

Authoring Tools: What's New and What's Coming Next

Moderator:

Richard Wynne

Aries Systems Corporation
North Andover, Massachusetts

Speakers:

Nancy Medina

Annals of Emergency Medicine
American College of Emergency
Physicians
Irving, Texas

Frank Stumpf

SPI Publisher Services
Glen Allen, Virginia

David Kochalko

Thomson ResearchSoft
Carlsbad, California

Reporter:

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Medical College of Georgia
Augusta, Georgia

Moderator Richard Wynne set the tone, saying that “something new is going on in our industry”. Nancy Medina, editorial director of *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, discussed how Web systems are changing the way peer-reviewed journals operate. *Annals* launched Editorial Manager (Aries Systems) in 2002 with dramatic results. Authors can track when papers are assigned to editors, reviews arrive, decisions are made, and papers are published and how often they are cited. Turnaround time has improved; editors have 48 hours to assign reviewers and 5 calendar days to make decisions. Editors compete for the best turnaround rate. The current average is 12 days, a figure that astounded the audience. Author satisfaction has improved, submissions are up, and editors are happy.

Web-based systems—such as Manuscript Central (ScholarOne) and RapidReview (Cadmus)—allow worldwide access 24/7, a feature of particular importance to Medina’s emergency physicians, who are as likely to submit a manuscript at midnight as at any other time.

The second speaker, David Kochalko, is president of Thomson ResearchSoft (www.researchsoft.com), a company that produces tools for author-researchers. According to Kochalko, “Customers want tools that increase their productivity as they research, write, and publish.” Kochalko described some of ResearchSoft’s latest products. EndNote is more robust than ever. An author types in key words, and EndNote finds the reference and adds it to the bibliography. EndNote formats papers and bibliographies in particular journal styles, searches databases on the Web in most foreign languages, and synchronizes with PDAs. Another product, Onfolio, collects and organizes Web content and, according to Kochalko, “acts as a bookmarking system on steroids”. Of great interest to the audience was the proof-reading tool SciProof, an index of more than 250,000 scientific, biomedical, and chemical terms from the National Library of Medicine and the National Center for Biotechnology Information. SciProof dramatically reduces the “red underlines” on the computer screen and is particularly well suited for the life sciences. When queried, Kochalko said that it would be available for Macintosh in June or July 2005, much to the delight of the audience.

Frank Stumpf, president of SPI Publisher Services, generated considerable excitement when he talked about a service “for which there is an acute need”. The numbers of papers submitted by nonnative English speakers is continually rising,

a result of online peer review, open access, and the large influx of scientists to the United States from Asian countries, most notably China. Many papers are rejected simply because of poor readability. Major problems, however, are accessibility to appropriate editing services and affordability. Stumpf described three editing services, including one recently established by SPI. International Science Editing (ISE) (www.internationalscienceediting.com/index.html) is based in the British Isles and has a Japanese version of its Web site. Asia Science Editing (ASE) (www.asiascienceediting.com), with a Chinese version, is affiliated with ISE but is based in India. Submissions for both are electronic, and payment is by credit card. Fees are about \$12 per page for ISE and \$7 for ASE (rates from current Web sites).

On the basis of client demand, SPI formed the Philippine-based Professional Editing Services (www.prof-editing.com). Quick price quotes are available (about \$8 per page, extra for figures and tables), and various payment options (credit card, wire transfer, and purchase order) are available. Each manuscript is edited and reviewed by two university professors, one skilled in English, the other in the particular scientific discipline. Several members of the audience lauded Stumpf for those services, citing the extreme need for them.

As the session concluded, a small group of editors lingered, discussing how they cope with editing for nonnative English speakers and what can be done to ameliorate the problem. Without a doubt, the last presentation was the high point for many of the author’s editors present. We readily agreed that this subject should be a topic for future CSE meetings. 🗣️