaborative space for the focal points and AIM partners. AIM follows the example of other regional Index Medici and will be a vital part of the Global Health Library development, says a contributor to HIF-Net. Visit the African Index Medicus at http://indexmedicus.afro.who.int.

Plagiarists beware!

The LexisNexis commercial archive provides access to 15 000 English language newspapers, magazines and news wires worldwide, and costs "well into six figures". Not for the humble science journal, then - it is used by newspaper research departments. Its Copy-Guard system is used for identifying plagiarism and copyright infringement. Copy-Guard scours the vast field for significant matches, which are then highlighted. In a case dealt with by the Guardian's readers' editor (27 February), the system showed that plagiarism of one magazine had indeed taken place, but it also demonstrated that in the same piece the offending writer had plagiarized another magazine to an even greater extent.

German scientists positive about OA publication

Of the 1000 scientists (funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) from all disciplines who took part in the "Publishing Strategies in Transformation" survey, 80% "thought that a culture of open access could play a decisive role in encouraging the exchange of scientific information, and considered that funding free access publications was basically a good idea." However, only around 10% have actually used the opportunity to make their own articles available in this way. Young researchers in the natural, life, and engineering sciences were more strongly in favour of promoting open access publications than their older colleagues. Some scientists expressed reservations about the status of open access publications in specialist circles and worried about the long-term availability of electronic publications. These doubts decreased in line with the experience researchers already had of online publications.

(www.dfg.de/en/news/press_releases/2005/press_release_2005_50. html)

Gaps in digital R&D programmes of national libraries of EU new member states

National libraries are often the custodians of legal deposit and the national cultural heritage. A survey by Tel-Me-Mor concludes that, to fulfil their role in the vision of a shared European heritage, libraries should find a more prominent role in their national R&D \bar{p} rogrammes; that more resources need to be digitized and new funding models uncovered; and that more effective systems for the management of research need to be put in place. The EC's Information Society Technologies Programme is to ensure better access to resources by fostering European partnerships and increasing the participation of new member states in EU research activities. (http://telmemor.net/pr.php)

Terminology portal developed in France

Five institutions in France — CNRS, INSERM, INRIA, INRA and CEMAGREF — have jointly developed the first version of TermSciences, a multidisciplinary terminology portal. The database will be mainly used for information searches; it will help users to make better use of bibliographic databases and the web in general by enabling them to formulate their queries. TermSciences has been produced to enhance the value of the terminological resources (glossaries, dictionaries, thesauri) developed by

public research and higher education institutions for their mutual benefit. The programme is open to participation by all research and higher education institutions with an interest in the mutual use of terminological resources and in the possibility of using an environment and tools allowing interactive approaches to content management and enhancement. (www.termsciences.fr)

ISBN agency moves

After 30 years of being located in Berlin, the ISBN agency (www.isbn.org/standards/home/isbn/international/index.asp) is moving to London. From April 2006 EDItEUR, an international body that develops and promotes book trade standards, will take over responsibility for the day-to-day running of the International ISBN Agency. The changes do not affect the ISBN agency for the UK and Ireland, which continues to be operated by Nielsen BookData.

New DOI extraction tool

CrossRef (www.crossref.org) is offering a free trial to publishers of a tool that parses free text references, converts the reference to XML and returns any matching DOIs. The product is a customized version of Inera's eXtyles refXpress. The simple cut-and-paste form accepts references formatted in common bibliographic styles and returns the DOI for the article if one is found. A free

text-based interface for individual DOI queries is available at www.crossref.org/guestquery.

Publishing bibliographies available Scholarly Electronic Publishing bibliography version 61 is now available at http://epress.lib.uh.edu/sepb/sepb.html. This selective bibliography presents 2610 articles, books, and other printed and e-sources that are useful in understanding scholarly electronic publishing efforts on the internet. The web site also provides access to an open access bibliography.

A podcast?

Nature has been piloting its podcasts since October 2005, and downloads are now at 30 000 a week. This free audio show contains highlights from news and articles, interviews with the people behind the science, and in-depth commentary and analysis from journalists covering the research. You can have it delivered to your desktop each week via www.nature.com/nature/podcast/index.html — where you'll also find the archive.

Thanks to: Jane Sykes, Fiona Godlee, Marie-Paule Kabore, UK Serials e-News

Contributions to News Notes

Please send items for this section to Margaret Cooter, BMJ Editorial, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JR, UK; mcooter@bmj.com.

News from editing societies

ACRL

The Association of College and Research Libraries Board of Directors endorsed the statement "Urgent action needed to preserve scholarly electronic journals" (www.digilib.org/ pubs/waters051015.htm) at its annual general meeting. The electronic environment poses several challenges for the long-term preservation of, and access to, information. I, for one, had not appreciated that many libraries do not actually own or store the journals they license in electronic form. This means that researchers may be restricted in their access to published literature unless libraries adopt strategies to preserve electronic journals. The ACRL urges academic libraries to take action to preserve their electronic journal collections.

EAPN

The East Asia Publishing Network (www.eapub.net) was launched last

year, with the aim of fostering the exchange and utilization of information and ideas among publishing professionals throughout East Asia. EAPN will provide a forum for dialogue about the new era of publishing among concerned individuals in East Asia, individuals who share a common heritage in a print culture based on Chinese characters. The launch of EAPN was preceded by a roundtable discussion on "What is an East Asia Publishing Network?" with eminent panelists from China, South Korea, and Japan. The discussion makes for interesting reading, providing an insight into the different publishing models in the different countries, the difficulty of establishing common Chinese characters to describe publishing terms, and the impact of the often-troubled shared history of these countries on publishing and what gets to be published.

SfEP

The Society for Editors and Proofreaders (www.sfep.org.uk) has recently revised its Code of Practice, which can be downloaded from the Society's web site. The new Code reflects the changes in working practices since the previous version (1995) and includes sections on professional behaviour (both supplier and client), standards of proofreading, editing, and project management, electronic file handling, e-mail etiquette, confidentiality and computer security. The Society has also set up a new section on its web site for "Frequently asked questions". Questions have been grouped according to whether they refer primarily to copy-editing, proofreading, working freelance, training and qualifications, and using copy editors and proofreaders.

EAC

The Editors' Association of Canada/Association canadienne des réviseurs (www.editors.ca) will launch certification tests this autumn. Open to non-members, certification is not intended for entry-level editors but for editors who have a high level of knowledge and skills in their profession. The Association's web site also provides a set of *Professional Editorial Standards*.

ALPSP

The Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers has announced publication of two new commissioned reports: ALPSP survey of librarians on factors in journal cancellation, by Mark Ware, and Scholarly publishing practice: academic journal publishers' policies and practices in online publishing, 2nd survey 2005, by John Cox and Laura Cox. Contact Nick Evans (nick.evans@alpsp.org) for further information.

CSE

The 7th edition of *Scientific Style and Format* (ISBN 0-87470-062-0; list price \$59.95) will be published in June.

Those interested can find out more from the Council of Science Editors' web site (see www.csemanual.org). The new edition includes new chapters on "Publication policies and practices" and the "Basics of copyright" (which covers copyright requirements and practices in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand). Several chapters have been extensively updated and expanded.

MET

Following its first successful meeting in Barcelona last year (see report by Karen Shashok in ESE 2006;32(1):15-16), Mediterranean **Editors and Translators** (www.metmeetings.org) has now registered as a non-profit organization. MET is an interdisciplinary association that brings together people in the Mediterranean and southern European area who facilitate international communication in English. Its members work wherever English language mediators are needed, facilitating the participation of local academics, scientists, politicians, businesses and cultural

representatives. Its second meeting will be held on 27–28 October 2006, again in Barcelona, Spain.

Plain English Campaign

On a light-hearted note, the Plain **English Campaign** (www.plainenglish.co.uk) announced at Christmas its annual awards for the year's worst examples of gobbledygook. One of the shortest winners was this e-mail from a UK internet provider to a customer: "Your email did not reach a humanoid. It only reached replicant level 1. E-mails arriving from here are spooled for automatic checking and will not be read by humanoids." The web site has various sections and gives numerous examples on the use of plain English in certain industries and on certain topics. It is an interesting site to browse, though. (It tells me that according to EU-speak I am a "chronologically gifted person".)

Jane Sykes (j.sykes@wxs.nl), compiler of this section, welcomes news from societies and national bodies concerned with editing, writing or publishing in the sciences.

Forthcoming meetings, courses and BELS examinations

Plagiarism and piracy: copyright infringement in an online world

ALPSP seminar
10 May 2006 London, UK
This seminar will include information
on initiatives from COPE and the
Publishers Association and an
overview of the legal framework for
scholarly publishing. (Contact:
www.alpsp.org/events/2006/RIE/
default.htm)

Working toward a sustainable, equitable world

CŜE 49th annual meeting
19–23 May 2006 Tampa, FL
(Contact:

CSE@councilscienceeditors.org or see www.CouncilScienceEditors.org)

Beyond borders and bindings

SSP 28th annual meeting Arlington, VA, USA 7–9 June 2006 How will scholarly publishing react to the new opportunities and responsibilities offered by ever-increasing globalization and innovative technologies? The numerous sessions at this year's meeting of the Society for Scholarly Publishing will have ideas for everybody in the publishing community. (Contact: Society for Scholarly Publishing, 10200 West 44th Avenue, Suite 304, Wheat Ridge, CO 80033, USA; tel. 01-303-422 3914,

e-mail info@sspnet.org, web www.sspnet.org)

The culture of science editing

9th EASE Conference and General Assembly 15–18 June 2006 Kraków

See pages 35 and 48, this issue. The registration form and other information can be found on EASE's web site. (Contact: www.ease.org.uk or Georgianna Oja, EASE Secretary, ease@pp. inet.fi)

Dead or alive? The future of copyright

ALPSP/Publishers Licensing Society seminar 16 June 2006 London, UK (Contact: www.alpsp.org/events/ 2006/DOA)

Meeting new challenges

SfEP 17th annual conference 18–19 Sept. 2006 Nottingham, UK Booking for this conference opened on 1 March. (Contact: www.sfep. org.uk)

Publication ethics

ALPSP seminar 22 September 2006 London, UK (Contact: www.alpsp.org)

MET meeting

27–28 October 2006 Barcelona, Spain The second meeting of MET (Mediterranean Editors and Translators). (Contact: www.metmeetings.org)

2007

IPEd (CASE) conference

9–11 May 2007 Hobart, Tasmania (Contact: www.iped-editors.org)

COURSES

ALPSP training courses, briefings and technology updates

and technology updates
ALPSP offers half-day and one-day courses and updates on the role of the managing editor, electronic publishing and marketing, journal marketing, production, fulfilment and finance, copyright, and related topics. (Contact: Amanda Whiting, Training Coordinator, Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, tel. +44 (0)1865 247776, training@alpsp.org; www.alpsp-training.org)

Style for reports and papers in medical and life-science journals

John Kirkman Communication Consultancy courses: London, UK One-day seminars devoted to discussion of style — tactics for producing accurate and readable

texts, not structure or format. (Contact: Gill Ward, JKCC, PO Box 106, Marlborough, Wilts, SN8 2RU, UK; tel. +44 (0)1672 520429, fax +44 (0)1672 521008; kirkman.ramsbury@ btinternet.com)

Publishing Training Centre at Book

(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 workshops

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 7736 0901, trainingenquiries@ sfep.org.uk. For other enquiries see

www.sfep.org.uk, or contact SfEP, Riverbank House, 1 Putney Bridge Approach, London SW6 3JD, UK; tel. +44 (0)20 7736 3278; administration@ 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 downloadable booking forms can be found at www.indexers.org.uk; admin@ indexers.org.uk)

University of Chicago

Medical writing and editing certificate programmes are among the many courses available at the Graham School of General Studies (5835 S. Kimbark Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637-1608, USA; fax +1 773 702 6814, http://grahamschool.uchicago.edu)

University of Oxford, Dept for **Continuing Education**

Courses on effective writing for biomedical professionals and on presenting in biomedicine, science and technology. (Contact: Gaye Walker, CPD Centre, Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, Suite 5, Littlegate House, 16/17 St Ebbes Street, Oxford OX1 1PT, UK; tel. +44 (0)1865-286953, fax +44 (0)1865 286934, gaye. walker@continuing-education.ox. ac.uk, www.conted.ox.ac. uk/cpd/personaldev)

Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) examination schedule

20 May 2006, New Orleans, LA (CSE) 17 June 2006, Kraków, Poland (EASE) 25 October 2006, Albuquerque, NM

19 May 2007, Atlanta, GA (CSE) 10 October 2007, Austin, TX (AMWA) See www.bels.org, or contact Leslie Neistadt (Hughston Sports Medicine Foundation, Inc, 6262 Veterans Parkway, Columbus, GA 31909, USA; neistadt@hughston. com, fax: +1 706 576 3348).

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