

## Cracking China

*Moderator and Speaker:*

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*Speakers:*

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The earliest advances in publishing—India ink, paper, and movable type—came from China and Korea long before Gutenberg made the first Western contribution to typography in 1450. China and other developing countries have since been left behind with regard to scientific publishing but are eager to rejoin the race. Speakers focused on how journals can make content available to a growing international audience and help international authors to publish. But why China?

China is becoming a prominent force online, and although only about 50,000 Americans are learning Chinese, more than 110 million Chinese are learning English—the language of science. Mark Robertson was unable to attend, but he sent a presentation providing background research to clarify why China should be a new area of focus for publishers and what publishers should focus on.

In 2006, China surpassed Japan in research and development spending, becoming second only to the United States. In a Blackwell poll, 94% of Chinese authors said publication in a foreign scholarly journal is beneficial to their academic

careers, but only 29% submitted to a foreign journal in the last year, because of hurdles in the publishing process.

Another Blackwell poll reports that journal reputation is by far the most important factor in Chinese authors' decisions on what journals to submit to, followed by specialty and impact factor. Electronic access and high-quality peer review also ranked high, but authors are wary of the submission process and concede that publishing in a Chinese journal is easier. With nearly a million researchers, China is producing a wealth of knowledge with tremendous potential benefit to the international community. It would behoove American journals to guide Chinese authors through the publishing process.

Adrian Stanley presented suggestions for building a lasting partnership with China. Since 1999, The Charlesworth Group has been developing its dealings in China by helping its publishers to promote their publications in this emerging market.

Publishers hoping to work in China should begin by performing market research to identify critical needs. Use questionnaires and contact current users, members, and authors to understand the desire for print, online content, and reprints. Next, build a team with local members, providing Chinese contacts. Publishers should show that they have long-term plans by laying firm foundations. Senior personnel should make quarterly trips to maintain *guanxi* (personal connections). The CEO of Reed Elsevier was cited as taking eight trips to China per year.

Giving back is fundamental to improving the market. Editorial courses on peer-review and submission processes and English writing workshops are highly desired in China and benefit both authors and journals. Barbara Gastel, editor of *Science Editor*, was recognized by both speakers as one of the leaders in the growing surge of US editors working closely with Chinese editors

to improve processes. Local editors can also aid in converting Chinese to English before and during the submission process.

Kristen Fisher Ratan stressed the importance of appreciating Chinese culture's integration with business dealings. Those who aim to build a working relationship in China should be prepared to form *guanxi* as well; this will go a long way toward pleasing clients and make working relationships more comfortable.

Introductions and hierarchy are important, as are formal meetings, ceremonies, banquets, gifts, and seating orders. Bargaining is customary, and making a business lower its price is a point of pride, so keep this in mind when making an offer.

Ratan also explicated two major Chinese consortia. The China Academic Library and Information System (CALIS) is a nationwide academic-library consortium whose goal is to facilitate content acquisition by its members. Funded partially by the government, libraries opt in for a fee and individually purchase their own content. The National Science and Technology Library (NSTL) is a collaboration between research institutions and university libraries that provides nationwide access funded at the government level. In an effort to aid information exchange across China, NSTL subsidizes some smaller institutions and some CALIS members. Chinese proverbs relating to points being made enlivened Ratan's remarks and added authority, as did inclusion of Chinese terms. Despite appearing at the end of the annual meeting, the session attracted considerable interest. 🔥