

Science Editor Since the 70s: When Looking Back Helps Us Look Forward

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Some may say that the first incarnation of *Science Editor* started in 1959 with the Council of Biology Editors (CBE) publication *CBE Newsletter*, edited by Fred R. Cagle, which was mimeographed (look that one up!) and stapled. *CBE Views* (1978–1999) represented a more modern approach, and just one year after it started, in 1979, Evelyn S. Myers became the first woman Editor—21 years after *CBE Newsletter's* first appearance. Barbara Gastel was Editor both of *CBE Newsletter* (1998–1999) and *Science Editor* (2000–2010), and has long been a valuable contributor of ideas, leadership, and content. We're fortunate that Barbara remains an editorial board member.

As *Science Editor* heads into more than 40 years of publishing since *CBE Views* started, it's fun to consider what we've learned and how this might inform what's next. We had originally thought about publishing a single anniversary issue. The editorial board first discussed, and then agreed on peppering the next year of *Science Editor* with text and image excerpts from past articles, reflections on scientific publishing over the years, and other items that provide not just a historical perspective, but also an idea of what possibilities exist in the future. In reading these excerpts, we hope you'll enjoy and learn from our colleagues past and present, and find the common threads that join us regardless of whether it's 2018 or 1978.

CSE has digitized most of its *CBE Views* and *Science Editor* issues starting with the January/February 1997, Vol. 20, No. 1 (<https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/publications/science-editor/1997-vol-20-cbe-views/jan-feb-1997-vol-20-no-1/>). I encourage you to spend some time browsing the treasure trove of our archive, as I'm certain you'll find articles that are interesting, useful, fun, and (often) still relevant.

In the January/February 1997 issue (Vol. 20, No. 1) a group of articles in a section called Dialogue tackles

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the challenges that were found as publishers and editors started to use electronic manuscript submission systems and email in manuscript handling. The titles reflect concerns over email and system security, as well as attempts to put risk into perspective. "Is E-mail Sufficiently Secure for Scientific Journals," "Security and Document Compatibility for Electronic Refereeing," "Security: So What's the Big Deal?" and "E-mail: An Expedient or Impractical Method for Reviewing Manuscripts?"

Below are some interesting excerpts from other past issues:

- "Panelists agreed that although sometimes justified, salami science more often than note wastes valuable resources and distorts the truth, is never acceptable in the pharmaceutical industry, and should be discouraged" (p. 200).

November/December 1998 (Vol. 21, No. 6): "Annual Meeting Report: Salami Science: Are We Still Allowing It?" (<https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/wp-content/uploads/v21n6p200.pdf>)

- "To appreciate the speed of change we now encounter, we need to stop and take a breath. We must recognize that in just 3 decades, a mere 30 years of the nearly 4500

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since papyrus was used in 2400 BC, we have moved from a world of merely atoms (the single medium based on a paper format) to a world of atoms and bits. Our current age embraces many media—paper, digital, audio, video—and who knows what’s next and when?” (p. 168).

“As they begin to join to manage change, publishers, editors, librarians, booksellers, subscription agents, and aggregators all recognize the need for a ‘duality of print and electronic products’ for the foreseeable future. How many years the ‘foreseeable future’ covers is debatable. Many of us expect it to span the remainder of our careers” (p. 169)

“We had less than 2 years of warning before the World Wide Web altered our view of the world, how we communicate with each other, and how we go about retrieving information. Are you ready for the next change? It may come tomorrow” (p. 169).

September/October 2002 (Vol. 25, No. 5): “Ch-ch-changin’” (<https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/wp-content/uploads/v25n5p168-170.pdf>)

- “The World Wide Web is truly a powerful tool for communicating science and scientific research data, but it is a web, a tangled one, that can quickly consume writing, editing, graphics, and information-technology resources” (p. 84)

May/June 2008 (Vol. 31, No. 3): “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Scientific Material Published on the Web” (<https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/wp-content/uploads/v31n3p083-084.pdf>)

Back to the current *Science Editor* issue, “The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same” by Dan Moran, Publishing Services Group Leader, Sheridan Journal Service, illustrates an age-old wisdom we often hear applied across myriad facets of life and work. Dan argues that, regardless of the latest technology, the basic tenets of scientific publishing and the importance of peer review hold fast.

Speaking of new developments, scholarly journals run by high school, undergraduate, and graduate students in STEM are on the rise. In their paper published in this issue, Ng and colleagues illustrate that these publications represent critical opportunities for preparing early-career scientists to more effectively read the literature as well as to communicate their research. The authors discuss the challenges of student-run journals, and suggest ways to mitigate these issues.

Colleen Sauber gives us a glimpse into Alec Tremaine Photography and Alec’s work at CSE’s Annual Conferences in 2016 and 2017. CSE provided attendees with an opportunity to work with Alec and to obtain professional headshots at a discounted price.

Looking for some interesting reading? Carolyn deCourt, Managing Editor & Marketing Assistant at J&J Editorial, writes a book review of *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer* by Siddhartha Mukherjee. Mukherjee, well known for his accessible science writing, tackles cancer in a compelling read that draws the reader in and leaves her with a lot to ponder.

Annual meeting reports covered in this issue include sessions on Attracting New Authors, Peer Review Innovation, JATS & BITS, and more.

Finally, we would like to publish images that show scientific editing and publishing in action or represent your domain areas or scholarly society. If you have such an image and the requisite permissions and you’re interested in publishing the photograph, graphic, or drawing in *Science Editor*, please submit a high-resolution image and caption to scienceeditor@councilscienceeditors.org.

Further Reading

- Gastel B. A new name and a new design. *Sci. Ed.*, 2000; 23(1):2. Available from: <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/wp-content/uploads/v23n1p002.pdf>
- Tacker MM. CBE Views: A look back. *Sci. Ed.*, 2000;23(1):3–7. Available from: <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/wp-content/uploads/v23n1p003-007.pdf>