



Croatian EASE Regional Chapter – Croatian Association for Scholarly Communication (CROASC) EASE 2021 satellite session report

Croatian EASE Chapter and CROASC organised EASE 2021 satellite session on 17 June 2021, with the following programme:

9.00-9.30 am (CEST) Mario Malički (Stanford University / Research Integrity and Peer Review / EASE / CROASC): *(Young) Editor's Guide to Preprints and Peer Review*

9.30-9.40 am Q&A

9.45-10.00 am Danijel Namjesnik (University of Zagreb / Croatica Chemica Acta / CROASC): *Results of the survey on preprint evaluation and publishing practices of Croatian scientific journals*

10.05-12.00 Panel discussion: *How to evaluate preprints and do we need printed issues of journals*

Moderator: Iva Grabarić Andonovski (Food Technology and Biotechnology / EASE / CROASC)

Panellists:

Ante Blaće (University of Zadar / Geoadria (Morepress)), Neven Duić (University of Zagreb / JSDEWES / CROASC), Mario Malički (Stanford University / Research Integrity and Peer Review / EASE / CROASC), Iva Melinščak Zlodi (University of Zagreb (FF Open Press) / CROASC), Jadranka Stojanovski (University of Zadar / Ruđer Bošković / EASE / CROASC), Siniša Zrinščak (University of Zagreb)

The session was held in Croatian. It started with the introductory lecture by Mario Malički on the peer review and evaluation of preprints. An overview of the history of peer review along with new perspectives were given. It was pointed out that peer review, although it has some flaws and could be biased, is still considered the best way to evaluate manuscripts. The need to motivate and train peer reviewers was emphasised, along with the fact that editors should be able to monitor the quality of the peer review and detect whether it adds value to the paper. Besides peer review, the rise of preprints, especially in some fields, was discussed, along with their pros and cons. Possible solutions on issues related to the evaluation of preprints (how to detect, evaluate and cite them) were given. The results of the survey conducted in May/June 2020 among 546 Croatian scientists (<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0244529>) show that only 12 % posted a preprint and that the majority of researchers have positive attitude towards open data, neutral towards preprinting and open peer-review and negative towards open peer review in small scientific communities.

After the lecture, Danijel Namjesnik presented the results of the survey on preprint evaluation and publishing practices of Croatian scientific journals, conducted in April/May 2021 among journal editors, mostly members of Croatian EASE Chapter and CROASC. Of 76 responses, 86 % journals are published both in print and online. The majority of printed copies (>80 %) are intended for authors, libraries and institutions. In most cases (65 %) printing makes over 50 % of journal expenses and journals are published in more than 100 copies per issue. More than half of journals are considering to switch to online only, mainly to cut the expenses, match the expectations of the audience and speed up the publication process. Other journal editors feel that authors, readers and libraries still need to have printed issues. Almost 48 % of the journals are preparing final PDF versions by themselves; the others are receiving them from the printer's office. Only 11 % of journals are published online only, mainly to speed up the process and cut the costs.

As for the preprints, 79 % of the journals do not have instructions regarding preprint submission and handling. Majority (67 %) do not evaluate preprints and of those who consider them for publication, 48 % are not asking authors to state in the cover letter that the submitted manuscript is already available as a preprint. Journals that do not consider preprints state that the main reason for such policy is that they are conducting double blind peer review and they do not approve the sharing of unreliable data (i.e. the data that were not peer reviewed). Almost 70 % of the journals do not have a defined policy regarding the possibility of depositing manuscripts submitted to them in a preprint repository.

During the panel discussion, various editorial practices were shown, from publishing online only to the use of institutional platforms to publish journals or books and reduce the costs. The updated requirements of Plan S were presented, along with the publishing practices of the international journals from small scientific communities *versus* commercial publishers. It was pointed out that different fields have different publishing practices, that in some fields (for example social studies) preprints are not common while in some others (humanities) printed issues of the journals are still preferred. It can be concluded that there is still a lack of knowledge on the importance of using preprints, especially during health crisis, when it is of utmost importance to share knowledge rapidly. Also, Croatian journals need to set the rules and standards for evaluating preprints and to revise whether they actually need to print so many copies of each issue.

The session was a great success, both the highly interesting and insightful lecture and the panel discussion, which opened up good grounds for the exchange of ideas, share of opinions and discussion of attitudes.

EASE Croatian Chapter Chair:



Zagreb, 24 June 2021

Iva Grabarić Andonovski