Promoting scholarly journals internationally: Russian editors and publishers' passion

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Event: The 8th International Scientific and Practical Conference: "World-Class Scientific Publication 2019: Strategy and Tactics of Management and Development"

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Organizer: Association of Science Editors and Publishers, Russia; National University of Science and Technology, Russia

URL: <https://conf.rasep.ru/wcsp/wcsp2019>

I was invited by Dr. Olga V. Kirillova, president of Russia's Association of Science Editors and Publishers (ASEP), to attend the association's conference in Moscow, held April 23–26. This annual conference is known as the largest and most authoritative event for developing the publishing industry in Russia's science and education sector through world-class scientific journals. The conference focuses on the current status and prospects for development of scientific journals in Russia, Commonwealth of Independent States, and Eastern Europe. It aims to develop tactics for publishing-related activities in various scientific fields, and to support, develop and promote the association's member journals and publications, strategizing to realize this goal. About 400 participants attended: experts directly involved in the publication of scientific journals, representatives of universities and the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Federal Science Center, and others from across the publishing industry (Fig. 1).

On April 22, the day prior to the conference, a *Scopus Only Day* comprised an international workshop presented by the Scopus team of Elsevier, with about 100 people attending. In the morning, Scopus introduced and discussed the latest trends with sessions on "How to get your title accepted into Scopus" and the "Russian board: an inside look into their ways of working." In the afternoon, a working group session examined submitting journals to Scopus for pre-evaluation and potential indexing in their database, highlighting a recent Scopus resource (<https://www.readyforscopus.com/>).

On the morning of April 23, there was an opening ceremony and eleven keynote speeches of fifteen minutes each. Two of the talks were particularly impressive: "Open access: a view from the EU," and "Economic feasibility of transferring to open access the Russian articles published under the support of the Russian Foundation Ministry of Science and the Russian Foundation for Basic Research." In the afternoon, we discussed the problems and improvements of

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Fig. 1. Participants at the conference, with me at far left. Fourth from the left is Dr. Olga V. Kirillova, conference organizer and President of Association of Science Editors and Publishers; next from left, Dr. Pippa Smart, European Association of Science Editors President. Second from right is Dr. Ksenija Baždarić, Editor in Chief, European Science Editing.

Russian scientific journals through the “State programme aimed at support and development of journals as part of the national project ‘Science’: directions, accents, solutions.”

On April 24, the presentations were organized in two concurrent series, the main one addressing “Management of the editorial process and publication of a scientific journal: strategy, tactics,” and “Ethical problems of the publication process: practice of solutions and the theory of overcoming.” The Q&A session was lively. I was especially interested in digital utilization services, such as the introduction of DOI, online contribution/review systems, and the number of citations, in Russia. In the afternoon, there was a workshop hosted by Ms. Pippa Smart, chair of the European Association of Science Editors. The specialist topic of international standards in ethics and reviewing was introduced under the title, “How to improve the quality of a journal: ethics, reviewing, international publishing standards, promotion, development.”

In the next session, from 16:45 to 18:00, at a “Round table of the chief and senior editors of international journals for editors: Sharing experiences, discussing current trends,” editors and related persons representing four journals (*Learned Publishing*, *European Science Editing*, *Science Editing*, and the *Scientific Editor and Publisher*) discussed the publishing experience of their journals. I introduced *Science Editing*, published by the Korean Council of Science Editors. The audience applauded the rapid development of *Science Editing*, indexed in Scopus and ESCI, having started in 2014.

The second concurrent series covered “Near and distant prospects for indexing Russian journals and publications in Scopus,” where the Scopus team presented topics from the *Scopus Only Day* for editors who had not attended. The first three presentations specifically related to “The impact of Scopus: main results of 2018, road map of 2019 and the effect of inclusion in Scopus,” “How to achieve inclusion in Scopus,” and “Re-evaluation of journals in Scopus.”

In the session on “Editorial policy, review and selection of materials for publication,” Liliya K. Raitskaya spoke on “Peer review in Russia: socio-cultural specifics and barriers (based on a survey of participants in the editorial process).” She mentioned that peer reviews cannot be objective in their evaluation of papers because of the high-context Eastern culture of Russia. According to her discussion of the research results, some reviewers believe that relationship is more important than law, and especially relationship to one’s circle and leaders. In addition, she added that this is a situation where good papers cannot be published.

As an invited talk, I presented a fifty-minute workshop for editors and publishers, on “How to make your journal highly cited in the Web of Science and Scopus databases.” Concerning strategy for improving journals, I explained that journal management should be scrutinized in terms of editing (submission, review) and citation management. I also introduced the “Golden rules for scholarly journal editors,” from *European Science Editing* [1].

On April 25, the sessions were divided into three groups. The first group covered “open science” addressing open access and scientific ethics, global registries of open access works and copyright reform, and aggregate data on scientists from open-source materials. Like Elsevier with Scopus, Clarivate Analytics conducted an independent session, regarding their “Web of Science resource development: new services and solutions for journals and publications.”

In the afternoon, the Association of Experts on Academic Writing’s National Consortium of Writing Centers opened their workshop, “How to perform the task of improving the quality of scientific publications in English.” The first of two speakers, Robert Jensky, gave an interesting talk entitled “A journey through time: musings on the past, present and future of academic paper writing.” Next, it was my turn to discuss a question: “Which paper is well written?” I made a lecture on how to write introductions and sections regarding methods, results, discussions, conclusions, as well as abstracts and titles in science, technology, and medicine (STM) journals.

One of the other groups of sessions was for Russian editors and publishers only. The first assessed the current state of scientometrics and bibliometrics for evaluating scientific publications, and the second considered whether there are any prospects for international recognition in the development of journals of social sciences, humanities or law. The third of these sessions considered classification systems and information support for science. On the 26th, the conference concluded with the ASEP general meeting and a closing ceremony.

The purpose of this conference, under the banner of management and development strategies and tactics, was to promote world-class science and technology publications by improving the impact of Russian domestic journals. The keynote

speakers emphasized global conditions for the popularization of Russian science and technology, and for innovation in these fields, as well as how to make a world-class journal. Although this conference was originally intended for STM journals, many people from the humanities and social sciences also attended. All participants received a 146-page Russian translation of Pippa Smart’s *Handbook for Journal Editors*. The attendees seemed pleased to receive this “textbook” for editors.

Considering that most of the participants were Russian, eleven of the sixteen sessions featured simultaneous English-Russian interpretation: overall, the participants were from the EU, UK, and USA, as well as Hong Kong and Korea. Many audience members shared empathy at the session, concerning the current trends in electronic publishing processes and platform development for scientific publishing and journal promotion. It was an opportunity for me to see Russian editors and publishers trying to adjust while considering internal and external factors to improve the quality of their academic journals. I felt that the enthusiasm of the Russian editors attending this conference was no different from what we find among Korean editors.

Conflict of Interest

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

Reference

1. Ufnalska SB, Polderman AK. Golden rules for scholarly journal editors. *Eur Sci Ed* 2014;40:65.