ISMTE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF MANAGING AND TECHNICAL EDITORS

EON Editorial Office News

SOCIETY UPDATE

2011 ISMTE Conferences

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

Fourth ISMTE
North American Conference
Washington DC, 9-10 August

Keynote Speaker

Michael Clarke is the executive vice president for product and market development at Silverchair Information Systems. He leads Silverchair's development of next generation semantic tools and platforms for STM and scholarly publishers. Previously, Michael was the founder and principal of Clarke Publishing Group, a consultancy specializing in electronic publishing.

Before founding Clarke Publishing Group, Michael held positions at the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the University of Chicago Press. Michael holds degrees from the University of Chicago and the University of Colorado. He is a frequent contributor to the *Scholarly Kitchen*.

In this issue:

Articles

Column

Society Updates

Miscellaneous

Retaining Reviewers

by Kristen Overstreet
Editor, EON
Managing Editor/Senior Partner, Origin Editorial, LLC
kristen.overstreet@mac.com

The peer-review process obviously depends upon reviewers, often volunteers. Their time and expertise correlate with the quality of a journal's content.

At the 2010 ISMTE North American meeting, I remember attendees had a conversation about a trend in the increased number of declined review invitations. Many expressed concern and frustration about seeing this trend at their journals.

So, how can we retain our reviewers and increase the number of accepted invitations? I wish I knew the full answer. One thing I do know is we have to ensure our reviewers feel valued and comfortable in their role.

Valued

The minimum requirement for a journal is to thank reviewers upon receipt of their reviews. For those using electronic submission and review systems, this is easily done with an automatic e-mail the system generates upon receipt. This automatic e-mail assures reviewers the reviews are off their desks and back onto yours. Duty completed. After receiving this e-mail, reviewers also should have a sense the work they did was appreciated.

This is a good start, but it has been my experience reviewers more highly value the second e-mail I (the system) send. This e-mail includes the editor's decision on the manuscript and (blinded) copies of each reviewer's comments. Reviewers are curious about the outcome of a manuscript they have spent several hours working on and appreciate knowing the editor's decision. Viewing the other reviewers' comments is educational, providing a measuring stick against which to compare their own comments.

In a recent (February 2011) conversation on the ISMTE discussion forum, participants suggested the following ideas for thanking reviewers:

- Inviting reviewers to a reception at the annual meeting;
- Providing access to top-cited papers;
- Sending gifts, such as a calendar, mug, or mousepad;
- Providing free membership to the society;
- Providing a voucher/credit toward page charges;
- Allowing the reviewer to choose a book from the publisher's book list;
- Providing a complimentary online subscription;
- Providing a discount on the publisher's books; or
- Mailing a hard-copy certificate of appreciation.

Retaining Reviewers

continued

In an older conversation (April 2008), participants also suggested:

- Provide free color pages for the reviewer's next accepted article,
- Send a hand-written note from the editor,
- Provide online access to the journal for a limited time,
- Provide a print copy of the issue the accepted article appears in that the reviewer reviewed,
- Provide journal news updates,
- Provide continuing education credits,
- Sign up reviewers for electronic tables of content,
- Provide a personal touch to correspondence,
- Invite top reviewers to the editorial board meeting, or
- Promote strong reviewers to the editorial board.

Many of the above depend upon your journal's budget and may only be appropriate for the top reviewer or a select number of reviewers.

A popular idea is to publish a list of those who have reviewed for your journal in print and/or online at least annually to thank them. In some cultures and disciplines, reviewers should be contacted first to solicit their permission before publishing their names.

Beyond Gratitude

Beyond thanking reviewers for their time and expertise, editorial staff can make reviewing a more enjoyable experience by providing reviewers with education and training.

Education

Ensure reviewers know what you expect from them by providing clear instructions for your review process. This can be done in the e-mail sent to reviewers after they agree to perform a review. Besides information on how to access the manuscript, provide instructions on how to perform and submit the review. Each journal is different, and having journal-specific instructions is useful to the reviewer. You also may want to provide resources on improving peer review. These could be included with links in the above e-mail or placed on the wall in the online reviewer center.

Training

Most online systems provide tutorials for new users. Reminding reviewers how to access these tutorials can save a lot of time and trouble for them when using your system. Reviewers often review for more than one journal, and if it's been a while, a reviewer may appreciate the opportunity to view a tutorial again before performing a review for your journal.

Analyze Your Process

Process

'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.' Right? Maybe not. Analyze your process regularly to determine if it is reviewer friendly. Are you getting the information you need from the reviews? Do the questions on your reviewer score sheet need to be updated or deleted? Should more appropriate questions be added? Don't overcomplicate your process. Reviewers are busy people, and they will be more likely to

Retaining Reviewers

continued

review for you again if they feel your process is efficient.

Another way to ensure your process is efficient is to properly match manuscripts with each reviewer's areas of expertise. Reviewers want to review manuscripts on topics that interest them. Sending review invitations for manuscripts that are not appropriate for the particular reviewer can quickly cause irritation.

You also want to avoid reviewer fatigue by being aware of how many manuscripts each reviewer has reviewed and when the last review was received. Develop policy on how many manuscripts are too many to review in a certain time period and/or how much time should be allowed between reviews. It is often easy to access these statistics in the online systems.

Also, is your panel large enough? Do you have enough reviewers in each area? Having enough reviewers will allow more time between reviews. Is your review panel open (submitting authors automatically become reviewers, authors suggest reviewers, *etc.*) or closed (all reviewers are vetted and invited)? Do you feel this makes a difference in the number of accepted invitations?

Deadlines

Take a look at your deadlines again. You want your deadlines to be tight enough that authors are attracted to your journal, but you don't want them to be unreasonable for your reviewers. Deadlines are journal- and discipline-specific. What works for one may not work for another. Your editorial board can provide helpful advice on appropriate turnaround times.

Contact Person

Providing a consistent contact person for reviewers helps them to develop a comfortable relationship with the journal office. They may be more likely to reach out when they're having trouble with a review or the online system if they know whom they will be talking to in the office. Reviewer queries should be answered as soon as possible. Reviews are often conducted during reviewers' personal time. A delayed answer to a query can result in late reviews if reviewers are unable to complete their task in the window of time they had set aside. A responsive contact person develops relationships with reviewers and helps their valuable time to be used efficiently.

Conclusion

Anyone who works on a peer-reviewed publication cannot do the job without the time and skill provided by the often-unpaid reviewers. Doing what is necessary to ensure your reviewers feel valued, understand what is expected of them, and are supported in performing their role is time well spent.

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. We look forward to working with you!***

ARTICLE

Portrait of a Transition: Moving From Publisher to Service Provider

by Melissa Dodd
Sales Director
Newgen Imaging
melissa@newgenimaging.com

Background

I graduated with a science degree approximately 12 years ago and have worked in publishing ever since. During the eight years I spent at the BMJ Group in the Journals Production department, I witnessed a lot of changes in the field and also in our own workflows and systems, as well as in attitude. In the role of operations manager I oversaw workflows, systems, and suppliers—the key supplier being typesetters. I was presented with the opportunity to cross over to the other side of the fence when Newgen offered me a job. Newgen is a typesetting supplier based in India which produces books and journals for publishers, as well as doing data conversions and various other publishing related activities for clients. Although I have never performed a sales role before, my background and experience were just what Newgen was looking for in a newly created journals sales role. It might appear very surprising I could jump from a production role to a sales role so easily; however, the ethos at Newgen is that experience and knowledge sell, not sales patter and gimmicks. So, with my experience managing the production of a suite of journals at a prestigious publisher, along with my interest in streamlined workflows and the benefits of XML first workflows, I can bring the client perspective to the role. Additionally, I can support new clients in the transition process and existing clients in improving their production workflows and opportunities for efficiencies. I am very detailed by nature, which, again, might not seem like a necessary asset for a sales person. However, this helped me get the most out of the systems and the processes at BMJ, so I should be able to do the same for other customers.

New Office Environment

Although the company is based mainly in India (with offices in three Indian locations as well as in the United States and the United Kingdom), I will be working out of a home office in the United Kingdom—another big change for me, working alone! Although I will be home-based, it will involve a lot of travel, so it feels like the perfect balance of just commuting to my spare room some of the time and travelling longer distances the rest of the time.

I've been used to working with the Newgen team as my supplier, with annual

From Publisher to Service Provider *continued*

visits, for awhile now. So, I have gotten to know a lot of the staff well, and I am currently spending a month in the office in India which is helping me get to know more colleagues, as well as forging more personal relationships with those I already know. Nothing beats being able to see and speak to people directly in the same room on a regular basis, but communication methods are so advanced that once I return home I will be in constant communication by phone and Skype, as well as old-fashioned e-mail.

Being away from home for this extended initiation period would be much harder on me and my family without being able to Skype, along with talking regularly on the phone.

I will no doubt visit the main facility in Chennia, India, a lot more now than I did as a client!

9–5? Not Anymore

Although there have been times at BMJ when I spent hours in the office or on e-mail without the 9–5 framework, the majority of the time it was structured to those times, or thereabouts. This new role will be the opposite, partly to do with the Newgen ethos but partly to do with the nature of the role—and I think it is going to suit me well.

Because I will now be on the service provider side, I will be meeting and having calls at times that work for my customers. Being based in the United Kingdom, it is less of an issue for me than it is for my colleagues in India for UK clients, but I will need to be available for US time zones too.

My Experience So Far – Three Weeks In

I have not noticed a difference in the way my (now) seniors treat me from when I was a client. My input and experience is valued and appreciated and I am encouraged to be as nosy as I want as well as get involved with as much as I want. I was even picked up from the airport at 3 am by one of the senior managers of the company and delivered safely to my hotel and made sure I had everything I needed.

I am staying in a lovely hotel and a driver picks me up from the hotel every morning and drops me 'home' again at night. This car facility is not just because I am from the United Kingdom—there is a Newgen bus service for staff that caters to the general shift patterns, and if project managers or copyediting staff work late they are picked up and dropped off by one of the Newgen cars and drivers. Great thought was put into whether I would be more comfortable in a hotel or a serviced apartment for my extended stay; they decided on a hotel due to concerns about whether I would be able to shop and feed myself! This caring attitude extends to all Newgen staff.

Working for Newgen

One of the company mottos is 'your work should speak'. So, as I go through the workflows and developments in detail I am seeing more and more brilliant innovations and systems I had not heard about when I was a client. I have spent time with the human resources manager and discovered many of the small and large innovations he has implemented to make all staff feel valued and cared for, as well as the work he has done in the community. One of the key things my new employer has is a flexible working environment, but the client is always the top priority. So, there is no 9–5 shift structure except in some units where it is unavoidable, but turnaround times and targets need to be

From Publisher to Service Provider *continued*

met, and managers and account managers each have a Blackberry so they are constantly available.

When I Return to the United Kingdom

When I get back to the United Kingdom I will be contacting potential clients, following leads, and learning a new approach to my working life. I will be focused on telling people about why they should use Newgen as a service provider, based on my own experience with them and also from what I've seen of their other operations. I will be talking with clients about their requirements, workflows, and systems, and thinking about how we can help them cut costs and improve efficiencies and quality by outsourcing to us.

Final word

All in all, this is an exciting change in role and opportunity for me. Typesetters and their clients often form relationships akin to trading partners, so we work with publishers in order to support current, updated, and new publishing models. There are, as such, many synergies between publishers and typesetters, so my experience and knowledge is easily transferrable to this new role. But I will also be building on this and learning many new things and skills—it's always exciting to progress and develop.

Editorial Building Blocks

by Monica L. Helton
Managing Editor
The Journal of Pediatrics
monica.helton@cchmc.org

When I decided to pursue an undergraduate major in psychology with an area of concentration in writing, I had no idea where my career path would take me. However, reading case reports, participating in statistics labs, writing and conducting surveys, and completing research papers served as good primers for what would be in store—a managing editor position for a leading pediatric medical journal.

The Journal of Pediatrics is a non-society, international, peer-reviewed journal that publishes 12 issues a year, maintains both a print and online presence, receives close to 1,800 manuscripts a year, and is ranked fourth by Impact Factor in the pediatrics category. The journal's editorial office at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center consists of two senior editorial assistants, the managing editor, and the editor-in-chief. Additionally, there are five associate editors, 25 editorial board members, and four international advisory panel members. The publisher, Elsevier, provides day-to-day support and strategic perspectives.

When I began working with *The Journal of Pediatrics*, a paper-based submission and review process was used, which included a lot of mailing, faxing, and fielding telephone calls. The editorial office even had a typewriter that was regularly used for typing FedEx labels! Although there were plans to implement an online submission and review process later in the year, I spent my first nine months learning the paper-based system. Although humans are usually creatures of habit, we were thrilled to switch to the online submission and review portal in late 2003. Creating the work flow took some time to configure, but the resulting system was well worth it. Since then we have used a few online submission and review systems, but our current system is Elsevier Editorial System (EES). Although EES usually works smoothly, on the occasion when it is not functioning properly (*e.g.*, an unscheduled change in the configuration, the server is down, e-mailed notifications are not sent or received), it can throw a major wrench into the workday. In spite of our online system, we continue to maintain paper files because editors handle their assigned manuscripts in different ways. Our onsite editors use the paper files and we proxy for them in EES, and offsite editors use a combination of EES and e-mails.

I continued working as an editorial assistant and then senior editorial assistant for three and a half years. After a brief hiatus as director of operations of a local, socially conscious business, I was contacted by the

Building Blocks *continued*

managing editor of *The Journal of Pediatrics* to let me know she was moving and the editor wanted me to interview for the managing editor position. After one week of training with the outgoing managing editor, I hit the ground running. Fortunately, and I cannot express how fortunate this really is, I started working with two amazing senior editorial assistants, who are still at the journal. Additionally, the editor is extremely supportive. It is easy to see why he was selected as the first pediatrician to be honored with the Distinguished Educator Award from the American Gastroenterological Association—he encourages and values feedback and suggestions, provides coaching moments, and has confidence in my day-to-day management of the journal.

Although many editorial offices are able to effectively work together remotely, I think there is something to be said for sharing a physical office. Many ideas form organically from informal discussions 'over the water cooler.' About six months ago, we began having regularly scheduled, monthly meetings to discuss quality improvement, time management, and new business. Because we are all familiar with this editorial office, most of our changes in workflow shave off time to make tasks flow more efficiently. The senior editorial assistants are always keeping an eye out for tasks that used to be required but now can be either revamped or discontinued.

The senior editorial assistants excel at taking on new responsibilities while maintaining productivity and attention to detail for required daily tasks. We are in the process of completing a detailed procedural manual of all of the journal's tasks, which is a time-consuming responsibility. Over the past few years, we have created and maintained a successful press release program that receives local, national, and international coverage. Although the journal has freelance copyeditors, the editorial office evaluates the proofs to ensure accuracy and uniform style.

Every day presents new challenges and tasks. For example, dealing with issues of 'salami science,' authorship, and other issues of publication ethics has become a regular part of our schedules, which often include time-consuming investigations and discussions with authors, institutions, editors, and the publisher. I am grateful I work with editors who are committed to ensuring publication and research ethics and identifying conflicts of interest. In fact, over the years they have presented multiple workshops on manuscript preparation and publication ethics at local and national meetings.

The functions of the editorial office have continued to expand in the four years I have been managing editor. We undertook a major redesign of the print issue (reflected in the online version) that was unveiled in the July 2009 issue. In an effort to acknowledge the efforts of our reviewers, we publish the names of all individuals who served as reviewers in the previous year in the July issue of the current year. However, in order to obtain the data for this list, we have to export data from an EES report, reformat it into a pivot table, and standardize the format of the names. Additionally, for the first time, the editorial office conducted original research, which was a retrospective analysis of the behaviors of author-suggested and editor-recommended reviewers. The results were presented as a poster at the Sixth International Congress on Peer Review and Biomedical Publication in

Building Blocks *continued*

Vancouver, BC, Canada, and the complete study is detailed in a recently published Commentary (http://download.journals.elsevierhealth.com/pdfs/journals/0022-3476/PIIS0022347611001600.pdf).

I initially thought that keeping up with the industry was important; however, I now realize that it is essential. In addition to searching for articles regarding scientific, technical, and medical (STM) publishing, I regularly read many industry-related blogs (*e.g.*, http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org, http://ori.hhs.gov, http://publicationethics.org, http://embargowatch.wordpress.com, http://retractionwatch.wordpress.com, http://www.equator-network.org). Becoming a member of professional organizations (*e.g.*, ISMTE, Council of Science Editors, Society of Scholarly Publishing), attending the 2010 ISMTE Annual Conference, and connecting with individuals and industry-related groups via LinkedIn.com, keeps me informed on the latest STM news. As issues in publishing continue to evolve, the Guide for Authors (www.jpeds.com/authorinfo) is updated about once a month, or as needed.

Although personally I am a bit of a Luddite (no smart phone, no Facebook account, and I travel without a laptop), I am dedicated to keeping the journal technologically up-to-date. At the end of April 2011, a strategic task force, comprised of editors, select editorial board members, and key publishing representatives, met to discuss how we can retain our current readership while expanding our visibility to new readers, residents, and fellows, solicit the best research for our audience, and enhance the journal's online presence using social media. The results of the strategy meeting will be presented to the full editorial board during the annual meeting in June 2011.

I enjoy learning about the developments in STM publishing in the ever-changing electronic world. It would be irresponsible not to evaluate the potential shifts in the publishing industry. However, these changes are motivating us to take a step back and think outside of the box to see how we can meet or exceed these challenges.

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

Journal Development
8 June 2011
London, UK
http://www.alpsp.org

Understanding Copyright
16 June 2011
London, UK
http://www.alpsp.org

Editorial Manager User Group Meeting
23-24 June 2011
Cambridge, MA, USA
http://www.editorialmanager.com/

ISMTE
US Conference
9-10 August 2011
Washington, DC-area
www.ismte.org

Effective Journal Editorial Management
5 October 2011
London, UK
http://www.alpsp.org

ISMTE
European Conference
18 October 2011
Oxford, UK
www.ismte.org

Editorial Manager User Group Meeting
28 November 2011
London, UK
http://www.editorialmanager.com/

11th EASE Conference
8-10 June 2012
Tallinn, Estonia
http://www.ease.org.uk/

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.

ISMTE *EON*

EON is the official newsletter of the International Society for Managing and Technical Editors (ISMTE) and is published monthly. The contents and opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily represent those of the Society, the Board of Directors, or *EON* editors, nor does the publication of an article constitute an endorsement on the part of ISMTE of the authors' organizations or companies. Submissions are welcome and can be sent to the editor at the address below. Submissions may be edited for style and format without the author's permission. Authors must seek permission to reprint any copyrighted material and provide this permission to the editor. *EON's* content belongs to the members of ISMTE. Users may view and download *EON* articles for personal, non-commercial use. Use beyond that allowed by the "Fair Use" limitations (sections 107 and 108) of the U.S. Copyright law require written permission from the *EON* editor.

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.*

ISMTE Executive Office: 107 Mantua Pike Ste. 701 # 122, Mantua, New Jersey, USA 08051-1606
Phone: +1 856 292 8512 Fax: +1 856 292 8513, E-mail: ismteoffice@gmail.com

Contact Information for ISMTE

Leslie McGeoch, Executive Director

International Society of Managing and Technical Editors
1107 Mantua Pike Ste. 701 # 122, Mantua, New Jersey, USA 08051-1606
Phone: +1 856 292 8512, Fax: +1 856 292 8513
E-mail: ismteoffice@gmail.com