

THE COMPLEX WORLD OF SCIENCE EDITING

Conference review
12th EASE General Assembly
and Conference, Split, 13th -15th
June 2014

The European Association of Science Editors (EASE) organised the 12th General Assembly and Conference (*hereinafter* the Conference) in Split, Croatia. The Conference was held in a modern new venue of the School of Medicine, University of Split. EASE defines themselves as an internationally oriented community of individuals from diverse backgrounds, linguistic traditions and professional experience who share interest in science communication and editing (www.ease.org.uk). Even though the Conference has had multidisciplinary character most of the participants were from the medical field. Furthermore, 124 participants from all over the world took part at the Conference and even the distant countries such as Australia and Korea were represented. Amongst the editors in science, many scientists and other editorial managers participated but the Conference also attracted the representatives from the big publishing companies such as Taylor and Francis and organizations which are of importance for the scientific publications such as Crossref.

The main Conference programme lasted for three days. However, optional workshops (with additionally fees for participating) took place day before and day after the main Conference programme, thus offering a total of five days which were dedicated to the editing in science.

The guest speakers at the opening ceremony were Professor Ivan Pavić (Rector of the University of Split) and Professor Dragan Ljutić (Dean of the Split School of Medicine). The opening ceremony's entertainment was perfor-

med by the soloists Professor Šime Mihatov, Professor Roderick Hunt and the Split Physicians' Choir.

The first plenary lecture held by the Professor Sir Tim Hunt from London Cancer Research aimed at answering the question »What is science?«. During his speech, Prof. Hunt commented on a few different opinions in an attempt to answer this question. He argued that science could be acknowledged simply as a way of looking at the world, or a knowledge about the natural world or, even as a method to find out about the world. Prof. Hunt went to conclude that sometimes science can be extremely difficult to understand even when it's well-understood by the specialists in a given field. Interesting remarks were given about the relation between science and politics. It is argued that politicians sometimes think that by funding the expensive researches one would be able to see the immediate results which mostly is non feasible. The reception at the Mestrovic Gallery in Split marked an end to the first day of the Conference.

The second day plenary speaker was Prof. Milena Žic-Fuchs from the University of Zagreb talk about inter/multi/trans-disciplinarity? and (its) challenges for the publishing. The presentation underlined the interesting concepts of the publishing paradox which include highly specialized journals specific by sub discipline or theoretic approach and on the other hand the need for inter/multi/trans disciplinarity in science. The multidisciplinary approach in science and in the scientific articles presents new challenges for the scientific journals to meet the needs of the authors. To the latter it is argued that, there are a few different approaches such as widening a scope of the existing journals or the establishing of a new interdisciplinary journal with a wider scope. However, both alternatives rise question on what would the implications be on the peer review process or on the needs for editorial board from diverse disciplines. Presentation enhanced the statement that the only thing that matters is the quality of an article and not the journals brand thus, underlining the importance of not judging the articles on whom they were published by.

The Conference further in the part of the Poster presentations includes poster about the *Ljetopis socijalnog rada* (hereinafter the Journal) and its development. Since 1994, the *the Journal* went through four main phases. The characteristics of each development phase were pointed out by the poster presentation. Whilst the presentation provided information on the Journal and its successful growth in the last 20 years it has also informed the attendees on various editorial processes such as the way in which the articles are submitted and the way in which the issues are published.

Saturday's parallel sessions included lecture on social media and »*The journal as a process not a product*« moderated by Alun Salt from the University of Leicester, UK. The lecture outlined the role of social networks, blogs and virtual environment. The main idea of the session was about importance of social media and social networks and blogs and their role for science journal development. The other parallel session held a lecture on the sustainable quality and usability in biomedical translation – issues and approaches to problem-solving moderated by Mary Ellen Kerans from the, Mediterranean Editors and Translators, Spain.

Saturday's other plenary speaker was Elizabeth Wager from the UK with the presentation on "Research into peer review: how could peer-reviewed publications be more efficient?". Ms Wager argued that peer review process(es) have changed remarkably little in over 300 years and that even today there is only small amount of research done on how the publications are used and how they could be made more useful. It is interesting that Ms Wager emphasizes that every article should be sent to at least six peer reviewers to get statistical significance and objective reviews. Even though it is known that peer review process is not really been useful, still, it is the only system we have. Also it was argued that the format of journal articles is essentially unchanged for many years (and many journals still view the printed version as the basic publication) while online publication and social media will offer great potential for innovation in this field in the near future.

The afternoon offered the parallel sessions of which one was the presentation on gender issues in research and journal management (a common standard for sex/gender policies in research reporting and journal management – an open consultation with EASE members) moderated by Shirin Heidari and Tom Babor. Other parallel session was a workshop on Publication ethics (case studies provided by COPE) moderated by Irene Hames, Mirjam Curno and André van Steirteghem. The session was consisted of interactive work in subgroups where members are presented with vignettes ethically questionable situations. Work in small groups identified various and mainly diverse opinions caused by the participants professional roles (i.e. author, editor, publisher).

The morning of very last day of the Conference had one parallel session on *Publishing metrics* moderated by Paola de Castro. The other session was on *Professional development for editors* moderated by Pippa Smart. This session outlined the useful skills editors need, the importance of ethical awareness in publishing, education for editors and the support that is available in the different regions in the world.

Furthermore, the day proceeded to hold another parallel sessions. One session was on a health issue topic titled the *Reporting guidelines: a tool to increase the quality of health research published in your journal* moderated by Iveta Simera. The

other parallel session was moderated by Prof. Ana Marušić from the host School of Medicine (University?), Split. This session provided the information on evaluating the editorial research and the collaboration among editors' associations in which the ways of collaboration among editorial organisations were explored.

The plenary lecture before the closing ceremony was held by Prof. Doug Altman from the Oxford Centre for Statistics in Medicine (reporting guidelines: lessons for journal editors from the EQUATOR Network).

The optional workshops which took place before the main conference (*»The application of advanced IT to scholarly journal publishing«* and *»Statistics for editors«*) and after the main conference (*»Editing non-native scientific English«* and *«How to be a successful journal editor«*) did seem very interesting and could have, perhaps, been very useful for the participants to attend them. Including this themes in into the main conference programme would contribute even more. Concluding, the Conference was well organized, interesting and useful for editors in science who understand the importance of professional networking among authors, editors, reviewers and publishers. As this is exactly what this conference provided and more.

Prepared by: Lucija Vejmelka

