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Carolyn Sperry  
Editorial Assistant, Archives of PM&R  
Co-Editor-in-Chief, EON

Stephanie Kinnan  
Editorial Assistant, ASGE  
Co-Editor-in-Chief, EON

It is an honor to be selected as co-Editor-in-Chief of EON. It has been my pleasure to contribute articles and conference summaries to EON, and I am grateful to ISMTE for the opportunity to play a larger role in our society’s publication. I feel very fortunate to be working with Stephanie Kinnan.

As a member of the editorial team for Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation for many years, I know how critical it is to keep abreast of the latest developments in the ever-changing world of medical and scientific editing. We will be publishing some great informational pieces this year, as well as launching some new features. We look forward to receiving your contributions and suggestions, so we can continue to make EON the best it can be.

I am so grateful to have the opportunity to serve alongside Carolyn Sperry as co-Editor-in-Chief of this wonderful publication. Although I am newer to ISMTE, having only been a member for a brief couple of years, I hit the ground running when I joined, excited to find a society that offers an outlet to connect with my peers and a forum for my questions and ideas. Over the past two years, I have contributed articles to EON, attended and presented posters at the North American conferences, and served as an Associate Editor and Section Editor. Now I am excited to start a new chapter of my ISMTE journey. EON has been a wonderful resource. It has taught me lessons, provided guidance, and given me insight into the editorial field. I am looking forward to representing ISMTE and the fine work of the society through the pages of EON, upholding the high standards set by my predecessors, and learning along with our readers as we build each issue. Carolyn and I have many great ideas to keep our readership informed and entertained, so stay tuned during the coming year.

Ira Salkin Scholarship: Now Accepting Submissions

The essay topic for 2017 is “Expectations of the Editorial Office to police publication ethics—how it has changed during the past 10 years.”

The submission deadline for entries is 31 May 2017.

The author of the winning essay will receive:
Complimentary registration at a meeting of his/her choice  
$1,500 USD toward travel/accommodation  
Essay published in EON

More information and submission instructions can be found online. Questions? Contact scholarships@ismte.org.
I wrote last year that 2016 promised to be an exciting year for the Society. And so it turned out: We had over 100 attendees at our inaugural Asian-Pacific meeting, a record attendance at our North American meeting, and our first ‘solo’ meeting in mainland Europe, at all of which we pioneered a new conference app. We achieved the milestone of 1,000 members. We rebranded ourselves with a smart new logo and a new tagline, ‘Empowering editorial offices around the world’. We surveyed you, our members, to learn more about you, the work you undertake, and the core competencies you have or want to carry out your day-to-day work effectively. We launched new educational resources for creating new figures and partnered with Scholastica in a webinar on developing your journal’s social media presence. I have no doubt unintentionally overlooked other efforts and endeavours: So many in the Society have worked hard, often in unseen ways, as we progress. It has truly been an exciting year.

2017 brings yet another milestone, the tenth anniversary of the Society. We hope you will join with us in celebrating this special birthday at this year’s conferences, and we plan to mark the year in other ways. Kristen Overstreet recalls with Jason Roberts the early days of the Society and how we have developed. Our newly launched scholarship in honour of Ira Salkin offers the opportunity to reflect on how editorial offices have handled matters of publication ethics over the past 10 years. We encourage you to use the Twitter hashtag #ISMTEis10 to tell us how ISMTE has helped you since its inception or to tell us of any of the top 10 most important things in your editorial office life.

There are two particularly exciting initiatives this year, both of which you will have already encountered. The first is moving EON to a new online format. We’re grateful to Sheridan for their help in making this transition, and I’m especially indebted to Meghan McDevitt, our former EON Editor, for overseeing the project. We hope you like the new look.

The second initiative is our new website design. For some time we were acutely aware—from our own experience as well as from your feedback—that our website needed to be better organised, and given that this is the ‘shop window’ for the Society, the Board decided that overhauling the website should be a priority. Thanks are due to our Director, Meg Weist, for leading the project. We continue to welcome your feedback on this and the new EON format.

Please do join us at this year’s meetings and encourage your colleagues to do so: Beijing in March (registration is now open), shifting away from our usual East Coast base to Denver in August, and a later date than usual for our European meeting, in London in November. Do bookmark www.ismte.org/page/Conferences for the latest information.

I am more conscious than most of the dedication, energy, enthusiasm, creative thinking, and sheer hard work on the part of our Board members, and I owe them a huge debt of gratitude for being such an excellent team in 2016. We say farewell and a very hearty ‘thank you’ to two long-serving members: Sherryl Sundell, with whom I personally share fond memories of organising our early European conferences and who has helped broaden the Society’s vision through her European focus and work with peer organisations; and Sally Gainsbury who, as well as providing the Board with financial good sense in her role as Treasurer, has brought a unique perspective to Board discussion both as an academic Editor and as a representative from the Southern Hemisphere.

Two new members were elected to the Board in December: Beverly Lindeen to the post of Director, and Carolyn Sperry as EON Editor. We look forward to their contribution in the coming year.

We are also grateful to the members of our Ethics Committee who have provided us with excellent support and guidance in matters of governance and good practice and to members of our Industry Advisory Board who have been ambassadors for ISMTE in the wider community.

I also want to acknowledge the ongoing help and support provided by Kelly Schild and Angie Coleman at Apex: They have been untiring in their assistance.

Most importantly in 2017, we want our grassroots members to be more involved than ever before. ISMTE is primarily a peer-to-peer organisation. Is there some good practice you’d like to share with other members? Write an article...
about it in EON. Do you have a special interest in marketing or social media? Join our Social Media or Marketing committee. Do you have some resources you’d like more to benefit from? Let our Education committee know about them. Are you keen to join up with other members in your area to foster networking, collaboration, and sharing best practice? Launch a local group. Are you conducting some research, however small-scale, into a particular aspect of your editorial office processes? Submit a poster for our meetings. Do you have colleagues or acquaintances who would benefit from ISMTE’s resources? Spread the word and encourage them to join.

The mission of ISMTE in 2017 is to ‘empower editorial offices around the world’. We hope the leadership of the Society helps you, our members, to fulfil this in equipping you to do your job effectively, professionally, and confidently.

### ISMTE Upcoming Conferences

**2017 Asian-Pacific Conference**  
27-28 March 2017  
Beijing, China

**2017 North American Conference**  
10-11 August 2017  
Denver, Colorado

**2017 European Conference**  
9-10 November 2017  
London, England

### 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 2017 issues. Contact our editorial office today for more information.
It scarcely seems possible that the first decade of ISMTE has passed. A once-nascent organization has matured from its most tentative of origins to become a fully fledged player within the publishing industry. Its meetings have proven massively successful. Both with its growing, globally dispersed membership and with conferences on three continents, ISMTE truly can now claim to be international. The first 10 years have witnessed the society achieve rapid stability, and the next 10 years look set to see ISMTE increasingly assert itself with initiatives to further professionalize the practice of peer-review management. The timing of these future endeavors is especially judicious. Peer review has probably never been under greater scrutiny (from daily media coverage on the failures to detect flawed or fabricated research through to a litany of retractions). Furthermore, authors, editors, funders, and publishers alike are all more demanding in their requirements placed on editorial offices. The need for meeting these challenges with professionalism, smart strategies, and an array of operational tools is critical: ISMTE is poised to make a difference, particularly in the frequently overlooked role of policy, guideline, or best practice implementation.

Our raison d’être

Ten years ago, the peer-review landscape was different to today. For many editorial offices the work—as it still is for a lot of journals—was very much an amateur effort. There was almost no advice on operational best practices beyond guides on how to use the online peer-review systems many of us had only recently implemented. Certainly there were no communication channels exclusively dedicated to editorial office work providing self-help and shared experiences for the benefit of fellow peer-review staff. It’s fair to say most offices operated as islands in a sea of limited potential with almost no charted routes to better practice. Innovative offices were often reinventing the wheel in parallel, unaware that solutions already existed. Few offices had any idea how to benchmark and report peer-review management performance (a hugely understudied aspect of editorial office work to this day, though ISMTE has now started developing some core reports and advice on how to interpret results). Certainly it was next to impossible for editorial offices to contextualize their performance or gauge their level of efficiency. Simply put, most of us basically had no sense of whether we were doing a good job or not. It was impossible to compare and contrast what we were doing with others. This is why ISMTE still carries the tagline “get connected,” as it has done since the early days.

While it may be an exaggeration to say ISMTE has completely changed the scenario just presented, it is fair to say more than any other organization, it was shone a light onto what was, perhaps, the darkest corner of publishing. Editorial offices, additionally, have either dramatically professionalized in recent years or have been awoken from their slumber. Again, this was precisely at the moment when more demands were placed on them. ISMTE has been there to both, in equal parts, ease the stress of and drive this awakening. It has been pivotal in arguing for greater professionalism. It has also greatly changed the wider industry perception of what we do. There is now better recognition of the importance of having properly qualified individuals on board to manage a well-run editorial office. The fact that just about every major scientific/academic publisher has either supported or continues to support ISMTE attests to both the recognition that editorial office best practices should no longer represent a publishing afterthought and that ISMTE is the organization best placed to make a difference.

Another aspect of ISMTE has been to ensure we get a seat at the table when major new initiatives across publishing are being devised, though frustratingly, it seems many still do not fully recognize the importance of the conversations we ISMTE members and meeting attendees are having with each other. Look back at past meeting programs or myriad EON articles and see how we have given each other invaluable advice regarding implementing new policies or standards. In performing such a retrospective exercise, I found multiple
instances in which practice blueprints were shared, peer-review research was distilled, or information was provided for members to pass on to editors and/or societies. ISMTE will only continue to grow in importance in helping offices convert theory into practice.

If pushing for professionalism and providing the concepts and tools to deliver that aim were a critical driving force behind the sustained growth of the society, another facet to ISMTE was that it made a conscious effort to celebrate the work that we do. In my more irascible moods, I sometimes feel we—ourselves—are the only people that recognize the good work we do. We are the quietly competent engine whirring away in the backroom that so often goes unnoticed. ISMTE now provides a home where we can shine and achieve recognition and support from the people that, perhaps, matter most: our peers. After 10 years of attending ISMTE meetings, I am continually astounded by the sheer inventiveness, creativity, and ingenuity employed by so many of my editorial office staff peers.

**How did the society emerge?**

The story of the emergence of ISMTE has been told in snippets before and will emerge again through a series of podcasts ISMTE intends to publish for the sake of posterity. Perhaps it is worth painting the story here, but in the interest of brevity, in broad brushstrokes. The catalyst was the gradual coalescence at one of the first system provider meetings of a group of like-minded individuals interested in learning more than just system tips and tricks while simultaneously looking for an outlet to bounce ideas and share war stories. I do not make that last point flippantly. Many of us still work remotely or in tiny offices. I am sure many of us have caught ourselves talking to inanimate objects while venting about a rude author/editor or a severely delayed peer review. I may be betraying my own predilections if I suggest that this was the retention of details, I fully confess to not having the greatest of recall of the formative events that followed. Perhaps surprisingly for someone whose job depends on the retention of details, I fully confess to not having the greatest of recall of the formative events that followed. I tried to write out some form of chronology for this article and got hopelessly confused. Equally, for newer mem-

If that would allow the widest cross-pollination of ideas. As an aside, it was so wonderful to see ISMTE recently recognize both Edward and Irene for all their work and support.

By the end of 2006/early 2007, ISMTE was still a vague concept with no resources. However, a board quickly developed, formed from highly enthusiastic and amazingly competent individuals. That group was rounded out by a select band of “early adopters,” many of whom believed in the project and later became more heavily engaged. Identifying everyone involved runs the risk of inadvertently failing to mention someone. But equally, if this article is to be referenced, perhaps at the end of ISMTE’s second and third decades, there are some people that must be mentioned because we wouldn’t be here now without them. Jennifer Dayton and Julie Nash were on board from the start. At the time, I think they literally were J and J, without the many team members they now retain! Taylor Bowen provided the steady hand as the Vice-President. Ira Salkin, who very sadly passed away in 2016, was in charge of all matters pertaining to fiduciary responsibility and, as he was simultaneously an Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor, a source of invaluable insights about what our editors might be thinking. Kristie Overstreet worked utterly tirelessly creating what was to become a pillar of ISMTE: **Editorial Office News**. She was tasked with a seemingly impossible job: convincing people to write for an organization that barely existed, providing content based on faith that one day such material would allow the society to offer an amazing value proposition to members. She, of course, was later to become the President. Elizabeth Blalock provided incredible amounts of energy and direction and helped with many initial design and website elements. She bravely took on the role of President after my term ended, and under her the society really started to gain traction. Then there was Wendy Krank. She tirelessly cajoled people in to being members (and then staying as members). After the initial launch, a second wave of people utterly pivotal in the development of the society emerged: Glenn Collins, Sherryl Sundell, Sally Gainsbury, Diana Epstein, Erin Landis, Alice Ellingham, Jan Higgins, Deborah Bowman, Meghan McDevitt, and Michael Willis. Now there is a third, and perhaps fourth and fifth wave of people whose involvement someone will be writing about 10 years from now. It is this continual renewal of ideas and energy that I believe has led to ISMTE thriving.

Perhaps more than just system tips and tricks while simultaneously looking for an outlet to bounce ideas and share war stories. I am sure many of us have caught ourselves talking to inanimate objects while venting about a rude author/editor or a severely delayed peer review. I may be betraying my own predilections if I suggest that this was the retention of details, I fully confess to not having the greatest of recall of the formative events that followed. I tried to write out some form of chronology for this article and got hopelessly confused. Equally, for newer mem-

After that, the idea was gradually sounded out to certain publishers (Edward Wates, at what is now Wiley, was one memorable advisor) and was met with enthusiasm. There were not many well-known Managing Editors or Peer Review Managers at that time, but the best known of all, Irene Hames, was an early supporter (and original board member). Her input was utterly invaluable, and through her, we also opened up a critical conduit into Europe as the society did have a more North American slant in its earliest of days. It was essential that the society was to be truly international as
In response to, and to additionally combat our relative geographic isolation, ISMTE has very successfully embraced various forms of online connectivity, discussion forums, and the sharing of content online. We currently have 9,635 Facebook followers and 739 Twitter followers. I think many members would agree that in the early days, ISMTE was quite pioneering in using its online and social media presence to foster a sense of belonging to the organization.

Finally, it is worth remembering that not only is ISMTE global, it is local. A wonderful feature it offers members is the chance to meet locally with several city/regional-based gatherings, often over lunch. Again, for those of us locked away or hiding behind a laptop in Starbucks, these represent wonderful opportunities to get together, exchange ideas, and network. I know of meetings that take place in North Carolina, the Boston area, Chicago, and Germany, amongst others.

Where to next?

ISMTE still has much to do to stay vital and essential. Rest assured its leadership is aware of that and continues to work hard to deliver a society that offers value for money and remains acutely aware of the needs of its members. Over the next few years the society will likely need to help members prepare for yet more scrutiny of peer review. It will continue to offer advice on how to measure performance and interpret the results via enhanced performance reporting by way of industry leading standardized reports. Maybe guidelines for best practice will also emerge. These will hopefully be data-driven, evidence-based policy and protocol recommendations. ISMTE will continue to fight for greater recognition and support for the vital role we perform. It will offer professional recognition through a variety of awards for those that innovate and help all of us improve our own performance. It will reward those that volunteer so much of their time to help the society remain fresh and current. It will continue to provide an outlet through poster sessions for members to explore research ideas or share measurements of new policy or workflow deployments. Rest assured, and
whatever the method of delivery will be 10 years from now, ISMTE will stay connected to you: the member.

Finally, as we move toward the completion of our first decade, it scarcely seems believable that ISMTE has now cleared an important landmark: We recruited our one-thousandth member in October 2016. If for some reason you chose to read this article with a drink in your hand, please raise that glass and toast to the continued success of ISMTE.

From the Forum

The ISMTE Discussion Forum is available to all registered ISMTE members and is a great resource to get and stay connected to a network of peers, publishers, vendors, and potential clients and employers. Here we highlight a question about authors’ contributions followed by further discussion.
My career path in the STM publishing industry was not planned. After college, I considered going back to school to get a teaching degree or to perhaps pursue a career in social work. It became apparent to me that I was not cut out for either profession. This was in the early nineties when the dot-com was at its peak, and I started my own business building websites for clients. This led to my being hired as the full-time web master at Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., a small STM publisher in Westchester, New York. I knew nothing about STM publishing but knew I wanted to make web design my full-time occupation. Little did I know that I’d be at that job for 13 years, and it would lead me down a very different career path. Over the years, my role expanded, and I took on more and more diverse responsibilities.

I left Mary Ann Liebert to take on the role of Director of Publishing for the AOM Academy of Management, a NFP organization also located in Westchester, New York. I had oversight of every aspect of AOM’s portfolio of journals. Since AOM is a NFP society, I had to adjust a bit and learn that while a NFP must do everything a for-profit publisher does, there must also be a balance struck with how to best serve the needs of members. The needs of an association or a society, especially in social sciences and humanities, are not the same as those in other STEM fields.

I left AOM to start a new company, at the time called preSCORE, which I envisioned as a new metric that would measure the level of peer review conducted prior to the publication of scholarly material. In time that idea evolved into PRE (Peer Review Evaluation) with more of a focus on the validation of peer review rather than a metric. PRE was acquired by STRIATUS, which allowed us to build and grow to the point where we were then acquired by AAAS.

I began to do some industry consulting, but I missed the social aspect of having a regular group of co-workers and a team to interact with on a day-to-day basis. As luck would have it, an opportunity at Springer Publishing Company presented itself, and I am now the Executive Editor of their journals program.

Throughout my career, one thing that has been consistent and helpful has been my membership and participation in organizations such as ISMTE. Having been a managing editor myself during my career, I know that they are among the unsung heroes of our industry. Jason Roberts had incredible vision in founding the organization, and the past and current Presidents and Board members deserve much praise for the success and growth ISMTE has seen. To think that ISMTE now has 1,000+ members and holds three meetings a year (USA, Europe, Asia) is phenomenal. Being a member of ISMTE has not only been educational, but it’s allowed me to grow my professional network, and there are several friendships which have grown out of that. At this point in my career, I consider myself a grey-haired veteran who hopes to give back to the industry I love. I’m proud to now serve on ISMTE’s Board of Directors.

If I had one piece of advice for someone just starting out in STM publishing, it would be to be open to the “whole shebang.” Try to never say “no,” and familiarize yourself with every single part of the business, including volunteering for industry organizations like ISMTE. You never know when a new skill obtained will increase in value, and you may be surprised to find yourself passionate in an area you’d not considered. People who educate themselves on how to use new tools and adapt to a constantly evolving industry are vital employees. My sense is that those interested in a career in publishing aren’t aware of how diverse the career paths in STM publishing can be. Obviously, editors, production staff, managers, and sales personnel are needed, but so are marketing specialists, social media experts, IT gurus, media whizzes, and more. Spread your wings!
ISMTE Core Competency Survey Results: Ethics, Plagiarism Detection, and Image Manipulation

By Sherryl Sundell
Managing Editor, International Journal of Cancer

Next in our series of articles presenting the results of ISMTE’s core competency survey 2016: This one reports on ethics, a topic that has become a major concern in peer-review management. The survey questioned the kinds of ethics issues managing editors are involved in at the office and what resources they use; do journals check for plagiarism and for image manipulation? To briefly recap: 188 responses (of 780) to the survey were submitted, giving a response rate of 24%.

Concerning ethics issues overall, 65% of respondents stated that they handle ethics issues at their journals, and 58% have been involved in setting policies. The ethics issues managed included authorship disputes (76%), appeals/rebuttals and retractions (both at 70%), permissions concerning already published material (62%), image manipulation (45%), ghostwriting (24%), and other issues (25%). Not surprisingly, COPE was the most-used resource at 82%, followed by ICMJE (51%)—which correlates pretty well with the number of respondents working on medical journals. Some 37% use ISMTE as a resource—should that be higher?—and 24% use CSE. Other societies played less of a role here.

At 91%, almost all of us collect conflict of interest statements. However, 63% in total ultimately refer ethical cases to their EIC (41%) or publisher (22%).

In the survey, the matter of plagiarism detection was divided into two parts: Part 1 dealt with the “whether” and “which” questions and also accounted for those offices handling more than one journal. As it turns out, 87% of respondents stated that plagiarism detection was performed in any of the journals they worked on and 75% that it was performed in all their journals. Nearly half of the respondents stated that they checked papers from certain countries, whereas only 10% performed plagiarism detection on all accepted articles; some journals randomly looked at every tenth paper.

Interestingly, 24% of respondents didn’t know which types of papers were checked. Another remarkable result is that 59% of respondents had set an overlap of 21% to 40% (excluding references) as the benchmark for further investigation, and 39% had no set policy for their journal or suite of journals. The benchmark for further investigation ranged from less than 10% (7% of respondents) to over 51% (17%).

In part 2 of the plagiarism section, questions were posed concerning the parts of the manuscripts that are checked. Here, over half of the respondents checked the whole paper and 29% only certain sections. Another interesting result that fuels the general discussion on plagiarism detection is that 11 respondents stated they don’t check the Material and Methods section and all check the discussion section.

Finally, the survey asked whether someone at the journal checks for image manipulation. Here, only 24% said yes. However, 34% state that all images are checked—in contrast
to 23% when an ethical violation is reported and 18% for select images.

Clearly, editorial offices are increasingly being confronted with ethics problems and need to investigate and resolve them. ISMTE’s survey demonstrates the broad range of expertise and awareness of ethical issues among the respondents and our membership. In fulfillment of our mission to “[provide]…education and training, research and resources for best practices, and development of journal policy,” this survey can also inform us about the resources that are needed to fill the gaps in our knowledge to the benefit of our membership and the “industry” as a whole.

Thanks again to the committee that developed and conducted the survey.

Join an ISMTE Local Group Today!

ISMTE Local Groups have formed through the efforts of members who would like to meet with peers and colleagues in their local area for networking and discussion. Participation is not limited to ISMTE members, and the only cost associated with participation will be your meal, if the group meets at a restaurant.

Active Groups:
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Chicagoland Area
- Heidelberg, Germany
- New York, New York
- North Carolina - Research Triangle Park Area
- Oxford, United Kingdom
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Rochester, New York
- Washington, DC Area
- Tokyo, Japan
- London, United Kingdom (NEW)

Visit the ISMTE Local Groups page to join a local group or to find more information.
In this next article in our series on the results of the core competency survey1 sent to all members in June 2016, I explore what we learned about members’ roles in seeing manuscripts through the entire publication process from submission to production. This is the theme of Irene Hames’ classic textbook for editorial office staff2; I cannot recommend it highly enough.

Of the 188 members who responded to the survey, 59% reported that they check in new submissions for the journal on which they work, and 65% also stated that they are the first person to review new submissions. The survey did not define ‘review’, but a further question in the survey asked respondents to select from a list the various checks undertaken for new submissions, from checking that the manuscript complies with the journal submission guidelines to checking that it is within journal scope. Ensuring that author guidelines are clear and well-constructed is an immense help to editorial office staff at this stage of a manuscript’s life-cycle, and ISMTE’s Education Committee has provided a resource for just this purpose3.


I was once described by an Editor of a journal on which I worked as the ‘Cerberus’ of the journal: the fearsome gatekeeper of Hades4. I am not sure the comparison was entirely judicious but, while peer reviewers and journal editors have

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Figure 1. The managing editor: Fearsome guard or service provider to authors and reviewers?
been described as the ‘gatekeepers’ of scientific content, the gatekeeping role is actually fundamental to that of journal editorial office staff and often (unlike Cerberus) understated. It is with this in mind that ISMTE’s Education Committee has prepared a primer on best practices for checking in new manuscripts, which we hope will be a useful guide to our members in knowing where to focus their efforts at this stage of the publication process. The Committee plans to develop the primer into a more comprehensive resource.

Given this critical importance of the editorial office staff in maintaining safeguards and upholding ethical robustness in the research publication process, it is interesting to compare the checks on new submissions undertaken by survey respondents with the subject matter of cases brought before the Committee on Publication Ethics. Top of the COPE list are issues relating to questionable or unethical research practice, whereas only 60% of respondents reported that they check that new manuscripts conform to ethical guidelines on human or animal research. Only 56% (48/85; the remainder did not answer the question or answered ‘not applicable’) reported that they check that Institutional Review Board and/or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IUCAC) approval has been obtained; this is notwithstanding the fact that the majority of the 188 respondents (medicine; 102, nursing/allied health; 12, veterinary/aquaculture; 6) represented biomedical journals. Similarly, number five on the COPE list are cases related to authorship disputes, whereas only 77% of respondents reported that they check that all authors know about and agree to the submission of a manuscript.

The old adage that to be forewarned is to be forearmed applies to dealing with ethical cases in the editorial office. Having robust editorial checks for new manuscripts is an effective safeguard against potential problems further down along the peer-review and publication path. The role of editorial office staff extends beyond checking that a new manuscript complies with journal guidelines (reference style, figure quality, anonymised manuscript for double-blind review, and so on) to upholding high ethical standards. There is of course a fine balance between upholding a certain level of quality and ensuring the submission process is as painless as possible for authors, and it is often a tricky one to get right. ISMTE has a part to play in equipping our members to find the right balance.

Assuming a manuscript has passed the initial scrutiny of the editorial office staff, it may proceed to be peer reviewed. Sixty-two percent of respondents described themselves as ‘responsible for managing the peer review process’ for their journal(s), going on to select from a list of typical tasks in which they routinely engage. Around 80% to 90% support reviewers by granting extensions or sending reminders, and as many as 71% invite reviewers themselves, although only 41%—still a sizeable proportion—actually select reviewers for manuscripts. A significant number of respondents undertake more than simple processing operations: For example, 59% edit reviewers’ comments, and 58% remove identifying information from a review.

Importantly in today’s publishing world where service to authors counts more highly perhaps than ever before, 92% deal with author enquiries, and 70% even upload manuscript materials on behalf of authors, although it is not clear whether this is a routine activity or on an ‘as needed’ basis: I suspect the latter. The general picture emerges that typical

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9 Hames has some helpful comments on ‘the ethics of amending reviewer reports for authors’, recommending that reviewer reports should be amended to remove ‘derogatory comments, unfortunate use of language, and colloquial expressions’ (Hames, 78–9).
The majority (78%) of respondents reported performing the peer review process, that is all stages between acceptance and publication. An additional question in the survey asked respondents to indicate the type of peer review performed by their journal. Eighty-four respondents reported that they operated a single-blind process, twice as many as reported using a double-blind process. Open peer review was represented by four respondents, and triple blind—comparatively rare in any case—by just one. The general picture that has emerged from recent surveys of researchers is that double-blind review is increasingly preferred to single-blind and even open review, largely because it is perceived to be the most effective mechanism for reducing bias. This was the finding of the Taylor & Francis\textsuperscript{10} and Wiley\textsuperscript{11} surveys, as well as that undertaken in 2015 by the Publishing Research Consortium\textsuperscript{2}, although all surveys acknowledge that the picture varies between subjects and disciplines. As open peer review appears to be gaining more momentum in certain fields, it will be interesting to see whether our members are increasingly exposed to this model, but for now at least the traditional model of blinded (and mostly single-blind) review holds undoubted sway.

The third aspect of the publication process covered by the survey concerned aspects relating to article production, that is all stages between acceptance and publication. The majority (78%) of respondents reported performing pre-production checks before sending manuscripts to production, including checking for style and formatting and adherence to journal guidelines. Most respondents reported checking that the quality of figures and images was adequate for publication and that the manuscript had adopted the correct reference style. It is interesting to consider at what point in the publication process such checks should take place: In my experience, checking for reference style usually takes place early in the process, often at initial submission, and certainly at or by the revision stage. Perhaps most significantly for ISMTE in terms of understanding our identity (we are a society for managing technical editors), 29% of respondents reported that they engage in technical editing of manuscripts, and a higher proportion (40%) undertake copyediting. Just over half of respondents stated that they read proofs or note corrections to accepted articles. It is clear that a substantial proportion of respondents engage closely with the actual content of manuscripts. The wide variety of job titles held by our members, including Content Development Editor, Editorial Manager, Senior Editorial Assistant, Peer Review Manager, and Editorial Processing Specialist, mirrors the fact that they are engaged in a broad range of activities.

The results of our survey are invaluable in helping the ISMTE leadership, and especially our Education and Professional Development committees, to determine where to focus our efforts. As our new tagline says, we are in the business of ‘empowering editorial offices around the globe’. Providing best practice recommendations for the key stages of the publication cycle—checking in new submissions, guiding them through the peer-review process, and ensuring they are in a good state for publication—fits both with our stated mission and, as the survey shows, with the needs of our members. There are implications too for the content of our conferences and local group meetings: Do our programmes reflect the fact that, for example, a sizeable proportion of our members edit manuscript content, or that basic journal ‘housekeeping’ is still very much a key function of editorial office staff?

One further implication which extends beyond ISMTE is that, across all our members, we have a wealth of data and practices, which we might be able to put to good use for the broader research community. A lot of research still remains to be done in the day-to-day practice of journal peer review. ISMTE is affiliated to the recently launched journal, Research Integrity and Peer Review\textsuperscript{12}; we are members of the Peer Review Week\textsuperscript{13} organisating committee; and we hope to have an opportunity at the 2017 Peer Review Congress\textsuperscript{14} to present and explore research projects of direct relevance to our grassroots members; and, above all, individual members have undertaken their own research projects for posters at our annual meetings\textsuperscript{15}. We have an opportunity to influence and inform best practice in peer review and day-to-day editorial office functions. In this our tenth anniversary year, fostering increasing collaboration between members in exploring such questions would be a truly excellent outcome of the core competency survey.

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13 \url{http://researchintegrityjournal.biomedcentral.com} (accessed 21 December 2016).

14 \url{http://peerreviewweek.org} (accessed 21 December 2016).

15 \url{http://www.peerreviewcongress.org} (accessed 21 December 2016).

Better, Faster Evidence for Strategic Editorial Program Decisions

By John Sack
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At the ISMTE North American conference in June 2016, HighWire Press presented its poster “Hello, Is There Anybody Out There?” Impact Vizor: Visual Data-Driven Insight into Some of Publishing’s Big Questions, earning second place—and the interest of many attendees. We thank the editors at EON for this opportunity to provide more information about Vizor’s visual analytics tools. Our goal is to provide specific evidence to answer questions publishers want to answer as they develop editorial, sales, and marketing strategies for their program.

Like the research in your journals, publishing is increasingly data-driven. The big decisions—launching a new journal, addressing scope, or changing a specific content section—need evidence. Editorial hunches such as performance relative to competing journals or the impact of editorial policies, need to be tested against data. The data is out there, in various forms, but gathering and normalising it to a point where analysis is possible has been very labor intensive, even for the most well-resourced publishers with business intelligence departments.

HighWire’s Vizor platform integrates data from Crossref, Scopus, Mendeley, and other systems used across the industry, including peer-review manuscript management systems like Bench Press and Editorial Manager for the Impact Vizor suite of visual analytics. The result is integrated views of information configured specifically to a publisher’s program, all displayed in an intuitive, visual format with simple filters to query the data. Impact Vizor, our first suite of visual analytics tools focused on citation data, which released in 2015, was a finalist for the ALPSP Innovation Award.

The Usage Vizor visual analytics suite, which recently launched, takes two perspectives on a publisher’s COUNTER-compliant usage data. One set of analytics supports article-level analysis to better understand what engages readers across a publisher’s journals or within a journal by section, topic, or other filters. Analysing the most in-demand content could help identify authors who may be especially qualified as reviewers, see trends across topics, or reveal the article types that contribute more usage per article, when normalized by number of articles published.

Views of usage by institution constitute the other set of analytics in Usage Vizor. Evaluating usage and turn-away trends by consortia and subscriber type can inform sales and marketing strategies.

The visualizations are developed to help publishers easily see trends and find outliers related to the questions they need to answer. Our partners tell us that the visuals make it easy to understand the gist of the data because they are based on standard business graphics. Even with graphics that have lots of pieces, it’s possible to see patterns; the eye is drawn to what sticks out.

Impact Vizor was the subject of much discussion during the 2017 HighWire Fall Publishers’ Meeting, including a panel session where representatives from the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, the American Society for Hematology, and the Society for Neuroscience discussed practical uses of the data visualisations in Impact Vizor to assess their publishing programs. These are some interesting questions that you may also be asking.

Evaluate the health of our article pipeline: Is our article pipeline strong enough to support a new journal? Is our transfer policy effective at retaining top authors? Evaluating the citation performance, not only of articles published but also rejected articles, can be informative. Publishers, especially those with a high volume of submissions that necessarily reject high-quality papers, want to monitor the ultimate publication history of the articles they
Using Impact Vizor’s Rejected Article Tracker it’s possible to identify trends by topic demonstrating that articles rejected because they are out of scope are later published and go on to be highly cited. If the pipeline is strong enough, the publisher may explore launching a new journal with a different scope, for example, of emerging topics or focus of practice that isn’t currently served by their journal portfolio.

The Rejected Article Tracker can also help to monitor manuscript flow across journals within a publisher’s own portfolio. Publishers who implement a manuscript transfer policy can understand how effective the more streamlined submission process is in retaining high-quality research across their portfolio when an editor recommends resubmission to another journal in the portfolio. One publisher saw a measurable increase in the number of articles they retained.

**Effective time investment in rigorous peer review: Are we asking reviewers to spend extra effort on the right papers?**

It can take a lot of editorial time to secure reviewers for some papers. The Citation Distribution Surveyor (CDS) (also shown above) can reveal how highly cited those papers were that took several requests to secure the required reviews or where a second or third round of review was required based on reviewer feedback. One publishing
partner analysed the articles that took an ‘extra effort’ to publish and found these articles performed as well as or better than the articles that found reviewers more quickly. Analysis with Impact Vizor showed that the extra effort for specific articles was worthwhile and supported editors’ instincts about these papers.

Analytical and forecasting shifts in Impact Factor: Are citation rates for articles coming into next IF date range tracking to those that are aging out?
A few particularly highly cited articles can create swings in Impact Factor over several years as they come in and age out. Tracking down the source of these swings can be a frustrating, expensive, and time-consuming process. Impact Vizor brings all the citation data together and allows the user to set filters to normalize the time period of the citations with the year of publication. This enables editors to find the specific articles in seconds. By doing this analysis early in the year, you can avoid surprises in June.

These are just a few examples of the questions publishers can answer with HighWire’s Vizor platform. We consult with publishers to understand what evidence they need to inform their strategic growth plans and evaluate the ‘health of a journal.’

For more information about the Vizor platform and how publishers use it, consider listening to the on-demand webinar with Keith Gigliello, Senior Manager, Digital Publishing, from the American Society of Hematology (ASH). How to discover article-level impact and strategic insights with Impact Vizor.

Figure 3. Impact Vizor’s Hot Article Tracker (HAT).
Update on the ISMTE Education Committee

By Kristen Overstreet
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In keeping with the ISMTE Education Committee’s objectives, members work to identify opportunities to provide education and materials, on a regular basis, for ISMTE members.

In 2016, the committee provided the following new resources (www.ismte.org/?page=Resources):

• Best Practices for Your Instructions to Authors: Essential Content
• Instructions for Authors Template
• Getting Better Quality Figures / Images for Publication
• Improving Your Instructions to Authors: Figures (PDF and Video)
• Improving Your Instructions to Authors: Get What You Want the First Time (PDF and Video)
• Image Manipulation FAQ
• Best Practices for Checking in a Manuscript
• Best Practices for Editorial Office Reporting: Editorial Board Reports 1-5
• Best Practices for Editorial Office Reporting: Editorial Board Reports 1-5: Instructions for Creating the Reports in Excel
• ScholarOne Webinar: How to Create the Best Practices Editorial Board Reports 1-3 in ScholarOne Manuscripts

Additionally,

• we created a subject headings list for EON articles to make them more discoverable,
• Tom Lang wrote an article for EON on the SAMPL guidelines and reporting statistics (http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.ismte.org/resource/resmgr/EON/August_2016.pdf), and
• we cohosted a social media and website optimization webinar with Scholastica (http://bit.ly/2c4g6CO).

We want ISMTE to be the go-to place for editorial office professionals to find best practice educational resources for performing daily tasks. With the long list of tasks identified in the core competency survey (http://dx.doi.org/10.18243/eon/2016.9.11.3), we have a lot of work to do.

For 2017, we are already working on the following:

• editorial office workflows
• definitions and links to digital resources for open access
• webinars from Aries and eJournalPress to show how to create the Best Practice Editorial Board Reports in EM and eJP
• ScholarOne webinar for the Best Practice Editorial Board Reports 4 & 5
• webinar on image manipulation and generating figures
• different models of peer review
• rewarding reviewers and editorial board members
• procedures on checking for fraud
• developing webinars
• Endnote
• a primer for understanding why those are the best practices for creating the top 5 Editorial Board Reports.

2016 committee members included Christine Dymek, Latoya Fladger, Jan Higgins, Anupama Kapadia, Maria Kowalczuk, Julie Nash, Kathleen Lyons, Kimberly Rhodes, Sherryl Sundell, Tim Vines, Hannah Wakley, and Meg Weist.
Calendar of Events

2017 PSP Annual Conference
February 1-3, 2017
Washington, D.C.
http://publishers.org

Researcher to Reader Conference
February 20-21, 2017
London, England
https://r2rconf.com

Introduction to Journals Publishing
March 1, 2016
London, England
www.alpsp.org

ISMTE Asian-Pacific Conference
March 27-28, 2017
Beijing, China
www.ismte.org

EASE and COPE members receive ISMTE member registration rate

SSP 39th Annual Meeting
May 31 – June 2, 2017
Boston, Massachusetts
www.sspnet.org

ISMTE North American Conference
August 10-11, 2017
Denver, Colorado
www.ismte.org

EASE members receive ISMTE member registration rate

8th International Congress on Peer Review and Scientific Publication
September 10-12, 2017
Chicago, Illinois
www.peerreviewcgress.org

ALPSP Conference
September 13-15, 2017
Noordwijk, the Netherlands
www.alpasp.org

ISMTE European Conference
November 9-10, 2017
London, England
www.ismte.org

EASE members receive ISMTE member registration rate
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A note on English: ISMTE aims to be a truly international society. English will represent our lingua franca, but we would like to stress that, in materials published in EON or online, variations in idiomatic usage and spelling should reflect the origins of the author. No one version of English is preferred over the other.

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