
This Site I Like

Notes from the blogosphere

As a blogger since 2006, approaching my 1000th post, I'm interested in what's going on in the corner of the blogosphere that's concerned with editing and related subjects. Reading blogs is a good way to keep your finger on the pulse, to find out what's new and what the latest thinking is on the current hot topics – and isn't it interesting to be exposed to some quite extreme opinions, sometimes! Here's a list of some of the web logs I read, or at least dip into, to find out what's going on not just in biomedical editing but more widely.

High on my list is the COPE Council blog – <http://publicationethics.org/blogs>. Since October 2008, members of the Council of the Committee on Publication Ethics have been writing succinctly about matters of concern and interest to them (and us as ethically-aware editors). Recent topics include: Should all journals have one universal referencing style?; Concern about UK libel laws; When an editor knows that a submitted article omits to reference key works in the area, what should he or she do?

Ben Goldacre's series of "bad science" articles in the *Guardian* led me to his blog – <http://www.badscience.net>. At time of writing, the latest post is about inaccurate science journalism: "There's nothing like science for giving that objective, white-coat flavoured legitimacy to your prejudices, so it must have been a great day for *Telegraph* readers when they came across the headline 'Women who dress provocatively more likely to be raped, claim scientists'. Ah, scientists. 'Women who drink alcohol, wear short skirts and are outgoing are more likely to be raped, claim scientists at the University of Leicester.' Well there you go. Oddly, though, the title of the press release for the same research was 'Promiscuous men more likely to rape.'" Read the rest at <http://www.badscience.net/2009/07/asking-for-it>.

After all those years of working at *BMJ*, I hasten to mention its blog, <http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj> – which has a variety of writers from the journal and from the BMA writing on current biomedical concerns. The list of categories on the *BMJ* blog consist mostly of the names of regular writers, but also includes some topics: carbon, conferences, credit crunch, digital media, flu pandemic updates, junior doctors, students, swine flu – and 245 posts by guest bloggers.

Nor is the *BMJ* the only journal with daily posts on topics of interest to its readers (often related to articles they have just published, or are about to – and why not?). Since the *Wall Street Journal* started in 1998 (blogs.wsj.com), every magazine and newspaper has hopped on the bandwagon, and as journals have gone online, they've often found they "need" to add a blog. Keeping up with them all will keep you busy, nor can I list but a few from well-known international journals: <http://www.biomedicaleditor.com/biomedical-editor-blog.html>; <http://blogs.sciencemag.org>; <http://everyone.plos.org>.

The best "one stop shop" must be <http://blogs.nature.com>. It's busy with "tracking blogs from nature.com and beyond. Find great science blogs, keep up to date with the latest buzz and read the latest posts from our editorial staff" – and yes, it does what it says on the tin, in the subject areas of Bioinformatics, Chemistry, Clinical Practice & Research, Earth & Environment, Life Sciences, Neuroscience, Physics, Science and Society. Some of the blogs it includes are Gobbledygook, Martin Fenner's blog on scientific publishing in the internet age (<http://network.nature.com/people/mfenner/blog>); Journalology: science publishing trends, ethics, peer review, and open access (<http://journalology.blogspot.com/>), 80beats "news aggregator, weaving together the choicest tidbits from the best articles covering the day's

most compelling topics" (<http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/80beats>), and blogs for NPG authors (<http://blogs.nature.com/nautilus>) and peer reviewers (<http://blogs.nature.com/peer-to-peer>).

Blogs are available in many languages, and I hope readers will share their non-English favourites. Being educated in Canada, I'm not uncomfortable with reading French and am glad to know about the blog of ESE's former editor-in-chief, Hervé Maissonneuve. At <http://redactionmedicale.typepad.com/redactionmedicale> (also accessible as www.h2mw.eu) he writes punchy posts about current stories in the biomedical field.

The blogs of practising editors are often on their professional websites, and pass on grammar and style tips (for example, <http://www.biomedicaleditor.com/biomedical-editor-blog.html>) or generously give general writing and publishing advice (<http://lillieammann.com/blog>).

If you're new to the blogosphere, you'll find a plethora of blogs for any topic of interest. Apart from the writing and opinions of the writer, characteristics of the blogs themselves make some more pleasant than others. An uncluttered layout, and use of black text on a pale background (not vice versa), make it easier to focus on the words, the argument. Visual material can be important – those without photos can use the catchiness of the headline, and the words highlighted with clickable links. Categories and tags are useful for finding similar items in the archives; a list of related blogs is useful for "joining the community" – as reader or as blogger. We'd be interested to hear from EASE members involved in blogging on their journal's website: what's your experience?

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