

## The Editor's Bookshelf

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### ECONOMICS

Frantsvag JE. **The size distribution of open access publishers.** *First Monday* 15(12) - 6 December 2010.

This study highlights the fact that a large number of small publishers publish the majority of OA journals, and that 90% of these publishers publish only a single journal. These data are compared to similar data about toll access publishing, and suggest that small-scale operation of OA publishing is economically inefficient and that it should be best organized in larger publishing institutions.

Houghton JW, Oppenheim C. **The economic implications of alternative publishing models.** *Prometheus* 2010;28(1):41-54.

This article focuses on the costs and potential benefits of three alternative models for scholarly publishing: subscription publishing, open access publishing and self-archiving. It summarizes the findings of a study undertaken for the UK Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) And concludes that more open access to findings from publicly funded research would have substantial benefits for research communication.  
doi: 10.1080/08109021003676359

### EDITORIAL PROCESS

Editorial. **Crafting a revision.** *Nature Neuroscience* 2011;14:941.

A thoughtful revision of a paper based on editorial and referee feedback does improve its quality. Authors should be open to referees' criticisms and should go through

their comments point by point responding constructively and diplomatically to each point. Despite noting that a referee has made critical mistakes or has requested unnecessary extensions, nonetheless authors should make any effort to improve the paper. Authors, editors and referees all benefit from a collaborative and collegial peer review process.  
doi: 10.1038/nn0811-941

Harris A, Reeder R, Hyun J. **Survey of editors and reviewers of high-impact psychology journals: statistical and research design problems in submitted manuscripts.** *The Journal of Psychology* 2011;145(3):195-209.

The authors surveyed 21 editors and reviewers from major psychology journals to identify and describe the statistical and design errors they encounter most often and to gather their advice to prevent them. The three major areas identified were problems with research design and reporting, inappropriate data analysis, and misinterpretation of results. Researchers should attend to these common issues to improve the scientific quality of their submitted manuscripts.

Marušić A. **Problems of editors with authorship in small medical journals.** *The International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 2011;2(3):130-132.

Authorship is a serious problem in smaller scientific communities. Many authors do not qualify for the standard authorship criteria set by the ICMJE, and some editors as well may not be familiar with them. Funding from a study carried out by the *Croatian Medical Journal (CMJ)* showed that contribution declaration forms should be considered unreliable as a means of assessing authorship. For this reason, the CMJ decided to ask each author a single open-ended question: "Why do you think you deserve to be the author

of this manuscript?" and to publish the author's answer to this question without editing it.

O'Dowd A. **Peer review system needs thorough evaluation, MPs hear.** *BMJ* 2011;342:d3046.

The UK parliamentary science and technology committee carried out an inquiry into the peer review process in science. Several medical and scientific journal editors appearing before the committee last May spoke of the many merits of the peer review system, but they raised some concerns about the variability of its quality and a lack of adequate evaluation to confirm its value. They agreed that the process should be improved.  
doi: 10.1136/bmj.d3046

Sprouse G. **Editorial: Redefining length.** *Physical Review Special Topics-Physics Education Research* 2011;7(020001).

The APS Editor in Chief announces that in an effort to streamline the calculation of length, the APS journals will no longer use the printed page as the determining factor. Instead the journals will use word counts to determine length. This new method will be easier for authors to calculate in advance, maintaining the quality of concise communication that is a virtue of letters and short papers.  
doi: 10.1103/PhysRevSTPER.7.020001

### ETHICAL ISSUES

Brysbart M, Smith S. **Self-enhancement in scientific research: the self-citation bias.** *Psychologica Belgica* 2011;5(2):129-137.

Self-enhancement and self-citation biases are well-documented phenomena in the social psychology field. This article examines the number of self-citations in articles published by four journals and the reasons why authors cite themselves. Such citations in articles are sometimes included because

authors wish to promote and praise themselves and their findings. Then, self-citations have more to do with self-promotion than with the advancement of science.

Fang FC, Casadevall A. **Retracted science and the retraction index.**

*Infection and Immunity* 2011;79(10). Overall, manuscript retraction appears to be occurring more frequently, although it is uncertain whether this is a result of an increase in misconduct or simply in detection due to enhanced vigilance. The authors developed a novel measure, the "retraction index", by dividing the number of retractions by the total number of articles published by 17 journals ranging in impact factor from 2.00 to 53.484 in the years 2001 to 2010. They found that the frequency of retraction varied among journals and showed a strong correlation with journal impact factor.  
doi: 10.1128/IAI.05661-11

Harmon K. **Impact factor: can a scientific retraction change public opinion?** *Scientific American* March 4, 2010.

This article discusses the effect that scientific retractions have on public opinion. After initial findings are published, some of the readers will not change their mind even if the paper is retracted. The recent retraction of a key paper proposing a link between childhood vaccines and autism has widened the societal divide on this issue. The number of retractions has been increasing, but they are just the tip of the iceberg: one study showed that about 2% of scientists admitted to fabricating, falsifying, or modifying data or results at least once.

Kesselheim AS, Lee JL, Avorn J *et al.* **Conflict of interest in oncology publications. A survey of disclosure policies and statements.** *Cancer* 2011, epub 29 June.

The authors examined disclosures related to conflict of interest that accompanied papers published in major oncology journals in

order to compare the nature of the information requested with the information provided. This analysis revealed a wide range of disclosure policies and practices: most but not all of the journals required some disclosure of potential conflicts of interest, but relevant standards and definitions varied considerably.  
doi: 10.1002/cncr.26237

Tarnow E. **Ethics authors don't follow guidelines.** *APS News* 2011;20(7):4

Ethics training at least in medical publication seems to lead to worse behaviour. Young researchers find out just how they are expected to behave, which turns out to be... unethically.

### INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

Piwovar HA. **Who shares? Who doesn't? Factors associated with openly archiving raw research data.** *PLoS ONE* 2011;6(7):e18657.

This article aims at investigating who openly shares raw research data, who does not, and which initiatives are correlated with high rates of data sharing. Regarding one particular type of data - biological gene expression microarray intensity values - in a field with mature policies, repositories, and standards, research data-sharing levels are low and increasing only slowly.  
doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0018657

Priti J. **New trends and future applications/directions of institutional repositories in academic institutions.** *Library Review* 2011;60(2):125-141.

This review of recently published literature on current trends and future applications of institutional repositories (IRs) includes the benefits and obstacles of setting up an IR. This report can serve to persuade different stakeholders at institutions, including management, as to the value of open access (OA) and the importance of establishing OA institutional policies.  
doi: 10.1108/0024531111113078

### LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Gasparian AY, Ayzvazyan L, Blackmore H *et al.* **Writing a narrative biomedical review: considerations for authors, peer reviewers, and editors.** *Rheumatology International* 2011 July 29.

Writing and properly structuring a review article requires the author's deep knowledge and expertise in a specific field of science. The aim of this review is to analyze the main steps in writing a narrative biomedical review and to consider points that may enhance its chances of successful publication and future impact, points related to authorship, title, abstract and keywords, introductory notes, search methodology, conclusions, acknowledgments, references, and places to submit a review manuscript. These steps can also be applicable to editorials and commentaries.  
doi: 10.1007/s00296-011-1999-3

Masic I. **How to search, write, prepare and publish the scientific papers in the biomedical journals.** *Acta Informatica Medica* 2011;19(2):68-79.

This article focuses on the methodology of preparation, writing, and publishing scientific papers in biomedical journals, in particular on those published in Bosnia and Herzegovina and indexed in Medline. It provides a comparative review of the number and structure of papers. The author believes that it is necessary to raise quality standards in the review and acceptance of papers.  
doi: 10.5455/aim.2011.19.68-79

### PUBLISHING

André F, Creppy R, Barthelet E *et al.* **OA report in 2010.** Madrid: FECYT; 2010.

This report arises from the activities of the Southern European Libraries Link (SELL), which represents library consortia of six countries (France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey). One of its main goals is "to draw common policies towards

information acquirement and provision." Experts in each country provided reports on the situation of open access to move towards common policies for open access to science.

Cambon-Thomsen A, Thorisson GA, Mabile L. for the BRIF workshop group. **The role of a bioresource research impact factor as an incentive to share human bioresources.** *Nature Genetics* 2011;43(6):503-504. doi: 10.1038/ng.831

Bioresources need to be easily accessible to facilitate advancement of research. A Bioresource Research Impact Factor (BRIF) could promote the sharing of bioresources by creating a link between their initiators or implementers and the impact of the scientific research using them. A BRIF would make it possible to trace the quantitative use of a bioresource, the kind of research using it, and the efforts behind establishing and maintaining it. Specific requirements for citing bioresources are lacking in the *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals* (URM). A BRIF working group has been recently established.

Creaser C, Fry J, Greenwood H et al. **Authors' awareness and attitudes toward open access repositories.** *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 2010;16(S1):145-161

This article investigates the awareness of scholarly authors toward open access repositories and the factors that motivate their use. The findings indicate that despite good understanding and appreciation of the ethos of open access in general, differences arose between authors from differing disciplinary backgrounds in understanding the validity of open access repositories and their subsequent motivations for depositing articles in them. doi: 10.1080/13614533.2010.518851

Davis PM, Walters WH. **The impact of free access to the scientific literature: a review of recent research.** *Journal of the Medical*

*Library Association* 2011;99(3):208-217. This paper reviews recent studies evaluating the impact of free access (open access) on scholars, clinicians, and the general public in developed and developing countries. It assesses impact in terms of reading, citation, and related forms of use. The authors consider factors such as journal reputation and the absence of publication fees when submitting their work, but free access is not a significant factor. Evidence is clear that free access leads to increased number of article downloads, although its impact on article citations is unclear and needs further research. doi: 10.3163/1536-5050.99.3.008

Laakso M, Welling P, Bukvova H et al. **The development of Open Access Journal Publishing from 1993 to 2009.** *PLoS ONE* 2011;6(6):e20961. Results of a study on the development of open access (OA) journals registered in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) showed very rapid growth in the period 1993-2009. Since 2000, the average annual growth rate in number of journals has been 18%, and for number of articles has been 30%. Three major phases of OA development suggested are the Pioneering years (1993-1999), the Innovation years (2000-2004), and the Consolidation years (2005-2009). doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0020961

Moher D, Weeks L, Ocampo M et al. **Describing reporting guidelines for health research: a systematic review.** *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 2011;64(7):718-742. This review includes 81 reporting guidelines, most of which have been developed in the last 10 years, classifying 58% of them as new guidance. The authors believe that a more rigorous approach is necessary for developing reporting guidelines. The findings indicate that guideline developers provide little information about the guideline development process that would be useful to assess the robustness of the recommendations provided. An assessment tool could be developed to

help authors and editors create and evaluate specific reporting guidelines. doi: 10.1016/j.clinepi.2010.09.013

Nariani R, Fernandez L. **Open access publishing: what authors want.** *College & Research Libraries* (accepted: June 5, 2011; anticipated publication date: March 2012). Results of this study indicate that authors are increasingly publishing in open access (OA) journals, and they appreciate library funding initiatives and believe that impact factor and readership are strong motivators for OA publishing. Specific recommendations for publishers include timely indexing in PubMed and other databases, promotion of OA articles through press releases, and access to statistics on a regular basis.

Tagler J. **Biomedical Publishing 101: an overview from the Chicago Collaborative.** *The Serials Librarian* 2011; 60(1-4):114-123. Challenges and opportunities posed by the migration from print to digital are here addressed. The author explores the role of publishers in the scholarly communication process, and the various roles and responsibilities of various players in the scientific publishing chain.

#### RESEARCH EVALUATION

Molinié A, Bodenhausen G. **The kinship or *k*-index as an antidote against the toxic effects of *h*-index.** *CHEMIA International Journal for Chemistry* 2011;65(6):433-436. According to the authors, the current fashion of ranking people, papers, and journals is anything but harmless. They suggest measuring the "fertility" of individual researchers - with respect to their ability to foster quality - in terms of kinship (the *k*-index) rather than measurement through personalized indices (the *h*-index). A chart of elective kinship, produced through the transmission of scientific theory, methodology, know-how, competence, and even culture, could then be realized. doi: 10.2533/chimia.2011.433

## EASE Business

### EASE luncheon in Paris strikes a perfect balance

Taking advantage of President Joan Marsh's attendance at a psychiatrist congress in Paris, EASE members in France gathered at Porte Maillot for an informal lunch on 5 September, as it has done regularly for several years. The date coincided with back-to-school for the kids, so a few members were unable to join us. We were 8 and had a nice discussion around diverse editing topics.

Two new participants were welcomed: Catherine Mary, who is a free-lance science journalist and works for prestigious journals, and Philippe Chatelet, from INRA, Montpellier, working in plant biology and editing papers. They presented their activities to the other participants (Rachel Carol, Frances Sheppard, Alex Edelman, Eric Lichtfouse), and to Joan who shared the latest EASE news and encouraged everyone to "spread the word" about EASE's big conference in Tallinn, Estonia next 8-10 June 2012, on the theme of "Publishing in a Digital Age". It looks like most of us will attend.



The photo, courtesy of yours truly, as Alison Clayson was still on vacation, shows (from left to right): C Mary, J Marsh, A Edelman, P Chatelet, E Lichtfouse, R Carol, F Sheppard. The participants came for the lunch from cities far from the Porte Maillot Conference Centre: Montpellier, Besançon, Dijon, Lyon, Malakoff, Juvisy and London! And, astonishing for a French event: all of us arrived in advance or on time! Around the table, the group was perfectly balanced: 4 Frogs and 4 Brits, 4 men, 4 women!

### ESE: what do you like (or dislike) about the Journal?

We are conducting a poll of what you, the readers and members of EASE, think about the Journal. Over the past year, you will have noticed various changes. We think they are improvements but would like to know whether you agree. There are 10 questions and we would really appreciate you taking the time to complete them. We will send an e-mail alert and put details on the EASE website. If anyone would like a paper copy, please contact the Secretary.

If anyone would like to help analyse the responses, please contact the Secretary - all assistance gratefully received!

### Publications Committee

We are very sad to report that Margaret Cooter has retired from her position as Production Editor of ESE. Margaret has done a fantastic job over the years, chasing copy, laying out the pages, editing where necessary and managing a team of proof readers to ensure a Journal fit for an Editors' Association. She is now going to devote more time to her retirement projects, including a Masters in Visual Art at Camberwell College of Art. Unfortunately, no one from the membership was willing to take on the job at this time, so we have appointed Lynne Rowland, a colleague of Mary Hodgson's who is not an editor but does have experience in page layout and design.

We also regret that Dario Sambunjak has resigned from the Publications Committee, following his resignation from the Editorial Board of the Croatian Medical Journal. Dario is now Director of the Croatian Branch of the Cochrane Collaboration and his career is taking him away from editing, so he felt it was no longer appropriate to be on the Publications Committee. Dario has been responsible for the Section, My Life as an Editor, and we are grateful for both the interesting articles he has commissioned for this Section and his overall contribution to the Journal. Anyone interested in joining the Publications Committee should contact Armen Gasparyan or Joan Marsh.

### Nominations for EASE Council 2012-2015

At the AGM in Tallinn in June 2012, a new Council will be elected. The following members of the existing Council are standing down:

**Vice Presidents:** Alison Clayson; Reme Melero

**Ordinary members:** Petter Oscarsson; Edward Towpik

Below is a list of nominees who have accepted. Other names may be added and the full list will be published on the EASE website in November. Members of EASE may also, not less than ninety days before the General Meeting, nominate in writing to the Secretary any eligible member of the Association for each office or position. Such nominations must be made in writing by two members for each nomination, and should enclose a signed letter from the nominee agreeing to his/her nomination, and a brief Curriculum Vitae of the nominee. These nominees shall be added to the list drawn up by the nominations committee. If the nominations committee accepts more nominations than there are places to be filled, a ballot of members will take place. Ballot papers would be circulated with the February 2012 issue of ESE. Details of the procedure may be found in the Statutes and Bye-Laws of EASE, available on the About EASE section of the website.

**Vice Presidents:** Eva Baranyiova; Ana Marusic

**Ordinary members:** Paola DeCastro; Alex Edelman; Shirin Heidari; Richard Hurley; Moira Johnson; Ana Marusic; Pippa Smart; Christian Sterken; Sylwia Ufnalska