

News Notes

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Some of these items are taken from the EASE Journal Blog (<http://esebookshelf.blogspot.com>) where full URLs may be found

Romanian anti-plagiarism initiative

Following some prominent plagiarism cases implicating government ministers and leading academics, a group of Romanian scientists has decided to respond to what they see as a culture of plagiarism. Their aim is simple: “to help reform and restore confidence in the Romanian research and education system”. The researchers have launched an online service called Integru (www.integru.org), which catalogues and publicises cases of plagiarism and other misconduct in Romania, alongside commentaries from independent reviewers. Contributions and support are sought from scientists worldwide. The project’s editorial team will remain anonymous, due to political tension surrounding this issue. A news story in *Nature* (15 August 2012) explains how Romania’s National Ethics Council, tasked with raising standards in universities, was dismissed on 8 June, and reconstituted with government-appointed members, who apparently overturned or suppressed a number of ongoing cases.

ImpactStory

Formally known as Total-impact, ImpactStory (impactstory.org) is an altmetric aggregator that traces the ‘engagement’ (cited, saved, recommended, ‘liked’) of research, using information from a range of open repositories, databases, social media, link aggregators and other sources. The change in name reflected a desire to move away from data gathering to story telling. As well as looking at non-traditional metrics and audiences, the site also allows you

to assess the impact of non-traditional research output, such as datasets, blog posts and software. You can search by article or researcher, and it’s free for all. A not-for-profit project funded by the Open Society Foundation (www.soros.org) and the Alfred P Sloan Foundation (sloan.org), ImpactStory is in early development, and its developers urge caution in interpreting the data. And as they say on the site: “Metrics are only one part of the story. Look at the research artifact for yourself and talk about it with informed colleagues.”

National Punctuation Day

Did you know that 24 September was National Punctuation Day in the United States? This day was created to “celebrate the lowly comma, correctly used quotations marks, and other proper uses of periods, semicolons, and the ever-mysterious ellipsis”. In celebration of this, you may like to ‘enjoy’ these blogs that focus on particular punctuation marks: www.apostrophecatastrophe.com, www.unnecessaryquotes.com and excessiveexclamation.blogspot.com.

Data Citation Index

In October, Thomson Reuters launched the Data Citation Index (tinyurl.com/ease-news24) as part of the Web of Knowledge platform. The index includes datasets and data studies from over 80 curated data repositories, across all disciplines. As well as helping researchers find data, the index will provide another view of scholarly output and could help funders track the use and impact of data.

SCOAP3

The Sponsoring Consortium for Open Access Publishing in Particle Physics, SCOAP3 (www.scoap3.org) has negotiated a deal with journal publishers in an attempt to make an entire field of science open access. The consortium, representing funding agencies, laboratories and libraries, invited journals to bid for three-year open-access contracts from

2014. They selected 12 journals, six of which will become entirely open access as a result. Most papers in the field are already openly available as preprints on arXiv.org, but this new deal ensures the final, peer-reviewed versions will also be free for all. The initiative will be supported by funds from libraries. A key part of the deal is that publishers reduce subscription prices to offset income from SCOAP3.

Funding for UK OA

The UK Government has allocated £10 million (€12.5 million) to support institutions who need to pay publication fees to meet the requirements of Research Councils UK Policy on Access to Research Outputs (tinyurl.com/ease-news22), which requires related publications to be available as open access within 6 months of publication, starting from 1 April 2013. The UK Royal Society of Chemistry has also agreed to help researchers publish their articles in its journals, offering £1 million (€1.25 million) worth of publishing support. Meanwhile, a major funder, the Wellcome Trust, has decided to enforce its existing OA policy more rigorously after observing that 50% of funded publications are not open access.

How open are you?

Three open access advocacy organisations, PLOS (www.plos.org), SPARC (www.arl.org/sparc) and OASPA (www.oaspa.org), have joined forces to move the debate on open access in a different direction. They have developed a resource called *How Open Is It?* that aims to illustrate how six elements of access (reader rights, reuse rights, copyright, author posting rights, automatic posting, machine readability) can range from fully open to fully closed, with many points between. The draft guide is available at tinyurl.com/ease-news14. Following consultation, a final version was due to be published during Open Access Week (October 22 -28, 2012; www.openaccessweek.org).

Retractions watched

A recent study of retractions in biomedicine showed that about 67% of retractions are due to misconduct, including fraud, duplicate publication and plagiarism, with only 21% attributable to error. The remaining 12% are of unknown cause. The study (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 1 October 2012) looked at 2000 retractions from PubMed and then searched external sources for information on the retractions, unearthing explanations not included in the retraction notices. The proportion of articles retracted because of fraud has increased dramatically in the last decade, mostly in higher impact factor journals from the US, Germany and Japan, whereas other sorts of misconduct-related retractions were from lower impact factor journals.

A retraction by the journal *PLOS Pathogens* has provoked plenty of debate because it was *not* linked to misconduct or error. The retracted article (*PLOS Pathogens* 2006;3:e25), was a highly cited research article on the link between a gammaretrovirus, XMRV, and prostate cancer. Many subsequent studies failed to confirm this finding, culminating in a recent paper in another PLOS journal, *PLOS ONE* (2012;7:e44954), demonstrating that the XMRV detected was a contaminant. While the methods used in the original study were sound and there was no suggestion of misconduct, the conclusions were demonstrably wrong, and *PLOS Pathogens'* Editor-in-Chief, Kasturi Haldar, decided to retract the paper. *ScienceInsider* (<http://tinyurl.com/ease-news20>) described how this decision sparked some heated debate, not least from one of the authors of both the original paper and the new *PLOS ONE* paper, who had not been made aware of the retraction and felt that a correction would have been sufficient.

ALPSP prize winners

The Association for Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP) has announced the winners of its annual awards. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* (www.methodsinecologyandevolution.org),

published by the British Ecological Society, was highly commended in the best new journal category. In the publishing innovation category, awards went to Peerage of Science (www.peerageofscience.org), a Finnish peer-review and manuscript-submission system, and CABI's Plantwise Knowledge Bank (www.plantwise.org/knowledgebank), a database of plant health information. A Contribution to Scholarly Publishing award went to CrossRef (www.crossref.org), described by ALPSP chief executive Audrey McCulloch as "a shining example of just what this industry can achieve when we set our minds to it".

Text mining deal

An agreement between P-D-R (an association of pharmaceutical company information departments), ALPSP, and the International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (www.stm-assoc.org) seeks to help pharmaceutical companies use text and data mining of content to which it subscribes. It is hoped the licence will be used as a model to negotiate individual subscription agreements with publishers and other content suppliers.

Journal transparency index

In a recent article in *The Scientist* magazine (1 August 2012), the two journalists behind the Retraction Watch blog (retractionwatch.wordpress.com) proposed a new metric for journals: the transparency index. As long-time observers of how, why and when retractions occur, Adam Marcus and Ivan Oransky believe that "lack of transparency serves only to reinforce a sense of incompetence." They propose developing a numerical measure of a journal's transparency based on factors such as: peer review process and performance; editorial board details, contact information, costs, data availability, plagiarism detection, disclosure of conflicts of interest, processes for dealing with errors or misconduct, whether corrections and retraction notices are clear and conform to COPE or ICMJE guidance. You can read more

(and comment) at retractionwatch.wordpress.com/transparencyindex.

Authorship pinned down

The journal *Science* has called for an end to honorary authorship, with an editorial (2012;337:1019) that states: "Credit for scientific research contributions must be clearly and appropriately assigned at the time of publication". This move follows a fascinating report by the International Workshop on Contributorship and Scholarly Attribution (projects.iq.harvard.edu/attribution_workshop). The editorial describes how this kind of authorship is common and can be 'coercive' (a senior academic insists on being assigned authorship despite minimal contribution), 'guest', or 'gift' (usually when a junior author hopes that a senior researcher's name will boost a paper's prospects), but is always misconduct. Journals could require authors to state: "I acknowledge that I take credit for the content of the published work. I also acknowledge that I will take responsibility for the work if questions arise in the future as to its authenticity and credibility." Institutions should instigate clear ethical standards. Meanwhile, an article in *Nature* (27 September 2012) proposes better use of online databases to more fully disclose authors' contributions, as well as the contributions of funding-obtainers, data-collectors, and other key non-author roles.

ORCID blooms

The ORCID (about.orcid.org) system of author and contributor identifiers was launched in October, enabling member publishers and institutions to start assigning identifiers. An ORCID ID is a random 16-digit number associated with a web location (eg <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3843-3472>).

eLife open house

eLife, the much anticipated new journal set up by major research funders is due to launch later in 2012. In anticipation of its launch the journal has made available some already accepted (but not yet

'published') papers on PMC. The journal's website (www.elifesciences.org) features a preview of its PDF layout and an 'open house' tour around the journal.

PMC name changes

UK PubMed Central (ukpmc.ac.uk), launched in 2007 as the first regional mirror site to PubMed Central (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc), has been supported by 18 funding bodies. With the arrival of a 19th, the European Research Council, the service will be renamed Europe PubMed Central (Europe PMC) from 1 November. All funders will continue to require any funded publications to be made freely available in Europe PMC. The US organisation has also changed its name. To avoid confusion with PubMed, PubMed Central has now been rebranded as PMC.

Paleontology editorial standards

The journal *PLOS ONE* has published a new set of ethical and editorial standards for paleontology research, driven by the need for long-term accessibility and security of fossils (and therefore the reproducibility of research)

and protection against illegal or unethical practices. The standards, available at www.plosone.org/static/editorial.action#paleontology require deposition of new species in a suitable repository, reporting to a level that permits reproducibility, and assurances about the ethical provenance of specimens.

Embargo manipulation

The European Union of Science Journalists' Associations (www.eusja.org) has reacted strongly following an embargo that came with strings attached. A recent controversial paper on food safety was delivered to journalists in advance, but only in exchange for "signing a non-disclosure agreement barring them from contacting any independent expert before publication". The paper (Seragini GE et al, *Food Chem Toxicol* 2012;50:4221-4231) was subsequently assessed by the European Food Safety Authority, who noted that "the design, reporting and analysis of the study, as outlined in the paper, are inadequate" and have contacted the author for clarification (tinyurl.com/ease-news21). The EUSJA condemned the manipulation of the media as

"unacceptable and unethical for journalists and for scientists."

This cat is good for you

Did you look at the cute picture of the cat before reading News Notes? If so, you probably learnt more than those who only found the picture after wading through the text. That's according to a recent investigation into an unexpected benefit of cute images (*PLOS ONE* 2012;7:e46362): "narrowed attentional focus induced by the cuteness-triggered positive emotion that is associated with approach motivation and the tendency toward systematic processing".



Image credit: Artemisphoto/FreeDigitalPhotos.net

European Science Editing improves its ranking

We are very pleased that the latest Scopus-based journal ranking indicators (for 2011) show that *European Science Editing* (ESE) is being cited more often and in higher ranking journals. Its SCImago Journal Rank rose substantially from 0.027 to 0.218. Its *h* index increased to 3 from 2 for 2010.

We continue to promote ESE more widely, through collaboration with organisations such as COPE and WAME and through our own website and social media accounts. We urge all readers to share articles they enjoy with colleagues and to consider submitting articles to ESE.

To reflect the higher status of ESE, the Publications Committee will be re-named as the Editorial Board from 2013.

Introducing Tina Wheeler



Hello everyone!
I joined the EASE Secretariat back in April and am a friend of Mary Hodgson's. I have kept my horse, Little Echo, at Mary's yard for the past three years. The photo shows Echo and me taking part in the mini-Greenwich weekend organised by Mary, inspired by the Olympics. Echo is the reason I am working

for EASE – horses are very expensive (ask my husband)! My background is in antiques, particularly antique glass, and I spent years organising antique fairs in New York and London. My husband, David and I left London and came home to Cornwall four years ago and Echo came too. I feel very lucky to have found a part-time job working with such a nice group of people and where I can look out of the window and see my horse happily grazing.