

## ISMTE 2014 European Conference

14 October 2014, London, UK

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

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



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

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

In the session *Managing Content*, Ashmita Das spoke about the language editing service **Editage**, which combines

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

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

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

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

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

There followed an ISMTE Society update and announcement of the Conference Best Poster Award. The prize went to Heather Blasco and Sarah Welliver from **J&J Editorial** with their presentation titled *Reformatting Submission Questions Increases the Accuracy of Author-*

**Supplied Information: A Case Study.** The winning poster can be viewed in full at [https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.ismte.org/resource/resmgr/Posters/2014\\_NA\\_Poster\\_4.pdf](https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.ismte.org/resource/resmgr/Posters/2014_NA_Poster_4.pdf)

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

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

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

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

In his talk **Is your Peer Review a Lottery?**, **Janne-Tuomas Seppänen** of Peerage of Science described several ways in which they are offering a novel form of review and journal selection in an independent reviewing platform, where journals bid for articles and the publishing decision is a result of the interaction between author and journal, after completion of peer review: thoroughness and timeliness of review is suggested by the author, reviewers evaluate each other's comments before agreeing on the suitability of papers for acceptance. Meanwhile, all PoS-Select service journals (currently 17 titles) may send publishing offers to

authors, who may then choose to accept or ignore them. If publishing has not happened via Select, authors can export their reviews to a journal in the PoS-Connect service. This service currently includes *PLOS Biology* and *PLOS One*, but Janne hinted at a major addition to the destination journal selection in the immediate future, though details remain a secret for now.

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

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

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

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