SciLance Rules of Conduct from Pitchpublishprosper.com

The vision for SciLance was to build a virtual community of science writer freelancers who can trust each other to share information, gripes, complaints, joys, successes, job ads, and clips. It only works if it is not anonymous and if kept small enough to remain that way.

1. Size of group is capped at 35.

We decided this because we didn't want the list to grow too large, yet wanted room to add people when we came across a writer who might fit well with the group.

2. You must participate to remain on the list.

We also decided to make the list work optimally, we would not allow lurking. You must participate in some useful way to stay on the list. Kendall will take certain considerations into account. For example, if you have been away giving birth, raising children, supporting elderly parents, etc, you will not be penalized. But as spots on the list have become precious, we want to make sure that as many of us as possible are active members.

Most easily, you can contribute by piping up with your own experiences and advice or questions when appropriate. Your opinions, questions, fears, doubts, insights, advice, congratulations, own-horn-tooting are important to all of us!

3. New members have to be within two degrees of the founder.

This rule, again, keeps the list intimate and accountable to each other. Any new members must be nominated by someone that Kendall either invited originally to the list or has met in person.

4. We are like Vegas—what happens on the list, stays on the list.

We are a private Yahoo! Group so no one can access our archives except members. Please treat list discussions and information that comes out in those discussions as you would any other private conversation. Do not repost snippets elsewhere, do not repeat information to non-list members unless you have cleared it with the person who was the originator of the information. This is key to keeping this a trusting community where people feel they can discuss problems and issues openly without fearing that it will come back to haunt them.

5. Posting job ads, concerns about an editor or client.

We relish job-sharing on the list, especially when you can recommend working for a client wholeheartedly or when you've taken on more than you can handle and would like to hand

off a job to someone you trust as responsible. We also welcome job postings from a client where you might have some reservations. We want to hear your concerns, but don't post those within the job ad.

So if you want to post a job ad, but have some reservations about it, the code to use is:

"Please contact me off-list at email@address.com if you are interested in this job. I have more information I'd like to share with you."

6. Make an effort to get to know each other offlist.

While we are a virtual community, it's much more fun when we know each other. We don't have the real water cooler to hang around, or cubicles to yell over (thank heaven), but we don't have to be interacting only in cyberspace! Make an effort to reach out to SciLancers located near you. Call someone up when you want to discuss something off-list. When going to a writing or science conference in another city, let us know so that you can meet with local SciLancers or others attending for dinner or drinks. Please post your photo to the group Yahoo! website.

7. The list is what you make it.

When the list started, Kendall just envisioned a forum and a way to keep in touch with other freelancers. But soon, we were doing virtual happy hours (drinking at home while chatting online) and online pitch slams (where we critique each others' pitches to new markets). Other members suggested a scientist-journalist matchmaking endeavor and a pay rate database. Kendall will maintain the list, moderate once in a blue moon and be a sounding board for ideas about the list. But the list belongs to everyone.

8. Use your discretion and when in doubt, don't hesitate to email or call Kendall.