



The Second Asian-Pacific Conference of the International Society of Managing and Technical Editors

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The International Society of Managing and Technical Editors (ISMTE) was founded in 2007 by a group of editors of American and British journals. In the USA and Europe, the ISMTE holds an annual conference to improve the skills of editors. Last year, however, an annual Asian regional conference was held in Singapore for the first time. On March 27 and 28 of this year, the second Asian-Pacific conference was held at Kempinski Hotel in Beijing, China, with the theme of “Empowering editorial officers around the world,” and about 110 editorial staff members from various journals attended the conference (Fig. 1).

Over the course of 2 days, with 14 sessions in total, the conference presented comprehensive and valuable materials for hands-on editors. During the morning on the first day of the conference, international standards for publishing technology, including ORCID (open researcher and contributor ID), various services by Crossref, and journal article tag suite (JATS) and book interchange tag suite (BITS) were examined. Later, in the afternoon session, thematic issues including “Metrics in journal publishing: what do you measure and how?” and “The implications for journal editor staff of open access policy and trends” were addressed in earnest. On the next day, journal publishing in China and the current status of internationalization were the major topics, as the conference was held in Asia. Concerns were subsequently expressed regarding peer review and publication ethics, and the conference ended with a discussion of the prospective impacts of new digital technologies on the publication of academic journals. The program of the conference was organized in the following stages: first, trends in the publication of academic journals should be examined at a glance, and then editors throughout the world should express concerns about currently relevant issues, and finally, trends in the state-of-the-art technology in journal publishing should be understood to prepare for the future. Thus, the organization of the conference was focused on the interests of participants at the front line of the publication of academic journals.

The conference began with a lecture entitled “What makes a successful international journal brand and a committed editorial team?” by David Sampson, the vice president and publisher of the American Society of Clinical Oncology. In contrast to the previous publication environment, currently, journals must take into account numerous and complicated issues, including submission, peer review, publication, distribution, advertising, data processing, copyright, and

Received: July 25, 2017

Accepted: July 27, 2017

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Fig. 1. Group photo of attendees at the Second Asian-Pacific Conference of the International Society of Managing and Technical Editors.

post-analysis. David Sampson presented his knowledge and skills regarding how to create a successful international journal brand and committed editorial board, emphasizing that support is required for various human resources working in journal publishing to become professionals in their own fields of work. Support for improving editors in journal publishing and promoting proper journal culture is required; the main point of the presentation was that the editors are those who create and develop a journal. In order to achieve these aims, Sampson suggested encouraging networking, including the active participation of editors in their related institutions or organizations and sharing information on many websites, as well as constantly seeking out new ideas by going beyond the simple publication of scientific journals. Furthermore, he highlighted cultural aspects, such as values, learning, and performance, as being more important than strategic aspects, including goals, objectives, and tactics, although both cultural and strategic aspects are required in a journal. I think that editors in Korean journals should pay attention to this point for improving the value of the journal. This discussion was theoretical to a certain degree, yet the lecture formed a very meaningful opening of the conference because it reinforced the point that focusing on the basics is of the utmost significance.

As the conference was held in China, the most exciting and interesting part of the conference was that it provided a venue to share the concerns of Asian-Pacific countries with editors from all over the world. In a lecture with a common theme of “JATS & BITS: facilitating the flow and preservation of science,” Hidehiko Nakanishi, the president of Nakanishi Printing in Japan, forcefully posed a problem regarding the current linguistic environment in academia by asking “If a Japanese scholar studies and reads a journal in Japan without using Japanese, but presents and publishes in English, would it be a

proper form of internationalization?” Previously, the use of English or a Romance language was a prerequisite for extensible markup language (XML)-formatted documents. However, JATS version 0.4 uses “alternatives” tags for multilingual support, making the use of English or a Romance language unnecessary for the XML formatting of academic journals. Nakanishi currently provides a full-text XML page in Japanese on the website of *The Japanese Journal of Gastroenterological Surgery*. Furthermore, the lecturer gave an invaluable demonstration of how JATS can be applied to Asian languages by giving an example of choosing between Japanese and English when browsing journal information, including titles, the names of authors, affiliations, and abstracts. Academic journals in local languages should definitely exist. However, shifting from a Korean-language journal to an English-language journal is regarded as an essential transition for the sake of internationalizing a journal, and the number of Korean-language journals is gradually decreasing. These are the domestic conditions in Korea, and they are related to the circumstances of Japan. For this reason, this lecture, which emphatically argued that “Only English is not globalization,” was very impressive because it repeatedly stressed the importance of journals in local languages, and also dealt with a topic that Asian journal editors—who are generally not use romanized language—should be deeply concerned with.

On the second day, a session entitled “The direction of Chinese publishing: mandates and vision of internationalization” examined the current status of academic journal publication in China, which is growing rapidly. First, Yan Shuai, the associate editor-in-chief of Tsinghua University Press, summarized journal publishing in China and the current status of internationalization: 10,014 periodicals were published in 2015 alone, and among these, 4,983 periodicals were sci-

ence, technology, and medicine journals, befitting the massive scale of China. Furthermore, an internationalization project of state-dominated journals of science and technology is currently underway in China, as China has provided sufficient support for improving the international accessibility of science, technology, and medicine journals. Although the number of published academic papers has increased, in reality, these journals are neither read nor cited on an extensive scale due to the language barrier. To address this issue, Hong Xiao, the vice general manager and deputy editor-in-chief of China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House Co. Ltd., proposed bilingual journal publication as an alternative. This was a refreshing suggestion. Converting a Chinese journal to an English-only journal would result in a rather low citation index, as it means losing the possibility of citations between large-scale native journals. Thus, CNKI, the representative academic paper search website in China, is actively promoting the English translation of Chinese journals and academic papers; it launched the JTP (Journal Translation Project; <http://jtp.cnki.net>) in March 2016, and currently, English-translated versions of 116 Chinese journals are provided. Still, there remains urgent work, including guaranteeing the quality of translation, ensuring support for the translation fee of 5,000 yuan per academic paper, and raising awareness of this project in the international academic market. Overall, the idea of interacting internationally while maintaining the publication of academic papers in the local language and not converting to an English-only policy was novel and interesting to me. This discussion also provided me with the opportunity to reflect once again on the internationalization of journals.

In the following session, “Best practices in peer review: what societies, publishers, and vendors are doing to increase the quality of peer review,” I learned that concerns about the review process during journal publication do not apply only to academic journal editors in Korea, but that this is a global issue. Sarah Tegen, the vice president of the American Chemical Society, Laura Harvey of Publons, which was founded for the effective management of peer review, and Tom Merriweather of SAGE Publications lectured about ways to enhance the quality of peer review and to vitalize peer review. The essence of the issue is how to improve the quality of peer review by securing as many outstanding peer reviewers as possible, leading to qualitative improvements and an increased pace of research. In reality, however, a few reviewers handle many reviews, thereby becoming overburdened without any formal training or any meaningful credit for their effort, as they work on a volunteer basis. To improve these conditions, the companies of all three of the lecturers were implementing an education course for peer reviewers. The American Chemical Soci-

ety offers a free 4-hour online course to teach the basics of peer review. Publons runs “Publons Academy,” a peer review training course for beginners that was developed by professional peer reviewers and editors. SAGE Publications holds an “Editor and Referee Workshops.” In addition, Publons stressed the importance of motivation to peer reviewers and the need to increase the peer reviewer pool by enhancing the services provided to authors, as ultimately, “author = reviewer = editor = reader.” In a similar fashion, SAGE Publications emphasized the importance of ensuring continuous motivation by supervising peer reviewers. More specifically, the company provides various benefits to recruit peer reviewers by giving a free access to all SAGE journals online for 60 days to peer reviewers, giving a discount on books that are published at SAGE, sending a printed acknowledgements note at the end of the year, and granting a certificate. Furthermore, improving the process to allow working from home, such that reviewers can escape from being at an office desk, was proposed to increase the pace of reviewing. This was useful information that is worth considering for Korean journals and their publishers, in light of problems such as a lack of reviewers and the slow pace of reviewing, and the fact that the publishers can provide an online submission and peer review system.

By attending the Second Asian-Pacific Conference of the ISMTE, I was fortunate enough to receive a wonderful opportunity to share thoughts with colleagues in related fields throughout the world, as well as to become more informed about international trends in academic journal publishing. Particularly, as a hands-on editor, the main issues discussed at the Asian regional conference gave me an opportunity to consider measures regarding the proper internationalization of domestic journals. Furthermore, I realized the need to constantly explore and adopt new information in order to respond to changing trends. Next year, the ISMTE is planning to hold the third Asian regional conference in Singapore. I hope the conference will develop over the years into a unique platform for communication where Asian issues can be shared.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by a travel grant from the Korean Council of Science Editors (2017).