eon
editorial office news

The official newsletter of the International Society of Managing and Technical Editors

IN THIS ISSUE

ARTICLES

MISCELLANEOUS

Very (P)interesting...

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I've been playing around with the social network Pinterest lately, trying to determine whether it has any value for journals. I created a personal account, came up with a few boards, and pinned some random things one evening, just to get the feel of it. Then, before shutting down my computer, I decided to check my email. There I found messages informing me that eleven different people had re-pinned items I had just pinned minutes earlier and three others had "liked" them. I found that to be a wake-up call; maybe Pinterest isn't just for crafters anymore! But dare we add more to our already-crammed schedules?

We are flooded with social networks, blogs, internet sites, e-books, and even (gasp!) print books that advise us about all aspects of our lives and jobs. Keeping up with everything is impossible, but we do the best we can. One thing I hope you make time for, though, is reading *EON* each month and letting us know what you think of it. This month, find an article by Nicole Adams, a Professor at The University of Dayton, about making your emails as effective as possible. Her suggestions will help you write professional emails that will be noticed and get results. Jason Roberts has written an action-inspiring article about reaching out to our authors by creating a presentation on how to get published in your journal. Lindsey Brounstein, in this month's Whistling in the Dark column, tells us how to look for image manipulation in submitted articles. And our continuing series, "What I Wish My Managing Editor Knew," is written this month by a group of three Publishers from Elsevier. See what they would like us to know about their job and how they can help us to do our job better.

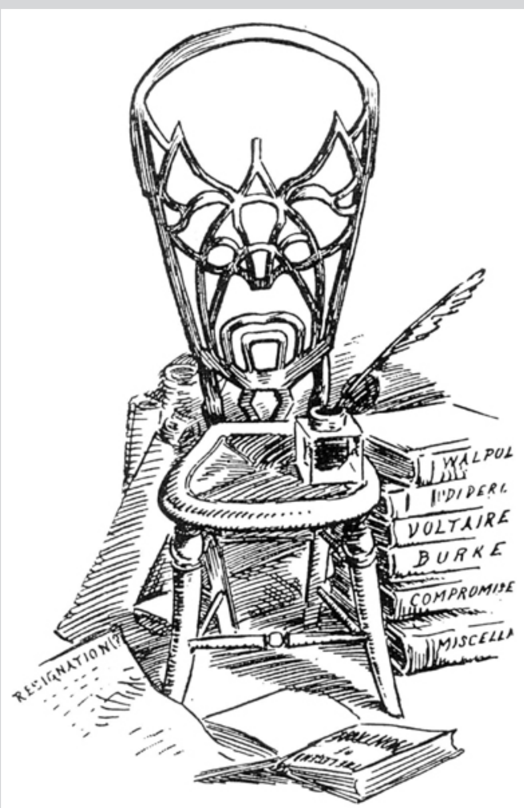
Check out this month's Finish This Sentence; your sentence completions are so entertaining! I can't wait to see what you have to say to this month's unfinished sentence. New this month: Letters to the Editor, inspired by a letter from Nijsje Dorman commenting on and adding to the April article about favorite iPad apps. This is your opportunity to let us know what you are thinking and to make suggestions for improving *EON*. Send your letters to me at dbowman@asge.org.

As we enjoy this spring weather, I hope you will send me your ideas and/or questions. We will continue working together to make the ISMTE the Number One answer place for Managing and Technical Editors.

The Philosophy of Editing

What Did You Say?

On an episode of *Friends*, Phoebe referenced "that song about Tony Danza. You know what I mean; the one that goes, 'Hold me closer, Tony Danza.' " Further questioning revealed that she was talking about the Elton John song that contains the line, "Hold me closer, tiny dancer." We've all had the experience of misunderstanding the words of a song, and we can get a good laugh out of it. To keep from looking foolish, though, we should always be careful to use the correct phrases in writing or editing. Here are some words or phrases that I've seen misused, along with their correct version.



Doggy dog world: Should be Dog-eat-dog world

Wet your appetite: Should be Whet your appetite

Tongue and cheek: Should be Tongue in cheek

Tow the line: Should be Toe the line

Tie me over: Should be Tide me over

Nip it in the butt: Should be Nip it in the bud

Mute point: Should be Moot point

Heart-rendering: Should be Heart-rending

Dire straights: Should be Dire straits

For all intensive purposes: Should be For all intents and purposes

The spitting image: Should be The spit and image

Chomping at the bit: Should be Champing at the bit

Author Outreach – thoughts on delivering a presentation on how to get published

by Jason Roberts, PhD
Managing Editor, Headache: the Journal of Head and Face Pain
Managing Editor, The Journal of Sexual Medicine

Introduction:
Periodically, editorial offices might be called upon to develop a presentation around the topics of how to improve your chances of publication or how to write a publishable paper. The invitation to deliver such a presentation may be to both you and your Editor-in-Chief, or maybe just your editor. Either way, the work involved in developing a presentation invariably falls to you, the editorial staff member!

There are a number of critical elements in developing a short, but informative, presentation and the purpose of this article is to share some experiences of what content and format works best. In association with the Resource Central pages at www.ismte.org some simple slide templates have been provided that can be used freely and adapted for your use in your own presentations.

Format:
Session Structure
Most likely a publishing-oriented presentation would take place at an academic or scientific conference. It may take the form of a session running concurrent to educational presentations or perhaps be staged as an interactive workshop. The audience may be general, in other words open to all conference attendees, or specific, such as a group of graduate students or residents. Either way, a PowerPoint presentation is going to be the best delivery mechanism and unless given more time, the presentation should probably last no longer than 35 to 40 minutes with 20 minutes for questions. Too short a presentation and there is no time to cover the fundamental points sufficiently without rushing. Too long and you will bury the audience in minutiae. Many attendees at a publishing presentation are simply searching for whatever the "secret sauce" might be for getting a paper accepted.

Unless the format and time allocation of the presentation allow for it, avoid discussing at length the submission steps within your online submission and review system. The focus of the presentation should be on writing and burnishing papers into something worthy of publication rather than handling file upload issues within your submission system. Individuals with specific system questions should be invited to follow-up after the presentation.

Session Content
Ideally your presentation should consist of the following elements:

- A series of slides on article composition that range from exploring the initial steps in formulating a paper through to delineating what are critical content elements
- An explanation of how peer review works and why journals bother with peer review
- Tips and tricks on how to format a paper properly
- Provision of supporting materials for attendees, especially resources they could use such as checklists or guides (for example, on producing high quality images)

Obviously you can cover some of these topics with varying depth. Some editors often start the presentation with comments on what are the motivations for publishing and potential barriers that have to be overcome. Such discussion can be interesting but must be brief as most attendees are looking to take-away practical tips. Typically, editors want to focus on compositional matters, but no doubt, as can be attested from your own personal experiences, formatting issues also play a role in both the peer review process and the pre-production/production phases ahead of publication. Whether or not, as an editorial office professional, you deliver the presentation, be insistent that such matters are discussed somewhere in the presentation.

What follows is some practical advice on how to develop each section of a publishing presentation.

Article Composition

Ideally embark on a publishing presentation by launching immediately into the essential components of a good manuscript. The best way to deconstruct the critical elements of a manuscript is to actually think about the chronological assembly of a paper and then present the corresponding slides in that order. Useful slides to start the presentation include:

- How to decide what the key take-away points of a manuscript should be (distilling the paper into 3-5 key messages)
- Establishing which journal might be interested in receiving a paper
  - Tips on targeting the right journal
  - How to research the target journal
  - Establishing how a target journal wishes a manuscript to be designed and formatted
  - Writing with a target journal in mind
- Devising a title that:
  - Captures the essence of the paper
  - Conforms to recommended title structure guidelines, e.g., if the paper is a report of a randomized controlled trial, it should state that fact at the end of the title – "Subject Matter X: a report of a RCT"
- How to write an effective abstract
  - Explore the importance of abstracts in both peer review and publication
- The value behind working on tables and figures before writing the paper (the answer: data included in figures and tables can then be referenced in the text briefly rather than requiring paragraphs of explanation)
- How to write:
  - An introduction
    - Why was a study performed? Why is the paper being written?
    - How to provide proper context
  - A methods section (if appropriate)
    - Effective descriptions of what was studied
    - Techniques to describe how a study was conducted
    - Selection criteria for literature studied/referenced
    - Statistical techniques employed
    - Ethical considerations in the study design
  - Results
    - What does the study show?
    - When to present the most important results (the answer: at the start of the Results section)
    - Appropriate inclusion of tables, graphs, figures, and supplementary content
  - Discussion
    - The need for the Discussion section to answer the question "so what?"
    - Highlight and interpret results
    - Limitations
    - Areas for future study
  - References
    - Importance of using the correct style as dictated by the target journal
    - The appropriate length for the reference section
    - Accuracy

How peer review works

This section of the presentation may need to be brief but is vital. Many authors simply have no concept of how peer review works. This inexperience may place them at a disadvantage because of either how their paper is written or through a failure to revise properly their material. They may also be susceptible to possible ethical manipulation by co-authors ranging from failing to state potential Conflicts of Interest or not recognizing dual submissions to making inappropriate requests regarding author inclusion/exclusion.

Potential slides to cover understanding peer review include:

- The goals of peer review
  - Gate-keeper function
  - Opportunity to have peers improve the quality of a manuscript

- The mechanism of peer review – what happens to a paper once it is submitted to a journal
- Different types of peer review, e.g. single blind, double blind, new crowd-sourcing open peer review techniques
- Some criteria employed for the assessment of manuscripts during peer review:
  - Results – how interesting are they? Are they original or confirmatory?
  - Originality of thought
  - Comprehensiveness
  - Timeliness of the study – is it ground-breaking? Is the study old news?
  - Methodological validity
  - Rigor, independence and balance
  - Quality of writing
  - Quality of images (in certain fields)
- What might cause delays in the peer review process

Tips and Tricks to aid submission and publication

This element of the presentation contains what could be labeled the "boring but important" elements to the entire writing and submission process. These are the issues the editorial office staff typically have to handle, issues that can derail a paper but are frequently not considered by authors. To accompany this article, at the ISMTE Resource pages you can find a suite of slides that explores the following issues in detail. These slides are available for download and can be incorporated into your own publishing presentations.

Topics that you might ideally want to cover in this section of the presentation include:

- Figure quality
- What to do with color-dependent images
- Permission for using previously published material (e.g., figures from other journal articles)
- Ensuring correct ethical compliance:
  - Patient consent to their case being published
  - Proper obscuring of patient details
  - Disclosure of Institutional Review Board approval
  - Publishing details on relevant permissions that were required to complete a study
  - Including details on any human or animal welfare issues
  - Inclusion of appropriate disclaimers
- Publication ethics:
  - Approval to publish from all authors
  - Conflicts of Interest
  - Avoiding salami slicing
  - What constitutes authorship
  - Sources for help on ethical issues
- Reusing written text – what is acceptable and what is not
  - Plagiarism
  - Avoiding self-plagiarism
- Failure to submit properly
  - Failure to answer all questions or include all information/files/forms requested by a journal
  - Problems caused by incorrect manuscript designation
  - Importance of labeling submitted files clearly for non-subject expert staff in the editorial office/at the publisher, i.e., "Roberts headache paper figure 1. TIF" rather than simply "axial T2 contrast-enhanced magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of a lesion.JPG"
  - Proofing a submission
  - Making sure all submission steps are actually completed!
- How to and how not to revise a paper
- Importance of sending necessary documentation to a publisher, most obviously the copyright transfer agreement.
- What happens when the Instructions for Authors are not consulted

Supporting Materials

With lots of great advice on a strict time-budget, the presentation audience may have little chance to record all the pertinent details. Ensure there are either copies of the slides or a short summary of the key points to disseminate amongst the attendees. You might also consider including a copy of your Instructions for Authors or your journal's manuscript submission checklist. If your title does not possess such a checklist consider adapting the sample checklist from the February 2012 issue of *EON* (EON 2012;Feb:5).

The success (or otherwise) of various presentation elements

Finally, the level of interest, quality of the speaker, the venue and the length of the session can all impact the reception of the presentation. Having delivered several presentations to a variety of audiences there are some techniques that emerge as typically successful in conveying information:

- Authors are particularly interested in learning about how to revise a manuscript properly. Most obviously this involves addressing how to document changes and how to respond properly to reviewer comments.
- For science and medical journals in particular, a walk through on how to obtain and submit high-quality images usually fills a common knowledge gap and guides your audience of authors away from future submissions that feature the dreaded fuzzy image copy and pasted into a MS Word document or the inclusion of a ridiculously over-stylized PowerPoint slide intended to be a figure, complete with *large-scale comic sans* labeling!
- If your journal has such a document, consider handing out your guide on how to review a manuscript. By reversing the logic, authors can then apply that guide to how they might write a paper.
- Apply a little humor that hits home such as remarking how editorial office staff with no subject knowledge can often predict the outcome of a paper while checking it in based on the presentation quality or use of a particular font type (e.g, single-spaced *courier* or *comic sans* fonts do not suggest academic gravitas). A more serious point to make is that reviewers, despite their academic credentials, are still ordinary humans prone to bias. If a paper is littered with spelling or syntax errors, making it harder to read the paper, reviewers may react unfavorably.
- Take time to explain how many publishers now offer the opportunity to publish supplementary material online or offer color for free.
- Allow plenty of time for questions (which can become very useful fodder for updating your slides for future presentations) and be very respectful with your responses. What is fundamentally obvious to an editor or editorial office staff member might not be for a researcher that has not yet taken lead-responsibility for the composition of a paper.

Some presentation strategies are typically less well received. It is recommended that presentations avoid the following pitfalls:

- Do not get nit-picky regarding formatting and presentation details specific solely to your journal.
- Ensure your Editor-in-Chief does not start talking about what irritates him/her, especially concerning writing styles. Typically, taking the presentation in this direction reveals more about the idiosyncrasies of the Editor rather than actual useful advice on potential errors authors are liable to make.
- Do not allow a discussion on ethical issues to become a dominant component of your presentation, unless time allows for a debate. It is critical authors are aware of these issues, and indeed this author has advocated prominently for better ethical standards for several years, but most attendees at your presentation are desperate to hear about the essential ingredients of a well written paper.
- During the question and answer portion of your presentation, work hard to quickly shut down any potential airing of grievances (e.g., “Your journal took 8 months to give me a bunch of poorly written, contradictory, peer review comments while rejecting my paper”). Politely and firmly suggest, for the benefit of all attendees, the wounded author discuss matters privately after the presentation.
- Know your audience: for example, for a publishing presentation to be delivered by a medical journal to an audience featuring residents, fellows, or junior doctors, include information about how to write case reports rather than focusing solely on writing up large-scale randomized controlled trials, which is not something early career authors may find applicable to their nascent writing experiences.

Conclusion:

Presenting an author outreach session on how to get published is not only a great exercise for imparting yours and your Editor's knowledge on manuscript composition, peer review and publishing, but can also be a great forum for connecting with potential authors. Most researchers, regardless of whether they are art historians or a clinical neuropsychopharmacologist learn how to write up their research with advice from their mentors. Such handing down of "knowledge" is often unstructured, incorrect, or at least highly variable in quality. Sometimes young authors get to work collaboratively with their supervisor. Others are left to their own devices. Publishing presentations, therefore, can become a chance to shape the practices of your existing, and future, cohort of authors.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Thanks for your column on iPad apps in the April issue of ISMTE! I'd like to share my favorite app for proofreading: iAnnotate (http://www.branchfire.com/iannotate/). It's pricey for an app ($9.99), but in my opinion well worth it because it lets me proof digitally as quickly and conveniently as I used to do with print. iAnnotate has the usual PDF markup/commenting tools as desktop software, but I default to the pencil tool and use proofreader's marks just as if I were proofing hard copy. This is made easier with my Bamboo stylus for ipad (http://wacom.com/), which runs about $30 but feels so much more natural to me than trying to "write" with my finger. For involved markups or tiny changes, it's easy to zoom in on the iPad and annotate precisely. It's only when I need to write a long explanation that I switch to the typewriter tool, which in addition to the usual option for customizing color, also lets me easily change font size—a feature my desktop PDF software does not have.

Annotations can be opened and edited on standard PDF software—by contrast, when I tested another iPad PDF annotation tool, I found that the markups drifted in location when the file was opened up in Acrobat or Foxit Reader—not exactly ideal when you're trying to correct, not introduce, errors.

iAnnotate plays well with DropBox, which is great for my workflow: before I leave work, I place the PDFs to be proofed in a DropBox folder I've set up to access on the iPad; on the commuter rail, I download the PDF, open in iAnnotate, proof as desired, and then share the annotated file back to DropBox.

Before iAnnotate, it was my experience that digital proofing took longer than marking up paper. Now, I feel I have all the advantages of digital proofing with none of the efficiency losses.

Best,
Nijsje Dorman
Managing Editor, AJKD

Emailing Busy (and Scientific) Professionals

by Nicole Adams, Lecturer, Professional Communication, Department of English University of Dayton

"Too many!" This is the response of many professionals when asked how many emails they receive in a day. The most common form of workplace communication, email allows us to target specific readers and share information or make requests quickly and easily. But email may also be the most commonly overlooked or ignored mode as receivers try to manage their overflowing "inboxes" while still performing their other pressing tasks. Because we receive so much correspondence, some messages will inevitably fall through the cracks or get moved to the bottom of the priority list.

So how do we as senders ensure that our messages get read—and, when appropriate, acted upon? This can especially be a concern when we know our audience to be extremely busy or more technically minded—in other words, people who want the bottom line without a lot of "fluff." The following eight tips can help us to get on our audience's radar while still saving them time.

1) *Prepare readers for your message with a clear and succinct subject line.* Capturing the main idea with a concise phrase (vs. a complete sentence) that the readers can see in their inboxes will allow them to prioritize your messages appropriately. A subject line that is too long will likely be cut off visually anyway, and a vague subject line may not motivate the reader to open the message.
2) *"Frontload" the message by placing the main idea first.* The first 1 or 2 sentences of an informational message should restate and amplify the subject line. If a reader has to read or scroll too far down the screen to determine the topic or requested action, he or she will likely become frustrated or even stop reading the message, thinking it must not be important to read since it has not been clearly presented.
3) *Include only one topic per message.* If an email contains information and requested action related to multiple unrelated topics, chances are the reader will only engage with and act on the first topic presented. Better to send multiple brief and clear emails about differing topics than to crowd a single message that a reader may not read thoroughly. Separating messages with clear subject lines allows the reader to electronically file those messages for later reference if necessary.
4) *Keep sentences and paragraphs short.* A cardinal rule of professional communication is that there *is* such a thing as too much information. Ask yourself, "What do I want my reader to know, believe, or do as a result of this message?" A more concise approach will often focus that reader on that main idea to ensure clarity, which often generates the desired response.
5) *Format messages for skim value.* Many professionals in today's workplaces do not read emails word for word, but instead actively skim to look for key points that pertain to them. And the easier they can skim, the more engaged they're becoming with your message! Headings (when appropriate) and brief paragraphs send the subtle message that you've done much of the work for the reader in providing these visual "guides."
6) *Establish a reader-oriented tone.* If you see that your message contains a lot of "I," chances are you're focusing more on your needs than those of the reader—a surefire way to diminish goodwill and reader interest. If a reader can sense how he or she will benefit from the information or request, you're much more likely to receive the response you're looking for, and quickly. Here's an example: "Our safety

policy forbids us from renting equipment to anyone who cannot demonstrate proficiency in its use" (writer-oriented) vs. "For your safety, you may rent power equipment after demonstrating proficiency in its use" (reader-oriented—better!).

7) *Motivate action in the closing.* Workplace readers often look at the first and last paragraphs of a message before reading the body (or the middle). This is because their time is limited, and they want to see the "bottom line" first to decide how to prioritize the message. They are looking to see what, if anything, they need to do as a result of the message. A closing that provides a statement of the requested action (even if it has also been mentioned earlier), a deadline, and the writer's contact information if appropriate can make it easier for the reader to respond.

8) *Proofread closely.* One surefire way to establish your credibility with a reader is to show that you are detail oriented, a valuable trait in any industry or position. Sentence-level errors and inaccurate information suggest that you may have rushed or that you may not approach other tasks diligently.

Taking a few minutes to consult these tips after drafting a message, especially one of several paragraphs in length or of high importance, can ensure that your message is clear and engaging to the reader. In the end, you will have saved your reader – and yourself – the most valuable workplace commodity of all: time.

Acknowledgements:
Guffey, Mary Ellen. *The Essentials of Business Communication.* 8th ed. Southwestern-Cengage Learning, 2010.

Tebeaux, Elizabeth and Sam Dragga. *The Essentials of Technical Communication.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Definition of an Editor

from Ambrose Bierce, Devil's Dictionary, early 1900s

EDITOR, *n.* A person who combines the judicial functions of Minos, Rhadamanthus and Aeacus, but is placable with an obolus; a severely virtuous censor, but so charitable withal that he tolerates the virtues of others and the vices of himself; who flings about him the splintering lightning and sturdy thunders of admonition till he resembles a bunch of firecrackers petulantly uttering his mind at the tail of a dog; then straightway murmurs a mild, melodious lay, soft as the cooing of a donkey intoning its prayer to the evening star. Master of mysteries and lord of law, high-pinnacled upon the throne of thought, his face suffused with the dim splendors of the Transfiguration, his legs intertwisted and his tongue a-cheek, the editor spills his will along the paper and cuts it off in lengths to suit. And at intervals from behind the veil of the temple is heard the voice of the foreman demanding three inches of wit and six lines of religious meditation, or bidding him turn off the wisdom and whack up some pathos.



What I Wish My Managing Editor Knew- An open letter to my Managing Editors

by Andrea Boccelli, Publisher; Tamara Lucas, Publisher; Terri Monturano, Publisher Elsevier Inc.

Often I want to hug you. Sometimes I want to stomp on your toes (and you want to kick me in the shins). I always want you to know just how much I appreciate all of the hard work you do, because it is a hard job. Our relationship may be complicated, but it is based on mutual trust and respect and lots of communication. And when we work together, both our lives are easier and great things can happen.

Communication between us is key. The cliché of there being no stupid questions is certainly true, especially within our working relationship. We both have the same goal of publishing quality and timely content. If I don't know you're having a problem, then I can't help you fix it. I never want to be left in the dark on any issue concerning the journal, no matter how small.

When in doubt, pass it on. When you get an odd query from an author, feel free to send it to me rather than spend too much time on it. I may have had a similar question posed before and, if I don't have the answer, I can either find out or we can work on it together. As the speed of publishing accelerates and as the demand for information increases, we are both faced with fresh and exciting challenges. I'm here to work with you, to learn from you, to educate you when needed, and to provide you with tools that help to ease the burdens you carry. Plagiarism suspected? Check, got that! Impact factor questions? Check, got that! Production-related issues? Check, got that! Editorial board planning session? Sure! In the Bahamas? Well…I'll have to think about that!

Know that we both want the journal to thrive, to grow, to reach as many readers as possible. Flag articles that you think should be promoted. Physicians and researchers read and watch the news so this is a great way to broaden access to and interest in our content. Share with me your ideas for improving the journal. You know the field; I have the means. We can work together for the good of the journal. That's what we do.

Let's be a bit more understanding with each other. Let's be more flexible. Our jobs are hectic. We both want the journal to flourish but remember, whereas you have one or perhaps two journals to focus on, my responsibilities include other journals. This doesn't mean that you and the journal aren't important to me. In fact, because my experience and responsibilities include a number of journals, I am in the position of sharing information and experience gained from that full portfolio of journals. So it can provide a real benefit to you and yours.

It is certainly true that *all* of my journals are important to me, as are *you*. So, be patient with me. Telling me the context of who's who, when a query or problem arises, would go a long way. It doesn't insult me to have things spelled out—it just speeds up my response. Please don't over-estimate how much I know, and don't be worried about causing offence. Similarly, when it comes to deadlines, schedules, and timing issues, giving me context and more information is better than giving me less. The more you can tell me upfront, the more likely I am to be able to place a query correctly, and the more likely I am to give a useful answer. What's obvious to you isn't always so obvious to me. Again, the key is communication.

If I don't get back to you immediately, I promise I'm not intentionally ignoring you. If you have an urgent matter, please pick up the phone! Sometimes the "old" way is the best way. And if you're really upset about something, definitely pick up the phone. We can talk it through and find a solution. Most importantly, we can discuss schedules and deadlines that will represent your priorities and make it possible for me to meet them. We're part of a team and that's important to remember. We can always schedule a recurring meeting to ensure that we're both communicating as often as we should. In fact, regularly scheduled calls are a great way to follow up on projects in the works, to discuss new ideas, or just to vent frustrations. I'm a great listener. Relationship building is my strength. Although the publishing industry has evolved, one thing hasn't changed: the relationship between managing editor and publisher is an integral part of making our journal a success. So, when I reach out to you, please reach back. I will be grateful, and the journal will benefit.

You remain my direct line to the Editor-in-Chief. I can turn to you when I need a quick response that a busy Editor might not be able to provide. I know that you often have a good grasp of a somewhat different picture from the one I see. You are invaluable when it comes to running efficient paths of communication among the many overlapping groups of Editorial Board members, reviewers, and authors. Although I work with many managing editors, I share a common interest with each of you. My priorities—although sometimes varied—are your priorities. Each of you does a great job, so I often wonder how those few journals without managing editors function efficiently.

Take your job seriously, but remember to have a sense of humor. Try as we might we cannot control every aspect of the publishing process. And believe me, I wish we could! We publishers are detailed oriented and have control issues, too. Editors and authors have other priorities that encroach on their time with us and expectations that need to be managed. Together we are balancing the priorities of many, many individuals. Sometimes the balancing act is challenging. Sometimes the processes don't go as smoothly as they should. Let's learn from each other and work together to ensure that mistakes are far and few and, when they do occur, that they don't happen again. Remember, I'm only human but I will try to move mountains for you. I hold myself to very high standards and I hate to disappoint.

Above all, hear me out. I may not always have the answers you want or move at the pace that you expect. When that occurs, my experience is showing. I am balancing need with want and short-term results with long-term gain. When we communicate, that can be part of what we both can acknowledge. I am committed to our mutual success, so trust me. I believe in what I do. I hope that in some small way, what I do makes a difference. So, just pick up the phone—I'll always answer the phone and respond in a way that will focus on our mutual goal: a better journal.

Your Publisher.

Whistling in the Dark
A Policy for Handling Image Manipulation

by Lindsey Brounstein, Publications and Graphics Manager
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Intro to Image Manipulation

If you've been to any annual meetings recently, either for ISMTE or other organizations such as the Council of Science Editors (CSE), you've probably seen a session or two on image manipulation on the schedule. You may have even gone to the sessions and listened to panelists from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) or the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) speak on the problems of image manipulation in scholarly publishing. While I know image manipulation issues had been on the radar in my editorial office for some time, we didn't really start working on it until we attended some of these sessions and discovered an article[1] in the *Journal of Cell Biology* (*JCB*) on the temptations of image manipulation.

Creating a Policy

Last year, my editorial office started drafting a policy on how to handle any cases of image manipulation in our two journals. In creating our policy, we considered a number of important issues:

- How do other journals handle image manipulation?
- Would we want to screen images ourselves or rely on editors, reviewers, and readers to bring potential cases to our attention?
- At what point would we want to involve outside groups such as the authors' institutions or funding bodies?
- What sorts of sanctions would we want to employ if we found that authors had in fact used image manipulation?

Over the first few months of our image manipulation policy creation, we performed a great deal of research. Our first stop was the COPE web site, which has several great resources for scholarly editors and publishers, including guidelines and flowcharts for many different ethical quandaries. COPE was a logical starting place for our research because we had made use of COPE's guidelines in creating previous ethics policies. Flowcharts are incredibly helpful tools for potentially messy situations like image manipulation, data fabrication, and plagiarism, because it allows for impartiality while handling each case in a similar fashion.

Additionally, we interviewed some staff from the *JCB* to learn about their approach to image manipulation and screening, even including a training session with one of their image screeners to see how they use various tools in Photoshop to find cases of potential image manipulation.

After performing this research, we decided to create our image manipulation policy using our own plagiarism/duplicate publication policy as a framework along with COPE's flowcharts on handling suspicion of fabricated data. Using both of these items as templates, we began addressing some of our concerns surrounding how we wanted to address these cases. We knew that we wanted the Associate Editor who handled the manuscript to be a main resource for the editorial office. The Associate Editor would help the editorial office determine the scientific impact of any manipulated images. We also knew that we wanted to follow COPE's guidelines for when to involve authors' institutions and/or funding bodies. After learning some of *JCB*'s image manipulation identification techniques, we decided to screen some of the submitted images ourselves in order to maintain a more active role. Deciding on possible sanctions proved easier than we had originally anticipated—since we had also used COPE guidelines to create our plagiarism policy, we already had most of the sanctions we would want written

[1] Rossner M and Yamada KM. "What's in a picture? The temptation of image manipulation." *JCB* 2004; 166(1): 11.

there. We used COPEs sanctions, modifying them as appropriate to make them specific to the image manipulation policy.

Implementing the Policy

The AGA is a member organization, so our policy needed approval from the AGA's Publications Committee and Governing Board. Thankfully, they had only minor edits. We received their approval with the second draft and were finally ready to implement our new policy. We posted the policy online in our instructions for authors, set in the section with our other ethics policies, and we informed all of our editors that we were using a new image manipulation policy, and requested that they be on the look-out for potential image manipulation cases.

With the policy in place, we took a closer look at our staff time to determine on how many manuscripts we could comfortably perform image manipulation screening. We decided to begin the new year with having a single staff member screen a random sampling of manuscripts per journal month. This sample size would allow us to determine if additional screening may be necessary in the future.

Current Status

Since our policy became official toward the end of last year, we have had two cases of potential image manipulation brought to the editorial office. One of our reviewers brought us our first official case only a couple of months after the policy had been approved and implemented. Together with the reviewer, we identified about ten instances of image duplication and manipulation spanning across three different journals. We were able to use our newly created flowcharts to proceed with the case and enact the appropriate sanctions given the level of severity. The authors were responsive to our requests and we were able to get the entire case wrapped up in under a month.

Since then, one of our Associate Editors found another case, this one also spanning three different journals and containing multiple images that were duplicated but then rotated, stretched, and flipped to avoid detection. That case was also wrapped up very quickly thanks to our flowcharts and the swift action of our Editors. In both cases where other journals were involved, the managing editors of those journals were notified of the image duplication.

Our random image screening has been in place for approximately four months, and to date it has produced one case of an unintentionally duplicated image, which is being addressed by the authors as they revise their manuscript.

Screeners Beware

When investigating cases of image manipulation, there are several things that are important to keep in mind:

- Sometimes image manipulation can be accidental. Images could be labeled or stored incorrectly on file drives leading to duplicated images. Researchers can go on sabbatical leaving someone else to interpret their notes and filing systems. An author may only be trying to "clean up" one of their slides, not realizing that removing that smudge or darkening that band is actually image manipulation.
- It can be extremely difficult, and sometimes impossible, to determine when image manipulation has been accidental or inadvertent versus intentional image fraud or research misconduct. Care needs to be taken not to jump to conclusions on motive unless strong evidence is provided.
- Careers may be at stake. When pursuing any case of image manipulation or any type of research misconduct, it's important to remember that the letter we write can have a significant impact on people's lives and careers.

If you've been to the seminars, then you know that image manipulation, and all research misconduct, is a serious problem facing scholarly publishing. This is how our editorial office addressed the issue and brought some structure to an otherwise nebulous topic. We feel that having this policy in place is important to our editors and society because it protects the scientific integrity of the research we publish. In providing our perspective on the problem of image manipulation, I hope that other editorial offices may find ideas for how they can move forward with their own policies and procedures.

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

Truths Universally Acknowledged: Book Review

Edit Yourself: A manual for everyone who works with words

One of my favorite books about editing is Bruce Ross-Larson's *Edit Yourself*. Ross-Larson's emphasis is on clear, concise writing, the kind that will make it easy for readers to understand the writer.

The book is divided into two parts: What Editors Look For and What Editors Cut, Change, and Compare. Part One consists of 11 chapters.

Chapter 1: Fat. Superfluous and overweight words and phrases should be trimmed or cut. Ross-Larson gives specific examples and suggests how they can be changed; for example, "It is Richard who damaged…" should be changed to "Richard damaged…."

Chapter 2: The Better Word. Some words are better because they are correct; others are more concise.

Chapter 3: Pronoun References. In a sentence such as "The main problem that doctors run into with their patients is their…." Does "their" refer to doctors or to patients? Sometimes the reader can figure it out, but writers should avoid making the readers go through that.

Chapter 4: Order in the Sentence. Items in a list can sometimes be arranged to make the sentence easier to understand.

Chapter 5: Shorter Sentences. Many of our journal authors are guilty of writing sentences so long they are hard to read; I sometimes think I should bring a compass along to help me get to the end. This chapter gives tips on ways to shorten them.

Chapter 6: Dangling Construction. This error results in incorrect, often humorous meaning. Ross-Larson shows how to recognize danglers and how to fix them.

Chapter 7: Abused Relatives. That, which, and who can be tricky. This chapter will help you understand the correct word to use.

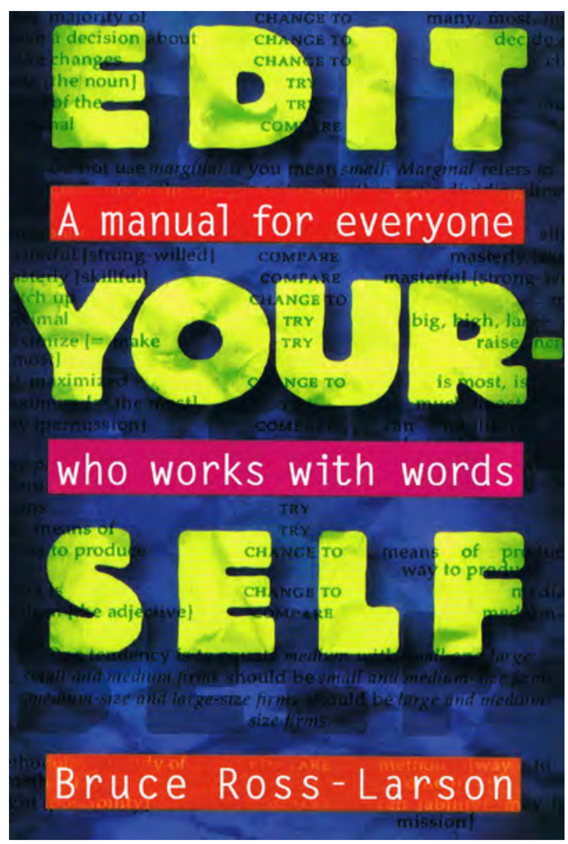
Chapter 8: The Active Voice. How can you change the passive voice to the active for more powerful writing? Should the passive voice ever be used?

Chapter 9: Parallel Constructions. Words that do the same work are easier to read if they are parallel in grammatical construction.

Chapter 10: Consistency. We can talk all day about editing elements, but consistency within an article is crucial.

Chapter 11: Basic Tools. Carpenters need the correct tools to do a good job, and so do we. Dictionaries, style sheets, and checklists will help us create or edit good writing.

Part Two of *Edit Yourself* consists of a long list of recommendations. Ross-Larson suggests clearer, simpler ways to say words that we use every day and lists words that can usually be cut. Due to the fact that? Change it to "because." Last but not least? Change it to "finally." This alphabetical listing of more than 1,500 recommendations is well worn in my copy of the book.



Edit Yourself goes beyond grammar and punctuation to help the writer or editor create writing that is easy for the reader to understand. What more can you ask from a book?

Have you read a great editing, grammar, or style book? How about a book that looks at publishing from a new angle? If you think ISMTE members would enjoy it, share your recommendations with us. Email dbowman@asge.org.

Finish this sentence...

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

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

- You never stop worrying! (Rachel Russell)
- You often have to wait 9 months to see the final product and the first thing you do is check the attachments. (Charlotte Seidman)
- You spend all day long worrying about details that no one notices unless they cause a problem. (Barbara Skalak)
- You're often shouted at to fix things you didn't break. (Mary Chang)
- Some papers need nursing, others encouragement, and yet others need strong discipline. (Jon Marshall)
- With little recognition of the fact, they both are responsible for helping others shine and put their best work forward. (Kirstin Anderson)
- Sometimes you just have to say, "Because I said so, that's why." (Wendie Howland)
- You couldn't possibly choose which of your issue(s) is your favorite. (Wendie Howland)
- Every author you deal with acts like they are the only author you have! (Glenn Collins)
- When you suggest a different choice of words, the new wording is worse. (Dan VanTassel)
- Writers and children both need your help with their "issues." (Dan VanTassel)
- You have to mother the authors. (Diana Epstein and Colette-Di-Ep)
- There is no school which teaches you the ropes... You learn by doing, on the field, and from peers! Sometimes making mistakes... (Lucia Steele)
- Your children (authors) generally don't listen to you (follow the Instructions). (Ira Salkin)
- Your clearly stated guidelines are regularly ignored. (Alethea Gerding)
- You have to guide and encourage consistently for continued improvement of manuscript submissions. (Wendy Krank)
- You need to balance your decision between telling the unvarnished truth and keeping someone's self-esteem in tact. (Barbara Meyers)
- Your journal (aka child) doesn't always have the highest Impact Factor (aka best grades in the class). (Barbara Meyers)
- You must use negotiation. And sometimes bribery. (Meghan McDevitt)

Thanks to everyone who responded! For next month, finish this sentence:
You can spot an Editor anywhere by...
Some examples are:
...the bloodshot eyes.
...the red ink marks on her fingers.

Calendar of Events

The Journal Editorial Office
May 2, 2012, London, UK
http://www.alpsp.org

Understanding Copyright
May 16, 2012, London, UK
http://www.alpsp.org

Council of Science Editors Annual Meeting
May 18–21, 2012, Seattle, WA, USA
http://www.councilscienceeditors.org

Effective Journal Marketing
May 24, 2012, London, UK
http://www.alpsp.org

Introduction to Journals Publishing
May 30, 2012, London, UK
http://www.alpsp.org

Society for Scholarly Publishers Annual Meeting
May 30–June 1, 2012
Arlington, VA, USA
https://www.sspnet.org/

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

Editorial Manager User Group Meeting
June 21–22, 2012
Cambridge, MA, USA
December 3, 2012
London, UK
http://www.editorialmanager.com/

ISMTE Conferences: Save the dates!
ISMTE U.S. Conference
August 14–15, 2012
Washington, D.C.
http://www.ismte.org
ISMTE European Conference
October 23, 2012
Oxford, UK
http://www.ismte.org

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