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### Skimming and Skipping

**Deborah Bowman, MFA**

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Recently I read an article about how people these days rarely finish reading online articles. They skim, they skip, they bounce, they tweet a link to the article without ever finishing it themselves. It's a shame; writers work so hard creating an article, yet only a small percentage of readers make it to the end. But we can't help it; with the tremendous glut of information on the internet, we can't read it all—not even all of the articles that interest us. Even if we could read everything, would we? Or have our attention spans shortened to a point that we couldn't finish an article even if we had the time? Well, I say, that's just gr8. See, I can't even pay attention long enough to spell out the word.

Still, I hope you will read the *EON* articles this month. Find out what's going on with this year's European ISMTE conference by reading Sherryl Sundell's article about what will be happening in Belgium. Sarah Bidgood talks

about the ISMTE's social media; are you taking advantage of all of our outlets? And speaking of social media, Meghan McDevitt discusses how social media can be used to get the most out of conferences (or how to help your attendees get the most out of your offerings).

Have you joined an ISMTE Committee yet? Julie Nash tells us what is involved in being part of her ISMTE Committee for the North American Conference. And in this month's "Whistling in the Dark" article, Pamela Miller tells us about New England Journal of Medicine's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary and how they celebrated.

Maybe *Sesame Street* is what destroyed our attention span, with its incessant barrage of information (this editorial is brought to you today by the letter B!). But whatever the cause, I urge you to begin your rebellion against this trend by reading and enjoying this issue of *EON*.



## ISMTE's Social Media Outlets: A call for material

Sarah Bidgood, MA

Peer Review Manager, *Applied Physics Letters*

As you may be aware, ISMTE has a robust social media presence, and one that has continued to grow along with the Society over the past five years. ISMTE uses social media as a tool for connecting with our membership, for reaching out to the larger editorial office community, and for bringing new and evolving member benefits to your attention. As ISMTE's social media manager, I am responsible for sharing news and information with our virtual audience through these channels; this is one of our primary mechanisms for connecting with our members all around the world, and I spend time each week contemplating and preparing posts that would be of interest to you. I want the content we share to resonate with you and to be compelling, and I am continually looking for different ways to accomplish this goal.

Currently, you can connect with ISMTE on three different social media platforms. We have over 10,000 fans from all around the world on Facebook and over 200 followers on Twitter. 1,420 members of the editorial and publishing community belong to ISMTE's group on LinkedIn, and a large percentage of them participate actively in online discussion threads with one another. These three resources provide a great way to network with your colleagues near and far between face-to-face meetings at our annual conferences and local group lunches. In a profession that can often be somewhat isolating, this opportunity for interaction with your peers are particularly valuable. To join us, simply search for "International Society of Managing and Technical Editors" on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn to follow the Society's posts.

In addition to helping you stay connected with your colleagues, ISMTE's social media channels also serve to keep you abreast of new developments in the academic publishing sphere. We know that all of you are busy, and that you may not have time each day to hunt down the latest in publishing news. With this in mind, we stay plugged in to numerous hot topics for you, from open access publishing to innovative and different models of conducting peer review, filtering important stories and articles right to your Facebook and Twitter feeds. To find these, I use a series of Google Alerts to help me stay up-to-date on various issues, and I post the most germane of the articles I find for you to read. I also scour news sources like The Scholarly Kitchen, The Chronicle of Higher Education, and Times Higher Education to find opinion pieces from thought leaders on topics relevant to our industry. These responses to questions that affect us day-to-day certainly help to inform my own stance on various issues.

Along with bringing you opportunities to connect in between our meetings, we use social media to enhance our meetings, as well. For the past two years, we have live tweeted our North American annual conference using the hash tag #ISMTE20XX so that our attendees (and those who couldn't make it) can exchange thoughts and ideas on conference sessions as they are happening. We also use our live tweets to provide on-the-spot links to news items and resources to which our speakers refer so that you don't miss a thing. Since you can access all the tweets from our meetings at any time by searching the meeting hash tag, you will have access to a complete set of these annotated notes to review at your

leisure once you get home. We will be continuing this tradition this year, so don't forget to follow ISMTE during the meeting and to tweet with the hash tag #ISMTE2013!

While we use a number of mechanisms to find articles and resources we think will be of interest to you, we want your input in bringing topical material to our community. I'm asking for your help in making ISMTE's social media outlets valu-

able sources of news and information, so if you stumble upon an article on an issue relevant to our community, please send it my way so that I can share it online. I'll post items as they come to me, so be sure to check back in regularly for new material your colleagues have recommended! I'm looking forward to making the most of these communication channels with you, and I thank you in advance for your collaboration.

## Writers' Quirks

Do you have unusual ways of getting your work done? Authors are well known for having such oddities. Here are some examples of author peculiarities.

Isaac Asimov often worked eighteen hours a day and wrote more than fifty pages of text, typing at a speed of ninety words per minute. He once said that you could conduct an orgy in his office and he wouldn't look up.

E.M. Forster said he liked to let writing happen to him. He said, "How do I know what I think unless I see what I say?"

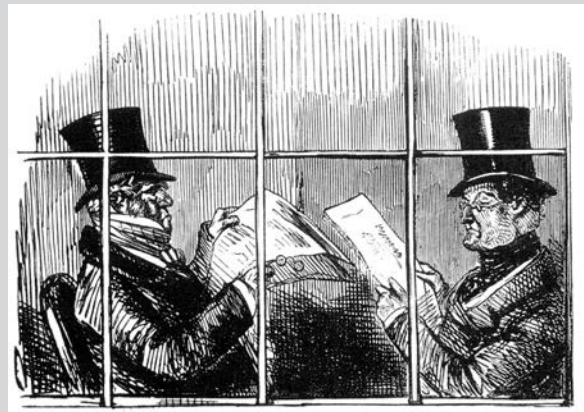
Henry David Thoreau slept with a piece of paper under his pillow. When he had insomnia, he pulled it out and wrote in the dark.

Jane Austen wrote on tiny pieces of paper so she could hide them under blotters if anyone walked into the room while she was writing.

Robert Frost once found himself without paper when he was inspired, so he wrote on the sole of his shoe.

Truman Capote kept as many as 500 pencils sharpened before he would start to write.

Thomas Wolfe stood while he worked, using the top of his refrigerator as a desk.





## Belgium Is Famous For...

Sherryl Sundell

Managing Editor, *International Journal of Cancer*

...REALLY good chocolate, *pommes frites* (also known as French fries or chips, depending on where you live), beer, waffles, its two official languages, the European capital, and Jacques Brel. I'm just back from a trip to Belgium, where I partook of several of the aforementioned pleasures and also visited our conference venue at the Hotel Aazaert in Blankenberge, Belgium. The hotel is located just a stone's throw from the sea and is a 5-min walk from the train station. Did you just quietly say "mmmmmm"? If so, you won't want to miss the next European ISMTE conference. It will be held on Sept. 23-24, 2013, at Hotel Aazaert in Blankenberge—this year as a 2-day joint meeting together with the European Association of Science Editors ([www.EASE.org](http://www.EASE.org)). Our two societies have planned two days chock-full of interesting speakers, topics, and events.

Are you wondering about the future of peer review? Are you puzzled—to use a gentle term—by all the different kinds of metrics that are out there? Do you despair at the first of every month/quarter/new year when it's time to put your statistics together or are your office procedures in need of a serious clean-up? Do you want to become a better leader or a more effective manager, improve the manner in which you associate with people, or enhance your professional development?



Fig. 1: What's left of the chocolates.

I thought so! And that's only the first day.

Has the digital age affected scholarly communication? Can the authority of scholarly communication still be trusted? Why have a gender policy? Are you eager to know what Cross-Ref now has up its sleeve? Has your journal been plagued by ethical issues and you need to know how to COPE better? Are you worried your journal's website is boring or ineffective?

For that, Blankenberge is clearly the place to be on Day 2, too.

One last question: are you a bit shy about asking a question at a conference or is the session always over by the time you have formulated your question? Is your question just too specific? Well, on both days this year you will have time to "speed



Fig. 2: Standing in front of the station. See the church steeple up ahead? Hotel Aazaert is right there.



Fig. 3: At the seaside.

date” (which you may always have secretly wanted to do anyway) with all the speakers and presenters and get some answers.

And another thing: if you have already submitted a poster for the ISMTE meetings, your poster will be on display in Blankenberge, too. BUT, new posters are also welcome for the joint meeting. Check out the website for details if you would like to create a poster (<http://www.ease.org.uk/node/852>).

Really, this is the very last question: Do you read the Scholarly Kitchen blog? If you do – and even if you don’t – you will be excited to learn that David Smith will be speaking at our conference dinner on Monday evening and hopefully tell us all about being a chef—this, of course, over coffee after a lovely meal.

Registration is open. See you in Blankenberge. (And don’t forget your swimming suit. Forgot to mention that there is a pool in the hotel and it might be warm enough in the morning or evening for a dip in the sea.)

## The Philosophy of Editing

I recently acquired a copy of *Correct English* from September 1934. (Yes, this magazine really existed!) As I read it, I was struck, not for the first time, by how much language changes through the years. Words or phrases that are completely acceptable now were once frowned upon by grammarians. Witness this Letter to the Editor from 1934, almost 80 years ago:

**Ballston, Virginia**

**Editor:**

The use of the expressions “Aren’t I” is heard with increasing frequency in every day conversation, in such sentences as, “I am talking too much, aren’t I?”

I cannot justify its use, neither can I say exactly why it is incorrect.

**A Subscriber**

**Answer:**

“Aren’t I” has not the sanction of recorded usage.

It has a certain vogue in England and is frequently found in English novels. You will find a ruling in *The Correct Word: How To Use It* bearing on the use of “Aren’t I” as meeting a need not unlike that of the use of *are* and *were* for the singular as well as for the plural in “You aren’t” and “Aren’t you?” and “You weren’t” and “Weren’t you?”

I have to wonder what will be acceptable in the future. As we Editors cringe to hear “Me and my friends went to the movies” or “We was going” or to see those misused homonyms and misplaced apostrophes, are we fighting a losing battle? What will English sound like in another 80 years? I don’t think I want to look into that crystal ball. Meanwhile, my red ink continues to flow.





## Improve Live Events with Social Media

Meghan McDevitt

Editorial Assistant, *GIE: Gastrointestinal Endoscopy*

Annual meetings, industry conferences, and other events keep many of us busy throughout the year. The staff at American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy recently returned from our largest event, Digestive Disease Week (DDW®), sponsored by ASGE and other top GI societies. Meetings and conferences are an excellent place to use social media to engage participants, bring attention to your events, and attract potential additions to your social media network.

Here are a few ways you can implement social media into your next meeting or event.

### Strategy and Scheduling

It's important to establish a strategy for marketing your event through social media—don't wait until you're at the conference to think about what you will post or tweet! Think about the presentations, speakers, panels, receptions, and other

events that will be happening and sketch out a rough outline of what you want to highlight. We focused on *GIE*-specific events like our Editors' Reception and filming our author interviews. We also retweeted or reposted content from ASGE's social media accounts that we thought would interest our followers, such as discounts at the store or video-related sessions like the Video Forum. Remember, too, that not all of your followers are attending the event, so it's a good idea to continue posting regular content during the event. For *GIE*, this meant scheduling posts related to articles in our current issue.

Monitor social media sites to see what is being said in the weeks leading up to the event. Use free services like Social Mention (<http://socialmention.com/>) or Tweet Chat (<http://tweetchat.com/>) to search for key words or topics and to



determine what social media platforms your target audience is using. This is also a good time to take note of specific Twitter handles and hashtags that you might want to include in your own posts. For example, we used the DDW Meeting hashtag #DDW13 on most of our tweets.

Create content for the social media platforms you'll be using. Keep your content varied by including links, photos, and video. Remember that tweets are limited to 140 characters and incorporate appropriate hashtags. Using a service like Hootsuite or Facebook's scheduling feature, schedule your posts ahead of time. This ensures that posts and tweets are being sent out during the event, even if you're busy with something else.

### Twitter Chats

Twitter chats require a bit more planning but provide a great opportunity for engaging with your social network and potentially gaining more followers. Twitter chats are a scheduled "chat" on Twitter moderated by a host and can take on a variety of forms such as interviews, "ask the experts," or a general discussion. Once you've decided on the focus of the chat and invited a moderator and possible guests, be sure to promote the event by tweeting about the time and date.

At DDW 2013, a group of physicians participated in a Twitter chat on childhood obesity. One physician served as a moderator and the other participating physicians answered questions and responded to the discussion, tweeting from their institution's Twitter handles. Remember to have some questions prepared in advance to generate discussion and always respond to and thank everyone who participates.

### Is it over yet?

After the meeting ends and you're back in the office, you might think it's time to kick back, relax, and hang up the social media hat. But if you do that, you'll miss out on opportunities to extend the life of your event! Keep people talking and start building excitement for *next* year's meeting. Post more photos or videos from the meeting on Facebook. Write a blog post covering the highlights of the event. After we got back from DDW, we created a small blog post, "*GIE* at DDW," which included photos of our editors, behind-the-scenes pictures from our author interview filming, and a link to this year's Reviewer Award Winners who were honored at the Editors' Reception.

It's important to use all of the tools available, including social media platforms, to boost participation and encourage engagement. With a little planning, social media can go a long way in promoting your next meeting or event.

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## The North American Conference Committee

Julie Nash

2013 ISMTE North American Meeting Chair

About a year and a half ago, I got a call from Glenn Collins, ISMTE president, asking if I would chair the North American meeting for 2012.

My initial thought: How in the world would I have time to do that?

I talked to Glenn about what was involved. It sounded simple enough. You come up with ideas and you think of people to speak on those topics. Then invite. If you build a good program, people will come.

Simple enough, I thought. But still how would I possibly come up with a dozen or more session ideas? And then find interesting people who are great speakers to make it an event people would want to pay money to come to?

Glenn's answer: A great committee.

Now as I am planning my second North American ISMTE conference, I realize how important it is to have an active meeting committee.

The responsibilities of committees are fairly simple: Develop program and speaker ideas, help promote the meeting with colleagues, publishers and contacts, assist with soliciting corporate sponsorship, and participate/help at the event.

### Task #1: Develop Program and Speaker Ideas

Planning for the annual meeting begins early in the year with a committee conference call. On that call, we go over the topics covered the previous year, the evaluations from attendees, and start brainstorming for ideas for the next meeting.

We take the evaluations from the previous year very seriously. The committee's goal is to put together a meeting that appeals to our members, so we want to see what comments people had and see what we can do to improve.

For example, you will see some changes in this year's program that are in direct response to attendee comments. The sessions will be a little shorter and the breaks a little longer. There will be more opportunities to network, including a speed networking session and an optional dinner

on Tuesday night. We also will have more break-out sessions this year than in 2012.

All of these changes came from committee discussions and attendee evaluations.

Each committee member puts forward a few topic ideas. We also look at suggestions from the evaluations. Then we slot the topics into time slots on the program.

On follow-up conference calls we brainstorm about speaker ideas. Once we have the list, I invite the initial group of speakers. We discuss more speaker ideas when people turn us down and continue to invite until we have the program complete.

This year several of our speakers came from the articles written about Open Access in *Nature*. Others were recommended by committee members as knowledgeable in a specific area or because they are great speakers on specific topic. Some are colleagues. And several work for the key software vendors that we all know and love.

### Task #2: Meeting Promotion

Being on the meeting committee naturally means that you will encourage everyone you know to come to DC. Committee members are encouraged to talk up the meeting with colleagues and contacts.

Many of our new attendees in 2012 heard about the meeting from committee members, board members, and those who attended the meeting in previous year. Word of mouth is a powerful thing!

### Task #3: Corporate Sponsorship

In an effort to keep meeting costs down for attendees, committee members reach out to corporate supporters for sponsorship. This year, committee member Sarah Bidgood created an excellent corporate prospectus to send out to potential sponsorship.

Sponsorships range for paying the full cost of a breakfast, break, or lunch, to contributing funds for Wifi access or providing a meeting giveaway.



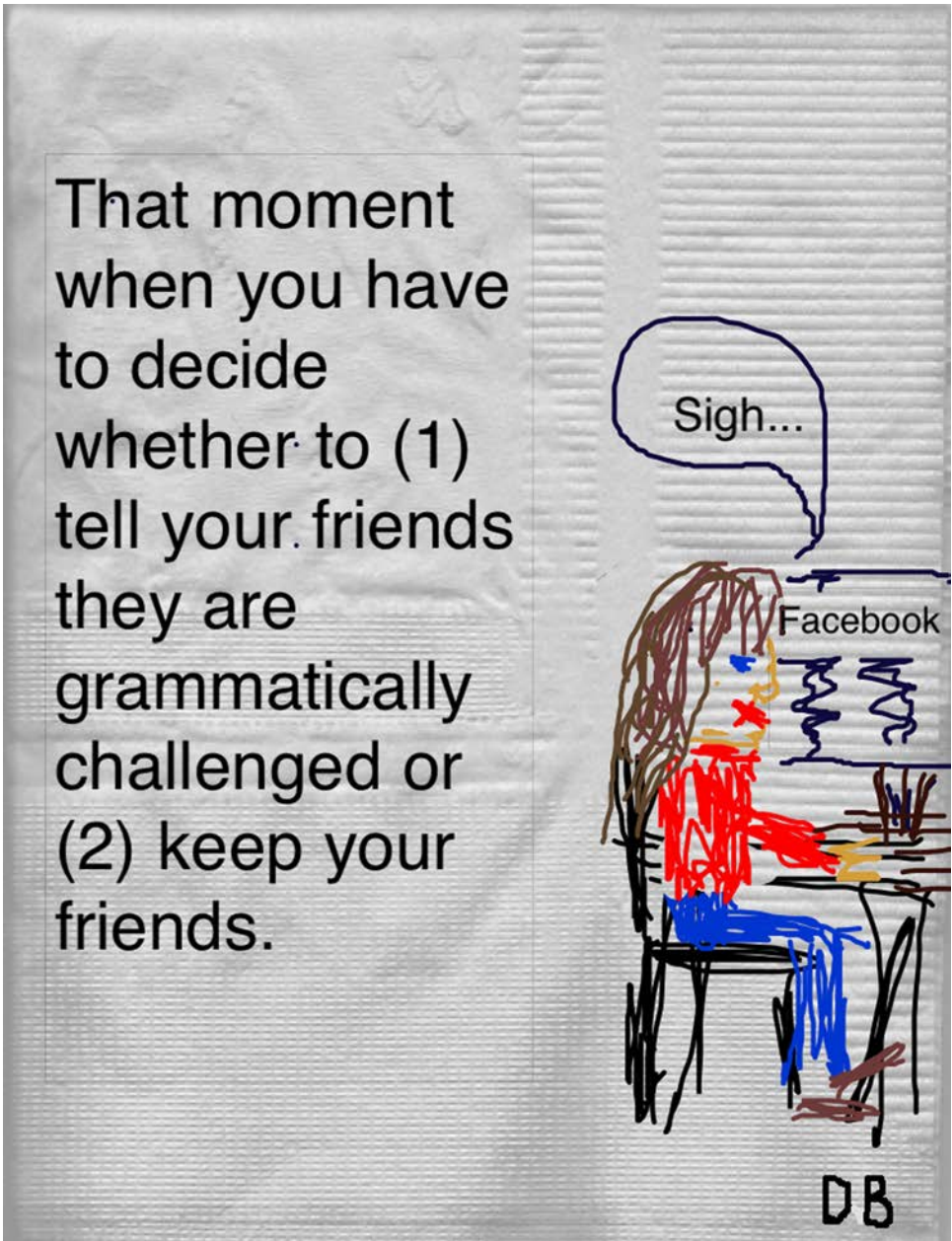
Many committee members have contacts with publishers or companies and reach out to them for funding. Several supporters—including eJournal Press and the American Chemical Society—agreed to contribute funds to the 2013 meeting.

**Task #4: Meeting Participation**

After all the slide presentations are submitted, conference programs printed, and speakers con-

firmed, the final task is introducing speakers and helping with the open forum sessions during the conference. This year, the open forum session will be divided up by topics to give attendees a chance to pick what they want to discuss.

Most of all, committee members get the satisfaction of seeing months of hard work come together into an exciting meeting.



## Whistling in the Dark

### Milestones: Celebrating 200 years of the *NEJM*

Pamela Miller

Assistant to the Editor, *New England Journal of Medicine*

How do our journals and our institutions mark significant milestones? In 2012, the *New England Journal of Medicine* celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Here is some of the thinking and doing that went into our celebration.

Planning began in 2010, mostly because the budget needed to be developed and approved early. The first thing we asked ourselves—me as the editorial lead and Christine Lamb, our director of marketing, as the business lead—was who are the stakeholders? Who is the anniversary for? Working with our senior management (publisher, Editor-in-Chief, human resources, and officials of the Massachusetts Medical Society, owner of the *Journal*), we decided that the stakeholders were as follows:

- Readers
- Contributors
- Customers (librarians, advertisers)
- Employees
- Members of the Society

We then asked for ideas for events and activities for each of these groups. Those ideas came from everywhere—employees, editors, the *Journal's* editorial board, members of the Society. A steering committee vetted ideas and eventually approved the scope of the project and the budget. At its heart, we recognized that the anniversary was a brand marketing activity. There would be no direct return on investment, but it would engage everyone and focus attention on medical progress and the *NEJM*.

The events and activities make a long list, but the bulk of the work focused on a logo and theme, editorial content, the anniversary website, a social media campaign, and our editorial party, the symposium.

Creating a theme was our first task, to tie all the events, marketing materials, and website together. Our Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Jeffrey Drazen, was clear that the celebration was not about the

*Journal* itself but about the progress medicine has made in the past 200 years. We hired a marketing firm to help develop that theme and to create an accompanying logo and design materials. Our anniversary tag line, “Inspiring Discovery, Advancing Care,” built on the theme of medical progress.

### Editorial Content

To celebrate the anniversary through *Journal* content, the editors commissioned a series of 200-year retrospectives in various areas of medicine. Because these were not traditional review articles, the editors looked for entertaining authors and engaging material. Solicitation started in July 2010—it can take a year or more to get an article written, reviewed, and revised. We commissioned one article for each month of the anniversary year, plus a history of the *Journal* as it related to advances in medicine.

Dr. Drazen suggested that we create an illustrative timeline poster to accompany each of the anniversary articles. We decided to build them for display on eight-foot-tall portable banner stands. Our editorial fellow worked with the authors to develop the content of each poster, and a graphic artist then did the layout. Despite some early misgivings on our part (I thought the idea was crazy), we found that they were a great success. Our marketing department took them to scientific and professional meetings, and we displayed them at live anniversary events. Even with the anniversary year over, they are still touring, and when they return to Boston they'll make memorable wall-hangings in our offices.

### The Symposium

As everyone knows, scientists and physicians don't throw parties, they have symposia. The major editorial event was therefore a day-long scientific symposium. In our initial thinking, it was to be a day for the authors of the anniversary articles to present their papers, but we quickly decided

to look for something more exciting. After much brainstorming, and keeping in mind our theme and tagline, we settled on a series of panel discussions (HIV, Breast Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease, Maternal Health) based on the anniversary articles but including historical, clinical, and patient perspectives. We thought big, and I encourage everyone to do the same. We invited Bill Clinton, Magic Johnson, Paul Farmer, Melinda Gates, Eugene Braunwald, Tony Fauci, and Robin Roberts. Needless to say, many of them couldn't or wouldn't come, but in a lot of cases it was close. If it hadn't been for the NBA strike and the Irish government. . . . The patients telling their stories were the highlights of the panels.

The directive from Dr. Drazen was to fill the hall of 490 seats from morning to night. And he found a way to help us do it—an essay contest for undergraduate, graduate, and medical students with cash prizes and tickets to the symposium for the winners. Once again I thought he was crazy! With the budget long since approved, where were we going to find the \$25,000 to make it happen? But I did, and he was right. A hundred and twenty very enthusiastic young people from around the world filled a quarter of the hall and added a real vibrancy to the day.

If you'd like to watch the end result of our efforts, search YouTube for “NEJM Dialogues.”

### The 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Website and Social Media Campaign

To reach and entertain our readers, we decided to build an anniversary website. It accomplished several things: gave people a way to interact with us that our regular *Journal* site (NEJM.org) does not, provided a place to delve into the history of medicine, provided a platform for our marketing plans, and gave us a place to experiment with social media all without disturbing the regular flow of production work for NEJM.org.

The idea was to promote interactivity. Features built for the site included a timeline, video interviews with every living former editor, messages and videos from our current editors, links to the anniversary articles, a historical images quiz, a poll to choose the most-important-paper, and places for people to leave both tweet-length and longer

written and video anniversary messages. We also posted the winning essays from the symposium contest. Everything, including individual messages and individual milestones on the timeline, could be liked, shared, and tweeted.

Our challenge was to bring visitors to the site. The marketing department developed a dedicated social media campaign to drive traffic. There were Facebook posts and tweets about the contest, the milestones on the timeline, the essay contest, the anniversary articles, anything which might catch people's interest. We created a special anniversary twitter feed, marketing emails, a special alert to readers, and a link from our main site. We found that 30% of our traffic came from Facebook. Much of the rest came from NEJM.org, Google, and direct bookmarks. We learned from the experience that it is very difficult to get physicians to interact beyond liking things on Facebook and clicking on some links. Although we had a small cadre of faithful readers and voters, it was difficult to attract many repeat visitors.

### How?

How does one get all this done? After all, don't we all have full-time jobs? The answer is threefold. First, we outsourced. A brand marketing firm developed our logo and theme and provided us with artwork that could be used for invitations, programs, and posters. A meeting planner who specializes in academic events (at academic prices) helped with the symposium. A web firm built the anniversary site for us at surprisingly low cost. Second, we hired interns and a physician fellow to help write and create content. Our fellow spent half her year with us creating the article posters and writing for the timeline. Third, we asked people across the organization to help. This was easy, because many people wanted to participate and to be included. Staff members who run the Society's annual meeting were happy to help run the symposium. Our best writer of milestones for the website timeline worked in *Journal* layout. One of our editorial assistants took on the historical image project solo. For Christine and me, more was required, and we transferred much of our normal work to others. Our job was to coordinate all of our volunteers, our vendors, and

our senior management. We devoted 75% time for 18 months to accomplish everything.

All this sounds like a lot, and it was. The essentials were the anniversary articles that appeared in the *Journal* and the website, both of which served our largest constituency, our readers. And we suc-

ceeded with that broad audience because we ensured that the anniversary wasn't just about the *New England Journal of Medicine* but was about the progress medicine has made in the 200 years since 1812.

### Puzzle Over It

Each word below contains a hidden gem. In each case, delete exactly one letter, then rearrange the remaining letters to find the gemstone.

Example: EMBARK = AMBER

1. POLKA
2. BUYER
3. PRELAW
4. TANAGER
5. ALDERMEN

The answer will be found in next month's issue of *EON*

Answer to last month's puzzle: Edgar Degas



## Calendar of Events

Effective Journals Marketing

July 9, 2013

London, England

<http://www.alpsp.org>

Seventh International Congress on Peer Review  
and Biomedical Publication

Organized by JAMA and BMJ

September 8-10, 2013

Chicago, Illinois

Registration now open

<http://www.peerreviewcongress.org/index.html>

Contact [jama-peer@jamanetwork.org](mailto:jama-peer@jamanetwork.org)

ALPSP International Annual Conference

September 11-13, 2013

The Belfry near Birmingham, United Kingdom

<http://www.alpsp.org>

Commissioning Content: Working Effectively with  
Authors and Editors

September 18, 2013

London, United Kingdom

<http://www.alpsp.org>

Understanding eJournal Technology

November 13, 2013

Oxford, England

<http://www.alpsp.org>

### Save the Date!

6<sup>th</sup> Annual North American ISMTE Conference

August 6-7, 2013

L'Enfant Plaza Hotel

Washington, DC

6<sup>th</sup> Annual European Conference

ISMTE/EASE Joint Meeting

September 23-24, 2013

Hotel Aazaert

Blankenberge, Belgium

<http://www.ismte.org>

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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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