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From the Editors' Desks

Next EASE conference

The Tenth EASE General Assembly and Conference – "Integrity in Science Communication" – will be held in Pisa, Italy, 16–19 September 2009. The first circular accompanies this issue of ESE. Speakers are being invited and the Programme Committee is confident that the Tenth Conference will match the great expectations that were raised by the Ninth Conference in Kraków (Poland) in 2006.

EASE AGM

The next Annual General Meeting of EASE will be held in Barcelona on Saturday 19 July 2008. A notice of this AGM is inserted in this issue of ESE.

ESOF 2008

EASE participates in the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF 2008; 18–22 July) with "The adventure of writing and publishing: the game of scientific publications", an outreach activity organised together with Mediterranean Editors & Translators (MET). It includes a scientific seminar, a practical session (hands-on preparation of a journal article) and a career opportunities session. See www.esof2008.org and p59 this issue.

EU funding application

There has been a new opportunity to apply for EU funds within the "Science in Society" programme (see *ESE* November 2007, p100). EASE has not hesitated to adapt the earlier proposal to the conditions of this part of the FP7 programme, and is cooperating with other societies to increase the impact of the proposal. The outcome is expected shortly.

SfeP membership

Through the new membership deal (see p27 in the February issue of *ESE*), EASE has gained 45 members who also belong to the Society for Editors and Proofreaders. EASE would like the scheme to continue and to be mutually beneficial, so we encourage you to join SfEP. EASE members working in the English language in other countries would have much to gain from having access to the training and qualifications SfEP offers. The SfEP directory is the first port of call for many specialist publishers and others looking for freelance editors. Read about SfEP activities on www.sfep.org.uk, and see p49 of this issue.

Resignation

After five years of diligently serving on the Publications Committee, Jane Sykes (News from Editing Societies, Reports of Meetings) has stepped down. We thank Jane for her years of dedicated support, and hope that she will join the Publications Committee for lunch at the next EASE conference in Pisa 2009. Thank you Jane, and good luck for the future.

Editorial

Participating in ESOF

Many of you may already know that EASE is participating in the upcoming European Science Open Forum (ESOF2008), the big scientific meeting and exhibition to be held in Barcelona from July 18 to July 22. Many of you may also wonder why EASE is participating in a meeting not directly related to science editing. Before answering this question, let's look at what actually ESOF is. The organizers define this meeting as "an open platform for debate and communication". But who is meant to debate and to whom would participants communicate? Scientists and researchers will of course be present at ESOF, but they are not the bulk of the participants. There will also be policy-makers and public and science managers; representatives of companies dealing with scientific, technological research and innovation; journalists and other science communicators, and press officers; artists, science and humanities educators, and even the general public with an interest in science and technology, who have attended the first two occasions of this biennal meeting (Stockholm, 2004, and Munich, 2006). What makes ESOF different from most scientific meetings is its wide multidisciplinary aspect, which goes beyond the boundaries of science.

EASE too has its multidisciplinary aspect. Its membership is made up of professionals from various fields including authors' editors, journal and book editors, translators, science writers, and librarians. Their backgrounds are also varied, coming from different scientific disciplines and from the humanities. What most ESOF attendees will have in common is the need to communicate — between themselves and with society. Unfortunately, communication training skills are not usually included in the curricula of science and technology studies. Nor have many policy-makers and entrepreneurs been trained in this area. Even journalists sometimes seem to have forgotten that language should be the most important tool in their profession.

ESOF 2004 attracted 1800 people, of whom 35 were journalists, whereas the attendance at ESOF 2006 was 2200 people, of whom 500 were journalists. Even though we do not expect more than a few score at the outreach activity which EASE is holding during the meeting, many hundreds, or even thousands, will be able to discover that EASE exists and that it can be of use to them, either because of the advantage gained by joining or because they will know to whom they can turn when in need of a professional in science editing.

The ESOF meeting is inspired by the long tradition of the annual AAAS meetings. A glance at the programme of the 2008 meeting held in February in Boston shows that science editing and science communication, as well as tools to improve resarcher's writing, were present there. Scientists have realized that doing research and teaching is not enough. Communication is also part of their profession. Science editors need scientists as much as scientists need science editors.

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Articles

Functional use of frequently and infrequently cited articles in citing publications: a content analysis of citations to articles with low and high citation counts

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Abstract

Using publication and citation data from a study on the selection procedure of the Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds (BIF), this study investigated the extent to which frequently and infrequently cited articles were used differently by the scientists who cited them. The data set consisted of 31 articles authored by research fellowship applicants that had received 451 citations in 270 publications. Each reference to the article in the citing publication was classified according to the location of the citation within the citing publication (section of the paper in which the citation appears) and whether mention of the article was meaningful or cursory. Articles with low or high citation counts showed statistically significant differences. Overall, an article with a high citation count had greater relevance for the citing author than an article with a low citation count.

Introduction

The central problem in the use of citation counts to evaluate scientific work is that it is uncertain what parameter is being measured by the citations.[1] Are frequently cited articles used differently by a citing author than articles that are cited infrequently? For citing authors, does a frequently cited article have greater relevance – in terms of "intellectual influence" and "contribution to scholarly progress"[2] – than an infrequently cited article? According to the social constructivist sociology of science,[3] the significance of an article depends largely on the manner in which it is used by other scientists. If scientists use the content of an article intensively, then the knowledge claims that are made in that article become scientific facts and are gradually integrated into the stock of scientific knowledge.[4] Although a number of studies on citing behaviour have been published already (we were able to identify about 30 studies for a literature review on citing behaviour[5]), few of these studies investigated the extent to which articles with different citation counts are used differently by the citing authors.

The present study investigated to what extent frequently and infrequently cited articles were used differently by the scientists who cited them. In a comprehensive content analysis we classified citations to cited articles in the citing publications in two different categories. Firstly, we noted the location of citations with respect to one of the sections of the citing publication: Introduction, Methods, Results, or Discussion. Voos and Dagaev say that it is possible to calculate the value of a cited article for the author of the citing publication by using its location in the citing publication.[6] In a citation content analysis, Maricic et al attached highest importance to citations in the Methods or Results section of a citing publication.[7] Citations in the Discussion were rated somewhat lower, and citations in the Introduction section are ascribed the lowest importance. For Cano, citations located in introductory sections represent a "setting of the stage" and have little informational utility to the authors of the citing publications.[8]

Secondly, we classified citations according to intensity of mentioning of the cited article by the citing authors. We followed Bonzi[9] and chose a simple three-level distinction that captured both cursory mentioning and more meaningful mentioning of the cited article.[7, 10] Other schemes that have been used for citation content analyses also include cursory or meaningful mentioning of cited articles in the citation categories (on this see Maricic et al[7]): cursory citation is called perfunctory,[11] peripheral,[12] or non-essential,[8] and meaningful citation is called organic,[11] central,[12] or essential.[8]

Methods

Sample of articles cited in the publications analysed

We previously investigated committee peer review for awarding long-term fellowships to young researchers as practised by the Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds (BIF), a foundation for the promotion of basic research in biomedicine.[13–18] Assessing the validity of the BIF selection decisions, bibliometric analyses for articles published prior to post-doctoral applicants' approval or rejection for a BIF fellowship were conducted. All in all, 1586 articles had been published by 397 applicants before they applied to BIF (an average of four articles each).

Using this data set of articles (applicants' articles and their citing publications), we examined to what extent frequently and infrequently cited papers were used differently by the scientists who cited them. As content analysis of citations with different classifications is time-consuming (it entails finding the citation in the article, reading the whole

sentence, incorporating the reference, and classifying the citation several times) we did not include all applicants' articles (and their citations) in the analysis but instead took a stratified random sample from the total data set of articles, selecting a separate random sample from each of two strata. The stratification variable was the decision of the BIF Board of Trustees to approve or reject an applicant for a post-doctoral fellowship, as it can be assumed that the articles published by approved applicants were of higher quality than the articles published by rejected applicants. In total, 34 articles written by BIF applicants with comparable citation windows of at least eight years were selected randomly: 17 articles each by approved and rejected applicants.

Citations to articles

The 34 articles were cited by 308 citing publications, with a median of 11 citing publications per cited article. The sample of the citing publications was adjusted by excluding those that listed the articles only in a bibliography without mention in the text (n=2) and those that were published in non-English language journals (n=5).

To test the extent to which the number of citations to articles correspond with the categories of both citation classifications, we divided the 34 articles into two groups by using the citations' median value as threshold (see Preacher et al[19]): articles with low citation counts (n=24) – that is, 3–10 citations; and articles with high citation counts (n=7), 12–23 citations. Three articles with citation counts equal to the median value were not included in the statistical analyses, and so the final sample for statistical analyses consisted of 270 citing publications. As some articles had been cited multiple times in one publication, the total number of citations was 451.

Statistical methods

The associations between the categorical variables – low or high citation counts for the articles by the BIF applicants – and the categories of the citations were calculated using the Cochran–Mantel–Haenszel test.[20,21] The test adjusted for potential effects of qualitative differences between articles of the approved and rejected BIF applicants in the statistical analyses. Since significance depends on sample size and "statistical significance does not mean real life importance",[22] it is the strength of the association that is more interesting and important for interpreting the empirical finding. For calculating strength we have to use an additional measure of association, here Cramér's V coefficient.[23]

Results

Location of citations

Table 1 shows the sections in the citing publications where articles were cited. (Of the 451 citations, only 350 could be assigned to a section; the others were cited in publications that had no (clear) section headings.) 32% of were cited in the Introduction, 24% in the Methods, 13% in the Results, and 31% in the Discussion. This agrees with citation distributions reported by Voos and Dagaev[8] and Cano.[24] Their findings indicate that the largest concentration of citations is located in the beginning sections of the citing publications.

As expected, articles with high citation counts were more frequently cited in the Methods (27% of citing publications) and Results (15% of citing publications) than articles with low citation counts (20% in Methods, 11% in Results). Articles with low citation counts are more frequently cited in the Discussion than articles with high citation counts (39% and 25% of citing publications, respectively). In contrast with our expectations, articles with high citation counts were more frequently cited in the Introduction than articles with low citation counts (34% and 30% of citing publications, respectively). The differences in the distribution of citations in sections of the citing publications between articles with low or high citation counts are statistically significant; T (n=350)=8.82, p=0.03; with a small effect size, Cramér's V=0.17 (Table 1).

Cursory or meaningful mention of articles

The citation content categories provided by Bonzi[9] are based on the premise that one measure of true relevance to a citing publication is the extent of treatment of the cited article in the citing publication. An article simply mentioned is less relevant for the author than one that is discussed in depth. We used three categories provided by Bonzi to measure citation relevance: (1) not specifically mentioned in text (eg, "Several studies have dealt with …"); (2) barely mentioned in text (eg, "Smith has studied the impact of …"); and (3) one quotation or discussion of one point in text (eg, "Smith found that …").

For this type of content analyses it is customary for two people to code text material to determine the inter-judgmental reliability of the codings, using measures of agreement.[12] In the present study two independent coders classified the citations as to cursory or meaningful mention

Table 1 Sections in citing publications containing citations to articles with low or high citation counts

Section of citing publication	% of articles with low citation counts (3–10 citations)	% of articles with high citation counts (12–23 citations)	Total (%)
No of citations	162	188	350*
Introduction	30	34	32
Methods	20	27	24
Results	11	15	13
Discussion	39	25	31

$T(n=350)=8.82$, $p=0.03$ (Cochran–Mantel–Haenszel test adjusted for potential effects of qualitative differences between articles of the approved and rejected BIF applicants); Cramér's $V=0.17$.

*101 further citations were in publications that had no (clear) section headings.

in the citing publications. The reliability of the two coders' ratings was high (kappa coefficient=0.93; on interpreting the coefficient, see Von Eye & Mun[24]).

The distribution of citations across the three citation content categories (table 2) shows that the greatest proportion (40%) were barely mentioned in the citing publications (second citation content category). In another 38% of citations, either a passage from the article was cited directly or the content of the article was discussed (third category), and 22% of citations were simple mentions, with no discussion of the content of the cited article (first category).

Table 2 shows that more articles with low citation counts were mentioned cursorily (first citation content category) than articles with high citation counts (31% and 13% of the citing publications, respectively). Articles with high citation counts were barely mentioned in the citing publication more frequently than articles with low citation counts (48% and 32%, respectively) and were slightly more frequently quoted directly or discussed (39% and 37%, respectively). The differences between the frequencies are statistically significant ($T(n=449)=22.84$, $p<0.001$); the association between both variables has a medium effect size (Cramér's $V=0.22$).

Discussion

Our findings suggest that when infrequently cited articles were used, they tended to have lower relevance than frequently cited articles for the authors of the citing publication (and vice versa). We utilized two different categorizations to capture the functional use of the articles by the authors in the citing publications: the location of the citation to the article within the citing publication (section), and meaningful or cursory mentioning of the article in the citing publication.

Whether citations are given cursory or meaningful mention in the citing publications, there are statistically significant differences between BIF applicants' articles with low or high citation counts. Articles with high citation counts were more frequently cited within the Methods and Results sections of the citing publications than articles with low citation counts. Articles with high citation counts were more frequently cited in meaningful mentions than articles with low citation counts. These associations held true when the threshold for categorization of the citations were changed: using three groups (low, medium, and high citation counts) instead of two in the statistical analyses gave almost the same results.

All in all, our findings suggest that the more an article is cited, the more intensively its content is used by the citing scientists. Therefore, citation counts are not only an indication of the (superficial) relevance of research but are also an indicator for the relevance of this research for scientific work in that field.

Table 2 Cursory or meaningful mention of articles with low or high citation counts

Category	% of articles with low citation counts (3–10 citations)	% of articles with high citation counts (12–23 citations)	Total (%)
No of citations	226	223	449
Not specifically mentioned in text (eg, "Several studies have dealt with …")	31	13	22
Barely mentioned in text (eg, "Smith has studied the impact of …")	32	48	40
One quotation or discussion of one point in text (eg, "Smith found that …")	37	39	38

$T(n=449)=22.84$, $p<0.001$ (Cochran–Mantel–Haenszel test adjusted for potential effects of qualitative differences between articles of the approved and rejected applicants); Cramér's V=0.22.

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10th EASE Conference

Integrity in Science Communication

Pisa, Italy, Wednesday 16 September to Saturday 19 September 2009

Wednesday 16 September – afternoon and evening
Annual General Meeting, General Assembly and Opening Ceremony
Plenary session and Reception

Thursday 17 September – morning sessions
Plenary session on *Physical Integrity* and three parallel sessions for submitted papers
The afternoon will be free

Friday 18 September – morning and afternoon sessions
Plenary session on *Moral Integrity* and three parallel sessions morning and afternoon

Saturday 19 September – morning sessions
Plenary session on *Editorial Independence and Responsibilities* and three parallel sessions
The conference will close at 1 pm.

Optional tours: to Lucca (Thursday afternoon); Florence (Sunday).
The conference dinner (optional extra) will be on Friday 18 September.

Viewpoints

Preserving the hidden heritage of scientific research institutions

In a time of online communication, globalization, and open access to different kinds of resources, everything goes very fast and what is new today becomes old tomorrow.

Important changes often pass unperceived, and we lose apparently insignificant records that are precious documents to build up the history of tomorrow.

We are always pressed to go on, to keep up with schedules, to be fast, and we often do not have time to think of how important it is to preserve the memory of daily activities, common practices, and ordinary objects. But let's reflect on our hidden responsibility of this unsuspected role in the history of science.

- Is it worth worrying about the preservation of old scientific instruments that were once used for research, then put aside or destroyed as useless pieces of furniture that steal the space needed for other activities that require new equipment?
- Is it worth worrying about the old correspondence, working papers, sketches, and drafts that were used to exchange ideas and carry on research that led to published journal articles?
- Is it worth preserving, through interviews, the memories of the silent workers contributing to excellent research appearing in prestigious journals?
- Is it worth devoting much of our time and efforts to collecting old pictures documenting events and research environments of the past?

The answer to all these questions is "yes, it is worthwhile" – because memories and objects of our past are the bricks that will make the history of tomorrow.[1, 2]

Is there a place for heritage?

The mission of scientific institutions is not directly connected with the preservation of historical legacy; in fact research is always based on a series of aims strictly determining priorities in terms of funds, spaces, facilities, and human resources. Safeguarding the historical and cultural heritage never ranks first. Furthermore, science has its own ways of keeping records and no important scientific fact generally remains unpublished.

Even so, old documentation, images, scientific instruments, and all those objects that made research possible become extremely important when it comes to reconstructing the past, doing historical and sociological research, and recovering values and personal experiences.

The history of science involves not just the best results achieved in research projects, or discoveries of new mechanisms that changed our perception of the world. Nor does it just follow the course of those events that deeply affected the population, such as natural disasters, accidents, epidemics, or emergencies.

Contributing to the recovering the history of science means giving adequate space to the preservation of the memories of the past through the very instruments used to carry on research, archival documentation, collections of photographs, films, or oral stories told by the silent workers who participated in research activities.

The history of science, and in particular the history of research institutions, is made up of all these bits and pieces – from scientific facts and events of worldwide resonance, to facts of everyday life, working practices, and habits of all the main and minor actors taking part in the challenging game of science.

Scientific institutions producing so many journal articles should be aware of the importance to preserve all materials useful to document their history through different sources, both oral and written. In fact, many websites of renowned institutions now include rich historical sections.

Recovering heritage at ISS

With this in mind, and as part of a larger project aimed at recovering its historical heritage, the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS), the Italian National Institute of Health, held a conference on "Histories and Memories" on 4 February 2008.[3] Researchers from different institutions crowded the large conference hall and were very interested and surprised to learn more about their past and about the preservation of old papers, instruments, memories and other objects.[4,5]

The ISS was established in 1934, a time when many other institutions for public health were created both in Europe and in the rest of the world. Since then it has had a primary role in public health at both the national and international levels; some Nobel Prize winners (Enrico Fermi, Daniel Bovet, Ernst Boris Chain, Rita Levi Montalcini) worked within its premises leaving ,important traces of their activities everywhere.

Building the National Institute of Public Health, Rome, 1931

Penicillin factory at Istituto Superiore di Sanità in the 1950s

In recent years, many initiatives have been developed to safeguard the heritage of the ISS: many scientific instruments no longer used for research were collected and preserved, especially in the field of physics (a CD-Rom was created containing images and descriptions of 400 objects), and objects belonging to different research laboratories were moved to a safe place, waiting to be catalogued and possibly exhibited on special occasions. Some pieces of furniture belonging to important scientists were recovered and restored and are now on show in new meeting rooms as a shining memory of the past. A book of selected old pictures was printed,[6] starting a series devoted to the historical heritage: "I beni storico scietnifici dell'Istituto Superiore di Sanità" (available in Italian, and online from www.iss.it). Old movies were found and assembled to show fragments of history.

The responsibility for collecting and preserving scientific memories, objects, papers, and stories should be part of a greater commitment to track the development of science through the centuries. The history of science is made up not only of officially documented events but also of the everyday life of everyone living within the research context and quietly contributing to research activities at different levels.

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Thanks to Eleonora Lacorte for help in preparing this article. Photographs are from the picture archive of the Istituto Superiore di Sanità and are reproduced with permission.

How to reject a statistical paper

If you want to reject a statistical paper but do not know how to do it, read this article. It is really easy, believe me. It is easy for a reviewer and an editor, and I can assure you, it is something that can make many authors of statistical papers go crazy. If you enjoy making statisticians go crazy, do read this paper.

Statistics aims to support science in most of its fields, and it usually aims to solve some problems of either theoretical or practical values. Therefore, there are different kinds of statistical papers: some are theoretical, some are application based, and others may be put somewhere in between theory and application. Below I argue how easy it is to reject a statistical paper, no matter how well written it is and how important the scientific conclusions that it may present.

First consider the case of a theoretical paper having no numerical illustrations. No problem! Such a paper can simply be rejected because it is theoretical. For authors it is common to read in editorial decisions that "the paper is theoretical and the results it provides have no practical importance." No comment. Well, maybe one—is it not theory that precedes applications? Ronald A Fisher had to discover analysis of variance before he could apply it, didn't he? (Oh dear! Did I prompt a possible reply to such decisions?!)

Next consider the case of a theoretical paper supported by results derived from simulation studies. There are so many choices here! The easiest one, and probably the most common, is to reject the paper because it has no real data example: it so easy to do, and so obvious, and so common…

You can be less commonplace by saying, "You need to extend the simulations to make them cover more possible situations." It works, it really does! To revise the paper the authors will have to work, sometimes really hard, to extend the simulations. You may even manage to make them need 12 months more to complete the simulations you have asked them to perform. Would it not give (you, of course, not the authors) a great pleasure? On the other hand, if the simulations are fine and seem to present the ideas of the paper well, you may try to be malicious and say that the simulations are not necessary to support the ideas of the paper (because the theories the authors present defend themselves). How pleased a reviewer may feel making the authors remove the results of time-consuming simulations from their paper because he or she asked them to?

Now consider the case of a theoretical paper supported by an artificial example. Such a paper, for certain, can easily be rejected because the example is artificial, not real. The artificial examples, as their name says, are artificial so have no or just a trivial link to reality. Statistics does not aim to explain artificiality, but reality—let us never forget it!

If it is a theoretical paper supported by a real example, you may say that this particular example does not reflect the complex reality so the authors should look for more examples to make the presentation cover situations that are more diverse. You may also say that the real examples are too narrow and the ideas should be supported by simulations, which are known to cover a wide range of situations.

In all theoretical papers, by the way, you may find pleasure in asking authors to add some more proofs (for example, if they write the proofs can be easily obtained), or to remove some unnecessary (in your opinion) proofs. Sometimes the authors will have to do quite a time-consuming job, even just to remove the proofs—for example, to find and remove the references cited only there.

If it is an application paper, it will contain no new theories. Nothing easier—reject it because it provides no substantial contribution to the current knowledge.

If it is a theoretical paper supported by several various real examples as well as wide-range simulations, well, truly, I don't know what to do here, but I am sure after this short course you will have no problems with figuring out a reason for rejecting the paper. If you need some more clues, you may find them in Carroll's[1] paper.

And finally, if you really cannot find any reason as to why a paper can be rejected, there is a solution. But remember! Use it sparingly: it's too valuable to overuse. To learn how to do it, read this story.

Once upon a time a statistician wrote a very good paper. He was a good scientist and he knew that this paper was good enough to be published in any high-quality statistical journal, so he submitted it to one. After some time he received an editorial decision, in which the scientific quality was acknowledged to be high and the paper, in general, to be good and worth publishing. But the paper was not accepted, it was rejected for… space reasons. There was no space for this high-quality paper in this high-quality journal.

Unfortunately, this is a true story that a colleague of mine told me—he was this author. I suggested that he send another, completely blank paper to the very same journal. Such a paper would have two important advantages: first, the journal would be able to publish the paper because it takes little space (the title—if any—and the author's names); and second, for certain there would be no mistakes in the paper, neither in the mathematics nor in language. The only disadvantage such a paper would have is a lack of important contribution to the body of statistical knowledge. Well, knowing that an important contribution is less important than the space it takes after writing it down, this is not a huge drawback, is it?

So, what is the moral about reviewing a statistical paper? Don't wait! Just simply reject 'em all!

Note: The views presented in this article do not necessarily reflect the author's opinion. Carroll's paper, on the other hand, as well as those presented by many others (e.g. Gleser 1986)[2], presents views that the author of the present paper agrees with. The story from the end of the paper is true, and the author of this article sends his compliments to the friend from whom he heard this story, and also to Dr Sujit K Ghosh of the Department of Statistics of North Carolina State University and Dr Stan Lipovetsky from GFK Custon Research North America for their valuable comments on the article.

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Editing around the World

Raising the visibility of "small journals": the Venezuelan Association of Biomedical Journal Editors (ASEREME)

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In 2006 the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) decided to create a task force to tackle problems encountered by so-called small journals, a concept mainly related to journals which have insufficient resources to permit international visibility. Many of these journals are published in "non-developed" countriesm many of which are in Latin America. One of these countries is Venezuela.

The Venezuelan Association of Medical Editors (ASEREME) includes about 60 biomedical journals which appear regularly, but often not punctually. The Science Citation Index includes only three Venezuelan titles. Venezuelan and Latin American journals, authors, and research activities are scarcely known worldwide. (The position is different for Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, mainly because these countries have more inhabitants, healthcare professionals, and universities.) This article pleads for stemming the "publication drain" of regional articles into well-established international journals and for the recognition of scientific activity in this region.

A country with small biomedical journals

"Small journal" has nothing to do with the physical size of a journal or its print run. It refers to journals that are not visible internationally. These journals receive few citations and are therefore precluded from international indexes on current criteria. A natural assumption would be that countries that primarily have small biomedical journals are small countries or fall within the "developing nation" definition.

Venezuela is a country of small biomedical journals, but it is not a small country. It is a Spanish-speaking country that occupies a large chunk of northern South America and has about 27 million inhabitants. According to the Council of Science Editors, it is not a developing nation and does not qualify for free or low-cost access to biomedical literature through the World Health Organization's Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative (HINARI; www.who.int/hinari).

Special problems facing biomedical editors in Venezuela include isolation, poor access to information, and limited physical distribution of their journals, as well as finance and other challenges such as establishing ethical practices and visibility in the indexing systems. These challenges are being tackled by the Asociación de Editores de Revistas Biomédicas Venezolanas (ASEREME, Venezuelan Association of Biomedical Journal Editors, www.asereme.org.ve), which was founded almost 30 years ago. Boxes 1 and 2 list ASEREME's main areas of interest and the challenges it faces.

ASEREME

ASEREME has no offices, phone numbers, or formal place of work. It could be considered a virtual group. The number varies of titles averages 60 but varies according to the journals currently being published. For inclusion, publication of the last issue must not have been delayed for more than two years. The oldest journal in the group, Gaceta Médica de Caracas, was founded in 1893. The typical print run of the journals is between 600 and 800 copies, and most are published twice a year.

The association is fully independent. The main source of financial support is participant fees for conferences and workshops. All members of ASEREME work for their journals on an unpaid basis.

Members of the board hold regular monthly meetings and organise an annual meeting open to all Venezuelan biomedical editors. These meetings have evolved into a sort of editors' academy, with important people related to the group's activities being invited to teachabout editorship. Other workshops offered address authoring, editing, and peer review, and ways to improve these activities. Two Venezuelan congresses on science information organized by the group, INFORCIENCIA 2004 and 2007, were very successful.

ASEREME has become an important reference point on science and technology for editors, academia, and government authorities. Board members are often called upon to act as assessors when conflicts arise, mainly in connection with ethics or fraud.

Box 1: ASEREME's main areas of interest

- Promotion of high-quality scientific papers and journals
- Guidance to editors on how to improve management and structure of their journals
- Creation of a new generation of peer reviewers and editors
- Promotion of ethical practices
- Promotion of electronic formats

ASEREME'S main challenges

- To increase integration of Venezuelan medical journals into international indexing and databases
- To assist in modernisation of Venezuelan medical libraries
- To achieve a "professional" status for our editors
- To continue to participate in international meetings
- To resolve problems related to the distribution of our journals and their visibility
- To incorporate teaching programmes related to authorship and editorial activities into the curricula of medical and scientific programmes at Venezuelan universities

One of ASEREME's main objectives is to establish contacts with other related organizations throughout the world to obtain information on journal processes and to promote Venezuelan science. The Regional Office of WHO, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) based in São Paulo, Brazil, was the starting point for our international relations some five years ago. Through this organisation, initial contact was made with WAME. Now a Venezuelan editor has been nominated for a second term as one of the two directors of WAME and also as Chair of its Small Journals Task Force. Contacts have also been established with the Council of Science Editors (www.cse.org) and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE, www.cope.org).

Sponsorship from PAHO has enabled us over the last few years to actively participate at the most important regional meetings related to information in science and editorship in Latin America: the Regional Congresses on Health Sciences Information (CRICS).

The *BMJ* and *Lancet* have shared their expertise and provided practical support on management and editorial processes (flowcharts for manuscripts, fast-track system, job descriptions for the management team). They have also advised on how to handle ethics problems and, most importantly for Venezuelan journals, how to regulate advertising from pharmaceutical companies.

Independence is important for ASEREME and its journals. The temptation to compromise with political systems, industry, or large publishers is great. The dilemma is that by trying to be even more independent, journals may sacrifice regularity of publication.

I am convinced, however, that a group of determined editors with appropriate guidance can achieve a lot without any industrial or official support. Already editors in Venezuela have achieved a great deal more than could be expected under their circumstances. Income can be secured by charging for courses, seminars, and workshops dedicated to potential authors, editors, and peer reviewers.

So much has to be done to raise visibility of our activities and journals and avoid the unfortunate "publication drain" from Venezuelan to international journals, a problem also reported for eastern Europe [1].

The need for support

We are extremely grateful for the help we have received from the organisations and publishers mentioned in this article. ASEREME has relied very much on this international support and guidance, which it hopes will continue in the future as a vital contribution to allowing ASEREME to realise its aims. We also understand that the initiatives must be on our side, but goodwill has to be forthcoming from the international community. It is hard to accept that so many efforts are made in Venezuela and our neighbouring countries without receiving corresponding gestures towards international acceptance.

An initial step would be to redefine our journals. "Small journals" is pejorative; we need a fair definition to establish the absolute minimum requisites for acceptance internationally as a scientific journal. Once this has been recognised, the journals and their problems need to be addressed by such influential organisations as the ICMJE, WAME, and COPE. Important literature guiding biomedical publications, such as the American Medical Association Manual of Style, could recognise the plight of journals with limited resources by offering advice on which of their recommendations deserve priority, as suggested by a reviewer of the latest edition of the manual [2].

I thank BIREME, FONACIT, WAME, the European Science Foundation, the Office of Research Integrity, and the journals JAMA, BMJ, and The Lancet as well as Alecia Acosta and my colleagues at ASEREME, Abel Paker and Regina Castro (BIREME), Peush Sahni and Michael Callaham (WAME), Alex Williamson (BMJ), Sabine Kleinert (The Lancet) and Pritpal Tamber (COPE) for invaluable support and assistance. Special thanks to Elise Langdon-Neuner for assisting me with the text of the article.

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The complete version of this article (*The Write Stuff* 2007;16(4)161–165) includes discussion of Venezuela's isolation as far as medical publication is concerned, and of financing, distribution, ethics, and the importance of indexing in this context.

Biomedical editors' associations in Latin America

Bolivia: Asociación Boliviana de Editores de Revistas Biomédicas (ABEREB)

Brazil: Associaçao Brasileira de Editores Científicos (ABEC; www.lncc.br/abec)

Chile: Asociación Chilena de Editores de Revistas Biomédicas (ACHERB; www.conicyt.cl/acherb/acerca/propositos_objetivos.html)

Mexico: Asociación Mexicana de Editores de Editores de Revistas Biomédicas (AMERBAC)

Peru: Asociación Peruana de Editores Científicos (APECI; www.freewebs.com/apeci)

Reports of Meetings

Publication metrics and delivering ROI on publications planning

Elsevier, 20 March 2008, Oxford

This seminar was offered to participants from the pharmaceutical and medical communications communities. Led by Leighton Chipperfield (Journal Publisher, Elsevier) and David Tempest (Associate Director of Research and Academic Relations, Elsevier), it covered how Return on Investment (ROI) in publication planning can be measured and maximized and gave an overview of the various methods of citation analysis.

The pharmaceutical industry currently invests $400 billion globally on publishing research data, and for this it clearly expects results. A pharmaceutical sector analysis shows that the top 12–15 companies accounted for a staggering 15,000 articles in the years 2004 and 2005, which generated 77,000 citations in 2006. This equates to a combined impact factor of 5 across all research studies in all fields.

Leighton Chipperfield explained how a publisher can be used as a means of collating journal information to maximise the efficacy of a client's publication plan. Methods include giving advice on publication opportunities throughout the lifecycle of a product, advance information on new or refocused journals, information about related products offered by the publisher, and a direct line of communication with its journals.

Although journal metrics can be obtained direct from journal homepages or through systems such as Journal Selector, a publisher can supply much more detailed metrics for its journals on issues such as fast track publication, circulation figures (covering both online and print issues), and the geographic profile of authors. A publisher is often best placed to advise on the best journal match for an article, liaise regarding suitability (first-pass response), and assist with article submission. Some publishers offer a number of options to maximise exposure of a key article–for example, embargoed publication as well as press releases, review publications, and products to complement peer-reviewed publications.

In addition to smoothing the often fraught path to publication, publishers should provide post-publication feedback, such as download and citation data, both to opinion leaders and to the client.

A pharmaceutical company expects demonstrable return of investment on its publishing and educational spend, Chipperfield concluded, and a publisher can support publication planning in legitimate and ethical ways.

David Tempest then described the phenomenon of citation analysis in its various incarnations. This was of particular interest to me as an EASE member, as well as a medical writer, following the EASE statement on inappropriate use of impact factors (*ESE* November 2007;33(4):99–100). The "original" impact factor, as created by Garfield, was developed to help navigation through the citation indexes. However, in practice it is used to evaluate the performance of individual authors and has a large influence on the allocation of research funds. In addition, factors other than the intrinsic merit of an article influence the impact factor, including subject area, number of authors, and the type of publication.

The H-Index, a more recently proposed means of quantifying value or impact, rates a scientist's performance according to career publications and is based on both quantity (number of publications) and quality (number of citations). Thus the higher the H-Index, the "better" the author is perceived to be. This is therefore a useful metric for pharmaceutical companiess to use when deciding on invitation to authorship. Scopus, Elsevier's abstract and citation database, can be used to generate H-factors.

Another method of rating the relative importance of journals is the Eigenfactor, which is based on the Thomson Scientific Journal Citation Reports. This method identifies journals that are good in their field. The impact factor and the Eigenfactor for an individual journal can be very different from each other.

The final means of evaluating the "value" of a journal that was presented is the SCImago Journal Rank, which uses neither the Thomson Scientific JCR or the ISI Web of Knowledge, but Elsevier's Scopus. By visiting the SCImago Journal Rank website (www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php) it is possible to view detailed bibliometric information on each of the journals in the Scopus database according to subject or country or in more general overall terms. Scopus covers 16,000 journals, the majority having entries from 1996 onwards, and it is possible to navigate through the literature by means of citations, a far more intuitive route than entering keyword queries time after time. For each article there is a detailed citation analysis, and the flexibility of the system allows analysis at multiple levels. One particularly interesting point is that smaller journals are more likely to be in SCImago than in the Thomson Scientific JRC (16,000 journals compared with 8000).

This seminar was targeted to those of us in the medical publishing industry who are in the position of advising our pharma clients where to submit their research. Perhaps we will now consider journals from the Elsevier "stable" because we can obtain (at a cost) access to tools that may make our publication planning functions easier. But the remit of the seminar went much further than that, in providing an insight into impact factors and citation databases more detailed than the numerical, all important IF value that clients often cannot see beyond.

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From the Literature

Software for detecting plagiarism and redundant publication

Peer review has a poor track record for detecting plagiarism and redundant submission or publication. Occasionally, reviewers may alert editors to such problems, for example if they happen to be the victim of the plagiarism themselves or have reviewed the same paper for another journal. But such serendipity is rare, so a tool that editors could use routinely to screen submissions for plagiarism and redundancy would be helpful. A recent study from researchers in the USA[1] and a partnership between CrossRef and a company that produces anti-plagiarism software[2] suggest that such a tool may soon be a reality.

Errami and colleagues from the University of Texas and the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation used the eTBLAST tool to detect text similarity among abstracts in the US National Library of Medicine's Medline database (the most widely used database of biomedical references, which contains about 16 million citations). They took a random selection of 5313 Medline records and used the text from the title and abstract to search for similar records within Medline. The overall rate of duplication detected was 1.35%. Very similar pairs of records identified by the software were read by the authors to distinguish cases of potential plagiarism (similar papers published by different authors) from redundancy (similar papers published by the same authors in different journals). They found 13 pairs of similar publications with non-overlapping authors. Two of these cases turned out to be caused by errors in the Medline citations (authors' names had been listed incorrectly, for example) but the other 11 represent possible cases of plagiarism.

Extrapolating these findings to the entire Medline database of around 16 million citations, the authors estimate that Medline contains over 100,000 duplicate citations, of which about 3500 represent possible plagiarism.

The authors have created the "Déjà vu" website to highlight possible cases of redundant and plagiarised publication. It is available at http://spore.swned.edu/dejavu. The eTBLAST software is available at http://invention.swmed.edu.

While this study is of considerable interest in revealing the probable extent of redundant publication and plagiarism in the medical literature, the eTBLAST tool and the methods used by Errami et al have some serious limitations in terms of their usefulness as routine screening tools for journal editors. The biggest limitation is that text can be compared only with the text available on Medline. About 50% of Medline citations do not include an abstract (although the proportion of new references without an abstract is declining). Therefore this method can only detect similarities within the text of the title and abstract of published articles and does not examine the body of the article. Furthermore, Medline does not cover all biomedical journals. Manual examination of the 11 cases of suspected plagiarism revealed that they were mainly published in journals with no available impact factor, and such low impact journals are more likely to be excluded from Medline than are well-established mainstream titles.

A tool designed especially for journal editors is currently being developed by CrossRef (the organization that coordinates DOIs (digital object identifiers) and facilitates reference linking between journals) and iParadigms (the company that produces TurnItIn and iThenticate anti-plagiarism software systems, which are widely used in academic institutions to detect plagiarism in students' assignments). The tool will be known as CrossCheck. The major advantage of CrossCheck is that it uses the CrossRef database, which contains the full text of articles. Therefore, rather than being restricted to publicly available titles and abstracts, the software can check for similarities anywhere in the paper. However, although it can check entire articles, the pool against which submissions are checked is restricted to journals that subscribe to CrossRef and, once again, will not include many smaller publications. The more publishers opt into the system, the more powerful the tool will become. Importantly, since the original TurnItIn software (on which CrossCheck is based) compares articles with text that is freely available on the web (since this is the most likely source for student copying), editors can also check articles against this pool, which includes Medline abstracts and the full content of Open Access journals.

Editors who are concerned about plagiarism and redundant publication will soon have tools that may be helpful in detecting, and therefore preventing, these types of publication misconduct. Like most screening systems, such tools are unlikely to have 100% sensitivity and specificity, so editors will need to work out how best to apply them, but they are likely to represent a major advance and to greatly increase the ability of the peer review and editorial processes to reduce such problems.

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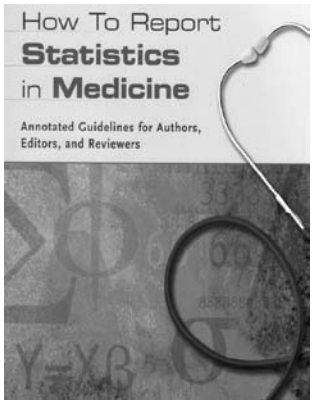
1 Errami M et al. Déjà vu – a study of duplicate citations in Medline. *Bioinformatics* 2008;24:243–249.
2 *European Science Editing* 2008;34(1):26.

Competing interests: EW is in discussion with CrossCheck about a research project to be undertaken in conjunction with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). She may therefore receive consultancy fees if this project goes ahead.

Book Reviews

How to Report Statistics in Medicine: Annotated Guidelines for Authors, Editors and Reviewers (Medical Writing and Communication). Second edition. Thomas A Lang, Michelle Secic. American College of Physicians, 2006. 488 pp. $54.95; £34.95. ISBN 10: 1-930513-69-0; ISBN 13: 978-1-930513-69-3.



We editors and readers of science often assume that the author of a journal article is proficient enough in statistics to use and correctly report appropriate statistical methods. And we assume that the peer review process will further ensure reliable reporting of statistics and the conclusions based on them. These assumptions are far from true. Few biomedical researchers have had more than a basic course in statistics, and that course most likely emphasized the mathematics of the methods rather than their appropriateness in scientific studies. Furthermore, most editors – being language oriented – have had even less exposure to statistical methods and, indeed, avoid this "difficult" subject. Lang and Secic point out that these shortcomings lead to misleading interpretations of research results – often influencing patient care. Inappropriate methods and reporting are "unfortunate at best unforgiveable at worst, but understandable in either case".

How to Report Statistics in Medicine is intended for editors, peer reviewers, and readers of science, and it goes a long way toward improving the credibility of statistically-based scientific reporting. I, as a teacher and editor of scientific writing, find the book to be "the one I've always wanted". For the past few months, when reviewing and editing articles, I have been checking the statistical reporting against the book's guidelines. This has added considerable value to my editing; I regularly receive a "thank you" from authors for helping them to improve the credibility of their work.

Don't be afraid – the book doesn't go into the mathematics, but it does go into the logic of using various statistical tests. It clearly shows, with many examples, how to choose appropriate statistical methods, how to report them and how to avoid all-too-common pitfalls. Lang and Secic present many guidelines, warnings of pitfalls, and examples of clear language with appropriate wording. The book also contains two chapters devoted to presenting data and statistics in tables and figures.

Although not specifically mentioned by the authors, the clear message is "keep it scientific". Bias plagues the biomedical literature in many forms, and Lang and Secic show how it can arise, how to avoid it, and especially how to recognize it. Biased reporting can drastically influence unwary readers. In the example below, the authors show two "statistically correct" ways of reporting the results of a study on the efficacy of a drug. Each method, however, leaves the unwary reader with a different impression of the drug's efficacy:

> In the Helsinki study of hypercholesterolemic men, after 5 years, 84 of 2030 patients on placebo (4.1%) had heart attacks, whereas only 56 of 2051 men treated with gemfibrozil (2.7%) had heart attacks (P<0.02), for an absolute risk reduction of 1.4% (4.1% - 2.7%=1.4%).

> In the Helsinki study of hypercholesterolemic men, after 5 years, 4.1% of the men treated with placebo had heart attacks, whereas only 2.7% of the men treated with gemfibrozil had heart attacks. The difference, 1.4%, represents a 34% relative risk reduction in the incidence of heart attack in the gemfibrozil-treated group (1.4%/4.1%=34%).

How to Report Statistics in Medicine is not a statistics book, and it will leave questions about the details of statistical methods unanswered. It does, however, fill a gap that is not addressed by most statistics books – responsibly choosing and reporting statistics. Its 488 clearly written pages contain 21 chapters, 5 appendices, a summary of statistical terms, extensive lists of references, and a bibliography. It is a thick pill to swallow and, indeed, I have spent several months "chewing it bit-by-bit" – with much satisfaction. I recommend it to anyone who does not want to remain statistically naive.

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Subtleties of Scientific Style. Matthew Stevens. ScienceScape Editing, 2007. 112pp, US$12 or A$15 plus postage; to view pdf or order, see www.zeta.org.au/~mls/subtleties.html.

This book was entertaining for quite the wrong reasons. It's meant to be a friendly, light-hearted vade mecum for editors. Unfortunately the author's grasp of linguistics is too weak for the task he sets himself. He immediately identifies himself as a prescriptivist, which is a bit like starting a biology textbook by stating that you believe the world was created in six days, and places himself squarely in a tradition based on superstition and nonsense.

One role of scientific copy editors is to resolve ambiguities, and Stevens mentions this early on. But instead of highlighting ambiguities that are common and important, he highlights the ones he thinks he knows how to fix.

Stevens' handling of dangling participles is illustrative. He describes them as phrases that have "become orphaned and ... in need of its own subject but is forced to make do with the nearest *it can find* (this happens in the reader's mind, of course, not on the page)" [emphasis mine]. No. What really happens is that in most cases the ambiguities will be sorted out by readers with their real-world knowledge.

Here's the killer: "Once you're aware of danglers, you can derive much amusement from spotting them … and can then save the authors the embarrassment of having anyone else spot them." I would counter that an ambiguity you have to be trained to spot is not worth fixing.

The tragedy is that he could perfectly well have done an experiment. Find a hundred or so examples of dangling participles and get participants to read the sentences and say what is going on. It would be scientific, if nothing else.

A second example is in the section on the word *using*. Stevens says: " 'Using' is not a preposition, but it is often used that way. This is the way language evolves, but this particular usage causes ambiguities." The first sentence is nonsense, and the second sentence looks like an attempt to say that at some stage in the future *using* will become a preposition. Perhaps Jane Austen will come back to life and tell us it's OK now.

In this section the author gives us a minimal pair:

(1) New Caledonian crows were seen using tools.

(2) New Caledonian crows were seen using binoculars.

It's clear that *using* means something slightly different in (1) and (2). The same is true of *with*, though:

(3) New Caledonian crows were seen with tools.

(4) New Caledonian crows were seen with binoculars.

Oddly, there is no mention of this ambiguity in the *with* section. He has another pet peeve to deal with there.

The author wouldn't be a prescriptivist if he didn't fail to follow his own advice. We see at the beginning of the book: "All statements must be supported." Later on, in a section on commas, he tells us "In English some authorities recognise five cases" without telling us who the authorities are! It's a ludicrous claim, which the *Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (Huddleston and Pullum, 2005) demolishes.

Some chunks of the book only make sense if their point is to tell us that Stevens studied Latin, a language in which very little science is published. We have an entire page devoted to mixed Greek/Latin coinages with a hypothetical example for why this is bad.

But there is material in here that is useful and sensible. The appendices are good. The section on graphs cites Edward Tufte. I was impressed by the step-by-step lists near the beginning on structure, content, figures, and tables. The same rules apply to numbered compounds in chemical text, and it's a shame this isn't mentioned explicitly. There are well-understood reasons for why stacking nouns and garden-path sentences are bad.

It could be a useful book, but the author needs to go beyond the assumptions that lie behind teaching schoolboys Latin before he has a coherent account of what is going on linguistically in scientific papers. This will be no small job.

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EASE-Forum Digest: December 2007 to March 2008

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

Units and references dominated the forum's winter months, sandwiched between a flurry into authorship and a trip to the drugstore with The Rolling Stones.

Authorship duels

In the course of editing a mixed clinical and basic science journal Mary Ellen Kerans encountered two authors who wanted a footnote included stating that they had contributed equally to the study. As explained by Iain Patten, and confirmed by others, this practice is becoming more common because the first author is generally considered to have done most of the work in the study. The last author and the corresponding author also hold key positions. Indicating that two researchers shared the project puts the second author on the same footing as the first author. Irene Hames alerted the forum to a recent study in which the chairs of promotion and tenure committees in North American medical schools had been questioned about their perception of authors' relative contributions, based on the authors' positions in the byline.[1] Adding authors to the byline had the effect of diminishing the perceived contributions of the first and middle authors, but not that of the last author—as long as he or she was also the corresponding author. Irene called for more research on how credit is perceived because no uniformity exists for byline listing and it is difficult for readers to know how to apportion credit to each author.

Dotty about units

Ask a simple question (Is the central dot in the unit $mU \cdot mL^{-1}$ necessary?) and you get a simple answer (No). Christopher Morfey referred to the International System of Units (SI) to verify that, although allowed, unit symbols need not contain a centre point when compound units are formed by multiplication (www.aip.org/pt/guide/metric.html). Nobody disputed this. Liz Wager quoted the CSE style manual (p148): "Express simple rates (1 or 2 units) with a slash and complex rates (>2 units) with negative exponents. Use of negative exponents for simple rates is not incorrect but it involves unnecessary keying."[2] She added that they do use a centred dot for the complex rates. Mary Ellen Kerans noted that the AMA style book considered versions with or without the dot acceptable (p791).[3] She had also found most journals were tolerant of both versions.

As for physical chemistry, where vectors can be important, Colin Bachelor explained that it is useful to distinguish scalar multiplication from the different sorts of vector multiplication. Consequently the centred dot is reserved for the scalar product of two vectors (the dot product) and the multiplication symbol for the vector product of two vectors (the cross product) or for where a multiplication overruns the end of a line. Units are always separated by spaces, and the solidus is never used.

Free downloadable bibliographic software

Liz Wager was looking for bibliographic software similar to EndNote or Reference Manager that could be downloaded free from the internet.

Reme Melero suggested Zotero (www.zotero.org), a free, easy-to-use Firefox extension useful for collecting, managing, and citing research sources. Another possibility was Jabref Reference manager (http://jabref.sourceforge.net), but she thought this would be more difficult to install.

Colin Bachelor recommended BibTeX, which is good for maths-heavy manuscripts. It can only be used with LaTeX (both are free) but LaTeX is "something of a learning curve".

Natasha Cohen put forward two resources for locating software: OSalt.com for open-source software, and download.com for commercial and free software. Searching download.com she had found an "EndNote" highlighted in Scholar's Aid Lite (version 4). This version is free but has fewer features than the Scholar's Aid package. It is available from www.scholarsaid.com/aboutsafree.html. Natasha recommended downloading it from download.com because there it's guaranteed to be bug-free.

Liz Wager had also posted her question on the WAME listserve, where she received a reply from John Rodgers suggesting Papyrus, which is free and available from http://researchsoftwaredesign.com. Its search engine is faster and logically more powerful than Endnote's, and has some features such as Groups that are available in Endnote only in the very latest edition (XI), but it does not have the WYSIWYG capability of Endnote. Papyrus can run in a DOS window and can use the Windows clipboard (at least up to XP, he didn't know about Vista). There is a free manual and a community of old users—both very helpful. John said Papyrus works well with RTF files, WordPerfect and Word, but it was difficult to keep it current with all the Word updates. Although it allows downloads from PubMed, you can't search from within Papyrus. As with other programs, one pastes codes into the text that allows the program later to generate a submit-ready version.

Private replies direct to Liz added www.biblioscape.com/biblioexpress.htm and www.tucows.com/preview/297751 as well as RefWorks (www.refworks.com), which is favoured by many universities in Spain because of the internet-based approach to references management and low price (about $100 for an individual licence).

Elisabeth Heseltine added an endnote warning researchers that Medline contains many citation errors.

Only papers that authors have read should be cited. Therefore, as authors will have a copy of the original, they should check this against the citation generated by the bibliographic software they are using.

Referencing systems

Mary Ellen Kerans had noticed that the 7th edition of *The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors and Publishers* described a referencing system which was a composite of the two systems described in previous editions. References appear alphabetically in the reference list by first author and are given numbers accordingly, which are then used in the text. This means that the numbering in the text is not sequential.

The advantages of this system, Mary Ellen suggested, were that numbering takes less space in the text than listing author names while the alphabetical reference can still be scanned more easily than a purely sequential list referring back to the text. This style was well established in some microbiology journals, according to Mercè Piqueras, but Maeve O'Connor noted that it is generally the least common variant, adding that efforts to standardize referencing goes back at least 30 years. EASE's predecessor, ELSE, and the Ciba Foundation held a workshop in 1978 which naively aimed to get agreement but totally failed (see *Earth & Life Science Editing* 1978;(7):18–21).

A prescription-filled authority

Is "fill a prescription" US English, and if so what would be the UK English equivalent? asked Richard Hurley. The consensus was that it is a common US English expression and the UK equivalent is "make up a prescription". This discussion was possibly the first on the forum in which The Rolling Stones had been cited as an authority. Stuart Handysides wrote that they, not averse to a little Americanization, sang (in "You Can't Always Get What You Want"): "I went down to the Chelsea Drugstore to get your prescription filled".

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2. *Scientific Style and Format: the CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers*. 7th edition. Reston, VA: Council of Science Editors and Rockefeller University Press, 2006.
3. *AMA Manual of Style: a Guide for Authors and editors.* 10th edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

SfEP – why there's never been a better time to join!

For a trial period of one year, EASE has agreed a reciprocal membership arrangement with the Society for Editors and Proofreaders.

SfEP and EASE have a longstanding relationship and a lot in common – both offer a range of membership benefits and work hard to help members keep up to date with trends in publishing and to maintain high standards in their work.

By joining SfEP, you'll be able to take advantage of discounts on training courses held throughout the UK– for example:

- Introduction to copy-editing: (held in York and London)
- Introduction to proofreading: (held in York, Bristol, London, and Edinburgh)
- On-screen editing 1 & 2: (held in Bristol and London)

Another valuable benefit is being able to take out an entry in the widely used *SfEP Directory of Editorial Services*. This fully searchable directory is available via the SfEP website, and members find it a cost-effective and invaluable means of advertising – regularly reporting back to us that it generates a lot of enquiries, many of which turn into long-standing contracts.

If you choose to join SfEP now, you'll also be able to get a significant discount on the delegate fee for this year's conference, being held in Oxford on 8–9 September 2008. The conference this year celebrates the Society's 20th year, so we're working hard to make it our best yet! Among the highlights:

- Our esteemed honorary vice-president, David Crystal, will be giving a keynote lecture.
- Susanne McDadd of Publishing Services will talk about 'Widening your market – inside and outside publishing'.
- This year's Whitcombe Lecture will be given by Charlotte Brewer, Fellow of Hertford College, Oxford, and author of *Treasure-House of the Language: The Living OED*.

There's also a varied mix of workshops, including pricing strategies, HTML, copywriting, computer housekeeping, macros, networking, reference sources, editing with TeX and development editing.

The saving on the conference fee alone comfortably covers the cost of discounted associateship (£57) under the EASE/SfEP membership deal.

Details of all the above – and a whole lot more – can be found on the SfEP website (http://www.sfep.org.uk).

The Editors' WebWatch

The Editors' WebWatch is a membership-driven resource guiding editors and writers in the sciences to websites and services of interest. Suggestions for the August issue should be sent to ese.webwatch@gmail.com*. We are also using the Editor's Bookshelf blog at* http://ese-bookshelf.blogspot.com *to collect entries. You can join the blog posters by contacting* paola.decastro@iss.it*. We look forward to your contributions.*

CrossRef again
http://sourceforge.net/projects/crossref-cite/

CrossRef now has a lookup plugin for Wordpress. This is a blogging tool, so why should anyone who is not a blogger be interested? The answer is that a decent blogging platform is simply a content management system that makes it easy to manage short chunks of text that don't merit pages of their own, and sort them by date or topic. There's no reason why you couldn't use Wordpress or Movable Type, or whatever, for a traditional website, and plenty of people do.

As far as I know, there's no CrossRef plugin for MediaWiki, the code on which Wikipedia runs, but there could well be by the time this issue reaches your hands.

OpenSearch
www.opensearch.org

This has been around for two years or so, but it's useful only if you have it built into your browser. Now that browsers like Firefox (version 2 onwards) and Internet Explorer (version 7 onwards) support it, in the search bar in the top right-hand corner of the screen, I find myself using Google surprisingly seldom. I can directly search PubMed and, if I must, Wikipedia, without remembering the URL or rummaging for a bookmark. They're now part of the browser.

Resources that are less obviously literature-based, biological classifications like IntEnz, frequently support openSearch, as does the handy German–English–German dictionary at dict.leo.org.

One of the best things about OpenSearch is auto-discovery, which means that if you go to an OpenSearch-enabled site and click on the dropdown, you find out straight away whether the site supports OpenSearch and can add it to your list.

Bad news for users of Mac-specific browsers, though: Safari doesn't support OpenSearch at present, and Camino users will have to wait for version 1.6.

Sending large files, or HTTP instead of FTP
www.yousendit.com

YouSendIt allows you to send large files without using an ftp site. You can register for a free account, which would serve most people's needs, or pay for one that allows you to send huge amounts. When someone sends you something from YouSendIt, you receive an email notification that contains a link to their website, from where you download the files. The recipient does not need to be registered. "Someone sent me something through this service recently," says Emma Campbell, "and it was very simple and fast (depending, of course, on internet connection speed) to use."

Mapping science
http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/worldmapper/index.html

Worldmapper is a collection of world maps, where territories are re-sized on each map according to the subject of interest. Interesting to see are the science research maps, where more than three times as many publications come from the USA as from the second highest publishing population, Japan. The science growth map is also interesting for us editors, showing the growth in scientific research: territories without an increase in scientific publications are not on the map. The 366 maps are also available as PDF posters.

More bibliometrics
http://www.scimagojr.com/

A collaboration between Scopus and some Spanish universities has put together a new citation-based number that they intend to compete with Eugene Garfield/ISI's impact factor.

Colin Batchelor (compiler)
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Thanks to Emma Campbell, Richard Hurley, Paola de Castro, Margaret Cooter.

News Notes

Please send items for inclusion to Richard Hurley (rhurley@bmj.com), with "News Notes" as the subject.

Free alternative to impact factors
A free citation statistics calculator may challenge Thompson Scientific's impact factor, which it derives from its Web of Science database. The SCImago Journal and Country Rank database (www.scimagojr.com) ranks journals and countries using a new metric, the SCImago journal rank. This includes an analysis of links between journals in a series of iterative cycles, which means that citations are weighted depending on the rank of journals. The algorithm is similar to the one Google uses to rank web pages. The data come from Scopus, a database created by the scholarly publishing giant Elsevier in 2004. (*Nature* 2008;451:6; doi: 10.1038/451006a)

Drug companies must show data
The UK government will tighten the law after an investigation found that evidence about a controversial drug had been held back. "Companies that conduct clinical trials should not compromise people's health by withholding information," said the public health minister, Dawn Primarolo. She said that new legislation will be introduced by the end of the year to ensure that drug companies pass on the results of clinical trials as soon as the alarm is raised about one of their drugs. The move came after an investigation into Seroxat, which is made by GlaxoSmithKline. (*Guardian* 2008 Mar 6; www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/mar/06/health.health)

Harvard votes for open access
Harvard University's faculty of arts and sciences will insist that the published work of all faculty members is deposited in a public repository. This may have far-reaching implications because it precludes exclusive copyright being given to a scientific society or commercial publisher. The university plans to claim a "non exclusive, irrevocable, paid up, worldwide licence to exercise any and all rights under copyright" regardless of publication elsewhere. Stuart Shieber, the professor at Harvard who proposed the landmark policy called it "a powerful message . . . that we . . . should have more control over how our work is used and disseminated." (*Chronicle of Higher Education* 2008 Feb 12; http://chronicle.com/news/article/3943/harvard-faculty-adopts-open-access-requirement)

***Nature* holds conference in Second Life**
Nature Publishing Group held a conference in December on Second Nature, its part of Second Life, an internet-based virtual world. The talks—on climate change—coincided with the UN conference in Bali on replacing the Kyoto protocol. Avatars attending Second Nature knew that their carbon footprint would be the smaller. George Monbiot, author of *Heat: How We Can Stop the Planet Burning*, spoke at one of the events, which were all free to everyone. Avatars produce an estimated 39 kg of carbon dioxide a year; a round trip from London to New York produces 1200 kg. (www.secondlife.com; http://slurl.com/secondlife/SecondNature/218/213/28)

Medical publishers forgot mission
Editors and publishers should "become leaders instead of followers . . . shaping the physician's information world, instead of reacting to it," says an editorial in *The Lancet*. It accuses few medical publishers of having kept pace with doctors' needs and says that some publishers seem disconnected from doctors' working lives. "They need to pay less attention to their financial bottom line, and commit themselves to a larger, more inspiring mission—to join doctors in working to achieve the highest attainable standards of health for the communities they serve." (*Lancet* 2008; 371:785; doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(08)60351-7)

Publishers consider open access
An assessment of 47 academic publishers, such as the BMJ Group, the Public Library of Science, and the Royal Society of Chemistry, has found an increasing interest in allowing articles to be deposited in a publicly accessible repository. Many of the publishers were said to be looking into changing their current policies to encourage an environment of sharing academic materials. Sixteen of the publishers had developed a repository policy that was compatible with the principles of open access and, the study reports, 15 publishers use a licence to publish instead of copyright transfer. *Acceptance of the JISC/SURF Licence to Publish and Accompanying Principles by Traditional Publishers of Journals* is at www.surffoundation.nl/smartsite.dws?ch=ENG&id=13543.

Find clinically relevant papers earlier
Quality, clinically relevant studies are "diluted in the larger body of articles." If an article's importance can be ascertained early, clinicians can focus on the research that matters most to practice. Bioinformatics researchers say that citation counts for clinical articles two years after publication can be predicted by using data available within three weeks (*BMJ* 2008 Feb 21; doi: 10.1136/bmj.39482.526713.BE). They took 1274 articles from 105 journals, such as *JAMA*, *The Lancet*, and the *New England Journal of Medicine*, published from January to June 2005. Data they considered included routinely collected ratings of clinical relevance and newsworthiness.

JANE tells researchers where to go
Rather than spend ages deciding where to submit a paper for publication, researchers could use a computer program. The Journal/Author Name Estimator (JANE) will tell you where to take submit a paper, based on its title or abstract. "With an exponentially growing number of articles . . . scientists can use some help in determining which journal is most appropriate," say the creators (*Bioinformatics* 2008 Jan 28; doi: 10.1093/bioinformatics/btn006). In tests on a *Nature* blog JANE got it right for three out of 10 *Nature* articles on the basis of abstracts, and put the journal *Nature* in the top 10 for seven articles. (http://blogs.nature.com/news/thegreatbeyond/2008/03/picker_produces_paper_publicat.html)

Kit promotes ethics in publishing
Elsevier has put together online resources to promote ethics in science publishing to help editors of science journals. The publisher recently decided to list all its journals with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE, www.publicationethics.org.uk), to provide editors with additional guidance if needed, and to support this independent activity. "Every reported act of unethical publishing behaviour must be looked into, even if it is discovered years after publication," Elsevier says. The resources include links to Elsevier's and other policy and procedures and decision trees and form letters for dealing with different forms of abuse. The Publishing Ethics Resource Kit is at www.elsevier.com/wps/find/editorshome.editors/Introduction.

Evolution needs semantic shift?
Darwinists need to raise their terminological game if they are to win the hearts and minds of US citizens, biologist Kenneth Miller said. He argues that scientists should not reject the idea of "design" in nature, but should talk of evolutionary design as an inherent part of the laws of chemistry and physics. A growing majority of Americans reject evolution, perhaps because of the emphasis on chance mutations in natural selection: "Human beings don't want to believe that they are unintended consequences of nature." (*Guardian* 2008 Feb 19; http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/james_randerson/2008/02/designing_evolution.html)

Western thought controls web
The United States is home to the most influential websites, hence they are governed by US law. This set of beliefs is rooted in Western thought but determines global internet policy, said Tim Footman. Wikipedia, based in Florida, is refusing to remove images of the prophet Mohammed, despite the demands of tens of thousands of Muslims. Wikipedia's justification is that it acts in accordance with Florida law. But "American . . . values are still not universal values. The web is still not truly worldwide, and probably never will be," concludes Footman. (*Guardian* 2008 Feb 19; http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/tim_footman/2008/02/dirty_pictures.html)

Practical science lessons investigated
The UK Royal Society is to investigate practical science lessons in British schools in collaboration with the Association of Science Education. The aim is to collect the views of scientists and teachers on the quality, quantity, and purpose of science practicals in British schools and colleges. "School practical work . . . could be much more successful at engaging pupils' interest and enabling them better to understand core scientific concepts," said Michael Reiss, at the society. "Particularly in chemistry and physics it would be good to know if . . . they don't have the specialised teachers." (*Guardian* 2008 Feb 15; http://education.guardian.co.uk/schools/story/0,,2256744,00.html)

Equator for better reporting
The EQUATOR Network aims to improve the quality of health research reporting in scientific publications (www.equator-network.org). The website provides a collection of reporting guidelines that facilitate the reporting of health research and are also a helpful tool for peer reviewers and journal editors. The network wants journal editors to link to the website from their instructions to authors, where they provide guidance on the description of research studies. The network will hold its official launch meeting on 26 June in London. EQUATOR stands for "enhancing the quality and transparency of health research." See www.equator-network.org/index.aspx?o=1113

Pfizer demands peer reviews
The world's largest drug company, Pfizer, has served subpoenas to the *New England Journal of Medicine* and other leading medical journals demanding they hand over confidential and anonymous peer reviews. Pfizer is defending lawsuits over painkillers that have been blamed for causing heart attacks and strokes. Editors worry that the move could threaten the confidentiality of peer review systems and that recruiting reviewers who could subsequently end up in litigation would be difficult. The journals have largely resisted the demands and have received widespread support. Donald Kennedy, editor of *Science*, called the demands a "fishing expedition." The matter will be decided in court. (*BMJ* 2008;336:575; doi: 10.1136/bmj.39518.526389.DB)

Leveraging synergies
Office terminology is becoming baffling. The Plain English Campaign says that it confuses new employees—and that you should always say what you mean. "To touch base" means to get in touch, and "run it up the flagpole and see if anyone salutes" means to present an idea and find out people's reactions (*Plain English* 2008 Feb:6; www.plainenglish.co.uk/Issue71.pdf). *Guardian* readers submitted terms to a blog on office

jargon in January, including "by close of play today," meaning by 5 pm, and "to interface with," meaning to talk to. "Leveraging synergies" seems meaningless, but apparently bosses love it. (*Guardian* 2008 Jan 28; http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/open_thread/2008/01/memo_to_all_staff.html)

Particle physicists want open access

"Global conversion of the main corpus of journals to the open access model" has been recommended by the international high energy physics community, in a process initiated by the head of CERN, Robert Aymar. The Sponsoring Consortium for Open Access Publishing in Particle Physics says that "the particle physics community has led the academic world in disseminating preprints of research articles through large repositories," which are now the lifeblood of information exchange in the discipline. The report estimates an annual budget of €10m a year, which it suggests will be recovered in cancelled journal subscriptions. (www.scoap3.org/files/Scoap3WPReport.pdf)

Chinese names cause confusion

Transliteration of Chinese names into English and overuse of Chinese surnames adds to confusion in citations, an article in *Nature* says. For example, Wang Xiao-yan, Wang Xiao-rong, and Wang Xiao-xue might all be given as Wang X. In English language journals, Chinese researchers use the Latin alphabet to represent Chinese sounds, but because of the Chinese tonal system the results are often not unique: Wang could be one of two Chinese surnames. Another problem is journals' insistence on the order of given and family names. Chinese authors are publishing more and more papers, but they might not receive due credit and recognition without proper attribution. (*Nature* 2008;451:766-7; doi: 10.1038/451766a)

Thompson launches register of researchers

The company that calculates journal impact factors, Thompson Scientific, has launched a register for researchers that it claims "enables researchers to create stable personal identifiers." Correctly attributing research is problematic as different researchers can share the same name and can give the same name in different forms. The register, at www.researcherid.com, aims to be an accurate record of a researcher's output, allowing colleagues to find a researcher's published work and find potential collaborators. Thompson's system is by invitation only, and critics suggest that publishers help to develop the open source http://openid.net and http://oauth.net open authentication systems. (http://scientific.thomson.com/press/2008/8429910 and http://mndoci.com/blog/2008/01/17/researcherid-doesnt-seem-like-all-that)

EU rules for open access

The European Research Council has mandated that after publication all peer reviewed publications it funds be deposited into a repository, where available, such as PubMed Central, ArXiv, or an institutional repository. Articles should be made open access within six months of publication. Primary data—for example, nucleotide or protein sequences, macromolecular atomic coordinates, and anonymised epidemiological data—must be deposited in a database as soon as possible, preferably immediately and not later than six months after publication. These are the guidelines in *ERC Scientific Council Guidelines for Open Access*, published in December 2007. (http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/ScC_Guidelines_Open_Access_revised_Dec07_FINAL.pdf)

Academics prefer double blind review . . .

The double blind system of peer review of papers, in which reviewers and authors are unaware of each other's identity, found strong support in an international survey of 3040 academics. Seventy one per cent of respondents rated double blind reviewing as effective. Respondents favoured double blind review because they said it removed potential biases—for example, because of a reviewer's opinion of an author. More than a third (38%) said that reviewers were overloaded with work. The survey found that a reviewer completed an average of eight reviews a year. (*BMJ* 2008;336:241; doi: 10.1136/bmj.39476.357280.DB and www.publishingresearch.net/PeerReview.htm)

. . . but *Nature* rejects it

The leading science journal *Nature* has decided not to implement double blind peer review, in which author and reviewer do not know each other's identity (2008;451:605-6; doi: 10.1038/451605b). The journal says that no strong evidence shows t that blinding improves the quality of reviews. Proponents argue that double blind review is less biased—towards the sex or nationality of authors, for example—and that objections might be from "prominent members of the research community who . . . cannot fully rely on the benefits of their reputation." Opponents argue that double blind review works against scientific cooperation and the open sharing of information. More than 75 people so far have commented in the debate. (http://blogs.nature.com/peer-to-peer/2008/02/working_doubleblind.html)

Creationists launch "science" journal

The $27m Creation Museum, founded in Kentucky last year, has launched a "professional, peer reviewed technical journal for the publication of interdisciplinary scientific . . . research." The open access *Answers Research Journal* (www.answersingenesis.org/arj) will "disseminate the vast fields of research conducted by creationist experts in theology, history, archaeology, anthropology, biology, geology, astronomy, and other disciplines of science . . . that demonstrates the

validity of the young earth model, the global flood, the non-evolutionary origin of 'created kinds,' and other evidences that are consistent with the biblical account of origins." (*Nature* 2008;451:382-3; doi: 10.1038/451382b)

Count characters, not words

Science journals encourage use of long sometimes obscure and technical words because of limits to word count, argues Alice Flaherty in a letter to *Nature*. She thinks that 150 word totals for abstracts in particular force authors to "spend hours looking for bulky portmanteau words to replace several simple ones." Her suggested solution is to use a character count that doesn't include spaces. Because "science convinces with evidence, whereas art persuades through rhetoric . . . we tell ourselves style does not matter in scientific writing [but] even scientists wish scientists would write more readably," she says. (*Nature* 2007;450:1156, doi 10.1038/4501156c)

Book publishers consider environment

The *Handbook on Book Paper and the Environment* was published by the Association of American Publishers in February to promote environmental sustainability in the book publishing industry. It covers governmental, commercial, and environmental matters that relate to the production of paper for books and reflects more than two years of discussion with representatives of environmental advocacy groups, forest certification and standards bodies, environmental industry consortiums, economists, paper mills, and publishers, including Cambridge University Press, HarperCollins, Wiley, Macmillan, and McGraw-Hill. An executive summary is available from tjordan@publishers.org. (www.publishers.org/main/presscenter/PaperHandbookRelease.htm)

Journalists should declare interests

Readers have a right to know about other commercial work that journalists might undertake and about gifts and hospitality that they accept, says Mike Cross, in the UK National Union of Journalists' members' magazine. He suggests a voluntary online database with the onus on journalists to declare what they think relevant—for example, "corporate jollies and commercial engagements such as training or speechwriting." He says, "A register could enhance the standing of journalists." The doctor and journalist Ben Goldacre recently called for more openness from medical journalists about conflicts of interest. (*Journalist* 2008 Mar:7; *BMJ* 2007;335:480; doi: 10.1136/bmj.39328.450000.59)

Languages evolve in bursts

A many as a third of the overall differences in vocabulary among languages arose from bursts of change after a split in a language, according to a study in *Science*. This is followed by long periods of slower change. Linguists used vocabulary data from three of the world's key language groups—Bantu, Indo-European, and Austronesian. They hypothesise a tendency for more linguistic evolution in fledgling languages, perhaps because of a desire to establish a distinct social identity. The evolution of language seems uncannily to echo a long standing biological theory known as "punctuated equilibrium." (*Science* 2008;319:588; doi: 10.1126/science.1149683)

Physicists demand copyright update

Physicists have called on the publisher of the journal *Physical Review Letters* to allow parts of papers it publishes to also be made freely available online. The journal recently withdrew acceptance of two articles because the authors asked for a rights agreement compatible with Wikipedia. "It is unreasonable . . . Scientists want as broad an audience . . . as possible," says Bill Unruh at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, who has been campaigning separately against strict copyright rules. The editor, Gene Sprouse, says that the publisher, the American Physical Society, will consider the request. (*New Scientist* 2008 Mar 15:6; http://tinyurl.com/yq8ybx)

Universities should stop ghost management

The drug industry manages trials, analyses data, has papers written, finds academic ghost authors, and pays communication companies to get published in the best journals, says Sergio Sismondo in PloS Medicine. This leads to bias that influences medical practice and ultimately affects patients. Universities should prohibit contracts that allow sponsors to draft, edit, or suppress articles or that allow sponsors to keep data from authors. They should even prohibit sponsors from facilitating publication and should also take disciplinary action against investigators who serve as authors on ghost managed articles, he says. (PLoS Med 4(9):e286; doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.0040286)

Richard Hurley
rhurley@bmj.com

Thanks to Nature for supplying the "Second Life" picture, and to Margaret Cooter, Emma Campbell, Joan Marsh, Arjan Polderman, and Sheila Evered for links and contributions.

The Editor's Bookshelf

We are glad to report that this section of the journal has received congratulations and support from all over the world, including places such as China and Latin America. We are using the Editors' Bookshelf blog at http://ese-bookshelf.blogspot.com *to collect entries. You can join the blog by contacting paola.decastro@iss.it. We look forward to receiving your contribution. If you do not have time to post to the blog, please email Paola with information on useful publications.*

ECONOMICS AND FUNDING

SCOAP3 Working Party ***Towards open access publishing in high energy physics***. Geneva: CERN, 2007. (www.scoap3.org/files/Scoap3WPReport.pdf)

High energy physics pioneered open access through repositories containing collections of pre-prints freely accessible on the internet, but there still is a strong consensus in the scientific community about the need for high-quality journals that provide quality control through the peer review process; a platform for the evaluation of scientists; and a measure of the quality and productivity of research groups and institutes. Yet open access journals are expensive. A model for financing open access journals which proposes that publishers' subscription income from multiple institutions is replaced by income from a single financial partner, the Sponsoring Consortium for Open Access Publishing in Particle Physics (SCOAP3), a global network of funding agencies, research laboratories, and libraries. Each SCOAP3 partner will recover its contribution from the cancellation of its current journal subscriptions. This model avoids charging authors for the open access publication of their articles.

ETHICAL ISSUES

Beunen A. **Acceptance of the JISC/SURF licence to publish & accompanying principles by traditional publishers of journals**. Utrecht: Surf Foundation, 2007. (www.surffoundation.nl/download/LtP-final-report-dec07.pdf)

An enquiry among 47 traditional publishers of journals asked if they support the principles formulated by SURF foundation and JISC, which attempt to clarify and balance the relationship between the rights of authors and publishers. The main points of these principles are that the author retains copyright of his/her work, while granting the publisher the rights needed to publish the work; the author may freely deposit the article in a research repository, with an embargo before public release of a maximum of six months. The results showed that a substantial number of traditional publishers support some or all of these principles or are looking into changes in their current policies to meet them.

Errami M, Garner H. **Tale of two citations**. *Nature* 2008;451:397–399. (doi:10.1038/451397a)

Are scientists publishing more duplicate papers? An automated search of seven million biomedical abstracts suggests that they are. High-profile cases of scientific misconduct remind us that not all of these publications are to be trusted. The scientific community must be aware that the three major sins of modern publishing (duplication, co-submission, and plagiarism) are becoming widespread.

Martin BR. **Keeping plagiarism at bay—a salutary tale**. *Science Direct* 2007;36(7):905–911. (doi:10.1016/j.respol.2007.08.001)

Examines whether plagiarism is increasing in social sciences and, if so, what should be done to keep it under control. The study was prompted by the discovery of a serious case of plagiarism. A fair degree of vigilance and a greater willingness to pursue suspected research misconduct are required by editors, referees, publishers, and the whole academic community to keep plagiarism at bay.

McGilchrist M, Sullivan F, Kalra D. **Assuring the confidentiality of shared electronic health records**. *BMJ* 2007;335:1223–1224. (doi:10.1136/bmj.39421.544063.BE)

We urgently need better technical measures to enforce and verify procedures that represent good practice in storing, managing, and sharing electronic health records between institutions. Standard operating procedures can prevent inadvertent disclosure of data only if staff are trained to use them consistently; if users do not have malicious intent, are competent, and don't make mistakes; and if the author of the procedure has planned for all scenarios relating to data access and sharing. These procedures form a closed opaque system; they need to be improved to provide transparency, to counter conflicts of interest, and to enforce agreed procedures.

Vlassov VV. **Is content of medical journals related to advertisements? Case–control study**. *Croatian Medical Journal* 2007;48:786–790. (doi:10.3325/cmj.2007.6.786)

To investigate the hypothesis that journal content is manipulated to place more emphasis on the advertisements, a case–control study was performed on a convenience sample of seven journals subscribed to by the Central Medical Library in Moscow: four international and three Russian peer-reviewed journals. The study assessed the relationship between the content of the journal and the paid advertisements published in the same journal. In three of the seven journals, the contents were related to the paid advertisements, which were usually placed face-to-face or overleaf from the related research articles.

Williams L. **Publishing perils include single-blind review**. *Physics Today* 2007; 60(11):12.

Discusses the exacting, and often confusing, electronic paper

submission process. But a much more important and corrosive impediment to publication is single-blind peer review, which has a fundamental flaw: it allows reviewers to assess the author(s) of a paper along with the scientific content, and thereby allows non-scientific considerations to creep in. Single-blind peer review can thus discourage scientists from publishing in new fields and add irrelevant considerations to the review of scientific content. For this reason peer review should be double-blind.

EDITORIAL PROCESS

Dickersin K, Ssemanda E, Mansell C, Rennie D. **What do the JAMA editors say when they discuss manuscripts that they are considering for publication? Developing a schema for classifying the content of editorial discussion**. *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 2007;7:44. (doi: 10.1186/1471-2288-7-44)

An observational study of discussions that took place during manuscript meetings at JAMA, aimed at exploring the words and phrases used by a group of editors during their meetings. A schema for classifying the phrases used by editors was developed by using an interactive approach. The authors concluded that the classification of editorial discourses provides an insight into editorial decision making and warrants further exploration.

Ware M. Peer review: benefits, perceptions and alternatives. London: Publishing Research Consortium, 2008. (www.publishingresearch.net/documents/PRCsummary4Warefinal.pdf)

The Publishing Research Consortium is a group of associations and publishers that supports global research into scholarly communication to enable evidence-based discussion. Its survey shows that peer review is widely supported by academics (93%); they believe that it improves the quality of published papers, yet there is a desire for improvement, and double-blind review is generally preferred. Post-publication review is seen as a useful supplement to formal peer review. Most reviewers (90%) are also authors.

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

Baruch P. **Open access developments in France: the HAL Open Archives System**. *Learned Publishing* 2007;20:267-282. (doi: 10.1087/095315107X239636)

From 2006, the main research agencies and universities coordinated their actions towards a common archiving platform, HAL (Hyper Articles on Line). It now stores the majority of open access records – some 10-15% of current French output.

Waldrop MM. Science 2.0: Great new tool, or great risk? Scientific American 9 January 2008. (www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=science-2-point-0-great-new-tool-or-great-risk)

Researchers are beginning to harness wikis, blogs, and other Web 2.0 technologies as a potentially transformative way of doing science. The author invites readers to comment on the draft article, promising that the input given will influence the article's content in its final form. Starting from common questions on Web 2.0 tools, the article analyses the promise and peril of Science 2.0, which the author considers as being one aspect of a broader open science movement that also includes open-access scientific publishing and open data practices. A small but growing number of researchers have begun to carry out their work via these new tools, while many scientists still remain highly skeptical of such openness. Advocates of Science 2.0 consider this movement to be a new opportunity of collaboration between scientists.

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

American Physical Society [Heading in Chinese characters]. APSHiC. Journals to print author names in Chinese, Japanese and Korean. APS News 2008;17(2):1.

APS journals now allow authors to include their names in Chinese, Japanese, or Korean characters after the name is given in Latin characters. Since December this programme is offered throughout the *Physical Review* journals. Many names that are written in different characters become the same when transliterated. Showing the characters after the transliterated name removes the ambiguity and enables readers to know definitively whose work is whose. With time and experience, additional languages may be offered. Instructions for authors on how to supply the proper Unicode characters at the time of submission are at http://authors.aps.org/names.html.

PUBLISHING

Hartley J, Betts L. T**he effects of spacing and titles on judgments of the effectiveness of structured abstracts**. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 2007;58(14):2335–2340. (doi: 10.1002/asi.20718)

In three studies, four versions of four abstracts were rated. Layout of the text, along with subheadings, contributed to a higher rating of effectiveness for structured abstracts, suggesting that the spatial organization and the greater amount of information present are the main reasons why structured abstracts are generally judged to be superior to traditional ones.

Jeandron M. **Journal to support astronomy outreach**. *Physics World* 2007;20(12):9.

The International Astronomical Union launched a new open-access, peer-reviewed journal designed to support the burgeoning field of astronomy communication. *Communicating Astronomy with the Public* contains research papers written by experienced astronomy communicators as well as news, reviews, and opinion articles - for example, articles about how to discuss astronomy using podcasts and the YouTube website. Among the journal's objectives are ensuring that outreach effort is not duplicated and establishing priorities for the field.

Johnson RK, Luther J. T***he e-only tipping point for journals: what's ahead in the print-to-electronic transition zone.*** Washington DC: Association of Research Libraries, December 2007. (www.arl.org/bm~doc/Electronic_Transition.pdf)

Examines the issues associated with the migration from dual-format publishing to electronic-only publication of journals and gives librarians' and publishers' perspectives on the current state of format migration, considering the drivers toward electronic-only publishing and barriers that are slowing change. It also assesses possible further changes and recommends strategic areas of focus.

Roth DL, Bronsdon R, Phipps TE, Jr, Dylla HF. **Open-access publishing at what cost?** *Physics Today* 2008;61(2):8–9.

Letters commenting on a paper by Paul Guinnessy (Stakeholders weigh costs of open-access publishing. *Physics Today* 2007;60(8)29–30). Roth discusses the impact of page charges on the economics of open-access publication and expresses concern about possible loss of quality that may accompany widespread open access. Open access is driven primarily by the needs of the medical community and its patients; shouldn't it be refined there first, before we attempt to impose it on all of science and technology? Bronsdon thinks the underlying problem concerns organizations that intend to profit from publishing scientific research. Phipps points out that people not directly involved or institutionally affiliated are discriminated against by page charges for downloading from archives such as the preprint arXiv at Cornell University. Dylla, executive director of *AJP*, replies to explain the economic reasoning behind their charging system.

Smart P. **Journals – the wrong model for Africa?** *Learned Publishing* 2007;20:311–313. (doi: 10.1087/095315107X225415)

Most journals published in Africa do a disservice to the research they contain, and the best local research appears in titles published outside the region. A support network is needed to appraise and develop research; communication skills and appropriate means of dissemination need to be developed from within the region.

Van Orsdel LC, Born K. **Periodical price survey 2007: serial wars**. *Library Journal* 15 April 2007. (www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6431958.html)

As the open access movement stands alone as an alternative to the existing system of journal publication (which most say is unsustainable in its present form), publishers of scientific, technical, and medical journals vigorously defend the adequacy of the current system, while fearing cancellation of subscriptions by librarians. Questions such as journal pricing, open access policies, and the practice of self-archiving and its effects on subscription cancellations, even though they are still unclear and under examination, are important.

RESEARCH EVALUATION

Budden AE, Tregenza T, Aarssen LW, Koricheva J, Leimu R, Lortie CJ. **Double-blind review favours increased representation of female authors**. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 2008;23:4–6. (doi:10.1016/j.tree.2007.07.008)

Within two years of the introduction of the double-blind review process in *Behavioral Ecology* and *Behavioural Ecology and Sociobiology*, articles written by women researchers increased. Is there a "chauvinist" bias in the peer review procedure that the double-blind process exposes, or if there is a "feminist" bias in the valuation of casual data?

Leydesdorff L. **Caveats for the use of citation indicators in research and journal evaluations**. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 2008;59(2):278–287. (doi: 10.1002/asi.20743)

Journals that are not included in the ISI dataset can be evaluated with an "externally cited impact factor" by using ISI databases anyway. To construct this indicator it is useful to follow a procedure that includes searching the Web of Science and Journal Citation Reports.

Shepherd PT. ***Final report on the investigation into the feasibility of developing and implementing journal usage factors***. United Kingdom Serials Group, May 2007. (www.uksg.org/sites/uksg.org/files/FinalReportUsageFactorProject.pdf)

Shows the growing interest in developing usage-based alternatives to citation-based measures of journal performance (impact factor). The study aimed to determine whether the usage factor concept is meaningful, practical to implement, and provides insights into the value and quality of online journals. It consisted of in-depth interviews with 29 prominent opinion makers from the science, technical, and medical author/editor, librarian, and journal publisher communities, to explore their reaction to the Usage Factor and to discuss how it might be implemented and used. Phase 2 consisted of a web-based survey of a larger cross-section of the author and librarian communities.

Steckler A, McLeroy KR. **The importance of external validity**. *American Journal of Public Health* 2008;98(1):9–10 (doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2007.126847).

Enhancing the quality of reporting on external validity in journal articles warrants higher priority than it has received in public health research publications to date. Several characteristics of external validity should be reported; many articles will benefit by including information on external validity.

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Forthcoming Meetings, Courses, and BELS Examinations

10th EASE Conference: "Integrity in Science Communication"

16–19 September 2009; Pisa, Italy

Council of Science Editors (CSE) Annual Meeting
May 16–20, 2008; *Vancouver, Canada*
www.councilscienceeditors.org

The BA (British Association for the Advancement of Science) Science Communication Conference
19 & 20 May 2008; London
www.the-ba.net/sciencecommunicationconference

Society for Technical Communication
55th Annual Conference
1–4 June 2008; Philadelphia, PA, USA
www.stc.org/55thConf/

European Association for Health Information and Libraries
11th European Conference of Medical and Health Libraries
23–28 June 2008; Helsinki, Finland
https://eventnordic-fi.directo.fi/congreszon/eahil_2008/

Public Communication of Science & Technology
25–27 June 2008; Copenhagen, Denmark
www.vr.se/pcst

3rd EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF08)
18–22 July 2008; Barcelona, Spain
www.esof2008.org

5th Science Centre World Congress
15–20 June 2008; Toronto, Canada
www.5scwc.org

Open Scholarship: Authority, Community and Sustainability in the Age of Web 2.0
12th International Conference on Electronic Publishing
25–27 June 2008; Toronto, Canada
http://www.elpub.net

EQUATOR Network Launch Meeting: Achieving Transparency in Reporting Health Research
26 June 2008; London, UK
www.equator-network.org/index.aspx?o=1113

EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF 2008)
"Science for a Better Life"
18–22 July 2008; Barcelona, Spain
www.esof2008.org

Mediterranean Editors &Translators
"Communicating Support Across the Disciplines"
11–13 September 2008; Split, Croatia
www.metmeetings.org

COURSES

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

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

Society for Editors and Proofreaders
SfEP runs one-day workshops in London and occasionally elsewhere in the UK on copy-editing, proofreading, grammar, and much else.
Training enquiries: tel: +44 (0)20 7736 0901; trainingenquiries@sfep.org.uk
Other enquiries: SfEP, Riverbank House, 1 Putney Bridge Approach, London SW6 3JD, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 7736 3278; administration@sfep.org.uk; www.sfep.org.uk

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

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

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

BELS - Board of Editors in the Life Sciences examination schedule
www.bels.org/becomeeditor/exam-schedule.htm

17 May 2008, Vancouver, BC, Hyatt Regency Vancouver, (CSE, May 16–20); register by 27 April 2008

4 October 2008, Bridgewater, NJ; register by 13 September 2008

22 October 2008, Louisville, KY, (AMWA meeting); register by 1 October 2008

15 and 16 November 2008, Mumbai, India; register by 25 October 2008

EASE Business

Meeting with a Chinese delegation

In March, EASE was invited to present to a delegation of visiting academics and journal editors from China. The delegation comprised 20 people working in a variety of disciplines, including electrical engineering, Chinese traditional medicine, crop science, computing technology, and fisheries.

Sheila Evered, EASE Secretary, described the history of EASE and its current range of activities. Joan Marsh (Wiley-Blackwell and EASE Vice-President) then outlined the different types of editor associated with journal publishing and their roles, especially the duties expected of a chief editor, regional editors, and an active editorial board. Professor Mike Jackson, Editor-in-Chief of Annals of Botany, concluded by reviewing the goals and achievements of his 12 years running the journal. He emphasized the importance of creating a distinctive image for a journal and how it is vital to be proactive in promoting the journal, recruiting papers, etc. Some of the tactics used are sponsoring lectures at leading botany conferences in exchange for the speaker writing a review, commissioning a high-quality review for each issue, and publishing special issues on particular topics. Readership and paper flow have increased substantially, allowing the journal to increase its rejection rate and raise the quality of its publications, which is reflected in a rise in impact factor.

The talks were followed by a lively question-and-answer session mediated by a translator and then some direct discussion with several of the participants. Sheila had brought two copies of the Science Editors Handbook as samples and was almost overwhelmed by people pressing cash into her hands for orders – hinting at an untapped market in China. We hope that this visit will lead to ongoing relations between several of the delegates or their institutes and EASE, and we look forward to collaborating with our new friends in the future. Our thanks to Mr Yang He for organizing the visit and to Mike Jackson for making the trip from Bristol.

Joan Marsh and Sheila Evered

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Deaths

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of **Dr Marie-Louise Desbarats-Schönbaum** on 27 February 2008