Author-centric thinking

Innovating the authorship experience for Asian scientists

Benjamin Shaw | COO & China Director
All authors face challenges on the path to publication success.

- **Preparation**: assessing relevance to research topic
- **Journal Selection**: determining likelihood of acceptance
- **Writing**: comparing journals
- **Submission**: navigating a submission system in a second language
- **Peer Review**: decision to re-submit, or try a different journal
- **Publication Success**: long decision timelines
  - writing in English
  - writing an outline
  - formatting to guidelines
  - understanding comments
  - citation management
  - Publication ethics
All references, including URLs, must be numbered consecutively, in square brackets, in the order in which they are cited in the text, followed by any in tables or legends. Each reference must have an individual reference number. Please avoid excessive referencing. If automatic numbering systems are used, the reference numbers must be finalized and the bibliography must be fully formatted before submission.
Busy researchers do not have time to read long Instructions, especially if written in their second language.

所有参考文献（包括网址）的序号必须以方括号的形式，先按照在正文中的引用顺序，然后按照在表格或图表说明中的引用顺序逐一编号。每条参考文献必须对应一个编号。请避免过度引用参考文献。如果使用自动编号系统，必须在投稿前确定参考文献编号及书目的格式。
Authors are affected by the wider ecosystem.
That ecosystem is highly fragmented.

The ecosystem is linked by ‘the paper’ as a unit of research output.

Unfortunately, most innovations have ignored the process of writing a paper.
“Deep” underlying trends affecting authors

- **Shift of power to producers and consumers of content** (we must become expert in providing a good user experience to authors as an end user)

- **Increasing research leadership of Asian and non-Western nations** (opportunities for leap-frogging old models)

- **New publishing, peer review and business models and workflows to reduce inefficiency**

The above trends reinforce each other
What would the STM publishing ecosystem look like if institutions, libraries and publishers put author-scientists at the center of everything they do?
It is your job to create a painless and valuable experience for authors. Those of you who do this will enjoy a competitive advantage.
Don’t leave the authorship experience entirely in the hands of publishers. Be a voice for those trying to communicate your institution’s research findings.
What areas are ripe for innovation?

- **Peer review**
  - Speed
  - Value to authors
  - Communication format

- **How research is matched to a suitable journal**

- **Convenience of authorship and submission experience**
  - User experience
  - Author services

- **Development of a positive scientific culture**
Survey of author experiences with peer review

- 1,300 responses
- Carried out June/July 2013 on DXY.cn, a portal for China’s biomedical community
Peer review survey

Editorial decisions & Chinese researchers

- 90% of respondents confused by the decision letters that journal editors send them

Confused
Not confused

n = 1311
Peer review survey

Reasons for confusion

- No definitive statement from the journal editor: 61%
- The English used by the journal editor was difficult to understand: 32%
- Other: 7%
79% of respondents confused by peer review comments
### Why were the referee’s comments confusing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The questions posed, or clarifications requested were unclear</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I was unsure why the referee did not understand my initial explanation as I thought it was clearly communicated</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referee comments were conflicting</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English was difficult to understand</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Author Challenges survey carried out Spring 2009 on ScienceNet.cn, China’s leading scientific portal.

Language

Primary Difficulty During Manuscript Preparation

- Formatting According to Author Guidelines: 63 (19%)
- Understanding the Journal’s Guide for Authors: 73 (22%)
- Expressing Thoughts Clearly in English: 79 (24%)
- Choosing a Journal: 118 (35%)

n=333

Language barriers 46%
Journal Selection

Primary Difficulty During Manuscript Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
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<td>118</td>
<td>35%</td>
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n=333
Journal Selection

Primary Criteria for Journal Selection

- Potential for Citations: 16 (5%)
- Inclusion in Indexes/Databases: 9 (3%)
- Appeal to Target Audience: 145 (44%)
- Impact Factor: 56 (17%)
- Business Model (OA or Subscription): 40 (12%)
- Speed to Publication: 13 (4%)
- Accepts Type of Manuscript: 23 (7%)
- Publication Costs: 31 (9%)

Aimed at Reaching Target Audience and Gaining Recognition 69%

Convenience 20%

n=333
Peer review survey
Helping authors overcome rejection

89% of authors would like journals to provide comments to help them improve their manuscript, even when they have been rejected...
Helping authors overcome rejection

...but only 18% of authors said they received comments upon rejection from peer review.
Peer review survey

Helping authors overcome rejection

When your manuscript has been rejected by a journal, did the journal editor provide you with alternative journals to submit your manuscript to?

- Yes: 21%
- No: 79%

Would have found this guidance helpful: 87%
Wouldn’t have found this helpful: 13%
90% of respondents want more detailed information about the publication process

- Expected time from submission to publication
- The time given for referees to review manuscripts
- The peer review model used
- Exactly what is required at the revision stage
# Brainstorm Ideas

## Problems

The traditional Aims & Scope is broken:

- the dozens or hundreds of A&S in a given field all seem the same
- A&S are too static and not updated regularly
- flat text is boring and lacks nuance

## Solutions

- Make a video or graphic Aims & Scope
- Update quarterly, or even after every issue
- Clearly state important information such as timelines to decision
Brainstorm Ideas

Re-think the Aims & Scope

SCIENTIFIC REPORTS

Monthly Statistics – July 2013

Mean time from submission to publication

111 days

Number of papers published

222 papers published in July 2013
2,269 papers published since launch

Great use of visualization instead of flat text

Interviews could be developed into a video A&S

Keep your research moving. Submit to Scientific Reports!

Boyana Konforti, Editor, Cell Reports
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructions are long and onerous</td>
<td>Simplify guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors are experts in their field of research, not in formatting in MS Word</td>
<td>Reduce formatting requirements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide templates</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Translate into key languages</td>
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Edanz recently helped BMJ translate all of its IfAs into Chinese. This will soon become an industry standard.
Brainstorm Ideas

Improve the value of peer review

**Problems**

Authors complain about:

- Long decision times
- Unclear comments
- Lack of bottom-line decisions or guidance from journal editors

**Solutions**

- Encourage pre-submission inquiries
- Re-invent how peer review comments are structured
- Clearly advise if authors should submit to a different journal
- Provide value even when rejecting a paper
Be helpful

### Problems

- Authors are unclear about policies
- Journals reject for language problems without giving suggestions on how to solve them
- Authors are unsure what it takes to get published

### Solutions

- Suggest alternate journals upon rejection
- Set up an author helpdesk
- Refer authors to vetted language services
- Show the anatomy of an exemplar paper
81% of respondents indicated that a sample exemplary article would aid them in writing a better manuscript.
AIP has done a good job of pulling together helpful resources.
Reach out to authors

Problems

- Authors from non-traditional markets face unique challenges
- Authors in China and elsewhere are already talking about your brand in their own language

Solutions

- Travel to the countries that your papers come from
- Make someone from management responsible for author experience
- Communicate with scientists online in their own language
Support development of a positive scientific culture

**Problems**

- Weak culture of scientific communication
- Inexperience with peer review

**Solutions**

- Provide educational materials
- Make a ‘Journal Club’ kit to encourage young scientists to read more
- Encourage authors from emerging markets to serve as peer reviewers
Brainstorm Ideas

- User registration & progress tracking
- Interactive
- Multimedia content
- Quizzes
- Uses SCORM-based E-learning management system (ELMS)

Why is good writing important?

Good writing is writing that clearly communicates your research. Scientists are busy people, so if your manuscript is poorly written and difficult to understand, they may not take the time to read it (or cite it later). Not only does writing well help others understand what you've done, it will also help you to better understand your own work.

Science is complex, but the writing used to describe it need not be. **Good writing is simple writing.**

High-quality, simple writing:

- Increases the chances of acceptance for publication
- Increases the impact of a manuscript for publication
- Accelerates understanding and acceptance of the research
- Increases the faith of readers in the quality of the research

Poorly written and complicated manuscripts annoy readers, peer reviewers, and journal editors, and hinder their understanding of complicated scientific concepts.
How does Open Access fit in?

It’s a stretch, but if authors buy in to the message that sharing their research is more important than Impact Factor, then they may be more likely to play a positive role in scholarly communication.

Perceived advantages

“Articles published in OA journals may reach a wider audience.”

Dr. Du
How does Open Access fit in?

Misconceptions

“OA journals have no SCI IF. Maybe they will have some years later, but not now. However, since they have no SCI IF, they are basically useless for us.”

There is still a lot of work to be done in Asia to raise awareness about OA and its benefits.
About Edanz
Localized in China and Japan, services for authors worldwide

Beijing, China
Fukuoka, Japan
Services for overcoming barriers to publication

- Language editing
- **Expert Scientific Review** (independent peer review)
- Journal Selection
- Abstract development
- Cover letter development
- Language assistance for responding to peer review comments
# 350+ language editors who understand science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr. Gregor Stewart</th>
<th>Dr. Elizabeth Juarros</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1989 – PhD Biotechnology, Durham University, UK</strong></td>
<td><strong>2007 – PhD Physics, University of Connecticut, USA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced bioinformatics analyst</td>
<td>Specialized in optical physics and quantum computing</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dr. Alison Sherwin</th>
<th>Dr. Daniel McGowan</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1988 – PhD Biochemistry, University of Kent, UK</strong></td>
<td><strong>2002 – PhD Molecular Neuroscience, University of Auckland, NZ</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has edited over 3,000 manuscripts for Japanese and Chinese authors</td>
<td>Former Assoc Editor at Nature Reviews Neuroscience</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dr. Robert Eager</th>
<th>Dr. Karen Bradshaw</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2007 – MD Internal Medicine, University of Texas, USA</strong></td>
<td><strong>1990 – Computer Science, University of Cambridge, UK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Current medical practitioner</td>
<td>University lecturer in computer science</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dr. Andrew Gorman</th>
<th>Dr. Anthony Hill</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2001 – PhD Geophysics, University of British Columbia, Canada</strong></td>
<td><strong>2001 – PhD Biological Sciences, Stanford University, USA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused on use of seismic imaging to investigate geological processes</td>
<td>Focused on genetics of neural development</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dr. Natasha Lundin</th>
<th>Dr. Jennifer Smith</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2007– PhD Chemistry, University of Otago, NZ</strong></td>
<td><strong>1999 – PhD Botany, University of Otago, NZ</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover article published in Angewandte Chemie</td>
<td>Investigated novel marine extracts with applications for crop and food research</td>
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About Edanz

Journal Selector

1. Authors enter an abstract or sample text; the Journal Selector returns a list of journals that publish in related areas.

2. Results refined based on publication frequency, Impact Factor or publishing model, including open access.

3. Users are shown links to similar articles previously published by recommended journals.

www.edanzediting.com/JS