

Out on our own

This section is very brief in this edition. We received no articles for publication and have not yet prepared a report on the Freelance Business Forum in Frankfurt.

Freelance Support Centre

We would like to thank Neil Fisher, Ingrid Edsman and Shanida Nataraja very much for all the work they put into the Freelance Support Centre, which was recently launched on the website. We hope this will form the basis for a continually growing resource for new and experienced freelancers, and are looking forward to receiving suggestions as to how it can be expanded.

Freelance Business Survey 2010

The Freelance Business survey was launched in the second week of February by an email to all members and an announcement on the website. If you are a freelancer or

do freelance work, please take the time to respond to the survey by following the link on the website. The survey is open until 31 March 2010.

Discussion Forum on website

All members were also informed by Shanida and Head Office that the discussion forum on the website now has an RSS feed facility, which means that once you have set up this facility, you are informed when new messages and answers to messages are posted. Freelance members have often asked for this type of discussion forum before and the RSS feed facility is easy to set up, so now it is your chance to make full use of this opportunity of fielding questions and discussing them with an audience of almost 1,000 colleagues (if all members sign up, that is)!

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How old is the word 'freelance'?

Although 'freelance' was originally used to mean a 'medieval mercenary warrior' the word does not date back to the Middle Ages but was coined by Sir Walter Scott in the nineteenth-century. He first used 'freelance' (as two words) in his medieval novel *Ivanhoe* (1820) to describe a man who did not serve any particular lord, and whose services could be rented by anybody.

The word was first used figuratively in the 1860s to mean 'a person (as a politician) who contends in various causes without being attached to a particular group'. The use of 'freelance' referring to a writer arose by the 1880s, and the verb 'to freelance' by around 1900.

Source: <http://www.randomhouse.com/wotd/index.pperl?date=19960617>

TWS call for articles about women

The cover of the first 2010 issue of *The Economist* sported the question "What happens when women are over half of the workforce?" The question was prompted by the imminent event of women crossing the 50% threshold to become the majority in the American workforce. As the medical writing profession has long been in this happy situation TWS is calling for articles about women and medical writing.

Please send articles, letters to the editor and suggestions for individual articles or future issue themes to me, Elise, at langdoe@baxter.com.

Anybody there?

The Radisson Blu Scandinavia Hotel in Copenhagen exhorts visitors to their website to do the following: *Need help? Call our toll-free number and speak with a live person!*

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Useful websites for regulatory writers

<http://www.ema.europa.eu/>

For information on Guidance documents, EPARs, Orphan Drugs, Paediatric Investigation Plans, Centralised Procedures and EMA News (EMA is the new name for EMEA by the way). There are links to the homepages of all EU competent authorities from this page.

<http://www.hma.eu/>

For information on European Regulatory Procedures (DCP and MRP). CHMP Good Practice Guidance, Q&A documents.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/pharmaceuticals/documents/eudralex/index_en.htm

For EudraLex—Notice to Applicants with links to relevant legislative documents in all EU languages.

<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/index.htm>

For MHRA Guidance, Q&A documents, and now has a special industry page.

With thanks to **Susan Bhatti** (Susan.Bhatti@premier-research.com) for providing this list.