My first task for this issue is to announce the appointment of a new Chief Editor for *European Science Editing*, starting in 2015. Armen Gasparyan is stepping down and on behalf of the EASE Council and the journal’s readership, I would like to thank him for all his work over the past four years. Armen has done an excellent job in enhancing the visibility of ESE through its inclusion in a wide range of indexing services. He was also responsible for the creation of the International Advisory Board. The new Editor will be Ksenija Bazdaric, from the Department of Medical Informatics at Rijeka University School of Medicine in Croatia. More about Ksenija can be found on p 93.

I am pleased to say that the Council has co-opted Elaine Seery, our Website Manager, as a full member. Elaine is already making a significant contribution to EASE and her position on Council will help to improve communication with our membership. The current Council will serve until September 2015, when the AGM will take place in Edinburgh. This will be in association with a conference on Waste Management and communication/networking/certification/training, advocacy, research and development. Four working groups will review current and potential activities in certification/training, advocacy, research and communication/networking/certification/training, advocacy, research and development.

Finally, Eva Baranyiová is going to take part in a discussion at the Royal Society in London in March, as part of its celebration of 350 years of journal publishing.
**Editorial**

**Do we have tools for quality assurance in science editing and publishing?**

The essence of science writing is an adequate supervision. A large proportion of current scholarly publications are redundant, flawed, plagiarized, and hinder scientific progress.\(^1\) Even the most prestigious peer-reviewed journals are not immune to pointless, erroneous, and potentially harmful reports and reviews.\(^2\) Too often scholarly articles fail to reflect the essence and novelty of the covered topics because of inappropriate and superficial analysis of related primary sources.

A large number of scholarly articles are driven by the urge to publish something rather than to contribute to the communication of science. Not surprisingly, in such environment mishandled limited financial and human resources produce enormous ‘scientific’ waste: researchers, authors and editors invest lots of time and effort in poorly designed, irreproducible research studies and ‘vanity’ publications.\(^3\)

The model of blind peer review, which is still widely practised worldwide, is hampered by the lack of referees’ expertise and sometimes by non-disclosure of the evaluators’ competing interests.\(^4\) Skilled referees are not widely available, and they preferentially contribute to a handful of top-ranking journals. Their comments and suggested revisions can alter the main points, and often deserve to be credited by openly informing the readership about contributions throughout the manuscript processing. In a worst case scenario blinded referee comments can dilute genuine points of the journal submissions, delay their publication, and even conceal their innovative potential. The persistence of the flawed and tangential reviewing practice can create a fertile ground for occult plagiarism and recycling of rational ideas.\(^5\)

In small scientific communities, where infrastructure and international collaborations are not established, pressures to publish more may force the authors to commit plagiarism or other misconducts.\(^6\) The lack of proper mentorship, poor understanding of research impact metrics, and unawareness of international standards of authorship worsen the situation further.

Scholarly publishing now confronts the dilemma of fast dissemination of well-structured innovative research reports, which is no longer possible on the basis of the traditional review models.\(^7\) Again, this issue is especially important in small scientific communities and developing disciplines such as nursing and science editing, where ethical research, publishing, and establishing an evidence base are building blocks of growth. Pushing to publish articles at any cost can damage growth at grassroots level.

In our times, only a few periodicals cover problems of ethical reviewing, publishing, and educating target audiences. One of these periodicals is *European Science Editing*, which is the oldest authoritative reference for researchers and editors across Europe. It is the official organ of the European Association of Science Editors (EASE), and this year the journal turns its 40th volume! It is a remarkable achievement for all stakeholders of scientific communications striving to develop quality tools for ethical writing, reviewing, editing, and publishing. And it is encouraging to see a variety of essays on scientific misconduct, emerging models of peer review, and quality editing in the latest issues of the journal. Although answers to the problems in editing are not readily available in these essays, it is hoped that solutions can be found by extending the discussion and by inviting editors across the world to share their experience.

Those who follow publications in *European Science Editing* over a long time might have noticed that the scope of topics covered by the journal have widened in the recent years. Overall, more attention is now paid to proper use of journal impact metrics, indexing, elements of ethical publishing, functions of editors in the changing digital environment, and expanding cooperation between editors of learned editorial associations. Such changes reflect the growing diversity of problems encountered by editors in our times.

*European Science Editing* improved its profile in Scopus by increasing its annual citation rates from 13 in 2009 to 81 in 2013 (as of 5 September 2014). Over the same period the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR), which reflects scientific prestige of citations, increased from 0.169 to 0.246. The journal’s latest h index reached 6. Some of the highly-cited papers over the past five years are presented in Table 1. Of course, there are a few more influential periodicals in communication and informatics, where the journal is currently categorized, but that does not undermine its role in disseminating information for the global editorial community. Not many editors across the world are currently involved in editorial research, and abundant citations are not common for any journal in editing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Times cited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Kerans ME, de Jager M. Handling plagiarism at the manuscript editor’s desk. European Science Editing 2010;36(3):62–66.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Not least important is that numerous references to these journal articles can be found in the EASE Science Editors’ Handbook and the EASE Guidelines for Authors and Translators of Scientific Articles to be Published in English, two other educational tools for novice and seasoned editors. Altogether, these tools can help improve the quality and ethics of scientific publishing across Europe and elsewhere. By educating editors and upgrading standards of publishing the editorial community can have far-reaching achievements in academic and social life.

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References

Medicine and politics
Science and medicine are inextricably entwined with politics in our modern world: climate change, transgenic crops, research funding, drug and medical device regulation are all affected by governmental decisions and public opinion. Governments can harm their own image with poor management of scientific crises, such as foot-and-mouth disease in the UK, severe acute respiratory syndrome in China or the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Sometimes governmental decisions directly affect science editors: In February 2004, the US Department of the Treasury ruled that editing or publishing scientific manuscripts from Iran violated its trade embargo, leaving US publishers and scientific societies divided over how to respond.

There are other instances where more general global politics may also affect journals. A recent example has occurred at The Lancet, which has created an opportunity to consider how the editorial community should respond in such circumstances. On August 2nd 2014, The Lancet published ‘An open letter for the people in Gaza’ in its Correspondence section, written by a group of doctors and scientists who had all worked in Gaza. This prompted a huge response from people both in support and against the sentiments expressed in the letter, many of which were published in the journal and online over subsequent weeks.

In The Lancet, 10th October, Richard Horton discussed the outcome of this correspondence, including an invitation for him to visit the Rambam Health Care Campus in Israel where he saw “an inspiring model of partnerships between Jews and Arabs in a part of Israel where 40% of the population is Arab”. Richard reflected on lessons to be learned from the overall experience, including ensuring that all possible conflicts of interest are declared at an early stage. (The Lancet does ask all authors for such a declaration but how to police what is not declared?)

Richard then floated a proposal for guidance to help editors on those rare occasions when politics intrudes into medical publishing.

“Editors will, from time to time, be faced with submissions that lie at the difficult intersection of medicine and politics. Health and health care do have political determinants and editors should not shy away from those. But politics, by its very nature, can be disruptive and divisive, with many different points-of-view held. While taking strong editorial positions on issues of relevance to health is sometimes necessary, editors should always pause, reflect, and consult before publishing any manuscript that might unnecessarily polarise, or foster or worsen political division.”

EASE welcomes this proposal and would be pleased to hear the thoughts of our members on this.

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Accuracy of references in scholarly journals: an analysis of 450 references in ten biomedical journals

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Abstract
Background The validation of reference lists of scholarly articles is an integral part of science writing, editing and publishing. In pursuit of sharing research reports with the global scientific community, authors should accurately cite primary sources to allow readers and indexers easily track them. This study examines errors in reference lists of selected English-language biomedical journals.

Methods Ten English-language MEDLINE®-indexed journals were selected and assessed for the reference errors. The reference lists of the first issues of these journals, published in 2005, 2008, and 2011, were analyzed. Selected from the table of contents of the ten journals, the 5th article of the 2005 issue, 10th article of the 2008 issue, and 15th article of the 2011 issue were analyzed. A total of 30 articles were picked. From each of these articles, 15 randomly selected references were examined. The total number of the analyzed references was 450. The trends of major and minor reference errors during 2005–2011 were also analyzed.

Results Eighty-one errors were noted in the 450 analyzed references. The reference error rate was 18% (95% Confidence Interval [CI] 14%-22%). There were 33 major errors (7.3%, 95% CI 4.92%-9.75%) and 48 minor errors (10.6%, 95% CI 7.8%-13.53%). The most common major errors were non-retrievable references (4.7%) and incorrect spelling of author names and order (1.1%). The reference accuracy rate improved from 70.6% in 2005 to 90% in 2011, whereas the error rate decreased from 29.4% to 9.9%, respectively.

Conclusion The study revealed an 18% reference error rate in ten MEDLINE®/PubMed-indexed journals. Joint efforts of authors, peer reviewers, editors, and publishers might prevent most reference errors. Topical trainings in scholarly writing and bibliographic management for all stakeholders of scholarly publishing are recommended to improve the reference validation.

Keywords Bibliography; reference validation; errors; biomedicine; periodicals as topic

Introduction
References are signposts that identify primary literature sources and help authors to credit original ideas and writings. Proper referencing guarantees ethical writing and facilitates tracking related scientific sources. Authors should be skilled to track original ideas and scientific facts in the literature. Accurately citing these ideas and facts is critically important since these are the generic currency for scientists.

Listing well-checked and validated references in a scholarly article has its reasoning. Readers can develop their own understanding of the subject matter by tracking primary sources and familiarizing with the authors’ views on these sources. Some reference errors, and particularly spelling mistakes, do not affect the retrieval of the cited articles. However, erroneously recorded journal title, publication year, volume, and page numbers make it difficult to locate the references and properly index the citing articles. Such errors break the links between citing and cited sources and lead to the dissemination of incorrect information, which can question the trustworthiness of the research reports.

This study reports the frequency of reference errors in ten selected English-language biomedical journals. The trend of the errors during 2005–2011 is analyzed and inter-journal variation in the errors is presented.

Methods

To assess the accuracy of references, original research articles from the first issues of the selected journals in 2005, 2008 and 2011 were analyzed. From the tables of contents of the journals every 5th article from the 2005 issue, 10th article from the 2008 issue, and 15th article from the 2011 issue were examined. The total number of the retrieved articles was 30. Fifteen references were randomly selected from each of these 30 articles, with 450 total references being collected for the analysis.

Only original articles were assessed since these are the most common items in biomedical journals. Focusing on original articles allowed to ensure consistency in the analysis. Editorial, reviews, case reports, and letters were excluded.

Records of each selected reference were checked in Web of Knowledge, ScienceDirect, PubMed, and Google Scholar. The initial searches through these platforms were based on journal title, author’s surname, keywords from the article title, and year of publication. In case of failure to retrieve a reference, phrases of exact title, author’s surname, and keywords along with year of publication were consecutively searched. A cited reference was then compared with a correct reference to record errors in the name or order of the authors, article title, journal title (full or abbreviated by PubMed titles...
were acceptable), volume, issue, and page numbers.

Incorrect references were categorized as those with major and minor errors in accordance with the established criteria. Major errors included 1) incorrect authors order or spelling mistakes in authors' names, 2) incorrect article title, 3) incorrect journal title, 4) incorrect year, 5) erroneous or missing volume and issue number, and 6) incorrect page numbers. Minor errors included 1) incorrect author initials, 2) slightly incomplete title, 3) missing volume or issue number, and 4) incorrect last page numbers.

Statistical analysis
The frequency of each error was expressed as percentage and 95% CI. Spearman's rank correlation analysis was used to explore the relationship between reference error rate and number of cited references in the articles. SPSS software (19th version, Chicago, Illinois, USA) was employed for all statistical analyses. P value below 0.05 was set as significant.

Results
Of the total 450 references 81 were erroneous (18%, 95% CI 14%-22%). There were 33 major (7.3%, 95% CI 4.9%-9.75%) and 48 minor (10.6%, 95% CI 7.8%-13.53%) errors. The distribution of major and minor errors amongst 450 analyzed references is presented in Tables 1 and 2. Non-retrievable references were predominant major errors (4.7%), whereas wrong or missing issue numbers accounted for the most frequent minor errors (8%). Number of errors across analyzed journals is presented in Table 3. The Breast Journal and Canadian Journal of Surgery contained large numbers of major and minor errors.

Table 3. Distribution of major reference errors across journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal title</th>
<th>Major error</th>
<th>Minor error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Saudi Journal of Gastroenterology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Journal of Surgery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American Journal of Surgery</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Breast Journal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Plastic, Reconstructive &amp; Aesthetic Surgery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Medical Journal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Research in Medical Sciences</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMC Medical Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Journal of Surgery</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Journal of Gastroenterology &amp; Hepatology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was an inverse and significant association between reference error rate and the number of references cited in the articles (Spearman's rank correlation coefficient -0.285, P=0.01).

Table 1. Distribution of major reference errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of errors</th>
<th>N of errors</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-retrievable references</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect author name or order</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect title</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing or wrong year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong page numbers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Distribution of minor reference errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of errors</th>
<th>N of errors</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wrong or missing issue numbers</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong or missing first or last page numbers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect spelling of author names</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete article title</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete journal title</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing volume number</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The yearly analysis of reference errors showed that the highest rate (29.4%) was observed in 2005, which dropped to 14.7% in 2008 and to 9.9% in 2011 (Figure 1). The percentage of combined major and minor reference errors also decreased over the years (Figure 2).
Discussion

The reference error rate of 18%, recorded in the present study, is within the range of previously published similar rates (11.1%-60%). One of the earliest studies of accuracy of references (1987) reported that 31% of the 150 analyzed references in public health journals contained errors, with 3% of these errors being so substantial that the cited sources could not be located. In the present study 7.3% of references contained major and 10.6% minor errors, which may reflect the improved validation of references in the past decade.

Interestingly, error rates differ across disciplines. For example, in an analysis of five dental journals the error rate reached 42%, whereas the same parameter was 48% for three surgical journals analyzed in another study. In the present study the most frequent type of major error was irretrievable references (4.7%), highlighting the importance of careful validation of cited sources by peer reviewers and editors at the pre-publication stage. The responsibility for reference validation lies with all stakeholders of scholarly publishing. Authors who cite references without retrieving and reading related full-texts diminish the value of the reference lists. Inaccurate reference lists negatively affect the indexability and impact of the journals. Reviewers and editors should take into account that citations to redundant (duplicate) and retracted items may also cause difficulties in locating references.

Some journal publishers employ editorial management software that validates references and draws the attention of reviewers and editors to incorrect or incomplete citations. However, not all journals have access to such software, making it mandatory to check all citations manually. In the present study wrong or missing issue numbers in references accounted for the most frequent minor errors (8%). Similar rates are reported elsewhere. High-impact journals reportedly have low rates of minor errors. However, rates of major errors reach up to 49%.

In the present study the highest rate of major errors was in The American Journal of Surgery (7%) and minor errors in The Breast Journal (18%). No reference error was found in The Asian Journal of Surgery during 2005-2011. Such differences across the journals may be due to the differing editorial policies and tools for the reference validation.

In this study variables used for Spearman’s correlation analysis were reference error rate (aggregate of major and minor error rates) and the number of cited references in selected articles. The results showed an inverse relationship between the variables, suggesting a decrease of reference errors with increasing number of references. Reference errors declined from 29.4% in 2005 to 9.9% 2011. This trend is encouraging as it may suggest that editorial checks are becoming more stringent and reference management tools are being increasingly used. However, more concerted efforts are still needed to eradicate inaccurate references.

There are some limitations of the current study. Reference errors were analyzed in a relatively small number of indexed journals. The duration of follow-up is short (2005-2011). The analysis did not examine whether reference errors affected contents of the published articles.

Large-scale studies of errors in different types of references (eg books, conference abstracts, URL sources) across multiple disciplines are still warranted.

Conclusion

Joint efforts of authors, peer reviewers, editors and publishers may prevent most reference errors. Topical trainings in scholarly writing and bibliographic management for all stakeholders of scholarly publishing are recommended to improve the reference validation.

Competing interests

None declared.

References

Plagiarism: What does the future hold for science writing?

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Abstract Over the past years, plagiarism has received much attention from the scientific community and has become one of the most frequent misconducts reported worldwide. There are numerous published articles on the prevalence of plagiarism worldwide, its definition, causes, and management. Herein I reflect on some new aspects of plagiarism of ideas and texts and forecast the future of this problem.

Keywords Plagiarism; misconduct; editing; education; publishing trends

Introduction
One of the most important and persistent problems faced by journal editors is plagiarism. As the number of articles on plagiarism increases,1 this form of misconduct attracts a great deal of attention from the concerned global scientific community. Hopes are high that the problem can be solved by software that identifies text similarity, which became widely available a few years ago (eg iThenticate®, eTBlas®, Google Scholar®).2

Plagiarism has been variably defined by research and ethics organizations.3 Generally, it is referred to as the appropriation of others’ published or unpublished ideas or words without proper acknowledgement and permission. Most researchers consider it to be a breach of ethics and/or theft.

Two main categories of misconduct can be distinguished—“plagiarism of ideas” and “plagiarism of words”. Most experts would find it extremely difficult to define the former, as no metrics are available to assess the theft of ideas.4,5

Plagiarism of ideas
Scholars may discuss ideas in public, deliver presentations at academic meetings, watch documentaries, and receive bulk information from everywhere. Even if they do not remember what they have captured, the received information finds its way to change mentality and to influence the generation of scholarly ideas.6 Academic laziness is believed to be the main cause of plagiarism amongst native English speakers.6,7 In non-Anglophone environments, causes of plagiarism are different.

Perhaps the most important related issue is the flow of ideas during the peer review process. All referees are asked to keep the information throughout the review strictly confidential, not share, or re-use ideas presented in the assessed manuscripts. However, it is impossible to entirely forget what has been presented and discussed throughout the review, especially when the topic is close to the referees’ current research interests. Journal editors ask the reviewers to destroy all processed electronic and print copies after the review. But all these materials may change their thinking and accrue professional skills. The more energy they spend on ignoring others’ ideas, the more attention they pay to these ideas and unintentionally re-use them. The tactical approach to overcome this problem is simply to wait and observe what happens after the review. If a new scientific product has traces of others’ ideas picked from the peer review, then responsible journal editors and authors could suspect a re-use. Perhaps it sounds too naïve, but it is ultimately the reviewers’ ethical duty to acknowledge source(s) that influenced their thinking. Otherwise, there is no straightforward way to uncover plagiarism of ideas, and this is why it is often reported by reviewers, editors, or readers after an unethical publication comes to light.

Plagiarism of words
Verbatim text copying has become frequent over the past years, after the introduction of copy-paste functions of word processors and availability of electronic sources on the Web.6 Such type of plagiarism is absolutely unacceptable by most stakeholders of scientific communications, and particularly in the disciplines where the essence of the work is masterful wording and phrasing.5 Plagiarism of words is a serious misconduct leading to punishment when it is discovered.3,7 Thanks to the current availability of software to track text similarities, plagiarism of words is now easier to report than plagiarism of ideas. And this may be a reason why the absolute majority of articles on plagiarism are about English text similarities, related algorithms for detection, and measures to prevent such type of misconduct. Currently available plagiarism detection software support only a few languages. For example, iThenticate®, one of the most globally used and powerful programmes, only supports English, Korean, and Japanese.8

Causes of plagiarism
Although plagiarism is known to cause serious penalties which threaten career prospects of the plagiarists, many novice and seasoned authors alike still commit such misconduct.7 Academic laziness is believed to be the main cause of plagiarism amongst native English speakers.6,7 In non-Anglophone environments, causes of plagiarism are different.

The Canadian philosopher Herbert M. McLuhan noted that technology has contracted our world into a “global village”. With the wide-spread use of the Internet and digital networks, this village has become even smaller. To succeed in the global science competition, and in an attempt to show off their capabilities, many developing countries push their scholars to publish more in prestigious journals. As most of these journals are published in English...
in the Western world, scientists from developing countries should strive to present their research data in a language different from their mother tongues. Describing complex scientific findings in any language is difficult, and in a non-native language it is even more so.

The originally western motto “publish or perish” is now all-pervasive in academia in developing countries, where many authors seek short cuts and are tempted to borrow well-crafted English phrases from articles of native speakers. In most cases plagiarists cannot write eloquently themselves and embark on borrowing words of more skilled writers.

Another big issue is that many novice and seasoned researchers in developing countries are not aware of the seriousness of committing plagiarism. Academics handling cases of plagiarism are not aware of the international regulations, most of which come from the West. Researchers from developing countries are actually newcomers to the international scientific league. They are not yet aware of all the tips and tricks. But they have to abide by the regulations if they want to remain in the league. Noblesse oblige!

**Treatment options**

Different organizations have differing penalties for plagiarists. My firm believe is that “intention to deceive” readers is critical for judging them. Those who commit plagiarism unintentionally—mainly junior researchers lacking exposure to the Western science writing standards and those who copy words but refer to primary sources—should be trained to properly write and paraphrase. The writing courses should be a part of undergraduate and continuing professional development (CPD) curricula. Students who commit plagiarism after passing proper writing courses should be punished and blacklisted by universities and journals. Students should be aware that even ‘minor’ misconduct can be detected, with appropriate penalties being followed.

In 1982, two social scientists, James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, proposed the so-called broken windows theory for criminology. They noted that “…if a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken.” They believed that “…one unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares…” If the scientific community does not avoid ‘minor’ breaches of publication ethics, much bigger and devastating consequences can follow.

**Alternative views**

Some believe that language in scientific writing has a role different from that it plays in other fields such as social sciences. In other words, while eloquence is of paramount importance for literature, arts, and humanities, it is not so important for scientific writing in the natural sciences, where the comprehensibility of the text matters more. Language is merely a conduit for transfer of scientists' ideas, and it is fine as long as the transfer is done with high fidelity; eloquence is not mandatory. As a prime example, participants of most scientific meetings are encouraged to use simple language.

Languages have their own limitations. To better understand them, I give an example of computer languages sharing structural similarities with human languages. When someone writes a computer programme, he/she considers the language syntax, semantics, and lexical rules. The same is considered when someone writes in English or other languages. As such, plagiarism in computer and human languages is comparable. Any language with inherent limitations will ultimately require re-cycling of words and exact word combinations. For example, if a number of students are asked to develop a computer programme to print out integer numbers from 1 to 20, more than half of the codes will be very similar. Almost all programmers use ‘i’ as the loop variable, though they are not obliged to do so technically. This practice originated from the fact that in the original FORTRAN, a programming language commonly used by scientists in 1960s and 1970s, ‘i’ is the first variable that is integer by default. This unintentionally inherited habit, which is similar to the word collocation in human languages, causes similarities between the programmes. The level of similarity between computer programmes is apparent when one considers a limited number of keywords used. If someone cannot stand similar limitation of human languages, he/she has to create new words and phrases (to cheat on text similarity software programmes!). And for a final example, in how many ways one can describe blood pressure measurement?

**Forecasting**

The limitations of human languages and growing use of information technologies will ultimately make all scientists intentionally commit “plagiarism of words”. Meta-analyses, systematic reviews and trial reports are cornerstones of evidence-based practice. The number of related publications is constantly increasing. Sooner or later, researchers will not be able to analyze the large pile of accumulated information. Given the progress in computer sciences and information technologies, it is likely that artificial intelligence will take over and perform meta-analyses and systematic reviews in the near future. As there is the precedent of research reporting standards such as CONSORT, STROBE, or PRISMA, new templates are warranted to make the artificial processing of data more correct and systematic.

Within the next thirty years, we will reach a point, when hundreds of templates will be ready to be filled by research findings. Thereafter, writing a manuscript will become a process of selecting and inserting in the machine a set of references (most probably suggested by a machine), research protocols (out of thousands of standard operating protocols) and obtained findings. The machine will do the rest and come up with interpretations rarely subjected to corrections by researchers. In such scenario no one will care about plagiarism of words and will not even consider it as a misconduct. Now that machines are going to help us in such a way, I see no reason not to finish my article with two FORTRAN commands:

```
STOP
END
```
References
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Ksenija Baždarić is a senior research fellow at the Department of Medical Informatics Rijeka University School of Medicine in Croatia from 2006. Her academic background lies both in social sciences and biomedicine. She received her master’s degree in psychology (2002) and PhD in social medicine (2012). She teaches medical informatics, statistics and scientific methodology. Her investigation for the PhD thesis The Value of Plagiarism Detection Procedure in a Biomedical Journal was focused on the detection of similar texts with web-services CrossCheck and eTBLAST in the Croatian Medical Journal (www.cmj.hr) during 2009-2010, and the development of a standard operating procedure for detecting and dealing with plagiarism in biomedical journals. She became Research Integrity Editor at the Croatian Medical Journal in 2012. Her current research activities include detection of plagiarism in a journal of oral sciences and dental medicine. She is also interested in biostatistics and scientific methodology; and she speaks English, Russian and Italian.

New EASE members in 2014

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS
Katarzyna Szymanska, France
Dr Abdolreza Norouzy, Iran
Nicole Muchmore, USA
Professor Zoya Babeva, Russian Federation
Dr Dariusz Pachocki, Poland
Iva Grabaric Andonovski, Croatia
Joan Fenton, Australia
Adnan Usmani, Saudi Arabia
Dr Veronica Bovenzi, Canada
Dr Sarah Kabani, France
David Stanmore, Germany
Analisa Weston, Spain
Elena Kostyukova, Russian Federation
Dr F. Michael Davis, New Zealand
Dr Ana R.L.N. Costa, Portugal
Dr Dan Csontos, Sweden
Dr Fiona Russell, UK
Dr Paola Minoia, Finland
Dr Catherine Walsh, UK
Professor Branka Marinovic, Croatia
Karen Muller, France
Dr Harriet Maclehoose, UK
Dr Lucrina Stefanescu, Romania
Ms Madeleine McMullen, France
Patricia O’Shaughnessy, UK
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Dr Barbara Von Beust, Switzerland
Dr Laurence Mabile, France
Dr Anne Cambon-Thomsen, France
Professor Anna Jedryka-Goral, Poland
Dr Maria Koltowska-Haggstrom, Sweden
Dr Jessica Kandlbauer, Switzerland
Dr Maria Kowalczuk, UK
Dr Robert Sykes, UK
Dr Narcis Hudorovic, Croatia
Dr Sarah Webb, Hong Kong
Khuzem Batawala, UK
Michael Newkirk, Canada

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIPS
Editage/Cactus Communications, India
AMERBAC, Mexico
Reports of meetings

Asian Science Editors’ Conference and Workshop 2014

2-4 July 2014, Seoul, Korea

The Korean Council of Science Editors organized the Asian Science Editors’ Conference and Workshop 2014, July 2-4 in the Korean Federation of Science and Technology Building, Gangnam, Seoul, Korea. 160 editors, manuscript editors, managing editors or staff members of publishing companies from 13 countries (Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, Mongolia, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Russia, the United Kingdom, and Australia) attended the meeting. The Korean Institute of Science and Technology Information participated as a co-organizer, and the Korean Federation of Science and Technology Societies and the Association of Academics and Societies of Sciences in Asia also supported the meeting.

On July 2, there was a conference on topics such as the current status of scientific journals in Asia, and an introduction to national and international editors’ organizations, including a report on the increased visibility of scientific journals from Asia through ScienceCentral (http://e-sciencecentral.org). In the first session, scientific journal editors from each attending Asian country presented. These were Drs. Tuvdendori Galbaatar (Mongolia), Banh Tien Long (Vietnam), Komang G. Wiryawan (Indonesia), Worachart Sirawaraporn (Thailand), Ramanathan Subramaniam (Singapore), Evelyn Mae Tecson-Mendoza (Philippines), Qi Feng Zhou (China), Toshihiko Yamada (Japan), and Kihong Kim (Korea). Although some of the issues raised were specific to particular countries, most of the problems and difficulties posed to journal editors and publishers in all locations are fairly similar. Firstly, with the exception of a small number of publications, it is difficult for journals to attract the submission of top-notch manuscripts, since those manuscripts are usually submitted in the first instance to international journals indexed in high-impact literature databases such as Web of Science™. Secondly, there is a shortage of professional manuscript editors or managing editors, such that researchers are often required to work voluntarily on the processes of journal editing and publishing. Thirdly, most scientific journals are published for non-profit purposes by academic societies or universities, and thus the budget for the journal is limited, making it difficult to engage high-quality professional editorial services. There is an urgent need for professional editors and manuscript editors in Asian countries. However, there are some countries in which scholarly journal publishing has been supported by the government, namely, Republic of Korea, Japan, China, and Indonesia. An interesting observation during this session was that, perhaps because of these difficulties in the scientific publishing environment, open access publishing policies have been introduced with relative ease to scientific journals published in Asia.

After lunch, 15 posters were presented; the production of Journal Article Tag Suite XML was introduced; the journal history of some countries was presented; and an output analysis of science and technology publications in Asia was presented, which showed that most research papers produced in Asian regions appear to have lower citation rates and are therefore often devalued.

During the session on editors’ organizations, the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors (APAME) was introduced by Dr. Jeong-Wook Seo from Seoul National University. APAME was launched in 2008 and has opened the Asian Science Editors’ meeting every year. The success of APAME is due to its collaboration with the Western Pacific Regional Index Medicus team, which is supported by the Western Pacific Regional Office of the World Health Organization. During the process of establishing APAME, members of the Korean Association of Medical Journal Editors showed strong leadership. Subsequent to the launch of APAME, editors’ associations appeared in individual countries, including Japan (2008), Mongolia (2008), Singapore (2010), Philippines (2011), and Malaysia (2011). The Korean Council of Science Editors was introduced by Prof. Hyungsun Kim from Inha University. It was launched in September 2011, and within 3 years was circulating its journal to more than 200 members. There were 12 workshops and several seminars on publication ethics, establishing it as an invaluable organization for the development of scientific journals with training for editors and the introduction of a recent international standard of journal publishing. In all, the session on editors’ organizations provided good guidelines and a model of how to learn from other countries’ organizations.

My presentation on ScienceCentral described the new Journal Article Tag Suite (JATS) XML-based full-text database platform for journals published directly by academic societies. Any scientific journal article that is produced according to the JATS XML standard can be deposited to ScienceCentral, regardless of its language. ScienceCentral includes a variety of additional functions, including Google translation into 80 languages. This database may contribute to increased visibility for small society-sponsored journals.

The last session of the conference was the inaugural Assembly of the Council of Asian Science Editors (CASE). CASE aims to improve the quality of science research journals published in Asia, by advising members about international regulations on, and guidelines for the editing and sharing of information about scientific journal editing and publishing, thereby contributing to the development of science and human well-being. The background to the formation of CASE was reported as follows: In recent years, the quality of scientific research in Asia has continuously improved, and accordingly, scholars in Asia are publishing a greater number of research papers. However, because the majority of
outstanding papers by Asian researchers are being published in non-Asian journals, many of the remaining papers that are being published in Asia have not drawn the international readership that they deserve. In order to continue the improvement of Asian scientific research publication that is necessary for attracting international attention, it is essential for those who are involved in scientific research and publication to work together within a structure such as CASE, since the cooperation of nations across Asia is likely to have a synergistic effect.

Emeritus Professor Jong Kyu Ha was elected as the first President of CASE and Professor Hyungsun Kim as the first Secretary-General. It was announced that 137 editors from 21 countries had applied to become, and were accepted, as CASE members.

On July 3, the first day of the Science Editors’ Workshop, Ms. Rachael Lammey from CrossRef gave two presentations: one on present CrossRef services, such as DOI, CrossCheck, CrossMark, and FundRef, and the other on future plans of CrossRef, such as text and data mining, and other services. She introduced the CrossRef Metadata search tool available at http://search.crossref.org/, which, although it does not enable complete data access, is invaluable for searching the approximately 67 million journal articles that exist. Collaboration with Cambia is a planned new service designed to link 10,694,365 linked citations from 6,729,459 different patent documents to the scholarly literature. The CrossRef API is a tool available in alpha version at https://github.com/CrossRef/rest-api-doc/blob/master/funder_kpi_api.md to support key performance indicators for funding agencies. It may be used to locate funder ID, publication types, number of DOI deposits by a journal, or specific topics. It will be a powerful tool for use by managers of journal literature databases. Since it is difficult to obtain permission to use data in articles that are not in open access journals, CrossRef’s new system for data mining represents a great opportunity for researchers. Through this system, researchers can access data from an article through CrossRef metadata or their click-through service and metadata. In the click-through system, a publisher contacts a researcher using CrossRef’s click-through service, while a researcher contacts a publisher through metadata. They exchange tokens, and after confirming the token supplied from the researcher, the publisher allows the researcher to access the full-text of an article. Several other topics, such as small publisher tools, widgets, linked clinical trials, and citing ephemera, were also discussed. The existence of CrossTech, which is the CrossRef Publisher Technology Forum, was also noted. This is where new developments by CrossRef are introduced and discussed.

Following the CrossRef session, Dr. Jeong-Tae Kim, editor of Archives of Plastic Surgery, discussed the management of a journal run by his local scholarly society. He gave an engaging presentation on his experience managing his journal. When the journal’s language was changed from Korean to English, he had to negotiate over the objections of a minor group within the associated professional society. In addition, he described the extensive work involved in seeking an editorial consultant, printing company, cover and layout designer, manuscript editor, e-submission system provider, XML producing company, illustrator, statistician, and English proofreading company. He aimed to appoint the best company or specialist in each service in order for his journal to be acknowledged as one of the most respected in the field worldwide. This kind of extensive, detailed search for vendors and resources is a common endeavour of many editors of journals working independently of major publishing companies. Next, Mr. Simon Goudie from Wiley Asia presented on how to develop journals from the point of view of a large publishing company. He stressed the importance of having a step-wise development plan that utilizes an understanding of the current landscape, defining unique aims, and searching for a niche for the journal’s identity. He suggested that journal development could be achieved by building a passionate team that shares a common vision, performing analysis of present strengths and weaknesses, undergoing regular journal updates of the style and an annual audit of journal success. This presentation showed how a large company systematically manages and assists editors with the publication processes.

On the second workshop day, Ms. Pippa Smart from PSP Consulting presented an entire day of material on
journal management. Ms. Smart was invited to provide comprehensive, up-to-date insight into the knowledge and methods of journal development. She described the present ‘big-picture’ in the world of journals, including journal development strategies, partnerships, and building on strengths and weaknesses. Her informative explanations of the differences between partnerships and service providers and between publishers and online hosts were of great interest to the audience. She explained that there are four types of publishing agreements. Type I is a full-service contract agreement under which a professional society (academic society) retains ownership and editorship of the journal. The commercial publisher provider supports everything; however, this can be expensive. Type II is a minimal service agreement under which a society retains ownership and editorship of the journal and the publisher provides the online hosting and financial handling, which can still be expensive. Type III is a sale agreement, whereby a society retains its editorship of, and association with, a journal, which may be lucrative; however, the society cannot maintain editorial control of the journal. Type IV involves online hosts to which a society sends PDF files for display. This type of agreement provides the opportunity to guarantee the visibility of journal articles. There are additional aspects of these agreements that require negotiation, such as editorial office management, subscription management, marketing, and typesetting and production. The presentation provided timely information for editors reconsidering the optimal journal development model for their needs. Overall, the topics in this session were new to the Asian editors present, and the workshop attendees showed great interest in Ms. Smart’s presentations.

In summary, the 2014 Asian Science Editors’ Conference and Workshop aimed to foster a highly interactive environment for the professional development of participants. During the conference, attendees were encouraged to communicate with each other to promote their journals and to apply international standards for journal publishing. Editors from a variety of countries reported that they were “very impressed at this conference,” and that they “learned much on editing and publishing”. Ongoing interest in collaborative editorial and publishing activity was evident from comments such as “I would like to organize an editors’ council in my country”, and “I hope to open a conference next year in my country”. On behalf of the conference organizing committee, I was pleased to hear such positive feedback. In particular, the launch of CASE was a significant advancement for the promotion of science journals from Asia. The next CASE conference was discussed with Vietnamese delegates and tentatively proposed to be held in Hanoi, August 20–22, 2015. CASE will provide support for initiatives to organize editors’ associations in each Asian nation.

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350 years of journal publishing
The Royal Society
6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London
Friday, March 20th, 2015, 5:30pm

In 2015, the Royal Society and a team of researchers at the University of St Andrews will hold a conference on the history of the scientific periodical as part of the 350th anniversary celebrations of Philosophical Transactions, the world’s oldest scientific journal.

The programme will include a panel discussion on the current state of science publishing and future challenges facing it, involving editors and publishers representing commercial, learned society, and open access publishing. Confirmed participants include Stuart Taylor (Commercial Director, Royal Society); Eva Baranyiová and Professor Diana Worrall University of Bristol; Scientific Editor, MNRAS. The event is open to all and free to attend; join us for a stimulating and wide-ranging discussion.

More information can be found at:
https://royalsociety.org/events/2015/03/publish-or-perish/
https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/philosophicaltransactions/publisherperish/
ISMTE 2014 European Conference
14 October 2014, London, UK

This was the 7th annual meeting of the International Society of Managing & Technical Editors (ISMTE), held at Charles Darwin House, London, attended by many first-time delegates and veteran Society members. There were three plenary lectures and eleven parallel sessions covering a wide variety of Editorial Office related subjects. As I could not attend them all, I requested summaries from the presenters of each parallel session. Many thanks to them all for providing me with some great details. The full agenda for the day is available on the ISMTE website (http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1102316625268-97/ISMTE+EU+Agenda.pdf).

A Storify collecting tweets from the day can be found at https://storify.com/dvlpmntduncs/ismte14

The opening plenary lecture, titled Impact Factor: Are you for or against it? featured Juan Aréchaga (International Journal of Developmental Biology, Spain) and Jason Hoyt (PeerJ) detailing some of the positive and, to a greater degree, negative interpretations and applications of it. Juan declared the Impact Factor (IF) an easily understandable metric that facilitates rational choices for subscribing and submitting, however, he warned against the trend for institutions to require researchers to submit to ranked journals. His talk proceeded to discuss themes of open access, IF gaming, and minimal peer review. Jason argued that the IF affects research and that it has an economic toll, and it chimed with several of Aréchaga’s issues, especially the potential for the IF to be used positively as a hallmark of legitimacy to guard against ‘predatory’ publishers. There was some heated debate from the floor as to the value, accuracy and motives of the metric, starting the day off with a passion.

In the second plenary, Wendy Moore described setting up her company Journal Editorial Services in The Business of Editing. She outlined services that she offers and new services she intends to develop such as full journal management, customized conference software, bespoke reporting and workflow solutions. Her key advice was to define editorial services, ensure they are broad but within editors’ scope of expertise, and to stay well informed of the industry developments.

In the session Managing Content, Ashmita Das spoke about the language editing service Editage, which combines academic and copy editor expertise to enhance the presentation of 6000 documents a month. To the question of why some language edited papers do not meet the standards required by a journal, Ashmita said that Editage does not monitor decisions of papers they have edited. Furthermore, authors may amend papers between receiving copy and submitting to a journal. Sherryl Sundell (International Journal of Cancer) and Anna Sharman (Cofactor) suggested that researching the efficacy of language services in this area may be beneficial.

Contracting with Lou Whelan of The Journal Office continued from a previous year’s seminar establishing the requirements to set up an Editorial Office. This session explored the ongoing challenges of business development, support networks, staying competitive, expanding into new markets, and outsourcing tasks such as accountancy and IT.

Working in the Cloud provided remote-working advice based on Kristie Overstreet’s experience of running Origin Editorial. Two thirds of the group’s attendees work remotely from the stakeholders involved in their businesses: authors, reviewers, editors, publishers and production, so this was a session relevant to many. Kristie discussed the importance of communication tools, such as video chat facilities, to foster strong team working, training methods using web-apps, and using newsletters to distribute resources and educational articles.

In Prevention is Better Than Retraction, Michael Willis of Wiley focused on three main issues to ensure the integrity of publishing: conflicts of interest, plagiarism, and image manipulation. Both groups drew similar conclusions: 1) Education around ethical issues needs emphasis through guidelines, workshops, and compliance advocacy from institutions and societies; 2) Editorial offices have little resource (time, money, technical expertise) to closely manage these issues; and 3) Trusting authors is critical to peer review integrity. Checking images for manipulation was the topic about which delegates felt least comfortable, and there was some demand for guidance on this at future ISMTE meetings (although resources do already exist on the ISMTE website and elsewhere).

Leighton Chipperfield of the Society for General Microbiology provided insight into Managing Change, the elements driving it, and how to plan for it. He illustrated his talk with SGM case studies of externalizing editorial support and moving to an online submission system; identifying needs; benchmarking progress and measuring results. He advised that it was wise for editorial teams to remember their initial goals, communicate, identify risks and define how success will be measured.

There followed an ISMTE Society update and announcement of the Conference Best Poster Award. The prize went to Heather Blasco and Sarah Welliver from J&J Editorial with their presentation titled Reformatting Submission Questions Increases the Accuracy of Author-
**Supplied Information: A Case Study.** The winning poster can be viewed in full at https://c.yimg.com/sites/www.ismte.org/resource/resmgr/Posters/2014_NA_Poster_4.pdf

Next, **Michaela Torkar** of F1000, gave her plenary lecture on **Emerging Models of Peer Review.** She covered current practices, openness, timings and stages of the process. She stated a key benefit of open reviewing is placing papers into the context of wider discussions. She cited a study by the BMJ, which found that open review did not affect quality of the reviews, but it did result in higher proportions declining open review invitations than blind. Michaela detailed the unique qualities of journals using open peer review: BMC journals’ re-review opt-out for authors; E-life’s intense first round of review and discussion; Peerage of Science’s peer-rated forum-style, and PLOS Biology and PLOS One’s cascading system. She finished on F1000, where papers are reviewed for scientific integrity then published online for transparent review and/or revising. This version of the record is updated in two ways – ‘Revised’ following community comments, or ‘Updated’ with significant advancements following further research or findings in the data.

The most well received aspect of the whole talk was that F1000 allows for live, in-article data manipulation, presenting the raw data along with charts to allow readers to plot the figures they wish to see. There followed a further set of concurrent sessions:

**Jigisha Patel** of **BMC** oversaw lively sessions discussing both kinds of **Openness**—Access and Review. After briefly introducing Gold and Green Open Access (OA) models, the rest of the time was spent discussing open review in its two forms – publishing names or full reviews. Various solutions to problematic scenarios were debated including a referee wishing their review to remain unpublished, a review containing defamatory comments, and a reader highlighting a referee’s conflict of interest.

**Cate Livingstone** of **Wiley** discussed issues around Cascading, although the groups preferred the term ‘transfer’ to ‘cascade’ as the latter was deemed to imply descending a hierarchy. The groups discussed whether recipient journals could end up competing with supporter journals, and the growing trend towards cross-publisher transfer, especially by societies with journals at multiple publishers. Simone Larche provided a neatly concluding comment, suggesting a project involving publishers and ScholarOne/Aries to look at cascading as an industry-wide issue to consider what standards might make transferring easier for the community.

In his talk **Is your Peer Review a Lottery?**, **Janne-Tuomas Seppänen** of Peerage of Science described several ways in which they are offering a novel form of review and journal selection in an independent reviewing platform, where journals bid for articles and the publishing decision is a result of the interaction between author and journal, after completion of peer review: thoroughness and timeliness of review is suggested by the author, reviewers evaluate each other’s comments before agreeing on the suitability of papers for acceptance. Meanwhile, all PoS-Select service journals (currently 17 titles) may send publishing offers to authors, who may then choose to accept or ignore them. If publishing has not happened via Select, authors can export their reviews to a journal in the PoS-Connect service. This service currently includes PLOS Biology and PLOS One, but Janne hinted at a major addition to the destination journal selection in the immediate future, though details remain a secret for now.

**Peter Hall** of the **Journal of Pathology** spoke about the issues surrounding **Handling Author Suggestions** – conflicts of interest, caveats and provisos, and the effectiveness of Editors using those suggestions. There was agreement that everyone employs suggestions differently, from a lot of usage to none, to the extremes of reviewers and authors being barred for misconduct. However the prevailing experience was that suggested reviewers were potentially useful and were sometimes used. There was agreement that some independently derived statistics on this matter would be useful (rather than anecdotal evidence).

**Diana Epstein** of **Di-Ep Biomedical Editorial Services** gave a thorough presentation on the **Overuse of Reviewers and Finding New Ones**, discussing how reviewers see themselves, what they identify with and why, models of peer review, advice on maintaining up-to-date reviewer databases, and finding reviewers. The sessions finished with discussions around reviewer tools; many participants had not heard of JANE (Journal Author Name Estimator), and a query was raised over Publons, a website that recognises and rewards reviewer activity. Diana will be writing a full article of this presentation for publication in the **ISMTE newsletter Editorial Office News** in the future.

**Anna Jester** of **eJournalPress** presented a whistle-stop tour of the **System Possibilities for Different Peer Review Models** which can be configured in review sites, accommodating an exhaustive range of options – single- or double-blind, author and editor suggested reviewers, data-set and statistical reviews, reviewer consultation sessions, triage, transfer and cascading, open and transparent review, Rubiq and submission fee models, and finally, visible pre-publication histories. Anna concluded her talk by saying that peer review is a varied, diverse and evolving system which requires continuous evaluation.

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In his talk **Is your Peer Review a Lottery?**, **Janne-Tuomas Seppänen** of Peerage of Science described several ways in which they are offering a novel form of review and journal selection in an independent reviewing platform, where journals bid for articles and the publishing decision is a result of the interaction between author and journal, after completion of peer review: thoroughness and timeliness of review is suggested by the author, reviewers evaluate each other's comments before agreeing on the suitability of papers for acceptance. Meanwhile, all PoS-Select service journals (currently 17 titles) may send publishing offers to authors, who may then choose to accept or ignore them. If publishing has not happened via Select, authors can export their reviews to a journal in the PoS-Connect service. This service currently includes PLOS Biology and PLOS One, but Janne hinted at a major addition to the destination journal selection in the immediate future, though details remain a secret for now.

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Book review

Academic and Professional Publishing


This book builds on previous books edited by Robert Campbell on journal publishing, and as the complexity of publishing has increased, so has the number of pages and contributors to this current volume. This book now includes 20 chapters from 23 contributors. The contributing authors come from academia, commercial publishers, and ancillary organisations involved in scholarly communication. They bring a wealth of experience and well-respected viewpoints filling almost 500 pages. The three editors themselves are well-respected within the industry: Robert Campbell worked for Blackwell Science (now Wiley) for over 30 years and was instrumental in the development of world-class publishing services for learned associations and scholars. Ed Pentz is the Executive Director of CrossRef, a non-profit membership organisation that provides cross-publisher services with the objective of ensuring safe, global linking to quality-assured content. And Ian Borthwick comes from the Institution of Engineering and Technology, where he works on the growth of international standards.

The chapters cover the full gamut of publishing issues, starting with an overview of how publishing is changing. The chapters consider peer review, publishing strategies, how digital communication has changed the scholarly ecosystem, and how journal and book publishing models and finances have changed to meet the new requirements of academia, scholars and professionals. Editorial workflows are examined, along with publishing standards, particularly looking at citation and impact. Sales are considered, and the roles of intermediaries – in particular librarians – are discussed, especially in respect to managing digital content. Finally, both legal and ethical aspects of publishing are each given separate chapters. The book finishes with a consideration of the future of the journal, the external forces that are moulding what publishers do, and finally the importance of trust within this environment.

One key feature of the book is the descriptions of the growing number of cross-publisher initiatives that scholars may be completely unaware of. These include linking standards (eg the digital object identifier), ethical agreements (the Committee on Publication Ethics), standards to ensure accessibility (eg DAISY for visually impaired readers) and identifying authors and institutions (ORCID and ISNI respectively). Many of these have been developed in response to the evolving digital and international environment, and show an industry that – usually – works in a collaborative (as well as competitive) manner. There is also an entire chapter devoted to relating content to the user – increasing discoverability and usefulness. This surely is something that users in the world of Google are totally unaware of – assuming that Google just takes care of this!

This book is certainly not a “how-to” book for the uninitiated, and assumes a level of understanding from the readers that would discourage those new to publishing. However it does provide an authoritative reference to the many issues that publishers – large and small – are encountering and having to manage. As in any multi-author book, the styles vary from chapter to chapter, making some easier to read than others. Some authors provide pragmatic information whilst others are more academic and discursive in their approach to the subject. In one chapter there is a checklist for meetings, whilst another has a text heading “The Tao of academic publishing” and discusses the importance of a “…strong positive feedback loop.”

There is a great deal of valuable information and insight provided in this book, and it would make a useful resource for publishers and librarians interested in the industry. It makes a strong argument for the value of publishers in a time when their role in scholarly communication is being questioned – but unfortunately those not already in agreement are unlikely to read such a book.

The book has been written from the perspective of the major publishing industry in the US and UK, and this is both a strength and a weakness. For those outside this community the complexity of initiatives and standards may make inclusion appear unobtainable, and there is a lack of perspectives from other regions of the world (although at almost 500 content pages perhaps there was no room for them!). However the book makes no apology for this complexity and argues that in a global, linked world, publishers must respond to the needs of scholars and meet their complex needs.

In conclusion, would I recommend this book? Yes, I definitely would, since it provides a wide range of opinions and information in an area where relatively little useful information is published.

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F1000: a useful resource for biomedical researchers and editors

http://f1000.com/

Faculty of 1000 for researchers and editors

Faculty of 1000 (F1000) is a platform highlighting future directions of research in biology and medicine. Nowadays biomedical bibliographic databases are expanding rapidly, and it takes a lot of time to find a relevant literature source. F1000 was launched in 2003 to help researchers pick exceptional sources and use them for future research.

Vitek Tracz, the CEO and founder of F1000, wanted to realize the concept of post-publication review by leading experts from all over the world. In line with this, three online services were organized: F1000Prime (recommendations hub), F1000Research (open access journal), and F1000Posters (repository of presentations). All these services are aimed at helping researchers reflect on prospects in research.

In our times there is no shortage of scholarly resources. On the contrary, the abundant flow of information is now a big issue. Not only researchers but also science editors are affected by the deluge of information and difficulties in distinguishing the most important items. Academic journals should become the main hubs for innovative research results and platforms for scholarly communication. Science editors, in turn, should play their role in upgrading journal standards by publishing the most influential and innovative articles. F1000 can help not only researchers but also editors to hone their editorial skills and learn how to select and review the most valuable papers.

F1000Prime

F1000Prime contains post-publication reviewer comments on selected biomedical papers. More than 10,000 leading scholars representing 53 research areas overview recent publications abstracted on PubMed. F1000Prime is unique in that its experts do not just provide opinions but also qualitatively assess papers. The experts’ recommendations reflect the scientific merit of papers rather than their indexing status and journals’ impact indicators. The experts pick potentially useful research papers and recommend them to the scholarly community, thus saving the readers’ precious time.

The experts provide authoritative comments on evaluated papers and forecast trends in research fields. Any recommendation from F1000 is a great honour for authors. F1000 recommendations may provide an outlook on the citability of individual papers. Apart from that, F1000Prime can help research, academic and publishing organizations to predict research outcomes and adjust the allocation of resources accordingly.

F1000Research

F1000Research is a promising initiative for science publishing. It differs from traditional and most open access journals. Submissions to F1000Research are accepted and then sent for peer review. The manuscripts’ initial and revised versions and reviewers’ comments are stored on the F1000Research website. Papers disapproved by experts are rejected and not visible to the public.

F1000Posters

Meeting reports contain a bulk of unpublished research data and innovative ideas. F1000Posters is an open access repository of posters and presentations from leading biological and medical conferences. Readers of these items can gain insight into the latest scientific achievements and tendencies. Since its launch in June 2010, F1000Posters has grown considerably and now includes posters from more than 180 international meetings, with some of the posters being viewed up to 850 times a month.
My route into science really began during a teenage love affair with the books of neurologist Oliver Sacks, whose writing inspired me to study Natural Sciences at the University of Cambridge. After a brief flirtation with potential clinical training and some valuable clinical experience, I found my way back to science. I am now a final year doctoral student at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), King’s College London, studying the neurobiology underlying antipsychotic treatment response in psychosis.

I really enjoy some aspects of working as a scientist, but other aspects I find frustrating. Sometimes these overlap. For example, being at the very edges of what is known is thrilling but also disconcerting. As a researcher, I have also realised that I like to look at the “big picture” more than the minute, sometimes tedious, details. I like to see results, and enjoy communicating these to others. Inevitably, I have developed an interest in writing, editing, and communicating science.

After a talk at the IoPPN by Joan Marsh, Senior Editor of The Lancet Psychiatry and President of EASE, I approached the podium to ask about working at The Lancet and how she came to be an editor. Our chat led to an internship and so a few months later, I found myself in Camden, London, about to spend two weeks as an editor with The Lancet Psychiatry.

I have to admit that I expected employees at The Lancet to be slightly older, cerebral, and mostly male, working in a formal and somewhat scholarly environment. Therefore, I was pleasantly surprised by the diverse workforce, comprising a range of ages and experiences. I was also pleased to find that formality was not the norm. There was an openness in the team discussion of submitted manuscripts, and the meetings with Editor-in-Chief Richard Horton were actually fairly relaxed. The emphasis was not on formalities but on what was really important – science and medicine.

During my two weeks, I saw the processes from manuscript submission and pre-review, through editing, to page layout and deciding which articles were worthy of a press release. As a researcher, submitting papers for publication can feel like placing the hard work of many months or years into a black box, from which months later some sort of critical commentary emerges. Sitting with experienced editors allowed me a view inside the black box, and I saw what editors look for in a paper. It is easy to be blinkered by daily exposure to your particular research topic, making it harder to be as critical of your own work as you might be of others’. Critical analytical skills are clearly foremost for an editor. I saw papers put through a process of tough criticism aimed at weeding out any potential faults, and seeing whether these were justifiable or redeemable. The process highlighted the importance not only of good design and a focused question, but also of clarity and transparency of reporting.

Another skill that I observed in the editors with whom I worked was their ability to aid authors to identify and narrate the story told by their research in a clear, methodical and engaging manner. They tried to discover the key message of the research and the implications the results might have out in the real world. Determining this makes it easier to decide what to include and what can safely be omitted, without compromising the impact or accuracy of an article. Editors play an active and highly important role, in concert with academics, in shaping scientific narratives, by determining not only what is published but also how the information is conveyed. Honesty and integrity are essential.

There was one aspect of the job that I had not previously given much thought. Usually, academics have worked for many years on the same topic, and may have pet theories that they are loath to have criticised. The ability to sensitively communicate criticism and rejection to authors is therefore a key skill, as is being able to direct and guide authors to make improvements based on the criticisms they receive. Producing an accurate and high quality manuscript can mean navigating the balance between the needs of the journal and the needs of the author.

Papers submitted to The Lancet that are considered for publication are generally of a high standard. One of the most rewarding aspects of my time was the exposure to so many interesting questions, debates, and pioneering results across a wide breadth of topics. This was a nice change from the more narrow focus that is required in academia. I liked that I could be reading about antidepressants in the morning and then hearing about gastro-oesophageal junction adenocarcinoma in the afternoon.

Has my two weeks as an intern inspired me to pursue a career as an editor? It’s certainly encouraging me to consider it seriously. I was always concerned that leaving research would mean leaving behind just a little too much of the science that I love. However, I have seen that scientific knowledge is a necessary commodity for academic science publishing. Becoming an editor may allow me to maintain my connection with science, while providing the opportunity to apply critical, communication and creative skills across a broader selection of scientific fields. Whether I decide to stay in science or move to publishing, my two weeks as an editorial intern has certainly shown me the importance of editors in shaping science and in ensuring that important research findings are disseminated accurately, fairly, and in as transparent a manner as possible.
News notes

Retractions news
Following the retraction of three papers found to include fabricated data, the editor of one of the papers has expressed his frustration at the time and effort spent working on the paper. The editor, Willem van Schalk, edited the paper for PLOS One. The Retraction Watch blog (retractionwatch.com; 11 July 2014) reports van Schalk’s experiences, noting that it was difficult to spot the fabrication even in hindsight.

At a recent Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) forum (23 September 2014), the topic for discussion was a proposed standard retraction form. The form, available to download from the COPE website (publicationethics.org/resources/discussion-documents), was suggested by an ex-Editor in Chief of European Science Editing, Hervé Maisonneuve. Studies of retractions have found that retraction reports often lack clear explanations.

In an article in Lab Times (labtimes.org; 16 September 2014), Retraction Watch founders Adam Marcus and Ivan Oransky ask whether journals should be penalised for retractions. They say, “Clearly, if a paper is retracted, no matter what excuses journals make, peer review didn’t work as well as it could have.” Marcus and Oransky also propose that journals accrue “reputation points” for clear retraction notices, raising awareness and quick responses.

Retraction Watch (8 July and 14 July 2014) reported on the unearthing of another peer review “ring”, creating false identities of peer reviewers to manipulate the editorial process.

Following an investigation, the Journal of Vibration and Control retracted 60 articles by Peter Chen from National Pingtung University of Education, Taiwan. The publisher, SAGE, identified 130 possible fraudulent email addresses, and the scandal resulted in the resignation of Taiwan’s education minister, Chiang Wei-ling, a co-author on some of the retracted articles.

New journals
The Royal Society has launched Royal Society Open Science (rsos.royalsocietypublishing.org), a new, fast, open access journal. As with other broad-based open access journals, RSOS enables easy transfer from the organisation’s other journals, article-level metrics, and CC-BY licencing. The Royal Society is waiving article processing charges and publication fees for early submissions.

A forthcoming new open-access journal from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the publisher of Science, has been criticised in an open letter by a group of 115 researchers, who say the journal’s business model would undermine the principles of open access and dissemination of knowledge. The journal, Science Advances, is due to launch in 2015. The letter (published on various websites, and reported in the New Statesman; newstatesman.com, 29 August 2014) questions the high article-processing charges and relatively restrictive licensing options. The AAAS states that the business model is necessary to support the journal sustainably.

Overleaf
WriteLaTeX has received investment from Digital Science (www.digital-science.com), the company behind Figshare and Readcube, to support the development of Overleaf (www.writelatex.com/overleaf), a collaborative science platform. Overleaf is a simple manuscript editor with real-time collaboration that enables co-authors to automatically create structured, typeset articles. You can read more on the WriteLaTex blog (www.writelatex.com/blog; 23 July 2014).

Text recycling guidelines
New guidelines on text recycling developed by BioMedCentral in collaboration with the COPE were published on the COPE website in August (publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines). The guidelines were developed with input from COPE members at a COPE forum.

Nature Communication goes OA
Nature Publishing Group’s multidisciplinary online journal Nature Communications (www.nature.com/ncomms) has converted to full open access. The journal, launched in 2010 as a “hybrid” subscription/open access journal, is now offering various licencing options, with CC BY 4.0 as default, and article processing charge waivers are available. The move has enabled Nature Publishing Group to join the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association.

Software Discovery Index
The US National Institutes of Health’s “Big Data to Knowledge” (BD2K) initiative (bd2k.nih.gov), launched in 2012, aims to find ways to overcome barriers in harvesting information from biomedical big datasets. A workshop in May 2014 explored one particular challenge: how to locate, cite, and reuse biomedical software.

A report of the workshop is now available at softwarediscoveryindex.org and includes many proposals and implications for journals and editors.

New ways to discover content
Papery (papery.org) describes itself as “the first multidisciplinary aggregator of open access journals and papers”. A small start-up company founded by Marcin Wojnarski, affiliated with the University of Warsaw, Papery aims to aggregate 100% of open access literature across all fields of research and is seeking the support of journals.

Sparrho (sparrho.com) is a new service that aggregates and
European scientists protest
In October, thousands of scientists across Europe took part in protests against research budget cuts, reported New Scientist (newscientist.com; 20 October 2014). This followed the publication of an open letter to governments and the European Union drawing attention to “the crucial contribution of a strong research sector to the economy”. The letter is published at openletter.euroscience.org, and a blog post (blog.euroscientifc.org) describes Homo scientificus europaeus, an endangered species.

New at Learned Publishing
A special open access issue of the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers’ journal, Learned Publishing, focused on data publishing. The issue, available at www.ingentaconnect.com/content/alsp/lp, includes seven articles covering the key topics in the area. This issue was published with the support of Wiley and guest edited by Alice Meadows and Dr Fiona Murphy from Wiley. EASE Council member, Pippa Smart, is the new interim Editor in Chief of Learned Publishing.

Rich citations
PLOS has developed an enriched citation format, with the aim of better distinguishing between the various functions served by citations and better mapping of citations across the literature. PLOS aims to enrich citations with “...detailed information about the citing paper, the cited object, and the relationship between the two.” They will also be in human- and machine-readable format under an open license. You can read more at blogs.plos.org/tech; 22 October 2014 and explore the way it works for PLOS papers at alpha.richcitations.org.

Indexing and impact services: beware
Several companies offering a range of dubious or bogus “impact factor” and indexing services have been highlighted on the Scholarly Open Access blog (scholarlyoa.com) in recent months. Of course there are many legitimate and respected services, so it pays to do some research before choosing where to index and how to measure the impact of a journal.

How to make more published research true
In 2005, PLOS Medicine published a very highly cited paper by John Ioannidis from Stanford University, USA, titled “Why most published research findings are false” (2005;2(8):e124). Now, Ioannidis has published a follow up titled “How to make more published research true” (PLOS Medicine 2014;11(10):e1001747). In the paper, Ioannidis highlights the need to adopt multiple practices that improve credibility in specific fields, to rigorously evaluate interventions to improve research, to understand the motivations of stakeholders, and to change the reward systems for science.

New article type in eLife
The journal eLife has introduced a new article type called Research Advances. The aim is to allow authors to publish “significant additions” to their articles as separate publications. An editorial in the journal explains the concept in more depth (2014;3:e03980), outlining how the additions could include new techniques or methods that strengthen, refine or challenge the original findings. Research Advances will usually be peer-reviewed by the same reviewers that worked on the original paper.

ImpactStory changes approach
ImpactStory (impactstory.org) is an independent altmetrics service that aims to give researchers a convenient showcase for their scholarly output and its impact (“Your CV, but better”). In August the previously free service moved to a subscription model. Alongside this change are some new features. The site has been redesigned to make it more customisable, and you can now share articles, slides and other content directly via ImpactStory alongside the metrics. These changes are described in the ImpactStory blog (blog.impactstory.org), which also provides insights into the broader issues around altmetrics and what you can do with them.

COASP reports
The sixth Conference on Open Access Scholarly Publishing (COASP), organised by the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA; oaspa.org) was held at UNESCO in Paris in September 2014. Sessions at the meeting explored the diverse roads taken to open access and open communication, and some of the innovative progress made in tackling the details while acknowledging the significant barriers that remain. A report of the meeting by Mark Patterson, executive director of eLife, was published in Research Information (researchinformation.info; 19 October 2014), and you can watch all the presentations on the OASPA website (oaspa.org/conference).

ICSU endorses OA
On 2nd September, the International Council for Science (ICSU) issued a statement endorsing open access and providing recommendations for guarding against misuse of metrics when evaluating scholarly output. ICSU, which represents national scientific bodies and international scientific unions, sets out five key goals for open access (no financial barriers for researchers, no financial barriers for users, no restrictions on reuse, quality assurance, and archiving) and 12 recommendations to help achieve the goals. The full report, titled “Open access to scientific data and literature and the assessment of research by metrics”, is available on the ICSU website (www.icsu.org/publications)

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The editor’s bookshelf

ECONOMICS AND FUNDING


The article discusses the serials and scholarly publishing industry as of April 2014, focusing on the authors’ identification of trends affecting use and pricing in the field according to data from the Periodicals Price Survey 2014. On the basis of the survey the average prices for science, technology, and medical (STM) serials remain the highest, compared with prices for serials in other subject areas.

Carroll MW. Creative Commons and the openness of open access. The New England Journal of Medicine 2013;368:789-791

The Internet has changed the economics of publication and digital-resource sharing. Copyright law supplies the baseline terms of use for almost all information on the Internet. These terms can be altered if the copyright owner grants a licence or permission to do something that would otherwise infringe copyright. Creative Commons licences are the most widely used of these public licences for all kinds of copyrighted works except software, for which free and open-source licences are most common.

doi: 10.1056/NEJMp1300040

EDITORIAL PROCESS


The authors used data from the handling service Manuscript Central for 10 mid-tier ecology and evolution journals to test whether number of external reviews completed improved citation rates for all accepted manuscripts. Results showed that citation rates of manuscripts do not correlate with the number of individuals that provided reviews. This study aimed also to explore whether editor-only review is a viable peer review model.

doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0085382

Nambiar R, Tilak P, Cerejo C. Quality of author guidelines of journals in the biomedical and physical sciences. Learned Publishing 2014;27(3):201-209

This article aimed to make a quantitative assessment of the completeness and clarity of author guidelines for 80 international English-language journals in the biomedical and physical sciences. No journal scored 100% for completeness and clarity. While author guidelines for many journals adequately address some essential aspects of manuscript preparation and submission, they often do not provide all the information needed as clearly as possible. ‘Formatting instructions’ was the most complete and clear category, and ‘authorship’ the least.

doi: 10.1087/20140306

Patel J. Why training and specialization is needed for peer review: a case study of peer review for randomized controlled trials. BMC Medicine 2014;12:128

Some types of research, such as randomized controlled trials (RCTs), may lend themselves to a more specialized form of peer review where training and ongoing appraisal and revalidation are provided to individuals who peer review RCTs. Any RCT peer reviewed by such a trained peer reviewer could then have a searchable ‘quality assurance’ symbol attached to the published articles and any published peer reviewer reports.

doi: 10.1186/12916-014-0128-z

ETHICAL ISSUES


Uncovered cases of misconduct and violation of publication ethics are increasing at a rapid pace due to the digitization and open access movement. A large amount of funding for research, publishing, and archiving activities comes from pharmaceutical agencies, supporting individuals and their research and academic institutions. These agencies are obliged to educate their authors and to inform them about publishing ethics and the consequences of biased and fraudulent publications. Reviewers and science editors, in turn, should carefully evaluate the correctness of research data and the transparency of authorship, contributorship, and disclosures of ethical approvals, funding, and conflicts of interests.


This study was aimed at assessing the compliance of retraction notices for articles on mental disorders with COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) guidelines and the impact of open access on post-retraction citation of retracted articles. A bibliometric search was carried out using PubMed. Results showed little impact of COPE guidelines on retractions.

Chaddah P. Not all plagiarism requires a retraction. Nature 2014;511(7508):127

In this article the author discusses why it is important to appreciate why scientists may indulge in three forms of plagiarism (text, ideas, and results plagiarism). According to the author, papers that plagiarize only text can still contribute to the

The authors examined every study since 2002 that was funded by TESS (Time-sharing Experiments in the Social Sciences), a national grants programme adopting a rigorous peer review for proposals submitted. They found a strong relationship between the results of a study and whether it was published, a pattern indicative of publication bias. Only 20% of the total studies with null results in the sample appeared in print. In contrast, about 60% of studies with strong results and 50% of those with mixed results were published.

doi: 10.1126/science.1255484


This paper presents an analysis of recent retraction patterns, with a unique emphasis on the role author self-citations play, to assist the scientific community in creating counter-strategies. The findings indicate that new reasons for retractions have emerged in recent years, and that more editors are penning retractions. The rate of increase of retraction varies by category, and there is a statistically significant difference in average impact factor across categories.

doi: 10.1007/s11948-014-9532-1


The authors studied attitudes to, and practice of, authorship among researchers in a university hospital and medical school in Norway. Researchers had knowledge of formal authorship requirements. Most of them agreed with the criteria, but found it harder to put them into practice, and had experienced breaches. More experienced researchers found it easier to put authorship recommendations into practice than less experienced researchers.


This article considers plagiarism factors such as the originality of the copied material, its position in the report, the adequacy of referencing, and the intention of the authors as well as the extent of the copying. It proposes possible definitions of major and minor plagiarism in relation to scholarly publications which might be used as the basis for anti-plagiarism policies in conjunction with resources such as the COPE flowcharts.

doi: 10.1087/20140105

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL


The use of Wikipedia in articles is increasing both in terms of quantity and diversity. This research aimed to identify the motivations for citation to Wikipedia in scientific papers. Also, the number of citations to Wikipedia, location of citation, type of citing papers, subject of citing and cited articles were determined and compared in different subject fields. Results showed that the most frequent motivations for citing Wikipedia are to provide general information and definition, facts and figures. Citations to Wikipedia often appear in the introductory sections of papers.

doi: 10.4103/2320-0057.135415

LANGUAGE AND WRITING


This article provides medical writers with advice on how to help researchers prepare high-quality clinical manuscripts for publication in English-language journals, and consider some ethical issues. Authors will then be assisted in preparing a well-structured, ethically sound, and highly readable manuscript that clearly expresses the clinical evidence of their findings.

doi: 10.1179/2047480614Z.000000000229


This second part of the review on English for Medical Purposes (EMP) presents the main results of research on spoken interaction in medical settings. The first group of studies focused on improving the English language skills of non-Anglophone medical students and health professionals; the second consisted of linguistic analysis of medical conference presentations; and the third analyzed the literature on healthcare (doctor-patient) communication.

doi: 10.1179/2047480614Z.000000000204

PUBLISHING


Members of the US National Academy of Sciences have an inside track to publication in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences journal as they can submit up to four papers per year. This article examined the contributed track, both to assess its scientific impact and to see which members use it most often and why. Results showed that only a small number of scientists have used the track to the maximum allowable rate while most of them published on average fewer than one paper per year. Direct submissions are much less likely to be accepted than those contributed by academy members.
European Science Editing


Journal instructions are important and need to be properly structured, linked to the available guidelines from editorial associations, and regularly revised and enforced to avoid unethical and erroneous publications. They should inform authors about the journal's scope, priority articles, peer review policy, code of publishing ethics, structure and content of different types of accepted articles, in-house style of editing and formatting, and accompanying documents required for each submission. Properly written, printed, and available online instructions are the keys to successful publishing and indexing in prestigious bibliographic databases.

doi: 10.3325/cmj.2014.55.271

Nunn E, Pinfield S. Lay summaries of open access journal articles: engaging with the general public on medical research. Learned Publishing 2014;27(3):173-184

This study investigates attitudes towards the addition of lay summaries to open access (OA) journal articles in the context of engaging the public with medical research. In particular, the perspectives of two stakeholder groups were analysed: employees of organisations with a stake in communicating OA medical research to the public, and members of the public who have experience of accessing online medical research.

doi: 10.1087/20140303


This article considers the changes that have happened recently in the scholarly journal environment, starting with changes in research and development and the influence of the emerging economies. It then considers the financial models and the serials crisis that led to the movement for more open access to research and greater involvement of the academic community. It looks at the ethical issues that have beset recent years, and the new technologies that promise more efficient and ethical publishing.

doi: 10.6087/kcse.2014.1.52

RESEARCH EVALUATION

Casadevall A, Fang FC. Causes for the persistence of impact factor mania. mBio 2014;5(2):e00064-14

Science and scientists are currently afflicted by an epidemic of mania manifested by associating the value of research with the journal where the work is published rather than the content of the work itself. One of the reasons for the persistence of impact factor mania is that it confers significant benefits to individual scientists and journals. Various measures to reduce the influence of the impact factor are considered.

doi: 10.1128/mBio.00064-14


This article examines the influence of Korean scientific journals by performing a correlation analysis of the indicators of citation indices for 62 Korean scientific journals cross-listed in the Web of Science and Scopus. Journals showed low values in both popularity and prestige-based indicators. The authors suggested to take a strategic approach to improve those values, in particular the impact factor.

doi: 10.6087/kcse.2014.1.27

SCIENCE

Thiese MS. Observational and interventional study design types; an overview. Biochimia Medica 2014;24(2):199-210

The appropriate choice in study design is essential for the quality, execution, and interpretation of biomedical and public health research. Observational study designs, also called epidemiological study designs, are often retrospective and are used to assess potential causation in exposure-outcome relationships and therefore influence preventive methods. Interventional studies are often prospective and are specifically tailored to evaluate direct impacts of treatment or preventive measures on disease.

doi: 10.11613/BM.2014.022

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION


Most medical students worldwide are using various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) for file sharing, circulation of educational resources and staying connected to peers. This narrative review examines social media use by medical students, with emphasis on online professionalism and how education on the topic is, or should be, integrated into the world-wide medical school curricula. The research shows that there is a potentially dangerous dichotomy between the online social lives of modern medical students and the professional requirements of the medical career for which they are training.

Denegri S, Faure H. It's plain and simple: transparency is good for science and in the public interest. Trials 2013;14:215

In the past couple of years, there has been a growing focus on the need to make scientific output accessible to a greater number of people, especially in the field of clinical research, and for taking part in clinical trials. There is still a number of challenges in making current research both accessible and understandable by prospective participants. It is necessary to improve ‘signposting’, to direct the public to the information. Plain English summaries are seen as a good idea but very few people are willing to pay for improved content.


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Appraisal of a good journal on science editing, communication and publication ethics

The availability of numerous information channels makes it critical to choose the most needed resources for scientific research and education. Researchers and science editors alike are now in dire need of innovative methodologies to adjust their practices to the accelerating pace of the digitization and generation of scholarly information.

As a researcher, editor and supervisor of scientific projects, I have contributed to numerous academic journals throughout my career. My writing, reviewing, and editing skills have been influenced by what I read and where I publish my papers.

Over the past decades, I’ve developed a strong interest in science editing, which is an emerging discipline, helping us to improve the quality of research at global and local levels.1 And I find *European Science Editing* particularly helpful for the growth of the new discipline and for educating science editors. It is a great pleasure to recommend this journal to all my colleagues, who are seeking reliable sources on ethical writing and editing.

I learned about the journal when I joined the European Association of Science Editors (EASE) in 2011. At that time the journal took confident steps towards the internationalization and expansion of its scope by the newly appointed Chief Editor, Armen Yuri Gasparyan.2 Since then, I’ve been following the progress and occasionally contributing to the journal as an author and reviewer. Importantly, the journal has become truly international, with papers being published from the USA, the UK, Croatia, Iran, Cuba, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, and Italy. All issues are distributed timely, which is unusual for small journals.

My busy academic schedule and numerous writing commitments leave no spare time for frequent contributions to the journal as an author. Besides, the ever-increasing priority to publish in journals with an Impact Factor (IF) takes its toll. These days most researchers and authors prefer to submit their best papers to the journals indexed by Web of Science® with a high rank on the ladder of the IF.

Having mentioned that, I find the quality of the journal high enough to meet the demanding criteria of indexing by Web of Science® and attractive for authors, who wish to publish in a good journal. As a contributing author, I was impressed at the friendliness of the handling editors and their swift responses to all queries at pre- and post-submission stages.

As a reader with an interest in publication ethics, I also found many thought-provoking essays published in the journal in the past few years, which alerted us to the threats of inappropriate authorship, plagiarism, and substandard peer review. These are perhaps the most pressing issues for the global publication ethics community.

The journal is published by and for EASE members, who are its main subscribers; open access to the global readership is offered 6 months after publication. I believe that providing open access immediately after publication, will expand the circle of readers further and boost timely citations.

**Competing interests**
I am a Council Member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), Editor in Chief of *Daru Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences* and *Journal of Medical Hypotheses and Ideas*. Opinions expressed in this letter are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of COPE.

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**ESE as an educational resource: a view from Africa**

Editors need to constantly keep abreast of progress in science communication. *European Science Editing* (EurSci Ed) is a well-designed periodical and the oldest on editing and writing that meets the ever-growing demands of the specialists in the field. It is truly one of the most highly informative and readable journals contributing to advances in editing.

The journal has many sections that I find important. Original research and essays on current situations within editing and publication ethics worldwide teach us a lot. The journal raises awareness of how editors can increase the scientific prestige and global influence of their publications. Numerous essays guide us on how to write for scientific journals. “My life as an editor” showcases the success stories of fellow editors from around the world. It shows that editors are dedicated to work for journals, and inspires others to write and learn.

The News Notes section is a channel to get the latest updates on science editing. It opens our eyes to things we may miss as editors. The Bookshelf section brings editorial articles of note, and enriches the knowledge of editors who lack access to a wide variety of scholarly journals.

The journal is truly international. It is a platform for sharing the thoughts of Cuban, Iranian, and many African editors.
Editors from middle- and low-income countries are isolated in their home countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The learned associations and their journals stand in a unique position to inspire editors globally. *Eur Sci Ed* brings one important message for us - build your own editorial networks and teach local editors.

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**Authors and editors, take references seriously!**

In this issue, Salman Yousuf Guraya1 presents a study on the accuracy of references in biomedical journals, with the disturbing result that 18% of the analysed references contained errors. Almost 5% of the references were not retrievable at all.

Incorrect references are not a new problem. Almost four decades ago, Goodrich and Roland2 reported an error rate of 29% in the references of 10 major US medical journals. Despite a long array of subsequent studies showing the same pattern, partly documented by Guraya,1 the general situation has not improved significantly. Guraya’s finding of a declining error rate in the journals he examined is encouraging, but it needs broader confirmation.

Medical researchers are not the only sloppy authors, of course. Similar, or even higher error rates have been reported, for example in entomology,3 paleontology,4 and business and economics.5 The references section of a scientific paper is often seen as a mere technical necessity or even a nuisance, something that needs to be done, but with the least time invested. References often get copied from bibliographic software where assistants have entered them in the first place, or out of other papers, or from online databases.

Why is this a problem? Quite often, incorrect citations suggest that an author has not read the cited paper. Following patterns of repetition of misprints in citations, Simkin and Roychowdhury conclude that 70–90% of scientific citations are copied from lists of references of other authors6. While I want to believe that this estimate is too high, other studies hint at the same trend. In his famous work *Sociobiology*, Edward O. Wilson used an incorrect word in the title of an important reference, a paper by W. D. Hamilton. Twenty three per cent of all subsequent authors who cite both Wilson’s book and the Hamilton paper made the same mistake.7 They have just copied from Wilson’s book without consulting the original reference, which for pre-desktop computer times is an indication of a deliberate disregard of the source publication. Even more damningly, another study found one in four citations in marine biology papers failing to support the assertion for which they were cited, indicating that the cited papers were not read8.

How can we improve the situation? The whole citation process is affected by citer motivations outside the scientific realm, be it friendship, animosity, or just convenience or sloppiness.9 While authors are unlikely to suddenly turn into unemotional robots or saints in choosing references, we can at least avoid carelessness. The compilation of the literature list, even if typed from the cited papers de novo, only takes a negligible fraction of the time involved in executing and writing up a scientific study. Consulting the papers we cite and getting the citations correct, being essential parts of scientific diligence, are increasingly easy to do in the digital era, and absolutely vital in our era of metrical research evaluation.

Why is correct citation vital? Typos in author names or other crucial bibliographical details are likely to harm our colleagues if they are exposed to any sort of citation-based assessment. Different spellings of the same author name can lead to lower performance indicators, such as the h index,10 as does the splitting of a reference into several spelling variants. By compiling reference lists, authors provide the raw data both for their own and for their colleagues’ performance evaluations, be it for career purposes or just for an informal check of a colleague’s Google Scholar profile.

Authors and editors, take the references section seriously! It is much more than a technical necessity and becomes a nuisance only if not taken seriously.

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