Can a style guide review and update reduce turn times?

CSE 2017 Annual Meeting
May 21–23, 2017

Midori Baer
Senior Production Manager
PNAS
mbaer@nas.edu
Yes.
PNAS background

- Published 3,100 articles, almost 38K pages in 2016
- Articles are published daily; issues, weekly
- Complex, highly custom workflow
- Style guide represents publishing and style conventions for all major classifications
- Expedited production:
  - 30 calendar days to online
  - 46 to issue
Our challenge: Inflated turn times

Deep-dive review of delays and workflow to determine root causes

• Existing article schedules and reports concealed delays
• New turn time tracking and reports, isolated two bottlenecks:
  • Copyediting review
  • Processing proof corrections
• Complex style guide = Our focus today
Review the style guide ...

- Checked for and culled redundancies
  - Duplication = confusion = time lost
  - Focus on exceptions, leave rules for the standard style manuals

- Reevaluated nonstandard style points
  - More customization = Fewer copyeditors available
  - Fewer copyeditors = Slower turntimes
... And also your proofs

The drag on turn times traced to PNAS style was not just in copyediting.

- How many style points had to be addressed with author proof queries?
- How many author proof queries resulted in responses that needed editorial review and approval?
- How much copyediting is too much copyediting??
Data points and strategic style changes

- Conventional and unconventional data to expose bottlenecks and drive discovery:
  - Turn times
  - Author alterations

- Analysis of copyediting queries and author proof corrections to identify and prioritize the most impactful style changes.
  - Reducing copyeditor time
  - Reduce author proof queries and follow up
Our results

23% reduction in time to online publication
20% reduction in time to issue publication

And we still have more to do!
Thank you.