

## News Notes

*NewsNotes are compiled by John Hilton (hilton.john@gmail.com)*

*Some of these items are taken from the EASE Journal Blog (<http://esebookshelf.blogspot.com>) where full URLs may be found*

### Peer-reviewing of open data

While peer review is a mainstay of the publication process, does it have a role in assessing the quality, relevance and significance of data, independent of any publication? Researchers at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences investigated this approach by asking users of its open data repository to review the data sets they downloaded. The findings, presented at the 7th International Digital Curation Conference ([www.dcc.ac.uk/events/idcc11](http://www.dcc.ac.uk/events/idcc11)) held in Bristol, UK in December 2011, showed that data users could provide positive but critical feedback that could enable 'tagging' of data sets in areas such as relevance, quality, and intent to publish based on the data.

### Books for students: print versus digital

Two recent reports on students' information sources had somewhat different findings. The Pearson Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation, surveyed students in the US, and found that about 60% preferred digital books over print. However, a survey in the UK by book research company BML Bowker, found that about 60% used print books, with very few relying on ebooks. So it will be interesting to see the results of the Global eBook Monitor study, an international study being undertaken by BML Bowker, Pearson, and several other organisations.

### ALPSP awards and conference

The Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP; [www.alpsp.org](http://www.alpsp.org)) is seeking nominations for its 2012 Awards for

publishing innovation and best new journal. The publishing innovation award aims to recognise novel approaches to publishing that are sustainable and beneficial, while the new journal award honours achievements in launching, marketing and commercial viability as well as editorial strategy. The closing date for applications is 30 May 2012 and the winners will be announced at the ALPSP International Conference ([www.alpsspconference.org](http://www.alpsspconference.org)) in September.

### FRPAA, RWA & Elsevier

The Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA) is currently making progress through the US legislature. It will require US federal agencies with a budget of over \$100 million to make government-funded research available for free online access, no later than six months after publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Public access and library groups have welcomed the bill but many publishers are concerned by the timescales. Debate about the FRPAA has been in the shadow of a furore surrounding another act, the Research Works Act, which aimed to stop the spread of mandates and was supported by the large publishers. Elsevier came under attack from many in the research community for its support of the act, as well as its pricing policies, and there were concerted campaigns directed against the company (eg [thecostofknowledge.com](http://thecostofknowledge.com)). Elsevier eventually withdrew its support for the RWA and the act was withdrawn soon after.

### New ways to publish

Peer Evaluation ([www.peerevaluation.org](http://www.peerevaluation.org)) is a new, independent 'community interest' service that "empowers you to manage and track the peer review, dissemination and reuse of your scholarly communications". The site uses a range of social media tools, indexing systems, web technologies and widgets to enable researchers to bypass or enhance traditional

publishing channels for peer review and dissemination. Uploaded files (published or unpublished) are embedded with a 'Peerev' widget that prompts and permits readers to offer formal or informal peer review, then indexed and disseminated and all feedback is aggregated and measured using the 'Total Impact' ([total-impact.org](http://total-impact.org)) system.

Another service offering peer review, curation and sharing is Figshare ([figshare.com](http://figshare.com)), supported by Digital Science, a sister company of Nature Publishing Group. Figshare enables researchers to "...publish all of their research outputs to the web in seconds in an easily citable, sharable and discoverable manner." It addresses the need for attribution and citation of figures, data, tables, videos and any other file formats that can be published.

F1000, the post-publication peer review organisation, will start its own publication venture during 2012. Called F1000 Research ([f1000research.com](http://f1000research.com)), it offers immediate, open-access publication of a range of file types, and will "address the major issues afflicting scientific publishing today: timely dissemination of research, peer review, and sharing of data".

### The future of publishing (again)

Every issue of News Notes seems to include an item about the future of publishing, sometimes doom and gloom, other times blossoming with optimism. On 29 Feb 2012, a group from Oxford University brought together representatives from publishing companies and advocates of open science to discuss "The Scientific Evolution: Open Science and the Future of Publishing." The meeting covered journal subscriptions, publishing costs, clarity, and peer review. You can watch a video of the session on the organisers' website ([evolutionofscience.org](http://evolutionofscience.org)), and there's a useful report of the meeting on [F1000research.com](http://F1000research.com) (2 March 2012).

Over the Atlantic, a similar

discussion took place at Duke University, Durham, NC, USA on 24 Feb 2012. Entitled “Transitions in Journal Publishing” the meeting was also recorded ([tinyurl.com/ease-news11](http://tinyurl.com/ease-news11)) and reported ([tinyurl.com/ease-news12](http://tinyurl.com/ease-news12)).

Finally, a paper by two researchers at the US National Institute of Mental Health, published in *Frontiers in Computational Neuroscience* (2011;5:55) puts forward a detailed proposal for a new approach to publishing that attempts to more efficiently marshal the energies and resources of authors, reviewers and editors by rearranging the process and the finances. See what you think.

### Avian flu article debate

Two articles reporting ways of mutating the infamous H5N1 influenza virus were put under scrutiny when a US government body expressed concerns about the risks of publishing such sensitive information. The papers were submitted to (and accepted by) *Nature* and *Science* in November 2011, but the journals were asked to withhold publication by the US National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB). Both the authors and the NSABB argued their case in the two journals, but the matter seems to have been resolved by a World Health Organization panel, which has ruled that the articles should now be published in full after a reasonable delay.

### How to repeat a citation

In academic book editing, there are numerous ways of shortening a citation after a first full mention. It varies between disciplines and publishers. While the simplest approach is “Name, short title, page number”, there are also the Latin constructions ‘*ibid.*’, ‘*idem*’, ‘*id.*’, ‘*op. cit.*’, and ‘*loc. cit.*’, which can be confusing and obscure. A post by Carol Saller on the *Chronicle of Higher Education’s* *Lingua Franca* blog ([chronicle.com/blogs/linguafranca](http://chronicle.com/blogs/linguafranca); 1 March 2012) explains the sometimes arcane rules regarding their usage and offers some useful guidance.

### How to cite a tweet

With so much information exchange (and peer review) taking place on Twitter, editors may wonder how to cite a tweet. The Modern Language Association has guidelines on just that on its website ([tinyurl.com/ease-news13](http://tinyurl.com/ease-news13)). Using this guidance, here is how a recent tweet from EASE should be cited: European Association of Science Editors (EASEeditors). “New EASE website launched” 6 Feb 2012, 5:27 pm. Tweet.

### PEER End of Project conference

The PEER (Publishing and Ecology of European Research) project was set up to investigate the impact of systematic deposition of peer-reviewed manuscripts into research repositories. Funded partly by the European Union, the project has involved collaboration between publishers, repositories and researchers and culminates in an End of Project Conference, to be held on 29 May 2012 in Brussels, Belgium. You can find out more about the conference and the final report on the PEER website ([www.peerproject.eu](http://www.peerproject.eu)).

### Retractions: correcting the record since 1756

Retractions play an important part in maintaining the integrity of the scientific record. While there are sometimes concerns about delays, incomplete investigation and non-adherence to guidelines, a recent citation analysis published in *Research Policy* (2012;41:276-290) and reported on the *Society for Scholarly Publishing’s* *Scholarly Kitchen* blog ([scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org](http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org); 29 Feb 2012) showed that retractions, at least in biomedicine, remain a viable, efficient way of informing the research community about invalid work. The study looked at authorship and citation patterns of retracted papers, compared with a control group, and noted a clear effect on the citation record.

Another finding of the study, reported by the *Retraction Watch* blog ([retractionwatch.wordpress.com](http://retractionwatch.wordpress.com); 27 Feb 2012) was the discovery of the earliest known English-language scientific retraction notice.

It was submitted over 250 years ago to the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (1756;49:682-683; doi:10.1098/rstl.1755.0107) by Benjamin Wilson, who wished to withdraw a previously expressed opinion on “minus electricity”.

### Arabic research database

A new online database provides access to scientific research from Arab and Islamic countries. The database, called E-Marefa ([www.e-marefa.net](http://www.e-marefa.net)) was launched in January 2012 by the Jordan-based company Knowledge World Company for Digital Content. At launch the database included 45,000 journal articles and reports in Arabic with English translations, as well as access to full-text articles from 450 journals, but the developers hope to expand coverage during 2012. The database will include only peer-reviewed work, to counter a perception that publications from the Arab world are biased or of poor quality, and will be free for academic and healthcare organisations.

### The Anywhere Article

Despite the numerous innovations in web design and technology and the versatility of HTML as a way of presenting text on the web, the PDF endures as a hugely popular format for scientific papers. One reason may be the lack of clutter, a side effect of all that design and technology innovation. While websites can offer all manner of tools and interactivity, the primary task when faced with a scientific paper is one of concentrated reading, avoiding distraction. In an attempt to combine the readability of the PDF with the benefits of HTML, Wiley-Blackwell has developed the ‘Anywhere Article’ ([tinyurl.com/ease-news9](http://tinyurl.com/ease-news9)). The aim is to have a PDF-like view that works on mobile platforms and also allows web-like enhancements and linking. Wiley-Blackwell hopes to use the model on both Wiley Online Library and new mobile apps.

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