

Society Update

New Training Module Available

The ISMTE Training Committee is pleased to provide ISMTE members with a new training module on podcasting. The module showcases an innovative and free smart phone application called Audioboo. By simply downloading the application and learning a few simple steps, you can produce short

podcasts for your journal in a matter of minutes. Learn all about this new and exciting application by watching our short how-to video and reading through our detailed step-by-step guideline. These resources are available to members for free (and to all for a trial period) online at www.ismte.org/Podcasts.

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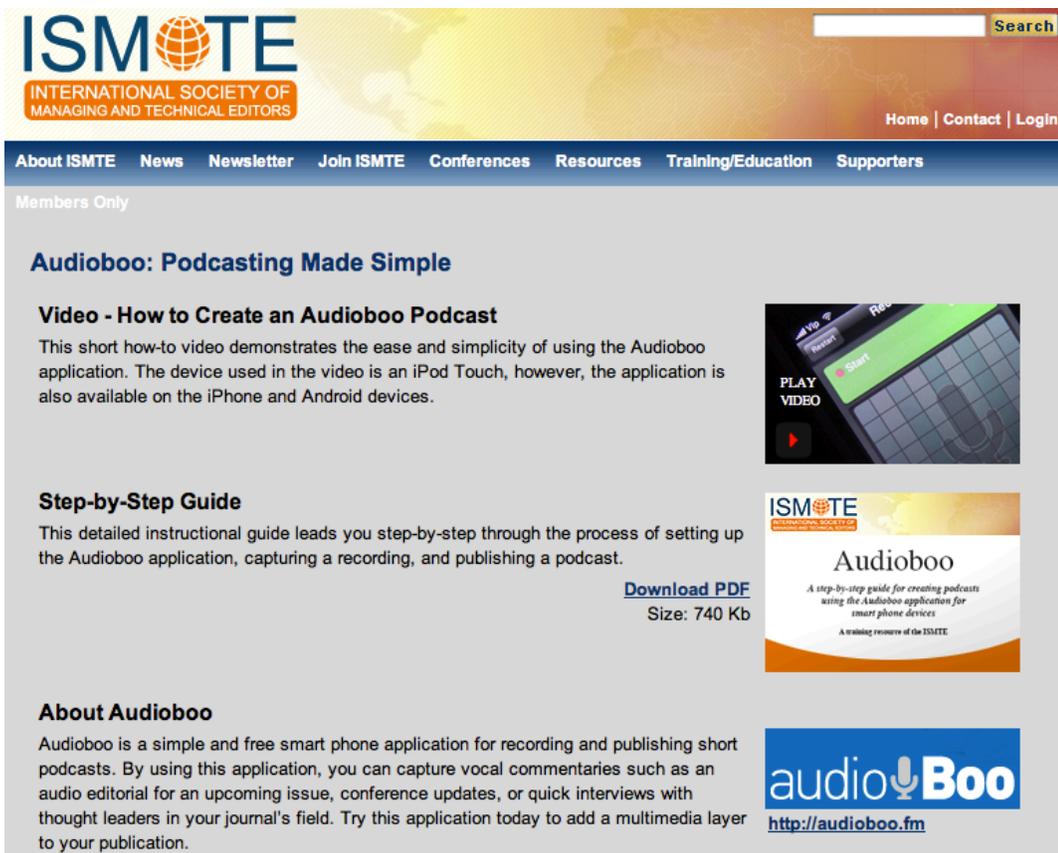
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Members Only

Audioboo: Podcasting Made Simple

Video - How to Create an Audioboo Podcast

This short how-to video demonstrates the ease and simplicity of using the Audioboo application. The device used in the video is an iPod Touch, however, the application is also available on the iPhone and Android devices.



Step-by-Step Guide

This detailed instructional guide leads you step-by-step through the process of setting up the Audioboo application, capturing a recording, and publishing a podcast.

[Download PDF](#)
Size: 740 Kb



About Audioboo

Audioboo is a simple and free smart phone application for recording and publishing short podcasts. By using this application, you can capture vocal commentaries such as an audio editorial for an upcoming issue, conference updates, or quick interviews with thought leaders in your journal's field. Try this application today to add a multimedia layer to your publication.



<http://audioboo.fm>

Membership

by Camille Fisher

Can you believe it is already spring of 2010? Neither can we over here in membership. Preparations for the annual ISMTE conference are now in full gear, and we would like to take a minute to highlight some of the most exciting ISMTE updates.

First, we have made a slight change of venue for this year's North American conference. Rather than holding it in Alexandria, Virginia, the conference will be across the river in downtown Washington, DC. Thanks to the American College of Cardiology, ISMTE will be convening in the heart of the American capital. After the North American conference in August, ISMTE will be meeting in Oxford, United Kingdom, at the first college at Oxford University to educate women, St. Hugh's College. Not to mention, this historic college was founded by the great niece of the famous poet William Wordsworth.

The keynote speaker in Washington, DC, John Sacks, will represent well ISMTE's dedication to cutting-edge publishing. His experience co-founding HighWire Press will provide valuable insight into how editorial professionals can anticipate and position themselves for the technological as well as philosophical shifts shaping publishing today. Similarly, at St. Hugh's college, Kirsty Meddings will share her expertise in plagiarism

detection, an issue growing as quickly as electronic publishing.

I am also happy to announce that ISMTE's newly formed resources committee is developing new content for the ISMTE website, which will aid members in daily publishing activities. One such project is a glossary of publishing terms, which will act as a way for professionals in different areas of publishing to familiarize themselves with a wider range of topics and issues. The committee also hopes to publish a list of free online resources and applications to assist in a variety of editorial office tasks. Both of these projects will help ISMTE members share their expertise with the rest of the organization, not just during the annual meeting, but all year long.

We hope you will join us in August for ISMTE's North American conference in Washington, DC, and then in October for the European conference in Oxford. Topics from copyright issues to social media will be covered by our diverse group of professionals, and, as always, will be centered on the future of publishing. The schedules are rich with valuable speakers, as well as time for our ISMTE members to exchange ideas and strengthen professional ties. 

Thank you to our Corporate Supporters!

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***ACS Publications, American College of Cardiology
Aries, Oxford University Press, ScholarOne Thomson Reuters***

2010 ScholarOne Manuscripts User Conference Summary

by **Kristen Overstreet and Susan Scalia**

Managing Editors and EON Editors

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Charlottesville, Virginia: In the beautiful atrium of the Omni Hotel, ScholarOne (S1) hosted a reception for conference attendees on the evening of May 2. It was an opportunity for attendees to meet one another, put names of S1 staff known only through e-mail to faces, and discuss mutual topics of interest. To help break the ice, S1 included a Bingo card in everyone's name badge holder. The Bingo card had nine questions on it and the goal was to find someone who could answer each question (the responder initialed the corresponding square).

There were about ten ISMTE members there, and we all used the opportunity to tell other attendees about the Society, especially those who were new to their editorial office roles. A number of people expressed wide-eyed wonder that a resource like ISMTE exists.

Following the reception, small groups broke off to walk down the pedestrian mall, right outside the hotel's back door, in search of dinner. The mall has many

restaurants and small shops and provided a great diversion for breaks and evenings.

Day 1

Keith Collier, vice president and general manager, welcomed attendees and provided an update on how the company has grown since the first User's conference in 2006. The company has grown from 989 journal sites with 500,000 total submissions and 7 terabytes of data storage to approximately 3,700 sites with 1.34 million submissions (2009) and 55 terabytes of data storage. Keith also shared the change in the top-ten list of submissions by country (see Table 1).

More manuscripts are being submitted by non-native-English-speaking authors, manifesting challenges for those authors, editorial offices, and reviewers as they confront the communication issues.

Tiffany Coker, director of product management,

Top Ten Submitting Countries in

2002:

1. United States
2. Japan
3. United Kingdom
4. Germany
5. Italy
6. France
7. Canada
8. Spain
9. China
10. Australia

Top Ten Submitting Countries in

2009:

1. United States
2. China
3. United Kingdom
4. Japan
5. India
6. Germany
7. Canada
8. Italy
9. Spain
10. France

Table 1. Top Submitting Countries

Conference Summary

continued

presented a product update summary from the past year's releases (v 4.2, 4.21, 4.22, and 4.23) and previewed the future 2010 releases.

Tiffany showed what we have to look forward to in the next few releases:

1. File storage defect resolutions and enhancements
2. Support for direct export to PubMed to support NIH mandate
3. EndNote updates (support for new reference styles)
4. Browser/OS updates (such as support for Windows Vista, Windows 7, Internet Explorer 7, 8, Firefox 3.6, Safari 4.0, and Chrome 3.0; and ending support for Windows 2000, Internet Explorer 5.5, Firefox 1.0.4, and Safari 1.2.4)
5. Addition of CVV to ecommerce usability
6. Ability to auto-decline reviewers (if no response is received from an invited reviewer within a specified period of time, that reviewer is automatically recorded as 'no response' and the next person on the list is invited to review)
7. Enhancements to lessen the number of 'clicks' needed to navigate through tasks
8. Researcher ID collection – a unique ID for every user
9. Nested linking (ability to link to manuscripts from the person details page)
10. File upload progress bar
11. Option to automatically attach review files to decision letters
12. Article-by-article transfer of manuscripts to production
13. Keyword selection redesign
14. Addition of PayPal authorization code to Cognos

A release on May 7 corrected an issue with the custom data fields in the reports. Future releases are scheduled roughly for July/August and November.

Breaks between presentations were long and allowed time for networking, discussion of session information, and the opportunity to attend the Solutions and Partners gallery. The Solutions and Partners gallery provided individual service to participants on support, configuration, and development throughout the conference. The SI staff was able to fix some issues on-site. For example, Kristie had the option for choosing alternate reviewers turned on for her three sites, and Susan had a custom Cognos report built for her site.

After the first break, Diane Biesecker, director of support and training, provided a quick overview of the Cognos reporting system and suggested tricks such as right click your mouse on a column to change the formatting options, and add a 'screen tip' when you create a new column so when you hover your cursor over the item later, you will see the description. There are many options for help. Click 'Get help now' on any page in the system to access the Cognos User Guide, PowerPoint presentations to teach others about the reporting system, video tutorials, and/or to sign up for free online training.

After a lovely lunch, with irresistible desserts, we formed groups and brainstormed suggestions to increase usability of various system functions, such as: reviewer search, ad hoc reports, administrator tools, and the add author/institution page. The goal was to come up with three suggestions and prioritize them in terms of desirability. Most groups surpassed the goal of three suggestions and came up with many great ideas for improvements. This session is always fun and is gratifying for the attendees [users] as the SI team uses these to improve the system. Two examples of

Conference Summary

continued

suggestions from past conferences, which have since been implemented by S1 are: deep links for editors and the ability to invite multiple reviewers at once.

After another long break, a panel presented information on e-publishing and social media. Pam Miller, from the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM), discussed how NEJM made its journal available on Kindle. Pam said translating the NEJM XML into Amazon's XML was the most difficult part of the process. After the template is set and the XML is converted, they send their issues to Amazon who does the publishing and retains 70% of the profit from the downloads. The limitations are that it's published in black and white, just like a book, and there is no ability to interact, link, or customize the content.

Charlie Trowbride discussed how the American Chemical Society (ACS) developed a mobile application (app) for one of its journals. First, they conducted a reader survey to see if their readers wanted this capability and for which type of device. The survey determined an app for iPhone would be the most feasible. Charlie said that if you're interested, you can receive a tool kit from Apple (no fee) and develop the application. Following approval from Apple (about 3 days for the ACS app), you're ready to go live. They set the cost for the app at \$2.99 (US\$). The app links the user to the Journal's website where they can see the abstract and then download the article for a fee or enter their subscriber number. Articles are available through the app as soon as they're published.

Michelle Norell, a sales executive for S1, and member of the Council of Science Editors (CSE), talked about how CSE has grown their reach through social media such as blogs (Scholarly Kitchen), Facebook, and LinkedIn. Michelle shared information from *Publisher's Weekly* magazine that says in order to achieve

significant results, two hours each day need to be spent on 1) listening (30 minutes), 2) connecting (60 minutes), and 3) publishing (30 minutes).

Day 2

The second day of the conference began with hot, fresh doughnuts from a local vendor who sold them from his truck outside the hotel, and a presentation from ISMTE's own Julie Nash. Julie, whose company J & J Editorial manages 30 journals with 20 contractors, discussed tips and tricks for managing multiple journals. She advised to carefully consider the possible future workload of your current journals before taking on another. If the workload becomes too much, it may be time to hire a contractor to assist you, say 'no' to new requests from the publisher/society, or outsource some of the work. As your business grows, be sure to establish your capacity, develop a growth plan, and add staff or say no to more work, as needed. It's important to organize your workday but not create a set schedule for each day—allow flexibility. Julie suggested 'batching' your work by journal and resisting the urge to jump from journal to journal as e-mails/notifications come in. Creating and maintaining a document outlining the guidelines for each journal is important. Keep 'notes' in the manuscript files (for S1 users) to help organize and share information. J & J uses Google Docs to share files/information that are outside the system between editors and for vacation coverage.

Pam Miller (from NEJM) followed Julie and discussed the new universal disclosure form created by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). The purpose of the form is to provide biomedical journals (and perhaps others) with a universal form that authors can complete and submit

Conference Summary

continued

with their manuscript to any journal versus needing to complete each individual journal's form upon submission. Pam said she dreams of the day when a central depository exists where these forms can be stored and be accessed by journals and editors. NEJM publishes disclosure forms online with the manuscripts. The new universal form is just being finalized after a beta testing period and will be available from the ICMJE website. (The beta version is available now. The final version will be available in June.) Instructions in multiple languages will soon be available.

After the morning break, an SI expert panel, consisting of Paula Peterson, Shawn Mollen, Ryan Looney, and LaDonna Hatton, answered questions from the meeting participants about the SI system. ISMTE's vice president, Taylor Bowen, asked if a future enhancement could allow users to access the site history, such as when it was created, who the administrators have been, etc. Shawn suggested a workaround solution is to upload a file from the 'Admin: configure instructions' link. Kristie asked when Cognos would work from the Macintosh browser, Safari. The answer was this is an issue with Cognos, and IBM will need to correct it.

There was a lot of discussion about how to make co-author account creation e-mails bounce back to the submitting author instead of the admin. Also brought up more than once was the need to be able to label the new manuscript flags. (Diane Biesecker commented this particular suggestion came in the same day the manuscript flags debuted.) Another topic was the need to make the author's response to the reviewers for revised manuscripts easier for the reviewers to find. There was a reminder that we can always submit suggestions through the system by going to the 'Get help now' link and clicking on the Suggestions icon.

Following another excellent lunch, Laura Stemmler, from American Journal Experts spoke about how her company provides manuscript editing services to non-native-English-speaking (NNE) authors. Laura had a number of suggestions for how publishers (and editors) can help make the manuscript submission process easier for NNE authors, and she has agreed to write an article or two for an upcoming issue of *EON* to share these suggestions. The company also just launched a service for helping authors format their manuscripts.

Next, Diane Biesecker provided a quick support update and then Keith Collier wrapped up the conference by announcing the winners of the Bingo game. Two lucky winners won an iPod touch and a Kindle.

Although the formal conference was over, attendees had the option to participate in an open lab where they could discuss Cognos reporting problems with and ask questions of the support staff. One-on-one, journal-specific guidance was available all afternoon, focused on the reporting system.

Overall, the weather was gorgeous in Charlottesville, and the venue was well situated. The only complaint was the size of the meeting room. Quarters were tight. SI put on a good conference. Perhaps it's their 'southern charm' that makes you feel like you're truly important and they're glad you came. They see to every detail and make sure you feel like you're a part of their community. You leave with more than just name-face associations with the staff, but a feeling that actual relationships have been developed.



A Funny Thing Happened While I Was Writing This Article . . .

by Morna Conway, PhD

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As a self-employed publishing consultant, my work priorities have a tendency to change depending on what is uppermost on my clients' minds. Take today for instance. I was sitting down in my office on my small farm in middle Tennessee on a balmy (read 85° and humid) day to write this article when my mobile chimed. Would I fly to London in a couple of weeks to interview candidates for a position with a top surgery association? As I was talking to my client, another call came; this time from a struggling little US medical journal asking me if there are any tricks to getting authors to deliver their review articles on time. A little later (still not a word on paper), there was a big brouhaha about reasons for non-renewals of institutional subscriptions to a very high-profile, scientific journal. Next call – could I negotiate a higher royalty for a book series for the society owner? And still to be done before I can call it a day in the office, a close read and red-lining of a publishing contract between a society (my client) and a major scientific, technical, and medical (STM) publisher. All in a day's work.

I have been a self-employed publishing consultant, focusing largely on STM journals, since the early 1970s (yes, I probably am the oldest in captivity). So what have I been doing all these years? My work is very much involved with helping societies, whether their journals are published by a commercial or non-profit publisher or are self-published, in developing and implementing sound publishing and

business practices. Because editorial workflows for peer review can affect the efficiency and economy of journals, and because production (print or online) is prone to errors, unexpected costs, lost material and other lurking disasters, my work often takes me up the food chain to editorial and production centers. But most of my time these days is spent in creating and managing requests for proposals (RFPs) and the responses to them—for editors, publishers, manuscript system vendors, printers, advertising representatives, online platform vendors, and the host of services that support journal publishing.

The RFP is a useful tool in ensuring journals are being run properly. The competitive bid process (typically conducted every 5 – 10 years for a journal publishing contract) can result in marked improvement in financial terms as well as in communications and strategic planning for the publication. Here's how the process works, usually with a publications committee, special task force, or subcommittee of the Board being the fulcrum within the society to ensure its goals for initiating the RFP are met:

1. Create a wish-list for the next publishing term, with input from stakeholders including editor-in-chief, managing editor, publications committee (or similar) members, and other volunteer leaders;
2. Collect data about impact factor, circulation, downloads, advertisers,

A Funny Thing Happened

continued

journal revenues, and other key metrics that enable publishers to develop financial *pro formas* for their bid;

3. Write the RFP for approval from the journal owner;
4. Manage the process of sending the RFP out to a list of relevant publishers;
5. Act as the liaison with the publishers and answer their questions, which are typically very detailed requests for further information on how the journal currently works economically and in its market space;
6. Analyze proposals along the RFP variables and create reports for the society;
7. Help society determine finalists;
8. Arrange and facilitate face-to-face meetings for finalists with society leaders;
9. Negotiate 'best and final' offer and contract with selected publisher; and
10. Work with outgoing and incoming publishers on the transition of the journal if a new publisher is awarded the contract.

It's worth noting not all RFP processes result in the incumbent losing out. In about one-third to one-half of these projects, the incumbent retains the business – and the society gains from an improved royalty and editorial support return from the publisher, as well as other concessions that strengthen the journal.

You may ask why a society can't conduct the RFP process *sans* consultant. Well, of course, a society can. A consultant, however, brings leverage to the situation by dint of

being privy to numerous publishing contracts and their terms and in being able to advise on best practices, industry standards, and other criteria that result in a deal that leaves nothing on the table. As one of my favorite clients once put it, the 'Morna effect' is to send publishers and vendors scrambling for their pencil sharpeners.

Mine has been a varied (and not too checkered) career: starting out in subscription fulfillment and marketing at a medical publishing house, going back to school and getting a doctorate focused on inter-organizational behavior (it helps to understand how alien life forms like not-for-profits and commercial companies can achieve collaboration through respecting mutual self-interest), and developing a niche market for a highly defined market segment. I'm always pleased when I've accomplished a better deal for my client, whether through streamlining workflow processes in the editorial area, helping volunteer leaders understand the complexities of publishing in the Internet era, or getting a big fat signing or retention bonus for my client (never for me). Some of the best projects I've worked on entail finding the right publisher to launch a brand new journal for a society. When the first issue hits my desk, it's a great feeling.

So now that the article is almost finished, what else needs to be done on this steamy Friday afternoon? Ah yes, red-lining that contract. Oh, the phone's ringing, and I see from the area code that Belgium is calling...



EON is seeking *column editors* for the *Tips & Tricks* and *Publication Partners* columns. The column editor is responsible for recruiting the column's articles. Interested? Contact the Editor, Kristen Overstreet, at kristen.overstreet@mac.com.

Understanding Why XML Is Important Without Needing To Know Much About It

by Melissa Dodd
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XML Looks Scary

Whenever I even say the term XML to non-techies I can see their eyes glaze over, let alone if I send them an e-mail or a file with an example to demonstrate something. I appreciate how scary it looks, but once you understand XML as a means to label content it is a much more manageable concept.

It is vital to understand the importance of XML and why it should be used, used correctly, and used as soon as possible in the workflow. Our suppliers are the experts in producing it, so I do not need to know more than the basics, which I will explain here and provide examples to back this up.

It's Just a Way to Tag Content

XML stands for eXtensible Markup Language and, to quote Wikipedia, it 'is a set of rules for encoding documents electronically.'

Production staff and copyeditors are comfortable with the concept of *tagging*. For years now copyeditors have been applying tags to content in Word files (or even before, on hard copy, content was labelled so the typesetter could identify the font and size in which to set the specified text), which translates into instructions for the typesetting

system to generate a page proof in the required style. Often the Word tagging does this, but it also generates XML which is used to publish content in various formats, so XML is being employed but we cannot see it. I think it is the sight of angle brackets (<) and slashes that immediately alarms people; and when there is lots of this, and it is hard to recognise the content in between, it is an understandable reaction.

Basic Principles

I have no formal training in XML and have learnt what I know on the job in the past year with patient support from colleagues in our technology department. I would say step one is not to be immediately panicked by the coding, but to start looking for the patterns and the terms you recognise in the content and not worry too much about the rest. For instance, when faced with a large XML document, I just tend to use the search function to cut through and find what I am looking for.

A basic principle of XML is that it is logical. The fundamental concept is the content to be coded has a tag on each end of it (an opening tag and an end tag). The tags are enclosed in angle brackets, and the end tag has a slash after the first bracket. For example:

```
<article-title>Title of this paper</article-  
title>.
```

Further, tags can be nested. For example, the article title may be nested within the article metadata:

```
<article-meta>  
<article-id pub-id-type="publisher-  
id">ac131359</article-id>  
<article-id pub-id-type="doi">10.1136/adc.  
2007.131359</article-id>  
<article-categories>  
<subj-group subj-group-type="heading">  
<subject>Paper</subject></subj-group>  
</article-categories>  
<title-group>  
<article-title>Title of this paper</  
article-title>  
</title-group>  
</article-meta>
```

If I open an XML file and want to identify the article title, that is when the search function comes in handy.

XML First Workflow

How content is represented in print and online can be driven by how it is labelled using XML in an XML first workflow. Once you begin to think of the XML workflow and labelling content as early in the process as possible, you have more chance to speed the process to publication, manipulate your content earlier in the process, and also put more onus on the author to provide correct data, thus reducing your need for input. Also, you can produce ‘ahead-of-print’ products because the content is labelled pre-print pagination.

Thus the XML first workflow enables us to streamline content delivery for different products, not just our print and online platform, but also mobile apps and downstream providers (e.g. Cross Ref, PubMed, Ovid, PubMedCentral) that is, multichannel publishing. Thus you increase your distribution channels and reduce the time to publish/distribute.

One of my current focuses is to ensure the same tagging is used in our manuscript submission system as is required at final output for online publication. By doing this I can reduce intervention and conversions and thus maintain the content as close to the author’s original intention. An example is author name segmentation. Our authors provide their names in the submission screens on our online manuscript tracking system. This is *segmented*, that is they provide first name and surname in different fields. This can be pushed to the typesetters as such, which can ensure the segmentation is retained throughout the process:

```
<name><surname>Hurlstone</  
surname><given-names>D P</given-names></  
name>
```

Without this the author names are not segmented and the typesetter/copyeditor has to guess what is right. It is much safer for the author to do it at the outset. When authors search for themselves, for instance in PubMed, if their names are not segmented properly they cannot find themselves and they will come back to you and complain.

Why XML is Important

continued

Granularity and Benefits of It

The above example is a demonstration of the granularity of tagging, the more you subdivide your content into sections the more you can do with it. For example, you could tag a reference simply as that, a reference:

```
<reference>17. Kiesslich R, Neurath MF.
Chromoendoscopy: an evolving standard in
surveillance for ulcerative colitis. Inflamm
Bowel Dis 2004;10: 695-6</reference>
```

Or, you could subtag all the elements of the reference:

```
<ref id="br17"> <label>17</
label> <citation citation-type="journal">
<person-group person-group-
type="author"><name><surname>Kiesslich</
surname><given-names>R</given-names></
name><name><surname>Neurath</
surname><given-names>MF</given-names></
name></person-group><article-
title>Chromoendoscopy: an evolving standard
in surveillance for ulcerative colitis</article-
title><source>Inflamm Bowel Dis</
source><year>2004</year><volume>10</
volume><fpage>695</fpage><lpage>6</
lpage></citation></ref>
```

In the granulated reference you have captured much more information:

- reference number
- type of reference (journal)
- first author's surname
- first author's given name
- second author's surname
- second author's given name
- article title
- journal source
- year of publication
- volume
- first page
- last page

Granulating the reference allows more of the information to be used and allows flexibility in publishing the content in several platforms with varying styles. So the content may be presented in the house style in print, but in a different style on your website or in PubMed by identifying the content labels and applying a style to them. If your print style is to embolden the volume number it need not necessarily be bold on the other publishing platforms.

Tying in Print Concepts to the XML

Many production teams may focus on the print product as that is the tangible product they produce. Unless you tie the XML labels to the tagging labels in Word used at copyediting and identified by production staff, you can cause confusion with your suppliers and also reduce the ability of staff to identify errors in tagging when looking at the product published in different media. For example, within the BMJ Journals we traditionally called the strip at the top of the page, which contains the article type, a 'banner'. However, in the XML it is called the 'section head'. By using the XML term, everyone is speaking the same language.

Again, this relates to the concept of labelling the content and labelling it correctly. Previously, because of our Word tags being used primarily to dictate the display of the

Why XML is Important

continued

content on the printed page, we would bastardise tags in order to get the 'look' we required rather than using the right tag to label the content correctly. For instance, if the sub-header tag produced a heading level we liked the look of, we would use that tag to present other content in the same way. When that translates to the full text version online, the content looked wrong and also was wrongly tagged, which has consequences for our downstream suppliers. Again, this is a move away from thinking about the print product primarily, but remembering the other

platforms you publish on.

Last Word

The essential premise, at a high-level, is that the XML tags identify what the information is, not how it should look or where it should appear on a page, website, etc. Also, by employing an XML first workflow, you can have higher integrity in your content labelling which reduces errors, increases speed to publication, and enables you to publish your content on many more platforms. 

SOCIETY UPDATE

ISMTE Annual Meetings - 2010

Registration for the North American Conference is now open!

Registration: [Log in to register](#) if you are a current member of ISMTE, have been a member in the past, or have attended past ISMTE Conferences. (Don't know your username or password? Use the '[Lost Password?](#)' link to find your information. New to ISMTE? [Create an account here.](#))

[Click here to see the conference agendas.](#)

Washington, DC

August 3-4, 2010 with an opening reception and registration the evening of August 2.

Oxford

October 19, 2010 at St. Hugh's College.

Going With the Flow: Life at a Kidney Journal

by Nijsje M. Dorman, PhD

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Before I began working for a nephrology journal, I never gave much thought to the kidney. I knew kidneys performed maintenance duties for the body, but their role seemed pedestrian compared to a marquee organ like the heart. Hundreds of nephrology articles later, I've gained a firm appreciation for the role of the kidney in overall health, and I've come to recognize a kinship between an editorial office and the overlooked kidney. Both perform routine duties that don't attract much notice, but turn out to be critical to the successful functioning of their host. And, if things go wrong, they sure can cause a lot of suffering.

When I started as managing editor of the *American Journal of Kidney Diseases (AJKD)* in 2006, the odds of mayhem seemed substantial. The hiring manager hadn't even passed my resume on to the deputy editor (I got an interview only because I sent a separate e-mail reaffirming my interest), I had no managerial experience, and I thought the 'M' in 'STM publishing' stood for 'mathematical.' [Editor's note: STM stands for scientific, technical, & medical.] Fortunately for me, the deputy editor and editor-in-chief (EIC) saw compatibilities between my background and the role. I'd been a lab rat (most recently as a postdoctoral fellow in cell biology), so I knew the research culture and had been on the author and reviewer side of journal

interactions. I'd spent the previous 3 ½ years as a scientific editor for a biology journal, so I knew the peer review process and had witnessed the workings of an editorial office. And, probably most critically, I was a bit of an Editorial Manager® geek, so I convinced them I could hit the ground running.

In short order, I realized the only running I would be doing was of the scared variety. *AJKD's* editorial office moves to the location of the EIC for every new 5-year term; the previous EIC had been based in Minneapolis, I was to set up shop in Boston, the society (the National Kidney Foundation [NKF]) was based in Manhattan, and the publisher functions were split between Elsevier offices in Philadelphia and New York. I discovered the publishing lingo I thought I knew was internal jargon used at my previous journal, and that I was unprepared to navigate the bureaucracy of the major medical institution that employed me. Fortunately, journal folks are as patient as they are helpful, and with the generous guidance of the previous editorial office and the publisher, the journal operations came together in time for our go-live date.

The *AJKD* editorial office has been constantly evolving since then, but currently comprises 3 ½ full-time equivalents supporting 11 editors who are paid for 5% to 15% effort (EIC, deputy editor, five co-editors, pathology editor, education editor, and two statistical

Going With the Flow

continued

editors), as well as five volunteer feature editors and their advisory boards. I'd been warned clinicians would be spread too thin to give the journal sufficient attention, but while it's true that medical doctors are exceptionally busy, they're disciplined about spending their time where it matters most. So, while the EIC will think nothing of requesting a fourth revision to clarify a statistical method, he's encouraged the editorial office staff to use our skills to the fullest so the editors can focus on making the journal content as valid, timely, and clinically relevant as possible.

It's satisfying to feel part of an enterprise where improving the content guides every decision, and where I'm given leeway to decide how best to support the editors' mission. At present, the team roles break down as follows:

- *Editorial Assistant 1*: performs technical check of submissions; facilitates peer review; handles routine communications with authors, readers, and reviewers; assists with handling of 4 article types; with managing editor, guides acting EICs in considering manuscripts that present conflicts-of-interest for the in-house editors; invoices authors for page charges; under guidance of deputy editor/EIC, prepares summaries highlighting 4 to 6 articles per issue; helps copyedit fast-track content; performs reporting and data entry.
- *Editorial Assistant 2*: works with feature editors to develop, review, and prepare for publication 9 feature article types (maintains publication pipelines, drafts invitation and revision letters, performs developmental editing when

required, and liaises between feature editors and deputy editor/EIC); manages the journal's continuing medical education program for peer reviewers.

- *Associate Managing Editor* (half-time position, working remotely): handles disposition of articles discussed at the editorial meeting, working with co-editors and EIC to coordinate statistical review and prepare detailed revision letters; collaborates with co-editors, statistical editors, and EIC in assessment of revisions of these articles; coordinates invitation, consideration, and publication of invited editorials that accompany 2 to 3 notable articles per issue; manages *AJKD's* Facebook presence.

Although it makes the division of duties a little harder to remember, I try to make each staff member responsible for at least one article type from submission to publication. It's my sense that threading a manuscript through each step in the cycle can be very satisfying and offset some of the assembly-line feel of repetitive editorial tasks. I also seek to align each job description with the particular interests of the individual, so for instance one of the editorial assistants writes the article capsule summaries because it fits nicely with his journalism experience.

As the one person with the opportunity to see the journal operations as a whole, I serve as the knowledge base of the journal, applying lessons of the past to new problems or projects. I am also the final guarantor of the office's commitments, filling in for others as needed. If there's a final check to be made, it's

Going With the Flow

continued

my responsibility (and yes, it still stings that I approved an article referring to kidney disease as a ‘pubic health’ crisis).

Day-to-day, I manage basic operations and maintain lines of communication, most notably in a ‘tri-ologue’ between the EIC/deputy editor, the NKF’s scientific affairs leadership, and the publisher. Although *AJKD* probably has less society contact than most journals, I’m constantly trading e-mails with the publisher’s journal manager to schedule content, troubleshoot, and check content (I handle $\frac{2}{3}$ of the initial proofs and all revised proofs). On a weekly basis, I am in touch with the journal’s publisher and executive publisher, and I feel extremely fortunate to have their mentorship. If I need advice about dealing with a publishing ethics issue or in finding strategies to improve the profile of the journal, they always have thoughtful guidance. Like most managing editors, I am responsible for developing and updating the style guide and editorial office procedures; implementing new features of the online manuscript handling system into workflows; coordinating updates

of the Information for Authors and editorial policies; and designing and implementing reports to measure journal, editor, and staff performance.

One responsibility that is probably unusual for a managing editor is performing a technical edit of each research article before transmittal to production. This arose because I routinely found disturbing errors in proofs, from mistakes in math to complicated tables becoming mangled when transferred into journal style. I discovered it was more efficient to handle these issues prior to transmittal, so I do a sweep of the article that focuses exclusively on items that aren’t in the remit of the copyeditor or compositor. It can be exhausting trying to keep up with all the content, but I draw energy from the editors’ enthusiasm and commitment. I’m not yet ready to donate a kidney (as the EIC did earlier this year), but the kidney—and our journal devoted to it—has definitely stolen my heart.



AJKD
AMERICAN JOURNAL OF KIDNEY DISEASES

The Official Journal of
The National Kidney Foundation

Current Issue
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AJKD News
You can now follow *AJKD* on Facebook. Visit our page and become a fan to receive updates on new content, features, and nephrology news.

According to the 2008 Journal Citation Reports®, published by Thomson Reuters, the **2008 impact factor for *AJKD* is 4.822!**

NKF
National Kidney Foundation®

Calendar of Events

Effective Journals Marketing

9 June 2010

London, UK

www.alpsp.org

Editorial Manager User Group Meeting

17-18 June 2010, Cambridge, MA, USA

www.editorialmanager.com

Journal Development

16 June 2010

London, UK

www.alpsp.org

Understanding Copyright

23 June 2010

London, UK

www.alpsp.org

Introduction to Journals Publishing

30 June 2010

Oxford, UK

www.alpsp.org

Web 2.0 Online Communities & Social Media

5 July 2010

London, UK

www.alpsp.org

ISMTE US Conference

3-4 August 2010

Washington, DC, USA

www.ismte.org

International Academy of Nursing Editors

11-14 August 2010

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

www.nursingeditors-inane.org/events.html

Reporting Your Randomised Trial

10 September 2010

Oxford, UK

www.equator-network.org/courses-events/courses-and-events/

Getting the Most from Journal Publicity

15 September 2010

London, UK

www.alpsp.org

Licensing Digital Content

22 September 2010

London, UK

www.alpsp.org

Commissioning Book and Journal Content

28 September 2010

London, UK

www.alpsp.org

Fundamentals of Journals Finance

30 September 2010

London, UK

www.alpsp.org

ISMTE European Conference

19 October 2010

Oxford, UK

www.ismte.org

Effective Journal Editorial Management

21 October 2010

London, UK

www.alpsp.org

Fundamentals of eProduction

24 November 2010

London, UK

www.alpsp.org

Journal Development

29 November 2010

Oxford, UK

www.alpsp.org

Do you have something to add to the calendar?

Contact the Editor: kristen.overstreet@mac.com.

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 that 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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