

Love Me Through It: My Thoughts About the Future of Scientific Editing, Publishing, and Social Media, Written in the Year 2025

Jennifer Regala

When I first set out to write this column for the special issue of *Science Editor* on the Future of Scientific Editing and Publishing, I had an inside thought: “Thank you, dear Editor-in-Chief Jonathan Schultz, for making writing my column a wee bit easier this issue by providing me a list of simple, succinct questions to conform to an easy-to-digest template that our readers undoubtedly will enjoy more than my usual drivell!”

And then came 2025. Honestly, I could probably stop right there, and you, my beloved scholarly publishing colleagues, would undoubtedly understand the state of my jumbled brain. But friends. Jonathan sent me really important (yet not easy, after all) questions. And I must answer them. Love me through it as I attempt to make sense among chaos. And as you read my column and approach the scholarly publishing world in the coming days, months, and years, please don’t forget my personal motto: “It’s free to be nice and to comb your hair.” We are all going to need each other these next 25 years and beyond... I hope you read everything I have to say, but this message is the most important one I have to share today. Our community is precious. Don’t forget that.

Please realize that as I type these responses, I am frightened for the future of scholarly publishing. With presidential executive orders and the resulting turmoil

coming at us fast and furious, I urge us to cling to any and all means of proactive engagement with one another. The question is, which platform(s) do we make this engagement meaningful and effective? At the time of this writing, we are less than 60 days from a possible permanent closure of TikTok. I have witnessed most publishing professionals fleeing from the X platform. In early January, Mark Zuckerberg, Meta CEO, announced that Facebook and Instagram would no longer utilize third party fact-checking services.¹ A Bluesky year-in-review blog² shared that over 25.9 million users had joined the platform by the end of 2024. Bluesky retains the look and feel of Twitter from the good old days with some fun additional features, such as follower “starter packs.” And LinkedIn, meant to be a professional networking tool, has seen an uptick in conversation. I remain active on all of these platforms (except Facebook, which I have never used) so I can stay connected with all of you.

With the state of the current scholarly publishing social media state of the union in mind, let’s dive into the questions Jonathan asked me to answer about the platforms of our future.

Where do you see social media/ engagement in 2050 compared with where scientific publishing and editing are today? What new challenges do you anticipate will arise in the next 25 years?

Misinformation, disinformation, and trust will continue to be our biggest challenges in the next 25 years. If it’s hard to understand what is real now, can you imagine what the world will look like in 2050? That said, it is our collective responsibility to work together to disseminate the scholarly record in an honest, accessible, and reliable way. A challenge

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and an opportunity will be to find the best platforms to tell the stories of the research we publish. We must see ourselves as the guardians of the peer review process, and once important works are accepted, we must commit not only to publication deadlines but to using all means to showcase new findings. I believe in us and issue a call to action for us to band together to talk continuously about the best ways to ensure our authors' voices are heard.

What are you most hopeful about?

I am most excited about the potential of using artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance our social media experience in scholarly publishing. There will be tools we can depend on to curate and summarize research articles into concise, fact-checked social media posts, plain language summaries, press releases, and more. Once we can depend on these tools, imagine how easy it will be to share the contents of an entire issue with a global audience of widely varying interests. The time saved using these tools will then allow us, as scholarly publishing professionals, to pay attention to the interactions that count. If we can use AI to schedule the routine posts, and in 2050 I am predicting that we can easily prove the validity of such posts, then we as humans can spend even more time understanding each of our publications as the unique communities they are. Even in 2025, I am a scholarly publishing "elder," and I have spent many years of my career working to improve efficiencies to make all journals identical to one another. Well, guess what? Every single journal out there is as unique as a fingerprint. We are embracing those differences now. And with technology to take care of the mundane tasks, we will be able to prioritize the organic outreach and relationship building that will grow in importance as the foundation of a journal. A journal is a community, so let the AI do the boring stuff while we do the enriching and fun work of real, human bonding with our editors, readers, reviewers, and authors.

Imagine you are in 2050 looking back to today: What would you be the most disappointed to note has not changed?

I am not going to lie. The movement away from kindness, unity, and human decency in 2025 is debilitating and stifling. I will be eternally disappointed if in 2050, I look back and see things are the same or even worse.

My optimistic human spirit believes in collaboration over competition, always. However, given the capitalistic

approach in 2025 to social media, I cannot see that changing much in 2050. In fact, I encourage the thought of competitive platforms to allow users to pick and choose where they share their messages. That said, I hope scholarly publishing can settle on one place to communicate, much like the earlier days of Twitter used to be. I also believe that video capabilities will far exceed what we know now. And another fond hope is that a platform will step away from perfecting their algorithm and allow individuals to have complete control of their interactions without intervention or interference.

I cannot stress enough that we must believe in our scholarly publishing community. I pledge to make 2050 a welcoming and loving place and hope you all will join me in this call to action. And let's use every platform—social media and otherwise—to remain connected and resolute.

What possible development do you think most people are not anticipating?

There will be new social media platforms for sure. Some will mimic old favorites, while others will change communication via social media in ways we cannot begin to imagine. I will be following closely and sharing the news as I see it until Jonathan shows me the *Science Editor* door.

And I touch on AI above. I am fully committed to using these tools in the social media space to free up the people power we need to retain our community. These tools will become as commonplace to us as submission systems and journal platforms. Time is value, and these tools will equate to efforts better spent on warm human interaction.

As always, thank you to our beloved Editor-in-Chief, Jonathan Schultz, and please keep in touch. I welcome your thoughts on this article, social media, and anything else you want to talk about, scholarly publishing or otherwise. You can find me on X/Bluesky (@JenniferARegala), Instagram/Threads (@mommyjennyblog), email (Jennifer.Regala@WoltersKluwer.com), LinkedIn, or call/text (410-991-5857). I appreciate you all and look forward to our now-more-than-ever endeavors to make scholarly publishing better than when we found it.

References and Links

1. <https://www.npr.org/2025/01/07/nx-s1-5251151/meta-fact-checking-mark-zuckerberg-trump>
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