

◆ AESE-CBE-EASE Joint Meeting: Drawing on Diversity

Barbara Gastel, Editor

CBE Views

The conference "Science Editing and Information Management", held 10-14 September 1998 in Washington, DC, brought together professionals pursuing various communication activities in a wide range of scientific fields. The conference was the second joint meeting of CBE, the Association of Earth Science Editors (AESE), and the European Association of Science Editors (EASE). AESE served as the host society.

Conference attendance exceeded 250, and registrants came from more than 20 countries. Attendees included writers, editors, librarians, and others working in disciplines as varied as geology, biology and medicine, psychology, and astronomy.

Keynote Presentations

The conference included keynote presentations on each of 7 themes. Robert D Utiger, a deputy editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, gave the keynote presentation on the education of editors. Noting that "few people set out to be editors of scientific journals", Utiger focused on the appropriate preparation of such editors.

Utiger observed that candidates seek editorial posts for various reasons, including enjoyment and intellectual satisfaction, the chance to serve one's field, and the prospect of influence and prominence. He also listed items that editors must learn among them, editorial policies and standards; responsibilities to authors, reviewers, readers, and publishers; and ways to attract manuscripts, administer a manuscript-evaluation system, produce a journal that people read, and resolve conflicts.

Every new editor should obtain a set of journal policies and procedures from his or her predecessor, Utiger said. He also mentioned vehicles through which new or future editors of journals can learn about editing, including short courses that organizations give for editors, fellowships at journals, university-based programs, and books and journal articles on editing and related subjects.



Panelists Ellen Cooper, Barbara Richman, and Steve Maran discuss popular communication of science.

Biologist Thomas Lovejoy, of the Smithsonian Institution and the World Bank, who founded the long-running public television series "Nature", gave the keynote presentation on popular communication of science. He described the origins of the series, which he characterized as providing a weekly glimpse of something interesting and beautiful in the natural world "with an occasional reminder that all is not well".

Lovejoy noted the importance of communicating to the public not only what science has discovered but also how science works. He also discussed the response of scientists when journalists ask what should be done about environmental or other problems. Commonly, Lovejoy observed, scientists answer only that more research is needed. However, he said, such responses can appear self-serving, with the scientists coming across as "gilded nestlings with mouths agape, saying 'feed me, feed me'."

The keynote presentation on information retrieval, archiving, and preservation was given by Brenda Hurst, of the Canadian Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI). Hurst noted that CISTI is the largest library of science, technology, and medicine in the world. She described how the library is dealing with issues in the 3 realms.

Additional keynote presentations addressed the other 4 major themes of the conference. Electronic publishing was discussed by Pieter Bolman, Academic Press; ethics in scholarly publishing by Marcel LaFollette, The George Washington University; economics of scholarly publishing by Andrew Odlyzko, AT&T Research; and copyright and intellectual property by Mary Jackson, Association of Research Libraries.

Concurrent Sessions

The concurrent sessions at the conference focused on aspects of the same 7 themes.

One session, "Many Faces of Science Communication: From Scholarly Journal to Daily News", featured moderator Richard Harris, of National Public Radio, and presenters Ellen Cooper (American Association for the Advancement of Science), Harvey Leifert (American Geophysical Union), Barbara Richman (*Environment* magazine), and Stephen Maran (National Aeronautics and Space Administration). Much of the discussion dealt with popular communication of findings reported in scientific journals and at conferences.

During the session, Richman described the workings of *Environment*, which targets a relatively general audience but contains articles that are much longer and more

detailed than those typically in the popular media. The articles in *Environment*, which “cover where science and policy meet”, are written by academics, policy-makers, and other experts and undergo peer review. Illustrations range from semitechnical figures and tables to eye-catching photographs. Richman discussed strategies for producing a publication that has highly substantive content yet is readable and aesthetically pleasing. Among them: “We edit the heck out of our articles.”

In a session on electronic publishing, Norman Paskin, director of The International DOI Foundation (<http://www.doi.org>), presented a progress report on The Digital Object Identifier (DOI), which was launched at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October 1997. Calling the DOI “the ISBN of the 21st century”, Paskin explained that it is both “a unique identifier of a piece of content and a system to access that content digitally.” DOIs can be used to identify not only books and articles but also, for example, pieces of music. Paskin noted that by serving as permanent “handles” for items on the Internet, DOIs can save users the frustration of finding that a World Wide Web address has changed.

A session on economics of scholarly

publishing included a presentation on advertising on the World Wide Web. Speaker Donald F Hemenway Jr, of the Camber Corporation, who has been an editor and publisher, cited advantages of using the Web for classified advertisements: Ads can be posted quickly, and they can be linked to employers’ Web sites, giving job-seekers ready access to additional information. Hemenway said that on the Web, as in print, advertising should be clearly distinguishable from editorial content. He recommended basing the price of an ad on how many times it was seen, not how many times it was “clicked on”.

Hemenway also discussed dealing with the competition that online advertising can pose for print advertising in a parent publication; he mentioned the option of selling online ads only to buyers of print ads, and he noted that “cannibalizing” one’s own ads may be preferable to having them go to competitors. His final recommendations were to look at other Web sites, use news groups that provide information on this topic, read magazines and books about online communication, and stay in touch with customers or members about what they want.

Among other subjects addressed in concurrent sessions were marketing for self-employed writers and editors, the relevance (or lack thereof) of bibliographic citations in scientific papers, ways to orient and motivate editorial boards, and statements on authorship that have appeared in the research-integrity policies of academic institutions and in the ethics codes of professional organizations.

The final day of the conference included field trips focusing on geologic and biologic aspects of Washington, DC, and its environs.

For Further Information

Additional coverage of the conference is slated to appear in an upcoming issue of *CBE Views*. In addition, proceedings are being prepared. Information on obtaining the proceedings is available from Connie Manson (Washington Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geology and Earth Resources, PO Box 47007, Olympia WA 98504-7007; telephone 360-902-1472; fax 360-902-1785; e-mail connie.manson@wadnr.gov).

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more than once, do not
hesitate to blot often.

—Horace
Satires, I, c 25 BC

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The Queen Elizabeth Hotel
Montreal, Quebec