

Editing Around the World in 80 Minutes

Moderator:

Mauricio Rocha e Silva
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São Paulo, Brazil

Speakers:

Ana Ivaniš
Croatian Medical Journal
Zagreb, Croatia

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Reporter:

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In the roughly 80 minutes of this session, speakers touched on science editing in Croatia, Asia (via Canada), and Latin America. This report presents some highlights.

Ana Ivaniš summarized the history and current status of the *Croatian Medical Journal (CMJ)*, an English-language journal published since 1992. The journal's mission is to be a "bridge between the scientific periphery and mainstream science", and its primary goal is to educate authors. Often, Ivaniš said, authors from the region publish their first papers in *CMJ*. Some of the papers are by students. The production of these issues of the journal has broadened the authorship.

CMJ has been indexed by MEDLINE since 1998 and by Thomson Scientific (ISI) since 1999. The number of submissions and the proportion that are non-Croatian have increased. In 2000, free full text of the journal became available electronically; issues going back to 1996 are available online. The journal established the post of editor for research integrity in 2002; introduced an online manuscript and tracking system, developed in Croatia, in 2006; started publishing pages in Croatian in 2007; and became included in PubMed Central in 2007.

Also in 2007, two of the largest scientific publishing companies offered to buy *CMJ*. The journal rejected the offers because the prospective buyers' goals ran counter to those of the editors, who wish to keep the journal a nonprofit entity that emphasizes educating authors. Today, the journal has three full-time employees and three research fellows (of whom the speaker is one). Among its editors are two editors-in-chief, an in-house statistical editor, an editor specializing in clinical trials, a language editor, and a manuscript editor. The readership of the journal is growing.

Iain E P Taylor shared reflections based in part on his experience in Asia. Among his points were the following: One should not assume a universal understanding of how to write a scientific paper. Local studies—for example, the polar bear research featured in the keynote presentation at this meeting—can be of broader import. In some locales, publication is required for an advanced degree; some authors wrongly believe that they can just publish excerpts from a thesis. Science-editing norms differ among countries, and cross-cultural under-

standing in that regard can be difficult to obtain.

Mauricio Rocha e Silva focused on science publishing in Latin America, with particular emphasis on SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online). SciELO, he noted, is a collection of mainly Latin American journals, all of which must provide open access. Devised in 1998 and linked to PubMed in 2000, SciELO has greatly increased the visibility of Latin American journals, both in and outside Latin America. As a result, prominent Latin American scientists have become more willing to publish their work in Latin American journals. As of May 2008, the SciELO collection encompassed 630 journals; the number of articles downloaded from SciELO increased from 2.3 million in 2002 to 164 million in 2007.

Rocha e Silva said that a recent survey indicates that journals in developing countries that include their country names in their titles tend to have lower impact factors. He also observed that the English often is poor in papers submitted to SciELO journals; he noted that refining the English of only the accepted papers is more economical than requiring that the English in all papers be good before peer review. Rocha e Silva ended by stating five reasons that good journals in transitional or developing countries are desirable: to publish material that is controversial and so might be reviewed unfavorably elsewhere, to publish research that is mainly of local interest, to help beginners, to show scientific autonomy, and "to give people like me something to do when their productive careers come to a natural end". ☯