



Newsletter

1 September 2026

Welcome to this week's newsletter. We offer the chance to pause, take stock as we share a few things that caught our attention over the past few days - ideas, articles, and observations worth a moment of consideration before the next deadline calls. In a field rarely short of information our aim is to filter out the background noise and share topics that deserve a second look.

In the news

The brain isn't hardwired to read - here's how we pull it off and why some are better at it than others: For an experienced reader, recognizing the words on this page feels effortless. Yet, evolutionarily speaking, your brain shouldn't be able to read. Reading has existed for too short a time to have shaped a dedicated centre in the brain. Therefore, the brain has to learn to read using systems that evolved for other purposes. But it has long been unclear exactly which systems it recruits to do so and how ([more...](#)).

Since the 21st Century Cures Act passed, FDA approvals have relied on fewer studies: To better understand how this policy might have affected subsequent drug approvals, the authors reviewed 6,763 studies linked to FDA novel drug approvals between Jan. 1, 2016, and Dec. 21, 2024, documented on ClinicalTrials.gov ([more...](#)).

A New Framework for How the Brain Compresses Our Noisy World: An updated view of categorization reflects the modern understanding that the nervous system is more of a prediction engine than a filing cabinet ([more...](#)).

AI-detection tools have made huge leaps forward - how good are they?: Scientists and publishers are testing a new breed of software that promises impressive accuracy at spotting AI-written text ([more...](#)).

The outsized power of a great short story: Short fiction is powerful because of its constraints. By compressing language and time, it achieves a singular intensity the novel cannot ([more...](#)).

How patients write portal messages may affect whether doctors respond: Portal messages have become a routine way for patients to communicate with their health care teams. But a new study suggests that how patients write those messages can play a key role in whether - and by whom - they receive a response ([more...](#)).

Bridging science communication and open science - Working inclusively toward the common good: The 2020 - 2022 pandemic highlighted concerns about "information disorders", pressing for approaches capable of guiding the science-society alliance toward a mutually beneficial direction. This essay advocates for and presents a framework proposing the combination of Open Science and Science Communication practices ([more...](#)).

Science beyond the ivory tower: Citizen participation in scientific and technological research processes is now recognised as a key tool for promoting individual empowerment and democratic inclusion, as well as for collectively addressing major techno-scientific controversies and challenges ([more...](#)).

Beyond predatory journals: Since the emergence of predatory journals, the integrity of scientific communications has faced serious challenges, particularly when this integrity is assessed solely through external indicators which, while providing an initial safeguard, do not ensure in practice whether there was a rigorous, independent peer review, or whether traceable evidence exists regarding the decision leading to acceptance ([more...](#)).

Science or fiction? Shadowy ‘paper mills’ let you pay to be a published author - of fraudulent research: Paper mill activity has exploded in recent years, polluting the scientific ecosystem with falsified data and compromising medical research ([more...](#)).

Responsible and transparent use of AI in scientific publishing: As AI becomes increasingly embedded in research and scientific publishing, transparency, accountability, and human oversight remain essential to safeguarding research integrity ([more...](#)).

Updated Guidance for Author Use of AI in Medical Publication: Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping research and scientific publishing at an unprecedented pace, with extraordinary promise. Editors are embracing AI as a tool that can be helpful to researchers and authors by reducing the burdens of some tasks and improving efficiency in some contexts. However, as use of AI in scientific publishing grows exponentially, so do concerns about such use, JAMA released new guidelines ([more...](#)).

Four Ways to Avoid the AI Writing Slop-a-Thon: Writers use AI because they don't understand they can control how readers respond to their writing. Research on priming reveals that titles and subheadings strongly influence readers' understandings of content. ([more...](#))

Does Writing Letters Build Character? Our ancestors declared love and announced births and deaths in forms that took months to arrive. Letter-writing cultivates empathy, patience, and risk-taking absent in instant messaging. Handwritten letters are acts of faith, requiring courage and exposing writers to vulnerability ([more...](#)).

AI-enabled health communication to address misinformation on social media: Health misinformation on social media is not only a problem of inaccurate content, but also a communication problem shaped by trust, uncertainty, emotion, identity, platform design, and unequal access to credible information. Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly proposed as a tool for addressing this problem, yet much of the literature emphasizes detection accuracy, automated moderation, or technical performance ([more...](#)).

Believing What We Want? Myside Bias and the Role of Open Science Practices in Public Trust in Science: Public trust in science may depend not only on the quality of the research but also on laypersons' attitudes toward the underlying topic. Although Open Science practices are meant to signal credibility, their influence on laypersons remains unclear, especially for scientifically controversial topics ([more...](#)).

From Storytelling to Truth-Telling: Narrative Integrity in Science Communication: Science storytelling can make evidence intelligible, memorable, and culturally resonant, yet persuasive narratives may still misrepresent how scientific knowledge is produced. This commentary argues that communicators need a standard beyond narrative trust: narrative integrity ([more...](#)).

When Leaders Are Hard to Find: Reimagining Opinion Leaders in Sparse Communication Networks: Diffusion of innovations theory proposes that opinion leaders can enhance the success of

science communication campaigns. Such strategies hinge on an assumption that target communities include well-connected and trusted members who need only be identified and recruited. However, sparse or difficult to engage communication networks may not meet this assumption ([more...](#)).

Storytelling strengthens the impact of psychological science: Psychologists must share their findings and why they matter in ways that resonate with a wide variety of audiences ([more...](#)).

Ambient scribes as narrative technologies: ‘Ambient scribes’ - AI systems that listen to consultations and automatically generate medical notes - are increasingly invoked as tools that reduce administrative burden for clinicians and free up more time for patient-focused care. This new article suggests that their potential impact on patient care, trust, and how patients are understood requires more attention ([more...](#)).

Scope, Prospects, and Limitations of Living Systematic Reviews (LSRs) in Medical Literature: A Narrative Overview: LSRs have emerged as a response to the persistent lag between the publication of primary research and its incorporation into systematic reviews, historically spanning several years. Since their introduction in 2014, LSRs have evolved ([more...](#)).

The impact of AI on writing: Erosion of truth in the digital age: We have traded friction for speed. What we risk losing is something more important: the ability to distinguish confidently between what is true, what is plausible, and what has simply been repeated often enough to feel true ([more...](#)).

Creative Writing in the Digital Age: Integrating digital tools into creative writing enables students to create interactive stories that extend beyond text, thereby expanding their possibilities for expressing ideas and emotions ([more...](#)).

More than words: the real-life impact of reading: Reading is more than words - it's how we learn to feel, understand, and connect with the world around us. It doesn't just build literacy; it builds our emotional understanding ([more...](#)).

Save the Date



Unlock the Art & Science of Medical Communications!

Building on the incredible momentum, creative spark, and vibrant insights of our past MSCN gatherings, we are thrilled to host our **Pre-Christmas Meeting on 9th December 2026** at Vestry House, London!

Medical communicators aren't just writers - we are storytellers, strategists, and vital leaders turning complex science into meaningful human connection. Join top minds across the industry for an inspiring afternoon exploring the perfect intersection of strategic narrative, visual design, and regulatory clarity.

Vestry House, London

Afternoon Session

Save the date - **details coming soon!**

The End of Publish-and-Forget



Publishing a paper was once the final act of scientific dissemination.

Today, it is merely the beginning of a far more complex challenge. As the volume of information explodes and artificial intelligence accelerates its spread, the problem is no longer about making science available.

The crucial task is making trustworthy science distinguishable from everything else. This demands a fundamental shift from one-way communication to genuine engagement, from measuring visibility to assessing understanding.

For authors, researchers and institutions alike, the future of science communication will depend not on generating more attention, but on hitting the target and building the transparency and trust that allows good science to survive the noise: <https://niche.org.uk/dissemination>

Upcoming Events

Redefining Healthcare in the Age of AI, September 8 - 10, 2026, Paris, France,
<https://natureconferences.streamgo.live/healthcare-ai/lobby>

Health optimisation conference: 11-13th September, London <https://uk.healthoptimisation.com/>

A Question Time Panel on Weight-loss Drugs and the Future of Obesity Care, 14th September from 5:30-7:30PM. Organised by the RSM, London, UK.

Innovation in MedTech and Diagnostics Conference: 6th October 2026, London
<https://shorturl.at/cyHs4>

CancerCare 2026: The NHS Oncology Conference: A Strategic Conference on Advancing Oncology Pathways Across the NHS. 6TH OCTOBER 2026
<https://sehta.co.uk/Events/?permalink=cancercare-2026-the-nhs-oncology-conference>

Crick Cancer Symposium 2026 Monday, October 5-Tuesday, October 6, 9 AM-5 PM, London, UK

Life sciences and the NHS: delivering the next generation of health innovation: 13th October, London: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/events/life-sciences>

Reframing Precision Medicine: Innovation to Implementation, October 13-15, 2026, The Royal Institution, London, England, <https://precision-medicine.conferences.nature.com/>

Delivering cancer care now and for the future (in-person conference), Wednesday 21 October, London, UK

ESMO 2026 Madrid, Spain, on 23-27 October 2026,
<https://www.esmo.org/meeting-calendar/esmo-congress-2026>

AMWA 2026 Medical Writing & Communication Conference, November 4-7, 2026, Washington USA <https://www.amwa.org/event/2026annualconf>

Extracellular Vesicles: Engineering the Future of Precision Medicine Porto, Portugal, 13-14th November

<https://targeting-exosomes.com/>

Medica 16-19 November 2026: Dusseldorf, Germany <https://www.medica-tradefair.com/en/Visit>

The King's Fund Annual conference 2026: good health for all: 17th November , London:
<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/events/annual-conference>

Conference: London Biotech 2026 Conference: 18-19th November Excel [Register For The Leading Global Biotech Event \ London Biotechnology Show](#)

DIA-MHRA Global Summit November 16-17, 2026 \ London, UK: Developed in collaboration with the MHRA, is designed to showcase how the UK ecosystem brings innovation to life across the full pathway.
<https://shorturl.at/qQ9nU>

International Celiac Disease Symposium: 17-20 November 2026, Melbourne, Australia [ICDS2026 - International Celiac Disease Symposium](#)

The MAD World Summit 2026, The UK's leading event dedicated to workplace culture, health and wellbeing. **Thursday 26th November 2026 \ Convene, 155 Bishopsgate, London**
<https://madworldsummit.com/venue-2/>

Shaping the future of Diabetes Prevention Sitges, Spain, 30th November -2nd December 2026
[Home - The Lancet Summit: shaping the future of diabetes prevention](#)

Titbits

The language of “maxxing” has roots in the gaming concept of “min-maxing”: The concept then made it's way to the mainstream, most notably through “looksmaxxing”: making focused, and sometimes extreme, efforts to maximise physical attractiveness ([more...](#)).

Practice helps the brain separate tasks and improve multitasking ability: It is often perceived that multitasking is highly inefficient, with the brain often "crashing" or scrambling when trying to do two things at once. A recent study has uncovered the mechanism behind this ([more...](#)).

Dolly Parton Was a Music Legend, But She Helped Science in Ways Most Fans Never Knew About: The country icon backed vaccine research, child literacy, public health and even bald eagle conservation ([more...](#)).

Daily social media use beyond 2.5 hours tracks with depression, analysis finds: Social media use is a better predictor of depression than many other common factors, such as one's job and educational background or time spent on other activities, such as playing video games, surfing the web or watching TV ([more...](#)).

A field guide to seeing through false expertise: In an age of information overload, reliable sources are easy to access but often difficult to identify ([more...](#)).

What employers are looking for in the age of AI - and four ways to provide it: For applicants whose knowledge of AI stops at the name ChatGPT, Nature spoke to academics, employers and early-career researchers to find out what you need to expand your understanding ([more...](#)).



Steven and Tim

Two friends, each running a business on opposite sides of the pharmaceutical and medical communications industry, have joined forces to rescue and sustain the MedComms networking group. Our shared vision is not just to preserve the community but to create a lasting legacy that supports future generations of communicators.



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