

European Science Editing

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EASE database and sponsorship scheme

EASE's new Secretary, Sheila Evered, is busy getting on top of the backlog of work, which includes updating the membership database and issuing invoices to many members who unfortunately weren't sent them last year. She thanks all those who have responded to her letter and renewed their membership and she hopes others will follow suit.

Several members have asked what has happened to the sponsorship scheme (which is for prospective members in countries with currency exchange problems). Sheila says it is coming to the top of her list of priorities to sort out. She will be in touch again soon with sponsors and those sponsored, with the aim of reviewing and assessing the value of the scheme.

In the meantime, she reiterates her request for anyone who knows anyone who has somehow lost contact with EASE to get in touch with her at secretary@ease.org.uk.

Publications committee

Chief editor Moira Johnson-Vekony is also very busy, having moved back to England from Canada, started a new job, and moved into a new home in Oxfordshire.

Other new members on the committee include Dario Sambunjak, who takes over the "Editing around the world" section from Edward Towpik, and

Mary Ellen Kerans, who takes over the WebWatch section from Moira. Richard Hurley replaces Margaret Cooter for the News Notes section; and Paola De Castro is in charge of the Editor's Bookshelf, with help from Colin Batchelor and Peggy Hubbard (and anyone else who offers: see p. 113, this issue).

Members due to leave the committee at the end of the year include Marie-Louise Desbarats-Schönbaum (book reviews), and Maeve O'Connor (production), who will be replaced by Margaret Cooter after Christmas.

In this issue

To lighten your reading of this issue we are including photos of Council members and a few views from the Kraków conference. For your delight next time we hope to include photos of the Publications Committee, maybe even some of them in working mode at a meeting in Barcelona in October.

Webmaster Emma Campbell has contributed a short account of what the EASE web site offers now and what is planned for the future.

We are also very glad to announce that the Editor's Bookshelf is back after a long gap. It is now under the care of Paola De Castro and others, as mentioned above.

Contributions for the next issue

Contributions for the next issue of *ESE* (February 2007) are invited and should be sent to the appropriate member of the Publications Committee (see list on left) by **15 December 2006**.

EASE Council 2006-2009

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Correspondence about EASE and applications for membership (see the web site or p. 120 of this issue for application form) should go to the Secretary.



Editorial

The face of EASE

It is a long and valuable tradition that a new President of EASE has the opportunity to present his views in an Editorial. The President is the face of EASE, and the members of EASE (as well as other readers of *European Science Editing*) have a right to know what EASE will look like in the next three years and how the Association will express itself. Moreover, one might wonder what face represents EASE to the outside world. It is a pleasure for me to give an impression of all this.

Writing about the appearance of EASE, I certainly must mention the new style that has been developed for the Association. A first impression could be obtained at the EASE Conference in Kraków. In the coming months the new look will gradually be introduced in all EASE manifestations. But, however important the new style may be, it is a means, not a goal. In my view, EASE has three major goals in the next three years: compensating for the loss of members, increasing the opportunities for courses in editing, and preparing a major editorial conference to be held in 2009.

Looking back at the EASE Conference in Kraków, two impressions compete for priority. From a quantitative point of view, the attendance was low, but in a qualitative sense it was a very good conference with significant momentum [a flavour can be seen in the “postcards” on p. 92 and p. 94]. I am glad and proud to be the President of an organization with such enthusiastic and competent members. It is also a privilege to chair the new Council, which is a group of people with many strengths. I appreciate especially the accession of four Council members from new EU countries and not-yet-EU countries. EASE, already firmly based in Northwest Europe, is now turning its face to the East and the South of the continent, where there appear to be lots of opportunities to advance the practice of science editing.

At the same time the Council and the Publications Committee had to say goodbye to several people who were not eligible for another term. I express my warmest thanks to Edward Towpik, Magne Nylenna,

Hervé Maisonneuve, John Glen and Marie-Louise Desbarats-Schönbaum for all they have contributed to EASE. They have to a large extent determined the face of EASE in recent years. Shortly we must also envisage the stepping down of Maeve O'Connor, who definitely is top rank among the EASE icons.

It is good to know the faces of the EASE officials — if that is the right word for the people who have been put in charge of the Association and its journal. The Publications Committee has therefore decided to publish portraits and short curricula vitae of the members of the Council (see p. 105–108) and of the Publications Committee (next issue), so you know whom you can approach if there is something — anything — you want to tell or ask us. It also brings a touch of familiarity — Council members are not far-away governors, but ordinary people who have a job in science editing just like you, plus some spare time — albeit sometimes attained with difficulty — to convene and talk about the wellbeing of EASE.

This brings me to the question of what is necessary for the wellbeing of EASE. A healthy Association needs more than a shining face; it also requires a clever brain and a strong body. If the President is the face of EASE, then surely Council is the brain. In the brain all input comes together, and the brain steers the body.

And who forms the body of EASE? Of course that is you, the members. You are the limbs, the organs, the senses. You feed the brain with your signals and you translate its incentives into action. If all parts of the body work together, with Council as the coordinating centre, we can move forward. Then EASE can sense the needs of the community of science communicators; then EASE can develop training courses for science editors and authors; then EASE can organize yearly seminars on topics that matter to science editing; then EASE can publish a journal and a handbook that help science editors in doing their job better and better; then EASE can maintain a web site and a forum where science editors exchange views, opinions and experiences; then EASE can attract more members; then EASE can organize a major editorial conference in 2009.

EASE can face the future — because EASE members *are* the future!

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Article

Scientists produce and use grey literature, but are they aware of the implications of doing so?

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Abstract

Grey literature includes documents produced by academia, government and industry outside the commercial circuit and it consists mainly of technical reports. It is an important primary source of information that is now available through the internet. Because grey literature is not generally subject to the peer review process, it is fundamental that authors and issuing organizations become aware of the implications of the uncontrolled diffusion of specific information. For this reason, the application of ad hoc guidelines (“Nancy style”) for the production of grey literature is highly recommended.

To become a scientist, you must get a degree and produce a dissertation or a doctoral thesis; to report the results of research supported by a grant, you must draw up an activity report or a progress report; to take part in a conference, you must prepare an abstract or a paper to be included in the conference abstract book or in the conference proceedings; to reach consensus on guidelines or regulations on specific topics, you produce a working paper to be discussed within small expert groups; to report extended data on a research project, to draw up operational procedures, or to refer to clinical trials, you write a technical report; to receive comments on a paper before submitting it to a journal, you circulate it among colleagues as a pre-print; to get up-to-date information on a specific issue, you may need to access a governmental report; to perform a correct meta-analysis, you must look at all sources of available information, in both indexed and non-indexed journals; to better understand a document written in a language that is not your own, you may read an unofficial translation; to gain information about the technical characteristics of new equipment, you may require technical or commercial documentation; and to spread general information to selected targets, you produce information leaflets.

These are just a few examples of those precious primary information sources that are produced outside the commercial circuit and that fall under the general term “grey literature”, defined as “Information produced on all levels of government, academia, business and industry in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishing, i.e. where publishing is not the primary activity” (Cassell 2005).

Some historical aspects

Some writers consider that grey literature existed during Roman times, and that the drawings and notes of ancient scientists could be regarded as *ante litteram* grey literature. Indeed, the first technical reports — the most typical example of grey literature today — were produced at the beginning of the last century in a military environment, first in Great Britain in 1909 (Research Memoranda of the Aeronautics Research Council) and soon after, in 1915, by the US National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics.

After the Second World War, technical reports were a useful means of communicating information at a time when journal publication was rather slow and information needed to be disseminated rapidly — the informal channel met these requirements. From that time on, there was a rapid development of report production, mainly in the scientific field, where speed of information transfer was more important than in other sectors.

During the last century, however, it was very difficult to retrieve grey literature documents because there were only ever a few copies available and because references to these documents were not included in bibliographic databases. Furthermore, these documents were often produced without the necessary identification items. Indeed, some of them even circulated without the names of the authors or issuing organization, information that represents the “bare minimum” for identifying and obtaining an unpublished document.

In 1985, the SIGLE (System for Information on Grey Literature in Europe) bibliographic database was established, with the support of the European Community, to collect and disseminate information about grey literature produced in Europe. Until the use of the internet became widespread, this multi-sectorial database represented a useful reference tool, but in 2005 it was officially abandoned as it no longer fulfilled current information needs.

Today, grey literature is available through the internet, mostly without restriction, and is also included in the catalogues of major libraries (e.g. the catalogue of the US National Library of Medicine). Research in public health relies significantly on grey literature (Alberani et al. 1990, Gray Bedford 1998), but retrieval facilities are not yet sufficiently developed compared with those of peer-reviewed articles. The New York Academy of Medicine’s Grey Literature Report (bimonthly online publication alerting readers to new grey literature in public health) represents a good attempt to disseminate

important research output (available from: www.nyam.org/library/greyreport.shtml).

Characteristics of grey literature

Researchers today widely use and produce grey literature, but they are often unaware of the implications behind such non-conventional documents (Alberani and De Castro 2001). In the grey literature, the relationship between production costs and the intrinsic value of the document has always been inverted — funds granted to carry out research activities reported in the document far exceed the costs of its production and distribution.

Until a few decades ago, the adjective “grey”, with its negative implications, was a perfect description of particular research output that was very poor in its formal attributes (shape, structure, editorial standards, etc.) and was used as opposed to the terms “white” or open literature (journal articles and books) and “black” or classified literature that was not to be disseminated at all. However, the information contained in the grey literature has always been very precious and unique because it was not to be found elsewhere: even if journals sometimes published originally “grey” documents, they did not include all details of the research contained in a report (i.e. descriptions of equipment, procedures, raw data, tables, graphs, maps, etc.), due to limitations of space or because such specific information might not be of interest to a wider audience. Furthermore, despite the many benefits of the peer review process of the most prestigious journals, generally only statistically significant findings are published in the open literature and this often inflates the perceived importance of the reported results. Raising awareness of the hidden value of grey literature may represent an important step in gathering precious and unbiased information (Banks 2006).

Traditionally, grey literature was produced in-house with a limited numbers of copies for specific aims and, generally, without following proper editorial standards. Because manuscripts were circulated as written by the authors, without editorial support, sometimes even the basic elements of structure and readability were missing and the bibliographic elements necessary to allow identification were often lacking. This made it very difficult to retrieve documents outside the “invisible colleges” to which they were addressed (committee members, expert groups, decision makers, etc.).

In the 1970s and 1980s — when the internet was not yet widespread — such informal and rapid circulation of documents was particularly welcome, firstly and mostly by physicists, who are recognized as the pioneers in pre-print (now e-print) production, as a way of obtaining colleagues’ approval or advice before submitting an article for publication in specialized journals. Grey literature then reached only the target readers and this was a safeguard against any possible misinterpretation or misuse of “unpublished” documents. Copyright laws and ethical considerations could be disregarded.

Today, thanks to the internet, the limited run of documents produced in-house is no longer a

hindrance to the dissemination of information, and as a result of the widespread use of new information communication technologies the shabby look of grey literature has rapidly changed.

Open access and the new responsibilities to grey literature authors and producers

Now that access to full-text grey literature is much easier, also thanks to the development of institutional repositories and digital archives, both authors and producers have new responsibilities. In fact, whereas in the past grey literature was addressed only to readers who were directly involved in the issues described, today it is no longer possible to have complete control of the target readership, and the general public may also access grey literature online, with the consequent risk of misinterpretation. Malevolent readers could misuse specific instructions intentionally addressed only to technical or medical staff (De Castro & Napolitani Cheyne 2006).

In this context, it is essential to guarantee that the grey literature available on the internet meets basic standards of editorial quality and ethical principles. A new challenge therefore arises in making authors and issuing organizations aware of their responsibilities. The development of open access and institutional repositories offers new possibilities for information storage and retrieval.

Until the end of the 1970s, there was little concern in Europe about the presentation of grey literature. In 1982, ISO standard 5966 on the presentation of technical reports (International Organization for Standardization 1982) was issued as a first step towards better report production. Today, most authors can autonomously produce and disseminate a document, even without editorial support. In most cases, the layout of “unpublished” material is no longer so “grey”, and the difference between grey and white literature might not be immediately clear. In this evolving scenario, ISO 5966 — which was very useful until quite recently — could no longer meet the requirements of information technology and it was withdrawn in 2000.

In the internet era, due consideration must be given to ethical principles when issuing grey literature, as well as to the possibility of applying a review (or peer review) process to guarantee quality. Authors of grey literature should be aware of editorial rules even more than authors of documents to be published in the open literature because they do not benefit from the referees’ or editors’ contribution during the editorial process, which provides added value to the original papers.

Recognizing the value of “Vancouver style” (Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals, produced by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors [ICMJE] — available from www.icmje.org) for authors and editors of journal articles, and the lack of freely available and updated guidelines for the production of technical reports, some producers of institutional reports felt the need to develop an ad hoc style for grey literature, to be used as a reference tool for its

production and dissemination (De Castro & Salinetti 2006a). To this end, a proposal to draw up updated guidelines for grey literature producers was presented at the 7th International Conference on Grey Literature held in Nancy, France, on 5–6 December 2005. The so-called “Nancy style” for the production of technical reports was developed on the basis of this proposal and was issued in April 2006.

Guidelines for the production of grey literature: Nancy style

“Nancy style” is the informal name given to the *Guidelines for the production of scientific and technical reports: how to write and distribute grey literature*, which are freely available in English, French, and Italian from www.glisc.info. The Guidelines were created to help the authors and producers of grey literature to write and distribute accurate, clear, and easily accessible reports. The Guidelines were adapted from the “Vancouver style” and the ISO standard 5966/1982 and cover:

- ethical considerations, including the responsibilities of authors, contributors and issuing organizations (playing the role of editors), conflicts of interest, peer review, security concerns.
- publishing and editorial issues, including copyright, electronic publishing, institutional repositories.
- recommended report structure, including the compulsory elements of a report, sections, formats, styles, illustrations, references, appendices, indexes and principles of revision editing.

A correct report structure is essential to guarantee readability and ease of use. A well-organized document will also be easily converted into XML, to allow advanced search facilities in specific parts of the document, such as the introduction, conclusion, and citations.

Institutions producing grey literature should be encouraged to draw up instructions to authors to guarantee a standard structure that is consistent with institutional policy and editorial and ethical considerations. They are also advised to provide adequate training for authors who may be unaware of editorial standards.

Since grey literature is not generally peer reviewed, it is essential that authors should understand the importance of careful revision of their texts before their distribution, to improve correctness, quality, and style. Detailed information on “Nancy style” and the new responsibilities of authors and producers of grey literature is reported in a recently published chapter of the *Science editors' handbook* (De Castro & Salinetti 2006b).

Final considerations

The newborn Nancy style, like the Vancouver style, could develop into a de facto standard, representing uniform requirements for the production of technical reports produced by an international group — the Grey Literature International Steering Committee, GLISC (for information see www.glisc.info) — in an effort to combat ignorance of the best editorial practices and to facilitate integration, cooperation, and standardization. The promotion of Nancy style by EASE could be part of a broader programme to raise awareness of European science editing (Hunt 2006). Even if grey literature is traditionally considered as a sui generis editorial product, it is nevertheless a written documentation of research output that deserves due consideration.

Grey literature is not associated with any prestige or career implications, but training inexperienced authors to produce grey material may represent the first step to publication at a higher level. Tutoring in scientific writing and data presentation also helps to improve research methodology. Experience, gained over years of writing courses in the biomedical field, shows that when a scientist understands the reasons why editorial rules and standards must be applied, his or her publication output will improve rapidly, even though the challenge of having an article accepted by mainstream journals still represents the ultimate aim of all researchers.

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Editing around the world

A bird's eye view of science publishing and editing in Iran

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Science publishing in a country is a reflection of the amount of research and science production in that country. This, in turn, is a variable depending on the academic infrastructures of that country.

The history of modern academic centres in Iran does not date back far. Tehran University, the first modern academic centre established in Iran, was officially inaugurated in 1934. Therefore, it is not surprising that Iran made a somewhat limited contribution to science publishing over the past century. Over the past decade, however, Iran has had such an accelerated trend in science production that it was placed among the 31 countries of the world that published the so-called "top 1% most cited publications" [1].

I believe there are several reasons for this result. Iran has allocated a larger budget to its scientific research sector and the number of graduates and assistant professors has increased significantly over recent years. Junior professors are required to publish scientific articles in recognized journals to obtain academic career promotion. Finally, postgraduate students are obliged to publish their research theses in order to graduate.

All these led to a surge in science publishing in Iran. If we take the number of published articles per 150,000 population, indexed in Science Citation Index® (SCI) and PubMed — the two most important databases in science and medicine, respectively — as an index of science production, between 1993 and 2002 Iran had a mean of 23% growth per year in science production (Fig. 1). The rate of change in biomedical sciences paralleled that in science publication as a whole, and I shall therefore focus mainly on biomedical

publications as a prototype of science publishing and editing in Iran.

Acta Medica Iranica, one of the oldest biomedical periodicals in Iran, was founded in 1956 by the Faculty of Medicine, Tehran University. It was indexed from its first issue by Index Medicus. Thereafter, several biomedical periodicals, such as the *Iranian Journal of Public Health*, *The Journal of the Iranian Dental Association*, and the *Pahlavi Medical Journal* were launched and soon indexed by Index Medicus. However, all of them were later dropped from the database, perhaps because publication ceased during and for a few years after the Iran 1979 revolution. After 1979, only two medical journals, the *Iranian Journal of Medical Sciences*, the successor to the *Pahlavi Medical Journal*, and the *Medical Journal of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, the two most prestigious Iranian biomedical journals, were indexed by Excerpta Medica/EMBASE. Nonetheless, the latter journal, probably because of delays in publication, was also excluded from the database after a while. No journal from Iran was then indexed by Index Medicus.

Thanks to new and inexpensive desktop publishing technology, Iran — like many countries in the region, where more than 200 biomedical journals are published — has had a boom in new scientific journals in the past decade. Almost all of these journals are owned, funded and published by universities — the government sector. Most of these journals are in Persian with abstracts in English and they usually publish articles by the academic staff of the publishing university. In my opinion, the major role of these local journals is to provide for the need of the academic staff of that university to achieve career promotion.

There are also several journals published by specialty societies or non-university research centres. The *Iranian Biomedical Journal* published by the Pasteur Institute of Iran, the *Archives of Iranian Medicine* published by the Iranian Academy of Medical Sciences, and the *Iranian Journal of Immunology* published jointly by the Iranian Society for Immunology and the Shiraz Institute for Cancer Research are examples of such journals.

Few Iranian journals receive submissions from neighbouring countries or other parts of the world, so the research work they publish is generally limited to their geographical location. Moreover, the journals have access to a limited amount of new high-quality clinical research and thus must compete for original manuscripts. Consequently, only a few journals can fulfill the minimum requirements for being covered by major indexing systems [2].

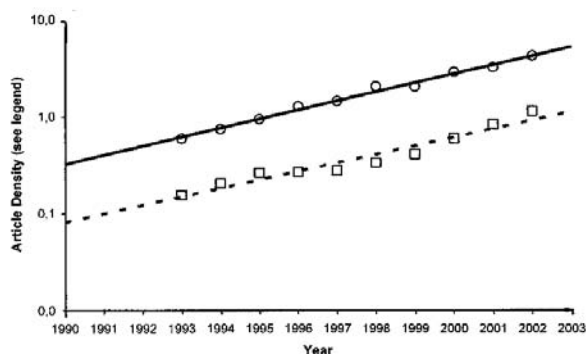


Fig. 1. The increasing trend in the number of published articles from Iran per 150,000 population, indexed by Science Citation Index® (circles) and PubMed (squares) between 1993 and 2002. Note that the vertical axis has logarithmic scale and that the science and medical research sectors have almost the same trends.

More than 20 biomedical journals are currently published in English and have worldwide distribution. Recently, the *Archives of Iranian Medicine*, a clinically-oriented journal, has been accepted for indexing in Index Medicus. This is the first and only Iranian biomedical periodical to be indexed by this database since the Iran 1979 revolution. In addition, more than 10 clinically-oriented Iranian journals are currently indexed by Excerpta Medica/EMBASE. Currently, 13 scientific journals are indexed by SCI. Three of these are biomedical journals: *Daru* in pharmacology, and the *Iranian Biomedical Journal* and the *Iranian Journal of Biotechnology* in basic medical sciences. Iranian journals in basic medical sciences generally publish articles of higher quality than clinically-oriented journals [2]. In fact, most contributions to science from Iran are in the basic sciences, e.g. neuroscience, pharmacology and chemistry.

So far, several attempts have been made to establish a national indexing system for biomedical articles published in Iran. The first attempt was made by establishing an Iranian Index Medicus. Unfortunately, publication was stopped after a short time. Currently, several databases available on the web index articles published in Iranian biomedical periodicals; IranMedex is one of them and is available at www.iranmedex.com.

Many of the journals published in Iran are available online with full open access. There are also some journals which are published only online. *Shiraz e-Medical Journal* is the first Iranian medical electronic journal.

With an increasing number of biomedical journals in the country, the Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education, which also supervises publication of biomedical journals, felt it was time to pay more attention to quality. A commission was established which has recently, inspired by criteria set by Index Copernicus, elaborated criteria for evaluating the quality of biomedical journals published in Iran. Furthermore, the Iranian Association of Medical Editors, though currently not very active, has been inspired by the "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals" produced by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and has developed minimum requirements for submission of manuscripts to Iranian biomedical journals. Finally, with the establishment of the Eastern Mediterranean Association of Medical Editors (EMAME), the idea of which was born at a regional meeting of biomedical researchers and editors held in Cairo in 2003 [3], it is anticipated that local standards for improving biomedical journalism in the region will be developed.

At the Cairo meeting, the participants found that their problems regarding editorship were similar for different countries, regardless of their social, cultural, political and economical status [3]. The problems of these editors, including Iranians, however, as expected, were far different from those that many mainstream journals are facing. At present, mainstream journals mainly have problems with

authorship vs contributorship, conflict of interests, ethical issues in conducting research and publication, redundant publications, etc. The problems of small journals are more fundamental and include lack of the infrastructure needed for running a journal, lack of sufficient funding, lack of expertise in desktop publishing, problems with disseminating their publications, low visibility, problems with attracting high-quality research articles, etc. [3].

Iranian editors, like other editors in the region, have to learn specific skills to meet their readers' needs, to become familiar with publication practices, and to exercise editorship. Many editors of science journals published in Iran, however, do not have any formal training for their craft; they find their way through trial and error among various stresses and strains to which their journals are subjected. It is a common belief that editorship is a simple issue that everyone can master easily. But I know several people who changed their minds soon after they were appointed as editors.

Another problem is in the peer-review process. In small scientific communities, the pool of reviewers is almost the same as the pool of researchers/authors. Sometimes there are only a few accessible experts in a subspecialty field. Some of these experts, although distinguished in their scientific disciplines, are not properly familiar with research methodology and therefore cannot serve as good reviewers. In a study we conducted on the process of peer review in the *Iranian Journal of Medical Sciences*, one of the prestigious Iranian medical journals [4], we found a very poor level of agreement ($\kappa = -0.07$) between reviewers.

The education curriculum in Iran, from primary school to university level, does not contain research-oriented materials. In medical faculties, the curriculum mainly emphasizes the clinical aspects of medicine rather than research and scientific writing. Perhaps that is why a great deal of research has methodological flaws and is immediately rejected by journals. Also, many of the manuscripts submitted to journals are of poor structural quality, and even if they are accepted for publication they need extensive rewriting/editing. Another problem is that while most of our scholars have enough talent for oral communication and presentation, they have trouble with writing — an unfortunate inherent characteristic among Middle Eastern societies. This is why many research studies are never written down for publication at all.

Another problem is the language barrier. English is de facto a language internationally recognized as the language of science. To gain international acceptance, journal submissions are usually required to be written in English, which is a problem for most authors who have a different mother tongue [5]. Recently, several centres have been created to help researchers with writing manuscripts in correct English and these may help science production by preparing acceptable manuscripts. Centres that provide instructions on statistical and methodological aspects help researchers to design their studies correctly. Each year, many workshops on research methodology,

biostatistics, scientific writing, and peer review are run throughout the country. No doubt, these workshops will also help towards better science production.

This short essay would not be complete without acknowledging the endeavours of one who, in my opinion, has had a key role in the development of biomedical journalism in Iran. My mentor, Professor Karim Vessal, has so far founded three medical journals: the *Pahlavi Medical Journal*, the *Archives of Iranian Medicine*, and the *Iranian Journal of Radiology*. He also revitalized the *Pahlavi Medical Journal* after its title changed to *Iranian Journal of Medical Sciences*. Therefore, I believe he truly deserves to be nominated as the “father of medical journalism in Iran”.

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From the literature

Statistical errors in science journals

Two recent studies have revealed the alarming frequency of statistical errors in medical journals. Neville et al. [1] checked two dermatology journals (described by the authors as “well-respected”) and found that, of the 155 studies published in 2003 that included statistical analysis, 38% contained errors in the methods or omissions in reporting the statistical results. The authors considered that 14% of the articles used the wrong type of statistical technique while 27% contained errors in the presentation of results and 3% contained errors in both. They concluded that the misuse of statistics is prevalent in the dermatology literature.

A couple of months earlier, Kurichi & Sonnad published a similar review of four major surgical journals [2]. They concluded that, while the statistical complexity of research in surgery journals is increasing, 27% of studies included incorrect selection or reporting of statistical methods.

Both sets of authors conclude that readers should critically review statistical reporting in studies. My reaction is that journal editors and reviewers should endeavour to improve the situation, as I find it hard to believe that most readers (myself included) are up to the task.

Several journals incorporate statistical review into their peer-review systems but this is clearly not infallible. Lukic & Marusic studied the quality of statistics in papers published in the *Croatian Medical Journal* before and after the appointment of a statistical editor and found, disappointingly, that this was not a guarantee of improvement [3]. They found problems in 54% of the 97 papers published before the appointment of the statistical editor, including 26 with definite errors in the analysis and 43 with errors in the presentation. Once the journal had a statistical reviewer, 21% of papers (30) were sent for statistical review; of these, the statistics were unsatisfactory in 25, including 11 definite errors in analysis and 17 in presentation. Statistical review improved just three of the papers, while nine more would have been

improved if the authors had incorporated the statistician’s suggestions.

But the problem of poor statistics is not restricted to small journals. Garcia-Berthou & Alcaez checked statistical reports in *Nature* and the *BMJ* in 2001 and found incongruencies which they considered were probably due to rounding, transcription or typesetting errors [4]. While many of these errors were apparently trivial, in 12% of cases they might have changed the significance level by at least one order of magnitude. They concluded that “statistical practice is generally poor, even in the most renowned scientific journals.”

Despite the two studies that appeared this year, journal editors cannot excuse themselves by claiming that statistical problems have only recently come to light. In 1838 the French psychiatrist Esquirol stated “the sciences founded on observation can only be promoted by statistics . . . If medicine had not neglected this instrument . . . it would possess a greater number of positive truths, and stand less liable to the accusation of being a science of unfixed principles, vague and conjectural” [5]. And there have been scores of articles about statistical problems since then. In 1980 Glantz reported that “approximately half the articles published in medical journals that use statistical methods use them incorrectly” and concluded that “journals should secure review by someone knowledgeable in statistics before accepting a manuscript” [6], but 25 years later the problem remains.

What can editors do? One useful resource is the book by Lang & Secic on reporting statistics in medicine, which has recently been revised and updated [7]. Unlike other statistical texts, this book is designed for writers, reviewers and editors and covers the reporting of statistics rather than how to do them. However, while it should help detect some reporting problems, editors and reviewers will probably need a deeper understanding of statistics to detect the use of inappropriate statistical methods in

studies. Conscientious editors and reviewers should undergo regular statistical training — EASE provided a workshop after the Kraków meeting and others are available (e.g. linked to the Council of Science Editors' annual meetings). Statistical analysis forms such an important part of reporting for most spheres of science that editors should not neglect it and should consider ways of improving the effectiveness of statistical review to reduce the number of errors that appear in published papers.

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EASE-Forum digest: July to September 2006

There might not have been much activity on the forum over the summer, but what there was is worth mulling over.

Abstract copyright: publishers' bamboozle

Liz Wager was preparing text for a drug company web site and wanted to include abstracts from key publications. She had been given conflicting advice about the copyright position of abstracts. Some abstracts that are available on PubMed included a copyright line and on the NLM web site the impression was given that taking the abstracts from the site without permission might be breaching copyright. The answers she received from the forum were alarming and indicated how publishers are bamboozling us to their own advantage.

The consensus was that policies of copyright holders differed and it is safest to check with them before using their abstracts. One comment was that this is advisable because publishers are completely hysterical about copyright laws. They are, but why? Because the law does not work so much to their advantage as they would like. The law seeks to strike a balance between protecting authors and ensuring the exchange of information which is so vital to science. Publishers are middlemen whose interest in scientific information is its monetary value. Whether they like it or not, laws are made by governments, not by publishers. As Sally Morris wrote, copyright is a matter of laws (which differ between countries), not publishers' or others' (*wishful*) interpretation of those laws.

Nevertheless the current legal position for abstracts might be seen as confusing. Unauthorized use of copyrighted work is an infringement of the law, with the exception of "fair use". Reproduction of abstracts is generally considered to be fair use of a portion of an entire article reproduced to educate readers. Furthermore copyright holders when they initiate

copyright infringement court cases have to show they have suffered financial loss as a result of the infringement. Therefore a copyright holder would have to convince a court that the re-publication of the abstract has diminished the market value of original article. But courts have yet to be convinced that this is the case for the re-publication of abstracts of the usual length of up to 250 words.

What has recently generated debate is the market value of abstracts themselves. The increasing secondary publication of abstracts, particularly their use on the internet, has given rise to discussion of whether abstracts themselves might have acquired a market value. So at the end of the day the answer to Liz's question depends on the likelihood of publishers deciding to risk a court case against her client. They would have to show the court that they have suffered a financial loss as a result of Liz's client placing the abstract on their web site.

As a postscript, Will Hughes' experience of publishers was more cheering (but notably it referred to events a few years ago). He set up a database of the most significant journals in his field and wrote to each publisher asking for permission to use abstracts. All granted this willingly and showed enthusiasm for his idea. The only exception was the American Society of Civil Engineers, who refused. For their journals he replaced the text of the abstracts with what they had told him, namely that it was not in the interests of the ASCE for abstract texts to be reproduced in the database.

Invent (or reinvent) your own word

I asked the forum what they thought the word "readersome" means. I had found the word in a manuscript I was editing. Most people thought the author could mean "easy to read" or worth reading (being a misprint for "readsome"). Norman Grossblatt searched Google and along with some

other people found it did not produce a single hit, which he thought indicated a spelling mistake. However, according to David Mason the word exists. He described it as a subcellular unit (organelle), derived from the centrosomes in brain cells from the reading centre (SA3) of the frontal cortex. This just goes to prove that Google does not know everything, but there is always someone in the EASE forum who will know! All the same, I don't think my author knew this either. Moira Vekony was probably right in assuming the author wanted to invent a new word because he could not think of one that fitted the bill. Moira thought this was fine because sometimes even the millions of possibilities in the English language leave us wanting.

She's right of course, but sometimes new words are invented when there are perfectly good old ones we could use. Worse still, often words that have precise meanings are diluted to mean something that another word already means. For example "novel" once meant something of a new form or nature, which was something previously unknown, but now it means nothing more than "new" (indeed using "new" in a manuscript might now have shock value). Then there is "impact", which once meant "the physical striking

of a body against another" but now means nothing more than "effect". "Administer" used to mean "the managing of affairs" but is now monotonously used instead of "give".

Perhaps one day someone will explain to me what crime "because" ever committed that it is constantly replaced by "since", a word with a temporal meaning. Of course, we all know what "sex" did to have to hide behind "gender".

I look forward to more fun on the forum in the winter months!

Joining the forum

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

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Book reviews

Council of Science Editors. 2006. **Scientific style and format. The CSE manual for authors, editors and publishers**, 7th edn. Reston, VA: Council of Science Editors. About 680 p. GBP35/USD59.95. ISBN 0-9779665-0-X.

This book, its title tells us, is aimed at authors, editors and publishers. The word "editor" is used in its widest sense, covering those responsible for the scientific content and those responsible for the styling and formatting of texts (functions nowadays rarely performed by the same people). The book is organized into what most publishers would recognize as the reviewing, editorial and production processes. The first section, a new one for this edition, begins with a short chapter on the elements of a scientific text. The second moves on to a description of the author's, editor's and reviewer's responsibilities during various aspects of the reviewing process, including dealing with plagiarism, conflicts of interest, and authorship disputes, all of which have become increasingly common. The final chapter in this section covers copyright issues, including ownership, transfer, and the question of copyright protection under different legal systems.

Having dealt with these, the book then moves to what is, for a copy editor, the real "meat" of the book: the editorial sections. One is likely to look favourably on an authority that confirms one's own prejudices, and I confess to a warm glow as I read most of these chapters (along with, admittedly, occasional moments of disagreement, and rather more of surprise and learning). Part 2 covers general style conventions, and the sections covering English usage and punctuation give better explanations than many a book purporting to be a specific guide to these. I did have some minor quibbles. The introduction states that one of the book's

aims is to reduce keyboard use, but I did feel that in places it strays into over-simplification. In parts, it failed to distinguish between "unnecessary" and actually "incorrect" usage, particularly with regard to punctuation (and as a self-confessed "comma person", I wasn't convinced that some of the examples were indeed unnecessary, much less incorrect). Nevertheless, this is an informative and well-organized section. Chapters I believe will be particularly helpful to many users include those covering mathematics; the differences between American and British spelling, including -ise/-ize and -yse/-yze endings; correct use of quotation marks, particularly for direct speech; and the list of frequently confused terms.

Part 3 moves on to special scientific conventions, a revised and updated section. I was particularly keen to read the chapter on "Genetic nomenclature", an area that has been subject to a wide range of style conventions over the years. The book covers general nomenclature (e.g. italics for [most] genes, roman [upright] type for proteins) and then covers certain groups in detail, including bacteria, viruses, some commonly used plants, and transgenic animals.

Other useful chapters include those on taxonomy, physiology and diseases, as well as non-biological subjects such as geology and astronomy. Some of these chapters are outside my subject areas, but after reading them, I certainly felt far more confident about tackling any that might come my way.

A definite plus point for this book is that, while encouraging standardization and “supporting convergence in style” it does not seek to enforce a particular style, or indeed a particular type of English, but rather, as it states, presents the alternatives to the reader. Recognizing that publishers will very often have their own style manuals, it reiterates the importance of ensuring that a decision is made and written into the publisher’s style guide, so that submitting authors can adhere more readily to the expected style.

The final part of the book deals mainly with the production process, and as a former production editor I found this subject was well covered. It gives those not working in-house a sense of the complete publishing process. It includes the different types of publication (e.g. journals, books, reports, conference proceedings). Referencing is covered in depth by a long and detailed

chapter. Non-text elements such as the parts of a table are described in detail. The chapter on manuscript preparation describes the copy editor’s role and shows examples of the tags used in electronic typesetting. The final chapter, on proof correction, shows both the ANSI-NISO and BSI standard proofreading marks. An excellent index finishes off the book.

So, is this book worth buying? My answer would be a resounding “Yes”. My overall impression of the book was that it brings together a wide range of information; some of it one may have on the shelf, but probably scattered among several books. This wealth of information makes it an essential for anyone engaged in scientific editing, and the price (around £35) gives the purchaser a lot of book for the money.

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Oxford University Press. 2005. **New Hart's rules**. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ix, 417 p. GBP12.99/USD25.00. ISBN 0-19-861041-6. [from 1 January 2007 ISBN 978 0-19-861041-0]

For most of my working life as an editor, one book travelled with me everywhere, the 36th edition of *Hart's rules for compositors and readers at the University Press*. Oxford. This invaluable little book started life in 1893 as a slim 24-page booklet intended only for staff working in OUP's offices; however Horace Hart decided to publish it after finding copies of its latest edition being offered for sale. So from its 15th edition it became generally available, and it continued to be revised and to expand and become the supreme reference book for editors that I knew and loved. Finally, in 2002 OUP replaced it with a book entitled *The Oxford guide to style* in a larger format. Now they have decided to revert to the smaller format again (though not as small as my beloved 36th edition!), and have given it the subtitle *The handbook of style for writers and editors*, thus explicitly recognizing its value to editors as well as compositors and readers.

This new work is the product of an editorial team under a chief editorial consultant, Rosemary Roberts, and covers a wider range of topics than the old *Hart's rules*. It is stated to be part of a trio of books for writers and editors, the others being the *New Oxford dictionary for writers and editors* and the *New Oxford spelling dictionary*. For this reason there is rather less about spelling in *New Hart's Rules*, but otherwise it covers much of what the older editions did, with much new material.

Thus the first chapter: Parts of a book, is essentially new, while chapter 2: Preparing copy, uses the same text as an example of proof correction as the older version. Chapter 3: Spelling and hyphenation, covers much the same ground as before but with, for example, much shorter lists of -ise and -ize endings and omitting completely the old “some alternative and difficult spellings” — presumably leaving that sort of thing to the companion volumes. In similar vein there is a longer description of the principles of hyphenation and, again, a much shorter list; however there is actually more attention given to word division — a topic that seems to be less and less understood in the outside world.

Chapter 4: Punctuation, again has more rules and fewer examples, but does explain the different uses of different brackets, unlike my 36th edition. Chapter 5: Capitalization, includes such up-to-date advice as “Excessive uses of capitals in e-mails and on bulletin boards is frowned upon (it is regarded as ‘shouting’)” as well as a very comprehensive treatment of its topic, and Chapter 6: Names, is very useful not least in dealing with various problems with foreign names. Chapter 7: Italic, roman and other type treatments, includes the use of bold, small capitals and underlining, again stating principles rather than examples, though in an example “ad nauseam” has moved from italics to roman. Chapter 8 deals with Work titles in text, and Chapter 9 with Quotations and direct speech.

Chapter 10: Abbreviations and symbols, shows some interesting changes in the advice given to reflect changing habits; BC and AD are now in small caps without points, and Mr and Mrs have lost their points too, and it advocates using “an” before abbreviations or initialisms with a vowel sound (e.g. before LCC) where the old Hart had “a”. Chapter 11: Numbers and dates, has a useful section on old and new style dates, and also on when there was a change in the month which began the year.

Chapter 12 is a long chapter on languages, with a longer list of abbreviations in French and a similar list in German, where it also describes the new (1998) German orthography. The section on Italian makes me glad I have not had to do much editing of Italian articles, and the chapter includes short sections on a very wide range of languages.

Readers of *ESE* will probably not need much from Chapter 13: Law and legal references, but Chapters 14: Science, mathematics, and computing, 15: Lists and tables, 16: Illustrations, 17: Notes and references, and 18: Bibliography, cover a number of topics dealt with in various sections of *EASE's own Science Editors' Handbook*, and cover them well in more limited space. Chapter 19: Indexing, offers again much useful advice, while Chapter 20: Copyright and other

publishing responsibilities, gives valuable warnings on avoiding some of the more serious difficulties editors and publishers may run into if they are not on top of their legal and moral duties.

All in all, this book does provide editors with a remarkably comprehensive aid to their work; it seems

destined to be as essential to new recruits to our profession as its predecessors have been for over a century.

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News from committees

EASE Council update

The new Council met under the chairmanship of Arjan Polderman on Sunday 18 June 2006 in the Palac Larischa in Kraków after the Ninth General Assembly and Conference.

A questionnaire had been circulated during the conference to evaluate it and Alison Clayson gave a preliminary report of the results. About 30% of the delegates had returned the questionnaire and the overall impression was very favourable. She briefly summarized both positive and negative comments on items such as the length, style and content of the conference, and the social activities. She will prepare a full report to be published in the next issue of the journal.

EASE's standpoint on the use of impact factors was discussed. It was agreed to draft a statement to the effect that EASE deplored the fact that impact factors, while being a good measure for journals, were not a good measure for papers and research. This statement would then be posted on the Forum inviting comments, and subsequently on the web inviting people to sign up to it. Sister societies should be invited to draw the attention of their members to the statement and EASE members similarly could contact their other professional organizations. It was recognized that it could take some time to effect a cultural change but it is certainly worth a try.

In the light of recent problems with the membership database, it was agreed that a new one was needed. This would be run from Lund under the guidance of Linus Svensson, who would be working closely with Sheila Evered, Jenny Gretton and Rod Hunt to develop one which met the needs of EASE. It was hoped to have it up and running by mid-November.

With regard to the venue for the 10th EASE Conference, it was hoped that this would be somewhere in the Mediterranean but the final decision would depend on the outcome of an application to the EU for funding. Rod Hunt outlined

the timetable for this, with applications being called for in early 2007, and an indication of how successful this was would be known within the year.

A seminar committee was set up comprising Remedios Melero, Eva Baranyiová and Mercè Piqueras who would organize a one-day seminar in Barcelona in April/May 2007 on alternatives to the impact factor and possibly also one on training.

Alison Clayson said there was much interest in the idea of national clusters organizing local meetings using the EASE name but not asking for funding. Some concern was expressed about the use of the EASE name and logo but it was agreed that as long as the meeting was not promoted as an EASE meeting, then EASE material, such as flyers, could be made available, perhaps in return for a report in the journal.

Joan Marsh said she had had some discussion with Elisabeth Kessler about training courses and one possible idea was to put together a set of standard courses which would be endorsed by EASE. This would include such topics as science writing, science editing, structure of articles and help with style and English. It was agreed that Joan would draw up a project plan for producing a package for trainers and workshops, and possibly a trainers' training course.

In the light of recent falling membership, a new recruitment drive would be launched and steered by a committee led by Alison Clayson with Mare-Anne Laane, Mercè Piqueras and Eva Baranyiová. Suggested means of promotion included contact with sister organizations, such as the Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) and the Council of Science Editors (CSE), various forums, through the web site, and by rewarding members with a compact disc for recruiting others.

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Introducing your EASE Council

Council consists of five officers and up to ten Ordinary Members. The President presides at meetings of EASE and Council, rules on questions of procedure that may arise, may appoint ad-hoc committees and can appoint a replacement if a vacancy on Council occurs. A Vice President can fulfil the duties of the President at any meeting from which the latter is absent. The Secretary maintains the records of EASE and Council, keeps minutes of meetings, and is responsible for all secretarial duties required by the activities of EASE. The Treasurer collects and disburses funds and is responsible for the accounts. The Past President and Editor-in-Chief of the journal are ex officio members (they do not vote).

Presidents and Vice-Presidents cannot be re-elected to that position; the Secretary and Treasurer can serve up to three terms (a term runs from one General Assembly to the next). Ordinary Members are eligible for one further term in that position.

How could you become a member of Council? A three-member nominations committee invites members to submit suggestions for nominations, and these are submitted to the Secretary six months before a General Assembly. Also, EASE members can nominate eligible members of EASE for an office or position by writing to the Secretary not less than three months before a General Assembly.



Linus Svensson (Vice-President; Sweden): After basic training in biology at Lund University, Linus moved on with studies in systematic botany which resulted in a Ph. D. in 1990. Continuing his work at the Department for Systematic Botany, LU, Linus was and is interested in issues associated with

small plant populations and population genetics. As well as being the Managing Editor of *Oikos*, head of the Oikos Editorial Office, Technical Editor of *Ecological Bulletins* and *Web Ecology* and producing the homepages for our journals, Linus participates in the development of research strategies in biodiversity and has been involved with EASE for quite some time. When not working, he can be found hunting for moose or wild boar or trying to catch the big northern pikes in the Swedish archipelago, or in the kitchen trying to cook the catch.



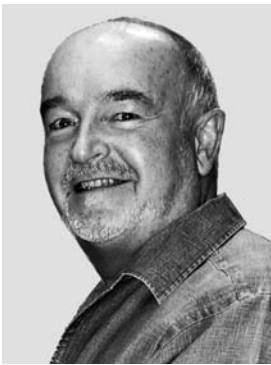
Arjan Polderman (President; The Netherlands) graduated as a biotechnologist from Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands. He started as an editor of the popular science magazine *Natuur en Techniek*. Since 1979 he has been the managing editor of *Pharmaceutisch Weekblad*, the journal of the Royal Dutch Association for the Advancement of

Pharmacy. Until 1996 he also was the managing editor of *Pharmacy World & Science* (now published by Springer). He was involved in the training of Dutch desk editors and was secretary of the Netherlands Association of Science Editors (Wetenschappelijke-Redacteurskring, WERK). In 1984 he joined EASE and from 1993 to 2003 was a member of the Editorial Board of *European Science Editing*. In 2003 Arjan joined the Council of EASE as the Treasurer of the Association and in June 2006 has been elected EASE's President. In his leisure time, he likes cycling and walking and belongs to a chamber choir.



Joan Marsh (Vice-President; United Kingdom) studied Natural Sciences at Cambridge, then did a PhD at the National Institute for Medical Research in London. Joan's first job was with the Ciba Foundation, where she was taught the art of editing by Maeve O'Connor. Seven happy years were spent dissecting

manuscripts and concocting scientific discussions in near-perfect prose. Then a rugby tour led Joan to New Zealand and to a five-year stint in South-East Asia. In Hong Kong she resumed her editing career, working for Excerpta Medica. In other countries she taught scientific writing at various universities. Returning to the UK in 1999, Joan joined John Wiley & Sons as a commissioning editor on the Life and Medical book programme. An EASE member since the late 1980s, Joan helped organize the Bath and Kraków conferences and edited the Kraków Trum-peter. She maintains her fitness and her sanity by refereeing rugby.



Roderick Hunt (Treasurer; United Kingdom) is Visiting Professor in Biosciences at the University of Exeter, UK. After his studies at the University of Sheffield, his research led him into plant growth analysis, climate change impacts, plant strategy theory, hierarchy theory, expert systems and cellular automata model-

ling. He currently helps manage the *Annals of Botany*, the world's oldest general botanical title. Rod has been a member of EASE since 1991, serving as a Council member (1997-2000 and 2003-2006) and Vice-President (2000-2003) and currently as Company Secretary as well as Treasurer. He has been a frequent contributor to *European Science Editing* and also wrote the *Science Editors' Handbook* chapters on Scientific Authorship and References. Kraków participants will already know that his other passion is operatic performance and EASE members who are also part of CSE can find a whole article on his stage exploits in CSE's 'Other than editing' series (*Science Editor* 2006;29:62-65).



Sheila Evered (Secretary; United Kingdom): Sheila graduated from the School of Oriental and African Studies in 1973 with a degree in Anthropology and Linguistics. For several years she ran a small family business and then for nine years worked as PA to the Director of the Ciba Foundation (now Novartis Founda-

tion), where her work involved the organisation of symposia. She has been secretary, treasurer and chairman of various voluntary organisations and has wide experience of freelance administrative work. She has just returned from living in France for two years, where her husband was working, and now lives in Berkshire. Her interests include choral singing, reading, tennis, theatre, crosswords and travel.



Elisabeth Kessler (Past President; Sweden) holds a BSc from Stockholm University and an Honorary Doctorate from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the same University, and from 2002 to 2004 was Visiting Professor in science communication at the Faculty of Environmental Studies,

Renmin University, Beijing, China. For the past 20 years she has been Editor-in-Chief of *Ambio – A Journal of the Human Environment*, published by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. She is also a member of the Academy's Environmental Committee and one of the three members of the Organizing Committee for Sweden's Royal Colloquia, the themes of which reflect the King's broad environmental interests. Any time that remains from her busy working life and constant travel commitments is devoted to horse riding, ice-skating, distance skiing, and studies in Mandarin Chinese. Dr Kessler lives outside Stockholm and has recently taken up kayaking on summer evenings on the nearby lake. Old-age pension is not on her current agenda.



Mercè Piqueras (Spain): is a biologist, science writer and science editor; collaborator of the Microbial-Ecology Group of the University of Barcelona; Staff Editor of *International Microbiology*; member of the Editorial Board of *Treballs de la Societat Catalana de Biologia*; President of the Catalan Association for Scientific

Communication and of the Executive Council of the Catalan Society for the History of Science and Technology, and member of the committees organizing the Barcelona Year of Science (2007) and the Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF, 2008). Mercè is coauthor of *Walks Through the Scientific World of Barcelona*, now in its second edition and was awarded the Premi de Literatura Científica 2004 for her popular-science book *Cròniques de l'altra veritat* and Medalla d'Honor of the City Council of Barcelona (2003). She enjoys reading, writing, music, cinema, strolling in the old Barcelona streets, and exploring the www and also the srw (surrounding real world).



Alison McKelvey Clayson (France): I joined EASE during the late 1980s when working as editor of *Science International* and overseeing the small publishing house run by ICSU, the International Council for Science. Basel was my first EASE conference, and one I'll never forget because the streets were lined with flow-

ering linden trees that made me sneeze non-stop for a week. Now I've got up my own communications and outreach business, catering mostly to big international science programmes based at UNESCO. They cover water resources management, education, the environment and sustainable development. The tasks are varied: science writing and popularization, design of public information materials, web content provider, speech writer, photo documentalist and editor. When not chasing clients, I keep very close watch over the tomatoes on my Paris balcony – a pastime that amuses the neighbours; and I play renaissance and baroque music with a small consort group on my harpsichord and viola da gamba.



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Eva Baranyiová (Czech Republic) graduated from the School of Veterinary Medicine in Brno, Czechoslovakia, in 1967. She joined the Department of Physiology to participate in research on farm animal development and published more than 40 original papers in domestic and foreign journals. In 1971

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Mare-Anne Laane (Estonia): Mare-Anne works for the Tallinn University of Technology as a lecturer in the Department of English, where she teaches communication and science writing for master and PhD students and other academics. Her research interests focus on rhetorical and cultural differences

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Council at Work, Krakow



EASE web site: new features

In 2005 the EASE web site (www.ease.org.uk) was redesigned and new content and facilities were added as part of the ongoing development of services to our members and anyone interested in science communication and editing. This short report describes the organization of content on the web site, to help you find the resources you need.

The web site contains general information about EASE, its history, its members, the Council and Publication Committee members, and the services that EASE provides. You will also find information on courses and meetings, dates of examinations of the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences and links to related organizations.

The Publications area of the web site includes past issues of *European Science Editing*, the full text of which can be downloaded as PDF files, free of charge. Past issues are posted on the site six months after publication. The table of contents of the latest issue of the journal, indexes dating from 1986 to 2005 and instructions for authors are also available in this area.

Information about the EASE Forum, an e-mail discussion list, is currently accessed via the menu bar at the top of the *European Science Editing* page. Simple instructions on joining the Forum can be found on this page.

The table of contents of the *Science editors' handbook* is located in the Publications area of the web site and

is updated each time a new chapter has been published. Members of EASE, who receive new handbook chapters by mail when they are published, can print an up-to-date copy of the table of contents from the web site. Non-members will be alerted to the appearance of new chapters in announcements on the home page.

By choosing Membership from the left-hand menu you can access information on the different types of membership subscription offered by EASE, and you can enter the EASE shop, where you can join EASE or renew your membership through a secure online payment system. Non-members can set up a subscription to *European Science Editing* or purchase the *Science editors' handbook* online. There is also a facility for paying invoices sent to you by EASE.

New features are continually in development for the EASE web site (see below for one example). If you have any suggestions for how it could be improved, or if there is anything that you would like to see added to the site, please send me your feedback to the address below.

Meanwhile, keep checking for more new updates and developments!

Emma Campbell (webmaster)
mailtoemma_c@yahoo.co.uk

Job announcements on the web site

Linus Svensson and Emma Cambell, our web site experts, are working with Jenny Gretton and John Allardice, who handles advertising in the journal, to develop a section for advertising jobs on the web site. They hope to have something running by the end of the year.

If you are interested in advertising in this section, please contact Emma (mailtoemma_c@yahoo.co.uk) in the first instance.