

THE CANBERRA editor

Newsletter of the Canberra Society of Editors

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From the President



The timing of this edition of *The Canberra editor* allows me to use this column to reflect on the past year and the coming year for the Society. I did this in my President's report to the Annual General Meeting on 27 August, where we had a roomful of members, most of whom stayed on for the enjoyable dinner afterwards.

It has been my privilege to serve as President of the Society over the past year, supported by the committee I was most fortunate to have worked with. And, following the elections at the AGM, I now have the double honour to serve another term, supported again by an excellent mix of returning and new committee members. I've written elsewhere about our committee.

After the turbulence of the previous two years, CSE's governance in 2013–14 was relatively stable. The 'business' of running the society was unremarkable, CSE remained financially sound, our membership at the end of May was over 180, and our renewals for 2014–15 are already encouragingly high at about 130—despite the fee increase you voted for in April.

And your volunteer committee just got on with the job of delivering the basic professional and networking services you ask for and expect, notably:

- monthly networking meetings with good speakers and panels on relevant subjects
- topical professional development workshops and discounts to other editors societies' workshops
- revived alternative networking events to suit those who can't come to our monthly meetings
- regular and accessible communications via several media (a well-designed website, an informative newsletter with a few new features, regular broadcast emails to members, a Facebook page, and the Yahoo discussion group)
- CSE's representation on IPEd Council and the IPEd Accreditation Board, and the access your CSE membership provides to IPEd services.

Most who contributed to, or took part in, these events and activities will have your own 'favourites'. Allow me to mention a few of my own highlights for the year, in no particular order. They are in addition to my appreciation of all the 'standard' events and activities mentioned above.

- CSE's 21st birthday gala dinner celebration at The Brassey last December went off exceedingly well, with nearly 70 guests including many founding members and past Presidents. Our two long-standing Honorary Life Members—Loma Snooks and Peter Judge—gave us their reflections on 21 years of serving Canberra's editors, and presented certificates to four new Honorary Life Members—Ted Briggs,

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The next general meeting of the CSE

Wednesday 24 September

Our guest speaker at the next general meeting is Professor Jenny Corbett, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Training) at ANU.

- Ferguson Room, National Library of Australia
- 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm.



For your diaries!

What?

CSE end-of-year and Christmas dinner

When?

Wednesday 26 November 2014

What time?

6.00 to 10.00 pm

Where?

The Brassey in Barton

Pre-dinner drinks, scrumptious dinner, entertaining guest speaker, terrific company. Great way to end the year.

Don't miss it. Book the date!
More details to come.

Ed Highley, Elizabeth Murphy and Virginia Wilton. And our long-time friend, *Canberra Times* Editor-at-large, Jack Waterford, entertained us after dinner with his customary witty and relevant stories and philosophical observations.

- CSE's mentoring pilot scheme from 2012 was rapidly transformed into a national mentoring program, with well-established criteria and protocols and with coordinators in all states but one. Elizabeth Murphy and Ted Briggs deserve our heartiest congratulations for their initiative, dedication and persistence in turning this idea into reality and building it up so quickly.
- Having been evicted from our established general meetings digs at the ANU Emeritus Faculty (and while I suspect that nothing will prise the truth from the EF, sharing a bottle of Henschke 'Hill of Grace' will get you MY version of the story!), CSE enjoyed several months at the homely and popular Fireplace Room at Gorman House, before having to find another venue, which we have now done in the Ferguson Room at the National Library—very different, but well-equipped, and also a 'good fit' in its own way.
- At an overflowing general meeting in April, you voted resoundingly to raise your membership fees so that CSE could meet the higher IPEd levy for the transition to the new unitary national representative structure for the editing profession. Your committee had considered this thoroughly before proposing the resolution, and is also putting in place a payment system for those in financial difficulties.
- CSE had the highest 'per capita' participation of all the editors' societies in the 2014 IPEd accreditation exam, held in May, and the majority of members who sat the exam were successful. This was also the first year of 're-accreditation' for those who were awarded AE status in the first exam five years ago, and all CSE applicants succeeded.

Two significant events lie ahead in 2014–15, which will need your attention and, I hope, your participation. One is the completion of the transition planning process for IPEd; the other is the national biennial conference, being hosted in Canberra in May by CSE and the ACT branch of ANZSI.

The IPEd transition planning will culminate in another national vote, one that this time makes the final decision to proceed (or not) to transform the national representation of the editing profession from the established federated structure into a single unitary national institute to which you would belong directly through a Canberra branch of that institute. There have been and still are strong voices within CSE both for and against this transformation. But after last year's national vote to proceed to the next stage, CSE members have been active in IPEd's Working Party 4 and its five project teams—the only society to provide a volunteer for every team. CSE also succeeded in improving the MoU that each society has now signed with the IPEd Council about the transition process.

Plenty has been written and said in our newsletter, website and general meetings about the 2015 conference—*write | edit | index*. With eight months to go, we're now getting to the pointy end of conference preparation, and our conference convenor, Tracy Harwood, is seeking volunteers for various specific roles. I realise this is yet another call for volunteers in a society run by volunteers. But I'm confident we would all share a determination to make a Canberra-based national conference that we are hosting a most memorable event. We can do it!

Thank you for your trust and confidence in having me as your President for another year. I shall endeavour to be worthy, and to ensure that CSE is well run and continues to provide the range of networking and professional development services we all joined for.

Alan Cummine
President

Your committee for 2014–15

More new members in 2014

A warm welcome to these new members!

Professional

Patricia Hewitson

Associates

Anthony Ecclestone

Justine McNamara

As I wrote in my President's column, I'm honoured to be able to serve a second term as President of Canberra Society of Editors, and I thank you for awarding me this privilege.

I don't need to tell you that I am but one member of a committee of volunteers that ensure our organisation runs well and provides the services that members want and need.

As you would expect, there is always a turnover of committee members at each election, some required by CSE's constitution after two years in one position. Whatever the reason for their leaving, CSE is—and should always be—grateful for the contributions they have made.

This year we said goodbye after two years to Professional Development Coordinator, **Malini Devadas**, who revived the popular informal networking events and left a forward program of training workshops to give her successor a flying start, and to Treasurer, **Mike Wilkins**, who has actually stayed on as a general committee member, which gives his successor some accessible support. We also said goodbye from the committee to the wise and witty **Dallas Stow**, who did so much to ensure the AGM and dinner were entertaining and run well, and to **Lindsay Nesci**, who left us with good contacts and information to confidently purchase our own portable PA system if we need to. And, as you know, **Kerie Newell's** health forced her to step down as Newsletter Editor.

In their places, we welcomed **Katie Poidomani** (Professional Development Coordinator), **Julia Evans** (Treasurer), **Farid Rahimi** (Newsletter Editor), **Elizabeth Manning Murphy** (Committee), and **Gabby Lhuede** (who replaced Farid as Assistant Editor).

Pam Faulks, our General Meetings Coordinator, agreed to also wear the hat of ACT Mentoring Coordinator, and **Kerie Newell** joined **Mike Wilkins** in staying on the committee 'without portfolio'.

We've been fortunate to have other members offering to help the elected office bearers with particular activities—such as the newsletter, training activities, and support for new or inexperienced members—and also getting involved in the 2015 national conference and the IPEd transition project teams.

All the rest of us were re-elected in our current positions. Thank you. You can find the full list of your committee for 2014–15 on the last page. Please get to know us and make use of us.

And, of course, extra hands and experience are always welcome. So be ready for a phone call!

Alan Cummine

President

Professional development

The course on EndNote, Friday, 8 August

I have known Dr Hilary Cadman for 10 years and learned a lot about editing from her when we worked together. But when it came to anything computer related, I was usually the one doing the helping. How times have changed ...

I had been thinking about purchasing EndNote for a while. But it was just another one of those things that I hadn't got around to doing. Plus, like most people, I had heard those horror stories of people 'breaking' EndNote libraries and, in the process, creating loads more work for themselves.

Then I had an idea: as Professional Development Coordinator, I could see if there was enough interest for the society to put on an EndNote course. Fortunately, we had more than enough people (there is a waiting list). And, again fortunately, Hilary had developed an EndNote course with a view to running it for other organisations.

Farewell

(After this article was written by Malini, we were pleased to have Katie Poidomani take up the role of the PD coordinator.)

This is my last contribution to the newsletter as the Professional Development Coordinator. I'm hoping this article will show you a key benefit of the job—if there is something you want to learn about and if there are enough interested members to make it financially viable, you can go ahead and put on that course! It is also a great way to get to know the committee as well as many members of our great Society.

As I have said in the broadcast emails, I would be happy to think up new courses and find suitable presenters.

I look forward to attending some new courses in 2015!

Malini Devadas

PD coordinator

On the day, each of the participants brought their own laptop with the EndNote software, mainly the free 30-day trial version, installed. The staff at Clifton (new venue for us) were on hand to deal promptly with the few technical glitches that occurred.

The half-day course was a great overview of what the program is capable of. As Hilary rightly pointed out, there was little point in going through detailed step-by-step procedures as these can be found on the internet. Instead, Hilary expertly guided us through basic features, such as creating an EndNote database, working with EndNote in Microsoft Word, and modifying the way the references are displayed in Word and in EndNote. She also explained how to best work with authors, depending on who actually has the EndNote software and database (the author, the editor, or both). Hilary also answered questions from those in the group who had some experience in using EndNote.

Another great part of the course was hearing from Hilary about what NOT to do. You know the type of thing: Do not under any circumstances click on the big red flashing button!

Having our own laptops meant that we could actually play around with the software, rather than just watch a trainer doing things. This gave us all an idea as to whether we would find it easy or difficult to use EndNote in our everyday work as editors.

Hilary aimed to enable us to decide whether we should buy the software or just learn how to work with authors who are using it. I decided it was worth mastering EndNote, and am pleased to say that I have finally purchased it! Now, checking out the in-depth tutorials on the EndNote website ...

Upcoming workshops

Keep an eye on your emails for information about upcoming ACT workshops on self-publishing (September) and improving your online presence (November). And see below for details about a NSW Society of Editors workshop in October, an invitation under our mutual sharing arrangement.

Malini Devadas

PD coordinator

Principles of Plain English for editors

Presented by Susan McKerihan.

Friday, 17 October 2014, 9.30 am to 4.30 pm.

Venue: UTS Short Courses Venue, Level 7, 235 Jones Street, Sydney.

Cost: \$200 for society members, \$350 for non-members (includes lunch and morning and afternoon teas)

CSE members enjoy the NSW Society members' discount, plus a further remote discount for travelling more than 200 km to attend the event.

There is a growing appreciation of clear written communication in business, not only among the general public and specific audiences but also within the organisations that have to prepare it. Many companies and government bodies are keen to respond to this demand from readers. Editors who understand the principles of plain English can offer extra value when advising their clients on a document's overall readability, structure and clarity. The society's workshop will take you through the three main components of Plain English.

Structure: the objective of Plain English is to ensure that a document's intended reader understands its messages quickly and accurately. Explore a 'reader-focused document', and how it is achieved. Discover specific tools and devices that can help make a document more readable.

Language: business-ese is often pilloried as 'gobbledygook'. The course looks at the most common sentence-level problems in business writing, and how they can be converted into a straightforward, succinct style.

The professional edge: some documents look instantly appealing—interesting, easy to read and digest—while others look as though they’ll be a chore to get through. Learn what can help a document make a good first impression on a reader.

This course will be particularly suitable for editors working with business, government, academic and educational material.

Susan McKerihan spent more than 20 years as a Plain English editor for one of Australia’s largest professional services firms, PwC. She has worked with consultants in all disciplines and industries, helping them write clear and succinct reports across a range of subjects. Susan has a Masters in Applied Linguistics and a graduate diploma in teaching English as a foreign language, both from Sydney University.

To register for the workshop and pay online go to <http://editorsnsw.wildapricot.org> and click Events or contact membership@editorsnsw.com. Tel: (02) 9294 4999 (voicemail only).

General meetings plans

I hope you’ve all enjoyed the great speakers we’ve had at recent meetings, as well as the new venue at the National Library. But it’s not all about the speakers; the value of the networking at these meetings can’t be underestimated, and if you haven’t been to a meeting for a while, you don’t know what you are missing.

In the next few months, we will be welcoming Professor Jenny Corbett, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Training) at ANU, who is our guest speaker in September, and Dr Amanda Laugesen, from the Australian National Dictionary Centre, ANU, will be speaking in October about her forthcoming book on soldier slang during World War I.

I’m now looking at planning speakers for 2015 and, knowing what talented and experienced editors we have amongst our ranks, am putting out a call for speakers from within the Society. There seems to be an unquenchable thirst for members to hear about what others are doing, or have done in the past, and this is a great forum to share your story. And if you get in early, you can have first pick of which meeting you speak at!

If you’d like to volunteer to be a speaker at one of our monthly general meetings, or have suggestions for topics or speakers, please call me on 0437 570 649 or email me at pam.faulks@gmail.com.

Pam Faulks
Meeting Coordinator

IPEd news

The IPed Council meeting on 3 August was the first for new Company Secretary Margaret Telford, who has taken over from Charles Houen. Margaret came to us from the Queensland Parliamentary Service where she worked for the past 10 years as an Executive Assistant and Principal Research Officer. Since 2012, she has also been a freelance editor. Margaret has postgraduate qualifications in writing, editing, publishing and communication from the University of Queensland, and is a member of the Queensland Society of Editors, the Queensland Writers Centre and the Northern Rivers Writers Centre. She was appointed following a call for applications from members in May.

Charles is staying on as councillor for Editors Victoria and as a key member of two of the project teams of IPed Transition Working Party 4.

The following were among the items of business transacted at the meeting:

- IPed’s budget for 2014–15, to be tabled by Honorary Treasurer Kerry Davies for endorsement at the company’s AGM in September, was ‘finalised’. The Institute is budgeting for a small deficit for a year in which there will be no exam income and substantial non-recurring costs associated with the transition to direct membership.

- The council agreed to implement the changes to the transition MoU and procedures recommended by our committee after its detailed consideration of the documents. We have now signed the MoU. Revised documents will be sent to the other societies for signing.
- I provided a progress report on developments in the program of activities for the national conference next year here in Canberra, using information provided by conference convener Tracy Harwood. The meeting also discussed IPEd's presentations at the conference. The council has asked for a 90-minute session to cover general and Accreditation Board matters, plus an area and facilities to give conference participants an opportunity to gain hands-on experience with a prototype onscreen exam that has been developed.
- Communication Officer Mary-Ann Came reported on her successful, ongoing campaign to promote the profession in the mainstream print media. Her current focus, in collaboration with the CareerOne® job-search resource, is on people who have made a career change to editing. One such story, published in the *The Daily Telegraph*, [can be viewed here](#). Similar articles have been published in *The Courier-Mail* and *The Advertiser*. I am now working with Mary-Ann to get a good story about the profession into *The Canberra Times*.
- After a missed year due to the activity overload of the IPEd review, the SurveyMonkey® questionnaire for the latest IPEd National Survey of Editors should hit Inboxes soon, thanks primarily to the work of Kerry Davies (Qld) and our own Pam Faulks. Be prepared. There were 345 responses to the 2011 survey; we want at least to double that this time to get an even better picture of our profession especially as we will soon all belong to one big family.

Ed Highley

CSE IPEd Councillor

Mentoring – the national scene

Our coordinators' team is complete again

After a little hiatus, the ACT has a new Coordinator, Pam Faulks. Here's a photo of Pam and a bit about her:



Pam Faulks has a varied work and academic background that includes teaching at both primary and tertiary levels, researching the motivations of sport tourists, writing policy documents for a federal government department and promoting Canberra as a destination for conferences. She has only recently formalised her role as an editor, which included getting involved with the Canberra Society of Editors, and

sees the mentoring program as a great way for editors at all levels to work together for mutual benefit.

Welcome to the team, Pam. Please contact Pam if you are already in a mentorship organised through the Canberra Society of Editors, either on its own or in association with another Society, if you need help.

Please also contact Pam if you are in the Canberra region but haven't thought about mentoring yet. We're happy to include nearby centres such as Queanbeyan, Yass, Cooma, Goulburn and any regional centres that are closer to Canberra than to their own state capitals. Maybe you would like to be mentored (guided) through the steps to understanding new technology or an area of editing that you would like to try for a change? Then apply to Pam for guidance notes and an application form. Maybe you would like to try your hand at mentoring (guiding) a fellow editor through an aspect of editing that you are good at? Again, Pam can send you an application form and guidance notes. It's a great way to share knowledge, one to one, at your own pace, and perhaps build a lasting friendship.

Forthcoming events around the country

Video: Your national coordinators have been far from idle! Ted and Elizabeth have produced a video about mentoring which is available, through your local Mentoring Coordinator, for showing at Society general meetings.

Local mentors' workshops: Elizabeth embarks this month on a program of visits to Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, to run in-person mentors' workshops. Either Elizabeth or Ted will be available early next year to run a workshop in Hobart and, with Pam Faulks, in Canberra. This is in addition to the Skype workshops that we run from Canberra as required.

Mentoring at the next IPEd conference: We expect to be presenting a paper at the May 2015 conference, and to joining the Indexers in a panel discussion. More details as we hear more. We hope most of the current state coordinators will join in these activities.

Happy mentoring!

Ted Briggs AE

tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au

Joint National Coordinators

Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE

emmurphy@ozemail.com.au

Mentoring in the ACT

Hi everyone:

I'm so enthusiastic about our mentoring program, I want to share it with you if you'd like to know more. It's a great way to give something back to the Society that you've been a member of for a while, or to experience guidance on a one-to-one basis about something to do with editing that perhaps you hadn't considered so far (maybe fiction editing or working from home instead of in a 9-to-5 job). There's a long list of possible mentorship options in our guidance notes, and I can think of more. Please get in touch with me at a CSE general meeting, or by email. I'd love to have a chat, and I'll send you those guidance notes for a start.

To those CSE members already in mentorships—and their mentorship partners, wherever they are: do please email me and tell me how the mentorship is going for you. I am now taking over from Elizabeth and Ted who have been holding the fort in Canberra as well as handling the national side of things. I'd like to get to know you, and learn from you how we can do things even better for future mentorship pairings. We have at least three mentorships going at the moment, and mentorships can start any time at all.

Pam Faulks

ACT Coordinator, CSE National Mentoring Program

Email: pam.faulks@gmail.com

To our new AEs. Very well done!

Our Society can be proud of our accreditation record:

After 5 exams, there are now close to 300 AEs in 7 editors' societies—CSE members comprise over 50 of these.

In the 2014 exam, 13 Canberra candidates passed, 2nd only to Melbourne's 17; comprising 23% of the national total of 57 successful candidates.

All of these ten CSE members can now proudly add Accredited Editor to their achievements and use the post-nominal AE: Jane Ayles, Cecilia Burke, Alex Bellis, Beth Battrick, David Keating, Anneke Myers, Maree Peterson, Lindy Allen, Julia Smith and Sonja Chandler. Hearty congratulations to all of you for passing the 2014 IPEd accreditation exam!

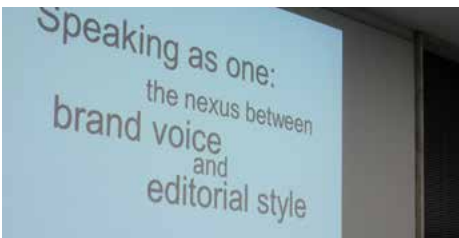
Three non-members also passed the exam: Ben Wilson, Katelyn Catanzariti and Patricia Hewitson—and Patricia has just been accepted as a new Full CSE member.

I support the sentiments of our President, Alan Cummine, who wrote in a recent edition of *The Canberra editor*: 'I trust that this status will translate into greater client confidence in you and the profession and into higher reward for your professional skills'.

Ted Briggs

CSE Accreditation Board Delegate (and outgoing Chairman)

June general meeting



CSE President, Alan Cummine, thanking Tracy Chalk for an engaging presentation.

Speaking as one: the nexus between brand voice and editorial style

Tracy Chalk, Director of Marketing at the Australian National University (ANU), spoke to attending members about the importance of personal or organisational branding and its influence on institutional image and interaction with stakeholders. Tracy focused on challenges of speaking with one voice for ANU—a devolved organisation.

As the ANU 'brand manager', Tracy is responsible for promoting and maintaining ANU's reputation—no small feat when you consider that ANU has over 3,500 academic staff and students, and authors, who are broadcasting their own information to a range of domestic and international stakeholders. Besides, the ANU has different characteristics that it wants to promote to different audiences (for example, 'contemporary' and 'optimistic' to students, 'fearless thinkers' and 'innovators' to international audiences, and 'understanding' to the business community). In order to balance communicating the diversity of 'who we are' at ANU, she has established a brand framework (i.e. a look and language) to facilitate the promotion of those specific characteristics (and more) via every point of contact (e.g. business processes, the way the phone is answered, promotional materials, ...). Tracy illustrated how having a brand framework helps to tie everything in a way that enhances ANU's reputation. More importantly, editorial input helps to reflect the desired tone of voice by using a balanced language. For example, descriptions such as 'leading academics' are changed to 'academics who shape and lead debates' in order to position ANU as an engaging, but not arrogant, expert in the field.

Tracy's presentation prompted a pertinent discussion about how the Society and its members want to be viewed—by current members, future members, clients, IPEd, and others—and how this can be more powerfully communicated through enhancing our individual and collective 'brand voice'. Members discussed the challenge of having communication and editing recognised as skills (worth paying for!) by potential clients, including University students writing theses or their academic mentors. Tracy described how she sells her team's skills to the ANU academics—highlighting how her team can add value to the academics' works and messages so that they are broadcasted widely while enhancing the academics' profiles and reputations. She believes that proactivity and discourse are crucial for achieving the benefits that brand management and editing can provide (e.g. statistics indicating increased Internet traffic has helped Tracy to secure buy-in from many ANU academics).

Members discussed opportunities to make personal connections with the ANU community to promote the Society's interests to the ANU students, for example, promoting the values of thesis-editing skills and employing a professional editor. Alan Cummine was invited to email Marion Mapham (Administration and Business Support, ANU marketing) to explore this and other potential opportunities further.

Extra reading: 'Voices Carry: Brand voice basics' by Melinda Flores is a short article about how a brand can be enlivened through words and lists the six rules of brand voice. This article is available through www.interbrand.com or [here](#).

Michelle Clewett



The many works of Elizabeth Manning Murphy.

July general meeting

'Take a letter ...'

When Elizabeth Manning Murphy wrote her first book in the early 1960s, there wasn't much discussion about inclusive language and gender. All the secretaries were to take the female pronoun, and all the bosses were to take the male. Of course this convention was challenged over time. In 1971, *The secretary in Australia* was published. Female secretaries were not allowed to wear trousers, were never referred to by their first names, and were encouraged to be 'an extension of her employer'. The book used 'she' and 'her' for secretaries and 'he' and 'him' for bosses, except in Elizabeth's three chapters!

Elizabeth's talk at the CSE meeting in July was a wonderful reflection on changing social and workplace norms, and how technology has changed the publishing industry and workplaces, but not the need for clear communication. She has edited, written and revised several books about communication in the workplace. The books were passed around during the talk so we could properly admire the retro typography and format.

Elizabeth shared stories of her life and her career. She spoke of the encouragement of a much-loved English teacher, and of her father, 'very much a words person'. He sent his reluctant daughter to secretarial school, where Elizabeth learned her valuable typing and keyboard skills. Working as a secretary at Qantas inspired that first book, to help employees improve the quality of their letters. She was promptly commissioned to write *The better letter*. The free booklet was distributed amongst Qantas staff around the world, and Elizabeth promoted it internationally. Its goal was to help people make their words work for them—an ambition just as relevant in this digital age.

Elizabeth continued her education at Pitman in the UK, where she developed a set of books and tapes for students of transcription, and then at the ANU, where she studied linguistics and psychology. Her honours thesis on language acquisition in children was based on the study of conversations between children and mothers and inspired her to invent the word 'withput', to sit between 'input' and 'output'.

During the 1980s, Elizabeth taught at TAFE, and turned her attention to unemployed youth in the ACT. She wrote *The job hunter's guide*, which covered many aspects of job-seeking skills.

Her work and studies led her to develop a chatty style that wrote for her readers, not at them. Linguistics training and experience showed that language changes all the time. Elizabeth's philosophy contains a descriptive, not prescriptive, approach to teaching grammar and writing.



CSE Vice-President, Kaaren Sutcliffe, and Elizabeth Manning Murphy



Attending Elizabeth's talk was Kerry Anderson (left) and Jo Williams (right).

Nevertheless, she suffers still from 'itchypencilitis', that terrible editors' plight discussed in her columns for *The Canberra editor* over the years. These columns were later compiled into her book—*Working words*.

Hearing about Elizabeth's career made for an entertaining evening. The Distinguished Editor and CSE Life Member has travelled the world to promote her books and worked with accomplished (and well-known) like minds. She spoke of future projects, including publishing her poetry for children, writing about the loss of language in dementia patients, and running a workshop in Belgium.

A lively Q&A session followed, and many members took the opportunity to have Elizabeth sign their copies of her new book, *Effective writing: plain English at work—2nd edition*.

Jane Ayles AE

The existential musings of an editor

You know that old saying about whether, if a tree falls in the forest and no one is there, it makes a sound? Well, I've been wondering something in the same vein about editors lately. If the Australian Taxation Office doesn't think we exist, does that mean we don't exist?

Allow me to explain. I've always looked after my own tax affairs. My first job after high school was in a chartered accountant's office and I've been comfortable with columns of figures ever since. Being an organised and pedantic person, I quite enjoy gathering the relevant documents year round, then downloading and completing the e-tax software each July!

I started calling myself an editor about five years ago, after editing and proofreading work had gradually engulfed my other tasks as a research assistant at CSIRO. This proved to be challenging when e-tax asked for my main occupation. While 'editor' is certainly in the list of occupational options, the ATO then requires us to drill down to a more specific level of detail. The options given are:

- associate or sub (print)
- book or script
- film, video or television
- newspaper or periodical
- sound.

Is it just me, or are these a peculiar bunch of specialties? I've tended to choose 'book or script' as it fits more closely than any of the other options, and the United Nations reports I work on sometimes appear as books.

Lately, though, a new challenge has appeared. I've been doing occasional freelance work over the past couple of years, so have had to wade into a whole different section of e-tax: business income. In this section, we have to provide a description of our 'main business or professional activity', and alas, editing is not among the options. Nor, I'm afraid, is writing or publishing. So where do we fit in? There are plenty of activities to choose from. I could claim to be involved in abalone fishing, bookmaking or brothel keeping, diamond mining, knitted product manufacturing or professional basketball playing. I could tick the box for lobster breeding, mattress manufacturing, or turf growing. But there is no way to tell the ATO that my business is editing.

In the end, I chose 'educational support services' this year, as most of my freelance work involves PhD theses. But are we editors really so few that we don't deserve our own category?

Just my two cents' worth ...

Karin Hosking AE

Survival of the unfittest in word-world

In contrast to the circumstance in the world of nature, in the world of words and language, bad 'mutations' tend to survive and multiply. So it is then that, in a sort of lexical Lamarckism, the evolution of word meanings is often driven by poor usage and ignorance. The meanings of perfectly serviceable words are diluted or corrupted, and some very fine words seem simply to disappear. Here are just a few examples:

Yes. This precise, succinct expression of the affirmative has all but disappeared in public discourse, to be replaced by the absolutely irritating 'absolutely'. Serial users should be arraigned.

Pupil. Even kindy kiddies are now usually called 'students', which they are not. They are (one hopes) open-eyed receptacles to learning; studying and analysis come much later. Let's call them what they are.

Can. Then: 'Can you do that?' 'Yes'. **Now:** 'Are you able to do that?' 'Absolutely!' OMG! I recall that during the Carnell administration here in Canberra the catchy slogan 'Canberra: can do!' was adopted to promote the capabilities of our fair city. 'Canberra: is able to do!' would have been as dud as the Skywhale. Furthermore, in many instances of this awful construction, ability is ascribed to inanimate objects, which have nonesuch. In the example used here, 'Canberra' is, of course, proxy for us, the highly talented, definitely animate population.

Enormity. There is more than just 'bigness' in the original meaning of this word; there is also atrociousness. Tess, even evil, as in, for example, the enormity of the crimes of a Martin Bryant or an Anders Behring Breivik. In discussing big, huge or enormous problems, it might therefore be better to stick with those less nuanced adjectives. Furthermore, there is potential confusion with the term 'wicked problems' used in the social sciences to describe especially difficult, perhaps intractable issues—like, for example, dealing with climate change.

Dilemma. This word once had a very specific meaning—the circumstance of being on the horns of a dilemma; that is, having to make a choice between two equally unpleasant alternatives. The example that comes to my mind centres on a calamitous event that occurred in 2001; it is too awful to recount here. In the bulk of common usage now, the meaning of 'dilemma' has degraded to simply a huge, big or serious problem, and sometimes even to lesser events. 'Quandary' might be a good substitute in many cases.

Fulsome. I recall that it was Paul Keating who brought the meaning of this word into focus when he endowed some worthy with 'fulsome praise', equating fulsome with lavish, when its true, initial meaning is in the realms of excessive, gushing and insincere. Mmmm.

Expiration. Those of you who do online shopping using their credit card might recall being asked by some providers for their card's 'Expiration date'. I can't detect that my Amex card is holding its breath, but if it is, it'll have to do so until late next year.

Effect/affect. It is sad to see that these words have been impacted nearly into oblivion.

Ed Highley

write | edit | index

A national conference for editors, indexers, and publishing professionals. Canberra, Australia, 6–9 May 2015

The call for papers has closed; thank you for your submissions. Program planning has begun—keep an eye on the conference website for updates: writeeditindex.net.au/

Editing across borders—final part

By John Linnegar, 6th IPEd National Editors Conference, Perth 2013

Development of SA Indian English since the arrival of the Indians in South Africa 150 years ago.

South Africa's Indian community first entered the country as indentured labourers on the sugarcane plantations in a subtropical region of southern Africa known as Natal (now the province of KwaZulu-Natal). It is the traditional homeland of the amaZulu people, members of the Nguni group of the Bantu peoples that migrated to southern Africa from Central Africa. At the time of the Indians' arrival (1861), Natal was a British Crown Colony, the local imported brand of English a strong influence.

Thanks to apartheid—which separated people socioeconomically according to race—the Indian community has been quite isolated since its first forebears arrived, not only from other linguistic and cultural groups in South Africa, but also from its roots and contacts back in India. South African Indian English has therefore developed as a unique dialect with borrowings both from regions within India (from which the first labourers were drawn) and from Afrikaans and isiZulu (a language based in Natal).

South African Indian English has acquired well over a thousand distinctive items,^{12,13} at least in informal speech, including adopted words from Indian languages: *thanni* (a card game), *dhania* (coriander) and *isel* (flying ant); and adaptations of many native English words: *proposed* (engaged), *future* (husband/wife-to-be) and *cheeky* (stern), for example.^{1,12,13} But the most notable feature of this variety is its syntax, including:

reduplication: fast-fast (very fast), different-different (many and different)
rhetorical use of question words: Where he'll do it! ('He certainly won't do it!'), What must I go? ('Why should I go?').

pronoun omissions: If you got, I'll take. Where you bought?

tag questions: He came there, isn't it?

end-placed verbs: Customer you got. ('You've got a customer').

relative clauses: Who won money, they're putting up a factory next door ('The people who won money are putting ...').

postpositions: Durban-side (near Durban), afternoon time it gets hot ('in the afternoon it gets hot'.) final use of some conjunctions

adverbials: She can talk English but'; 'I made rice too, I made roti too' ('I made both rice and roti').

The influence of African languages on SAE

The use of the feminine third person singular pronoun (she), usually, for either males or females, because the indigenous languages do not have the same pronounal distinction (nouns are used to indicate gender). As a result, in English, 'he' and 'she' are used indiscriminately: 'The police(man), she came and took a statement from me'.

The tendency to use the present continuous verb form when the simple present is meant for a statement of fact or a habit. For example: 'I am having a house in Bryanston'. Instead of 'I have a house in Bryanston'.

The tendency to **place emphasis on the incorrect syllable in polysyllabic English words** (usually the second syllable): *circumstances*; *deficit*; *determined*. This makes comprehension and transcription difficult at times, meaning that the text editor has to be extra vigilant when intervening in such texts.

Elongating conventionally short internal vowel sounds and shorting conventionally long internal vowel sounds in English. This tendency can affect the received meaning of sentences, often leading to misinterpretation and misunderstanding in public forums, where oral presentations have to be transcribed: 'He must *asset* himself more determinedly if he wants to succeed as a manager'. ('assert' was intended); 'He was *banned* during the protests last week' ('burned' was intended).

The incorrect usage of prepositions, usually an unidiomatic choice: 'Please ask to him ...' ('Please ask him ...').



bunny chow: a hollowed-out half-loaf of bread filled with meat or vegetable curry, as a takeaway.

The use of ‘very much’ as an adverbial phrase intensifier: ‘I am very much glad for the opportunity ...’.

Uniquely South African English words that will not translate well internationally

While SAE has undoubtedly adopted many a ‘foreign’ word or expression, a multitude of words that are uniquely South African do not translate well beyond the country’s borders.^{5,13} Text editors have to ensure that if a publication is intended for a wider audience beyond our borders, these words have to be either substituted or explained.

Examples include:

Bantustan: territory set aside by the apartheid government for black South Africans

bioscope: cinema; a British word that has survived in South Africa but died out in Britain, and is still heard among members of the older generation

braai(vleis): barbecue,

donga: a dry watercourse, gully

bottle store: a retail liquor outlet,

bunny chow: a hollowed-out half-loaf of bread filled with meat or vegetable curry, as a takeaway

eish!: an exclamation used to express a range of emotions, including surprise and annoyance, derived from *Tsotsitaal* (an Afrikaans-influenced township patois, originally a form of slang used by criminals) of the 1990s

go well/stay well: a leave-taking greeting and its response, from *Nguni hamba kahle* and *sala kahle*, respectively

indaba: an important protracted meeting

konfyt: a fruit preserve (compare the Dutch *konfijt*, French *confiture*)

pants: meaning ‘trousers’, not ‘underpants’ (the British meaning)

robots: traffic lights

sharp, sharp: an exclamation of approval, acceptance or agreement; an informal greeting at meeting or parting (post-1994)

tik (tik-tik): methamphetamine

tsotsi: a black urban criminal

vuvuzela: a long, straight plastic horn, chiefly used by spectators at soccer matches.

Understandably, then, in a multilingual society such as South Africa’s, where ‘historical, racial, tribal and political factors have combined to produce a sociolinguistic situation of stunning intricacy’^{1,7} and where the borders between English and the languages living cheek by jowl with it are often blurred, the normative and text–linguistic challenges that face the text editor of English texts are as stimulating and fascinating as they are great.

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Editor's choice: some of Merriam Webster's new words for 2014

Links

www.merriam-webster.com/new-words/2014-update.htm

blogs.wsj.com/digits/2014/05/19/hashtag-selfie-big-data-unfriend-the-new-words-of-2014/?mod=Wsj_hps_sections_tech

I had subscribed to M-W's Word of the Day for some time. I receive a word a day by email. Last month I received words that were added for 2014. I thought I could compile a list for *The Canberra editor*. After investigating, I found out that 15 such words are already listed on Merriam Webster's website. However, the complete list of 150 cannot be accessed in its entirety for 'competitive reasons', according to a Merriam Webster's spokesperson. I asked Geoff Dawson's help in compiling this list with me as I got extremely busy in the past two months. Here is the list:

big data: an accumulation of data that is too large and complex for processing by traditional database-management tools. First known use: 1980

catfish: a person who sets up a false personal profile on a social networking site for fraudulent or deceptive purposes

crowdfunding: the practice of soliciting financial contributions from a large number of people especially from the online community. First known use: 2006

digital divide: the economic, educational, and social inequalities between those who have computers and online access and those who do not. First known use: 1996

e-waste: waste consisting of discarded electronic products (as computers, televisions, and cell phones). First known use: 2004

fracking: the injection of fluid into shale beds at high pressure in order to free up petroleum resources (such as oil or natural gas). Origin and use: by shortening and alteration from (hydraulic) fracturing. First known use: 1953

freegan: an activist who scavenges for free food (as in waste receptacles at stores and restaurants) as a means of reducing consumption of resources. Freeganism is the noun form; first known use: 2006

gamification: the process of adding games or gamelike elements to something (as a task) so as to encourage participation. First known use: 2010

hashtag: a word or phrase preceded by the symbol # that classifies or categorizes the accompanying text (such as a tweet). First known use: 2008.

paywall: a system that prevents Internet users from accessing certain Web content without a paid subscription. Origin: pay + firewall; first known use: 2004

pho: a soup made of beef or chicken broth and rice noodles. First known use: 1935

poutine: a dish of French fries covered with brown gravy and cheese curds—chiefly Canadian. First known use: 1982

selfie: an image of oneself taken by oneself using a digital camera especially for posting on social networks. First known use: 2002

social networking: the creation and maintenance of personal and business relationships especially online. First known use: 1998

steampunk: science fiction dealing with 19th-century societies dominated by historical or imagined steam-powered technology. Origin: steam + cyberpunk; first known use: 1987

turducken: a boneless chicken stuffed into a boneless duck stuffed into a boneless turkey. First known use: 1982

tweep: a person who uses the Twitter online message service to send and receive tweets. Origin: back-formation from tweeps an individual's followers on Twitter, blend of tweet and peeps; first known use: 2008

unfriend: to remove (someone) from a list of designated friends on a person's social networking Web site. First known use: 2003

Yooper: a native or resident of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan—used as a nickname. First known use: 1977.

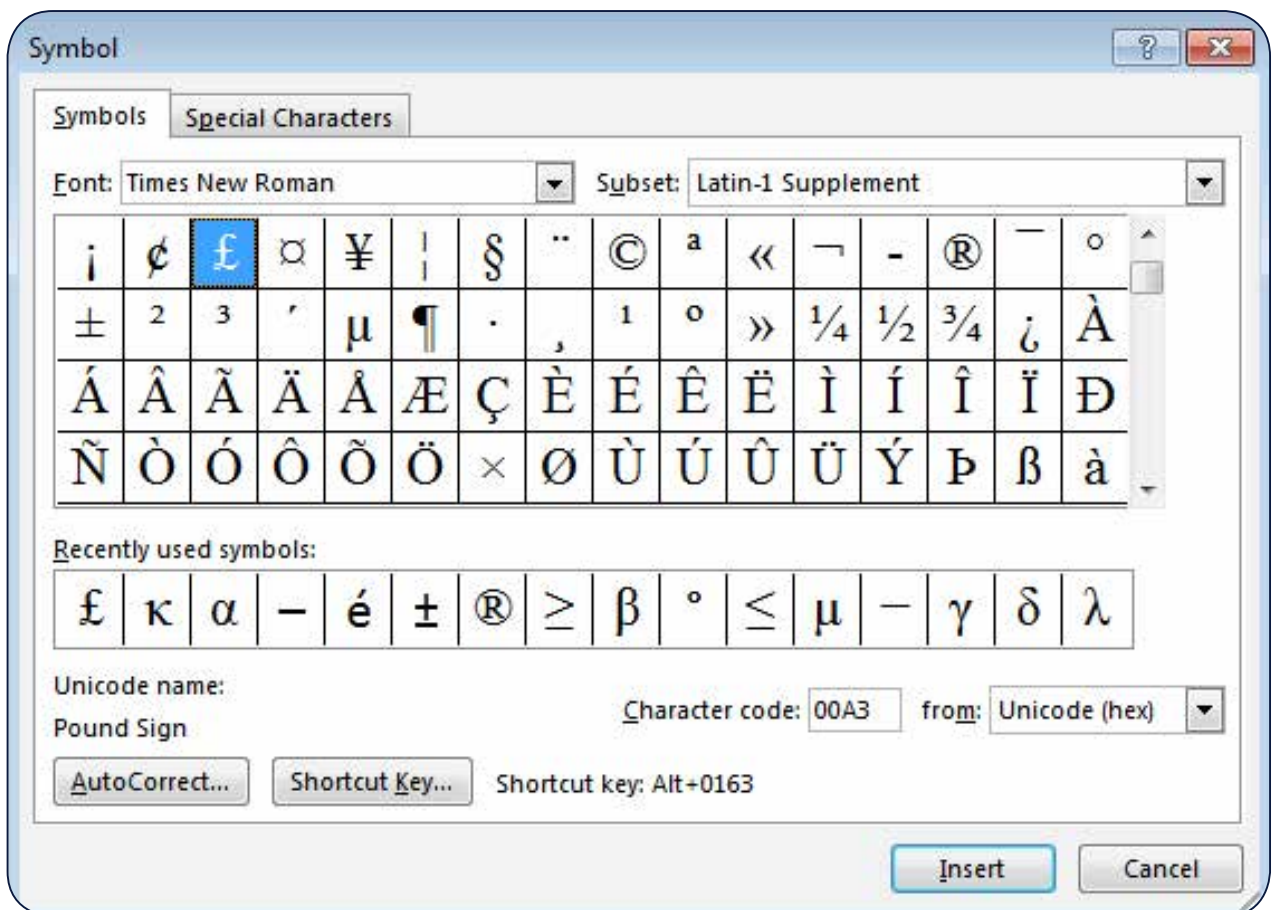
Geoff Dawson and Farid Rahimi

Taking in the shortcuts

Here, I list some keyboard shortcuts used for inserting special characters. This is related to how the Microsoft Word's Symbol dialogue box (see Figure), *character codes* with *Alt + X*, or *Alt + character codes* work. I'll have something on the Microsoft Word *ribbons* in another issue as promised...

Shortcut	To insert
Ctrl + F9	A field
Shift + Enter	Line break
Ctrl + Enter	Page break
Ctrl + Shift + Enter	A column break
Alt + Ctrl + minus sign	An em-dash
Ctrl + minus sign	An en-dash
Ctrl + hyphen	An optional hyphen
Alt + Ctrl + C	The Copyright symbol
Alt + Ctrl + R	The registered trademark symbol
Alt + Ctrl + T	The trademark symbol
Alt + Ctrl + Period	An Ellipsis
Enter (after you type the first few characters of an AutoText entry name and when the ScreenTip appears)	An AutoText entry, e.g. names of days

One can insert special characters by using the Unicode (hexadecimal) character code for a specific character and pressing *Alt + X*. For example, to insert the euro currency symbol (€), type 20AC, and then hold down Alt and press X; or type 2212, then *Alt + X* to type the minus sign (note that the minus sign character is different from the n-dash character, but their interchange is acceptable). Aside, to show the Unicode character, select the character and type *Alt + X*.



Yet another way is to type the ANSI (decimal) code of a character. For example, to insert the euro currency symbol, hold down Alt and press 0128 on the numeric keypad (that can be activated usually by an Fn key on laptop keyboards). The ANSI character codes can be found in the Symbol dialogue box in Microsoft Word accessible by pressing *Alt + I + S* (I for Insert and S for Symbol).

Shortcut	To insert	Shortcut	To insert
Alt + 0150	En-dash	Alt + 0247	Division sign
Alt + 0151	Em-dash	Alt + 0161	Inverted exclamation mark
Alt + 0134	Dagger	Alt + 0162	Cent sign
Alt + 0135	Double dagger	Alt + 0163	Pound sign
Alt + 0149	Bullet	Alt + 0165	Yen sign
Alt + 0133	Ellipsis	Alt + 0167	Section sign
Alt + 0137	Per mille sign	Alt + 0169	Copyright sign
Alt + 0128	Euro sign	Alt + 0174	Registered sign
Alt + 0181	Micro sign	Alt + 0177	Plus-minus sign
Alt + 0182	Pilcrow sign	Alt + 0176	Degree sign
Alt + 0183	Middle dot	Alt + 0191	Inverted question mark
Alt + 0215	Multiplication sign (this is not the same as the letter x, either small or capital)		

Farid Rahimi

Newsletter editor

Comical collections

This has to be one of the cleverest ‘word plays’ that’s come across my screen in a very long time. I’m sure some of you will have seen it.

See how you can get an extraordinarily appropriate ‘definition’ of the following well-known words and phrases by rearranging the letters (with the occasional punctuation liberty).

Someone out there has too much time on their hands. And must be truly deadly at Scrabble!

Presbyterian	<i>Best in prayer</i>
Astronomer	<i>Moon starrer</i>
Desperation	<i>A rope ends it</i>
The eyes	<i>They see</i>
The Morse Code	<i>Here come dots</i>
Dormitory	<i>Dirty room</i>
Slot machines	<i>Cash lost in me</i>
Election results	<i>Lies—Let’s recount</i>
Snooze alarms	<i>Alas. No more Zs</i>
A decimal point	<i>I’m a dot in place</i>
Eleven plus two	<i>Twelve plus one</i>

There was one more very clever rearrangement in the collection I was sent, but my sense of good manners overrode my sense of humour, and I decided to leave it out. Ask me some time.

You may have enough time on your hands to come up with other similar clever word plays. Please share them with us!

Ara Nalbandian

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Schedule for next newsletter

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The editor welcomes contributions by
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All articles must be in .doc format.

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