

# eon

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## in this issue

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### ARTICLES

- 2** Behind the Words: Being a Mindful Editor  
*By Maureen Peck*
- 5** Increasing Productivity While Working Remotely  
*By Meaghan Kelly*
- 7** ISMTE Member Profile: Beverly Lindeen  
*By Beverly Lindeen*
- 8** ISMTE Core Competency Survey Results: Social Media and Podcasting  
*By Deborah Bowman*
- 10** Introducing Cover Art: What to Know, How to Implement It, and What to Ask  
*By Alyssa Murphy*
- 13** The Scourge of Illegitimate Journals: Becoming Better Informed  
in a Post-Beall Era  
*By Jason Roberts*
- 17** Celebrating ISMTE's Tenth Anniversary  
*By Michael Willis*

### MISCELLANEOUS

- 12** Committee Update
- 16** Grammatic Fanatic Comic
- 18** From the Forum
- 20** Calendar



**ISMTE**

Empowering editorial  
offices around the world.

# Behind the Words: Being a Mindful Editor



**By Maureen Peck**

Senior Technical Editor  
Journal AWWA  
[mpeck@awwa.org](mailto:mpeck@awwa.org)

A friend recommended a book to me that just might be changing my life. One day, as we talked about the value of mindfulness and meditation, and as I admitted to my on-again, off-again relationship with both, she mentioned a book that she had found helpful: *10% Happier* by Dan Harris, a lighthearted and simple, yet seriously useful, primer on mindfulness meditation. Reading it set me on a path of discovery.

## What Is Mindfulness?

With its roots in Buddhism and now with a solid foothold in mainstream society, mindfulness is the complete awareness of your present circumstances—thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, and your external environment—without attaching to them, without judging. Mindfulness meditation can involve a focus on something, such as your breathing, sounds, or walking. The key is awareness, nonattachment, and being in the present.

There are numerous sources from numerous experts on mindfulness and mindfulness meditation—the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhất Hạnh, Pema Chödrön, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Jack Kornfield, Joseph Goldstein, Sharon Salzberg, to name just a few. If you're interested, you'll find an abundance of material online, in bookstores, or in your local library. Maybe you saw the "60 Minutes" segment about correspondent Anderson Cooper's experience at a mindfulness retreat hosted by Kabat-Zinn.

Mindfulness meditation is practiced in schools, with military veterans, and in the workplace. And while meditation has far-reaching, long-lasting benefits, you can engage in mindfulness *sans* meditation any time, anywhere, and reap its rewards.

## Principles of Mindfulness Practice

Seven "additudinal" components of mindfulness practice were outlined by Kabat-Zinn in *Full Catastrophe Living*. In our professional and personal lives, all our experiences are intertwined because of the way we experience them; therefore, the opportunities to practice mindfulness are infinite. What follows is my take on applying these interconnected principles to our work as editors.

### Nonjudging

*Be an impartial witness to your thoughts.* One mindfulness practice is to be aware of your thoughts; when you're aware, you have more control over their effect on you. Notice when you are judging. Be aware and observe whatever judgment you have. How is this judging affecting your work—are you distracted? Agitated? Editing with a clouded perspective? Is it affecting your work relationships? Are you operating from ingrained notions that might not even be accurate? You don't have to stop judging thoughts—just observe them.

*Show team spirit.* If you work with other editors, keep your judging mind in check, keep an open mind, and allow others to be right. Thank goodness for a team; the proverbial second set of eyes can catch things you missed, and you're likely to have opportunities to return the favor, for no one is perfect.

*Respect the author's voice.* If it's an accepted practice in your publication, preserve the author's voice as much as possible. Even if you prefer a different writing style or think you can make the author sound "better," it doesn't mean the author is wrong.

### Patience

*Be patient with yourself.* Kabat-Zinn applies this idea to learning and practicing mindfulness, suggesting that one need only let the process unfold, along with all the judging, anxieties, and perceived setbacks that come with being human. No matter how long you've been an editor, you're going to come up against obstacles and times of doubt, and that's okay. Step into the role of a neutral observer of your thoughts. From there you can assess the situation: Is there something

to learn? A new approach to take? Would a new editing tool or workflow process help? Coursework? A vacation?

*Be patient with your work.* Be calm, methodical, and thorough. Settle into the moment and the experience of your editing. Don't rush through your editing. Granted, there's a deadline, but it's not a race. Note the difference between focused efficiency and scattered, unfocused rushing. Beware the trap of hurrying through one project to get to the next one. Don't assume you caught everything the first time.

### Beginner's Mind

*Don't get attached to your expertise or expectations.* To quote Kabat-Zinn, "Too often we let our thinking and our beliefs about what we 'know' prevent us from seeing things as they really are." Avoid being blinded by what you know and instead be willing to see your work, on a project level and in the scope of your career, as if for the first time.

*Question authority, including your own.* Each time you read through an article, have fresh eyes. Are you *sure* that's correct usage? Correct spelling? Correct interpretation or recollection of a rule? What about those word-division rules you learned from your eighth-grade English teacher that you've remembered all these years? Make sure she knew what she was talking about. You might have misread or misheard some information, or your memory managed to change it, and you have carried that erroneous rule with you all this time. Don't assume you've got it right.

*Don't be limited by pride and habits.* Be open to discoveries, new perspectives, new ways of doing things. Our language is always evolving. There's always something new to learn. It's all right if you don't know. Be open to others' knowledge.

*Be humble.* In Harris' "Way of the Worrier" list, he says, "Humility prevents humiliation."

### Trust

*Trust your own knowledge.* You have knowledge and skills. Believe in what you know. Trust your ability. Don't give up or flog yourself when you've made a mistake. Be accountable, of course—then, assess the situation, see its value as a lesson, and move on.

*Don't compare yourself with others.* Don't assume that because someone has more experience or different expertise it would be better to be like them. If you're going to compare, use the comparison as a mirror to see how your strengths and abilities contribute to your workplace and your team. Or be inspired by the comparison, as Harris learned in his mindfulness journey. We can become better at our craft by looking to others as guideposts for learning

and self-improvement. Focus on being fully yourself and cultivate your talents on the basis of who you are.

*Know your weaknesses.* Create systems and schedules to accommodate them. Do you edit too quickly and consequently miss things? Is there a particular time of day when you're apt to be tired or distracted? Are there areas in which you could use training? Get it—read, attend online or in-person seminars, learn from your co-workers' best practices. (By the way, don't beat yourself up if you feel like you lost time in your fuzziness or distraction; respect it as part of your process.)

*Know what you need.* What will keep you on track and at your best? Don't be the victim—rather than waiting for a situation to improve or hoping that someone will wave a magic wand and make it all better, take steps to take care of yourself.

### Nonstriving

Meditation, according to Kabat-Zinn, ultimately "is non-doing. It has no other goal other than for you to be yourself." This, he continues, "may be pointing you toward a new way of seeing yourself, one in which you are trying less and being more." If you decide that you're going to become more experienced, more respected, less distracted, more this, less that, be careful not to send yourself the message that that you're not okay now. Shift from regretting that you're not where you think you should be. Set goals, but don't put excessive effort into the effort of achieving them; you likely will accomplish more with patience and perseverance. Forcing a goal or desired outcome may backfire.

### Acceptance

If you are dissatisfied with a work situation, or with yourself, you don't have to wait until resolution or a goal is reached to stop suffering. If you come to terms with things as they are, you may find your suffering eases and that you have more energy and clarity for whatever change you want to make.

Acceptance does not equal resignation or passivity. It doesn't mean you avoid opportunities to learn or stretch out of your comfort zone, or take action to remedy a situation. If you're clear about your current reality, you can be more clear on the best actions to take.

### Letting Go

When a thought has a strong hold on your mind, pay attention to how it's affecting you. Scan the tension in your body, your facial expression, how you're moving, how you're undertaking your work (e.g., rushed, frenetic, brusque, unfocused).

What's your inner monologue? How does the situation have a hold on you? How do your thoughts have a hold on you? What obstacles and limitations are they causing? If they're not helping matters, it might be time to let go of them.

*Step away from your thoughts.* Got a crazy deadline? A pile of assignments and a feeling of "it'll never get done"? Acknowledge the thoughts and observe them. "Oh, there's that anxiousness again." You're *not* that thought of anxiousness. You're *not* that feeling of panic about a difficult situation. Identify the thought (e.g., judgment, anger, feeling overwhelmed) as an experience you're having. To become an impartial observer will help restore equilibrium.

In *10% Happier*, Harris mentioned a "mantra" that he learned from his mentor, Joseph Goldstein, and which has become a favorite for me: "Is this useful?" Stopping just long enough to catch a thought midstream with this no-nonsense question will give you time to take charge when your mind is on a rampage.

*Step away from your work.* If you are distracted, physically step away if you need to. When your mind gets dull or muddled, when you start to lose focus, get up and walk away from your work. Shift your attention to a different, perhaps less intense, project. Stretch, fix a cup of tea, go for a walk, chat with a co-worker.

## Conclusion

Control is a beneficial and necessary mechanism. In the editing world, we follow established rules on usage and grammar and adhere to house style. We have workflows, deadlines, and organization charts all in the interest of maintaining consistency and control in our published works. Control can be limiting, too, if we try to control too much, especially factors and circumstances outside ourselves. You can control your thoughts, or at least how you respond to them.

Mindfulness, as far as I can tell, isn't a state at which you arrive; it's a constant monitoring and balancing, doing your best to exist in healthy mental states and extract

yourself from unhealthy ones. I still work myself into less-than-centered states of mind and likely always will. But a calm voice steps in sooner and more often than it once did and asks, "Is this useful?"

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# Increasing Productivity While Working Remotely



**By Meaghan Kelly**

Managing Editor, Assistant Copy  
Editor  
J&J Editorial

One of the biggest perks of working in this industry is that so long as we have a trusty Wi-Fi connection, we can work from practically anywhere—our favorite coffee shop, the in-law’s house, at the airport waiting for a flight to take off—but for most of us, it’s our home. And while it is nice to roll out of bed at 7 am, grab the first cup of coffee of the day, and start working with bedhead and sleep still in our eyes, we sometimes struggle to fight off the daily distractions of working from home to focus intently on the tasks at hand. In an industry in which deadlines are strict and emails and submissions keep rolling in, increasing productivity and making the most of an eight-hour workday have become a kind of art. How do you begin to cross off items on that seemingly endless to-do list when everything is a priority?

First things first. Create a workspace that is functional and organized. This is where you’ll be spending most of your time throughout the week, so why not make it a place that you enjoy being in. Invest in a comfortable chair, and ensure you have all of the wrist supports you need. Lumbar support cushions and wrist rests will help your posture throughout the day and keep you focused because you’re less distracted by the physical pain caused by discomfort.<sup>1</sup> Avoid working from the bed and the couch. Although extremely tempting, especially on those winter days when it’s hard to get out from under the covers, these places often have TVs close by, and there is no time for Netflix and chill during the workday. Ensure that your workspace is clean and tidy, especially at the end of the day. Think of cleaning as an act that simultaneously declutters the mind, while giving yourself time to prep for tomorrow’s tasks.

With 43% of the workforce now telecommuting, there are many resources out there to help you stay on track.<sup>2</sup> Spending the first few minutes of your day creating a to-do

list allows you to prioritize tasks, and that can lessen the chance of a “How am I going to get this all done” kind of freak out. There are many apps and browser extensions available to get you organized. One of my personal favorites is Google Keep, a Web app that allows you to create a to-do list, set daily and weekly reminders, and invite coworkers to collaborate on notes. Think of it as a minimalist version of EndNote. Google Keep also allows you to organize your lists and tasks by color, and all notes are saved to and can be shared through Google Drive. The app is also available to download on any Android device and can be added to a Chrome browser for quick access. If you’re a traditionalist, nothing beats a good notebook and a favorite pen. Plus, how good does it feel to cross out those items?

Staying on task can be a real struggle. With papers to check in, reports to run, and emails to answer, it can be difficult to focus on one particular responsibility at a time. The Pomodoro Technique is a great way to build up that focus 25 minutes at a time.<sup>3</sup> First, choose a task and set a timer for 25 minutes. Work only on that one thing until the timer goes off. Once the timer goes off, put a checkmark down on a piece of paper and reward yourself with a short break, whether that is a walk around the block, throwing a load of laundry in the washer, or grabbing a cup of coffee, the important thing is that you do something that is not work-related for about 10 minutes.<sup>3</sup> When you get back to work, set the timer for another 25 minutes. With every four checkmarks, reward yourself with a longer break. This method not only builds our focus but encourages us to take a break every now and then, something we sometimes forget to give ourselves, but that we—and our brains—desperately need. A reinvigorated mind increases productivity and reduces the chances of making mistakes.

Tracking time can also help plan your day. Toggl is an excellent way to record your time spent on various tasks and projects.<sup>4</sup> The website is free to use and keeps a running timer while you work on a specific task. Toggl runs weekly and daily reports, breaking down each second spent on a particular project. After a week of tracking your time, you are able to easily figure out exactly how long a project takes, and, as a result, you’ll be able to plan more accurately. The next time your Editor asks you to run a report on the number of

active reviewers and their number of active reviews, sorted by the time to completed review and grouped by institution, you can look back at a previous Toggl report and see that you'll expect to spend about 30 to 45 minutes gathering that information. Toggl is also an excellent tool for billing clients and makes filling in a timesheet a breeze.

It's important to keep in mind the value of the work that we do. Authors rely on us to keep their hard work moving through the submission process—work that can have a real effect on the academic and research communities. Editors rely on us to supply them with reports, successes and potential problems, and reminders to help them stay on task. Our work is meaningful, and reminding ourselves of that fact is not only rewarding but another way to keep us engaged and motivated to complete important projects and meet deadlines. Editors and managers who positively reinforce and recognize our contributions to the journal workflow increase that sense of engagement, thus giving our jobs a deeper level of meaning.<sup>5</sup> That connectedness to our work improves our overall job performance.

It can be hard to mark the end of the day when your office is your home because there isn't that social cue marked by several employees leaving the office around 4 pm. Be sure to set your schedule and stick to that schedule. We are creatures of habit, after all. It's important to clearly define your work hours to reduce the risk of burning out.<sup>6</sup> This schedule not only provides us time in the morning to prep for the day ahead but allows for daily goals to be set and gives us something to look forward to on those seemingly endless days.

Give yourself a few minutes before the end of the day to organize for tomorrow, and then when the clock strikes 4 or 5, step away from the desk. Your brain will thank you.

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## Ira Salkin Scholarship

The application process is open for the 2017 International Society of Managing and Technical Editors Ira Salkin Scholarship.

Ira was one of the founding fathers of ISMTE and sadly passed away in 2016. His goal was to ensure editorial office professionals are educated and vigilant in matters of publishing ethics.

**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**.

Eligible applicants must be members of ISMTE.

Applicants must include a short cover letter stating their position and some background.

Read the official [Rules and Regulations](#).

We are looking forward to receiving your entries for the 2017 Ira Salkin Scholarship.

# ISMTE Member Profile: Beverly Lindeen



**By Beverly Lindeen, ELS**

Senior Managing Editor  
Allen Press, Inc.  
[blindeen@allenpress.com](mailto:blindeen@allenpress.com)

Science and art have always been equally important to me. Through middle school and high school, I excelled in my math and science classes and found peace in my drawing and painting classes, as well as comfort within the pages of many a classic novel. After a few false starts in college as an Engineering major (first Electrical, then Computer, and finally Chemical), I eventually decided that literature was where my heart was and received a degree in English.

During college, I had many people ask, “Do you want to write or teach?” My answer was always, “Neither.” My desire was somehow to be involved in the publishing industry. At the time, I envisioned moving to New York and getting a job at a large publishing house as an editor. However, as often happens, life had different plans for me. A few months before I graduated from college, I was hired at Allen Press, Inc., as a proofreader. Working in scientific publishing was not exactly what I had in mind when I graduated, but I figured the experi-

ence would be good for my long-term career goals. Little did I know that I would find my niche.

My road to becoming a Managing Editor at Allen Press was a long one (more than 7 years in customer service), but I learned a lot along the way. One of the things I learned was that being any kind of editor in scholarly publishing was the perfect job for me. I do not like to write; rather, I prefer to edit other people’s writing. And, I am fascinated by all things science, but especially subjects in the medical field. So, I get to spend my days reading and editing scientific content. Perfect! Being a Managing Editor means I get to work with scientific content and provide customer service to my editors, authors, and reviewers—something I have a lot of experience doing and enjoy.

Being a member of ISMTE means I am involved in an organization of like-minded people who understand the trials and triumphs of being a Managing Editor. I attended my first ISMTE Annual Meeting in 2014, and it was a revelation! Allen Press is located in Kansas, where precious few scientific societies and publishing companies are located. It is easy for people in my line of work to feel isolated outside the walls of their company. However, ISMTE gives me a means for communing with other Managing Editors, Copy Editors, and Technical Editors. I feel I am among “my people” with ISMTE. That is what drove me to become more involved. I am proud to be serving on the Board of Directors for the next three years so that I may help our members get the most out of their memberships. I look forward to many more years being involved in this wonderful organization.

## 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.

# ISMTE Core Competency Survey Results: Social Media and Podcasting



**By Deborah Bowman, MFA, ELS**

Senior Managing Editor  
of Clinical Publications  
*Gastrointestinal Endoscopy*  
and *VideoGIE*

ORCID: [0000-0002-4851-6319](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4851-6319)

Learning about our fellow Managing and Technical Editors and comparing our journal practices with theirs is a huge benefit of the ISMTE and was one of the incentives for starting the organization 10 years ago. The Core Competency Survey was created in part to help us all understand what other ISMTE members are doing and the directions other scholarly journals are taking. These discoveries, we hope, will not only help ISMTE members but will also help ISMTE to better serve the membership.

The survey was created and conducted by the ISMTE Professional Development Committee and was sent to all ISMTE members in June 2016. The Committee received 188 responses out of 780 who received the survey, or a 24% response rate.

This month we continue to examine the results of the survey by looking at social media and podcasting results. Clearly social media is gaining importance in scholarly publishing. When asked “Do any of the journals you work on use social media?” 82% said yes, 10% said no, and 8% didn’t know. The types of platforms used vary as well, but by far the largest number of people use Twitter and Facebook (Figure 1). Other platforms used by smaller numbers of journals are LinkedIn, blogs, and “other,” which included Instagram, YouTube, and Google Plus.

Who creates the content posted? Only 43.8% of Managing Editors create the content themselves, and 43.1% do the posting. A total of 36% of journals ask their authors to provide the social media content, whereas 54% do not (and 14% don’t know). In 42% of the journals, the Editor-in-Chief or other Editors are expected to provide social media content; in 44% they are not (and 13% didn’t know).

When asked “Do you engage or interact with your journal’s audience via social media?” the answer was 37% yes and 62% no. In answer to the question “Does your journal have a social media policy?” 58.6% said no and only 22.4% indicated that they do (Figure 2), whereas 19% said they didn’t know. Some indicated that they aren’t familiar with their journal’s social

Which social media platforms do your journals use? Please select all that apply.

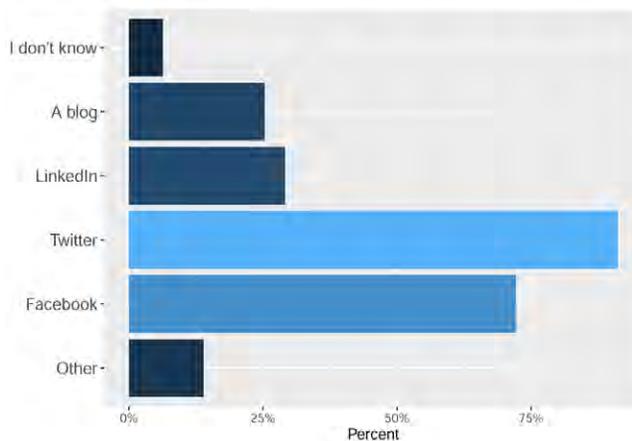


Figure 1

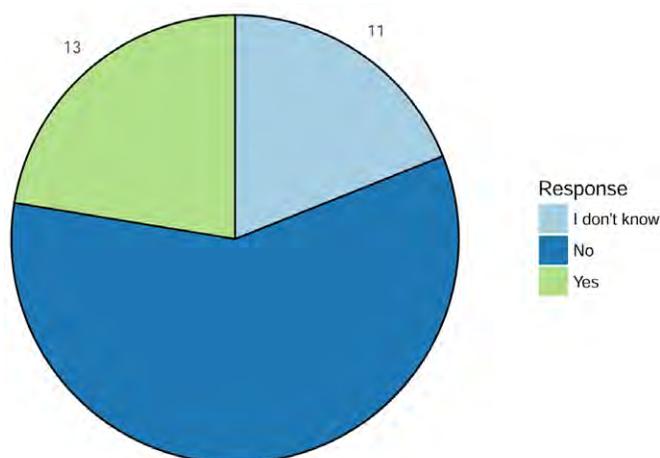


Figure 2

media policies because their Publisher or another company handles it. Finally, only 37% of journals have a separate social media editor; 57% do not, and 6% don't know.

Next, survey responders were asked whether their journal has a podcast. Only 32% do; 53% do not, and 15% don't know (Figure 3). Of those journals with podcasts, 35% are

produced professionally, 43% are not, and 22% don't know (Figure 4).

Watch future issues of *EON* for further results from the survey.

### Does your journal(s) have a podcast?

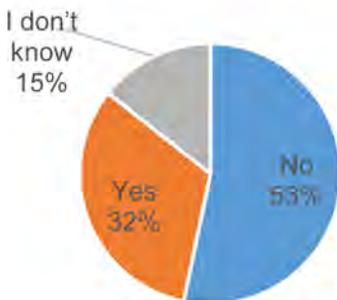


Figure 3

### Are any of the podcasts produced professionally?

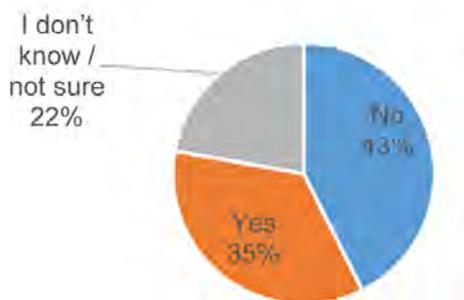


Figure 4



## Launching Soon

The application process will open soon for the 2017 International Society of Managing and Technical Editors Awards! As an annual event, the Awards celebrate the success and achievements of editorial office staff. The range of Award categories has been designed to be accessible to all members. The Awards provide an opportunity for businesses, organizations, and individuals to appear in the spotlight and celebrate their editorial achievements.

The following 3 Award categories are available:

- ISMTE Award for Excellence
- ISMTE Award for Achievement or Innovation
- ISMTE Jason Roberts Founder's Award



2016 ISMTE Award Winners: Deborah Bowman, Michael Willis, and Irene Hames



# Introducing Cover Art: What to Know, How to Implement It, and What to Ask



**By Alyssa Murphy, MA**

Editorial Manager

*Journal of the American Academy of  
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*

One of the telltale signs that a journal is under new leadership is a cover redesign. The cover, after all, is traditionally what gives readers the first impression of the publication, both in content and style. Thus, a redesign may follow from the editor's effect on journal content (as in the case of adding or deleting a table of contents on the cover) and may function as a graphical representation of the changing of the guard (introducing cover art and new features, for instance).

At the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (JAACAP)*, we find ourselves in the midst of such a transition. While the Editor-Elect, Douglas K. Novins, MD, does not take the *Journal's* reins until January 2018, for the moment, he is sharing the coachman's seat with our current Editor, Andrés Martin, MD, MPH, as they manage the transition. Among many other decisions that Dr. Novins will make regarding substance, style—particularly that of the cover—is demanding considerable discussion and thought. If your journal is considering commissioning cover art or is rethinking how it functions, you might find the evolution of *JAACAP's* cover and our conversations about its future helpful in shaping your own process.

## In the Beginning

We began featuring cover art in 2010 at the urging of Dr. Martin, who was inspired by the covers of the *American Journal of Psychiatry* under Robert Freedman, MD, and *Australasian Psychiatry* under Garry Walter, MD, PhD. Since

then, the *Journal* has featured cover art by Socorro Rivera, an artist living in Mexico who had worked with Dr. Martin previously at *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*. With the exception of the January cover, which is always a design featuring the *Journal's* signature ampersand, and the October cover, which is always tied to the city hosting the Academy's annual meeting, the cover art comments on one or more of the articles appearing in the issue, with the goal of piquing the reader's curiosity and also drawing out a particular aspect of the article that may not be readily apparent to readers. The cover art goes beyond a literal representation of the article's content: The April 2016 cover, inspired by an article on the distribution of obsessive-compulsive traits in the general population, used no. 2 pencils in various states of fracturing and disintegration below a bell curve as a metaphor for the percentages of children who exhibit obsessive-compulsive symptoms. To show that few children are exceptionally messy, pencil shavings, graphite dust, and eraser crumbles were on the left side of the curve; to show the small number of children who exhibit a compulsion for extreme neatness, identical, pristine pencils were lined up on the far right of the curve. Another recent cover, which drew on Academy recommendations for clinicians treating reactive attachment disorder and disinhibited social engagement disorder, showed a child's hand reaching for an adult's, to show, depending on the reader's interpretation, either a child who cannot connect with a caregiver because of his or her reactive attachment disorder or one who is continually striving to connect with any potential caregiver as a result of disinhibited social engagement disorder.

## The Creation Process

The process for creating the art involves several people and relies on multiple drafts and comments. Three months before the issue is set to publish, Dr. Martin identifies the article that he thinks should be featured on the cover. The decision is made sometimes based on which article has the most artistic possibilities, sometimes on blockbuster potential,

and sometimes to spread the wealth of which articles will feature “extras,” such as podcast interviews, press releases, and CME credit. Some topics present more visual possibilities than others; we have had more covers on juvenile justice than on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, for example, and we try to avoid oversampling certain topics. What follows after selecting the article is a flurry of emails and drafts. Ms. Rivera, whose medium for *JAACAP* is pastiche/collage, produces a first draft, which is discussed between Dr. Martin and Mary Billingsley, the Managing Editor. Requests for revision are sent back to the artist, and more drafts and discussion follow. Once the final version has been agreed upon, the file is sent to our publisher, Elsevier, and the proof of the cover is returned.

The amount of time and the number of revisions required vary enormously from cover to cover, and the process is not always smooth. Cover art has sometimes gone through three or more iterations before the basic concept is scrapped and a new one is substituted. Occasionally the issue release has been pushed back by several days because the cover art was not finalized. Dr. Martin and Ms. Billingsley generally try to leave the interpretation of the central idea or theme up to Ms. Rivera because setting out too many guidelines can be artistically restrictive, but occasionally the instructions are too vague and more guidance is required. Working with the same artist every issue helps smooth the wrinkles that appear in the course of cover art development, however. After working together for six years, Ms. Rivera, Dr. Martin, and Ms. Billingsley have developed an efficient and effective process to create the cover image.

Many journals work with more than one artist to create cover art. They establish a bidding process, with prospective illustrators or photographers mocking up concepts before one is selected. The benefits of this approach are several: You get more variety in cover art, more control over the final product, and can negotiate the fee. On the other hand, fees can vary wildly from person to person, the process takes longer since more negotiation is involved, and you have to be more mindful of achieving a unifying tone or voice in cover art if having a coherent appearance is important.

### Room for Interpretation

Commissioned cover art can speak for itself, and if you are thinking about introducing cover art, you may only need a line or two inside the cover to explain the choice of the cover image. But because *JAACAP*'s cover art is an interpretation of an article in the issue, we always include

commentary in the table of contents that ties the research and the imagery together and also to something larger. The connection to the broader world is sometimes a discussion of current events—an article on equine therapy yielded a cover featuring a stylized horse and commentary on American Pharoah winning the Triple Crown—or, more often, a work of art or literature that speaks to a phenomenon from the original article. The cover that commented on reactive attachment disorder and disinhibited social engagement disorder inspired me to write about the ambiguity of showing two hands that cannot quite touch, imagery central to the iconic painting of the creation of Adam in the Sistine Chapel. What the commentary does not do is explain the creative decisions point by point. Instead, we leave the readers to contemplate both the cover art and the cover text, making any implicit connections for themselves, and, we hope, thinking more broadly about how the research applies beyond the consulting room or lab.

### Looking Ahead

After six years, the process of creating cover art and text is, if not a well-oiled machine, one that still works consistently well. Soon, though, we may have to adapt to a new process. The incoming Editor, Dr. Novins, plans to keep cover art but has proposed using art created by children, something that the journal has explored before, most recently in March 2014. As he points out, *JAACAP* is a journal about children. Why shouldn't the cover art be created by them too? Featuring art created by patients in therapy, in particular, opens new avenues for integrating research with clinical practice: The child artists could, in effect, be commenting on their experience living with the conditions that our authors are investigating. But complications are inherent in this approach, as well: For starters, we will have to ensure we obtain necessary consent forms and maintain the artists' anonymity for confidentiality purposes. Furthermore, we must contend with some difficult-to-answer questions: Will all art come from patients' art therapy sessions, or will we take submissions from healthy children as well, and how will we maintain a pipeline of submissions? If we send out a call for submissions, will the readership be supportive? If not, what will we put on the cover instead? And how will each month's art be selected?

While these questions and issues are specific to our field, the broader point is applicable to other academic journals experimenting in cover art: If you solicit submissions, how does the possibility of contributor publicity affect the

mission of your journal? On the other hand, what are the numerous benefits to having more people involved in the appearance of the journal, helping to shape the public face of scholarly literature?

The cover of your journal is prime real estate for making a statement about the content inside, for asserting a point

of view, for rallying readers to a uniting purpose. It can take on a multitude of responsibilities if you are deliberate about selecting an artist to render it, a topic or idea to show, and words to prompt readers' thoughts. The cover deserves no less attention than that given to selecting articles. Let it act as an ambassador to what lies behind its page.

## Committee Update

### Volunteers Welcome: How to Get Involved in ISMTE

**By Julie Nash**

J&J Editorial, LLC  
President-Elect, ISMTE  
[julie@jjeditorial.com](mailto:julie@jjeditorial.com)

Back in 2007, ISMTE was started with a group of 17 dedicated publishing professionals who wanted to network and share ideas with others working in the field. Now, 10 years later, our society has more than 1,000 members and nearly a dozen different committees and focus areas.

We want to continue to grow our membership and programs, but to do so, we need volunteer help. One of our goals for 2017 is to recruit more members to volunteer, so you will be seeing more posts on social media, emails, and *EON* articles encouraging participation.

Perhaps it also was your New Year's resolution to get more involved in professional organizations, but you aren't quite sure how to get involved with ISMTE. How can you sign up for a committee? Who should you contact with meeting session ideas? Maybe you would love to write a column like this for *EON* but aren't sure how to get started.

Here is a quick guide to answer all those questions and, hopefully, make getting involved easy.

1. **Sign up to help.** We have a volunteer sign up that has all the latest open committee spots and other projects. You can find the sign up on the ISMTE web page or at this link: [www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c48afaf2fa13-looking](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c48afaf2fa13-looking).
2. **Contact a board member or committee chair.** If you are interested in one of the society's focus areas, feel free to contact a board member ([www.ismte.org/?page=Leadership](http://www.ismte.org/?page=Leadership)) or committee chair ([www.ismte.org/?page=FocusAreas](http://www.ismte.org/?page=FocusAreas)) to find out how to get involved.
3. **Read *EON*.** Our monthly publication highlights many of the society's upcoming events and activities. If you are interested in writing for *EON*, contact the Editors at [editorialofficeneeds@gmail.com](mailto:editorialofficeneeds@gmail.com). We are always looking for new writers!
4. **Join a local group.** We have local groups all over the world. Joining a local group is a great way to network with other editors in your area. Please visit our local groups site ([www.ismte.org/page/LocalGroups](http://www.ismte.org/page/LocalGroups)) to see if there is a group in your area. You can join the group directly from this site.
5. **Attend a meeting.** In 2017, we will host our annual meetings in Denver, London, and Beijing. Check in on the [ISMTE website](#) for more information.
6. **Contact me.** My focus area on the board is volunteer recruitment and organization. Please feel free to reach out to me at [julie@jjeditorial.com](mailto:julie@jjeditorial.com) if you are interested in getting involved.

# The Scourge of Illegitimate Journals: Becoming Better Informed in a Post-Beall Era



**By Jason Roberts, PhD**

Senior Partner

Origin Editorial

[Jason@origineditorial.com](mailto:Jason@origineditorial.com)

In January 2017, one of the most (in)famous sites in publishing suddenly went dark. I am talking about Jeffrey Beall's eponymous List of predatory journals and publishers that was to be found at [www.scholarlyoa.com](http://www.scholarlyoa.com). Beall's List is likely known to most of us, but for the uninitiated, it came to represent a quasi-definitive list of highly problematic journals. These are journals that flooded inboxes with requests for papers.<sup>1</sup> Journals that promised rapid peer review and cheap publication yet fail to actually perform a review or properly produce an article to ensure it has a persistent link and is properly archived. Journals that allegedly fake the names of editors, stole identities to plump their editorial boards, and tricked others into believing they had lent their name to a credible publication. The emerging situation has proven disheartening for some (a short list of pieces on the disappearance of Beall's List can be found at the end of this article). Potentially predatory publishers, on the other hand, likely greeted the news of Beall's disappearance with unbridled joy. If not exactly rejoicing, another, very distinct, group are probably quietly relieved as well: Beall critics. Beall was accumulating a growing legion of detractors regarding his rather opaque methods used to develop the List. Furthermore, concern was also raised about the implication of being on the List with its "predatory" appellation which connoted deceit and nefariousness, when in fact some journals were perhaps guilty of nothing more than guilelessness and/or incompetence and may have otherwise been on a path toward legitimate publication. So, if anyone is hoping to read a Chicken Little-esque article on what will happen to the world now that Beall has gone dark (and remains so at the time of publishing) you can

stop reading here. Instead, I ask that we think carefully about what Beall (the man and the List) achieved and where we go from here. I also make a plea in this article for any future endeavors that aim to replace Beall to include every stakeholder in the publishing process.

Make no mistake: What we commonly understand to be predatory journals are an appalling parasitic blot on the publishing landscape. "They exploit the unwitting" goes the common, and most vocal, narrative. They pollute the publishing landscape by allowing non peer-reviewed research to bubble up and get cited, with potential risks of misdirecting future research, misplacing significance, and maybe, downstream, influencing patient treatment approaches when it comes to biomedical journals. But can we precisely define what "they" actually represents? We think we can. But can we? Honestly? Over the last couple of years, I have been involved with a multi-center research project led by the Centre for Journalology at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute. At about the time this issue of *EON* will publish, the fruits of this work will be available for all to see: The first, systematic study on the characteristics of so-called predatory journals as compared to a sample of legitimate open access and "traditional", subscription-based, journals.<sup>2</sup> Those results will be summarized in a future issue of *EON* but, in short, the results challenged many of my own personal assumptions about predatory journals. Not least is the term predatory itself. The word is perfect for grabbing attention but may be somewhat excessive with the potential for some innocent parties becoming swept up by a broad brush. The problem is that across publishing, there is no definition of what actually constitutes "predatory" publication. That situation was not helped by Beall himself. His inclusion methods were never made completely clear and, really until the Ottawa study, have barely been subjected to any systematic vetting. The upcoming Ottawa article will not provide definitive criteria for what constitutes predatory publications, but will instead point out common characteristics across these publications. Inevitably, the more you look, the more troubling the definitions used to date become. And



for that specific reason, I am not particularly sad Beall's List is now dark.\*

Note that big asterisk, however. I think Beall's List served an incredibly important, if sometimes misdirected, function, and the vacuum left is now potentially troubling unless the publishing industry and the research community get smart quickly. I had the great fortune to meet Jeffrey Beall at the ISMTE conference in Baltimore in the summer of 2015. He was standing alone holding a beer; he was possibly one of the most well-known people in the publishing world at that time, and no one was talking to him. I approached him and promptly spent the next hour talking to a very humble, self-effacing, erudite man. I truly admire what he has done and the fact that he was brave enough to do it with all the potential for nastiness and legal battles. I was also struck by the fact that he was very candid. I do not claim to know Jeffrey Beall and absolutely will not be presumptuous enough in this article to speculate about his motivations for walking away from his curated List, as I found some have done in blogs, articles, and social media. However, it was very evident to me that I was talking to someone who had a brilliant idea to shine a light on the most murky corner of publishing but had now found the List—how people used it and how various agendas were being pushed because of it—maybe a little overwhelming. Was Beall blameless in all this happening? Arguably not. But that is another conversation for another time.

Certainly, as an outside observer, it felt to me that Beall's List, and all the conversations it generated, had gone way beyond its intent and original purpose. On the one hand, the List was being used by some as a tool to label and accuse. On the other, it was being used as a crutch to protect many from being duped. It was, if we are brutally honest, a blunt instrument when a scalpel was needed to cut out the cancer inside the body of the official published scientific and academic record that such duplicitous publications had come to represent. Amazingly, from just this one list, many debates arose. Beall's List was focused on journals and publishers, but the List itself did not really address why people were publishing in these journals. That discussion is critical: Were authors being duped? Alternatively, did authors possess adroitness to recognize that if mainstream journals could not/would not publish their research, they could find an outlet in the modern day equivalent of vanity publishing? Authors could be fraudsters too and, in the absence of any discernible peer-review process and perhaps in perfect symbiosis, the illegitimate journal market grew to mutually serve each party in a race to the

bottom. Then again, is this also a convenient, and assuring, conceit? That all research in so-called predatory journals was tainted in some way but, reassuringly for many, contained within a silo (defined by Beall) of the discredited. Research will be published this year (currently embargoed, so I cannot disclose any information) that showed rather than Beall's List journals being a repository of the corrupt, inept, and rejected, they also published a lot of perfectly good studies. Okay, so that covers corrupt publishers and authors, both the good and the bad. What also about the entire open access pricing model that many contend possibly led to the sprouting of predatory journals? Was that model, with article processing charges often over \$2,000 in many journals, shutting out a huge number of the world's researchers? Did a number of these journals, either corrupt or inept, cater to the disenfranchised, and what did it mean for a journal that found itself on Beall's List? Was there/is there a path towards legitimacy? And there is yet another conversation topic: Was there substance to possible claims that the List contained a whiff of neo-colonialism or Western paternalism, whether intended or not? After that far-from exhaustive digest I just presented of ongoing conversations surrounding predatory publishing, it is easy to see how Beall's straightforward idea of pointing a finger at what ostensibly seemed to be the publishing equivalent of a bad hombre, spiraled out of control and spun away from its originator.

And herein lies my concern for what now follows. More than anything, I am concerned that someone—or some entity—will simply jump in and fill the space without paying attention to the fact that their inclusion criteria need to be scientifically tested and subjected to the highest standards of methodological review. As Beall never published his criteria, his methods were impossible to validate. Any future list also probably should not be a blacklist, but maybe a white list. It may be something that, through the provision of clear criteria for good practice, could be used both by emerging journals as a guide and for existing legitimate journals to sharpen up their own performance before looking down their noses at others. Any future replacement for Beall's List also needs to be multi-functional. It needs to be able to incentivize good practice. It needs to be used as a tool for education. It should be adaptable. On this particular point, I would love to see it feed a future system all journals could tap into, to detect whether a citation is from a journal that does not demonstrate some common core criteria for acceptable practice (the tool only detects and provides

no judgment; journals can simply choose whether to accept the citation or not once it is highlighted). Above all, a future List absolutely needs to be utterly transparent, smart enough to evolve and even learn from itself. It needs to be supported by publishers and researchers alike. It needs to be built upon proper, published, research and not just simple consensus on what we think is the proper way journals (and researchers who publish in them) should behave. Anything less, simply put, becomes Beall 1.1 rather than a paradigm-shifting version 2.0.

Anyway, for one final, brief, moment: back to Beall. Gradually, Beall's List was being subjected to ever-greater scrutiny and, quite frankly, its position, as the unofficial arbiter of legitimacy, was increasingly untenable. Beall's List represented a fantastic version 1.0, but it was on the cusp of outliving its usefulness. Maybe Jeffrey Beall felt the same way (sorry, I said I would not speculate!). Whether he was right or wrong or, most likely, somewhere in between, Beall has performed an amazingly useful service to both publishing and academia. But it is time to get more sophisticated. It's also time we get both more serious and smarter in discussing what to do with illegitimate publications and illegitimate research. This is a multi-stakeholder conversation that concerns all of the following: the research community (both researchers and their institutions alike), funding agencies, and publishers/society journal owners who should be motivated because they are potentially losing revenues. Shen and Bjork, for example, contend that the predatory journal market in 2014 was worth US\$74,000,000.<sup>3</sup> If we eventually accept, when the forthcoming study I alluded to earlier shows as such, that some of these revenues were generated off the back of good research, publishers may realize income is being siphoned away from them.

Finally, if you read *EON* you are more likely than not working in an editorial office. You might be wondering: Why should I care, particularly if your journal is utterly respectable. Here is your answer: You most likely serve a particular niche market of authors, especially so if you are a society journal (*i.e.*, the *Annals of the International Society of X*, the *Journal of the American XYZ Society*, etc.) Many of your authors are working in the dark with no instruction on how to get published, how to properly write for publication, or how to properly cite papers to effectively contextualize their research. Many of you, like me, go to great lengths to make your journal(s) become a knowledge source on all matters publishing. In doing so,

you give a little back to the authors that give you their research to publish. Your journal in return might benefit from any sense of trust or community that you may foster. So go ahead and think about how you might educate your authors on so-called predatory publishing. You could write an editorial. I did this recently and still get emails from readers thanking me for pointing out a phenomenon they were not aware of.<sup>4</sup> A second reason why you should care is that you might want to audit your practices, your instructions for authors, your peer-review processes, and then determine whether you are complete/up-to-date with the latest good practices (such as they are, scattered across a multitude of documents and organizations). Take a good look at what you are doing. Seriously. The Ottawa study, just in our small sample, found some otherwise perfectly legitimate publications displaying behaviors that were scarcely different from so-called predatory, or potentially predatory, journals. Finally, use this moment to talk to your editors about what protections you might need in the future to ensure the corpus of research you publish does not become infiltrated by citations to publications that cannot be verified for their legitimacy because they published in potentially illegitimate journals. That might be a discussion for the Editorial Board or a publications committee. That doesn't mean you shouldn't initiate the conversation.

So, for now, Beall's List is gone. Something may follow soon. If it does, it better meet some high standards or otherwise expect withering criticism from an increasingly alert research community. Let's all use this pause to think about what each of us can do to contribute to the conversation and uphold the qualities of good peer review and the proper publication of expertly validated research.

If you wish to know more about the fate of Beall's List, here you will find an assortment of further reading:

[www.timeshighereducation.com/news/bealls-list-closure-boon-predatory-publishers](http://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/bealls-list-closure-boon-predatory-publishers)

[theconversation.com/who-will-keep-predatory-science-journals-at-bay-now-that-jeffrey-bealls-blog-is-gone-71613](http://theconversation.com/who-will-keep-predatory-science-journals-at-bay-now-that-jeffrey-bealls-blog-is-gone-71613)

[www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/01/18/librarians-list-predatory-journals-reportedly-removed-due-threats-and-politics](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/01/18/librarians-list-predatory-journals-reportedly-removed-due-threats-and-politics)

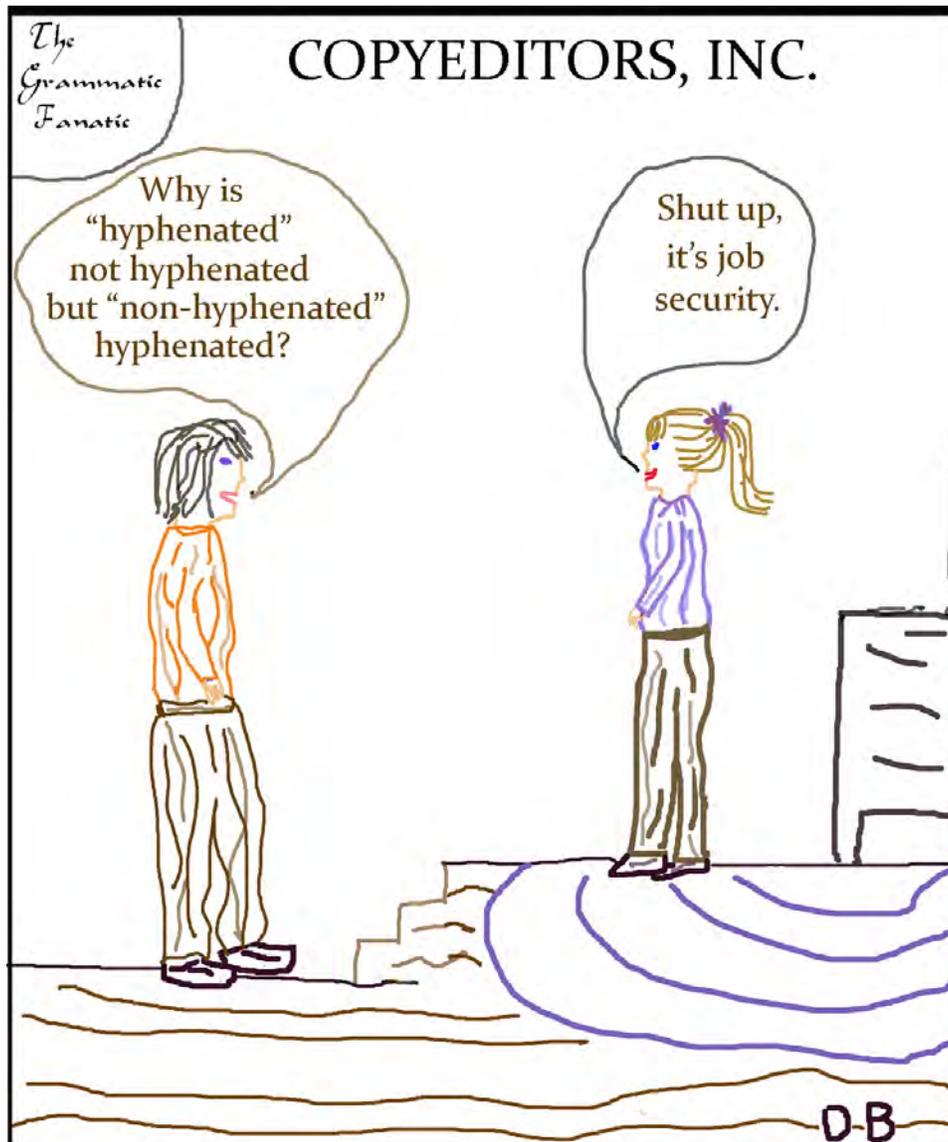
[retractionwatch.com/2017/01/17/bealls-list-potential-predatory-publishers-go-dark/](http://retractionwatch.com/2017/01/17/bealls-list-potential-predatory-publishers-go-dark/)

\*Please note: All opinions represent my own and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Origin Editorial, ISMTE, or any journals I am personally associated with. In the interest of full disclosure, my spouse, Larissa Shamseer, is involved

in research into illegitimate publication. Again, however, the views expressed here are mine and mine alone.

**References:**

- 1 Moher D., Srivastava A. You are invited to submit... BMC Med. 2015;13:180.
- 2 Shamseer L., Moher D., Maduekwe O., et al. Potential predatory and legitimate biomedical journals: can you tell the difference? A cross-sectional comparison. 2017; DOI 10.1186/s12916-017-0785-9 (in press).
3. Shen C., Bjork B.C. "Predatory" open access: A longitudinal study of article volumes and market characteristics. BMC Med. 2015;13:230.
4. Roberts, J. Predatory Journals: think before you submit. Headache: The Journal of Head and Face Pain. 56:618-621.



# Celebrating ISMTE's Tenth Anniversary



**By Michael Willis**  
President

We're looking forward in 2017 to celebrating the Society's tenth birthday. I thought it would be interesting to share my personal top ten highlights of ISMTE from the past decade. It's difficult to be selective, but—in no particular order—I came up with the following:

- Our inaugural **Asian-Pacific meeting** in Singapore in April 2016: a highly engaged audience with stimulating speakers in a (for me) very unusual environment.
- Rebranding: a smart new **logo and tagline** ('empowering editorial offices around the world'), helping us to focus on the core of our activities.
- The early years of the **European annual meeting**: often in a beautifully autumnal Oxford, with a cosy informal atmosphere.
- The launch of the **Oxford local group**: a testament to the commitment and enthusiasm of (in particular) two members, Naomi Conneely and Stephanie Saccharov, with some promising beginnings.
- Reaching the milestone in 2016 of **1,000 members**.
- Opening up our membership to individuals from **low-income countries**: Dozens benefit from this, and we have benefited from their presence at some of our annual meetings.
- Launching our **core competency survey** in 2016: an important effort in understanding the make-up and needs of our members.
- Serving on the **Poster Committee**: having the privilege of reviewing and assessing the research and creative thinking of a number of members.
- Collaboration with **peer organisations** in our industry: COPE stands out in particular, as we continue to work with them in organising our annual meetings, but I have greatly appreciated our good relations with EASE, CSE, ACSE, and other bodies.
- Working with a truly excellent team of dedicated, hard-working, and enthusiastic **Board members**: People have come and gone over the years, but the momentum and drive never wanes.

Please do share with us your own top ten. You can also tweet about them with the hashtag **#ISMTEis10**.

**KEEPING UP TO DATE???**

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## 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 comment about publishing delays followed by further discussion.

2/15/2016 AT 9:10:21 PM GMT



PHOTO NOT AVAILABLE

J. Nash

Posts: 2

[Permalink](#) [Report](#) [Quote](#)

**Does It Take too Long for Research to Get Published?**  
Happy February!

Nature recently published several articles commenting on how long it takes for research to be published. The article comments about how scientists are becoming increasingly annoyed by the "snail's pace" of academic publishing. Researchers quoted in the article (<http://www.nature.com/news/does-it-take-too-long-to-publish-research-1.19320>) conclude that something needs to change.

This got me thinking: how would I change the peer review process to make it faster -- but still fair and accurate? Is Open Access or online-only publishing the answer? What do ISMTE members think?

As an aside, Nature ran a survey of readers regarding their longest wait to get published. Here is a link to those replies: <http://www.nature.com/news/snail-s-pace-nature-readers-on-their-longest-wait-to-get-published-1.19375>

Here are some of the authors suggestions for improved turnaround times:

"Of nearly 3,000 responses, more than 40% suggested that peer reviewers should stop asking for unnecessary revisions in manuscripts, and another 22% asked journal editors to make quicker and clearer decisions."

Interested to hear your thoughts!!

Julie Nash



A. Etkin  
Posts: 20

[Permalink](#) [Report](#) [Quote](#)

I'm not sure if the time it 'usually' takes for peer review to complete is what is delaying publication. I think most often delays occur post-acceptance. For many journals, there is a large backlog of papers and accepts just sit in a queue until they are assigned to an issue. One of the things which drives me batty is that there is no reason for journals not to published accepted papers online ASAP (many do nowadays) and THAT should be considered "published." I get the sense that there is still confusion and mixed feelings about this.

Overall, the entire process can be more efficient. Time of review, time of copy edit/production, time to publish online and in print. Having said this, we've come along, long way from the days when an author had to send multiple hard copies via snail mail into an editorial office and then pray their manuscripts did not get lost on a pile on someone's desk!



D. Bowman  
Posts: 19

[Permalink](#) [Report](#) [Quote](#)

My journal has started publishing accepted articles (uncorrected proofs) within 3 days of sending them to the publisher, and that has made our publication time much faster. The biggest hold-up for us is in getting our reviewers to complete their work on time.



K. Overstreet  
Posts: 22

[Permalink](#) [Report](#) [Quote](#)

Hi Julie,

This is a great topic. I think there are a lot of things that we can do in the editorial office to reduce the time from submission to final decision. We should set expectations for how long papers sit in our hands; for example, papers should not sit in the Complete (Initial or Revised Submission) Checklist or Complete Production Checklist queues for more than 24 hours. We should benchmark the peer review process for our journals so we know where time is spent, on average, in the process and address bottle necks, where possible. We can also analyze how and when reminders are sent to reviewers, editors, and authors to ensure they have the desired effect. My colleagues Jason Roberts and Steve Cavanaugh presented a poster at the 2015 meetings on this topic.

Although papers spend a great majority of time in the peer review process with reviewers, editors, and authors (for revisions), I think the editorial office staff can still reduce times by enacting appropriate policies and proactively evaluating system data. Of course, we all wear the "Professional Nag" hat, and that is an important part of our role. No one is closer to the full peer review process than we are, and we can take opportunities to suggest improvements to editors, societies, and publishers that will save time.

# Calendar of Events

## Best Practices in Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Board Review

March 7, 2017

Webinar

<http://www.alpsp.org/>

## Developing Open Access and Hybrid Journals

March 9, 2017

London, England

<http://www.alpsp.org/>

## Publishing for Professionals

March 11, 2017

Chicago, IL, USA

<http://www.cwip.org/>

## Understanding eJournal Technology

March 22, 2017

London, England

<http://www.alpsp.org/>

## ACES

March 23-25, 2017

St. Petersburg, Florida, USA

<http://www.copydesk.org/>

## ISMTE Asian-Pacific Conference

March 27-28, 2017

Beijing, China

[www.ismte.org](http://www.ismte.org)

*EASE and COPE members receive ISMTE member registration rate*

## SSP 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

May 31–June 2, 2017

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

[www.sspnet.org](http://www.sspnet.org)

## ISMTE North American Conference

August 10-11, 2017

Denver, Colorado, USA

[www.ismte.org](http://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, USA

[www.peerreviewcongress.org](http://www.peerreviewcongress.org)

## ALPSP Conference and Awards

September 13-15, 2017

Noordwijk, the Netherlands

[www.alpsp.org](http://www.alpsp.org)

## ISMTE European Conference

November 9-10, 2017

London, England

[www.ismte.org](http://www.ismte.org)

*EASE members receive ISMTE member registration rate*

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## EDITORS-IN-CHIEF:

**Stephanie Kinnan**

skinnan@asge.org

**Carolyn Sperry**

sperrymossa@gmail.com

## SENIOR EDITORS:

**Liz Bury**

managingeditor@acousticalsociety.org

**Nijsje Dorman**

nijsje@gmail.com

## EDITORIAL ADVISOR:

**Meghan McDevitt**

mmcdevitt@asge.org

## SECTION EDITORS:

**TAMING TECHNOLOGY: Edwina Thorn**

edwina.thorn@gmail.com

**PEERS IN REVIEW: Meghan McDevitt**

mmcdevitt@asge.org

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# ISMTE

International Society  
of Managing and  
Technical Editors

275 N. York St. Suite 401  
Elmhurst, IL 60126 USA

**PHONE** +1.630.433.4513

**FAX** +1.630.563.9181

**info@ISMTE.org**



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