

## News notes

News Notes are taken from the EASE Blog ([ese-bookshelf.blogspot.com](http://ese-bookshelf.blogspot.com))

### Disentangling Plan S

There has been a great deal of discussion about Plan S, the open access initiative announced in September 2018 by COALition S ([www.coalition-s.org](http://www.coalition-s.org)), an international group of research funders with support from the European Commission. Thankfully, the University of Cambridge Office of Scholarly Communication has published a useful collection of commentaries about Plan S on its Unlocking Research blog ([unlockingresearch-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk](http://unlockingresearch-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk)).

### New flowcharts from COPE

The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE; [publicationethics.org](http://publicationethics.org)) published two new flowcharts to help editors and publishers decide what to do when they suspect that the authors manipulated the publication process: one for image manipulation, and one for peer review manipulation. Both these types of manipulation can result in retraction of the papers concerned, and thus require a careful investigation. The new flowcharts join the collection of more than 20 flowcharts designed to navigate difficult situations in scientific publishing.

### Survey of current status of open access publishing

In summer 2018, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ; [doaj.org](http://doaj.org)) ran a survey of all publishers holding a DOAJ account (i.e., with at least one journal) in their directory. A short report summarises the results from more than 1000 replies to the survey. It reveals increasing standardisation of open access publishers (73% now report using DOIs and 84% provide article metadata) and some interesting shifts in the country affiliation of

open access journals, such as a sharp increase in the number of journals published in Indonesia, and a decline in those from India. As for the ownership of the open access journals, the most popular in DOAJ are non-commercial, academic and society publishers. But in terms of output (number of papers published), eight out of ten largest publishers are commercial publishers.

### Guidance needed about trustworthy publishing outlets

The preliminary results from a survey conducted in September 2018 by the Think. Check. Submit initiative ([thinkchecksubmit.org](http://thinkchecksubmit.org)) have been published on the OASPA website ([oaspa.org](http://oaspa.org)). Think.Check.Submit is an educational initiative to help authors identify trustworthy publishers. The survey was completed by 410 respondents. The initial results indicate that researchers and librarians are happy with the initiative but require further guidance and levels of detail on the issue. Relevance to their field, inclusion in indexes/impact factor, and belief that the journal was trustworthy were the top three reasons respondents selected journals in which to publish. In 2019, the initiative will provide more in-depth analysis of the findings and will develop further educational resources for librarians and researchers.

### Diversity in peer review

A survey of 391 members of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) community has revealed that diversity and inclusion are important in peer review, particularly in terms of area of expertise (88%), gender (77%), race/ethnicity (74%), and age (66%). The results are available on the COPE website ([publicationethics.org/news](http://publicationethics.org/news)). Of 384 respondents, 71% said their employer or publication “values diverse involvement and opinions in its peer review process”, yet only 37% “has achieved an ideal level of diversity in its peer reviewer

pool”. The survey revealed policies and training surrounding diversity and inclusion were generally lacking. COPE will use the results and available resources to hold further discussions and guide their members on this issue.

### New measure to rank reviewers

Bianchi and colleagues have created the F3-index<sub>u</sub> to measure the contribution of reviewers to scholarly journals in terms of report delivery time, length of the report, and alignment of recommendations to editorial decisions. The authors tested their index on a dataset of peer review in the *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation*, including 544 reviewers on 606 submissions over 6 years. You can read the full results in the *Journal of Informatics* (2019;13:78). The authors say their index can be extended to other dimensions, and parameters can be weighted differently depending on the context of the journal and the data available. They suggest editors could use the index to identify and recognise the most active reviewers, and to assist with reviewer selection.

### Gender bias glossary

In *The BMJ* Christmas issue (2018;363:k5218) Esther Choo (Oregon Health and Science University, USA) and Robert DeMayo (VA Portland Health Care System, USA) give us additions to the glossary of terms to describe gender bias in academia and medicine. These additions extend beyond the well-known ‘mansplaining’ and ‘himpathy’, offering us “fertility leave: when becoming a mother is conflated with choosing to forsake the practice of medicine (also known as What They Suspect When You’re Expecting)”, “ova-looked: when a woman is bypassed for an opportunity even though she is eminently qualified”, and “maper: an academic journal article with no female authors and an uncomfortable number of male authors”.

### Registered reports and null findings

One proposed solution to publication bias, whereby studies with 'negative results' are not published, is to register (and peer review) protocols before the study is carried out. A study by researchers at Cardiff University has explored how effective this approach is. The study found that protocols that were registered were more likely to report null findings, although the authors acknowledge that researchers may deliberately use this approach for hypotheses they anticipate will not produce positive findings. The research was published in *PsyArXiv* ([psyarxiv.com](https://psyarxiv.com); 17 October 2018) and reported in *Nature* (24 October 2018).

### Funders' ORCID open letter

A group of research funders has published an open letter in support of ORCID, the system of persistent identifiers for researchers ([orcid.org](https://orcid.org)). The letter complements a 2016 open letter by publishers and demonstrates public commitment to ORCID, as well as noting that funders could do more to support the initiative. As of January 2019, ten funders (from seven countries) have signed the letter. You can read the letter at [orcid.org/organizations/funders/open-letter](https://orcid.org/organizations/funders/open-letter)

### Glossary of open access jargon

Is your article platinum or universal, gold or born, green or secondary, or hybrid? Open Book Publishers ([openbookpublishers.com](https://openbookpublishers.com)) have curated a simple list of definitions of open access jargon, (see [blogs.openbookpublishers.com](https://blogs.openbookpublishers.com)) highlighting overlapping terms, and reinforcing the purpose of open access publishing: to make information as widely available as possible, with as few restrictions as possible.

### Publishers v ResearchGate

The American Chemical Society (ACS) and Elsevier are involved in a second round of legal challenges to the academic network site ResearchGate ([www.researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net)), as reported by Inside Higher Ed ([insidehighered.com](https://insidehighered.com); 4 October 2018). The publishers state that ResearchGate is illegally obtaining

and distributing research articles protected by copyright law. The Coalition for Responsible Sharing ([responsiblesharing.org](https://responsiblesharing.org)), formed by the ACS, Elsevier, and other publishers, says it wants ResearchGate to take responsibility for the content they share—and to check which papers can and cannot be legally shared before they are uploaded. The coalition says it is holding ResearchGate, not the authors, responsible for unlawful sharing.

### Fabrication, falsification, plagiarism in reporting

Twelve retraction notices about 15 articles (six by the same author) and six notices of Expression of Concern about nine articles have been tallied by *JAMA* and the JAMA Network journals over the past five years. Using *JAMA*'s approach as an example, Editor-in-Chief Howard Bauchner, addresses the roles and responsibilities of editors and of institutions in the investigation of allegations of scientific misconduct involving fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism in the reporting of research (*JAMA* 2019;320:1985). Bauchner says authors, journals, and institutions are obligated to ensure the accuracy of the scientific record.

### Toolkit to improve research integrity

Integrity promotes trust and confidence in research. The Royal Society ([royalsociety.org](https://royalsociety.org)) and the UK Research Integrity Office ([ukrio.org](https://ukrio.org)) have developed a toolkit to support, improve, and inspire creative thinking around research integrity and culture within research organisations. Seven aims are outlined: (1) creating informal channels to openly discuss research integrity; (2) creating a dialogue around research integrity and culture; (3) agreeing shared expectations; (4) constructing an environment that nurtures training; (5) developing a research environment to be proud of; (6) embedding research integrity into institutional culture; and (7) fostering community ownership of research integrity. The toolkit provides a description and background, benefits

of achievement, and ideas and examples of actions for each of the seven aims. The toolkit is available from the UKRIO website ([ukrio.org/integrity-in-practice-toolkit](https://ukrio.org/integrity-in-practice-toolkit)).

### Do authors comply with OA rules?

*Nature* has published the first large-scale analysis of author compliance to open access (OA) rules, reporting that of more than 1.3 million articles identified as subject to the OA mandates, two-thirds were freely available to read (*Nature* 2018;562:483). The authors report that the proportion of 'green' and 'gold' OA articles has risen since 2009. They also report variations in compliance by discipline and by funder, with the funding agency appearing to be a stronger driver of OA than the culture of the discipline. The authors call for further research on why scientists do or do not comply with funder mandates.

### In Review

Publisher BMC has opened up its manuscript submission and peer review process, so that authors can more easily track the status of their manuscripts and even share linked to works under review. The system, called In Review, was developed using Research Square's pre-publication platform ([researchsquare.com](https://researchsquare.com)). It will be available for four BMC journals: *BMC Anesthesiology*, *BMC Neurology*, *BMC Ophthalmology*, and *Trials*. You can read more on the BMC website ([www.biomedcentral.com/p/InReview](https://www.biomedcentral.com/p/InReview)).

### Data commitment statement

The Coalition on Publishing Data in the Earth and Space Sciences (COPDESS; [copdess.org](https://copdess.org)) has published a commitment statement for the availability and interoperability of data. The statement builds on a 2014 statement and the Enabling FAIR Data Project ([copdess.org/enabling-fair-data-project](https://copdess.org/enabling-fair-data-project)). The statement commits to the goals of: "Ensuring that earth, space, and environmental science research outputs, including data, software, and samples or standard information about them, are open,

FAIR, and curated in trusted domain repositories whenever possible and that other links and information related to scholarly publications follow leading practices for transparency and information.”

### Global State of Peer Review

The Global State of Peer Review report ([publons.com/community/gspr](http://publons.com/community/gspr)) summarising data from a survey of 11,000 international researchers as well as data from Web of Science, ScholarOne, and Publons, presents the state of peer review worldwide, combining quantitative and qualitative data for this very thorough breakdown of the peer review landscape. The report asked four key questions: who is doing the reviewing?; how efficient is the review process?; what do we know about peer review quality?; and what does the future hold? Among many results presented in the report, it looked at established and emerging regions publishing and reviewing research and found researchers from China, Brazil, Turkey, India, Iran, South Korea, Malaysia, and Poland were under represented when compared with reviewers from the USA, Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Netherlands, Sweden, Canada, UK, and Japan. Editors were also found to invite researchers from their own geographical regions more than chance would predict. In terms of efficiencies, the report found that reviewer completion rates are decreasing each year, while the total number of review invitations sent is increasing at 9.8% year-on-year. The rate of agreements to invitations in 2013 was around 0.54. In 2017 that had reduced to 0.44, with the number of completed reviews to invitations following the same rate of decline. However, some good news from the report is that peer review process may not necessarily take as long as we think it does. The report found that reviewers took a median of 16.4 days to complete a review after agreeing to the assignment (the mean is 19.1 days). Breaking these results down into 22 subject areas, the report found that review times were longest in economics &

business and mathematics at around 30 days average, and shortest in pharmacology and chemistry at around 12 days. For several subject areas, average peer review times have been reducing, and for several others, there has been a small increase. The report also looked at length of reviews as a method of assessing quality.

Although a very imperfect measure, the report provides some interesting results. The average review wordcount from established regions (eg USA, UK, Germany, Spain) was 528, and from emerging regions (eg Brazil, China, India, South Korea) was 250. The report also observed longer reviews in higher Impact Factor journals than lower IF ones and offered the suggestions that editors of journals with higher IFs may solicit more reviews from regions that tend to write longer reviews, regardless of quality, or that higher IFs are associated with subjects that tend to have longer reviews. The final section of the report looks to the future, and suggests that, should trends continue, that over the next few years the number of invitations required to secure reviewers will increase, review times may continue to decrease, and that open reviewing and reviewing policies may affect the rates at which reviewers agree; 40% of respondents under 26 are likely or highly likely to review for journals that make author and reviewer identities, and review reports public. This news note covers a just few of the many intriguing findings presented in this report; the full report is well worth reading.

### ALPSP innovation awards

Code Ocean ([codeocean.com](http://codeocean.com)) won the 2018 Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers ([alpsp.org](http://alpsp.org)) Award for Innovation in Publishing. The cloud-based computational reproducibility platform allows researchers to share, find, and run published code. Development of the platform was inspired by the challenge of accessing, understanding, and reproducing code, analysis, and algorithms needed to build on existing research. Annotation for Transparent Inquiry ([qdr.syr.edu/ati](http://qdr.syr.edu/ati)) was also a finalist for the award.

The tool acts a digital overlay, allowing readers to annotate the content on publisher websites and link to other data sources. The team behind ATI says the ability to access additional data alongside the main text brings transparency to qualitative research.

### Crossref hits 100 million

Crossref ([crossref.org](http://crossref.org)) has taken a deep-dive into what makes up their 100 million content records. 74% are articles, 15% books, 5% conference papers, and 4% is data, reports, standards and dissertations, and preprints and peer reviews. 69 million records have full-text links, more than 31 million have license information, and more than 3 million have funding information. You can read more about the data on the Crossref Blog ([crossref.org/blog](http://crossref.org/blog); 26 September 2018). Crossref is also encouraging users to understand and learn from the registered metadata via the participation reports tool ([crossref.org/members/prepare](http://crossref.org/members/prepare)).

### Open peer review workflow

Transparent publication of an article's entire peer review process: that's the promise of the new scalable peer review workflow resulting from the latest Wiley and Clarivate Analytics partnership. The workflow makes use of Clarivate's ScholarOne and Publons platforms and will be first used on the Wiley journal *Clinical Genetics*. The initial review and response, revision, and final publication decision will be made transparent, given a digital object identifier, and published alongside the final article. The workflow is expected to be rolled out to other journals, publishers, and submission systems in future. You can read more on the Clarivate blog ([clarivate.com/blog](http://clarivate.com/blog); 13 September 2018).

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