

Ethical challenges in the arts, humanities and social sciences

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COPE and our collaboration

| C | O | P | E |

**Council on
Publication Ethics**

A COPE STUDY (2019):

**EXPLORING
PUBLICATION
ETHICS ISSUES**

in the Arts, Humanities,
and Social Sciences

COPE: Advise, educate, support

- **preserve** and **promote** the integrity of the scholarly record
- **develop policies and practices** around transparency and integrity
- **manage** a few employees and many volunteers
- **engage with 12,500+ members (one third AHSS)** in 100+ countries

Publication ethics resources

- **All of our journals are members of COPE** – editors may attend COPE forums online, access the flowcharts, and submit queries
- **Our Editor Resources site** hosts a wealth of resources about publication ethics, drawing from COPE guidance, and more training to follow

EDITOR RESOURCES

Supporting Taylor & Francis journal editors



Background to the study

COPE traditionally perceived as STM-focused

Routledge: world's largest publisher of humanities and social sciences journals

(2018 Calivate Analytics)

Enhance understanding of the publication ethics landscape for AHSS editors

A COPE STUDY (2019):

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PUBLICATION
ETHICS ISSUES**

**in the Arts, Humanities,
and Social Sciences**

Aim of the study

To better understand the publishing ethics needs of arts, humanities and social sciences journal editors, and to identify areas where they may need specific guidance and support

Two-stage methodology

Online focus groups

- COPE publisher members
- Two x 75 minute sessions



Online survey

- Academic editors; >650 responses
- Mix of major publishers and smaller society and university publishers

Areas Covered by the Survey

Awareness

Are AHSS editors/journals aware of COPE and familiar with the work it does?

Challenges

What issues are these editors/journals dealing with?

What is it that these editors/journals need from COPE in terms of support?

Needs and gaps

What is COPE not currently providing?

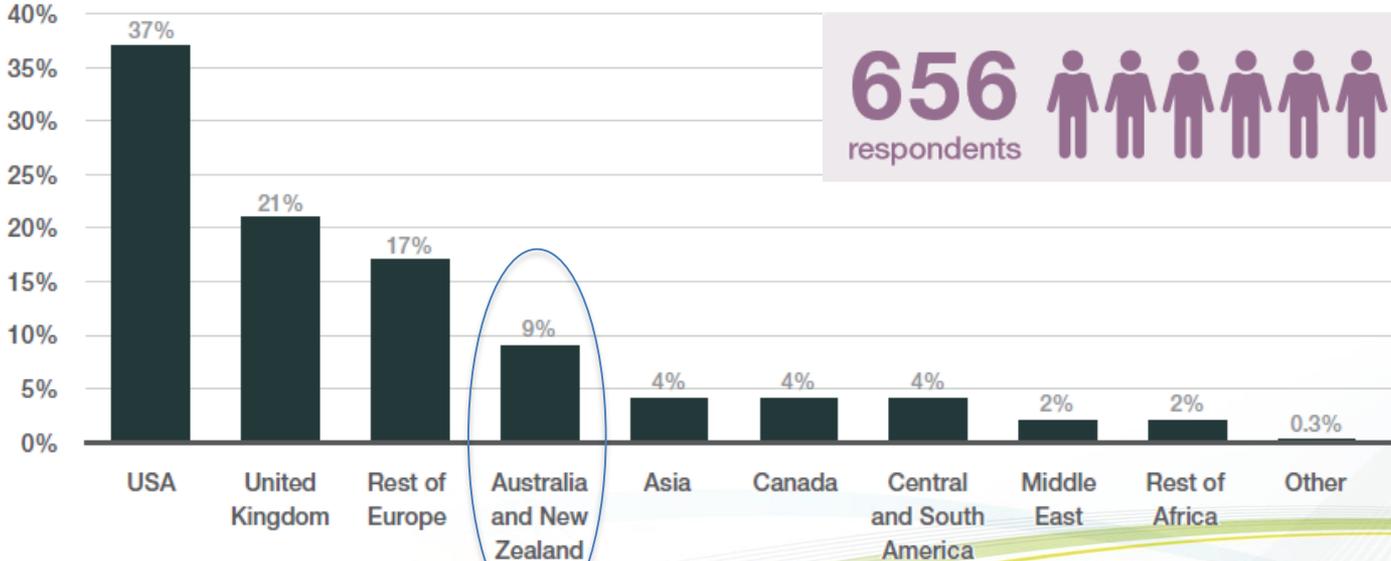
Communications Preferences

How could COPE best communicate the services it provides to those involved in AHSS publication?

The results



Geographical distribution



Subject distribution



Key editor challenges

- Being **inclusive** in authorship while addressing **language issues**
- Assessing contribution and **co-authorship claims**
- Recognizing and dealing with **peer review bias**
- Handling **author responses** to criticism
- Issues of **self-plagiarism**

Digging into the results: ethical issues

Most Serious

Detecting **plagiarism** and poor attribution standards

Fraudulent submissions

Data and/or image **fabrication** issue

Most Widespread

Addressing **language and writing** quality barriers while remaining inclusive

Detecting **plagiarism** and poor attribution standards

Recognising and dealing with **bias in reviewer comment**

Most Frequent when experienced

Addressing **language and writing** quality barriers while remaining inclusive

Issues around the way in which **authors receive and respond to criticism**

Detecting **plagiarism** and poor attribution standards

Least confident in dealing with

Data and/or image **fabrication** issues

Fraudulent submissions

Intellectual property and **copyright issues**



HSS vs STM – most serious issues

This Study: Arts, humanities, and social sciences journal editors – 2019

- 1** Detecting plagiarism and poor attribution standards
- 2** Fraudulent submissions
- 3** Data and/or image fabrication issues
- 4** Intellectual property and copyright issues
- 5** Predatory publishing
- 6** Issues of self-plagiarism
- 7** Potential conflict of interest between authors and reviewers
- 8** Recognising and dealing with bias in reviewer comments
- 9** Addressing language and writing quality barriers while remaining inclusive
- 10** Assuring fair representation of new voices and diverse perspectives

Wager et al.: Scientific journal editors – 2009

- 1** Redundant publication
- 2** Plagiarism
- 3** Duplicate submission
- 4** Undisclosed author conflicts of interest
- 5** Undisclosed reviewer conflicts of interest
- 6** Gift authorship
- 7** Disputed authorship
- 8** Falsified or fabricated data
- 9** Reviewer misconduct
- 10** Unethical research design or conduct



Spotlight on diversity and inclusion

“For us we have mainly been thinking about the ethical issue of **who gets published**...we are trying to support good scholars to get into the publication process. But on the other hand, trying to keep the academic status of the journal.”

Journal editor, Arts

“Increased numbers of writers from non-English speaking backgrounds whose language issues seriously affect how we can work with their material”

Social Sciences editor, Australia and NZ

Spotlight on data integrity

“Data fabrication can be a big concern since the validation of reported results is often not within practical means of the reviewers (as they would have to have access to the **raw data** and be willing to replicate the analyses being reported).”

Journal editor, Business

“With the increased mainstreaming of ‘big data’ machine learning and AI... I could imagine investigators using methods they do not understand completely and inadvertently publishing misleading or identifying information”

Social Sciences editor, US



Challenges for editors in future?

- Anonymous peer review possible?
- Reviewing data arising from new technologies
- Increasingly global authorship and resource/language difficulties and bias
- Technology and authorship: identifying authentic papers
- Academic culture and incentives around publication – e.g. quality vs quantity



Areas for COPE AHSS Resource Development

Fraud, fabrication, and intellectual property

While issues around language are most prevalent, it is issues around fraud, fabrication, and intellectual property that are most serious and difficult to deal with for those surveyed.

Language concerns

Specific issues around language are not currently given prominence in COPE's offering and more could perhaps be done here. Recently added resources appear to go some way to fill some gaps, for example in addressing issues of diversity and inclusion, and, as COPE continues to add more flowcharts and guidelines to its resources, these needs should be addressed.



Authorship standards

Arts, humanities, and social sciences journal editors also indicated that they could use more support in their responsibilities to mentor authors, mediate between conflicting interests, and moderate authorship standards, particularly, though not exclusively, in relation to qualitative work.

Advice

Some indicated a desire for a more direct relationship with COPE and for more tailored advice. While COPE's resources may not be able to stretch to one-to-one advice, the COPE Forum should be promoted to members from the arts, humanities, and social sciences as a source of support.



What Next?

- More collaboration and research between COPE and AHSS journal editors
- Nuance existing advice or create new guidance
- Raise awareness of resources



Read the study

www.publicationethics.org/ahss-study

Give feedback

www.publicationethics.org/ahss-research-findings-your-feedback

COPE resources

www.publicationethics.org

Follow us on twitter

@COPE (with a zero!)

