

## Transatlantic Views: European Science Editing

A detailed comparison of the European Association of Science Editors (EASE) journal *European Science Editing* (ESE) and CSE's *Science Editor* (SE) would probably provide enough data for a doctoral thesis. However, I have received, and usually read, both journals for over 10 years and thought a subjective comparison might be interesting.

I'm loath to admit that life moves more slowly in Europe than in America, but one obvious difference is the frequency of the societies' journals and meetings. EASE conferences take place every 3 years, and ESE has only recently increased from three to four issues a year. But before you dismiss European editors as an idle bunch, I'd like to point out that each issue of ESE is more densely packed. There are more words per page, fewer photographs, and less white space. That may be kinder to trees, but it gives ESE a more earnest feel, whereas SE is more browsable and the pictures of members emphasize the newsletter function.

Articles in ESE tend to be longer than those in SE. Each page delivers over 1000 words (compared with 600 to 900 in SE), and papers running to four or five pages are not uncommon. That partly reflects the fact that ESE publishes more original research than SE.

Both journals, while aiming to represent all sciences, suffer from a predominance of biomedicine. It is slightly less marked in EASE, which from its very foundations embraced earth-science and physical-science editors, but I'm afraid the biomedical brigade still has the loudest voice—and look who's writing this article.

One feature of ESE that I have always appreciated (and always marveled at the work involved in compiling) is the Editor's Bookshelf. It comprises three or four pages listing and briefly describing recently published items of interest to editors. It covers

everything from the politics of publishing to archiving systems and is drawn from a wide array of publications. It is a great resource for keeping up with the literature and a sobering reminder of just how much literature there is to keep up with.

If I get depressed by the thought that I will never have time to read everything, I am at least cheered by the fact that European editors seem to be blessed with great longevity. Some of ESE's regular contributors and most active members of the publications committee are well into their eighth or even ninth decade. So perhaps there will be time to read all those papers, after all.

Some features of the two publications are very similar: both offer book reviews, and both report their societies' meetings. I generally enjoy the former but dread the latter. I understand why meeting reports are included—it would be a terrible waste not to capture some of the best moments of conferences. But I have a problem: if I've attended the meeting, a written report seems a dull substitute for a stimulating session; if I haven't attended the meeting, I can't always be bothered to read about something I've missed. If the session sounds fascinating, I'm cross because I wasn't there; if it sounds dull, I don't want to read about it. In contrast, a book review might provide an excuse for one of my favorite activities: buying more books.

If you are interested in finding out more about European editors, I can recommend ESE, which can be found at [www.ease.org.uk](http://www.ease.org.uk). It's a little less glossy than SE but, who knows, you might discover the secret of long life!

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