After a brief hiatus over the holidays, EON is back this month with another issue full of useful tips, advice, and publishing news to get you and your Editorial Office on the right track for 2016. At the end of 2015, the ISMTE membership voted to approve the slate of directors and officers of the Board going into 2016. We welcome two new members to the Board, Margot Puerta and Adam Etkin, and thank outgoing Board member Alice Ellingham and past-president Glenn Collins for their dedication and support. Visit the ISMTE Leadership page to read full bios and more.

We all face the struggle of a never-ending “to-do” list that only gets longer as we add new tasks and duties and never take something off the list. Many articles in this issue touch on ways that might help automate or improve tasks while maintaining the high level of quality our journals (and customers) demand.

One of the key functions of Editorial Office staff is communicating with authors, reviewers, and editors. Think how many emails you might send on a given day, sometimes answering the same type of question over and over. In an effort to provide proactive service, Duncan Nicholas writes about setting up customized and automated template letters that can be triggered to send emails after certain tasks are completed. Automating these emails reduces time spent manually checking the system while proactively informing authors or reviewers about the status of their manuscript.

Nick Rushby discusses the idea of a process for assessing and improving quality in journals that is transferable across disciplines and publishing models. Applying the business technique of “total quality management” to journal processes under the Editor’s control, Rushby provides steps for improving journal quality as well as some determining quality measures.
Finding the Time (While Maintaining Quality)

Finding reviewers is always a tricky task. Sarah Wolper provides ten tips for using keywords to search for and find reviewers. Read on to learn how things like leveraging databases and checking reference lists can improve and speed up the reviewer selection process.

Hannah Wakley and Emma Stephens write about their experience using Editorial Manager’s “Inter-Journal Resource Sharing” feature to share letter templates across a group of linked journals. They discuss the steps they took to update letters across the British Psychological Society’s 11 journals.

We run a lot of reports whether through our editorial systems or through Excel or other spreadsheet applications. But is this really the best way? Although it seems intimidating, Darin Baumgartel, PhD, highlights the benefits of using an analytical programming language such as R for data manipulation and improved visualization and analysis tools. Maybe it’s time to give something new a try.

I hope you can find the time to enjoy this issue of EON! Next month, be sure to check out our special themed issue on the topic of Open Access in scholarly publishing.
When Kristen Overstreet embarked on her presidency in 2014, she wrote in *EON* of the four focus areas to which she planned to devote her efforts during her term: committees, marketing, partnerships, and value. Her article in the last issue of *EON* amply illustrates how well the Society has progressed in these areas since then, and as I embark on the role I see signs of a vibrant organisation.

**International Membership**

We are a growing Society. In January 2014 membership stood at around 300; two years later we have exceeded 800, with growth in the number of individual as well as corporate members. We are also a truly international organisation, with members in North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australasia. I am honoured to be the first President based outside of North America, and our 2016 meeting calendar shows that we are committed to an international vision: we are holding our first meeting in Asia (Singapore, 4-5 April: registration is now open, so please sign up or encourage colleagues to do so), and as with the Asian and the North American meeting (the latter in Philadelphia, 11-12 August), our European meeting will take place over two days (Brussels, 30 October–1 November). I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at one of these.

**Grassroots Activity**

ISMTE’s mission statement expresses our vision of connecting a community of professionals. Aside from our annual conferences, which accomplish this so well, it is heartening to see our local groups slowly expanding. I was privileged to be present at the inaugural meeting in Oxford late last year, a prime example of a couple of members setting up a local group on their own initiative to connect peers in the local area. Another group has just launched in Tokyo, with enthusiastic participation by those who attended, as evidenced by the write-up appearing in this issue of *EON*. Local groups provide an excellent opportunity for grassroots networking and sharing resources and knowledge, and they also are a good way of introducing the Society to colleagues and peers who may not yet be members. If you don’t have a group in your area, consider launching one. We’ll provide you with the necessary support: contact the ISMTE office for more information. It would be fantastic to see the number of local groups double over the next two years.

**Partnership with Peers**

My personal focus area over the past two years has been to develop our relationship with peer organisations. I have not done this alone; thanks to the efforts of many, now more than ever we have close collaboration with, and are respected by, societies similar to our own and industry bodies who value the contribution and expertise of our members. I look forward to further collaboration in the years ahead. I am also eager to see how ISMTE might contribute to this year’s Peer Review Week, inaugurated last year with considerable enthusiasm from publishers, vendors, and other industry bodies. Peer review is after all at the heart of our activity.

**Developing Resources**

Our members come from diverse working and publishing environments. Some face the challenges of inadequate technological infrastructure, while others face a bewildering array of technologies. For many, managing an Editorial Office
can often be a lonely existence; others are so well embedded into a publishing organisation that it is sometimes hard to see the wood for the trees. For all of us, the landscape of journal publishing and peer review is changing rapidly and we value the advice and experience of peers.

Equipping our members more effectively to grow in knowledge and expertise remains a key objective. We have material already available, but I appreciate it is not as accessible as it could be. This year we plan to improve our website to allow visitors to access more easily the wealth of resources it contains. We also hope to develop more educational resources such as webinars: keep an eye out for more information over the next few months.

Aside from these more formal resources, however, my vision is that all members feel empowered to share experience and expertise, and our Discussion Forum, recently relaunched, is an ideal mechanism for this to happen. Please consider using it as your go-to resource to consult your fellow members for their advice or to share your own advice with others.

Lastly, I remain indebted to the members of the Board for their combined experience, enthusiasm, and commitment. On their behalf I would also like to express my appreciation to those who have served on various committees. More such volunteers are always welcome, so please consider how you can contribute to the Society in this way. This year promises to be an exciting one for us.
One of the most frequently raised issues with peer review is the long delay many authors experience with the process. The four main roles contributing to the reviewing process are the administrator, the editor handling the manuscript, the referees, and of course, the authors. Fast turnaround times, from submission to decision to resubmission to acceptance, depend on effective communication between these roles. In the event that a speedy response is not possible, a way to alleviate the frustration of authors waiting for a decision is to update them on the status of their manuscript.

From 2004 to 2012 I was employed by Taylor & Francis as a peer-review administrator, responsible for the day-to-day of almost 30 psychology journals, dealing with hundreds of submissions a month. It was a big task to keep up with the basic housekeeping required on all these titles, but the challenge was to be able to provide a greater level of personable service on this scale.

Now, in the days before online reviewing platforms, I managed all my titles with an Access database, and therefore had complete control of everything. When the time came to move all my journals over to online systems, I did so with a sense of trepidation, concerned that I was going to lose the homespun elements that my journal communities found so appealing about the services I provided. Indeed, I received many emails from editors with the same fears, based on their experiences of online systems, and the stories they had been told about the “cold, impersonal, template” correspondence.

Well, of course, I would never have been able to manage 30 journals if I had written every email by hand. In fact, almost all of my correspondence was sent either through automated mail-merges, or email signatures. If I didn’t give myself a victory spin in my chair, I am sure I threw a little mental celebration the first time I sent 1,000 emails in one day. But never once did I receive a message from anyone suggesting messages from my Access database were “cold, impersonal templates.”

Something I am particularly passionate about is providing very considerate customer services, and being forthcoming with information. My logic behind this is that the peer-review administrator knows the status of the manuscripts, so there is no reason the authors and editors should not know. My trusted Access database had a seemingly endless series of buttons with layers of reports in them, triggering pop-ups and filling reports to be mail-merged, covering all sorts of scenarios to leave no stone unturned. I had weekly reports for decision-making editors, with all the manuscripts they were handling accompanied by a multitude of comments instructing them on what needed doing, letters to chase reviewers for their comments should they be late, and off the back of those, letters to editors to inform them of late reviewers, the number of reminders sent, on which dates, and whether any other reviews had been submitted for that manuscript. I also sent updates to authors every time the status of their manuscripts changed, giving them every piece of information I could. In response to all these automatically sent template letters, I received many responses from people, especially authors, thanking me for my consideration and the personal notes updating them, which they had never received before from other journals.

Automation is perhaps the most double-edged instrument in the peer-review toolkit. It serves efficiency, but fuels some of the bad reputation the process comes in for. Automating updates reduces the amount of time spent manually checking the
status of manuscripts, and templating reduces the need to write brand new letters each time. Sending updates to authors can also reduce the number of initial queries themselves, and most importantly, proactively informs authors about the reviewing process. For me, this was one of the more motivating factors in setting up notifications: to provide that proactive service.

Just because these emails were triggered automatically doesn’t mean they were not written in a personable manner, and I believe that was the key. These letters were, essentially, personally written notes, because I had written them. Just because they were being triggered by a machine did not mean they had to sound mechanical or impersonal.

I was somewhat sceptical that I could recreate everything from my Access database through an online system, but I took a tour, set up some demo sites, and was convinced by the convenience, and more importantly, the access to information and direct abilities the editors would be granted. I could sense potential in the full automation of ScholarOne—no more button presses to launch emails would be a great time saver. It didn’t take long for me to discover that the ScholarOne (and later, Editorial Manager) sites contain enough customisable features to allow for suitably detailed updates to be triggered by granular events.

Some of the notifications I set up were very simple, relying on the completion of a task to trigger the email. Some were slightly more complex, and required adjustment of various configurations in the system to make them work effectively. For example, many ScholarOne site administrators are familiar with double-blind review workarounds for sending copies of decision letters to authors and reviewers.

Before setting up any notifications in the sites I worked on, I always asked the permission of the editors of the journals to ensure they were happy with everything, or to veto any letters they didn’t want. I feel this is good practice because it is appropriate to get sign-off on letters which essentially detail an editor’s work performance, include editors in the editorial decision-making of the journal, and inform them of developments they may be unaware of otherwise.

Below I describe some examples of popular automations I routinely set up in ScholarOne Manuscripts websites, and the ways in which they are triggered:

- I set a notification to authors when sufficient referees have agreed to review a manuscript, based on the Assign Reviewers task being completed. This letter informs authors that the editor has managed to secure the required number of referees. This letter does not include the names of the reviewers, of course.
- A notification to authors when all reviews are received, based on the Decision task becoming pending. This letter informs authors that all the reviews are in and their manuscript is with the editor awaiting their decision.
- Some of the notification triggers are caused by the lengths of time a manuscript has spent in certain tasks. These are the more important letters, in my opinion, as they can alleviate the silent void of the infamous “black hole” of the review process.

The greatest causes of delays in peer review are at the reviewer assignment stage, and waiting for reviews to be submitted. Just because the word “reviewer” appears twice in describing the longest periods of waiting does not necessarily mean it is the “fault” of the referees that such delays occur. Assigning reviewers can be a protracted process, with many requests being legitimately declined due to time constraints and subject area mismatches. When I was an administrative assistant, an Editor and I once invited 18 individuals in order to secure two reviewers. The correspondence involved in all those review requests naturally delayed the manuscript, and neither of us could have anticipated so many declines. But in order to achieve the basic standard of review we required, we persisted. From my experience, such delays can always be mitigated by communication. It is the silence during reviewing that authors find the most frustrating.

Using the length of a time a reviewer takes to submit can also be used to trigger an email to the action editor to advise them of the late reviewer, as well as a reminder to that referee and a notification
Developing Communications
to the author. I tended to send the notification to the action editor first, to give them a chance to decide what course of action to take. After several days I would send the reminder to the referee to see whether they would submit their review, then several days after that, the update to the authors. This gives each person enough time to respond with an update in case they will take any actions on it, such as an immediate decision, or submitting the review.

Sometimes it can be a little tricky to set the automations because of the mechanisms by which the websites work. My notification to authors of the assignment of an action editor to their manuscript had to be triggered by the Select Reviewers task becoming “overdue.” This was because manuscripts that received an immediate reject decision move through the pending and completed Select Reviewers tasks. Using either of those as the trigger, as I had done for other notifications, would result in the author being advised of a “blank” action editor at the same time as receiving a rejection. Confusing and unprofessional. Using the overdue trigger ensured that only manuscripts remaining in that queue for more than 24 hours would receive this particular notification. This meant that some authors did not receive this particular notification, because their manuscripts were assigned to action editors before they became overdue, but that was not a problem because the information was also included in subsequent messages about the reviewing status.

As well as setting automatically triggered updates, you can equip peer-review sites with many template emails to manually select in a variety of situations when manual intervention is required. For example, the Hyperlink emails section of ScholarOne can be used for submission checking. Some examples of such templates include admin checks, such as double blinding, exceeding word length, wrong format, missing information, or standard of writing; Special Issue templates for sending to editors, assigning guest editors, inviting reviewers, and making decisions; and Pre-Production emails for requesting copies of final files, un-blinded manuscripts, high-resolution figures, or permission checks on reproduced images.

These are just some examples of many different automations I have added to sites over the years to respond to author and editor requirements, and to manage the demands on my time. In Table 1,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recipient</th>
<th>Notification</th>
<th>Trigger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Action editor assignment</td>
<td>Select Reviewers task becomes overdue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Referees secured</td>
<td>Assign Reviewers task is completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Reviewing update (delayed reviewer assignment)</td>
<td>50 days (e.g.) after Assign Reviewers task becomes pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Reviewing update (delayed review submission)</td>
<td>50 days (e.g.) after review agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Final review received</td>
<td>Decision becomes pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Decision update</td>
<td>30 days (e.g.) after Decision becomes pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Revision enquiry</td>
<td>30 days (e.g.) before revision due date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Revision overdue enquiry</td>
<td>30 days (e.g.) after revision due date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Paper sent to production</td>
<td>Manuscript files export is successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action editor</td>
<td>Late reviewer</td>
<td>30 days (e.g.) after review agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action editor</td>
<td>Very late reviewer—decision or new reviewer request</td>
<td>50 days (e.g.) after review agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action editor</td>
<td>Decision overdue</td>
<td>14 days (e.g.) after Decision becomes pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewer</td>
<td>Late review</td>
<td>28 days (e.g.) after review agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have provided a summary of these and a few more, for easy reference of the recipient, type of notification, and how it is triggered. Every site is different, and every journal has different workflows and its own unique requirements. Even if these examples would not suit all sites, I hope they will give an idea of the things that are possible and inspire some new approaches to managing communications with journal communities. The ScholarOne Ideas forum is another great place to draw inspiration from, swap ideas, and ask for answers to problems you may be experiencing with the sites. I can be found there offering my opinions, or you can reach me by email if you would like to know more about anything in this article.

Join an ISMTE Local Group today!

ISMTE Local Groups have formed through the efforts of members who would like to meet with peers and colleagues in their local area for networking and discussion. Participation is not limited to ISMTE members, and the only cost associated with participation will be your meal, if the group meets at a restaurant.

Active Groups:
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Chicago, Illinois
- Heidelberg, Germany
- New York, New York
- North Carolina - Research Triangle Park Area
- Oxford, United Kingdom
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Rochester, New York
- Washington, DC Area
- Tokyo, Japan

Visit the ISMTE Local Groups page to join a local group or to find more information.
This project was stimulated by a seminar run by the European Distance and e-Learning Network (EDEN) on June 9, 2015 when I was asked to give a short presentation on aspects of editorial quality. From this starting point has come the notion of a transferable process for assessing and improving a range of aspects of journal quality, not only in education journals but also in other SSH (social sciences and humanities) and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines, and for online Open Access journals as well as those with more traditional formats.

As I explored my ideas of what “total quality management” (TQM) has meant to me as a journal editor, I started to realise that many of the techniques that are used in business to improve quality could be applied to those processes that are under the editor’s control. (We might conjecture why they are not widely applied—but that is a topic for another day.)

I should emphasise at this point that this initiative concerns those editorial processes that are under the control of the editor. There are other sets of processes over which many editors have little control—for example the back-office software, production process, and marketing. Focusing on the editorial processes makes the initiative manageable!

We can distinguish two types of quality:

- An agreed level of quality which the journal can commit to meet (for example ISO 9001:2015). These might include time to first/final decision, inclusion of standard items (abstract, practitioner notes, ethical statement, etc.).
- An absolute level of quality to which the journal may aspire (for example, the quality expressed in a Rolls Royce car or a Balenciaga dress).

**Steps for Improving Quality**

The classic approach to improving quality involves a number of steps:

1. Identifying your customers; and then
2. Identifying the key quality indicators (KQIs) that determine quality for those customers;
3. Documenting your procedures;
4. Doing what you say you will do;
5. Monitoring the KQIs; and
6. Continually reviewing the procedures to improve quality.

When considering editorial quality we need to be clear that the editor is the provider, not the consumer. His/her processes have to deliver quality to the consumers, who are shown in Figure 1.
For each of these groups we need to look at what they want in terms of quality, noting that they may not express their desires directly in quality terms and so we will need to explore them to determine the underlying quality measures. So, for example, authors may be looking for:

- High Impact Factor or other metrics (to meet institutional requirements for tenure, promotion, etc.);
- Good reputation (based on the reputation of other published authors, timeliness of papers, etc.);
- Clear author guidelines;
- Constructive feedback from reviewers;
- Short time to first decision and final decision;
- Inclusion in many abstracting services;
- Accepted papers appearing online quickly;
- Papers that are discoverable and accessible, as well as tools provided by the publisher to enable potential readers (and hence potential citers) to find papers;
- Easy to understand mechanics of the submission system and subsequent reviews; and
- A proofing process which is reliable and easy to understand.

Not all of these are under the direct control of the editor. The first five items in the list certainly are under the editor’s control but the remaining items are usually the publisher’s responsibility.

Similar lists can be developed for the other customer groups. Then they need to be tested by asking the customers through surveys, or focus groups if the resources permit.

From this information we can then start to develop and test KQIs. The published journal metrics (such as Impact Factor, Eigenfactor, h-index, etc.) are obvious candidates, as are the decision times. The objective measures of the clarity of the author guidelines and the value of the reviewers’ feedback are harder to define. However, it is important to bear in mind that not everything that can be measured is important, and not everything that is important can be measured. But then, nobody said that achieving quality was easy!

The result of this research is a series of systematic nested lists or tables that set out for all of the customer groups, their criteria for journal quality and the ways in which those criteria can be measured. These form the basis for the next part of the TQM programme.

Once we have the KQIs then we can start to evolve our editorial processes so as to improve quality, remembering that those processes need to be documented and that the quality process needs to be regularly reviewed.

**Conclusion**

Quality does not come cheap and those journals, whether Gold Open Access, Green, or hybrid, that are not prepared to invest in quality are not likely to last for long. Article processing charges for those journals that are recognized as quality journals are significant. Of course, some of that fee is profit for the publisher and some is paid in royalty to the learned society, but the greater part goes into supporting the publishing and editorial processes that ensure quality.

Thus far we have started to develop the lists that contribute to improvements in the quality of the *British Journal of Educational Technology (BJET)* and reflect the approach taken by the Journal. Other editors will have lists that differ in detail but probably not in substance. The TQM approach takes time to achieve. In the case of *BJET* we have been working with, and refining, our current processes for 10 years. A sustained total quality programme could be a problem for journals owned by learned societies that have a policy of limiting their editors to a term of three or four years. A short time span is insufficient for the editor to understand, monitor, and make effective improvements: this will restrict the journal’s capability to achieve high quality.

**Next Steps**

If this approach to TQM is to be useful then there needs to be a collective approach to building a toolkit for use by other journals. We are therefore looking to build a relatively small team of editors from SSH and STEM disciplines, and from online, Open Access journals as well as those (like *BJET*) with more traditional formats. The draft programme will be to:

- Test these ideas with other journals;
- Develop a generic set of KQIs;
Improving Editorial Quality

- Develop and administer a series of surveys and other instruments to the journals’ “clients”;
- Devise and put into practice a process of continual quality improvement; and
- Document the toolkit for use by other journals.

The project was presented at the ISMTE local group meeting in Oxford (United Kingdom) in late January.

If you would like to be involved in this project then please contact me, Nick Rushby, at nick.rushby@btinternet.com.

ISMTE Upcoming Conferences

2016 Asian Conference
4–5 April 2016
“Best Practices in Scholarly Publishing”
Novotel Singapore Clarke Quay
Singapore

2016 North American Conference
11–12 August 2016
Hilton Philadelphia City Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

2016 European Conference
31 October–1 November, 2016
Sheraton Brussels Hotel
Brussels, Belgium
We had a kick-off meeting of the ISMTE local group in Tokyo on November 27, 2015. Nine people attended in total, including two from publishers, two from academic societies, two from journal editorial staff, and three from printing companies. The ISMTE group in Tokyo offered the first opportunity for those who work in the field of academic publishing in Japan to meet and exchange ideas. The meeting started with a self-introduction session followed by an introduction to ISMTE and discussion of a future meeting. We are going to have a local meeting every two months. We also plan to establish a mailing list to offer an email-based platform for information sharing and discussion.

In addition to the people who attended the kick-off meeting, five people were interested in ISMTE local activities and joined the mailing list. Those who live outside of Tokyo found it difficult to attend the meeting. Therefore, in the future, we are planning to use a web conference system to encourage participation for people living outside of the Tokyo area. We hope that the Tokyo group will grow and extend networking opportunities.

Please contact Katsumi Hashimoto at kahashim@jeaweb.jp or visit the ISMTE Local Groups page to learn more.
When it comes to selecting peer reviewers, keywords are the lifeblood of a manuscript. It isn’t going too far to say that keywords are like a set of car keys—regardless of the quality of the vehicle, without a set of keys, it’s not going to go very far. The same can be said for keywords: even if a paper is exceptionally well written, without well-chosen keywords it can be difficult to select suitable reviewers for a manuscript, thus resulting in a delayed review process or in subpar reviewer comments. And unfortunately, authors do not always provide the most useful keywords. The good news is that even when faced with unhelpful keywords (or even no keywords at all—it happens), the savvy Editorial Assistant or editor can still formulate well-crafted search terms for finding expert reviewers for any paper...no matter how daunting the topic! These ten tips—presented in no particular order of importance—will help you become a wizard at finding referees for manuscripts, and will result in notably improved reviews for your journal.

1. **Search elsewhere for key terms.**
   While the manuscript keywords are obviously important, it is good practice to also scan the title, running title (if applicable), and abstract of each manuscript before commencing the hunt for reviewers. Not only is this an excellent way to take note of important or useful phrases that might aid in a reviewer search, but it is also the best way to gain a general overview of the paper: the medical discipline to which it belongs, etc.

2. **Utilize the resources provided by the submission site.**
   Rarely will you have to begin a search for a reviewer “cold,” because many submission sites—depending on the system used—provide a number of tools that are incredibly useful for kick-starting a referee search. Many of my journals on ScholarOne use the abstract and keywords to draw in a list of up to 20 potential reviewers for each manuscript from Web of Science. This is a terrific time-saver; however, it is worth noting that if your journal has strict guidelines as to whom can be invited to peer review then you will need to vet each suggested reviewer against your criteria. In addition to suggesting these potential reviewers, most submission sites will allow you to perform a search for people in your database who have the same keywords or who have already reviewed/submitted papers on a similar topic. Finally, check to see if the authors have provided suggestions for reviewers. (But be careful when using these names—oftentimes the authors provide the names of colleagues from the same institution or with whom they have published extensively. Obviously you will want to steer clear of these suggestions so as to avoid conflicts of interest.)

3. **Check the reference list.**
   Before branching out to search elsewhere, one last place I recommend searching is the manuscript’s list of references. Here you have a ready-made list of papers on related topics, so select authors from the references with abandon! One thing to be aware of is that authors will sometimes inundate the reference list with papers that they have previously published. This can be a warning flag for self-plagiarism, and it’s also worth taking note of if you are trying to avoid selecting reviewers with whom the authors have worked in the past.

4. **Become aware of interrelated fields and terms.**
   One of the mistakes that beginning Editorial Assistants, myself included, often make is to assume that a keyword or subject area is
an entity unto itself when, in reality, many domains of medicine interact with one another. Diabetes for instance affects multiple systems of the body, and so it is reasonable to seek experts in the fields of cardiology, nephrology, etc., as opposed to simply endocrinology. Similarly, immunology is a far-reaching field of medicine that relates to a number of medical conditions from rheumatoid arthritis to inflammatory bowel syndrome.

5. **Broaden your search terms.**
   This is a helpful technique to employ with drug evaluation papers, for which there may not yet be much available literature, or on which a small pool of reviewers has published; especially if it is a relatively new drug. For instance, a Scopus search for “racotumomab” will only bring in approximately 40 results for papers published within the last 10 years. However, running a search for “anti-idiotype antibody” (the class of drugs of which racotumomab is a member) will result in more than three times as many results. If you are trying to avoid securing reviewers who have published with the author(s) previously, this is an effective technique.

6. **Narrow (or combine) your search terms.**
   On the other hand, sometimes the keywords authors provide can be too broad for finding knowledgeable reviewers. “Diabetes,” for instance, is far too all-encompassing and even if the authors narrow their keywords to either “type 1 diabetes” or “type 2 diabetes” these are almost certain to not be selective enough. An excellent way to narrow your search for reviewers is to combine search terms by using multiple keywords: searching for “type 2 diabetes” AND “basal insulin” will result in a more focused list of experts to review your manuscript. Depending on the breadth of the paper topic, it may even be advantageous to search for three words or phrases.

7. **Familiarize yourself with the reviewer pool.**
   Unfortunately, this is something that will only happen with time but it is still important to pay attention when inviting and searching for reviewers. Over an extended period of time, you will begin to recognize names of reviewers with whom you have worked in the past, as well as useful information about them—area of medical expertise, whether or not they delivered a timely and/or helpful review, whether or not they were courteous in their correspondence, etc. Having a list of go-to reviewers whom you know can be counted upon to deliver will make your job much easier!

8. **Tweaking your search terms slightly can lead to improved results.**
   Simple amendments such as switching word order can lead to an improved list of results when searching for reviewers. Even something as simple as spelling can make a big difference: once, I was searching for experts on esophageal cancer and having little success. I tried changing my search term to the English spelling, “oesophageal cancer,” and suddenly received a long list of possible reviewers!

9. **Learn how to search using databases.**
   Databases are your friends. There is a wealth of scientific databases which will streamline your reviewer search process to no end. My colleagues and I tend to gravitate toward Scopus and PubMed for our purposes, although there are many others. If you are fortunate enough to have access to the library at a college or university, definitely ask one of the librarians for assistance in formulating search queries.

10. **Don’t be afraid to reach out to your Editor or colleagues for help!**
    Know when you’re beaten. When all else fails and you still haven’t found the necessary number of reviewers for your manuscript, seek help from your Editor(s) or colleagues. They might be able to provide the names of possible reviewers, or perhaps will be willing to take a stab at referee selection themselves. Sometimes the key to finding that elusive last reviewer is as simple as having a fresh set of eyes look over a manuscript.
Discovering Our Roots: What’s Love Got To Do With It?

By Stephanie Kinnan
Editorial Assistant
GIE: Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

February is finally here, and you know what that means. Soon, every door, store window, and grade-schooler’s desk will be decked with that classic Valentine’s Day symbol; the heart ❤️. Oh, there’ll be heart decorations, heart cards, heart-shaped boxes, and everyone’s favorite mouthful of chalk, candy hearts (always ready with a pickup line for that special someone: “Be Mine!” “I’m Yours!” “Hug Me!”). Yes, for a couple weeks each year everything is so much more love-ly, and it’s all thanks to that iconic symbol.

The heart icon has a long and rich history, establishing itself as the symbol of love over centuries of evolution. The use of this shape as a representation of the human heart dates back to the 1250s. It first appeared in the French manuscript Roman de la Poire, in which a man offers his heart to a woman. The heart was shaped much like a conifer cone, a precursor to its current shape, which was consistent with medical descriptions of a heart at that time. In fact, similar shapes have appeared in pictograms as far back as 10,000 BC (for those of us who aren’t history buffs, we are talking about Cro-Magnon man). Although what those drawings represented, we’ll never know. Jumping ahead to 3000 BC, the use of the heart-shaped image becomes popular again, although, it is generally believed that these depictions represent foliage rather than the human heart.

In many early uses of this symbol, the heart is pictured inverted with the point on top. It wasn’t until the 15th century that the shape began to really resemble the one we all know and love today. Over the next few centuries its use became widespread. We have the Catholic Church to thank for that, and they are certainly happy to take the credit. They contend that their use of the “Sacred Heart of Jesus” was the first real appearance of the modern heart shape. Originating from a vision had by Saint Margaret Mary Alocoque, the heart began appearing all over in church iconography. It wasn’t long until the symbol was adopted into mainstream society as a representation of love. So now, thank you very much, every Valentine’s Day, we enjoy the sickeningly sweet sight of red and pink hearts around every corner!

Adapted in part from
The British Psychological Society (BPS) has 11 journals that use Editorial Manager (EM). They are linked together with the “Inter-Journal Resource Sharing” feature, so they have a shared people database and a shared reporting tool. Each journal’s EM site is configured in almost the same way and when new features are introduced, any changes have to be repeated a tedious 11 times. Therefore, in the hope of saving time in the future, we have had an item on our wish list for years that reads “Ability to make configuration changes across all linked journals at once.” This year, with the release of EM 12.1, our wish was partly granted because it is now possible to have one set of letter templates shared across a group of linked journal sites so any changes only need to be made once. “Yippee!” we thought and went skipping off to look at our letter templates. And then we realised that each journal’s site had at least 104 letters that would need checking for any differences before shared versions of the templates could be created. Suddenly, it started to seem like a big job.

Journal Office Letters

To make the task manageable alongside our day-to-day work and to avoid the peril of letter blindness, we decided to tackle one small batch of letters at a time. We looked at the letters sent to the Journals Office first, because we knew we would be able to spot any problems with the shared templates easily and they would only affect us.

The shared letters feature requires that you designate one of your linked journal sites as the master site and the others as subscriber sites. You can choose letter templates to share from your master site, which will make them available in each subscriber site. You then need to visit each subscriber site and replace the local versions of the letters with the shared versions (Figure 1). Doing this...
Creating Shared Letter Templates

automatically links the new, shared template of a letter to the “event” in EM’s ActionManager, so that if you replace the notification of a new manuscript with a shared template for that letter, it will be triggered by a new submission in the same way as the old version of the letter. I have to admit that I was nervous about this and did a lot of double-checking for the first batch of letters but it worked seamlessly.

The Journal Office letters were entirely straightforward; they all had identical text and were already using system merge fields for any journal-specific information (e.g., the journal title in the email header), so no changes were needed before the master site’s templates were shared. A week followed in which we did not have time to do any more work on this project, so we just kept an eye on the emails that had been replaced with shared templates and were reassured to see that they continued to be sent out as normal.

Reviewer Letters

Next, we tackled the letters sent to reviewers. The letters related to registration had identical text across the journals but the signatures were slightly different. An update to EM a couple of years ago had given us the ability to set up custom merge fields for letter templates. We used this to create a custom merge field for the email signature for each journal, because we had had to update the text a couple of times and it was very time-consuming to copy and paste a new signature into each letter template. With the custom merge field, any changes only need to be made in one place for each journal. However, replacing the signature in each letter template with the custom merge field was not an urgent job so we had updated some journals and others were still waiting to be done. Creating shared letter templates gave us the opportunity to roll out the custom merge field at the same time and tick an old item off our to-do lists. We had checked that the custom merge fields would continue to pick up text from each journal, rather than using the text from the merge field in the master site, so we knew they would continue to work with shared letter templates.

Creating shared letters for inviting reviewers presented more of a challenge. First, the text giving the length of time for review was replaced with a system merge field, as some of our journals allow 28 days and some only give 21 days. Some of the BPS journals have a list of “classifications,” which are predefined keywords, and they ask reviewers to select a certain number as part of their user record, to make it easier for action editors to find reviewers with appropriate expertise. Journals using classifications have a sentence in the reviewer invitations asking people to add classifications to their user record if they have not already done so. Needless to say, this sentence could not be added to letter templates for journals that do not use classifications. We resolved this by creating a custom merge field called “Update_record_instructions” and using slightly different text for each journal—either asking reviewers to add classifications or asking them to check and update their contact information. This meant that we were able to create shared reviewer invitations that would work for all of the BPS journals. Two of the journals have additional invitations, for a specific reviewer role and for a specific article type. It was not possible to standardize these so they were left as local letter templates.

The reviewer reminder emails needed a custom merge field for the reviewer instructions as they are different for each journal. These instructions appear at the end of several letters so the custom merge field will save time when they need updating anyway.

The reviewer instructions email also contained a statement about each journal’s rejection rate and Impact Factor. We found that the wording varied slightly between the journals, with some journals leaving out this paragraph altogether. As before, the solution was to create a custom merge field containing the journal-specific information. Before doing so, we took the opportunity to contact the editors to check the exact wording they would like (particularly important for the journals which hadn’t previously included the statement).
Editor Letters

The editor notification and reminder emails already had identical text. When we were preparing to share them, we did spot, however, that the timeline for reviewer reminders given in one editor notification was several years out of date, so we fixed that in the master site letter first.

The editor assignment and decision emails were more complicated because of slight workflow differences between the journals. Some journals ask authors to suggest reviewers when they submit their manuscript and these suggestions then appear in the editor assignment email. At the decision stage, some journals use the “draft decision” workflow, in which EM gives editors a template decision letter to edit, and others ask editors to type their own letter from scratch. We could not think of a simple way of resolving these differences with custom merge fields to create shared assignment and decision templates so we did not share them.

Author Letters

We looked at letters sent to authors last of all. Standardizing the notification emails only required one custom merge field for our revise and resubmit checklist, which differs slightly between different journals. Like the reviewer instructions mentioned above, this is used in several letters so the custom merge field will save us time when it next needs updating.

The author invitation and response emails had the same text for each journal but they were assigned to different letter families. When EM first created letter families, all existing letters were allocated to the “General” family; since then, we have gradually been re-categorizing them. It seems that we had moved the author emails into the “Communications to Author” family for some journals but for others they were still in the “General” family. To replace a local letter with a shared letter, they must both belong to the same letter family. Unfortunately, changing the family of a shared letter on the master site does not roll out the change to the subscriber sites (a new item for our wish list!) so we had to ensure that shared and local letters belonged to the same family on each EM site before we could replace the local versions of these letters.

Lastly, we looked at the author reminders. Each journal had five different reminders, for example, to prompt authors about their revision due date, as well as reminders to submit an invited article or commentary. There were a few minor discrepancies with the wording across journals, so creating shared templates was a good opportunity to decide on the wording we thought would be best for all journals. We also decided to edit them to ensure the tone was appropriate and matched the tone of our reviewer reminder letters, which we had updated some time ago to make them a bit friendlier.

We noticed that some of the reminders were signed off with the rather impersonal words “Journals Department.” Merge field functionality has changed over the last few years and most of our letters now include merge fields for our names and roles. After checking they would work in these letters, we were able to update the signature line to the much more desirable “Editor Name” and “Editor Role” merge fields. A few more clicks and this final batch of letters was shared and replaced across all the journals.

Conclusions

Overall, we feel this has been a useful exercise for a number of reasons. Firstly, it allowed us to check through letter templates across the whole package of BPS journals, to make updates and iron out inconsistencies, and also to look at areas where wording could be improved (e.g., the tone of reminder letters). Additionally, although it has been a quite a big job, it should save us time in the future when making updates to letters. Gone are the days when we have to make the same change 11 times across all journals!

By breaking this project down into small tasks, we fitted it around our normal workload and managed to complete it in about six weeks overall.

We still have a few items on our EM wish list, but this has definitely been a big step forward!
Why Use R?

For many Editorial Offices, the go-to software for analyzing bibliometric and turnaround time data is a spreadsheet application from a commercial or open-source office suite. While many become masters at finagling these applications to do just about anything, it can often be at the cost of time and sanity. A few common shortcomings include:

- **Data size limits:** if you have more than a million data points or a slow computer, you will often run into limitations in a spreadsheet.
- **Reproducibility:** if you didn’t keep good track of the sorts, copies, pastes, pivots, and calculations you used the first time, refreshing an analysis with new data can be painful.
- **Functionality:** if you want to create powerful, flexible visualizations or perform advanced operations, options available in spreadsheet programs may be limited.

In contrast, using an analytical programming language can allow you to manipulate larger amounts of data, store your analysis in a single document that can be rerun later, and take advantage of constantly improving suites of visualization and analysis tools. One popular language for such tasks is **R** (www.r-project.org/about.html). R is a very mature language for statistics, graphics, and data manipulation, and in this article, I will provide some examples of how it can be used to analyze data of interest to Editorial Office staff.

Diving into Data with R

While R may seem daunting to learn, most common tasks can be performed in just a few lines of code. Integrated Development Environments (IDEs), such as **RStudio**, allow coding in R in a user-friendly interface. RStudio Desktop is freely available open-source software that can be installed on Windows, Mac, and Linux platforms (unless you’re using the latter OS, you’ll first need to install R itself, which is easily done by downloading it from the R Project website).

A key strength of RStudio is that it integrates R with the document language “Markdown” to create “R Markdown,” a simple formatting syntax for authoring HTML, PDF, and Word documents. In essence, RStudio with R Markdown allows R code to be written and executed along with normal word processing text to create a data-driven story in one coherent document. For example, this entire article was written as a single document with the R Markdown functionality of RStudio; when it was complete, I simply exported to a Word document that contained all the text and data visualizations. For more details on using R Markdown see http://rmarkdown.rstudio.com, or consult a handy cheat sheet for writing documents with R Markdown.

Importing Data

In RStudio, it is possible to import data from all types of databases or file formats. It is very common to have data in a text file or spreadsheet. In the examples presented here, our data is stored in comma-separated value (CSV) files.

In our first example, we use a CSV based on Web of Science data, in the form of one row per article. Fields included are article type (for the purposes of these analyses, the actual article type names are replaced with a single-letter code), document type, and the number of times the given article was cited.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article Type</th>
<th>Document Type</th>
<th>Times Cited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Editorial Material</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Editorial Material</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Editorial Material</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Editorial Material</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Editorial Material</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First we import the data into R by reading the CSV file (which we've named citations.csv); the resulting data will be stored in R as an object called a “Data Frame.” Data import can be done by using the “Import Dataset” icon in the Environment window of RStudio, or by typing the appropriate code into the Console window, as shown below. (Note that code lines beginning with “#” are code comments. These lines aren’t used by R—they are just there to make the code easier to understand.)

```r
# Load the file "citations.csv" into a data frame called "citations" using the "read.csv" function
# The "header=TRUE" option flags the first row as column names, not data
citations = read.csv("citations.csv",header=TRUE)
```

**Preliminary Data Exploration**

Unlike analysis in spreadsheet programs, we won’t be looking at the data directly; instead, we will just be manipulating a dataset with code. To get an idea of what the data look like, we first print the column names by typing `names(citations)` into the Console. This returns the columns we expected from our CSV (note that R turns spaces into periods).

```r
# Print the names of the fields in the citations data frame
names(citations)
```

It is also useful to summarize the data. The “summary” function in R will return counts for categorical columns and descriptive statistics of numeric columns:

```r
# Print a statistical summary of the citations data frame
summary(citations)
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article.Type</td>
<td>The type of article: 127 of type “S,” 34 of type “A,” etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document.Type</td>
<td>The type of document: 196 classified as Article, 87 as Editorial Material, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times.Cited</td>
<td>This is the only numerical field, so here we are presented with basic summary statistics, including mean, median, quartiles, and extremes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visualizing What Drives Citations

Suppose we are interested in which document types garner the most citations. The first thing to do is look more deeply at document type. A simple bar plot of counts can show the document types that exist and how prevalent each is:

```r
# Use the generic R plot function to plot the document type field of the citations data frame
plot(citations$Document.Type, ylab="Number of Documents")
```

![Bar plot showing document types and number of documents](image)

The R plot function is pretty good at guessing the right plot for the job. Next, by just adding the citation count column into the plot function, we end up with intuitive, grouped box plots, and it is immediately obvious that Reviews and Articles are garnering the most citations.

```r
# Add the Times.Cited field, so the y axis shows number of citations instead of a basic count
plot(citations$Document.Type, citations$Times.Cited, ylab = "Number of Citations")
```

![Box plot showing document types and number of citations](image)

But now, the million-dollar question: “How do I make it prettier?” Enter ggplot2, a powerful data visualization library. We start by loading the ggplot2 library (in RStudio, type `install.packages("ggplot2")` in the Console, and click ok if a pop-up warning appears), and creating an object (called “g”) that defines the basics of our plot: the x axis will related to the type of document, and the y axis will relate to the number of citations.

```r
# Load the ggplot2 library; optionally, choose a plot theme (I prefer the light theme)
require(ggplot2)
theme_set(theme_light())
# Create a plot called g, relating the document type to x axis and times cited to the y axis
g = ggplot(citations, aes(x=Document.Type, y=Times.Cited))
```

![ggplot2 response](image)
Now, we build up our visualization by adding “layers” using the plus sign. The first layer will add a box plot. An alpha (transparency) shading of 20% is used. Outliers are omitted. The aesthetics (aes) are set such that the box plot fill color and outline are given with one color per document type.

```r
# Add to the graph a layer for a box plot
g = g + geom_boxplot(alpha=0.2, outlier.colour = NA,
aes(fill=Document.Type,color=Document.Type))
# Print the graph
print (g)
```

One thing that is still missing is an intuitive “sense” for the individual articles. How many are there? Where do they fall on the citations spectrum?

To provide this type of insight, it is useful to overlay the points over the box plot. This is a tricky endeavor: points which are too large or overlapping can create too much clutter. It is useful to jitter these points around a bit so that they don’t lie on a single line, and to give them some transparency so the sense of density is not lost.

```r
# Add to the plot a layer for the jittered points
g = g + geom_jitter(alpha=0.5, position=position_jitter(width=0.2),
aes(color=Document.Type))
print (g)
```

Examining Geographic Data by Overlaying on a Map

A second dataset gives the country of origin for articles published in a particular timeframe. This simple dataset looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNITED STATES</td>
<td>article1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAPAN</td>
<td>article2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITED STATES</td>
<td>article3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITED STATES</td>
<td>article4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITALY</td>
<td>article5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We can use libraries in R to plot data by country overlaid on a world map. To get started, we import our dataset from CSV and prepare the country counts:

```r
# Import the publication country data from CSV
pubcountry = read.csv("publicationsbycountry.csv",header=TRUE)
# Use the plyr library to count occurrences of each country in the data
require(plyr)
countrycount = count(pubcountry$Country)
# Give intuitive names to the data
colnames(countrycount) = c(‘Country’,’Count’)  
# The map will be colored according to the count  
# But we want counts of 1 to show up alongside counts of several hundred 
# So we take the log of the count to get a smaller scale for color variation
countrycount$LogCount = log10(countrycount$Count)
# Print a sample of our country count dataset
head(countrycount, n=5)
  Country  Count  LogCount
  1 AUSTRALIA  40 1.6020600
  2 AUSTRIA    3 0.4771213
  3 BELGIUM    7 0.8450980
  4 BRAZIL     2 0.3010300
  5 CANADA    56 1.7481880
```

Now, we overlay the dataset on the map, coloring by number of observations (if this is your first time using rworldmap, you will need to install it by typing install.packages(‘rworldmap’, dependencies=TRUE) in the Console):

```r
# Import the R world map library
require(rworldmap)
# Join our data to the map data using the country names, using the country column in our data
spdf = joinCountryData2Map(countrycount, joinCode="NAME", nameJoinColumn="Country")
# Draw the country heatmap of submissions, color according to the LogCount
mapCountryData(spdf, nameColumnToPlot="LogCount", catMethod="fixedWidth", addLegend = FALSE, mapTitle="Heat Map of Published Articles by Country of Origin")
```
Looking at Article Turnaround Times

One very useful performance metric for journal management can be turnaround time (TAT) values for articles in different stages of the publication process. Consider a dataset for four different journals that contains dates of submission, acceptance, e-publication, and print publication; the following is an abridged view presenting only a couple of the rows for each journal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submit Date</th>
<th>Accept Date</th>
<th>E Pub Date</th>
<th>Print Pub Date</th>
<th>Journal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/9/13</td>
<td>4/14/14</td>
<td>05/22/14</td>
<td>11/01/14</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/15/13</td>
<td>4/17/14</td>
<td>06/11/14</td>
<td>11/01/14</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16/14</td>
<td>9/29/14</td>
<td>11/11/14</td>
<td>01/01/15</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/15/14</td>
<td>9/22/14</td>
<td>11/05/14</td>
<td>01/01/15</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/09/13</td>
<td>05/07/14</td>
<td>06/09/14</td>
<td>01/01/15</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/14/13</td>
<td>06/25/14</td>
<td>07/30/14</td>
<td>01/01/15</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/05/13</td>
<td>03/27/14</td>
<td>05/14/14</td>
<td>01/01/15</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/06/14</td>
<td>04/03/14</td>
<td>05/28/14</td>
<td>01/01/15</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once again these data are imported from a CSV into a data frame. Note that we can specify that certain fields in the CSV are dates, so that R knows how to treat them. From these data, we calculate time differences between the various stages:

```r
# Get the handling time data from CSV
handlingtimes = read.csv("handlingtimes.csv", header=TRUE)
# Calculate the turnaround times as number of days differences
# Some care is taken here to tell R that our fields are days encoded
as Month/Day/Year
handlingtimes$Sub.To.Accept = as.numeric(as.Date(handlingtimes$Accept.Date, '%m/%d/%Y') -
as.Date(handlingtimes$Submit.Date, '%m/%d/%Y'))
handlingtimes$Sub.To.EPub =
```

# Heat Map of Published Articles by Country of Origin

Heat Map of Published Articles by Country of Origin
as.numeric(as.Date(handlingtimes$E.Pub.Date, '%m/%d/%Y')) -
as.Date(handlingtimes$Submit.Date, '%m/%d/%Y'))
handlingtimes$Sub.To.PrintPub =
as.numeric(as.Date(handlingtimes$Print.Pub.Date, '%m/%d/%Y')) -
as.Date(handlingtimes$Submit.Date, '%m/%d/%Y'))

Now, we can use ggplot2 to summarize the TAT metrics across all four journals in a single
convenient plot. First, we reformat the data for viewing in easy groups.

# The reshape2 dataset will help us transform our data
require (reshape2)
# The melt function gives us a generic form of the dataset so we can
group by fields
reshapeddata = melt(handlingtimes, id.vars = 'Journal', measure.vars
# Name our new columns more intuitively
colnames(reshapeddata) = c('Journal', 'Metric', 'TAT.Days')
# Print a sample of our data
head(reshapeddata, n = 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>TAT.Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A Sub.To.Accept</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A Sub.To.Accept</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A Sub.To.Accept</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A Sub.To.Accept</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A Sub.To.Accept</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, we can draw box plots, for instance, let’s cluster together each journal and put the metrics side
by side.

groupplot = ggplot(reshapeddata, aes(x=Journal, y=TAT.Days,
fill=Metric)) + geom_boxplot(alpha=0.2, outlier.colour = NA)
print(groupplot)

Modern Visualizations

Most of us are accustomed to thinking about common generalizations of large datasets—means,
medians, interquartile ranges, etc. But means are inappropriate when the data aren’t normally
distributed, and interquartile ranges are not the most meaningful way to visualize complex data. With
modern computers and visualization software, there is no need to stick to these old reliable solutions.
One common alternative to a box plot is the more informative violin plot. The violin plot gets its name from the shape it displays. As opposed to a box plot, which is just based on a few values, a violin plot shows a smoothed distribution of the entire dataset. For those adept in using ggplot2, it is trivial to redraw our previous example as a violin plot:

Instantly, more details come to light. For instance, we can see that journal C has acceptance times reliably less than 200 days, but a handful of articles take more than 600 days to reach print publication.

A plethora of fun types of visualizations are available in the ggplot2 cheat sheet.

**Try It Out**

R certainly has a bit of a learning curve, but there are substantial online resources and an active community of users to help get you started. If you find yourself churning through a routine analysis over and over again, having a well-coded, repeatable analysis can be a huge time saver. Additionally, you will get the flexibility to customize your calculations and make compelling visualizations. And perhaps most importantly, being data-savvy is an increasingly sought-after talent, and data can be used to drive performance, highlight successes, and monitor workflows. Making your analysis routine and flexible is crucial to making your data work for you.

Dr. Baumgartel ([www.linkedin.com/in/baumgartel](http://www.linkedin.com/in/baumgartel)) has a PhD in experimental physics and is a data engineer working in health care information services.

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**Erratum**

In the article, “The Impact Factor: For Better or for Worse” in the August 2015 issue of *Editorial Office News* (EON 2015;8:7-16 [http://dx.doi.org/10.18243/eon/2015.8.8.2](http://dx.doi.org/10.18243/eon/2015.8.8.2)), the author affiliations were not listed. The author affiliations are below.

Deborah E. Bowman, MFA, ELS, Managing Editor, *GIE: Gastrointestinal Endoscopy*; Secretary, ISMTE; Prof MVDr. Eva Baranyiova, CSc; Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Czech Republic; Kristen Overstreet, BA, Managing Editor / Senior Partner, Origin Editorial; President, ISMTE; and Sherryl Sundell, BA, Managing Editor, *International Journal of Cancer*; Board of Directors, ISMTE
What to do if a reader suspects undisclosed conflict of interest (CoI) in a published article

1. Reader informs editor of author’s undisclosed CoI
2. Thank reader and say you plan to investigate
3. Contact author(s) and express concern
   - Author(s) supplies relevant details
   - Thank author but point out seriousness of omission
   - Publish correction to competing interest statement as required
   - Inform reader of outcome
4. Author(s) denies CoI
   - Explain journal policy/CoI definition clearly and obtain signed statement from author(s) about all relevant CoIs (if not obtained previously)

Note:
To avoid future problems:
Always get signed statement of CoIs from all authors and reviewers before publication.
Ensure journal guidelines include clear definition of CoI
Calendar of Events

ISMTE New York City Local Group Meeting
February 11, 2016
New York City, New York
www.ismte.org

ISMTE RTP Local Group Meeting
February 12, 2016
Durham, North Carolina
www.ismte.org

ACSE Workshop—Research Integrity & Peer Review
February 18, 2016
Islamabad, Pakistan
http://theacse.com/

ISMTE Chicagoland Local Group Meeting
March 9, 2016
Chicago, Illinois
www.ismte.org

Developing Open Access and Hybrid Journals
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