

# EASE Digest

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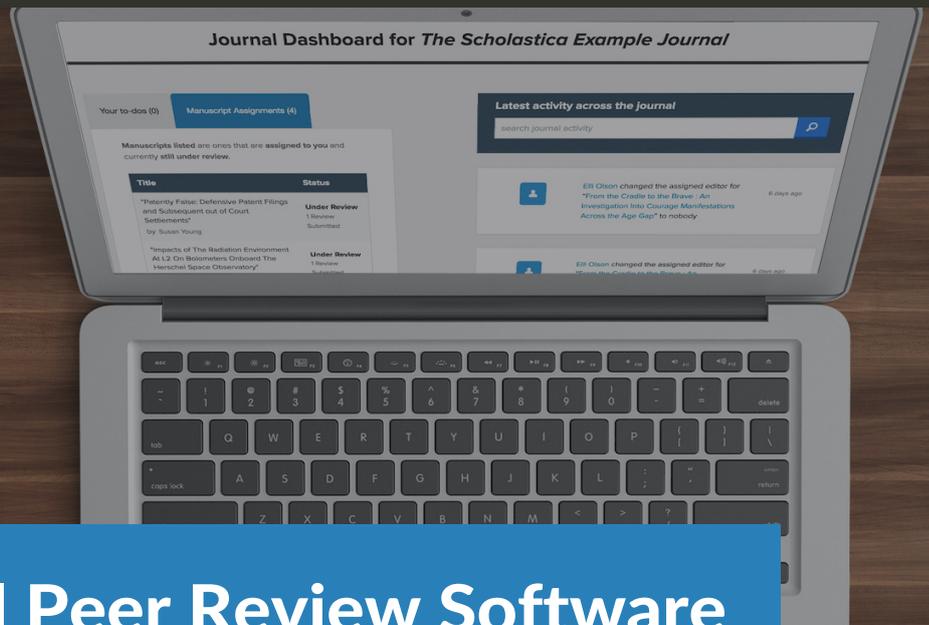
Plus the regular features

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Science  
Editors**

**EASE**

September 2021

Produced exclusively for EASE members



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**EASE Council 2021–2023**

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## Letter from the EASE President

Welcome all to our third Digest issue of the year! I hope you are all having an enjoyable summer, and have been able to get out and about a little more freely than we have got accustomed to over the last (loooong) 18 months. But the last few months feel like they have flown past, in a blur of activity – not least, the EASE Virtual Conference, which we have some reflections on in this issue.

The feedback we received about the conference has been overwhelmingly positive, along with some ideas for even further improvements the next time, and like me, I hope you found the week's events to be interesting, valuable and entertaining. I am enormously proud of how well received and attended the event was, and would like to thank everyone once again for your contributions in making it a huge success.

I would also like to take this chance to welcome our new EASE Council members Iva Grabarić Andonovski, Ali Şahin, and Matt Hodgkinson, and to congratulate all the members who were re-elected to Council for the 2021-2023 period.

Outside of EASE, we have been preparing for September's back-to-school month of events, with a focus on peer review and open access. Join us at the International Congress on Peer Review and Scientific Publication symposium on 14 September, and Peer Review Week, on the theme of Identity, from the 20–24. There is still time to get involved with EASE, through our Peer Review Committee hosted webinar on the 20th, submitting videos for the PRW YouTube channel (being overseen by me), or through events you would like to host yourself. See the PRW website for details (or drop me an email to ask).

We will also be attending the 8th PubMet conference on OA scholarly communication, the ALPSP Conference from the 15–17, and the OASPA Conference on Open Access Publishing from the 21–24.

A busy month indeed!

**Duncan Nicholas**  
EASE President

## 2021 EASE Conference: what a great event!

*Pippa Smart, EASE Past-President*

Our conference in June (it feels like a long time ago now!) was a resounding success, with feedback praising the programme, the speakers, and the social events which – even in a digital world – enabled meeting new friends and chatting with colleagues.

Before summarising the content of the conference, some of the numbers make impressive reading:

- Over 200 delegates from more than 30 countries
- 1 Keynote speaker
- 6 sessions
- 2 debates
- 26 Speakers
- 12 Sponsors
- 44 Sponsored delegates, from 11 countries, supported by 5 separate sponsors
- 10 EASE Forum Live! sessions
- 1 Quiz, attended by 41 people
- 2 Get-together networking sessions
- 11 Poster presentations
- 3 Sponsor's sessions
- 9 Regional Chapter satellite sessions
- 3 workshops

### The AGM

The event opened with our General Assembly AGM. It was the first time this had been held virtually, with just under 100 registrations. Duncan Nicholas gave his presidential address highlighting the activities which had taken place in the last year. He also gave a sneak preview of the new



designs for EASE which will be introduced later this year as part of our rebranding and rejuvenating the organisation.

Rod has been our treasurer since 2006 and at this meeting gave his last report after deciding that the time has come to step down. He has done a fantastic job, ensuring that we are sustainable, and on a tight financial track, and we are very sad to see him leave. We are pleased to welcome Matt Hodgkinson (from Hindawi) into the role. He will work closely with Duncan and Mary to ensure that the good works put in place by Rod over the years continue into the future.

To thank Rod for all his hard work, EASE planted a tree for every year of his service (24 trees), as part of our EASE Virtual Forest initiative (more of this later).

We also welcomed the new Council: the re-elected members are: Bahar Mehmani (Netherlands), Rachael Lammey (UK), Yateendra Joshi (India), Jadranka Stojanovski (Croatia). The newly-elected members are: Iva

Grabaric Andonovski (Croatia) and Ali Sahin (Turkey), and we said a fond farewell to Stephen Mertens (Germany), Flaminio Squazzoni (Italy), Sylwia Ufnalska (Poland) and the Past-President Ana Marušić (Croatia).

We also announced at the General Assembly that EASE is now a signatory to the SDG Publishers Compact, which aligns nicely with the topic of the conference. This initiative is a cross-publisher agreement that commits all signatories to supporting the Sustainable Development Goals, and we are proud to be a supporting organisation.

### Conference theme

The theme of this year's conference was sustainability, which is a topic that should be high on the agenda of everyone working in scholarly communications. In addition to signing up to the SDG Publishers Compact we decided to exchange the more common conference gifts with a tree planting initiative, which caused a small Twitter-storm with people excited by the idea of an "EASE Virtual Forest" being created. We are planning to extend this over the next few years with further support for tree planting, but from this conference we have funded the planting of:

- One tree for every registered delegate: 221.
- 24 trees to celebrate Rod Hunt's contribution to EASE as he retires.
- 45 trees as a match of the top score in our Quiz.
- 11 trees – one for every poster submitted.

Mary Hodgson has been active in investigating the best organisation for this initiative, and has identified Plant for the Planet as the best match for us. There is more information on page 6 and a page on our website with further details, and I am delighted to report that as part of the conference and with additional member support, we currently have 575 trees being planted on our behalf. <https://ease.org.uk/about-us/ease-virtual-forest/>.



### Session 1: keynote

The conference opened with a keynote presentation from Monica Contestabile (UK) from Nature Sustainability. She shared her views of the sustainability research landscape and how it is growing, particularly after the launch of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. She raised some of the challenges for editors in terms of dealing with cross-discipline research, finding suitable reviews, dealing with article selection and bias, and engaging non-academic audiences. She explained that being an editor in this area can enable thought-leadership and provides the opportunity to engage with the research community and enhance the impact of published research via social media and engagement with non-research users. She discussed access, independence, influence and bias, and diversity and outreach – all topics picked up by subsequent sessions.

### Session 2: The environmental manifesto

In 2018, the EASE Council decided to pay more attention to publishing's effect on climate change and suggested practical

solutions within the EASE Environmental Manifesto. In this session Stephan Mertens (Germany) outlined the positive changes that can be achieved by editors and publishers. The manifesto also addresses the influence that editors can bring to research, to improve sustainability and reproducibility and to ensure that research publishing contributes positively to the global challenges that we all face.

### The debates

One exciting experiment in the conference was running two debate sessions – each asking the same question but presenting each one from a different region to bring in both Asian and western voices. Both debates proved to be fantastic sessions. The speakers challenged us to think widely, they provoked their opponents with intelligence and good humour, made us smile and made us think. A perfect mix.

The first debate session was chaired by Clarinda Cerejo (India), with Hoang Quan Vuong (Vietnam), arguing in favour of the proposal that preprints will replace journals. He was who was ably challenged by Haseeb Irfanullah (Bangladesh). In the afternoon the session was chaired by Mario Malički (USA) with Janne Seppanen (Finland) arguing in favour, and Catherine Otto (USA) opposing.

The audience were asked to vote at the start and end of each debate and the results were very interesting. In the morning 82% voted no (preprints will not replace journals) and in the afternoon debate the number was very similar – 84% of delegates disagreed with the proposal. However, the vote taken at the end of each session revealed that the debaters had achieved different results: in the morning, the final poll was identical to the first one (is this suspicious I wonder?), but in the afternoon, the 84% who had been convinced that journals would continue to survive had reduced to 70%.

### Session 4: Promoting gender, cultural and geographic diversity in scientific journals

This session, chaired by Leila Posenato Garcia (Brazil) considered diversity in the publishing workforce, and how one publisher (Cell Press) has addressed this. Matilda Hellman (Finland) opened the session by discussing how we need to identify thoughts and behaviours that retain the norms so that we can break with them to introduce more inclusion and diversity. Deborah Sweet (UK) described how Cell Press launched a project that involves implementation of an I&D checklist for all submissions which captures data on the study population and those doing the research. This information is then going to be analysed to ensure that editorial bias can be avoided, and to provide statistics that can be used to inform future research and funding – a great example of how editors and editorial influence can be used to positively affect diversity issues. The session was concluded by an animated presentation from Ruth Oniang'o (Kenya) about the challenges of running a medical journal in Africa, and how diversity, whilst always at the forefront, had to evolve organically as one of the many challenges associated with making the journal a success.

### Session 5: How local journals are using technology to ensure sustainability

This session considered the linguistic and technological dependence that large publishers exert on authors and institutions and how open access and technology can help small journals to survive. It brought in perspectives from Arianna Becerril Garcia (Mexico) on how the use of technologies has increased visibility and quality, and facilitated collaborative work. Brian Cody (USA) pointed out that small is not synonymous with low quality and described the role of technology in supporting journal sustainability. This was endorsed by Stephanie Dawson (UK) who described how initiatives such as ScienceOpen support small publishers and can be highly influential on improving interoperability, visibility and sustainability of smaller publishers and journals.

### Session 8: Editing and publishing in times of crisis

We could not ignore the current global crisis at this event, and this session specifically considered what good will come out of the past 18 months. John McConnell of The Lancet Infectious Diseases (UK), described how the journal had managed peaks in submission during March and early April 2020 (1043 papers in 2020 vs 299 in 2019!), and how preprints have become “the norm” for much of medical publishing as a direct result of the need for fast publication. Leila Posenato Garcia (Brazil), reflected on ‘Where did all the women and contributions from low- and middle-income countries go?’ and asked what we have learnt about the need to support women researchers and address the pre-existing gender gap which became much worse during 2020. This theme was taken up by Bahar Mehmani (Netherlands) whose last slide commented “Extraordinary times require extraordinary policies”.

### Session 9: What environmental responsibilities do editors and publishers have?

This session brought us right back into the core of the conference theme and was introduced by Stephan Mertens (Germany) stating that “The publishing sector should strive for carbon neutrality”. The session asked what motivations could be introduced to increase positive behaviours, and examples of how publishers have been responding positively and making a difference were presented. Yvonne Höller (Iceland) spoke about motivations to adopt the SDGs, and Molly Hawes (UK) spoke about how publishers lack resources and sometimes interest to introduce more sustainable practices. Alastair Brown (UK) reported that many papers talk about the problems, but few offer realistic solutions, but it was commented that this session alone provided lots of large

and small ideas that together could contribute to improving sustainability and making a real difference to the world.

### Session 10: Meeting the challenges of publishing in a world of politicised science

To finish the conference, we concluded with a rollicking session about politics and bias. If the previous sessions had all been interesting and informative, this session was an adrenalin-packed rollercoaster – a perfect way to conclude the conference. It opened with Paul Graham Fisher (USA) presenting the problems of balancing a public profile with editorial independence, and discussing his own experience of being sued by the Trump administration. He also questioned the acceptability of editors airing political views, even when they were doing so as individuals rather than as representatives of their journal. He was followed by Ana Marušić (Croatia) discussing how putting the journal first could lead to some difficult decisions, such as accepting articles from a country that is identified as an enemy state. The session was rounded off by a passionate presentation from Aoife Foley (UK), with concern about the influence on science - and environmental science in particular - by political decisions throughout academia and ending in what is published. She raised quite a Twitter storm amongst participants with her impassioned approach and direct statements.

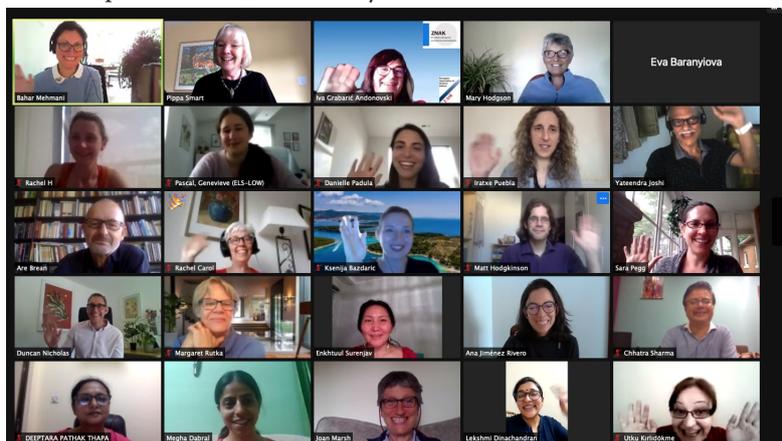
### Poster presentations

We were delighted to receive 11 posters for this event which presented original research into editorial issues. Each poster was presented during the conference and the awards for Medical scholarly communications was won by Mario Malički (Croatia/USA) and for the conference theme of sustainability, by Maryna Zhenchenko (Ukraine).

### Social events

In the digital world it isn't easy to run social events, but we held a quiz and provided two social sessions which were well attended. The quiz was great fun with over 40 participants, gathered into small groups so we could meet new friends and argue about the answers (my own team came last). The winning team, who scored 45 were called Smart Running Chickens, and romped their way to a score of 45 out of 50. There was a lot of laughter and requests to re-run a quiz at future events.

We also tried out a platform called GatherTown which provided a framework for people to network – and to our delight, it actually worked! Moving our personal avatars close to other people allowed for chatting and quizzing speakers, and (although there was a certain amount of



confusion and distraction) it worked quite well and allowed for meeting up with friends. Again, this was an initiative that we will certainly continue in future events.

### Regional events

We were thrilled that so many of our regional chapters held events around the conference, most of which were on the same theme. Eight out of our 10 chapters held events. Some were small scale with small group getting together to discuss the theme of the conference and their plans for future activities, and a couple were full scale symposium, with multiple speakers/sessions and running for the whole day with hundreds of participants.

### Thanks and sponsorship

Finally, I would like to say thank you to everyone who organised this event, especially Mary Hodgson, who did so much work to ensure that everything worked.

Also – and very importantly – I would like to thank our sponsors whose generosity made the conference possible, and which helped to keep costs down, and support many people to attend. Without them the conference would not have gone ahead, and the many people who were supported to attend would not have come.

So a very large thank you to Aves, ALPSP, Crossref, INERA, KnE, Manuscript Manager, M2PI, Paperpal, Select Crowd Review, Scholastica and Scribendi.

## Conference sponsors

EASE would like to thank the following sponsors



Thanks to Arpha for their sponsorship of three delegate places and *The Lancet* for their sponsorship of the poster prizes.

## ESE highlights

An overview of some of the latest articles to be featured in *European Science Editing* in the last few months. Read them all in full at <https://ese.arphahub.com>, and subscribe by email to be notified when new articles are published.

In *Rejection rate and reasons for rejection after peer review: a case study of a Russian economics journal*, Evgueniya A Balyakina and Ludmila A Kriventsova, members of our Russian Chapter, add more information to the growing research on the content of peer reviews with their paper which analyses reviews of 1300 rejected papers, from their journal 'Economy of Region' (Рус Экономика региона), from 2016 to 2018. The authors analyse descriptive statistics to determine the quality of reviewer feedback and author responses, and consider the related potentials for journal development. <https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2021.e51999>

Maryam Talei and her team from Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, surveys 233 reviewers of Iranian biomedical journals, to better understand their motivations and identify the incentives that make them likely to accept invitations to be a peer reviewer, in the article *Factors influencing acceptance or rejection by Iranian medical researchers of invitations to peer review*. Another nice addition to the literature on peer review, adding insights and evidence to the values researchers place on reviewing and the effectiveness of current, and future, compensations and rewards. <https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2021.e62836>

In guest editorial *Giving editors and institutions some CLUEs about research integrity cases*, Liz Wager (past Chair of Committee on Publication Ethics), and Sabine Kleinert (The Lancet) introduce the CLUE recommendations - Cooperation & Liaison between Universities & Editors - which provide guidance on handling research integrity cases, especially in those instances where misconduct is not easily proven. <https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2021.e68868>

*The need for a new set of measures to assess the impact of research in earth sciences in Indonesia* is the first of two papers from a group at the Indonesian research centre, IGDORE, involving Dasapta Erwin Irawan, Olivier Pourret, the late Jon Tennant and more members. In this paper, they critique current research assessment frameworks, and suggest some open-science practices which could transform them into more responsible measurements of research performance and impact. <https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2021.e59032>

*International disparities in open access practices in the Earth Sciences* is the second original article from Olivier Pourret, Dasapta Erwin Irawan and team. In this paper, the group examine the open access publication practices and status in journals across six countries around the world. The article highlights disparities, barriers and limitations in publishing models which may impede research and academic works from equitable access and dissemination. <https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2021.e63663>

**International disparities in open access practices in the Earth Sciences**

Olivier Pourret, David W. Hedding, Daniel Enrique Ibarra, Dasapta Erwin Irawan, Haiyan Liu, Jon Tennant

Original Article

6 AUTHORS  
6 COUNTRIES  
4 CONTINENTS



We think disparities exist in #openaccess practices in the earth sciences

Until the earth sciences community decides to move away from journal-based criteria to evaluate researchers, it is likely that high author-levied publication costs will continue to maintain inequities to the disadvantage of researchers from the least developed countries.

**EASE ESE** European Science Editing

[doi.org/10.3897/ese.2021.e63663](https://doi.org/10.3897/ese.2021.e63663)

## EASE virtual forest

The 15th EASE General Assembly and Conference was on the theme of sustainability. To reflect this, we created an initiative to establish a virtual EASE forest, with the help of Plant for the Planet and their affiliated restoration projects.



The concept is to support restoration and planting projects in different countries over time, and continually grow our virtual EASE forest with each of our initiatives in the years to come.

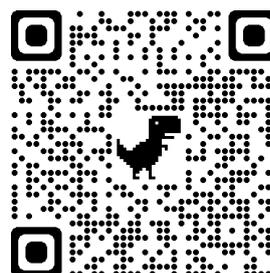
To kick start the initiative, we pledged £302 to plant 575 trees in the name of the 15th EASE Conference. This includes 23 trees to mark each year of service and support given by Rod Hunt, our retiring treasurer and Council member.

Many thanks to our Plant-for-the-Planet restoration organisations who have planted the trees on our behalf. You

can find out more about each of them by following the links on the webpage, where you can also gift trees to the project.

This initiative is part of our commitment to support the SDG Publishers Compact and the United Nations sustainable development goals. Together with Plant-for-the-Planet, this action supports at least seven of these goals.

Scan the QR code below to access the full information.





## **Peer Review Week 2021 theme: Exploring the multifaceted role of identity in peer review**

Mark your calendar for Peer Review Week 2021, 20-24 September. This year's event is dedicated to the theme "Exploring the multifaceted role of identity in peer review." During the week, participating organisations will host virtual events and activities exploring the multifaceted nature of identity, how personal and social identity affects peer review practices and experiences, and what's needed to foster more diverse, equitable, and inclusive peer review processes. More information available at <https://peerreviewweek.wordpress.com/>

Many EASE members will be involved in PRW2021, including several events hosted by our Regional Chapters. The EASE Peer Review Committee will kick off the week on Monday, 20 September, with a 90 minute Q&A online session, starting at 1pm (UK time). The event will be chaired by Bahar Mehmani and will address four different aspects of identity in peer review:

- The role of personal identities such as gender, experience level, ethnicity, language and nationality in improving equity, diversity and inclusion in peer review
- The impact of review process transparency and the reviewer identity disclosure on the peer review process
- The importance of research ids in the process of reviewer selection
- The need for profiling the peer reviewer role of academics in further recognition and evaluation

Please register for free and promote this event through your networks. We look forward to welcoming you and encourage you to join us with all your questions.

## **ARE YOU ONE OF THE MISSING PIECES?**

**The EASE Digest is undergoing a transformation and will look completely different in 2022. We are looking for section editors and regular contributors to join the team.**

**If you are interested in being part of the Digest's new journey, contact Lynne Rowland, [lynne.rowland@gmail.com](mailto:lynne.rowland@gmail.com)**



Guest advertorial from conference sponsor Scribendi

## New AI Technology Launches Editors into a New Age of Productivity

As one of Canada's fastest growing companies, Scribendi has always recognized the demand for high-quality editing and actively works to increase the productivity of editors. In 2018, with 20 years in the editing industry, Scribendi launched Scribendi.ai, a pioneer in artificial intelligence (AI) software, with the aim of supporting rather than replacing Scribendi's exceptional team of editors. Unlike automated editing services, Scribendi combines the work of its global force of more than 600 freelance editors with that of its AI technology—the Accelerator—which goes a few steps further than standard grammar software that only corrects simple grammar and spelling mistakes. The Accelerator can help to correct an assortment of subtle and complex issues, and its editing algorithm has been optimized specifically for academic writing and the intricacies of spelling, grammar, and formatting that are required in this type of writing.

### AI Acts Supplementarily to Support and Uplift Editors

Scribendi's sophisticated Accelerator leverages more than 20 years of editing experience, across hundreds of thousands of documents, to suggest the most accurate grammar and punctuation solutions. As the most advanced grammatical error correction (GEC) technology in the industry, it supports editors in providing pristine deliverables. At Scribendi, we understand and celebrate our human editors, and we know that the Accelerator can help them to catch and correct errors, ensuring that they produce their best work.

### Continue to Cultivate Your Academic Knowledge as a Scribendi Editor

#### *Freelance Editing Opportunities*

Scribendi's freelance positions can provide editors with a primary or supplementary income, depending on the need. Editors receive competitive compensation that directly reflects the time and effort channeled into each assignment. With assignment transparency, editors can see

all the relevant information about an order, including the compensation and the document itself, before choosing to take on an assignment. Unlike with traditional freelance work, there is security in knowing that there is a continual flow of orders that will be available to them. And, of course, there is great flexibility in working remotely at their own pace and controlling their own volume, taking on as little or as much work as they wish, depending upon their availability.

#### *Schedule and Content Flexibility for Editors at Any Stage*

Scribendi recognizes that editors come from diverse backgrounds and locations. Whether you are a PhD candidate in Cape Town, a writer in Glasgow, or a lawyer in Manila, the assignment selection and independent work hours accommodate professionals at all stages of their careers. The types of projects include English as a Second Language (ESL) documents, academic articles, student papers, creative manuscripts, and business and personal documents. We help to ensure our editors are engaged in providing the highest quality of work by offering the opportunity to choose assignments within their areas of interest as well as to expand into new fields and genres and continually grow as professionals.

#### *Continued Learning*

The ability to select projects based on subject matter lets editors stay abreast of cutting-edge research in their area of expertise, keeping current with the research that will change their industries or fields of study. Editors can increase their knowledge and understand new trends, all while increasing their income.

#### *Opportunities at Scribendi*

Scribendi is actively looking to grow its diverse pool of talented editors. We are excited to play a role in advancing academic knowledge and providing editors with the freedom to do what they love anytime and anywhere. Visit [www.scribendi.com/jobs](http://www.scribendi.com/jobs) to begin your journey as a Scribendi editor today.



## Manuscript Manager challenges classic peer review system models

With over 50% growth during the past five years, Manuscript Manager has entered the market of peer review editorial management systems, sporting a *software-as-a-service* business model, attractive pricing and an “easy to get started” approach. We sat down with Partner & Business Developer, Peter Okholm, and Customer Success Manager, Leah Kristensen, to learn more.

### ***Manuscript Manager has seen rapid growth over the past five years - why do you think this is?***

Peter: “I think it’s because we offer something that was needed. The peer review system product niche is dominated on the one side by complex, very expensive systems, and on the other, by systems that are not sophisticated enough to be customized to an individual journal’s requirements. We were founded in 2015, but have 20 years of experience in building peer review software. So we offer just the right combination of features, user experience, and price.

Admittedly, cost is probably a factor that matters more and more in recent years as publishing models increasingly come under financial pressure. When publishers discover us, they are often quite surprised at the transparency of our pricing model and that a comprehensive peer review system can be had for just \$8.50 per manuscript submission. They are used to completely different business models and costs. We believe a good peer review software system should be competitively priced and accessible.”

Leah: “If I could just add to that - another factor that has surely influenced our growth is the fact that the customer can test the product at no cost or risk before deciding to commit. Even while using another peer review system, potential customers can start a free trial with Manuscript Manager, work with us to customize the system to a journal’s specific requirements and then make a truly informed decision based on a realistic feel of what the system can do for the journal. This resonates with teams considering platform migration - a ‘no strings attached’ evaluation of the product. In fact, over 50% of those who try us out end up moving their journals to Manuscript Manager.”

### ***What can your customers expect when joining Manuscript Manager?***

Peter: “A lot of changes have been happening in publishing technology in recent years, so much of our development efforts go into building relationships with valuable collaboration

Guest advertorial from conference sponsor Manuscript Manager



partners in order to maintain and even supersede industry standards. As a result, our customers regularly get extra functionality that saves time, improves accuracy, and simplifies workflows. A good example is Active Author Guidelines, built in collaboration with [Penelope.ai](#) and [Karger Publishers](#). Active Author Guidelines give authors immediate feedback on whether their manuscript is in compliance with journal guidelines before they submit it. Journals using this extension are seeing a reduction in journal guideline incompliance by up to 25%, which saves a lot of administrative work in the editorial office.”

Leah: “Another thing that customers can expect with Manuscript Manager is access to sophisticated, real-time reporting features. In the current climate of changing business models, publishers are increasingly interested in analytics. We find that collecting data and analyzing all aspects of the peer review process is vital for the integrity of the journals, as well as for the future business development of our publishing company customers. So, with Manuscript Manager, you can expect sophisticated, built-in usage reports, included for all customers, large and small. The reporting and analytics part of Manuscript Manager is an area that we plan to continue to develop and expand in the future.”

#### **About Manuscript Manager**

- Manuscript Manager is a peer review editorial management system for scholarly journals.
- Founded in 2015 in Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 1,000,000+ users.
- Over 350 journals use the platform, worldwide.
- Over 60,000 manuscript submissions are processed on the platform every year.
- Prices start from \$8.50 per manuscript.
- Get a free trial at [manuscriptmanager.com/free-30-day-trial/](https://manuscriptmanager.com/free-30-day-trial/)

## Meeting reports

### International Epidemiology Association webinar series: Scholarly Publishing in Epidemiology and Public Health

*Online, April 27 – 30, 2021*

The Latin America and North America Regions of the International Epidemiology Association (IEA) jointly organized a series of webinars, including a module on **Scholarly Publishing in Epidemiology and Public Health**. Editors from the main Brazilian journals in those fields were invited to present on topics of interest to an audience that included editors, researchers and graduate students. Each session had two speakers and time for discussion and interaction with the audience.

In the first session, Professor Rita Barata of *Revista de Saúde Pública*, spoke about the limitations of journal citation indexes, and proposed that the focus of evaluation of postgraduate programs should shift from journals to articles, in order to allow a more reliable and fair evaluation. Also, Leila Posenato Garcia, Coordinator of the Forum of Brazilian Public Health Journals Editors, and member of the Gender Policy Committee of the European Association of Science Editors (EASE), addressed sex and gender equity in research, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Results of a survey conducted with more than 1,000 reviewers and editors in Brazil were presented, which pointed out that women, especially those with children, had less time dedicated to writing, reviewing and editorial activities.

During the second session, Professor Claudia Medina Coeli presented on the challenges of editing epidemiology manuscripts in *Public Health Reports*, and Professor Leopoldo Antunes, from *Revista de Saúde Pública*, envisioned the future of journals in the open science era. The discussion approached how journals are adapting their policies and how authors are responding to growing demands for data sharing. In the field of epidemiology, researchers who conduct large observational studies involving the collection of primary data have concerns regarding misuse and exploitation of data. Nonetheless, different types of open data requirements are increasingly adopted, so it is necessary to involve editors and researchers in the development of policies that promote responsible data sharing.

The third session included presentations from Professor Antonio Fernando Boing, from the *Brazilian Journal of Epidemiology*, and Antônio Augusto Moura da Silva, from *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*. They presented indicators from their journals, the main reasons for manuscripts rejection, recent changes in editorial policies, and highlighted challenges for the sustainability of journals in a national scenario of restricted funding for science. Both journals are edited by the Brazilian Public Health Association (ABRASCO), and are starting to charge fees to guarantee their publication, which is entirely open access. It should be noted that the main Brazilian journals are published in the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), based on an open access model and considering scholarly publication as an inseparable part of science endeavor, therefore it must be fostered by public policies. However, in recent years, public funding for journals has declined considerably, which has brought great difficulties to its sustainability.

In the last session, Professor Eduardo Franco (IEA representative, and Editor-in-Chief of *Preventive Medicine*) presented a historical overview of scientific journals' evolution and discussed current trends in publishing, including open science, preprints and research integrity promotion. Professor Alfredo Morabia (Editor-in-Chief of the *American Journal of Public Health*) shared his knowledge and vast experience as an editor talking on how the elaboration of a good research question is fundamental for the writing of quality articles that will be successfully published in top-ranked journals. In fact, those journals receive a number of submissions much greater than their processing capacity, so manuscripts that bring light to current, interesting and innovative research questions are more likely to thrive.

The series of webinars was a great opportunity to exchange experiences between editors, as well as to bring together editors and authors in the areas of epidemiology and public health.

*Leila Posenato Garcia*  
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## Shaping our Future by Embracing Adaptability: 2021 Annual CSE Meeting Updates

Online, May 3 – 5, 2021

The 2021 Annual CSE Meeting was noticeably larger this year, with the conference being held virtually. The theme for this year's conference was "shaping our future by embracing adaptability." A wide variety of journals, publishers, disciplines, and job descriptions were represented among the attendees, and the roundtables and lunch-and-learn sessions provided excellent networking opportunities.

The meetings began with three roundtables. An Editor-in-Chief roundtable revolved around the discussions, changes, and implementations put in place by EICs to address key topics including increasing diversity on editorial boards, in reviewer pools, and among authors.

The freelancer roundtable involved early-career and professional freelancers, plus a few experienced delegates, discussing their career goals, freelancing workflow and management arrangements, and how to make the most of their current setup and portfolio. Additionally, there were participants who were contemplating switching to freelancing and were interested in learning more about the opportunities. This diversity prompted discussions about the flexibility available in freelancing and the idea that most people can find their own niche.

The early-career roundtable, for those within their first 5 years of a career in scholarly publishing discussed fulfilling one's career potential, ideas and resources for unearthing career pathways and achieving success.

The first general session focused on delivering effective presentations; a skill that is treasured and effective in several contexts professionally and personally. Gabriel Harp, the keynote speaker, debunked the art of presenting, sharing his valuable insight on approaching presentations, how to treat them as something exciting rather than terrifying, as well as the differences between virtual and in-person presentations.

In another interesting session, Jessica Malaty Rivera explained how science is unfinished until it is communicated. She emphasized that in public health emergencies, clear, consistent, evidence-based communication is the most powerful tool. She spoke of ways in which scholarly editors and managers can help increase science and data literacy, demystify misinformation, and rebuild trust among members of the editorial community.

In other sessions, Jason Terry, a professional LinkedIn trainer, shared tips for using LinkedIn on a regular basis to grow one's network and reviewed features like name pronunciation and emoji support. Michael Osterholm focused on promoting data sharing among the scientific community, discussing its help in the advancement of science, supporting replicability and a study's findings, and its potential to reduce the time and costs required to gain confidence about a particular discovery. Another session addressed new AI-assisted editorial tools for analytic validation, and text and data mining used by journals, and how these editorial offices have been integrating these tools

into their systems and workflows.

A session on data sharing and publication ethics raised further awareness among the researchers and the scientific community on mitigating potential misconduct in research, how to verify data and support investigations in case of ethical issues, ensure high-quality scientific publications and public trust in scientific findings, and ensure people receive due credit for their work and ideas.

Finally, there was a debate session on whistle-blowers and the ethics responsibilities of journal editors. Due to social media and public forums, discussions are increasingly taking place on informal platforms, placing authors and articles under greater public scrutiny, especially with respect to conflict of interest-related issues, manipulation of findings, and other concerns pertaining to data ethics. This session focused on how a journal editor can handle these complaints raised via email and social media, or other platforms. Panelists Elisabeth Bik and Daniel Bolnick debated the statement: "it is the role of scientific journals to investigate concerns regarding published articles only when they have significance to the conclusions of the article and are addressed via formal communications except in rare circumstances." Attendees decided whose argument was the most persuasive via zoom polls and a questions-and-answers round. Daniel Bolnick was the clear winner of the debate, with his argument that factual errors in published manuscripts should be corrected and that retraction is warranted when the conclusions are faulty, arrived at in a fundamentally unethical way, or may lead to ethical violations.

The entire conference had a great vibe and potential for deep learning, and I would like to thank the organizers, panelists, and the entire CSE Board for being so bold and authentic. This was one of those moments where I saw such wisdom, the truth and hope about what we are doing that is not working, what we can do to get it right going forward, what we need to own from the past, and how together we can fix the future of scientific publishing. All things considered, the 2021 Annual CSE Meeting fulfilled my expectations of learning and building new relationships that catalyze the work I am doing. What stood out to me was the entire scientific community's interest in learning the innovative and ever-evolving approaches that have been integrated into the work in scholarly publishing.

Information about the upcoming 2021 Fall Virtual Symposium and the 2022 Annual Meeting may be found on the CSE website at <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/events/upcoming-events/>

**Simona Fernandes**

*CSE 21 Scholarship awardee, Anupama Kapadia (Mentor),*

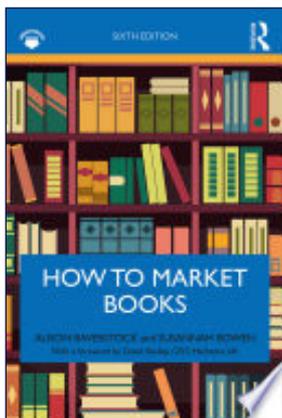
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## Book review

### How to Market Books, 6th edition

Alison Baverstock and Susannah Bowen, 2019. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 482 pp. ISBN: 978-1-138-59725-9 (pbk)



That the publishers of a book which was published 30 years ago and is now in its 6th edition should continue to seek reviews goes only to show how strongly the lesson it seeks to impart have been absorbed and put into practice. Although this review is based on reading a digital copy, I am sure the physical copy would have carried a sticker because, to quote from the book under review, “a sticker can’t

be lost and means the review copy can’t be mistaken as anything other than a review copy”. On the layout of blurbs, the book advises you to “use paragraphs of different lengths, quotations highlighted by the use of large inverted commas, a section of indented text to draw the eye in. Anything to avoid three justified paragraphs of identical size.” This is the level of detail that the book goes into, making it into a practical handbook, although it also uses such scholarly apparatus as endnotes and a bibliography.

The book is divided into three parts, namely 1) General principles and understanding (four chapters), 2) Putting principles into practice (ten chapters), and 3) Specific advice for particular markets (one chapter), and also carries a 7-page appendix, which is devoted entirely to GDPR, or the General Data Protection Regulation. The distribution of chapters also shows that the emphasis of the book is on practice. As befits a book that has been a standard text for publishing studies, every chapter as well as the appendix carries a section titled ‘Further reading.’ This section comes before the ‘Notes’ section. Every chapter concludes with a section titled ‘Conclusion and looking forward.’

However, these academic trappings are supplemented throughout by boxes, extracts, quotations, and so on, which offer the perspectives of industry practitioners. Of particular interest to members of EASE is the case study, titled ‘Case study on income diversification: what’s for sale?’ by Peter Ashman, the CEO of *BMJ*. A table, which is part of the case study, shows the marked changes in publishing revenues: the share of print subscriptions, which was 45.5% in 2007, was down to 5.4% in 2018 whereas the share of author fees – non-existent in 2007 – increased to 17.5% in 2018.

The chapter particularly relevant to members of EASE is titled ‘Approaching specific-interest markets’ because it includes the following sections: Promoting to university academics, Working with academic libraries, Marketing to doctors and other healthcare professionals, and Selling to professional and industrial markets. All these sections are practical and informative. On the other hand, readers of *European Science Editing* should keep in mind two important caveats: first, this is a book devoted to marketing books, not journals (which is a different ball game altogether); secondly, the book seems to aimed at – but does not say so explicitly – large publishers, given the frequent references to catalogues, marketing departments, and sales representatives.

To sum up, *How to Market Books* offers its readers a solid grounding into the subject; at the same time, it serves as a consultant you can turn to for good advice at any stage of marketing books.

Lastly, I hope I have turned in this review in time and thereby prevented the book review editor of *European Science Editing* from getting a reminder from Routledge: after all, the book under review advises that one should “gently remind them [book reviewers] they have not yet reviewed what you last sent.”

**Yateendra Joshi**  
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### SAGER guidelines news

The SAGER guidelines are now being cited in the new Polio Eradication Strategy 2022 – 2026, published by the World Health Organization (WHO) on behalf of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI). In 2019, the GPEI developed a Gender Equality Strategy (2019–2023), recognizing the importance of gender as an important determinant of health, that needs to be incorporated in all its research, data analysis and programmes to enable progress toward polio eradication.

## Resources

### How do publishers really decide whether to publish your book manuscript?

#### Avi Staiman

CEO of Academic Language Experts, a company that provides customized translation, editing, and academic support services to researchers, scientists and other professionals to help them produce publication-ready texts at the highest level. [avi@aclang.com](mailto:avi@aclang.com); [www.aclang.com](http://www.aclang.com)

#### Katie Chin

Senior Acquisitions Editor, Ancient Near East & Jewish Studies at Brill Publishers. Brill is one of the leading academic publishers in the Humanities, Social Sciences, International Law and Biology, with a broad Open Access portfolio consisting of more than 450 books and several thousand journal articles. [chin@brill.com](mailto:chin@brill.com); [www.brill.com](http://www.brill.com)

This is the second of a three-part interview by Avi Staiman, of Katie Chin. This interview is a redacted version of the virtual interview held on January 26, 2021 as part of the Academic Language Experts 'Publication Success Interview Series'. A full recording of the interview can be accessed [here](#).

#### Part 2: Putting together a publisher's package

In the second installment of our 'How do Publishers Really Decide Whether to Publish Your Research', Avi Staiman, CEO of Academic Language Experts, interviews Katie Chin, Acquisitions Editor at Brill Publishers, about how to put together a winning publisher's package and increase your chances for a successful submission. They discuss common mistakes new authors make, the difference between a synopsis and an abstract, and the quality of language required.

*Avi: What advice could give to new scholars who have not yet published a book? What common mistakes should they avoid? In light of the competitive nature, how can they improve the chances of their submission getting noticed and accepted?*

Katie: The first thing to think about is who your target audience is because that impacts so many things. It will help decide what publisher is best suited for your project; how you write your book (ie the tone and the content); how you want your research used; and finally how your book is marketed.

*Avi: What would you say are the key components of a publisher's package?*

Katie: We have four main pieces in a proposal. First: a prospectus—a synopsis of your project. Second: a planned table of contents. Third: your intended audience. And fourth: a schedule of when you think the manuscript is going to be ready.

*Avi: What's the difference between a synopsis and an abstract? Is there a marketing angle involved?*

Katie: An abstract boils the whole work down into three to four sentences. A synopsis gives more detail about your project. Your synopsis can also include how your project is different than other books in the field. Brevity is key in both; we don't need a synopsis that is more than a couple of pages.

*Avi: What is the level of language quality that's expected of the manuscript for it to be published?*

Katie: When talking about peer review it does not have to be edited for language before you submit it. However, it does need to be at a point where a reviewer can understand the content without being lost in the language.

Occasionally, we get a manuscript and we know ahead of time that it will need some language editing. We can then go to the peer reviewers and let them know that this needs language editing, but we want to know their feedback on the content. When the manuscript has been accepted, we would like the copy editing done, but Brill does not automatically provide this for authors. However, we do have freelancers and our friends at Academic Language Experts who can help with copy editing. We can also suggest places where you might be able to find funding to cover the copyediting costs.

*Avi: Are there instances where peer review can be done in other languages?*

Katie: Yes. Mostly in ancient Near Eastern studies, but also somewhat in Jewish Studies, there are still books that are published in French and German because those are languages that people working in the field are expected to know. English is still preferable because it reaches the widest audience. We do have reviewers that can read the original manuscript in Hebrew, French, German, etc. however if you are planning on translating it into English, we will still need to review the English version once it's ready to be sure that it is an accurate translation of the original work.

*Avi: What about books that have been published in another language? Would they consider a translation of high quality for publication in English?*

Katie: We would absolutely consider publishing an English translation. You can approach us before the work is translated and we can evaluate it at that point, or you can do the translation first and come to us with the English version. As translations are costly, Brill does not have the budget to translate individual monographs or edited volumes. Most of the translations that Brill funds are larger reference works.

*Avi: Do you give preference to scholars who have a publication history with Brill or do you focus on the particular research at hand and the quality of that research?*

Katie: We are of course happy to have repeat authors come back to us, but we're mostly looking at the content. We work closely with series editors and we rely on their expertise to help us. They look at the content and tell us if they think

its quality is good enough and if it fits with the series. Our series editors and peer reviewers are very important in helping us evaluate content.

*Avi: What's the timeline from the submission of a full proposal until the book arrives in the mail?*

Katie: The initial proposal review usually takes a couple of weeks. This enables us to read through it, send it to the series editor, and see if they're interested. Then you take whatever time you need to write the full manuscript.

Once we get the manuscript in, the peer review process usually takes about two to three months to complete. We like to have two reviewers for each manuscript so that gives us time to secure reviewers as well as give them time to read the book. Once the review comes back in, I'll take a look at it again with the series editors.

If revisions are needed, then it again depends on how long it takes you to complete them. Once we get the final manuscript in, which includes all of the text and images, we turn it over to our Production Department for typesetting, printing, etc. That takes at most six months to complete.



Avi Staiman

The production phase does not include copy editing so if you want to have the manuscript copy edited that will be done before we start production.

Bottom line: it is possible to have a book published within a year if the writing and revisions don't take too long.

*Avi: Do you automatically disqualify previously published projects from being published?*

Katie: Including some previously published content doesn't automatically disqualify it, but we are shying away from republishing content. So much is published online now and people can access these resources in so many different ways that there's not a market for content from multiple sources to be republished in one place.

In terms of permissions for publishing content that you've published somewhere else, I would encourage you to check with the original publisher. Usually, if you've published an article and you want to include it in a larger manuscript that you're doing you have the right to do so as long as you cite the original publication.



Katie Chin

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## Where was the research done? Are we reporting consistently?

Recently, I invited an author, Dr Duleeka Knipe of Bristol Medical School, UK, to revise her paper and to include the country of study, in this case Sri Lanka, in the title. Dr Knipe agreed that this is really important, but wrote that this omission was intentional to see what response was obtained from reviewers and editors. Dr Knipe has been working in Sri Lanka and other settings outside high-income countries for a while, and has found that co-authors often ask for the country to be in the title when the research is from a low or middle-income country but less so when the setting is a high-income country. She was therefore testing our editorial processes. Dr Knipe correctly asserted that the title should

identify the country and that the requirement should be the same for all countries from which data originate. She then identified various studies that we had published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* that reported research from high-income countries and identified this in the abstract but not the title. We fully agree that we should be consistent and are now working harder to ensure that the country or countries are identified as accurately as possible. I encourage all editors to review their own processes to ensure that we all report research in a consistent, balanced way.

**Joan Marsh MA PhD**  
Deputy Editor, *The Lancet Psychiatry*

## EASE activity

### Committee news: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

A clear need has arisen to address the issues of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in publishing. Therefore, the decision was taken by EASE to establish a new committee to address this broad agenda.

We hope to be able to offer support and guidance for EASE members on issues relating to EDI, as well as make EASE itself a more inclusive, welcoming and representative space.

The topic of EDI is multifaceted, with attention on not only the differing experiences of multiple demographics (remembering they often intersect), but also the contexts in which those experiences occur. Some of the core spaces ripe for change include:

- The scholarly publishing workforce
- Editorial stakeholders (namely authors, reviewers, editors and editorial board members)
- Research participants
- Reader accessibility

Evidence on the lack of equality and representation in these core spaces is growing, and in time EASE hopes its journal, *European Science Editing*, may be a home for more literature on this topic.

#### *Scholarly publishing workforce:*

National and international surveys of the publishing workforce have highlighted the existence of a predominantly White, able-bodied, cis and straight workforce at all levels – including leadership. Clearly, more needs to be done to transform the scholarly publishing industry to make it more inclusive and representative of society.

#### *Editorial stakeholders:*

Many studies have demonstrated biases within scholarly journals; for example, author gender, geographical location and institutional prestige can have a significant effect on peer review outcomes. Thus, an author's experience can be influenced due to both who they are, and who the gatekeepers (eg editors) are, suggesting the need for more diverse representation amongst gatekeeper roles, and tackling inherent biases amongst gatekeeper groups.

#### *Research participants:*

For all populations to reap the benefits of health-related scientific advances, all populations need to be included in the research and testing of new products, services, techniques and therapies; but historically, there has been a bias towards White male participants in research. The societal and public health repercussions of not striving for greater representation in research are serious. As gatekeepers of published research, it is within editors' sphere of influence to encourage representative recruitment and ensure transparent reporting of participants' demographics.

#### *Reader accessibility:*

Despite a growing proportion of academics and the general public disclosing issues relating to their physical and mental health, there remains a lack of technological innovation by publishers and platform providers in terms of accessibility; for instance the traditional journal article is still provided in PDF form, often without suitable XML tagging for compatibility with screen readers. Progress in this area appears slow, and when changes are made there is little communication to the scholarly community. These challenges must be addressed to support full inclusion and transparent communication.

The mission of the EDI committee is to:

- ensure EASE is a socially-just community that welcomes, values, and celebrates all who seek to contribute to its mission, and that this statement is owned at the highest level within EASE
- work with our members and industry partners to support equity, diversity and inclusion in scholarly communications, editing and publishing
- design, implement and support initiatives created to 1) reduce biases within the publishing workforce and editorial processes and 2) increase diversity in research participants and transparency in related research reporting.

Our objectives/goals are to:

1. identify partners and existing initiatives whose work we could support, and partners who could help develop, test and support the work coming out of this committee
2. undertake a survey to establish the diversity of EASE's leadership and membership to provide a starting point for measuring change
3. assess the inclusivity of EASE's structure and governance and make recommendations to Council about how these could be improved
4. monitor and evaluate EDI policies and processes used by others in the publishing industry to identify good practice and case studies
5. use the knowledge gained from point 4 above to produce guidelines (where required) detailing good practice for editorial stakeholders, with case studies
6. advocate for EDI awareness amongst EASE members and the broader industry, and promote good practice in editing and publishing
7. develop and/or link out to training resources, for example on unconscious bias, anti-racism and micro-aggression.

Although the scope of the EDI committee is very broad, the immediate issues for attention will be selected according to the skills and expertise of the committee, once recruited. We'd like to take this opportunity to reach out to EASE members and the wider scholarly community; if you are interested in joining the committee – or would like to find out more about it – please do get in touch with Diana Samuel (d.samuel@lancet.com).

## EASE forum in brief: May – July 2021

*The forum is open to members only. To subscribe, configure your preferences, and read the archives, go to <https://mail.lib.irb.hr/mailman/listinfo/ease-l>*

May started with Avi Staiman announcing his upcoming audio interview with Stephanie Paalvast, head of Open Research at Brill Publishers, talking about open access publication. Soon after, the discussion list once again went on fire over a language issue - always a popular theme among editors. This time, it was Yateendra Joshi who raised the issue of the word “respectively” - is it generally superfluous or not? Maria Kołtowska-Häggström stated that in her opinion, “respectively” makes the reading more difficult. Ivana Štětinová, on the other hand, would have added the word in both of the examples mentioned by Yateendra. And so the discussion went on. ““Respectively” needs to be laid to rest”, wrote Carolyn Norris, shortly thereafter correcting her own comma error (oh - the beauty of editing!). Pether Matthews joined in, raising the idea of a dictionary of colloquialisms. Then Christa Bedwin added that “respectively” in certain cases could be useful, in that it “cues the readers that they must do the tedious task of matching up the jumbled parts of the sentence”. Tom Lang wondered whether the overuse of “respectively” might have something to do with how English is taught as another language, while Carol Norris wrote warmly for the use of semicolons (and she *en passant* wondered whether “whom” was thoroughly antiquated or not). And so the discussion went further on, until Christa Bedwin directed everyone’s eyes in the direction of an article in The Guardian, telling the story of the researcher who is facing legal action for scientific misconduct after trying to get everyone to take hydroxychloroquine against Covid-19, a story that raises important points about peer review and ethics in research. And so ended the month of May in the discussion list.

Next up, in June, was Peter Matthews asking for advice. He had submitted a manuscript to a journal that uses double blind peer review, and was asked to propose reviewers for the manuscript. His problem was that any reviewer that knew him personally would instantly recognise him from the manuscript. Andrew Davis advised him to answer the editor as follows: “For an author to suggest referees negates the entire principle of double blind review. I therefore decline to suggest any referees for my manuscript.” Vijay Prakash Mathur gave a thorough explanation of his journal’s practice of triple blinding, in which the member of the editorial team who assigns reviewers is blinded about the name of the authors. Peter Matthews thanked the EASERS

for all the advice, and cited the answer he got from the editor in question, who proposed that Peter suggested qualified researchers in the field who are probably not familiar with his work, and added that someone who recognised his work would anyhow likely decline to review on the basis of conflict of interest. Peter’s meticulous search for researchers familiar with his field but NOT with his work, made Andrew Davis recommend using JANE ( <https://jane.biosemantics.org> ) to find people with similar interests to your own. In his view, JANE has better total coverage than WoS or Scopus, as well as easier searching. Lastly, Eva Baranyiova concluded the discussion with writing warmly about peer review at large.

At the start of July, Christa Bedwin tipped us off about a blog run by Stephen Heard: “Scientist sees squirrel” ( <https://scientistseessquirrel.wordpress.com/> ). Stephen’s motto for the blog is “Seldom original. Often wrong. Occasionally interesting” - a motto that probably holds true for many of us. Haluk Berk then asked whether to perform ordinary editorial processes with manuscripts already published on Research Square. He got responses from Andrew Davis and Duncan Nicholas, both underlining that Research Square is a preprint server, and as such, manuscripts published there has not been peer reviewed. Therefore, they should always undergo ordinary editorial processes when submitted to journals. Duncan added that it is becoming standard practice for journals and publishers to make policies on preprints, to clarify to authors that they do not consider posting on a preprint server to be a duplicate publication. And Andrew added that he wondered how Research Square make its money. No one in the Discussion list seemed to know this, because the question remained unanswered.

To conclude the alarmingly warm month of July, several EASERS shared great tips with us all: Avi Staiman invited us to hear his monthly “Publication Success Interview”, this time with the Heads of acquisition at Oxford university Press, for humanities and social sciences, respectively (sic!). Christa Bedwin invited us to her free webinar about using style guides in a corporate setting to save time and frustration. Jadranka Stojanovski announced the PUBMET2021 Conference programme available online, the conference itself to be held online in September. And Christa Bedwin shared a useful article by Yoel Strimling, on feedback for writers. Plenty of good stuff there, for editors on summer vacation, while waiting for even more action on the EASE Discussion List in August and September!

**Are Brean**  
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## International Congress on Peer Review and Scientific Publication

*Enhancing the quality and credibility of science*

### **Free Virtual Event: Advancing the Science of Scientific Publishing**

*Call for Research and Abstracts for the Ninth Peer Review Congress*

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- Join the Peer Review Congress organizers for this live Call for Research and Abstracts.
- Learn about the Ninth Congress and discuss hot topics in peer review and scientific publishing, including
- How the Pandemic has Affected Peer Review, Publishing, and the Dissemination of Science
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- New Forms of Reporting Science, Quality Assurance of Reported Science, and Reporting Guidelines
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As with all Peer Review Congresses, there will be equal time for presentations and Q&A

#### **Presenters**

- John Ioannidis, Meta-Research Innovation Center at Stanford (METRICS)
- Michael Berkwits, JAMA and JAMA Network
- Annette Flanagan, JAMA and JAMA Network
- Fiona Godlee, The BMJ
- Theo Bloom, The BMJ
- Veronique Kiermer, PLOS
- David Moher, Centre for Journalology
- Steve Goodman, Meta-Research Innovation Center at Stanford (METRICS)

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*Questions in advance are welcome and can be sent to [jama-peer@jamanetwork.org](mailto:jama-peer@jamanetwork.org)*

## The editor's bookshelf

Bookshelf was compiled by Silvia Maina. You can join the EASE journal blog at <http://ese-bookshelf.blogspot.co.uk>

### ETHICAL ISSUES

Llorens A, Tzovara A, Bellier L, *et al.* **Gender bias in academia: A lifetime problem that needs solutions.** *Neuron* 2021; 109(13): 2047-2074; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuron.2021.06.002>.

Despite increased awareness of the lack of gender equity in academia, progresses in improving the participation of underrepresented groups in academia are still slow. This article examines gender bias and factors contributing to the increasing gender gap, gender differences in the number of citations and bias in scientific funding, awards, and academic hiring. Also, authors give suggestions to decrease this bias both at an individual and at an institutional level.

Tang C, Hamad N. **Trials and tribulations: including women in cancer clinical research.** *Lancet Haematol.* 2021 Jul;8(7):e477-e478. doi: 10.1016/S2352-3026(21)00165-4. PMID: 34171277.

[No authors listed]. **Getting serious about sex and gender.** *The Lancet Rheumatology* 2021; 3(5), E313; DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2665-9913\(21\)00118-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2665-9913(21)00118-1)

Differences between men and women have not been reflected accurately in the field of medicine, and especially in design, enrollment and analysis in clinical trials. Such female underrepresentation in biomedical research could affect statistical power to detect sex-based variations in drug effect and limit the generalisability of trial data. These two papers, recently published by *The Lancet* group, underline the importance of a more balanced gender both in two important fields of research: oncology and rheumatology. Authors also state that action is needed at all levels: funders and regulators must demand

and enforce the incorporation of sex and gender into study populations, study design, and statistical analysis plans; journals must ensure that sex and gender differences are appropriately analysed and reported.

Misra V, Safi F, Brewerton KA, Wu W, *et al.* **Gender disparity between authors in leading medical journals during the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-sectional review.** *BMJ Open.* 2021 Jul 14;11(7):e051224. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2021-051224. PMID: 34261692.

In this research article, authors evaluate gender differences in authorship of COVID-19 articles published from 1 January to 31 December 2020 in high-impact medical journals. 2252 articles were included, of which 748 were COVID-19-related and 1504 covered other topics. Women were significantly less likely than men to be the primary or senior authors in all articles, thus confirming the fact that, in general (and COVID related papers are not an exception), men are more likely than women to publish in high-impact medical journals

### PUBLISHING

Baždarić K, Vrkić I, Arh E, *et al.* **Attitudes and practices of open data, preprinting, and peer-review—A cross sectional study on Croatian scientists.** *PLoS ONE* 2021;16(6): e0244529; <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0244529>

The goal of this study is to develop and validate a questionnaire measuring attitudes towards open access. In particular, three elements of open access are examined: open data (open data use and reuse), open science tools (open repositories—preprint servers) and open science evaluation (open peer review). The questionnaire, named ATOPP (Attitudes towards Open data sharing, preprinting, and peer-review), was then used to explore Croatian scientists' attitudes towards those

topics and the association of those attitudes with their open science practices and socio-demographic information. researchers found that we that attitudes Croatian researchers towards these topics are neutral, and that more positive attitudes were found among those that participated in open science practices before or had an education in open science.

[No authors listed]. **Mars selfie, Betelgeuse mystery and the impact of journal closure.** *Nature* 2021; 594(479). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-01679-4>

Betelgeuse is normally one of the ten brightest stars in the night sky. Mysteriously, it began getting dimmer in October last year, and by mid-February it had lost more than two-thirds of its brilliance.

Similarly to the star loss of brightness, a dip in papers' citations seems to often to follow a journal closure. A research about the *Journal of Business*, once considered one of the top five finance-research journals and closed in 2004, reveals that articles published in the now-defunct title received 20% fewer citations than did those in journals that are still operating.

Neiman M, Bagley RK, Paczesniak D, *et al.* **Development, implementation and impact of a new preprint solicitation process at Proceedings B.** *Proc Biol Sci.* 2021 Jul 14;288(1954):20211248. doi: 10.1098/rspb.2021.1248. Epub 2021 Jul 14. PMID: 34256003.

*Proceedings B* is the Royal Society's main biological research journal. Recently, the journal developed a new process to solicit preprints for consideration for publication in *Proceedings B*. In this paper, researchers compare the focal topics and geographic origin of submitting authors of papers submitted in the traditional (non-solicited) route versus solicited preprints.

Fanelli D, Wong J, Moher D. **What difference might retractions make? An estimate of the potential epistemic cost of retractions on meta-analyses.**

Account Res. 2021 Jul 1. doi: 10.1080/08989621.2021.1947810. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34196235. Retractions are a phenomenon of growing importance in science, but it is unclear if to what extent a retraction might require revising previous scientific estimates and beliefs – defined as the epistemic cost. Meta-analyses, designed estimate overall quantitative picture given by a literature, are an optimal tool to measure this impact. Therefore, this study estimates the epistemic cost of a representative sample of recent retractions, by measuring the difference that these retractions make to the meta-analyses that included them. The authors' finding support concerns that the retracted status of articles is too often overlooked by researchers, and yet suggest that the epistemic cost of retractions on meta-analyses is relatively contained and very context-dependent.

Anikina Z. **Don't focus on English at the expense of your science.** *Nature*. 2021 Jul 12. doi: 10.1038/d41586-021-01905-z. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34253915.

No doubt that in science articles language does matter, because papers must be understandable. But, according to Zhanna Anikina, an English teacher specialized in delivering full English courses to academics, sometimes academics spend so much of their professional time and effort to learn a perfect English that they might find themselves lacking in ability to actually work on science. She suggests that rather than investing seemingly endless time in learning English so that researchers can share their findings with a global audience, it makes sense to re-evaluate researchers' needs, reconsider training and seek support from language professionals for editing and proofreading.

McMahan P, McFarland DA. **Creative Destruction: The Structural Consequences of Scientific Curation.** *American Sociological Review* 2021; 86(21); <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122421996323>

In this paper, authors analyze a corpus of millions of journal articles, focusing on citation and co-citation as indicators of scholarly attention, to see the consequences of review articles for the publications they cite. They show that we that review articles have significant and consequential influence on scientific discourse at multiple levels. First of all, papers cited by formal review articles generally experience a dramatic loss in future citations, because the review, and not the mentioned articles, gets cited. Besides, in their attempt to summarize the literature concerning a research topic, reviews may also simplify it, highlighting certain connections between publications while obscuring others.

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