

EASE activities

Ten years of *EASE Guidelines*

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This year we celebrate the 10th anniversary of *EASE Guidelines for Authors and Translators of Scientific Articles to be Published in English*, which were first released online on our website in May 2010. They provide simple, practical advice to help researchers understand the standards of scientific writing in English and, consequently, write better manuscripts. The document aims to make international scientific communication more efficient, but simultaneously draws attention to ethical issues, such as authorship criteria, plagiarism, and conflict of interests. Non-commercial printing of the guidelines is allowed, so they can be used as handouts for courses in scientific writing and publication ethics.

The first edition was the fruit of long discussions on the EASE forum and at the EASE conference in Pisa in 2009, followed by consultations within the EASE Council. Since the very beginning, the document has explained that scientific publications should be COMPLETE, CONCISE, and CLEAR (3 x C for quick memorization), so the main part of *EASE Guidelines* was divided into three sections focused on these characteristics. It was supplemented by a list of contributors, references and further reading, as well as five appendices (Abstracts, Ambiguity, Cohesion, Plurals, and Spelling), which described the selected topics in greater detail. In June 2010, one more appendix was added (Simplicity) and seven translations were freely downloadable as PDFs: French, Spanish, Italian, Estonian, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

The number of translations increased gradually and the document was revised every year. In 2011, we included two new appendices (Ethics and Text-tables) as well as basic information about EASE, increasing the number of pages 16. In 2012, practical tips for junior researchers were added (on page 5), and some copies of *EASE Guidelines* were printed and distributed at the anniversary EASE Conference in Tallinn. By the year 2014, the document had been translated into 20 languages, mostly by volunteers. In 2015, an abstract was added at the beginning, and appendix Ambiguity was complemented with a short note about the incorrect use of scientific terms. Starting from 2016, the document was not published online independently, but as an electronic-only article in *European Science Editing* (each language version with its own DOI). The latest edition, issued in 2018, is available in 29 languages: the English original approved by the EASE Council and 28 translations into Arabic, Bangla, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovenian, Spanish, Turkish, and Vietnamese. Because of the large number of language versions, we no longer update the document annually, but we will do it when it proves to be necessary.

This successful initiative was only possible thanks to the cooperation of many people, more than 20 of whom are

named in the list of contributors (on page 5). Special thanks are due to Ed Hull, Marcin Kozak, Eric Lichtfouse, and Eva Baranyiová, who prepared appendices and practical tips. About 40 volunteers were involved in the translation of the document into their native languages (acknowledged on page 5, too). I am also very grateful to Waleria Młyniec, Arjan Polderman, Paola De Castro, Alison Clayson, Joan Marsh, Ana Marušić, and Pippa Smart, who continuously supported this initiative and actively promoted *EASE Guidelines*. Besides, I would like to acknowledge the work of production managers of *European Science Editing* – Margaret Cooter and Lynne Rowland – who formatted the English version and patiently introduced all the changes in its updates, as well as our web people – Silvia Maina, Elaine Seery, and Duncan Nicholas. Last but not least, I thank Professors Izet Mašić, Edward Towpik, and Hesam Abbasi, who reproduced *EASE Guidelines* in their journals, which aided their popularization.

The guidelines, or their selected parts, were presented at many scientific conferences, eg at EuroScience Open Forum in Turin (2010), 3rd World Conference on Research Integrity in Montreal (2013), and REWARD/EQUATOR conference in Edinburgh (2016). Additionally, articles about this useful document were published in Wikipedia and many academic journals, such as *Learned Publishing*, *European Science Editing*, *Journal of Tehran Heart Centre*, and *Science Editor*.

EASE Guidelines are now additionally promoted by our new campaign, advocating the use of a universal framework for more user-friendly author instructions (with a “quick check” table at the beginning), as described briefly in the first issue of *EASE Digest* and in more detail in *European Science Editing* recently.

After these ten years, it appears that *EASE Guidelines* have truly helped scientists in many countries write more complete, concise, and understandable manuscripts and, consequently, increase the chances of their publication in high-quality journals. Thanks to this, more non-Anglophone researchers are able to disseminate their research results effectively, which is essential especially in the face of new threats and challenges, like COVID-19.

Cooperation between people from all countries is urgently needed now. I believe that we, as science editors and/or scientists, can greatly contribute to solving serious problems, eg to minimizing the losses caused by the pandemic. In the long run, this may be crucial for promoting peace worldwide, if we focus on searching for solutions, rather than for people to be blamed. I wish the present terribly difficult situation would lead not only to human suffering. I hope it will also urge us to change our priorities and show more respect for other people (whose work has allowed us survive the crisis), our own organisms (which can fight off the virus better than drugs do), the beauty of nature (contemplated during the quarantine), and our Creator.