

## Procedures and Forms

**The Peer-Reviewed Journal: A Comprehensive Guide Through the Editorial Process.** Gary Michael Smith. New Orleans, Louisiana: Chatgris Press; 1996. xii + 132 pages. Softcover \$35. No ISBN

In his introduction to *The Peer-Reviewed Journal: A Comprehensive Guide Through the Editorial Process*, Smith cautions that "editors have to develop a system of operation applicable to the structure of the environment." His book is intended as a guide to developing an editorial processing system for a specific journal operation. The system Smith describes is expansive and complex and suitable for a large journal, but it could be streamlined and adapted for a smaller operation.

Anyone who reads this guide will be impressed with how labor intensive the peer-review structure is, regardless of whether one follows all the steps outlined by Smith. Those contemplating editorships would also benefit from reading such a guide before accepting the position, because many editors have been surprised (and sometimes overwhelmed) by the amount of work and support required to publish peer-reviewed journals.

Although I have extensive experience with managing journal offices, I was, at times, confused by some of the material in Smith's guide. Although the information is generally applicable, the novice would have difficulty comprehending the system presented. Some of the terms used for editorial positions (pages 4-6) are not universally applied and depend greatly on the size of the journal, the available budget, and the publisher's role and responsibility. The role of the editorial secretary (editorial assistant) is also underplayed.

A large number (62) of letters and forms are cited throughout the text, but some are overly simplistic and could have been deleted. Likewise, some form letters are not appropriate to all journal operations and can be eliminated without hampering operations. Although detailed, the style checklist (Figure 49) could be a valuable resource for

staff who must ensure that original or revised manuscripts are complete. (Such forms must, of course, be adapted to the requirements of a specific journal.) Throughout the journal process and during peer review, a manuscript is handled many times, and an incomplete manuscript requires more attention (handling) than one that is conscientiously prepared and submitted by the author for publication. Thus, Figures 49 and 52 (final checklist) are really parts of an ongoing process.

Regardless of their purpose, all communications emanating from the editor's office should be clear and unambiguous. Letters and forms should be free of typographical errors, and care should be taken to ensure that names, degrees, and addresses are correct and complete. Information entered into a database (and reused throughout the process) should be accurate and stylistically consistent, for ease of reporting and to avoid potential embarrassment.

In reviewing the guide, I found a number of typographical, syntactical, and production errors that should be corrected in future editions. [A 2nd edition, in which, the author asserts, such errors have been corrected, is due shortly. The author has also added information on electronic methods of manuscript processing.—Ed.] Another area that deserves attention is Chapter 5, "Publication", where Smith's cynical view of authors' motivation is inappropriate. The office staff should assume that an author wants to publish in their journal and proceed accordingly. Professional standards should be maintained at all times. Finally, the "Selected Readings" tend toward electronic publication but fail to include some useful standard texts, such as the *American Medical Association Manual of Style* and *Scientific Style and Format: The CBE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers*, as well as Huth's *How to Write and Publish Papers in the Medical Sciences* and Day's *How to Write & Publish a Scientific Paper*. Further, they include references to some unpublished documents, which, in fact, should not be included in the "Readings" list.

While the book tells us what we should do, it does not answer for the reader (and potential user) the question, "Why do we do this?" Staff who understand the relationship of their work to the final product will take more responsibility for the process and will be more responsive to the needs of authors and others who rely on the editorial office for information and service. Successful operations are based on 1) understanding the journal editor's goals and anticipating future needs; 2) service to a varied constituency (the journal editor, editorial board, reviewers [referees], authors, readers, and publisher, among others); 3) flexibility to adapt and react to the new challenges presented daily; and 4) teamwork.

**Colleen M Hubona**

*Colleen Hubona, who has more than 25 years editorial experience, began her career as a copy-editor for JAMA and presently serves as executive editor for Clinical Cancer Research, the International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics, and Annals of Surgical Oncology.*

**Permissions Management for Requesters and Granters: Dealing with Copyright and Fair Use.** John B McHugh. Glendale, Wisconsin: John B McHugh; 1996. 60 pages. Softcover \$68. No ISBN

The controversy generated by the Report of the Working Group on Intellectual Property Rights (The White Paper) highlights the anxiety about copyright in the digital age. There are many questions and, as yet, few answers. For new recruits to the publishing arena among researchers, editors, and publishing house permissions departments, a firm grounding in the traditional issues of copyright and fair use will be useful as these issues are argued and resolved.

This manual offers a nonexhaustive overview for those newly involved in the publication and dissemination of intellectual property. Its intended audience seems to be small publishers and lower-level managers

at larger publishers. Authors are a secondary audience. The reader is apparently presumed to have no knowledge of copyright law.

In general, the book covers the subject clearly and succinctly. The author has a good understanding of the publishing business and of copyright. Areas that could be improved are the organization and the sometimes inconsistent level of detail. In addition, numerous minor errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation mar the text. Some are more important than others, but collectively they erode the author's credibility, especially considering that the audience is publishers. I am going to detail some of these because they may help readers of the manual make better use of it and perhaps help the author improve future editions.

#### Organizational and Content Issues

In some specific places, the logical flow of the book was interrupted or could be improved. For example, acknowledgments properly belong in a preface or as a separate section before Chapter I, not after the substantive content of the book has begun. The manual discusses public domain, then infringement, and doesn't cover fair use until several chapters later. As written, however, the chapter on infringement requires an understanding of both fair use and public domain.

In addition, key concepts and terms are not defined. The Five Rights listed on page 8 use the idea of work for hire without defining it. A clear definition of work for hire, along with some examples, would be helpful. Exhibit 1 is very helpful for summarizing copyright periods. However, the term "public domain" is used without being defined. In the discussion about recent changes in international copyright law (page 12), readers need information about the "large classes" of foreign works whose copyright status is changing; without knowing what kinds of works might be affected, readers cannot know when they need to get more information or talk to an attorney. Page 35 refers to "the Kinko's case" without describing it. Though some of us know only too

well what it was about, those new to copyright and permissions may not; it should be described, if only briefly. The term "course pack" is not defined. The reader could likely figure it out, but the author should supply a definition.

In Chapter VI, it would be helpful to include some suggestions about when to ask the Copyright Law Office for research help. What can they find out? When should a publisher go to the Copyright Office instead of doing research in-house? When is a private copyright search firm most helpful? Chapter VI would also be more useful if it included a list of steps for searching copyright, perhaps even a discussion of the forms attached at the end of the book; then the logical transition to obtaining permissions would be smoother and more obvious. The list of steps would also help clarify the importance of identifying "thin" and "embedded" copyrights at this stage. Perhaps a glossary of terms like "fair use", "public domain", "thin copyright", and "embedded copyright" would be helpful.

The author's voice is inconsistent; sometimes he appears to be talking to authors, other times to publishers. Changes in purpose and audience should be clearly identified. For example, the unstated change of audience for Chapter IX is jarring, especially on page 29, where step 8 is "send all of [them] to the publisher." Until this chapter, the reader has been the publisher. The beginning of Chapter IX should be addressed to the publisher, along with the explicit suggestion that the author or anthology editor should secure permissions. The step-by-step instructions should be in a subsection clearly labeled as being for authors. The chapter title "Permissions Suggestions for Requesters" is not clear enough; readers may not understand that the requester is usually not the publisher. The revised chapter should be titled something like "Obtaining Permissions".

Chapter IX suggests doubling the estimated time for obtaining permissions, but does not give any kind of baseline. Should it take a day for each source? A month for 1 to

10 sources? Without some specific information to start with, a suggestion to double the time estimate is not helpful.

"Fourteen Caveats," Chapter XIV, is really a summary and would be more effective if an introductory paragraph were added and the chapter placed before the forms library.

#### Editing Issues

As I mentioned earlier, poor copyediting mars the credibility of this book. For example, on page 5, beginners should "feel bad", not "badly", if they are confused. "Creater" should be spelled "creator" (page 8 et seq.). The reference cited for Exhibit 1 is incomplete; information such as the publisher information, volume number, and page numbers should be added, as appropriate. The title of William S Strong's series appears to be incorrect on page 12, where it is given as "*Update 2 to the Fourth Education [sic] of The Copyright Book*"; the bibliography cites *The Copyright Book*, no edition. Finally, "all-conclusive" on page 23 should be "all-inclusive".

**Bradley Hundley**

*Bradley Hundley is owner of Hundley & Associates, Dallas, Texas, a publication management and consulting firm, and is a past-president of CBE.*

#### Advertising Disclaimer

*CBE Views* will not knowingly accept newsletter advertisements that are deceptive, misleading, or expressly incompatible with our mission and goals. *CBE Views* does not endorse, advocate, or guarantee any offer, viewpoint or representation made by advertisers in *CBE Views*.