eon
editorial office news

The official newsletter of the International Society of Managing and Technical Editors

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MISCELLANEOUS

Keeping You Informed

By Meghan McDevitt
Editor
EON

It's hard to keep up with daily duties—submissions, revisions, acceptances, rejections, proofs, and all those emails (so many emails)—let alone find time to stay current on industry trends. That's why we strive to provide useful articles in every issue of *EON* that help you muddle through day-to-day as well as keep you informed of emerging trends and where scholarly publishing is heading. This month, *EON* includes articles on topics ranging from dealing with appeals and rebuttals to helping authors edit their own figures to learning a bit about the science that goes into writing a manuscript. As always, *EON* and the ISMTE hope to serve as your "go to" resource for Editorial Office topics.

In the next few issues, we'll be including lists of relevant organizations, publishers, vendors, and colleagues you may be interested in following or engaging with online. Whether you tweet, post, blog, pin, instagram, or tumble (is that a thing?), hopefully you'll find an interesting addition to your social media network. We will also continue to publish COPE flowcharts for reference when dealing with cases of possible misconduct.

For many researchers, rejection is part of the game in scholarly publishing. Chloe Tuck from Technica Editorial explores the appeals process and provides recommendations on effective rebuttal letters and what to avoid when handling an appeal.

Danielle Padula of Scholastica interviewed Oxford Internet Institute Researcher, Cristóbal Cobo, who shared his thoughts and predictions on the pressures researchers face to make scholarly works visible and to demonstrate impact beyond the academic community.

We've all been there—you open up a figure in a submission and see that it's fuzzy, low res, pixelated, blurry, or (gasp!) a PowerPoint

slide. Elizabeth Brenner, Assistant Managing Editor at John Wiley and Sons, provides some great tips for helping authors create their own high-resolution figures, suitable for publication.

As editors, one could say that we're a creative bunch, but sometimes there are artistic endeavors beyond our skillset. In her article, "Crowdsourcing Design," Liz Bury shares her Editorial Office's experience with 99designs, a design crowdsourcing site, that was used to develop their blog's new logo.

Editorial Offices typically see manuscripts toward the end of their publication journey; research has been completed, conclusions made, and data and images collected and interpreted. But what about the life of a manuscript *before* it reaches the Editorial Office? Kat Farley from J&J Editorial summarizes the recent local ISMTE meeting for the North Carolina–Research Triangle Park region in this article, "Q&A: Science for English Majors."

Enjoy this month's issue of *EON*!

Upcoming ISMTE Local Group Meetings

Chicagoland
Wednesday, April 1st
6:00 pm
Location TBA
Contact: Karen Parks

Heidelberg-Rhein-Neckar Region
Wednesday, June 17th
Location/Time TBA
Contact: Sherryl Sundell

North Carolina – Research Triangle Park Area
Friday, April 10th
12:00 pm
Research Square
Contact: Jan Higgins

NEW FOR MEMBERS ONLY: Want to join the RTP local group remotely? Please check the box on the registration form and we will send the details prior to the presentation.

Visit the Local Groups page on the ISMTE website for the latest information

So You've Been Rejected, Now What? On Appeals in Peer-Reviewed Publications

By Chloe Tuck
Assistant Editor
Technica Editorial

Getting rejected stinks. Wouldn't it be great if we could appeal people's decisions in life? Imagine asking someone on a date and getting rejected. What if you could submit an appeal letter explaining your argument with data to back it up? If only. Well, in science, you can.

As an Editorial Assistant, I've seen quite a few appeal letters submitted to my editors. While most are well-written scientific responses, some are emotionally driven criticisms of the nonscience kind. Rage and disappointment seep off the page. Scientists have an incredible amount invested in their work but personal attacks on the editors or reviewers will not overturn a rejection. In this brief piece, it is my aim to explore appeals in the scientific community and their place in the peer-review process, and conclude with a bit of advice we can all take away.

Scientific work can be quite difficult. In fact, I'm of the opinion that we should all be out there thanking scientists every day. What they do is hard enough and, on top of that, they're expected to publish, which is no easy feat.

Dr. Daniel Kohane, Associate Editor of *Nano Letters*, likens publishing to dating: "Quite frankly, one accepts the fact there is a certain amount of subjectivity. It's very much like dating. You have a general sense of what league you're in. Most authors take rejection as part of the game."

Of course, this is much easier said than done. In an article about her journal's appeal process, Dr. Jillian Buriak, Editor-in-Chief of *Chemistry of Materials*, writes that getting rejected isn't easy: "Having one's paper declined is far from a pleasant experience and, as we know personally, the experience stimulates a range of emotions and reactions."[1]

I am certainly not faulting authors for the deep disappointment and frustration that a rejection letter can cause, nor am I suggesting that authors should refrain from appealing. As Dr. Kohane notes, "people have a right to appeal. The paper is the fruit of their hard work. They have a right to advocate for themselves."

Editors and reviewers are people just like authors. In other words, they make mistakes. Sometimes, they miss a point and an appeal gives the author an opportunity to expand upon that point. As Dr. Paul Weiss, Editor-in-Chief of *ACS Nano*, explains in an editorial that gives a breakdown of appeals handled by his journal, "Sometimes, we overlook a key aspect of submitted work; we have found that appeals help us identify these papers, and several have ultimately been published."[2]

Dr. Kohane personally experienced this when he appealed the rejection of a paper he coauthored: "One of the reviewers just completely shot [the paper] down. It was just a rogue reviewer—as if someone said, we don't need antibiotics. In fact, the paper was accepted."

If the editors or reviewers have missed a point, it could be that the authors need to revise their work. In an article on the review process for his journal, Dr. Prashant Kamat, Deputy Editor of the *Journal of Physical Chemistry Letters* (*JPCL*), writes that "authors need to realize that the origin of this misunderstanding may lie in his/her presentation of the results."[3] Dr. Weiss echoes this

1 Buriak, J.M. Appealing Chemistry: How Our Appeals Process Works. *Chem. Mater.* **2014,** 26 (14), 4045-4045; DOI 10.1021/cm5024103.

2 Weiss, P.S. How We Handle Appeals and Why. *ACS Nano.* **2014**, 8 (3), 1951-1952; DOI 10.1021/nn501422p.

3 Kamat, P.V.; Scholes, G.; Prezhdo, O.; Zaera, F.; Zwier, T.; Schatz, G.C. Overcoming the Myths of the Review Process and Getting Your Paper Ready for Publication. J. Phys. Chem. Lett. 2014, 5 (5), 896-899; DOI 10.1021/jz500162r.

sentiment, noting that, "As scientists and authors, it is up to us to make ourselves understood in our writing and otherwise."[2]

I spoke with a Managing Editor/Freelance Scientific Writer who talked about the value of appeals from an author's standpoint. For the authors, appealing is always worth it. Authors may wish to challenge a disappointing decision if the reviews in the decision letter appear bland. It's possible that the reviewers shared more detailed information with the editors that was not included in the rejection letter. Moreover, the often nuanced language in rejection letters can be a big obstacle to non-native English speakers.

Appeals are helpful to more than just authors. They can occupy an important place in the scientific community. In his article on appeals in *ACS Nano*, Dr. Weiss highlights their importance: "Appeals effectively give us a series of live case studies of how we understand the state of nanoscience and nanotechnology, as well as a way to move *ACS Nano* forward."[2]

We've seen that appeals can and should be included in the peer-review process, but what should they look like? As I mentioned, I've seen attacks on the editor and the reviewers as well as personal notes that do not deal strictly with the science at hand.

In his article, Dr. Kamat explains that authors should refrain from making nonscientific remarks, such as "the reviewer is not qualified" or "he/she has a biased opinion."[3] Dr. Kohane expresses similar concern about the importance of being professional: "Appeals that are not successful are those that are scientifically weak and where either side is disrespectful or unreasonable."

A Managing Editor I spoke with agrees that an effective rebuttal letter should be professional and objective, provide data refuting the reviewers' concerns, and include evidence supporting any claims of bias. The letter should thank the editors and the Editorial Board for their expertise. My colleague notes that the appeal letter "gives points not understood by the reviewer, does not take the one positive reviewer comment and run with it. It deals with the real content of the reviews and addresses it now or says we can address it."

What these letters should avoid are personal attacks, attempts to identify reviewers, emotional appeals, and cosmetic changes. Dr. Kohane echoes this sentiment, explaining that appeals should be polite and constructive, or rather, factual: "Politeness is important because the editor has put a lot of time and effort [into reviewing the paper], and to be rewarded by a rude email, that just doesn't help. Also, odds are the editor wants to help you but needs rational ammunition to do so." This ammunition does not come in the form of attacks. It comes directly from the data.

One Managing Editor/Freelance Scientific Writer I spoke with concurs that "generally, the Editor-in-Chief is on your side." Editors will help if there is a reasonable argument for further review, rooted in the work itself. Dr. Weiss, in his article on how appeals are handled in *ACS Nano*, recommends highlighting the novelty of the work and the broad interest of the work in addition to addressing referee comments.[2]

So, what should authors know going forward? Being polite is key. Sticking to the facts and avoiding personal attacks is also imperative. Appeal processes may vary depending on the journal. Authors should keep in mind that the response time frame may also vary, as additional input from specific content editors or reviewers may be necessary. It is important to remember that Editorial Offices cannot change the decision on a manuscript; rather, they can be used as a resource for the process.

It should also be stressed that, as pointed out by Dr. Buriak, editors and reviewers aim to treat manuscripts the way they hope their own would be treated. Editors and reviewers understand what it's like to be on the other side of the decision letter.

As a final takeaway, a Managing Editor/Freelance Scientific Writer I spoke with recommends that authors should wait 24 to 72 hours before responding to a decision letter—then re-read the email. This simple process will remove much of the personal bias that could pollute appeals letters written in rage or disappointment.

What allows the peer-review process to operate honestly and effectively is for authors, reviewers, and editors to respect their distinct

roles and to appreciate each other's profound contribution to published works and the general scientific dialogue. Rejection is disappointing, but remaining polite and professional is essential. Courtesy occupies an important place in the peer-review process. It is my hope that all involved in the peer-review process will pause, think, and reflect on the points raised here before writing or reviewing their next appeal letter.

Information Overload

EON is hoping to help you stay on top of industry news! We've compiled a list of relevant and hopefully interesting Twitter handles you may want to follow. Join the conversation.

Editing/publishing industry

@ISMTE
@BELS_editors (Board of Editors in the Life Sciences)
@STM_Publishing (STM Publishing News)
@alpsp (Association of Learned & Professional Society Publishers)
@CrossRefNews
@CScienceEditors (Council of Science Editors)
@copyeditors (American Copy Editors Society)
@Eur_Sci_Ed (European Association of Science Editors)
@ORCID_Org
@C0PE
@scholarlykitchn
@altmetric
@ScholarlyPub (SSP feed)
@WileyExchanges
@Editage
@senseaboutsci (Sense About Science)
@CONSORTing (CONSORT)
@EQUATORNetwork

Just for fun

@EditorSays
@PoorlyProofedNY
@ExcuseThePun
@AcademiaObscura
@GrammarGirl

ISMTE colleagues

@Overstrk (Kristie Overstreet)
@ctyerkes (Michael Willis)
@robertsjasonl (Jason Roberts)
@adametkin (Adam Etkin)
@GreenArrow13 (Glenn Collins)
@dbowmangie (Deborah Bowman)
@mcdevimm (Meghan McDevitt)
@OccupySTM (Tony Alves)
@p_binfield (Peter Binfield)
@irenehames (Irene Hames)
@kerryrorourke (Kerry O'Rourke)

New Currencies of Knowledge: Impact or Perish

By Danielle Padula
Community Development Manager
Scholastica

Editor's Note: This article is based on an interview with Cristóbal Cobo posted on the Scholastica blog earlier this year.[1]

Publish or perish—we've all heard the phrase. The pressure to publish is a reality for academics around the world. In our increasingly digital age a new concern is cropping up as well—the pressure to make scholarly works visible and to show that they are having a broad impact in and beyond the academic community. The move towards assessing how research is having an effect beyond the ivory tower, coupled with the unprecedented rate of journals migrating online, is putting mounting pressure on academics and publishers to find new ways to distinguish the value of their publications and to look beyond traditional citation-based impact indicators.

"Today we see new currencies of knowledge," said Oxford Internet Institute Researcher Cristóbal Cobo. "A large number of institutions argue that the h-index has been incredibly useful for measuring the impact of science for the last decade or so, but now the h-index seems to not be enough to illustrate all the other academic discussions, which are incredibly relevant and which are taking place on the Internet beyond journals."

Cobo, who specializes in the effects of technology on learning and collaboration, said he anticipates that alternative impact indicators will become the norm among scholars as information continues to move online in greater volumes. "It is the same thing that was taking place a couple of years ago with journals and Open Access," he said.

Cobo sees scholars advocating for publishers and institutions to embrace altmetrics much as they did and continue to advocate for Open Access (OA) publishing. As scholars publish more research faster and in new formats, such as the digital humanities, many are questioning if traditional citation-based impact indicators encompass all research outputs and if they are happening fast enough, given that citations can take years to surface. This reality has led scholars to look to altmetrics to track and illustrate the many avenues, beyond articles, where their knowledge is being discussed.

It's a push that universities and institutions are leaning towards as well, as more and more encourage scholars to have an online presence and to use altmetric impact indicators to enhance their grant applications. Research quality assessors and grant providers including the United Kingdom's Research Excellence Framework and the Wellcome Trust recognize altmetrics as a means of seeing how researchers are making a difference beyond

Dr. Cristóbal Cobo

1 D. Padula. Redefining Knowledge in the Digital Age: Interview with Cristóbal Cobo. January 22, 2015. http://blog.scholasticahq.com/post/108837538413/redefining-knowledge-in-the-digital-age-interview#.VOJqbHa8iTV.

academia, as expressed by Professor Jeremy Farrar in a short videoon the Wellcome Trust funding website. As Farrar states, "researchers don't exist in a bubble outside of society … to cocoon ourselves is no longer viable."

Cobo pointed out that the move towards OA and altmetrics seem to go hand in hand, due to the fact that OA articles tend to have a better chance of being read, cited, and discussed on the Web. He offered an example of just how much of a difference openness can make.

"I have a number of colleagues who worked for one year to publish a paper in a highly recognized journal, and then after the acceptance of that they were incredibly disappointed that those papers were never read or quoted," Cobo explained.

After waiting for citations that never came, Cobo's colleagues decided to turn to green OA to see if it would have an effect. "They put a draft of that paper in an open repository and saw the level of visibility that it generates is incredible," said Cobo.

Despite some radical scholars calling for the end of traditional journals, predicting a future of open online publishing and postpublication peer review, Cobo does not think journals will go away. Instead he predicts individual journals will continue to adopt new OA business models and take on an even more established gatekeeping role. Journals will be able to set best practices to help scholars make their research highly searchable and to combine traditional and progressive impact assessments.

"The algorithm is now really becoming the gatekeeper for producing what we know about science," said Cobo. "Search engines and online journals, whether Open Access or not, they will have a much more relevant role."

Cobo said scholars will need to look to publishing institutions to establish norms for gauging altmetrics impact, which remains highly debated. The tipping point now depends on who will be willing to challenge the status quo. "The question is who is going to throw the first stone," said Cobo. "The national systems are afraid of moving and changing to these new currencies because they want to be compared with the other national systems and the same thing with the journals."

Yet, despite trepidations about making the transition to accept altmetrics, Cobo feels the change is near. "If those new knowledge currencies aren't adopted that affects the universities and that affects the academics," he said. Cobo predicts that in the future more institutions will accept altmetrics impact indicators and consider contributions such as presentations, blogs, and podcasts as complementary ways to present research in conjunction with traditional publishing. "I think it's a transition," he said.

Helping Authors Help Themselves to Create High-Resolution Figures

By Elizabeth Brenner
Assistant Managing Editor
John Wiley and Sons

Every time I see "slide" in a figure filename, I shudder. I just know it's going to be a small chart or picture in the center of a large PowerPoint slide, with a whole lot of white around the edges. And the resolution? A whopping 72 dpi.

When I started as a Managing Editor, my knowledge of figure files was sparse. I was asking authors to provide images to production specifications at the point of submission, but I had no idea what to do if they sent me the wrong file type, or a resolution that was too low, other than ask them to fix it. I returned manuscripts and crossed my fingers that the authors would figure it out on their own. This was, of course, a Bad Plan. Some authors didn't know any more than I did, and returned the files unaltered, or, in some cases, worse than before.

I've seen it all: tiny figures on huge 8.5" × 11" backgrounds, really poor composite jobs, watermarks from trial versions of image conversion software, screen shots of entire desktops displaying a figure open in Word. That last one was so bizarre, so baffling (what voodoo does this author think we can do on this to make it look like a published figure?) I thought that would be a one-time event. But oh no. It happened again, over a year later. Different journal, different authors, same troubles. When it comes to figures, a lot of the authors have no idea what they're doing. This wasn't covered in graduate school.

My own education in figures was self-guided. I quickly discovered that using the default settings to export a figure as an image from PowerPoint or Word (like many of my authors do) yields a very low resolution. But, now I knew what they were doing, so I could advise them against it. I added helpful hints to my emails when I sent the files back: "Please do not export directly from PowerPoint or Word. This yields a very low resolution (only 72 dpi). Please increase the resolution of your figures . . . ."

Some got it; most didn't. They try their best, but if the programs they have don't yield what they needed, what else can they do? They write me emails asking about camera settings. They reply that they don't really know what "dpi" means. The say their IT department/colleague/friend helped them create the files and they'll try to get new ones at a higher resolution as soon as possible. They aren't allowed to install software on their institutional computer. They live in the developing world and don't have the money to purchase software. Or, they ignore my requests and re-submit low-resolution images on a hope and a prayer that it isn't grounds for the journal to reject their paper.

So, I searched for more instructions online and quickly found some wonderful resources. The first was GIMP, a free, open-source program comparable to Photoshop (www.gimp.org). I also stumbled upon two webpages, hosted by the biochemistry department at the University of Utah (www.biochem.utah.edu/bass/pdfs/Hi-res_figures.pdf) and the *Journal of Immunology* (www.jimmunol.org/site/pdf/PPTtoTIFF.pdf), that walked me through the steps of converting a PowerPoint slide or a PDF into a high-resolution image using Photoshop (or, in my case, GIMP). While these instructions are brief (one and four pages, respectively), there are still several steps that can sound complicated. Our authors are certainly intimidated. But they are also, for the most part, willing to learn, to try it on their own, to add a new skill to their authoring repertoire, because it's publish or

perish. The top-tier journals have a reputation for rejecting papers that don't meet posted formatting guidelines. Authors are anxious to get it right the first time, to get reviewed quickly, to be published quickly and move on to the next project, confident that they will make better images next time.

I updated my emails with the links, prefaced by a note, "Other authors have found the following webpages helpful for creating high-resolution figures." The response has been overwhelmingly positive. While I do occasionally have to ask them to crop the extra whitespace from the edges, on the whole, I am getting the correct resolution when I ask for it. They thank me for helping them learn: "No one has ever taught me about this before!"

And I didn't stop there. Recently, I discovered this little gem: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzelcfmiJio. It's a video tutorial on importing an image into GIMP and re-scaling it (reducing the image size will get a higher resolution). Now I don't have to go through all the steps of the conversion process. I can even change the file type when I save the re-scaled image. I put that link right at the top of the list!

I've found and discarded other resources over time. Some of them are just too dense or difficult to read for quick comprehension and action, or the instructions go out of date with new software releases (such as this article from *American Journal of Roentgenology* about altering the default settings in PowerPoint to export images at a higher resolution: http://www.ajronline.org/doi/pdf/10.2214/ajr.185.1.01850273). It's helpful to have options, since not every person learns the same way. I would like to try making my own videos someday, so I can address the questions and issues my author groups raise most frequently. But in the meantime, the links mentioned in this article are those other Managing Editors have found helpful for creating high-resolution figures.

Editor's Note: ISMTE has a training resource titled "Publishing High-Quality Figures" available here: www.ismte.org/resource/resmgr/docs/publishing_figures-8_tips_su.pdf

Crowdsourcing Design

By Liz Bury, MFA
Associate Managing Editor
American Journal of Kidney Diseases

Our journal's blog desperately needed a logo. The original one—created in haste in-house—was our journal's logo with an italicized "e" stuck to the front.

Some members of our blog team had suggested using a design crowdsourcing site called 99designs, which they had used for another project. The idea is that you hold a contest for the type of design work you need, competitors enter designs, and the winning designer receives the prize money.

I was a little hesitant about the suggestion as I had come across blog posts from the design community that such crowdsourcing sites devalue the design field and are unfair to designers, who end up working for nothing if they don't win. On the other hand, designers do make a choice to enter contests and these sites seem to be filling a need for affordable design work.

Setting Up a Contest

99designs has different tiers of pricing for logo design (http://99designs.com/pricing/logo-design). Taking the advice of a blogger who had previously run a 99designs logo contest (www.clarusft.com/99designs-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly), we set the contest amount at $525, which wass lightly above the $499 silver package, to help distinguish our contest from the many other contests happening at the same time.

There are a few paid options 99designs offers to help increase attention for your contest, and we went with the highlight option ($19), which promised to accentuate the name of our contest in the contest listing (the emphasis ended up being a subtle grey shading). Another way to encourage more designers is to guarantee the contest in the first qualifying round, which means you commit to paying and can't get any money back (the contest automatically becomes guaranteed if you proceed to the final round).

As part of the set-up process, you create a design brief that introduces your organization/product and instructs the designers on what you envision for the design. I found it helpful to peruse the briefs other logo contests. For our brief (http://99designs.com/logo-design/contests/create-logo-blog-kidney-doctors-researchers-453344/brief), we didn't want to give too much direction because we were fairly open to any ideas but we did want a logo that would be somewhat complementary to our journal's logo.

Qualifying Round

The first round is a qualifying round that is open for up to four days and any designer can enter. (See http://99designs.com/customer-blog/how-to-run-a-design-contest/for a helpful overview of the contest process.) The goal during this round is to work with designers by providing feedback through ratings of one to five stars and/or comments as well as eliminating any designs with no potential of winning. I checked in frequently because designers can see how attentive contest holders are about giving feedback.

To help bring in more designers, 99designs allows contest holders to invite up to 50 designers per day (designer directory: https://99designs.com/designer-directory). We tried to invite designers whose profiles contained a few works we liked and/or had positive testimonials from clients. Inviting designers proved to be time-consuming because many we came across didn't have portfolios, so we only invited about 35 designers in

Figure 1: The original blog logo and its replacement via 99designs.

total. Only a handful of them submitted design entries but the designer who ended up winning had been invited by us.

For the star ratings, 99designs suggests to avoid giving a design more than three stars in the qualifying round as this may stop that designer from improving the design, dissuade new designers from submitting to the contest, or encourage imitation. We were careful follow this advice but we ended up conferring four-star ratings later on in the round, usually after we had gone through a couple of revision rounds with a designer.

To save both the designers' and our time, we tried to give feedback only on designs that had some potential to be the winner or if we liked other work from the designer. Some designers were great about responding to feedback and others not so much. We noticed that designers were influenced by designs still in consideration and there would be trends in similar colors and concepts, so we found it best to quickly eliminate designs that were moving in the wrong direction. There were a few occasions where we were willing to give a mediocre design a chance because it was a fresh concept.

Selecting Finalists

After the qualifying round, we had up to four days to select up to six finalists. 99designs has a polling tool to collect votes in the form of star ratings and feedback for up to eight designs. We selected eight designs that were representative of eight designers and emailed the poll link out to a small group that included journal Editors, the blog's advisory board, and editorial staff. We found the poll very helpful but also considered how responsive the designers were to feedback if applicable. We also wanted to choose designs that wouldn't need a drastic overhaul since we wanted to use the final round for finessing the current designs.

Final Round

We had up to three days to work with our final four designers to refine our favorite designs. We asked the designers for some subtle variations so we could pick the ones we liked best. We also asked for specific colors and for each design to display three components: a version of the logo for light backgrounds, logo version for dark backgrounds, and icon examples. We found it helpful to create a mock-up to see what the potential logos would look like as part of our blog header and requested some changes based on that.

When trying to finesse the designs, I found that some designs in the 99designs preview looked fuzzy or the colors seemed off so I checked in with designers about any concerns. We later learned that these distortions were an artifact of the 99designs preview, and in one case, a designer ended up submitting screenshots to show us how the images looked in the original graphics software.

Choosing a Winner

After the end of the final round, we had up to 14 days to pick a winning design. We created another poll for the final four designs, opening up the poll to about 40 participants, including more journal Editors and the entire blog team. We decided on the top-ranked logo in the poll but before officially choosing it, we asked the designer some questions that 99designs recommends: http://help.99designs.com/customer/en/portal/articles/1554766-how-do-I-choose-a-winning-design (also see http://99designs.com/designer-blog/2013/05/29/5-details-to-remember-when-creating-a-logo/).

Because of the limitations of the design preview, I made sure to ask our designer if he would be willing to make any final adjustments at the handover stage if we found any issues (designers

aren't officially required to do this). I asked about our desired file formats and if the fonts had been converted to shapes (so they can be opened regardless of whether the original font is installed on one's computer). I also asked about the originality of the design and about the font licensing since I read that certain fonts may not be able to be used or have licensing fees. It turned out that we needed to contact the font's foundry to confirm it was okay to use for a logo.

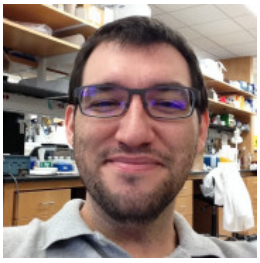
Handover Process

After the designer sent files, we had up to five days to review them (http://help.99designs.com/customer/en/portal/articles/1554684-what-is-the-design-handover). The files can't be downloaded until the "handover" is complete and you approve the files and sign the design transfer agreement, which releases the prize money to the designer.

As we want to use our logo for the long haul, we asked for many file formats and received 26 files in the end. We noticed a few minor issues with some of the files, but thanks to the designer's prior agreement to make additional changes, these problems were quickly resolved. Since we'd be using the logo for print and online, we asked for files in EPS, PDF, PNG, and JPEG formats, with transparent background for all formats (except JPEG). 99designs also recommended getting an editable file so we asked for the Adobe Illustrator file as well. For the icons, we asked for most of the same formats but also requested the largest dimensions we'd need for an icon, figuring it would be easier to shrink it down to the proper size.

At the end of the contest, 91 designers had submitted 455 designs, and our winning designer had submitted 64 designs. We are happy with how our new logo came out (Figure 1) and feel it is vastly better than the former one. Overall, our experience with crowdsourcing a logo was positive and we may work with our winning designer, or do another contest, in the future.


Department Store
I would if I had one.
Door Broke Please Use Revolver
DB



Justin English, PhD

Q&A: Science for English Majors

Reported by
Kat Farley
J&J Editorial

At the local ISMTE meeting for the North Carolina–Research Triangle Park region, Justin English, PhD of the Department of Pharmacology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, spoke about the life of a manuscript BEFORE it reaches the Editorial Office—specifically, how are data and images captured, manipulated, and interpreted for publication?

Because his talk, entitled "Science for English Majors," inspired so many thought-provoking questions from its attendees, we decided it needed to be shared with the broader ISMTE community. The following Q&A captures the highlights of the presentation itself as well as the subsequent open question forum, with topics ranging from the mysterious world of scientific figures to the complexities of peer review. Because his perspective is limited to that of the biomedical/biological researcher and author, Dr. English emphasized that he cannot speak for the entire scientific community, but he certainly did well at speaking *to* the editorial one.

We hope you enjoy it as much as those of us in North Carolina did!

Q: The average Editorial Office handles the submission and production of scientific figures on a daily basis, but most of the time we don't know exactly what it is we're looking at. Can you describe some of the different types of images that editorial staff might encounter and how these images are made?

A: At its core, every figure is derived from raw data points. In certain instances, this raw data is provided directly to the journal in the form of captured images from microscopes or other imaging equipment, as is the case with blots and gel images. A few specific types staff may see on a regular basis are western blots (Figure 1), DNA gels (Figure 2), or microscope images (Figures 3 and 4).

The remaining figures are usually presented as quantified data. Quantified data is any figure generated by converting raw data into a representative image that can be displayed graphically (such as a bar graph, heat map, or other chart). Every figure is generated in a slightly different way, and it is often informative to read the methods or protocol section of a manuscript for specific details. However, from a general viewpoint, most raw data figures are generated by placing a sample beneath a camera and capturing the image. Most quantified data has its origins in readouts from machines that detect or record particular experimental outputs (e.g., radiation intensity, fluorescence intensity, heat, or movement). This data

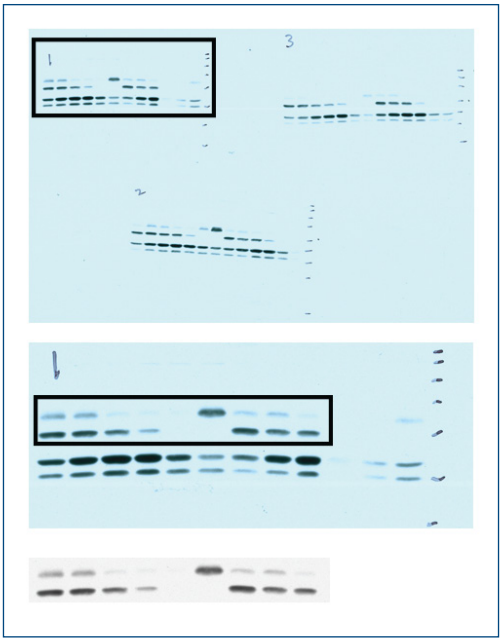


Figure 1: An example of a western blot taken from photographic film and pared down digitally to the figure that is normally published.

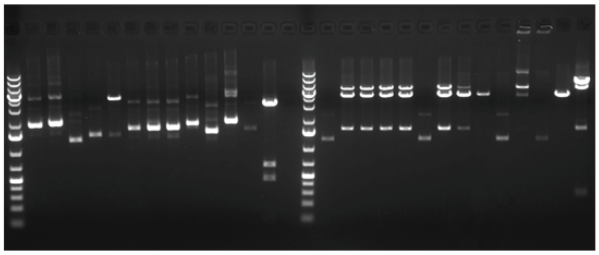


Figure 2: An example of an unmodified DNA gel.

Figure 3: A standard light microscopic image of some abnormal yeast cells.

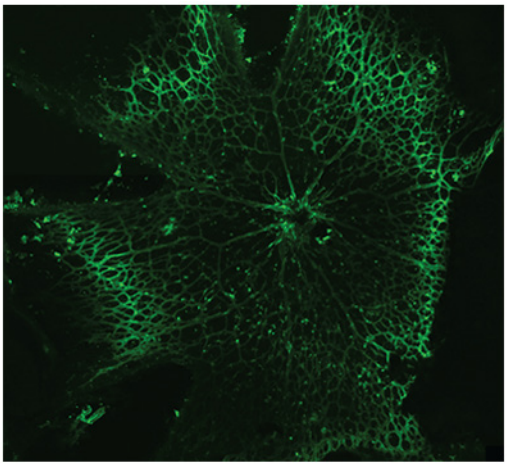


Figure 4: A fluorescent microscopic image of a green fluorescence labeled mouse retina.

is provided as a value (Y) plotted against some identifier (X)—for example, time. The scientist then takes this spread of numerical data points and constructs a graph or drawing that clearly and fairly represents the data.

Q: As journal staff, it's our job to ensure the quality of the figures we publish. However, often we receive images that are pixelated, blurry, or downright microscopic (pardon my play on words). In terms of publication quality, which ones can be improved by the authors?

A: All graphs, charts, and other quantified data images can be altered to the publisher's specifications. All of these images are generated in graphical or mathematical programs and thus can be exported at a wide range of sizes and resolutions.

Q: That's helpful to know! On the flip side, which ones cannot be improved?

A: Raw data can rarely be improved upon. If a microscopy image was taken using a camera with a 720 x 720 pixel resolution, then the image can never have a resolution greater than 720 x 720. This becomes an issue if an author wishes to emphasize a small component of an image. Often, he or she will crop to that section and enlarge the photo, resulting in visible pixelation. If asked to provide a higher resolution file, the author might then try to simply increase the resolution using graphics software; however, this will not actually improve the resolution. The only way to improve the resolution would be to retake the photograph at a higher magnification on the microscope or use a higher resolution camera.

Q: Are authors able to retake these images or is that asking too much of them?

This would need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. I can think of a few examples for and against this request. Histological samples, such as tissue samples from human patients, are often preserved as mounted slides and kept in storage for reimaging. In such instances, it would not be untoward to request the researcher to recapture the representative image—especially if they are basing their interpretations in the article on the observations from this sample. It is to everyone's benefit that the image is of high quality and resolution. However, imaging of whole animals or live tissue samples would be difficult to retake as the authors would need to repeat their entire experiment to produce the materials necessary for

retaking the image. In such instances, it may be best to request the raw, or original, image taken prior to processing and analysis to determine the maximum possible resolution at which the image can be published.

Q: Now that our heads are spinning with blots, graphs, and gels, let's turn to some other questions that editorial staff have been itching to ask a scientist.

To start from the top, we had a couple questions about the author byline, which is obviously an area of great concern for scientists (and therefore of great interest to editorial staff). How in fact is the authorship order determined?

A: In most cases, the first author is the individual who wrote the manuscript and performed the majority of the data collection in the paper—usually a student or postdoctoral fellow. The last author is usually the laboratory head or principal investigator. The authors in between are generally added based on their relative contributions to the work, either in writing or data collection.

Q: How about the corresponding author? Is this always the person who knows the most about an article?

A: The corresponding author is not always the first author or specifically the individual who knows the most about the details of a work. Frequently, the corresponding author is chosen based on who will carry on the research efforts outlined in a paper after the paper has been published. The corresponding author tends to be the individual who will maintain the materials and data outlined in the paper and provide it upon request, a responsibility that often falls to the laboratory head.

Q: That helps to clarify how we get the "who" of a paper, but what decides the "when?" In other words, why do authors decide to publish their work at a certain time?

A: With respect to a time-specific publication requirement, I can think of a few examples. Graduate students must, at most institutions, publish their work or have the work under review for publication before they are granted their PhD. Principal investigators seeking tenure or preparing for submission of a grant may also be eager to see their work published prior to review. Similarly, postdoctoral fellows seeking employment may be eager to publish the remaining body of work in their current laboratory before entering the job market.

In most other scenarios, timing is less important than correct representation of the work and growing the body of evidence for or against the hypothesis being tested in the publication.

Q: In the journal office, we're exposed to many different forms of peer review, and we've all probably developed opinions on which ones we (as editors) think are best. Yet, our perspective on the process is entirely different from that of the author or reviewer.

Although this is obviously a matter of individual preference, what do you think is the best form of peer review (e.g., single-blind, double-blind, open, etc.)?

A: This is a complicated issue! In my opinion, double-blind review is best; however, it is not without its own shortcomings.

Here's a thought experiment for unblinded review. You're a young fledgling researcher at your first university. You are asked to peer review a paper for X (the Titan in your field). The manuscript is poorly written, and the research is…subpar. You know X is likely to sit on grant committees in your future, as well as review at least some of your manuscripts soon to head to journals. Do you provide a critical review and draw his ire, knowing you're correct, or do you give a glowing review and hope he passes the favor along?

Neither choice is favorable. In double-blind review, the reviewer would be free to use their best judgment and assess the work fairly without fear of undue reciprocity. This is, however, a bit utopian. There are caveats to the perfect double-blind solution. For one, most scientists are actively participating in conferences wherein they share their latest work. Thus, while reviewers are blinded, they may know the origin of the submitted paper based on an abstract catalog from last year's conference. This tips the balance in favor of the

reviewer, who can sting at a competitor from the veil of anonymity and potentially ruin their chances of publishing perfectly acceptable work.

Q: Bearing in mind the potential dilemmas that might be involved in any peer review, what actually motivates you to contribute to this system?

A: More than anything, I believe participating in peer review is my duty as a member of the scientific community. It is often suggested that as a reviewer one is afforded the ability to see cutting-edge research before it is publicly available. While this may be true under certain circumstances, for those expert enough in a field to do a review justice, they are already aware of many of the up-and-coming papers through professional contacts and conferences attended throughout the year. Quality peer reviewers are vital for maintaining well-reasoned scientific discourse.

Q: Agreed! Reviewers are an integral part of scientific publication and deserve a sincere thank you for all the time and effort they commit to bettering their field. I think we can all imagine how time-consuming a responsibility it is.

On that note, can you describe how long it takes to review a paper? While the Editorial Office provides authors with deadlines, it's not always clear how many days go into writing the review and how many are needed just to allow for reviewers' busy schedules.

A: Speaking strictly from my experience, the active process of reviewing a paper should take no more than three days. This gives sufficient time to read the manuscript, digest it, review cited works, and write thoughtful commentary. However, it is rare that any reviewer will have three consecutive days to work on any one review, and the process can often take up to two weeks, depending on the reviewer's schedule, the complexity of the presented work, and the number of necessary revisions that need to be outlined.

Q: Is the review always done by an individual or is it sometimes a collaborative process?

A: In certain cases, principal investigators may share a work under review with their direct subordinates, giving them experience with an unfinished manuscript and an opportunity to review the work. These subordinates often write their own reviews, which may be edited or combined with the principal investigator's into a final commentary.

Q: After all this talk of deadlines and time, I have to ask: how important is speed of publication? Would you ever choose a journal that you knew published quickly over one that had a high Impact Factor but slow publication speeds?

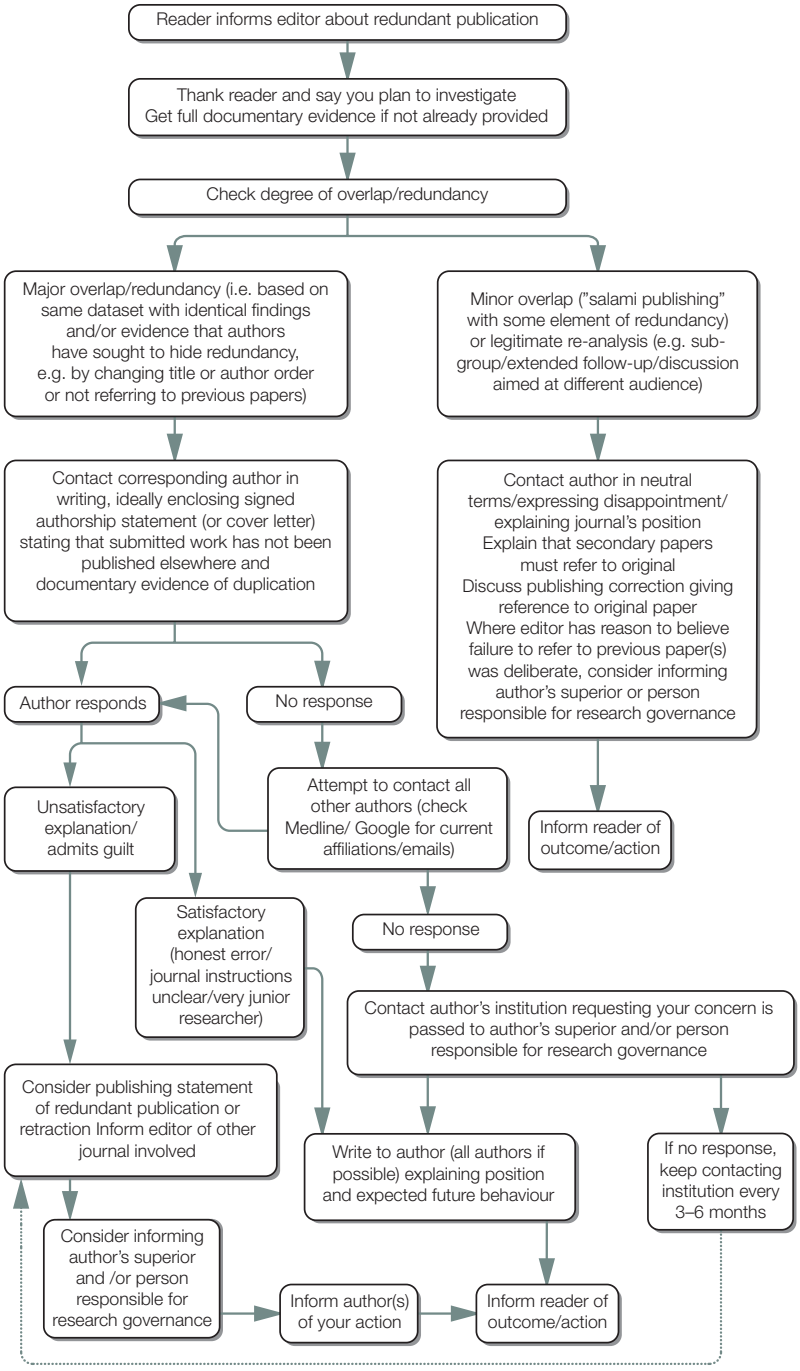
A: There are several instances in which speed could trump impact. For example, if a scientific discovery has been made simultaneously in multiple laboratories and each is rushing to be the first to publish, then it is often decided to publish in a journal of lower impact but quicker publication speed to be the first to press. Publication speed may also come into effect in the examples outlined above for "time-specific" publication requirements: when the author must meet a deadline prior to graduation, grants, tenure, or a job hunt. Personally, I would always prefer to publish in a journal of higher repute and readership than one that published swiftly.

A sincere thank you from ISMTE to Dr. English for shedding some light on the scientist's side of publication!

Editor's Note: All images produced by Justin English, PhD.

COPE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS

What to do if you suspect redundant (duplicate) publication
(b) Suspected redundant publication in a published manuscript



Note: The instructions to authors should state the journal's policy on redundant publication.

Asking authors to sign a statement or tick a box may be helpful in subsequent investigations.

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publicationethics.org

Calendar of Events

Financial Management in Journals Publishing
March 20, 2015
London, England
www.alpsp.org

Data Protection: Compliance Issues for Publishers (Full Day and Half Day Options)
March 24, 2015
London, England
www.alpsp.org

UKSG 38th Annual Conference
March 30-April 1, 2015
Glasgow, United Kingdom
www.uksg.org/event/conference15

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www.ismte.org

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Durham, North Carolina, USA
www.ismte.org

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www.sspnet.org

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www.alpsp.org

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www.councilscienceeditors.org

SSP 37th Annual Meeting
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Arlington, Virginia, USA
www.sspnet.org

ISMTE North American Conference
August 20–21, 2015
Baltimore, Maryland, USA
www.ismte.org

Society for Editors and Proofreaders/Society of Indexers 1st joint conference and AGMs
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York, United Kingdom
www.sfep.org.uk/

ISMTE European Conference
October 13, 2015
Heathrow, Middlesex, United Kingdom
www.ismte.org

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