

### IN THIS ISSUE

#### ARTICLES

- **The Intersection of Humanities and Science** 1  
*Deborah E. Bowman*
- **What DO Authors want Managing Editors to Know** 3  
*Todd H. Baron*
- **Membership: A Reflection and Update** 5  
*Wendy Krank*
- **What's On Your iPad?** 7  
*Deborah Bowman*
- **Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics** 9  
*Ira Salkin*
- **Truths Universally Acknowledged:** 11  
*Meghan McDevitt*
- **Whispering in the Dark** 12  
*Meghan McDevitt*

#### MISCELLANEOUS

- **Calendar** 14



## The Intersection of Humanities and Science

by **Deborah E. Bowman, MFA**

Managing Editor  
GIE: Gastrointestinal Endoscopy  
dbowman@asge.org

Edwin Land of Polaroid talked about standing at the intersection of humanities and science and what a great place that was to be. As Editors of scholarly journals, we, too, stand at that intersection, and that means we are expected to know a lot of information and to keep up with the latest advances. As ISMTE members, we have the opportunity to help each other by sharing our knowledge and the obligation to let other Editors know how helpful the ISMTE is in our quest to stay current. In this month's issue of *EON*, Board member and Membership Chair Wendy Krank talks about the benefits of membership; you might be surprised to learn some of the great advantages your membership affords you. We continue "What I Wish My Managing Editor Knew" this month by hearing from Dr. Todd Baron, a gastroenterologist from Mayo Clinic, who has submitted

hundreds of articles to various journals. He writes from the viewpoint of an author, telling us what we can do to make things easier for the people who write for our journals. He called me to complain about a Managing Editor he was having trouble with; I said, "I have the perfect place for you to vent your frustration!" The result is in this issue.

Our Ethics Editor, Ira Salkin, frightens us again by telling how authors can manipulate their data to make it seem statistically significant, even when it isn't. Arm yourselves with this important information by reading "Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics." Managing Editors: do you want to know what your Editorial Assistant is really thinking? In this month's "Whispering in the Dark," Meghan McDevitt, Editorial Assistant for *GIE*, tells what it is like to step into an editorial job fresh out of college and how she manages to work for

an Editor who carries out the job from a remote location.

What apps will you put on your new iPad? This month, I talk about some of my favorite apps and invite you to share yours. And I hope you will enjoy our new book review feature, “Truths Universally Acknowledged” (taken, of course, from the line from *Pride and Prejudice* and chosen because books do give us universal truths). We kick off the new section with a review of *Editing for Dummies*.

Our jobs combine science and the humanities in a way that makes life interesting and challenging. We take scientific information and make sure it is organized and readable; we bring humanity to science, and that ends up benefitting everyone. I’m proud of what I do, and I hope all of you are proud of your roles, too. Check the calendar listing for the dates of the 2012 ISMTE conferences in this publication. I hope you all try to come so you can share your pride and knowledge with Editors from all over the world.

## The Philosophy of Editing

### Are You Dangling?



One error that I find our authors making frequently (and our copyeditors missing all too often) is dangling constructions. Participial phrases, infinitive phrases, gerund phrases, and elliptical clauses dangle if they are in a position to modify a word that they are not supposed to modify. Some are fairly obvious:

*To run the mile, your stopwatch must be accurate.*

This says your stopwatch is running the mile; obviously, that isn’t right.

*While driving down the road, a deer ran in front of my car.*

Not only does this deer probably not drive, but he couldn’t be driving a car and running in front of my car at the same time.

A recent example I came across in an accepted journal article was this: *Using an ultraslim upper endoscope, balloon-guided direct peroral cholangioscopy allows direct visual examination.* Cholangioscopy doesn’t use an endoscope; the doctor uses the endoscope. This sentence can be corrected by giving

the opening phrase a subject: *When physicians use an ultraslim upper endoscope, balloon-guided direct peroral cholangioscopy allows direct visual examination.* Check yourself and your authors: make sure nothing is dangling!



## What DO Authors Want Managing Editors to Know

by Todd H. Baron, MD, FASGE  
Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN

Dear Managing Editors of the world,

This author has been asked to tell all of you what authors need in a Managing Editor (ME) and what can make our lives easier (and more difficult). So, as a representative of all authors, I'll do my best to enlighten you. First let me provide you with my background. I started out as an author about 20 years ago, before the era of electronic submissions. Since that time I have published more than 350 articles in PubMed and have served as Associate Editor for two journals. I peer-review for about 20 journals and submit articles to multiple journals. My role has become one of an overseer to medical students, residents, and fellows in training, so I help them navigate through the maze of authorship and online submissions.

Now that we have introduced ourselves, by far and away the most important thing an author wants from an ME is responsiveness. Remember that most authors are not savvy with the submission process and find it all very confusing. So, while the process may seem intuitive to MEs, it is not to most authors. Thus, when an author is confused, he or she reaches out by way of email (some even use phones!) and other forms of communication (dare I say Facebook and Twitter?). What they expect is responsiveness. Recently, I found an online submission site particularly confusing in the instructions to authors section. Nearly one month after submission of an article, I received correspondence from the ME saying that my article had been “unsubmitted” as it failed to meet the requirements of the journal. I immediately logged on to the authors’ portion of the website and found that the manuscript was still in the

queue and did not appear to be unsubmitted. I phoned the ME and said I was confused as what to do next, to which the reply was, “Didn’t you read my email?” I replied that I had and was somewhat confused. The resulting conversation was unpleasant for both of us, and the person said, “You were lucky I answered the phone; it’s after six p.m. here and only just after five p.m. there.” I said, “I work very late every evening.” Eventually, in frustration, I asked, “Why did it take so long to receive the initial response?” The ME informed me that she/he (identity to remain anonymous) took a vacation “once in a while,” does not always check emails when away, and asked if I took vacations. When I promptly said no, he/she said, “Well, you should.” I responded, “Well, if I did take vacation I would expect one of my colleagues to cover for me.”

After I hung up in total frustration I relayed this conversation to the journal Editor-in-Chief, who did not ever respond to me. My thoughts at that time were this: “The attitude of the journal starts at the top.” I reflected on journals that were respected and had high impact factors, and realized that the MEs for those journals were always responsive, either by email or phone. As my father, a businessman, told me over and over again, “The customer is always right.” And we, as authors, *are* the customers. Granted we are not always right, but need to feel that the ME is responsive to our needs, particularly when it comes to helping guide us through the submission process. To have a manuscript sitting for one month before being told that the instructions were not adhered to is unacceptable. This should be addressed in a clear, concise manner quickly—within days.

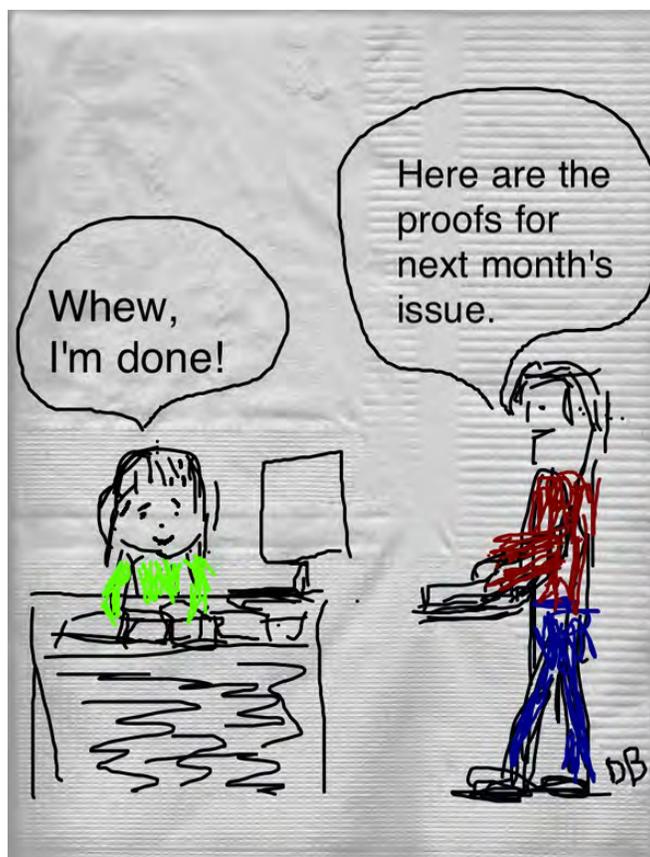
A corollary to the above is the author's sense of individualized attention. All of us want to believe that we are not just a number (like our manuscript number). Thus, not only is a timely response appreciated, a respectful one is as well.

Also tying in to the scenario outlined above is that the ME is the real "face of the journal." Your actions and professionalism reflect on what the author thinks about the journal. A ME who is knowledgeable always impresses me. Knowledgeable about what? Foremost, be knowledgeable about the journal's inner workings. Things that a top ME instantly knows are how to troubleshoot glitches in the online submission process, what classifications would be best for the authors' paper, what the requirements are for particular sections of the journal, what place does the particular journal have in the field (including impact factors) compared to other journals, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the journal, and last but not least, knowledge about the field itself (in other words, do you know the basics of the specialty that your journal serves?).

Yet another corollary to my vignette is that timeliness is of key importance. Many authors

feel the clock ticking from the moment the manuscript is submitted. Now, I understand that turnaround time can be largely out of the ME's hands. There are many steps in the process, but I would like to think that processing and handling by a ME speeds up turnaround time. Whatever you can do to make that happen, please do.

I will end with the fact that the ME's assistance and "can do" attitude will make an author want to submit an article to your journal. Although there may be times when you might wish we didn't submit an article, always remember that the journal thrives and prospers by attracting author's articles. A positive and helpful attitude is paramount. Having trouble uploading a file? Sure we can help you with that! "Send me a CD" or "Here's an ftp site" are examples of responses that an author likes to hear and that will entice them to send a manuscript to your journal again. We will probably encourage our colleagues to do the same. Remember, MEs, you are the face of your journal. Carry the flag and wave it proudly! (And be nice to the customer.)





## Membership: A Reflection and Update

by Wendy Krank

ISMTE has approached the five-year mark and is still every bit an inquisitive child. The Society is determined to create new and different resource opportunities for its members. As I reflect on where we have been as an organization and how the Society was created then launched with the idea that members would support a peer organization that was just for managing and technical editors, I have to believe that the journey thus far has been quite amazing. The rolling out of new resource tools for our members has been phenomenal in recent years. These include rejection calculators, archived news topics that are pertinent to your editorial office, and training opportunities. The Society is considering a certification program that would seek to enhance member résumés. The training committee has created podcast interviews, supplemental guides for publishing high-quality figures, and an in-depth guide to running an efficient editorial office, appropriately named Editorial Office 101. This young society has a world-wide membership base now that has shown consistent support, creating an increased interest in the Society from corporate entities. We, as an organization, have shown sustainability by offering two conferences per year on two continents with near sold-out venues. This is an amazing accomplishment for any non-profit organization. We are led by a superb group of energized volunteers. Our solid core Board of Directors has propelled ISMTE forward to become a recognized leader for managing and technical editing professionals.

An article outlining the benefits of membership is not complete without mentioning that the Society has received continued financial support from major publishing corporate leaders. Wiley-Blackwell has held the lead sponsor role from the beginning.

As the years have passed, we have gained more sponsors; we are now supported by the American Chemical Society along with BMJ Group, J&J Editorial, Aries System, Oxford University Press, Elsevier, and Thomson Reuters, among others. The Society has also gained a valuable resource recently with the creation of an industry advisory panel. Their feedback has expanded and has given the Board of Directors another valuable tool that has benefited our members.

The membership of ISMTE is beyond baby steps these days as the member benefits continue to evolve and change. Compared with the relatively small member benefit program from those early formative years, the membership has grown tremendously. We have resource tools, job postings, forums, newsletters, and the most significant, I believe, is the opportunity to become published in *EON* or to become a speaker at ISMTE conferences. The personal professional achievement possibilities are only limited by the desire of the member. As a member, please consider our newest professional opportunity, which is to prepare a poster for the upcoming conferences this summer and fall. The poster presentation was made available to allow members to share their viewpoints and unique perspectives about their Editorial Offices. Perhaps a member would prefer to research in detail a software product that created an improvement with their editorial process. ISMTE wants you to get involved! Our Society can help members increase their professional potential to improve their careers.

The possible opportunities for members to experience professional and personal growth are endless with ISMTE, and herein is another example: if you have a desire for sharing or teaching you could grow your passion at ISMTE by becoming involved in a committee. Consider this—join a

committee, research a topic, and share the results at an ISTME conference. This is an excellent addition to your résumé and an opportunity to build supporting professional relationships.

Most importantly, ISMTE is about growth specific to the increasing membership, which will only create additional benefits to serve all active members. There are more reasons to become involved with ISMTE than ever before. Members can take advantage of discounts with Thompson Reuters to attend ScholarOne University for training sessions. Check out the career center often, where you can post résumés and look for freelance positions. There is a possibility for increased earning opportunities as a member of ISMTE. Consider if you will, writing for *EON*. I realize everyone is very busy with everyday work, but here is an opportunity to write an article and get published in *EON*, a perfect launching pad for the Managing Editor to add professional publication to his or her list of accomplishments.

As an active member, consider inviting a colleague or an associate to join ISMTE. As the Society continues to grow in membership size, the snowball effect will then actually benefit all members by increasing the chance to meet up with other like-minded professionals, which in turn creates a stronger community. Managing Editors are a unique group of individuals who support each other. ISMTE members are friends and acquaintances that you can draw upon when questions arise in your Editorial Office. Think about the time that you struggled with a process or had an ethical question, and thought—wouldn't it be great to share an idea with someone of a similar work situation to get another opinion? Who could you call or email? There is not enough time in our busy work day to visit and associate with peers who understand you and your Editorial Office and how it functions. ISMTE provides that easy access to your peers for questions, suggestions, and advice. I don't know of anyone who couldn't use some genuine feedback when questions arise. It's the stuff that we all need to help us grow and mature at our jobs.

Think of ISMTE as that reliable source to give advice or provide suggestions for handling difficult situations. ISMTE is your professional organization to help grow your Editorial Office.

I've listed below a few bullet points from the ISMTE website<sup>1</sup> that highlight the support system available to our members.

- Participation in a pro-active community that enables members to influence professional development for themselves and others
- Continuing education and training through regional meetings, webcasts, mentoring, and an online discussion forum
- Sharing of ideas, concerns, and best practices
- Consultancy services for publishers/journals/members upon request from a pool of recognized leaders
- Monthly newsletter with original articles on trends, best practice procedures, and performance data

Consider yourself as that young entrepreneur capable of creating new income opportunities for yourself. Clever entrepreneurs surround themselves with resources that help to grow and change their environment. Membership in ISMTE is one credible and vital link to success. If you haven't already, take a moment to consider inviting a colleagues who might also benefit from membership to ISMTE, which would in turn build your support system.

With five years of growth behind us, we have smoothed out all the nicks and bumps that occur in those early growing years. We now stand as a young Society with potential beyond imagination. Our new president, Glenn Collins, has his focus primarily on membership; I look forward to additional member benefits and resource opportunities in the near future. Most importantly for yourself, consider becoming that active member who gets involved, and use your voice and talents in this Society to grow your opportunities. You'll be glad you made that choice.

It's been my honor and pleasure to serve ISMTE for five years. See you all at the conference in August.

Wendy Krank  
Membership Coordinator  
Secretary, Board of Directors

Reference:

1. ISMTE, member benefits.  
<http://www.ismte.org/>



## What's On Your iPad?

by Deborah Bowman, MFA

Last month Glenn Collins told us about his experiences with his journal getting an iPad app. My journal is in the process of getting an app, and I suspect many of yours are as well. This probably means that more Managing Editors are getting iPads, so this month I'm going to tell you what is on my iPad. Please understand that I'm not saying these are the best apps; these are just some that I have found and that I use a lot. I would love to get letters to the editor or complete articles telling me what you have found to be your favorites or what you find to be better apps than these.

I love apps; being able to put an icon on my iPad that is dedicated to one thing that I need to do is convenient, efficient, and just plain fun. For writing, it's hard to beat Pages. You can bring up a blank page or choose from a number of templates, and dropping photos into it is easy. For quick notes, I like to use Daily Notes. You can add tabs for different categories, and a calendar along the edge shows you quickly which days contain notes, so it's easy to access your old thoughts. A pop-out tab gives you a place to write to-do lists. The whole app is really versatile and easy to use. For jotting down my private thoughts, I enjoy Maxjournal. It is password locked so even if someone else gets hold of your iPad, your secrets are safe.

I use Qrafter for reading QR codes and Fahrenheit for checking the temperature. You can add or subtract cities to check the forecast for traveling and you can set your home city for the home page; the current temperature of your home city will display right on the icon, so you don't even have to open the app to see whether you need a jacket. I like Moviefone to get information on what movies are playing at nearby theaters. This app will give you movie times, descriptions of the movie, information about cast members, and

trailers. It searches for movies near your current location and gives you directions as well, so when you are in another city, you can easily find theaters and see what is playing.

Trying to get interviews? Audioboo is an app I learned about last year at the ISMTE conference, and it is a great way to record, save, and send audio recordings. Another app that will record is Educreations. It allows you to draw on the screen and then record something to accompany the drawing.

PoetryMagnets is fun; it is magnetic poetry with words that you can pull up from the bottom of the screen and push around on the workspace to inspire creativity. Skitch is an app that allows you to add labels to your photos. It also lets you capture and annotate web pages or maps. If you are looking for an app that is designed to help you keep track of and write comments on books you've read, try Book Crawler. If you want to read what other people have to say about books they've read, check out Goodreads. QuoteBook is fun if you like to read quotations; they are arranged by category or you can browse by author. Another fun app is GourmetFood. It quizzes you on such things as cooking terms, herbs and spices, basic sushi terms, gourmet recipes, and table etiquette. I don't cook much these days, but BigOven is still fun to browse for recipes. You can look for particular dishes, recipes that use up leftovers, recipes that others have rated highly, or ask for a random recipe.

Another person favorite is Greek Myth. A list of names and places runs along the side of the screen, and you can scroll through it and choose one to learn about. The information goes beyond the explanation of the person or location; click on Sisyphus, for instance, and you will find instances

of the word in modern usage. Did you know that in the TV show *30 Rock*, a character said, “I am the Sisyphus of Reaganing”?

A popular app for letting you know when articles of interest are posted on the web is StumbleUpon, and it is addictive. The NPR and PBS apps are great, too, for showing you articles and videos that are trending. However, my absolute favorite app is Zite. You let it know what categories you are interested in, and it brings up snapshots of articles in those categories. When you touch the short synopsis, the article comes up. You then have the opportunity to tell the

app whether you liked that article and whether you want to see more on that subject or more by that author. As you do this, the app “learns” what types of articles you want to see. Skeptical? I was too, but I swear it is working. Zite is getting to know me better than I know myself; when I open it now, I see article after article that I want to read. I love it!

I’m old enough to be astonished that I can carry a computer around in my purse, and being able to configure it to suit my taste is amazing. Share your favorite apps with me and I’ll pass them along to *EON* readers. Contact me at [dbowman@asge.org](mailto:dbowman@asge.org).





## Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics

by Ira Salkin, Ethics Editor

Mark Twain popularized a phrase that he probably mistakenly attributed to British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli: “There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.” This was brought to mind by a recent article that describes the numerous ways that authors may manipulate their data sets so that statistical analyses will support the significance of the results obtained in their studies. In an article entitled “False-Positive Psychology” published in *Psychological Sciences*, Joseph Simmons and colleagues reported that flexibility in data collection methods allows authors to present virtually anything as being statistically significant.<sup>1</sup> The latter can be roughly defined as the opportunity that results can occur by chance rather than by the factors investigated by the researchers as being not greater than five percent.

Simmons and associates point out that it is the researchers (authors) who decide on the size of the study sample, when to stop collecting data, and which outliers in their findings can be excluded from analysis. Often, these researchers define their hypotheses during the course of the investigations rather than at the initiation of the studies. Put another way, the authors determine their objective(s) on the basis of the results they discover during their ongoing research. By manipulating various aspects of their methods, authors can skew the data such that they can claim statistical significance even if the results are not scientifically supported. One reason for this might be that most editors prefer publishing positive rather than negative findings.

To demonstrate the way investigators can manipulate data, Simmons et al established two test populations of approximately equal size. Each group listened to a different popular song and afterward, they were asked to complete a survey containing a number of variables, including their

dates of birth. Surprisingly, the members of the group who listened to song A were found to be over a year younger than those who listened to song B. It should be remembered that no attempt was made to establish membership in either group on the basis of the age of the participants.

How could this be described as a statistically significant result? Well, while Simmons et al reviewed numerous variables obtained in their surveys, they reported on the one that would apparently withstand statistical analysis. When one combines this with the fact that researchers are free to halt the data collection when they choose, one enhances the appearance of the significance of the findings. Simmons reviewed the data in blocks of ten observations or responses to the surveys and stopped the analysis when convenient for his co-authors and himself. Purely by chance, this was the point at which the age gap between the two groups was the highest.

Editors all too frequently want to have their journals involved in the publication of “crest of the wave” investigations or studies with unanticipated findings, especially if these are supported by statistical analyses. The inclusion of the latter generally ensures that the results of the studies will be quickly disseminated by the popular media. How many times have you read, heard, or seen the results of clinical investigations, new treatment methods, or chronic diseases being reported as statistically linked to unusual variables, as for example, the age of the participants. Whenever I see that a specific percentage of seniors or Caucasians or Italian-Americans are more prone to acquire a specific disease or can be helped by a specific drug, I remember the fact that 98% of the members of these same groups brush their teeth. Therefore, statistical analysis clearly demonstrates that teeth brushing must be a predisposing factor

in acquiring the disease or in the successful treatment with the new drug. Remember that authors are responsible for the selection of the variables to be subjected to statistical analysis, but wouldn't the misuse of statistics be uncovered by other scientists working in the same area of study? The reality is that many editors are reluctant to publish papers that replicate investigations that have previously appeared in the literature. However, there is one caveat to this broad editorial policy generalization—if the confirmatory studies generate as much or more attention grabbing results as the original investigations, editors would very likely publish the report.

Dr. Simmons makes the following suggestions to limit the misuse of statistical analyses by authors who might be submitting their work to your journals:

- Authors must establish specific termination dates for their data collection and describe them in their work. For example, from the world with which I am most familiar, “Bacteria were grown for 72 hours on the new medium, after which the colonies were observed for morphologic variations.” Seeing this, readers know that all data were collected at a specific time;
- Authors must describe all variables collected during the course of their investigations. For instance, authors should indicate that only the length and width of bacterial cells were measured and were subject to further analysis;
- Authors must describe all experimental conditions, even if discontinued during their investigations. In addition, they should report the justification for eliminating them from the studies. Furthermore, they should discuss the statistical consequences if the conditions had not been terminated. In this way, authors cannot select only those results obtained with techniques and procedures that support their hypotheses.

For a complete discussion of Simmons' recommendations for authors, as well as for reviewers, I refer the readers to the *Psychological Science* website where the entire article can be downloaded at no cost.

The majority of instances of possible statistical manipulation are benign in origin in that the authors did not intend to report fraudulent data. However, ignorance of the appropriate methods seriously compromises the integrity of the findings. Therefore, authors, editors, and editors-in-chief should be educated and vigilant with respect to this critical issue to ensure that papers approved for publication meet valid statistical standards.

<sup>1</sup>Simmons JP, Nelson LD, and Simonsohn U. False-positive psychology. Undisclosed flexibility in data collection and analysis allows presenting anything as significant. *Psychological Science* 2011;22(11):1359-66.

## The Hokey Pokey, as it would have been written by William Shakespeare



O proud left foot, that ventures quick within  
Then soon upon a backward journey lithe.  
Anon, once more the gesture, then begin:  
Command sinistral pedestal to writhe.  
Commence thou then the fervid Hokey-Poke.  
A mad gyration, hips in wanton swirl.  
To spin! A wilde release from heaven's yoke.  
Blessed dervish! Surely canst go, girl.  
The Hoke, the Poke—banish now thy doubt  
Verily, I say, 'tis what it's all about.

Did you ever wonder...What if the Hokey Pokey IS what it's all about?



## Truths Universally Acknowledged: Book Review

### “Dummies” book provides useful information for newbies and old hats alike

by Meghan McDevitt

In *Copyediting & Proofreading for Dummies* (©2007 Wiley Publishing, Inc.), Suzanne Gilad, founder of PaidToProofread.com and experienced copyeditor, presents a crash course on the day-to-day expectations people have of copyeditors and proofreaders. Using a sense of wit and humor usually absent in typical grammar and style books, Gilad enlightens readers about the differences between a copyeditor and a proofreader, explains how to turn editing and proofreading skills into a job, and examines the pros and cons of editing using new technology.

Two sections expand on “Conquering Copyediting” and “Picking up a Proofreading Career.” To explain the difference between copyediting and proofreading, Gilad boils it down to the simple idea that copyeditors work with content and proofreaders produce error-free copy. Throughout these chapters, she discusses house style, how to maintain authorial voice, and explains and demonstrates proofreading symbols. A unique aspect of these sections is the inclusion of writing samples for readers to test their skills followed by Gilad’s assessment and suggestions.

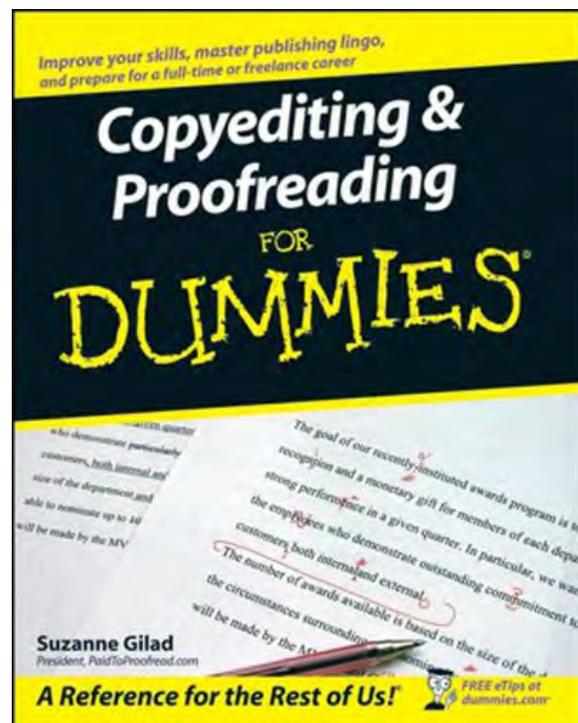
A good portion of the book is spent on how to prepare for, search out, and maintain a career in editing or proofreading. Gilad introduces a thorough list of publishing terms such as front or back matter, ToC, and masthead that are crucial to communicating in an editorial or publishing office. She discusses professional opportunities available including working with major publishers, magazines, scientific journals, and corporations in addition to being a freelancer.

From how to position your keyboard and mouse to common editing software, Gilad’s chapter on “Editing and Proofreading Electronically” is useful and practical in today’s digital age. A

detailed explanation of how to use Track Changes in Microsoft Word is followed by a handy list of keyboard shortcuts that make life easier. Gilad concludes this section with a discussion of the pros and cons of electronic editing, mentioning the time-saving benefits of technology but acknowledging the disadvantages of constantly sitting in front of a computer screen.

This is a perfect read for any bookworms out there who want to turn their copyediting or proofreading skills into a profession or an excellent resource and handy guide for the experienced professional to have on the shelf.

Have you read a great editing, grammar, or style book? How about a book that looks at publishing from a new angle? If you think ISMTE members would enjoy it, share your recommendations with us. E-mail [dbowman@asge.org](mailto:dbowman@asge.org).





## Whispering in the Dark

### Diving In: An Editorial Assistant's Perspective to Working with Scientific Journals

by Meghan McDevitt

Nothing can quite prepare you for your first real job out of school. The longer days, the grey cubicle, and learning your way around the office is a drastic change from sunny days spent on the quad and classes that end by noon on Friday. On top of getting to know co-workers, understanding the office culture, and learning how to work the complex printing machine, you also have to start from scratch in your day-to-day tasks that compose your new job.

When I began as Editorial Assistant for *GIE* at the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE), I had a vague understanding of my responsibilities. Monitoring new and revised manuscripts, proofreading articles, and answering phone calls and emails from authors and reviewers was easy enough, and I could almost imagine what I would be doing each day. But there was a lot in that job description that didn't make sense. What is a conflict of interest form anyway?

Another new aspect to my job was working for a professional society. I was amazed by the impact that the ASGE can have and by how much our members rely on us. ASGE's influence stretches across international borders and language barriers to promote and advance patient care and digestive health in gastrointestinal endoscopy. From membership to education, meeting services to corporate relations, ASGE's various departments must work in tandem to provide excellent service to our membership and promote innovation in the GI field.

With submissions coming in, authors calling with questions, and the Associate Editors meeting right around the corner, I didn't have much of a chance to take my time getting my feet wet. The monthly cycle of submissions, revisions, acceptance/rejection letters, copyediting proofs, and meeting

deadlines didn't stop just because a new person came on board. I had to ramp up quickly, learn my responsibilities (and the lingo), and help my Managing Editor keep the process in line.

In addition, my Managing Editor doesn't work in my office. She doesn't even work in the same state! Technology has enabled her to work remotely, meaning we don't have the traditional editorial office set up. Since we don't see each other face-to-face except during Editors' meetings or the occasional office function, we have adapted to a new kind of working environment. She and I communicate constantly, mostly via email, but also over the phone. I send copies of scanned proofs or faxed COI forms, and she emails me daily instructions and answers to my many questions. She has remote access to all of our files, and it's a simple matter of clicking a few buttons and hitting "send" to pass documents back and forth. With the ever-changing pace of technology, it makes you wonder how long it will be before we'll all be telecommuting from our computer screens.

I quickly got to know my way around our online submission system and was soon able to answer common questions from editors, authors, and reviewers. Under the Managing Editor's training, and an excellent job handbook left by my predecessor, I began adding more tasks to my responsibilities such as organizing our Author Interview Series, helping to manage our social media pages, and compiling monthly statistics for our Editors. I planned and organized my first Editorial Board meeting in January and am already working on our next meeting for May. When Deborah became Editor-in-Chief of *EON*, she offered me the opportunity to be an Associate Editor, helping with the copyediting and even managing my own column.

An Editorial Assistant has to be multifunctional, able to understand the ins and outs of the journal production process, know how to check proofs for consistency and style, and be a good communicator. Flexibility is key, especially when revisions are late, computer issues abound, or a mysterious manuscript is floating around. I love participating in the publication process, following a submission from initial review to acceptance and on through to publication. It's fulfilling knowing that all the little day-to-day tasks that I do add up to a final product: the monthly publication of an excellent peer-reviewed journal. It's also important to remember that although we are only one slice of the ASGE pie, through our efforts with the journal, we are contributing to

the greater mission of improving patient health and providing innovative information to our subscribers.

My friends might chuckle uncomfortably when I tell them what I do (yes, I read articles about colonoscopies and other unpleasant GI problems), but I know that the skills and experience I'm gaining now will be instrumental to the development of a successful editing career. Being an Editorial Assistant is the perfect "foot in the door" for young professionals interested in editing and publishing, and I'm so glad I ended up here.

*Have something to share? If you are interested in writing an article for "Whistling in the Dark," please contact Meghan McDevitt at [mmcdevitt@asge.org](mailto:mmcdevitt@asge.org).*

## Finish this sentence...

Here are the answers we received from last month's question:

**You can tell that an Editor has been proofing articles all day when....**

...she starts looking for and finding errors on the TV Dinner box. (Wendie Howland)

...an email received at 8:59 p.m. from the Editor asks me to rescind a decision letter for a manuscript because the paper was good but unfortunately not original. (Wendy Krank)

...she comes home and looks at you with crossed eyes. (anonymous)

...when he sees the "error of his weighs." (David Miller)

...she kisses you passionately because your subject and verb agreed. (anonymous)

...her daughter asks her to sign a permission slip and she corrects the text instead. (Barbara Meyers Ford)

...when he/she wakes up in the middle of the night worrying about word breaks. (Sherryl Sundell)

...he makes curlicue delete marks in the air near attacking mosquitoes. (Daniel VanTassel)

...he commands his dog to STET! (Daniel VanTassel)

Thanks to everyone who responded! For next month, finish this sentence:

**Being an Editor is like being a parent because...**

Some examples are...

...it's a 24-hour-a-day job.

...you have to answer tough questions.

...you have to get used to tantrums.

Send your sentence endings to me at [dbowman@asge.org](mailto:dbowman@asge.org), and we will print them next month.

## Calendar of Events

### ScholarOne User Conference

April 15–18, 2012  
Washington, DC, USA  
[www.ThomsonReuters.com](http://www.ThomsonReuters.com)

### Emerging Trends in Scholarly Publishing

April 19, 2012  
Washington, DC, USA  
<http://allenpress.com/events/2012seminar>

### The Journal Editorial Office

May 2, 2012, London, UK  
<http://www.alpssp.org>

### Council of Science Editors Annual Meeting

May 18–21, 2012, Seattle, WA, USA  
<http://www.councilscienceeditors.org>

### Introduction to Journals Publishing

May 30, 2012, London, UK  
<http://www.alpssp.org>

### Society for Scholarly Publishers Annual Meeting

May 30–June 1, 2012  
Arlington, VA, USA  
<https://www.sspnet.org/>

### 11<sup>th</sup> EASE Conference

June 8–10, 2012  
Tallinn, Estonia  
<http://www.ease.org.uk/>

### Editorial Manager User Group Meeting

June 21–22, 2012  
Cambridge, MA, USA  
December 3, 2012  
London, UK  
<http://www.editorialmanager.com/>

### ISMTE Conferences: Save the dates!

ISMTE U.S. Conference  
August 14–15, 2012  
Washington, D.C.  
<http://www.ismte.org>  
ISMTE European Conference  
October 23, 2012  
Oxford, UK  
<http://www.ismte.org>

# Thank You

to our Corporate Sponsors!

## Gold Level

Wiley-Blackwell

## Silver Level

ACS Publications, BMJ Group,  
Elsevier, Informa Healthcare,  
Nature Publishing Group

## Bronze Level

Aries Systems Corporation, eJournalPress,  
Newgen Knowledge Works,  
Oxford University Press, ScholarOne  
Thomson Reuters



**SILVERCHAIR**  
INFORMATION / SYSTEMS

**Additional Support:** CrossRef

**Interested in supporting ISMTE?**  
Please visit <http://ismte.org/supporters.html>

## ISMTE Editorial Office News

Editorial Office News (*EON*) is the official newsletter of the International Society of Managing and Technical Editors (ISMTE) and is published monthly. The contents and opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily represent those of the Society, the Board of Directors, or *EON* Editors, nor does the publication of an article constitute an endorsement on the part of ISMTE of the authors' organizations or companies. Submissions are welcome and can be sent to the Editor at the address below. Submissions may be edited for style and format without the author's permission. Authors must seek permission to reprint any copyrighted material and provide this permission to the Editor.

*EON's* content belongs to the members of ISMTE. Users may view and download *EON* articles for personal, non-commercial use. Use beyond that allowed by the "Fair Use" limitations (sections 107 and 108) of the U.S. Copyright law requires written permission from the *EON* editor.

### Editor:

**Deborah Bowman**  
*dbowman@asge.org*

### Associate Editors:

**Meghan McDevitt**  
*mmcdevitt@asge.org*

**Emily Mueller**  
*emueller@allenpress.com*

**Susan Scalia**  
*susan@awra.org*

### Editorial Advisor:

**Kristen Overstreet**  
*Kristen.overstreet@mac.com*

### Section Editors:

**Ethics: Ira Salkin**  
*Irasalkin@aol.com*

**Taming Technology: Lindsey Brounstein**  
*lbrounstein@gastro.org*

**Whistling In The Dark: Meghan McDevitt**  
*mmcdevitt@asge.org*

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

## CONTACT

### ISMTE Executive Office:

107 Mantua Pike Ste. 701 #122, Mantua, New Jersey,  
USA 08051-1606  
TEL: (+1) 856-292-8512  
FAX: (+1) 856-292-8513  
[ismteoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ismteoffice@gmail.com)

# Thank You to our Corporate Sponsors!

## Gold Level



## Silver Level



## Bronze Level



## Additional Support



Interested in supporting ISMTE? Please visit <http://ismte.org/supporters.html>