

---

THE CANBERRA

# editor

---

Volume 20 • Number 1

February 2012

next meeting

29 February  
6.30 pm

---

Emeritus Faculty  
Building 3T  
Fellows Lane Cottage  
ANU

## History and development of SfEP

Val Rice will be the Society's guest speaker at its first meeting in February 2012. Her talk will cover the history and development of Society for Freelance Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) from its first meeting in 1988 to the present day. Join us for dinner after the meeting at Shalimar.

## Book review

### **Working Words: 'A compendium of wise words'**

**Isabelle Delvare**

While John Linnegar and I were attending the annual conference of the Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) in Oxford in September, we had the pleasure of meeting a delightful Australian, Elizabeth Manning Murphy, and the opportunity to purchase copies of her book *Working Words*, which had just been published by the Canberra Society of Editors in Australia.

*Working Words* is a collection of 'chats' (chapters written in a chatty style) about aspects of editing and writing, and is based on articles written by Elizabeth Manning Murphy for the society's newsletter, *The Canberra editor*, over a period of ten years. Besides the chats, there are also a few fun pieces scattered throughout the book, called 'itchypencils', which describe instances of itchy pencilitis (the disease that afflicts all true editors when they find themselves without a writing implement and are confronted with public signs and notices they think cry out to be corrected, clarified or recorded).

Its blurb describes *Working Words* as follows: The book is for dipping into—it's not a textbook, but is a companion to books on grammar, style, punctuation, plain English, editing, and the business of being a freelance writer or editor.

All this is true, and points to the fact that *Working Words* is not meant to be a language-usage manual or a reference text. However, John and I were completely taken with it, somewhat unexpectedly finding ourselves reading it for hours on end instead of 'dipping into' it. That's how good and relevant it is.

*Working Words* has been divided into eight parts, with their headings providing an idea of the scope of the topics covered in the book: 'The craft of editing'; 'Editors beware: Ethical and legal considerations'; 'The business of editing'; 'Grammar – some basics'; 'Grammar—beyond the basics'; 'Punctuation—marks that matter'; 'What is style?'; and 'The future of working words'. The author is a trained linguist, an editor of long standing, a consultant in communication skills and a trainer in effective writing; and in the course of her varied career has reflected on many of the numerous issues that give editors pause for thought on a daily basis. The book goes to the nub of the issues, problems and challenges that editors inevitably experience with most manuscripts they take on.



**President**

Gil Garcon  
0414 701 470  
6216 6572 (wk)  
gil.garcon@three.com.au

**Vice-president**

Vacant

**Secretary**

Martin Holmes 0431 268 948  
Martin.Holmes-Forte@bigpond.com

**Treasurer**

Tracy Harwood 0402 627 530  
tracyharwood@grapevine.net.au

**Training coordinator**

Vacant

**Membership secretary**

Margaret Millard  
margaret.millard@ozemail.com.au

**Newsletter**

Editor: Kerie Newell  
0412 042 974  
kerie.newell@bigpond.com.au  
Design: Hilary Cadman  
Proofreader: Megan Cope

**Meeting coordinator**

Ara Nalbandian  
yerevanarax7@hotmail.com

**IPEd delegate**

Cathy Nicholl 6259 2984  
Cathy.Nicholl@atrax.com.au

**IPEd Accreditation delegate**

Ted Briggs  
6161 4924  
0407 018 433  
tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au

**Committee members**

Helen Topor  
Emma Field  
Leanne Pattison

**Non-committee positions****Catering coordinator**

Liz Phillips 0403 941 058  
lizphillips@gmail.com

**Public officer**

Vacant

**Web minder**

Cathy Nicholl

According to Elizabeth Manning Murphy, many of the topics for the chats 'happened as a direct result of requests from working editors, would-be editors and people who didn't learn the whys and wherefores of English grammar at school'. Her approach to language usage is both authoritative and open to different ideas. As the author tells us, 'I am a descriptive linguist, not a prescriptive grammarian'. At the same time, this is not a case of 'anything goes'. Despite her flexible touch and egalitarian ways, the author consistently explains and clearly substantiates her views on the issues she raises.

This attitude applies equally well to all the other topics in the book. Again and again, one marvels at solid content accessibly expressed, at the work of someone who clearly loves to share and impart knowledge accumulated through long reflection and experience.

The tone is engaging, personal, practical and immediate, and the book acts as a friendly mentor that is always within one's reach. Elizabeth Manning Murphy has a crisp, fresh way with words. Each chapter sizzles with energy, and offers clear thinking, wisdom and good humour in large quantities.

Described slightly differently, this is a title that provides good cheer and encouragement on the path of an editor's life. *Working Words* is the kind of book that makes more experienced practitioners feel both affirmed and challenged. At the same time, I cannot think of a better buy for someone starting out on a career as an editor (especially as a freelance); it will make new editors feel grounded.

In summary, this is a book to be savoured, a steadfast companion not only to other books but also to its readers. You will find it useful to dip into, especially since it has a decent index. However, don't be surprised if you find yourself including it in your holiday or your fireside reading.

*Isabelle Delvare works as a writer, editor and a lecturer in publishing studies. She currently heads the Professional Editors' Group (PEG) in South Africa. This review was first published in the group's newsletter, PEGboard, in December 2011. <http://www.editors.org.za/>*

*Used with permission.*

## From the editor

Welcome to the first issue of The Canberra editor for 2012 and a belated happy New Year to all.

This year is the society's 40th anniversary and, despite some recent events, I am sure that 2012 will be celebrated in style. You will already be aware that we have lost our vice-president, training coordinator and the newsletter's typesetter. Fortunately, the email sent to all members advertising these vacancies has provided the newsletter with a new graphic designer — a great relief for all.

The other positions are still open to all members and I would encourage anyone interested to apply.

Further bad news plagued the society in early February when we learned that our president, Gil Garcon, is not well. Gil's ill-health has distressed all committee members and those who know him. We hope that he has a speedy recovery.

In 2011 your newsletter lost several regular contributors. At the IPed conference in September, the newsletter editors of all state societies met and agreed that we would share articles. So far, this has worked out quite well but it is not the same as having regular contributors who you know and can talk to on a regular basis.

So, in 2012, I am asking all members of the society to think about contributing to the newsletter. We have quite a few accredited editors

now and it would be much appreciated if they would use their skills and contribute to the newsletter. Hilary Cadman, our retiring designer, has written a monthly article about online applications and software she uses. It would be great if we could keep providing information about web publishing, online editing procedures and other technical areas. Web accessibility is one area of particular interest to me and all editors who work with government and I will be writing about it in the March issue.

The marketing of the society's first publication, *Working Words*, is progressing and I would like to thank Leanne Pattison for the enormous time and effort she has put in to contact people and establish distribution outlets. The book is being sold through Paperchain in Manuka, Readings in Melbourne and the University Co-op bookshops at the ANU and University of Canberra. It is also available online through Paperchain, Readings, Nielson and, of course, the CSE website.

This issue carries a glowing review of *Working Words* from South Africa and an interview with its author, Elizabeth Manning Murphy.

Until next month...

**Kerie Newell**

---

## **News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited (www.iped-editors.org) November – December 2011**

### ***Ed Highley***

The IPEd Council met twice during the period covered by these notes, on 13 November and 11 December. Both meetings were by teleconference.

### ***New IPEd Accreditation Board Chair***

At its November meeting, council welcomed WA editor Carla Morris AE, a member of both that state's society and Victoria's, as the new AB Chair. The board is moving into high gear and planning for the next exam, scheduled for the second half of 2012. A call for exam assessors was put out to Accredited and Distinguished Editors during December. The board is also working on development of an onscreen version of the exam, to test whether such an exam is viable. If it is, 2013 is the target for its delivery and implementation.

### ***Revision of ASEP***

Workshops giving members the opportunity to contribute to the revision of the CASE/IPEd Australian Standards for Editing Practice will be held during February 2012 in the NSW, SA, Tasmania and WA societies. Queensland held its standards-revision workshop in early December, and the Canberra society discussed the revision at its regular October 2011 meeting but a date is yet to be set. Planning and implementation of the revision process are being managed on behalf of the council by Kerry Davies AE. Kerry, who is president of the Queensland society, will facilitate the forthcoming workshops, as she did the earlier workshop of her own society.

### ***Communication matters***

At its December meeting, council recorded, with regret, the resignation, due to work pressures, of Rowena Austin AE as Communication Committee (CommComm) Convenor. Rowena has long been a guiding light in IPEd's communication plans and activities, and council will miss her guidance and experience on matters of promotion and advocacy.

Also at the December meeting, council endorsed a new policy covering communication and information dissemination in the institute. The policy promotes the free flow of information between all stakeholders in IPEd and full transparency in IPEd's work on behalf of its members and the wider profession. The policy is on the website.

### **The IPEd Prize**

To support and foster research in editing and publishing, as part of its broader mission to enhance the profession of editing, IPEd has established an annual 'IPEd Prize' for an essay on editing or publishing. Entry will be open to students enrolled in postgraduate tertiary education courses in editing and publishing. The author of the winning essay will receive \$250, and their essay will be published on the IPEd website, where more details about the award can be found.

### **IPEd web minder**

Following a call for volunteers from the societies, the IPEd Council is pleased to announce that Paul Bugeja, a member of the Victorian society, has accepted the position. Paul's day-to-day work is currently as a digital editor with a sports betting agency, managing a pool of writers across a multitude of sports. He has tertiary qualifications in screenwriting, professional writing and editing, copywriting, dramatic art and arts/commerce, and noted in his offer to IPEd that he 'would love the opportunity to help out an organisation I clearly support'. Welcome aboard Paul.

### **Training and professional development**

Victoria's Rosemary Noble AE and Susan Wales AE have updated the compilation of training activities undertaken by all the societies over the past three years. It's an impressive list and contains many items that, all circumstances permitting, IPEd, through its 'transportable training' scheme, would be pleased to support re-running in societies including those in which they were first held. On the IPEd website you can find out what's on offer.

### **Barbara Ramsden Award 2011**

During December–January, IPEd-appointed judges Rosemary Luke AE and Rosemary Noble AE will be assessing publishers' entries for this year's Barbara Ramsden Award for excellence in editing. The award, sponsored by IPEd, is made in recognition of the synergy between author and editor that is essential to produce a high-quality publication. More details will be put on the website as they come to hand.

### **Reciprocal membership of UK society**

Negotiations are in progress to recognise IPEd Accredited Editor status as a substantive part of the requirements for advanced status membership of the UK Society of Editors and Proofreaders ([www.sfep.org.uk](http://www.sfep.org.uk)). More details next issue.

*All the best for 2012 ...*

*Ed Highley*

## **An interview with Elizabeth Manning Murphy, DE**

### **Megan Cope**

Elizabeth Manning Murphy's latest book, *Working Words*, has been ten years in the making, according to the author, although it was only in the last couple of years that she decided to put it together as a collection.

Recently, I interviewed Elizabeth—fellow member of the Canberra Society of Editors—about her book, to learn more about the processes behind writing a book like this.

One thing which stands out is the style it is written in. While many similar books can sound preachy, 'chats' are the perfect name for the sections of *Working Words*. Elizabeth said that she deliberately set out to write the book this way to avoid sounding 'threatening' or 'dictatorial'. She wanted it to sound 'friendly'. All her books have been written this way because it is the style that works best for her readers.

*Working Words* is aimed at a wide audience—it is not only for editors, but for anyone interested in editing, writing and words in general. 'The whole idea is that, no matter who you are, if the words don't work, the document doesn't work,' Elizabeth said.

In particular, editors need to make words work, 'whether one's own or someone else's'. The book also helps to remove the 'mystique' of the editing career; mystique not on the part of the editor but of clients not knowing what kind of edit is required, and not knowing what is involved in editing. She said the editing profession could make itself more accessible to the public and is beginning to do so through the Institute of Professional Editors in Australia and other bodies.

Elizabeth also said that editing was only part of the story. The other aspect of making words work was helping a lot of people who did not do English grammar in school and now find themselves in middle management and expected to help others get their start. When they are asked grammar-related questions, they often 'have a gut feeling, but cannot explain what is wrong', she said. The book is also intended to assist these people, as it explains some of the common, tricky aspects of grammar in words that 'everyone can understand'.

Of course, a project like this requires the input of other people. Elizabeth singled out editor Ara Nalbandian for his skilful grouping of the original articles and Carina Manning for her design and layout of the book. She called it a 'joint effort' by a number of people. She said that she was very happy with how the project had turned out, and is keen for it to benefit the Canberra Society of Editors as its first foray into book publishing.

---

## Saving time with PhraseExpress

### *Hilary Cadman*

I recently joined the Editorial Freelancers Association ([www.the-efa.org](http://www.the-efa.org)). Based in the United States, the EFA has a broad membership that includes editors, writers, indexers, proofreaders, researchers, designers and translators. Like the Canberra Society of Editors, the EFA has an online freelancer directory, a newsletter and a discussion list. And it also has a job-listing service.

A chance comment on the EFA discussion list led me to PhraseExpress ([www.phraseexpress.com](http://www.phraseexpress.com)), an excellent little program for Windows that can correct typos and complete particular phrases. The program is much like the 'autocorrect' function in MS Word, but has the advantage of working across all applications—Word, Excel, Outlook, Thunderbird, Wordpress, and so on. It's also very user friendly.

I use PhraseExpress to save time when typing words or phrases that I use often. For example, when I type the letters 'hx', the word 'Hilary' magically appears on the screen (very useful, as I frequently misspell my name when signing off on emails). Other 'snippets' that I have set up in PhraseExpress include:

- 'hivx' for 'human immunodeficiency virus' or 'human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)'—a single abbreviation can be used for multiple phrases, and the program shows a pop-up menu from which to choose the desired phrase
- 'faox' for 'Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations'
- 'plsx' with 'Please check rewrite, original unclear' (a phrase I use often when writing comments to authors).

I put an 'x' at the end of all my snippets, so that I can easily remember them, but in the testimonials on the website, one user says, 'Because I can't remember the short cuts I use I have lots of alternatives and away we go'. He also notes, 'It is so easy to add phrases. I haven't worked out how or even if it matters where my phrases are stored but the program just sorts it out. Well done'.

Having used the program for a couple of months, I would certainly recommend PhraseExpress. The program is free for personal use. For those wishing to use the program in their work, the cost is about US\$50 for the standard version and US\$140 for the professional version.



**PHRASEEXPRESS**



## Biotext writing and editing courses 2012

Biotext is offering their highly acclaimed *Successful science writing and editing* course in Melbourne, Canberra and Brisbane in 2012 (for more information, see the courses section of the Biotext website at [www.biotext.com.au](http://www.biotext.com.au)).

**Registration:** Positions are limited, so please register your interest soon.

Melbourne: 3 July; Canberra: 5 July; Brisbane: 7 August

We are also offering our *Publication management* course (for anyone putting together an annual report or other large publication), in Canberra: 19 April.

Contact: If you have any questions about the Biotext courses or would like a quote for workplace training, please contact Kylie Evans on 02 6282 2280 or email [kylie.evans@biotext.com.au](mailto:kylie.evans@biotext.com.au).

## Where does XML fit in?

***Digital publishing in Australia has taken off since the launch of the iPad, but what does this publishing technology do, and how does it compare to the current production tools of word processors, desktop publishing and graphic design software? Dave Gardiner explores the concepts of structured authoring to put XML into context and will continue with digital publishing in further issues of this newsletter***

### **Introduction**

Digital publishing is a term to describe the production workflow that is used to create different ebook formats for various computer platforms (e.g. PCs, laptops, ebook readers, tablets and smartphones). The term 'digital publishing' is currently gaining more popular use in the literature about publishing than another term used widely over the past decade or so, which is 'single-source publishing'. Digital publishing and single-source publishing are synonymous terms that cover the same type of workflow: that a document (or more generically, 'digital content') is stored in only one format, and that different output documents can be produced from that one source for print and electronic formats (Mackenzie 2011, p. 92). Some output document formats include PDF, epub, HTML web pages, RTF and 'help' documents (this last term covers documents produced using 'help authoring tools' and includes WebHelp and wiki pages, which technical communicators produce when writing user documentation for software).

### **Authoring formats**

Digital publishing can be categorised into two types of production, depending on how digital content (i.e. text, graphics, tabular data, metadata) is stored—'unstructured authoring' and 'structured authoring'. Authoring, in the context of digital publishing, refers to the entire production process from writing right through to deriving final documents.

Unstructured authoring is the environment in which authors, editors and publishers currently work. Documents are written, stored, designed and produced with an emphasis on page-based visual formatting—known as 'what you see is what you get' (WYSIWYG). Word processing software is used first in the publishing workflow to create textual content, then graphics packages are used separately to create and format images, figures and charts. Desktop publishing packages, such as Adobe InDesign, help to refine the visual aspect of document design before final documents are produced—such as PDF. In an unstructured workflow, the storage format of the content changes as a document moves from one stage to the next, and from one document format to the next; each step in the production forces users to change to a different storage format, thus 'going backwards' in the extra time it takes to convert between formats (and in reformatting pages and redesigning text styles) before moving forward again towards a final design. And if you need to also create web pages, then even more time is taken to convert content into HTML format and to redesign styles in yet other formats.

Structured authoring, on the other hand, is the emerging main type of workflow for digital publishing, and is based on content stored in various XML formats. XML is a text-based formatting language (in the same way that HTML for web pages is also text-based). It involves a completely different way of storing and producing documents because it uses a structured, logical approach to add meaning to content (by using 'tags'), and ensures that relationships between different types of content are specifically defined and rigidly maintained. Publishing content in a structured format is referred to as

a 'what you see is what you mean' (WYSIWYM) production environment because the emphasis is on adding meaning to content, rather than focusing on visual design.

XML enforces a publishing environment where content starts out in a non-visual text format. Structured authoring is true single-source publishing because all content is stored in one XML format right at the start of production. XSLT stylesheets (XSLT is a variation of XML) are used to convert that one source to multiple output documents (e.g. PDF, epub, web pages); unlike word processing, there is no change in text formats when moving through the editing and typesetting stages because most of the production is done using one software package (an XML editor).

Read the rest of this article at <http://tinyurl.com/6osbon8>. Got a question? Post it at <http://tinyurl.com/7yqk4q8>.

### **Reference**

Mackenzie, J (2011) *The editor's companion*, 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne.

## Review of the standards

### **Did you know the editing standards are under review?**

#### **Cathy Nicholl**

In our November newsletter, we described the outcomes of a discussion about how the Australian Standards for Editing Practice (ASEP) might change. In our discussions, we looked at:

- the structure, and how much change we thought would be appropriate (or not)
- whether we should move from a knowledge approach to a skills approach
- whether we preferred the use of more active language (we all supported this)
- how skills around new technology should be incorporated.

You can read the article in more detail online at <http://www.editorscanberra.org/november2011/>.

#### **Where to from here?**

As you have probably realised, some many important issues were not dealt with, partly due to the amount of time we had. An hour or so was simply not long enough. Other questions that need discussion are:

- What is the purpose of the standards? Compared with the original ASEP, the draft has more emphasis on its use by employers, educational institutions and accrediting bodies to assess skills of editors. Is this something you support?
- Should the draft revert to the existing format and structure (of ASEP) with minimal rewording and simply incorporating any new information identified through this process?
- Do we need to hold a workshop to work through some of these issues in more detail?

The feedback I have had in emails and the poor attendance at the meeting suggests that most Canberra editors are generally comfortable with the draft. There are comments about some details, which will be incorporated into our response to IPEd. Participants at the October meeting were asked to go through the draft and the current ASEP, and email comments back to me at <cathy.nicoll@atrax.net.au>. I would also value comments from other members.

You can still comment if you want to, but you will need to do so quickly.

The next step is for IPEd to compile the responses and prepare another draft for endorsement by the state and territory societies.

---

---

# Contents

Book review . . . . .	1
From the editor . . . . .	2
IPEd notes . . . . .	3
Interview . . . . .	4
Onscreen editing . . . . .	5
Training. . . . .	6
Digital publishing . . . . .	6
Review of the standards . . . . .	7

## The Canberra editor

Published by the Canberra Society of Editors

PO Box 3222 Manuka ACT 2603

21st year, number 1

© Canberra Society of Editors 2012

ISSN 1039-3358

Opinions and statements in signed articles are those of the author.

### Newsletter schedule

The next newsletter will appear in March 2012 and for that issue the copy deadline is 30 February 2012.

The editor welcomes contributions by email to:  
<kerie.newell@bigpond.com>.

All articles must be in .doc format.

---

If undeliverable, please return to:

**Canberra Society of  
Editors**

PO Box 3222,  
Manuka ACT 2603

SURFACE  
MAIL

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA

---

Print Post approved  
PP 299436/00098