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The last two years have formed one of the most bizarre periods of political and social history in my lifetime. It hasn’t been plain sailing for those in publishing either, not least journal managing editors: There are ever-increasing demands on our knowledge, expertise, and professionalism, whether it be in keeping up with publication ethics and integrity; responding to the growth of open access and complexities around licensing; the rapid development of technology to help authors, editors, and reviewers; or simply the everyday management of articles and publications. ISMTE’s mission is ‘to connect the community of professionals committed to the peer review and publication of academic and scholarly journals. ISMTE provides peer-to-peer networking, education and training, research and resources for best practices, and development of journal policy.’ It’s been my pleasure to oversee for the last two years a society full of members who are enthusiastic about their jobs and who seek to learn how to do them better.

If I had to identify pivotal moments for the society since I took over the role of President from Kristie Overstreet in January 2016, my list would comprise the following (in no particular order):

- Refreshing our branding and developing our tagline of ‘empowering editorial offices around the globe.’ Our Branding Committee, supported by our Executive Director Kelly Schild, gave us a logo and theme of which we can be proud and which illustrate very clearly our purpose as a society.
- Our inaugural conference in Singapore in 2016, achieving our goal of organising three annual conferences in three global regions, and engaging for the first time with managing and technical editors from Asia. Indeed our conferences are my personal highlight: They continue to provide superb opportunities for networking, sharing resources and best practice, and keeping an ear to the ground of journal publishing. The introduction of the conference app has transformed the way I interact with the conference programme.
- The launch of our monthly publication EON on a mobile app, in partnership with Sheridan Press. As well as making it easier to read EON on the go, the app has great potential, for example, in being able to support multimedia content (when you have a moment search YouTube for ‘ISMTE,’ and you’ll see a handful of ISMTE-related videos), and it’s easier now to share links to content through social media. And EON itself continues to flourish under the excellent editorial direction of Carolyn Sperry and Stephanie Kinnan.
- Completing our core competency survey, under the direction of Jan Higgins and her team, giving us for the first time a detailed picture of our membership. The information we gathered helps steer and direct our
programme of educational resources and other outreach activities.

- Seeing our membership hit the milestone of 1,000, representing 43 countries.
- Rapid growth of our pool of educational resources, thanks to the hard work of our Education Committee. They have an excellent pipeline of more resources to follow in the coming year.
- Reaching our tenth anniversary (Figure 2), a very faint speck in the distance for those who founded the organisation. As our founding President Jason Roberts wrote: ‘A once-nascent organization has matured from its most tentative of origins to become a fully fledged player within the publishing industry.’¹ We see this in our increasing engagement and partnerships with peer organisations, thanks most recently to the efforts of our Board member Meghan McDevitt.

I have often simply observed these projects and achievements from the sidelines, while others have done the hard work. My predecessor, Kristie Overstreet, was exactly right when she wrote that ‘our committees do the work of the society,’² and I echoed this more recently when I wrote, ‘We want our grassroots members to be more involved than ever before. ISMTE is primarily a peer-to-peer organisation.’³ We’re a volunteer organisation, and I am deeply appreciative of all of those who have contributed time and effort to these successes, particularly our committee members and chairs.

Our philosophy of peer-to-peer support is embedded through all of ISMTE, and the role of President is very much part of a team of peers. I owe a great deal to the support, long-suffering, depth and breadth of experience, and wisdom of the fellow members of the Board who, like all our committee members, are volunteers. At the end of 2017, we say farewell to our Secretary, Deborah Bowman, and to our Directors, Adam Etkin and Meg Weist, with all of whom it has been my immense pleasure and privilege to work. I also want to pay tribute to Kelly Schild and her team at Apex Management who have ably supported me during this term of office.

I hand over the reins of the presidency to Julie Nash and eagerly look forward to seeing the society thrive under her leadership. And here’s to the next 10 years!

References
Towards an Understanding of the Phenomenon

2017 saw yet more revelations on the pernicious and predatory nature of fake journals. Picking up on some of the themes discussed in an earlier article in EON, this article provides a brief summary of the results from one of the two papers that represented the culmination of several years of work by the Centre for Journalology in Ottawa in the form of a very large, systematic study of the so-called predatory journal phenomenon. In addition to providing a brief synopsis of the findings, this article will touch upon why editorial offices should care about predatory journals and what they can do to help curb the damage they wreak. In a follow-up article for EON, I will address the results of the second paper from the Centre for Journalology, which provided insights on who is publishing in predatory journals along with a study of what they were publishing.

The first article by Shamseer et al (of which I was a participant) published in March 2017 in BMC Medicine. It looked at multiple characteristics of a random sample of 93 presumed predatory journals (as found on Beall’s List, that was then extant when the study commenced), 99 presumed legitimate open access journals (‘legitimate’ was defined by obviously being published by a well-known publisher), and 100 traditional subscription journals. Roughly half of the predatory journals were biomedical, the rest seemingly a confusing blend of literally anything and everything. All the open access and subscription journals were biomedical journals. The results were fascinating for two reasons. The first was that by applying a variety of assessment criteria, we discovered that predatory journals were not all that difficult to identify. Until this study, however, no one has measured the prevalence of predatory-identifying criteria in comparison with legitimate journals. Collectively, as an industry, our capacity to detect predatory publications has undoubtedly been more instinctive rather than based on empirical evidence. The second impact of the results, at least to my eye as a practicing editorial office professional, was that sometimes the legitimate open access and subscription journals could have done a better job of providing homepages and Instructions for Authors that were comprehensive in relaying important information for all stakeholders. They also perhaps could have done a better job in ensuring their web presence was free of errors. These issues become problematic when we recognize that they are traits common to predatory journals.

As I write this article, six months on from the publication of the BMC Medicine paper, the most impactful element of the Shamseer paper has undoubtedly been the list identifying 13 salient characteristics of potential predatory journals. This list, reproduced here as Table 1, was built upon an analysis of the web presence of each journal included in the study. To complete the analysis, a detailed questionnaire was given to study investigators to enable them to check each journal in a standardized manner. The results gathered as part of that process informed the development of the list. The list, in essence, suggested there were several warning signs of the potential predatory nature of a publication. The intent of the list was to create a tool to better educate authors, but equally, the criteria had value for readers, reviewers, editors, and publishers.

The value of the list to authors is evident. Effectively, along with campaigns like Think-Check-Submit, it represents a checklist which authors could use to assess the legitimacy of a publication to which they intended to submit—assuming they cared. As I discussed previously, it seems likely a fair proportion of authors of articles found in predatory journals are somewhat, if not fully, cognizant of the predatory nature of the publication to which they are submitting and care not.
The most obvious reason for such ambivalence is that authors need a citation (perhaps for grant funding or promotion), and they know few people are paying enough attention to the legitimacy of the source.

Relevance of the Study Results for Editorial Offices

The results also have a lot of value for journals and their editorial offices. Rather than simply regurgitate all the data from the paper, I will, instead, dwell on the findings with greatest relevance for editors and editorial office staff, with my interpretation of what the implications are for our community.

One of the most alarming findings was that 54% of the predatory journals possessed a title that was very similar to another journal name. This is particularly problematic as it creates confusion. Authors, for example, (particularly irregular writers) might inadvertently submit to the wrong journal. Individuals might take up one of the myriad offers of an editorial board position not realizing they have been fooled by one of these like-sounding predatory journals. That creates a problem for legitimate journals because they may find they have missed the opportunity to publish a good article that was misdirected to a fake title or find that their genuine requests for article/peer review are ignored by authors and reviewers fatigued by receiving an onslaught of similar such emails sent by predatory journals. Obviously this problem of brand hijacking is not likely to be a setback for top brands. But for the many thousands of smaller journals that do not stand out from the crowd, the problem is real. Furthermore, some editorial offices may be finding they are now devoting time to dealing with situations such as helping duped authors extricate their papers from a predatory publication as they bid to try and publish in the legitimate journal.

Unfortunately, there may be little legitimate journals can do to fight back. Upon finding a journal with a very similar title, many journals have likely consulted with their lawyer or publisher. However, the legal opinions that seem to be coming back all suggest that unless the name of a journal is specifically trademarked, there seems to be little to no grounds upon which to construct a legal fight back.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of this author that all journals check the legal status of the journal’s name immediately. If it is not already too late, it is strongly recommended you take action by trademarking your journal’s name. Your publisher should be able to advise on this matter.

Another finding, which only goes to show why the current conflation of open access journals with predatory journals remains, is that 51% of the predatory journals claimed they were included in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). This compares with 65% of legitimate open access journals. This means the DOAJ branding, which already took a bit of a beating when it was found its initial version contained many illegitimate titles, is now undermined by predatory journals just making up their inclusion.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Characteristics of Predatory Journals.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The scope of interest includes non-biomedical subjects alongside biomedical topics</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The website contains spelling and grammar errors</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Images are distorted/fuzzy, intended to look like something they are not, or which are unauthorized</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The homepage language targets authors</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The Index Copernicus Value is promoted on the website</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Description of the manuscript handling process is lacking</td>
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<td>7. Manuscripts are requested to be submitted via email</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Rapid publication is promised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. There is no retraction policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Information on whether and how journal content will be digitally preserved is absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The article processing/publication charge is very low (e.g., &lt; US $150)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Journals claiming to be open access either retain copyright of published research or fail to mention copyright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The contact email address is non-professional and non-journal affiliated (e.g., @gmail.com or @yahoo.com)</td>
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This was not the only source of concern for open access journals trying fight off encroachment from predatory journals. The study found that predatory journals were offering article processing charges (APCs) that were typically 18-fold lower than the legitimate journals included in the study. Clearly, for early-career authors or those in large parts of the world, the low fee is attractive. Rather perversely, one could argue, therefore, that the “high” APC of the legitimate journals is a badge of genuineness.

However, and this point is critical, legitimate journals could do a lot more to help distinguish themselves from predatory journals, and it is hoped that this research serves as a call-to-arms for legitimate journals to clean up their own acts. First of all, this means tightening up a journal’s web presence and ensuring essential items are present and correct. The study team before gathering data thought a good way to distinguish predatory journals from legitimate titles might be by determining whether or not an Editor-in-Chief was identified. The team found that 24% of predatory journals failed to do that, so this was promising as a potential identifier. However, we then found 17% of legitimate open access and 9% of traditional journals did not name their Editors either. Alarmingly, of the sample journal population, only 62% of the so-called traditional journals identified the institution where the Editor-in-Chief worked. That is truly a miserable statistic. The equivalent figure for predatory journals was 56%. At least legitimate open access journals did a better job, with 86% identifying where the Editor-in-Chief did their day job. This underwhelming performance by the legitimate journals is simply inexcusable, particularly as there is no obvious reason to not name the Editor-in-Chief and where they work, but many reasons why you should clearly identify who the final arbiter of acceptability is.

Additionally, spelling errors seem to be a good indicator of whether or not a journal is predatory. While 65% of predatory journal websites contained spelling errors, just 6% of legitimate open access journals contained spelling errors. By comparison, that latter figure doesn’t seem too problematic, but really that figure should be 0%. Before I cast stones at others, I fully admit I have found errors on my own journal pages. Perhaps the situation could be helped if we started to use standardized language in our Instructions for Authors. ISMTE is perhaps well placed to look at common components of text in Instructions for Authors and then maybe propose language or stock phrases we could all adopt.

The second way that this study can be used by legitimate journals to put some distance between themselves and the fake publications is to be inspired by the results to place greater emphasis on transparency of their peer-review processes. Only 56% of predatory journals actually described their peer-review process either on their homepage or within the Instructions for Authors. Traditional journals (86%) and legitimate open access journals (90%) were much more likely to describe how peer review was managed. However, that figure should be 100%. Indeed, for biomedical journals that subscribe to the ICMJE principles, this is something you are supposed to do. For ethical reasons and as a way to improve the quality of peer review delivered, peer-review transparency is increasingly becoming a paramount need. Now we can add to this growing call for change another reason for moving away from our current position of relative opacity: the pressing need to distinguish ourselves from predatory journals. Of course, predatory journals could simply make things up. So, perhaps legitimate journals need to take the time to explain how peer review works to their constituents and to detail, for example, that it takes a little bit of time to secure manuscript evaluation from the world’s leading experts, certainly more than the impossible timelines predatory journals claim. From the study, 41% of presumed predatory journals promised an undefined “rapid publication,” compared to 16% of open access journals and 9% of traditional subscription journals (18% of predatory journals promised publication in under one week). Maybe there is a role for ISMTE here in leading the charge for greater transparency.

A Peer-Review Transparency Checklist

Finally, based upon the results of the study performed by the Ottawa group and cognizant of the need to help journals help themselves by cleaning up their web presence to better distinguish themselves from predatory publications, I have developed a handy checklist for editorial offices to tidy up their practices, take steps towards greater transparency, and put some distance between themselves and the predatory journals that are targeting their least-suspecting authors (Table 2). The checklist has not been properly validated and is published here to simply get the ball rolling. It seems likely an even more comprehensive checklist is needed for every editorial office to use. What also needs to follow is a collective effort across all journal publishing to define minimum standards journals need to meet in providing full and transparent information on both a journal’s identity and its application of peer review.

So, in conclusion, there is a direct interest for editorial offices in the results of this study that attempted to better define the shared characteristics of presumed predatory journals. As a community, we need to lead the way in improving our own web presence by ensuring it is error free and full of essential information.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Notes with Reference to Shamseer et al 2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Check journal homepage and Instructions for Authors are both free of</td>
<td>65% of surveyed predatory journals had problems with grammar and syntax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling errors and colloquialisms.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Check that any images/logos are high resolution, actually need to be</td>
<td>63% of predatory journals had a website that contained distorted/unauthorized images.</td>
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<tr>
<td>included, and are properly authorized for use on your homepage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Clearly identify your Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Board members.</td>
<td>24% of predatory journals failed to identify the Editor-in-Chief. 35% of predatory journals failed to identify an Editorial Board and/or team of Associate Editors. 44% of predatory journals that named an Editor-in-Chief failed to identify the institutional affiliation for the Editor-in-Chief.</td>
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<td>include information on the institution where they work.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Ensure the journal owner (e.g., society) and publisher are clearly</td>
<td>47% of predatory journals did not identify this information. Only 32% of predatory journals provided the URL of their publisher. However 13% of legitimate open access journals also failed to provide a link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identified.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ State your manuscript handling process.</td>
<td>43% of predatory journals provided no information on their peer-review process. However, 14% of traditional subscription journals also failed to describe how their peer review was managed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ If you use COPE to guide your response to publication ethics, state this</td>
<td>Only 13% of predatory journals mention COPE.</td>
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<td>support for COPE.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ State if you actively support ORCID or use iThenticate, Crossref,</td>
<td>Just 1% of predatory journals mentioned iThenticate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crossmark.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ If you mandate some form of study registration prior to submission (e.g.,</td>
<td>Only 6% of predatory journals mention pre-registration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.clinicaltrials.gov">www.clinicaltrials.gov</a> for randomized controlled trials), make sure that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is clearly stated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Consider using an email address that uses your journal/society/publisher</td>
<td>63% of predatory journals used a generic address compared to 9% for legitimate open access journals and 5% of traditional subscription journals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>name, rather than @gmail.com and @yahoo.com.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ For open access journals, ensure you are listed in the DOAJ and mention</td>
<td>34% of legitimate open access journals did not reference DOAJ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that fact on your homepage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Provide your journal ISSN.</td>
<td>28% of traditional subscription journals failed to mention their ISSN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Mention your policy for the digital preservation of content.</td>
<td>Just 6% of predatory journals mentioned digital preservation. The veracity of such claims were not tested, however, in the study by Shamseer and colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Disclose who retains copyright.</td>
<td>20% of predatory journals did not mention anything about copyright.</td>
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In doing so, we will likely make our peer-review processes more transparent. And such transparency will reveal a legitimate effort to evaluate a paper. It will simply be too hard for predatory journals to maintain they adhere to such standards and then claim they can publish a paper inside a week. The burden of proof for legitimacy needs to be high, and we need to make sure we are meeting such standards before casting stones at the predatory journals.

References:

Call for Submissions

Are you a fan of *EON*? Do you have an idea for an article, column, or special section? *EON* is currently accepting submissions for all 2018 issues. Contact our editorial office today for more information.
Cleaning Up “Sloppy Science”

Franca Bianchini1 and Sherryl Sundell2

1Editorial Office
International Journal of Cancer
2Managing Editor
International Journal of Cancer

Editors’ Note: Franca Bianchini and Sherryl Sundell won first place in the ISMTE North American poster competition. See their winning poster at the end of this article.

The term “sloppy science” struck a chord when we first heard it during a presentation at the European Association of Science Editors (EASE) meeting in Strasbourg, France, in June of 2016 and has been ringing in our ears ever since. Interestingly, we were just about to launch a project on image integrity at our journal to try and help further the general cause of credibility and reproducibility in the scientific literature. Thus, the additional insight was very motivating at that time.

Our project of checking images in all papers ready for acceptance was modeled on procedures at other journals, such as J Cell Biol, the EMBO journals, the American Gastroenterological Association, and the American Physiological Society, to name those we were aware of at that time. We also took advantage of the insight from the newly prepared ISMTE education committee resources on image integrity (http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.ismte.org/resource/resmgr/docs/Image_Manipulation-Resources.pdf); one of us (Sherryl Sundell) was privileged to contribute to that too. Importantly, one main objective of our project was to properly collect data and conduct it as befitting of the best practices we expect from our authors in the research they conduct and then want to publish in our journal. Our study had several goals:

- Determine whether such checking was feasible on a routine basis
- Evaluate the time and personnel needed for such a task
- Consider the feedback from the authors concerned

In preparation for launching the project, all the office staff and some of our editors participated in a workshop to learn more about identifying problems in those types of images prone to manipulation—of which there are many in our cancer research journal—and how to use the available tools to investigate images in greater detail. Two of us proved to be quite good at this: the two first authors on our ISMTE 2017 poster. We had already publicized our quality control policy in our author instructions and, in accordance with our publisher, endorsed the CLIP principles.1

To recap the data presented in our poster: During a 10-month period, 107 papers containing gels and blots, microscopic images, or other figures prone to manipulation were checked. This represents about 25% of papers accepted for publication in that period. The most common errors found were related to copy and paste, magnification, and nonlinear adjustments. The procedure was time consuming; the average checking time per image being two minutes (consider that some papers might have 50 images or more). Additional time had to be spent rechecking images after authors had modified them. Of course the process was much slower at the beginning, but improved over time; we can say that after three months we felt proficient in the procedure, such that we were even able to train yet another person for the task (our third poster author).

Image integrity issues were found in approximately one third of checked manuscripts (38 out of 107), and half of them were submitted from Asia, representing about 40% of those checked from Asian countries (19 out of 49), compared to about 30% for Europe (12 out of 37) and North America (5 out of 16). The errors found were almost exclusively attributable to inaccuracies in preparing the manuscripts: 25 papers contained copy & paste errors, 16 contained magnification errors, and only 5 contained nonlinear adjustments. Once informed, the authors were very keen to correct their mistakes and submit modified figures, showing high compliance with the new process.

The procedure in place at our journal seems to overcome problems of sloppy science, at least as far as images are concerned, which after publication might have been screened by readers and required us to check possible allegations of misconduct. We believe the number of alerts about potential misconduct will be reduced (indeed, we hope to have put Clare Francis out of a job!), saving us time in the future and also increasing the reputation of our journal. One open issue is still to evaluate whether the authors “learned” and will avoid these errors in their future submissions.

We invite you to have another look at our poster, which presents more detail and also features a short video...
(accessible via QR code) demonstrating how we do things.

Acknowledgments:

Several of the office staff at IJC, notably Yvonne Ohl and Stefanie Heck (also Florian Grünschlager, who has since moved on), invested a great deal of time in the project and the resulting poster. We also thank them for their input and comments on this article.

References

Eighth International Congress on Peer Review and Scientific Publication

Every four years, some of the greatest minds in scientific publishing come together to exchange ideas and innovations at the International Congress on Peer Review and Scientific Publication. First established in 1989, the aim of this conference is “to encourage research into the quality and credibility of peer review and scientific publication, to establish the evidence base on which scientists can improve the conduct, reporting, and dissemination of scientific research.” With these goals in mind, around 600 attendees including journal editors, publishers, researchers, and managing editors, met in Chicago this September for the eighth assembly of this noteworthy conference. Over three days, original research on topics surrounding peer review were presented in a plenary format in orderly 10-minute presentations followed by 10 minutes for audience questions and discussion.

This year, its innovativeness on full display, the Congress was live-streamed. Videos of each session can be found on the Peer Review Congress YouTube channel. Social media was also abuzz (search #PRC8 on Twitter) and, by design, the Congress coincided nicely with Peer Review Week 2017.

The three days were packed with important research, presentations on new technology, and informational sessions. While there were too many presentations to summarize individually (over 50 in total), all posters and abstracts from the Congress can be found online. In the following pages, we hope to distill some “take-home” messages we found most relevant to managing editors and editorial office staff along with some unanswered questions as to “what’s next” for scholarly publications.

Peer Review

It is clear that we are still not sure how to definitively delineate peer review, and there is no one-size-fits-all type of peer review. If anything, it seems to be a spectrum, covering everything from preprints to post-publication peer review, single-, double-, and even triple-blind peer review, and portable, cascaded, and open peer review. The varying degrees of transparency (or lack thereof) depend on many factors such as journal specialty, cultural norms, and even editor preference.

The preferences and tendencies of the peer reviewers themselves also play a large role in the diversity of peer-review systems. Many presentations analyzed various characteristics of peer reviewers. American reviewers tend to prefer single-blind peer review, while Chinese and Indian reviewers prefer double-blind. Women are less likely to be invited as reviewers and are also more likely to decline. Patients are now being asked to review for some journals, offering a different perspective than expert opinion.

While it is unlikely we will ever standardize “best practices” for peer review for all scholarly publishing, what is clear is that good peer review takes time, which is something that is hard to accept in today’s fast-paced society that is used to same-day delivery and rideshare services at the touch of a...
Bias in Scholarly Research

Several speakers presented research on bias, covering topics such as conflicts of interest, trial registration, reporting, publishing interim results, and spin. Although most journals mention their policies on disclosing conflicts of interest, there is variation in how conflicts of interest are collected and reported. Indeed, one report found 130 different ways of stating that there were no conflicts of interest for a given article.5

Consistent, correct, and complete reporting of research was examined in a variety of ways covering clinical trial registration, reporting guidelines, and reporting checklists. Unsurprisingly, journal policies regarding encouraging versus requiring completed reporting checklists are inconsistent, and there seems to be mixed conclusions as to whether adhering to reporting checklists helps reviewers or if their use can be associated with editorial outcomes.6,7,8

It is still unclear where exactly the responsibility lies for correct and complete reporting. The obvious answer is that it is the authors’ burden to bear, but a lack of education on proper and ethical reporting practices shifts responsibility to the editors and reviewers. Editorial offices can collect the information, but who is ensuring its accuracy? Journals should revisit their reporting requirements for authors and reviewers and consider separating funding and conflict of interest disclosures. At minimum, journals should require clinical trial registration numbers for randomized controlled trials, and these trial registration numbers should be located in a consistent place.

The audience was also encouraged by presenters to be wary of publishing interim results. Premature publication can result in inaccurate reporting, uncertainty, and inflated treatment effects. Many interim results are subject to change before final publication.9 The publication of these results, at minimum, should be disclosed and justified, and a link should be provided to final study results if possible.

Spin in research bias, such as using favorable language, focusing on secondary results, discrepancies in the abstract versus the results and the study aim versus conclusions, and selective reporting is, unbeknownst to most readers, present in the majority of published articles.10 Training and education for researchers is imperative in making authors aware of unconscious spin. Recommendations for protocol registration and reporting guidelines can discourage authors from intentionally or inadvertently including spin in their research.

EthicsGen, previously reported on in EON,11 is a tool authors can use to develop complete and standardized ethics statements for journal submissions. Above all, journals should develop policies for conflicts of interest and funding, reporting guidelines, and spin that are transparent and consistent and aim to educate researchers and reduce bias in scholarly research.

Research Integrity and High-Quality Science

Little data are available regarding the day-to-day research integrity issues journal editors and those in editorial offices face especially during the pre-publication phase. One presentation examined the type and frequency of research integrity issues, finding that issues related to ethics/consent were most commonly found at submission, whereas data issue queries (such as data ownership disputes) were most common post-publication.12 The authors used these findings to adjust editorial policies and submission guidelines, but it is also clear that further training and resources for editors and researchers are needed.

Image integrity is an overlooked aspect of presenting accurate and ethical research. In one report, an image quality control procedure was implemented to check for image manipulation, leading to a decline in corrigenda and author queries related to image issues.13 Journals should be encouraged to check the quality of images and when image manipulation is a concern, it should be used as an educational opportunity to teach authors about unethical practices. The Office of Research Integrity provides several tools for detecting image manipulation issues.

An implied message from the Congress was that training developed from established and evidence-based core competencies would go a long way toward improving the quality of scientific research. In his presentation “Custodians of High-Quality Science: Are Editors and Peer Reviewers Good Enough?” David Moher from the Centre for
Journalology at the University of Ottawa discussed his recent article describing core competencies for journal editors and the need for standardized training. Along the same vein, there is no formal training for peer reviewers and no evidence that existing informal training programs are effective. Peer-review training should be offered at institutions and integrated into graduate studies. Researchers should be truly rewarded and incentivized for following good reporting standards in their own research and for being active in providing high-quality peer review.

Data Sharing, Preprints, and Innovations
Several presentations were related to data sharing, mentioning that up to 50% of results from registered clinical trials are never published, and even when a study is published, a limited amount of data is reported. Data sharing has become more common, and journals and publishers have started promoting data-sharing policies. Benefits surrounding data sharing include reproducibility, transparency, and maximizing the value of the data. However, concerns remain such as patient privacy, the cost of data sharing, the extra effort involved, and researchers’ unwillingness to share data if it conflicts with their own interests. Challenges around data sharing persist including who should cover the cost of data sharing, how to encourage data sharing among researchers, and a lack of best practices. Journals should consider creating a policy around data sharing and use standardized language.

Regardless of whether you are a fan or not of preprint servers, they are becoming increasingly more prevalent in scholarly publishing. Preprint servers are repositories for drafts of papers that have not yet been peer reviewed or published. Posting on a preprint server allows researchers to accelerate how quickly their research is disseminated, encourages the sharing of research, and reduces research waste. However, concerns remain in the era of “fake news” and excessive information, and there is a need for better filtering and organization. Just as importantly, there is also a need to clearly distinguish preprints from peer-reviewed articles with, for example, watermarks and ORCID or DOI links. Overall, preprints can be considered complementary to rather than a replacement for journals and perhaps provide an option for less publishable products such as protocols, technical reports, quality innovations, and white papers.

On the final day of the Congress, research related to innovations in peer review was presented. Several talks discussed single- versus double-blind versus open peer-review models, looking at reviewer preference or author demand for a particular model. One presentation reported on the uptake of peer-review functionality associated with ORCID identifiers, showing an increase in the number of review activities connected to ORCID records; however, overall awareness of the ability to connect reviewer activity to ORCID records remains limited. Finally, a group from The BMJ presented their experience with incorporating patient reviews alongside traditional peer review. They found that it was feasible to do so and that some editors found the patient reviews to be beneficial.

Predatory Journals
A satellite session on predatory journals, organized by the EQUATOR Network and the Centre for Journalology, was held prior to the Peer Review Congress and consisted of several presentations, a panel, and group discussion. An increasingly persistent problem, encouraged by the growing popularity of open access publishing, predatory or illegitimate publications result in the waste of resources and funds and the loss of research when articles fail to be indexed in proper repositories. In the “publish or perish” culture, many authors may even intentionally submit to predatory journals, lured by the promise of rapid review and publication. Although frequently considered to be more of a problem for low-income countries, in fact, the United States is the number two contributor of material in predatory journals, and the National Institutes of Health is the number one funder for studies submitted to predatory journals. As predatory journals negatively affect not only authors and researchers, but also legitimate journals, publishers, funders, and institutions, all of us in the scholarly publishing field need to be aware of the threat to our legitimate publications and take steps to combat it.

Despite the prevalence of predatory journals, there is a large knowledge gap, fueled in part by the difficulty in defining and identifying truly predatory journals. Many journals that are swept up in this category are legitimate journals that are simply ignorant of proper publishing practices. Where do we draw the line between predatory and naïve? How should we help authors determine if a journal is legitimate or not? Legitimate journals can uphold best practices and high standards, distinguishing themselves from nefarious publications. We should offer education to authors and direct them to resources such as Think, Check, Submit and WAME’s Identifying Predatory or Pseudo-Journals. Journals should also do their best to increase transparency regarding their editorial processes.
Editors’ Note: Look for further information on Predatory Publishing in Jason Robert’s article, “Predatory Journals: Know Thy Enemy,” on page 4 of this issue.

Take-Home Message

In conclusion, we leave you with what we believe was the major take-home message or common thread weaving through the wide variety of presentations and research. There is a current lack of and desperate need for proper education and training to instill best practices when it comes to research and publication. This training prepares researchers to be ethical and informed writers, study designers, editors, and reviewers, ensuring contributions of the highest quality. At the risk of sounding like a cliché, in the field of scholarly publishing, education is the root from which scientific advancement will grow.

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ISMTE Member Profile: Liz Bury

By Liz Bury
Managing Editor
Journal of the Acoustical Society of America
Senior Editor
EON

It all started my second year of grad school. I was pursuing my MFA in creative writing at Emerson College in Boston and one of my friends in the publishing program asked me if I’d be interested in applying to an internship at a medical journal. At the time, I had a tutoring assistantship as well as a full-time administrative position, but I thought the internship might be a great way to break into publishing.

When I started my internship at the Journal of the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, I didn’t know all that much about scholarly journals. I had interned and been a reader for literary magazines before, slogging through slush piles, but this was different. I wasn’t commenting on artistic merit, I was copy editing manuscripts and helping shepherd submissions through the peer-review process. After work, I could still focus on my own creative projects without feeling drained. I hoped I’d be able to find a full-time job doing this kind of work.

Following my internship, I joined the American Journal of Kidney Diseases (AJKD) as an Editorial Assistant and ended my tenure there almost eight years later as Associate Managing Editor. My time at AJKD was a formative experience in which I figured out that I wanted my career to be in scholarly publishing. I found that I really loved being able to wear many varied hats. Not only did I continue to work on peer review and editing, I also maintained invited submission pipelines for features, recorded podcasts, and managed the journal’s blog (including a nephrology-themed March Madness tournament!). And most of all, I enjoyed being part of and having the privilege to work alongside my journal’s community.

I started my current position as the Managing Editor of the Journal of the Acoustical Society of America (JASA) about a year and half ago. The journal, published since 1929, hadn’t had a Managing Editor before me, and so I have enjoyed having the opportunity to help shape my position and becoming part of the journal and society’s community. I’ve also liked having the challenge of getting acquainted with LaTeX and managing a project to get a new template ready for authors.

What I like about editorial work is that you can’t stand still—there’s always something new to learn, a process that could be improved, a better way of doing things. ISMTE helps me keep on top of best practices and industry trends with its many useful resources. One of which, of course, is EON, which I very much enjoy being a part of! I attended the 2017 ISMTE North American Conference, and as with prior meetings I’ve attended, I left with a long to-do list and many ideas for my journal. Ever since becoming an ISMTE member years ago, I have valued the opportunities to meet and learn from other editorial professionals. I’m always looking forward to learning more and sharing knowledge with others in the field and to the next meeting!

Looking for New Members for the Awards Committee!

The Awards Committee is looking for several new members to help develop the society’s awards criteria, promote the awards to members, and evaluate the nominees. US and non-US members are encouraged to volunteer. The Committee meets via teleconference six to eight times a year.

Click here to volunteer today!
Commentary: LinkedIn, the Social Networking Pain in the Neck

By Lisa Sands
Freelance Nonprofit Association Professional

Some people use LinkedIn on a regular basis. Others use it when job hunting or networking; still others on an occasional basis or when a connection request comes through. For many, the question is the same: Why is LinkedIn so difficult to use?

Currently, I am in active job-hunt mode. So that I’m not deluged with volunteer opportunities during my LinkedIn search, I must insert “nonprofit management NOT VOLUNTEER” to weed out non-paying positions. It took a good deal of patience to locate the contact email to learn the answer to the above issue. This begs the question: Why are volunteer positions listed on this social network? And as most jobs listed in my search are not relevant to my field, I continue to use other websites for employment opportunities.

Recently, with the assistance of a career coach, I revised my LinkedIn profile. According to the LinkedIn gurus, I am unable to remove my last position (a temporary assignment) so that it will not display as if I still work for that employer.

In a July 2015 MarketWatch article, LinkedIn was the least liked among seven social media networks (Pinterest was most liked). Among reasons cited were difficulty of use, possibility of scamming, too many ads, and, oh, those unwanted connection requests.

When LinkedIn rolled out their new update in early 2017, the update appeared upon login for me; however, my career coach could not access it, causing difficulty for us to collaborate on revamping my profile.

Lately, I’ve noticed that LinkedIn appears to emulate Facebook in some respects—the message list appears without prompting, ads and articles are “Suggested for You,” and now you can wish a connection a happy birthday, if you are so inclined.

A few head-scratchers that I’ve come across recently:

a) A “suggestion” for me was an advanced Excel tutorial; however, it is a subscription service (LinkedIn Learning). Thanks, but I can access tutorials for free via YouTube and various other websites (one site being Microsoft, which owns LinkedIn).

b) Determining if the salary search is accurate for my field (although I suspect that some of Glassdoor’s salary listings may not be either).

c) On one profile view, my profile lists 126 connections. When I clicked on another profile view—presto, 149 connections! (Refreshing the page did not change the total.)

d) Companies, Groups, and Schools are accessed only by clicking on “Interests.”

e) Skills and Endorsements now are truncated, and a viewer must click to view more.

f) Users are encouraged to pay for Premium membership to see who is viewing their profile, when all or some of that information is posted for free.

What’s Next?

What’s next for LinkedIn? Limiting the number of connections? Becoming a subscription-only network? Or a premium networking-only service?

There are numerous articles with tips to improve a LinkedIn profile. But is LinkedIn listening to its users and innovating for the future? According to an August 2017 TechCrunch article, LinkedIn, after introducing content, education, and new users in emerging markets, is rolling out a mentoring service (free, and currently limited to San Francisco and Australia). A Forbes August 2017 article announced that LinkedIn now offers users a video upload option, apparently catering to millennials. Executives, prepare for lights, camera, action!

A January 2017 Fast Company article mentioned that LinkedIn may be a site about work, but its designers wanted...
the new version to feel less like work. The network appears well on its way to accomplishing that goal.

References

What to do if you suspect an ethical problem with a submitted manuscript

Reviewer (or editor) raises ethical concern about manuscript

Thank reviewer and say you plan to investigate

Author(s) supplies relevant details

Satisfactory answer

Apologise and continue review process

Unsatisfactory answer/no response

Inform author that review process is suspended until case is resolved

Consider submitting case to COPE if it raises novel ethical issues

Forward concerns to author’s employer or person responsible for research governance at institution

Issue resolved satisfactorily

Contact institution at 3-6 monthly intervals, seeking conclusion of investigation

No/unatisfactory response

Inform reviewer about outcome of case

No/unatisfactory response

Refer to other authorities (e.g., medical registration body, UKPS, CRI)

Permission to publish this flowchart was granted by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Please visit http://publicationethics.org/ for additional flowcharts and information.
Calendar of Events

2018 European Meeting of ISMPP
January 23-24, 2018
London, United Kingdom
http://www.ismpp.org/

ACSE Annual Conference 2018
March 21-22, 2018
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
http://acseconference.com/

ISMTE Asian-Pacific Conference
March 27-28, 2018
Singapore
www.ismte.org
EASE members receive ISMTE member registration rate

The 4th Asian Science Editors’ Conference and Workshop 2017
July 18-19, 2018
Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia
http://asianeditor.org/

14th Annual Meeting of ISMPP
April 30-May 2, 2018
National Harbor, Maryland, USA
http://www.ismpp.org/

2018 CSE Annual Meeting
May 5-8, 2018
New Orleans, Louisiana, USA
https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/

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