

The BELS Letter

Board of Editors in the Life Sciences

Maintaining and promoting editorial proficiency in the life sciences



From the President

I lead the marketing and communications team at UF Health, the University of Florida's academic health center, where we recently rolled out a new strategic vision we themed "Life Transformed." I also just returned from the Association of American Medical Colleges Group on Institutional Advancement annual meeting, where we heard from a strategic futurist who talked about how new technologies are revolutionizing our lives and our work. And I took my first spin this month in a driverless Jaguar, which my colleague called up on a smartphone app and which drove us to a lunch spot in downtown Phoenix. The vehicle made a right on red, told a bad dad joke, and warned me of an

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The BELS Letter

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From the President

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oncoming car before I hopped out of the back seat at the end of the ride.

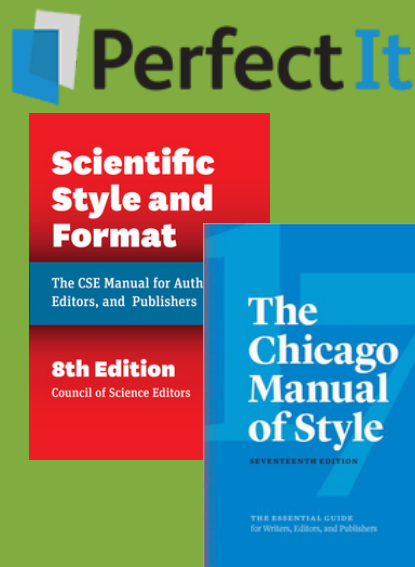
That got me to thinking more about this interesting time we are in and the many ways the world is changing, as artificial intelligence opens up new opportunities day by day, and the rise of programs like ChatGPT creates new challenges and new opportunities for us—and no doubt impacts our work as editors in the life sciences. I am sure that in the months to come, we will all be talking more about the peril and the promise of these advances. How are you using new technologies to support the editing you do? What is working? What are you concerned about? Let's start a conversation. Send us your thoughts and we'll consider including them in an upcoming issue. Or if you're interested, we can schedule a membership Zoom to talk about related topics you might find of interest. Let us know!

*Melanie Fridl Ross, MSJ, ELS
BELS President*

BELS Member Discounts

BELS has partnered with resource providers to offer valuable members-only discounts on products and services that help make your job easier. These offers are exclusive to BELS members and should not be shared with any other non-member.

BELS member discounts include a **30% discount** on a single license of PerfectIt software. PerfectIt improves consistency, ensures quality, and saves time. BELS members also receive a **20% discount** on reference books such as *Scientific Style and Format: The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers* and *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The discount can be applied to both online and print versions of these books. Visit bels.org and click on Member Resources to claim your discounts today!



BELS Member Event Recap

At last month's members-only event, "Editing Fatigue: Wellness Tips for Editors," we discussed relaxation techniques, mental health resources, and exercise techniques. Described in detail were simple techniques for meditation and exercises for the wrists, shoulders/neck, back, and legs that can be performed seated at one's desk.

If you missed the event, the slides are available on the [website](#) for BELS members.



Be There With BELS On!

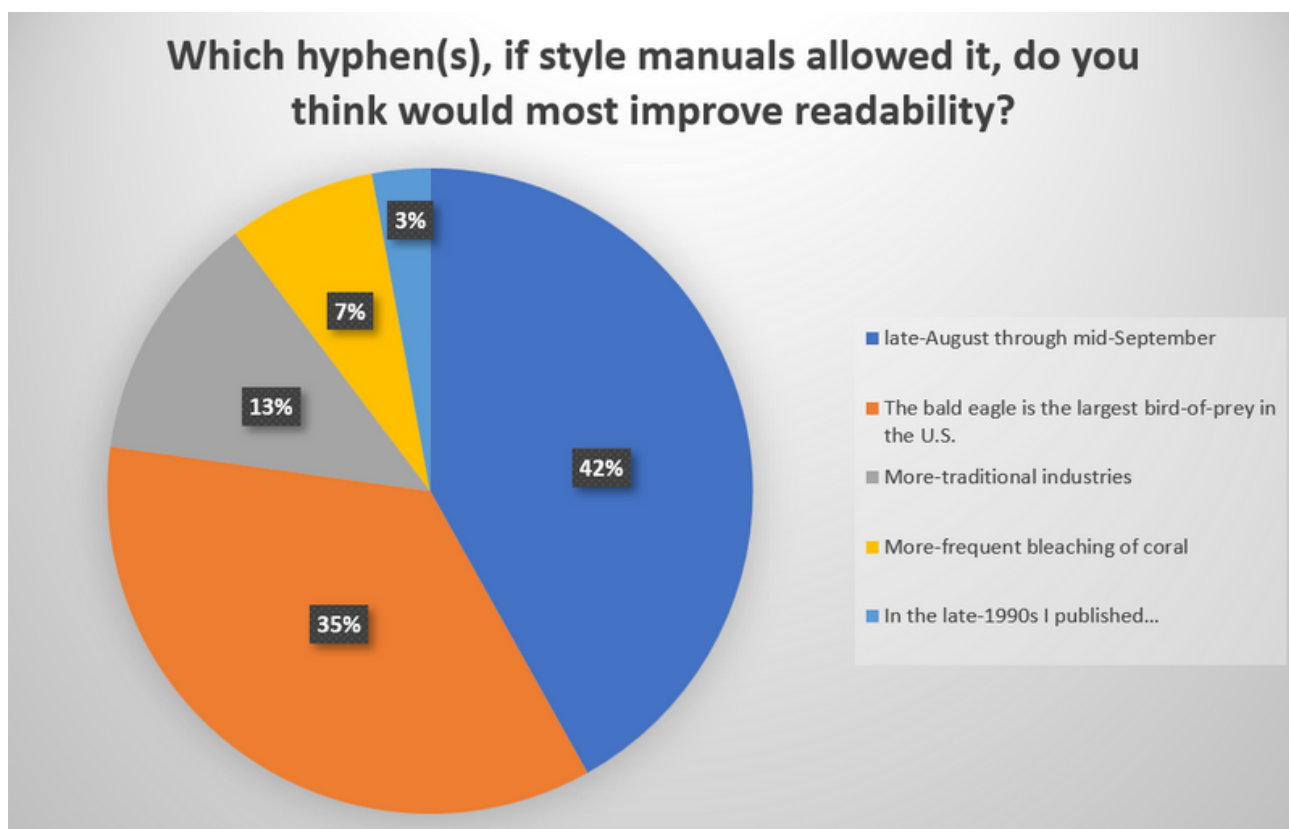
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Monthly Poll Results

In March, our online poll once again focused on hyphens, asking which of five examples most improved readability. The most popular answer was, “late-August through mid-September,” followed by “bird-of-prey.”

Visit bels.org to participate in this month’s poll, which deals with defining abbreviations.



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The Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) was founded in 1991 to evaluate the proficiency of manuscript editors in the life sciences and to award credentials similar to those obtainable in other professions.

Potential employers and clients of manuscript editors usually have no objective way to assess the proficiency of editors. For their part, editors are frustrated by the difficulty of demonstrating their ability. That is why both employers and editors so often resort to personal references or ad hoc tests, not always with satisfactory results. The need for an objective test of editorial skill has long been recognized.

To meet that need, BELS developed a process for testing and evaluating proficiency in editing in the life sciences. The Board administers two examinations—one for certification and one for diplomate status. The examinations, written by senior life-science editors assisted by testing experts, focus on the principles and practices of scientific editing in English.