

The Editors' WebWatch

The Editors' WebWatch is a membership-driven resource of web sites for editors and writers in the sciences. Please send suggestions to: ese.webwatch@gmail.com.

Hot topics on the internet: following the virtual news trail in the Paraxel International phase 1 trial scandal

Readers are often cautioned to beware of the democratic and unfettered World Wide Web as a source of news or interpretation. Yet careful cross-checking of facts plus critical reading of rapidly posted sources can give a deeper or broader picture of events than traditional media can offer.

How the 2006 story of the phase 1 trial that nearly killed six men unfolded on the internet was analysed in a recent article by EASE member Karen Shashok in *The Write Stuff* — the journal of the European Medical Writers Association (Shashok K. 2006. On the net . . . drug testing, adverse reactions, and the TGN1412 disaster. *The Write Stuff* 15(2);63–66). The analysis led to interesting insights into the dissemination of news through web postings, some on sites unfiltered by journalists or other hired writers. Shashok found that information about patients' progress was available on blogs authored by individuals after the mainstream press had moved on to other aspects of the story. Such self-archiving instruments provided a window onto the critical thinking of a wide range of expert commentators and policy makers.

Conclusions were that the internet allowed the manufacturer and institutions to present news more directly than would have been possible through traditional media. Discussion progressed more quickly, Shashok wrote, as manufacturing errors were investigated and ruled out and debate could switch to ethics and scientific background.

For readers without a subscription for accessing *The Write Stuff* article easily and who want to see how the story was handled on the web firsthand, Shashok recommends the following web sites: <http://hcrenewal.blogspot.com/2006/03/window-on-human-research-done-by.html>, a collection by the Alliance for Human Health Research Protection, and www.blacktriangle.org/blog, by Anthony Cox, who is also the author of the Wikipedia entry for TGN1412, the drug in the trial. My googling finds Cox to be a pharmacist with the West Midlands Centre for Adverse Drug Reaction Reporting in the

UK—a good example of a scientific author for the 21st century.

Plagiarism: a new journal

www.plagiary.org/index.htm

A new open-access scholarly journal on the growing problem of plagiarism has appeared: *Plagiary: Cross-Disciplinary Studies in Plagiarism, Fabrication, and Falsification*. The journal's interdisciplinary approach refers to differences in how plagiarism is perceived from different fields. The scope extends to any form of misconduct involving documents in any medium. The journal is also open to discussion of legitimate means of derivative expression — such as mimicry, parody and pastiche — as a start towards distinguishing real plagiarism from acceptable borrowing and inspiration.

The project was launched in January 2006 and the first 10 articles, a book review and an editorial had been posted by early September. Abstracts are posted as they are accepted and full articles as they are revised.

Plagiarism again: an updated web site resource

<http://facpub.stjohns.edu/%7Eeroigm/plagiarism>

The first article published in *Plagiary* was a review of cases handled by the US Office of Research Integrity (ORI) — reminding me that the ORI-sponsored instructional resource on plagiarism by Miguel Roig of St John's University in New York was updated in August 2006. Those who looked at those very complete lessons and exercises when they were first mentioned in this column in August 2005 (*ESE* 31(3);95) know that the discussion, examples and exercises are highly appropriate for developing writers in the sciences.

Journal backfiles digitization

<http://library.wellcome.ac.uk/node280.html>

Three partners — the Wellcome Trust, the Joint Informations Systems Committee, and the US National Library of Medicine — in a project to digitize historical journal backfiles have published the details on a web site. The site outlines objectives and lists the journals that have been selected. The oldest is the *Journal of*

the Royal Society of Medicine, first published in 1809.

A practical freeware tool — work faster and better

Make your e-mail discussion of manuscripts with authors and colleagues go much faster with a simple tool to select, copy and paste partial screen shots of what you want to show them or query. Screen shots are pictures of what you see on your screen.

Most of us are familiar with keystrokes that will paste what we see on the screen onto the computer's virtual clipboard, for later pasting to MS Power Point slides, documents or e-mails. (If not, try holding down the Control and Alt keys, then pressing the Print Screen key, and then going to any MS Word document before pasting the picture there.) Rarely do you want to show an author the entire screen, however, and you don't want to bother cropping it in Paint or other software. So wouldn't it be nice to download a tool that lets you draw a box around exactly the part of a screen that interests you? The little camera tool on the Acrobat Reader toolbar works like that, but what about other environments on your computer?

With freeware Screenshot Captor you can paste equations into an e-mail to focus an author's attention for a quick question. You could show a typesetter which part of a figure is flawed and use fewer words to explain what needs to be done. In short you can work faster and communicate more effectively — especially with authors whose native language may not be English and for whom a picture is better than dozens of words.

Screenshot Captor is freeware, from many download sites — just use your favorite downloader or google the words *freeware screenshot captor*. Here are two sites that make it available: www.snapfiles.com/get/screenshotcator.html or www.donationcoder.com/Software/Mouser/screenshotcaptor/index.html

For fun

www.worldwidewords.org/index.htm

Author Michael Quinion, who writes about English words and the grammatical, social and literary

company they've kept over the centuries, has collected his short essays, stories and items from a question-and-answer column on this well-organized web page: World Wide Words. Quinion's subject is international English from a British point of view, and he's best when writing about words — new or old — and their history rather than structures.

The site is searchable for those who know what they're looking for. It's also fun to roam from tab to tab, and the titles of short essays (articles, he calls them) convey their content

immediately. I clicked on the question-answer entry for *eggplant* expecting to learn why US Americans abandoned *aubergine* and took up the more prosaic word. Instead, I learned that *eggplant* is the older name and that *aubergine* came from al-Andalusian Arabic (*al-badinjan*) after filtering through Catalan and French.

If you need to exercise discipline when engaging with a web site like this, between editing jobs you can allow yourself a specific number of clicks per day on Quinion's *Surprise me!* tab. That gives you a random pick

from the question-answer collection.

Quinion is a contributor to the *Oxford Dictionary of New Words* and the author of books published by the Oxford and Cambridge University presses and other houses. Those books are lightly promoted on the web site — not obtrusively so.

Contributions compiled by Mary Ellen Kerans (ese.webwatch@gmail.com).

Acknowledgements

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News Notes

PLoS increases charges as journals fail to break even

The open access journals of the Public Library of Science (PLOS) lost more than \$1m in the last financial year, a report in *Nature* claims. In response, PLOS is to increase the cost to authors to as much as \$2500 a paper. Although the organization's annual income was up (to almost \$1m in 2004–2005) spending was \$5.5m. The philanthropic grants that launched the project make up the shortfall. PLOS's newest open access journals are run externally by volunteer academics, which saves money. And the soon-to-be launched interdisciplinary *PLoS ONE* will peer-review for technical correctness and not originality, increasing acceptance rates and so revenue, PLOS says. (*Nature* 2006;441:914)

Journals must publicly expose plagiarists

Authors who are investigated and found guilty of plagiarism can continue to plagiarize because journals and universities are not responding appropriately, says Iain Chalmers in the *BMJ*. He recommends that journals use systematic reviews and possibly specialist software to detect plagiarism. Universities must be open in their investigations and active about checking the credibility of all papers authored by identified plagiarists in all journals. Where credibility is lacking, journals must inform their readers. Chalmers describes the case of a university professor who continued to plagiarize after the university was informed of similar previous wrongdoing. The university had said it would appreciate the "tactful handling of the case" when it was first informed. (*BMJ* 2006;333: 594–596)

A feeling is so much stronger than a thought

Asking participants in surveys and focus groups how they feel — instead of what they think — better targets the decision-making part of the brain, says Kent Anderson from the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The location of 95% of cognitive activity is the limbic, or dog, brain, which processes not words but metaphors. Metaphors synthesize knowledge and allow for anticipation and linking ideas. Asking people about what they feel could mean asking fewer people, understanding other information better, and developing responses that work on the most influential part of the brain. Surveys usually rely on rational responses and anticipate results, and peer pressure in focus groups can stifle emotions. (*Learned Publishing* 2006;19:209–218)

Don't believe significant results in abstracts

The *P* values associated with relative risks or odds ratios in the abstracts of biomedical papers are much more likely to be slightly less than 0.05 than to be slightly greater. This highly skewed distribution around $P=0.05$ — the conventional 95% significance level — indicates bias in reporting or analysis. A study in the *BMJ* looked at more than 500 cohort and case-control studies. The author, Peter Gøtzsche, argues that although significant results in abstracts are common, they should not generally be believed. Often, the abstract is the only part of a paper that is read, and it should accurately and fairly represent the paper's results. Lowering the conventional significance level or scrapping it altogether, blinding authors in analysis and writing up, and greater editorial scrutiny might help. (*BMJ* 2006;333:231–234)

Sub-Saharan Africa gets free access to physics journals

Online access to the American Physical Society's journals is now free for non-profit making institutions in sub-Saharan Africa. The society's publications include the *Physical Review* journals, which carry reports of primary research — essential reading for researchers in the physical sciences. The programme for the enhancement of research information is run by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications. It is hoped that the society will expand the programme to other developing regions. To register, see www.inasp.info/peri, which also lists the countries currently allowed free access. (www.fit.edu/fip)

US fails to legislate against two-tier internet

Politicians in the United States failed to enshrine "net neutrality" in legislation this June. Currently, internet protocols treat all packets of data equally, whether they originated on the servers of a multinational corporation or in someone's bedroom. AT&T, Verizon, Comcast, and other telecommunications companies, and governments, are seeking greater control of the information superhighway and greater revenue. Advanced technologies such as video streaming are intolerant of delays in transmission, and the companies want to prioritize data — and charge a premium for speed. The resulting two-tier internet would favour web sites able to pay. Google, eBay, Microsoft, and Amazon supported the failed amendment and say that net neutrality led to the innovation of the past 20 years. See www.savetheinternet.com and www.itsournet.org. (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/5063072.stm>)

Asking authors to declare competing interests is not enough

Some of the authors of two papers published in *JAMA* this year did not disclose relevant financial ties to the drug industry, in violation of the journal's policy (2006;295:499–507 and 2006;295:2275–2285). Had the ties been declared, these authors' recommendations might not have been received so uncritically. Journals may also be leaving themselves open to litigation, as accomplices in concealing information that might lead to deaths. The editors of *JAMA* and the *New England Journal of Medicine* deemed as "impractical and unnecessary" the suggestion of a three-year ban on authors who do not disclose financial ties (www.ahrp.org/cms/content/view/288/55). For journals to reduce their exploitation by the marketing departments of drug manufacturers, editors must be more proactive in identifying authors' potential conflicts of interests.

Poor countries to get subsidized access to journals until at least 2015

The HINARI, AGORA, and OARE initiatives will continue until at least 2015, to match the time scale of the United Nations millennium development goals. Five years after the first programme started, the representatives of many publishers, colleagues from the UN, Yale and Cornell Libraries, and other organizations met to review the schemes, in July 2006. The health internetwork access to research initiative (HINARI) provides subsidized access to journals in biomedical sciences for non-profit-making local organizations in poor countries (www.who.int/hinari). AGORA is the corresponding programme for agriculture (www.aginternetwork.org), and the soon-to-be launched OARE covers environmental research. The programmes provide free access to 2100 institutions in 69 of the poorest countries. Guidelines for publishers are unchanged. (www.library.yale.edu/~license/ListArchives/0608msg00069.html)

Physicists need ethics education web site

The American Physical Society's task force on ethics education has announced that it supports the creation and maintenance of a web site to serve as a resource for ethics education. The proposed web site should include case studies illustrating ethical problems, including those associated with publishing practice, conflicts of interests, data acquisition, mentoring,

issues of bias, and health and safety. The society already provides some resources on ethics: an official statement is at www.aps.org/statements/02_4.cfm and guidelines for professional conduct are at www.aps.org/statements/02_2.cfm. (*APS News* 2006;15(7):1, 3)

South Korea pays researchers for publishing in top journals

Since June, researchers in South Korea who publish in certain journals are being rewarded with bonuses of 2500 euros per paper. Only the first and corresponding authors qualify. Critics worry that bonuses encourage fraud and will lower the quality of research, but papers must still pass the journals' peer review systems. The practice is already widespread elsewhere. In China, researchers can make bonuses 10 times larger. And in Pakistan, financial inducements have substantially upped the number of papers published and are an important supplement to researchers' low wages. A linked editorial says that governments should avoid crude cash-per-paper incentives and tailor rewards to promote ethical research. (*Nature* 2006;441:792; 785–786)

Click fraud worries online publishers

Fourteen per cent of clicks on internet advertisements deliberately link users to sites they were not expecting (www.clickfraudindex.com). This "click fraud" is lucrative because sites pay advertisers per user who clicks through. "Overall losses" could be as much as \$1bn (*Business Week* 2006 Feb 27). Internet heavyweights Google, Microsoft, Yahoo! and others have formed a working group to tackle the problem (www.iab.net). Advertising links have become big business for online publishers — *The Times* newspaper has ditched entry charges to its web site in favour of advertising online to readers, and AOL has scrapped subscription fees. (www.theregister.co.uk/2006/08/03/iab_click_fraud_committee)

Nature sends researchers from poor countries to conferences

Delegates from poor countries will attend leading science conferences, thanks to Nature Publishing Group. Awards of up to \$1500 will enable researchers to go to the Gordon Research Conferences in 2006. These conferences are international forums for the biological, chemical, and physical sciences and their related technologies. The conference programme may extend to related subjects in areas such as industrial technology, the environmental

sciences, geology, medicine, computation, science education and public policy. The primary criteria for attendance are scientific accomplishment and a commitment to participate. Unfortunately all awards have now been allocated. See www.grc.uri.edu/funding/nature.htm for a list of eligible countries. (www.nature.com/press_releases/NPG_Gordon_Research_Conference.pdf)

Chemistry journals get open access web site

An open access web site for chemists was launched in August by the Science Navigation Group Chemistry Central at www.chemistrycentral.com. The site comprises peer-reviewed articles from five open access journals, including *Geochemical Transactions* and the *Beilstein Journal of Organic Chemistry*. All research articles are free and permanently accessible online immediately after publication. The site will launch more journals soon, including the *Chemistry Central Journal*, which will cover the entire discipline. (www.biomedcentral.com/info/about/pr-releases?pr=20060822)

The UK Royal Society of Chemistry, which publishes more than 30 subscription journals, has described the open access/author pays model as "ethically flawed" and "financially unproven". It argues that if the business model turns out to be unsustainable, parts of the scientific record may be lost when publishing platforms fold. (www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/News/2006/August/22080601.asp)

Traditional thinking may slow editorial development

Traditional thinking might be slowing the international development of some academic journals in China. Conservative editors "emphasize completeness and synthesis during editing." And traditional thought patterns can also emphasize admiration for authority and lead to a bias toward familiar authors, say Shao Ju-fang and Shen Hui-yun from the *Chinese Journal of Emergency Medicine*. "Chinese traditional thought" sees "the universe, life, nature, and human society as an organic whole". But corruptions in the peer review process damage the quality and image of a journal. A "more scientific and progressive way of editorial thinking" will be of benefit both to research and to China, they say. (*Learned Publishing* 2006;19:165–167)

Online spelling company checks its own work

A company that specializes in correcting the text on web sites had to reissue a press release because it contained spelling mistakes. The original communication mentioned "16 million we pages" that Canadian firm TextTrust had checked for spelling in the past year. "Independant," "accomodation," and "definately" were also wrongly spelt. An embarrassed public relations manager, Pat Brink, admitted, "I made the mistake, not TextTrust — they do a much better job". TextTrust sells software that eliminates "negative text impressions on web sites", using a combination of human

editors and special software to find spelling errors (www.texttrust.com). (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/5219220.stm>)

Pathologically usual units are less parochial

Journalists love to give helpful comparisons, says *New Scientist* — for example, height as a multiple of the Empire State building and area in football pitches. Scientists too use non-SI, natural systems of units to make calculations simpler. Bernard Peek remembers a system of "pathologically usual units" — with the speed of light and the universal gravitational constant set to unity. In this system of geometrized units, one

unit of length is about an imperial foot; one unit of mass weighs about the same as the planet Jupiter; and one unit of time takes about a nanosecond. This foot-Jupiter-nanosecond system is also less parochial than using metres based on the circumference of the Earth, he says. (*New Scientist* 2006 Sept 9, p 96)

Thanks to: Margaret Cooter, John Glen, Maurice Long, Fiona Godlee and Jane Sykes

Contributions to News Notes

Please send items for this section to Richard Hurley (rhurley@bmj.com), with "News Notes" in the subject line.

News from editing societies

ALPSP

Congratulations are due to the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (www.alpsp.org). Their web site has been selected by Thomson Scientific for inclusion in *Current Web Contents*TM, which provides links to selected and evaluated web sites.

The scholarly web sites selected for inclusion complement the journal coverage in *Current Contents Connect*[®], the *Web of Science*TM, and other *ISI Web of Knowledge*SM applications. ALPSP was selected because it "publishes high-quality material on the Web".

ALPSP is developing training plans with Chinese publishers and hopes to find work placements for Chinese publishers at European, North American, or Australia/New Zealand publishers. It is envisioned that during the placement the visiting publisher will gain a thorough understanding of international scholarly publishing.

ALA

The American Library Association (www.ala.org) has been awarded a substantial sum by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in support of the Association's efforts to ensure free public access to the internet in all of America's public libraries. We tend to forget that even in prosperous Western countries there is a digital divide, with disadvantaged individuals having to rely on public libraries for their primary access to computers and the internet. The support provided by the Gates Foundation will help to ensure that America's public libraries can invest in the hardware and connectivity upgrades necessary to sustain quality services.

The Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) of the ALA has approved a revision of Guidelines for the Introduction of Electronic Information Resources to Users, which will assist librarians who provide and publicize new electronic resources. The guidelines cover planning and policy setting, testing, compatibility and remote access, staff education, user instruction, and assessment and evaluation. The Guidelines can be accessed through the RUSA web site (www.ala.org/rusa/stndelectron.html).

AALP

The Association of American University Presses (www.aaupnet.org) draws attention to an excellent initiative — Books Donation Programs, run by the Sabre Foundation (www.sabre.org). Many university presses have worked on successful book donation programmes to libraries in Bosnia, Asia, and Afghanistan (Kabul University library is particularly in need of support). Could EASE set up something similar, albeit on a smaller scale, to support editors?

AMWA (Australasia)

The Australasian Medical Writers Association (www.medicalwriters.org) has made the text of a lecture on "Copyright for freelance writers" by Caroline Morgan of the Copyright Agency Limited available on its web site. The lecture provided a tour of copyright law, covering communication rights and moral rights, and how recent changes affect freelance writers.

ISTC

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators

(www.istc.org.uk) has been reviewing its Code of Professional Practice with a view to producing a shorter, simpler, and more realistic Code for its members. The two-page draft statement covers the values to which members should aspire and the duties they have to various parties (the profession, clients, colleagues, users). It is pleausably concise.

INASP

The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (www.inasp.info) has run workshops on publishing in Kathmandu, Nepal, and will shortly hold workshops on "Strengthening African scholarly publishing" in Accra, Ghana, and on "Monitoring and evaluating the use of e-resources" in Vietnam, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and Uganda. The most recent INASP newsletter covers a series of training sessions on "Preparing authors, publishers, and librarians to work together building open-access digital libraries" attended by participants from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Cuba.

The newsletter also reports on an "Open access survey of Africa-published journals", the full report of which can be accessed through www.inasp.info/pubs. Questionnaires were sent to 230 journal editors in sub-Saharan Africa; 48 were returned. Analysis showed that few journals were indexed in databases and that most had poor visibility outside their immediate community (which reminds me of the session on cultural differences at the recent EASE Conference in Kraków; see *ESE* 2006;34(3):69-70). Because funding was often a problem, volunteer staff did much of the

editing and production work. Most articles came from African authors. There was confusion and misunderstanding about Open Access — while editors would like global visibility, they were worried about their journals' survival. There is a need for training and information on electronic publishing, to raise awareness of Open Access, a conclusion that is not solely applicable to African academic communities.

PLA

The Publishers Association (www.publishers.org.uk) has recently published the "Quarterly UK/USA Price Comparison Index September 2006". The survey was based on the top 20 bestselling original fiction titles and 20 mass-market fiction titles, as published in *The Bookseller* magazine. Despite globalization, the UK and US markets operate in very different ways (e.g. a book published or promoted in a certain way in one country will not necessarily be marketed in the same way in the other country), and only 15 of the 40 books were available in comparable form in both countries. The bottom line was that US consumers pay more

than UK consumers for the same content. Does anyone know whether there are differences in the pricing of academic books?

The PLA has also recently published its 2006 update on "University Library Spending on Books, Journals and Electronic Resources" by Peter Sowden, which can be downloaded from their web site. The report provides data on acquisitions spending by UK universities (the proportion of spending on electronic journals is increasing and that on print-only journals is decreasing) and then compares it with that of universities in Europe, North America, Australia/New Zealand, and Japan. One of the main conclusions is that acquisitions spending in both the UK and Europe is much lower than in the other countries studied.

Open Books Open Minds

The 2006 Open Books Open Minds Campaign (www.openbooksopenminds.co.uk) is a multifaceted campaign to raise the profile of textbooks, to remind lecturers and students of the value of textbooks and of reading widely. The campaign is supported by academic

publishers and booksellers. Those interested might like to go to the web site and find the results of a survey conducted among 771 full-time undergraduates that provides "interesting insights into today's learning landscape".

SfEP

The Society for Editors and Proofreaders (www.sfep.org.uk), which as I write is holding its annual conference in Nottingham, has thrown down the gauntlet to the general public (well, those living in Nottinghamshire) in the form of a piece of written text that needs to be corrected. The Nottinghamshire Proofreading Challenge can be downloaded from the SfEP web site.

Sources

News items are derived from the web sites and official publications of the societies and associations mentioned.

Contributions

Jane Sykes (j.sykes@wxs.nl) welcomes news from societies and national bodies concerned with editing, writing or publishing in the sciences.

Forthcoming meetings, courses and BELS examinations

Maximising the potential of your books programme

ALPSP seminar
7 November 2006 London, UK
(Contact: www.alpssp.org/events.org)

AESE Annual Meeting

8–11 November 2006 San Diego, CA
This meeting of the Association of Earth Science Editors will include "a field trip to sample the geologic and scenic highlights of the region, including beaches, seacliffs, fault exposures, backcountry crags, and a possible dip into the desert." For more about the geology of the region see www.signonsandiego.com or www.sandiegogeologists.org.
(Contact: www.aese.org)

EMWA: 8th autumn meeting

16–18 November 2006 Brussels
The European Medical Writers Association (EMWA) includes a workshop programme that will cover a wide range of medical writing subjects. (Contact: www.emwa.org)

Web 2.0 hip or hype? New ways to engage users with content

ALPSP technology update
21 November 2006 London, UK
(Contact: www.alpssp.org/events.org)

Research conference on research integrity

ORI/USF College of Medicine
1–3 December 2006 Tampa, FL
A conference organized by the Office of Research Integrity and the University of South Florida College of Medicine "for scholars interested in research on research integrity: policy studies, behavioral analysis, law, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, education, biomedical sciences, information science, and other related areas." Keynote speaker: Ana Marusic. (Contact: www.cme.hsc.usf.edu/research_integrity)

2007

The transformation of research communication

International Scholarly Communications Conference (ALPSP seminar)
13 April 2007 London, UK
(Contact: www.alpssp.org/events.org)

IPeD (CASE) conference

9–11 May 2007 Hobart, Tasmania
(Contact: www.iped-editors.org)

CSE 50th Annual Meeting

18–22 May 2007 Austin, Texas
(CSE@councilscienceeditors.org)

COURSES

ALPSP training courses, briefings and technology updates

ALPSP offers half-day and one-day courses and updates on the role of the managing editor, electronic publishing and marketing, journal marketing, production, fulfilment and finance, copyright, and related topics. (Contact: Amanda Whiting, Training Coordinator, Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, tel. +44 (0)1865 247776, training@alpssp.org; www.alpssp-training.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, not structure or format. (Contact: Gill Ward, JKCC, PO Box 106, Marlborough, Wilts, SN8 2RU, UK; tel. +44 (0)1672 520429, fax +44 (0)1672 521008; 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, publishing.training@bookhouse.co.uk; www.train4publishing.co.uk)

Society for Editors and Proofreaders workshops

SfEP runs one-day workshops in London and occasionally elsewhere in the UK on copy-editing, proofreading, grammar and much else. (Training enquiries: tel. +44 (0)20 7736 0901, trainingenquiries@sfe.org.uk. For other enquiries see www.sfe.org.uk, or contact SfEP, Riverbank House, 1 Putney Bridge Approach, London SW6 3J D, UK; tel. +44 (0)20 7736 3278; administration@sfe.org.uk)

Society of Indexers workshops

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

University of Chicago

Medical writing, editing and ethics are among the many courses available at the Graham School of General Studies (5835 S. Kimbark Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637-1608, USA; fax +1 773 702 6814, http://grahamschool.uchicago.edu)

University of Oxford, Dept for Continuing Education

Courses on effective writing for biomedical professionals and on presenting in biomedicine, science and technology. (Contact: Gaye

Walker, CPD Centre, Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, Suite 5, Littlegate House, 16/17 St Ebbses Street, Oxford OX1 1PT, UK; tel. +44 (0)1865 286953, fax +44 (0)1865 286934; gaye.walker@continuing-education.ox.ac.uk, www.conted.ox.ac.uk/cpd/personaldev)

BELS**Board of Editors in the Life Sciences examination schedule**

15 April 2007, Pacific Grove, CA (AMWA)

19 May 2007, Austin, TX (CSE)

10 October 2007, Atlanta, GA (AMWA)

See www.bels.org, or contact Leslie Neistadt (Hughston Sports Medicine Foundation, Inc, 6262 Veterans Parkway, Columbus, GA 31909, USA; neistadt@hughston.com, fax: +1 706 576 3348).

The Editor's Bookshelf

A new team at work

During the EASE Conference in Kraków in June 2006, and following a trend towards renewal of the Association and the major involvement of new and enthusiastic members, a new group went to work on the Bookshelf section.

Moira Vekony, Hervé Maisonneuve, Reme Melero, and many other old and new members of the EASE Publication Committee and the Council talked to us (Paola De Castro, Colin Batchelor and Penny Hubbard) and the three of us individually agreed to collaborate, even if we did not know each other personally.

Our contacts were by e-mail, during a period when Moira was moving from Canada back to Europe, but we kept on going.

We agreed to open a **blog** to work together for the Bookshelf. Then I thought this blog might be shared with all EASE members, to collect suggestions on possible references to be added to the Bookshelf that could be published in each issue of *ESE*. Copyright questions are no problem for this kind of reference information, especially when the comments about each reference are original. We sent notice of the new blog (www.ease-bookshelf.blogspot.com) to the EASE forum and received the warmest welcome, although this is only the initial step of a work in progress.

In expectation of a possible merger with earlier Bookshelf items we have used the same subject headings as in

previous issues. Whenever possible, we have included the URL of the reference described as this is useful for online consultation.

The blog will probably be included in the EASE web site and further developed as a working tool for exchanging news and ideas. Technically speaking, the blog needs to be improved (we know there are some problems for Apple users) and we will also have to find a way to archive all postings appearing under the same heading.

At the moment this is still a personal initiative towards working as a team and it has allowed us to collect the information in the Bookshelf that follows.

If you are interested in this initiative and wish to collaborate, please e-mail paola.decastro@iss.it in order to be invited to join the blog.

ECONOMICS AND FUNDING

Loscalzo J. 2006. **The NIH budget and the future of biomedical research**. New England Journal of Medicine 354(16):1665–1667.

Whatever mechanisms are chosen, it seems clear that new methods of support must be developed if biomedical research is to continue to thrive in the United States. The goal of a durable, steady stream of support for research in the life sciences has never been more pressing, since the research derived from that support has never promised greater benefits. The fate of life-sciences research should not be

consigned to the political winds of Washington.

Frank M. 2006. **Access to the scientific literature — a difficult balance**. New England Journal of Medicine 354(15):1552–1555.

In reviewing the case for open access, it makes more sense to focus readers' attention on ways of increasing access, rather than holding to a strict line on whether a journal article, a journal, or a publisher for that matter, is open or closed. A commitment to the value and quality of research carries with it a responsibility to extend the circulation of such work as far as possible, ideally to all who are interested in it and might profit by it. Given the current transformation of journals from print to online formats, it follows that researchers, scholarly societies, publishers, and research libraries must now ask themselves whether they are using this new technology to do as much as possible to advance and improve access to research and scholarship.

ETHICAL ISSUES

Kennefick D. 2005. **Einstein versus the Physical Review**. Physics Today 58(9):43–48.

Reports how Einstein objected when *Physical Review* sent a paper of his to a referee: he withdrew the paper and subsequently published it in another journal with radically altered conclusions — and never again submitted a paper to *Physical Review*! The reasons for his changes are discussed, as are the policies of early

journals about acceptance of papers.

Mermin ND. 2005. **Proper citation of the Matthew effect.** *Physics Today* 58(4):17, 87.

Points out that the suggested earlier attribution (*Physics Today* 58(1):15–16) of the origin of the Matthew effect (the tendency to give credit for a scientific advance to the most distinguished of several possible candidates) to Louis and Mary Fieser is incorrect — they used the same Matthew quotation but for a different phenomenon. The original attribution by the author (*Physics Today* 2004;57(5):10–11) to Robert Merton (*Science* 159: 56, 1968) is correct.

Dawson J. 2005. **Yucca Mountain e-mails indicate data were falsified.** *Physics Today* 58(5):32.

The US Department of Energy lawyers discovered e-mails indicating that some data relating to the long-term environmental safety of this proposed nuclear waste repository site had been falsified.

Bonetta L. 2006 **The aftermath of scientific fraud.** *Cell* 124 (5):873–875. When a retraction is published it appears in PubMed linked to the original paper, thereby alerting scientists to the problem; however, retracted papers continue to be cited in the scientific literature at rates comparable to those for non-retracted papers. Being the co-author of a paper that is retracted can be very damaging. Scientists who have come face to face with scientific misconduct consider its consequences years later. Cases of possible scientific misconduct involving research funded by NIH and other agencies within the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are brought to the attention of the Office of Research Integrity (ORI). Most countries outside the United States do not have an independent institute like ORI dedicated to handling scientific misconduct.

Scott, JF. 2006. **Unintended impact of author impact factor.** *Physics Today* 59(9):16.

Comments on suggestion by Loc Vu-Quoc that multiple author publications be divided according to the number of authors might lead to junior collaborators being removed from authorship. Also questions whether all authors have to be held responsible for everything in the paper. Reply by Vu-Quoc points out that such behaviour would be short-sighted and that ethical guidelines such as those of the American Chemical Society clearly state that all persons who have made

significant scientific contributions to the work would be listed as co-authors.

APS. 2006. **APS task force calls for website on ethics education.** *APS News* 15(7):1, 3. The APS Task Force on Ethics Education has advocated the creation and maintenance of a web site to serve as a resource for ethics education. There are some existing resources: the APS has an official statement on the issue (www.aps.org/statements/02_4.cfm) and has also produced "Guidelines for Professional Conduct" (www.aps.org/statements/02_2.cfm). The proposed web site should also include case studies of publication practices, conflict of interest, data acquisition, mentoring, issues of bias, and health and safety, among others. The example given involves excluding a graduate student from authorship of a paper which develops a theory that accounts for the student's results.

Holden C. 2006. **The undisclosed background of a paper on a depression treatment.** *Science* 313:598–599. *Science* reports failure to declare conflicts of interest by Editor-in-Chief and editorial board members of *Neuropsychopharmacology* over an article reviewing a device manufactured by a company for which most of the authors acted as consultants.

Collins J. 2006. **Professionalism and physician interactions with industry.** *Journal of the American College of Radiology*. 3(5):325–332. Presents a broad framework for understanding the professional and legal responsibilities of physicians when interacting with industry. Physicians have unique responsibilities based on the "fiduciary" nature of the patient–physician relationship and on specified laws regarding health care. Physicians must protect the best interests of patients, with clinical decisions free of undue influence. Physicians have special obligations related to receiving gifts from industry and ensuring that these gifts do not compromise professional judgment. They should generally not accept personal gifts from industry and should consider accepting only those that primarily entail a benefit to patients, are not of substantial value, and have no "strings" attached.

Goldberg DM. 2006. **Is scientific publishing a criminal activity?** *Clinical Biochemistry* 39(5):473–481. A published scientific paper is the

end-result of a complex interaction between authors, referees, editors and publishers. Each brings to the process a different agenda and a widely disparate adherence to standards of competence and integrity. This subjective analysis attempts to explain why and where the regulatory mechanisms that ought to detect and eliminate the publication or the dissemination by other means of poor, erroneous, or frankly fraudulent scientific finds have broken down, and what can be done to fix them.

Kalra D, Gertz R, Singleton P, Inskip HM. 2006. **Confidentiality and consent in medical research: confidentiality of personal health information used for research.** *BMJ* 333:196–198.

Researchers must balance the quest for better health for all against the need to respect the privacy of research participants. Kalra and colleagues look at what needs to be done to ensure best practice. Several areas of research practice need to be improved, and staff training and access policies are essential, but the main contemporary public concerns must first be recognized and understood, they say. doi:10.1136/bmj.333.7560.196

INFORMATION

Bryant SL, Gray A. 2006. **Demonstrating the positive impact of information support on patient care in primary care: a rapid literature review.** *Health Information & Libraries Journal* 23(2):118–125. Shows that there is only a small body of evidence demonstrating the positive impact of library and information services on the direct care of patients. There is also a lack of impact studies conducted with non-clinical staff. It is possible, however, to gather evidence of the potential for information services to deliver cost savings. www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1471-1842.2006.00652.x

Virji A, Yarnall KSH, Krause KM, Pollak KI, Scannell MA, Gradison M, Ostbye T. 2006. **Use of email in a family practice setting: opportunities and challenges in patient- and physician-initiated communication.** *BMC Medicine* 4:18. E-mails have the potential to improve communication between physicians and patients. Patients' interest in using e-mail is high, but the "digital divide" is still an ethical concern for this type of communication. The results of a survey show that patients are interested in e-mail

communication with the family practice clinic.
www.biomedcentral.com/1741-7015/4/18/abstract

Hede K. 2006. **There's gold in those archives.** Howard Hughes Medical Institute Bulletin 19(2):23–27. Librarians, publishers, and the scientific community are grappling with how libraries will maintain the role of storing published articles and their supplemental data in the digital age.
www.hhmi.org/bulletin/may2006/pdf/Archives.pdf

Vercellesi L, Centemeri C, Miranda FG, Rotta B, Bruno F. 2006. **How to provide an alerting service on health topics for medical journalists selecting papers from scientific journals.** Health Information & Libraries Journal 23(3):223–228. Information disseminated by the media influences health behaviour, health-care utilization and health policies. A study of the lay press was established to check news and articles dealing with medicine and health. The aim is to improve the quality of scientific and medical news in terms of selection and content.
www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1471-1842.2006.00659.x

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Flores G. 2006. **Language barriers to health care in the United States.** New England Journal of Medicine. 355(3):229–231. Many patients who need medical interpreters have no access to them. Language barriers can have deleterious effects. Patients who face such barriers are less likely than others to have a regular source of medical care; they receive preventive services at reduced rates; and they have an increased risk of non-adherence to medication.

POLITICS OF PUBLISHING

Buela-Casal G; Perakakis P; Taylor M; Checa P. 2006. **Measuring internationality: reflections and perspectives on academic journals.** Scientometrics. 67(1):45–65. Internationality as a concept is being applied ambiguously, particularly in the world of academic journal publication. Although different criteria are used by scientometrists to measure internationality and supplement its minimal literal meaning, the present study suggests that no single criterion is sufficient. An Internationality Index, constructed from a combination of suitably weighted criteria, is the only

way to unambiguously quantify the degree of internationality.

PRACTICE OF PUBLISHING

Peskin, ME. 2005. **Publication and the internet: where next?** APS News 14(4):8.

Presents a model for scientific publishing in which distribution and archiving are undertaken by the authors and only refereeing and possibly indexing are undertaken by another agency. Papers would be deposited in subject-based centralized archives. How this residual refereeing service would be paid for is discussed.

Bonell C, Oakley A, Hargreaves J, Strange V, Rees R. 2006. **Assessment of generalisability in trials of health interventions: suggested framework and systematic review.** BMJ 333:346–349.

Few randomized trials assess the generalizability of their results. Trials should include evaluations of the feasibility, coverage, and acceptability of interventions. Such information is essential to decisions about adopting new interventions.

Carroll S. 2006. **Welcome to the Blogosphere.** APS News 15(5):8. Describes the rapid development of blogs (magazine-like collections of articles published on the internet), which now include many providing information to scientists and also aimed at providing science news to the general public. The use of hyperlinks and trackbacks make finding such blogs relatively easy. See, e.g., Carroll's own site at www.cosmicvariance.com.

Glänzel W, Schlemmer B, Schubert A, Thijs B. 2006. **Proceedings literature as additional data source for bibliometric analysis.** Scientometrics 68(3):457–73. Proceedings of scientific meetings are important sources of scholarly communication and supplement journal literature in basic and applied sciences. In some fields of engineering they seem to be even more important than publishing in periodicals. This study analyses the weight of proceedings literature in all fields of sciences, social sciences and humanities through the ISI Proceedings database; it also explores information about conference location for the analysis of bibliometrically relevant aspects of information flow.

PUBLISHING

Glover SW, Webb A, Gleghorn C. 2006. **Open access publishing in the biomedical sciences: could funding agencies accelerate the inevitable changes?** Health Information and Libraries Journal 23(3):197–202. Open access is making a noticeable impact on access to information. In 2005, many major research funders, including the Wellcome Trust, National Institutes for Health (NIH), and the Research Councils UK (RCUK), set out their position in a number of statements. Of particular note was the stipulation that authors receiving grants must deposit their final manuscript in an open access forum within 6–12 months of publication. The paper considers such position statements and the models used by publishers to provide open or delayed access, such as Oxford Open from Oxford University Press, HighWire Press's delayed access policy, BioMed Central, and the Public Library of Science (PLOS). www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1471-1842.2006.00657.x

Pabón Escobar SC, Da Costa MC. 2006. **Visibility of Latin American scientific publications: the example of Bolivia.** Journal of Science Communication 2:1–8. Discussions of the state of the art of scientific publications in Latin American countries generally refer to their supposedly low visibility. This characteristic is usually related to the exclusive use of large international databases, mainly from the USA and Europe, that have marginalized a large part of the scientific literature produced in peripheral countries. Given this low visibility, it became imperative for some Latin American countries, beginning in the 1990s, to develop their own mechanisms for recording the results of their own scientific production.
[http://jcom.sissa.it/archive/05/02/Jcom0502\(2006\)A01/](http://jcom.sissa.it/archive/05/02/Jcom0502(2006)A01/)

Carlson E. 2006. **Scientific publishing 101.** Howard Hughes Medical Institute Bulletin 19(3):44–45. Thanks to enterprising students, undergraduates have several opportunities to share their research in journals created by and for their peers. Students are involved at every step: writing, designing, fund-raising, and even delivering.
www.hhmi.org/bulletin/august2006/pdf/Publishing.pdf

Hargens LL, Herting JR. 2006. **Analyzing the association between referees' recommendations and editors' decisions.** Scientometrics

67(1):15–26.

The association between referees' recommendations and editorial decisions in two scholarly journals are analysed. The method enables researchers to (1) determine the number of latent dimensions needed to account for this association, and (2) estimate scale values for both the referee-recommendation and the editorial-decision categories.

SCIENCE

Royal Society. 2006. **Science and the public interest: communicating the results of new scientific research to the public**. London: The Royal Society.

The vast majority of scientific papers are of direct interest only to specialists, even if they report research of long-term importance. However, a few journal papers are

published every week that have immediate relevance for health and safety, or for public policy. This report has resulted from three years of investigation by the Royal Society into best practice in communicating the results of new scientific research to the public, carried out as part of the Society's "Science in Society" programme. The study was carried out by a working group drawn from science in academia and industry, scientific publishing, and groups representing consumer and patient interests.

www.royalsoc.ac.uk/downloaddoc.asp?id=2879

O'Grady L. 2006. **Future directions for depicting credibility in health care web sites**. *International Journal of Medical Informatics* 75(1):58–65. The purpose of this study was to determine a theoretical framework by

which credibility in health care web sites can be depicted. A comprehensive literature review of published articles, policy papers, and grey literature using relevant search terms was conducted. Sources for articles reviewed included MEDLINE, PsycINFO, ERIC and the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) databases. The Web of Science citation service and Google were also implemented. The common term, credibility, was chosen for use in this context. A comprehensive set of credibility criteria was also developed. The conclusions indicate that further research is needed of the relevance and readiness of the common terminology, criteria, and implementation within the chosen theoretical framework.

Thanks to John Glen and Liz Wager who contributed to this Bookshelf.

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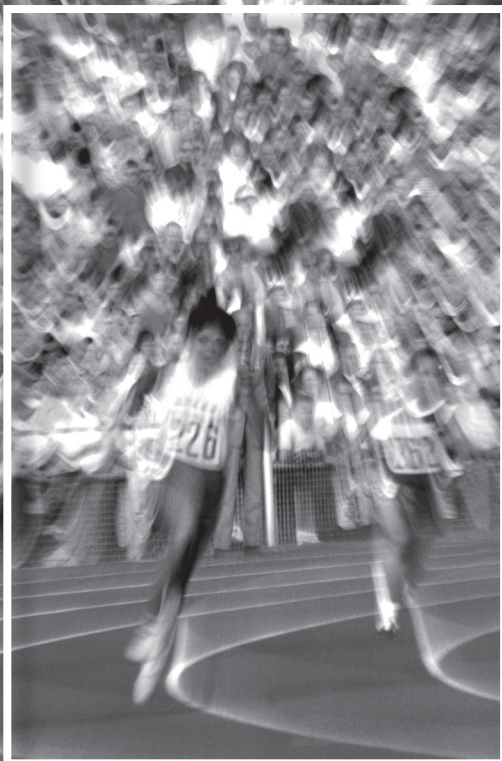
We regret to announce that Martin B Edwards died on 18 July 2006.

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