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From the Editors' Desks

Articles editor wanted

Igor Vlahovic is stepping down from his position of *European Science Editing's* article editor. The Publications Committee thanks Igor for all of his hard work over the past two years.

Igor's responsibilities need to be taken over by someone else. If you are interested in joining the Publications Committee please contact ESE's chief editor, Moira Johnson-Vekony, at ese@dunascripts.com. Igor has gallantly offered to provide guidance and proper handover, so you will be well looked after. And, of course, you will get to work with a lovely group of people. We meet twice a year, usually at a central location (Barcelona has been a recent favourite) and generally have a lot of fun both when fulfilling editorial responsibilities and in the free time that we get on these occasions.

Could you help proofread ESE?

The content of *European Science Editing* is obtained or provided by the publications Committee, and the production is done mostly by the production manager with help from several committee members who diligently read the proofs. But sometimes the regular helpers have other commitments and cannot oblige. If you can spare a couple of hours every three months to read a

few pages we would like to hear from you. Proofs are sent as pdfs so that you can print them out and don't have to read them on screen.

The bottom line: rates for 2008

The rates for subscribing to *European Science Editing* for non-members of EASE will rise slightly in 2008, from £54 to £57. Individual membership will be £70 next year, but for those who are retired and over 60, students, and sponsored members, membership is £35. Corporate membership varies according to the number of members

By arrangement with SfEP

See "EASE Business" (inside back cover) to find out how members of EASE can save money on their SfEP membership. Everyone who belongs to SfEP as well as EASE is invited to contact Sheila Evered for a saving on their annual subscription to SfEP.

Instructions for authors

Guidelines were published in the issue of August 2007, and are available on the EASE website, www.ease.org.uk.

Contributions for next issue

The copy date for the next issue of *ESE* (February 2008) is **15 December 2007**. Please send contributions to the appropriate member of the publications committee (see list on left) by then.

EASE Council 2006–2009

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Editorials

Keep your hands off our impact factor

In this issue of *European Science Editing* you will find an official EASE statement on inappropriate use of impact factors. Of course, inappropriate use of anything should be avoided, so what does this statement mean?

Impact factors were once introduced to help librarians select the most important journals in different scientific fields. Journal impact factors can be used to rank journals according to the number of citations to articles in these journals. Because this use implies a judgement of the quality of science journals, journal impact factors affect the work of science editors. The reliability and usefulness (unreliability and uselessness, if you prefer) of journal impact factors has triggered debate, often heated, sometimes even contentious. Various other yardsticks for journal quality have been proposed and developed, but there is still no generally accepted alternative to journal impact factors, so we may phrase the present situation in terms of Sir Winston Churchill's remark about democracy: it is the worst form of journal evaluation except for all the other forms that have been tried.

I am not going to discuss the imperfections of journal impact factors when they are used for the purpose for which they were developed: comparing journals. Neither shall I discuss methods to influence or manipulate journal impact factors. Such manipulation is possible and is practised.[1] There is a wealth of articles on impact factors, their imperfections and possible alternatives in evaluating the quality of journals, but that is not the issue here.

Our concern is that journal impact factors have been co-opted to evaluate the quality of single papers and individual researchers. Administrators would understandably like to express the scientific productivity of a scientist in a simple Scientific Productivity Figure. The journal impact factor was not invented for this purpose, and its use as such a productivity figure is inappropriate use.

Were journal impact factors a reliable measure to assess scientific productivity, there would not really be a problem - but they are not. There is a large distance between scientific productivity and journal impact factor.

Publications are only a proxy of scientific progress. Scientific productivity also includes presenting research at conferences, teaching, filing patents, writing weblogs, depositing data in repositories, and many more activities.

A publication in a journal is only a proxy for the whole written output of a researcher (or a research group or a research project). Conference proceedings, dissertations, and handbooks are neglected when administrators focus on journals.

The number of citations to a publication is only a proxy for the value of the publication. One perfect way of getting lots of undeserved citations is to publish a fraudulent paper on a hot issue. One perfect way of forgoing deserved citations is to publish a practice-oriented paper in a local

language journal (if the local language is not English).

The journal impact factor is only a proxy for the number of citations to an individual paper. It is well known that only a few papers in a journal are responsible for most of the citations. Using the journal impact factor as a proxy is unfair to both the articles that attract many citations and to the articles that are not cited at all.

So how could anyone claim that journal impact factors reliably reflect scientific productivity?

We science editors have our hands full when coping with journal impact factors as a means of evaluating our journals, but we manage. However, we must object to people who complicate the picture by running off with our problem child.

Understandably, journal impact factors have often been the subject of discussions in EASE: on the EASE Forum, in the journal, and at the triennial conferences. At the Seventh EASE Conference in Tours in 2000 there was a strong feeling that EASE should take a stand against inappropriate use of journal impact factors.[2] Somehow, this momentum vanished. In Kraków, at the Ninth General Assembly and Conference in 2006, there was a session on cultural consequences of impact factors,[3] and again the need was felt to take a stand.

So we drafted an official EASE statement on the inappropriate use of impact factors which was improved by input from EASE Council and EASE members - for which we are very grateful. The final version is now published in this issue and the next step is to seek support from individuals and organizations in the field of science publications. Your help in achieving this will again be greatly appreciated.

In summary: leave the journal impact factor to the people who deal with evaluating journals - that is cumbersome enough.

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- 1 Chew M, Villanueva EV, Van Der Weyden MB. Life and times of the impact factor: retrospective analysis of trends for seven medical journals (1994-2005) and their editors' views. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 2007;100(3):142-150. (Abridged version reprinted in *European Science Editing* 2007;33(3):68-71.)
- 2 Oja G. Impact factors: reports from workshops. In: What it means to be an editor. 7th General Assembly and conference of EASE. 21-24 May 2000, Tours, France. *European Science Editing* 2000;26(2):468-54.
- 3 Sykes J, compiler. Cultural consequences of impact factors. In: The culture of science editing. EASE Ninth General Assembly and Conference. Palac Larischa, Krakow, Poland, 15-18 June 2006. *European Science Editing* 2006;32(3):688-72.

EASE statement on inappropriate use of impact factors

The journal impact factor was developed as a means to measure the impact of scientific journals.^{1,2} Over time, its use has been extended to measuring the quality of scientific journals, the quality of individual articles, and the productivity of individual researchers.^{3,4} Impact factors are nowadays even used in academic appointments, to evaluate grant applications, and to allocate other financial support for research programmes.^{5,6}

The impact factor, however, is not always a reliable instrument for measuring the quality of journals,^{7,8} its use for purposes for which it was not intended causes even greater unfairness.⁹⁻¹²

Therefore the European Association of Science Editors recommends that journal impact factors are used only – and cautiously – for measuring and comparing the influence of entire journals, but not for the assessment of single papers, and certainly not for the assessment of researchers or research programmes either directly or as a surrogate.

- 1 “The ‘impact factor’ is similar to the quantitative measure obtained by Gross in evaluating the relative importance of scientific journals”. Garfield E. Citation indexes for science. A new dimension in documentation through association of ideas. *Science* 1955;122(3159):1088–111.
- 2 “Measures of citation frequency and impact factor should be helpful in determining the optimum makeup of both special and general [library journal] collections.” Garfield E. Citation analysis as a tool in journal evaluation. Journals can be ranked by frequency and impact of citations for science policy studies. *Science* 1972;178(60):4718–479.
- 3 “While the IFS [impact factor score] was designed to assess journals, there are frequent mentions in the literature of the IFS being used as an indicator of the eventual impact of a scholar’s work.” Holden G, Rosenberg G, Barker K, Onghena P. Should decisions about your hiring, reappointment, tenure, or promotion use the impact factor score as a proxy indicator of the impact of your scholarship? *Medscape General Medicine* 2006;8(3):21.
- 4 “The Higher Education Funding Council in Britain came to understand that it was assessing science in a fundamentally unscientific way by using the impact factor of journals as a surrogate for the impact of articles published in them.” Smith R. Commentary: the power of the unrelenting impact factor – is it a force for good or harm? *International Journal of Epidemiology* 2006;35:11298–1130.
- 5 “Evaluationsgrundlage sind die Impactfaktoren [bzw. die Journal-Reihungen] aus der unveränderten Impactfactor-Liste des ISI, jeweils letzte verfügbare Ausgabe zum Zeitpunkt des Einreichsdatums zur Habilitation. Die Publikationen der/s Habilitand/in/en werden getrennt nach Erst- und Koautorschaften.” [The basis for evaluation are the impact factors [respectively the journal rankings] from the unchanged impact factor list of ISI, always the most recent available issue at the time of submitting the application.

The publications of the applicant are distinguished in first authorship and co-authorship.] *Habilitationsrichtlinien der Medizinische Universität Wien* [Guidelines for qualification as a university teacher at the Medical University of Vienna]. Wien: Medizinische Universität Wien; 2004.

- 6 “Universities in Germany, for instance, regularly plug the impact factor of journals in which scientists publish into formulae to help them determine departmental funding. The Italian Association for Cancer Research requires grant applicants to complete worksheets calculating the average impact factor of the journals in which their publications appear ... [In Finland] government funding for university hospitals is partly based on publications points, with a sliding scale corresponding to the impact factor of the journals in which researchers publish their work.” Adam D. The counting house. *Nature* 2002;415(6873):7268–729.
- 7 “All citation studies should be adjusted to account for variables such as specialty, citation density, and half-life.” Garfield E. The history and meaning of the journal impact factor. *JAMA* 2006;295(1):908–93.
- 8 “Apart from being non-representative, the journal impact factor is encumbered with several shortcomings of a technical and more fundamental nature ... Pure technicalities can therefore account for several-fold differences in journal impact.” Seglen PO. Why the impact factor of journals should not be used for evaluating research. *BMJ* 1997;314(7079):4988–502.
- 9 “The IFS [impact factor score] was the best predictor of both short- and long-term impact [of journal articles], yet even when the IFS was combined with other predictors, the overall amount of variance in both short- and long-term impact was less than 13 %.” Holden G, Rosenberg G, Barker K, Onghena P. Should decisions about your hiring, reappointment, tenure, or promotion use the impact factor score as a proxy indicator of the impact of your scholarship? *Medscape General Medicine* 2006;8(3):21.
- 10 “Indeed, of 38 million items cited from 1900–2005, only 0.5 % were cited more than 200 times. Half [of the published articles] were not cited at all ... The skewness of citations is well known and repeated as a mantra by critics of the impact factor ... The use of JIFs [journal impact factors] instead of actual article citation counts to evaluate individuals is a highly controversial issue. Granting and other policy agencies often wish to bypass the work involved in obtaining citation counts for individual articles and authors ... Thus, the JIF is used to estimate the expected count of individual papers, which is rather dubious considering the known skewness observed for most journals.” Garfield E. The history and meaning of the journal impact factor. *JAMA* 2006;295(1):908–93.
- 11 “[In Finland] a single paper published in a journal with an impact factor of 3, rather than 2, could have boosted a hospital’s funding by about US\$7,000 in 2000.” Adam D. The counting house. *Nature* 2002;415(6873):7268–729.
- 12 “Even the uncited articles are then given full credit for the impact of the few highly cited articles that predominantly

determine the value of the journal impact factor ... However, the correlation between journal impact and actual citation rate of articles from individual scientists or research

groups is often poor." Seglen PO. Why the impact factor of journals should not be used for evaluating research. *BMJ* 1997;314(7079):498-502.

No help yet from the EU

Earlier this year, EASE Council made an ambitious proposal to the European Commission (EC) which could have advanced EASE's mission to enhance science editorial skills and communication and fellowship, and also boost EASE as an organization.

Though EASE is nominally a European organization it has never previously sought support from the EC, even though the match between what we do and what they want to see happen is not trivial. For example, the EC pursues a proactive agenda to improve the competitiveness and world standing of European science through elimination of duplication of effort and ignorance of best practice, and increased harmonization, integration, cooperation, and standardization. A particular aim is to enhance what the EC calls the European Research Area (ERA).

Our chance to help the ERA came in December 2006 when the EC announced a competition for funding under an activity that they called Coordination and cooperation in the context of ERA. There was to be €200,000 made available for "Support for conferences, seminars, coordination and cooperation activities". Applicants would be judged on three sets of criteria: scientific and/or technological excellence, including quality of coordination; quality and efficiency of the management and implementation; and potential impact.

For EASE, the obvious way in which we could satisfy these criteria was by means of a proposal linked to our own triennial series of general assemblies/conferences. We hoped that our 10th anniversary event in 2009 could be an EC-funded, European super-conference. We envisaged a large event at which European science editors, particularly from newer member states, could exchange ideas, share experiences, and develop best practices in research reporting.

We wanted this conference to be enlarged upon our usual pattern, with a deeper and wider penetration into the world of European science editing. EASE wanted to involve at least 560 participants, particularly "new-EU" science editors, who would get a full subsidy on their registration fee. Participation in the conference would improve their personal skills in science editing, give them directly useful deliverables, and provide valuable networking opportunities.

All of this would lay the foundations for durable cooperation and coordination in these participants' future editing activity within the ERA, and they would be supported well beyond the conference through the continuing framework provided by EASE. We hoped that the eventual outcome of the conference would be a large advance in editors' knowledge and understanding of good editorial practice in European science publishing'

A proposal team involving Arjan Polderman, Elisabeth

Kessler, and Joan Marsh and led by me was convened, and advisors Linus Svensson, Alison Clayson, Jenny Gretton, and Sheila Evered also contributed. Four months of vigorous writing produced a 52-page proposal covering the main ideas behind the work, details of the objectives, contribution to the co-ordination of high quality research and the development of the ERA, quality and effectiveness of the action, overall strategy of the work plan, timing of the work packages, specification and interdependency of the work packages, management structure and procedures, organizational structure, appropriateness and justification of the organization, responsibility for individual work packages, personal information on the coordinator and on the consortium as a whole, background information about EASE, list of work package leaders, resources to be committed, expected impacts as listed in the EC's work programme, how the project would contribute towards these impacts, steps needed to bring about these impacts, why this project requires a European approach, assumptions and external factors determining impacts, spreading excellence, exploiting results, disseminating knowledge, and a discussion of relevant ethical issues.

We felt pleased with ourselves because we had crafted what we thought was a compelling argument for enlarging contacts within the European science editing community and at the same time boosting EASE. The response from the EC, which came in August 2007, was therefore very disappointing. "The proposal is not in scope with the ... work programme ... The objective of this call is to stimulate and intensify the coordination and cooperation initiatives with and between relevant [research] organizations to enhance further development of ERA ... The proposal does not include any of the relevant [examples of] organizations as described [in the published work programme] ... or other organizations of equivalent relevance at the European level ... Therefore, it is impossible to judge if it [EASE] fulfils the requirement of call. All the outcomes of this proposal are limited to the science editors community. Beyond that, major simulation or intensification of coordination and cooperation activities is unlikely to happen from this proposal on a broader European level in the context of ERA."

So, EASE is apparently not a valued organization within European science and the ERA can get by nicely without state-of-the-art science editing. Nonsense, of course. We lose this one but we live to fight another day.

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Articles

Abstracts of research articles: problems of translation

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Abstract

The most important problems related to translation of abstracts of research articles into English are the shortage of professional scientific translators and the insufficient knowledge of non-native-speaker researchers about the proper style and structure of scientific abstracts in English. In this paper special attention is paid to the differences between scholarly registers in English (which is classified as a writer-responsible language: writers are responsible for making their texts understandable) and in several Central European languages (which are reader-responsible: authors do not need to write understandably because readers are responsible for understanding). Possible solutions to these problems are close cooperation between author and translator, postgraduate courses in academic writing in English, and wider use of structured abstracts.

Introduction

The ability to put across one's discoveries to a wider public is essential in both science and the humanities, because research is of little value if its results are not known to those who need them. The basic tools of scientific communication worldwide are research articles and their abstracts. When the results are important internationally rather than locally, English is typically used as the scientific lingua franca. Consequently, most research articles are published in English, or at least are provided with English abstracts. The title and the abstract constitute the pivotal elements of each research article, because, as Swales (1990) put it, "of those who will read the title, only some will read the abstract, and of those who read the abstract only some will read the article itself".

Many researchers do not pay enough attention to what they write in the abstract. Some abstracts are very long and contain a lot of unimportant details; others are laconic and provide hardly any information. Abstracts often contain complicated sentences, so that even specialists find them difficult to understand. Such problems are particularly common in abstracts of research articles written by non-native speakers of English and translated into English by the author or a translator.

This paper discusses some of the problems related to the translation of abstracts of research articles into English. It is based on a review of linguistic publications concerning scientific translation, English scientific style and format, and cultural differences between English and other languages.

Problems of available options of translation

Ideally, translators of scientific texts should have a knowledge of the source language, a knowledge of the target language and an expert knowledge of some branch of science (Gould 1966). Tybulewicz (1989:88-9) believes that even more qualifications are necessary:

If a person is to translate into English, he should have received his scientific or technical education in an English-speaking country. The educational qualifications must be supplemented by a current knowledge of the subject ... Additionally translators would be expected to have many months or preferably years of translating experience so that they have a satisfactory level of proficiency ... In addition to all this, one requires a particular knack or skill which is inborn."

In Poland, in Spain (Bloor 1984), and probably in many other countries, only a few people have all these qualifications. Because of this, non-native speakers of English who write research articles generally have to choose between four options.

Firstly, they may be tempted to use machine translation, and then discover that the produced text is usually clumsy and incomprehensible.

Secondly, they may have the text translated by a person who is proficient in this language but does not know the specialized vocabulary and, in many cases, does not understand the message of the paper. This solution frequently results in misinterpretation and application of incorrect terms.

Thirdly, the authors may attempt to write in English themselves, although this is linked with the danger of unintelligibility and incorrect grammar or spelling.

The fourth possibility is close cooperation between author and translator. Although time-consuming, the last option is the best because it helps to minimize the risk of misunderstanding and errors. Even so, the resultant translation may fail to obtain the interest and appreciation of editors and readers unless both translator and author are aware of and conform to the norms of English academic writing. (Clyne 1991, Schaffner 2000, Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas 2005).

Differences between Central European and English scholarly registers

According to Styś (1991: 59), "Scientific style is plain, direct, and factual by tradition", but culture-specific differences exist between scholarly registers of different languages. These disparities should be taken into account in the process

of translation (or preferably already at the stage of creation of scientific texts that are to be translated).

Investigations into culture-specific discourse patterns were initiated by Kaplan (1972), who distinguished five major kinds of discourse structures: linear, parallel, circular, and two digressive variants. Clyne (1981) claims that although all of these rhetorical modes can be used in any language, each culture displays some preferences. For example, in English the linear discourse structure is favoured, while in German the digressive structure is the most common.

Clyne (1987) and Čmejrková (1994) suggest that these differences result from disparate cultural traditions. "The Anglo-Saxon linguistics, due to its philosophical tradition of pragmatic approach to language, naturally aimed at handling the phenomena of text composing in terms of interaction, and even transaction from sender to receptor" (Čmejrková 1994:304). Because of this, using Hinds' (1987) classification, English is a writer-responsible language. This means that in the Anglo-Saxon culture the author must make the text readable so that the audience does not have to make extra effort to comprehend. By contrast, in the German tradition "it is the reader's responsibility to understand rather than the writer's responsibility to write it understandably" (Čmejrková 1994:306). According to Duszak (1994:294) this is linked with the fact that in German "an academic text should be difficult so as to validate the writer's credentials".

For a long time the "cryptic and elitist" German intellectual style exerted a strong influence upon the norms of academic writing in Poland and other countries of Central Europe (Duszak 1994, Galtung 1985). Therefore, it is not surprising that Polish – like German – is a reader-responsible language. As a result, the Polish and English scholarly registers are markedly different, as Duszak (1994) has shown in her comparative study of paper introductions: "In contrast to my Polish data, the English texts featured expressions which were predominantly direct, assertive and positive, rather than indirect, affective, and tentative" (Duszak 1994:309). The characteristic features of Czech academic writing described by Čmejrková (1994:307), apply also to Polish in my opinion:

The Czech writer does not write simply, plainly, precisely, or in a straightforward manner ... A Czech writer has no restrictions placed upon him or her with respect to adding more and more new information, to making digressions or to providing the reader with as much information and as many standpoints as possible. Associativeness, parallelism and thus obtained interplay of meanings seem to be a culture specific characteristic of a Czech discourse. No wonder that an English text written by a Czech and read by the native English often seems to be obscure and complicated.

Clyne (1981) and Čmejrková (1994:304-5) noticed also that differences in the style of expression are associated with dissimilar educational traditions:

Whereas in the Anglo-Saxon tradition writing is considered a skill that can be taught, acquired, tested

and qualified, in the Czech stylistic tradition the creation of texts is viewed rather as a result of an individual gift or talent ... Instead of writing the Czech students take lessons in stylistic variation in language ... Paragraph writing, which seems to be essential to English and American writing instructions, has no parallel in Czech stylistics.

This indicates that non-native speaker researchers would benefit from learning about paragraph writing and the norms of academic writing. These topics could be included, for example, in doctoral curricula.

However, the differences described above are generalizations. On the one hand, Rounds (1982) found considerable amounts of hedging in English abstracts, and Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2005) reported that some hedging tactics (such as the use of extraposition, e.g. beginning a sentence with "It is possible that") are applied more often in research articles by native speakers of English than by non-native speakers. On the other hand, "There appear to be some disciplines (e.g. mathematics, engineering) in which German scientists have adopted a basically linear discourse structure. This may be conditioned by the discipline or by the leadership in the discipline of English speakers. In other fields of science (e.g. chemistry), the non-linear structure is quite common in German" (Clyne 1981:64). These disparities are probably the reason why Styś (1991), who compared Polish and English medical research articles, concluded that "The two languages share one general structural pattern [of scientific reports] as well as the same prevailing paragraph structure" (Styś 1991:106).

Language and structure of English abstracts

If a translated informative text is to communicate effectively, it must meet target-language standards concerning not only register but also content schemata (House 1977). Although abstracts may be regarded as parts of research articles, most often they act as independent discourses (Van Dijk 1980). Consequently, abstracts are treated here as a separate text variety.

According to most dictionaries, the essence of abstracts consists in summarizing. As Hind (1989:351) put it, "The abstract should be a selective and organized presentation of the original's contents ... Clarity and accuracy are important, but brevity is paramount." Both the language and the content schema of this text variety seem to be highly conventional.

A comprehensive description of the language of English abstracts was formulated by Graetz (1985:125):

The abstract is characterized by the use of past tense, third person, passive, and the non-use of negatives. It avoids subordinate clauses, uses phrases instead of clauses, words instead of phrases. It avoids abbreviation, jargon, symbols and other language shortcuts which might lead to confusion. It is written in tightly worded sentences, which avoid repetition, meaningless expressions, superlatives, adjectives, illustrations, preliminaries, descriptive details, examples, footnotes.

The avoidance of abbreviations and absence of bibliographic

references and tabulated data in abstracts are widely recommended (eg CSE 2006). However, O'Connor (1991:71) recommends that telegraphese should not be used in abstracts; her advice is: "Write complete sentences that follow each other logically". Swales (1990) accedes that Graetz's (1985) synopsis is adequate, although some deviations from the rule can be recorded. He gives examples proving that non-standard abbreviations, incomplete sentences, or untypical syntactic constructions can be used, and that active verbs, sometimes subjectless, are preferred by some editors. Besides, present tense is more suitable in some contexts (Malcolm 1987, Heslot 1982), eg when explaining the conclusions, or when summarizing the content of a review article.

As regards the content schema, "most abstracts reflect the Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion pattern of the research article itself, allotting a sentence or two for each section" (Swales 1990:181). This agrees with suggestions found in editors' handbooks, such as that published by the Council of Science Editors (CSE 2006:460):

Both NISO [National Information Standards Organization standard for bibliographic references, 2005] and ISO [International Organization for Standardization standard, 1976] state that an abstract should contain the following elements: purpose, methodology, results, and conclusions ... Abstracts of research reports should be informative, giving specific summaries of all elements of content. For reviews and other similarly long and wide-scope articles, abstracts may have to be indicative, simply sketching out the topics of the article and not summarizing evidence and conclusions.

The last sentence is noteworthy, because conclusions of a wide-scope article are often far too complex to be summarized adequately in the abstract. Linguistic literature contains conflicting views on the placing of conclusions in abstracts of research articles. For example, Cremmins (1982) advises to reveal the conclusions at the beginning, while Gopnik (1972) provides convincing pieces of evidence to prove that it is better to place general statements last. Besides, O'Connor (1991) says that the purpose of research must be explained in the abstract only if it is not clear from the title.

The choice and ordering of information to be included in an abstract should certainly be conditioned by its communicative function. Nonetheless, abstracts sometimes perform also a persuasive function – justifying the reasons why the study is worthwhile. Persuasive elements in abstracts seem to be a characteristic chiefly in emerging fields of interdisciplinary research and perhaps in applied areas of inquiry (Samraj 2005). In contrast, abstracts of research articles in more mature research areas tend to lack rhetorical strategies (Melander et al 1997).

Generally, abstracts should be single paragraphs, without subheadings (eg CSE 2006). An important exception from this rule is the structured abstract, which has been developed by Haynes and associates (Ad Hoc... 1987, Haynes et al 1990). It is widely used in medical journals, but

has become popular in some other areas of research. A structured abstract is composed of several paragraphs with headings, such as: background, aim, methods, results, and conclusions. Recent research (reviewed by Hartley 2004) has confirmed that on the whole the structured abstract is more useful, as it helps authors to organize the text better and usually provides readers with more information than the traditional abstract, but also facilitates peer review and "text mining". Thus the structured abstract seems to be particularly helpful for non-native speakers (both authors and readers).

Conclusions

1. Close cooperation between author and translator helps to improve the quality of abstracts of research articles.
2. Authors and translators of research articles to be published in English should be aware that English is a writer-responsible language, ie the author must make the text readable so that the audience does not have to make extra effort to comprehend.
3. Researchers need to learn the norms of academic writing in English, so these topics should be covered by courses available to postgraduates.
4. The use of structured abstracts can aid non-native speaker researchers in writing better abstracts of their manuscripts.

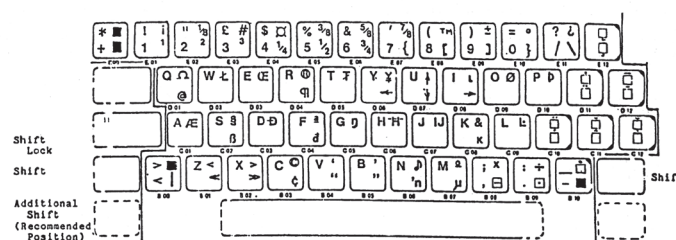
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From the archive - 20 years ago

A supranational keyboard



The keyboard shown here conforms to the International Organization for Standardization's 'supranational layout which may be used in an international environment'. A keyboard with a second shift key extends the range of accessible characters to 342, so 40 European languages based on the Latin alphabet could be typed from a single keyboard without the typist needing to draw in all the funny foreign characters that his or her language does not have. The ISO standard regulates the placing of the second shift characters on each of the 48 keys, so that typists would not have to relearn new keyboard layouts as they move round Europe. (This is only a standard; we don't know of anyone actually making such a keyboard.) (*Information Market* 1987; No.47:3, March-May)

—from the issue of May 1987 (No.31), p12.

Editing around the World

National journals of Aotearoa New Zealand – open access or perish?

Robert Lynch

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The uncertain future of New Zealand's national research journals is a topic of some concern. The journals have a traditional focus on the natural history of Aotearoa New Zealand and Antarctica and the application of post-colonial scientific knowledge to New Zealand's impressive agricultural development. As such, they are undeniably and proudly regional in content, but with the wider role of providing a "window" of unique academic insight of benefit to research throughout the world.

Seven journals of natural science are published by the Royal Society of New Zealand on behalf of the government. They are the New Zealand Journals of agricultural research, botany, crop and horticultural science, geology and geophysics, marine and freshwater research, zoology, and the Society's own journal, the *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*. Their raison d'être is to provide a service to New Zealand researchers by enabling publication of their work in "the most suitable journal". That service includes the means for assessing, recording, and disseminating the results of internationally verified research to the most relevant audience (primarily, other New Zealand researchers or researchers with an interest in New Zealand subjects). To the extent that New Zealand research is a model for similar research worldwide, the journals are distributed to many other countries around the globe.

At risk of becoming irrelevant

The New Zealand Government is the owner of the journals. The government is also the ultimate funder of 70% of all journal content that is sourced from New Zealand universities and research institutes. Remaining work is submitted from authors worldwide. Despite this, these regional journals are today at risk of becoming irrelevant as a result of two main conflicting trends.

The first trend is the increasing demand of government and other funding bodies to showcase the fruits of their investments in high-prestige, internationally recognized publications outside New Zealand. This has resulted in some of our journals being slowly starved of suitable and worthwhile contributions, which have been directed offshore in the hope of "making the big time" and scoring more points in the domestic funding stakes.

The second is the effect of our own efforts to increase the immediacy and awareness of the journals and New Zealand science, both locally and internationally, through electronic publishing and the advocacy of open access. We currently have an open access embargo of two years on our electronic journals, and a generous policy of access for all individual staff from one institutional subscription. Not surprisingly, this has resulted in a marked decrease in our

subscription numbers that has not been counter-balanced fully by government funding. The tacit messages we receive from government are that they would prefer to see their country's best papers be published overseas than in their own journals, and that they would prefer authors pay for their papers to be published on open access in the New Zealand journals rather than provide us with the direct funding necessary to do so.

Let me take a few steps backward to provide you with the context for this dilemma.

Revolution and backlash

When the New Zealand Government dissolved its scientific organization known as the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, in 1992, including its publishing division, the government charged the Royal Society of New Zealand with publishing New Zealand's national science research journals. Since then, academic publishing worldwide has undergone a technological revolution which has led to significant changes in the way journals are published and used. Simultaneously, the amount of material being written has burgeoned and its commercial value has been capitalised by a number of large publishers. As a partial consequence, academic libraries, whose resources have slowly been eroding, have been pressured to subscribe to those journals deemed the most desirable and which usually demand the highest prices. This has been at the expense of many small specialist or regional journals, whose readership is naturally limited because of the restricted relevance of their contents. The national journals of New Zealand published by the Society fall in this latter category.

A global backlash against unseemly profiteering by some publishers of the biggest "international" journals saw the introduction in the mid-1990s of open access publishing, whereby published research is made available through the internet for free. With open access, the cost of publishing falls on the originator of the research, their institution, or the funding body, rather than on subscribers. The open access movement has since become such a worldwide phenomenon that a number of major funding agencies – including such august bodies as the National Institutes of Health and the National Academy of Sciences in the USA, and the Wellcome Trust in the UK – are now advocating its usage for the work that they fund.

Open access in New Zealand

The benefits of open access for the New Zealand journals, which are limited in scope and have a finite subscriber base, are potentially enormous. Open access would allow

our regional research to become available immediately to an almost unlimited worldwide readership, unlike the subscription-based system where only a small fraction of overseas researchers has access to our published material, often months or even years after its initial publication. Many people are unaware of the existence of New Zealand's printed journals, but through open access and the use of powerful search engines, combined with comprehensive electronic journal databases used by research libraries, and inclusion in aggregated subscriptions, not only are the journals made more "visible" but individual papers and their authors are exposed to the most relevant audience, often from the moment of the paper's publication. Such presence and immediacy of material was only a pipe dream before the advent of open access.

For its part, the Royal Society has been pursuing open access for its electronic journals, but only to the extent that current market forces allow. We recently began our foray by publishing a new open access, online-only journal of social sciences, *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online* (see www.rsnz.org/publish/kotuitui/). This journal is intended to be a useful indicator of how open access might work. Our remaining journals have been fully electronic since 2003 and could readily become open access, given the right financial backing. Evidence of their use is seen in the number of article downloads, which has consistently risen every month since their inception. Other incentives, such as our journal digitisation project, in which all our archival print issues are being digitised and available for searching through Google Scholar, and the provision by the National Library of New Zealand for online access to the early publications of the Society (the Transactions and Proceedings from 1868) will increase the availability of archival and historical material.

No viable economic model

The disadvantage for the publisher, of course, is that we are left with no viable economic model with which to operate under an open access arrangement. Unlike many local or society-based journals, particularly in Europe and North America, the New Zealand national journals are professionally edited, largely because the pool of available academic editors is either too small or too busy to sustain the work demands of honorary journal editorship. Consequently, any income received, either as subscriptions or publication charges, will be required to cover the full costs of scientific assessment, technical editing, and layout in addition to the standard printing and distribution costs.

Our current page charges are little more than notional and fall short of the real cost of publication. Realistic page charges, however, would no doubt lead to the journals being completely bypassed by authors in favour of non-charging

journals. Importantly, government funding agencies are charged with full-cost funding of research, and that is meant to include a contribution towards publication costs, if applied for. In reality, however, such funds are commonly exhausted well before publication of the research has been seriously considered, and the publisher is expected to carry the cost of these "oversights". Besides, what ambitious researcher would choose to publish in the New Zealand journal when publication in an international one will result in more kudos for the author and extra funds for their department? Significant income for journal publishing is currently received through direct government funding and subscriptions, but sufficient income under a future full open access scenario is by no means assured.

Too many options are available to authors wishing to avoid page charges. Most journals around the world in the natural sciences, in which New Zealand features most prominently, are still free of any charge. They provide an attractive alternative to New Zealand researchers. We waive page charges for New Zealand authors whose work was unfunded and for whom payment would be a personal hardship. Nevertheless, there remains a natural resistance to page charges by many authors, who regard them as an alien concept within the traditional publishing ethos.

Undaunted

Rather than be daunted by the uncertain future, we will step out purposefully and progress towards our goal of open access. To take the safe option and ignore the benefits of open access for New Zealand science may well enable the publisher to operate in a financially more stable environment, but it would also disadvantage the position of New Zealand research publishing in the world and the service that we provide to the researchers. So, we will continue to confront the problems around full-cost funding and publication charges in the expectation that amicable solutions will eventually be realized by all parties.

The successes of many large international open access publishers outside New Zealand may promote this cause by engendering the climate of acceptance by governments and authors that will be necessary to enable our operations to continue and flourish. In just the last year, for example, New Zealand Government funding for the journals had its first significant increase in more than 10 years, partly as a belated response to the changes in publishing that had occurred over that time but also, importantly, in expectation of the changes anticipated to follow. There may be a few bumps along the way – lack of author confidence, for example, can be a difficult obstacle to overcome – but as the benefits of our goal become more visible, acceptable, and indeed desirable, there is every reason to hope that we will be successful in achieving it.

Reports of Meetings

From practice to impact: consequences of knowledge dissemination

Berlin 5 Open Access conference, Padua, 19–21 September

The latest in the Berlin series of meetings devoted to open access (OA) was jointly organised by the Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Italiane (CRUI, Conference of the Chancellors of Italian Universities), the European Science Foundation, and the Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft. Aimed at enhancing the OA paradigm within the scholarly communication system, this international event renewed the enthusiasm of the stakeholders towards the principles of the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, signed in 2003 by national and international scientific organisations. The meeting was mainly intended to describe the practice and impact of OA initiatives worldwide, in order to foster the free circulation of scientific output. Scientific editors have been recognised as active participants in the process of content dissemination. They are increasingly aware of the needs of scholarly community in developing international data sharing infrastructures. In this regard the editor's contribution is to ensure quality standards in the protection of privacy, security, and proprietary knowledge.

As J Sijbot Noorda, chair of the European University Association's Working Group on Open Access, observed in the opening session, "Open access is both easy and difficult, a clear concept and complicated realities". It involves various topics and interests within the research community, the publishing industry, and among politicians, academy leaders, and information specialists.

Gold routes

Open access "gold route", aimed to encourage publishing on OA journals, seemed to be the most debated issue. Ralf Schimmer from Max Planck Digital Library commented that the author-pays pricing model supported by OA publishing represents a challenge and a solution at the same time to synchronise library and research budgets. In fact, covering publication charges instead of subscription cost contributes to removing access and rights barriers more effectively and represents a promise of saving.

A new business model created by CERN, the world's leading high energy physics laboratory, was shown as a feasible and sustainable solution to gather funds covering OA journals' publication charges: launched in November 2006 and based on contracts with publishers of OA journals, SCOAP (Sponsoring Consortium of Open Access Publishing) 3 replaces the traditional reader-pays model with the author-pays one.

Frederick Friend, one of the authors of the Budapest Open Access Initiative, commented on UK progresses towards OA, referring to work by JISC, Research Councils, and the Wellcome Trust. The common perspective seems to be that of funding authors' publishing fees as part of the research process and budget.

Copyright and other rights

Copyright issues were also debated. There is an urgent need to provide authors with the means to control their intellectual property rights, as managing copyright should be a priority in the open access movement. The initiatives of Science Commons (<http://sciencecommons.org>) aim at identifying and removing unnecessary legal and technical barriers to access scientific information. Led by the concept that the "future of science is network science", Science Commons projects offer integrated solutions to easily manage the legal matters (content, software and patent licences, and materials transfer agreements) connected to the scientific research process. The tools provided are the Biological Material Transfer Agreement Project (<http://sciencecommons.org/projects/licensing>) and Neurocommons (<http://sciencecommons.org/projects/data>).

Rights management policies and costs of producing and distributing materials are crucial points of the reshaping process involving the communication system. In the open access context, the European Commission (EC) plays a key role as policymaking and funding body. Celina Ramjoué from the Commission's Research Directorate General (Governance and Ethics Unit) reported on EC actions to optimise access to scientific publications within the Framework Programme, the EU's main research funding programme. She mentioned the activities of the Commission within the goals and strategies of the Lisbon Agenda to make the EU "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy by 2010", including the promotion of the European Research Area (SER).

Infrastructures

On infrastructures for open access initiatives, German research organisations (including the Max Planck Society) proved to be strongly linked in promoting services and support for specific needs of the OA community. A platform (www.open-access.net) has been developed to serve as a national focal point providing information and technical and legal expertise for all OA stakeholders, and the eSci-Doc project (www.escidoc-project.de/homepage.html) was launched to promote archiving materials in German repositories and of networking digital OA archives.

As is usual at the end of a meeting, the concluding remarks traced back papers' key points and elements raised during discussion, and sought to strike a balance between what has been achieved and what remains to be done.

Most presentations are at www.aepic.it/conf/papers.php?cf=10.

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From the Literature

Improving journals' instructions for authors

Although editors frequently bemoan the fact that authors rarely read journal instructions (and one editor has even proved that this is the case¹), it makes sense for journals to provide up-to-date and useful information for potential contributors. Even if editors cannot force all authors to read their instructions, it is surely better to attempt to inform potential contributors than to assume everybody will understand your journal's requirements. It can also be argued that, as journals increasingly demand transparency from authors (and want to know who funded the work, who had the idea for an article, who wrote the first draft) that authors should also expect similar transparency from journals explaining their philosophy, policies, and methods of peer review. Journal instructions can also provide a forum for educating potential authors on wider issues such as publication ethics and criteria for authorship which are by no means universally understood. Having clear guidelines may also be helpful in cases of suspected misconduct and may protect the journal if authors claim they didn't know they were doing wrong.

Three studies of instructions in medical journals suggest that many do not review and update their instructions very often, and that opportunities for educating authors and raising the standards of reporting are being missed.

David Schriger, Sanjay Arora, and Doug Altman reviewed instructions from 166 leading medical journals published in 2003 (selecting the five journals with the highest impact factors in each of 33 clinical categories plus the top 15 general medical journals).² Schriger and colleagues looked for guidance about statistical methods and references to the ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) Uniform Requirements for biomedical journals and the CONSORT statement on reporting clinical trials (these two documents are considered the gold standard and have been widely endorsed by medical journals). They found that only 39% provided any information about statistical methods, 41% cited the ICMJE Uniform Requirements, and just 22% cited the CONSORT statement.

Schriger and colleagues then looked, in more detail, at the instructions from 35 of the journals (taking, for this part of the study, the first and fifth ranked journals from 10 clinical specialties plus the top 15 general medical journals). They categorized the content of the instructions and recorded the number of words devoted to each topic. The 15 categories included formatting the abstract and references, information about the types of articles published, and specific instructions about aspects such as duplicate publication, authorship, and conflicts of interest. They also looked for guidance about the contents of tables or figures and experimental methods.

While all 35 journals surveyed provided information about how to submit and format an article (with 91% specifying the reference format and 97% specifying the abstract format) only 57% gave any guidance about the

scientific content (with 29% giving information about tables or figures and 40% giving guidance about the methods section). Guidance about publication ethics was slightly more common than information about scientific content, with 83% mentioning duplicate publication, 80% advising authors about declaring competing interests, and 74% providing a definition of authorship.

The journal instructions ranged in length from 885 to almost 19,000 words; all but four of the instructions were under 5000 words and two were over 10,000 words (median of 2283 words). In nearly all the journals, the majority of words were devoted to information about formatting.

The authors remark that "we cannot understand why 59% of journals would fail to refer to the ICMJE Uniform Requirements and 78% of journals would fail to mention CONSORT". They also note "we ... are at a loss to fully explain why so few journals provide advice related to methodologic and statistical issues".

Doug Altman reported another survey of instructions from 167 high impact medical journals published during 2005.³ Of the 72 that mentioned the ICMJE Uniform Requirements, 41 (57%) cited an obsolete version.

In 2006 I examined instructions about authorship from 234 biomedical journals, randomly selected from members of the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) (117 journals) and from Medline (108 journals) together with nine members of the ICMJE.⁴ Of these, only 134 journals (59%) provided any information about authorship. Interestingly, journals whose editors belonged to WAME were significantly more likely to include information about authorship in their instructions (70% versus 40% of the non-WAME members). Like Altman, I found that many journals cited outdated versions of the ICMJE document. The ICMJE authorship criteria were updated in 2001, yet by 2006, in my survey, 35% of journals cited the old version.

It appears that editors should review their instructions to authors more frequently and ensure they are up-to-date. Editors might also consider giving more guidance about the scientific content of submissions.

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3. Altman DG. Endorsement of the CONSORT statement by high impact medical journals: survey of instructions for authors. *BMJ* 2005;330:1056-7.
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EASE-Forum Digest: June-September 2007

The farce of “authorship”

“Does anybody know the highest number of authors for a single medical paper?” This was the question Liz Wager posed to the forum. Arjan Polderman replied reporting a paper with almost 1000 contributors (976), who received the Ig Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993 for publishing a medical research paper which had 100 times as many authors as pages. The byline of the paper is in fact “The GUSTO Investigators”, which makes searching by authors’ names difficult. The investigators are listed in an appendix to the paper (*NEJM* 1993;329(10):673-82). Requests for reprints are to be addressed to Dr Eric Topol, who hopefully will have time to send you one because he is a very busy man. The ISI’s list of highly cited researchers lists 1592 of his publications from 1980 onwards, and he’s still writing papers.

Maybe he really did make a substantial intellectual contribution to the conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of the data in all these papers as well as drafting or revising them critically for important intellectual content and of course approving the final version to be published, to accord with the ICMJE definition of authorship (www.icmje.org/). The reality of authorship does not necessarily correspond to this definition. There are authors who demand authorship: the supplier of samples or patients who might not produce the goods unless he or she is added as an author on the research paper; the head of the department when everybody is too frightened to point out that he or she does not qualify as an author. And there are authors who hide from it: the medical writer who might have put a review article together but did not approve the final version. This was hopefully done by the named author but would also have been approved by the medical writer’s boss, the publications manager, who is not named as an author either.

An excellent article about the guests and ghosts of authorship (*National Medical Journal of India*, 2007:20(2)) is available at www.nmji.in/archives/Volume_20_2_March_April/editorial/Editorial_2.htm.

Self plagiarism

Self plagiarism is an in-topic in the scientific editing milieu. Carol Norris raised it on the forum. She works in Finland, where physicians are very honest and are shocked to learn that scrupulously citing the source of “borrowed” lines is insufficient, even if the lines are theirs. Permission also needs to be obtained from those who may have “wrestled”—to quote a contribution to the discussion from Stuart Handysides—copyright from the author. Carol referred to a commentary by Miguel Roig, (*BMJ* 2006;333:596-7) in which he notes that self plagiarism is not universally considered unethical and gives cutting and pasting from published methods sections as an example. Well, Margaret Cooter proffered that reusing your own words is not plagiarism, so self plagiarism is non-existent. She is not

without some authority on this because, as she pointed out, the dictionary definition of plagiarism is “to copy (ideas, passages of text, etc) from someone else’s work and use them as if they were one’s own”. Margaret concluded that if the work being reused is cited, this fulfils the transparency criterion, and probably also the fair-use criterion that comes into play under copyright.

The arguments against, let’s for the sake of argument say “repeating yourself”, are that duplication of information distorts the scientific record and is especially troublesome when it comes to compiling meta-analyses. Stuart Handysides, however, felt that repeating the description of methods is distinct from plagiarism elsewhere. He contended that the testing of one set of results depends on reproduction of the same conditions to verify the results. If the first statement of methods was precise and clear, why should it be changed, especially if the words were your own in the first place? It would be only right, he went on, to declare that this was what you were doing, and cite the original statement of the methods description, but not to reproduce and merely cite would disadvantage the new reader, especially one without access to archives. He conceded that elsewhere simply cutting and pasting from earlier work might suggest that the writers have stopped thinking about their subject, as the new data should be the prime focus of the discussion and the context should at least be changed somewhat; if not, what was the work for?

Correction

Robert Huggan has pointed out to me that Ramadan is not usually in November, as stated in last issue’s forum digest (*ESE* 2007;33(3):80). Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, which is lunar, so it changes dates every year in our Western calendar. In 2006, Ramadan began on 24 September and ended on 24 October. This year, it began on 13 September and ends on 12 October. Next year it starts on 2 September and finishes on 1 October. Thank you, Bob, for this correction.

Joining the forum

You can join the forum by sending the one-line message “subscribe ease-forum” (without the quotation marks) to majordomo@helsinki.fi. Be sure to send commands in plain text format because only plain text is accepted by the forum software, e.g. HTML formatted messages are not recognised. More information can be found on the EASE website (www.ease.org.uk).

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Film Review

Helvetica: the film

When he was pitching the idea for his project, I imagine film maker Gary Hustwit must have had a hard time. Can an 80 minute film about a typeface be a hit? Apparently it can. With Helvetica's 50th birthday in 2007, Hustwit's documentary looks at how this typeface was "born" and has gone on to become a part of our lives without us noticing. Helvetica type has infiltrated corporate logos, signage, and advertising worldwide.

The film is a series of interviews with designers and typographers—people whose work surrounds us but we've often never heard of them. Not an action packed narrative you'd think, but because of neat editing, a funky sound track, and great shots of cityscapes in the United States and all over Europe, it's riveting.

Helvetica was developed in 1957 by Swiss designers Max Miedinger and Eduard Hoffmann, who were looking for a typeface that would embody the principles of modernism—something clear, neutral, and elegant. When the font was marketed internationally in 1961 the world loved it, and judging by the amount of use Helvetica still gets, you'd think it still does. Yet there's more to this ubiquitous typeface than meets the eye. It's controversial.

The people who work with type are a passionate bunch. One interviewee was Massimo Vignelli, who used Helvetica to design the American Airlines logo in 1966. Forty years later the logo remains unchanged. He explains that "the life of a designer is a life of fight, fight against ugliness just like a doctor fights against disease." With such strong feelings abounding, trouble occurred when the graphic design world became divided over Helvetica's aesthetic qualities and social connotations. They loved it or hated it.

The rebellion against Helvetica began in the 1970s and '80s with graphic designers using typefaces that were more



expressive. Record cover designer Paula Scher said, "If you used it [Helvetica] that meant you were in favour of the Vietnam war." David Carson, one of the most influential graphic designers of the 1990s, had similar views on Helvetica. His experimental use of typefaces even included converting text into the unreadable Dingbats font.

Who is right about Helvetica? Who knows? But it's everywhere, and it looks like it's here to stay, so perhaps we should take time to watch this clever documentary. The DVD is out in November, and you can find out more on the film's website: www.helveticafilm.com/.

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From the editors' desks, May 1987

Data Protection Act 1984

The secretariat now has a computer, an Amstrad PC-1512, and the EASE mailing list will be transferred to the appropriate disks shortly. In order to comply with the provisions of the UK Data Protection Act 1984, the holders of such information are required to ask those listed if they have any objection to the information being thus recorded. Any EASE member who does not wish to have his or her name, address, date of joining EASE and subscription status held in this form should advise the Secretary-Treasurer accordingly.

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 November 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.

New global science gateway

www.worldwidescience.org

A new online global gateway to science information has now been opened by the US Department of Energy, the British Library, and eight other participating countries. WorldWideScience.org uses federated search technology to give citizens, researchers, and anyone interested in science the capability to search science portals that are not easily accessible through popular search technology. It will use existing technology to search vast collections of science information distributed across the globe, enabling much-needed access to smaller, less well-known sources of science. As WorldWideScience.org grows, it will give access to the research results of any nation in any language.

European academy for scientific explainers

<http://ease.infm.it/index.html>

We all know what EASE is, but did you know that there is another EASE on the web?? It is the European Academy of Scientific Explainers, representing a project based in Genoa, Italy, involving many and various scientific centres throughout Europe. The Science Festival of Genoa (www.festivalscienza.it/it/home.php) proposes a training programme for graduates and researchers with the core skills and personal awareness development inherent in the new professional figure of Scientific Explainer.

Most-cited geology papers

www.thomson.com/content/pr/sci/229867

Thomson Scientific has analysed 10 years of geology research and found that larger institutions generally tend

to have higher total citations since they publish more articles. Among the top 10 most highly cited institutions (each cited more than 11,000 times), six are located in the United States – first is the US Geological Survey with 23,172 citations; the others are in China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom. *Geology* is the most cited journal, with 116,069 citations.

All-in-one search engine debuts in UK

www.webfetch.com

Infospace launched an all-in-one search engine called WebFetch, hailed as searching the entire web. Using just one engine leaves a huge amount of relevant content unseen, but combining results from various engines increases the likelihood of relevant search results. WebFetch provides the top results from the biggest and best search engines including Google, Yahoo!, MSN Live search, and Ask.com, along with smaller and more specialist engines like blinkx and Kelkoo. WebFetch also allows users to personalise their search using advanced tools and settings.

Fishing for words on the net

<http://term-minator.it/>

Search definitions, proverbs, abbreviations, acronyms, portals, literary texts, bibliographies, museums ... and much more – in English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian.

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Springer Open Choice offers to make authors' articles made available with full open access for a basic fee, or

“article processing charge”. Authors who choose open access in Springer's programme will not be required to transfer their copyright to Springer. All articles will be peer-reviewed, professionally produced, and available both in print and in electronic versions on SpringerLink. In addition, every article will be registered in CrossRef and included in the appropriate Abstracting and Indexing services.

EBSCO Launches Data-Rich E-Journal Reference Tool

support.epnet.com/support_news/detail.php?id=394&page=

To assist editors and librarians in tracking e-journal changes, EBSCO has launched its data-rich E-Journal Updates feature within EBSCONET. The tool allows librarians to review titles where format or pricing options have changed, view an archived history of changes made via E-Journal Updates, receive notification when an online version of a current print subscription becomes available, identify journals that have changed publisher, view new open access titles, and identify titles that have been added to or removed from e-journal packages.

Fitting urls

www.tinyurl.com or <http://www.tiny.cc/>

TinyURL can be used to shorten long urls that break in emails and oblige readers to cut and paste them into the address bar, or that need to be painstakingly retyped when they are found in printed publications. By entering a long URL in this software, you will get a tiny URL (usually about 20 characters in total) that will not break in emails or postings and never expires.

News Notes

Open access irrelevant to citations

The open access model of journal publishing does not lead to more citation of articles, a review by researchers at Thomson Scientific, Elsevier, and Wiley-Blackwell has found. Some early studies concluded that articles' free availability online caused them to receive more citations, but these studies didn't consider confounders. The most rigorous study, in condensed matter physics, found that after earlier availability of open access articles was controlled for, the remaining difference in citation counts is explained by the most prominent authors being more likely to publish via an open access model. (*Journal of Informetrics* 2007;1:2398–48 doi: 10.1016/j.joi.2007.04.001)

Wikis help with email overload

The average UK inbox contains 2483 messages; we spend up to half of our day checking and responding to emails; and one in 10 UK users receives more than 200 messages a day. According to the reported statistics, the number of messages we receive is rising despite spam filters, and addiction to checking emails is a growing problem. Some companies have turned to instant messaging and wikis to help. Wikis are collaborative webpages to which people can be invited to contribute rather than emailing documents back and forth (see <http://docs.google.com>, www.jot.com and www.socialtext.com). (*Independent* 2007 Jul 25, http://news.independent.co.uk/sci_tech/article2800175.ece).

Journalists should declare interests

Health journalists who don't declare competing interests were criticised in the *BMJ* (2007;335:480 doi: 10.1136/bmj.39328.450000.59) and in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* (2007;64:122–4 doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2125.2006.02830.x). Goldacre wrote in the *BMJ*, "It is extremely common for journalists to take money from drug companies . . . there are real dangers in being too close: their trade is, by definition,

manipulation. Drug companies are businesses . . . a journalist's article is far more credible than a paid advertisement." And in the pharmacology journal, journalists were lambasted for enabling "disease mongering" by often not divulging that their source is a drug company.

Books' golden age never was

Book publishing is as tough for authors and as focused on profit as it's ever been—but it still wants to produce good books that people enjoy using, said veteran editor and writer Louise Tucker, blogging on www.guardian.co.uk. Although editorial teams are now smaller, with jobs such as copyediting outsourced to freelancers, the number of jobs relating to each book has risen, she says. Blogs and websites have to be updated, internet and traditional marketing campaigns organised, and multiple editions of books prepared for different markets. She says the internet has increased the complexity in the market. (http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/books/2007/08/publishing_never_had_a_golden.html)

General readers trust the web

The websites of newspapers and magazines are as trustworthy as their print editions, according to 81% of newspaper readers and 74% of magazine readers. The UK Association of Online Publishers (www.ukaop.org.uk) surveyed 27,000 readers of mainstream media. It concluded that the brand was more important than the medium, with 60% of respondents saying they used both print and online but for different needs. Two thirds said that compared with information in print, web information was easier to access, and the internet was faster for finding information (*Guardian* 2007 Aug 7 <http://media.guardian.co.uk/newmedia/story/0,,2143367,00.html>).

Lancet launches student website

The top ranking medical journal the *Lancet* launched an online-only offshoot for medical students in August. The site, www.thelancetstudent.com,

aims to be a forum to encourage medical students to become more involved in global health. The site is looking for medical students from around the world who are interested in blogging on the site or contributing or peer reviewing articles (*Lancet* 2007;370:457 doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(07)61204-5).



Clichés aren't what they used to be

Clichés came in for some stick in an article in the *Economist* in August. Copyeditors tend to try to remove clichés because overuse has dulled their meaning. But the article argues that many well known phrases no longer make sense, describing them as a "linguistic fossil record". Old assumptions and new concerns – for example, environmental interests – render some clichés redundant: "Putting new wine into old bottles is now to be applauded." And "in the age of the iPod, no one can be accused of being unable to carry a tune" (*Economist* 2007 Aug 9 www.economist.com/opinion/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9621676).

CONSORT launches new site

The new website for CONSORT (Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials) has been launched at www.consort-statement.org. CONSORT started in 1996 to help reduce problems of inadequate reporting of randomised controlled trials. It's endorsed by more than 200 journals and editorial groups worldwide and now has extensions, which are relevant to specific data, interventions, and designs of trials (*BMJ* 2007;335:406, doi: 10.1136/bmj.39311.654479.BD1).

Governments secretly rewrite Wikipedia

To remove embarrassing historical information, organisations – from the departments of democratic governments to private multinational companies – have been anonymously editing their Wikipedia entries (<http://en.wikipedia.org>). WikiScanner (<http://wikiscanner.virgil.gr>) has matched these anonymous edits with computers registered to Wal-Mart, Exxon, the UK Labour party, the US Central Intelligence Agency, and the Vatican, among others. In one example, Dow, the chemical company that owns Union Carbide, is alleged to have deleted a passage on the Bhopal chemical disaster at a plant it operated; the incident cost up to 20,000 lives in 1984 (*New York Times* 2007 Aug 19 www.nytimes.com/2007/08/19/technology/19wikipedia.html).

Nature to launch in chemistry

Continuing with its expansion into the physical sciences, Nature Publishing Group will launch *Nature Chemistry* in 2009. The peer reviewed title will join *Nature Chemical Biology*, *Nature Nanotechnology*, and *Nature Physics*. The journal will “publish only the very best research from all parts of the world and it will have a strong online component,” including blogs and podcasts. *Nature* has also expanded its chemistry coverage, with additional chemists working as editors to select papers and report news in chemistry (www.nature.com/press_releases/naturechemistrypr.pdf).

Older publications link for less

CrossRef, which operates a cross-publisher system that links online citation via digital object identifiers (DOIs), has announced that it is lowering its fee for registration of content published more than three years ago from 17 cents to 12 cents a record. CrossRef wants to expand its coverage of older research publications. Only 400 000 of more than 28 million DOIs point to resources published before 1900. The Oldenburg epistle dedicatory, dating from 1665 and published in the first volume of *Philosophical*

Transactions of the Royal Society, is the earliest publication linkable via DOI (www.crossref.org/01company/pr/press080907.htm).

Journals' 2008 prices listed

The UK Serials Group has uploaded journal price lists for 2008, which is searchable by publisher and imprint (www.ringgold.com/UKSG/si_pd.cfm?pid=27).



Google reaches for the stars

Now that Google has conquered the Earth, the search engine has turned its attentions to the heavens, the *Times* reports. The Sky in Google Earth project (<http://earth.google.com/sky>) brings together NASA, the UK Astronomy Technology Centre, and the Anglo-Australian Observatory. The user friendly site will make images from a number of telescopes that are already available on the web accessible to everyone. The site can display the sky from any point on the Earth's surface on a clear night. It is aimed at amateurs and professionals and allows users to submit their own content (*Times* 2007 Aug 23 www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/science/article2310461.ece).

Nature's "tiny step in the right direction"

The journal *Nature* has changed its mission statement by adding “sic” after “to aid Scientific men,” to acknowledge female scientists, who are still under-represented in the upper echelons of academia and in prestigious scientific awards. The mission statement published each week in its table of contents is reprinted from *Nature's* second issue, from 1869. At that time the word

“scientist” was not in general use, and in the interest of historical integrity the journal has reproduced its mission verbatim until now (*Nature* 2007;448:728 doi: 10.1038/448728a).

Turkish physicists accused of plagiarism

Moderators have removed more than 70 papers by 10 theoretical physicists at four universities in Turkey from the arXiv preprint server. They allege the papers plagiarise other work or represent duplicate publication. The author of 40 of the papers has denied the allegations. Many of the papers concern an obscure theory of gravity that few people are likely to check. Suspicion was raised when in PhD vivas some authors of the papers struggled to answer school level questions about Newtonian mechanics (*Nature* 2007;449:8 doi: 10.1038/449008b).

Local ethics committees attacked

Local research ethics committees, designed to protect human participants in biomedical research, are being widely criticised, according to an article in *Nature* (2007;448:530–2 doi: 10.1038/448530a). The article quotes research that indicates that the procedures of committees, also known as institutional review boards, are slow, inconsistent, expensive, unnecessarily complicated—and are putting study participants at risk. In many countries, a complex network of local ethics committees handles the approval of research on humans, with an understanding of local context, but these may be ill suited to approving multicentre trials, which have become more and more common. See also the accompanying editorial (pp 511–2 doi: 10.1038/448511b).

Glaciology journal wins award

The Journal of Glaciology (www.igsoc.org/journal), published by the International Glaciological Society, has won the award for best learned journal from the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers and the Charlesworth Group. They praised its “excellent design and production standards and . . . very dynamic feel.” The

Biochemical Journal, from Portland Press, was judged best online journal for being “both visually attractive and easy to use.” And the judges, from academia and industry, gave the award for publishing innovation to Project Prospect, from the Royal Society of Chemistry, which introduces semantics into chemistry publishing (www.alpsp.org/ngen_public/default.asp?id=251).

Hirsch index predicts success

The h-index, which ranks the quality of individual researchers, is also a good indicator of their future performance, claims its inventor, the physicist Jorge Hirsch. Subjective peer assessment of researchers is open to bias. Objective measures, such as number of papers published in *Science* and *Nature* or average impact factors of the journals in which researchers have published, are poor measures of a researcher’s value. The h-index is the number of a researcher’s papers that have all received at least n citations, and Hirsch says it’s a better predictor of success than past productivity (*Nature* 2007;448:737 doi: 10.1038/448737a).

Missing references need provision

Journals should include a section on their websites where relevant studies that have been overlooked by authors can be cited after the paper has been published and where it can be shown how the omitted papers relate to the published paper. This is one way to tackle faulty research citations and their negative influence on the growth of scientific knowledge “Verification of Citations: Faulty Towers of Knowledge?”. Journal editors are also advised to require that authors sign statements that they have read and have attempted to check the studies they cite (<http://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/4149>).

Plain English fights back

The *Daily Telegraph* newspaper has brought out a book of phrases that infuriate its readers—*She Literally Exploded*. Examples include “raft of measures” and the “do” phrases, as in “let’s do lunch” or “I so don’t do smiling.” “End of story” and “she literally exploded” also upset

Telegraph readers. Meanwhile, a well known car manufacturer has launched a marketing campaign that features simple descriptions of everyday items, such as a cup of coffee, alongside longer descriptions—for example, “double-choc cinnamon mochaccino with cream.” The advertisers say that the car is “a simple concept in a world of fluff” (*Plain English* 2007;(68):2 www.plainenglish.co.uk/Issue69.pdf).



Rods, poles, and perches to stay

The European Union has lifted the threat to the United Kingdom’s imperial units, such as the mile (1.6 km), pint (0.47 l), and the Troy ounce (31 g). Since 1995 goods have had to display metric quantities in addition to imperial ones, and the traditional British units were to be axed in 2009. EU officials say that keeping the old units will avoid fuelling Euroscepticism, but the UK Metric Association has accused the EU of “political cowardice”; it blames pandering to US industry, which uses imperial measurements, and says the move undermines consumer protection (*Guardian* 2007 Sep 11 <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,,2166724,00.html>; www.metric.org.uk/press/releases/pr070627.htm).

Australia may impede open access

Moves by the Australian government to make publicly funded research there more accessible may impede the development of the open access movement. One requirement has been that all institutions build repositories (see www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue11_4/sale/index.html). However, according to the policies of most subscription journals, the copyrighted version of a paper cannot generally be immediately made freely available in a repository. Because

academics have tended to be reluctant of to deposit their work voluntarily, this is seen as an impediment to open access. Compliance with the new requirement would therefore require major reconfigurations of existing repositories (www.sciencealert.com.au/opinions/20072906-16059.html).

Search physical sciences for free

Fifteen, mostly scholarly, publishers of physical science and technology are offering a free search gateway to all their products. Scitopia (www.scitopia.org) searches more than three million documents, including articles in peer reviewed journals and technical conference papers. The collaboration claims that the signal to noise ratio of its search differentiates it from other services. The publishers are mostly from the United States and include the American Institute of Physics, the American Society of Civil Engineers, and Optical Society of America, and also the UK based Institute of Physics (*Information World Review* 2007 May;(235):4).

Curbing research misconduct

The first world conference on research integrity took place in Lisbon on 16–19 September. It was organised by the US Office of Research Integrity and the European Science Foundation, which represents 78 scientific research organisations in 36 European countries. Little or no regulation exists in most countries to investigate allegations of scientific misconduct and to take action. Formal national systems for investigating allegations, internal regulation if no legislation exists, and international cooperation were called for in an editorial in the *BMJ* to tackle “Europe’s long history of allegations of scientific misconduct” (*BMJ* 2007;335:524–5 doi: 10.1136/bmj.39325.624618.BE).

Thanks to Margaret Cooter, Michael Dines, Jane Sykes, and Sheila Evered.

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

Richard Hurley
rhurley@bmj.com

News from Editing Societies

AAAS

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (www.aaas.org) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to advancing science around the world. It encompasses some 262 affiliated societies and academies of science, serving 10 million individuals. It has just won an award in the 2007 National Health Information Awards Program in the patient education category for its plain-language book *Obesity: The Science Inside*.

The AAAS has bought out a statement urging scientists and patients to support the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which expands federal support for embryonic stem cell research and which has been vetoed by President Bush.

ALA

The American Library Association (<http://www.ala.org>) and others have long been urging Congress to reform laws governing the Federal Bureau of Investigation's use of National Security Letters (NSLs) to obtain people's library records, and these efforts appear to have borne fruit. The National Security Letters Reform Act introduces checks and balances to the use of NSLs, protecting Americans against unnecessary intrusion into their private lives and preventing abuse of power by the government.

The ALA annually awards Diversity Research Grants, one of which this year went to a study of the pattern of use of archival and grey literature in articles in library and information science journals.

In a time when increasingly more US employers are recruiting on line, an interesting study funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and ALA found that more than 73% of 4000+ public libraries reported being the only source of free public access to computers and the internet in their communities. The libraries offered a range of support to job seekers, including help in job hunting, technology training, writing CVs and

cover letters, and setting up email accounts so that people could monitor the status of their applications. Public libraries everywhere, and not just in the USA, deserve more support.

AMWA

The American Medical Writers Association (www.amwa.org) is offering writers and editors a Science Fundamental Certificate Program, which provides medical communicators the opportunity to deepen and expand their understanding of basic concepts in science and medicine. The programme does not intend to provide a comprehensive education in the sciences (and certainly not to replace a university science degree), but instead focuses on the needs of writers and editors, helping them to become oriented in different scientific areas. The curriculum includes 15 workshops, five of which are termed "specialty workshops" (drug interactions, pharmacokinetics, understanding and reporting the results of routine clinical laboratory tests, basic immunology, and an introduction to the nervous system). The "general workshops" include workshops on genetics, molecular biology, biomedical research design, statistics, reporting correlation and regression analyses, and elements of medical terminology. After completion of the programme, participants should have a better knowledge base and improved skills, and be better able to achieve their professional and personal goals.

ALPSP

The Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (<http://alpsp.org>) has announced the launch of "ALPSP Author Choice", an optional open access model for its journal, *Learned Publishing*, whereby authors can choose to make the online version of their article freely available to all immediately on publication. *Learned Publishing* already provides "delayed open access" as all papers can be accessed

free of charge 12 months after publication. The open access option is being tested by ALPSP to see whether it provides a viable way of sustaining the costs of peer review, editing, and other aspects of journal publication. The trial will run for 12 months and will then be reviewed by ALPSP Council. I look forward to reading about their findings and conclusions in due course.

Together with the International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers, ALPSP has been working on draft "safe harbour" guidelines for orphan works, material that is copyrighted but whose owners may be impossible to identify or locate. The uncertainty about copyright ownership means that potentially important work goes unused. The draft guidelines require that users of "orphan works" demonstrate they have made a reasonably diligent, good faith search for the copyright owner and include clear and adequate attribution to the original work/author. If a copyright owner is subsequently identified, users must pay a reasonable royalty and ensure that there is no further re-use of the copyright work without agreement with the copyright holder. Several major publishers (such as, BMJ Publishing Group, Elsevier, John Wiley & Sons, Oxford University Press) have agreed with the provisions of these guidelines.

CASW

The Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (<http://casw.org>) is committed to improving the quality of science news reaching the public. It develops and funds programmes to help reporters and writers produce accurate and informative stories about developments in science, technology, medicine, and the environment. CASW's contribution to science writing was recognized when it received the prestigious public service award of the National Science Board in 2003.

At its "New Horizons briefing", which has been held annually since

1963, CASW brings distinguished scientists from various of disciplines together with journalists and science writers for an intensive four-day exploration of seminal developments in science, medicine, technology, and the environment.

CSE

The Council of Science Editors (www.councilscienceditors.org) continues its series of Global Theme Issues with a call for participation in this year's theme on Poverty and Human Development. At the time of writing, 230 international journals have agreed to participate by publishing new original research, review articles, editorials, perspectives, etc about poverty and human development. An event sponsored by the Fogarty International Center, the National Library of Medicine, and the CSE will be held to promote the Global Theme Issue.

Have I mentioned before that CSE publishes a series of thumbnail booklets on issues of interest to science editors? Those currently available are: *The Publication Process at Biomedical Journals*, *Levels of Technical Editing*, *Posters and Poster Sessions*, *Editing Science Graphs*, and *Editing Grant Proposals*.

Science writing

If you're interested in becoming a science writer, take a look at the websites for the National Association of Science Writers (a US organization; www.nasw.org), the Association of British Science Writers (www.absw.org.uk), and the Australian Science Communicators (www.asc.asn.au) and scroll through their links for resources or information about science writing (although the Australian site was down for maintenance when I had a look [and on 20.09]).

I spent much too much time browsing the links of the "Online resources for science writers" of the US association. Many of you may already be familiar with the AlphaGalileo, EurekAlert, or News@Nature sites, to mention but a few, but I wasn't.

ISO

The International Organization for Standardization (www.iso.org) has published a new version of the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) based on the international standard ISO 3297:2007. It meets the need in the digital environment to collocate and differentiate media versions by setting up a new category of "continuing resources" to encompass new kinds of resources, such as updating websites as well as traditional serials. The "linking ISSN" (ISSN-L) has been introduced for the purpose of supporting services that offer search and delivery functionality across all media versions.

The draft standard *ISO/IEC DIS 29500, Information technology – Office Open XML file formats* failed to achieve the required number of votes of approval. ISO/IEC DIS 29500 was a proposed standard for word-processing documents, presentations, and spreadsheets for implementation by multiple applications on multiple platforms. In support of its proposal, Microsoft argued that the shift to an XML file format and the publication of a new format as an open standard would allow for better data management, accessibility, interoperability, and data recovery. Such a standard would ensure the long-term preservation of documents created over the past 20 years with programs that are becoming incompatible with continuing advances in the IT field. Ecma International, a European standards body that focuses on information and communication technology, has defined Office Open XML's vocabularies and document representation and packaging as ECMA standard 376.

EMAME

Dr Farrokh Habibzadeh, who reported on the First National Conference on Medical Editing in Pakistan in the last issue of *ESE*, drew my attention to the Eastern Mediterranean Association of Medical Editors (www.emro.who.int/EMAME). The Association, which is closely affiliated with the

World Health Organization, is a non-governmental, non-partisan, and non-profit organization to support and promote medical journalism in the Eastern Mediterranean Region by fostering networking, education, discussion, and the exchange of information and knowledge. It has many specific objectives, among which are "the promotion of research in peer review and medical editing" and "the promotion of free access or special access to medical journals in underdeveloped countries, such as the HINARI initiative."

More than 400 medical journals in different languages are published in the region. To improve the quality of biomedical publication in the region, the Association recently held a "train the trainers" course on "Writing a journal article – and getting it published". The Association holds regional conferences every two years, the latest one in Shiraz in 2006. If you are planning to attend the next conference, to be held in Bahrain in 2008, would you be willing to write a report for *ESE*?

Mentoring

Mentoring periodically raises its head in *EASE*. MentorNet (www.mentornet.net) is an e-mentoring network for diversity in engineering and science. Its aims are the further the progress of women and others underrepresented in scientific and technical fields through the use of a dynamic, technology-supported mentoring network, and to enhance engineering and related sciences by promoting a diversified, expanded and talented global workforce. Comments suggest that mentors and "students" gain from the experience.

The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP; www.inasp.info) is going to test the concept of AuthorAID in a project known as "AuthorAID@INASP". The concept was formed in recognition of the publishing gap between rich and poor countries – authors from resource-poor countries have difficulty getting their work published in international journals. AuthorAID seeks to help

researchers in emerging countries to communicate their work more effectively by increasing researchers' publication success rate, ultimately increasing the visibility and influence of research done in developing countries. When you have a few minutes to spare, do read about the project, which can be accessed under the "Projects & Activities" button.

WFSJ

The World Federation of Science Journalists (<http://wfsj.org>) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization representing science and technology journalists' associations. Its aims are to improve the quality of science reporting, promote standards, and support science and technology journalists worldwide. WFSJ's recent conference, World Conference of Science Journalists, was held in Melbourne this year and was reported in August (*ESE* 2007:33(3):77).

The Federation is asking science journalists to comment on a generic science journalism curriculum funded by UNESCO (<http://portal.unesco.org>) to meet the science communication needs of emerging and developing countries. The course's objectives are to give students a high-quality intensive course in science writing, to teach students to think critically, to increase their understanding of how the media operates, and to give them access to international ideas and practices. It is envisioned that the course will be delivered online or by lecturers over 12 months. There is an interesting article on science journalists working in Africa, Asia, and Latin America in *A World of Science*, one of UNESCO's journals (www.unesco.org/science/).

CSSTJ

Thirty six national, regional, or international associations are members of the WFSJ, among which is the Chinese Society for Science and Technology Journalism (www.csstj.org.cn) but access is easier through the WFSJ website, <http://wfsj.org>). The Society consists of reporters, editors, communicators, government officers, educators, and entrepreneurs. Its

aims are to bring science journalists and editors together to implement strategies for revitalizing the nation, to promote academic exchange, to improve science communication, and to boost social progress in science and technology. It sponsors media postgraduate courses and a biennial conference.

CAST

The China Association for Science and Technology (<http://english.cast.org.cn>) is an umbrella organization for academic and professional societies for science and technology in China and acts as an important driving force for the development of the nation's science and technology. One of its aims is to promote science literacy for the whole nation. It holds meetings annually, with the aims of building a platform for academic exchange and popularization of science and technology; promoting dialogue and communication among scientists, between scientists and the general public, as well as between scientists and the government; and contributing to all-round, well-coordinated, and sustainable development of economy and society.

During its recent 7th National Congress (which, judging by the photo on CAST's website, was very well attended), the CAST statute incorporated an additional objective, namely "to promote international cooperation in fields of science and technology, and develop friendly communications with foreign scientific and technological organizations and personnel." Perhaps EASE should respond to this call for communication.

KAMJE

Still in the Far East, I was pleased to see that the Korean Association of Medical Journal Editors (www.kamje.or.kr/eng) mentions EASE in its list of references and resources for journal editors. The Association was founded in 1996 with the aim of improving the quality of medical journals published in Korea and strives to support editors in improving journal editing.

IPEd

The Institute of Professional Editors (www.iped-editors.org) is working on its accreditation scheme. When a sample editing examination was presented at the national conference this year, many participants were concerned at the prospect of a handwritten examination and preferred the idea of doing it on screen. However, moving to an on-screen examination raises several issues, among are which the cost of providing computers (Macs and PCs) and technical assistance. The Accreditation Board has produced an interesting paper that explores the consequences of moving to on-screen examinations. Members seem eager to take the examination as soon as possible; the first is expected to be held in March 2008.

Plain English

The Plain English Campaign (www.plainenglish.co.uk) reports on a European plain language newspaper. Six European countries (Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, the UK) worked together to produce an accessible newspaper highlighting global warming, with each country producing articles on a subject of its choice. The newspaper covered complicated subjects in a way that most people can understand without "talking down" to readers. Chrissie Maher, the founder of the Plain English Campaign, said: "Over the next few years there will be plenty of decisions made by the EEC that will affect our daily lives. There must be a way that people across Europe can read and understand changes in the law. Hopefully the group that produces the newspaper will realize the potential and use it as a force for good." The paper will be available in the native language of the contributing country as well as in English.

Sources: Websites and publications of the associations and societies mentioned.

Jane Sykes, compiler
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The Editor's Bookshelf

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 your contributions.

ECONOMICS AND FUNDING

Reed DA, Cook DA, Beckman TJ, Levine RB, Kern DE, Wright SM. **Association between funding and quality of published medical education research.** *JAMA* 2007;298:1002–1009.

After the National Academy of Science recommended that education journals and federal funding agencies should identify reliable and valid metrics for scoring the quality of medical education research, a Medical Education Research Study Quality Instrument (MERSQI) was designed and applied to 13 peer review journals (analyzing 210 experimental, quasi-experimental, and observational studies). A validity study of MERSQI and a cross sectional study using the instrument to identify the association between funding and study quality found a significant association between funding and the quality of research studies, providing evidence to support the call to increase funding for medical research.

ETHICAL ISSUES

De Melo-Martín I, Intemann K. **Authors' financial interests should be made known to manuscript reviewers.** *Nature* 2007;448:129. Authors' conflicts of interest should be revealed to reviewers before the manuscript is accepted for publication, say the authors of this letter. "If the aim of conflict-of-interest policies is to promote objectivity and inform readers and the public, we believe a more effective approach would be for authors to be required to reveal possible financial competing interests, not only to the public after publication, but also to reviewers during the peer-review process."

England C, Hodgkinson M, Stamber P. **Not being clear about authorship is lying and damages the scientific record.** *National Medical Journal of India* 2007;29(2):56–58.

Offers sound advice to authors about authorship criteria and invites the creation of in-house policies regarding who can and should be listed as an author. Young authors should clarify authorship rights at the start of a project to avoid disappointment at the end, and seniors authors should show humility and accept other forms of acknowledgement when authorship is not really appropriate.

Keech A, Gebiski VJ, Pike R. **Interpreting and reporting clinical trials. A guide to the CONSORT statement and the principles of randomised controlled trials.**

Australasian Medical Publishing, 2007. 166 p. (ISBN 9780977578641) Useful guide for planning, conducting, and interpreting clinical research; explains and expands on the items in the CONSORT checklist.

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Brunker J. **Physglish: our coded speech.** *Physics World* 2007;20(9):64. Winning entry from a student in Institute of Physics "Lateral Thoughts" writing competition. Discusses the different use of language in physics and ordinary speech.

McIntyre E, Eckermann SL, Keane M, Magarey A, Roeger L. **Publishing in peer review journals – criteria for success.** *Australian Family Physician* 2007;36(7):561–562.

The authors of this article have had many peer reviewed papers published and are also peer reviewers for several journals relevant to the primary health care sector. On the basis of their experience, as well as information derived from electronic searches, they developed a set of criteria that should increase the chances of your paper being published in a peer reviewed journal.

PUBLISHING

Scientists are wary of open-access journals. *Research Information* 2007 March 22.

Researchers at University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the University of Munich showed that researchers are reluctant to publish their research within open-access outlets, even if open-access publications have a higher speed of publication and citation rates. According to this study, academics are positive about the speed at which online journals spread new findings to academic world, but more than 50% of them said that open-access is not well-known enough to use it as a medium for publishing works, and that open-access publications lack a guarantee of long term availability of research. There seems to be a gap between positive attitudes toward open-access publication and its use.

Latin America provides new publishing opportunities. *Research Information* 2007 May 14.

In Latin America online resources are becoming a significant part of libraries' collections and librarians plan to invest in a wide range of resources like e-books, online databases, and journals. But they are restricted in what they can afford to purchase, so they appreciate models offering flexibility to purchase the content they need, in the format they need, for a fair price not subject to rises. Online and print bundles remain the most popular subscription option.

Chen F. **Open access unnecessary for physicists.** *APS News* 2007;16(4):12. Physicists prefer to attack problems without comprehensively reading the literature; the author says, "The only time I access previous articles is when the referee forces me to!"

Galyani Moghaddam G. **Archiving challenges of scholarly electronic journals: how do publishers manage them?** *Serials Review*

2007;33(2):81–90.

Electronic archiving of scholarly journals is an important issue for libraries as the usage of electronic journals has increased significantly in recent years. Two of the most important issues in digital libraries are long-term preservation of electronic journals and their accessibility; along with electronic publishing in general, these are causing a shift in responsibility for archiving journals from library to agreements between libraries and publishers.

Kljaković-Gaspić M, Petrak J, Rudan I, Biloglav Z. **For free or for fee? Dilemma of small scientific journals.** *Croatian Medical Journal* 2007;48(3):292–299.

The *Croatian Medical Journal* was recently approached by two major publishing companies. The journal decided it wouldn't benefit from joining commercial publishers because its interests are beyond making a profit, and setting the standards and education are its fundamental aims.

Kurata K, Matsubayashi M, Mine S, Muranushi T, Ueda S. **Electronic journals and their unbundled functions in scholarly communication: views and utilization by scientific, technological and medical researchers in Japan.** *Information Processing & Management* 2007;43(5):1402–1415.

Assesses the position of electronic journals in scholarly communication, based on Japanese researchers' information, behavior, and estimation. Even if they are shifting to electronic resources, researchers still rely on traditional scholarly journals for accessing information and publication.

RESEARCH EVALUATION

Bornmann L, Daniel HD. **Multiple publication on a single research study: does it pay? The influence of number of research articles on total citation counts in biomedicine.** *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*

2007;58(8):1100–1107.

A regression model with an interaction term shows that multiple publication does lead to greater reception of the research, even if reception actually depends on length of article. The authors say that it pays for scientists to practice multiple publication of study results in the form of sizable reports.

Gawrylewski A. **New site pits 'published' vs. 'posted': Nature Precedings raises questions over the value of sharing findings before submitting to peer review.** *The Scientist* 2007 June 19.

Nature set up a new site, named "Nature Precedings", to post preprints of articles that haven't yet undergone peer review. This experiment will be watched to see its consequences on scientific communication, publishing, and evaluation.

Macdonald S, KamRing J. **Ring o' Roses: quality journals and gamesmanship in management studies** *Journal of Management Studies* 2007;44(4):640–655.

Academic performance is measured by papers in quality journals much more than by contributions to knowledge, and published papers measure academic performance and determine funding. Considering the gamesmanship of publishing in quality journals the author concludes that cunning and calculation support scholarship, and this gamesmanship will continue until the publication in quality journals is considered more important than the content of the published papers.

Moore A. **Can journalists help improve peer review?** *The Scientist* 2007;21(7):25.

Major journals risk losing credibility when press releases are issued with added "spin" before publication. When research makes headlines, science journalists facilitate a kind of post-publication scientific review. Their interviews with other scientists, as well as the author, reflect the collective wisdom and opinion of far more scientists than the number involved in the peer review.

SCIENCE

Davies K. **The information-seeking behaviour of doctors: a review of the evidence.** *Health Information and Libraries Journal* 2007;24(2):78–94.

Literature from the past 10 years that focus on the information seeking behaviour of doctors is divided in three sub-themes: information needs of doctors, information seeking by doctors, and information sources utilized by doctors. Traditional methods of face-to-face communication and use of hard-copy evidence still prevail among qualified medical clinicians, but new technologies in information provision may be influential in the future.

eBooks now available on inter-library loan. *Research Information* 2007;30:28.

The National Research Council Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (NRC-CISTI) and MyLibrary, an eBook aggregator, have partnered to launch a new service called eBook Loans. This electronic version of the traditional library interlending model reduces the costs associated with processing interlibrary loans and allows publishers to benefit from a new channel to market their content and users to gain instant access to the eBook they require. In addition there is no need to worry about returning a borrowed book, nor about lost or damaged books.

Marcum DB. **Digitizing for access and preservation: strategies of the Library of Congress.** *First Monday* 2007;12(7).

Library of Congress, like others, is exploring new ways of using digital technology for both access and preservation. This work will grow as the library completes moving its audiovisual resources into its new National Audiovisual Collection Center. The library hopes to share new developments and work with others in meeting the challenges of the digital information era.

Thanks to Eleonora Lacorte, John Glen, and Renata Solimini

Forthcoming Meetings, Courses and BELS Examinations

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
14–18 February 2008; Boston, USA
www.aaas.org/meetings

EMWA and Institute of Clinical Research
“Publishing Clinical Trials: Ethics and the Pharmaceutical Industry”
27 February 2008; London, UK
www.emwa.org; www.icr-global.org

International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers
“STM Book 2.02 Seminar”
17 April 2008; London, UK
and
STM Annual Spring Conference
22–24 April 2008; Cambridge, MA, USA
www.stm-assoc.org/stm-conference

European Medical Writers' Association (EMWA)
17th Annual Spring Conference 2008: Medical translations
29 April to 3 May 2008; Barcelona, Spain
www.emwa.org

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

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

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

Style for reports and papers in medical and life-science journals
John Kirkman Communication Consultancy courses: London, UK
One-day seminars devoted to discussion of style – tactics for producing accurate and readable texts, not structure or format. Contact Gill Ward, JKCC, PO Box 106, Marlborough, Wilts SN8 2RU, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1672 520429; fax +44 (0)1672 521008; kirkman.ramsbury@btinternet.com

Publishing Training Centre at Book 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 workshops
SfEP runs one-day workshops in London and occasionally elsewhere in the UK on copy-editing, proofreading, grammar, and much else. Training enquiries: tel: +44 (0)20 7736 0901; trainingenquiries@ssep.org.uk
Other enquiries: SfEP, Riverbank House, 1 Putney Bridge Approach,

London SW6 3JD, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 7736 3278; administration@ssep.org.uk
www.ssep.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 at the Graham School of General Studies, 5835 S Kimbark Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637-1608, USA. Fax +1 773 702 6814.
http://grahamschool.uchicago.edu

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

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

30 March 2008, Pacific Grove, CA, Asilomar Conference Center, (AMWA Northern California Chapter Conference); register by 9 March 2008

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

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