

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

ICMJE guidelines updated

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) has updated its “Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals”. The guidelines, last revised in 2010, have been largely rewritten and also renamed ‘Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals’. The main changes, summarised on the ICMJE website (www.icmje.org/new_recommendations.html), are the addition of a fourth criterion for authorship, more guidance on author accountability and contributorship, and a revised approach to conflicts of interest. The new recommendations also explicitly address publication bias and the use of reporting guidelines such as CONSORT.

Updated Declaration of Helsinki

The World Medical Association (www.wma.net) has updated its Declaration of Helsinki, which relates to ethical principles underpinning clinical trials and other research on humans. Two aspects are of particular relevance to editors. Firstly the Declaration now includes the requirement for study registration in a publically accessible database. Secondly, the Declaration states that “researchers, authors, sponsors, editors and publishers all have ethical obligations with regard to the publication and dissemination of the results of research.” and adds that “reports of research not in accordance with the principles of this Declaration should not be accepted for publication.”

Opening peer review

Several new initiatives have emerged

in recent months offering a range of open peer review options for author and peer reviewers. The Winnower (thewinnower.com) is an “open access online science publishing platform that employs open post-publication peer review”. Set up by a PhD student in the USA, The Winnower is set up as an alternative to journal publishing and offers a set fee of \$100. In contrast, Libre (libreapp.org), run by Open Scholar (www.openscholar.org.uk), wants to work with journals, offering an “author-guided open peer review process” that can run parallel to the publication process. Authors are encouraged to submit papers at any point before, during or after publication. A third site, Publons (www.publons.com), looks at peer review from the other direction. It provides a reviewer-led forum whereby reviewers identify a paper they wish to comment on, upload a review, and obtain a DOI for their contributions once they are endorsed. Peer Evaluation (peerevaluation.org) is harder to define. It offers an open-access repository for all research content with an open peer review system. Under the tagline ‘empowering scholars’ it relies on peer networking and is entirely free to all users.

Peer Review Congress

The Seventh International Congress on Peer Review and Biomedical Publication took place in Chicago, USA, in September. The abstracts of the plenary sessions and the posters are all available from the congress website (www.peerreviewcongress.org) and provide a searchable goldmine of knowledge and current research on all aspects of biomedical editing and publishing. It’s impossible to cover everything in News Notes, but some of the hot topics were reproducibility (or lack of it), abuse of citations, the sheer amount of published research, spin, lack of disclosure of industry links, and of course access to clinical trial data. You can read summaries of the event on the Absolutely Maybe blog, hosted by *Scientific American* ([maybe\) and on the dedicated Peer Review Report blog \(\[prprt.blogspot.co.uk\]\(http://prprt.blogspot.co.uk\)\)](http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/absolutely-</p>
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BioMedCentral CCO Waiver for open data

BioMedCentral has introduced the Creative Commons CC0 public domain waiver (creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0) as part of its licence agreement. The CC0 waiver will ensure that data components of articles will be clearly marked as available for sharing and re-use without legal restrictions. The waiver applies to data in all articles submitted to BioMedCentral or Chemistry Central journals from September 2013.

Better posters

Zen Faulkes, a biologist based in Texas, USA, maintains a popular blog called Better Posters (betterposters.blogspot.co.uk) that gives advice and critiques to anyone creating scientific posters. A recent post (3 October 2013) provides readers with a ‘Bad poster bingo’ to play at conferences, highlighting 25 common scientific, language and design flaws of poor posters. While the idea is fun and aimed at posters, it also serves as a handy watch-list for any kind of scientific article layout. Faulkes also highlights several journals or publishers that publish posters: Figshare (figshare.com), *Nature Precedings* (precedings.nature.com), F1000 Posters (f1000.com/posters) and *ePosters* (www.eposters.net).

Publishing horror stories

How long should an author expect to wait between first submission and publication? Simon Chapman, an Australian professor of public health and former journal editor, recounts the nightmare story of a paper first submitted in December 2010 and still not published. The paper was subjected to delays caused by online system failure, staff changes, failing processes, “incomprehensible, outrageous delays” and required changes that were “insubstantial matters of presentational preference”.

The story, published on BMJ Blogs (blogs.bmj.com; 27 September 2013).

Science: secrets and spoofs

The 4 October issue of *Science* was devoted to communication in science. The article that hit the headlines and gained very wide coverage was a story called 'Who's afraid of peer review?' (p60), in which scientist and journalist John Bohanen submitted spoof research papers to 304 open-access (OA) journals. More than half (157) of the journals accepted the obviously-nonsensical paper, with 98 rejecting it and 49 doing neither. The article showed that there are many very poor OA journals there are, but critics pointed out that Bohanen didn't look at any subscription journals as a comparison. Elsewhere in the issue is an intriguing article (p71) about a new journal called the *Journal of Sensitive Cyber Research and Engineering* (cybersecurity.nitrd.gov/jscore). This journal provides a forum for peer-reviewed research on sensitive government-funded work. You can only publish in it or read it if you have security clearance from the US government, although authors are asked to provide non-secret titles and abstracts.

Unlocking the value of research data

The volume of scholarly and scientific research data available is projected to grow to more than 35 zettabytes by 2020, according to a report by Thomson Reuters. (A zettabyte is 10²¹ bytes, or a trillion gigabytes.) That's quite a lot of data. The report, written in collaboration with industry experts, identified a series of recommendations to deal with the complexity and scholarly challenges that arise from this growth. Among the challenges highlighted are providing uniform access to research outputs, filtering and peer review of data, incentives for researchers to make work attributable and new publishing models. The report is available at collaborativeresearch.thomsonreuters.com.

ALM collaborations

Faculty of 1000's F1000 Prime service (F1000.com/prime) has partnered with

Public Library of Science (PLOS) to add both PLOS article-level metrics and F1000 recommendations to articles included in F1000 Prime, providing a mix impact measures. *BMJ* and Wiley are both collaborating with Altmetric (www.altmetric.com), a company that provides altmetrics data and a distinctive 'donut' display at the article level.

Transfer code of practice update

The UKSG Transfer Working Group (www.uksg.org/transfer) has developed a new code of practice for the transfer of journals between publishers. The new version covers redirection, content types, and communication, among other issues.

New video journal

Elsevier has launched a new publication called *Video Journal and Encyclopedia of GI Endoscopy* (www.vjgi-endoscopy.com). As the name suggests, it aims to provide both an encyclopaedic resource and a scientific journal based on high-quality video presentations. The journal is open access and is produced in partnership with the German Society for Ultrasound in Medicine and with Fujifilm.

Conflict of interest at PubMed Central saga continues

Kent Anderson wrote a summary of his investigations into the links between *eLife* and the US National Library of Medicine, which is responsible for PubMed Central. The summary includes additional information received in response to a Freedom of Information request - which resulted in 859 pages of documentation (<http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2013/10/15/pubmed-central-and-elife-new-documents-reveal-more-evidence-of-impropriety-and-bias/>). It's worth reading in full as it reveals how not all journals are created equal in the eyes of some of the key people at NLM. Priority treatment was clearly given to *eLife*, allowing it to post articles on PMC before it had actually been launched as a journal. This could be viewed as a trivial bending of the rules: Anderson's digest shows just how

many rules had to be bent, how PMC staff had to do extra work to enable this, in Anderson's words "lying" to PMC's own systems and processes, but most disturbingly there is clear awareness that what they are doing is inappropriate, reflected in their wish to conceal this special treatment from the community at large.

PubMed search results - lead to where?

Another post by Kent Anderson tackles a different aspect of PubMed Central, asserting that the way the interface is set up directs reader traffic to PMC versions of articles, with the publisher versions requiring an additional click to reach. Fair play in a competitive world: the National Library of Medicine wants readers on its own site, so that it can showcase its information management tools. The nub of the issue is again transparency: if PMC wants to compete with publishers for traffic, this should be admitted. Perhaps the most memorable part of this article was its use and definition of a "docsum", short for a "document summarization." <http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2013/10/08/how-the-nlm-justifies-linking-to-pubmed-central-versions-directly-from-pubmed-search-results-lists/>.

Usage-driven acquisition

This is becoming a buzzword (or phrase) amongst publishers as librarians are increasingly able to monitor which parts of their collections are being read - or at least downloaded. The latest announcement is for a usage-driven acquisition purchase model for e-books. It comes from Gale, part of Cengage Learning and a publisher of research and reference resources for libraries, schools and businesses. Libraries will pay a deposit then get complete access to the full Virtual Reference Library for six months. The e-books with the greatest usage will then be automatically added to the library's collection and their price deducted from the initial deposit.

John Hilton

Editor, Cochrane Editorial Unit,
Cochrane Collaboration, London, UK
hilton.john@gmail.com