Reports of meetings

PUBMET2016 – the 3rd conference on scholarly publishing in the context of open science

20-21 October, 2016, Zadar, Croatia

The third conference on publication metrics was held in the beautiful city of Zadar, winner of the 2016 European Best Destination award. After the event gathering at the Ledana bar on Wednesday evening, the first day of the conference started with a workshop about the EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS) led by Pavel Synek from EBSCO Information Services. EDS is the EBSCO discovery tool that enables fast and simple search of multiple databases, journal collections, and other resources. During the workshop, functionalities and searching possibilities of EDS were presented.

Beautiful city of Zadar

The conference was then opened by the organiser, Jadranka Stojanovski (one of the founders of the Croatian database of scientific journals Hrčak) as moderator, and introductory words from Ivanka Stričević, the Vice Rector of the University of Zadar; Franjo Pehar, assistant professor at the University of Zadar; and Bojan Macan, head of the Croatian Centre for scientific information.

Organisers: Jadranka Stojanovski, Iva Grabarić Andonovski, Zrinka Pongrac Habdija and Ivana Hebrang Grgić

The block of lectures headed by Research Assessment and OA Implementation started with Gunnar Sivertsen's presentation on data sources and indicators for a balanced representation of all fields, where he discussed why a balanced representation of all fields is needed, and some of the problems in creating a balance and offering possible solutions. Pablo de Castro spoke about FP7 Post-Grant Open Access Pilot funding of open access publications arising from completed FP7 projects, and alternative funding mechanisms for APC-free Open Access. The latest information about the Research Excellence Framework and the insistence on Open Access in the UK was given by Dominic Tate. The block ended with Peter Porosz and his "Landscape without battle", where types of data used in research performance management were discussed.

The discussion continued on the topic of peer review and research integrity. Flaminio Squazzoni eloquently described the pros and cons of open peer review on research integrity, while Ksenija Baždarić gave some examples of the experiences of the *Croatian Medical Journal* with detection of plagiarism using CrossRef Similarity Check (iThenticate). Radovan Vrana shared some insights into the editorial job and peer review in the field of social sciences. To round up this section, Vanja Pupovac presented the results of their meta analysis of the frequency of scientific plagiarism measured by text matching software.

There was no time to rest, and the coffee break was active and lively with a poster session. The topics included metadata schema for open research data in Croatian archaeology, human-computer interaction in social work, including ethical dilemmas of online research, and prerequisites for government and academic collaboration.

The day concluded with the topic of "Open Access and Library Role", comprising three lectures. A team from Slovenia led by Miro Pušnik presented their analysis of open access articles published in peer review journals in 2015, Dijana Erceg talked about the repository of the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Geodesy, and Narcisa Puljek-Bubrić discussed the repository initiated and developed by the Bosniac Institute—Adil Zulfikarpašić Foundation. The end of day one was rounded up by a nice conference dinner in the company of Klapa Kontrada (Klapa music is a form of traditional a cappella singing in Dalmatia, Croatia).

On the second day, the programme started with a workshop on Lodel, presented by Pierre Mounier from OpenEdition. Lodel is open-source publishing software for social sciences and humanities, developed by OpenEdition, a European infrastructure based in France, which supports open access publishing in social sciences and humanities. Participants were introduced to Lodel and were able to try working with it by themselves.

Ana Marušić started the first session with a lecture on enhanced publications in the digital age with an insight on how enhanced are scientific journals in Croatia. Liz Wager talked about responsible publication, authorship, and how to get your research published. Lea Škorić gave an overview of publication practices in Croatian medical journals.

After the coffee break, Nicolaie Constantinescu showed the importance of sharing research results as API accessible data and Želimir Kurtanjek pointed out the problems related to big data research publishing. Mirjana Pejić-Bach presented the results of the analysis of most common title words used in the publications of Croatian researchers. The session was concluded with the sponsor presentations from Thomson Reuters IP and Science, and MDPI.

The first lecture after the lunch break was held by Siniša Zrinšćak, who talked about the evaluation of scientific journals in Croatia and the changes in the evaluation criteria in the last two decades. Nina Antičić talked about a self-sustainable scholarly open access journal "Brodogradnja". Damir Modrić and Ivan Rajković gave an interesting presentation on image manipulation and usage of multimedia in research publications. Snježana Dimzov gave an overview of the most commonly used research material among students and compared the use of print versus digital material, while Franjo Pehar critically reviewed the usability of digital textbooks.

PubMet2016 was described as very successful, with numerous interesting topics and relevant speakers, and Jadranka Stojanovski concluded by inviting all to the next PubMet2017 conference which will be held in Zagreb. Friday afternoon was reserved for a tour of old Zadar city, and on Saturday morning several attendees joined organiser Jadranka Stojanovski on a trip to Krka waterfalls.

Zrinka Pongrac Habdija; Iva Grabarić Andonovski
Food Technology and Biotechnology, Zagreb, Croatia

Marina Mayer
Ruđer Bošković Institute, Zagreb, Croatia

Klapa Kontrada at the conference dinner

Correspondence

A manual on scientific writing and publishing for authors

I have written about 7 essays for ESE regarding the use of many different words, phrases, clichés and other matters which unnecessarily clutter up scientific papers submitted to journals and annoy editors. This is an issue that must now be directed towards novice (and in some cases, even "experienced") authors. However, these occasional essays do not set out clearly or sequentially how authors should go about preparing succinct, lucid and sound papers for publication in currently acceptable formats. The best papers are not only succinct, but have some style about them; these are most welcome when they come across the desk because the majority of papers submitted these days are very poorly presented. Indeed they seem to be getting worse, becoming increasingly stereotyped. To some extent the conventional format restricts authors in this way, but good authors can comply and still have style.

Editors often receive papers that can be scientifically sound, but are poorly presented often because the English is weak and many of the arguments are unclear. Unfortunately this means that they are likely to be rejected, editors usually being reluctant to pass them out to peer-reviewers (ie unless their policy is to send all papers out). Editing a paper to make it more comprehensible and presentable can be a tedious and time-consuming task for an editor running a busy journal; few are prepared to take on the task, particularly as the number of papers being submitted increases.

However, there are several ways to get round these problems. One is to get authors to find good native English speakers to help them redraft their papers before submission and present their arguments more cogently. A second is to refer the authors to a company that specialises in editing difficult papers. A third is to advise them to find good books and articles on scientific writing to learn how to write a good paper. The fourth is to promote the training (notably of researchers) in the art of scientific writing along with a thorough insight into the sequence of steps from submission to publication, to include such matters as copyright, ethics and, *inter alia*, conflicts of interest. In a recent article for *The Biologist*,[1] I draw attention to the almost complete lack of training in both these regards in institutions worldwide. In brief, a comprehensive approach to the whole business of scientific writing *and* publication needs to be available to all scientists and doctors in the biomedical world (as also in other disciplines).