Medical and Scientific Communications Network

20 October 2026

Medical writing, AI and the value of human judgement

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

China is mass-producing slop at a scale the world has never seen: I thought China's AI video boom was driven by creativity, innovation, and tech diffusion. I was wrong (more...).

DIY healthcare is on the rise - here's why it's so dangerous: Need treatment fast? Many people now turn to Google before a healthcare professional. From checking symptoms online to buying medicines online and taking advice from social media influencers, healthcare is increasingly becoming a do-it-yourself activity (more...).

ArXiv versus AI slop: will capping preprint submissions work? Major preprint platform tightens its rules to curb a surge of submissions, including those generated by artificial-intelligence tools (more...).

Can science save meetings? The research is rolling in, and the answer is yes. It's possible to turn tedious work gatherings into more effective and enjoyable experiences (more...).

Medical device adverse event reports are often incomplete, inaccurate and delayed: Permitting medical device manufacturers to submit bulk summary reports of adverse events to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), rather than reporting individual cases, often fails to promptly detect potential safety signals (more...)

Can Truth, Science, Faith and Trust Co-Exist? How to avoid the illusory truth effect. Repeating misinformation creates the illusory truth effect. Integrity, competence, aligned values, and humility are essential to establish and rebuild trust. That science is self-correcting should give people confidence that any misinformation will be discovered (more...).

Is this idea from AI or humans? A detector claims it can tell: A tool called IdeaLens helps to judge whether concepts - rather than just writing - in scientific papers are AI-generated (more...).

Academic freedom: defending a public good: This essay, an expanded version of a Presidential Address delivered at the 2026 conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), addresses the global erosion of academic freedom and its implications for communication scholarship (more...).

Beyond Faster Drafts: Redesigning Regulatory Medical Writing For The AI Era: Clinical development produces thousands of interconnected documents, and a single change can ripple across many of them. As AI becomes an expected part of regulatory medical writing, many teams find that

faster drafting alone doesn't shorten timelines. Adding AI to an unchanged process leaves the same review bottlenecks, handoffs, and governance delays (more...).

How Plain Language Summaries Created Under EU CTR Can Help Shape NIH Policy: Only 18% of people have “a lot” of trust in pharmaceutical companies, according to a recent CISCRP survey. While trust among government research organizations is notably higher (43%), there is still room for improvement, especially within the U.S. as only 32% of U.S. survey respondents reported having a lot of trust in their government research organization (more...).

Disrespectful Language in Medical Records Isn't Rare, Survey Shows: Majority felt it would lead to worse health outcomes (more...).

Prestige, Topic, and Team Size Sway Elite Journal Acceptance: A 5-year analysis of 110,000-plus manuscripts finds prestige, topic, geography, and team size shaped who got published at Science and Science Advances (more...).

Ready for the robot reviewers? As AI’s capabilities grow, researchers and publishers are exploring how it can support peer review - and where it still falls short (more...).

Managing Manuscript Versions Across Co-Authors: A Corresponding Author’s Guide: The corresponding author’s ICMJE duties don’t explicitly cover manuscript version control, but in practice the job of keeping one authoritative draft across co-authors falls to them anyway. Practical version- control, communication, and conflict-avoidance practices for managing a multi- author manuscript (more...).

A patient-first shift in disease language and communication: The pharma marketing world has unique insight into how words play into their world: Many months and many dollars are spent sculpting and perfecting the right word for a new drug, one that speaks to doctors and patients while remaining within the confines of promotional barriers. But language goes beyond the brand. In the world of health, how the media, doctors and patients name a disease, condition or disorder matters. That importance was not always recognized, but awareness is now on the rise (more...).

Speechmatics wows US with new medical speech recognition model - and NVIDIA has a key role: Cambridge speech recognition specialist, Speechmatics, has launched a groundbreaking medical model built on new architecture which should prove a Godsend to American people, especially clinicians, who often speak a language other than English (more...).

Does written language speed up or slow down cultural change? The written word has been revolutionary in preserving ideas from the past, and transmitting new ones in the present. But does it favour tradition or change (more...)?

MHRA 2030 Strategy to modernise patient-centred regulation for the era of AI and personalised medicines: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has set out ambitious plans to translate cutting-edge scientific and technological innovation into better health outcomes for patients across all four nations of the UK, in its 2030 Strategy (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. Location: **Vestry House, London** (WC2H 8LG).Session: **Afternoon Session**Find out more

Medical Writing: Is It Becoming Data Formatting?



Medical writing has long been about turning complex science into understanding.

But as protocols become structured, content becomes reusable, and standards like ICH M11 push documents towards machine-readable formats, a challenging question emerges: are medical writers becoming data engineers?

The shift promises greater consistency, efficiency and traceability, yet it also risks reducing writing to the assembly of validated components.

If information can be created once and deployed everywhere, where does human judgement fit? This article explores whether the future of medical writing lies in formatting data, interpreting evidence, or mastering a new blend of both, read on: https://niche.org.uk/data-formatting

Upcoming Events

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

Festival of Biologics 2026: 13-15 October 2026 | Messe Basel, Basel, Switzerland Biologic medicines, immunotherapies, clinical trials and commercialisation. https://www.terrapinn.com/conference/festival-of-biologics/

TOPRA Annual Symposium 2026: 19-21 October 2026 | Royal Jaarbeurs, Utrecht, Netherlands https://www.topra.org/vienna-sym

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

The European Conference on Digital Transformation & Data in Medical Technologies 26-27 October 2026 in Munich, Germany. https://dtd2026.com/conference-program/

29-30 October 2026 - BMJ Future Health Europe
https://futurehealth.bmj.com/bmj-future-health-europe

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 Novemberhttps://targeting-exosomes.com/

Public Engagement in Practice 2026 5 November 2026 | Linacre College, University of Oxford, UK Applications close at 09:00 on 5 October 2026. https://www.royce.ac.uk/events/royce-training-public-engagement-in-practice-2026/

Falling Walls Science Summit 2026 6-9 November 2026 | Berlin, Germany, and online Scientific breakthroughs and engagement between science and society. https://falling-walls.com/science-summit

BIO Europe 2026 9-11 November 2026 | Koelnmesse, Cologne, Germany https://informaconnect.com/bioeurope/

Communicating science how do we talk about what we do and does it work 17 November 2026 | 12:00-13:00 UK time | Online https://www.foundation.org.uk/Events/2026/What-does-effective-engagement-between-science-%281%29

18 November 2026 - 7th Annual Pharma Communications Conference
https://thepharmaconference.com/

9-21 November 2026 - EMWA 62nd Virtual Conference, Autumn 2026
https://emwa.org/conference

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

19 November 2026 - Making STEM Engagement Accessible
https://www.big.uk.com/event-6759327

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: D *eveloped 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

December 2026 and early 2027 GIANT Health 2026: 7-8 December 2026 | Business Design Centre, London, UK Healthcare innovation, NHS transformation, AI and digital health. https://www.giant.health/giant-2026

Genesis 2026 Maximising Returns from Life Science Innovation: 10 December 2026 | 1 Wimpole Street, London, UK Life sciences research, investment, collaboration and innovation. https://www.genesisconference.com/

Association for Science Education Annual Conference 2027 7-9 January 2027 | University of Northampton, UK Science education, engagement and professional development. https://www.ase.org.uk/events/2027-ase-annual-conference-shaping-future-of-science-education-together

2027 European Meeting of ISMPP: 25-27 January 2027 | Leonardo Royal Hotel Tower Bridge, London, UK Meeting for medical publication professionals. Link opens the organiser's specific event listing. https://connect.ismpp.org/events/event-description?CalendarEventKey=f25da30e-f338-4784-a8e4-01983d793e02&Home=%2Fevents%2Fcalendar

DIA Europe 2027: 16-18 March 2027 | Basel, Switzerland Drug development, clinical trials, regulation, pharmacovigilance and patient access. https://www.diaglobal.org/en/flagship/dia-europe-2027/about/conference

BioTrinity 2027: 13-14 April 2027 | London, UK Life sciences research, investment, pharmaceutical partnerships and networking. https://biouk.glueup.com/event/biotrinity-2027-184799/

23rd Annual Meeting of ISMPP: 3-5 May 2027 | Orlando, Florida, USA Meeting for medical publication professionals. Link opens the organiser's specific event listing. https://connect.ismpp.org/events/event-description?CalendarEventKey=39d02661-4703-47b1-ab5f-0194461b519f&Home=%2Fevents%2Fcalendar

BIO International Convention 2027: 7-10 June 2027 | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA International biotechnology convention. The event website now displays the 2027 save-the-date; some supporting pages still contain 2026 material. https://convention.bio.org/

Titbits

100 Years of Pooh: What we can learn from the legacy of Winnie-the- Pooh. Pooh's enduring appeal includes gentle humour, recognizable personalities, and the comfort of friendship. Character styles have changed little in one hundred years. Transitional objects can offer comfort at any age (more...).

A rare-book dealer acquired a medieval manuscript filled with strange writing in 1912; 114 years later, no decipherment has won broad acceptance. The Voynich Manuscript is one of history's greatest unsolved mysteries. The medieval document, illustrated and bought in 1912 by rare-book dealer Wilfrid Voynich, is full of unfamiliar writing, detailed drawings of plants, astronomical diagrams and strange pictures of human figures (more...).

Mysterious brain activity under anaesthesia challenges what we know about consciousness: Even under general anaesthesia, the human brain can analyse language, recognize different types of words, and predict what comes next in a story, according to a surprising discovery (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.

Our sponsors

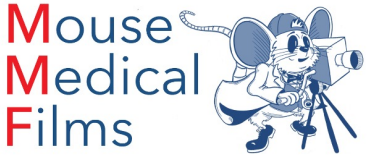
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