

that some organisms traditionally treated as plants are bacteria or protozoa (or vice versa) and by uncertainty over which set of rules should be followed.

Another concern is the extent of changes in scientific nomenclature. For example, there have been two monographs on penicillins in the past 25 years with a similar number of species, but only 43% of the names have remained unchanged. Users of names demand stability, but as each name is a hypothesis (as a species), changes may arise as science progresses. In bacteriology, the publication of a list of "approved names" reduced the number of names that could be used for bacteria from around 32 000 to 3000 at a stroke, while in botany and zoology, where the number of names is much greater, the establishment of committees to safeguard certain well-known names has had only a minor influence.

While the five different Codes have been developing independently, they have been confronted by similar problems. Accordingly, the International Committee on Bionomenclature was established jointly by IUBS and IUMS in 1995 in order to harmonize the usage of terms and practices. A glossary of terms for use in all groups of organisms has been published, which is to be updated and adopted as an international standard by the IUBS Taxonomic Databases Working Group. The Committee has also prepared a draft biocode that is potentially applicable to all organisms, though it has not yet been formally adopted, and has developed and tested a trial system for the registration of newly proposed scientific names of plants and fungi. The trial went well, but was not endorsed by the International Botanical Congress in 1999, though it may prove more acceptable to other disciplines.

In addition to ensuring that authors follow the appropriate Codes now in force, which are briefly described in chapter 3-4.4 of the *EASE Science Editors' Handbook*, scientific editors should add their voices to appeals for increased standardization, promote the use of harmonized names, and encourage the development of databases of names that can be accessed worldwide by the public.

Karen Philips (University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas) discussed the various print and electronic sources available for identifying abbreviations and acronyms and for checking terminology used in the medical and basic sciences. Her department uses *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary*, 29th edition (2000) for checking general terminology, and *Scientific Style and Format*, 6th edition (1994) and the American Medical Association's *Manual of Style: a Guide for Authors and Editors*, 9th edition (1998) for checking terminology used in the basic sciences and clinical sciences, respectively. *Stedman's Abbreviations, Acronyms & Symbols*, 2nd edition (1999) and S Jablonski's *Dictionary of Medical Acronyms and Abbreviations*, 4th edition (2001) are also used as general references, and NM Davis's *Medical Abbreviations: 2 000 Conveniences at the Expense of Communications and Safety*, 11th edition (2003, Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania: Neil M Davis Associates) for checking whether abbreviations have multiple meanings.

Other sources for identifying abbreviations and

acronyms used in the medical and basic sciences are available over the internet, although there is concern about their reliability. Some are online dictionaries or handbooks (the IUPAC handbook, Medicine Online, MediLexicon), while others are databases (Medstract) or search engines (Carryondocs, Google, Lycos, etc.).

#### *Scientific standards and nomenclature*

During the discussion that followed, participants were asked who was responsible for keeping editors informed about scientific standards and nomenclature.

Kathleen Lyle noted that while publishers could not be relied on for keeping their editors informed, editorial societies have a role, especially given the expense of purchasing international standards. EASE and the Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) had both been represented on committees responsible for the development of standards (ISO 9 on information and documentation and the BSI standard on proof correction and copy preparation, respectively), but greater representation on such bodies was required, and she suggested that EASE should lobby in this regard.

Edward Huth pointed out that international standards were often taken up by other publishing bodies and made available in other formats. For example, the National Library of Medicine's standard for bibliographic references is very similar to that of ISO and is available free on the internet. Internet searches could also be used to locate other equivalent standards. In his opinion, editors had a responsibility to keep themselves informed about standards and to apply them as far as possible. For example, George Lundberg, former editor of *JAMA*, had assembled a group to push for the adoption of SI units in the USA, to ensure that drugs were expressed in molecular rather than gravimetric units; however, the move was opposed by the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association, which finally agreed to the inclusion of the SI equivalent in parentheses.

Colin Batchelor (Royal Society of Chemistry) commented that it was relatively easy for the Society to keep its editors informed about general standards as its journals were all devoted to a single subject. Nevertheless, it should be possible for larger publishing houses to keep their editors informed.

David Hawksworth added that although editors might be familiar with standards in their particular area of expertise, they had to trust authors to follow the relevant standards in other areas. He noted that EASE was preparing a bibliography of relevant standards in scientific nomenclature; other sources were the Committee on Data for Science and Technology (CODATA) (for geographical and biological names), ISO and other standard-setting organizations.

Arjan Polderman pointed out that both the *EASE Science Editors' Handbook* and the new edition of the Council of Science Editors' manual would enhance knowledge of standards; however, it would also help if the relevant standards and the bodies responsible for setting them were to be listed in *European Science Editing*.

There was general agreement that standards were only of use when they were accepted and adhered to by the scientific community. For example, the standard relating to eicosanoids nomenclature had not been accepted and as such was not followed.

John Glen drew attention to the different ways in which dates are expressed. China, Hungary and Japan follow the ISO system and give the year, followed by the month and day respectively, whereas the USA places the month first, followed by the day and year; the rest of the world follows the more traditional order (day, month, year).

There was a consensus among participants that EASE should take a greater role in keeping its members informed of changes in standards and terminology. Sheila Poole suggested that a regularly updated list of relevant standards could be published in *European Science Editing*; Kathleen Lyle added that the EASE forum could also be used for keeping members informed of changes. Other suggestions were for the CSE style manuals and the *EASE Science Editors' Handbook* to be made available on the Web, with built-in hyperlinks to relevant standards, and for the EASE web site to include hyperlinks to the home pages of relevant standard-setting organizations.

## Authors' editors' ethical dilemmas

(M14, moderator Karen Shashok)

Carol Norris considered what depth of author-editing deserves mention in acknowledgements, and the possible harm to the reputation of the authors' editor (AE) if advice is rejected or if errors occur in lines added after the final reading. The University of Helsinki Language Service requires a final reading by the AE before any published acknowledgement. Some journals even refuse, said Brian Harrison, to print acknowledgements for assistance, either technical or linguistic. Carol, the chief AE for doctors who are her writing students, showed classroom materials to help them identify unintentional plagiarism. To discourage redundant and "salami" publishing, they hear about journals' severe sanctions.

Rita Lazar's talk concerned those appearing as authors versus those being named in the acknowledgements. Has everyone even contributed? The days of the single author, she commented, seem nearly over, giving way to an era of articles with six or more authors, intriguingly including more and more professors. Some authors have neither made a major contribution to nor accepted public responsibility for study results — the main criteria for authors to be listed. And is the first or the last author considered the one most important?

Liz Wager suggested that AEs may remain unaware of who contributed what to a study, particularly in cases of in-fighting. Some groups or even nations lack

## Acronyms

Maria Persson (*Oikos*) noted that acronyms and abbreviations are useful for certain terms, as all journals want their authors to be specific and to the point.

Edward Huth considered that editors should discourage use of acronyms by authors. Although some acronyms are widely understood, others are likely to be confusing to readers who are not specialists in the subject, even if they are defined when first used.

Richard Raper (Indexing Specialists) suggested that the problem could be addressed by giving authors a list of accepted acronyms and abbreviations, though this would not prevent them from introducing errors.

Another issue raised was that of incorrect definitions for acronyms and abbreviations. For example, HPLC is frequently defined as high-pressure liquid chromatography rather than high-performance liquid chromatography.

Closing the session, Barbara Burlingame recommended that discussion of standards in scientific data, nomenclature and terminology be pursued at the next EASE conference.

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ethics committees and neglect informed-consent procedures. Some authors rationalize that a study is "just a survey." Powerful players can manipulate an AE who lacks access to the study protocol and is hired only to "polish the English" or do a hasty "little clean-up" of the language. AEs can, however, educate authors (often more ignorant than criminal), by offering COPE, CONSORT, or ICMJE guidelines — plus MOOSE and QUOROM for reviews — as well as stressing target-journal instructions. [See *The Editors' WebWatch*, this issue, for more about these acronyms.]

Tom van Loon and other enthusiastic workshop participants suggested that we beware of lazy authors who fail to do their best, depending on AEs to be workhorses. Another tip: inaccuracies in the references may reveal an author's basic carelessness.

Some questions. Should AE manuscript changes be considered only as suggestions? Do we or should we serve as pre-referees? Can an AE actually show bias? To whom is an AE answerable? To readers? To authors? To employers? The workshop consensus: we AEs should be responsible to ourselves, to our own sense of integrity.

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## Using the products of peer review: reviewers kept in the dark

(W3, moderator Kathleen Lyle)

Participants in this session agreed that too many publishers inexplicably discouraged contact between writers and reviewers and there should be more openness at all stages of the publication process.

Tom van Loon believes it is a good idea for authors to send their papers to three colleagues before submission for peer review. "If authors, being in principle the most prominent experts on the research topic, need help from referees to come a bit closer to the scientific truth, does that make a referee some kind of magician?" he asked. Reviewers rarely have to defend their sometimes inexplicable recommendations. Often different reviewers make contradictory comments on the same paper.

Abigail Pound (*Lancet*) said it was a shame that authors felt they had to accept everything in a peer review, or all editing changes, when editors, especially, were only too willing to discuss changes. So were referees, said van Loon: "The more detailed the comments the clearer it is that they can have strongly different views. It is amazing that publishers do so little to educate their referees who do their job, return the manuscript with comments and that's it! Only rarely are they informed about the conclusions of the

other referees, let alone about their detailed comments." A referee's work takes a day if a paper is badly written. Van Loon has also refereed opposing comments in a manuscript for publishers.

Liz Wager asked what it is that publishers fear. Authors need to realize they don't have to accept everything in a peer review. Some journals discourage contact between reviewers and authors, with injunctions to reviewers not to contact authors. Wager was concerned that papers are still hard to read. House styles are imposed for no valid purpose, but probably do no harm.

Pound said that authors often see readability as dumbing down of their work. An interested person should be able to read a journal report. If a sentence needs reading twice it needs to be fixed.

Chairman Kathleen Lyle said that authors might be worried about confidentiality, or that their work could be stolen, but on the whole there is now more openness at all stages of the process.

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## 12th Annual EMWA conference

14-17 May 2003; Lisbon, Portugal

For those who have never been to an EMWA conference before, one of the most distinctive elements is the chance to get real practical experience in various aspects of medical writing through the three-hour workshops that are held during the conference. Unlike the largely passive educational experience at most conferences, many of the European Association of Medical Writers (EMWA) workshops involve pre-workshop assignments, active audience participation and group exercises, and a post-workshop assignment to assess whether the participants have actually learned anything. The workshops were everything I was led to expect from an EMWA conference, interesting, relaxed and informative. I was initially disappointed at being limited to four accredited workshops and it was very difficult to choose from the broad selection. An EMWA record of 40 different workshops was offered on topics ranging from *Advanced Word Processing through Essentials of Editing and Proofreading* to *Interpersonal Skills for Medical Writers*, with almost everything imaginable in between. In the end, there was more than enough information to absorb from four workshops, and together with the pre- and post-workshop assignments, I realised that any more would have been a frightful load.

As a relatively new medical writer, I was keen to attend workshops that would provide a good background to the field. With that in mind, my first two choices were *From Protocol to Study Report – What's in Between?* and *The Clinical Study Protocol*. The first of

these courses clearly illustrated the many different aspects of the clinical trial process, and the influence of these components on overall success. Similarly, *The Clinical Study Protocol* emphasized the importance of a good protocol in both running a trial and writing the final Clinical Study Report. I found both courses very useful, although I think that less experienced medical writers like myself benefited more from these courses than writers with a lot of experience. My other two workshops were the two-part *Pharmacology for Medical Writers – Parts 1 and 2*. In these workshops we were introduced to the field of pharmacology, illustrated by examples of different medications in several therapeutic areas. While I appreciate the difficulty in scheduling a timetable for a large number of courses, I do feel that insufficient time was allocated for these workshops, which were otherwise excellent.

Participants were also treated to a keynote address and two plenary sessions during the general meeting. Anne Hudson Jones of the Institute for the Medical Humanities of the University of Texas (and EMWA workshop leader: *Literature and Medicine*) gave the keynote address, in which she discussed the always controversial topic of ghostwriting in the medical literature. Not surprisingly, a most lively discussion followed this presentation and it would appear that the two sides are as far apart as ever on this topic. Since it seems that certain elements of the medical profession are still deeply suspicious of the ethics of ghostwriting in the medical research literature, we

medical writers need to increase our efforts in educating them as to what we do and do not do.

Rute Costa, the current president of the European Association for Terminology, introduced the audience to the setting up of glossaries. After an explanation of the process, she took some examples from a project she is currently working on: a multilingual glossary on mastology. One of the main messages was that setting up such databases is quite a lengthy process which it is easy to underestimate.

Finally, Suzann Johnson of Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems gave a lively and fascinating presentation entitled "From Taste Buds to Tantalizing Tales: Writing About Nutrition", which lived up to its enticing title and won over the audience with a distribution of chocolate samples to illustrate the message as a grand finale.

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## EASE-Forum digest: April 2003 to September 2003

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EASE members obviously chose to lie in the glorious European sunshine this summer and forego the cut and thrust of lively debate and information exchange through the forum. All was quiet on the forum front, almost. The lines began to pick up towards the end of the summer, hopefully indicating we are returning to work invigorated with new ideas and energy that will flow over into our future forum dialogue. I would urge members to make use of the forum not only to give me something to write about but also because it is invaluable for quickly obtaining a useful piece of information that you can't immediately locate in a style manual, or for seeking guidance from fellow editors about a proposed course of action. There are also a few regular contributors who keep us informed about interesting articles, meetings and new guidelines, and who deserve a special thank-you.

### Joining the forum

You can join the Forum by sending the one-line message "subscribe ease-forum" (without the quotation marks) to majordomo@helsinki.fi. Do not include a subject line or signature or any text. To stop receiving messages from the forum, send the message "unsubscribe ease-forum" to majordomo@helsinki.fi. 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, make sure to delete those parts of the original message that are 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 unless your message is intended for the original sender only.

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)).

### Information and articles

Reme Melero wrote that an "Open Access choice for authors of *Physiological Genomics*" had been announced in *The Scientist* (2003 (June 16);17:37, [www.the-scientist.com](http://www.the-scientist.com)). Authors who pay \$1500 can post their article online for free access by viewers. Reme commented that as copyright was still being retained by the journal this cannot be considered true open

access according to its definition but was a welcome step in that direction. Reme also informed us about three publications by the Open Society Institute that focus on the launch, operation and sustainability of free journals. These are accessible free of charge on the OSI Web site ([www.soros.org/openaccess](http://www.soros.org/openaccess)).

Georgianna Oja gave us details of the availability of scholarships to attend the Council of Science Editors Retreat in Leesburg, Virginia, in November ([www.councilscienceeditors.org](http://www.councilscienceeditors.org)). The retreat was planned to bring together professionals interested in scientific publication to discuss how journals can handle, respond to, and prevent cases of scientific misconduct.

Jenny Gretton notified members that they would soon be receiving the 47 chapters of the revised *Science Editors' Handbook*. A smart binder with section dividers to hold the chapters of the handbook is also available. Details of how to order it can be found in both the August issue and this issue of *ESE*. The Chief Editor would welcome suggestions for further chapter subjects, with authors if possible.

Finally Helle Goldman highlighted an article in *The New York Times* entitled, "Fine points of dashes set heads spinning: *Chicago Manual of Style's* 15th edition gets excited about covering new ground", and offered to fax a copy to anyone interested in it. The article is not only amusing but also summarizes the main changes resulting from ten years of labour since the previous edition was published. Electronic publishing has been addressed, the "en" dash spared the dagger of Damocles, and Bryan A Garner says in the first chapter on grammar and usage ever published in the manual that it is all right to use "but" and "and" at the beginning of a sentence. Another shock is that dates are to be written not in the British style as recommended in earlier editions but with the month first (e.g. July 1, 2003), "the way everybody does it in real life". Oh, really?

### Requests

Mary Ellen Kerans made a plea for a list of brilliant speaker/educators in science. She planned to search media archives for film footage or video files of the speakers, which she would then use to help students develop public speaking skills.

Kerstin Markendorf, writing from the *Brazilian Journal of Medical and Biological Research*, asked if anyone could sell or donate a network version of the

manuscript tracking program RMTS as it is no longer on the market. The journal's financial resources precluded them from purchasing a new program.

### Sensu

Joy Burrough wondered whether she had gone Dutch when reviewers of her linguistics paper wouldn't allow her to use the word "sensu". She pointed out that "sensu lato" and "sensu stricto" are used in scientific English but wondered whether sensu on its own was used other than in genetics or by Dutch scientists writing English. Was this term used in other sciences, is it acceptable to journals and what might it be replaced by? This prompted Helle Goldman to survey the ISI database of natural and social science articles. She came up with more than 1500 instances of the use of sensu on its own, mostly in taxonomic contexts, although usage was varied.

Joy pointed out that scientists in countries with a strong tradition of Latin use more Latin words today than English native speakers do and even in everyday Dutch a "park and ride" facility is called a "transferium" and a lecture hall complex an "educatorium". She concluded that sensu does have a use in highly coded texts full of other devices used for space saving, such as abbreviations and symbols (e.g. when used to mean "to all intents and purposes"). Joy had received two more replies, one from John Kirkman and the other from Patricia Reichert. In John's reply he listed a number of well-known dictionaries

that do not define sensu lato or sensu stricto or have an entry for sensu alone. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* is an exception because although it does not list sensu alone it defines sensu lato as "in the broad sense" and sensu stricto as "strictly speaking; in the narrow sense, Origin Latin 'in the restricted sense'." He saw the question of whether "narrow" was the same as "strict", or "restricted" as an interesting debating point, and if sensu stricto means strictly speaking, does sensu lato mean loosely/impactly speaking? John in any event felt we should get rid of all bits of Latin (including "i.e." and "e.g.") because they are more likely to obscure meaning than lay it bare. I wonder how he edits "in vivo" and "in vitro". Patricia's view was that sensu screamed out for translation (she changed it to "as defined by") but said that sensu stricto and sensu lato, if used properly, would pass through her hands unmolested.

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### Discussion initiators

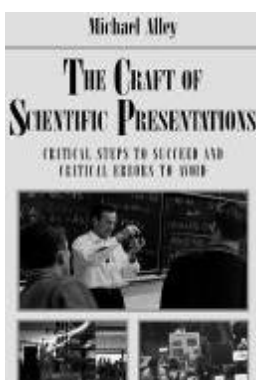
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## Book reviews

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Michael Alley. 2003. **The craft of scientific presentations: critical steps to succeed and critical errors to avoid.** New York: Springer-Verlag New York Inc. 241 p. Paperback. US\$29.95. ISBN 0-387-95555-0.



A good scientific presentation can be an extremely effective way of communicating research. However, as the author points out in a well-written introduction that sets the scene for the book, it can also be very expensive to carry out — audiences have to take time off their work to attend, speakers can also spend a great deal of time on preparing and presenting,

and when travel is necessary the cost can increase significantly.

Because of the importance and expense, it is essential that scientists spare no effort to communicate clearly and effectively. However, I am sure that *ESE* readers have sat through many presentations that lacked both clarity and effectiveness.

Monotonous voices that send audiences to sleep, rapid-fire speech that nobody can absorb, speakers with faces buried in their texts with never a glance at the audience, overhead slides with too small type,

out-of-focus photography, colour combinations of typeface and background that render messages unreadable, lack of preparation — unfortunately, I have found such elements to be alive and well even in the presentations I have witnessed in the past few years, while working as a professional communicator of science for different research institutions. And this at a time when more technical innovations than ever before are available to produce attractive, interesting, lively presentations.

Michael Alley describes and evaluates such innovations but they form a very minor component of what is a well-organized tutorial on producing strong presentations, beginning with the question: "Why do I need to make presentation — why not just write a paper or post a Web page?" Once the need is acknowledged, with the help of a table that lists five advantages and five disadvantages of presentations, the book takes a step-by-step approach to guiding the would-be presenter towards success.

Content is the only element not covered in the book. If the content of the scientist's work is not worthwhile, says the author, "it does not matter how well designed the projected slides are or how smooth the delivery is. The presentation is doomed." Among

the elements it does include are:

*Speech*: adding flavour and supporting arguments; targeting the audience; recognizing the purpose; addressing the occasion; speaking from points; reading directly; memorizing.

*Structure*: organization; transitions; depth; emphasis; anticipating questions; anticipating bias; how much detail.

*Visual aids*: slides; writing boards, film; demonstrations; models, passed objects; guidelines for typography, colour and layout; accounting for the "worst that can happen".

*Delivery*: different styles; adequate preparation; paying attention — to the room, the audience, the allotted time, yourself; controlling nervousness; handling tough questions.

In an interesting section on "recognizing the purpose" of the presentation, the author describes the different approaches to be used if the event is meant to inform, or persuade, or inspire, or has several purposes. "Tailoring" the presentation to different types of audiences is also important. One illustration of this is the vice-president of a research facility who, observed by the author, gave the same tour of the research station to three different types of visitors on the same day with a different presentation each time — tailoring the examples provided, the depth of explanation and the background information.

Also highlighted are four questions, the answers to which presenters are recommended to provide at the beginning of the presentation:

- What exactly is the subject?
- Why is this subject important?

- What background is needed to understand it?

- In what order will the subject be presented?

This helps the audience, especially if it consists of people of mixed disciplines and backgrounds, to grasp the context in which the information is being given. It also suggests that what they are going to hear is well organized.

Also worth copying from the book and pinning on the office wall is a detailed "Checklist for scientific presentations". If this list can be checked positively before a presentation, there is a better-than-average chance that success will follow.

What makes the book especially valuable is the number of examples the author supplies to illustrate the points he is making. He not only describes how he has suffered or succeeded in his own presentations but also highlights historic, and not-so-historic, presentation moments of scientists such as Albert Einstein, Ludwig Boltzmann, Richard Feynman, Rita Levi-Montalcini, Linus Pauling, Chiung-Shien Wu, Lise Meitner and Neils Bohr.

Such anecdotes, along with the writer's clear, flowing prose and the well-organized text, make this a book that one can read for pleasure and self-improvement, as well as utilize as a manual. I consider it to be a valuable addition to the libraries of scientific institutions and I have already recommended it to several of my research organization clients.

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Cecil Helman (ed.). 2003. **Doctors and patients: an anthology**. Abingdon: Radcliffe Medical Press. viii + 162 p. Paperback. £19.95. ISBN 1-85775-993-1.

This anthology demonstrates the concern of its editor, a physician and anthropologist, author of *Culture, Health and Illness*, about the current "alienation" of doctors. Nowadays, he feels, doctors too often inspire the reaction of one contributor, novelist and kidney-recipient Clive Sinclair: "I am not a man, I am a patient."

In 16 true or fictionalized medical stories, some well-worn, some fresh, plus non-fiction pieces, 11 authors trained in medicine and several patients (cancer, multiple sclerosis) expose doctors' conflicts and patients' indignities. Doctors of the early 20th century — Chekhov, Bulgakov, Maughham, Cronin, Arthur Conan Doyle, William Carlos Williams — lacked modern tools to ensure a high cure rate so focus in their tales on patients as unique human beings. With Kafka, who himself had some medical training, they could assert that "writing prescriptions is easy but coming to an understanding with people is hard." Doctors of the next generation — Oliver Sacks, Rachel Naomi Remen, Moacyr Scliar of Brazil, Helman himself — are aware of the "process of abstraction", which Helman describes as curing "paper patients" rather than attempting holistically to be a healer.

In his long introduction, "The Healing Bond", Helman worries that "something crucial, some human

singularity, has been lost from the doctor-patient relationship", a loss he sees reflected also in medical journal style. Unlike those before the mid-20th century, no longer are articles "anecdotal and subjective" with a familiar vocabulary, their contents accessible to the educated citizen. Instead, "by the 1980s . . . they had become opaque, dense, so packed with technical terms that they were virtually incomprehensible to all but the initiated."

This exclusivity and the elitism he detects in science writing have, however, shown signs of change. Some editors, at least of general journals, encourage authors to take into consideration a wider range of readers, including those expert in divergent disciplines and those constituting an international audience. Helman surely would approve. This collection is not a presentation of *The Doctor in Literature*; it is an appeal to the doctors we are — or the doctors we will meet when each of us periodically becomes a patient — to listen to the wisdom of the heart and remain not quite so hidden within the data-processor of the brain.

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Alan G. Gross, Joseph E. Harmon & Michael Reidy. 2002. **Communicating science — the scientific article from the 17th century to the present.** Oxford, Oxford University Press. x + 267 pp. Hardbound. Price £45.00. ISBN 0-19-513454-0.

The title promises an overview of the historic development of scientific articles. However, this is not exactly what the book is about. It is rather — and this is certainly interesting enough — an analysis of changes over time in prose style, presentation of text and graphics, and ways of arguing. These changes are interpreted by the authors in terms of a rhetorical selection theory. Not surprising if one considers that the first author is professor of rhetoric at the University of Minnesota and has published a book entitled *The Rhetoric of Science* (1996). After a preface and an introductory chapter which focuses on how texts are analysed, a somewhat rigid sequence of chapters follows: (2) Style and presentation in the 17th century; (3) Argument in the 17th century; (4–9) the same two chapters for the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. A final chapter (10) follows: Explaining the development of the scientific article. An epilogue (Past, Present, Future), three appendices (Method for sampling scientific texts; Method for analyzing scientific texts; Noun-phrase analysis), references, and an index follow.

This list of contents shows that it is not the development of science communication *per se* that is the main topic (the 1980 book *Development of Science Publishing in Europe* edited by AJ Meadows is much more informative on this aspect), but rather text analysis, which plays a more important part. The analyses are carried out in most cases on the basis of quotations from articles, the choice of which is not always accounted for. All editors who are interested in text analysis (and most of them should be) will find a lot of interesting information. Questions like “how sound is the reasoning by the author”, “are the data complete”, “if the data are incomplete, is this incidental or deliberate”, etc., are dealt with, and these are important topics, indeed. For those editors who are more interested in the development of scientific communication through printed media, the preface in particular, the first chapter, the last chapter, and the epilogue will be found to

contain a wealth of interesting information: “Any contemporary reader of the scientific literature knows intuitively that 20th century scientific prose is a very specialized use of language distant from the general register of contemporary intellectual prose and from its 17th century counterpart. What is not known, however, is when or how this change came about. This book seeks to explore and map this change as it occurred in English, French, and German”.

For a good understanding of present-day style, as used particularly in the natural sciences, technical communications and medicine, this exploration is truly worthwhile. Exploration of the past, even though it is split into analyses of texts from four individual centuries, rather than from periods characterized by specific science-communications attitudes, might even be a basis for considering whether the present-day style is better (i.e. more efficient and more effective) than earlier ones. Too often the present-day structure (IMRAD), style (“the samples were analysed” rather than “we analysed the samples”) and flood of data (tables several pages long) are taken for granted.

And few scientists read the literature for pleasure: it is commonly a tiring and cumbersome activity. It is still astonishing how much progress the natural sciences, technology and medicine showed during the 17th and 18th centuries. Could this be due, at least partly, to much more effective communication of research results in the form of more easily readable texts that are also pleasant to read?

Questions like this come up on reading the book. That alone is more than sufficient to recommend it. I read it with much pleasure, and I also found much in it that I can use for lectures about the history of science communication. A book to buy, to read, and to think about.

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## From the literature

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*This new section aims to provide a detailed commentary on one or two articles of interest to editors. It will cover new information about peer review, conflict of interest, journal financing, research misconduct, electronic publishing, copyright — in fact anything that editors need to know about. We plan to feature items from any science discipline and welcome contributions or suggestions for articles to highlight. These should be sent to Liz Wager (liz@sideview.demon.co.uk).*

### Effects of authors' competing interest statements on readers' perceptions of articles

Many journals, and especially those in biomedicine, require authors to provide details of potential competing interests. An increasing number of journals now publish this information, while others make it available to reviewers and editors. Such policies are

usually introduced in the belief that they will increase transparency and benefit readers.

The *BMJ* has published a study of the effects of including a competing interest statement on readers' perceptions of a paper. The *BMJ* editors (Chaudhry et

al. 2002) sent a short article to 300 *BMJ* subscribers. Half the subscribers received a version that included a statement that the authors were employees of a fictitious company in which they held stock options. The other half received a version which stated that the authors were from an ambulatory care centre and had no competing interests. Apart from the author details and the competing interest statements, the two versions of the report were identical. The report described the prevalence and effects of long-term pain after shingles (herpes zoster); it was a genuine paper, written by employees of a pharmaceutical company, that had been accepted by the *BMJ* and was used with the authors' permission.

Readers were asked to rate the shingles report in terms of its interest, importance, relevance, validity and believability, using 5-point Likert scales. The readers were told that this was a trial, but were not informed about its purpose. Of the 170 questionnaires returned (giving a 59% response rate), the readers who received the version with the pharmaceutical competing interest statement rated the study as significantly less interesting, important, relevant, valid or believable than the readers who received the other version. Other factors such as readers' gender and age were not correlated to their scores.

While it is perhaps not surprising that readers are more sceptical about findings from commercially sponsored trials, the striking finding of this study is that the declaration of competing interests also appeared to affect readers' perceptions of the report's interest, importance and relevance. The differences in scores were statistically significant in all cases. The largest difference was observed in scores for believability, for which the version without the pharmaceutical competing interest statement received a mean score of 3.33 (out of a maximum of 5) while the other version was only rated 2.73. Taking ratings of 1 or 2 as negative and 4 or 5 as positive, 19% of readers who received the version without the pharmaceutical competing interest statement rated it negatively in terms of believability, compared with 43% of readers in the other group.

Ratings for interest showed a similar pattern, with the version containing the commercial interest statement receiving a positive rating from only 15%, compared to 33% in the other group. Similarly, 42% of readers considered the article to be relevant to their work when they read the version without the commercial interest statement, compared to 27% of those who received the version with academic authors.

The authors of the study acknowledge that the unfamiliar name of the fictitious company (Tohen Research Laboratories, Connecticut) might have influenced readers' responses. It is also possible that readers' behaviour was affected by the fact that they knew this was a research exercise. However, this remains an interesting study.

Editors who publish competing interest statements, or who are considering introducing them in their journal, should consider their effects. Perhaps it is no bad thing to raise readers' level of scepticism, but this study

does raise concerns about whether readers rate studies objectively on the strength of their methodology, or if their perceptions are affected by other factors such as the authors' affiliations.

We have known for some time that readers and reviewers are influenced by authors' place of work. Peters & Ceci (1982) resubmitted 12 papers to the psychology journals that had previously published them but with the authors' names changed and their affiliations altered to fictitious, unprestigious-sounding institutions. Three articles were recognized as resubmissions, but, of the other nine, only one was accepted by the journal that had already published it. Interestingly, the reasons for rejection were not lack of originality but poor study design or flawed statistical analysis. Fisher et al. (1994) studied the effects of removing authors' names from 57 paediatrics papers. Reviewers who knew the authors' identities judged well-known authors more harshly than the blinded reviewers did. Nylenna et al. (1994) found that Scandinavian reviewers gave significantly higher scores when a poor quality paper was written in English rather than in their native language, although this effect was not observed for a paper of higher quality.

Editors have sometimes cautioned readers to be on their guard with a cry of "Caveat lector" (reader beware)! But it seems that readers of the *BMJ* are already pretty sceptical about drug companies' motivations for publishing studies. Companies have suspected this for some time and this concern has sometimes led to deserving employee authors being omitted from author lists (Wager 1996). Editors who publish competing interest statements should therefore ensure that, where possible, mechanisms are in place to make sure that commercial sponsors do not try to play down their involvement in studies, which, of course, is why journals started to publish competing interest statements in the first place.

Liz Wager

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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.\**

### Ethics revisited/reloaded

Ethics appears to be (so far) the burning publication issue of the 21st century, and as the trend these days is to revisit previous themes I thought I would take this opportunity to put together all the ethics and related sites sent in over the last few months, even though some are probably already familiar to readers. Some of the sites concern publication ethics, others refer to medical/scientific issues; some have been featured in the Editors' WebWatch before (in these cases, please refer to your archive of *European Science Editing*).

### Integrity in science

#### [www.cspinet.org/integrity](http://www.cspinet.org/integrity)

Hot on the heels of our own excellent conference in Bath this year, on Editing and Scientific "Truth", I was alerted to the CSPI project "Integrity in Science" that was created as a result of concern that the union of scientists, clinicians and academic institutes with for-profit organizations in their entrepreneurial activities may lead to conflicts of interest that may "compromise the judgement of trusted professionals, the credibility of research institutions and scientific journals, the safety and transparency of human subjects research, the norms of free inquiry, and the legitimacy of science-based policy".

On its home page Integrity in Science lists the problems it has been created to combat: it is broadly similar in its aims to NoFreeLunch ([www.nofreelunch.org](http://www.nofreelunch.org); featured previously in WebWatch: *European Science Editing* 2002;28(3):88) but encompasses domains other than the pharmaceutical industry, for example nutrition, environment, toxicology, and medicine.

A relatively recent addition to the site is the Integrity in Science Database: Scientists' and Non-profits' Ties to Industry. Here you can search on the names of individuals, universities, companies and topics, and learn about associated funding. In some cases the actual value of research grants awarded is also given. However, the database is not complete, and although it claims to use information from reliable sources the individual entries have not been verified. The aim of the database is to encourage transparency in the conduct, oversight, and reporting of science and to make information available to the public, but please

read the lengthy disclaimer before relying on it as an absolute source.

Integrity in Science is a project of the Centre for Science in the Public Interest, a non-profit group in Washington, DC, and is funded by subscription to Nutrition Action Healthletter and foundations grants.

### Healthy Skepticism

#### [www.healthyskepticism.org](http://www.healthyskepticism.org)

In a similar vein is Healthy Skepticism, concerned primarily with drug promotion. Formerly the Medical Lobby for Appropriate Marketing (MaLAM; established in 1983) Healthy Skepticism was "re-born" in 2001. It is an international non-profit organization for health professionals and others interested in improving health, mainly by reducing harm caused by misleading drug promotion. Reports of Healthy Skepticism/MaLAM's activities and impact have been published in *The Lancet*, *BMJ* and elsewhere. Healthy Skepticism is run by a management group and is supported by subscription.

### Watching the "quacks"

Quackwatch: [www.quackwatch.org](http://www.quackwatch.org)/  
"Quack" defined as: "short for quack'salver (archaic): person who quacks about their salves (remedies)" (*Webster's New World College Dictionary*); or "someone who claims and practices under the pretence of having knowledge or skills (especially in medicine) that he or she does not possess" (Chambers).

Quackwatch, subtitled "your Guide to Health Fraud, Quackery, and Intelligent Decisions", is one of nine web sites operated by Stephen Barrett, MD, from Pennsylvania. Quackwatch Inc. was a member of the Consumer Federation of America for 30 years and is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to combat health-related frauds, myths, fads, and fallacies. Its primary focus is on quackery-related information that is "difficult or impossible to get elsewhere". Among the activities of Quackwatch are investigation of questionable claims, distribution of reliable publications, and improving the quality of health information on the internet. Stephen Barrett is also the vice-president of the National Council Against Health Fraud. The Quackwatch site supports links to his other web sites, which include chiropractic care, nutrition and homeopathic medicines.

Quackwatch is funded by donation and profits from the sale of publications. You can make an online donation using Amazon.com's "Honor System". I have to admit that I like this site — it's a must-visit for anyone wanting to take responsibility for his or her own state of health (the ducky cartoon is rather cute too!).

### Publication ethics at the BMJ

Visit [http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/collection/research\\_and\\_publication\\_ethics?notjournal=bmj](http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/collection/research_and_publication_ethics?notjournal=bmj) and you will find a huge collection of resources on research and publication. This is just one of the pages in the collections of *BMJ* articles, classified by both specialty and topic. There is even a section on "journalology" which includes relevant articles from other titles.

### Office of Research Integrity (ORI)

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

Featured in *ESE* 29(1), the ORI is an American organization with the aim of promoting integrity in biomedical and behavioural research. Of direct relevance to us is the 18-page document containing advice to editors on how to deal with scientific misconduct, which is freely available at <http://ori.dhhs.gov/html/publications/guidelines/asp>.

### COPE

#### Committee on Publication Ethics [www.publicationethics.org.uk/](http://www.publicationethics.org.uk/)

On its home page COPE poses the following questions: What happens when an editor suspects that data have been falsified or fabricated, but there is insufficient conclusive evidence? What action should be taken under these circumstances? Should a further investigation be conducted to obtain more evidence? What, if any, sanctions need to be applied?

In answer to these questions COPE has posted a collection of anonymized case histories — cases that have been submitted to COPE for review. These reports can be viewed as PDFs by following the links to "reports" from the COPE home page. They illustrate particular aspects of publication ethics and provide a framework for dealing with instances of research misconduct.

In addition the COPE Guidelines on Good Publication Practice (1999) can be obtained as a PDF at [www.publicationethics.org.uk/cope2002/pdf2002/21330\\_pp48\\_52.pdf](http://www.publicationethics.org.uk/cope2002/pdf2002/21330_pp48_52.pdf).

\*Contributions for WebWatch should be sent to Moira Vekony at [DunaScripts@editors.ca](mailto:DunaScripts@editors.ca).

## Cambridge Journals Online



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The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 2RU, UK  
 32 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA

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

The World Association of Medical Editors featured in a previous issue of WebWatch (*JSE* 2003; 29(1):8) but is such a well-designed and information-packed site that it deserves further coverage. New articles were posted on August 5th so a return visit is worth while. If you are not already a member of WAME, this is something to consider.

**CONSORT**  
[www.consort-statement.org/](http://www.consort-statement.org/)  
 CONSORT is concerned with improving the quality of reports of randomized controlled trials. The aim is to help researchers to compose their reports by suggesting issues that need to be addressed in the report and by providing a flow-chart for the progress of all trial participants. The overall objective is to improve the clarity of the experimental process and make it more "friendly" for the end users.

The CONSORT statement is available in six languages and has been endorsed by prominent medical journals such as *The Lancet*, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, and *JAMA*.

### ICMJE [www.icmje.org/](http://www.icmje.org/) International Committee of Medical Journal Editors Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals

A small group of editors of general medical journals met informally in Vancouver, BC, in 1978 to establish guidelines for the format of manuscripts submitted to their journals. Subsequently the group became known as "the Vancouver Group" and its requirements for manuscripts were first published in 1979. Evolution took place and the group eventually became (after some expansion) the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), which meets annually. Over the years, the scope of concerns has gradually broadened.

A total of 500 journals agree to use the Uniform Requirements, which are instructive to authors on how to prepare manuscripts, not instructions to editors on publication style — which may vary from journal to journal. However, if authors prepare their manuscripts in the style specified in these requirements,

editors of the participating journals have agreed not to return the manuscripts for changes in style before considering them for publication.

### MOOSE and QUOROM [www.greenjournal.org/moose.pdf](http://www.greenjournal.org/moose.pdf) [www.greenjournal.org/QUOROM.pdf](http://www.greenjournal.org/QUOROM.pdf)

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists produces two sets of guidelines for meta-analysis and systematic reviews, one concerned with randomized controlled trials (QUOROM) and the other with observational studies (MOOSE). For each section of the analysis/review (e.g. Introduction, Sources, Study Selection, Results, Discussion) there are bulleted points that should be taken into consideration.

Comprehensive and complete, elements of these guidelines could be applied to the composition of most scientific papers.

**Good Publication Practice Guidelines:** [www.cmrojournal.com](http://www.cmrojournal.com)  
 See *JSE* 2003;29(3):82, 87 for information on these guidelines

## News Notes

### Journal prices

The Information Access Alliance web site contains links to papers on monopoly in the scholarly journal industry ([www.informationaccess.org](http://www.informationaccess.org)). Also, the US House of Representatives adopted an appropriations bill (H.R. 2660) giving funds to the National Library of Medicine to investigate how journal prices have restricted the availability of biomedical research and to recommend "remedies to ensure that taxpayer-funded research remains in the public domain and steps that can be taken to alleviate this restrictive trend in information technology."

### BMC and open access

BioMed Central has a new program allowing any user to download its complete corpus of open-access articles in a single zipped file ([www.biomedcentral.com/info/update#data](http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/update#data)). And there's a PERL script to automate reference-linking among the XML files in the collection. This brings reference-linking within reach of cost-conscious open-access journals and archives ([www.pmbrowser.info/hublog/archives/000411.html](http://www.pmbrowser.info/hublog/archives/000411.html)). BioMed Central has also launched Open Access Now, a newsletter on open-access issues ([www.biomedcentral.com/openaccess/](http://www.biomedcentral.com/openaccess/)), and it is building a list of foundations willing to pay the processing fees charged by open-access journals. There are currently 12 foundations on the list ([www.biomedcentral.com/info/about/apcfaq#q8](http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/about/apcfaq#q8)).

### Copyright and the internet: myth and reality

Where people have access to information in electronic form it is often possible to make perfect digital copies, which is why rights owners are keen to protect their intellectual property through a combination of legal protections and technological protection measures. A report by Paul Pedley, head of research at the Economist Intelligence Unit, explores issues relating to copyright and the internet, and dispels ten myths that have built up about how copyright applies to the internet — starting with "Its alright to copy 5% of a copyright work without breaching copyright" and going through to "I have only created a link to the document rather than making copies of it. There are no potential legal problems with doing that". The report costs £15/€22/\$25 and can be ordered via [www.freepint.com/shop/](http://www.freepint.com/shop/)

report/copyrightmyths/. We hope to publish a review in a future issue of *ESE*.

### New connectivity solutions

The latest version of the bibliographic management software EndNote gives authors new types of bibliographies, flexible image handling, and connectivity to explore and mobilize their reference collections, says its distributor, Adept Scientific. Its users can now go mobile on Palm handhelds. Authors and researchers who want to simplify the publishing process and have "the power to create new types of bibliographies" can get more information at [www.adeptstore.co.uk/](http://www.adeptstore.co.uk/)

### DOIs go European

MEDRA, a multi-application Multilingual European DOI Registration Agency, is the DOI Registration Agency for Italy, Germany, France and Spain with effect from July 1, 2003. It is backed by AIE, the Italian Publishers Association (co-ordinator); MVB — a company of the German publishers association, the ISBN agency for German language; SNE — French Publishers Association; Editrain — Spanish publishing services company; and CINECA — Italian technology provider, a consortium of 18 Italian universities. For further information on digital object identifiers, see [www.doi.org](http://www.doi.org); for further information on MEDRA, see [www.medra.org](http://www.medra.org)

### Approval for EBSCO acquisition of RoweCom

EBSCO Industries (the global leader for the delivery of integrated information systems and services) has received approval from the French Ministry of Finance for its acquisition of RoweCom's European operations. Upon definitive closure, EBSCO will fund payments owed to publishers on behalf of RoweCom Europe's customers. This affects anyone who works for a publisher or possibly library, since no one was getting paid when RoweCom went bust.

### Wellcome launches bibliographic database

The Wellcome Library has launched psi-comlit, a new bibliographic database, available free of charge. The database has been developed to provide a searchable source of journal, newspaper and book references on science communication,

public engagement with science, and the wider issues of science in society. See [www.psi-com.org.uk](http://www.psi-com.org.uk)

### Wikipedia

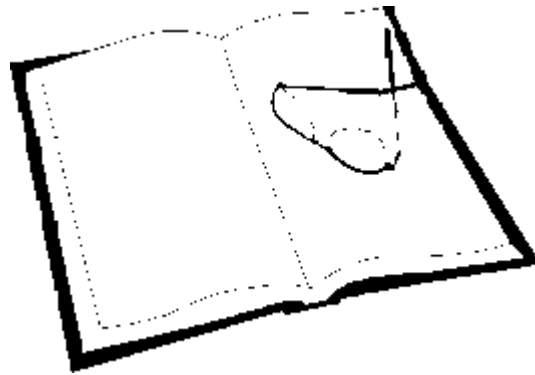
The Wikipedia concept has developed as a result of the open source software model using free (wiki) software. The essential features are a revision control system, unrestricted editing of articles on the wiki by any registered member, unrestricted membership of the wiki, and the ability to fork articles (to see current versions at the same time). No copies are deleted and the newer versions of an article comprise the original article with all additions made cumulatively. ([www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicine](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicine))

### Vocabulary test

American Heritage dictionaries have compiled a list of 100 words which every high school graduate should know — if you are able to use these words correctly, you are likely to have a command of the language, the thinking goes. The list runs from abjure to ziggurat. A British "translation" in the *Sunday Times* (29 June) runs from abstemious to zenith. But the words on these lists are inseparable from the knowledge that surrounds them. The article points out the need to acquire words in context, and notes that the American list is low in a number of areas that are of strong interest to many people in Britain — it's thin on words that have come into the English language from the immigrant population, and medical and scientific terms. Interestingly, "the average educated adult knows and can potentially use at least 50,000 words and some university graduates possibly know double this number" and "the English language now has easily more than half a million words and that's in Britain alone".

### Book aid

Perhaps you received a flyer from Book Aid International, which distributes books principally to Africa. The flyer is headed "Join our Reverse Book Club — 4 books for £5 and you never receive any of them!" Inside the brochure, a letter from Philip Pullman invites standing orders of £5 monthly and highlights examples of four books — a Ghanaian children's book, an Arabic grammar, a soldering manual, and the *ABC of AIDS* — which could be distributed with this money. Pullman's letter finishes: "You are



## Science Editors' Handbook

The Handbook has been expanded to 47 chapters, which were given with a looseleaf binder to everyone who registered for the Assembly and Conference in Bath in June 2003. Paid-up members of EASE have been sent the new chapters but not the binder. If you would like to order the binder alone, or the binder and all the chapters published to date, please photocopy this page, complete the form below, and send it with your payment to the Secretary, Georgianna Oja. If you want the binder or chapters to go to an address outside Europe, postage and packing cost £3.50 extra. The Handbook is now on sale to non-members. For a list of chapters, see [www.ease.org.uk/](http://www.ease.org.uk/).

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unlikely ever to be offered a copy of the *ABC of AIDS* through a UK book club, but a Namibian nurse could make excellent use of it if you just give her the chance." The books are bought at cost for BAI by donors, and these supplies satisfy a real need — as well as gaining recognition for their publishers. Information from: Philip Pullman, Freepost, LON15664, London SE5 9BR, or [www.bookaid.org/](http://www.bookaid.org/)

#### Books preserve reduced VAT

The protection of the UK's zero rating of VAT on books has been strengthened after the European Commission announced that printed products should continue to be eligible for reduced rates of VAT. The EC's decision was made after a review of Annex H of the sixth VAT directive, which lists all products eligible for tax at reduced rates. There had been fears that books would be struck out of the list as part of a move to simplify VAT legislation, but the book and newspaper industries put pressure on the EC to continue the exemption. (theBookseller.com Informer, 1 August)

#### Cultural censorship

Academic publisher Frank Cass & Co has ended 50 years of independence by accepting a buyout bid from Taylor & Francis. Frank Cass, 73, chairman and founder of the books and journals company, said that the move had been hastened by current retail practices at the large high street booksellers. "It has been difficult for us to get into the high street. We can't and T&F can," he said. "In today's philosophy — which is about the chains and the bottom line — a new form of censorship has begun where your imprint has to be on the 'accepted' list before it will be considered. This is a form of cultural censorship that bodes ill for society." (theBookseller.com Informer, 1 August)

#### Writing and citing

The citation rates of papers prepared by medical writing agencies differ from those that are not agency linked. The *British Journal of Psychiatry* (2003;183:22–27) reports a study of published papers about the antidepressant sertraline which found that the citation rate for articles written by agencies was 20.2, compared with 3.7 for papers with no links to agencies. Agency-written papers included a greater number of authors (6.6 vs 2.9) and were significantly longer (10.7 vs 3.4 pages). "The emerging style of authorship in industry-linked articles

can deliver good-quality articles," the study concludes, "but it raises concern for the scientific base of therapeutics."

#### Battening down the hatches

BMJ has announced that it will start charging for access to some of its content in 2005. But original research articles will continue to be available without charge and BMJ will experiment with different versions of the "author pays" model. (<http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/327/7409/241>)

#### Communication award

The Pirelli Award is seeking nominations for the 2004 version of its Nobel Prize for Scientific Communication ([www.pirelliard.com/](http://www.pirelliard.com/)). The Pirelli International Award is the world's first internet multimedia award aimed at the diffusion of scientific and technological culture worldwide. This broad field covers any interactive audiovisual format that is electronically transmissible. It extends beyond simple web sites to include all digital interactive information delivery products and processes such as flash animations, CD-ROMs, WAP and even e-mail attachments. Awards are granted every calendar year to the best multimedia presentations that concern one of three main themes for the diffusion of science and technology: multimedia oriented toward education; the environment; and the enabling information and communication technologies that package, deliver, present and define multimedia itself.

#### Rumours of search possibilities

Amazon.com is to launch a free search engine ranging over full-text, non-fiction books from cooperating publishers. It will limit how much of any given book a user can read. "Look Inside the Book II" expands a current programme. Searches on a term will result in sentences containing that term, and registered users can read around that citation. It's likely that the works covered will be narrative non-fiction rather than reference books. ([www.nytimes.com/2003/07/21/technology/21AMAZ.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/21/technology/21AMAZ.html))

#### In the company of editors and proofreaders

Fifteen years ago, a few like-minded freelancers got together to form an association for editors and proofreaders. Since then the Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) has grown into a professional body

with over 1200 members, and now it has become a company limited by guarantee. Restructuring the Society began in March 2002, when SfEP changed its name and logo, and introduced membership tiers that reflect skills and experience. SfEP's accreditation test in proofreading was launched in 2002. The Society offers training courses aimed at all levels of the profession and run at centres across the UK. Further information about the Society can be found at [www.sfep.org.uk](http://www.sfep.org.uk). The registered office is at Riverbank House, 1 Putney Bridge Approach, London SW6 3JD (tel. +44 (0)20 7736 3278; fax +44 (0)20 7736 3313; email [admin@sfep.org.uk](mailto:admin@sfep.org.uk)).

#### A redundant skill?

Recent computer virus problems show that handwriting may still be relevant in today's brave new technological world. Here are some tips for legible handwriting, first offered to doctors in the *BMJ* (<http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/327/7413/s67>):

- dot i's and cross t's "on the go" rather than after finishing the word — this keeps them in the right place;
- keep down strokes parallel to each other, and take them "down to the line" before turning up again;
- write with a 5–15 degree slant;
- position paper off centre, slanted parallel with the forearm of the writing hand; move it as needed;
- loops in letters such as h and y account for a quarter of legibility problems — drop them;
- use straight lines, not curves, to join letters (this helps you write faster, too);
- lose the prettiness — make writing legible, not ornamental.

#### ... and fnillay

Accodrng to rschearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoent tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a total mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

#### Contributions to News Notes

Please send items for News Notes to Margaret Cooter, BMJ, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London, [mcooter@bmj.com](mailto:mcooter@bmj.com).

Thanks to: Joan Marsh, Marie-Louise Desbarats-Schönbaum, John Hudson, Jane Smith, and Minerva.

## Forthcoming meetings, courses and BELS examinations

### 2003

#### Managing risk in a publishing environment

ALPSP seminar  
December 2003 London, UK  
(Contact the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, tel. +44 (0)1865 247776, programmes@alpsp.org)

#### Digitising journal backfiles

ALPSP seminar  
December 2003 London, UK  
(Contact ALPSP, tel. +44 (0)1865 247776, programmes@alpsp.org)

### 2004

#### Annual journal publishers forum

ALPSP/SPE seminar  
28 January 2004 London, UK  
(Contact ALPSP, tel. +44 (0)1865 247776, programmes@alpsp.org)

#### Delivering change

ALPSP seminar  
February 2004 London, UK  
(Contact ALPSP, tel. +44 (0)1865 247776, programmes@alpsp.org)

#### Scholarship-friendly publishing

20th International learned journals seminar (ALPSP)  
26 March 2004 London  
(Contact: ALPSP, tel. +44 01245 260571, programmes@alpsp.org, www.alpsp.org/events.htm)

#### Understanding libraries: how they work and what they want

ALPSP seminar  
April 2004 London, UK  
(Contact ALPSP, tel. +44 (0)1865 247776, programmes@alpsp.org)

#### Pre-prints and accelerated publishing on the web: impact on publishing

ALPSP seminar  
May 2004 London, UK  
(Contact ALPSP, tel. +44 (0)1865 247776, programmes@alpsp.org)

#### CSE 47th annual meeting

14-18 May 2004 Vancouver, BC  
(Contact: Council of Science Editors, Inc., 12100 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 130, Reston VA 20190, USA; tel. +1 703 437 4377, fax +1 703 435 4390, CSE@CouncilScienceEditors.org; web www.CouncilScienceEditors.org)

#### Meeting of minds

15th Annual SfEP conference  
12-14 September 2004 Egham, UK

Meeting to be held at Royal Holloway College, close to the Savill Garden, Virginia Water, Windsor and Runnymede. There will be a programme of talks, workshops, special interest groups/forums, and a keynote speaker. Training courses will be held either side of the conference. (Contact: Society for Editors & Proofreaders, admin@sfep.org.uk, www.sfep.org.uk)

#### 12th IFSE conference

October 2004 Mexico  
(Contact: Luis Benítez-Bribiesca, Archives of Medical Research; luisbenbri@mexis.com, or lbenitezb@cis.gob.mx)

### 2005

#### CSE 48th annual meeting

20-24 May 2005 Atlanta, GA  
(Contact: CSE, 12100 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 130, Reston VA 20190, USA; CSE@CouncilScienceEditors.org, www.CouncilScienceEditors.org)

#### 5th international congress on peer review and biomedical publication

15-17 Sept. 2005 Chicago, Illinois  
Details to be announced.

### COURSES

#### ALPSP training courses

The Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers offers courses on electronic marketing; journal production, fulfilment and finance; and related topics. (Contact: ALPSP, 47 Vicarage Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 9BS, UK; tel. +44 (0)1245 260571, fax +44 (0)1245 260935, events@alpsp.org, or see web site www.alpsp.org)

#### 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. (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)

#### 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, web site www.train4publishing.co.uk)

#### Society for Editors and Proofreaders

SfEP runs one-day workshops in London/elsewhere in the UK on copy-editing, proofreading, grammar and much else. (See www.sfep.org.uk, or contact Lesley Ward, 20 Howard Road, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 2BX, UK, tel. +44 (0)118 979 2571, or e-mail admin@sfep.org.uk.)

#### Society of Indexers workshops

Workshops for beginners and more experienced indexers in various cities in the UK. See details and downloadable booking forms on the web site (www.indexers.org.uk), or e-mail admin@indexers.org.uk or jane.henley@britishlibrary.net.

#### 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, web site 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)

#### University of Oxford writing and presentation courses

Courses on effective writing for biomedical professionals and on presenting in biomedical sciences and technology. (Contact: Gaye Walker, CPD Centre, Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, Suite 5 Littlegate House, 16/17 St Ebbes Street, Oxford, OX1 1PT, UK; tel. +44 (0)1865 286953, fax +44 (0)1865 286934, gaye.walker@continuing-education.ox.ac.uk, web site www.conted.ox.ac.uk/cpd/personaldev.)

### EXAMINATIONS

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

20 March 2004, Princeton, New Jersey  
20 March 2004, Chicago, Illinois  
13 May 2004, Vancouver, British Columbia (CSE meeting)  
20 October 2004, St Louis, Missouri (AMWA)

March 2005, University of California  
San Francisco (Asilomar)  
March 2005, Boston, Massachusetts  
19 May 2005, Atlanta, Georgia (CSE)

28 September 2005, Pittsburgh,  
Pennsylvania (AMWA).  
For more information, or to take a  
BELS examination to certify your

editing skills and make you an ELS  
(Editor in the Life Sciences), visit  
www.bels.org to obtain the  
application form. Or contact Leslie  
Neistadt (neistadt@hughston.com).

## The Editor's Bookshelf

The bookshelf is compiled and edited by Jane Moody (jane.moody1@ntlworld.com). Please send Jane details of articles or books of interest to editors.

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

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

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

Many thanks to those who have sent contributions.

### GENERAL

#### *Politics of publishing*

Cozzarelli NR. 2003. **PNAS policy on publication of sensitive material in the life sciences.** PNAS 100(4):1463. The US National Academy of Sciences and the Center for Strategic Studies co-sponsored a public meeting bringing together scientists and policy makers to discuss whether current publication policies and practices in the life sciences could lead to the inadvertent disclosure of "sensitive" information to those who might misuse it. PNAS policy and practice is outlined.

Singleton A. 2003. **Terrorism, publishing decision and beyond.** Learned Publishing 16(3):189–192. The legal, ethical and practical aspects of the journal publisher's position when material that appears to be of use to terrorists is presented are discussed and some alternative strategies set out.

[Editorial] 2003. **Censoring science.** CMAJ 10 June 168(12):1517. Publishers recognize that some papers might be of use to terrorists. Most journal editors hold the principle that research findings should be disseminated as widely as possible. How can the risks and benefits of publishing be weighed? To accurately assess the risk–benefit ratio of new scientific findings would require a prescience that none of us has. No one should attempt to lull the public into a belief that science can be prevented from falling into the wrong hands.

[European Science Foundation]. 2003. **ESF highlights demands for openness, transparency and public access to the results of clinical trials.** ESF Communications (45):6. The recommendations by the ESF and its European Medical Research Council Standing Committee cannot be met through the confidential register of drug trials being established by the European Council Directive. They call for member organizations to establish publicly accessible registers of all non-commercially funded clinical trials.

Falkow S. 2003. **"Statement on scientific publication and security" fails to provide necessary guidelines.** PNAS 13 May 100(10):5575.

Responsibility for dissemination of sensitive information should lie with individual investigators and not with editors, who may not have the expertise to make an informed judgement.

Healy D, Cattel D. 2003. **Interface between authorship, industry and science in the domain of therapeutics.** British Journal of Psychiatry 183(1):22–27.

Comparison of articles coordinated by a medical writing agency with articles not so coordinated. The literature profiles and citation rates differed. Industry-linked articles deliver good quality articles but concern raised for scientific base of therapeutics.

[News] 2003. **Ant book deepens divide over web publishing.** Nature 28 August 424:985.

Brian Fisher, an entomologist at the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, wants to publish data about ant species on the internet. Under the terms of a book agreement he signed with Harvard University Press, he cannot put material from his forthcoming monograph online for at least four years after it is published. He wants to do both simultaneously, which the publishers argue will adversely affect sales.

#### *Science and the media*

[European Science Foundation]. 2003. **ESF policy paper on science communication.** ESF

Communications (45):6. Brief report on a policy for better communication of science to the broader public, which includes "putting demands on journalists and the gatekeepers in the media". Full report [Science communication in Europe. ESF Policy Briefing no. 20; March 2003] can be downloaded from the ESF website: www.esf.org.

Moynihan R. 2003. **Making medical journalism healthier.** Lancet 21 June 361:2097–2098.

Evidence indicates that too often medical reporting looks more like promotion than journalism. Seen against a backdrop of soaring national drug costs and rising controversy over the pharmaceutical industry's influence in medicine, this "evidence-biased" media coverage demands attention and action.

Rowe S, Toner C. 2003. **Dietary supplement use in women: the role of the media.** Journal of Nutrition 133(6):2008S–2009S.

The incongruity between science and the media perpetuates misinformation and fails to provide the context that gives scientific research meaning. The International Food Information Council and the Harvard School of Public Health convened an advisory group to examine the communications process. What resulted was a set of questions meant to guide all groups in the communication process.

Schwitzer G. 2003. **How the media left the evidence out in the cold.** BMJ 21 June 326:1403–1404.

US media became "cheerleaders" for an investigational drug for the common cold, which ultimately failed to proceed past the clinical trial stage. Article documents the chronology of the story and the media sensationalism involved.

### PRACTICE OF PUBLISHING

Hartley J. 2003. **Personal view: On the presentation of book reviews.** Learned Publishing 16(3):219–220. Author perceives that book reviews play an important role in academic journals but are often presented in less helpful ways, such as more or fewer columns, different typographical style.

[Institute of Physics]. 2003. **Institute to publish new journal on physical biology.** *Physics World* 16(8):45. Announces new journal entitled *Physical Biology* to foster development of biology-driven physics to promote an understanding of the fundamental principles governing biological systems.

Kahn D. **Perceptions of the customer.** *Learned Publishing* 16(3):213–217. Publishers need to talk directly to the people who use their information and not leave the interactions to intermediaries. More and different interactions are needed if publishers are to become truly customer focused.

#### *Quality indicators*

Terajima K, Aneman A. 2003. **Citation classics in anaesthesia and pain journals: a literature review in the era of the internet.** *Acta Anaesthesiologica Scandinavica* 47(6):655–663. DOI: 10.1034/j.1399-6576.2003.00137x. In order for an article to be seen as a possible "citation classic" (i.e. top 100 most-cited) in anaesthesiology, it should be published in one of six leading journals and originate from an established institute in North America. Internet resources to publish and cite the literature have not to date advanced any article published in the last 5 years to the top 100 list.

Nakayama T, Fukui T. 2003. **Comparison between impact factors and citations in evidence-based practice guidelines.** *JAMA* 13 August 290:755–756.

Letter reporting study looking at impact factors as indicator of quality. Hypothesis was that guidelines should cite more journals with high impact factors if the quality indicator is correct. "Overreliance on impact factors may undervalue the unique contributions of individual areas of research."

Vail A, Gardener E. 2003. **Common statistical errors in the design and analysis of subfertility trials.** *Human Reproduction* 18(5):1000–1004.

The quality of clinical trials has received increasing attention with the growth of evidence-based medicine and systematic reviews. This study aimed to identify whether errors and omissions commonly encountered when undertaking Cochrane reviews in this field were still passing review. The study reviewed 39 trials published by two major journals: *Human Reproduction and Fertility* and *Sterility*. Simple trials from respected

journals should represent trials of the highest methodological quality in the field. However, the standards of design, analysis and reporting of many were not sufficient to allow reliable interpretation of results or inclusion in meta-analyses.

#### *Peer review*

Benos DJ, Kirk KL, Hall JE. **How to review a paper.** *Advances in Physiology Education* 27(2):47–52. Most scientists learn how to review manuscript by doing it. Formal training is rarely provided. This article aims to define how best to peer review an article.

Fitzmaurice DA. 2003. **The faults of expert reviews are already well known.** *BMJ* 2 August 327:269.

Comment on paper: What happened to the valid POEMs? A survey of review articles on the treatment of type 2 diabetes (Shaughnessy AF, Slawson DC. 2003 *BMJ* 2 August;327:266–269). Responses to this paper concentrate interestingly on faults in the peer review process.

Pincock S. 2003. **Science forced to retract article on "ecstasy".** *BMJ* 13 September 327:579.

US journal *Science* has published a retraction of an article that it published in 2002 on the drug MDMA (or "ecstasy"). The results of the study were invalid, as 9 of the 10 animals in the study had been given the wrong drug, owing to incorrect labelling. The move has prompted questions about the peer review process.

Pravinkumar E. 2003. **Peer review and appeal: flawed but trusted?** *Lancet* 30 August 362:747.

Authors should receive detailed reasons for rejection of a paper. We should not rely on peer review, a system that is failing.

#### *New models for publishing*

European Science Foundation Policy Briefing no. 20. 2003. **Open access: restoring scientific communication to its rightful owners.** Strasbourg: ESF; April.

The European Science Foundation (ESF) supported two workshops on the Open Archives Initiative held at CERN in 2001 and 2002, resulting in this report. Aims to stimulate and encourage a wide and full debate within the scientific community.

Held MJ. 2003. **Proposed legislation supports an untested publishing model.** *Journal of Cell Biology* July 3 [epub ahead of print] DOI:10.1083/jcb.200307018.

Under the Public Access to Science Act introduced into the US House of Representatives by Democrat Martin O. Sabo, papers describing scientific research substantially funded by the US government would be excluded from copyright protection. This is proposed as a means to guarantee free access to this material. Author argues that this is a thinly veiled attempt to force all publishers into the Public Library of Science's unproven open access model, which may be unsustainable, and is an irresponsible act.

Hellman E. 2003. **Open URL: making the link to libraries.** *Learned Publishing* 16(3):177–181.

The background and theory of the open URL are described and examples given of its usefulness. An account is then given of the OpenURL system and its relationship to CrossRef.

Morris S. 2003. **Open publishing.** *Learned Publishing* 16(3):171–176.

There is increasing pressure from academia to make the results of publicly funded research freely available to all. While openly accessible preprints seem to have damaged publishers less than was originally feared, when combined with sophisticated retrieval software, things may be different. Publishers have done much to make their content more accessible. There are elements of value in journals themselves and in the functions performed by journal publishers, which should survive.

Prosser DC. 2003. **From here to there: a proposed mechanism for transforming journals from closed to open access.** *Learned Publishing* 16(3):163–166.

A major barrier to the greater take-up of an open access model for journal publishing has been the concern of many journal owners that they will not easily be able to migrate over from the current subscription-based model to open access. This paper presents a potential migration path that should significantly reduce the financial risk to journal owners, while allowing them to offer open access to their authors.

Savenjie B. 2003. **The FIGARO project: a new approach towards academic publishing.** *Learned Publishing* 16(3):183–188.

The current difficulties of scholarly publishing are set out (slow, expensive) and a response to them based upon publishing by two Dutch universities is described (setting up



an infrastructure for academic e-publishing).

Shepherd PT. 2003. **COUNTER: from conception to compliance**. Learned Publishing 16(3):210–205.

COUNTER (Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources) was formally launched in March 2002. The background to its launch is described. The main features of the Code of Practice are discussed, together with the current status of its implementation and the next steps for the project.

Velterop J. 2003. **Should scholarly societies embrace open access (or is it the kiss of death)?** Learned Publishing 16(3):167–169.

Should organizations of scientists with publishing activities, such as scholarly societies, primarily be fund-raising organizations for other activities in their disciplines, using their publications to bring in the necessary money, or should they be promoters of efficient scholarly communication and use their publications more directly to that end, for example, by embracing open access? No real answers provided.

#### FUNDING AND ECONOMICS

Cowhig J. 2003. **Surfing the publishing wave**. Physics World 16(8):44–45.

Describes how journal publishers are profiting financially and also achieving much wider access to their papers from new sales techniques, including using consortia and licensing web access through libraries.

Delamothe T. 2003. **Fees waived for university researchers publishing through BioMed Central**. BMJ 21 June 326:1350.

Researchers at 180 UK universities will soon be able to share their findings at no cost to readers through a deal struck by the open access publisher BioMed Central and the Joint Information Systems Committee (a joint committee of UK further and higher education funding bodies).

Delamothe T, Smith R. 2003. **Paying for bmj.com**. BMJ 2 August 327:241–242.

Free access to electronic BMJ is to end.

Ha L. 2003. **The economics of scholarly journals: a case study on a society-published journal**. Learned Publishing 16(3):193–199.

This study investigated the perceived interest and demand for a society-published journal in the field of media management and economics

and the preferred format: print or online. Results showed a divided opinion: print is prestigious but uneconomic; online is feasible but has dubious status as a prestigious journal.

Zerbinos P. 2003. **Consortia provide alternatives to standard journal subscriptions**. APS News 12(6):1,6.

Describes the Academic Press and Elsevier system adopted by the American Physical Society to continue funding of publication as journal subscriptions fall.

#### ETHICS

Gill D, Ethics Working Group of the Confederation of European Specialists in Paediatrics. 2003.

**Guidelines for informed consent in biomedical research involving paediatric populations as research participants**. European Journal of Pediatrics 162:455–458. DOI:

10.1007/s00431-003-1192-0.

Guidelines providing child-specific guidance compatible with other international guidelines on informed consent.

Healy D, Cattell D. 2003. **Interface between authorship, industry and science in the domain of therapeutics**. British Journal of Psychiatry 183(1):22–27.

Comparison of articles being coordinated by a medical writing agency with articles not coordinated in this way. Medline-listed articles per author, journal impact factors, literature profiles and citation rates calculated for both sets of articles. Concludes that profiles of industry-linked and non-industry-linked article sets differed. Style of authorship in industry-linked articles delivers good quality but raises concerns for the scientific base of therapeutics.

Krzyzanowska MK, Pintilie M, Tannock IF. 2003. **Factors associated with failure to publish large randomised trials presented at an oncology meeting**. JAMA 290(4):494–501.

Bias against publishing non-significant results applies even in large, randomized, phase 3 oncology trials. This can lead to incorrect practice guidelines and inappropriate management of patients. Investigators, funding agencies, ethics boards and publishers have a responsibility to minimize this problem.

[Institute of Physics]. 2003. **Institute to get new code of conduct**. Physics World 16(9):51.

Reports recommendations of working

party, all approved by Council, to expand existing guidelines to include specific references to honesty, care, social responsibility and guidance on “whistle-blowing” and the setting up of a standing committee to deal with ethical issues. It also suggested that publishers consider how to assure the highest standards of impartial refereeing and author responsibility.

Rodgers, Peter. 2003. **Editor's note**. Physics World 16(9):20.

Letter from editor of Physics World apologising for the inclusion in the previous issue (16(8):6) of a short article by Edwin Cartlidge entitled “Hawking's big night out”, about Stephen Hawking's visit to Stringfellows nightclub which “offended some readers. Its publication showed a lack of sensitivity to the cultural aspects of working in a male-dominated field such as physics”.

Shelton AM. 2003. **Considerations for conducting research in agricultural biotechnology**. Journal of Invertebrate Pathology 83(2):110–112.

Two recent high-profile articles in major journals showed flawed methodology, yet caused great consternation in the scientific community, regulatory agencies and the general public. Modern communication may exacerbate the flow of misinformation and could lead to a decline in confidence in biotechnology and science generally.

[Various]. 2003. **Role of a research ethics committee in follow-up and publication of results**. Lancet 28 June 361:2245–2246.

Responses to article arguing that ethics committees did not follow up, where they should, what happens to research they have authorized.

#### Scientific misconduct

Gilbert FJ, Denison AR. 2003. **Research misconduct**. Clinical Radiology 58(7):499–504.

Assessment of the extent of research misconduct in the field of radiology done by contacting five English-language radiology journals. Redundant or duplicate publication has been reported infrequently. Issue of how to tackle misconduct discussed with reference to guidance from the Medical Research Council, the Wellcome Trust and the Committee on Publication Ethics.

#### LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Leadstone S. 2003. **It's all Greek to me**. Physics World 16(7):17–18.

Letter commenting on John Singleton's article [ibid 16(5):64].

Suggests that use of "acceleration" has been misleading and that a Greek-based word such as "epitachysis" might be better.

Hartley J, Pennebaker JW, Fox C. 2003. **Abstracts, introductions and discussions: how far do they differ in style?** *Scientometrics* 57(3):389–398. In 80 educational psychology articles, abstracts scored worst on most measures of readability, with introductions next and discussions best of all. However, readability was variable across sections but consistent among authors.

#### REFERENCE AND ARCHIVING

Burns N, Carney K. 2003. **Internet sources of information on Hispanic health.** *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* 14(3):276–281. Introductory survey of sources relevant to the Hispanic population in the USA, focusing on internet sources of information about health

in the broad sense, including income, education, living standards, immunization, major disease and life expectancy.

Connertz T. 2003. **Long-term archiving of digital documents: what efforts are being made in Germany?** *Learned Publishing* 16(3):302–211. The existing legal arrangements in Germany for the archiving of print material are described. The technical, legal and practical difficulties in extending such arrangements to digital material are discussed, together with current initiatives to overcome those difficulties. The specific experience of the Thieme Publishing Group in these matters is also given.

Veiga J. 2003. **Visibilidad de revistas científicas e iniciativas para incrementar la difusión de las publicaciones españolas.** *Nutrición Hospitalaria (Madrid)* 18:177–180. Changes in the storage and retrieval

of scientific and technological information are examined. Databases such as Medicine, PubMed, Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences (LILACS) and Spanish Health Sciences Bibliographic Index (IBECS) are described. The Virtual Health Library (VHL) developed by BIREME/PAHO/WHO is discussed, especially with reference to the electronic publication model, SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online).

Wyer PC, Allen TY, Corral CJ. 2003. **How to find evidence when you need it, Part 4: Matching clinical questions to appropriate databases.** *Annals of Emergency Medicine* 2003;42(1):136–149. Summary of the knowledge and skills that physicians need to select and use databases dealing with questions arising from emergency care. Covers ACP Journal Club; Best Evidence Topics; Clinical Evidence; Cochrane Library; Emergency Medical Abstracts; home-grown databases.

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## News from the Council and Publication Committee

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### EASE Council update

The current EASE Council held its second meeting in Barcelona on 5 October 2003. Old business was brought up in the form of the AESE–EASE meeting held in Halifax in September 2002. There was a small profit, EASE's share of which amounted to CAD 719.00. EASE finances were discussed and priorities were set. So far, reorganizing EASE banking policies has been given the most attention. This process will continue in the near future.

Those who attended the Eighth General Assembly and Conference in Bath will attest to the success of the Conference. The final records of the conference showed that financially the Conference broke about even once the funds allocated to the publication and distribution of the *Science Editors' Handbook* were deducted. As expected, the major expense proved to be the catering. The conference had 198 fully paid participants, an exceptionally good number considering the unfavourable global events of the preceding spring. Thanks were once again extended to Jenny Gretton for her dedication and untiring efforts in making the conference the success it was.

Increasing EASE membership is of primary importance to EASE in that many of its many long-term loyal

members are beginning to retire. In addition, there is a turnover of approximately 10% turnover in membership annually. To aid the work of the recruitment and promotion committee, it was decided to expand the readers' survey that will be distributed with *European Science Editing* to include questions concerning this topic. The committee will also look at what has been done in the past, define EASE target groups, re-evaluate and improve existing promotion material, and consider suggestions offered for possible promotion programmes.

With respect to training, education and meetings, training on the web was suggested as a potential endeavour, along with tutoring for editors through exchange programmes that would provide junior editors with a wider view of the complete editing process. Training in collaboration with other organizations should also be given more attention. The types of training now offered were discussed, and support for a proposed training course in China was approved.

The dates and location of the next Council meeting, the annual general meeting (AGM), and a seminar to be held in conjunction with the AGM were finalized (Barcelona, 7–9 May 2004). The AGM is to follow the

seminar on Friday 7 May. The introduction of AGM seminars is Council's first step in its attempts to expand its "training and workshop" activities. The first AGM seminar will deal with "scientific journals in the era of informatics" and will be held in the Institute for Catalan Studies in the heart of Barcelona.

The preliminary work on the Ninth General Assembly and Conference to be held in Cracow in June 2006 got under way as Council discussed some of the practical details of organizing the conference and appointed a Council member to head the programme committee. Work will begin in earnest as soon as the summary of the Bath questionnaires is ready.

The possibility of applying for outside funding for future EASE projects was once again introduced and will be considered more carefully over the coming months. It was noted that other organizations are already actively seeking such funds, and some are seeking cooperation with EASE in their endeavours.

See also the report (next page) of the meeting of the Publications Committee.

Georgianna Oja  
Secretary, EASE  
secretary@ease.org.uk

## Publication Committee meeting

### A readers' survey will be welcome

The Committee met in Barcelona on 4 October 2003 and had a fruitful day. The five new members of the Committee have contributed much to the November issue of *ESE* you have in your hands and all of them presented suggestions for the EASE publications. The new rules of the Committee (a three-year term, allocation of work to each editor, mentoring of new members) were confirmed. All sections of the journal were discussed and the Committee focused on new columns and on tasks for the new editors.

A section on review articles is to be started and the Committee welcomes contributions from authors. The chapters of the *Science Editors' Handbook* may also be excellent review articles under a format that allows the authors' views and opinions on the topic to be included. In the series "Editing in my Country", articles on Croatia and Spain will appear, following the articles on Poland and France. Other authors have agreed to contribute to this series and present their opinions on scientific publishing in their countries.

A lively discussion on the Editors' WebWatch showed the interest in this column and the need for listings of web sites to be updated frequently. This column will help to rebuild the EASE web site. The list of useful links for editors is impressive now compared to the lists published in

earlier issues of *ESE*.

The EASE Forum will continue to move forward, with a moderator who will make proposals to increase the quality of the exchanges. We also need to attract members who were disconnected in January when the address for the Forum changed.

The new contribution on "From the literature" that appears in this issue (p. 120) will add to the critical appraisal of the literature. Contributions and suggestion for topics to be covered are welcome. The Publication Committee is setting up a network of correspondents to get information from editors in many countries. We have names and suggestions for such a network and the Committee wants to reinforce the existing links with countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

The Editor's Bookshelf has a new editor and we are looking for correspondents who will send articles in non-English language and from non-medical fields.

The *Science Editors' Handbook* has a new editor too and the Committee reviewed the existing chapters, proposed many new topics, and will be looking for new authors. Suggestions from EASE members are welcome and will be easier now that members should have received all the chapters of the *Handbook*. New chapters will be sent out with the journal when they are ready and we hope to issue an updated handbook

at the next conference in Poland.

In the afternoon, the Production Committee from the Council joined the Publications Committee to consider how to improve the layout, design and production of the journal. Most of the discussion concerned the reshaping of the web site that EASE will relaunch in 2004. It was then decided that three members will make proposals to set up all internet services for members.

The Committee would like to get more input from EASE members and it was decided to prepare a **readers' survey** for the February issue of *ESE*. In the meantime, all comments and suggestions are welcome. The bias towards the medical field was discussed and the Committee will facilitate work and articles in the earth sciences.

The agenda was quite busy, including the dinner with the Council that helped to build teamwork. The forthcoming activities will show the vitality of this new group. The next meeting will be in May 2004 and will plan to look at the table of contents of *ESE* and consider how to respond to the wishes of EASE members as expressed in the February survey of readers.

*Hervé Maisonneuve*  
Chief Editor, EASE  
hervemaison@wanadoo.fr

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## Obituary

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### Roger Bénichoux, 25 December 1919–20 June 2003

Roger Bénichoux was head of the cardiac surgery unit at the university hospital of Nancy (France) and Professor at the School of Medicine, Nancy. Head of the Institut de Recherches Chirurgicales, he was one of the founders of the European Society for Surgical Research, formerly the European Society for Experimental Surgery. The society was founded on 17 February 1966 at the Abbaye des Prémontrés, Pont a Mousson, near Nancy, during a meeting organized by the Laboratoire de Chirurgie Expérimentale de la Faculté de Médecine de Nancy. During his surgical career, Roger Bénichoux travelled extensively to the UK, USA and the Scandinavian countries, where he learned the differences between French and English publications. In 1970 he began to teach scientific communication and medical writing. He organized many regional meetings at the Abbaye des

Prémontrés and in 1973 published *Comment Écrire, Comment Dire en Médecine*.

He was a great defender of the use of French versus English for scientific communication. He gave lectures on this topic at many congresses, particularly at the Montreal colloquium on "L'avenir du Français dans les publications et communications scientifiques et techniques" in November 1981. He fought the English language with talks such as "L'anglophonie est hélas nécessaire, toujours injuste, souvent insuffisante, certainement dangereuse".

He was very active in scientific communication in France, being a member of the Association Nationale des Scientifiques pour l'Usage de la Langue Française (ANSULF) and creating the Collège Français d'Enseignement de la Communication Scientifique (COFECOS) in 1983. He published a regular newsletter entitled *Éditologie*.

His book *Guide de la Communication Médicale et Scientifique* ran to three editions, the first in 1985 and the last in 1991 (publisher Sauramps).

Roger Bénichoux was very active during the birth of EASE, participating in the founding meeting in Pau, and was a member of the Council 1982–1985, a Vice-President 1985–1988, and an editorial board member of *European Science Editing* from 1981 to 1991.

In 1991, he published a book on the life of a Swedish pioneer of cardiac surgery: *Quand les chirurgiens étaient rois, La vie de Clarence Crafoord*. He was a member of the French Surgical Academy and gained national renown with the Croix de Guerre and as a Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite and an Officier des Palmes académiques. He retired to La Grande Motte in the south of France, where he died on 20 June 2003.

*Hervé Maisonneuve*  
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### DEATH

We regret to announce the death of Dr David F Horrobin

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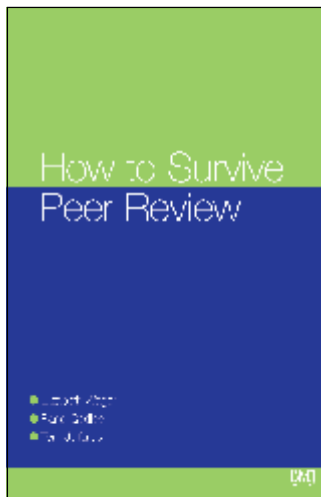
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