

# European Science Editing

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## From the editors' desks

### Thank you

Thanks to all those who paid their subscription to EASE in good time, and those who returned the data sheet with their address details. If data can be corrected once a year we can produce an accurate *List of Members* later in the year. If you have yet to pay, please do so as soon as you can: EASE wastes precious funds chasing members for late payments.

### Eighth General Assembly and Conference, Bath, 8–11 June 2003

If you have not received the Second Circular you can download a copy from the EASE Web site at [www.ease.org.uk/ease2003info2.pdf](http://www.ease.org.uk/ease2003info2.pdf). The deadline for cheaper registrations for the General Assembly and Conference at Bath is 1 March; you will need to have paid your subscription by then to qualify for the considerable saving on registration fees for members.

### EASE-Forum

This popular feature of EASE's activities is moving house from Turku to Helsinki. Details of the change were sent to the Forum in December and will be repeated from time to time until the original host closes the database on 1 March 2003. Our thanks to Hannu Pajunen in Turku for the years spent as administrator of the host database, and also to Markku Löytönen for arranging a new host in Helsinki. If you missed the Forum announcement, see the Forum digest in this issue. Details are also on the Web site at [www.ease.org.uk](http://www.ease.org.uk).

### Science Editors' Handbook

Last year was a busy one for Hervé Maisonneuve, Arjan Polderman, Moira Vekony and Rabi Thapa, the team gathering the chapters for the new and much enlarged *Science Editors' Handbook*. The *Handbook*, in a

binder with section dividers, will be given free to all those attending the Conference in Bath in June. Paid-up members who are not able to attend Bath will receive the revised and new chapters free, in July. An order form for the binder and additional copies of the *Handbook* will be enclosed with the May issue of the journal.

If you have promised to write a chapter for the *Handbook* please ensure it is delivered to Hervé as soon as possible (deadline: end of January). The *Handbook* will not be static but will grow in line with members' needs, with additional chapters being issued from time to time, as before.

### Annual General Meeting, Paris

No new nominations to serve on the Council have been received. Papers for formal acceptance of the Council nominations, as circulated in November, will be sent out in January, together with a form to appoint a proxy for those unable to attend the AGM. Please let the Secretariat know if you plan to attend.

### Moira has moved, again

Moira Vekony has now moved to her permanent address in Canada. See Membership list additions and changes for details.

### Peter Lomax

Peter Lomax's name will be familiar as a regular, and thorough, book reviewer. It is with great sadness that we have to record that Peter died in December 2002.

### Contributions for the next issue

Contributions for the next issue are invited and should be sent to the appropriate member of the Editorial Board (see right, and see Instructions to authors in this issue and on the Web site). The deadline for the May issue is **15 March**.

### EASE Council 2000–2003

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Originally entitled *Earth Science Editing* (1975-1976), *European Science Editing* became *Earth & Life Science Editing* in 1977 and acquired its present name in 1986. The journal is published four times a year (February, May, August and November). It is free to paid-up members of EASE and is available on annual subscription of £50 to libraries and other non-members.

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## Editorial

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### An authors' and editors' problem: authorship\*

The scientific community was, in 2002, confronted with an explosion of scientific fraud. Perhaps the most remarkable was the fraud committed by Jan Hendrik Schön, a 32-year-old physicist at Bell Laboratories, New Jersey. He had published numerous articles in the fields of superconductivity, molecular electronics and molecular crystals in the top journals. An independent committee found a "preponderance of evidence" that he falsified or fabricated data in 16 of the 24 alleged cases of misconduct that it looked at, involving 25 published research papers and 20 co-authors. Much attention was paid to this remarkable case by numerous scientific journals, including *Nature* and *Science*.

Immediately after some of Schön's articles had proved to be fraudulent, several of his co-authors claimed that they had nothing to do with the fraud, that they had contributed only minor pieces of the work, and they they had not had an overview of the entire work. For this reason they claimed to be innocent of this fraud. The committee found all co-authors completely cleared of scientific misconduct. The co-authors have, in general, met their responsibilities, but in one case questions remain that the committee felt unqualified to resolve.

This is only one more example of how ambiguous the attitude of scientists towards authorship is. They will do almost anything to become an author or co-author of an article published in, particularly, *Nature*. If they can do so on the basis of the work done by someone else (by just providing some data or doing some routine measurements), many scientists will not hesitate to be named as an author. Nor will they waive the credits following such a publication — until something happens like the discovery of fraud. Then those who were most eager to become co-authors are usually the first to reject accusations of responsibility for the fraud.

Authorship has become a hot item, particularly because many organizations (universities, research laboratories, etc.) judge scientists on the basis of their publications, primarily on the number of publications in refereed journals. This makes authorship — and certainly co-authorship, since it requires in general less effort — a valuable good. The consequence is that people seek — and find — opportunities to become co-authors without contributing much to an article, so authorship nowadays is fairly different from authorship half a century ago. This makes it difficult for the scientific community to judge who is responsible for what in a multi-author article. Several ways of dealing with this problem (including establishing categories of co-authors such as contributors and guarantors) have been proposed — and partly implemented — but none is found to be truly satisfactory.

Where the scientific community has problems with attributing scientific responsibility to specific co-authors, science editors have the same problem. And it may be an even more severe problem for editors than for the scientific community as a whole, because the editors — backed by referees — are considered to be the gatekeepers who must guarantee the quality of papers published in respected journals. This is where a serious problem emerges: the editorial board and the referees of respected journals are commonly scientists themselves, chosen for editorial or refereeing activities on the basis of their scientific merits. Consequently, the value of articles must be judged by scientists who are, as a rule, under the same pressure to publish as colleagues who break down under this pressure and commit fraud. Are editors and referees by definition so superhuman that they can resist the temptation of committing fraud? It seems unlikely.

Authorship is mostly questioned by editors. Authors are non-existent in the debate. They seem to exist only when misconduct is revealed: then they claim that they followed the local habits and were not aware of guidelines proposed by editors. Where are the authors when authorship issues are debated? Do the authors agree with the guidelines proposed by editors? Several studies have shown the ignorance of scientists on the authorship question. How can awareness be raised amongst the scientific community and how should authors be represented when authorship is discussed in congresses and journals? Authors must challenge editors by giving their views on editing topics and taking part in the debate.

Life would be much easier, certainly for editors, if there were no added value to authorship. This is a dream, however, that will probably never come true. It means that we have to face the problem. This is already being done, amongst others by EASE in this journal and in the new *Handbook* that will be launched at the 2003 EASE Conference in Bath (UK; 8–11 June), where authorship will also be one of the hot topics to be debated. The new *Handbook*, with the 40 or more chapters that will be ready by then, will be included in the conference bag.

An inventory of the problems of authorship is fine. Proposals for tackling at least some of the problems are good too. But eventually, for the good of the scientific community, for the good of honest authors, and for the good of editors as the gatekeepers of scientific truth — whatever that may be — we must find satisfactory solutions. Possibly the Bath meeting will produce some answers.

Tom van Loon  
Hervé Maisonnewe

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\* See also News Notes, page 19, and The Editor's Bookshelf, pages 25 and 26.

## Articles

### Current peer review policy needs improving

Shuang-ming SONG

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#### Abstract

**The existing problems of single-blinded and double-blinded peer review policy indicate that the current commonly used peer review method should be modified and improved. A serial review process could be used, rather than the standard parallel process in which the reviewer's name and reviewing results are known to other reviewers. This method can provide faster, better, and more efficient peer review. With the consent of reviewers, the reviewers' names and the reviewing results are no longer blind to authors. Peer review should become completely open via the internet.**

Song S. 2003. Current peer review policy needs improving. *European Science Editing* 29(1):4–6.

Peer review plays a key role in determining which original research is published and thus becomes part of the accepted body of scientific knowledge. Single-blinded peer review policy is commonly used in Chinese biomedical journals and it generally includes three steps: a preliminary review by one of the editorial staff, two external reviewers, and a final decision made by an editorial board meeting. In the first step, the manuscript is checked to determine whether the content belongs to the scope of the journal, and whether it complies with technical details such as the correct listing of references and labelling of figures. In the second step, the reviewers assess the manuscript's science, originality, design, suitability, and interpretation of the results. At the third step we editors often regard peer review as a fundamental pointer to the final decision.

The importance of peer review in selecting the best articles and guaranteeing the quality of biomedical publications impels us to consider whether present peer review policies are fair. Do they guarantee the highest quality publications? What is the favourite reviewing style of authors or reviewers? Is there any room for improvement in the directions of less bias and more efficiency?

#### Strengths and weaknesses of current peer review policy

Single-blinded peer review policies are generally followed by Chinese medical journals, with reviewers knowing the identity of authors but the identity of reviewers concealed from authors and other reviewers. It is beneficial to protect reviewers and avoid contradictions, especially when authors and reviewers have different academic viewpoints. This policy seems to produce less bias and ensure the quality of published papers because reviewers are able to evaluate manuscripts frankly and without any worries. On

the other hand, there are some disadvantages: there are more processes, so more time and expense are involved. The policy is to blame for a great deal of delayed publication because of a few tardy reviewers and the loss of some manuscripts during the reviewing process. It is almost impossible for authors to explain their position and respond to the reviewing result even if they think the review is not correctly judged. Authors must feel disappointed when manuscripts are not correctly reviewed or if they are misunderstood because the expertise of a reviewer is peripheral to the subject of the manuscript. In these circumstances, reviewers are like judges and authors like defendants deprived of the right of reply. The authors and reviewers are obviously not equal and consequently the system may be unfavourable to academic progress.

#### Survey and results

Information on preferences in peer review policy was obtained from a questionnaire survey carried out by our journal recently. Those questioned were peer reviewers who were members or non-members of the editorial board and authors who contributed manuscripts from 1 May 2001 to 1 May 2002, no matter whether the manuscripts were accepted or rejected.

The questions concerned the style of peer review: (1) double-blinded review, (2) single-blinded review, (3) open review among reviewers (unmasking identities and reviewing results between reviewers), and (4) open review among reviewers and authors (identities of reviewers and authors and reviewing results are known to each other).

Of the 197 surveys mailed, 154 were returned. The response rate was 81% for reviewers (58/72), and 77% for authors (96/125). Reviewers in favour of a single-blinded policy accounted for 40% of all reviewers, and few were in favour of unmasking their names to authors. In contrast, most authors appreciated open review or a double-blind policy (Table 1). The main reasons for reviewers to choose double-blinded

**Table 1. Comparison of peer review style favored by the reviewers and authors**

Groups	n	Double blind (%)	Single blind (%)	Open between reviewers (%)	Open between reviewers and authors (%)
Reviewers	58	11 (19)	23 (40)	21 (36)	3 (5)
Authors	96	23 (24)	8 (8)	16 (17)	49 (51)
Total	154	34 (22)	31 (20)	37 (24)	52 (34)

or single-blinded review were that they could express their opinions freely and so reduce bias and increase fairness. Those who like open review among reviewers think it is helpful to the evaluation process and therefore more comprehensive. Those who dislike it think it may influence their decisions. The reasons given by authors were that open review is convenient for exchanging ideas with reviewers if this was necessary and that it was beneficial for revision of the manuscript; it also reduces bias and increases accountability. Those who supported double-blinded review believe it can reduce bias.

### Suggestions for improving current reviewing policy

Double-blinded and single-blinded review policies are commonly used for most biomedical journals. Double-blinded review was once postulated to produce less biased, better-quality reviews, but now more and more studies show that it is no more beneficial than single-blinded review and therefore may also fail to improve the fairness of review [1–3]. In addition, blinding is not only a logistical hassle but may also be impossible. Several studies have shown that about half of blinded reviewers can correctly guess the identity of the authors, based on either the subject matter or clues in the text [3–5]. If masking is frequently unsuccessful, it is not likely to improve fairness, no matter how fairness is defined. Today double-blinded review is not used as often as single-blinded review.

The shortcomings in the current generally used single-blinded review policy indicate that it should be modified. A different peer-review process has been practised in our journal recently. This follows, with some modifications, the system used by the *Journal of Neurosurgery* [6], where I studied and worked in 2000. It is a “serial review process” rather than the commonly used “parallel process”. When a paper is received, we send it to the first reviewer. The first reviewer sends both the manuscript and the review directly to the second reviewer. When the second review is ready, the second reviewer sends the manuscript and the reviews back to editorial office. Instead of the editorial board making the final “accept” or “reject” decisions, we editors make the decision on the basis of the reviewers’ comments. If the opinions of the two reviewers are contradictory, we generally send the manuscript to one or more additional reviewers to determine whether a consensus can be established. The time for decision-making after submission of the manuscript is shortened from five months to six to eight weeks because there is no need to wait for an editorial board meeting, which cannot be held often, and the parallel process takes more time to deliver the manuscripts. We found that the new peer-review process can provide a quick, unbiased, helpful review and accordingly ensure that good scientific papers in understandable language are published.

In this peer review style, reviewers are not blinded to each other. The most significant potential risk of this open review style is obvious: reviewers may be influenced by each other’s opinions and, as a result,

manuscripts may receive an unfair review. Equally possible, however, is that the sharing of opinions leads to reviews of better quality. A similar concept has been practised for many years and commonly accepted in clinical settings. The sharing of a consultant’s opinions regarding the management of a patient is often in the patient’s best interest. Each physician may have an idea that the others had not considered or with which they might have disagreed. The collaborative process of weighing a consultant’s opinion against one’s own is potentially more fruitful than two independently developed decisions. The long-term successful practice in clinical settings led us to conclude that the key to practising the new peer review policy is not to suspect its benefits but to realize that it could become second nature.

The internet makes it possible to practise a new peer review system using the Web [7]. In this way, not only authors and reviewers but also readers are able to read the reviewing results. It is advisable and feasible for them to take part in discussion to elucidate their agreement and disagreement. At this point, peer review will be revolutionized to become a scientific discourse rather than the current summary judgment; consequently the aim of journals to act as a garden of academic exchanges can be realized. It is generally accepted that published papers are followed by discussion, so why not do the same for unpublished papers?

Peer review is a social behaviour practised among authors, reviewers, and editors. It is necessary to establish a supervisory mechanism. Open peer review among reviewers and also among authors has been recommended in several studies [8–12] and will become a way to achieve faster, easier, more economic, more efficient and better peer review.

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## Publishing short articles in the print journal and full articles on the Web?

### The *BMJ* is doing it with most research papers

**Marcus Müllner**

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#### Abstract

**The value of original articles as published in scientific journals is undisputed. At the *BMJ* it is known that regular readers appreciate such articles but unfortunately hardly ever read them. This is probably true for many if not most scientific journals. In 1999 the *BMJ* started to publish shorter, more reader-friendly articles in the print journal and to put the full version, with the abridged paper, on *bmj.com*. The process, our experiences and how this idea will be developed further are described here.**

Müllner M. 2003. Publishing short articles in the print journal and full articles on the Web? The *BMJ* is doing it with most research papers. *European Science Editing* 29(1):6–9.

### What is it and why we do it?

The mission of the *BMJ* is to “publish intellectually sound material that will serve the needs of doctors, members, other health professionals, the scientific community, and the public”. We are trying our best to live up to our mission statement and to present our material in ways that make people actually read and understand it. Reader surveys tell us that unfortunately few people bother to read original research papers. Except for some researchers, and maybe a few science editors, reading a full-blown research paper is not much of an entertainment. About 80% of our weekly readers read the title of a paper and 50% read the abstract, but only about 2–5% read the complete paper; at least, this is what they say, but I suspect that even fewer people read entire research papers. There is also another community: researchers who know exactly what they are looking for. These people actually read papers but only a particular selection of them. Accordingly the journal serves one audience as if it were a weekly magazine such as *The Economist*. It serves another audience, mainly researchers and clinicians, as an archive of high-quality information. With the World Wide Web it is now possible to serve both needs by having a shorter, more journalistic version in the print journal and a longer, more detailed version on *bmj.com*. We call this process ELPS — for Electronic Long Paper Short. Because readability is just as important on the Web, these shorter papers are also published on *bmj.com* along with their original

longer versions; both versions are accessible for free in html and as pdf files. To make this clear to readers of *bmj.com* we mark the papers “abridged text” and “full text”. In the print journal a symbol indicates that this is the abridged version and that a longer version is available on *bmj.com*.

In April 1999 we published our first four experimental papers (Williams and Poulton 1999, Bredin et al. 1999, Quinn et al. 1999, Whitehead and Drever 1999) and the feedback was generally positive. Since then the number of ELPS papers has steadily increased and for about a year now virtually all original research papers have been provided in the ELPS format, unless they have already been submitted as a short report.

The numbers that follow show how much we shorten papers: the average paper has about 2500 to 3000 words of main text, three to four tables, and two figures. After shortening, the average paper has about 1100 to 1500 words of main text, one table, and one figure. In the print journal the average abridged paper has three editorial pages and the long version has about five pages (pdf file). Accordingly we are able to save five to eight editorial pages every week, which we can use for other articles.

### How we do it?

When we started shortening papers we had no recipe for doing it. Quickly an informal pattern emerged and has not changed greatly since we began doing this. The general structure of the short paper remains the usual Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion (IMRaD). We try to reduce the less exciting bits, such as parts of scholarly introductions, detailed methodological information (e.g. technical and statistical details far beyond the interest of a general readership), long-winded and complicated results (of no help to the non-specialist), and learned discussions (also for specialists only), particularly the speculative parts.

I used to say that I was “trying to maintain the impression that the paper is still critically appraisable”, that is, the paper still contained enough information on methods to allow readers to assess its strength as a study. I need to say here that critical appraisability is often an illusion, even for full papers. Then we tested these versions on other *BMJ* editors

and finally on the paper's authors. Surprisingly, we had hardly any complaints. Over time I compiled informal guidelines on how to shorten papers (appendix). The beauty of the whole process is that you don't lose the detailed information; it is still there, just somewhere else.

Initially several editors thought it was a problem that the long version was not as immediately accessible as the short one. To a certain extent this is true, but this mainly affects our traditional paper readers in the UK. There are, however, many more users of *bmj.com* than print subscribers. In practice the Web version (i.e. both the full and abridged versions) is more accessible to most people.

We also tried different formats and asked our readers which they preferred. The most successful version was the way we do it at the moment (IMRaD). Readers also liked the "serious newspaper" style (<http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/319/7220/DC1/6> [30.11.2002]). In this style we present the main findings and message in the first paragraph, with more details later in the paper. Further, we used different sub-headings to structure the text (Why we carried out this study; The background; What were the main findings? How did we perform the study? Why are these results important?). We have published a few studies in this format in the print journal (e.g. Herren et al. 2001) but we received no feedback at all, not even from the authors. I am not sure whether this is good or bad.

The process has evolved over time to make it more practical and less of a hassle for everyone involved. Currently the work flow is as follows. Once a paper is accepted after final revision it gets properly edited. That means one of our technical editors checks the paper thoroughly for grammar, spelling, consistency, accuracy, and clarity and inserts style tags into the text. Then it is sent back to the author for approval. One editor shortens the edited and approved long version. The average time to shorten a paper is about three hours. A short report of a randomized controlled trial might take only an hour but a huge systematic review or a qualitative paper might take up to six hours. Then the short version is again seen by a technical editor, who tidies it up (e.g. makes sure the references are renumbered to take account of chunks of text that have been removed). The short version is then sent to the authors for final approval. We are planning to streamline the process by combining technical editing and shortening, so that the author gets the two versions simultaneously.

### Who does it?

I believe that papers should be shortened only by people who enjoy reading scientific papers. Editors should have experience with research papers and ideally (not necessarily) some formal training in health research methods or epidemiology. Oddly, technical editors at the *BMJ* are rather reluctant to shorten papers, though I am sure they would do it very well.

### What do authors say?

Generally the short versions appeared to be well received by authors. Tim Cole said he thought the

short version (Cole et al. 2001) was even clearer than the long version. On receiving proofs of the abridged version another author (Heller et al. 2001) wrote to us "The short version is an excellent version which captures all the major points." Occasionally authors want to have a figure or a table put back in the print version. I remember only two papers where the authors were terribly unhappy with the short version. In both cases I obviously had not spotted where the emphasis of the message was and I had deleted important parts from the abridged text and left in less important parts. In both cases it was no problem to sort this out quickly.

Finally we did a survey of authors and found their feelings were mixed. The great majority said that, though not perfectly happy, they would still submit their papers to the *BMJ*. About a third were unhappy about particular changes and had the feeling that they had not had enough influence on what was changed and what was better not changed. As a rule we do not force authors to accept our changes but probably we did not communicate this appropriately. We prefer to see our changes as suggestions.

### Some frequently asked questions

Finally I would like to address some of the most frequently asked questions.

#### *Which is the original version?*

For us and for PubMed the canonical version is the long version. Accordingly it is this version which is indexed in Medline and published in full on PubMed Central.

#### *Will *bmj.com* be free forever?*

Like everything else on *bmj.com*, both versions of each research paper are freely accessible to everyone. We hope to keep this service free of charge as long as we can afford it. If this becomes impossible, readers who don't want to pay will still be able to access the long version via PubMed Central.

#### *Are archiving problems to be expected?*

Some readers and authors argued that paper may last whereas electronic records might not. As mentioned above, the electronic version is stored at the *BMJ* and at PubMed Central. We believe that this is as safe and permanent as it needs to be.

#### *Which version generates the citations?*

Even though we encourage readers to refer to the long version, both versions certainly generate citations but we do not believe this to be a problem.

#### *Do other journals do it?*

As far as I know, *Pediatrics* was the first medical journal to use the internet by publishing some articles as abstracts only, with the full versions available in the online journal. *Health Affairs* publishes short articles in the print version (about 300 to 400 words, which is more than the abstract of the article, usually 100 words) and the full article on the Web. The short article is written in-house; it seeks to put the work in context and it is optional for authors. The *CMAJ* pub-



lishes extra material on its Web site and occasionally the *New England Journal of Medicine* puts tables with additional data about patients on its Web site. The idea of having additional material on the Web site is obvious and appealing. Therefore I assume that many journals use the advantages of having a Web site in various ways.

### The future

For the time being we at the *BMJ* have agreed to continue to print abridged versions only. We will even try to shorten fast-track papers, which have been excluded from the process for logistical reasons. Admittedly, we don't know which of the above-mentioned formats is preferred by our readers. A simple experimental study will answer this question.

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### Appendix

#### Informal guidelines for ELPS (December 2002 version)

The aim of the short paper is to be readable, and the aim of the long paper is to be reproducible.

#### Introduction

It is almost impossible to draw up strict guidelines for shortening the introduction or the discussion, which are the parts where most "redundant" bits can be found. I try to avoid redundancy, e.g. the context being explained in both the introduction and the discussion (a frequent finding). I do not touch introductions or discussions if I find them fascinating.

#### Methods

As a clinical epidemiologist I want the methods to be explicit — in the long version. The number of words which can be lost here is often considerable. The problem is that ambiguities may slip in. I usually try to retain some description of time, place, and person (population).

Most but not all randomized controlled trials are now really CONSORT, our gold standard for reporting randomized controlled trials (see [www.consort-statement.org](http://www.consort-statement.org) [16.12.2002]). So most of the concepts essential for CONSORT can be omitted. I try to include that a trial was randomized (but not how!), that allocation was concealed, that outcome assessment was blinded, and that the analysis was performed according to the intention-to-treat principle, if all this was indeed the case. The same goes for QUOROM, our gold standard for reporting meta-analyses of randomized controlled trials (same URL as for CONSORT): in particular, search terms may go in the long version only.

#### Sample size calculation

If the results are statistically significant I delete the part on sample size calculations. If the results are not statistically significant and the confidence intervals are narrow I also delete this part (unfortunately I cannot define how narrow they must be as this depends a bit on the frequency and importance of the disease — again very arbitrary and subjective); if the results are negative and the confidence intervals are wide I retain the sample size calculations. They can often be shortened to what the authors think is a clinically relevant difference.

#### Statistical methods

I usually delete phrases such as "results are given as mean and 95% confidence intervals" if this is also explicit in the results section (usually it is). I delete the kind of tests used unless the authors used some very particular or unusual methods, e.g. special multivariate models. I delete details of these models and refer to the long version, as follows:

- I delete things like "we used a *t*-test" and the like. The reader really must assume that the *BMJ* gets things like this right, at least most of the time.
- I delete phrases like "data are presented as mean and standard deviation (SD)"; this is obvious from the results anyway. If not, I make it obvious.
- I delete "we present results as [name of effect] and its 95% confidence interval"; again, this is usually obvious in the results section.
- When the authors use unusual multivariate models (e.g. generalized linear mixed models or generalized estimation equations) I usually retain one or two explanatory sentences and insert "see [bmj.com](http://bmj.com) for more details".
- When authors use a complex modelling strategy, such as hierarchical modelling to assess the impact of potential confounders, I try to explain the main structure in one sentence and insert the recommendation "(see [bmj.com](http://bmj.com) for the detailed modelling strategy)".

*Discussion*

Most papers start and end with a summary of their findings. I retain such summaries at the beginning only if the findings, including interpretation, are very complex. I always (!) retain the authors' discussion of the limitations. Some of the technical editors say this is unjust as it puts the paper in an unfavourable light. I really disagree, as a good discussion of limitations is actually a strength of a paper — we would not publish invalid research anyway, would we? I usually don't touch discussions if the findings are at odds with current knowledge and the authors explain why their findings are correct.

*Systematic reviews*

Reviews often include many references. Ideally they go only (or mainly) in the long version. This is a recent decision so authors might still find references in the examples I send them.

If sensitivity and funnel plot analyses say that findings are robust and there is no publication bias (or other heterogeneity), I take these parts out and mention that they were performed and also that everything was OK (see *bmj.com*). I also shorten, or generalize, detailed search terms while referring to *bmj.com*.

*Qualitative papers*

The introduction and discussion in this kind of paper are often very long and amenable to heavy shortening. In the methods/results section I try to maintain the appraisability of the setting and sociocultural context. I try to maintain salient quotes while not distorting the meaning (almost impossible). I delete quotation reference numbers as well as the interviewee reference number but not her/his description (age, gender and the like).

*Ethical approval and consent*

Given on the Web only.

*Contributors*

Web only ("see *bmj.com*")

*Funding and acknowledgements*

Kept in both the short and the long versions.

*Figures*

Flow charts are mostly for the long version unless they help to save many words, which is seldom the case. Unless figures other than flow charts are really dull I try to retain one figure as this looks better in print (I like survival curves and hate most bar plots).

*Tables*

I also try to retain at least one table as tables are often more informative than just text and they break up the page lay-out. Sometimes it is difficult to decide which tables to remove and which to retain. Unduly large tables usually go to the long version only. Sometimes I also shorten tables. Usually tables with baseline data go to the long version only, unless I consider this information necessary for understanding the results (again very subjective). Often there are measures of effect in the table and in the text; if the table is retained for the short version I delete these measures from the text.

Most findings can be reported in 1000 to 1500 words (as a long version is easily available). For the technical editors I include a word count and the number of tables, figures, and boxes for both versions. I provide these details for psychohygienic reasons (a kind of reward): it is good to know if you were at least partly successful.

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## Correspondence

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### Call for papers: *Acta Pharmacologica Sinica*

As a member of EASE, I am making a call for papers from readers of *European Science Editing*.

*Acta Pharmacologica Sinica* (APS) is an international monthly journal publishing original research in all life sciences. Reviews based primarily on the authors' own researches of international importance are also welcome.

Manuscripts should be prepared according to the "Information for authors" in APS 2002;23(1) (Jan), which may also be found on our Web site ([www.ChinaPhar.com](http://www.ChinaPhar.com)).

Key words (3–10) should be selected from the latest Medical Subject Headings list of *Index Medicus* when possible. A structured Abstract (no more than 250 words) should contain four parts: Aim, Methods, Results, and Conclusion. Mean values ( $\bar{x}$ ) should be

accompanied by *s* (SD, not SEM). Système International d'Unités (SI units) should be used. Statistical significance should be indicated by <sup>a</sup>*P*>0.05, <sup>b</sup>*P*<0.05, <sup>c</sup>*P*<0.01.

Since 1985 APS has been the only journal from China among the core journals (pharmacology and pharmacy) listed in the *Science Citation Index*. APS is also one of the two journals from China listed in *Current Contents/Life Sciences*. Reprints of articles in APS can be obtained from the Institute for Scientific Information, 3501 Market Street, Philadelphia PA 19104, USA (tel. +1 215-386 0100, fax +1 215-386 6362).

I look forward to seeing your manuscripts.

DING Guang-Sheng

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## Reports of meetings

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### What is the editor's role?\*

Annual conference of the Editors' Association of Canada/Association canadienne des réviseurs  
24–26 May 2002; Montreal, Quebec, Canada

*"To make God [the author] more like Himself, while eliminating the flaws, errors and mistakes — for the publisher will accept just about anything, knowing that his valiant one [the editor] will fix all the faults."*

The above excerpt from Suzanne Robert's "Les taupes de l'édition" (*Libertés*, 1985, 7) was cited by René Bonenfant (Presses de l'Université de Montréal) during his introduction to the round table at this conference.

The 2002 conference was certainly a wonderful occasion to spend time in the company of great people, but as the merriment and sharing faded, a sense of pride came over me that has remained strong. I am proud to belong to an association that is capable of planning and putting on a superb event of such high quality.

This remarkable conference showed me that I belong to a community that's committed to finding the most appropriate answers to diverse communication needs. First among those who provide work for editors are writers — authors who, like Roch Carrier, may change how they perceive our profession over time. Underlying his very funny keynote address was an eloquent account of Mr Carrier's evolution in his relationship to the editing process. It was the growth of an author, an absolute master of words, who first saw himself as God — or as Balzac — and who now engages in an enriching, collaborative revision process, in which finally the editor, too, has an intrinsic role. Do all authors show the same open-mindedness?

After listening to the many enlightening positions voiced during the round table on the art of editing in English and French, a similar question was unavoidable in comparing practices in the two cultures. Do all publishers show the same open-mindedness?

Aside from issues of the publisher's subjectivity and creative licence in exercising his prerogatives, we

learned that publishing practices in the English-speaking world benefit from according more *responsibility* to the editor. The best illustration I can give in these few lines, without summarizing the very stimulating ideas put forward by Robert Lecker (ECW Press), would be none other than the recipient of the Tom Fairley Award for 2002, Camilla Jenkins. During her brief but brilliant thank-you address, Ms. Jenkins enumerated the set of tasks that the publisher gave her. These tasks go well beyond those attributed to the *réviseur* and would, in the French-speaking world, be more properly called "project management". Although they defend themselves well, the French publishers seem semantically inclined to reduce the work of the editor to that of a "*correcteur*". This was the term used spontaneously by Antoine del Busso (Fides) and Jean Bernier (Éditions Boréal) during the debate. You no doubt will agree with me when I affirm that correcting is but one of the many dimensions of our profession. As we head towards certification, the product of the work by EAC/ACR's francophone committee on the French version of the editorial standards, *Normes de qualité en révision professionnelle*, will soon attest to the vastness of the editor's field of action.

If publishers are to benefit from giving editors more responsibility, then we must let them know not only individually but also collectively that we are ready to assume that responsibility with professionalism. *Voilà* — another fine battlehorse for future action in our association!

Gilles Vilasco

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### The Cotswold Wayzgoose

Society of Indexers annual conference  
16–17 July 2002; Cheltenham, UK

A wayzgoose is the traditional name for a printers' annual dinner or picnic, so was an appropriate name for the annual conference of the Society of Indexers, which was attended by almost 100 members.

After a welcome by the Society of Indexers President, Doreen Blake, Andrea Powell (CABI Publishing) considered the future of the publishing industry. She focused on three key themes: technology, economics and ethics. Most publishers are now realistic about investing in technology to improve their business, but costs have risen; even large publishers are struggling to maintain profit margins. Ethical considerations are coming to the fore, and the

WHO HINARI project aims to give developing countries access to journals online — but the technology is still needed to bring adequate internet access to such countries.

Lori Lathrop (American Society of Indexers) gave the keynote lecture on "The impact of technology on indexing — challenges, choices and possibilities". Electronic publications will not replace printed ones, but they can (and should) supplement them. Recent trends include PDF files, integrated indexing, and retro-indexing (the creation of online indexes for conventional printed publications that will be converted to online publications). Lori considered indexing

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\* Reprinted with permission from *active voice/la voix active*, the national newsletter of the Editors' Association of Canada/Association canadienne des réviseurs.

online documents to be more important than indexing books, and indexes to be more valuable than search engines.

The next day of the conference began with a choice of workshops on stress management (led by Jan Ross), business tips (Derek Copson), updating indexes (Moir Greenhalgh) and a trainees' session (Ann Hudson).

Isabel Syed (Zurich Financial Services, formerly Eagle Star) spoke about "The company archivist, present and future", and the topic of stress management was revisited by Nicola Ellis, a chartered physiotherapist, who spoke on "Good working practices, workplace ergonomics and work-related health", with a practical demonstration of an "office workout".

Jan Ross gave a talk on the Society's training course, which had recently been issued on CD-ROM, and Janet Shuter reported on the activities of the SI Future Group, set up in 2002, which is currently looking into various issues including embedded indexing and XML (extensible mark-up language).

Further workshops were then held for indexers specializing in archaeology, earth sciences, law, medicine and biology, and names. These were followed by a presentation on XML by Karl Howe (Cambridge University Press) and Maureen MacGlashan (SI). After dinner, James Turtle (Gloucestershire County Archives) gave an entertaining talk on his work.

The final day of the conference began with a panel discussion on "The future of publishing", with Richard Duguid (Penguin Books), Elizabeth Tribe (Hodder and Stoughton Educational), John Button (Bookcraft Ltd) and Ruth Willats (freelance project manager). Not all the panel members were sanguine, with references to pressures on editors from reduced time schedules and cost-cutting, alarming trends towards zero editing and proofreading in some publishing houses, and the adverse effects of government targets, but the views were also expressed that there was still a place for niche publishers and that people were prepared to pay for quality.

Jill Halliday introduced a session of reports from representatives of the associated overseas indexing societies: Diana Witt (American Society of Indexers), Noeline Bridge (Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada), Christie Theron (Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers), and Glenda Browne (Australian Society of Indexers). Unfortunately, a delegation from the China Society of Indexers had to cancel plans to attend at short notice, through no fault of their own.

The Society's Annual General Meeting brought the conference to a close with the election of a new Council, Michèle Clarke being elected SI Chairman in place of Connie Tyler and Maureen MacGlashan replacing Doreen Blake as President. Presentations were made to the retiring officers and to the conference organizers.

Other events in the course of the conference were the presentations of the Society's Bernard Levin Award (for services to the Society) to Drusilla Calvert, and the Carey Award (for services to indexing) to Pat Booth. There was also a ceremony in commemoration of the late Betty Moys, whose MBE medal (for services to classification and indexing) was presented to the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians, while her Wheatley Medal (awarded in 1991 for her index to the *British Tax Encyclopedia*) was presented to the Society of Indexers. These presentations were made by Sir Leslie Sharp, Betty's cousin.

This report is based on the conference report in the Society of Indexers' newsletter *Sidelights* (no 3, Autumn 2002), compiled by Janet McKerron from contributions by Elizabeth Ball, Caroline Barlow, Michèle Clarke, Madaleine Combie, Anne Doggett, Elizabeth Fowler, Ann Griffiths, Oula Jones, Zeb Korycinska, Janet Shuter, Alan Thatcher and Phyllis Van Reenen.

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## Recorded in nature — revealed in words

Joint meeting of AESE and EASE  
14–18 September 2002; Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

This meeting was attended by 65 people of whom — sadly — only 10 were EASE members. The organizers had put together an interesting programme, in which the EASE members took an active part. The programme contained sessions such as "Ethics in scientific publishing", "Refereeing in the new millennium", "Digital dilemmas, copyright issues, and archiving headaches in the digital world", "Communicating via Web pages", "Interactive outreach projects", and "Science for non-scientists".

In addition the organizers had chosen to include a workshop (mainly for PhD students) called "Nobody told me there would be rules for writing", describing central "rules" and giving advice for good PowerPoint and poster presentations, and discussing reference lists and the difference between PhD theses

and journal papers. The workshop leaders were Evelyn Inglis, Natural Resources Canada and Mary-Margaret Coates, TechEdit, USA.

Jenny Gretton, known to us all, opened the first session with a talk entitled "Fraud — grasping the nettle". After giving some examples, including a true horror story from the biomedical journal where she previously worked, her main point was that success of the author at any price is the main reason behind the various forms of fraud that journals and journal editors experience. Her advice to editors is to include in their guide to authors a statement that the editor has the right to call on an auditor (to check original data, for example). This is a practice that is already used in the biomedical sciences, especially in the USA.

This talk was followed by Tom van Loon with "The ethics of duplicate publication". As usual, Tom put forward some controversial ideas, including the suggestion that material published in, for example, Eastern European languages should be given space in translated form in special sections of international journals. This would have a twofold advantage — it would give the authors international recognition, while on the other hand the international scientific community would get access to previously unknown information and data.

Elisabeth Kessler discussed the various conflicts of interest that referees might encounter. Are referees appropriately chosen? Can there be hidden bias on the part of the referees? Might there be some rivalry between the referee and the author (or the respective research groups or departments) causing the referee to downgrade the "opposition"? How can such situations be avoided (or foreseen)? These are difficult problems and editors sometimes suspect that such situations exist, but how to discover and counteract them?

In a stimulating talk Tom van Loon discussed the role of referees — scientists who put much unpaid work into scrutinizing the work of others (the more work, the higher the risk that the work would not be published!), but seldom get any credit for this. How can a situation be reached where universities acknowledge this work, and how can it be ranked and credited compared to other scientific achievements? Tom also argued for closer contact between author and referee — a kind of external supervision, if you will, especially with younger authors.

Aldyth Holmes (NRC Research Press) presented a long list of authors' rights vs. authors' wants. The wants include the commonly known — to reach the target audience, rapid publication, favourable peer reviews, and prestige — and the right to include, for example, the importance of sharing new research results with the scientific community, the right to put the material on the author's own home page after a period of time, the right to distribute copies for educational purposes or to re-use for other purposes (e.g., translation). But she also discussed a number of misperceptions concerning electronic publication — "It is free if it is on the internet", "Electronic publishing is cheap", "It is my work, so I can do what I want with it" (copyright problems!), and "Commercial publishers are bad and Society publishers are good".

Other speakers centred on the comparison between a printed journal and its Web site — with partly different material — and the advantages for the printed journal of maintaining such a site (Kristina Bartlett, *Geotimes*); and the problems of access to digital data (Marie-France Dufour, Illinois State Geological Survey; Merrienne Hackathorn, Ohio Geological Survey; Carol Ruthven, Kentucky Geological Survey;

Sue Kropschot, US Geological Survey). One aim is to give the public free access to various kinds of data (water availability, wells, oil and gas production, etc.) but the problem remains of what data should not be released, because of the risk of improper or terrorist use. In the USA there are federal recommendations concerning these problems, but the laws of individual states override those recommendations. Moreover, when there are various state agencies whose mandates and responsibilities somewhat overlap, data sets can be duplicated and issues can arise over distribution, because of the agencies' differing policies.

Other talks dealt with the general theme "Making geology real", describing efforts to engage and interest the public in geological history and features, by excursions (Liz Brosius, Kansas Geological Survey), interpretive walks in parks (Parks are for People program, Howard Donohoe, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources), and making museums more active and attractive for the public (Stephen Archibald, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History). This topic was followed up by Brian Hoyle (Square Rainbow Ltd) and Tom van Loon, who discussed ways and means of communicating scientific results to the public (Tom: "Write two abstracts of every scientific paper; one for the scientists and another for the public, describing the work in everyday language!").

This very stimulating and well organized symposium (responsible for the arrangements was Doug MacDonald who certainly had put much work into the planning and execution and to whom we are all grateful) began with a very nice "Icebreaker" — a get-together — at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History.

The programme also included a fascinating excursion to two of the world-famous geological sites in Nova Scotia — Joggins and Parrsboro — led by John Calder and Howard Donohoe. The fossil cliffs at Joggins were investigated by Sir William Dawson and Sir Charles Lyell ("The Father of Geology") in the 19th century. The fame of Joggins arises as much from the history of scientific theory as from its place as a lasting repository of the fossil record. Charles Darwin in his *Origin of species by means of natural selection* cited this place a number of times. As a curiosity it might be mentioned that in the same year that Lyell first visited Joggins (1842), Richard Owen coined the name "dinosaur". And dinosaur remains have been found at Parrsboro.

The fact that the rain poured down during the whole excursion could not drown the enthusiasm of the participants when examining the site and its fossil remains. What could be more proper than a Flood when viewing the remains of a world long gone?

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## EASE-Forum digest: September to December 2002

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### Joining the forum (new instructions)

You can join the forum by sending the one-line message "subscribe ease-forum" (without the quotation marks) to majordomo@helsinki.fi. Do not include a subject line or a signature or any other text. To stop receiving messages from the forum, send a similar message, "unsubscribe ease-forum", also to majordomo@helsinki.fi (see the third paragraph on this page about the move to another host).

Once you have joined, you should send messages for the forum to ease-forum@helsinki.fi. Please keep messages short; if you reply to someone else's message, delete any of the original message that is not essential for understanding your response. To keep other forum participants informed, check that your reply (or a copy of it) is sent to ease-forum@helsinki.fi. If your e-mail software has a "reply to all" possibility, this will probably do the job. Do not use the "reply to" or "reply to sender" facility or your message will go to the original message sender only.

The EASE-Forum is now moving to another host at the address given above. Subscribers to the Turku host need to rejoin before 1 March 2003. Anyone who loses contact with the forum, or is unable to establish a new subscription, will be able to find information on the EASE Web site ([www.ease.org.uk](http://www.ease.org.uk)).

### Seeking help and information

Harvey H. Shenker was not sure whether he was entitled to submit a message on a dispute he had on payment for proofreading services. The dispute may originate from the definition of proofreading. Although anyone may submit messages related to editing and publishing, this message had no follow-up in the Forum.

Hervé Maisonneuve announced that the EASE Web site ([www.ease.org.uk](http://www.ease.org.uk)) carries the contents list of the forthcoming revised and enlarged *Science Editor's Handbook*. Some chapters still lack authors, and the Handbook editors are looking for volunteers. Suggestions for new chapters and potential authors were welcome.

On behalf of an American colleague, Angela Turner asked for information about authors' editors for a seminar course on writing papers.

Margaret Cooter wanted to know if there was a Web site that summarizes requirements for higher degrees in various countries.

Rhana Pike was looking for a study that found that women are less likely than men to resubmit a paper after it has been returned for revision.

### Guidelines

Elise Langdon-Neuner mentioned an article "Sponsorship, authorship, and accountability", signed by 12 editors and published in several biomedical journals in September 2001. The article announced an amendment to the Uniform Requirements for Manuscript Submitted to Biomedical Journals, but the Web site for the Requirements ([www.icmje.org](http://www.icmje.org)), although updated in October 2001, does not correspond with the amendment as published. Does anyone have more information? Rhana Pike answered that a revision of the Requirements is on the way and that the amendment is still current.

Margaret Cooter wondered how to reference a Dutch university thesis that also has a publisher. Tricia Reichert referred to the Vancouver style for thesis references (*New England Journal of Medicine* 1997;336(4):309, also at [www.icmje.org](http://www.icmje.org)). Moira Vekony supposed that, if the book is really available for purchase, the reference should take the form of a book reference. Will Hughes endorsed this view. His impression that Dutch theses are indeed commercially published was confirmed by Joy Burrough: the Dutch DO publish theses; see *ESE* 2002;28(1):7-9.

Arjan Polderman (compiler)  
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## Book Reviews

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C.C. Hyde, E. Seneta (eds). 2001. **Statisticians of the centuries**. New York: Springer-Verlag. xii + 500 pages. Softback, \$44.95. ISBN 0-387-95283-7.

H.A. David, A.W.F. Edwards. 2001. **Annotated readings in the history of statistics**. New York, New York: Springer-Verlag. xv + 252 pages. Hardback, \$74.95. ISBN 0-387-98844-0.

Statistical methods are used in every field of science, be it basic or applied. EASE members probably know this. But how many of us know who was responsible for these methods? Yes, some of these carry eponymic tags: Bayes' theorem, Boolean algebra, the Bonferroni correction, the Poisson distribution, Venn diagrams. But who were Bayes, Boole, Bonferroni, Poisson,

Venn? Who was the "Student" of the frequently used Student's *t*-test?

The International Statistical Institute decided in the mid-1990s that it should publish a collection of biographies illuminating the contribution of statistics in human affairs. *Statisticians of the centuries*, the result, offers biographies of 103 men and women written by

75 authors from around the world. They are not exhaustive biographies but concise sketches, averaging 4.6 pages each. Beyond giving the salient facts of each life, they sketch the relation of the subject's work to that of predecessors and successors, the importance of his or her work to science, and even, in some, to wider effects in the rest of society. The span of years runs — despite the “centuries” in the title — only from the 17th century to the 20th and for the 20th only persons born before 1901. “Statistician” is interpreted broadly so the collection includes, for example, biographies of Florence Nightingale (nursing and hospital reformer), John Maynard Keynes (economist), Simon Newcomb (astronomer). Each biography includes a short bibliography of carefully selected works representing the biographee's work and further biographical sources.

Clearly this is not a text that editors can put to use in their daily work. But I recommend it for the attention of any who have even a shred of interest in the history of the science in which they work. Who was the father of pie charts, bar graphs, and trend lines? See pages 105–110: William Playfair (1759–1823), whose graph types still inhabit our journals two centuries later.

I must point out, however, that the brevity of the biographies precluded the biographers' pointing to insights of some of their subjects that proved to be valuable only many years later. The best example for me is Laplace's 1820 opinion that probability analysis could be valuable in judgements on medical treatments:

“By means of the calculus of probabilities one can appreciate the advantages and disadvantages of the methods employed in the speculative sciences. Thus, to recognize the best of the treatments in use for curing a disease, it is sufficient to test each of them on the same number of patients, making all the circumstances completely similar. The superiority of the most advantageous treatment will manifest itself more and more as

this number is increased, and a calculation will lead to the probability corresponding to its advantage, and to the ratio according to which it is superior to the others.”

The biography of Laplace does not reflect this view, probably because Laplace's judgement had no effect in 19th century French medicine.

Most of the biographies are engaging but readers with no background in statistical methods may find the mathematical terms necessarily used an obstacle to ready reading.

*Annotated readings* . . . is a collection of 17 excerpts of documents (letters, formal papers) important in the history of statistics. Each is accompanied by comment that places it in statistics' development. Understanding these excerpts calls for a substantial knowledge of mathematical statistics, save for one or two such as Pascal's 1654 letter to Fermat on betting dice throws and Arbuthnot's 1710 paper on dice throws and implications from his analysis for ratios of male–female births. Arbuthnot's paper ends with the one — probably unintentionally — humorous note in the collection:

“Polygamy is contrary to the Law of Nature and Justice, and to the Propagation of Human Race; for where Males and Females are in equal number, if one Man takes Twenty Wives, Nineteen Men must live in Celibacy, which is repugnant to the Design of Nature; nor is it probable that Twenty Women will be so well impregnated by one Man as by Twenty.”

I am sure all members of EASE can understand this passage but it may be the only understandable one in this collection!

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Jennifer Peat, Elizabeth Elliott, Louise Baur, and Victoria Keena. 2002. **Scientific writing: easy when you know how**. London: BMJ Books. 292p. Paperback, GBP22.50. ISBN 0-7279 1625-4.

My first reaction to *Scientific Writing: easy when you know how* was favourable. The book is a small paperback, with an attractive cover. However, I was uneasy about the title. Could this book really convince me that scientific writing would be easy when I knew how? That view is contradicted by Richard Smith in his Foreword (“As you wrestle with the words . . .”). It is contradicted by quotations at the beginnings of chapters and sections — for example, William Styron's forthright “Let's face it. Writing is hell”.

### Format

The narrative text is interspersed with boxes that contain statements of the objectives of chapters, examples that illustrate advice expounded in the text, and summaries of points discussed in the text. The boxes have black type in reduced font on a sea-green background — a welcome attempt to relieve the monotony of black-on-white pages, but uncomfortable to read.

Many boxes contain examples of sentences and paragraphs stacked together to illustrate a tactic of arrangement or a point of style. The authors comment on the tactics or points in the surrounding text, referring to examples with expressions such as “The top paragraph” or “In the fourth example”. I would have found it easier to assess the authors' comments if they had presented the examples one at a time, within their discussion.

### Audience

The authors specify “novice writers” and “seasoned scientists” as their audience. Most of the book is more suitable for novice writers who have never thought extensively about planning, compiling, and writing a paper. Tips for writing a postgraduate thesis are probably too late for seasoned scientists, and seasoned scientists are probably familiar with topics such as Vancouver format, IMRAD, avoiding argu-

ments about credit for authors, choice of statistical methods, review procedures, the *Science Citation Index*, and impact factors.

The authors' orientation is to academic settings. They address mainly researchers producing journal articles. They say little directly to industry-based scientists whose main writing tasks are the compiling and writing of protocols and reports destined ultimately for drug-approval authorities.

## Content

Of the 12 chapters in the book, eight are concerned with planning and compiling a paper and four are concerned with handling language. Novices will welcome the detailed discussions of planning, conventional structures, tactics for presenting and discussing findings, publishers' requirements and review procedures, and sources of support; but they are likely to be confused by the discussions of writing style, grammar, word choice, and punctuation, which contain much that is eccentric or incorrect.

The authors offer a "Style table for scientific writing". Readers are advised to "say what you mean", but the authors themselves often write imprecisely.

Examples of their failure to practise what they preach abound. For instance, they advise us not to use the "terrible grammatical style" of following a singular noun with a plural pronoun, but themselves often use expressions such as "no researcher should allow

their names". Their general handling of commas and hyphens often made reading difficult. They say punctuation matters, but their summing up — "The rules of punctuation are simple and few and add style to your writing" — is imprecise (the rules don't add anything, the marks do) and gives the impression that punctuation marks are optional add-ons.

Their use of the terms subject, verb, and object is unconventional, and they make mistakes in their identification of word-groups as phrases and clauses. Their discussion of words suggests that each word has one use only — as a noun, a verb, or an adjective — which is misleading to learners. They exhort us not to use some nouns as verbs or adjectives, declaring "the word *impact* is a noun" and condemning the use of *asthma* as an adjective (in the phrase *asthma prevalence*). However, their own text constantly uses expressions such as "you can *structure* your sentences" [my italics], and a "*grammar checker*" [my italics]. They even include *an asthma medication* in an example of good writing.

"There is no substitute for careful proofreading", we are told, but many errors and inconsistencies have slipped through. I would not recommend this book to my students.

John Kirkman

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Jacob Goldenberg, David Mazursky. 2002. **Creativity in product innovation**. Cambridge University Press. 224 pages, hardback £71.50/paperback £19.95. ISBN 0-521-80089-7/0-521-00249-4.

The authors study inventions and the creative process systematically, focusing on the ways in which new products are created for the marketplace. They work in the School of Business at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and have considerable experience in business and industry. The book reflects the contribution of hundreds of students and workshop participants who helped to build their Template Theory.

The authors were clearly influenced by the work of Genrich Altsculler who postulated that there must be repeated patterns underlying creative ideas and products. After examining 200,000 patents, he identified 40 patterns. Goldenberg and Mazursky reduced this number to just five, which they call Templates. Another influence was the use of Operational Definitions, suggested by the physicist P. Bridgman to give meaning to a scientific term in a quantitative discourse in order to be understood.

Inventors such as Edison do not advance our understanding of creativity by saying that it consists of 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration, however true it was for Edison.

The book is easy to read. It is written clearly and with many amusing examples to illustrate the use of templates. Most readers will recognize some of their own creative processes in the analyses. The authors claim that about 70% of all successful new products match one of their creative templates.

The Replacement Template is used when resources in the immediate environment are used to replace a (product) component. Examples which come to mind include using the keyboard of a portable computer to recharge the battery; a wire-free device which uses a car's radio speakers to improve the sound quality of a cellular phone; and (from the natural world) the use of empty shells on the ocean floor by hermit crabs.

The Displacement Template states that a component of a product (or system) may be removed, along with its functions, to create a new product for a new market. The cake mix is a simple and very successful example of this template. The mix only requires the addition of water to bake a great (successful?) cake. However, when the mix needed the addition of eggs before baking, sales rose markedly.

The Attribute Dependency, Component Control and Division Templates are also described, with suitable illustrations. There is a good chapter on the research into creativity which only began to be taken seriously as a scientific investigation as recently as the 1970s.

Overall, the book is a significant contribution to the study of creativity and its practical applications in business and industry.

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## The Editors' WebWatch

The Editors' WebWatch is intended to be a membership-driven resource of Web sites for editors and writers in the sciences.

### A miscellany of bookmarks

This quarter several of you sent excellent suggestions of sites to include in the WebWatch — thank you and please keep them coming.

We have here a heterogeneous collection of sites including specialist information in chemistry and medicine, ethics, electronic publishing, the internet and that part of the book that is printed last and almost always turned to first — the index. So, just to be contrary, that's where I'll begin.

### Society of Indexers

[www.socind.demon.co.uk/](http://www.socind.demon.co.uk/)

Most editors edit, and most indexers index. It is not often that one finds a single individual equally talented in these two complementary skills. Every good book deserves a good index (and some might say that a bad book doesn't deserve an index at all). The Society of Indexers Web site includes plenty of items of use to editors who need to consider an index, for whatever reason. Items include advice for editors on commissioning indexes; advice on the cost of indexing; a directory of Indexers Available, which is regularly updated and may be searched online by name, subject, skills or media; and general information about the Society, its publications, indexing as a career, distance-learning training courses, workshops and conferences. Next time you need to create an index and you need help in doing so, here's where to go.

### IUPAC Compendium of Chemical Terminology

The IUPAC *Compendium of Chemical Terminology* is published by Blackwell for the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry. There is now an online version, which includes browsing and searching options, at [www.iupac.org/publications/books/author/mcnaught.html](http://www.iupac.org/publications/books/author/mcnaught.html). It contains more than 7000 cross-references. According to IUPAC this is the definitive guide to chemical terminology and is freely accessible, without the need to fill in a tiresome registration form and remember a password (can't you tell I just hate doing this for information that is supposed to be freely accessible?).

In addition to this mine of information the IUPAC Nomenclature Books Series at [www.iupac.org/publications/books/seriestitles/](http://www.iupac.org/publications/books/seriestitles/)

[nomenclature.html](#) is well worth a visit. Here you will find a whole host of useful publications on terminology and chemistry, a couple of which are available, like the *Compendium of Chemical Terminology*, online. However, the online link to the *Compendium of Analytical Nomenclature* (The Orange Book — 3rd Edition) is not functional at the moment.

### NIST Guide to SI units

The National Institute of Standards and Technology site at <http://physics.nist.gov/Pubs/SP811/sec11.html> contains pretty much everything you might ever need to know about the use of SI units, and a lot more besides. There are even some links to explanations of how certain expressions are derived, and the precise meaning of some units. There is also an 18-point checklist to help NIST authors to review the conformity of their manuscripts with correct SI usage. This is essential reading for anyone editing technical material.

### Medical abbreviations

There are lots of sites out there claiming to be the best for finding acronyms for medical terms. I wonder why this is? Is it because it is becoming trendier to abbreviate in medicine or is it that the field is advancing at such a fantastic rate that there really are more abbreviations to get a mental hold of?

Anyway, the latest contender for "the definitive guide to medical abbreviations" to be brought to my notice is MedlinePro — The "Ultimate Medical Search Engine" — at [www.medlinepro.com](http://www.medlinepro.com). The home page contains several search boxes including Medline, Cochrane Library (although the link to this is at present non-functional) and RxList DrugDatabase.

The Medical Abbreviations option searches Pharm-Lexicon's Medical Abbreviation Database. It returns the search results rapidly and gives links to articles within PubMed, which in turn allows access to abstracts. This can be accessed directly at [www.pharma-lexicon.com/](http://www.pharma-lexicon.com/), where it can also be used to look for articles and drugs. It claims to be a dictionary of more than 56,000 medical, pharmaceutical, biomedical and healthcare acronyms and abbreviations. The advantage with accessing this

directly, rather than through MedlinePro, is that it also has a small list of topical medical articles, some of which are quite informative.

Back to the MedlinePro page and scrolling even further down the list of search options brings us to a medical metasearch engine (see WebWatch on p. 122 of *ESE* 2002;28(4) for an introduction to metasearch engines). This one searches up to 15 medical search engines, among them CDC, FDA, Medline, NIH and NLM (practically all of US origin). You can then choose how many results to take from each search engine and even place a limit on the time spent on the search. The option of "stop search never" holds the promise of hours of puerile fun.

### Internet Detective

[www.sosig.ac.uk/desire/internet-detective.html](http://www.sosig.ac.uk/desire/internet-detective.html)

"As things stand, the Internet has no system of quality control — all of human life is there, the good, the bad and the ugly: academic journals sit next to comics; presidential speeches next to idle gossip; today's news next to yesterday's news." So the Internet Detective introduces itself, a tutorial that has been produced by the DESIRE Project with funding from the European Union, under the Telematics for Research, Fourth Framework Programme. It claims to be of particular relevance to those looking for academic information: researchers, lecturers, students and librarians.

The tutorial is available in three languages (English, French and Dutch) and is free to use but you need to register your own personal ID so that the system can remember your quiz scores and your place in the tutorial when you go back (the site suggests that the tutorial takes around two hours to complete but because of the user ID you don't have to do it all at one sitting; it took me only one hour, but I could have spent a couple more hours looking at the appendices and supplementary information). Worth doing, even if you know a bit about the Web already.

### Internet Language Dictionary

[www.netlingo.com/inframes.cfm](http://www.netlingo.com/inframes.cfm)  
Offered by NetLingo.com, this site is an online dictionary containing thousands of popular internet words or "Net Jargon" and definitions that describe the technology and

community of the World Wide Web. Many of the entries are standard technical terms and are in common use in the real world as well as online, others are taken from authoritative sources on a particular subject, and still others have been submitted to the dictionary by users. Because of this mix, many of the terms are serious, others are funny and some are downright offensive.

NetLingo is also available as a book, and it would seem that although the online version is free, the money is being made by sales of the printed version. "While it's easy and free to get this info on NetLingo.com, it's even easier and more enjoyable to have a copy of the book 'NetLingo The Internet Dictionary' near your computer (it makes a great gift for men!)" Uh oh! and I was about to run out and buy a copy. (This site definitely cannot claim to be politically correct: you have been warned.)

That aside, here are a few of the (politically correct and inoffensive) more amusing terms: "bit bucket — the fictitious place in cyberspace where missing documents or files are said to end up" [now there's an excuse for me to use for all those unanswered e-mails — "it must be in the bit bucket"]; "banner blindness — the tendency of online users to ignore ad banners, even when they may contain information the users are actively looking for" [hey, what's wrong with this, some of us have been perfecting this art for years!]; and finally "word-of-mouse — gossip or information spread via e-mail".

### Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog

<http://info.lib.uh.edu/sep/sepw.htm>  
The Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog is one part of the Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography at <http://info.lib.uh.edu/sep/sep.html> and is a daily listing of selected English-language articles, books, and other printed and electronic sources that are useful in understanding scholarly electronic publishing efforts on the internet (it is an equivalent of our own Editor's Bookshelf). It is compiled by Charles W. Bailey Jr, Assistant Dean for Systems, University of Houston Libraries. Links are current only, however, so if you see something you like either save it to your computer or print it, as next time you visit the site the link may not be working. On December 13 there was a link to ePrints-UK ([www.rdn.ac.uk/projects/eprints-uk/](http://www.rdn.ac.uk/projects/eprints-uk/)), a project to provide

access to UK Open Archive repositories.

Other items in the Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography include Electronic Books and Texts, which contains a section on e-journals that lists all the journals available online — their URLs, whether full text, subscription information and the name of the publisher. Another section gives a list of free e-journals, and states the degree of "freeness" (whether selected issues, free trial period only, etc.). There is also a section entitled "Publishers" which contains a link to the Scholarly Societies Project (University of Waterloo Library), which in turn contains links to several dozen scholarly societies, including our very own EASE and related editorial and publishing organizations.

Of itself the Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography (version 6) says this: "This new *SEPB* version includes over 1,750 articles, books, and other printed and electronic sources that are useful in understanding scholarly electronic publishing efforts on the Internet. The 'Scholarly Electronic Publishing Resources' directory includes more than 230 related Web sites." There you have it — a massive portal to many of the resources you are likely to need.

### British Computer Society's EPSG

[www.epsg.org.uk/](http://www.epsg.org.uk/)  
The Electronic Publishing Specialist Group is a specialist group within the British Computer Society ([www.bcs.org.uk](http://www.bcs.org.uk)). "We know that professionals in publishing need to understand a vast range of products, systems and file formats; and that much of the real struggle is to get all the elements to work together. Our position within BCS means we are not attached to any commercial organisation, and can therefore take a wide and independent view when we organise our events." The events referred to are four one-day meetings each year on subjects of interest within electronic publishing (including desktop publishing, digital imaging, multimedia and the Web).

"Publishing brings together people from very different backgrounds, and to be successful these people must learn to appreciate and understand each other's expertise. EPSG provides an excellent 'space' in which to network!"

### SGML/XML Users' Group

[www.isgmlug.org/](http://www.isgmlug.org/)

If you use mark-up technology (and it would seem that as more journals put their content on the Web more and more articles are being coded in this way) you may be interested in ISUG, a federation of user groups and individuals who support each other through sharing knowledge of mark-up technologies and influencing the development of related standards.

ISUG has official liaison status with ISO through SC34, the group that maintains the SGML family of standards, and also has liaison status with OASIS, the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards.

### Office of Research Integrity (ORI)

<http://ori.dhhs.gov/html>

ORI (USA), located within the Office of Public Health and Science ([www.hhs.gov/agencies/ophs.html](http://www.hhs.gov/agencies/ophs.html)), promotes integrity in biomedical and behavioural research supported by the Public Health Service (PHS) at about 4000 institutions worldwide. ORI monitors institutional investigations of research misconduct and facilitates the responsible conduct of research through educational, preventive, and regulatory activities. The home page has a list of quick links to a large number of items including the very useful document "Managing allegations of scientific misconduct: a guidance document for editors". This 18-page document contains advice on the role of editors in the response to scientific misconduct, and a set of guidelines concerning how to handle a suspect manuscript. The document is freely available at <http://ori.dhhs.gov/html/publications/guidelines/asp>.

### More on ethics from WAME

[www.wame.com/](http://www.wame.com/)

The World Association of Medical Editors has a Web site full of useful resources. The latest addition to the site is a list of Web sites that contain useful information on ethical issues, compiled by the WAME Ethics Committee ([www.wame.com/ethicsresource.htm](http://www.wame.com/ethicsresource.htm)). The list is divided generally into Research Ethics and Publication Ethics, although the two topics are closely related. These sites have been reviewed and very briefly summarized by WAME Ethics Committee members; preference has been given to sites that are regularly updated.

**Faculty of 1000**

[www.facultyof1000.com/start.asp](http://www.facultyof1000.com/start.asp)  
Faculty of 1000, produced by Biology Reports and published by BioMed Central as part of the Current Science Group, "is the next generation literature awareness tool. It is a revolutionary new online research service that will comprehensively and systematically highlight and review the most interesting papers published in the biological sciences, based on the recommendations of a faculty of well over 1000 selected leading researchers." In fact Faculty of 1000 consists of more than 1400 scientists and aims to invite the best scientists internationally in each field and to involve both experienced and younger investigators. The vast majority of the Faculty are from the USA, some 200 are from the UK, and the remainder are mainly from other European countries, Australia and China.

Several functions are outlined, one of which "Highlights papers on the basis of their scientific merit rather than the journal in which they appear". This claims to "offer an immediate rating of individual papers by the authors' peers, and an important complement to the indirect

assessment provided by the journal impact factor".

Faculty of 1000 is a subscription-based service costing US\$50/£35/€55 per annum for an individual; institutional subscriptions are also available, and it is possible to get a 48-hour free trial.

This online literature evaluation service has been recognized by the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers as the "most innovative publication of 2002", but it concerns biology only. Does anyone know of an equivalent for any of the other branches of science?

**Postal codes and other links**

[www.execulink.com/~louise/w/postal-links.htm](http://www.execulink.com/~louise/w/postal-links.htm)  
The creation of Virtual Mechanics, this is a huge collection of links to postal service Web sites throughout the world. If you need to find a postal code, this is a good place to look. It also has links to post office home pages, where you can track recorded parcels in several countries (these services require registration) and a list of "other addressing issues" such as translation pages, and links to the white and yellow pages. Very useful if you are trying to send your snail

mail on time and don't want to go to the expense of an international phone call to get someone's correct address and postal code.

**Just for fun: Babel Fish**

<http://babel.altavista.com/>  
Any self-respecting fan of Douglas Adams will be familiar with the term Babel for reasons other than Genesis. The term is now hugely overused for Web sites concerned with exchanging information of one sort or another (enter "babel" into Google's search engine and see what comes back). Of all these Babel Fish is arguably the best known, claiming to translate a block of 150 words of text between a multitude of languages. However, its automated nature leaves much to be desired and is really no substitute for even a second-rate translator. It will translate simple phrases with reasonable accuracy; however, try entering something a little more complex, containing expressions of feeling, or conditionals, and spend a few minutes being amused by the results.

Watching the Web in this issue were Margaret Cooter; Paola De Castro; Liza Furnival; John Glen; Bruce Squires; Moira Vekony (contributions to [DunaScripts@editors.ca](mailto:DunaScripts@editors.ca)).

**News Notes****Misconduct in physics**

In connection with the discovery of 16 incidences of fraud in physics, journalists and some scientists have taken the opportunity to make potentially damaging assertions about journals: that to compete or to publish exciting results, journals will cut corners in peer review, overrule hostile reviewers or select sympathetic ones. *Nature* (3 October 2002) refutes this, and has invited co-authors to send in retractions. It sees such misconduct as a way for the scientific community to improve its procedures for investigating misconduct when it arises, and for introducing principles of laboratory management to minimize the potential for fraud. *Nature's* 24 October issue has a news feature exploring fraud and the review process, which concludes with the thought that the real peer review only starts when a paper is published.

*New Scientist* (5 October 2002) wondered why the journals that published Schön's work couldn't have picked up that identical graphs were representing different data. Even if journal referees had time to cross-check every paper by an author, they wouldn't necessarily have

noticed the problem: "It requires a very big change of viewpoint to say 'I'm looking for fraud'."

The case highlights the need for record-keeping: Schön was unable to produce his raw data, and claims he had deleted the relevant files after running out of space on his computer. And it behoves journals to look again at the practice of including co-authors on papers when they don't have the expertise or time to critically assess the results.

**Who is a co-author, then?**

Several of Schön's co-authors had done no more than supply him with materials. One was interviewed by the *International Herald Tribune* (1 November 2002). He had done an experiment that didn't work, and suggested it to Schön — who sent him data that seemed to show success, at which point "I agreed to be a co-author." He went on to tell the newspaper that when researchers combined their studies to produce a single paper, each scientist depended on the honesty of work contributed by the other co-authors. That was the way, he said, science was supposed to work.

**New code for co-authors**

In the wake of the misconduct furore, the American Physical Society has produced new ethical guidelines. All researchers must now share "some degree of responsibility" for papers that they co-author, but only some have responsibility for the entire paper — including "co-authors who are accountable for the integrity of critical data reported in the paper, carry out the analysis, write the manuscript, present major findings at conferences, or provide scientific leadership". Critics contend that fraudulent data almost always find their way into print before senior researchers are alerted, so it is unfair to hold supervisors accountable. (*Nature* 21 November 2002)

**Low-key unethical behaviour**

Obviously science — as published — sometimes doesn't work properly. In the US, the Office of Research Integrity is trying to spread awareness of the importance of ethical conduct in the life sciences community. A survey ([www.faseb.org](http://www.faseb.org)) has dared to seek out information on the pervasiveness of low-key unethical behaviour, such as authors citing

papers that they haven't read — going, some claim, beyond the government-approved definition of scientific misconduct. This definition, a *Nature* editorial says (21 November 2002), is a restrictive, lowest-common-denominator approach.

### Read before you cite

It won't be news to editors that scientists are sloppy citers of other people's papers, and now a widely-reported study confirms that most authors don't bother to read the original. Simkin and Roychowdhury ([www.arxiv.org/abs/cond-mat/0212043](http://www.arxiv.org/abs/cond-mat/0212043)) looked at citation data for a 1973 paper and found that in 4300 citations, 196 contained 45 different misprints in the volume, page, or year. The most popular mistake appeared 78 times. This pattern suggests that 45 scientists made an error in citing it — and 151 others copied their misprints without reading the original — so for at least 77% of the 196 misprinted citations, no one read the paper. Simkin and Roychowdhury estimate that only 20% of citers read the original.

### Manuscript management systems

A paper entitled: "Web-based journal manuscript management and peer review software and systems" by Gerry McKiernan of Iowa State University is available free online. It considers AllenTrack, BenchPress, EdiKit, ESPERE, Journal Assistant, Manuscript Central, and Rapid Review. For each, a brief overview is provided, as is an outline of the features and functionalities of the system/service, contact information, Web site, and vendor. A select list of journals published by the software/system is included within each profile. ([www.emeraldinsight.com/fm=html/rpsv/cw/mcb/07419058/v19n7/s5002/p21](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/fm=html/rpsv/cw/mcb/07419058/v19n7/s5002/p21))

### Distortion of journal market

The lack of normal competitive forces in the journals market for libraries has been noted by the UK's Office of Fair Trading. It says the market is skewed because scientific, technical and medical journals tend to compete on quality rather than price. "Bundling", whereby publishers give discounts to libraries that provide electronic access to all or most of their journals, also distorts the market — and favours publishers with large portfolios. Intervention is not necessary, says the OFT: schemes such as the Public Library of Science could be

a force for change in the future. (*Nature* 19 September 2002)

### Authors pay, readers go free

Two peer-reviewed journals, one on biology and one on medicine, are to be published online by the Public Library of Science ([www.publiclibraryofscience.org](http://www.publiclibraryofscience.org)) and will be funded through payments made by authors of the papers. The cost per article will be about \$1500, and scientists are hoping that the cost will be met by those funding the research in the first place. Viewing or reproducing the information will be free. The initiative is supported by a five-year, \$9 million grant from a private foundation.

### Japanese online journals

Concerned about language barriers and competing on the international scene, Japan is planning online journals. Japanese scientists are concerned, says *Nature* (31 October 2002), that leading journals may be biased against them. Initiatives to improve the international standing of Japanese science aren't without difficulties — the new publications will need readers and reviewers from around the world if they are to have a reasonable chance of success. In a world of science where English is the lingua franca, non-native speakers sometimes feel hard done by — but these new journals will be in English. The key to the journals' success will be finding fields in which Japan excels, researchers say.

### Copyright contradictions in scholarly publishing

Contradictions in the protection of authors' interests in scholarly journals have become apparent with the rise of open access publishing as an alternative to the traditional commercial model of selling journal subscriptions. Authors may well be better served, as may the public which supports research, by open access journals because of the wider readership and early indications of greater scholarly impact. The Web site [http://firstmonday.org/issues/current\\_issue/willinsky/index.html](http://firstmonday.org/issues/current_issue/willinsky/index.html) provides a review of the specifics of publishers' contracts with editors and authors, as well as the larger spirit of copyright law in seeking to help scholars to better understand the consequences of the choices they make between commercial and open access publishing models for the future of academic knowledge.

### Technical editing as quality assurance

The August 2002 issue of *Technical Communication*, the journal of the Society for Technical Communication (STC), includes a summary of the things technical editors can — and should — contribute to writing projects. The article compares technical editing processes to software testing processes (thus providing some good arguments that have meaning for a large number of managers and clients). The article divides content editing activities into three categories: comprehensive editing, usability editing, and copy editing. Perhaps this is a good reason to consider joining the STC? ([www.stc.org/](http://www.stc.org/))

### "Electronic writing"

Is electronic writing a special form of talking? Many oral characteristics of communication occur in writing for the Web: argument rather than exposition, group thinking rather than individual thinking, and greater capacity for individual participation and interactivity. In electronic writing, the reader becomes the author's partner in determining the meaning of the text. "Writing electronically: the effects of computers on traditional writing" may help us to think differently about e-publishing. ([www.press.umich.edu/jep/08-01/ferris.html](http://www.press.umich.edu/jep/08-01/ferris.html); Aug 2002)

### Columbia University Press to publish JEP

With the release of the Spring 2003 issue, the *Journal of Electronic Publishing* will be published by Columbia University Press and will be re-launched with a new design, augmented content, enhanced search capabilities, and a new home address on the Columbia University Press Web site. *JEP* has been published since January 1995 and currently delivers three issues a year. *JEP* is available by free subscription, and has 1700 subscribers and thousands more readers, mostly in the publishing industry, libraries, and the academy. Readers have access to close to 200 articles written by industry professionals in library science, private publishing, and academic presses.

### Problems of online privacy exposed

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) and Privacyactivism have launched an interactive video game designed to educate players about their privacy and fair use rights.

Individuals aren't always aware that they are releasing personal information when they download software from the Net, or subscribe to a particular service. Privacy policies are often vague and leave users in the dark as to sites' data collection practices, so the game is designed to spotlight some of these trouble areas and provide tools so that people can protect their privacy. ([www.eff.org/carabella/20020619\\_eff\\_drm\\_pr.html](http://www.eff.org/carabella/20020619_eff_drm_pr.html))

### Electronic dissemination in peer-reviewed serial publication system

The internet opens the possibility of developing a variety of different models of scholarly communication, each fulfilling to a greater or lesser extent the three roles that paper journals have served (the ranking of scholarship, facilitating interactive communication among scholars, and creating a comprehensive archive of scholarly and scientific knowledge) and possibly other roles that were not even conceivable before the development of world-wide electronic networks. The implications of electronic distribution for ownership and access to the scholarly literature are profound and likely to exacerbate the already serious serial pricing crisis that is hindering widespread access

to scientific and scholarly information. It is up to the scholarly community, which both provides the material contained in these publications and largely consumes the finished product, to solve this crisis and allow the internet to be a vehicle for disseminating publicly funded research and scholarship rather than allowing its transfer to private ownership. ([www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue7\\_8/solomon/index.html](http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue7_8/solomon/index.html))

### Using a DOI in a Web browser

DOIs (digital object identifiers) are not URLs: they are names, not locations — but they can be used in Web browsers. A freely available "resolver plug-in" can be downloaded from [www.handle.net/resolver/](http://www.handle.net/resolver/). It will recognize a DOI in the form "doi:10.1000/123", and resolve it to a URL or other file type the browser recognizes. Or, users may resolve DOIs that are structured to use a DOI proxy server (<http://dx.doi.org/>), which "translates" a name using URL syntax. The resolution of the DOI in this case depends on the use of URL syntax: for example doi:10.1000/123 would be resolved from the address: "<http://dx.doi.org/10.1000/123>". Any standard browser encountering a DOI in this form will be able to resolve it. For more on

this topic, see [www.doi.org/faq.html#24](http://www.doi.org/faq.html#24)

### Finding facts electronically

Keywords and boolean searches are all very well when you are doing research on a topic, but they don't work so well for fact-checking. Some tips for getting results up on the screen are at [www.freepint.com/issues/080802.htm#feature](http://www.freepint.com/issues/080802.htm#feature). Think like a journalist, rather than a librarian. Type in "how to wire a plug", not keywords (wiring, plug). Also, use parts of sentences: "the smallest church in London"; "Miro was born on".

### Longer living through chemistry

Registration on the Web site of *Chemistry & Industry* requires a date of birth via a drop-down multiple-choice menu system. The options preclude anyone under 16 subscribing — but possible years of birth go back to 1892. It looks as if *C&I* has its eyes clearly focused on the more mature chemist. It is no surprise, then, to learn that one of the oldest professional workers in the US is a chemist and teacher — aged 102.

### Contributions to News Notes

Please send items for News Notes to Margaret Cooter, BMJ, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JR, UK (e-mail [mcooter@bmj.com](mailto:mcooter@bmj.com)).

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## Forthcoming meetings, courses and BELS exams

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### Who pays for the free lunch?

#### Alternative models for funding research communication

4 April 2003 London  
ALPSP 19th international learned journals seminar  
(Contact: Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, tel. +44 (0)1245 260571, e-mail [events@alpsp.org](mailto:events@alpsp.org), Web site [www.alpsp.org/calendar.htm](http://www.alpsp.org/calendar.htm))

+61 2-9519 2203,  
e-mail [despina.scarano@commongroundconferences.com](mailto:despina.scarano@commongroundconferences.com))

### CSE 46th annual meeting

2–6 May 2003 Pittsburgh, PA  
(Contact: Council of Science Editors, Inc., 11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 8, Reston VA 20190, USA; e-mail [cse@CouncilScienceEditors.org](mailto:cse@CouncilScienceEditors.org), Web site [www.CouncilScienceEditors.org](http://www.CouncilScienceEditors.org))

workshops on plenary session themes, followed by discussion groups with facilitators. See [www.ease.org.uk/ease2003info2.pdf](http://www.ease.org.uk/ease2003info2.pdf) for full details and copies of the registration form and hotel booking form. (Contact: Jenny Gretton, Secretary-Treasurer, EASE; tel./fax +44 (0)1483-211056, e-mail [secretary@ease.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ease.org.uk), Web site [www.ease.org.uk](http://www.ease.org.uk))

### The future of the book

RMIT University/Common Ground Publishing international conference 22–24 April 2003 Sydney, Australia  
Topics will include the changing roles of writer, reader and editor; the editor's craft; from paper to electronic books; new ways to translate text; emerging standards for electronic and printed books, and much else. (Contact: see [www.Book-Conference.com](http://www.Book-Conference.com) to submit a paper or for updated information, full online registration details and accommodation options. Further enquiries to the Conference Secretariat, tel. +61 2-9519 0303, fax

### Society for Scholarly Publishing

25th annual meeting 28–30 May 2003 Baltimore, MD  
(Contact: SSP, 10200 West 44th Avenue, Suite 304, Wheat Ridge, CO 80033, USA; tel. +1 303-422 3914, fax +1 303-422 8894; Web site [www.sspnet.org](http://www.sspnet.org))

### Editing and scientific "truth"

8th General Assembly and Conference of EASE 8–11 June 2003 Bath, UK  
Plenary sessions will be on grey areas of ethics, the evolution of peer review, and conflict of interest, with

### After Gutenberg and Gates: gazing into the e-future

CASE national editors conference 18–19 July 2003 Brisbane, Australia  
The Council of Australian Societies of Editors (CASE) is organizing a conference focusing on the changing nature and demands of the market for editors in terms of opportunities and skill requirements, including internet, multimedia and electronic publishing. Issues such as accreditation and marketing the editing profession will also be addressed. (Contact: Robin Bennett, [beyondgutenberg@hotmail.com](mailto:beyondgutenberg@hotmail.com))

**Something for everyone**

14th Annual SfEP AGM and conference  
20-22 Sept. 2003 Birmingham, UK  
(Contact: Society for Editors and Proofreaders, General Secretary, e-mail [admin@ssep.org.uk](mailto:admin@ssep.org.uk), Web site [www.ssep.org.uk](http://www.ssep.org.uk))

**Journals development**

ALPSP seminar  
23 September 2003 London, UK  
(Contact: ALPSP, tel. +44 (0)1245 260571, e-mail [events@alpsp.org](mailto:events@alpsp.org), Web site [www.alpsp.org/calendar.htm](http://www.alpsp.org/calendar.htm))

**COURSES****ALPSP training courses**

The Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers offers courses on electronic marketing, journal production, journal fulfilment, journal finance, and related topics. (Contact: ALPSP Ltd, 47 Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 9BS, UK; tel. +44 (0)1245-260571, fax +44 (0)1245-260935, [members@alpsp.org](mailto:members@alpsp.org), Web site [www.alpsp.org](http://www.alpsp.org))

**British Library training courses**

(Contact: Maureen Heath, Training Courses Administrator, The British Library, Marketing RS&CD, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB; tel. +44 (0)20-7412 7470, fax +44 (0)20-7412 7947; e-mail [maureen.heath@bl.uk](mailto:maureen.heath@bl.uk); Web site [www.bl.uk/services/stb/courses.html](http://www.bl.uk/services/stb/courses.html))

**Style for reports and papers in medical and life-science journals**

John Kirkman Communication Consultancy courses  
London, UK

One-day seminars devoted to discussion of style — tactics for producing accurate and readable texts, not structure or format. (Contact: Gill Ward, JKCC, PO Box 106, Marlborough, Wilts, SN8 2RU, UK; tel. +44 (0)1672-520429, fax +44 (0)1672-521008, e-mail [kirkman.ramsbury@btinternet.com](mailto:kirkman.ramsbury@btinternet.com))

**Publishing Training Centre at Book House**

(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, e-mail [publishing.training@bookhouse.co.uk](mailto:publishing.training@bookhouse.co.uk), Web site [www.train4publishing.co.uk](http://www.train4publishing.co.uk))

**Society for Editors and Proofreaders workshops**

SfEP runs one-day workshops in London and occasionally elsewhere in the UK on copy-editing, proofreading, grammar and much else. (For up-to-date information see Web site [www.ssep.org.uk](http://www.ssep.org.uk), or contact Lesley Ward, 20 Howard Road, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 2BX, UK, tel. +44 (0)118-979 2571, or e-mail [admin@ssep.org.uk](mailto:admin@ssep.org.uk))

**Society of Indexers workshops**

The Society of Indexers runs workshops for beginners and more experienced indexers in various cities in the UK. See details and downloadable booking forms on the Web site ([www.socind.demon.co.uk/](http://www.socind.demon.co.uk/)).

**Tim Albert Training**

Courses on writing, science writing and setting up publications. (Contact: Tim Albert Training, Paper Mews

Court, 284 High Street, Dorking, RH4 1QT, UK; tel. +44 (0)1306-877993, fax +44 (0)1306-877929, e-mail [tatraining@compuserve.com](mailto:tatraining@compuserve.com), Web site [www.timalbert.co.uk](http://www.timalbert.co.uk))

**University of Chicago Publishing Program**

(Contact: Publishing Program, Graham School of General Studies, 5835 S. Kimbark Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637-1608, USA; fax +1 773-702 6814, Web site [www.grahamschool.uchicago.edu/contact.shtml](http://www.grahamschool.uchicago.edu/contact.shtml))

**EXAMINATIONS****Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) examination schedule**

22 March 2003: San Francisco, California (Asilomar) (register by 1 March 2003)  
3 May 2003: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (CSE meeting) (register by 19 April 2003)  
8 June 2003: Bath, UK (EASE meeting) (register by 25 May 2003)  
4 November 2003: Miami, Florida (AMWA meeting) (register by 14 October 2003)

For more information, or to take a BELS examination certifying your editing skills and making you an ELS (editor in the life sciences), visit the Web site at [www.bels.org](http://www.bels.org) to obtain the application form and a complete schedule of upcoming examinations, or contact Leslie Neistadt (e-mail: [neistadt@hughston.com](mailto:neistadt@hughston.com), fax: +1 706-576 3348, mailing address: Hughston Sports Medicine Foundation, Inc, 6262 Veterans Parkway, Columbus, GA 31909, USA).

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**The Editor's Bookshelf**

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The bookshelf is compiled and edited by Mrs Jean Shaw, The Old Rectory, Shoscombe, Bath, BA2 8NB, UK; e-mail [exxjgs@bath.ac.uk](mailto:exxjgs@bath.ac.uk). Please send her details of articles or books of interest to editors.

Contributions in European languages other than English, especially French or German, are welcome.

Entries are arranged (roughly) by topic under each heading, not alphabetically by author.

We regret that photocopies of the material referred to in these entries cannot be supplied.

Many thanks to those who have sent contributions.

**GENERAL**

Kmietowicz Z. 2002. **Patent laws are keeping poor countries in poverty.** *BMJ* 14 Sept; 325:562.

Schiermeier Q. 2002. **Traditional owners "should be paid"**. *Nature* (London) 3 Oct; 419:423.  
Traditional knowledge can provide cheap leads for pharmaceutical companies looking for new drugs. A model law now being developed would allow the traditional owners to negotiate an authorization agreement.

Dalton R. 2002. **Tribes query motives of knowledge databases.** *Nature* (London) 31 Oct; 419:866.  
Some groups fear that such databases

will be used to exploit their cultural heritage. Report from World's Indigenous Peoples Conference, 16-19 October, Kelowna, British Columbia — [www.wipo.org](http://www.wipo.org).

Ramsay S. 2002. **African health researchers unite.** *Lancet* 23 Nov; 360:1665.

Launch of the African Health Research Forum (AfHRF) with daunting but vitally important objectives.

[Editorial]. 2002. **Towards a European Research Council.** *Nature* (London) 17 Oct; 419:653.  
"Europe's science ministers should focus on the bigger picture."

Schiermeier Q. 2002. **A window of opportunity.** *Nature* (London) 12

Sept; 419:108–109.

"Enthusiasts for European scientific integration believe the time is ripe to launch a new independent research council" — the European Research Council.

[Editorial]. 2002. **Reform by stealth.** Nature (London) 7 Nov; 420:1.

"The government of Silvio Berlusconi apparently wants to restructure Italian science, but seems uninterested in consultation."

Taylor I. 2002. **Opening the journals market in China.** Learned Publishing 15(4):243–245.

Publishers are reporting sharp increases in journal subscriptions. Copyright protection and agreements due to China's application for membership of the World Trade Organization seems to have been the spur.

[Editorial]. 2002. **Breaking down the barriers.** Nature (London) 24 Oct; 419:777.

"Many Japanese researchers are concerned they don't play on a level playing field when it comes to international science. Language and cultural barriers may be partly to blame. But the perception is more forbidding than the reality."

Cyranowski D. 2002. **Japan plans web of English journals.** Nature (London) 31 Oct; 419:868.

Jayaraman KS. 2002. **India's scientists agonize over fall in publication rate.** Nature (London) 12 Sept; 419:100.

China has overtaken India in the number of papers published (data from *Science Citation Index*) with Brazil and South Korea challenging India's reputation in the developing world.

[Editorial]. 2002. **Obstacles to bio defence.** Nature (London) 5 Sept; 419:1.

The Department of Homeland Security will find a lack of preparedness. Suggests that key stakeholders collaborate in the development of scenarios of imaginary attacks.

Brumfiel G. 2002. **Mission impossible?** Nature (London) 5 Sept; 419:10–11.

The new Department of Homeland Security will have to research the vulnerabilities already revealed.

McLellan F. 2002. **Academic freedom or speaking to the enemy.** Lancet 7 Sept; 360:731.

Debate regarding the open exchange of replicable research in scientific

journals and its potential use by terrorists.

Gewin V. 2002. **Security worries stifle report on agricultural bioterror.** Nature (London) 12 Sept; 419:99.

Malakoff D. 2002. **Tighter security reshapes research.** Science (Washington DC) 6 Sept; 297:1630,1632–1633. The aftermath of September 11th.

Enserink M. 2002. **One year after: hunt for NIH funds fosters collaboration.** Science (Washington DC) 6 Sept; 297:1630–1631.

Check E. 2002. **National academies slam Bush proposal for data security.** Nature (London) 24 Oct; 419:769. Problems with a new category of "sensitive" but not "classified" information.

Michaels D, et al. 2002. **Advice without dissent.** Science (Washington DC) 25 Oct; 298:703.

Editorial. "The Bush administration has made some unwise recent moves that undermine the process by which scientists provide advice to the US Government."

[Editorial]. 2002. **Keeping scientific advice non-partisan.** Lancet 16 Nov; 360:1525.

Worried that the current USA administration is packing expert panels with those "whose views would be sympathetic to [the Republican] party's agenda."

#### *Access to data*

Ding Ymin, Xiong Lei. 2002. **China issues rules on fossil excavation.** Science (Washington DC) 20 Sept; 297:1981.

"One agency will now regulate many Chinese fossils."

Gibbons A. 2002. **Glasnost for hominids: seeking access to fossils.** Science (Washington DC) 30 Aug; 297:1464–1468.

"Outside researchers are vying for quicker access to key specimens, but fossil discoverers say they need control over new finds in order to prepare and analyze them carefully."

Thiele K, Yeates D. 2002. **Tension arises from duality at heart of taxonomy.** Nature (London) 26 Sept; 419:337.

Creating a taxonomic database is not as easy as it may be for other subjects. The base unit in taxonomy "is an hypothesis, not an observation or 'fact'."

#### *Ethics and clinical trials*

Powell K. 2002. **Call for clinical-trial reform leaves critics unmoved.**

Nature (London) 10 Oct; 419:546. Report, "Responsible research: a systems approach to protecting research participants", chaired by Daniel Federman, commissioned by the Department of Health and Human Services, may face opposition from drug firms.

Marwick C. 2002. **Report demands better protection for people in research trials.** BMJ 12 Oct; 325:796.

Baird P, Downie J, Thompson J. 2002. **Clinical trials and industry.** Science (Washington DC) 27 Sept; 297:2211. The importance of "protecting the right of trial subjects to disclosure of risks and the academic freedom of investigators."

Miller FG, Rosenstein DL. 2002. **Reporting of ethical issues in publications of medical research.** Lancet 26 Oct; 360:1326–1328.

These are rarely described even when there are controversial features in study design or procedures. Guidelines are presented.

Gilman RH, et al. 2002. **How many committees does it take to make a project ethical?** Lancet 28 Sept; 360:1025–1026.

The problems of international collaboration — "15 initial submissions and then, after approval, a further 25 applications in five formats."

#### *Training*

Goldmann E, Marshall E. 2002. **NIH grantees: where have all the young ones gone?** Science (Washington DC) 4 Oct; 298:40–41.

"Since 1980 the percentage of biomedical grants awarded to 35-and-under investigators has plummeted from 23% to 4%."

Goldmann E. 2002. **European program to fund the best.** Science (Washington DC) 11 Oct; 298:345. European Young Investigators Awards are launched to boost European science.

Bawden D, Robinson L. 2002. **Promoting literacy in a digital age: approaches to training for information literacy.** Learned Publishing 15(4):297–301.

Case studies: a training programme in information literacy for the scientific staff of a multinational pharmaceutical research organization and a summer school primarily for information professionals from

countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Goodman S. 2002. **Put your lab in a different class.** *Nature* (London) 7 Nov; 420:12–14.

Initiatives designed to give young people hands-on experience of research in different sciences.

Weston W. 2002. **Access to scientific literature.** *Nature* (London) 7 Nov; 420:19.

"The web can complement libraries, but not replace them."

Goodman S. 2002. **"Unusual forces" are pushing journal market off course.** *Nature* (London) 19 Sept; 419:239.

Libraries may be paying too much because the market lacks normal competitive forces — [www.oft.gov.uk](http://www.oft.gov.uk).

#### Citation issues

[Anon]. 2002. **Building a European Citation Index for the Humanities.** ESF Communications no.22:12–13. Because of the inadequacy of ISI's *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*, ESF's Standing Committee for the Humanities is planning to produce a European Citation Index to assist in evaluation of humanities research.

Mackinnon L, Clarke M. 2002. **Citation of group-authored papers.** *Lancet* 9 Nov; 360:1513.

Difficulties of finding all the citations to a group-authored paper in the *Science Citation Index*.

#### PUBLISHING

Cox B. 2002. **The Pergamon phenomenon 1951–1991: Robert Maxwell and scientific publishing.** *Learned Publishing* 15(4):273–278.

Albert T. 2002. **Medical journal publishing: one culture or several.** *Learned Publishing* 15(4):291–296. Questionnaire survey of editors, technical editors and 26 editorial assistants of *BMJ* specialist journals. 50 reviewers from the *BMJ*'s database were also sent questionnaires.

Jones R. 2002. **Journals e-publishing: outsourced solutions for professional, scholarly and society publishers.** *Learned Publishing* 15(4):313–314. "Personal view".

Powell A. 2002. **Linking to full text: the secondary publisher's perspective.** *Learned Publishing* 15(4):267–272.

The experience of CABI in linking *CAB Abstracts* and *CAB HEALTH* to

full-text articles. Data consistency and accuracy, increased pay-per-view availability and a willingness to look at citation linking from both sides are necessary if primary and secondary journal publishers are to cooperate effectively in linking full text.

O'Neill S. 2002. **DOIs — the key to interoperability.** *Update* 1(9) :44–45. TSO (formerly the Stationery Office) has been appointed as a registration agency for digital object identifiers in the UK.

Renner R. 2002. **Online pioneer winds up lost in cyberspace.** *Science* (Washington DC) 30 Aug; 297:1468–1469.

The hazards of introducing digital object identifiers, "smart identifiers" and changes in the print version have caused problems for the American Geophysical Union but the American Physics Society has had fewer problems.

Derricourt R. 2002. **Scholarly book publishing in Australia: the impact of the last decade.** *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 33(4):189–201. Discusses developments and trends from the late 1980s to early 2002.

De Bono M. 2002. **Electronic books.** *BMJ* 19 Oct; 325:850.

Medical books are now available online at [www.bmjbookshop.com](http://www.bmjbookshop.com) — starting with titles published by BMJ Books.

Kenneway M, Sutherland P, Williamson SC. 2002. **Introducing a new journals subscription system: the agony and the ecstasy.** *Learned Publishing* 15(4):302–306.

[Anon]. 2002. **Counting the costs.** *Update* 1(8):7. "The EC Copyright Directive will create 'extreme problems' for those in the commercial sector and elsewhere, CILIP has warned in its official response" on UK implementation. [www.cilip.org.uk/committees/local/directive.html](http://www.cilip.org.uk/committees/local/directive.html).

#### New trends?

Wolpert AJ. 2002. **The future of electronic data.** *Nature* (London) 7 Nov; 420:17–18.

"Will universities' own electronic repositories affect traditional publishing?"

Butler D. 2002. **MIT gets plugged in for global data archive.** *Nature* (London) 31 Oct; 419:869.

Plans to launch DSpace electronic archive at MIT. Over 40 other academic institutions are considering its adoption. It is intended to transform

the way in which academics publish and archive their results and raw data.

"JLD". 2002. **Ultrafast science journal.** *Physics Today* 55(9):33.

News note reporting new virtual *Journal of Ultrafast Science* launched by the American Institute of Physics and American Physical Society, which assembles research and review papers from 50 publications concerning anything that lasts a trillionth of a second or less from biophysics to high-field physics to applications. Contents and abstracts are posted monthly on the Web (see: [www.vjulfast.org](http://www.vjulfast.org)).

Doyle M. 2002. **How to profit by providing free access.** *Learned Publishing* 15(4):315.

Walker TJ. 2002. **Two societies show how to profit by providing free access.** *Learned Publishing* 15(4):279–284.

Immediate free Web access is the most economical mode of access. Two entomological societies have offered it to their authors and profited.

[Anon]. 2002. **New journals service.** *Physics World* 15(8):45.

Reports that articles from most of the Institute of Physics journals are now available free of charge for 30 days at [www.iop.org/ejgs-extra](http://www.iop.org/ejgs-extra).

Harwood P. 2002. **You are the weakest link — goodbye: serving the information-hungry corporate end user.** *Learned Publishing* 15(4):285–290.

The changing roles of different parts of the information system as end-users become more demanding.

#### EDITING

Huth EJ. 2002. **In memoriam: J. Russell Elkinton, MD, MACP, FRCP(L); 1910–2002; editor, Annals of Internal Medicine, 1960–1971.** *Annals of Internal Medicine* 137(7):613–614.

Müllner M, Groves T. 2002. **Making research papers in the BMJ more accessible.** *BMJ* 31 Aug; 325:456. Electronic long paper short — combination of reader friendly versions of original papers in print and full version online.

Richards T. 2002. **Editors pledge support for African journals.** *BMJ* 26 Oct; 325:922–923.

A group of medical editors has set up a forum to support and strengthen medical journals in Africa — FAME.



Hartley J. 2002. **Do structured abstracts take more space? And does it matter?** Journal of Information Science 28(5):417–422.

They do take up more space. Suggestions for saving space are considered.

#### Authorship

Grujic P. 2002. **First authorship does not determine real leader.** APS News 11(5):4.

Discusses rules for list order of authors — alphabetic, author's first paper, and, in the case of CS.-S. Wu in the parity violation paper, ladies first.

Abbott A. 2002. **Dispute over first authorship lands researcher in dock.** Nature (London) 5 Sept; 419:4.

The court's decision favoured the original verbal agreement between the two authors — not the intellectual contribution.

Tarnow E. 2002. **Don't give yourself a bad name.** Physics World 15(9):17–18.

Results of a survey show that many physics papers contain inappropriate co-authors who do not deserve to be listed.

#### Conflicts of interest

Lenzer J. 2002. **Controversial stroke trial is under review following BMJ report.** BMJ 16 Nov; 325:1131.

The majority of the experts on stroke had ties to the manufacturers of the drug concerned.

[Various]. 2002. **Conflict of interest and its significance in science and medicine.** Science and Engineering Ethics 8(3):261–475.

Special issue containing papers from a conference, 5–6 April 2002 ([www.Opragen.co.uk/SEE/contents.php3?volume=8&issue=3](http://www.Opragen.co.uk/SEE/contents.php3?volume=8&issue=3)).

#### Peer review

Rowland F. 2002. **The peer-review process.** Learned Publishing 15(4):247–258.

Review of recent literature about peer review of scholarly articles with emphasis on the cost — \$400 per published article!

Adam D, Knight J. 2002. **Publish, and be damned . . .** BMJ 24 Oct; 419:772–776.

Investigation of the ways in which journals select papers for publication. Asks what more could be done to weed out dubious results.

Einsenberg MS, Thompson SA, Stanley EH. 2002. **"Getting in" revisited: an analysis of manuscript**

**characteristics, reviewers' ratings, and acceptance of manuscripts in Psychological Bulletin.** Psychological Bulletin 128(6):997–1004.

Butler D. 2002. **Theses spark twin dilemma for physicists.** Nature (London) 7 Nov; 420:5.

The difficulty of reading these papers had led to the suggestion that they are "spoofed". The credibility of the peer review system and journals reporting string theory or related areas are taking a battering.

Mercer J. 2002. **The difficulties of double blinding.** Science (Washington DC) 27 Sept; 297:2208.

In some cases the placebo group is likely to know their assignment by detecting physical changes in themselves, e.g. in HRT trials.

Zwarenstein M. 2002. **Peer review of statistics in medical research.** BMJ 31 Aug; 325:491.

Sample size issues estimated and attained should not influence reviewers unduly.

Marusic A, et al. 2002. **Peer review in a small and a big medical journal: case study of the Croatian Medical Journal and The Lancet.** Croatian Medical Journal 43(3):286–289.

Comparison of reviewers' recommendations and editorial decisions in these two journals. Reviewers for *The Lancet* were found to be stricter. Editorial decisions differed in the emphasis placed on novelty or methodological superiority of studies.

Borgstein J. 2002. **The lecture.** Lancet 23 Nov; 360:1708.

"Peter Medawar made an important, though largely forgotten, point when he reminded us that so many gracefully executed studies answer questions that are entirely irrelevant . . . to any conceivable clinical situation, or are based on incorrect premises that essentially invalidate the results no matter how elegant and correct the statistical analysis may be."

#### Causes for concern

Adam D. 2002. **Suspicious intensify over elusive European Academy of Sciences.** Nature (London) 31 Oct; 419:865.

*Nature* "has been unable to find any record of the academy's publications, projects or meetings, and cannot confirm the scientific credentials of those behind it."

[News item]. 2002. **Scientific societies foil potential journal scam.** APS News 11(6):1,4,5.

Reports out-of-court settlement by a

subscription service which filed false society memberships to get reduced rates and made false claims for "missing" issues.

Adam D. 2002. **Medical funding group calls for clamp down on hype.** Nature (London) 24 Oct; 419:769.

Research misconduct guidelines just released by an association of British medical charities suggest that premature disclosure to the press of unpublished results might cause researchers to be blacklisted for funding.

Kareiva P, et al. 2002. **Slow-moving journals hinder conservation efforts.** Nature (London) 7 Nov; 420:15.

"Critical policy decisions miss out on research stuck in an 18-month publishing queue." Survey of conservation journals.

Garnier J, Berendsen JC. 2002. **International Unions concerned about biodata.** Nature (London) 24 Oct; 419:777.

"Action must be taken now to ensure that data are safely archived and always accessible."

O'Malley MA, Roger AJ, Doolittle WF. 2002. **Can commercial protection be good for research?** Nature (London) 12 Sept; 419:111.

Access to data from publicly and privately funded research should not be treated differently.

#### Scientific misconduct

Greenberg DS. 2002. **Misconduct poll prompts fury among scientists.** Lancet 23 Nov; 360:1669.

There is opposition to a government-sponsored survey to quantify shady practices by two prominent organizations concerned with American science, on the grounds that the survey goes beyond federal authority for policing misconduct and might generate misleading findings.

[Editorial]. 2002. **Soft responses to misconduct.** Nature (London) 21 Nov; 420:253.

Scientific associations and scientists have attacked the Office for Research Integrity's survey "for daring to seek out information on the pervasiveness of low-key unethical behaviour, such as authors citing papers that they haven't read" — "a heads in the sand" response.

[Anon]. 2002. **Paper trail reveals references go unread by citing authors.** Nature (London) 12 Dec; 420:594.

" . . . an analysis of how errors propagate through the literature."

Brumfiel G. 2002. **Physics guidelines drop equal-responsibility clause.** *Nature* (London) 21 Nov; 420:258. The guidelines have been revised following recent misconduct cases such as those at Bell Laboratories.

Friedman E. 2002. **Sitting in judgement.** *Nature* (London) 26 Sept; 419:332–333. A harrowing experience for the investigators too!

#### *Recent reports of misconduct cases*

Wilmhurst P. 2002. **Institutional corruption in medicine.** *BMJ* 23 Nov; 325:1232–1235.

Suggests that covering up at a senior level may take place in academic institutions. A case history is given.

Schiermeier Q. 2002. **Cancer researcher found guilty of negligence.** *Nature* (London) 21 Nov; 420:258.

The paper concerned with a vaccine for kidney cancer “fails to meet the requirements of good scientific practice.”

Tuffs A. 2002. **Cancer specialist found guilty of misconduct.** *BMJ* 23 Nov; 325:1195.

“[The chief investigator] was not diligent in his handling of data and did not care about accuracy.”

[Anon]. 2002. **Dutch neurologist found guilty of fraud after falsifying 438 case records.** *BMJ* 5 Oct; 325:734. Part of a European stroke research project.

Dyer O. 2002. **Medical council investigate alleged research fraud.** *BMJ* 7 Sept; 325:509.

The paper in question investigated how Indian patients fared after their first heart attack.

Brumfiel G. 2002. **Misconduct finding at Bell Labs shakes physics community.** *Nature* (London) 3 Oct; 419:423.

Schön has admitted to making mistakes — rather than fraud.

Durrani M. 2002. **118: a case of misconduct.** *Physics World* 15(8): 7. Reports that the “discovery” of the heaviest ever element was the result of fabricated research data.

Schwarzschild B. 2002. **Lawrence Berkeley lab concludes that evidence of element 118 was a fabrication.** *Physics Today* 55(9):15–17.

Internal investigation shows the claimed discovery of this superheavy element was part of a pattern of deception by one physicist that goes back to 1994.

Service RF. 2002. **Bell Labs fires star physicist found guilty of forging data.** *Science* (Washington DC) 4 Oct; 298:30–31.

According to a report at least 17 papers by J.H. Schön contain faked experimental results. The 17 papers are listed. A list of 8 papers published in *Science* are retracted by co-authors, Z. Bao et al., *Science* 1 Nov. 2002, p. 961.

Farrer S. 2002. **For whom the Bell tolls?** *The Times Higher Education Supplement*(1546):8.

Reports on inquiry investigating allegations of fraud in the work of Jan Hendrik Schön of Bell Laboratories and suggests journals may be partly to blame for competing for “exciting” papers.

[Editorial]. 2002. **Reflections on scientific fraud.** *Nature* (London) 3 Oct; 419:417.

Difficult to prevent “but all involved can try harder”. *Nature* rejects charges that in order to compete they cut corners in peer review and overrule hostile reviewers or select sympathetic ones. (Re: Bell Labs.)

#### WRITING AND READING

Kirkman J. 2002. **Writing readably.** *UroOncology* 2(3):159–161.

“We must also pay attention to the demands we put on our readers’ language-processing abilities.”

Henige D. 2002. **Indexing: a users’ perspective.** *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 33(4):230–247.

Too many books lack an index or have an inadequate index.

Durrani M. 2002. **Writers face the language barrier.** *Physics World* 15(5):12.

Discusses why popular science books written in English are most successful even in translation, and the difficulties facing ESL authors in writing such books.

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#### DEATH

We much regret to  
announce the death of  
Peter Lomax.

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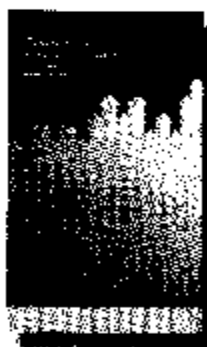
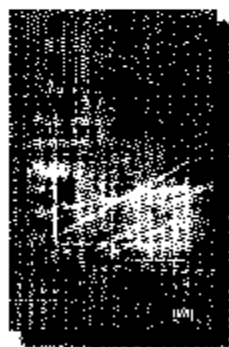
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