A little background

- **Authors’ editors** work for, and with, authors to help make draft manuscripts fit for purpose.
- **Author editing** has roots in US medical research; first published definition 1968.
- Authors’ editors have low visibility and their work is often underappreciated and misunderstood.

Project design

- **Qualitative research** Interviews with exemplary authors’ editors (purposive sample – not representative)
- **Bibliographic research** Document the history and development of author editing to present day
- **Realist review** Synthesize new knowledge from the research findings:
  - Explain how author editing works in particular contexts and settings
  - Guide decisions about engaging authors’ editors in research communication.

Book themes

Authors’ editors:
- Have important role in research communication
- Help produce better research articles, reduce research waste
- Contribute to researcher training

Research highlights

**What do authors' editors do (and not do) when editing a research article?**

**Copy editing** Sometimes done, in limited amounts, not a priority. Examples:
Standardize spelling to American or British; format according to journal's I2A

**Language editing** Always done. A fundamental activity. Examples:
- Fix grammar, remove tautology
- Adjust formality, reduce verbosity
- For EAL³ authors, correct:
  - Intra-language errors (language learner's errors), e.g. over-generalization of grammar rules
  - Interlanguage errors: negative transfer from L1 (Table)

**Substantive editing** The heart of author editing. Activities depend on skills, knowledge, time, budget. Editor identifies areas to improve and decides whether to correct, with author query, or prompt author to change. Examples:
- Check genre adherence (e.g. length of sections; division of content among sections; level of detail): work with authors to improve
- Shorten, meet word limits
- Detect errors, discrepancies, and ambiguities
- Identify text that needs glossing (explanation of technical or unusual term)
- Check substantiation, citation and attribution: improve or prompt authors
- Pre-review: check reporting guideline adherence, anticipate reviewers’ criticisms

**Added value** Activities depend on relationship with author. Examples:
- Plagiarism check: highlight and discuss problem with author
- Didactic editing: annotate changes with explanations, links to resources
- Language: explain grammar, demonstrate hedging, point out false friends
- **Substantive**: explain scientific notation and nomenclature, refer to reporting guidelines, advise on data presentation, educate about ethical reporting
- Assistance after peer review
  - Help interpret editorial decision; help contact journal editor with questions
  - Edit revised manuscript (check for coherence throughout text)
  - Edit rebuttal for tone, completeness, effectiveness

**Ethical limits to author editing** Authors’ editors DO NOT:
- Rewrite plagiarized texts
- Cover up breaches in research ethics
- Assume authorial duties: calculate statistics, plot data, select references, draw up conclusions

Learn more The book *Editing Research* will be published by Information Today, Inc. (August 2016)