

Building a Community in the Age of Isolation

From the Vice President - Taylor Bowen

Think back 10 years. Though my memory is a little fuzzy, 1998 is about when the Internet came along and suddenly changed the way the world does business. For scholarly publishers, Web-based software systems were also starting to be developed about the same time—really not that long ago.

Now consider how rapidly the Internet and Web-based software have altered the way we work in publishing. Our editorial processes have become streamlined, faster, more efficient—and distributed worldwide without regard to national borders, languages, or culture. Gone are the days of an editor's office with a large staff receiving overnight delivery packages full of manuscripts and glossy figures ready for photocopying, filing, and redistribution via courier or fax. Today an editor lives and works in one city while the journal's administrator works in another; the publisher's office may be on another continent, and its service providers

are still further afield. Our only common space on a daily basis is in the netherworld of servers and software.

I love my *desk job* in today's virtual work environment. I love being a managing editor for multiple journals, overseeing editorial processes for a worldwide community of stakeholders from the comfort of my cozy home office. Providing a high level of customer service to my clients around the globe while sitting at my desk at home (or wherever my Internet connection happens to be) is very satisfying to me. But there is a drawback to my happy little niche in the world of the distributed workflow: Isolation.

I have no co-workers nearby (my wife and 2 daughters don't count in this case). There is not a proverbial water cooler or mailroom at my home where I can mingle with work buddies and talk shop. My editors and publisher colleagues are scattered around the globe. I am

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Article

Image Manipulation and the Editor: Tools to Prevent Unacceptable Alterations

by **Mary Annonio**

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As staff of scientific and technical journals, our goal is to publish the most accurate, precise, and original information for our readers. Growing technical advances in electronic communication and digital imaging software make this goal increasingly challenging to meet. Programs such as Adobe Photoshop make it easy to perform any of a wide variety of alterations to an image such as add, delete, color, copy, stamp, paste, or clone. Whether unintentional or deliberate, authors may be tempted to use imaging software to ‘touch-up’ figures to make them look more attractive, cleaner, simpler, or to better reflect the desired result of an experiment. These actions pose a problem to editors dealing with raw scientific and technical data. Alterations made to images can be considered inappropriate manipulation of the original data and may be classified as research misconduct, especially if it falsifies the results of an

experiment or study. Below are some general guidelines and tools editorial staff can use to help prevent image manipulation and ensure the accuracy and honesty of the data they publish.

The Journal of Cell Biology has pioneered this subject and initiated a dialogue among the scientific community. They have developed the following guidelines, which have been adopted by numerous science journals:

🌐 “No specific feature within an image may be enhanced, obscured, moved, removed, or introduced.

🌐 Adjustments of brightness, contrast, or color balance are acceptable if they are applied to the whole image, and as long as they do not obscure or eliminate any information present in the original.

🌐 The grouping of images from different parts of the same gel, or from different gels,

fields, or exposures must be made explicit by arrangement of the figure (i.e., using dividing lines) and in the text of the figure legend.

🌐 If the original data cannot be supplied by the author upon request, the acceptance of the manuscript may be revoked.”¹

These guidelines are easily communicated to the journal’s community through the ‘Instructions to Authors’ and can serve as a basis for the journal’s image policy. It is important to draw the line between appropriate and inappropriate alterations because slight alterations are acceptable (for example, light contrast adjustments made to the whole image). Journals should recommend any alterations be specified in the figure legends. The editors can then decide whether these statements are needed at the time of publication. The Rockefeller University Press has outlined two types of

1. Rossner, M., & Kenneth M. Yamada. “What’s in a picture? The

temptation of image manipulation.” *The Journal of Cell Biology*, Volume 166,

Number 1, July 5, 2004 11-15.

Image Manipulation

continued

digital image manipulation: inappropriate and fraudulent. Inappropriate manipulation is defined as alterations to an image that violate the journal's guidelines but do not affect an author's results. One example is adjusting the contrast levels so the background of a gel or micrograph disappears. Fraudulent manipulation refers to alterations that affect the interpretation of the author's data. An example would be deleting a blot or adding a band from a different gel.² Mike Rossner's article, "What's in a picture? The temptation of image manipulation" provides useful examples and illustrations of appropriate and inappropriate alterations of data. Actively screening figures in accepted manuscripts for possible signs of manipulation is an effective step in the production process to ensure accurate, publishable data. No special tools are needed to screen figures besides basic imaging software, such as Adobe Photoshop. It is also a quick process that takes just a few minutes. After receiving an author's figures in the office, it

is difficult to work backwards to see how the image was created. However, altered images often have inconsistencies that can serve as red flags for those screening for manipulations. John Krueger at the Office of Research Integrity explains that you should ask whether an image is 'inauthentic' or 'inconsistent' with how the experiment was purportedly done. The goal is to then identify the inconsistencies and address the possibility of an alteration.³

Journals should ask that figures have a high resolution and minimal compression so the detail is not compromised and artifacts are not introduced. It is also helpful if the images have good detail and a full range of grayscales.³ It is especially necessary to screen gels, blots, and micrographs for signs of manipulation. You should look at the overall figure and note if anything looks selectively smudged, spliced, erased, or faint. If you are screening blots, note if any of the lanes inexplicably differ in width

from the one next to it. 'Orphaned' groupings of bands inserted in different lanes or different rows should be explained.³ It is a good idea to magnify the image you are checking, then if necessary, further magnify a particular area if it looks questionable. Begin by adjusting the contrast and brightness levels (found under Image -> Adjustments -> Brightness/Contrast in Photoshop). These levels show the most detail when the contrast is raised and the brightness is lowered. The 'Curves' routine is a particularly revealing way to change contrast (Image -> Adjustments -> Curves).³ While adjusting these levels, look for inconsistencies in both the data and the background, such as areas that may have been smudged or erased. Also look for any areas of the image, which may be repeating, especially in the background. Watch for sharp edges, circular patterns (thumbprints are OK) or discontinuities.

For color images such as fluorescent confocal microscope images and for

2. The Council of Science Editors. CSE's White Paper on Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications. Identifying Research Misconduct and Guidelines for Action. 3.4 Digital Images and

Misconduct. http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/editorial_policies/whitepaper/3-4_digital.cfm.

3. John Krueger. Scientist-Investigator, Division of Investigative Oversight. Office of Research Integrity. Personal Communication, March 13, 2008 and June 9, 2008.

Image Manipulation

continued

zymography gels, where the blots appear white and the background is black, you should use the 'Levels' slide (found under Image -> Adjustments->Levels) or Equalize (Image -> Adjustments -> Equalize) to check for inconsistencies.

The Gradient Map (Image->Adjustments->Gradient Map) is also a useful tool in checking for manipulation. The Gradient Map shows the most dynamic range of intensities and maps the shadows, midtones, and highlights of an image using a variety of colors and selectively enhances areas of weak contrast. Make sure to explore the different gradients and color patterns available in the Gradient Map to utilize its full potential.³

Note if an image does not have background. It may be hard to detect background in an initial viewing; however, after magnifying the figure and adjusting the contrast levels, the background should have different tones. Blots should have a grainy, random, amorphous background.^{1,3} While it is acceptable to adjust the brightness or contrast of the whole image, an adjustment that makes the background fade or drop out completely is

unacceptable, since this trick may be used to hide signs of splicing. Although some authors are not concerned about the data in the background and state it does not affect their results, it is still a concern to editorial staff. Readers may be interested in different parts of the figure, not just the highlighted data. The background of an image must also be free of empty, washed out spaces or inconsistencies. Inconsistencies in the background may also point to intentional manipulation of the author's presented data, such as a repeating gel.

Photo-editing has also been used to falsify physiological traces and scatter grams of flow cytometry (FACS) data. The random nature of the noise in the recordings or positions of the points in FACS data should never be the same in two separate measurements.³

If an author's figures are questionable, it is suggested the editors request the original data from the authors and compare it with the previously submitted figures. The Journal of Cell Biology reports since they have initiated the screening of accepted images in 2002, about 25% of all accepted

manuscripts have had one or more illustrations that have violated the journal's guidelines. Most cases were resolved when the author presented the original data. In 1% of cases the authors may have engaged in fraud.⁴ These screening methods only detect inconsistencies, they cannot verify the authenticity of an image. It is crucial the authors retain their original work and can present it if questioned. Only the original data can authenticate a figure if a question about images arises, even if the manipulation was well intentioned.³

New software is being developed that detects alterations made to scientific images. There are currently at least two commercial programs that detect image manipulation, but they have not been refined and can only detect manipulation under ideal circumstances. The sophistication of imaging technology will surely increase; however, manipulations will always be constrained by the clues left behind after an alteration is made.³ Editors should take a proactive approach to address the possibility of image manipulation in their journals.

4. Wade, Nicholas. "It May Look Authentic; Here's How to Tell It

Isn't." New York Times. January 26, 2006.

Article

Image Manipulation

continued

As more editorial staff become aware of this issue and are educated on the tools used to prevent manipulation, the scientific community can continue to ensure the accuracy and honesty of the data it publishes. 

Further reading:

Rossner, Mike and Kenneth M. Yamada. "What's in a picture? The temptation of

image manipulation." *The Journal of Cell Biology*, Volume 166, Number 1, July 5, 2004 11-15. <http://www.jcb.org/cgi/doi/10.1083/jcb.200406019>.

The Office of Research Integrity. <http://ori.dhhs.gov/>.

The Council of Science Editors. CSE's White Paper on Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications. Identifying

Research Misconduct and Guidelines for Action. 3.4 Digital Images and Misconduct. http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/editorial_policies/whitepaper/3-4_digital.cfm.

Young, Jefferey. "Journals Find Fakery in Many Images Submitted to Support Research." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. May 29, 2008. <http://chronicle.com/free/2008/05/3028n.htm>.

President's Message

continued

lucky if I get to personally visit with the people I work with even once a year. We e-mail and talk on the phone regularly, but it is not the same as having face-to-face contact. We are all in different time zones, going in different directions, and coming together only briefly at different times during the life of a manuscript. Isolation is a daily challenge.

Of course I also have absolutely no idea how other journals or publishers are operating. The virtual, distributed workflow world is not only isolated (and isolating), it is insular. Being ignorant to the goings-on and developments in our industry is dangerous because it means I am not fully tied into my industry and, therefore,

probably not working at peak efficiency.

Thanks to ISMTE, though, professional isolation is becoming a thing of the past. Now I am part of a brand new and energized community of colleagues and like-minded individuals who face the same challenges as I do every day.

Case in point. At the inaugural ISMTE London and Baltimore conferences held in the spring, I was thrilled to meet more than 60 editorial professionals from a variety of backgrounds and publishers. I had no contact whatsoever with these people before—we were all operating in our own far-off islands of authors and reviewers, editors and publishers, manuscripts and page counts. Now, however,

these are my new friends and colleagues with whom I can interact, learn from, and grow professionally. Eureka—I am not alone!

I am grateful that ISMTE has come along and is taking off so quickly. The timing could not have been better. My place in publishing has additional meaning and purpose thanks to ISMTE, and I look forward to growing professionally along with the Society.

Taylor

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Reading Your Journal's Financial Statement: Making Sense of the Numbers

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When I started high school, my father decided it was time for me to learn how to manage a checking account. To him, this meant I should understand how to deposit and withdraw money and balance a checkbook. To me, this meant I could choose a fun style of checks—I was partial to the Looney Toons style featuring Bugs Bunny—and start writing “New Pair of Jeans” or “Cool Red Shirt” in the memo line.

Needless to say, I was never very good at—or interested in—managing money. So, imagine my dismay when a little over ten years later I was expected not only to manage a multimillion-dollar journal, but I was also required to understand its quarterly financial statements provided by our publisher. My head swam when I encountered my first statement...what in the world was I looking at? Terms like *net revenue*, *cost of sales*, and *publisher's overhead* danced around on the page laughing at me.

I remember slumping

down in my chair and putting my head in my hands—this was not what I signed up for.

But with a little investigation, and after asking a lot of questions, I soon realized reading a journal's financial statement is not like learning quantum physics (although I had imagined it to be). Rather, it is more about having a basic grasp of financial terms (and how your publisher uses them), understanding what the numbers mean regarding your journal's financial health and how you can use such information to predict future performance, deciding which (if any) information to share with your board of editors, and knowing what resources to turn to when in doubt.

The ABCs of a Financial Statement

Financial reporting typically includes three types of financial documents: the balance sheet, the income statement, and the cashflow statement. For the purpose of

this article, I have focused on the income statement (which I refer to as the financial statement)—this is the document you will generally receive from your publisher. An income statement (also known as a profit and loss statement or P&L) measures your journal's financial performance over a specific period of time.

To determine how well your journal is performing financially, it is necessary to first understand the terms used on the income statement. Although statements will vary among publishers, most will likely contain similar language. Below is a list of commonly used terms found on a typical statement.

Revenue: Also sometimes called *sales*, revenue represents the amount of money your journal is bringing in. Types of revenue include subscriptions, author and commercial reprints, advertising, single-issue sales, publication rights, and foreign editions.

Cost of Sales: Also known as *sales costs*, cost of sales is

Financial Statement

continued

what it costs your publisher to generate the sales in the revenue line-item. Examples of cost of sales include manufacturing, postage, storage and handling, reprint costs, and advertising commissions.

Gross Profit (or Loss):

Gross profit (or loss) is the difference between revenue and

cost of sales. If the difference is positive, it is profit. A negative difference is a loss and is shown in brackets.

Operating Expenses:

Sometimes called *direct expenses* or *selling, general, and administrative (SGA) expenses*, operating expenses usually include marketing, fulfillment, administration, and overhead.

Net Profit: Also known as *net income*, this figure represents the journal’s “bottom line”—what the journal has left over (if anything) once the total expenses are subtracted from the revenue.

A sample financial statement is provided below:

**The Journal of Good Times
Financial Statement
January 1, 2008–March 31, 2008**

Revenues

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Subscriptions | \$350,000 |
| Author Reprints | \$10,000 |
| Commercial Reprints | \$200,000 |
| Advertising | \$300,000 |
| Single Issue Revenue | \$20,000 |
| Publication Rights | \$10,000 |
| Foreign Editions | \$30,000 |

Total Net Revenue **\$920,000**

Cost of Sales

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Manufacturing | \$200,000 |
| Postage | \$100,000 |
| Storage and Handling | \$35,000 |
| Advertising Commissions | \$100,000 |

Total Cost of Sales **\$435,000**

Gross Profit **\$485,000**

(difference between revenue and cost of sales)

Operating Expenses

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Marketing | \$25,000 |
| Fulfillment | \$100,000 |
| Administration | \$150,000 |

Total Operating Expenses **\$275,000**

Net Profit (Loss) **\$210,000**

(difference between total revenues and total expenses)

You Understand the Terminology, Now What?

Now that you know what the various terms on a typical financial statement mean, how can you use the information provided? Typically, financial statements are used to determine cash flow, profit margins, and other important financial metrics. Most importantly though, the statements you receive from your publisher will help you determine the proverbial “bottom line”—is your journal making a profit or is it losing money? This figure will provide you with a benchmark to help improve your journal’s financial performance. By examining the factors affecting the bottom line (revenues and expenses), you can discuss with your publisher ways to increase your net profit.

It is also important to examine your financial statements from a historical perspective. Statements are generally provided on a regular basis (often quarterly); thus you

can determine how the figures on the current statement compare to past statements. An efficient method for tracking your journal’s progress is to create an Excel spreadsheet, documenting the figures from period to period. This historical context will help you spot trends and identify areas of strength and weakness, thus enabling you to predict future performance and establish strategies to meet your journal’s financial goals.

Another valuable analysis of your publisher’s financial statement is to ensure their costs are in line with industry standards. For example, are their warehousing, printing, and storage and handling expenses reasonable when compared to those of other publishers? To help make this comparison, it is useful to have experience with several publishers or at least have contacts in the field who are willing to share this information with you.

Finally, you can conduct a line-item analysis by

percentage of revenues. This technique helps you understand which expenses are sensitive to revenue increases or decreases and which are not. By dividing each expense line-item total by total revenues you arrive at a percentage for each expense line-item. For example, using the financial statement provided in this article, if you divide manufacturing costs (\$200,000) by total revenues (\$920,000) you arrive at 22%. This means manufacturing costs are 22% of your revenue. This information can be useful if you want to increase revenue and can’t do so by bringing in more dollars—instead, you can consider reducing your manufacturing costs. It’s also useful when comparing your publisher’s costs against industry standards.

Are Your Statements Audited?

All financial statements should be prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting

Principles (GAAP) to assure readers the underlying accounting information has been recorded and categorized using a nationally recognized standard. A journal's financial statement that has been prepared by an auditing firm, which employs certified public accountants (CPAs), certifies that the statement meets GAAP requirements. The auditor will also provide an opinion if they agree with the information provided in the statement. Audited statements give the reader greater confidence in the accuracy of the statements than those that are unaudited. A review of your contract will tell you if you are entitled to audited statements. For example, the contract for one of our journals stipulates we will receive audited statements, whereas the contract for our other journal only provides for unaudited statements.

To Share or Not to Share

While it's critical for you and your staff or organization to understand your journal's financial statements, is it necessary to share this type of information with your board of editors? The answer isn't black and white and varies from organization to organization, and perhaps even from journal to journal within an

organization. For example, I provide detailed financial information for one of our journals to its entire board of editors, but I only provide summary financial information to the editor-in-chief of our other journal. My decision to vary the type of information I share with the two boards is based purely on the preferences of the editors; one editor chooses just to understand the big picture whereas the other editor prefers to know the details.

In some cases, organizations make the decision to not share any detailed financial data with the board of editors, stipulating the information is confidential and the editors' purview is simply editorial. In these cases, financial performance is often communicated in general terms, such as if the journal is performing to expected standards and how it stacks up against other journals in the field (as in the case of advertising dollars). Additionally, sometimes organizations decide the editor-in-chief may receive detailed financial information but such information will not be extended to the associate editors.

In the case of our journals, keeping the editors abreast of the journals' financial health sometimes leads to financial

growth. For example, if the editors are aware our commercial reprint revenue is lagging, they often identify important articles our publisher can market to pharmaceutical companies in order to garner large reprint orders. The same thing is true for our advertising revenue: the editors help identify articles that might be of interest to future advertisers. Whatever decision you make, however, in terms of sharing financial information with your board, should be carefully considered and discussed internally with your organization's senior leadership.

When in Doubt, Use Your Resources

Learning how to read your journal's financial statements doesn't have to be a lonely experience. There are several resources you can consult to help clarify your understanding:

Accounting Department:

Start with your organization's accounting staff. These individuals are likely educated in the area of finance or at least have several years of experience.

Publisher:

Don't be shy to ask your publisher questions. They developed the statement so they know it best. Don't hesitate to ask what a term means or how they arrived at a

Financial Statement

continued

figure. In fact, this step is imperative so your publisher knows you're reading their statements closely. And if the statements don't meet your needs or provide enough details, ask your publisher to modify them.

Internet: The Internet is a valuable resource for learning the basics about reading financial statements. Sites such as **About** (<http://management.about.com/cs/adminaccounting/ht/readincomestmt.htm>), **Money Chimp** (www.moneychimp.com/articles/financials/income.htm), and **TheStreet** (<http://www.thestreet.com/university/financeprofessor/10358047.htm>) provide excellent definitions of financial terms and sound tips

for reading statements.

Workshops/Seminars:

Several organizations provide courses for non-financial managers covering topics such as how to read financial statements and how to report and discuss financial data. Examples of such organizations include **SkillPath** (<http://www.skillpath.com/seminfo.html/st/FA2/GS/gsoo03>), the **American Management Association** (<http://www.amanet.org/seminars/seminar.cfm?basesemno=2218>), **National Seminars Training** (http://www.nationalseminarstraining.com/SeminarTopics/Finance_Financial_Management/YFIN2/index.html), and **Fred Pryor Seminars** (http://www.pryor.com/mkt_info/

[seminars/desc/fs.asp](http://www.pryor.com/mkt_info/seminars/desc/fs.asp)).

See Ya, Bugs

It's been about seven years since I encountered my first financial statement and I've come a long way in not only understanding them, but also in feeling comfortable with using financial terminology to discuss them with senior staff and my boards of editors. For someone who doesn't have a proclivity for finances, I'd say I've graduated from the days of Bugs Bunny checks and silly memo lines. With some basic understanding, a little research, and a few tips from the experts, anyone can understand their journal's financial performance and help plan for the future. I'm living proof. 🌐

Thank you!

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Remote Management of the Editorial Office

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How many of you out there are whittling away at your three- or five-year editorship, worried about where you will work next? In my experience, the ‘industry standard’ for scientific and medical peer review journals dictates that editorships change institutions every three to five years. Consequently, the editorial office packs up and moves too, or rather, is ‘fired’ and hired anew. Although this is how transitions have typically been handled in the past, there is a better way. As I am sure most of you know, this job can be done in an office separate from the editor-in-chief. Since this is so easily accomplished, it is then also possible to stay on and continue managing your title even when the editor-in-chief is in a different location.

This *Tips and Tricks* article focuses on remote management of the editorial office. Here you will find advice on how to keep your job. I offer up advice on some of the things you need to set up your own office and how to convince your publisher or society to allow you to stay on and continue management. I have also included some of my ideas on ‘best practices’ for remote management.

What You Need

Remote management of the editorial office operates best when the work flow is completely digital. Thus, the requirements for setup are simple: computer, internet, fax, and phone. Although you do often need to print and file, such needs are minimal. These days, it is almost

always possible to find an electronic solution to a paper problem.

Convincing the Powers That Be

With your simple list of supplies in hand, it is time to tackle the hardest part of remote management: convincing the boss. Of course, *we* know why it is better to keep an experienced managing editor on through the transition. Being a managing editor is not what it used to be. Thanks to tools like online manuscript submission and management systems, the days of opening bulky packages and sending lengthy faxes are over.

Consequently, the job description of a managing editor has drastically changed. The skills we possess are far more professional and specific to the system we are using. In addition, we possess an institutional memory that takes years to develop. Since no comprehensive training exists, we get on-the-job training only. We know that continuity of management, especially from a remote location, saves time spent on training a new managing editor and eliminates the learning curve entirely. (Not to mention the fact that remote management saves valuable office space and money typically spent on human resources.)

Part of what makes a managing editor worth keeping is professionalism and commitment to the title. If you take this argument to your boss, she will listen. If you feel you need numbers to support your pitch, take a look at last month’s *EON*. You will find

Remote Management

continued

the results of a poll of people who attended the ISMTE launch meetings. Some useful statistics: 27% of MEs are home-based, 27% of MEs are self-employed, 81% of MEs work from a remote location. Precedence!

Best Practices

When you have successfully convinced the powers that be, you might find working from home or in a café (my spot of choice) foreign at first. Below are several tips that help me do a better job and enjoy my position more. I hope you find these tips helpful as well.

Use Web-based Manuscript Tracking Software – I use Manuscript Central, and it is the single most important tool I have. I try to use it for everything it is worth. Comprehensive training on your software of choice is ideal. In addition, stay on top of release notes and any continuing education offered by the parent company.

Use Technology - E-Fax is a great way to cut down on paper and allows copyright forms to be e-mailed as PDFs. E-Annotation is a great tool for marking and transmitting proofs to the proofreader free of charge. If you are not sitting in a cubicle near the editor-in-chief, he might be concerned that he will not be able to contact you at a moment's notice. A Blackberry or IM makes you constantly available to your editor-in-chief, and wireless

allows you to get out of the house (and into your favorite coffee shop).

Cater to your EIC - Know your editor-in-chief's technological strengths and shortcomings so that you can better assist when needed. Make sure she knows how to use your tracking software as well. Be flexible to accommodate the busy schedule of an editor-in-chief. (This is often her third or fourth hat.)

Communication - The tone of an e-mail is often misread. Authors and editors will know you through your emails, so keep them formal and clear. Slow down and edit before sending.

Organize - Set a schedule for the day so you stay on task. It is easy to get distracted when you are working on your own. Don't let this happen to you.

Network - Managing a remote office can be isolating. It is important to stay professional and connected to others doing the same work. I recommend joining societies and making lunch dates with other managing editors in your area. We have a little gang of editors in my area who get together to talk shop on a frequent basis. 

P.S. The ISMTE forum would be a great place for others to toss out their 'best practices for remote management'!

Giving Thanks

by Deborah Bowman, MFA

I love a good quotation. One of my favorites is from John Dewey: ‘To find out what one is fitted to do, and to secure an opportunity to do it, is the key to happiness.’

I am the managing editor for *GIE*: *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy*, a society journal owned by The American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. The Society is located in Oak Brook, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, but I work remotely from a small town, Wentzville, Missouri, about 40 miles west of St. Louis.

GIE is published by Elsevier. I say that with some fondness because my association with Elsevier predates my current position. When I got my MFA degree (Master of Fine Arts—more than a Master’s, less than a PhD), I got a job at Mosby Publishing in St. Louis in the Journals department as an editor. They call them Issue Managers now, but back then we did our own copyediting, and Mosby called us editors. After I was trained as a medical editor, I was assigned to work on *GIE*. I approached that assignment with trepidation because the journal was known to have a “challenging” editorial office; however, it turned out to be a good fit for me. I learned that a demanding managing editor would produce the most professional, error-free journal. (Thank you, Donna, for teaching me how to be a managing editor before I ever dreamed of being one.) After a few years, I advanced to become a manager in the department, but my bosses always made sure I was the manager over *GIE* because I knew that “difficult” journal so well. Around the same time, Elsevier bought Mosby. We were all concerned, but everything continued smoothly—at first. Then, in January of 2005, Elsevier executives came to St. Louis

from New York and announced they were closing the Journals department in St. Louis. My heart was broken. St. Louis is not a big publishing town, and I was sure I would never find another job I enjoyed as much.

The good news was that they were giving us a transitional year so that the New York and Philadelphia Elsevier offices could take over our journals gradually; that meant I had a year to find another job. One reason I hated leaving was because *GIE* had just gotten a new editor-in-chief that same January who had dynamic, exciting ideas, and I wanted to see where he would take the journal, which, up to then, had been quite conservative. For the first time, the managing editor and her editorial assistant moved into the Society office, apart from the editor-in-chief, who was in California, and away from the associate editors who were all over the world. This was possible, of course, because of the online submission system, Editorial Manager, which *GIE* had just started using with the advent of the new editor.

In early July of 2005, just as I was starting to panic about not having a job lined up, the new *GIE* managing editor announced that she was leaving the position for family reasons. It didn’t occur to me at first that I might have a chance to get the job because the Society office was over 300 miles away in Oak Brook, and I didn’t want to move. But then my friend Kirk, who was working with EES, Elsevier’s equivalent to Editorial Manager (and who, coincidentally, had the office next to mine), suggested they might be willing to hire someone to work remotely, since they were already using Editorial Manager. (Thank you, Kirk, for giving me a leg up by tutoring me in EM before I interviewed for the job!) I applied

Giving Thanks

continued

for the position, and although I could tell the Society's executive director was uneasy about hiring someone to work remotely, my experience with *GIE* won out and they decided to give it a try. (Thank you, Pat, for taking a chance!)

That was nearly three years ago, and the arrangement has worked beautifully. I have an editorial assistant who works in Oak Brook. We have instant messaging set up, and that, along with e-mails and phone calls, lets us be in contact whenever we need to be. (Thank you, Liz, for being so efficient and self-motivated!) I already owned a small publishing company (we work with people who want to self-publish their books), so I work out of that office, four miles from my home. This works well for me, though I can work from home, too, during bad weather or on mornings when pajamas seem like the obvious clothing choice. I go up to Oak Brook for a couple of days about every 3 to 4 months for meetings (or parties!), and we have editorial board meetings and editor/associate editor meetings twice a year, once at our Society's annual meeting and once in the fall at different locations around the United States. We have one editor-in-chief,

13 associate editors, and 9 members of our editorial board. These editors change every 5 years. Last year we received 1,482 submissions and published 2,425 pages. This year we are on target to receive around 1,750 submissions by the end of the year.

One of my journal's innovations is that we record podcasts of the abstracts from each of our major articles (around 20 per month), and I get to do those recordings. I always loved reading out loud to my children, but they are all grown. Now I get to continue the tradition, only I'm reading about colonoscopies instead of caterpillars, barium instead of bears, and currently about 1,000 people hearing me each month, instead of three children. The podcasts are available through our website or through iTunes.

Among the many things I love about my job are (1) that it is permanent and will thus continue after the current editors' sojourns end (to do otherwise really doesn't make sense for the sake of continuity) and (2) that the editor-in-chief includes me on anything that has to do with the journal, making my job go far beyond pushing articles through the system and all the way to a true profession. I know

We offer our gratitude to Sage and Aries Systems for their support of ISMTE!



Giving Thanks

continued

these are goals that ISMTE is striving toward for every managing or technical editor. I thank Dr Triadafilopoulos for getting me there ahead of schedule.

I first heard about ISMTE when Jason spoke at the Editorial Manager meeting in 2007. I was immediately enthusiastic because I had been investigating possible societies and found that they all seemed to cater to either publishers or copyeditors. ISMTE sounded like exactly what I had been looking for, and the meeting in Baltimore in March confirmed my initial impression; this organization truly strives to fill the special needs of managing and technical editors. It is an opportunity to discuss and solve problems that directly concern us. When I learned they were looking

for volunteers, I said I could work on the newsletter. I will be recruiting articles for this 'Portrait of an Editorial Office' column, so please be kind and cooperative when I call upon you!

Another of my favorite quotes is by John Ruskin: 'The highest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it.' I hope the reward for all the toil by Jason and everyone else who works on making ISMTE a success is all its members find a platform for their questions and ideas, an outlet for their frustrations, and a path toward making their jobs truly professional. With ISMTE, I believe we can all become better editors, and for that I thank Jason and his cohorts. 

Check your SPAM!

Talley Management and the Directors are hearing from ISMTE members that Society e-mails are ending up in their SPAM or Junk folders. Please check your folders for Society e-mail. Talley is doing everything they can to prevent this occurrence.

Bizarre!

Do you have a story relating to your work you would like to share with EON readers? The EON staff are looking for 'bizarre,' 'unbelievable,' or 'amusing' stories to publish in a new column. Send your stories to the editor at kristen.overstreet@mac.com. (Please don't share any details that might be considered libelous or defamatory.) We look forward to reading your stories.

Calendar of Events

International Academy of Nursing Editors

27th Annual Meeting

August 4-6, 2008

Held at the Hotel Ritz in

Abano, Italy

Website:

www.nursingeditors.org

www.metmeetings.org/?section=metmo8_call

ALPSP International Conference

September 10-12, 2008

Old Windsor, UK, website:

http://www.alpsp.org/ngen_public/article.asp?aid=2008

ISMTE Board of Directors Meeting

August 26-28, 2008

Peabody Hotel

Baltimore, MD, USA

6th International Congress on Peer Review & Biomedical Publication

September 10-12, 2009

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Website: www.ama-assn.org/public/peer/peerhome.htm

Mediterranean Editors & Translators Meeting

September 11-13, 2008

University of Split, School of Medicine, Split, Croatia

Website:

Please send your suggestions for inclusion in the calendar to kristen.overstreet@mac.com.

Call for Articles

Please submit articles and ideas for articles to EON Editor, Kristen Overstreet at kristen.overstreet@mac.com.

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, 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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