Editage in Treves, Pennsylvania, has websites in English, Japanese, German, Portuguese, Korean, simplified Chinese (for mainland China) and traditional Chinese (for Taiwan). The Japanese version has a free 'chat' function for scientists to ask general questions about publication and authorship practices; this function may soon be expanded to other languages. For a 4,000-word manuscript, Editage's basic language editing starts at around \$200; its premium service costs about \$400 and takes the paper from start to finish. Editors ensure that the article complies with the target journal's author guidelines and provide help with cover letters and responses to reviewer comments. They also provide coaching on issues such as journal selection, authorship, disclosure of conflicts of interest and peer-review function in Western journals.

Edanz, an editing firm headquartered in Hong Kong, caters mainly for scientists from Asia, the Middle East and South America. It offers comprehensive editing; a web-based journal-selection tool that can use a paper's abstract to draw up a list of the top ten most appropriate target journals from a pool of more than 10,000; a mock peer-review service; and in-person workshops on how to structure manuscripts.

"We teach authors how to be persuasive and construct stories that meet reader expectations," says Benjamin Shaw, China and global director of Edanz in Beijing. The company charges a flat fee based on the length and difficulty of the paper; articles below 4,000 words usually cost \$200–250. For that price, they do the work necessary — including multiple revisions — to bring it up to the level for publication in an international journal, says Tom da Costa, managing director for the firm's Japanese operations, based in Fukuoka.

Shaw notes that high-quality editing companies should be willing to answer questions about pricing, about who is doing the editing and about security and privacy. Edanz publishes its editors' profiles online so that scientists know who will be previewing their research.

Regardless of whether they seek help from colleagues, university services, private consultants or large firms, ESL scientists have to consider how to 'sell' their research to editors and reviewers, says Rashmi Nemade, founder of BioMedText, a biomedical writing and editing firm in Columbus, Ohio. "It's got to be entertaining and compelling," she says. "This concept is sometimes lost on scientists in general, but particularly those from other cultures where work is all about merit." ■

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TURNING POINT

Martin Oeggerli

Best known as a scientific photographer, Martin Oeggerli takes close-up images of microscopic creatures and structures that have been featured in scientific publications and art galleries worldwide. Although he is still a postdoc in cancer research at the University of Basel in Switzerland, his photography has become his passion and his main career track. Oeggerli received his third Best Scientific Image prize in March, in The EMBO Journal's annual cover contest, for capturing the most interesting microstructure.

How did you come to take up photography?

I drew a lot as a child — I especially liked snakes and lizards — and I always tried to draw as accurately and in as much detail as I could. When I started to study, however, I didn't have much time to draw, so in 2001, when I was 26, my father gave me my first camera, a digital Nikon Coolpix 995. In one month, I took 20,000 images of insects, snakes and lizards.

How did technology affect your photography?

That first camera had just 3.2 megapixels, but it had an outstanding macro function and excellent post-processing software. I looked at a close-up picture I had taken of a fly and thought it was spectacular. So I kept trying to get closer, and started to buy micro-adapters for the camera. Finally, I turned to scanning electron microscopy (SEM). These images are the best: there is huge depth of field, which is very appealing because it resembles the depth we see with our own vision. The tiniest things are magnified 500,000 times or more.

When did you first get public recognition?

In 2006, I entered an international photography contest in Germany and submitted an image of a pollen grain germinating, just at the point of releasing a pollen tube. The pollen grain hydrates as soon as it attaches to the female part of the flower, and can grow the tube in a couple of seconds. I had tried to distinguish the different structures and present them in a way that looked natural. I didn't expect an award, but I won third place in Best Research Image.

Has there been broad interest in your work?

Yes. I grew up in a small town and didn't go to many art galleries, but I was interested in books and magazines. I started to read *National Geographic* when I was 12 or 13. I always liked the pictures — it is regarded as one of the world's most important photographic magazines. So I couldn't believe it when *National Geographic* published my images in December 2009 as part

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of a feature about pollen grains. I started scientific microscopy as a hobby and never expected it to go anywhere, but this was my international breakthrough. It confirmed to me that the work I do really is of interest.

What was your EMBO winning entry?

An image of a network of mosquito eggs. By trapping air, this mesh-like web repels water, allows the eggs to float and keeps the whole structure from sinking.

You tint your images. Why?

SEM is always black and white because it uses electrons instead of photons to view the specimen, and only light carries colour information. But black and white is not the truth, and I'm a perfectionist, so I try to mimic the natural colours. As a scientist, I think black and white hides some information, and as an artist, I want the image to be attractive. I try to highlight morphologically different structures to make them more visible so that the viewer can recognize complexity. I go to great lengths to reproduce the original colour.

How long does it take to create a final product?

It might take 20–60 hours — it depends on how much detail and how many structures are in the picture. It takes less time to create an image of a single pollen grain than of 5,000 spores of fungi, because I have to colour everything by hand.

Are you still active in research?

Yes. I have a year-long postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Basel, and I spend 20% of my time on cancer research. But my photography work frequently exposes me to samples and research from different areas of science — this year, for example, I produced an image from the dissection of a 1907 painting. ■

INTERVIEW BY KAREN KAPLAN