Contributions for the journal should be sent to the Chief Editor or the appropriate section editor listed above. See the Instructions to authors on EASE's website (www.ease.org.uk).
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From the Editors' Desks

Taken on board
We welcome two new members of the Publications Committee. Stuart Handysides will be looking after the Original Articles section, and Sharon Davies will be coordinating the Reports from Meetings. They introduce themselves on page 90.

What's missing?
Can you think of a topic that needs to be added to the Science Editors' Handbook? Please let us know! And if you can think of a knowledgeable person who could write about the topic, all the better – email your suggestions to europeanscienceediting@googlemail.com

URLs – who needs them?
You may have noticed that the URLs of sources in the regular columns that depend on the internet – WebWatch, News Notes, and The Editor's Bookshelf – seem to be getting longer and longer. In this issue we start the experiment of shortening them, so that we can get more useful information onto the page, rather than cluttering it with things that are of no use to anyone. Or are the URLs useful to you? Would you rather have them on the printed page or go to the EASE blog, and click on them there, for access to the original item? Please let us know!

Members-only area of the EASE website
This area is still under development, but already has some useful information. To access the members-only area of www.ease.org.uk you'll need a user name and password – please contact the EASE Secretary (secretary@ease.org.uk) and Sheila will supply you with them.

Deadline looms!
If you are thinking of submitting a paper for one of the parallel sessions, or a poster, for the EASE conference in Pisa, please send a title and a 200-word abstract to the Secretary (secretary@ease.org.uk) by 30 September 2008. If you would like to participate as a speaker or chairperson, please let the Secretrary know, indicating the session. More details of sessions are on p 69.

Erratum
In Arjan Polderman's editorial on the impact factor (November 2007;33(4):98) the page numbers in references 2 and 3 should be 46–54 and 68–72, respectively.

Contributions for next issue
The copy date for the November issue of *ESE* is **15 September**. Please send contributions to the appropriate member of the publications committee (list on the left) by then.

Editorial

Integrity in science communication

Integrity in Science Communication is the title of EASE's Tenth General Assembly and Conference (Pisa, Italy, 16–19 September 2009). There is no need to emphasize that science communication is pivotal for science editors, but I would like to explain why we focus on integrity this time.

Integrity derives from the Latin adjective *integer* (with the noun *integritas*), meaning intact, whole, pure, complete, unimpaired, etc. When we talk about communication we definitely want our messages to be conveyed intact. In science communication this especially applies to the reliability of scientific data. We need to be certain that original research data are correct, complete, accessible, retrievable, and durable – to name but a few properties. This has everything to do with quality control, refereeing, repositories, access (open or otherwise), indexing, and storage. You will recognize several buzzwords that regularly appear in *ESE*'s Editor's Bookshelf, News Notes, and other contributions.

Of course, editors are dedicated to maximizing the physical integrity of their publications, be they paper or electronic. This physical aspect of integrity will be the subject of the second plenary session, on Thursday 17 September 2009, followed by a set of parallel sessions.

The meaning of Latin *integer* gradually extended to righteous, honest, incorruptible, etc. In science communication we have become aware that this moral aspect is important too – alas. Of course editors have always dealt with honest mistakes and the resulting publication of errata. But in recent decades we have also had to introduce the phenomenon of retraction of papers because the published results were purposely manipulated to misrepresent the original data sets – or data sets were even invented to yield the desired results. The acronym FFP is increasingly used to indicate dishonest behaviour like falsification, fabrication, and plagiarism – and let us not forget data omission. This infringement of integrity has triggered the establishment of institutions like the US Office of Research Integrity (ORI) and the Committee On Publication Ethics (COPE), as well as the First World Conference on Research Integrity in 2007.

No doubt, editors are dedicated to maximizing the moral integrity of all parties involved in science communication. Ethical matters have always been discussed at EASE conferences, but the present upheaval warrants the inclusion of a plenary session and two sets of parallel sessions on Friday 18 September.

In order to deal with their responsibilities regarding physical and moral integrity, editors must be able to take stands without any pressure from other parties involved in the reporting of scientific findings. Sometimes science editors must be whistleblowers, sometimes science editors must be prosecutors, sometimes science editors must be judges. This relates to editorial independence and responsibilities – the theme of the fourth and final plenary session, on Saturday 19 September. You will not be surprised that EASE pursues maximum independence and responsibility, but in practice we encounter the limits of our attempts. How do we cope with such boundaries, and what can we learn from each other's experiences? This plenary session too will be followed by parallel sessions where certain aspects of the theme can be discussed in more depth, or related subjects can be introduced.

No doubt you will have missed the first plenary session and its theme. I can reassure you: there will be a first plenary session, right after the Annual General Meeting, the triennial General Assembly, and the Opening Ceremony. We have invited a distinguished keynote speaker to introduce the theme. This keynote address will be followed by an introduction to the place where the Tenth General Assembly and Conference is held: the historical Italian city of Pisa. In this way we can get an impression of the background where the word *integer* originated.

We try to maximize the benefit of all sessions by incorporating as many aspects as our delegates want to discuss. Your suggestions for programme topics are therefore most welcome, especially if you want to contribute a paper or a poster. You have until 30 September to submit your proposals.

The English noun *integer* means a whole number or a complete entity. This meaning applies to the participants at EASE's Tenth General Assembly and Conference. I would like to see them – ie, you – attend the Conference in whole numbers, with complete, unimpaired interest. We are aware that you need to relax as well, so we have included a free afternoon and optional tours to the cities of Lucca and Florence. These tours are scheduled in such a way that you will not be distracted from the sessions that are so important for our profession.

EASE wants to maximize integral participation. So do not hesitate to register for this Tenth General Assembly and Conference.

Arjan Polderman
President, EASE
a.k.s.polderman@pw.nl

Articles

Abstracts of research articles: readers' expectations and guidelines for authors

Sylwia B Ufnalska
Mieczewo Osada 9, PL-62-022 Mosina, Poland; sylwia.ufnalska@gmail.com

Abstract
This study aimed to investigate readers' expectations concerning the form and content of English scientific abstracts, and to formulate guidelines for authors and translators. The guidelines are based on results of an original questionnaire that analysed readers' expectations, and are presented in the context of data in linguistic publications or in handbooks for editors and authors. An international multidisciplinary group of 43 postgraduate students and lecturers answered the questionnaire. Its results are generally consistent with published data, but many of the comments made by respondents are interesting.

Introduction

The quality of the abstract of a research article determines whether the paper is going to circulate, ie, whether it was worth writing at all.[1] For the abstract to perform its crucial role in international scientific communication effectively, it is important to take into account the expectations of its readers. Surprisingly, no detailed data on readers' expectations of abstracts have been published.

The goals of this study were: (1) to investigate readers' expectations of the English abstracts of scientific research articles; (2) to compare their expectations with the advice given in linguistic publications and in handbooks for science editors and authors; and (3) to formulate guidelines for authors and translators of scientific abstracts on the basis of results of this study.

Methods

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. In the first part, the aim of the questionnaire was explained (with special focus on English abstracts of papers written in uncommon languages) and demographic information about the respondents was collected, together with data on the number of their own publications, field(s) of interest, and a measure of how frequently the respondents read abstracts of the type being analysed.

In the second part of the questionnaire, respondents' expectations concerning the content and form of abstracts were queried. The main types of information included in abstracts were listed, but respondents could add to this list any other kinds of information if they regarded them as important. In addition, five qualities of the text were chosen: the structure and length of the abstract, use of correct English and of terminology, and understandability to non-specialists. (The questionnaire is available from the author.) Each kind of information and each quality were scored on a scale of 1 (irrelevant) to 5 (essential). Student's *t*-test was used to assess the significance of differences.

In the third part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to evaluate four selected sample abstracts. These results will be the subject of another paper.

Participants

The questionnaire was completed by 43 postgraduate students and staff members of the Summer Program in Environmental Sciences and Policy at the Budapest College of the Central European University in 1994. The students came from central and eastern Europe, while the staff members were mainly from western Europe. All had a good command of English and held a degree (6 held doctorates or were professors, 33 held master's degrees, and 4 held bachelor's degrees). Most were aged between 25 and 35 years, and included biologists or ecologists (11), physicists (9), and engineers (7). Around 23% of the respondents had not published; 40% had 1-3 publications, and 37% had 4-100 (mean 10.2). Most of the respondents had read abstracts of the type to be analysed in this study: 4 very often, 16 often, 15 sometimes, and 7 rarely.

Results

General expectations of readers

The table shows that results and/or conclusions as well as the purpose of the study were regarded as the most important kinds of information included in the abstract (mean 4.60 and 4.37, respectively). Materials and methods also ranked high (mean 3.72), while the study period, type of study, geographical region, and the exact place of the study were considered as relatively unimportant (mean 2.81–2.44). Only five respondents said that additional details should be given: namely, references to previous research in the given field, an explanation of abbreviations, practical applications of the study, the main limitations of results, or a short description of conditions instead of the exact location of the area where the study was made.

Among the qualities analysed, the use of correct terminology ranked highest (mean 4.23), followed by clear abstract structure and correct English (mean 3.95 and 3.84, respectively). Brevity was graded slightly lower (mean 3.33), while understandability to non-specialists was regarded as rather unimportant (mean 2.51). The importance of brevity and understandability was the most controversial (SE 0.18

Table 1. Importance of various kinds of information found in abstracts and selected qualities of abstracts

	Characteristic	Sample size	Mean (SE)	NS*
a	Results and conclusions	43	4.60 (0.11)	b
b	Purpose of study	43	4.37 (0.14)	ac
c	Correct terms	43	4.23 (0.13)	b
d	Clear structure	41	3.95 (0.14)	ef
e	Correct English	43	3.84 (0.15)	df
f	Material and methods	43	3.72 (0.14)	de
g	Brevity	43	3.33 (0.18)	
h	Study period	43	2.81 (0.15)	ijk
i	Kind of study	43	2.74 (0.15)	hjkl
j	Region of study	43	2.56 (0.16)	hikl
k	Understandability to non-specialists	43	2.51 (0.17)	hijl
l	Exact place of study	43	2.44 (0.16)	ijk
m	Other kinds of information	43	1.47 (0.13)	

*Characteristics that do not differ significantly from this one ($P \leq 0.05$, Student's *t* test).

and 0.17, respectively), while the least controversial (SE 0.11) was the importance of results and/or conclusions of the study.

Comments of respondents

About a third of respondents contributed comments:

- Figures and tables should not be referred to in the abstract
- The most important kinds of information found in abstracts are: the object/aim of research, a brief description of methods, and a clear statement of conclusions, but sometimes also the study area, time, and practical applications
- Brief information on methods is important when discussing/deciding about methodology for one's own research
- The abstract should be very detailed but still not too long
- For those living in countries without easy access to journals, it is important that the abstract provides a detailed account of the article
- Only general ideas should be included in the abstract, because "if a reader is interested in general ideas of your article, then he would apply to you directly"
- The major function of abstracts is not to inform but to enable the readers to decide whether the paper is interesting to them
- A native speaker of English stated that abstracts are often very difficult to understand for people who do not know English very well
- Abstracts should be written in simple sentences, and avoid sophisticated vocabulary; they should be very concise but also easy to understand
- The scientific degree of the abstract should match the potential audience of the article and meet the demands of the journal's editors.

Discussion

Readers' expectations concerning the content of abstracts generally agree with data found in linguistic literature and in handbooks for science editors and authors: [2, 3] the main kinds of information to be presented briefly in the abstract are the results and conclusions, but also the purpose of the study and the methods used. A few respondents noted that in some fields of scientific investigation, the study period and geographic area are important and should therefore be mentioned in the abstract. If this is the case, study area can be described briefly or the exact place and/or region where the study was made can be indicated, depending on which will be of more use to the readers.

Other kinds of information suggested for inclusion in the abstract were practical applications of the research, and an explanation of uncommon abbreviations. The remaining kinds of information that were suggested for inclusion (references to previous research, main limitations of the results) are generally outside the scope of abstracts.

Exclusions

References to previous research should not be given, because abstracts function also as independent discourses, copied verbatim in information retrieval systems and current awareness publications. For the same reason, abstracts should not refer to tables, figures or any other parts of the main body of the article. This is not only the opinion of many respondents and linguists, but also is required by many renowned journals. Limitations of the results should be examined in the discussion section of the research article, and it is not advisable to include them in the abstract, for the reason that tentativeness may discourage the reader.[4] However, the abstract should not be misleading, so Bhatia maintains that discussion of methodology and experimental procedures is crucial in research abstracts.[5]

In any case, the abstract should be self-contained and present all of the data that are most likely to be important and useful to the reader. It must be also remembered, as noted by O'Connor, that the abstract should never refer to information that is not in the paper and should not repeat information given in the title, because abstract and title are always read together.[2] Weiner says that the abstract should include the internationally recognized scientific names of the species studied if they are not given in the title.[1]

What is valued

This study showed that readers appreciate a clear structure in abstracts. Swales observed that most abstracts follow the pattern typical of research articles, where an introduction precedes an account of methods, results, and conclusions.[6] Such ordering of information in abstracts is preferred by many medical journals and seems to be advisable in other fields of scientific research as well.

Respondents valued highly the proper use of specialized terms, as well as correct grammar and spelling. In addition, brevity was considered important, which is in

agreement with linguistic literature and handbooks for editors and authors.[3, 7] On the other hand, respondents regarded understandability to non-specialists as relatively unimportant, and one respondent noted that in this respect authors should adjust their texts to their potential audience. Linguists share this view.[4, 8, 9] As the abstracts of research articles are generally intended to be read by specialists, it is not necessary for them to be understandable to a lay person. However, Gopen and Swan provide useful suggestions on how the scientific texts can be written more clearly.[10]

The analysis of readers' expectations and of recommendations found in literature has enabled me to formulate some guidelines.

Guidelines for authors and translators

- Follow the journal's instructions to authors
- Do not repeat the information given in the title
- Identify which of the data will be the most interesting for prospective readers (most often readers want to know the purpose, results, and conclusions of the research)
- Preferably, first explain the purpose of the research reported. Next, briefly describe the methods (eg, experimental design) and summarize the results and conclusions, providing specific data and their statistical significance if plausible. Emphasize new and important aspects of the study
- The study area and period should be mentioned if relevant; you must then decide whether it is more sensible to give the exact location, the region, or a brief description of the study area
- If you regard it as important, include information on practical applications of the results of your research, major limitations of the results, and whether this was a single study or part of a research programme.
- Instead of listing the contents of the article, explain what was done and found. This does not apply to review articles and similar wide-scope articles, the abstracts of which can be indicative (summarising the covered topics but not conclusions)
- Do not refer to the body of the article (eg, to tables, figures, and cited literature)
- Use past tense, except in those statements where present tense is more appropriate (eg, when drawing conclusions)
- Write in third person, passive, unless the editors prefer first person
- Make sure you use correct English terms and phrases: do not translate word for word
- Use internationally recognized scientific names of organisms (eg, those found in British or American literature, which may be different from the Latin synonyms preferred in your country)
- Remember that the abstract will be read by foreigners, who may not be aware of the specific conditions, regulations, classifications, or concepts that are widely known in your country. Consequently, you may need to add some explanatory information
- Try to make the abstract easily understandable: avoid sophisticated vocabulary, complicated sentences, and tentativeness. Minimize the number of abbreviations; define them if they are not commonly known among the expected audience
- Avoid "repetition, meaningless expressions, superlatives, adjectives, illustrations, preliminaries, descriptive details, examples, footnotes"[7]
- Be consistent in spelling (follow either British or American rules)
- Make sure that your abstract is an interesting and succinct condensation of the abstracted article and is not longer than permitted by editors of the journal (usually 100–500 words)

I thank Prof Alicja Pisarska (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland), Prof EG Bellinger, and Sir Prof TRE Southwood (Central European University, Budapest, Hungary) for their help and encouragement during this study. I am also grateful to all respondents who completed my questionnaire as well as to ESE editors and reviewers for their valuable suggestions.

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Ethical implications of an emerging discipline: biometrics

Emilio Mordini
Centre for Science, Society and Citizenship, Rome, Italy; e.mordini@bioethics.it
Sabina Gainotti
National Centre for Epidemiology, Surveillance and Health Promotion, National Institute of Health, Rome, Italy; sabina.gainotti@iss.it
Carlo Petrini
Bioethics Unit, Office of the President, National Institute of Health, Rome, Italy; carlo.petrini@iss.it

Abstract
We map the development of modern biometrics, an identification technique relying on morphological, behavioural, and genetic data and then consider the collection of biometric data for aims that concern security in its wider sense, and also for biomedical research. The ethical consequences of biometrics are described in connection with the notion of "identity", the right to identity, and the right to privacy. We present the main findings of a European research project on biometrics called Biometric Identification Technology Ethics and conclude with open questions on the future challenges in biometrics.

Recently the term biometrics has been broadened from meaning "biological statistics" to encompass the study of "techniques that allow a person to be identified on the basis of one or more biological or behavioural traits".[1] It is used to describe identification methods and technologies that cope with personal and collective security.

This article thus concerns state-of-the-art identification techniques that rely on morphological traits (such as iris recognition, retina recognition with blood vessels, hand geometry, finger and arm veins), behavioural traits (voice and gait recognition), and genetic data (DNA analysis). We consider some general themes, including the place of biometrics in scientific literature.

Personal identification and security

Personal identification has been warranted for centuries by local communities through direct witness. Societies developed the means to control the individual's provenance and affiliation, especially during periods of increased movement and migration. For example, the second half of the 15th century saw a dramatic increase in the exchange of goods and written correspondence within Europe, and consequently in the number of envoys. These envoys carried crucial military and economic information and needed proper identification. By the end of the 15th century, Nordman says, a complex system of documents had been developed based on physical traits (height, scars, etc) to allow envoys' movement; these were the forerunners of passports and identity cards.[2]

Many of these traits, however, are variable and transitory, as are the criteria underlying "Bertillonage", a technique developed by Alphonse Bertillon in the second half of the 19th century and adopted by the law enforcement agencies of many countries. Bertillonage relied on anthropometrical measurements that were coded in 11-digit numbers corresponding to body measurements and aimed to "capture" a person's identity. However, it was not viable because of changes in the body over time, and the difficulty in making exact measurements. A Scottish missionary doctor, Henry Faulds, and a scientist, Francis Galton, recognised that fingerprints are unique,[3] revolutionising investigative recognition techniques. Today fingerprinting is supported by modern biometric techniques.[4]

The reasons for collecting biometric data are increasing: for security generally (judicial systems, police inspections, criminals identification); document management (passports, identity cards); national health systems (management and processing of health-related data); control of physical (places) access or virtual (electronic databases) access, both individual (private property) and collective (staff inspections in the workplace, for example). Moreover, biometric data are used in scientific research, especially biomedical research.

Biometry both hampers the right to privacy and protects it. Huge amounts of information are collected, stored, and exchanged for research purposes, such as epidemiological analysis and production of biomedical applications. However, electronic patient records and "smart cards" containing medical information increasingly challenge the right to privacy. Biometry is also used to limit consultation of medical data and to restrict physical access to human tissues and DNA banks and to laboratories that produce biotechnologies with possible military applications. Many institutions are thus being equipped with biometric identifiers to control the electronic flow of data.

The ethics of biometrics

There are many definitions of "identity" in psychology, sociology, and philosophy. "Personal identity" deals with questions about ourselves, many of the which are familiar ones: What am I? When did I begin? What will happen to me when I die?[5] Every person needs to acknowledge to attain a unitary view of himself or herself – a biographical narrative – to give sense to his or her life.[6] Although the protection of each individual's personal identity is a fundamental human right, this right has been addressed only in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child[7]:

> The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents (Article 7)

> States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference (Article 8)

Some scholars have interpreted Articles 6 and 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[8] as referring to the right to an identity:

> Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law (Article 6)

> No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks (Article 12)

Although Article 12 is often cited as the foundation of the right to privacy, its reference to honour and reputation can also be interpreted as an appeal to respect personal identity. Indeed, personal identity is linked to personal life and to privacy: personal choices strongly contribute to a person's identity. The right to a personal identity and the concept of using a biometric measurement in this context is not new; what is relatively new is electronic verification of identity.

Biometric data pose difficult ethical questions, some of which concern any collection and retention of personal data. One of the main problems applies to informed consent and to transparency in data processing. In every country that explicitly allows use of biometric data, it is generally governed by specific laws that establish the obligation to acquire a person's informed consent, except in cases of emergency or in circumstances that justify breaches of the principle of respect for autonomy. Other problems relate to the management and retention of information (data access, use, and disclosure), to compliance with the aims for which biometric data were collected, or to social discrimination. Questions also arise regarding the balance between the goals of biometric identification and the means used to achieve it and their risks, including direct and indirect risks of biometrics; the former associated with the use of equipment for reading biometric data and the latter associated with the use of biometric information for discriminatory purposes.

Laws can partly deal with some of these problems by, for example, establishing rules that apply to specific circumstances and constraints on how long data can be kept, compliance with the purposes for which data were collected, and limitations on the uses of data. Usually the laws concern other methodological aspects, including validation of procedures to ensure quality and standardisation of data collection, control of access, and responsibilities for data registration and use.[9]

Biometrics and the person

Biometric techniques are associated with more profound questions, since the notions of "person" and "individual" are involved. For instance, one may wonder if data collected through modern biometric techniques are an expression of a person's identity or if they contribute to the dehumanisation of the individual, thus reducing a person to a series of numerical codes stored in electronic memories. To quote Michael Foucault, the risk is that "an individual may be created by regulatory powers".[10]

Paul Ricoeur differentiated two aspects of human "identity".[7] The first concerns the objective body, which endures in time and space despite its alterations, ageing, and diseases. Ricoeur defines this aspect of identity as "mêmeté". The second element consists of experiences involving conscience and reasoning of every human being. The former is called "ipséité" (from the Latin "ipse"), while the latter can be rendered in English with "self". Many Latin-based languages, such as French and Italian, use a single word ("identité", "identità") to indicate both meanings.

Modern biometrics seems to blur this philosophical distinction. Multimodal and behavioural biometrics aim to monitor behaviours and mental states. Biometrics lies at a complex crossroad of various philosophical, political, and social issues.

Biometrics, security, and individual freedom

Biometrics poses questions that are relative to individual identity (involving the dividing line between individual and collective values) and also to the conflicts that may be triggered among them.

The increase in bioterrorism has made people around the world more familiar with the collection and storage of biometric information for security reasons. Collective security is also pursued through highly sophisticated individual controls. Individual freedoms and the right to the respect for anonymity may be encroached upon even further as we move from vigilance to surveillance – that is, always towards more far-reaching forms of control. Consequently, Article 8 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights,[8] which established that "everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life", may be infringed.

It seems that there is a paradox between the protection of privacy and the safeguarding of every citizen's integrity – to protect the latter, the former is encroached upon.

The BITE Project

The ethical aspects of biometrics, as mentioned above, have been the subject of a huge, integrated European research project called Biometric Identification Technology Ethics (BITE; www.biteproject.org). Coordinated by the Rome-based Centre for Science, Society and Citizenship and involving leading EU experts and US scholars, BITE was the first global multicentre research project focused on the social impact of biometrics. Its documents, conference proceedings, and public e-consultations will prove useful for scientists, experts, decision-makers, universities, industries, and other social and cultural stakeholders in dealing with the ethical issues raised by biometrics, as well as intensifying the public debate on the implications of biometrics.[11]

A fundamental understanding of biometric technologies, applications, and issues is needed for discussion and reaching consensus. Because scientific and technological developments in biometrics are rapid and numerous, good dissemination of information and of scientific results about biometrics is important, not only to increase public

knowledge but also to inform scientists, overcoming the barriers which separate their different fields. All scientists are part of the general public when something that lies outside of their field is discussed.

Trends and issues

Two important trends – technology convergence and interoperatility – are affecting future ethical issues in the development and deployment of biometric technologies.

Technology convergence

The first trend is the convergence of technology. For example, radio frequency identification (RFID) uses electromagnetic waves to collect information contained in devices (TAGs) that are physically linked with the item to be identified by an RFID terminal (reading system). The information provided by the TAG can be continuously updated and the TAG can be passive (without its own feed) or active (with its own feed). In the former, readings should be made at regular intervals[12].

Developments in nanotechnology and biotechnology have created new opportunities for surveillance and have stimulated new applications in the fusion of RFID, biometrics, and micro electro-mechanical systems. Cheap, reliable, and low power micro-electronics have allowed cameras, processors, and power supplies to be used in a wide array of security-related applications, such as video surveillance and monitoring) In addition the fusion of biotechnological sensors with nano devices has given rise to technologies such as ZigBee which, by coordinating communication between thousands of tiny sensors, can detect and transmit information about motion, heat, chemical composition, and particle content. Another example is "Smart Dust", which allows the construction of a reliable and affordable network backbone that uses much less power and bandwidth than average sensors, and that has a longer battery life and lower cost than older technologies.

Technology convergence is the key to evolution of future surveillance. Being able to covertly detect not only individuals but also their "intentions" is a dramatic breakthrough that could overturn any standard approach to prevention of crime and terrorism. But the potential for misuse is enormous and poses a basic ethical and political question about the legitimacy of developing such technologies: "Measures against terrorism should not and need not reduce standards of protection of fundamental rights which characterise democratic societies. A key element of the fight against terrorism involves ensuring that we preserve the fundamental values which are the basis of our democratic societies and the very values that those advocating the use of violence seek to destroy."[13]

Interoperability

A second critical technology trend is related to system interoperability – the ability of two or more systems or components to exchange and use information. Interoperability trends are motivated partly by the desire to create economies of scale and may also concern questions of market dominance. For instance, in 2004, the European Commission found that Microsoft had abused its market power by deliberately restricting interoperability between Windows PCs and non-Microsoft workgroup servers. By doing so, Microsoft was able to acquire a dominant market position for workgroup server operating systems, the heart of corporate IT networks. Microsoft was ordered to disclose complete and accurate interface documentation, which will enable rival vendors to compete on an equal footing ("the interoperability remedy").

Interoperability is an essential component of security systems and surveillance programmes. This is evident in areas such as border security, which is a priority for most of the world's governments. In 2004 the International Civil Aviation Organization agreed on an international standard for passports with globally interoperable face recognition systems and RDIF chips in which biometrics (including fingerprints) are to be stored.

The US VISIT system provides the foundations for screening everyone entering and leaving the country and retaining their profiles for up to 40 years. This system relies on biometric identifiers, and everyone entering the US (including Canadians and returning Americans) will be required to have biometric identifiers on passports, smartcards, or visas. Canada is preparing to implement a parallel but interoperable system and began field trials of electronic visas with biometric features in October 2006. The European Commission is developing an "automated fingerprint identification system" and an "entry–exit" system to record all travel into and out of the EU. Police and intelligence services across Europe will have access to the fingerprint data, and linked EU visa information and border control systems will send automatic EU-wide alerts on all illegal aliens.

The increase of interoperability and the proliferation of public and private databases are generating an increasing demand to pool data from diverse technologies (RFID, biometrics, global positioning systems, smart identity cards, etc) and from diverse applications and systems (signals intelligence, automatic number plate recognition, electronic patient records, DNA databases, etc). This raises many concerns, not least of which is the ability of sophisticated "data-mining" techniques to discover unknown and non-obvious relationships within sets of information. Privacy can be breached.

At the same time, interoperability is an effective way to fight terrorism and crime. Cities are organised through a myriad of electronic passage points, negotiated through a widening number of electronic identities, code words, pass words, PIN numbers, user names, access controls, electronic cards, or biometric scans. This vast network of sensors and communications devices is currently used almost exclusively for traffic management, safety, and emergency response – but it could be used for security, crime prevention, and antiterrorism. This is a reason for serious concern. The growing proliferation of interconnected identification technologies should not mean the indefinite growth of an indistinct "security area".

Conclusions

New technologies for identification and verification of identities (authentication) are radically changing the relationship between citizen and state. The globalisation of identity management could reassure or seriously concern us, depending upon our understanding of the use of science and technology in society. While identity management concepts are by no means new, the scale of empowerment that technology, and especially biometrics, now provides certainly is. Can this power be managed and regulated on a global scale? This is the ethical and political challenge that scientists and policy makers have to face.

Publications from the BITE project are included in volume 43, number 1 of the Annali dell'Istituto Superiore di Sanità (the official journal of the National Institute of Health), and online.[11]

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Viewpoints

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the economy…

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the economy because it provides people with food.

Is it? Does it? Yes, it is. And yes, it does. But should we say it in all scientific articles in the field of agriculture? No, we should not. Everyone knows it, irrespective of their background and knowledge. There is no need to inform the scientific community about it even once more.

The agriculture example is of course one of numerous examples that we could point out here. Authors love to start their papers with such clichés, let it be in agriculture, mathematics, health sciences, and the like. Why? I do not know, but I suppose they think that a paper has to start with general information. If one is productive in a particular field, after some time the opening paragraphs of one's papers may seem to have been written by using the copy and paste technique. (Is this not, by the way, what we would call plagiarism?) The point is simply that such openings are unnecessary because the fact that "agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the economy because it provides people with food" is well known by all of us. Do such authors assume that we don't know this?

How the paper opens is very important, and this is a cliché as well, but a very accurate one. The readers do not read the whole paper to find out whether it interests them or not; if reading the opening paragraph or two bores them rigid, there is a good chance they will choose one of the many other articles on the same topic. Nowadays they should have no problems with that. Kane writes, "You may play upon curiosity by opening with a short factual statement that raises more questions than it answers."[1] And though this does not have to be the best way of opening all papers, it says what is really important: first, that making the readers interested may help them to muddle through more than just one paragraph; and second, reading between the lines, that not doing that may result in being neglected by all of those, or most of them, to whom the paper is directed.

MacPherson says, "Needless to say, the first paragraph is one of the most important of all ... It must lead on to what is to follow and be clearly related to it."[2] It must lead on to and be clearly related to what is to follow: neither tricky nor difficult, is it?

Kane adds, "You don't want to repel readers ... labouring the obvious also implies a low opinion of readers: don't tell them what a wheel is; they know."[1] This is what each author should remember, and each editor too, because it is the editor is who accepts (and sometimes prepares) the final version of the paper. It is the editor's task not to accept the author's attempts to repel readers, attempts that are still so popular among science authors.

And finally, Knuth et al say, "The opening paragraph should be your best paragraph, and its first sentence should be your best sentence."[3] And to this, there is nothing more to add.

Marcin Kozak
Departmentof Biometry, Walsaw University of Life Sciences
m.kozak@omega.sggw.waw.pl

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Non-native English writing: an underestimated problem?

Recently my husband, who works at a senior level in engineering science, grumbled about the amount of time he was having to put into reviewing research articles. "Doing the job of the supervisors" was how he put it. Articles are submitted that are nowhere near a "final" form. He implied that some supervisors, although clearly native speakers themselves, may not have taken the trouble to even look at the papers before allowing them to be sent in, let alone to check them through. And it is hard work for reviewers to understand the actual message and to evaluate and suggest effective improvements on the basis of a badly written text, particularly when the research may not even be directly in their own field. My husband admitted to being very tempted, on occasions, to resort to sarcasm to relieve the frustration.

Shortly after this I was asked to read through a research paper by a colleague. The paper had been rejected following a pretty devastating report from one of the reviewers, in which the latter made reference to his subjective experience in trying to review the article ("nearly lost the will to live"). I knew enough about the research and the authors to be fairly certain of the quality of the scientific content of the paper, so it seemed unfortunate that it was rejected because the reviewer was unable to appreciate the quality of the

research presented because of what was, in his view, "bad" writing.

A few months ago I had also been asked to help with the revised version of an article by a different colleague; in this case the paper had been provisionally accepted on condition that fairly major revisions be carried out, including having the article checked by a native speaker "to improve the flow of the text" . There seems to be a problem in producing adequate English text, and these examples are not unique in my experience.

In some cases, as my husband implied, simply not enough effort is put into training English academic writing skills and ensuring that submitted texts are of sufficient quality. This is a serious problem in itself, but cultural differences may play a role. A literal translation is rarely enough to transform a non-English text into an effective English text, but not every author, or reviewer for that matter, appreciates that what constitutes "good" writing within one culture may be seen as "bad" writing in another.

Clyne describes a range of "national styles" of discourse, intricately bound to culture.[1] For example, English argumentation is basically linear in structure, whereas oriental languages tend to prefer more circular structures, with "the topic looked at from different angles". German is another example of non-linear discourse: digressions are quite common in German texts, and even digressions from digressions, as the author seeks to exhibit knowledge and expertise. Clyne cites one extreme case in which in his (Anglo-Celtic) view "the structure may best be represented by cooked spaghetti". Whereas the German reader would appreciate the depth and breadth of argumentation presented in this style, according to English standards it does not improve the readability of the text. On the other hand, a text written in the Anglo-Celtic style may be considered superficial by a German reader. Clyne casts "some doubt on the effectiveness of translations of academic publications which do not reorganize the discourse".

In a later study Clyne compared differences in academic discourse patterns in texts by English- and German-speaking scholars, motivated among other things by the concern that:

"If English- and German-educated scholars do apply different formal criteria to judge the acceptability of academic writings, and cultural differences make them susceptible to such judgments, international and academic exchange and cooperation may suffer."[2]

Communication of scientific knowledge is vital for the development of our understanding, and editors and reviewers (mostly on a voluntary basis) have an important role in ensuring the validity and quality of the knowledge that is passed on. It would be unfortunate if good research were misinterpreted and perhaps even rejected as a result of cultural bias – or if reviewers were no longer willing to do the job because they have to put much time and effort into adapting the style of text (which, incidentally, is not always appreciated by the authors), when their main concern should be with the scientific content of the research presented.

Although this problem is not a new one, it still requires serious consideration. My husband's view was that the problem is getting worse rather than better, perhaps as a result of recent trends that most research in his field is carried out (and published) by relatively inexperienced PhD students. This does not apply so much in my own field of work, but here too there is increasing pressure on researchers to publish their work internationally. Recognition of what constitutes an effective international academic text (including respect for different cultural viewpoints), and the will and the means to ensure that submitted texts meet a basic standard, could ease the burden on authors and reviewers alike.

Katrina Emmett
Freudenthal Institute for Science and Mathematics Education
Utrecht University, The Netherlands
K.M.Emmett@uu.nl

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A subtle but profound change in citation practice

Moving away from the traditional practice for citing journal articles (year, volume, page numbers), the BMJ is as of 1 July using e-locators -- unique identifiers for BMJ articles, analogous to DOIs, which are unique identifiers of any electronic object. This is part of the BMJ's new practice of continuous online publication, in which articles are posted on bmj.com as soon as they have been edited and proofed. Later the articles are gathered into print issues.

"The *BMJ* is the first major medical journal to move to continuous publication," says an editorial in the issue of 28 June, "but within publishing generally it is not alone. Broadcasters have long been posting news continuously on their websites, and many newspapers now post their articles online as soon as they are written, in advance of the next morning's paper edition. People's online behaviour suggests that their interest is primarily in individual articles and not in the print issues, or indeed even the journal in which they appear. The *BMJ* has for

some years been .giving authors all the space they need for their research papers and providing shorter versions in print."

The online "publish ahead of print" model that the BMJ used for research articles assumed that they would eventually be published in a print issue, and the ultimate citation for that article derived from that print issue. But now each article has only one (permanent) citation, not derived from print. When it was first published, an online first article had a year and a DOI (*BMJ* 2008 doi:10.1136/bmj.012334.5678. BM, for example) but when it later appeared in print, the citation became: *BMJ* 2008;336:123-5.

Now, that citation is *BMJ* 2008;337:a145 – from its first online appearance to entries in Medline, PubMed, and other bibliographical indexes. PubMed and ISI have been informed about this change n and are happy with it.

This subtle change marks a profound shift in publication practice. It will be interesting to see if other journals follow this route; what would motivate them to do so?

Margaret Cooter
Technical editor, BMJ
mcooter@bmj.com

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Correspondence

Inquiring about impact factors

With great interest I have read Arjan Polderman's editorial in the November 2007 issue of ESE,[1] because the correct use of impact factors is currently of great importance to journals and their authors. I fully endorse the accompanying official statement from EASE and believe that the editorial community may be interested in supplementary materials that shed some additional light on the subject.

In this connection I would recommend familiarization with the related polemics developed last winter in the *Journal of Cell Biology* and in Thomson Scientific's Citation Impact Forum. The last portion of this discussion appeared in January in the *Journal of Cell Biology*.[2] Its corresponding webpage (www.jcb.org/cgi/content/full/180/2/254) contains references and links to the previous parts of this debate, as well as some extra comments.

In addition, for those concerned with the possible future of impact measures I would recommend the blog of Iowa State University's Science and Technology Librarian, Gerry McKiernan (http://scholarship20.blogspot.com/2008/05/more-open-metrics-emerging-impact.html), which holds a collection of related citations, references, and links, and which can be a good starting point for further inquiry into this interesting area.

Volodymyr Lysenko
The Information School, University of Washington
vlysenko@u.washington.edu

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Editing around the World

The plight of biomedical journals in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Husref Tahirovic
Department of Pediatrics, University Clinical Center Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina; husref.tahirovic@untz.ba

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a southern European state covering 51,197 square kilometers, populated by 3.8 million people, and located between Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro. It contains five schools of medicine, three of dentistry, three of pharmacy, one of veterinary medicine, a few health colleges, and four clinical hospital centres.

Publishing history

The first medical journal, *Jahrbuch des bosnisch-hercegowinischen Landesspittales in Sarajevo* (Yearbook of the Land Hospital in Sarajevo) was first published more than 100 years ago, most probably in 1897.[1] In a special section, Austrian doctors working in Sarajevo wrote about patients' illnesses, in a way that may be considered to be scholarly studies in today's terms.[1] A copy of the journal was found in the collection of the National and University library of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was burnt down on 25 August 1992, during the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

Up to 1945, five biomedical journals were published in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Zdravlje* (Health) began publishing in 1914 in Belgrade and Sarajevo; *Glasnik ljekarske komore za Bosnu i Hercegovinu, Dalmaciju i Crnu Goru* (Herald of Physicians' Chamber for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalmatia, and Montenegro), later known as *Glasnik ljekarske komore za Drinsku banovinu* (Herald of Physicians' Chamber for Drina Banate) was published in Sarajevo from 1925 to 1941; *Glasnik ljekarske komore Vrbaske banovine* (Herald of Physicians' Chamber of Vrbas Banate) was first published in 1930, *Vijesnik zavoda za suzbijanje endemskog sifilisa* (Proceedings of the Institute for Prevention of Endemic Syphilis) was published in Banja Luka in 1942; and *Acta medica biologica Croatica*, the journal for medicine and biology, was first published in 1945 in Zagreb and Sarajevo.[1, 2] All of these journals were published only for a short period of time, and they were not indexed.

From 1945 to the end of 2007, 56 medical journals were published in Bosnia and Herzegovina for various lengths of time. Some of them were not catalogues by the national library, and some closed down after only a few issues.[3-5]

At the end of 2007, according to the figures supplied by the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 23 biomedical journals were being published (table 1). It is difficult to establish what kind of journals they are, since at the time of their registration in the National and University Library they were not defined as scientific, professional, or other kind of biomedical journal. The frequency of publishing is also not always known, since the interval between two issues can be up to several years. Therefore it is sometimes unclear whether the journal is no longer published or has just been temporarily halted. Moreover, it is not uncommon for journals, even those that are published regularly, to fail to send copies to the library, so those journals are thought to have been closed down.

Regular publications

If we take into account only the journals that are published regularly and are publishing scholarly studies, 12 biomedical professional and scholarly periodicals are published in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of these, nine are indexed in international bibliographic databases, and some of them in more than one database. Two journals are indexed in Index Medicus/Medline, one in EMBASE, two in CAB Abstracts/Global Health Databases, one in Chemical Abstracts, two in Index Copernicus, and one in the British Library Inside Service (table 1). These journals can be considered "important" in Bosnia and Herzegovina because they meet the criteria for inclusion in international bibliographic databases. Articles published in them, alongside the articles published in foreign biomedical journals, are counted for professional and scholarly advancement at the biomedical schools.

More than half of the biomedical journals in Bosnia and Herzegovina were founded by professional associations; three journals were founded by university clinical centres, and two by scientific institutions (table 1).

Obtaining contributions

Medical periodicals in Bosnia and Herzegovina usually publish two or four issues a year. When the editors cannot gather sufficient manuscripts, they resort to publishing double, triple, and sometimes even quadruple issues. This problem is characteristic of journals from the countries of the so-called "scientific periphery".[6]

Since the end of the 1992–1995 war, conditions for scientific and research work in this country are very modest. Bosnia and Herzegovina, in terms of the number of scientific articles published in international referenced journals per 100,000 of the population in 2000, was the lowest among the countries from the former Yugoslavia.[7]

An increasing number of journals have a website, on which they provide basic information about the journal and either partial or full content of the papers published. Only three journals have a registered online form of journal – *Medicinski glasnik* (Medical Herald), *Acta Medica Academica*, and *Pedijatrija danas* (Pediatrics Today). It is well known that the increased visibility brought by a website is a good way to attract authors, not only in the country in which the journal is published but also abroad.[8] Journals in Bosnia and Herzegovina should make use of this fact.

The journals are financed mainly by advertisements and membership fees of professional associations, much less by subscriptions or state government support. Most

Table 1. Biomedical journals in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Title	Founded	Issues per year	Publisher	Language	Indexed in	Type of journal
Acta informatica medica	1993	4	Medical Informatics Society Bosnia and Herzegovina Sarajevo	English	EBSCO	Professional -scholarly
Acta Medica Academica	2006	2	Academy of Arts and Science, Bosnia and Herzegovina Sarajevo	English		Professional -scholarly
Acta Medica Saliniana	1972	2	University Clinical Centre, Tuzla	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, English	Index Copernicus	Professional -scholarly
Apotekar	2001	4	Apoteke Sarajevo, Sarajevo	Bosnian	-	Professional -informative
Bilten Ljekarske komore Zenica	2000	2	Chamber of Pharmacists, Zeničko–dobojski canton, Zenica	Bosnian	-	Professional -informative
Bilten stomatologia B&HC	1998	3	Dentists Association of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, English	-	Professional -informative
BIMA journal	1999	2	Medical Association BIMA u Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo	Bosnian, English	-	Professional
Bosnian journal of basic medical sciences	1998	4	Association of basic medical science, Sarajevo	English	Index Medicusu / MEDILINE, Cab abstract: Global Health databases	Professional -scholarly
Doctor	2004	6	Chamber of Pharmacists Sarajevo canton, Sarajevo	Bosnian	-	Professional -informative
HealthMed	2007	4	Society for development of teaching and business processes in new net environment, Sarajevo	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, English	EBSCO publishing	Professional -scholarly
Info Bosnalijek danas	1998	6	Bosnalijek d.d. Sarajevo		-	Professional -informative
Materia socio-medica	1993	4	Association for social medicine and public health B&H, Sarajevo	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian	-	Professional -scholarly
Medici.co	2003	6	Medici.com, Banja Luka	Serbian	-	Professional -informative
Medicinski arhiv	1947	4	Avicena, Sarajevo	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, English	Index Medicusu/ Mediline, EBSCO	Professional -scholarly
Medicinski glasnik	1998	2	Chamber of Pharmacists Zeničko-dobojski cantons, Zenica	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, English	EMBASE (Excerpta Medica, Scopus), Science Citation Index Expanded	Professional -scholarly
Medicinski žurnal	1995	4	Institute for scientific and research work and development of Clinical Centre, Sarajevo University, Sarajevo	Bosnian, English	-	Professional -scholarly
Pedijatrija danas	2005	2	University Clinical Centre, Tuzla	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, English	The British Library Inside Service, Index Copernicus, CAB Abstract /Global Health Databases	Professional -scholarly
Pharmacia	1954	2	Pharmacists Association, Federation of B&H, Sarajevo	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, English	Chemical Abstract	Professional -scholarly
Stomatološki bilten – Dentalart	2005	5	Computer Library, Banjaluka	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, English	-	Professional -informative
Život & Down Syndrome	2007	2	Life with Down Syndrome, Sarajevo	Bosnian	-	Professional -informative
Veterinarija, Sarajevo	1951	4	Veterinary faculty, Sarajevo	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, English	CAB Abstract	Professional -scholarly
Veterinarski žurnal Republike Srpske	2001	2	Veterinary Institute of Republika Srpska Dr Vaso Butozan	Serbian	-	Professional -scholarly
Vjesnik UKC	2006	6	University Clinical Centre Tuzla	Bosnian	-	Professional -informative

Source: National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina, printed editions of journals, and websites of each journal.

Table 2. Country of origin of authors of articles published in indexed journals from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2005–2007

	Country of origin of authors					
	Bosnia and Herzegovina		Other countries of former Yugoslavia		Rest of the world	
Journal	n	%	n	%	n	%
Acta informatica medica	119	80	10	7	20	13
Acta Medica Saliniana	70	93	5	7	0	0
Bosnian journal of basic medical sciences	181	90	7	4	11	6
*HealthMed**	23	96	1	4	0	0
Medicinski arhiv	334	97	7	2	5	2
Medicinski glasnik	46	84	9	16	0	0
Pedijatrija danas	24	49	21	43	4	8
Pharmacia	10	77	1	8	2	15
Veterinarija Sarajevo	53	70	14	18	9	12
Total	860	87	75	8	51	5

*Started publishing in 2007.

journals receive little if any support from state institutions. This situation is made more complex by the fact that the responsible state institutions do not show any particular interest in biomedical journals. They do not even have a valid document on financing scientific periodicals, nor an established basis to stimulate the quality of journals, which would encourage journals from Bosnia and Herzegovina to become indexed in prestigious international bibliographic databases and thus increase their visibility.

Staffing

The editors of indexed biomedical journals are mainly university professors. None of them do the work of editor full time, and four of nine receive modest financial remuneration for the work of editing. It is interesting to note that the journals whose editors are paid for their work are published by professional associations. The majority of editors believe that the greatest problems of the journals are lack of financing, and poor quality of submitted articles. Other problems, such as regularity of publication, difficulties with the process of review, indexing in bibliographic bases, are merely the consequences of these two issues.

Language of publication

Only one indexed biomedical journal is published exclusively in English. Other journals publish mainly in their own language (Bosnian, Croatian, or Serbian) with an obligatory summary in English. This leads to the conclusion that most of the works published by indexed journals in Bosnia and Herzegovina are mainly reviewed by local reviewers, or reviewers from neighbouring countries created after the break-up of former Yugoslavia. In these conditions, where almost all professionals know one another, it is almost impossible to maintain objectivity in the review process,[9] and this is reflected in the quality of the works published.

Outside influences

Only 13% of the papers published in the analysed journals are by authors from outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, with more than half from neighbouring countries (table 2).

All indexed biomedical journals in Bosnia and Herzegovina, except Medicinski arhiv (Medical Archive), have an international publishing board. However, if we assess their influence on the publishing policies of the journal, we can conclude that this body usually acts more or less formally and without much influence on the quality of the studies published.

The quality of the studies published in biomedical journals in Bosnia and Herzegovina is assessed by the amount they are cited in international biomedical scholarly journals, which is very modest. This is confirmed by the fact that not a single journal from Bosnia and Herzegovina has an official impact factor.

In conclusion

In the light of the situation of biomedical periodicals in Bosnia and Herzegovina, some provocative questions can be posed: Do medical journals in Bosnia and Herzegovina fulfil the basic role of a journal – that is, to communicate scientific information? In which professional and scholarly circles do published information circulate? And what is the purpose of the published studies? Answers to these questions are not hard to find, but it is difficult to resolve the problems that sustain the present gloomy situation.

I thank Adisa Žero, the head of the ISSN Centre B&H, National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for information on the library's journal holdings.

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Reports of Meetings

Empires of the mind: inventing the future of scholarly publishing

SSP 30th annual meeting, Boston, 28-30 May 2008

The 30th annual meeting of the Society for Scholarly Publishing (www.sspnet.org) in Boston was well attended—almost 800 delegates turned up at the Westin Copley Place to participate in an extensive two-day conference programme (not including the pre-meeting seminars) consisting of three plenaries; 16 parallel sessions of 90 minutes each, featuring panels of three to four experts; 13 luncheon roundtable discussions organised around topics covered in the sessions; and a lively exhibition featuring 38 booths.

Two keynote speakers looked at publishing's past to find possible clues for conceptualising and predicting its future. Alex Wright, an information architect at the *New York Times*, opened proceedings with "The deep history of the information age", trying to find clues in past periods of transition that were characterised by disruptive new publishing technology for how the information age may unfold in the future, and the publishing industry with it. The third plenary speaker, Pattie Maes, an associate professor in MIT's programme in media arts and sciences, focused entirely on the future in her talk, "Just-in-time information". She featured some interesting technological developments that try to integrate information more closely into people's physical lives so as to make accessing it less disruptive than it is at the moment—for example, electronic sticky notes that can send electronic messages to electronic media.

The closing plenary lecture, "The authenticity engine", by Adrian Johns, history professor in Chicago, reflected on historical developments in book publishing, which he interpreted as a "history of endeavours to authenticate both a technological culture of communication and the products of that culture." Amusingly, he framed his lecture with a Hannibal Lecter question from the film *The Silence of the Lambs*: "What is it in itself and of itself?" to move from Galileo and about half a dozen other carefully selected examples to the present and possibly the future.

The two days in between contained sessions that touched on just about any subject area that is relevant to scholarly publishing today: green issues; multimedia content, new business models, and working in global markets; tagging, taxonomies, and folksonomies; accessibility and archiving; search engine visibility and reference resource discovery; blogging and online communities; marketing copyright issues; and even dropping print completely.

The session in which I participated as a speaker and panellist was entitled "Building a better blog—value added or just another distraction?" Jane Hiebert-White from US health policy journal *Health Affairs* was the first speaker and covered much common ground in terms of setting up regular blogs, blogging software and web administration, staffing issues, guest bloggers, blog content, and how to use blogs to drive article usage. I then gave a historical tour through the *BMJ*'s attempts at getting blogs up and running, describing how we went from next to nothing to almost daily blog updates from guest bloggers within a mere three months after implementing a new blogging strategy and actively recruiting opinion leaders in medicine as bloggers ("Comment is free, and everybody is welcome"). The third speaker, David Crotty, executive editor of *Cold Spring Harbor Protocols*, presented a different model. As the "voice of the organisation", he has his own blog, Bench Marks, on www.cshprotocols.com, and focuses on laboratory methods or Web 2.0 issues. All three of us agreed that blogs are time consuming, for writers as well as administrators, and if blogs are to succeed as a form of user generated content then resourcing and strategy are important considerations.

Other sessions I attended included "New content and business models in the new publishing world order", with an excellent panel that suggested many ideas on how to adapt to shifting content models and make money from their web offerings in the new publishing world order. iTunes, online books, and content aggregators were among the topics discussed in this session.

One of Friday morning's sessions, aptly entitled "Copyright 2.0—the agony and the ecstasy", gave insights into one of the probably most unsettled areas in publishing at the moment. New technology enables just about anyone to misappropriate someone else's content and repurpose it without any identification of its origin—for example, by placing a "widget" (one of the buzzwords at the conference) on their site. Discovering such a "theft" would not be easy and probably more a happy accident.

Another Friday morning session, "Interactive marketing and advertising: when the web gets personal", (re)familiarised the auditorium with personalised offers, packages, and recommendations that retailers such as Amazon use with great success. Using automation to create a more personal user experience was the fascinating paradox, and the speakers included a publisher, a marketing expert, and a speaker from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation in Europe, with the OECD website as a case study.

I very much regretted not being able to attend more of the sessions, but they were incredibly rich in detail, and drifting in and out did not seem a good idea for fear of missing something important. In spite of this minor niggle, a compliment to the organisers for compiling such an interesting programme.

Birte Twisselmann
assistant editor, bmj.com
btwisselmann@bmj.com

Book Reviews

Effective Onscreen Editing: New Tools for an Old Profession. Geoff Hart. Diaskeuasis Publishing, Quebec, 2008. 743p. US$20.00. ISBN 978-0-9783227-0-0.

The title of Geoff Hart's excellent e-book is misleading: *Effective Onscreen Editing: New Tools for an Old Profession*. A better title might be *Everything I Know About Editing*. This is simultaneously the book's strength and its weakness.

First, true to its title, the book explores in depth the tools available in word processors, for both Windows and Macintosh, and relates the vast functionality to onscreen editing.

Second, it covers many aspects of building and running an editing business, such as negotiating contracts, defining the level of editing, communicating with clients, and setting up a secure electronic working environment. Lining up these familiar topics in a clear structure will encourage readers to review their own practices.

Finally, it offers a sensitive meditation on editing, but one that might test the patience of an editor in a hurry to mine the gold of Hart's 20 years of experience with computers.

Of course, one challenge that Hart faced was to cover the technical topics usefully for beginners as well as masters, and he met it well. Judging a user's competence level is tricky: one user's needless digression is another's priceless revelation. Even as I restlessly tapped my toe reading information that seemed basic, I was ambushed by bits of information that were new and useful to me.

The book is ideal for someone new to editing, no computer experience required. For a veteran editor looking for a quick overview, however, there is too much information, too lavishly explicated. Hart often takes the long way round the barn in his explanations; as an editor, I kept wanting to swing a machete. A whole chapter on the benefits of onscreen editing (how many of us have a choice?) seemed superfluous – but later, his discussion of the pros and cons of combining onscreen editing with printouts was profitable. Still, his voice is warm and conversational, and the verbosity feels like generosity.

The danger is that the book's nearly 200,000 words will banish it to the pile of unread user's manuals. That would be a shame because there is a great deal of valuable information for editors at every stage in their careers.

His most useful chapters cover personalizing your computer and word processor, navigating in documents, revision tracking, inserting and deleting text, search tools, style sheets, spelling checkers, and automating your editing. Throughout the book, Hart offers editor-specific strategies for each of the many tools. Following his instructions, editors will increase their speed, consistency, and accuracy, and learn to automate repetitive tasks.

For example, his coverage of revision tracking is clearer than many other explanations I've read. He begins by explaining how to define the appearance of revisions: the style and colour of inserted, deleted, and reformatted text; assigning each reviewer their own colour (which overrides the separate settings for insertions, deletions, and reformatting); inserting vertical bars next to lines containing changes; and whether or not to show comments in balloons and how to print them.

The unexplained materialization of balloons causes panic and rage in many inexperienced users, and knowing how to make them disappear is a great comfort. Strangely, Hart only covers them in Appendix III.

Expanding on revision tracking, he discusses overlooked and mangled revisions, compares ways to accept or reject revisions (one at a time, all at once, changes visible or not), offers advice on collating revisions from multiple reviewers, and considers the psychology of presenting revisions to authors. Little did I know that it is possible to restrict the kinds of changes made by (obstreperous) authors to an editor's revisions (Tools > Protect document > Editing restrictions). His discussion of the Compare Documents feature reveals how handy it can be, and the information on coping with other file formats will save a lot of heartache.

Hart offers important advice on backing up your work, avoiding computer-related health risks, and working securely. At random, one of my favourite tips is how to create custom dictionaries for individual projects or subjects. Open Tools > Options > Spelling and Grammar > Custom Dictionaries. Click the New button and name the dictionary. To add words to a particular dictionary and not to Word's default custom dictionary, select the preferred dictionary in the Custom Dictionaries dialogue box and click the Change Default button.

An onscreen version of the book can be purchased at Hart's website, http://www.geoff-hart.com/home/onscreen-book.htm, for US$20.00; a print-on-demand version is available for £19.28 at lulu.com. On his site, Hart offers the table of contents and Chapter 3, "Writing and editing are human endeavors". Oddly, it is a poor example of the book's scope, but I guess that Hart didn't want to give away the farm by offering one of the richer chapters.

This may be two or three books in one, but I'm glad that I had to plough through the whole thing. It is a treasure house not only for editors but also for anyone who uses a word processor to prepare documents.

William Anthony
Executive Editor, International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
Bill@ices.dk

Peer Review and Manuscript Management in Scientific Journals: Guidelines for Good Practice. Irene Hames. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007. 293 pp. £21.50. ISBN 978-1-4051-3159-9

If you want to have an intimate look at what life is like in the editorial office of a scientific journal, this eminently readable book will take you into that world of conflicts, frustrations, difficult decisions, and satisfactions. You will also have a glimpse into the lives of peer reviewers, dictating manuscript reviews into their mobile phones as they rush from one conference and one country to another.

The author, Irene Hames, has been the managing editor of *The Plant Journal* for many years and has been a member of a number of working parties on peer review. The goal of this book is to provide a basic "how to" guide for people involved in editorial peer review – that is, journal editors, editorial office staff, and publishers. It mentions one previous book on the subject, Peer Review in Health Sciences, edited by Fiona Godlee and Tom Jefferson.[1] Otherwise, it fills an apparent gap in helping journal editors to conduct the process of peer review.

Peer Review and Manuscript Management in Scientific Journals certainly achieves that goal. It covers every conceivable aspect of what must be done before, during, and after peer review, with many pitfalls, terrifying eventualities, and solutions. The steps are outlined clearly, with summary boxes and warnings in "Beware" boxes and a series of checklists in an appendix. A whole chapter is devoted to online submission and review systems.One of the obvious qualities required of a reviewer is an intimate knowledge of the subject to be reviewed. The author of this book review has never worked in an editorial office but has been involved from the author's point of view, from submission of manuscripts to what is euphemistically known as "dealing with reviewers' comments". She was therefore fascinated to find out what goes on in the journal office, and the book goes far beyond peer review to the whole process of manuscript management. In fact, only about 80 of the nearly 300 pages and three of the nine chapters are devoted to peer review. Nevertheless, the subject is admirably covered within the overall flow of dealing with a manuscript from submission to publication.

One of the main emphases of the book is the importance of being nice – to everyone. Again and again, the editor is reminded that he or she must be fair, polite, thoughtful, and considerate with editorial staff, with authors, and with reviewers. One of the three chapters that deals directly with peer review consists mainly of suggestions for thanking, recompensing, and maintaining the loyalty of reviewers, going so far as "sending them things they may not be able to get in their own countries and develop a craving for, such as certain chocolate bars!" Authors and reviewers are also reminded to be polite and patient. Certainly, such consideration is desirable and editors should be reminded of its necessity, but the extent to which it can be ingrained by advice such as this is doubtful.I would have liked to know more about what the policy of journals actually is, for instance with respect to giving feedback to reviewers, and whether they ask authors submitting a manuscript to a journal after it has been rejected by another to send on the reviews they have already received. Some examples are given in the appendices, for instance with respect to authorship, but more concrete examples would have been helpful.

These small carpings do not detract from the fact that this is an excellent book for any journal editor, whether novice or experienced, which will be a valuable guide to either setting up a peer review system from scratch or improving an existing system.

Elisabeth Heseltine
heseltin@club-internet.fr

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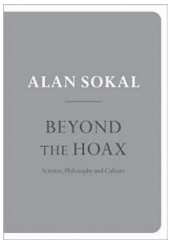
Beyond the Hoax: Science, Philosophy and Culture. Alan Sokal. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 448p. ISBN 0 199 23920 7



The "science wars" are still raging, argues Alan Sokal in this book, and the scientific world view of facts and evidence is under more threat now than ever. In these wars, a misnamed debate among humanities academics, realists defend the objectiveness of science, and postmodernists assert that science and logic are merely subjective social constructs, no more valid than any other means of thinking about the world.

This debate took a turn with an experiment by Sokal in which he submitted a spoof of a postmodernist essay to a cultural studies journal to see whether the humanities academics who were critiquing the validity of science knew what they were arguing about. Would the editors of the non-peer reviewed journal Social Text accept "an article liberally salted with nonsense if (a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors' ideological preconceptions"? They did, and they published the article in 1996.

Beyond the Hoax brings together this paper and Sokal's subsequent announcement that it was a hoax. The book considers the fallout over the decade after the experiment and the legitimacy and scope of the academic subject of "science studies." It goes on to lambast the acceptability of "sloppy thinking" that postmodernist discussions have invited. And Sokal blames this disrespect for evidence for the rise in faith over reasoning, which, he says, governments are now using to their advantage to muddy the scientific consensus, for example, on climate change and evolution.

The first chapter of *Beyond the Hoax* reproduces the jargon-rich paper from Social Text titled "Transgressing the boundaries: towards a transformative hermeneutics of quantum gravity". This parody argues that quantum physics itself provides evidence for postmodernist thought: "Quantum gravity informs us that space and time are themselves contextual, their meaning defined only relative to the mode of observation."

This version is annotated to explain the many hidden jokes—references to the work of philosophers such as Derrida and Lacan, "feminist, queer, multiculturist, and ecological critiques" and a misuse of scientific terms, which Sokal says characterises science studies essays. He writes, for example: "Physical 'reality,' no less than 'social reality,' is at the bottom of a social and linguistic construct . . . scientific 'knowledge,' far from being objective, reflects and encodes the dominant ideologies . . . of the culture that produced it."

Sokal simultaneously published an announcement in another humanities journal that his first paper had been "a pastiche of left wing cant, fawning references, grandiose quotations, and outright nonsense . . . structured around the silliest quotations I could find about mathematics and physics" made by postmodernist academics (*Lingua Franca* 1996;May-June:62-4).

Social Text refused the article that comprises the second chapter of Beyond the Hoax, in which Sokal explains his experiment (it was subsequently published in *Dissent* 1996;43(4):93-9). He writes, "I'm a stodgy old scientist who believes, naively, that there exists an external world [and] that there exist objective truths about that world." He goes on to explain his motives as political: "To combat postmodernist/poststructuralist/social-constructivist discourse . . . which is inimical to the values and future of the Left."

Sokal goes on to consider the implications of his hoax. The themes and legitimacy of science studies is fascinating, especially the analysis of ideas put forward by some feminist critics that modern scientific method is fundamentally misogynistic, even interpreted as the "rape and torture of Nature, viewed as female" by some commentators. In other chapters Sokal discusses what the affair does and does not prove, looks at cognitive relativism in the philosophy of science, and defends "scientific realism".

In the last part of the work, Sokal seeks to demonstrate how irrational pseudoscience is widespread and funded and promoted as science, using the examples of alternative therapies in nursing, science in India, and radical environmentalism.

Beyond the Hoax is a rewarding read, yet demanding in places, and Sokal tackles some complex ideas about the philosophy of science and the nature of scientific knowledge, but he writes clearly and entertainingly. Sokal's aim to defend a scientific world view is an admirable one. It seems that irrationality is on the rise: recent newspaper reports have claimed that as many as 40% of UK citizens and 60% of US citizens believe in creationism, which is directly contradicted by scientific evidence. Sokal's hoax shows the readiness of some people to dismiss evidence based thinking, saying it is no different to faith.

Richard Hurley,
Technical editor, BMJ
rhurley@bmj.com

For an interview with Alan Sokal about his book visit www.guardian.co.uk/science/audio/2008/feb/25/science.extra.podcast

EASE-Forum Digest: March to June 2008

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

The exchanges on the forum between March and June have covered an interesting range of topics and should give editors some food for thought.

Three cheers for the serial comma

Ed Hull asked which of the following sentences 'flowed' better:

> A: The book "How to report statistics in medicine" is intended for editors, peer reviewers, and readers of science, and it goes a long way toward improving the credibility of statistically-based scientific reporting.
>
> B: The book "How to report statistics in medicine" is intended for editors, peer reviewers and readers of science, and it goes a long way toward improving the credibility of statistically-based scientific reporting.

The two sentences only differ in that sentence A has a comma after "reviewers" and sentence B does not.

Stuart Handysides and Rhana Pike suggested other constructions but they were not very different from Ed's sentences and the forum discussion centred on the "Oxford" serial comma; the comma that, if you follow the rule, always appears before the "and" at the end of a list. Otherwise the comma would only be used to avoid ambiguity where there are other "ands" earlier in the list.

This is not the best sentence for a discussion about the serial comma because the second "and" after the list would tend to push most opinion (as was the case on the forum) towards using a comma after "reviewers"—ie, inserting the serial comma for clarity here. Not surprisingly, therefore, no one argued against its use for this sentence.

But we did hear from a few Oxford serial comma crusaders. Norman Grossblatt, supported by David Mason, pointed out that it is easy to forget that writers and editors are working to benefit readers and certainly not to be "grammatically correct". Therefore he supported always using the Oxford serial comma on the basis that it avoids those smallest of moments in the reader's mind when careful thinking has not kicked in yet, and instantaneous perception governs. It also avoids the writer having to think—whether to use it or not—of course.

The Oxford serial comma is often thought to be American style. Mary Ellen Kerans was quick to point out that this is a misconception, stating that most American writers use it no more than British writers. On the other hand Carol Norris was raised in the US on the "American list-comma". Maybe it depends on the part of the US you are brought up in.

Non-systematic reviews: terminology and method

Non-systematic literature reviews, there's no doubt about it, have a bad name. They have been defined as reviews that do not use systematic procedures to search for, select, and appraise studies, which are therefore not replicable. Furthermore, often they do not state how literature was retrieved and selected for inclusion in the review. Their conclusions are generally considered more subjective and less valid than those of systematic reviews even though they do not necessarily search less widely than systematic reviews.[1]

I passed a query on to the forum from a colleague who had noticed that the term "non-systematic review" often came up in abstracts. She did not like the term because it sounded as if the author selected articles from a pile on his or her desk or chose the ones in PubMed that supported the author's view. She felt the author of an article that aspires to have some scientific air should be able to state why the literature reviewed in the article was chosen.

Jim Hartley thought of a non-systematic review as one in which no particular method for doing the review was used, whereas systematic reviews involve assembling all papers possible on the topic and then sifting those that do not follow a certain methodology, eg those that did not use random allocation of patients to treatments. He preferred the term "narrative" review to "non-systematic review" to avoid use of a pejorative tone. Jim discusses what authors are trying to do in an introduction/literature review and distinguishes between different kinds of review in his new book.[2]

Marge Berer did not like the term "non-systematic review" either, as there may well have been a system or methodology involved, although the review might not have been "exhaustive", which was the description she preferred. She gave an example of one review she had done that brought up 20 pages of citations on PubMed, many of which sounded irrelevant, were old or short, had no abstract, or were in publications to which she could not obtain access. She went through the main journals that were likely to cover the subject. Most of what she read pointed in the same direction, so felt she had enough basis for drawing her conclusions. She agreed that an author should be expected to describe her or his methods in choosing to review some—but not all—articles.

For more reading on non-systematic reviews see these websites

http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/318/7176/135
http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/287/21/2853

Publisher's vocabulary: typesetter and "proof collation"

Bearing in mind that all manuscripts are now digital and publishers no longer need to type, is the word "typesetter" still useful or has it been engulfed by "pagemaker"? Mary Ellen Kerans posed this question to the forum and received answers supporting the continuing use of "typesetter". Publishers, including Elsevier, still have employees/contractors who are called "typesetters". Although their task is primarily to "set" the page, they do still need to type to make changes in the electronic version of hand copyedited manuscripts that are still sometimes sent to them.

Mary Ellen also sought help from the forum on another word. She explained that the combined results of several people marking proofs at once (author, editor, copyeditor) was called "fusión" in Spanish. What would this be called in English? The answer "proof collation" was provided by Lionel Browne and Kersti Wagstaff.

Science writing is abysmal

In a posting from Ed Hull he said, "We are in this strange situation where everyone has to write and publish, but no one has time to read." The context in which Ed wrote these words was his quest to find out how to teach researchers, whether native or non-native English writers, to write for the "real world". He argued that many problems with science writing stemmed from high school and university education, where style rules are learnt that apply to fiction: never use the same word twice in a sentence, use synonyms to bring your work to life, paint pictures with your words. Ed argued that busy real-world readers have to immediately see that an article offers them something they can use in their own work. Interestingly, he used a metaphor himself to argue his point and compared journal readers to gold diggers searching for easy-to-grab "nuggets" that give them something of value. He called for all universities to offer courses in academic writing for science students. Journals could also help by giving tips in their instructions to authors that go beyond cursory advice to use the active voice.

I agree with Ed that science writing is abysmal. You wonder how confused the author's mind itself must be to write in such convoluted heavy sentences, or what hope there is for science if all writers like sheep follow the norm rather than showing ingenuity in their writing style. Science writing often lacks the obvious prerequisites of clarity: simplicity, consistent word use, and parallel sentence structure. In the forum I pointed out that even though "throw- away" journals have lower methodological and reporting quality than peer-reviewed journals they are more popular with doctors because are they are more readable.[3] Where I differ from Ed is that I believe science writing should take more—not less—from non-academic writing. Science can be written with colour and joy by using metaphor and glimpses into the human emotions of the author. This is why I suggested that Richard Dawkins' *Oxford Book of Modern Science Writing* should be prerequisite reading for authors who are submitting papers to peer-reviewed journals. I will be reviewing this book for *ESE*.

Disappointingly, Ed's posting did not elicit the debate it deserved on a forum for governors of the scientific literature. I commented that if it were not for the need for authors to publish to promote their careers, peer-reviewed journals would probably die out because it is the authors' needs rather than those of the readers that keeps them going. This prompted Margaret Cooter to ask whether, if authors need to publish, are they willing to "put their money where their mouth is" and pay to do so? This was met with a retort by Andrew Davis that the real reason for publishing is to disseminate information and ideas. He added that this is a social benefit and there needs, in fact, to be an element of direct social support for such outlets.

Many will agree that this is a laudable stance but might question whether there is a chance of it regaining ground against the use of journals as a vehicle for authors to get points for their CVs and against thepharmaceutical industry's use of medical journals to market their products. Read Moira Johnson-Vekony's report[4] on a seminar given by Elsevier that focused on how publishers can work in cahoots with pharmaceutical companies to ensure the pharmas get the best out of medical journals and returns on their planning publication investment.

Elise Langdon-Neuner (compiler)
langdoe@baxter.com

Discussion initiators
Ed Hull: edhull@home.nl
Elise Langdon-Neuner: langdoe@baxter.com
Mary Ellen Kerans: mekerans@telefonica.net

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The Editors' WebWatch

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

Are you correcting what isn't even wrong?

www-csli.stanford.edu/~zwicky/

Arnold Zwicky, who you will have heard of if you read Language Log (www.languagelog.org), which was mentioned in a WebWatch column a few issues ago, is interested in the advice literature, and has taught on the subject.

Hopefully we all know that using *hopefully* as I've just used it is OK, infinitives can be split, prepositions can appear at the end of sentences, there is nothing necessarily wrong with dangling modifiers and so forth. There's lots of interesting discussion of all of these, and a few more that I'd never seen before, like the baffling possessive antecedent proscription, which tells you that this sentence:

> Toni Morrison's genius enables her to create novels that arise from and express the injustices African Americans have endured.

contains a mistake.

Oh dear

http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/exercisecentral/
http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/rewriting/ge3.html

These sites for improving your grammar were mentioned on http://www.stc-techedit.org/2007/11/30/keeping-up-with-the-joneses.

Hmm. There is a tutorial here on dangling modifiers, which Zwicky (above) discusses, and which everyone disambiguates dozens of times a day without thinking about it. Helpfully the tutorial says "Dangling modifiers often seem correct, which makes them difficult to recognize as errors."

There are fun proscriptions, too. In order to avoid sentences like "Indigestion is when you cannot digest food.", we are enjoined to avoid *is when* and *is where*, even though "Edinburgh, not Glasgow, is where I was born." looks fine to me.

Reference checking

www.redbrick.dcu.ie/~noel/JCIM.html
www.redbrick.dcu.ie/~noel/ACSlookup.html

Following on from the CrossRef lookups I've been mentioning in past WebWatches, Noel O'Boyle of the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, UK has been tackling some different aspects of citation checking.

The first link is to a straightforward format checker that compares the input against American Chemical Society house style, but the second is much more ingenious.

O'Boyle's contribution is to use sequence alignment algorithms designed for identifying differences between DNA sequences (which are, of course, simply text written in a four-letter alphabet) to compare the citation you've entered against the version stored by CrossRef and the one stored by PubMed, and highlight differences.

Learn how - online

http://cpd.conted.ox.ac.uk/personaldev/courses/getting_research_published.asp

Online courses are starting to flood the market, and the publication field is no exception. EASE's own Liz Wager will be giving an online course on getting your research published this autumn via theUniversity of Oxford's Department of Continuing Education.

Many courses focus on the mechanics of writing papers, but this one promises to focus instead on "getting the most from your writing efforts, for example by choosing the best meetings and journals", and covering "the ethics, conventions and often unwritten rules of publishing in peer-reviewed journals and at conferences."

Standard fee is £595.

Coping with Word 2007

Contact: lkrauss@stanford.edu

HighWire press have set up an e-mail discussion list about the use of Word 2007 in editorial processes, and Microsoft have two staff who are members of the list.

Top cited in different disciplines

http://info.scopus.com/topcited/

In a canny piece of advertising, Scopus have put up lists of the top 20 cited articles in various fields. The top-cited article since 2006 in Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology is in a crystallography journal and the top-cited Arts and Humanities paper is "Size effects in the deformation of sub-micron Au columns" by Volkert and Lilleodden at the Institute for Materials Research in Karlsruhe, so this tells us that either Scopus's categories need some tweaking, or that chemists and materials scientists are taking over.

Colin Batchelor (compiler)
batchelorc@rsc.org

Thanks to Paola de Castro, and Margaret Cooter.

News Notes

*As URLs for electronic sources can be lengthy, shortened URLS are given for some News Notes items. The complete URL can be found on the EASE blog (*http://ease-bookshelf.blogspot.com*) or obtained from the compiler (rhurley@bmj.com).*

Government dismisses simplified spellings

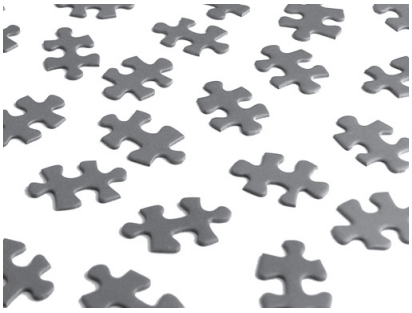
The UK schools secretary, Ed Balls, has dismissed as "nonsense" claims that tricky English spellings hinder children's education. The literacy researcher Masha Bell said that by the age of 11 children face 800 words with difficult spellings – such as monkey, spinach, caterpillar, dwarf, soldiers, and stomach – at a recent conference of the Spelling Society (www.spellingsociety.org). The society campaigns to raise awareness of "the problems caused by the irregularity of English spelling" and promotes spelling reform. "English has an unspeakably awful spelling system," she told the *Observer* newspaper. "It is the worst of all the alphabetical languages." (www.guardian.co.uk, 8 Jun 2008, "English is too hard to read for children").

Peer reviews stay private

The *New England Journal of Medicine* has been told by a federal magistrate that it does not have to hand over peer reviews to the drug company Pfizer. The company recently issued subpoenas to try to force journals to disclose confidential peer reviews and other materials relating to studies of its painkillers Celebrex (celecoxib) and Bextra (valdecoxib), which are the subject of lawsuits. Three weeks ago an Illinois judge ruled against Pfizer after it issued almost identical subpoenas to *JAMA* and the *Archives of Internal Medicine*. (*Nature* 2008;452:677; doi: 10.1038/452677d)

Editorial boards lack women

Women made up only a fifth (21%) of the editorial boards in 2005, although they were far worse represented in 1970, when they had just 1% of positions, a 35 year study of 16 prominent biomedical journals has shown (*Archives of Internal Medicine* 2008;168:547-8). Seven per cent of the journals' chief editors have been women, but having a female editor made no significant difference to the sex distribution of the board. Women were better represented in specialty clinical journals, such as the *Pediatrics*, and general medical journals, such as the *BMJ*, than in biomedical science journals, such as *Cell*. In an accompanying editorial (p 446) Nanette Wenger calls for journals to "explore their ranks for gender diversity".



The power of n=1

Two new journals hope to harness the evidence in medical case reports. *Cases Journal* (www.casesjournal.com), launched by BioMed Central in May, is open access and peer reviewed and authors must pay £99 per report. *BMJ Case Reports* (http://casereports.bmj.com) is a free online journal launched in June. It charges authors an annual fee of £95, and they can submit as many reports as they like. Case reports are weak evidence but are a starting point for further research, the editors say, and together they might provide evidence for people with comorbities, who are often excluded from randomised trials. (See www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/may/14/medicine20)

Spanish portal opens access

A national portal for Spanish open access scientific publications, Recolecta (www.recolecta.net), has been launched. The project is a collaboration between the Spanish network of libraries REBIUN and the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT) to provide a national search service for open access publishing in science. Recolecta seeks to stimulate open access publishing in Spain; to coordinate the creation of a national infrastructure of institutional repositories; and to serve as a central point of information on all topics related to open access. The search engine will find open access documents in journals, institutional repositories, and disciplinary repositories. (www.knowledgespeak.com/forward.asp?newsID=5918)

Email damages productivity

The three billion emails sent a day in the United Kingdom are "leaving us tired, frustrated and unproductive." A third of office workers suffer "email stress", and dealing with pointless messages may cost UK business £39m a year. These are the conclusions of a BBC2 *Money Programme* in March called "Email is ruining my life!" Some firms are trialing email-free days and hiring consultants to solve the problem. To reduce the burden, get a good spam filter, choose your email's recipients carefully, write more clearly, and reduce automatic interruptions from email software, experts suggest. (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7281707.stm and see "Email time bandits" www.dailymail.co.uk/)

Publishers confirm authors' rights

Advocating that authors add copyright postscripts to journal publishing agreements is a call for needless bureaucracy, said the International Association of Scientific, Technical, and Medical Publishers in March. The publishers' group has issued a statement which it says clarifies authors' rights: "Standard journal agreements typically allow authors to use their published paper . . . for educational purposes . . . and to post some version of the paper on a preprint server, their institutional repository, or a personal

website." Michael Mabe, head of the association, said, "Policy debate should be . . . based on evidence and consultation." (www.stm-assoc.org/documents-statements-public-co/ and www.stm-assoc.org/press-releases/)

Enough conflicts of interest?
In March the *BMJ* asked whether the hunt for authors' conflicts of interests had gone too far. Thomas Stossel argued that restrictions on academics' interaction with commercial companies damages research because they exclude qualified experts from writing in some journals. They also limit financial rewards that professionals can receive from private companies or even ban corporate consulting, he said. Kirby Lee, however, believes that competing interests "require management to prevent potential bias, or the perception of bias, in medical decision making or research." Of 443 voters in an online poll 45% agreed that the hunt had gone too far. (*BMJ* 2008;336:476-7)

XML extra for Word helps editors
An extension to Word 2007 allows science journal editors to create article templates, tailored for their individual requirements. These templates can encourage authors to write articles with greater consistency and to include semantic information, which is essential for the search of articles in digital form. Microsoft has released the enhancement, which supports the use of the National Library of Medicine's XML (extensible markup language) format and National Center for Biotechnology Information format for digital books. This "will help publishers to process these articles in their editorial and production departments," said Ahmed Hindawi, chief of the publisher Hindawi. See www.microsoft.com/mscorp/tc/scholarly_communication.mspx.

WHO renames bird flu viruses
The World Health Organization has standardized the nomenclature for H5N1 avian influenza viruses. The group of "Fujian-like" viruses should be referred to as "clade 2.3.4," for example. WHO says the reason for the change is scientific and that it was already in progress when China complained that the name stigmatizes its province. Clade 2.3.4 viruses are not restricted to Fujian—they have caused cases of bird flu in humans in Laos, Burma, and Vietnam. "The geographical naming system [is] rather confusing and unspecific; this more precise numbering system is far more rigorous," said Edward Holmes, a flu genomicist. See www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/guidelines/nomenclature/en. (*Nature* 2008 Apr 23; doi: 10.1038/452923a)

Le bloc replaces the blog
The English words "blog", "email", and "podcast" have been banned by the French government, to be replaced by the more French sounding "bloc", "courriel", and "diffusion pour baladeur." The French ministry of culture is worried about the anglicisation of the French language and has listed French replacements for 500 English words that are commonly used in France. Football commentators have been asked to use "entraineur" and "coup de pied de coin" instead of "coach" and "corner." A spokesman said, "French is a living language rich enough to speak for itself without the need for hundreds of English expressions." (www.mirror.co.uk/news/topstories/2008/03/12/ and http://my.telegraph.co.uk/maggie_millington/march_2008/)

Save the semicolon?
France is debating the future of the semicolon, according to a *Guardian* blog. The "point virgule," the writer François Cavanna is reported as saying, is "a parasite, a timid, fainthearted, insipid thing, denoting merely uncertainty, a lack of audacity, a fuzziness of thought." But defendants cite Hugo, Flaubert, and Voltaire as writers for whom the mark was essential. Writers such as George Orwell, Lynne Truss, and Will Self give their views. Meanwhile, in New York the sign "Please put it in a trash can, that's good news for everyone" has been revised to include a semicolon, but the *Financial Times* reports that "Americans see the semicolon as punctuation's axis of evil." (www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/apr/04/ and http://normblog.typepad.com/normblog/2008/03/)

Vigilante copy edits America
An illustrated blog (www.jeffdeck.com/teal/blog) has been started to document errors in public signage and their correction by the Typo Eradication Advancement League, reports Andrew Mueller in the *Guardian* (April 14). Armed with marker pens and correction fluid, Jeff Deck aims to correct as many typos in signs, posters, and restaurant menus as he can in a three month trip across the United States. Deck, a former editor for an academic publishing house in Washington, DC, said, "I had internalised the *Chicago Manual of Style* . . . and thought it would be a good thing to go around raising awareness." (http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/)

Blog till you drop
Two fatal heart attacks in the United States may have been a result of stress caused by excessive blogging, an article in the *New York Times* says. Other bloggers complain of weight loss or gain, sleep disorders, and mental health problems. Bloggers are "toiling under great physical and emotional stress created by the around-the-clock internet economy that demands a steady stream of news and comment," the article says. In some sectors blogging is highly competitive. Financial rewards are often low and based on the number of posts written or on the hits an entry gets. Some journalists have been fired for not meeting hits targets. (www.nytimes.com/2008/04/06/and http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/news/2008/04/)

Medline has 121,000 duplicate articles

Researchers estimate that the Medline database contains 121,000 duplicate articles. They analysed more than 62,213 abstracts indexed in Medline and found that 421 (1.4%) were duplicates with the same authors, and extrapolated this to the entire database, they report in a commentary in *Nature* (2008;451:397-9; doi: 10.1038/451397a). The detection of duplicate papers has not kept up with the rapid growth in scientific publication, they say, and journals should use software to identify duplication and expose unethical authors. Duplicate publication was discussed on a *Nature* blog, http://network.nature.com/forums/harvardpublishingforum/954. (See *Bioinformatics* 2008;24:243-9; doi: 10.1093/bioinformatics/btm574.)

Research misconduct is largely undetected

Questionable research practices are common and probably do more damage to science than the "big three" of fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism, said Nick Steneck, consultant to the US Office of Research Integrity, in April at a conference on the governance of good research conduct in the United Kingdom. These practices include poor design, incomplete literature review, failure to report some evidence, unreported outcomes, failure to declare conflicts of interest, and redundant publication. US surveys have asked researchers about the incidence of serious research misconduct; they show that between 0.1% and 1% of researchers have committed serious misconduct. (*BMJ* 2008;336:913; doi: 10.1136/bmj.39556.698646.DB.)

Free access boosts science

Low cost access to research in poor countries has been accompanied by an advance in scientific discovery, an analysis by the publisher Elsevier suggests. The Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative (HINARI), run by the World Health Organization, subsidises access to Elsevier journals. Between 2002 and 2006, in 105 countries with HINARI access papers published in international peer reviewed journals rose 63%, compared with 38% in 102 rich countries. Kimberley Parker, HINARI's programme manager, said "We are pleased to be able to say that we look to be a contributing factor but we can't prove it." http://www.scidev.net/en/science-communication/news/

Nature rallies for evolution

Between now and the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth on 12 February 2009, science academies and societies should summarize evidence for evolution on their websites and take every opportunity to promote it, a *Nature* editorial says. Resources to help include the US National Academy of Sciences' updated booklet *Science, Evolution, and Creationism* (www.nap.edu/sec). And the palaeontologist Kevin Padian destroys the false assertions by creationists that there are critical gaps in the fossil record in a court testimony (www.sciohost.org/ncse/kvd/Padian/Padian_transcript.html). Darwin's complete works are online at http://darwin-online.org.uk. Creationism is strong in the United States and rising in Europe (http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc07/EDOC11297.htm). (*Nature* 2008;451:108; doi: 10.1038/451108b)

Advice for strong observational studies

The STROBE statement, guidelines to strengthen the reporting of observational studies in epidemiology, has recently been published in German (*Internist* 2008;49:688-93; doi: 10.1007/s00108-008-2138-4) and Spanish (*Gaceta Sanitaria* 2008;22:144-50). The guidelines cover what should be included in a report to increase its generalisability and usefulness. The English guidelines for cohort, case-control, and cross sectional studies have been published in several top journals. A translation was published in the Chinese edition of the *Lancet*. Medical journals are increasingly adopting the recommendations. The translations are available at www.strobe-statement.org.

One million English words?

The English language will soon have a million words, predicts one language expert. A new word is created every 98 minutes, and the millionth word will arrive on 29 April, 2009. The 1.35 billion English speakers in the world, along with email and the internet, give rise to new words, says Paul Payack of the Global Language Monitor (http://www.languagemonitor.com/?m=200806). But though we have nearly a million words at our disposal, the average person's vocabulary consists of fewer than 14,000 words, and someone who who is "linguistically gifted" would use about 70,000 words.

Students plagiarise plagiarism code

Students at the University of Texas at San Antonio drafted a code to discourage plagiarism, but they took sections from Brigham Young University's plagiarism code, which they found online, a *Nature* blog reports. They even copied the definition of plagiarism. Both codes say, "Inadvertent plagiarism involves the inappropriate, but non-deliberate, use of another's words, ideas, or data without appropriate attribution." The student in charge of the project said that the lack of credit was an oversight. The entire *Nature* blog entry was copied from other (referenced) sources. (http://blogs.nature.com/news/thegreatbeyond/2008/04/schools_plagiarism_code_plagia.html)

Richard Hurley
rhurley@bmj.com

Thanks to Emma Campbell, Joan Marsh, Margaret Cooter, and Arjan Polderman.

The Editor's Bookshelf

We are using the EASE journal blog at http://ese-bookshelf.blogspot.com *to collect entries for The Editor's Bookshelf, and also for WebWatch and News Notes items. You can read the evolving blog online, and can contribute to it by contacting* paola.decastro@iss.it. *We look forward to your contributions.*

EDITORIAL PROCESS

Banks M. **Peer review gets the thumbs up**. *Physics World* 2008;21(3):8. (www.publishingresearch.org.uk/PeerReview.htm)

Review of a new survey of 3000 academics around the world in the sciences and arts commissioned by the Public Research Consortium; 93% of the respondents agreed that peer review is necessary. Other questions involved "single-blind" and "double-blind" reviewing and whether reviewers should be paid. Mark Ware, the independent consultant who carried out the survey, says, "We hope editors will at least look into the possibility of double-blind peer review, as bias is certainly present when knowing the author's identity in single-blind review."

Luey B. **Different kind of Profession: the Council of Editors of Learned Journals (CELJ)**. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 2008;39(2):94–108. (http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_scholarly_publishing/toc/scp39.2.html)

The keynote address at the 2006 meeting of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals discusses the ways professions are or are not appropriate to journal editing, and some possibilities for increasing professionalism. For one of the starting questions, "is journal editing a profession?" the proposed answer is that it should not be. Rather, it should be a profession open to innovation and talent and transparent to those who interact with it as authors, subscribers, and readers.

Macdonald S, Kam J. Aardvark et al. **Quality journals and gamesmanship in management studies**. *Journal of Information Science* 2007;33(6):702–717. (doi: 10.1177/0165551507077419)

Analyses the notion of a "quality journal", as publication in such journals has become a major indicator of research performance in UK universities. The indicator, as often happens, has become the target, so the challenge is to publish in quality journals, and the challenge rewards gamesmanship. In the rush to win the game, publication as a means of communicating research findings for the public benefit remains all but forgotten. This analysis of the situation in management studies underlines a much more widespread problem; it concludes that laughter, on top of being the appropriate reaction to such farce, could also be a stimulus to reform.

ETHICAL ISSUES

De Angelis CD, Fontanarosa B. **Impugning the integrity of medical science: the adverse effects of industry influence**. *JAMA* 2008;299(15):1833–1835. (http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/299/15/1833)

This editorial illustrates studies documenting the manipulation of study results, authors, editors, and reviewers by pharmaceutical and medical device industries. If this manipulation has occurred it is because physicians have allowed it to happen, and it is time to stop it. Journal editors also bear some of the responsibility for enabling companies to manipulate publications. Drastic action is essential, and cooperation of everyone involved in medical research, medical editing, medical education, and clinical practice is required for meaningful change to occur.

Kulathuramaiyer NMH. **Fighting plagiarism and IPR violation: why is it so important?** *Learned Publishing* 2007;20:252–258.

The revolutionary development of the web presents numerous opportunities for the spread of plagiarism and infringements of intellectual property rights (IPR). This situation creates the risk of introducing a "culture of mediocrity". Tools to detect plagiarism are available.

Ross JS, Hill KP, Egilman DS, Krumholz HM. **Guest authorship and ghostwriting in publications related to rofecoxib: a case study of industry documents from rofecoxib litigation**. *JAMA* 2008;299(15):1800–1812. (http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/299/15/1800)

Starting from recent litigation related to rofecoxib, the article examines guest authorship and ghostwriting, both practices that have been suspected in biomedical publication but for which there is little documentation. The objective was to determine the different types and the extent of guest authorship and ghostwriting in a case study. Using court documents and articles related to the topic, the authors showed that clinical trial manuscripts related to rofecoxib were authored by sponsors' employees but first authorship was often attributed to academically affiliated investigators who did not always disclose financial support from the industry, and that review manuscripts were prepared by unacknowledged authors and authorship was subsequently attributed to academically affiliated investigators who often did not disclose industry financial support.

Young JR. **Elsevier agrees to let MIT use bits of journal articles online**. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 2008;March 10. (http://chronicle.com/wiredcampus/article/2805/elsevier-agrees-to-let-mit-use-bits-of-journal-articles-online)

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced that it has

reached a deal with Elsevier to allow a limited amount of material from its journals to be used in MIT's OpenCourseWare project, winning a major challenge for colleges that want to post lecture materials on the web. The vice president and general counsel at Elsevier declared that the company has also agreed to a new policy on copyright, set up by the International Association of Scientific, Technical, & Medical Publishers, allowing any college to post small bits of journal material online, even if the policy doesn't allow quite as much as the deal with MIT does.

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

Giustini D. **Web 3.0 and medicine.** *BMJ* 2007;335:1273–1274. (doi: 10.1136/bmj.39428.494236.BE)

Medical librarians believe that it is necessary to build better mechanisms for information retrieval, due to the current bulk of unorganised information that is "searchable" but not easily "findable" in web 2.0. That is why we need web 3.0 – the semantic web. Information retrieval in web 3.0 should be based less on keywords than on intelligent ontological frameworks, such as Medline's trusted MeSH vocabulary. Web 3.0 should help find information more effectively and cut through the information glut, creating new knowledge through semantic technologies. It should bring order to the 21st century web in the same way that Dr John Shaw Billings's Index Medicus brought order to medical research back in the 19th century.

Clinical knowledge: from access to action [editorial]. *The Lancet* 2008;371(9615):785. (doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(08)60351-7)

Harvard is making an institutional commitment to open-access publishing, and several leading universities are now preparing to follow its example. Traditional publishers responded to the research community's interest in wider access to medical science with a strategy that is unlikely to send a positive signal to the medical research community, such as cost-cutting and job losses. Confronting a future in which the next 20 years may change more than the past 200, editors and publishers should instead join doctors in working to achieve the highest standards of health for the community.

Esposito JJ. **The nautilus: where – and how – OA will actually work**. *The Scientist* 2007;21(11):52. (http://www.the-scientist.com/article/home/53781/)

Discusses the new phase of the debate over open access to the scientific literature, listing pros and cons of open access within the landscape of scientific publishers. It presents scholarly communication as a the spiral of a nautilis, with the inner spiral representing the researcher's intimate colleagues; the next spirals scientists in general, highly educated individuals, universities, policy-makers; on to the outer spirals, which represent the consumer media, whose task is to inform the general public. The article concludes by identifying a fundamental tension in scholarly communications today, between the innermost spiral of the nautilus, where peers communicate directly with peers, and the outer spirals. In this landscape OA advocates sit at the centre and attempt to take their model beyond the peers, and at the outer spirals traditional publishers attempt to extend their reach into the inner spirals.

Johnson JM, Cano V. **Electronic publishing in librarianship and information science in Latin America – a step towards development?** *Information Research* 2008;13:1. (http://informationr.net/ir/13-1/paper331.html)

Draws on the results of studies carried out between 2004 and 2007 as part of Project REVISTAS, supported by the European Commission's ALFA Programme. Through a variety of methods and results, it points out the weaknesses of the printed scholarly publication process for library and information science. The emergence of electronic publication is identified and the potential it presents is discussed. If scholarly publication in this discipline within Latin America is to achieve its potential in the dissemination of research and in the education of students, the opportunities presented by electronic publication and archiving must be grasped, but the full benefits cannot be achieved without attention to the need for peer review and other quality control methods. This article also points out the major information networks of Latin America.

Stringer MJ, Sales-Pardo M, Nunes Amaral LA. **Effectiveness of journal ranking schemes as a tool for locating information**. *PLoS ONE* 2008;3(2):e1683. (doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0001683)

Electronic publishing, preprint archives, blogs, and wikis raise concerns among all stakeholders in the editorial chain about the relevance of traditional peer reviewed journals. These concerns are increased by the ability of search engines to identify and sort information. This article points out that the distribution of the number of citations to a paper published in a given journal in a specific year converges to a steady state after a journal-specific transient time, and demonstrates that in the steady state the logarithm of the number of citations has a journal-specific typical value. A model was developed to enable quantification of both the typical impact and the range of impacts of papers published in a journal. A journal-ranking scheme is proposed to maximize the efficiency of locating high impact research.

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Bell HK. **Editors and copy editors in fiction: taking a carpet-sweeper to the jungle**. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 2008;39(2):156–167. (doi: 10.3138/jsp.39.2.156)

How the various types of editors and copy editors presented in fiction: the conscientious, the compulsive, the stereotypical, the Cinderellas, the ruthless, the arrogant, and the power-abusers.

PUBLISHING

Hahn C. **Research library publishing services: new options for university publishing**. Association of Research Libraries, March 2008. (http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/research-library-publishing-services.pdf)

This study is based on a survey carried out in 2007 by the Association of Research Libraries to gather data on the publishing services they were providing. The results showed that research libraries are rapidly developing publishing services (44% reported they were delivering publishing services). Libraries publish many kinds of works, even if the main focus is journals (88% of publishing libraries reported publishing journals). Peer reviewed works dominate library publishing programmes. Libraries are increasingly inclined to provide at least basic hosting services (open source software). Advice and consulting regarding a variety of publishing practices and decisions are perhaps even more popular services.

Schwitzer G. **How do US journalists cover treatments, tests, products, and procedures? An evaluation of 500 stories**. *PLoS Med* 2008;5(5):e95 (doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0050095)

Starting from the premise that the daily delivery of news stories about new treatments, tests, products, and procedures may have a profound, and perhaps harmful, impact on health care consumers, a new US website project, HealthNewsReview.org (http://HealthNewsReview.org/), modeled on similar efforts in Australia and Canada, has been created to evaluate and grade health news coverage, notifying journalists of their grades. This article reports on the project's findings after its first 22 months and after evaluation of 500 health news stories. It hopes that the evaluation of health news that is proposed will lead news organizations and all who engage in the dissemination of health news and information to re-evaluate their practices to better serve a more informed health care consumer population.

Wiley S. **No to negative data. Why I believe findings that disprove a hypothesis are largely not worth publishing**. *The Scientist* 2008;22(4):39. (http://www.the-scientist.com/article/display/54459/)

Why are journals disinclined to publish negative data? The problem with negative results is that they are seen as not actually advancing science. As science is based on a set of ideas supported by observations, a negative result is considered as not supporting any specific idea. Certainly some of the positive data that have been published are wrong, and they eventually suffer the fate of all scientific errors and are abandoned. The solution to that bias is seen in treating published results more skeptically.

RESEARCH EVALUATION

Bar-Ilan J. **Informetrics at the beginning of the 21st century – a review**. *Journal of Informetrics* 2008;2(1):1–52. (http://scienceserver.cilea.it/pdflinks/08032416200104511.pdf)

Several issues concerning informetrics, bibliometrics, scientometrics and webometrics at the beginning of the 21st century are covered: the development of Open Access, the growth in webometrics, the comparison between two new citation databases (Scopus and Google Scholar), the use of new indicators (h-index) in science evaluation, among others. Traditional topics are also reported: history of bibliometrics, citation analysis, impact factor debate, university rankings, and so on.

Habibzadeh F, Yadollahie M. **Journal weighted impact factor: a proposal**. *Journal of Informetrics* 2008;2(2):164–172. (http://scienceserver.cilea.it/cgi-bin/sciserv.pl?collection=journals&journal=17511577&issue=v02i0002&article=164_jwifap&form=fulltext)

The authors consider the sole impact factor not adequate enough to measure journal quality. Therefore they propose to improve the calculation of the journal impact factor by taking into account both the number of citations and a factor concerning the prestige of the citing journals relative to the cited journal. This "weighted impact factor" could be a better scientometrics measure of journal quality.

Brenner S, Roberts RJ. **Save your notes, drafts and printouts: today's work is tomorrow's history**. *Nature* 2007;446:725. (http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v446/n7137/full/446725a.html)

Increasing knowledge in science is making it imperative that we document the history of all discoveries. Historians need all forms of data so as to document the development of today's innovations and inspire future generations. Fortunately, interest is growing among historians of science and institutional archives in preserving this history. Several institutions in the United States are establishing archival collections related to the history of molecular biology and chemistry. The purpose is to encourage all researchers to preserve their papers and donate them to institutions that are committed to making them freely accessible to scholars.

SCIENCE

Cartwright J. **Mind the hack**. *Physics World* 2008;21(5):14–15. (http://physicsworld.com/cws/article/print/33959)

Two of the world's biggest science journals (*Nature* and *Science*) control their news coverage by giving sneak previews of research under embargo while limiting how scientists can interact with journalists. The author looks at whether the system benefits, or hinders, science communication. A related editorial is entitled "Embargoed science: embargoes may have their faults but they mask wider problems in science communication".

Paola De Castro (compiler)
paola.decastro@iss.it

Thanks to Penny Hubbard, Eleonora Lacorte, John Glen, Margaret Cooter, and Renata Solimini.

Forthcoming Meetings, Courses, and BELS Examinations

10th EASE Conference: "Integrity in Science Communication"

16–19 September 2009; Pisa, Italy

2nd European Conference on Scientific Publishing in Biomedicine and Medicine
4–6 September 2008; Oslo, Norway
www.ecspbiomed.net/

Society for Editors and Proofreaders "Twenty-twenty vision: looking forward, looking back"
8-9 September; Oxford, UK
www.sfep.org.uk

Mediterranean Editors and Translators "Communication Support Across the Disciplines"
11–13 September 2008; Split, Croatia
www.metmeetings.org/?section=metm08_program

Association of Earth Science Editors Annual Meeting
20–24 September 2008; Flagstaff, AZ, USA
www.aese.org/AESE2008_call4abs.pdf

Society of Editors
9–11 November 2008; Bristol, UK
www.societyofeditors.co.uk

Berlin 6 Open Access
11–13 November 2008; Düsseldorf, Germany
http://oa.mpg.de/openaccess-dus/index.html

4th International Digital Curation Conference
1–3 December 2008; Edinburgh, Scotland
http://www.dcc.ac.uk/events/dcc-2008/

6th World Conference of Science Journalists
29 June–2 July 2009; London, UK
www.wcsj2009.org/programme.php

6th International Congress on Peer Review and Biomedical Publication
10–12 Sept 2009; Vancouver, Canada
http://www.ama-assn.org/public/peer/previous.html

COURSES

Getting Research Published: How to Develop a Publication Strategy in Biomedicine
10-week online course; 6 October–12 December 2008
A University of Oxford course, tutor Liz Wager
www.conted.ox.ac.uk/cpd/science-writing

Editing Medical Journals
19-21 November 2008; Oxford, UK
A short course for editors-in-chief, editorial board members, and managing editors, including how to attract the best authors; how to manage your journal; and how to give readers what they want. Now in its 12th year, this course provides a highly interactive environment in which to learn new strategies and discuss them with your peers. Contact Pippa Smart (pippa.smart@gmail.com) or see www.pspconsulting.org

Effective Writing for Biomedical Professionals
3–5 December 2008; Oxford, UK
A University of Oxford course, tutor Dr Jane Fraser
www.conted.ox.ac.uk/cpd/science-writing

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

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

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

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

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

BELS - Board of Editors in the Life Sciences examination schedule

www.bels.org/becomeeditor/exam-schedule.htm

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

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

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

May 2009, CSE meeting, tba

News from Editing Societies

Save 10% on Open University Courses with the ISTC

by Kathryn Valdal Fourie MISTC, Copy editor, ISTC newsletter InfoPlus+

Members of the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators (ISTC) can now get a 10% discount on courses offered by The Open University Centre for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The ISTC has negotiated this discount as part of our commitment to continued professional development in 2008 and is negotiating with other CPD Training Providers to offer a similar discount.

If you are thinking of further study to increase your skill set, why not join the ISTC to enjoy discounts on courses as well as a broad range of other benefits. The ISTC offers its members:

- Professional recognition
- Online forum with regular job postings
- Monthly newsletter
- Quarterly journal
- Annual conference
- Annual awards
- Local area groups
- Distance learning course
- Special offers

The ISTC is the UK's professional association for technical communicators with strong international ties. To this end, the ISTC is a member of:

- The Professional Associations Research Network (PARN)
- INTECOM: the international body for technical communicators
- TCeurope: the umbrella association for technical communicators in Europe

The ISTC is the oldest association in our field, with a history dating back to 1948, and probably the largest operating on a mainly voluntary basis, run by its members for its members. Why not come along and meet us at the annual ISTC Conference, which will be held in Nottingham on 23–25 September? To learn more about the ISTC Conference and how the ISTC can help you, visit www.istc.org.uk.

ISTC Journal Editor Marian Newell asked ISTC members what they think of the ISTC. This is what they said:

The best thing about the ISTC is…

…its promotion of the technical communication profession in the UK. —Mike Unwalla

…being part of an extended community of professionals: the online groups, journal and newsletter all help you to keep in touch with what others are thinking and doing, giving important information about the latest ideas, tools and methods and a chance to share your own ideas and experience. —John Evans

…(apart from the marvellous Communicator, a superb publication) the online groups because, no matter what the topic, somebody always offers assistance or guidance; without that, the job would be significantly tougher for lots of us. —John Nicholas

…that it is compact enough to facilitate the network of members who support one another in day-to-day questions such as 'Does anyone know who, what, why, how and when…' — an invaluable facility that is alone worth many times the subscription. —Adrian Young

…being able to keep in touch with other freelancers through the online groups; working mostly at home, it gives me practical and moral support. —Lois Wakeman

…the willingness of members to make use of their own knowledge, experience and time to help each other; the most visible examples of this are the online groups. —Rick Webster

…the knowledge base provided by the members. -Charles White

…it provides me with a professional family to augment my biological and social ones. —Kevin Chilton

First volume in new ISTC book series

XML in Technical Communication has just been published. It is the first in a new series of books being published by the ISTC. Each title in the series will cover a specific topic of relevance to technical communicators in about 200 pages.

This first title has been written by Charles Cowan FISTC, who is a Principal Technical Writer with the Oracle Corporation. He has worked as a technical communicator for over a quarter of a century, developing documentation for various clients and software companies in Belgium, Germany and Switzerland, as well as in the UK and Ireland. He is an IBM Certified Developer in extensible markup language (XML) and Related Technologies and holds postgraduate qualifications in computing and software development.

The book will be invaluable to anyone who needs a fast introduction to XML and its role in technical communication, such as those whose organisation is deploying an XML-based documentation solution, or freelancers who need to keep pace with technical trends. It caters for technical communicators of all levels of markup

EASE Business

More sponsors needed!

As many of you know, for several years EASE has run a sponsorship scheme enabling people from countries with financial constraints to benefit from full membership of the Association. Its success is due to the generosity of members who kindly pay a subscription (half the full rate) for someone to be sponsored. Each year, those sponsored are asked to re-apply and sponsors are asked if they wish to continue, as circumstances often change in the interim, so there is no long term commitment either way.

At the moment we have 17 sponsored members from seven different countries in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe, but it would be good to increase this number – for which I need both candidates and sponsors! So if you know of anyone who you think would particularly benefit from membership but is unable to pay the fee, do encourage them to apply. And equally, if you would like to sponsor someone, please get in touch with me. Feel free to specify any particular area of interest or country, but "general" sponsors are also much appreciated. I would like to build up a "bank" of sponsors on whom I can call as and when the need arises. I look forward to being inundated!

Sheila Evered
secretary@ease.org.uk

Membership Changes

New Members

Individual members

Dr Seyed Hesameddin Abbasi
Tehran Heart Center
Tehran, Iran
abbasi.hesam@gmail.com

Mrs Helen Ambassador-Brikins
Instructional Resources Devolopment
National Open University of Nigeria
Lagos, Nigeria
Principal Editor
diplomatsupernatural@yahoo.com

Professor Ingeborg Barišić
Children's University Hospital
Zagreb, Croatia
Editor-in-Chief, Paediatria Croatica
ingeborg.barisic@kdb.hr

Mr David de Boniface
Stockholm, Sweden
Freelance editor and translator
info@altusmultilingual.com
www.altusmultilingual.com

Ms Lidia Kasprzak
Kirkland, Canada
homomedicus@yahoo.ca

Dr Alistair H Kidd
Good Written English GWE AB
Halmstad, Sweden
akidd@good-english.com

Dr Jeanette Müller
Accelopment AG
Zürich, Switzerland
jmueller@accelopment.com

Mr Ndubuisi Fidelis Okoroegbe
National Open University of Nigeria
Lagos, Nigeria
Editor, University Course Materials
fnokoroegbe@yahoo.com

Mr Felix K Olakulehin
Regional Training & Research Institute for ODL
National Open University of Nigeria
Lagos, Nigeria
Research Fellow
felixkayman@gmail.com

Dr Emmanuel U Onyekwelu
Department of Paediatrics & Child Health
Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital
Banjul, The Gambia
euonyekwelu@hotmail.com

Ms Veronique Viretto
Lyon, France
French scientific and medical translator
scimedcom@gmail.com

Professor Denys Wheatley
Leggat House
Keithhall, Inverurie, UK
Director, BioMedES Ltd; freelance, trainer
Cell Biology Int; *Cancer Cell Int*; *Theoretical Biology & Medical Modelling*; *Oncology News*
wheatley@abdn.ac.uk

Mail returned

*Any help in making contact again would be much appreciate*d

Reuben Sengere
Formerly of: CIC Research & Growers Services Division, UKARUMP
Papua New Guinea, and
Australian National University
Canberra

Marie-Louise Desbarats-Schönbaum (1921-2008)

Doctor Marie-Louise Desbarats-Schönbaum escaped peacefully from the ravages of a lengthy illness on the evening of 27 February 2008, at the Zorghotel in Veghel near her home in Venhorst, the Netherlands.

Marie-Louise was a scientist educated in the biomedical sciences at McGill University (BSc 1942, MSc 1953) in her hometown of Montréal, and at the University of Utrecht (PhD 1970) in the Netherlands. She was somewhat of a pioneer, one of only two women in the class of 1929 obtaining an MSc in biochemistry. One of her subsequent papers was highly cited (The specificity of brain choline acetylase, *Br J Pharmacol*, 1956).

She met Doctor Eduard Schönbaum (born in Vienna) in Montréal, where they married in 1953. They later moved to Holland, where Ed's father had been a refugee in the 1930s.

She and Ed (who died in December 2000) began their life-long involvement in biomedical research and teaching at the University of Toronto, continuing in Holland for the last 35 years, where Marie-Louise applied her talents to scientific writing, editing, and translating even into the last year before her death.

I had the privilege to work with Marie-Louise for EASE. She was a member of the ESE editorial board and was very active, adding accurate comments to all our discussions. We had a lot of fun as we were both used to have "en aparté" during the meetings with some private comments in French about these British who lead the world…. Marie-Louise remained brilliant in her 80s with new ideas and she was always talkative when I called her late at night, after she had rested in her swimming pool!

We both wrote papers for ESE, and for years she took care of the book reviews, tracking new books from publishers and then gently harassing reviewers to get the work done on time. She always delivered the book reviews on time without any reminders, and the editorial board always listened to her accurate comments.

Marie-Louise valued clear thinking, detested fuss, and encouraged the younger generation to develop their potential through education. She was well travelled and cosmopolitan, but also created a cosy home alive with her beloved kitties and enchanted garden and woodland, where visitors were always welcome. She will be remembered for the warmth of her hospitality, her love of music, her prolific sewing, and for her independent, curious, and often humorous outlook on life.

Hervé Maisonneuve
ESE editor (2000-2006)

New members of ESE Publications Committee

Sharon Davies (Reports of Meetings and Forthcoming Meetings; United Kingdom) is letters and obituaries editor at the *BMJ*. Armed with an honours degree in physiology from St Andrews, she studied for a PhD in reproductive physiology at the Physiological Laboratory in Cambridge. After four years she was shocked to find she had very little to show for it, despite being surrounded by "names" in the tea room, so she decided to seek her fortune without any letters after her name. She worked for three years as a technician in what was then the department of pharmacology at St George's Hospital Medical School in Tooting—a kind of scientific rehabilitation—and she discovered that she found the communication of results the best part of research. She jumped at the chance of training as a technical editor with the *BMJ*. That was in 1987, and she hasn't looked back since. Being a member of EASE was a perk of the job at the *BMJ* from the beginning, and Sharon has enjoyed meeting kindred spirits fascinated by editing at four association conferences.

Stuart Handysides (Original articles; United Kingdom) is a general practitioner and medical editor. He studied medicine at University College London, then trained and practised as a GP for several years. In 1992 he went to the *BMJ* as an editorial registrar, and became a member of EASE. As the medical editor at the Public Health Laboratory Service's Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre he was responsible for weekly and monthly editions of the *Communicable Disease Report* and played a central role in developing *Eurosurveillance* and *Communicable Disease and Public Health*. In 2000 he organised a symposium on measuring reader satisfaction for the EASE conference in Tours. He returned to general practice the same year and became an associate editor of ProMED-mail (www.promedmail.org), an internet facility that provides early warnings of emerging infectious diseases. He has been an occasional columnist for *General Practitioner* newspaper, and contributes to a local writers' group. His other activities include running and cycling, long distance walks, stage acting, gardening, and playing guitars.