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Reading Their Reactions: Where the Scientific Community Stands on Changing Policies

By Meaghan Kelly
Managing Editor, Assistant Copy Editor
J&J Editorial

Historically, April 22nd has been celebrated as Earth Day. This year, Earth Day coincided with the first ever March for Science. The March for Science was a gathering of scientists and advocates of scientific research, from the middle school biology teachers to the humble bug enthusiast, to support the importance research has on our everyday lives. With the recent threats of budget cuts to a lengthy list of government-funded programs along with attempted travel bans, the scientific community hopes this rallying cry will have a positive effect on lawmakers to reverse these proposed policies. We, too, are members of this community, and it is important for us to be aware of what is at risk of being lost and how our editors, authors, and reviewers are reacting to this news.

The Environmental Protection Agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Energy are just a few of the agencies on the chopping block.1-3 Entire state and federal programs would be eliminated, such as the Clean Power Plan and the Global Climate Change Initiative.1 Out of the agencies listed above, the drastic cut to the NIH’s budget could be the most dramatic and the most detrimental to researchers, the United States’ position at a pioneering forefront in medical and biological breakthroughs, and to American families. The Administration has planned to cut 20% of the NIH’s budget, resulting in a loss of $5.8 billion, which funds over 2,600 institutions and supports over 313,000 full-time and part-time jobs.2 Medical research is not cheap and researchers depend on grant money to not only support their work but their lives and their families. A loss on that grand of a scale is bound to cause rippling effects that could be felt for years to come.

We’ve all seen at least one funding statement that includes grants from the NIH. So, what would happen if the money disappeared? The budget cut could mean that the NIH would not be able to provide a single grant in 2018.4 That would put a hold on current work and prohibit any future studies from leaving the notebook of any researcher. The American Society for Microbiology published a statement on the proposed budget cut, declaring that “the magnitude of this reduction in funding is unprecedented and will slow scientific discovery against chronic and infectious diseases.”5 Christine McEntee, the Executive Director and CEO of the American Geophysical Union, believes the budget cuts “would be a step backward for scientific progress, jeopardize the U.S.’s role as a leader in innovation, and harm the American public.”6 Within the publishing community, we could see a decline in submissions or a cut in issue publication. There would most likely be a serious drop in open access (OA) manuscripts as those fees are paid by grants. If researchers are struggling to fund their studies, it would be understandable if they chose to submit to a journal that did not charge any kind of publication fee. Eigenfactor.org has a current listing of all OA journals and their publishing fees to assist authors in choosing the right journal for their budget. The index includes journals that charge nothing, while the most expensive is a $4,366 fee to publish in the International Heart Journal.6 PLOS and BioMed Central, two giants in OA publishing, could feel a huge loss in profit as a result of the Administration’s budget cuts to state and federal programs that support the sciences.

However, we should not forget what is really at stake here, and that is the critical information shared through scholarly publishing: life-saving vaccines and procedures, preventative medicines, alternative energy models, and plant and crop management. Whether on the editorial or
production side of publishing, we have an equally important contribution to the distribution of this knowledge. And although we may not fully comprehend the information within each manuscript, we fully understand the reason a manuscript was published—it has something of value to say that must be shared among the community.

Budget cuts are not the only thing threatening the scientific community. The attempts at banning travel from several predominantly Muslim countries has a direct effect on researchers here and abroad. The policy would prevent critical collaboration between universities and institutions, essentially cutting off America from countries that have brought us award-winning mathematicians, NASA engineers, and microbiologists. The travel ban has the potential to dissolve research labs and prevent the hiring of university faculty. Universities will begin to lack the diversity that provides the creative environments for ideas to flourish if current and prospective students are prohibited from entering the country. If the travel ban is approved, there will be a drop in attendance at conferences, further inhibiting collaboration between American and foreign researchers.

While the March for Science has the best of intentions, some scientists feel as though it is simply not enough to change the minds of lawmakers. Some fear that the March will turn the scientific community into a “biased interest group” in the eyes of the policymakers and only cause the partisan divide to widen at a most critical time. What really brings scientists together? According to one biologist, it’s “hypothesis-driven experiments, replication of results, and peer review.” Where the march needs to take place is in schools and town hall meetings, places where scientists can educate and advocate the importance of their results. Those who believe the march will have little impact to reverse any decisions on budget cuts and environmental policies know that Washington needs to be shown evidence-based facts. Strong scientific research is not supposed to have any kind of bias or predispositions, and what worries scientists most about the march is that many will begin to think that research and its results be presented only to support the legislation of one side of the aisle and not the other. This is not to say all scientists believe that the march is not deserving of support, but there is more to be done beyond April 22nd.

We have an important role as managing editors to support the researchers and their publications. Perhaps one of those reports sent through peer review will end up in the hands of policymakers. Perhaps one is all it will take to educate someone on evidence-based truths. While we may not directly feel the brunt of these proposed budget cuts or travel bans, there is a good chance we have interacted with someone who has. As these policies are debated and potentially turned into law, the definition of “editorial support” may go beyond helping an assistant editor navigate ScholarOne to one that is more engaged in the support of the scientific community as a whole.

References
Science is a method of study aimed at understanding the physical world and disseminating that knowledge. The scientific process, including publishing and disseminating research findings, is based on an underlying assumption of trust in those that do the research and belief in the truth of what is reported to have been done and found.

While that underlying assumption remains to this day, over the years, the need for some standards of best practice has emerged. These standards have been set, via various codes of practice, with the aim of maintaining the integrity of the scientific record and ensuring the ethical conduct of research. This process of setting standards has not ceased but continues to develop as research communities question current practices and seek to improve them further. Questions about the validity of peer review and the crisis in reproducibility are notable examples of this in recent years.1,2

In the past, the revelation of shocking and unethical research was the driving force behind the development of standards for research on humans.3-5 However, the development of best practice standards has been an ongoing process and the present may be the most challenging time yet for integrity in science. The reality for modern day scientists is that their motivation, by necessity, must go beyond just the desire to better understand the world to include a far more complex combination of factors that aim to maintain reputations, prestige, and livelihoods. That coupled with an increasing growth in the number of researchers, articles, and journals worldwide has put a strain on the process of publication while making the need to maintain standards more important than ever.6

Anyone working as an editor over the last 10 years will have noticed an increase in the number of issues they have to handle related to research misconduct. It is unclear how big a problem this really is. This is in part due to difficulties in defining it. The Office of Research Integrity defines serious misconduct as fabrication (making up results), falsification (manipulating results), and plagiarism (copying other’s work without attribution), while their definition of ‘questionable research practice’ includes the use of harmful or dangerous research methods.7 It could be argued that the latter is the most serious type of misconduct of all, and a broader definition of research misconduct should include any activity which undermines the integrity of the scientific record be this via the fabrication or falsification of data, plagiarism, the use of research methods where there is inhumane treatment of animals, the violation of human rights, or a disregard for international agreements and conventions on research practices.

Another hindrance to understanding the extent of the problem is that it is difficult to measure. The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), which holds quarterly forums where editors can take difficult cases for discussion, has seen a rise in data-related misconduct, questionable behaviour, and peer review-related cases brought to the forums.8 This could be because editors are becoming more aware of such practices, that detection methods are better, that there is an overall increase in the number of articles submitted to journals, and because there is a real increase in the occurrence of practices that constitute misconduct. Similarly, we know the number of articles retracted by journals is rising,9 but some argue this is because of better detection methods and a greater willingness to retract articles rather than a real rise in research misconduct.10 Using retractions as a surrogate marker for research misconduct is problematic because articles are retracted due to honest error as well as research misconduct, and the reasons for retractions are difficult to investigate because of inconsistencies in the amount of information given in retraction notices and the lack of a standardised approach to retraction wording across the industry.

When asked directly, fewer researchers admit to behaviour such as fabrication, falsification, or manipulation of the results, than to seeing such behaviour in others.10,11 So any reported data on research misconduct is likely to be an underestimation of its real extent.
Research misconduct is a difficult to define, difficult to quantify problem with complex and varied causes and serious consequences. How is such a problem to be tackled? The first step must be to agree on where responsibility lies. The findings of a survey on the culture of scientific research in the United Kingdom, published by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics in the United Kingdom concluded that “[t]here is a collective obligation for the actors in the system to do everything they can to ensure the culture of research supports good research practice and the production of high quality science.”

This report makes suggestions for action for funding bodies, research institutions, publishers and editors, professional bodies, and individual researchers, which aim to promote a positive culture of good research practice and high-quality research. These are aims that need not necessarily be confined to the United Kingdom and could apply on a global scale.

Research misconduct tends to be dealt with in a compartmentalised way with focus on detection of misconduct, correction of the scientific record, and consequences for the authors. The usual process for journals and publishers when misconduct is detected is to investigate, and in some cases, ask institutions to investigate further. When needed, steps are taken to correct the scientific record, usually via the publication of retractions. Institutions investigate allegations of misconduct and, where found to be upheld, determine sanctions against the authors. Despite these established processes, there is a stigma associated with article retractions. Institutions investigate allegations of misconduct and, where found to be upheld, determine sanctions against the authors. Despite these established processes, there is a stigma associated with article retractions. Institutions investigate allegations of misconduct or disclosing the reasons behind individual retractions. Similar concerns may discourage institutions from investigating or disclosing outcomes of their investigations. Sometimes the process of addressing misconduct stalls because an institution won’t investigate a journal’s concerns or a journal won’t act on an institution’s investigation recommendations. The discovery and resolution of cases of misconduct need to be viewed in a more positive way. Specifically, that they are not a reflection of failings on the part of any one organisation, but that quality assurance mechanisms are in place and corrective measures are taken. There is guidance from COPE on how journals, publishers, and institutions can work more effectively together to deal with research misconduct and promote good practice.

A proactive, collaborative effort focused on prevention is needed to really tackle misconduct in the long term. Many researchers are not aware of what the expected standards are in their field of research. They follow the lead of their supervisors and senior colleagues who may be equally unaware, and so bad practices are perpetuated. Journals and publishers can play their part by working proactively in collaboration with institutions to raise awareness of expected standards by providing resources and training for researchers and peer reviewers and by tackling the causes of misconduct behaviour. For example, COPE is working with editors and publishers on alternatives to article retractions to better reflect the many reasons why an article may need to be removed from the public record. The pressure to publish is recognised as a possible motivation for researchers to commit misconduct because academic success is judged on an individual researcher’s publication record in high Impact Factor journals. The usefulness of journal Impact Factors has been questioned. Some institutions are already experimenting with alternative ways to measure academic success.

More research needs to be done on the causes and extent of research misconduct as well as the efficacy of measures instituted to prevent them. Recognising that research integrity is an emerging research field in its own right that needs expertise and resources is another step towards addressing the issue of research misconduct. While the details of any ongoing individual investigation have to remain confidential, publishers have data, for example, on the relative frequencies and patterns of different types of misconduct as well as experience in handling difficult cases, which, if shared in an anonymized form, could help to achieve a better understanding of misconduct practices for all involved in the scientific process. The challenge here is to overcome the natural competitiveness between publishers to allow sharing of such experience and data.

Despite the lack of a clear definition or understanding of the extent of the problem, much can be done to tackle research misconduct if all parties involved in the research process accept their collective responsibility and particularly focus on prevention, awareness raising, and educational activities.

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ISMTE Upcoming Conferences

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

2017 European Conference
9-10 November 2017
London, England
My present role is probably the most challenging in my 36 years of editing scholarly journals. Shortly after I declined to renew my contract as editor of the British Journal of Educational Technology in December 2015, I was asked to work with Education & Self Development, an institutional journal published by Kazan Federal University. (To save you looking for a map, Kazan is in Tatarstan, about 800 km to the east of Moscow—not in Kazakhstan.) The challenge is to re-engineer this journal, to turn it into a respected international journal, and secure its inclusion in Scopus and Web of Science.

I inherited a journal with an editorial board that was almost entirely Russian, a 10-year publishing history of articles that are almost entirely Russian, a manual manuscript submission system, and a minimal ethical policy. It is the latter that has come back to bite us!

Although we now have a comprehensive ethical policy (see http://en.eandsdjournal.org/ethical-policy/), an external review by Dissernet (an independent Russian ethical watchdog, https://www.dissernet.org/) publicly identified a number of articles published before I took over the editorship, in which there was evidence of possible plagiarism. A detailed investigation of each of these articles revealed that while some authors had indeed plagiarised the work of others, the majority of cases involved self-plagiarism or redundant publication. Publication ethics are based on cultural beliefs as to what is and what is not acceptable behaviour: The Russian concept of plagiarism excludes text-recycling. So we have an interesting consequence of the Russian academic journals’ aspirations to join the international publishing community. (See, Rushby, N.J. (in press) Publication ethics—moral principles and cultural dissonance, Science Editor and Publisher.)

In comparison, the other issues are relatively easy to resolve, and (I think) we are well on our journey towards inclusion in Scopus and Web of Science. And my Russian is improving.

A consequence of this work is that we are now advising other Russian journals on how they can improve their international standing. There is a need for the kind of support that can be offered through membership of ISMTE, and we are hoping that the Society may have some presence at the forthcoming 6th International Scientific and Practical Conference on World-Class Scientific Publication: Publishing Ethics, Peer-Review, and Content Preparation to be held in Moscow April 17-21st, 2017. May we live in interesting times!
Preprint Servers: Challenges and Consequences

By Dugald McGlashan, PhD and Caroline Hadley, PhD
Co-Founders of INLEXIO

In our previous article, we explored the recent rise of preprint servers, especially in the life sciences, chemistry, and humanities. In this article, we explore why it has taken so long for these fields to embrace preprint servers and delve into what the rise of preprint servers might mean for scholarly publishing.

The persistence of resistance

In an article marking the 25th anniversary of arXiv, founder Paul Ginsparg answers a series of FAQs (from biologists in particular) about the dynamics of preprint servers. Why researchers outside the physical sciences have been reluctant to use preprint servers is still debated, but what is clear is that there are concerns from many quarters about a range of issues.

One of the biggest worries for researchers is being scooped—if their work is on an unvetted, little-known website, how will they maintain primacy? As mentioned in our previous article, some journals are now explicitly addressing this possibility by modifying their policies on originality and previous publication. The increasing professionalism and entry of large companies to the hosting of preprint servers means increased acceptance by researchers and integration into services such as search engine indexing. This adds surety for authors, with the days of research competitors claiming “I didn’t see it” soon to be numbered.

Another concern is information overload: Will authors’ work be lost in the mass of unfiltered and uncurated content that is regularly uploaded to preprint servers? Probably not, at least in the longer term. Researchers have always found ways to discover the latest work in their fields, which they know well and can be quite narrow. Artificial intelligence and machine learning approaches may hold great promise to help researchers navigate, find, and screen the literature.

Copyright and licensing issues may have also dissuaded authors from using preprint servers. Authors may be reticent to post preprints if they are unsure about the legal consequences and their subsequent rights; a combination of conservatism and (perhaps studied) ignorance is well known among many authors. Recent data show that authors uploading their work to bioRxiv choose the most restrictive license on offer—retaining full copyright—for their work. The reason(s) for this choice are not clear. This option is first on the list, so the tick-the-first-box response is one possible explanation. We suspect that authors choose a restrictive license because they want to ensure their work remains theirs to control, even if more liberal licenses still allow them to retain ownership, some control, and the rights to attribution.

Another downside to preprint servers—for both authors and readers—is that they offer no evaluation or certification of an author’s work. Other publication outlets, such as journals, have traditionally provided these services through editorial assessment and peer review. As we touch on below, some preprint servers allow comments, which is a form of evaluation or post-publication peer review. However, there is no certification, and there is a danger that the wider, non-research community presumes that articles on preprint servers have been certified. Preprint servers such as bioRxiv are working to ameliorate this risk by labelling articles as non-peer reviewed. (Many proponents of preprint servers suggest that peer review provides little assurance of quality anyway.)

The uncertainty around the sustainability of preprint servers may have also discouraged researchers from using them. Authors are wary of services that come and go and are reluctant to spent time and effort—not to mention stake their most precious assets, their articles, and reputations—on unknown entities. Readers are similarly unlikely to rely on a resource that might not be around for long. Even known entities, such as Nature Precedings, can close at short notice. ArXiv has had very public financial difficulties, while Cold...
Spring Harbor Laboratory has explicitly addressed this issue by stating that they are providing bioRxiv as part of their remit. However, any service or product that has no associated revenues will always be at some financial risk, thereby threatening its long-term sustainability.

**Potential consequences**

What then are the consequences for scholarly publishing if preprint servers become an integral part of it? It is early days, but we are beginning to see some interesting—and possibly unintended—outcomes.

In any nascent marketplace, it takes some time before product names become well known, and this lag in brand recognition can be exploited. The American Chemical Society will soon launch chemRxiv, but, in the meantime, Open Academic Publishers (which was listed as a “potential, possible, or probable” predatory publisher on the former Beall’s List) has unveiled chemArxiv. Unscrupulous operators may pose no financial risk in a free-to-publish, free-to-read environment, but a deluge of low-quality sites would waste researchers’ time, could threaten the integrity and persistence of their data, and would damage the reputation of all preprint servers. The rapid rise in the number of new preprint servers—and their use of all or part of the “arXiv” name—can make it difficult to track which are legitimate enterprises backed by trusted organisations.

Could preprint servers boost the use of post-publication peer review? Some preprint servers allow users to comment on posted papers, much like some journals allow online feedback on published papers. However, not all preprint servers see a benefit in offering such a feature—particularly as it raises the question of whether moderating comments is necessary, and if so, how to pay for it. As Ginsparg explains, arXiv has explicitly chosen not to allow comments; a user survey confirmed that its “drama-free minimalist dissemination” of content is one of its biggest virtues.

We are already seeing the rise of new services that aim to mitigate some of the challenges posed by preprint servers. Overlay journals collect articles from preprint servers but provide additional assessment or peer review to help curate content for readers. PrePubMed allows users to find articles in a range of preprint servers using a single search function.

Journal publishers and owners are watching recent developments in scholarly publishing, including those around preprint servers, with great interest—and possibly some trepidation. Authors can now publish their work in various forms: standalone figures (with DOIs), laboratory notebooks, data, so-called nano-publications, as well as the traditional forms of articles and reviews. If authors (and their funding bodies) begin to trust post-publication peer review for certification and feedback, and can receive citations to their preprints, are journals in danger of becoming obsolete?

The scholarly community’s broad adoption of preprint servers is still fluid and progressing via trial and error; the variation among the new preprint servers reflects the imagination and entrepreneurship of those developing them. Ultimately, preprint servers and journals serve different functions: Preprint servers quickly distribute work to a core research audience, while journals provide a quality-assurance mechanism that helps to certify a researcher’s discoveries.

*This article was originally published on inlexio.com on January 23, 2017.*

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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 here**.

We are looking forward to receiving your entries for the 2017 Ira Salkin Scholarship.
Peers in Review: Introducing ISMPP, a Society for Medical Publication Professionals

By Al Weigel
President and CEO
ISMPP

The International Society for Medical Publication Professionals, or ISMPP, is grateful for ISMTE’s invitation to introduce our Society in EON’s “Peers in Review” column. ISMPP is a global society with a mission that centers on enhancing integrity and transparency in medical publications; improving standards and best practices; and fostering education, advocacy, and professional collaborations.

Formed in 2005, ISMPP has the distinction of being the only nonprofit organization founded by medical publication professionals for medical publication professionals. The Society welcomes all stakeholders involved in the publication of medical research—including pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and device companies, medical publication and communication agencies, medical journal publishers and editors, and professional medical writers—to join its worldwide membership of more than 1,500 individuals.

A key pillar of ISMPP’s global programs are its educational meetings in the United States, Europe, and Asia Pacific. The US Annual Meeting held in the spring is the most highly attended conference, with more than 500 participants. The European Meeting is held yearly in January, and the Asia Pacific Meeting is held every other year. These informative meetings showcase key issues and topics relevant to all medical publication professionals through panel sessions, roundtable discussions, and workshops. Members also have many opportunities to network with peers from around the world.

ISMPP also holds monthly ISMPP U educational webinars that feature current medical publication topics. The ISMPP U webinars are available to all ISMPP members.

Recognizing the importance of establishing a formal credential for medical publication professionals, ISMPP began offering a global certification program in 2009—the Certified Medical Publication Professional™ (ISMPP CMPP™) credential. The ISMPP CMPP™ certifies expertise as a medical publication professional, proficiency in good publication practices, and commitment to ethical and transparent data dissemination standards. The CMPP™ exam is administered during two testing windows each year, at testing center locations throughout the world.

An important resource for medical publication professionals, including editors and publishers, is the Good Publication Practice (GPP) guidelines, which were updated in September 2015, and are widely known as GPP3. The original GPP guidelines were published in 2003, and were first updated in 2009. ISMPP sponsored GPP3, which extended the focus on transparency and integrity of medical publications, and strive to expand its reach globally to broaden adoption of good publication practices. A Chinese language translation of GPP3 is currently available, and a Japanese language translation is underway.

ISMPP is governed by a Board of Trustees, whose volunteers are elected by the Society’s membership. ISMPP also relies on the cross-functional collaboration of our volunteer committees to achieve its goals. Current committees include:

- Global Transparency Committee—aims to help address both data and financial transparency globally and greater transparency of medical publication practices.
- Ethics and Standards Committee—endeavors to discover, document, and promote ethics and best practices in medical publications. The Committee has developed various useful resources, including a Code of Ethics, Standards Handbook, and Glossary.

As stated in our mission, ISMPP believes that identifying opportunities to partner with similar organizations, like ISMTE, is of mutual benefit to our respective organizations. We look forward to pursuing future collaborations with ISMTE.

Information about ISMPP, its programs, and membership benefits can be found at www.ismpp.org.
By Peter D. Finn
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Department of War Studies, King's College London

We seem to live in an age of revived political philistinism where the measure of a state’s greatness—whether it be the United States, the United Kingdom, or even the utopic ‘Islamic State’—is increasingly conceived of in terms of what it excludes. This development entails a turn away from the classical conception of the liberal state characterized by its openness to thoughts, discussion, peoples, and commerce. Academics, and academic publishers, will certainly be challenged by such a fundamental shift in attitude because it is ultimately opposed to the same academic values that inspired this increasingly embattled form of political association. While there is cause for concern, there is hope for a positive outcome—if the academy remains true to its own values.

Those who laid the philosophical foundations of our contemporary liberal (or ‘free’) conception of civil life acknowledged—with some courage—that such an enterprise made intellectual, moral, cultural, and commercial life more strenuous; that with freedom of thought and discussion came repugnant doctrines, with the free movements of peoples came unfamiliar and unsettling practices, and with freedom of commerce came expanded competition—and occasionally foreign plagues. This project was not undertaken on the assumption that all opinions were valid, all practices were rights-respecting, and all trade beneficial (or even moral) but rather on the belief—undertaken with some faith—that the challenges they presented ultimately occasioned a distinctly human sort of life. In terms of what specific form they might take, the qualities of such a life were intangible, and the conditions that gave it meaning unforeseeable. Thus the argument rested on a conviction—akin to providential trust—that exposure to and engagement with contrary views and life possibilities would create an environment where self-deception became less likely and self-correction more likely, allowing what was worthy to naturally flourish, what was base to fade, and what was befitting each human character to be discovered, enriching the life of each individual and by extension, humanity as a whole.

Most significantly, this view of civil life questioned the possibility that any individual, minority of individuals, or even plurality of individuals could authoritatively decide any of these matters for others. In such an idealized environment, the role of a government was not to instruct (for it was really but a voice in the debate), not to lead (for it could not know where the association was ultimately heading), not to champion a cause (if that meant imposing the causes of some upon others), nor even to inspire action (because the contention of affairs itself would be sufficient for that). Rather, the role of ‘government’ was to be akin to that of a governor on an engine—a device that suppresses the ‘overspeeding’ or ‘excesses’ to which such a dynamic civil life may be prone.

This view of social, political, and economic life was really the ideal of an engagement with the liberal arts and sciences—the academic life—writ large. This academic life was a medieval innovation, and since its origin in the monastic scriptorium, academic publication has been its medium of communication across time and across space.

It has been, overall, a successful undertaking on its own terms, but the success of institutions breeds complacency in their preservation, and this is where we are beginning to find ourselves. Occasionally, academics and their publishers must attend to the foundations of their own houses, and, just as importantly, they must ensure that they remain true to— or even in defence of—those who attack them. Most importantly, they must not exclude voices they pre-judge to be, in the words of the philosopher John Stuart Mill, ‘foolish, perverse, or wrong,’ and thus wall themselves off in snug communities warmed and illuminated by their own inner lights. Academics and publishers will not only need to address an increasing number of assaults upon...
themselves, they will increasingly need to address assaults upon others.

A journal with which I was affiliated recently received a shockingly anti-Semitic submission from a professional scholar. Discussion between colleagues concerning how to respond to it revealed that the manuscript had been submitted to other journals and that they had desk rejected it on the basis that its Holocaust-denying stance simply could not be countenanced. While we agreed that the article should be desk rejected, we disagreed with the justification. Such an article should not be rejected because it is ‘wrong’ scholarship; it should be rejected because it is poor scholarship—and, in this specific case, because Holocaust denial is poor history. A subtle distinction? Perhaps, but academic work often involves reaching for subtle but pivotal distinctions—and in this case, it discloses a characteristically scholarly approach to the issue that should serve as an example for the politics of our time.

As academic life gave rise to this form of political association, it can strengthen it again by exemplifying its highest values. The academy has never been better equipped and positioned to do this, but it must muster the character to do so.

The thinker Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel once observed, in an expression as poetic as it is philosophical, that ‘the Owl of Minerva spreads her wings only at twilight.’ What Hegel meant by this is that one can only come to understand an event when it is past—from the vantage of critical, historical, and philosophical distance. However, like all suitably profound reflections, it lends itself to deeper meanings. It is only in times of fear that courage can be shown, only in times of uncertainty and confusion that conviction shines, and only in times of doubt that enquiry emerges. As the owl departs alone into the darkness that is its element, so the philosopher of a fearful, uncertain, and doubting time returns to the cave.
Committee Update
North American Conference Planning Committee

By Michelle English
Director of Operations
J&J Editorial LLC
ISMTE Program Chair

Becoming involved in a committee is one of the most beneficial ways to stay active and engaged in ISMTE. I am currently the chair of this year’s North American Conference Planning Committee, and I served as a member of the committee in prior years. Each year, the planning committee begins planning for the next conference in earnest after the prior year’s conference comes to a close. We comb over attendee surveys and take into consideration the feedback provided by members on what they liked and disliked from the current year’s program to begin plotting out the course for the following year. The committee is a collaborative one at first, as we shape the theme and mutually agree on important topics we’d like to see covered. As we progress with planning, each committee member typically takes “ownership” by working to secure speakers for a particular session. We regularly collaborate by email and conference calls. This year marks the tenth anniversary of ISMTE, and with this comes an exciting opportunity for the conference to feature retrospectives on the last 10 years of this growing society. Our theme this year—shared across the North American, European, and Asian-Pacific conferences—is “Empowering Editorial Offices Around the World.” We hope to honor to this year’s theme with interactive workshops and practical takeaways for attendees. If you’re interested in joining an ISMTE committee, please reach out to info@ismte.org.

ISMTE’s North American Conference will take place on August 10-11 in Denver, Colorado. Register now to take advantage of special rates!
From the Forum

The ISMTE Discussion Forum is available to all registered ISMTE members and is a great resource to get and stay connected to a network of peers, publishers, vendors, and potential clients and employers. Here we highlight a question about an open access request followed by further discussion.

3/13/2018 AT 10:39 AM GMT

Open Access article paid by pharma company

We have received a request from a pharma company to pay for an article to be published online under open access option in a hybrid journal.

This request does not come from the authors who are so far unaware, and the article has already been published in print.

This raises a few questions, also practical and not only ethical:
1) should the authors be informed (I would say that they would only be happy about it.)
2) where does the copyright lay in this case? author, publisher or pharma company?
3) should our licence to publish - signed by the author for an OA option, be amended?
4) does this option constitute "financial support" to the article?
5) should this be disclosed in the disclosures and the paper amended?
6) we use CCBY licence CC BY-NC-ND 4.0: would you maintain this licence or change it?
7) should the open access logo displayed online be different from the open access logo which identifies pure open access?

Thank you for any opinion or advice you can share.

3/14/2018 AT 4:01 PM GMT

Hi! If the article has been published. I am not sure I understand an option for publishing the article again...wouldn't that be a Dual Publication?

Dual Publication: Authors should not submit the same manuscript. in the same or different languages, simultaneously to more than one journal. The rationale for this standard is the potential for disagreement when two (or more) journals claim the right to publish a manuscript that has been submitted simultaneously to more than one journal, and the possibility that two or more journals will unknowingly and unnecessarily undertake the work of peer review, edit the same manuscript, and publish the same article.

A. Elin
Posts: 20

Sounds like this would apply to the online version. Here are my thoughts, FWW:

1) should the authors be informed (I would say that they would only be happy about it...)

Absolutely ask the authors. They may have some concerns you've not thought of or there may some type of COI.

2) where does the copyright lay in this case? author, publisher or pharma company?

I don't think this would change whatever your standard copyright is.

3) should our licence to publish - signed by the author for an OA option, be emended?

Not sure. Best to ask legal.

4) does this option constitute "financial support" to the article?

I don't think so, but see below re: disclosures.

5) should this be disclosed in the disclosures and the paper amended?

Absolutely.

6) we use CCBY licence CC BY-NC-ND 4.0: would you maintain this licence or change it?

IMO maintain whatever your standard license is.

7) should the open access logo displayed online be different from the open access logo which identifies pure open access?

Your call.

Remember, all the above are just my opinions. I could be incorrect on some or all if you've not already done so, best to consult legal and/or perhaps reach out to COPE.

3/17/2018 AT 7:32:45 PM GMT

L. Steele
Posts: 12

Thanks Adam and D. for taking time to reply, you both supply valuable insight on this matter.

D. this is not a duplicate publication, as the article is only ever appearing once (the company wants to change visibility option).

Lucia
Update on the Oxford Local Group

By Deborah Wardle
Freelance Managing Editor

At the recent ISMTE Oxford Local Group meeting, we were joined by Shehnaz Ahmed who discussed her COPE document regarding when to request consent for publication with the attendees: “The International Rheumatology Editors’ Group propose a working policy with the aim that all rheumatology or specialty journals adopt the common principles of patient confidentiality and data anonymity for small cohort studies with n<20.” Ms Ahmed also brought 3 very different case studies with her, which ranged from questions over patient anonymity to the levels of sensitivity when using data gathered from an online political petition. She opened these to the floor for general discussion, which, due to the range of subject knowledge and publishing expertise within the group, provided some very interesting insights.

Before and after the talk, there was plenty of opportunity for networking and catching up with colleagues over drinks and nibbles which were kindly provided by our hosts.

All in all, it was a fantastic evening and I’m very much looking forward to the next event which will be held in London at 6 pm on 25th May as a post-COPE networking event (venue to be announced).

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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.
Calendar of Events

Resilience, Reinvention, Renewal
May 18-21, 2017
New Orleans, Louisiana, USA
http://www.aiip.org/conference

2017 CSE Annual Meeting
May 20-23, 2017
San Diego, California, USA
https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/

COPE European Seminar 2017
May 25, 2017
London, England
http://publicationethics.org/

5th World Conference on Research Integrity
May 28-31, 2017
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
http://www.wcri2017.org/

CrossRef Live in Boston
May 30, 2017
Boston, Massachusetts, USA
https://crossrefboston.eventbrite.com

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

ISMTE North American Conference
August 10-11, 2017
Denver, Colorado, USA
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

ISMTE European Conference
November 9-10, 2017
London, England
www.ismte.org
EASE members receive ISMTE member registration rate

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