

European Science Editing

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Membership payments

Those of you who have paid your membership fee by credit card and have not yet seen the payment deducted, please be patient. The problems with arranging authorization to handle such payments have only recently been worked out.

The individual membership fee for 2006 will be GBP66.00. The corporate membership fees will be adjusted accordingly and will soon appear on the web page.

Another step forward

The updated EASE web pages will be operating quite soon (see reports from the Council and Publications Committee in this issue) and Council has also decided on a new logo, around which a complete promotional package is being designed. The logo should appear on the new web pages but may not appear in *European Science Editing* until a little later.

Committee reports

This issue contains reports from Council, the Publication Committee, and the Programme Committee. See them all for information on current activities and developments. For example, Council is becoming even more committed to seeking EU funding for a special project, and the Programme Committee has a new chairman.

Price of the *Science Editors' Handbook* increased

Because of increased handling costs and other factors, Council decided that the price of the *Science Editors' Handbook* will be increased to GBP 30.00. Its chapters will continue to be distributed to members free of charge as they appear.

Topical issues

Those of you who follow the Forum will be interested to know that a

viewpoint on the Science Citation Index appears in this issue. Those of you who do not read Forum messages can read the summary of this topic in the EASE-Forum digest.

Forum subscription

For those of you who do not follow the Forum and would like to give it a try, excellent instructions on how to join are given on the EASE web page (<http://www.ease.org.uk/EASE-Forum.html>). They are as follows: "You can subscribe or re-subscribe [to the Forum] by sending the one-line message "subscribe ease-forum" (without the quotation marks) to majordomo@helsinki.fi. Do not include a subject line or your signature, and do not include any text other than the above instruction; your e-mail address should be picked up from the message header. Once you have joined, send new messages and your replies to other messages to ease-forum@helsinki.fi."

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Contributions for the next issue

Contributions for the November issue of *European Science Editing* are invited and should be sent to the appropriate member of the Editorial Board (see left). The deadline for contributions is **15 September**.

Contributions for the journal should be sent to the Chief Editor or the appropriate section editor listed above. See Instructions to authors in the February issue and on EASE's web site (www.ease.org.uk).

The journal is published in February, May, August and November, free to paid-up members of EASE and available on annual subscription of GBP 50 to libraries and other non-members.

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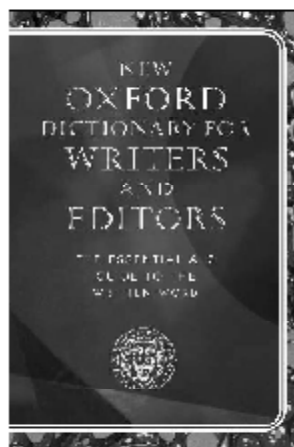


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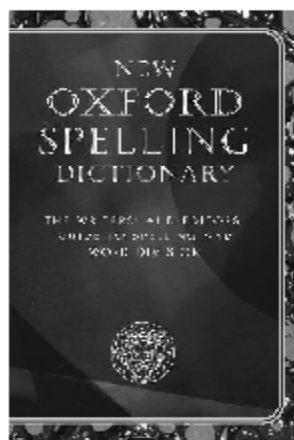


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Editorial

Will local language publications replace major English-language journals?

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English language publications and databases appear to dominate the world of science. However, scientists communicate with their peers and the public in their local language and obtain information from their local scientific and medical journals. The *ESE* series "Editing around the world", edited by Edward Towpik, has told us something about editing and publishing practices in various countries, and medical publishing in Japan [1] is featured in this issue.

Many flourishing non-English publications

Poland [2] has a history of scientific publishing in which the political situation played a part. Until the fall of the Berlin Wall, editorial activities were the preserve of academics, while logistics and circulation were the concern of state publishers. When the latter were privatized, some of the scientific journals no longer appeared.

In Croatia [3], the *Croatian Medical Journal* has received some international recognition, being published in English. However, this journal faces the problems of a small scientific community, with a scarcity of good reviewers and an insufficient understanding of commonly accepted editorial practices.

In China there is intense activity [4]. According to *A guide to the core journals of China*, there are at least 10 000 scientific journals, and a number of commercial databases with bibliometric data. Of these journals, 210 are published in English.

Many Spanish-language projects [5] and databases have been launched. With both Spanish and Portuguese being used, work done in Latin American countries is receiving recognition.

In Russia [6], publications were formerly state-managed and the number of publications fell after the disintegration of the USSR. Now there are private publishers, and liberalism permits new projects, though with some official control.

In France [7], professionalism in editorial practices is not well developed, although one independent medical journal with a circulation of 30 000 is unique in having 100% of its income from subscriptions, with no advertising at all (*La Revue Prescrire*).

Roles for local journals

Scientists don't accept a culture that is difficult to apply to local habits, so they prefer to read journals in their local language. The main scientific discoveries are probably published in English, but in China, Russia and other large countries journals in the local language are the main source of professional information. Education is a major role for these journals, which adapt international advances to local

practices for a wide public. Most learned societies wish to publish their journals even though this is economically unrealistic, and academic scientists use these journals to publish their research.

Quality of local language scientific journals

In most articles in the *ESE* series the authors have mentioned the poor understanding of editing and publishing practices. We have few data about the quality of publications. If quality includes providing non-biased and accurate information, most journals (including the English-language ones) have some way to go. In medicine these journals circulate pharmaceutical messages known as "infomercials". Editing is usually a part-time job, except in China and a few other countries. Courses for editors and authors are needed, but courses in just the English language are not sufficient; training for editors in the local language is necessary, but few skilled teachers have the time to train young editors. Peer review should be more widely accepted and used.

What have we learned?

Many journals of poor quality have a strong impact on readers (general practitioners, for example). Business is more important than science. Quality is important but nobody seems concerned about this. The volume of information will continue to increase, and *EASE* has a role to play in encouraging experienced editors to help to implement good editing practices everywhere.

Note

All contributions to the *ESE* series so far have been from non-English speaking countries. We hope to find authors from North America, England and elsewhere (Germany, Italy, Scandinavia and others).

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Articles

Outsourcing and the future of editing

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If you live in North America or Western Europe and earn your income doing some form of editorial work, you may be looking at the current trend in outsourcing with some alarm. Just how worried you should be will depend on your niche in the editorial/publishing food chain. An article in *Folio* magazine by Karen Holt (2004) provides several illuminating examples of the current outsourcing trend.

Boma, a Philippine company, charges \$50 per page for layout and design, a price that includes sending the pages electronically to clients three times for proofing. Boma pays its staff about \$12,000 a year for a job that might pay \$60,000 in the USA. In case that sounds like “exploitation”, the average per capita income in the Philippines is just under 2000 Euros (£1350; \$2400) a year (yes, that’s “year” not “month”). Being an editor in the Philippines is a good job.

Office Tiger, another example from Holt (2004), is an Indian company with a staff of 1650 with offices in New York and London. Tiger started in 1999 by offering research, analysis and production services to law firms and investment banks. It was an easy move to start producing annual reports and other company publications. Now Tiger is moving into prepress and editorial support to magazines.

Many American and European editors wonder if editors in India can master nuances of style well enough to smooth copy for a gourmet magazine aimed at upper middle-class Americans. Can a graphic designer in the Philippines create the right “look” for a British ‘teen fashion publication? Before you join the chorus with an emphatic “no”, consider that many overseas designers and editors were trained in the West and that many of the firms employing them are under Western management or are partners of Western firms.

Professional journals have been quick to follow in the steps of niche market magazines. Publishers are discovering that instead of investing in expensive software and staff, they can outsource work to India or the Philippines and save up to 80% of the cost of doing the work in-house. One such example is SPI Publisher Services, a Manila-based company doing layout and copyediting as well as file conversion from print to electronic format for professional and scholarly journals. SPI’s revenues have been growing 50% a year for the past two years and are expected to reach \$15 million this year.

Many American and European editors would like to think that editing is too “complicated” to be done well by someone in another country. Karen Holt quotes Barbara Wallraff, a language columnist for the *Atlantic Monthly* and editor of the *Copy Editor* newsletter, who says: “If it’s quality that the

companies care about for the great majority of copyediting applications, offshoring wouldn’t be the way to go. So we need to do a good job of explaining why good, solid domestic editing does have value.”

Wallraff’s Ameri-centric view may be right — up to a point. Most science publishers are not looking for sophisticated style. What they want is nothing more complicated than clear, error-free copy. MD Writers, an Indian firm with American links, has six Indian physicians under contract who write, research, copyedit and fact-check material for consumer and professional audiences. MD Writers supplies content for web sites, ghost-writes articles for peer-reviewed journals and prepares material for continuing education courses. The Indian doctors hired to do the work typically make \$1200 to \$2000 a month — a welcome supplement to their income. According to MD’s owner, it takes only three months to train Indian doctors to write American-style copy.

Not all editing can be outsourced

The first step in getting a grip on the outsourcing issue is to step back from the editorial trees and have a look at the professional forest.

In a *Lancet* commentary on 21st century biomedical journals, Richard Horton (2003) reminded us that editing and publishing are “separate but interdependent activities carried out by people with different training, skills and interests”. Publishers are in the business of bringing content to readers. Their skill sets include marketing, sales, database management and other business applications. Their success is judged by how well they deliver information and by the profit they make.

Editors, says Horton, are typically “the peers of authors and readers, prepared by experience and interest to act on their behalf”. Managing editors help to ensure quality by selecting material they consider to be appropriate for the publication’s readers and improving it for the readers’ benefit. Success is measured in terms of how well they build and retain an audience of readers.

In the heat of the debate on outsourcing we forget that “editing” is not a single profession but a cluster of specialist skills. The range includes activities typically described by titles such as managing editor, book editor, photo editor, copyeditor and proofreader.

People working at the managerial and supervisory levels of editing have little to fear from outsourcing in the immediate future. The big shift in outsourced jobs will be in those areas that can be automated or do not require a high level of English language fluency. A lot of routine “cleaning up” can already be handled with

common desktop tools and there are more on the way. Despite what some American and European editors would like to think, it does not require a high level of language ability to correct subject-verb agreements, check for consistent capitalization or apply house style and XML tags. And thanks to the highly successful export of English-language training programmes, the level of fluency among so-called "non-native speakers" is steadily improving.

Nothing new in outsourcing

The second step in assessing the impact of outsourcing on our profession is realizing that there has always been an ebb and flow of outsourcing services and bringing them back into the company structure as technology and economic conditions change. The three main reasons that companies cite for outsourcing are to reduce and control operating costs, to free internal resources for other purposes, and to improve the company's focus. Technology and the globalization of business are the main forces driving the current wave of outsourcing.

In the USA, Gartner Inc. earlier predicted that 25% of the jobs in the US IT industry will have moved offshore by 2010. Forrester Research predicts that \$136 billion in wages, or 3.3 million jobs, will move offshore in the next 10 years. And these figures do not include Western Europe.

The current round of outsourcing came to public attention when American companies discovered that Indian and Chinese computer programmers were as good as but cheaper than American programmers. Indian and Chinese programmers working in America were just as upset about this as their American colleagues. India had the early advantage because its workforce has good English language skills. This advantage allowed enterprising Indian entrepreneurs to bid for and win contracts to take on "back office" functions.

First it was data entry for insurance claims, then credit card and membership applications, catalogue ordering, stock market research reports and most recently research and development. In the USA the recent move to outsourcing was fuelled in part by a law that allows companies to defer paying taxes on money earned overseas. This helps explain why Indian companies like Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys have seen increases of 40–50% or more in their software services. The call centre business is booming to the point where there is a chronic labour shortage of qualified staff in India. Given the double benefit of cost savings and deferred taxes, it is hardly surprising that other industries have started to look at what outsourcing can offer. Publishing is no exception.

Publishing has been a technology-driven business since Gutenberg invented the movable type press. The only thing that has changed in the world of publishing is the rate of change. Publishers have always outsourced their printing. Offshore entrepreneurs, often trained in the West, started bidding for print jobs as soon as they could afford presses of suitable quality and the staff to operate them. Information technology further lowered costs by allowing data to be transmitted electronically to

remote presses. My *Herald Tribune* is laid out in London but printed in Singapore and a dozen other cities in the world. As the skill level of the human resource pool has improved in "developing" countries, publishers have been able to persuade their offshore printers to take on graphic design and page layout. Offshore printers will outsource these functions to local shops or set up their own department or subsidiary company in a process of vertical integration. The more "technical" levels of editing, i.e. copyediting, are the next logical step.

Limits to growth

While the trend to outsourcing the technical levels of editing will most certainly continue and even progress up the editorial food chain, it will face a number of limitations. First, the number of publications that need editing is increasing more rapidly than the number of qualified English speakers in developing countries who have the skills, experience and inclination to edit. There are a limited number of countries where the general level of English is good enough to take on copyediting, mainly India, China, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Singapore. As more publishers move work offshore, competition for qualified copyeditors among offshore companies will increase, driving up their costs and narrowing the gap somewhat between them and American and European providers.

American and European publishers must also consider the risks involved in outsourcing to developing countries. One risk is the potential loss of intellectual property and proprietary business-process information. China, which produces most of the world's pirated goods, has no laws to protect intellectual assets such as editorial and production software, not to mention the content itself.

Terrorist networks operate in some of the regions where companies look to outsource. Outsourcing means that daily operations could be disrupted by a terrorist attack. A political situation, such as a threat of armed conflict between Pakistan and India, could shut down offshore operations.

Finally, even in this much-hyped age of advanced telecommunications technology it can be difficult to convince clients and potential customers that their information is secure with a company thousands of miles away in a region they may perceive to be unstable. Sometimes people are willing to pay a little more for the sense of security that comes with doing business face-to-face.

Advice to editors

A practical response to outsourcing is to realize that the publishing industry is growing by leaps and bounds, and the need for qualified editors along with it. There should be ample room to prosper and grow for anyone with an eye for opportunity.

Start by paying attention to the current trends in publishing, such as open access and single source publishing. Great changes are afoot, and you can't be prepared if you don't know what's happening. Keep up your membership in professional organizations like EASE, go to conferences, and scan the trade

magazines, web sites and internet discussion groups where these issues are under active discussion.

Second, keep up with the technology. If you think there is something charming, romantic or purist about refusing to go digital, then good luck to you. In the long term, new technology creates more jobs and opportunities than it eliminates. Plan on updating your hardware and software regularly; learn to use new tools and keep up with the discussions on their relative merits. Even at the managerial level, editors can no longer afford to delegate the "technical stuff" entirely to the IT department. This includes "getting connected" to the mobile phone, wireless, FTP and internet networks where the changes are happening.

Finally, look for ways of adding value to the services you offer. As a freelance editor or small enterprise, you can't hope to compete with a shop in Manila that has 20 well-educated Filipinos grinding through 10,000 pages of technical text a month — and doing a good job of it. The question is "Why would you want to?" With the amount of printed information being created and disseminated today, there is no shortage of

rewarding work for competent, qualified, business-minded editors.

Acknowledgements

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How do scientists read and write book reviews?

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Abstract

This paper outlines the results obtained from a questionnaire on reading and writing book reviews completed by 51 scientists, half of whom were members of EASE.

The importance of book reviewing in academic journals cannot be denied but there is little research on how academics read and write book reviews. What there is (in terms of volume) suggests that book reviewing is perhaps more important in the arts and the social sciences than it is in the natural sciences. This paper presents a summary of the results I obtained in a survey of academics in the Natural Sciences when I asked them, via an electronic questionnaire, to comment on the processes of reading and writing book reviews. Fifty-one participants responded. Thirty-six had both read and written book reviews; and 15 had read but not written any book reviews. Just over a half (24) were members of EASE and two-thirds were men. Although most of the respondents came from the UK, members of the total sample came from 14 different countries.

Most previous research on book reviews has concentrated on the nature and content of book reviews, and some of it addresses their academic importance. Few studies, however, have examined how people actually write reviews (but see Hyland 2000). In this enquiry I report on how my respondents both read and write book reviews, and on what they think are their important qualities. (Copies of the questionnaire can be found at www.keele.ac.uk/depts/ps/jimh/jim.htm and more detailed results are available from the author.)

Results

Reading book reviews

Most respondents reported reading between one and five book reviews a month, and they rated this activity to be generally "useful". About 50% of the participants had ordered books for their own personal use on the basis of reading a book review, and about 70% had also "sometimes" ordered books for their institutions on this basis. The majority of the participants (70%) did not read all of the published reviews in either the popular or specialized journals of their discipline but concentrated on reading only the ones that were pertinent to their specific interests. Fifty per cent reported that reading book reviews was "useful" or "very useful" for their research but only 25% reported that this was the case for their teaching. Table 1 shows the distributions of the responses to items in an academic book review that participants thought to be of value, arranged in rank order.

Twenty-two of the respondents (43%) recalled reading an outstanding book review (but only one gave an actual citation). Some of the things said about such reviews were:

It made me want to buy the book.

A balanced critical evaluation.

An overview of a topic that I had not thought to be interesting.

It made a theoretical contribution in its own right.

Succinct, informative, and well written.

It made the book come to life.

Twenty-six of the respondents (51%) recalled reading a dreadful book review. Some of the things said about such reviews were:

Table 1. Items valued in book reviews (51 respondents)*

Mode	Item
1	A straightforward overview of what the book is about
2	Information about the intended audience
2	A critique of the argument of the book
2	An evaluation of the book's academic credibility
2	A comparison with other books in the field
2	An assessment of the book's usefulness for its intended audience
2	Information about the price
2	Information about the number of pages
3	A substantial as opposed to brief discussion
3	A well-known person as author of the review
3	An attempt to position the book in its historical context
3	A chapter-by-chapter structure

*Each item was rated on a five-point scale where 1 = highly valued, 3 = neutral, and 5 = not valued.

Bland and descriptive.

Pointless, uninformative, indecisive, boring.

A mere listing of the contents.

Personally abusive about the author's credentials: a diatribe.

Pretentious, unkind, careless, and where the main focus was on cherishing the reviewer's ego.

Finally in this section of the questionnaire the respondents were asked to nominate from a list any particular suggestions that they thought might enhance the academic standing of book reviews. Here half of the respondents supported the idea that citing academic references in book reviews would do this. The next most popular suggestions (from 40% of the sample) were (1) that institutions should give academic credit for writing book reviews, and (2) that journals might like to nominate their outstanding review of the year. Any suggestions about changing the typographic layout of book reviews received little support.

Writing book reviews

Twenty-two of the 36 scientists who had written reviews (61%) reported writing one to two reviews in the last 12 months, six (17%) reported writing three or four, and two (6%) reported writing five or more. Six (17%) reported not writing any reviews in the previous year but still considered themselves as book reviewers, as they had written them in the past. Ten of the participants (28%) had submitted unsolicited book reviews and eight of these had been accepted for publication. Table 2 shows in rank order the number of participants who checked various reasons that led them to write book reviews. Somewhat obviously, "An invitation by an editor" was ranked highest, but the data in Table 2 also indicate that there are altruistic and instrumental considerations here.

The respondents were also asked to evaluate the importance of the various features of book reviews that they had tried to include in their reviews. The results here closely matched those presented in Table 1 — so there was considerable agreement in these

data between what the readers of reviews liked and what the writers of reviews tried to provide. This, of course, was perhaps not surprising, given that the data came from the same respondents.

Table 2. Reasons for writing book reviews (given by 36 book reviewers)

Number agreeing	Item
28	I am asked to by the editor
20	I wish to inform my colleagues about the value (or otherwise) of a new book that may be of interest to them
16	I will get a free copy of the book
8	I think that the title sounds interesting
8	I am flattered to be asked
7	I initially think a book will be an important contribution
4	I wish to clarify my own ideas about a set of issues in my field
4	I think it useful for my c.v. to have written a book review
3	I conclude that a book is an important contribution
1	I think that the argument needs a rejoinder

The participants were then asked whether they used roughly the same approach each time they wrote a review, or whether what they wrote varied according to the book in question. Twelve participants (33%) did not feel that they had written enough reviews to be able to answer this question. Twenty-one (58%) thought that their approach varied with the book in question (and three of these added that it also varied with the style of journal and the permitted word limit). Only three (8%) thought that they used more or less the same approach each time. As one put it, "I use a basic 'recipe' that touches on all the information that I think readers of book reviews need." Unfortunately none of the respondents took the opportunity — although they were invited — to write a brief paragraph on how they went about writing book reviews.

Discussion

There appears to be high agreement between what readers and writers of book reviews in the sciences think of value in book reviews but, as noted earlier, this is perhaps not surprising, given that the data came from the same people in each case. Such agreement occurs, of course, only when we consider the overall or average judgements, but there were in fact wide variations in the responses to most of the questions. Some judges used the full range of the 1–5 scale on the various measures, but some only used points 1 and 2.

The findings were disappointing if one was hoping to gain evidence on how colleagues in the natural sciences went about writing book reviews. Perhaps I should have asked more forcefully for a paragraph from each respondent on this, rather than suggesting that it would be nice if they could provide it! In the future more qualitative work of the kind described by

Hyland (2000) would be useful to amplify and expand on the quantitative summaries provided here. Some of the overall findings qualify previous results from the USA. Thus the modal results on the usefulness of reviews for research and teaching are slightly different from those reported for scientists by Spink et al. (1998). These investigators reported, with a much larger sample, that their respondents found book reviews to be slightly more useful for their teaching than for their research.

Nonetheless, the data presented here about the qualities of good and poor reviews, and what readers and writers look for in reviews, are consistent with the advice given on the web and in books and scholarly journals (and to members of EASE: Lomax, 2003). The data shown in Table 1 are consistent with the views of Motta-Roth (1998) and Nicolaisen (2002) who say that there are key elements in book reviews, irrespective of their discipline. If we agree that there are such elements then this has implications for how reviews might be written better (by not leaving any key element out) and for giving instruction to novices (by indicating what readers and writers think it important to include). Taken to extremes, the findings presented here give some support for the notion of "structured" book reviews that are prevalent in some medical journals (e.g. *Annals of Internal Medicine*). Here book reviews are written under subheadings, much like the "structured" abstracts in many medical research journal articles. Critics of structured book reviews argue, and I would concur, that such reviews can be informative but dull.

Conclusions

The data provided in this report suggest that the readers and writers of book reviews in the sciences do have clear opinions about what should be included, and what a good review should contain. Accordingly I have listed these suggestions in Table 3 in the form of a potential checklist that might help book reviewers do a better task. Journal editors might like to provide such a checklist at the end of their guidance-notes for authors with, perhaps, additional items specifically tailored to their particular journals.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Chris Woods in the School of Psychology at Keele for valuable technical assistance and to colleagues who completed my questionnaire and offered helpful comments on earlier versions of this report.

Table 3. A potential checklist for book reviewers

Make sure that your review contains:

- An early paragraph saying what the book is about, and putting it in context
- Information about the intended audience
- A critique of the argument/content of the book
- Remarks on the strengths and limitations of the book
- A note on the format, length and price (or value for money)
- A note (if appropriate) on how well the text is supported by tables/diagrams/illustrations
- Any supporting academic references

If the following are not supplied for you, please make sure that your review contains:

- Accurate details of the authors'/editors' names and initials
- Date of publication
- Publisher and place of publication
- ISBN number
- Format (hardback, paperback or soft cover)
- Number of pages
- Price

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Editing around the world

A survey of medical journal publishing in Japan: editorial board structure, review systems and ethics

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There has been growing interest recently in the international standards of medical journals, especially in countries in which the native language is not English. Increasingly, authors are concerned about whether their papers will receive due recognition or whether publication in a journal without an impact factor will fail to benefit their career. Since most journals in countries in which the native language is not English are published in their native language, it is almost impossible for them to obtain listing in Index Medicus and an impact factor.

We therefore set out to try to clarify the situation concerning publications in the medical field in Japan, and to gain a deeper understanding of the policies of such journals. The instrument we used to do this was a questionnaire we developed jointly, with the project being carried out in response to a request to one of the authors (BH) by Professor Edward Towpik.

Materials and methods

The questionnaire we developed and conducted in Japanese was based largely on reports previously published in EASE [1–6], and was also based on discussions that we had among ourselves concerning what we considered to be important points, in order to present a general overview to investigators, publishers, and editors in other countries about the present situation regarding editing and medical publications in Japan today. We aimed to obtain information concerning (1) the editorial board and staff; (2) attitudes concerning their review systems; (3) problems in publishing ethics and peer review; (4) attitudes to language of publication; and (5) trends in publishing formats. This report deals with items 1–3). Of the 45 journals approached, either through our individual connections or through the good offices of a large Japanese publishing company with which one of us (JPB) has collaborated for more than 30 years, responses were obtained from 33 (73%). As can be seen from the Appendix, the journals cover a sufficiently wide range to allow us to consider that the results of the questionnaire provide a good overview of the situation concerning medical journal publishing in Japan today.

Results

The post of editor-in-chief was a part-time job in the overwhelming majority of the journals surveyed (25/33, 76%). Concerning positions other than the editor-in-chief, six journals had full-time employees, four had full-time and part-time

employees, and 21 had part-time only. One journal gave two answers.

In the majority (19/33, 58%) of the journals, the editorial board was selected by the board of directors. In five journals, the selection was made by the chairman of the board or the president. Nine were chosen by the various methods listed in Table 1. None was chosen by public solicitation or advertising.

Table 1. Other selection methods of the editorial board described by journals*

The committee in charge of the annual meeting selects the board
The editor-in-chief nominates the board
The editorial board selects candidates from members of the society who are appointed by the chairman after being approved by the executive committee
(Local) chapters make recommendations
The editor-in-chief selects the board
Local representatives make recommendations which are approved by the executive committee
The editorial board selects candidates who are approved and decided by the executive committee
The board is appointed by the chairman after discussion by the executive committee
The journal committee makes recommendations which are approved by the executive committee

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

When asked whether they knew of any site or event at which it was possible for editors of biomedical journals to meet and talk to other editors about editorial policies etc. in Japan, 22 replied no, five gave no reply, and two did not know. However, four stated they believed there was such a forum, citing editorial board meetings, the Japan Society for Medical Education and the Japan Urological Society.

Because of the recent trend in Japanese medical faculties to require a minimum number of first-name authored publications in journals with an impact factor in order to obtain academic promotion, we asked whether there was a perceived need to have a domestic impact factor system for journals published primarily in Japanese. While 11 agreed, almost double that number (20) said no, 13 of them giving various reasons (Table 2). One journal did not answer and one indicated that, if significance could be assigned to such a system, then it might be necessary.

Table 2. Reasons given by journal offices why a domestic impact factor system is not necessary*

The English impact factor system is sufficient
It is becoming more common (authors' note: meaning of this comment is unclear)
Out of consideration for international journals
In areas which are strongly leaning towards applied science, it would be difficult to use this as a quantitative measurement index
It would be difficult to make a quantitative assessment and comparison of impact factors between Japanese language-only journals and English language journals; therefore it seems unnecessary
There is no point in making a comparison of better or poorer journals
The English system alone is enough
Even if such an impact factor system were developed, it would not be recognized internationally
There are doubts about the validity of evaluating publications by impact factor
A system limited to only one country lacks universality
If it is only domestic, it would be impossible to make it quantitative
It is not really necessary
The impact factor system has no significance

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

Concerning the acceptance rate of submitted manuscripts, 11 (35%) out of 31 responding stated that it was 90% or more, and 28 (90%) said their acceptance ratio was 50% or more.

When asked about authors' responsiveness to comments of reviewers, 17 (52%) of the journals said that less than 5% of authors fail to respond to the reviewers' comments and resubmit. Seven journals each said the figure of non-responsiveness to the reviewers' comments was 5–9% and 10–19%.

Only six journals did not publish any review papers. Of the 27 that did publish review papers, two-thirds said the review papers were invited in over 90% of cases, while three journals said they were invited in 66–90% of cases, two journals said 10–39% and three said under 10%. Seven did not clarify this point.

With regard to peer review, more than half (15/28, 54%) of those replying to the question about the difficulty of locating good reviewers said it was not a problem. We also tried to identify other problems journals perceived to exist concerning the implementation of the peer review system. Almost half said there were no problems with it, but the other half cited various problems: the review process was too long (seven journals), the burden on reviewers was too high because the number of qualified reviewers was small (six journals), and the authors would have a good idea who the reviewers were because the number of reviewers was small (one journal). Other comments regarding the question are listed in Table 3.

The question of ethics in publishing has attracted more and more attention throughout the world and, of the journals we asked, the greatest problem related to ethics was ensuring that informed consent had been obtained (15 journals), while many others also felt that

Table 3. Comments by journals concerning the implementation of the peer review system

No problems (15 journals)
The review process was too long (7 journals)
The burden on reviewers is too high because the number of qualified reviewers is small (6 journals)
The authors would have a good idea who the reviewers were because the number of reviewers is limited (1 journal)
The period between requesting the review to final editorial decision is too short (1 journal)
Selection of reviewers is difficult and a list of reviewers and their qualified specialty is necessary (1 journal)
The editor-in-chief does almost all the reviewing (1 journal)
There is a wide variation in the results obtained because there are no established standards for reviews (1 journal)

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

it was difficult to ensure that the authors had adhered to the Helsinki Agreement (nine journals). Eight also mentioned the problem of plagiarism and copyright violation.

Surprisingly to the present authors, only one journal considered that guest authorship was a problem, and not one journal said that there were any ghost authors. Considering that we have been involved with editing Japanese medical papers for a combined total of almost 80 years, and that we consistently find problems with guest authorship and also ghost authorship, we find it very hard to believe that this is not a problem in Japan. At the risk of sounding judgmental, we feel that the editorial offices are either taking a very lenient view in accommodating the claims of all authors to be real authors, or are not yet aware of the problem.

Not one journal cited any political pressure to reject an article not agreeing with prevailing academic consensus or opinions of authorities in the field. However, problems concerning ethics that were listed by five journals included duplicate publication, adding authors after an article has been accepted, unusually mild reviews of papers being submitted as requirements for a PhD, and failure to obtain permission from other publications for copyrighted material.

In the West, it is becoming increasingly common for authors to suggest the names of possible reviewers, and ever since the *New England Journal of Medicine* included this suggestion in their Instructions to Authors, more and more journals are becoming receptive to this practice. This of course can help a journal to expand its range of reliable reviewers. In our questionnaire, we asked journals whether they encouraged authors to submit names of possible reviewers. Twenty-eight journals (85%) said no, two said yes and three did not reply.

The last question we had concerning ethics was whether the editorial office felt that the views concerning plagiarism, respect of copyright, etc. in Japan were similar to international standards. There was an almost even split, with 14 journals saying they

believed the standards within Japan were the same as those in the international community and 13 disagreeing; four did not reply, one said they did not know, and one said they never had the problem of plagiarism.

Conclusion

While we did not ask in the survey about the budget for editorial office support, it was clear that very few editors-in-chief were working for the journal on a full-time basis. This suggests that most editorial offices are run on a fairly limited budget and that editorial offices are mainly administrative centres. Furthermore, there seems to be no established forum at which the editors and editorial board members of different journals can interact and exchange information.

Fairly lax standards with regard to acceptance are reflected by the fact that in more than one-third of the journals the acceptance rate was 90% or more. We also believe that there is an extremely unrealistically low awareness of the extent of the problem of guest or ghost authors. The approach to quotations or even plagiarism also appears much less strict than in most Western European or North American journals.

The second instalment of this survey will focus on attitudes toward the language of publication (i.e. Japanese or English) and publication formats. In the Appendix we list the journals that cooperated with us, and we would like to thank all the secretarial staff involved for their kind cooperation, which they gave in addition to their regular duties. We hope to make the data from this survey available in table form through the home page of the International Medical Communications Center of Tokyo Medical University (www.tokyo-med.ac.jp/imcc/index-e.html).

Acknowledgement

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Appendix: Cooperating journals (33 journals)*

Acta Obstetrica et Gynaecologica Japonica
 Allergology International
 Health Care for Menopause and Aging
 Japanese Journal of Biomechanics in Sports and Exercises
 Japanese Journal of Dermatology
 Japanese Journal of Gastroenterology
 Japanese Journal of Headache
 Japanese Journal of Lung Cancer
 Japanese Journal of Occupational Medicine and Traumatology
 Japanese Journal of Stroke
 Journal of Infection and Chemotherapy
 Journal of the Japan Society of Perinatal and Neonatal Medicine
 Journal of the Japan Surgical Society
 Journal of Nippon Medical School
 Journal of Orthopaedic Science
 Journal of the Japan Diabetes Society
 Journal of the Japan Epilepsy Society
 Journal of the Japanese Society for Laboratory Hematology
 Journal of the Physiological Society of Japan
 Journal of Tokyo Women's Medical University
 Neurological Therapeutics
 Pediatrics International
 Reproductive Medicine and Biology
 The Japanese Journal of Gastroenterological Surgery
 The Japanese Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery
 The Japanese Journal of Urology / International Journal of Urology (English)
 The Journal of Biochemistry
 The Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Research
 The Journal of the Japan Medical Association
 The Journal of the Japan Society for Respiratory Endoscopy
 The Journal of the Japanese Respiratory Society

*Two of the 33 responding journals did not wish to be listed.

Viewpoints

Should editors train authors in science communication?

In the May issue of *ESE* (2005;31(2):40), Elisabeth Heseltine described the successful history of EASE workshops in science communication and their less certain future [1]. In this contribution we want to propose that journal editors should have a major role in training authors in science communication, especially in smaller and developing scientific communities such as those targeted by the EASE

workshops. Some editors may question the need for such editorial activity, and only those who clearly see the need for training of their authors should embark on such a demanding task [2].

Why train authors?

Big high-impact journals may not need to train their authors in science communication because a) they

receive well-written reports from well-trained authors, b) they can afford to be highly selective and choose from many excellent contributions, and c) authors who produce good science usually also write well. By default, editors of purely commercial journals also don't train authors, because it is time- and resource-consuming work.

The need to train authors is particularly relevant to journals from small or developing scientific communities and stems from an essential characteristic of such communities [3]: authors usually submit scientifically acceptable but poorly prepared articles and it is a pity to lose valid data because of poor presentation.

Although it is clear that increased output of well-prepared scientific reports would directly benefit journals in small scientific communities, it is also true that editors of many small journals with poor international visibility are not always interested, for various reasons, in improving the communication skills of their authors. Although these editors usually say they want to become a part of mainstream science and attribute the failure to be indexed in international bibliographic databases to their small size or geographical origin, they do nothing to improve the articles of their authors and thus the quality of their journal!

This lack of interest on the part of journal editors, as well as the lack of interest in the generous EASE offer of workshops in countries where such help is most needed to overcome the barrier of the so-called scientific periphery [1, 3], stems from the lack of quality criteria, intentional or unintentional, in the research and academic communities. Such scientific communities are often closed-in, self-sufficient and self-sustaining: low quality articles published in low quality journals set the general criteria, because they are recognized as credits in the process of academic or research advancement for their authors. In Europe, the closeness and self-sustenance of academic communities is not restricted to small scientific communities from former communist countries in the East. Favouritism or "inbreeding" at universities, defined as the proportion of teachers at a university who trained at the same university, is especially high in Portugal (91%), Spain (88%), Italy (78%), Austria (73%) and France (56%), compared with the United Kingdom (5%) and Germany (1%) [4].

Journals and their editors can thus have a devastating influence in such scientific environments; not only because they do not train authors (or themselves), but for exactly the opposite reason — they are the key factors for maintaining low criteria, scientific and editorial (Fig. 1) and are the final link in the psychological vicious circle: recognition of low quality scientific reports does not stimulate authors to improve, and the editors do not care to establish higher criteria because they are doing well with their low quality journals.

The solution to this problem must come from within the community, perhaps from the authorities who finance such journals — they should establish higher academic/publication criteria for advancement, and higher criteria for financing scientific journals.

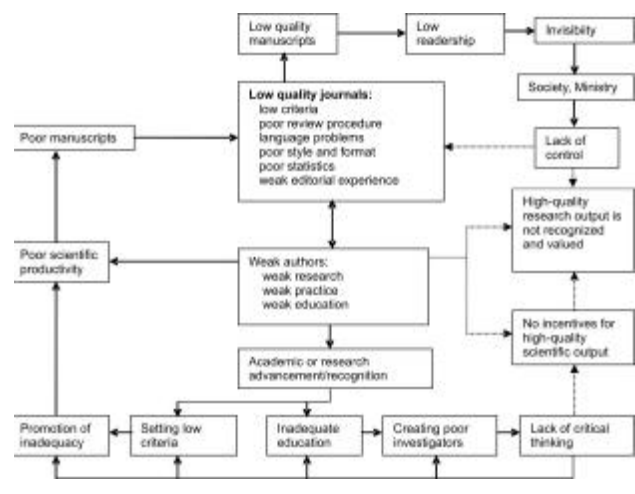


Fig. 1. Low-quality scientific journals as the central factor in perpetuating low quality criteria in a scientific community. Dotted lines represent inhibitory loops. [2]

However, changing research and academic institutions and systems is very difficult and often unsuccessful [4] and must sometimes come from the outside. In Europe, such movement may be the responsibility of the Research Framework Programme and the proposed European Research Council [5]. The role of editorial organizations such as EASE could be to draw attention to the need for training in science communication at the European level, so that this training becomes part of research strategy in the expanded EU.

We agree with Elisabeth Heseltine that editors and their journals could be a major force in introducing the culture of scientific communication to their communities. Editors are usually respected professionals and researchers in their communities and have great power in training authors [2]: they have the knowledge (journals are the essential means of communicating research results), the means (they receive the reports and have direct contact with authors) and a direct vested interest (to improve the quality and number of submitted reports).

How can authors be trained

Authors can be trained in a number of ways [6]: through individual work with the editor, when they submit the manuscript (before and after the review process), at continuing education courses, and by students being taught at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. However, providing training from a journal is a demanding task [6]. It is difficult, almost impossible, to cover the entire population of potential authors. Many of them are not interested or only become interested in learning scientific communication when it is too late (i.e. after they receive the reviews). Also, those in the greatest need usually do not participate. These are the "old-type" bosses, top professors who think they know the subject and who are embarrassed to take lessons from others. Unfortunately, they are the people who mentor doctorates, lead projects, and often write, supervise or approve manuscripts. In a decade of

systematic effort to train authors contributing to our journal, and researchers in general [7], we have learned that such people are not only unreachable but are also the ones who do the greatest damage. Even when their young(er) collaborators are better educated in scientific communication, they do not dare to correct their bosses or disobey their “infallible” expertise.

To be successful in teaching authors, journals and editors must recognize the need for training. Then comes careful and skilful planning, and also endless work, for only partial results. However, even a thousand-mile journey starts with a single step. Teachers who train authors may fail with a hundred pupils, but when she or he succeeds with one it is truly a victory, because it is so difficult to beat ignorance.

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The Science Citation Index and Europe: a point of view

Scientists hoping for career advancement are well advised to publish their work in journals with a high impact factor, since papers published elsewhere are rated less highly. For example, papers by my colleagues at the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, Split, that are published in the Institute’s own *Acta Adriatica* have a low rating. This is true throughout Europe.

Thompson ISI’s evaluations of scientific journals have been widely accepted. I do not wish to discuss their well-accepted objectivity but I would assume that, given their geographical viewpoint, they might favour locations that are geographically close to them. Leading scientists in distant areas may thus be at a disadvantage. To some extent this affects even the fundamental sciences, whose results are general and universally valid. But it is certainly the case in, for example, the environmental sciences. From the American standpoint, journals publishing research on Indian or European coastlines are not of equal interest to those dealing with, for example, Chesapeake Bay. Therefore it is obvious that the SCI database is dominated by American publications. “Thus, both the apparent quality lead of American science and the values of the various journal impact factors are, to an important extent, determined by the large volume, the self-citations, and the national

citation bias of American science” (Seglen 1997).

So it seems to me that it might be beneficial to establish a similar European journal-evaluating organization. It is not a question of competitive organization from another continent, but of competition itself. For example, for film evaluation you may obtain an Oscar but also awards from Venice, Cannes or Berlin.

Of course, the price of such an endeavour would be high and I do not know who might undertake it. However, European publishers could perhaps examine the potential benefits to European scientific output of such an arrangement and find means of realizing it. Elsevier has already developed bibliographic databases which are sufficiently comprehensive and which also assess journal quality. The company could probably produce impact factors for the European scientific community.

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Reports of meetings

Habits in science communication and science publishing

EASE seminar

Barcelona, Friday 29 April 2005

More than 50 people gathered in Barcelona to attend a well-organized meeting on some original topics. Five speakers opened our minds to ways in which scientists and editors behave.

Peter and Heather Brown (Department of Computer Science, School of Engineering and Computer Science, University of Exeter, UK; p.j.brown@exeter.ac.uk) convinced us that annotating electronic documents can be as useful as annotating paper documents. New developments will continue to astonish us and within a few years the portable e-book will facilitate writing while reading or reading while writing. Archiving of notes and retrieving them will no longer be a dream. The speakers compared writing on paper documents with annotating electronic documents and considered writing on web pages and Word or Acrobat documents. They also mentioned new publishing systems and listed new opportunities for proactive suggestions while writing and for lifelong annotations, the digital desk (bringing paper and digital worlds together), multiple and shared annotations, repositories, annotations with data types, and automatic capture of users' needs. The talk also covered some problems to be tackled if the opportunities are to be realized.

James Hartley (School of Psychology, Keele University, UK; j.hartley@psy.keele.ac.uk) investigated the value of book reviews and reported that not much has been published on how people read and write these. He presented some data from a survey of Keele scientists and EASE members which indicate that what academic scientists value most is a straightforward overview of what the book is about. Readers value opinions about the book and do not search for a chapter-by-chapter analysis. They expect the book reviewer to provide a critique of the argument of the book and compare it with other books in the field. They think the quality of book reviews would be enhanced if reviewers included references supporting their views. [See article in this issue.]

Jannica Heinström (Center for Scholarship in School Libraries, School of Communication, Information and Library Studies, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, USA; jheinstr@scils.rutgers.edu) spoke about personality and motivation behind habitual information behaviour. "Personality is that pattern of characteristic thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that distinguishes one person from another and that persists over time and situation" (Phares EJ. 1991. Introduction to psychology, 3rd ed. New York: Harper Collins, p. 4). It is a combination of five central dimensions:

- sensitivity–stability;
- extraversion–introversion;
- openness–conservativeness;

agreeableness–competitiveness; and
conscientiousness–easy-goingness.

Jannica has defined three groups of people seeking for information. *Fast surfers* use minimum time and effort, and access is prioritized over quality of content. They have problems with relevance judgment and the critical evaluation of information and tend to have low motivation and low conscientiousness. *Broad scanners* look for broad and flexible information from a wide range of sources. Broad scanning is linked with extraversion and openness to experience. *Deep divers* seek high quality information and make efforts to get it. Deep diving goes with intellectual curiosity, high motivation, a strategic aim to achieve, and conscientiousness.

Stefano Mizzaro (Department of Mathematics and Computer Sciences, Faculty of Science, University of Udine, Italy; mizzaro@dimi.uniud.it) gave an original talk on peer review and the internet, with an alternative approach to impact factors. He explained that information overload is not only a matter of relevance (reading the papers on the topics one is interested in) but also a matter of quality (reading good papers), and that we have little information on the good papers that people have read. He proposed a mathematical model for assessing the quality of authors, readers and papers. This refreshing proposal uses some formulae but the goal is not to make sophisticated calculations. Machines would take account of all activities that occur through the internet. Authors would be assigned a score based on scientific productivity, papers would have a score according to their quality as quoted by readers, and readers would also have a score measuring their capacity for expressing good judgments. The model seems convincing, as we are all fed up with the culture of impact factors that have never been able to correctly assess the quality of papers and scientists. Many further developments and tests need to be done before launching the project, but the idea is excellent. I hope that resistance to change will not delay a new era for evaluating science and scientists.

Jack Meadows (Loughborough University, UK; a.j.meadows@lboro.ac.uk) studied differences between the sciences in the handling of research literature. He asked the audience to guess the numbers he later presented, comparing biochemistry, psychology and sociology. He told us that the percentage of articles using quantitative analysis in biochemistry was 98%, in psychology 75% and in sociology 53%. The percentage of papers in these disciplines that include tables was 74%, 71% and 65% respectively, while the percentage including graphics is 91%, 42% and 23% respectively. Exact percentages depend on which specific journals are chosen for analysis. The important

thing is that the order remains the same. Acceptance rates by the top leading journals differ between disciplines (90% for astrophysics, 60% for zoology and 15% for sociology). The choice of a journal, when submitting a paper, seems to be based on prestige, readership and speed of publication. Comparison between disciplines is certainly interesting.

[Next year this successful meeting will not be held as EASE will be busy with the Kraków conference (15–18 June 2006), so we expect to meet again in Barcelona in May 2007.]

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Innovation in publishing 2005

London College of Communication
London, UK; 12 May 2005

New publishing models: the Google Print initiative and online developments

The School of Printing and Publishing at the London College of Communication hosted this conference on the theme of innovation in publishing, with discussion panels exploring design, technology and business models, as part of the MA publishing course. Panel Two focused on online developments and their potential to change the face of the industry.

Nick Dempsey of Electronic Publishing Services explained the possibilities and perils offered by Google Print, the recently announced project for scanning thousands of printed texts to make them freely searchable online. He described Google as putting out “content tentacles” into the information marketplace, making publishers think again about their approach to what they consider their intellectual assets. Each of Google’s initiatives challenges a different publishing sector: Google Local the Yellow Pages, Google News the news aggregators, and Google Scholar the aggregators of scholarly journal information, for example. Now, one of these tentacles, Google Print, is seen as a threat to the general publishing sector (see <http://print.google.com/>).

Nigel Newton of Bloomsbury has accused Google of “opening a Pandora’s Box ...[with] no idea where it will lead.” A blog writer responds: “Who has any idea where anything will lead? Don’t resist technology, old chap, or your customers will leave you behind.” Nick sympathized with this reaction, but felt that those publishers concerned with collecting and organizing information, and providing it to libraries for a subscription fee, might justifiably be concerned.

Google is not providing as high a level of service as subscription-based information providers, but provides enough to pose a challenge from the bottom up. Nick called this the “just good enough” factor: Google Print will be “just good enough” for the fringe users of reference products, typified by the undergraduate with a looming essay deadline.

Timo Hannay of Nature Publishing Group sought to broaden the concept of publishing on the web, pointing out that online developments were a question of much more than open access. The web can redefine not just how publications are distributed, but what they actually *are*. In terms of data display, new interfaces mean that information need no longer be presented as text and graphics. An example of an alternative is the Grokker search engine (www.grokker.com), which presents results on a visual map.

SVGs (Scalable Vector Graphics) also offer potential for innovation in this area, allowing high-quality vector graphics and animation to be added to web pages. Significantly, as they are based on XML, SVGs are open to all users and are not proprietary. In the area of delivery, Hannay believes that new possibilities for customizing information are key. Google News and My Yahoo, for example, tailor the news to the user’s interests. Native XML databases will make the creation of similar systems even easier.

Publishing online also offers the possibility of linking in and out between papers. PubChem has exploited this opportunity, linking its chemical structure records to relevant records within other databases such as PubMed. In a similar vein, SBML (Systems Biology Markup Language) is a computer-readable format for representing models of biochemical reaction networks. CML (Chemistry Markup Language) can likewise describe a chemical structure to be downloaded and manipulated. In this way a scientific paper becomes more than a static document. The Signaling Gateway web site (www.signaling-gateway.org/) exploits such opportunities to great effect.

Hannay pointed to the potential of the web for discussion and dialogue. Publishers have been guilty of seeing the web as a one-way medium. In fact, it is most useful for interactivity, for example through blogs and participative (grassroots) news. One of the first of these was Slashdot (<http://Slashdot.org>). Wikis are web sites anyone can edit: the Wikipedia had one and a half million articles at the last count (www.wikipedia.org). Social bookmarking (see, for example <http://del.icio.us>) allows users to save web bookmarks on a central server and share them with others.

Richard Charkin, CEO of Macmillan, remarked that the issues around Google Print recently became “news” because it is only now that general publishers have become aware of them. This shows a major contrast with scientific publishing, which has constantly been moving forward. The digitization of information is happening, and the reason why Google has been able to take over in this area is because the publishers have not done it themselves. The message to publishers was: innovate, or be left behind!

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Editing science for the global community

Council of Science Editors 48th annual meeting
Atlanta, Georgia, USA; 20–24 May 2005

Short course in statistics for editors

In the new short course in statistics for editors, Jessica Ancker and Tom Lang reviewed statistical issues relevant to scientific publication. The course encouraged questions and discussion, showed the mathematics behind the statistical tests, and provided good and bad examples to illustrate key points. One highlight was learning that authors widely use the mean and standard deviation for data that are not normally distributed: markedly non-normal (skewed) distributions, which occur in most study trials, should be presented with the median and range or interquartile range, in addition to the *P* value. Authors frequently misuse statistical terminology; for instance, they use standard error of the mean because it makes their data look better, although it is not statistically accurate, and they often forget to label upper and lower boundaries and error bars (whiskers) in graphs. This new course is a great addition to the short courses offered at the CSE meetings and should be taken by all science editors.

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Short course for journal editors

This two-day course aimed to provide editors (editors in chief, desk editors, not manuscript editors) with the know-how to “get it right”. The course covered instruction and discussion on how best to manage a journal from the editor-in-chief’s perspective: how to improve the quantity and quality of manuscripts, how to expedite and streamline the peer review process, how to deal with authors and reviewers, and how to resolve allegations of misconduct (plagiarism, duplicate publication, honorary authorship, and so forth). “Breakout sessions” provided the opportunity to ask specific questions and to share experiences.

Keynote address

The first morning of the CSE 48th Annual Meeting started with an interesting and slightly outside of mainstream science editing presentation by Alison Richards (Science Desk, National Public Radio). The aim of the Science Desk is to take serious news and make it accessible and entertaining for the public at large. Given that most members of the public are not interested in science at all this would seem to be a difficult task, so this news needs to be slipped in among the more mainstream articles.

Generally speaking, science news falls into three categories. First, there are the big events (the tsunami of last December, the power outage in North America two years ago). Then there are related items, in which science is a central, but not the sole, aspect, such as the space shuttle, mad cow disease, and foot-and-mouth disease. Finally, there are the “contrivances” which can be made into news events, such as press

conferences, national weeks for societies, and scientific research news.

Of the stories presented as news, between 40% and 60% originate in science and medical journals. What makes a good news story? Reporters have to ask the questions “So what?” and “Why should anyone care about this?” If these two questions cannot be answered satisfactorily, the story will not be covered. Sometimes, because of the risk of raising false hopes, the preliminary findings of drug trials and research are not covered, although this rule has occasionally been broken, for example in the recent coverage of the new stem cell research from Korea.

In deciding what to cover there are several “must dos”. For example, a story has to be new (a new hypothesis, a new association) or clinically relevant. Sometimes, whether a story will be covered or not depends on what else is going on at the time — is it overshadowed by current events, whether science-related or not? Timeliness can be everything in the world of science news. Things that almost always make the news are the “cool” topics, the “isn’t science weird” items that evoke public curiosity. In conclusion, you need a balance between “understanding” and “over-flagging”. Not an easy task!

STM workflows: the latest and greatest

This session dealt with the latest trends in STM workflows. There are different ways of handling text-to-XML processing, and different publishers do it in different ways, often depending on what systems they were using at the time they decided to “go online” with their final products.

Monica Mungle (*JAMA*) described how just a few years ago *JAMA* was using heavily customized proprietary systems that were originally created for a paper-based and non-linear workflow. In fact, the content was structured and validated as the last step, with SGML being added after composition. The decision to switch to a later version of Word with earlier application of XML and HTML made it possible to streamline the submission and peer review process, and enabled electronic management, tracking and scheduling.

John Muenning (University of Chicago Press) described the life of an “all-electronic” manuscript. The University of Chicago Press uses an in-house DTD (document type definition) that covers all the documents they produce, and defines all the rules and structure. Having only one DTD gives a huge economy of scale, and ease of maintenance. Because of the use of web publishing, the use of HTML and SGML is integrated with the copy-editing stage.

Next, Kevin Pirkey (Odyssey Press Inc.) described how an ultrashort-run printer operates. Odyssey Press epitomizes the current trend in book production — keeping titles in print, print on demand, and alignment of income and expenditure.

In general, print subscriptions are declining in the journals publishing industry. In cases where the printed product is the premium and print frequency is declining, the ability to produce a few copies on demand from an archive is a real asset. Another advantage of this "print-on-demand" mentality is the reduction in shipping costs — assuming that technical capabilities are adequate, language, time zone and currency considerations are eliminated because printing can be done anywhere in the world by transfer of the electronic product.

Publisher anthropology 101: what editors need to know about publishers and their culture

What do publishers and editors need to know about each other? Alex Williamson (BMJ Publishing Group) began by pointing out that both parties want the same thing — a prestigious and profitable journal; however, the two parties may have very different ways of viewing the same goal. While editorial staff and publishers should work together, they also need to accept that in certain areas one partner has more expertise than the other. Mary Waltham (publishing consultant) stressed the importance of role definition and of each party knowing the needs of both themselves and the other party.

Randolph Nanna (*Physics Today*) addressed the importance of market research — the need to track changes in readers' interests. "It is necessary to ask frequently, and to ask the right questions." The answers to such audits can help to direct change, and to "shape" an audience (or even develop a new one).

Finally, Alison Mitchell (Nature Publishing Group) described the launch of the *Nature Reviews* series and how internal resistance to the launch of the new titles, which could compete for submissions, was overcome. Even things as (apparently) trivial as whether the cover should be matt or gloss finish were a source of division between editors and publishers. It's a minefield out there!

Editing for the online environment

David Ansley (BMJ Publishing Group) started the session by giving a summary of the mistakes he had made in the last eight years, offering them as advice to the rest of us. He emphasized that it is important to "know who is in charge", because everyone (the designer, the programmer, and "even" the editor) thinks they are in control of the web publishing process; it is also important to "know your audience". To make an effective e-journal web site it is essential to know the habits of the visitors, in particular when and why they quit and go to look at something else.

Diane Lang (Radiological Society of America) made the point that online facilities mean that data that would not necessarily be printed can be made available to readers. For example, detailed scans or images, large tables, or algorithms, even movie clips of a trip through the colon, can be offered as additional information.

Bill Silberg (The Commonwealth Fund) pointed out that instead of making the linear print process work for the web, you should make use of the capability of

the online medium. A web editor must have elements of a publisher, project manager, promotions/marketing manager, and technical manager as well as customer relations capabilities: in other words the web editor needs to "do it all".

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Editing and publishing for and with the pharmaceutical industry

Researcher Sam Shaver (Inspire Pharmaceuticals Inc.) has to include publication timing and strategy as part of his research focus. As an employee of a small pharmaceutical company, he discussed the importance of filing patents, which may include "unexpected results", so that the pharmaceutical company can recoup some of the money that it spent on research. Publication of the patent by the US Patent and Trademark Office occurs 18 months after the patent application is received. Once the patent is published, other pharmaceutical companies and researchers have access to research information that was not previously available.

William Lanier (*Mayo Clinic Proceedings*) noted that while aspects of pharmaceutical company research need scrutiny, such research should have an equal opportunity to be published. A substantial proportion of biomedical research is performed by the pharmaceutical industry. At *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, the process of acceptance is similar to that of non-pharmaceutical-funded research; however, peer reviewers are tipped off that there may be potential bias. The peer review process also may include critical appraisal by a statistician or epidemiologist. Areas of concern are conflict of interest, validity, and bias. Lanier speculated that while researchers at pharmaceutical companies analyse data accurately, the marketing department may sometimes put some "spin" on the data before submission. He noted that different ethical and practice standards exist in the pharmaceutical industry and that unfortunately there is no mechanism for disciplining unethical pharmaceutical companies.

Risks of reporting risk in the mainstream media: educating science reporters

Maryn McKenna (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*) started the discussion by pointing out that risk is defined as a mathematical calculation by scientists (relative risk, etc.), but when used by reporters is a subjective measure that often translates into fear by the public. McKenna juxtaposed the coverage of cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) with coverage of cases of inhalational anthrax. The use of inhalational anthrax as a bioterrorism weapon was not well understood. McKenna noted that information about the cases was disseminated by the Department of Health and Human Services instead of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which is the agency that she and others looked to for a response. The lack of information and sense of insecurity throughout the anthrax crisis led to new public health powers during the SARS outbreak, even though there were few

cases in the United States. McKenna explained that these two examples illustrate components of risk perception and journalistic interpretative tendencies. If these components are recognized, risk communication may be managed and miscommunication may be reduced.

Ivan Oransky (*The Scientist*) noted that there is widespread misunderstanding of and assumptions about whether, how, and who covers a topic or event. Owing to the sensitivity of various topics, science writers need to be particularly mindful of what might be sensationalized. As deputy editor, Oransky requires his writers to identify the findings, methods, fundamental aspects of research, “newness”, and controversial aspects when pitching a story — anticipating what controversies may arise and thinking about how their story will be interpreted — before they write.

Former media officer and current web editor Richard Lane of *The Lancet* discussed the relationship between the media officer of a journal and those working for other media. He noted that the relationship is dependent on good communication, timely and accurate press releases, allowance of lead times to embargo, and tone. Because of the complex and controversial aspects of journal articles, the media officer has the responsibility to communicate risk, to provide press conferences for clarification, and to provide context. Lane explained that the media officer also is responsible for “calming a story down” and explaining whether the research is preliminary. He noted that the responsibilities of the media officer are increasing because journals are publishing articles ahead of print on the web, hosting web forum discussions, and providing webcasts of press conferences.

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Serving the global community: fighting poverty, sharing knowledge, and how journals can make a difference

Based on the UN Millennium Development Goals Project, which set clear targets for reducing poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women by 2015, CSE has appointed a Task Force to engage science journals of all disciplines in the effort to combat worldwide poverty and disease, and to establish sustainable paths for human development. G. Paul Bozuwa (Dartmouth Journal Services) began by describing the CSE Task Force and outlining his vision for reaching these goals: (1) catalogue all sites and existing efforts (grassroots efforts), (2) engage journal editors, and (3) get things done. He also referred to various web sites for finding different efforts, such as Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), United States Agricultural Information Network (USAIN), and the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP).

Richard Horton (*The Lancet*) presented statistics showing that five top countries (including the UK and USA) account for 36% of health-related publications worldwide versus 63 countries that account for 1.7% of such publications. Public health is a vital element to our security, and eradicating poverty, AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria rank high among CSE goals.

Jeffery Sachs, author of *The end of poverty: economic possibilities for our time*, ended the session with slides of various grassroots efforts in Africa, ranging from the distribution of antimalarial bed-nets to the distribution of antiretroviral medicines for individuals with AIDS.

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EASE-Forum digest: March–June 2005

It seems that we editors know some things but not everything . . .

Provenance of review copies of books

I thought it was an old wives’ (editors’) tale when John Glen first raised this question at the EASE Barcelona Seminar. But you never know what you don’t know, so it was put to the forum test. John mentioned he had been chief editor of a journal that had a policy of only reviewing books provided direct from the publisher, because the journal would be less liable to legal action following an unfavourable review. Will Hughes thought this a strange idea. How could a reviewer be sued for expressing an opinion as long as it is not libellous? The *BMJ*’s book review editor, as reported by Margaret Cooter, said rubbishing a book was fair comment. My contacts at Elsevier agreed and could not see how the fact that the book had been provided

by the publisher would weaken their case if the reviewer could be sued. Mary Ellen Kerans pointed out that, to sue, the author, not the book, had to be defamed.

Multivariate and multivariable analysis

Arthritis & Rheumatism obviously has some awkward authors but the problem with such nuisances is that they might know something you don’t. Tricia Reichert, managing editor at the journal, wrote that some of their authors insisted there was a difference between “multivariable” and “multivariate” analysis. Terry Clayton asked if she had tried asking these insistent authors what the difference was. Well, yes, she had, but authors’ responses are not always to be accepted as the last word on the subject.

Lotika Singha reported that the *AMA manual of style* says the terms are one and the same, while with a

concordancing program (www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp) Mary Ellen Kerans found multivariate was six times more common than multivariable, with no difference in meaning.

On Google, Zayd Abdulla found only one hit for multivariable and numerous hits for multivariate analysis, indicating interchangeability.

Tricia added that the *Numbers Guide* published by Economist Books (5th ed., 2003), *Webster's New World College Dictionary* (4th ed., 2000), and the *Oxford Dictionary of English* (2nd ed., 2003) all list multivariate but not multivariable.

All wrong. I have always had a sneaky suspicion that statisticians are some sort of secret society beyond the reach of us simple mortal editors. Here is the statistician's explanation given by Andre Charlett, head of Marjorie Monnickendam's statistics unit:

"There is indeed a distinction between multivariate and multivariable in statistical terms. Multivariate is a term that is used to describe a set of statistical techniques for which there are a more than one 'outcome' measurement, for example principle component analysis, factor analysis, multidimensional scaling, cluster analysis, correspondence analysis, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) etc. There are many texts on this collection of methods.

"The term multivariable has been adopted by many statisticians (but not universally) to describe methods for which there is a single outcome (dependent) measurement and several predictor (independent) variables as is the situation with many regression analysis. I will often use the term multivariable as a qualifier to a regression e.g. multivariable logistic regression analysis to make the distinction between this and a 'simple' logistic regression model where there is only a single predictor variable. However, I would not consider the term 'multivariable analysis' to convey any meaning what so ever."

Author affiliations: a conundrum

A conundrum presented by Jane Moody: if a researcher works on a project for two years in Centre A and completes writing it up in Centre B, from where it is submitted, should the affiliation be given as Centre A or Centre B? Except for a bit of dissent in the Spanish quarter (and Mary Ellen will put them right on this) the answer was unanimous: the correct affiliation is where the work was done, in this case Centre A.

Positioning of numbered citations when authors are named in text

The Spanish contingent, in the person of Iain Patten, put us to the test again, asking what the correct position is of the citation number in a sentence where the authors are mentioned? For example is it

Smith et al consider citation to be correctly positioned at the end of the sentence or clause.¹

or

Brown et al² found that this was not the case?

Here the votes came in strongly for the Brown alternative being more logical.

Iain was also keen to know if there are regional

differences or any trends towards one or the other style. In Australia they read a lot of overseas journals and are therefore well placed to notice national differences in English-language journals. Rhana Pike had not noticed any differences but added, "Putting the citation at the end of the sentence is common in journals that publish a lot of numbers. If the citation is after the stop, it won't be mistaken for an exponent. So medical journals, which use the Vancouver referencing style, often cite at the end (though the AMA (US) style is to put the citation inside some punctuation marks but not others). Putting the citation near the name is customary in the author-date system (Brown et al. (year)) used mainly in social science journals."

Technology might be coming into play though, because Karen Shashok has noticed a new fashion of putting the name and date citation at the end of the sentence, which she thought could be for the benefit of content repackagers. It would enable them to more easily toggle between the name-date system and the numbered system. It could also help publishers outsourcing to copy editors who may not be able to decide the most useful place to deploy the citation within the sentence.

Liz Wager added that software packages such as Reference Manager and EndNote can convert the style of in-text citations (e.g. use of brackets, superscripts etc.) and the reference list but cannot change the position of the in-text citations. This means that if you want to make a change between the citation position relative to punctuation (e.g. inside or outside a full stop) this has to be done manually. Help was at hand. Kathleen Lyle and Margaret Cooter offered macros for the job for anyone interested.

Rod Hunt, very philosophically, said that Iain could not have his cake and eat it. You would always land up in a mess if you attempted to enjoy the economy of the numbered system while retaining features from the more informative name-date system. Rod advised that in such cases a decision should be made either for a pure number citation, in which case the number should be attached to the relevant noun (as in the Brown case), or for the full-blown name-date system. Iain was not sure he had entirely understood this as he had wanted to know what happened when both number and name were present. (But the point is: why have both? When I was managing editor of *Diabetologia* we had a policy of not mentioning authors' names, but for another reason: this precluded the possibility of sycophantic or, worse still, self-puffing writing. I have just edited a manuscript by author XYZ in which the text was liberally sprinkled with "XYZ et al. put forward this hypothesis" and "YXZ's results show . . .". Not any more, because all have been replaced by innocuous numbers.)

Percent versus %

The prize for mentioning the ultimate mess goes to Margaret Cooter this quarter. She pointed out that some journals use the word percent whereas others use the symbol %. Maybe enough said, but this is just the tip of the iceberg. She went on: "The AMA style

book says 'Use Arabic numerals and the symbol % for specific percentages' The CSE style book says "percent ... 'units per 100 units', often represented by the symbol %. The *Chicago Manual of Style* says 'In scientific and statistical copy use the symbol % for a percentage; in humanistic copy, the word percent' The *Economist Style Guide* says: 'Use the sign % instead of per cent and write percentage, not %age.'... Eisenberg's *Guide to Technical Editing* says: 'In general, use the symbol with the figures when giving results ... include the symbol for each number within a range including zero ... use the word percent for approximate or rounded numbers.' Judd's *Copyediting: a practical guide* says: 'Normally, you should spell out per cent and use digits with it. In tabular matters or statistical material, the symbol may be used instead.' Turabian's *Manual for Writers*, says: 'do not use the symbol for percent (%) when it is not preceded by a figure. And note that percentage, not percent or %, is the correct expression to use when no figure is given'."

There's more. Stuart Handysides added that *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage* distinguishes the percent in American English from per cent in British English but has no advice for use of the symbol. Stuart said he kept per cent for use with numbers expressed in words, usually at the start of sentences.

It's not over yet. Hugh de Glanville bewilders further with: "The late DM Davies throughout some

30 years of writing about adverse drug reactions insisted on per cent in all instances except the concentration of a preparation or its constituents. For example he would have written "Ten per cent of patients treated with 2% arsenic in arachis oil ..."

Solutions were not forthcoming. Perhaps the last word should be left to Norman Grossblatt, "It certainly backs up my belief that if you have enough style guides you can find published support for just about anything you want to do in a manuscript."

Joining the forum

You can join the Forum by sending the one-line message "subscribe ease-forum" (without the quotation marks) to majordomo@helsinki.fi. More information can be found on the EASE web site (www.ease.org.uk).

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Book reviews

APA. 2005. **Concise rules of APA style**. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Spiral bound, 212 + x p. USD26.95/GBP17.95. ISBN 1-59147-252-0.

This is an excellent text in an irritating format. The APA describes it as an easy-to-use pocket guide, but its 222 pages, 115 x 215 mm, held together by a 12 mm spiral binding, do not fit comfortably into the pockets of any of my clothes. As with most spiral bindings, the pages frequently do not turn easily, and the cover was beginning to show wear and tear even before I had finished reviewing the book.

I have long considered the APA's large (439 pages) *Publication manual* to be among the best guides to effective scientific writing. The *Concise rules* is compiled from that manual, and shares the thoroughness and wisdom of its source. It is not just a guide to skilful handling of words: "style" in the title refers to all aspects of the presentation of information to readers. Guidance on choice and handling of language, punctuation, and spelling is first class, if occasionally pedantic and couched in grammatical

terminology that will defeat many UK readers, but it occupies only a quarter of the book: the rest contains good advice on the varying types of figures that can be used, outlining their different benefits, and detailed advice on citation of references, including citation of material from web sites and from unpublished papers presented at conferences.

Like its source, the *Concise rules* is a reference text, to be dipped into as queries arise. If you want a reference text that, in the words of the APA web advertising, "will travel easily from home to school to office" the *Concise rules* will be more portable than the fifth edition of the *Publication Manual*, but given USD26.95 to spend on a reliable reference book, I would choose the softcover edition of the *Publication manual*, which is exactly the same price as the *Rules*.

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Vivian Cook. 2004. **Acomodating brocolli in the cemetary or why can't anybody spell**. London: Profile Books. Hardback, 160p. GBP9.99. ISBN 1-86197623-2.

Vivian Cook is a professor of applied linguistics at Newcastle University and therefore well placed to share his observations about people's difficulties with English spelling. He has delivered what could have been a serious and heavy-going academic tome as a

delightful, interesting, erudite, and fun small volume that is full of the most scurrilous and enlightening insights.

He starts with Shaw and Chomsky and their different ideas of how spelling works, which leads

him straight into his argument. In English, one of the functions of spelling is to show the sounds of words, but the correspondence between spelling and sound is not at all straightforward, and if you don't know the rules you are very likely to get it wrong (although English spelling is very systematic). The second function of spelling is to show what words mean — and to use English you have to connect letters and sounds and also remember a whole host of individual words, common and uncommon. The strength of the language is its flexibility; its spelling can handle integration of new foreign words easily. This has led to, or even encouraged, new creations in all walks of life, from business to pleasure to academia. People may not understand each other's spoken English but written English is pretty much the world's lingua franca in, for example, the press and science.

We don't get worried if people have difficulties pronouncing English words — so why get worried if people cannot spell? Cook argues that it is pointless getting emotional or dictatorial about rules of spelling or looking at historical rules to understand how modern spelling works. His intention with this little book is to celebrate the richness and resourcefulness of English spelling, taking examples from real use. The "chapters" are in no particular

order and are interspersed with tests in which interested readers can find out their own strengths and weaknesses.

Leafing around and dipping in and out of the many chapters of this book is very enjoyable. The anecdotal is closely followed by the academic, the worthy by the wicked (from Limp Bizkit to Wylde Winta for Luvah Girl). The scope ranges from pop groups' names, text messages, hyphenation, uses of "till, 'til, 'til' and until", and car number plates, to that well-known source of entertainment for well-travelled Westerners, foreign hotels ("Smiles and kidneys are waiting for you"). Racehorses, businesses and products, traffic signs, spellings in cookery, Wargs and Heeche (and how to speak to them — you'll have to look it up for yourselves!), mistakes by non-native speakers, drug names — the list seems endless. US versus British spellings are given throughout.

This small volume offers amazing encyclopaedic depth, width, and breadth, leaves its readers chuckling, and is written in an easily accessible style that not only editors and linguists will make sense of — a celebration indeed. Anyone with the slightest bit of interest in the English language should own a copy.

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CJ Moore. 2003. **In other words: a language lover's guide to the most intriguing words around the world.** Oxford: Oxford University Press. Hardback, 128 p. GBP9.99. ISBN 0-19-280624-6.

This is a strange little book. When I started reading it I thought it was going to be about untranslatable words (such as *duende* or *samizdat*), words that express succinctly in one language something that needs a sentence if not a paragraph to translate into another language — and it does contain a number of these, but a lot of the entries are not words but phrases or idioms. What they have in common is that they indicate something about the culture from which they come. The scope of this book is extraordinary, and as a result in a number of cases only one or two entries come from some of the languages involved.

After a foreword by Simon Winchester the book starts with an introduction in which the author explains what he is going to do, partly by pointing out how many foreign words have been incorporated into English precisely because there was no English equivalent and also reminding us that even words we think we understand, such as *democracy*, may prove to mean something quite different when translated into, say, Chinese.

The first chapter deals with Western European languages; after a short introduction there are from two to six pages on each of French, German, Italian,

Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese. Eastern European languages are dealt with similarly in the second chapter, with sections devoted to Czech and Hungarian, Polish and Russian. There follows a short chapter on Yiddish, then one on Nordic languages with sections on Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and Icelandic.

The Middle Eastern languages chapter has sections on Arabic, Turkish and Persian. African languages are dealt with in a four-page chapter, while the Asian languages chapter has sections on Chinese, Japanese, East/Southeast Asian languages and Indian languages. There follows a chapter on ancient languages with sections on Greek, Latin, Sanskrit and (rather surprisingly) Scottish Gaelic and Irish. Two further chapters deal with indigenous languages and creole and pidgin languages.

Altogether this is a fascinating overview of interesting words and phrases from an extraordinarily wide range of sources. It will entertain and inform readers about the cultures behind these languages, but in no way is it a reference book of untranslatable words.

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Solomon Posen. 2005. **The doctor in literature: satisfaction or resentment?** Foreword by Edward J Huth. Oxford: Radcliffe Press. Paperback, 392p. GBP29.95. ISBN 1-85775-609-6.

This book on doctors in fiction is written and printed in a wonderfully readable style, with charm and wisdom. It is, in truth, an encyclopedia, with 1500 passages offering some 600 appearances of doctors in every field from psychiatry to surgery. A second book is promised from Radcliffe in 2005.

The current volume covers topics including the fee, time-use, doctor and patient behaviour, treatment issues, the ward round, confrontation, and litigation. A breathtakingly inclusive 23-page bibliography precedes a 21-page index (one random run: operation, placebo effect; ophthalmoscopy; opinion-based medicine; optimism, inappropriate; osteogenic sarcoma). The author drew on databases and bibliographies as well as on his own early literary training. Sources range from ancient times to the present; almost all are fiction (prose and poetry) written in or translated into English. Some authors have medical training, but the wide range of talent represented – which, as Posen wryly notes, produces a disturbing juxtaposition of Nobel Laureates and very minor literary figures – convincingly enhances credibility. My unpublished thesis (on doctors in fiction, Helsinki, 1969) similarly indicates that the most accurate depictions of the gritty reality of medicine come from doctor-authors, and the more renowned the author, the more likely that the doctor will play a symbolic role.

In this volume some doctors' depictions are, in double-negative medical phraseology, "not unfavourable" though there is also a collection of dupes, despots, and drunkards. A half-century of medical experience allows Posen to season deep medical knowledge with ironic insider humour. He shows, rather astonishingly, that across the millennia plaudits and complaints have undergone little or no change. For instance, the doctor who says "I view'd your urine and the hypostasis, thick and obscure doth

make your danger great", and the one who says "her complexion and conjunctivae had the muddiness of chronic gastritis", are found in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* of 1590 and Thompson's *Not as a Stranger* of 1955, respectively. The observation "There's no more credit to be given to th' face than to a sicke man's urine" comes from a doctor in Webster's 1623 *Duchess of Malfi*.

Doctors' use of medical jargon and secret symbols is not exempt from scrutiny. When Charles Reade asserts in his 1863 novel that "some of . . . [Doctor Wycherley's] secret hieroglyphics would not have misbecome the tomb of Cheops" he is restating Pliny's view that the gullible patients prefer what they do not understand to what they do understand. Wycherley's circumlocutions "earned him the admiration of fools; and that is as invaluable as they are innumerable." The Egyptian doctor Sinuhe (1945) of Finnish novelist Mika Waltari asks his teacher about evidence and then complains, "He merely looked at me as if I were half-witted and said 'It is so written'." But this was no answer. Then comes a smooth glide back – or forward – to 1867 and a Matthew Arnold poem: "Nor bring to see me cease to live/ Some doctor full of phrase and fame,/To shake his sapient head and give/The ill he cannot cure a name."

This book will attract readers to open it and be enlightened and amused. For EASE members the most relevant aspect is that it makes easy the search for those needing examples and quotations for their own publications. Each description as well as each quotation is referenced, line by line, to pages in a current edition of the work. This was the author's intent; he has succeeded, and I applaud the result, only feeling impatient for more.

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News from committees

EASE Council update

Barcelona was once again the venue for the latest EASE Council meeting, held on April 28th and 30th in conjunction with the fourth Annual General Meeting (AGM) of EASE and the EASE Seminar "Habits in science communication and science publishing". Council was very pleased with the quality of the seminar, another product of Remedios Melero's industrious efforts. It drew even more participants than the first seminar held in 2004. Council hopes to continue the tradition of holding annual seminars in non-conference years.

According to the financial report presented at the AGM, 2004 showed a slight deficit, as did the preceding year. However, this result was expected in

that the annual seminar had been held for the first time, work to revamp the web site had begun and the switch to handling the memberships and subscriptions in-house needed to be funded. In fact, taking over the work from the subscription agent proved to be far more time-consuming than expected, as arranging the banking transfers proved to be very complicated. Invoicing was therefore delayed and only recently has the Treasurer been granted the right to handle credit card payments. In order to minimize future deficits, the individual membership fee will be increased to GBP66.00 in 2006; corporate membership will be increased accordingly.

This year, plans to modernize the EASE logo came to fruition. Alison Clayson presented alternatives for Council to choose from. A complete promotional package (leaflets, flyers, a poster, etc.) will be developed around the new logo. As the person in charge of membership recruitment and promotion, Alison emphasized the fact that visibility is a key factor, and she will be working to improve the visibility of EASE.

One project to promote EASE reached its conclusion when EASE made an agreement with a publisher under which the publisher will be given as many as 100 subscriptions for its editors at a reduced price for one year. It is hoped that receiving *European Science Editing* will encourage these editors to join EASE. So far subscriptions are going out to 57 editors under this plan.

It was agreed that any organization that is arranging an educational activity, such as a course, to which an EASE member is contributing or helping to organize must submit a request in writing to the President for the right to link the EASE name to its programme. The President will then consult Council on whether to approve the request.

The possibility of obtaining EU funding for a special project was given even greater attention. Rod Hunt, who had been appointed in 2003 to head this

effort, was joined on the committee by Jenny Gretton and Elisabeth Kessler. They will first direct their attention to possible participation in two EU efforts that had been brought to the attention of Elisabeth Kessler.

The mail-list services that had been set up at the beginning of 2005 to improve communication within Council, the Publication Committee and the Programme Committee had not been put to as much use as expected. If use does not increase these services will be discontinued.

A point of dissatisfaction arose when the forthcoming Ninth General Assembly and Conference was discussed. Some Council members felt that they had not had enough feedback about the conference. In the absence of the Programme Committee chairman, the tentative programme was discussed. As a result the Programme Committee was asked to revise the programme to take into consideration the comments of Council.

A nomination committee was appointed to nominate officers for 2006–2009. The President and the two Vice-Presidents will be joined by a fourth member in this endeavour.

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Publications committee

The Publications Committee met in Barcelona at the Institute for Catalan Studies on 30 April 2005, after the seminar reported in this issue of *ESE* (p. 84–85). Hervé Maisonneuve (Chairman), Margaret Cooter, John Glen, Elise Langdon-Neuner, Moira Vekony, Maeve O'Connor, Edward Towpik, Jane Moody, Jane Sykes, and Emma Campbell were present. It was the first meeting for Emma Campbell, a physiotherapist with a PhD in neurosciences, who works for the Nature publishing group and is now deputy editor for *Nature Neurology* (to be launched).

All contributions from the members of the Publications Committee are always ready on time and the journal is being successfully produced four times a year.

At this meeting the various sections of the journal were reviewed and the committee was happy to note that contributions on editing in China and Russia had been published. Other promised articles for the "Editing around the world" section have not yet arrived. Finding authors and obtaining papers is a long process, though Edward Towpik has been very active. He welcomes suggestions and help, and volunteers are called for (see editorial in this issue, p. 73).

A section on ethics is to be discussed at some later time. As usual, a dedicated editor must volunteer to look after this section.

Margaret Cooter proposed a section entitled "Profile of an editor". The idea was appealing and it could be done using the format of a few short questions and answers. Margaret will suggest a list of six to ten questions and a decision will be taken in November 2005.

The *Science Editors' Handbook* is continuing its expansion. A chapter on genetics was distributed to all members with the February issue. At the Kraków conference next year five to eight new chapters should be available. More promotion of the handbook is still needed.

Linus Svensson made a presentation of the template of the new web site to the Council and Publication Committee, and a few changes were requested by those present. Further developments that are needed include a search engine and a system allowing members to pay subscriptions online. Emma Campbell has agreed to upload the material and to act as webmaster. The new site should be launched before long: look out for it.

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Programme committee: 5th report

The Programme Committee met twice within a period of less than two months during the first half of 2005, first in Barcelona on April 30th in conjunction with the 2005 seminar and the fourth EASE annual general meeting, and then in London on June 11th.

In Barcelona, the main concern of the meeting turned out to be a discussion of the reservations expressed in Council during their meeting earlier in the day about the tentative programme that had been set up for the Ninth General Assembly and Conference. The major outcome was that the number of sessions for submitted papers was reduced, some adjustments were made to the invitations to plenary speakers, and minor changes were made to make the programme appeal to a wider audience.

At the meeting in London, Jenny Gretton was asked to take over as chairman of the Committee, as Tom van Loon, the former chairman, had resigned as a result of his disapproval of changes made in Barcelona. Rod Hunt became vice-chairman. The first task of the new chairman and vice-chairman has been a visit to Kraków to check up on the venue and meet the contact at the conference bureau and the chairman of the local organizing committee.

Currently, arrangements for practical matters concerning the venue are at a standstill because there have been delays in the construction of the intended conference centre. The new chairman has now looked

at alternative possibilities. The rest of the plans, for example for the conference banquet, social programme and the like, are going forward on schedule.

From the beginning, the Committee has had a goal of 200 participants as the break-even point for the Conference and has set up the budget accordingly. So far there has been no reason to revise this. However, it has been pointed out that the time of year of future conferences should be reconsidered, particularly in relation to university schedules. For example, the 2006 conference is being held during the week of finals, at least in Europe, and this may influence participation.

The first circular for the meeting was distributed with the February issue of *European Science Editing* and can also be found on the EASE web site (www.ease.org.uk). Anyone wishing to express interest in the Conference can do so there or by returning the form by post. The final circular, to be distributed with the November issue of *European Science Editing*, will contain information on travel arrangements, hotels, and pre- or post- conference tours, as well as details of the sessions.

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EASE Council officers at the Institut d'Estudis Catalan, Barcelona, during the AGM on 29 April 2005. Left to right: Ricardo Guerrero, Georgianna Oja, Elisabeth Kessler, Arjan Polderman, Jenny Gretton.