

ARTICLE

CrossCheck Plagiarism Screening: What's the Magic Number?

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CrossCheck, the plagiarism screening initiative from CrossRef and iParadigms has recently welcomed its 240th publisher and is becoming an established part of the editorial process for many journals. CrossCheck members use the iThenticate system to screen submitted papers for originality and can quickly tell whether a paper contains passages of text that also appear in other publications or resources.

When a manuscript is first uploaded to iThenticate, a *Similarity Score* is returned indicating the percentage of text in the uploaded document that matches text in other published documents or webpages. The similarity score is the first thing you see when a document is processed and, because it's easy to focus on this number as signifying a problem, a common question new users of the

system ask is 'what level of similarity score indicates a problem?'

The answer to this question is there is no such thing as a 'magic number' that will tell you whether a document contains problematic content. The similarity score gives you a rough 'headline' that ensures heavily duplicated papers are brought straight to your attention and allows you to quickly disregard papers with hardly any matches. Beyond that, the score itself doesn't give you definitive answers and definitely cannot tell you whether you have a case of plagiarism.

Why is this? Well, there are a number of factors that need to be taken into account when assessing a paper's overall similarity score.

Firstly, it's important to note the similarity score is telling you the *total* amount of matching text. This is probably going to be made up of a number of smaller matches. It is

In this issue:

Articles

- *CrossCheck Plagiarism Screening: What's the Magic Number?* **1**
- *Offshore Copyediting: A Perspective From the Other Side* **4**
- *Changing Online Hosting Platforms: Part I* **8**

Column

- *Portrait of an Editorial Office* **13**

Miscellaneous

- *Calendar* **15**

What's the Magic Number?

continued

possible a 30% score will turn out to be a 30% match to one source, but it's much more likely that when you look at the reports you'll find the 30% is made up of a number of smaller matches, the largest of which might be just 4 or 5%. Of course, a paper with six separate matches of 5% could well be as problematic as one that has copied 30% of its content from a single source, but it's impossible to tell whether this is the case without looking at the reports.

Secondly, where the match appears can sometimes be more important than how big the match is. For example, editors in certain subject areas may be less concerned about sizable matches in methods sections, where there are only so many ways to describe a certain process. A match in the discussion or conclusions with no appropriate citation, on the other hand, could set alarm bells ringing even though it only accounts for a small percentage of the manuscript. Similarly, acceptable thresholds for one type of article may not be appropriate for another: Review articles could be expected to have a higher overall similarity score than original research articles.

It is also important to bear in mind there could be simple errors in the unedited manuscript that mean matches are picked up incorrectly. The *exclude bibliography* feature of iThenticate relies on the reference section having a title on its own line within the document. If this is omitted from the manuscript, the references will not be excluded. Similarly, the *exclude quotes* feature looks for quotation marks. If the author has not used quotation marks or missed one at the start or end of the passage, the system will not recognise it as a quote, even though it might be apparent to the editor due to its layout and reference.

For all of these reasons it's important to look at the reports rather than rely on the

similarity score alone.

Using the Content Tracking Report

The default report in iThenticate is the Similarity Report. This shows you content matches from highest to lowest. It highlights all areas of the uploaded manuscript that match one or more sources in iThenticate's comprehensive databases and gives you a very good indication of whether the paper contains significant sections of duplicated text. A quick glance at the Similarity Report will often be all that is needed to confirm a manuscript only contains small matches comprised of frequently used terms or phrases, or at worst, poorly cited content that can be corrected. If, however, the Similarity Report identifies one or more matches that are quite large, or lots of smaller matches even with the bibliography excluded, the Content Tracking report should be your next port of call.

Content Tracking compares the uploaded manuscript to one source at a time. The Similarity Report combines the top matches from multiple sources into a summary, and in doing so can only attribute each match to one source when it may in fact appear in several.

This is best explained using an example. Say a document has an overall similarity score of 25%, comprised in the Similarity Report of one match of 20% to source A and a second match of 5% to source B. Switching to Content Tracking reveals the second match to source B is in fact 15%, but 10% is a passage of text located within the match to source A and is therefore masked by the larger match. This 10% cannot show as matching both source documents in the Similarity Report because it can only be highlighted once, but in Content Tracking where you can toggle between individual sources with a radio button it will be attributed to each source separately.

What's the Magic Number?

continued

An example of where this can be particularly useful is when there is a combination of duplicate or redundant publication and possible plagiarism: Large matches to the author's previous work could hide smaller passages copied from other articles. Content Tracking will lay out the full extent of overlap with each source with no masking.

hand screen of either the Similarity Report or Content Tracking. Clicking on the link in the right-hand pane will take you to the article or webpage in its original location, which can be useful for identifying website matches or checking unfamiliar sources, but only the side-by-side view will show you the matching passages next to each other.

Side-by-Side Comparison



Finally, don't forget that for any match you can view the full text of the source article or webpage alongside the uploaded manuscript by clicking on the highlighted passage in the left-

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Offshore Copyediting: A Perspective From the Other Side

by **Meenakshi Venkat**

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About Myself

I have a BA and an MPhil in English Literature, and I thought I was destined for the groves of academe, when second thoughts about my career trajectory led me in the direction of publishing. After a couple of uninspiring, low-level, editorial jobs, I got my first lucky break into the publishing industry in 2004, when I joined Macmillan Publishing Solutions in Bangalore, India, as a copyediting manager. In my role as a copyediting manager, and also in subsequent roles with other companies as a project manager and customer service head, I have gained wide exposure not only to publishing but also to the offshore publishing industry, a markedly different animal from its onshore (Western) counterpart. I presently work for Newgen Publishing and Data Services, a Chennai-based publishing services provider, out of Newgen's Bangalore office. My designation is managing editor. In this capacity, I play a role in managing offshore copyediting operations and copyediting resources for one of Newgen's prestigious humanities and social sciences publishing clients based in New York. As managing editor, my job is typically to assess incoming manuscripts for copyediting requirements (level of editing and whether they are to be edited offshore in India or onshore in the United States); to train and mentor new copyeditors; to run a quality

check on all the copyediting being done by our pool of copyeditors (I do this by reviewing copyediting samples on a regular basis and providing feedback to the copyeditors); to field the many editorial queries we get from authors and the client about manuscripts in the production process; and to offer editorial support while a manuscript is in the typesetting stage.

Outsourcing Copyediting

Western publishers (in North America, Australia, and Europe) have been sending their editorial work offshore since the late 1970s, but it is really in the last two decades, particularly in the first decade of the twenty-first century, outsourcing of copyediting has been garnering more attention. Offshore destinations in Southeast Asia include Singapore, China, India, and the Philippines. In India alone, there are many vendors of publishing services catering to foreign clients; some notable names include my own company, Newgen, as well as others such as Macmillan Publishing Solutions, Integra, SPI, Aptara Corp., KGL, Cosmic Strands, SR Nova, and Glyph. More recently, companies such as Mindworks, located just outside New Delhi, have ventured into offshore newspaper copyediting, handling the copyediting needs of newspapers such as the *Miami Herald* and *South China Morning Post*. It would not be inaccurate to say the offshoring of copyediting has

Offshore Copyediting

continued

stretched the abilities of both laypeople and experts to negotiate and straddle vast differences in time, place, language, and culture. With the outsourcing of writing and editorial services to countries halfway around the globe, a copyeditor in Mumbai may be required to rewrite parts of a manuscript on Barack Obama; a copyeditor in the Philippines might have to tinker with content written in China or Japan; and a copyeditor sitting in the United States might have to be prepared to edit a book written in India. This is a time of multiple boundary crossings and the global movement of content.

Is the World Flat?

But by no means is everyone sold on the idea of outsourcing editorial work to countries such as India, even if the percentage of English-speaking people in India is higher than in business rival China. Clients and authors alike, while often praising the capabilities of Indian copyeditors and production teams highly, simultaneously express concerns about their books and articles being copyedited in a nation where English is not the native language. There are concerns the vast cultural differences between East and West make it difficult for an Indian copyeditor to be responsive to Western cultural idioms and grammatical nuances. Debates rage on about whether it is possible for Western publishers to outsource editorial functions, which are embedded in a nation's culture, to destinations on the other side of the globe. In the Indian context, where the English spoken is traditionally the Queen's English, there are questions about whether copyeditors can do justice to works written in American English, or Canadian English, or Australian English. While Indian companies have reached the international level in terms of basic infrastructural facilities, software and

technology capabilities, and resource management, there is admittedly still some distance to go in terms of leveraging the language capabilities of its educated, English-speaking population. However, it is also fair to speculate an American or British copyeditor editing Indian-authored content might face similar challenges to the Indian copyeditor editing Western content.

Copyediting as a Career

However, none of these arguments have in any way put a damper on the enthusiasm of people who are seeking to build a career in copyediting. With the proliferation of vendors across the major Indian metropolitan areas and the increasing numbers of senior copyeditors who are now branching out on their own (either starting their own companies or diversifying as freelancers), there is likely to be a large pool of copyediting resources available from this country for several years to come. Even with copyediting rates in the West being slashed, copyediting in India is still a moderately profitable venture for Indian companies and businesses. The main draw is variety. The range of editorial services being outsourced to India is staggering, comprising: scientific, medical, and technical editing; humanities and social sciences editing; indexing; editorial proofreading; and even developmental editing. There's something for everyone here and ample opportunity to pick up specialized skills—if you have good English-language competency, at least a college or postgraduate degree, and an eye for detail. Even increasing numbers of PhDs and college lecturers are now turning to publishing, and specifically editing, as a career path.

In the wake of the software boom in India, copyeditors have become used to editing on the computer—electronically—making for the easy transferability of files and content across

Offshore Copyediting

continued

distances and time zones. Teams are increasingly virtual, and so are training methodologies, with a trainer sitting in Mumbai imparting editorial training via webcam and Skype to editors located in Delhi, Pune, Kolkatta, or Bangalore. Globalization has left a deep impact on how editorial operations and copyediting careers are managed offshore today.

Full-Service Project Management

Publishing services providers in India typically yoke their editorial offerings with the additional bonus of full-service project management, whereby the provider also manages the entire range of pre-press services in one location and under one roof. So a client who is outsourcing editorial work to an Indian company will typically also be encouraged to outsource composition and design work for those same projects, all of which are managed by a ‘full-service project manager’ who oversees the production process from the time a manuscript enters the copyediting stage to the time it is ready for printing in the form of print PDFs and application files. This allows for the production process to be streamlined considerably, usually with one person seeing the manuscript through the different stages.

Sophisticated management information systems enable project managers and clients to track the progress of any given project at any point in time, while sophisticated communications platforms enable cross-continental communication via e-mail, phone, or Skype in real time, making time differences work to both the clients’ and the providers’ advantage. Most providers thus aim at becoming ‘a one-stop shop’ for their overseas clients.

Managing Authors and Clients

As I mentioned earlier, it is with some trepidation, but often with a lot of enthusiasm, that both publishing clients and their authors undertake to work with Indian vendors. Authors in the West, who traditionally have been accustomed to working on hard copies of their manuscripts, now have to adjust to an online mode of communication and to the review of electronically marked-up manuscripts with a copyeditor or project manager about 10,000 miles away. Copyeditors, for their part, do not have the luxury of calling up an author over the telephone to seek clarifications about something in the manuscript—instead, they have to learn how to formulate queries that are sent with the edited files in the form of Word ‘comments.’ Clients and providers have to learn to interface via e-mail or occasional conference calls to share and understand editorial and typesetting requirements, as the distances do not allow face-to-face meetings. All of this requires a considerable amount of juggling, time management, and skill at navigating cultural differences. Terminologies differ between countries: One person’s ‘compositor’ is another person’s ‘typesetter’; one person’s ‘scrub’ is another person’s ‘clean-up.’ A considerable amount of effort goes into translating these differing terminologies into common idioms so effective communication is possible. Most challenging of all is the importing of foreign content into a culturally different environment: Here in India, we edit books on topics as varied as Robert Southey’s poetry, the Colbert Show, and Caribbean slave narratives. An editor not familiar with such content needs to do some basic research on the Internet to acquaint themselves with these cultural contexts—in effect, with content

Offshore Copyediting

continued

crossing cultural lines, an offshore editor in particular must aim to acquire a certain degree of cultural literacy in addition to honing and updating his/her editing skills.

Challenges

I think the biggest challenge facing an Indian copyeditor today is proving to our Western clients we can deliver a quality product. The biggest criticism we face from our clients and other customers is that Indian—or offshore—copyediting as a whole does not equal the standards of onshore copyediting. Offshore copyediting often contains errors and inaccuracies either because the copyeditor is a non-native speaker of English and does not fully grasp the linguistic nuances of an author who is a native speaker of English, or because the copyeditor is not familiar enough with the contexts behind the content. Sustained training is one way of addressing these issues, and many offshore vendors today now have in-house trainers who work with copyeditors to bring them up to speed on matters of style, cultural literacy, and language usage. The easy accessibility of reference books, style manuals, and online discussion forums is another means of helping

offshore copyeditors remain current and up-to-date about the many aspects of style and usage. In today's globalized world, it is imperative for copyeditors to read widely and upgrade their knowledge base on an ongoing basis.

Another challenge comes from the area of technology. Nowadays, automation is king, and more and more editorial functions are being replicated—if not actually replaced—by sophisticated editing tools that go far beyond the scope of a basic spell check. Today, editing tools can run hyphenation checks, capitalization checks, flag consistency problems in a manuscript, perform a basic document clean up, and even style references. The twenty-first-century copyeditor will need to be conversant and comfortable with such tools in order to keep apace with new and emerging developments concerning editing technologies.

Despite differences of culture, competency, know-how, basic infrastructure, and the pros and cons of editorial outsourcing, it is fair to say countries such as India continue to remain popular destinations for offshore editorial services.



New! Interview with an Expert Series

[Addressing Conflicts of Interest in Journals: Interview with Liz Wager](#)

In the first installment of ISMTE's 'Interview with an Expert' series, Kathy Brister, managing editor of the *Journal of Applied Microbiology* and *Letters in Applied Microbiology*, speaks with publishing ethics expert Liz Wager, chair of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Their lively discussion focuses on the key issues surrounding conflicts of interest (COI) in journal publishing. Listen to the podcast now and learn how COIs are defined, advice on developing and implementing a sound policy, what to do when COIs are undisclosed, and much more!

Changing Online Hosting Platforms: Part I

by **Cindy DeLano**
Managing Editor
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As the managing editor for a small, quarterly, scholarly journal I am a one-woman shop—the chief cook and bottle washer, which can keep me very busy but has also allowed me to learn much about the ever-changing world of scholarly publishing. As I was preparing to interview for my current position with a small nonprofit association, I did the requisite research one does when looking for a new position, including perusing the journal's website. The site consisted of the journal's current published content in addition to several years of back content. My first thought when I saw the site was, 'I want to change that site!' Although the site was functional enough, it had a very outdated look to it.

My chance came when after taking on my current position, the publisher of our journal proposed we change the journal's online hosting provider, that is, the vendor who is responsible for maintaining and posting the online version of the journal on the Internet using the vendor's proprietary online hosting platform. I was excited at the thought of doing so, with a hefty dose of intimidation and uncertainty thrown in since I had no experience in doing something like this. Where does one start in evaluating why and how to change online hosting platforms? Following are the steps I took, with help from the journal's editor-in-chief and our publisher, in making the transition of online platforms. Please keep in mind this is how we made our decision, but it should not be construed as the only method for deciding to change vendors.

I have written this article in two installments: Part I covers why and how we decided to change online hosting platforms, and Part II will cover how we prepared for the transition of the site, the process of transitioning the site, and the outcome of doing so.

Why Change Online Hosting Platforms?

Several factors drove the decision to consider moving our journal to a different online hosting provider. Because our contract was ending, the time was opportune to explore other options and platforms for hosting our journal online while at the same time considering renegotiation of our current contract. Our publisher uses a different platform from what we were using, which created some difficulty in terms of production. Because file requirements were different between the two platforms, our journal was the odd man out, requiring more production and staff time to provide files in the format required by our vendor. In addition, we had two concerns about the current vendor. The first was we had heard from colleagues that our current vendor's services came at a higher cost than other providers; however, we needed to conduct more research to determine if this was the case. The second was the vendor's customer service was sometimes lacking, with slow response to my requests and to requests from our publisher to resolve problems with the site.

Changing Online Platforms

continued

How We Made the Decision to Change

To begin the process of changing online vendors, I compared services and costs among three different vendors, followed by writing a proposal for changing vendors to present to the people within the association who would be responsible for making the final decision to make a change.

Obtaining an estimate

To get started on evaluating whether to make the transition to another provider, I began by comparing our current vendor (Vendor A) with two other vendors: the vendor used by our publisher (Vendor B) and a third vendor (Vendor C) who was not involved with the journal in any way. (I have intentionally left out the proper name of each vendor so as not to promote one vendor over another.) I requested a formal estimate from Vendor C and relied on our publisher to provide me with the same information for Vendor B. (If we switched to Vendor B, it was determined that our publisher would contract directly with them.) In seeking the estimate from Vendor C, I chose an online hosting vendor who appeared to have similar capabilities to the platforms of Vendors A and B. I contacted a sales person I had met at a professional meeting and requested an estimate for the cost of transitioning the journal, including back content, and the cost of the services overall for maintaining the site from month to month and the posting of each new issue quarterly. I also asked whether Vendor C would be willing to work with a small journal. In my request, I included a description of our association (e.g., type of membership association, location of members, etc.) and a brief description of the journal (i.e., page count per issue, frequency of publication, and print run), a list of the

features available on our current site (e.g., articles available as PDFs and in HTML; electronic table of contents notifications; back-digitized articles since 2003, with some sporadic tables of contents available prior to 2003; deposition to applicable indexes, etc.), a list of vendors responsible for other aspects of publishing the journal (including the publisher, who is responsible for copyediting, composition, printing, fulfillment, and distribution), and the name of the vendor of our online peer-review submission system.

Comparing services

As I evaluated the three platforms, I found there were very few differences among platforms, with all three vendors providing similar, if not the same, features and functionality. These common features included the following:

- All three platforms were well-recognized, high-performing platforms, with each platform hosting journals published by large, commercial publishers as well as non-profit associations and learned societies
- Articles could be posted in PDF and HTML formats (providing articles in HTML increased cost on all three platforms)
- XML metadata were deposited in online scholarly linking, abstracting, and indexing databases (e.g., CrossRef, PubMed, SCOPUS, and Google Scholar)
- Each platform partnered with major online search engines (e.g., Google, MSN, Yahoo)
- All three platforms had similar browse

Changing Online Platforms

continued

and search interfaces, allowing users to choose between simple and advanced search options, including fielded searches of article titles, author names, abstracts and keywords, as well as the ability to search with Boolean operators

- Each platform had similar registrations procedures for users, with maintenance of institutional and individual IP addresses
- Comparable reports collected usage data across content by title (articles accessed) and institution (IP address access)
- Each had a single-article purchasing option (also known as *pay per view* [PPV])
- Each had the ability to post supplemental data/material
- E-mail notifications could be sent to subscribers when a new issue of the journal was posted online
- Each had forward and backward reference linking
- Each had the ability to design a new journal site, closely matching the design and/or look and feel of the recently re-designed print journal and aligning the look of the site with the association's new website

Because the similarities were so great, I decided the best way to evaluate and differentiate the three platforms was to consider the pro and cons for each vendor that lay outside the realm of the similarities listed above. Following is the list of the pros and cons for each:

Vendor A

Pros

- Had the biggest 'brand name'
- Journal had been established with this vendor since 2006
- No file transfer costs

Cons

- Highest annual cost of the three vendors
- Complexity of file formats needed for providing files for posting

Vendor B

Pros

- Significantly lower annual cost than Vendor A, but comparable to Vendor C
- Publisher would serve as liaison for transition of sites and continued posting of files
- There might be additional leverage to negotiate costs because of publisher's relationship with Vendor B
- File requirements for articles to be posted online were less cumbersome/complex than as requested by Vendor A
- Each of the publisher's online journals were hosted on Vendor B; therefore, adding our journal to this list would result in increased efficiency and consistency in production of the journal

Cons

- One-time cost for file transfer and design of site

Changing Online Platforms

continued

- Lack of familiarity with the vendor; therefore, we were giving up some control by relying on our publisher to present Vendor B's platform to us

Vendor C

Pros

- Significantly lower annual cost than Vendor A and only slightly higher than Vendor B

Cons

- There were significant one-time costs for moving to this vendor that were not required for the other two vendors
- No previous experience or relationship with this vendor by either the association or the publisher
- File requirements for posting online and other operational details were unknown
- A more thorough review of Vendor C would be needed, including who would be responsible for transitioning sites (publisher vs. managing editor) and for preparing files for posting (publisher vs. managing editor), and how would subscriptions be affected?

Comparing Costs

After comparing the features and services of each platform I completed a comparison of costs across the three vendors for transitioning and maintaining the journal's site. I broke down each vendor's costs for transitioning the journal's site into the following categories:

- Initial cost for setting up the new site,
- Additional cost for design of the new site if not included in the set-up cost,
- The cost of converting back content,
- The cost of providing a PPV option,
- The cost for posting supplemental data,
- The cost for providing free access,
- The total cost to transition the site, and
- The yearly cost of maintaining the site, including the cost for posting each new issue of the journal.

Obviously, we already knew what the costs for each category were for Vendor A; however, for Vendors B and C, each vendor provided their estimates with slightly different cost variables. For example, Vendor B provided an estimate for setting up the new site in addition to a cost for designing the site; whereas, Vendor C's cost for designing the site was included in the estimate for setting up the site. Vendor B did not charge for back content conversion whereas Vendor C did. Vendor C charged separately for setting up the service to post supplemental data whereas Vendor B did not. To avoid confusion I used a table to simplify and present visually the estimates from each vendor (See Table 1).

The Decision

Ultimately, we decided to leave Vendor A and transition our site to Vendor B, the hosting platform used by our publisher. For us, the biggest consideration came down to cost for yearly maintenance of the site and posting of each new issue of the journal. Although we would initially incur the added cost of setting up the new site, once the site was established we'd be paying about half of what we were paying previously. The yearly costs for maintaining the site were about equal between

Changing Online Platforms

continued

Table 1. Vendor Comparison

Vendor	Initial costs to set up new site	Design of new site	Back content conversion	PPV	Supplemental data	Free access	Total cost to transition site	Yearly cost
Vendor A								
Vendor B								
Vendor C								

Vendors B and C; however, we felt production would be streamlined if we were using the same vendor that our publisher used for their other online journals. In addition, our publisher was already familiar with Vendor B.

information presented from the above sections to structure the proposal for presentation to our executive director, who ultimately approved the decision to change online hosting vendors.

Buy-in

Because the journal I work on is relatively autonomous from the association, the only approval needed for making the decision to change platforms was approval of the preliminary proposal by the editor-in-chief of the journal, with final approval needed from the association's executive director. I used the

PART II

In Part II of this article, I will discuss how we planned for the actual transition of our journal's site once we made the decision to change platforms, how the transition went, and the lessons learned in the process.



New Training Module!

Publishing Ethics 101: A Guide for the Editorial Office

The ethical handling of the review process and publication of journal research is critical to guaranteeing the accuracy and transparency of information disseminated to the scholarly community. Editorial staff should be familiar with the fundamentals of ethical publishing, including the common types of ethical violations, the primary elements of an ethics policy, and how to correct errors in literature that result from a breach of conduct. "Publishing Ethics 101: A Guide for the Editorial Office" is a quick-reference tool that will provide editorial staff with these fundamentals, as well as resources for more in-depth information about the ethics of journal publishing. This module is a benefit of ISMTE membership.

Managing Editor: A Worthy Profession

by **Diane Rothrock**

Managing Editor

Mucosal Immunology and

Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

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It's difficult to conceive of a job more intensely social—more face-to-face interpersonal—than that of the public school teacher. Whatever the experiences those so employed must face (an unenviable salary, the physical confinement, the slings and arrows of administrative bureaucracy, the physical and emotional exhaustion from the unending requirement to perform), even the most cynical cannot fail to recognize the value that accrues to society from the teacher's efforts. After serving as a teacher for twelve years, I made a sharp detour into the world of medical publishing and began to work as a managing editor. At the outset, I knew next to nothing about the field of publishing generally, or specifically how or what I was to 'manage.' Now more than a decade has passed and, along with acquiring proficiency in fulfilling the responsibilities that fall to me, I've achieved some perspective of what it means to be a managing editor... a perspective clearly influenced by my previous experience as a teacher.

I'm a person who thoroughly enjoys interacting with others in diverse social paradigms. My personality does not lend well to social isolation. Those who know me are surprised I've chosen a vocation wherein most

social contact is faceless, electronic, and can be performed in the solitude of a home office. Weighing the pros and cons of my job, I rank the social isolation involved as by far the most compelling of the latter. What other complaints I could voice are trivial and outweighed by the job's more positive aspects. Amongst these:

- 1) My job is eminently portable. Laptop, iPhone, and iPad in hand, I've managed editorial offices from locations far-flung (Oahu's north shore, the Grand Canyon, Tahoe's snow-covered slopes). My husband's work frequently requires travel, and the flexibility of a virtual editorial office allows me to accompany him at will.
- 2) I must admit to owning my fair share of obsessive-compulsive traits. On the one hand, this serves me well professionally when I methodically track down and consume the chain of editorial details requisite to an efficient editorial office. The satisfaction of transmitting a perfectly intact manuscript to production after shepherding it through weeks of rigorous peer review, and sometimes multiple revisions, is reinforcing. On

A Worthy Profession

continued

the other hand, the flexibility of my vocation enables me to pursue my non-professional obsessions: running, swimming, and my most recent devotion to Hip-Hop and Latin dance. It isn't unusual for my editors or authors to receive an e-mail from me written late in the night, early in the morning, or on weekends. This control I have over the structure of a workday allows satisfaction of my professional and personal obsessions. For a person like me, this is a huge plus.

- 3) I'm able to remain productive and engaged intellectually with the world in a manner compatible with family life. With three sons ranging from ages 5 to 15, I contend with more than my share of soccer practices, swim team events, track meets, drum and guitar lessons, class parties, and the occasional sick child. Working as a managing editor from a home office allows me to retain the satisfaction of professional challenge and achievement without the pangs of conscience so often felt by

other working parents. The periodic travel to society meetings or a publisher's office helps to offset the lack of daily 'live' professional interaction.

- 4) And, finally, my job as a managing editor connects me with a multitude of talented, articulate, and diverse individuals. From my hilltop office in Birmingham, Alabama, I work with editors, authors, and reviewers from all over the world. We are ultimately united in a common effort whose value cannot be overestimated: to raise the standard of medial care through research.

This last lies at the core of what drew me to both fields, teaching and medical publishing. Different as they are in terms of work environment and the responsibilities associated with each, in the end both reinforce my need to devote time to efforts that are valuable... valuable to me and to the society in which I live.



What would you like to tame?

Do you have questions about specific programs, software, or hardware that you would like to see featured in one of these columns in 2011? If so, please contact Lindsey Brounstein, LBrounstein@gastro.org, the Taming Technology section editor and let her know what lions, tigers, and bears are running amok in your world.



Calendar of Events

Maximising Journals Profitability

28 September 2011

London, UK

<http://www.alpsp.org>

Effective Journal Editorial Management

5 October 2011

London, UK

<http://www.alpsp.org>

2011 European Meeting of ISMPP

“Trends, Transparency, and Trust: From Insights to Action”

15-16 November 2011

Alderley Park, Cheshire, UK

http://www.ismpp.org/education/eu_meeting.html

Editorial Manager User Group Meeting

28 November 2011

London, UK

<http://www.editorialmanager.com/>

ISMTE European Conference

18 October 2011

Oxford, UK

www.ismte.org

11th EASE Conference

8-10 June 2012

Tallinn, Estonia

<http://www.ease.org.uk/>

Fourth ISMTE European Conference Oxford, 18 October

Open or closed?

If you're based in Europe make a note in your diary for this year's European conference, taking place at our now-customary venue of St Hugh's College.

We plan this year to devote the morning to debates on the twin themes of **open access** and **open peer review**. The plenary sessions will be conducted in the form of debates, with experts from the industry explaining the issues for and against each of these two controversial topics.

For the afternoon you'll be able to select from a range of workshops, covering subjects such as reporting guidelines, how to manage and involve your editorial board, and strategies for dealing with excessive copy.

Whether you're self-employed or work for a small society publisher, or whether you work within ancient history or nuclear physics, we hope there'll be something for everyone.

Michael Willis
Chair, European Conference Committee

ISMTE *EON*

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

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