

## Selling Shakespeare to today's audience

Ricky Bryan, Marketing Manager at Canberra Theatre Centre, talked to us last month about the challenge of marketing Shakespeare in the 21st century, and why words play such an important part in theatre marketing campaigns.

Ricky outlined the exhausting process he went through in writing, editing and publishing the 44 page A5 booklet that was the core of the marketing campaign to sell the Theatre's 2010 subscriber season, a task made more difficult over the last few years with 1000 fewer subscribers than before the GFC. The booklet is edited by CSE member Bree Winchester.

Ricky's process involves managing the expectations and requirements of the government and private enterprise sponsors, the theatre companies who put on the shows, and the audience. There were 20 key stakeholders in the first two groups alone, and the booklet required the approval of each of these.

Each of the 14 shows in the season has a two facing-page spread in the booklet, with a photo on the left hand page and a blurb on the right hand page. The blurbs come from the theatre companies putting on the shows, with Ricky's requirement being a blurb of less than 300 words that will give a feeling of a one-on-one conversation to a potential subscriber. Each one had to say, in effect, 'don't miss this show; it's going to be great!'

Each blurb needs four paragraphs: a hook, a plot outline, some information about the

show's production, and a sign-off. Some of the companies are big, well-resourced and experienced, and others small and not so well resourced and experienced, so the contributions vary widely and Ricky spends a good deal of time massaging them into the required voice and structure.

Besides a photo, the left-hand page needs a quote. For instance, the quote for *Rain Man*, the next show in the season (July 13-17), is:

'Dan Gordon's adaptation for *Rain Man* for the theatre is a triumph', *This Is London* (UK).

Besides the detail on the shows, the booklet also give subscribers information on how to buy tickets. As there are a number of subscription options and prices this section can be complicated, so the flow of information and attention to detail in this section is critical.

Ricky concluded with some 'take-homes':

- this sort of booklet has to be a bit of a fruity, one-on-one conversation with the potential subscriber
- get help (especially from your internal experts) when you need it
- clear the layout with the sponsors well beforehand
- give the theatre companies as early as possible information on the required structure, the timeline, and what's required in, and of, the blurb.

And we all recognise those take-homes...

Dallas Stow

### Next meeting

30 June

6.30 pm

### Managing client relationships

with Judy Waters, one of Canberra's leading marketing and communications consultants.

See page 2.



## Your committee for 2009–10

### President

Cathy Nicoll 6259 2984  
Cathy.Nicoll@atrax.net.au

### Vice-president

Damaris Wilson 6247 3111  
Damaris.Wilson@afp.gov.au

### Immediate past-president

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

### Secretary

Brian O'Donnell 6297 5705  
odonnell1@netspace.net.au

### Treasurer

Margaret Millard 6288 6754  
0402 029 552  
margaret.millard@ozemail.com.au

### Public officer

Helen Topor 6275 7222 (w)  
Helen.Topor@afp.gov.au

### Training coordinator

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

### Membership secretary

Ed Highley 0412 358 151  
ed@clarusdesign.com

### Web minder

Gabby Lhuede  
(contact Cathy Nicoll)

### Newsletter editor

Gil Garcon 04 1470 1470  
Gil.Garcon@ato.gov.au

### Newsletter copy-editor

Kerie Newell 0412 042 974  
kerie.newell@deewr.gov.au

### Meeting coordinator

Briony Winchester  
0404 856 925  
Bree@couchcreative.com.au

### Catering coordinator

Liz Phillips 0403 941 058  
liziphillips@gmail.com

### IPEd delegate

Ted Briggs 6161 4924  
0407 018 433

### IPEd Accreditation Board delegate

Larissa Joseph 6161 5216  
larissa.joseph@gmail.com

### Committee members

Martin Blaszczyk 6156 0997  
Elena Guarracino  
Kevin Maguire  
Claudia Marchesi

# June general meeting

## Managing client relationships

One of Canberra's leading marketing and communications consultants, Judy Waters, joins us at our June meeting for some sage advice on managing client relationships.

Judy will provide advice on finding new clients, building genuine and collaborative relationships with clients and the frequent challenge of negotiating your way to 'yes' with a client!

As the former owner of Canberra-based boutique advertising agency and event management company, Judy's clients in the past have ranged from senior government leaders and corporate sponsors to cultural institutions and one of Australia's biggest wine distillers.

Judy worked with ACT Tourism on Floriade in its infancy and helped shape the event it is today.

Recently, she worked with the National Gallery of Australia on the Masterpieces from Paris marketing campaign, securing 400,000 visitors to Canberra. Judy has been on the boards of the ACT Chamber of Commerce, ACT Cultural Council and Jigsaw Theatre Company.

*Bree Winchester*

# Committee positions

We will hold our annual general meeting in August, and it is time to start thinking about filling committee positions. Feel free to have a chat with some of the current committee members at the next general meeting to see how you can be more involved in what happens in your society.

# Next training course

## Building and maintaining an online presence: an introductory course

Presenter: Michael Cairns

Date and time: Friday 27 June 2010, 9.00–4.00

Location: Acorn Training and Consulting  
74 Townshend St, Phillip ACT

Costs: members \$195 non-members \$295

Note: limit of 15 participants

Bookings: Martin Holmes

[martin.holmes-forte@bigpond.com](mailto:martin.holmes-forte@bigpond.com)  
6255 8142 0431 268 948

With the abundance of free web technologies to promote yourself and your work online, it is often hard to pick the simplest and most effective platform for sharing your information. Discussion about the pros and cons of some of the web technologies will provide an introduction to students' building their own web presence.

With a focus on simple implementation and ongoing management, students will begin building their website using some of the free technologies available, and gain some insight into how they can be used to continue their online presence.

Topics covered include:

- What's out there (and is it right for me)?
- Defining different technologies and their specific purposes
- Identifying which medium best suits your needs
- Time constraints and commitment: how this affects your site
- What to think about when building a website
- How to sell yourself
- Introduction to WordPress
- Getting started on building your own website
- Troubleshooting

### About Michael Cairns

Michael Cairns runs his own web development business. A passion for user-centred design and ease of use has seen him work with a variety of different clients from small publishers and artists to ASX listed companies.

Much of Michael's experience lies in maximising the opportunities presented by Open Source web technologies, social media and online publishing.

# Criteria for CSE membership: a position statement

**Criteria for the Canberra Society of Editors (CSE) membership are set out in the constitution. In summary, a person can become a full member if they are a practising editor, or have past experience. A person can become an associate member if they have an interest in editing.**

The membership criteria were established before a person could become an accredited editor by passing the IPEd examination. A debate has arisen in the CSE and other state societies that have similar membership criteria, whether a person should become a member based on accredited editor status.

A small subcommittee recently discussed this matter and has drafted a position statement for further discussion. Note that the position statement does not advocate changing the current membership criteria. A change to membership criteria requires successful passage at the annual general meeting (AGM) of a motion to amend the CSE constitution.

The AGM is scheduled to take place in August 2010. At this stage, the committee does not intend to put forward a motion to amend the constitution with respect to membership criteria. However, if anyone who thinks differently, they can raise the matter at an ordinary meeting, or the AGM.

*Martin Holmes*

## Position statement

**The current criteria for full membership of the CSE are professional engagement in editing or publishing, or past experience.**

If a person does not qualify for full membership, associate membership is available on the basis of an interest of any kind in editing or publishing.

Given that there are now several degree courses in editing (such as Canberra University, Macquarie University, University of Southern Queensland) and IPEd offers accreditation by examination, a CSE subcommittee has considered whether the CSE should change its criteria for full membership, to allow full membership on the basis of academic qualification.

The CSE is supportive of degree courses in editing and IPEd accreditation. The CSE believes that the profession of editing is enhanced by editors gaining formal qualifications. However, the CSE is a society of practising professional editors and believes that current, or past professional engagement in editing or publishing should remain the only criteria for full membership.

The CSE welcomes, and offers associate membership to, people who have formal editing qualifications but no professional editing or publishing experience. The CSE offers full membership to associate members when they commence professional editing or publishing.





# Getting to grips with tracking changes

**When I became a science editor, I discovered the ‘track changes’ function in MS Word, along with lots of other things such as templates and styles. At that time I was using Word 97 or 2000, and track changes was quite simple—tracking was either on or off, and changes were either shown or hidden.**

With the advent of Word 2003, the track changes function was linked to the reviewing toolbar; I found this so complicated that I avoided using it for as long as possible. However, eventually all the computers at home and at work had Word 2003, so I had no choice but to work with the reviewing toolbar.

Once I got to grips with it, I found it wasn’t so hard, and the many features of the tracking function are actually very useful; for example, I like being able to:

- work with comments visible (in balloons) and all other changes hidden
- use a shortcut to view or hide changes, and to turn tracking on or off
- quickly remove all the formatting changes
- view only the changes from specific reviewers.

The rest of this article explains these functions, and suggests ways to present an edited document to a client.

## **Working with comments only**

Most clients like to have the editing changes tracked so, at the start of a job, I turn on the tracking. Because I find it impossible to work with the changes showing, I go into the reviewing bar, click on ‘Show markup’ and untick ‘Insertions and deletions’ and ‘Formatting’, which leaves only ‘Comments’ visible. I set the comments to appear in balloons, because that makes it easy to see what comments I have made and where they are located.

## **Using shortcuts**

I’m now using Word 2007, so I have added the tracking button and the comments button to my ‘Quick access toolbar’. The tracking button allows me to see at a glance whether or not I have tracking

turned on. The comments button lets me add a comment without having to remember where to go in Word 2007 to find it! I also have Editor’s Toolkit (available from the Editorium at [www.editorium.com](http://www.editorium.com)) as an add-in to Word; it’s a set of macros that gives you shortcuts for various functions. With Editor’s Toolkit installed, you can use a keyboard shortcut (the F2 key) to turn tracking on or off, and another (F4) to show or hide the tracking.

## **Removing formatting changes**

Generally, clients are only interested in changes that involve insertions or deletions, and are happy not to see formatting changes. Turning tracking off when formatting and turning it back on when making more substantial changes is one option. However, this is a hassle, and it’s all too easy to forget to turn tracking back on when you have finished making a formatting change and have returned to editing the text. To get round this problem and remove all the formatting changes in one fell swoop, I recommend the following steps:

- Track everything as you are working.
- When you have finished editing, go to the reviewing function, click on ‘Show markup’ and untick everything except formatting, so that the only changes showing are the formatting ones.
- Click the ‘Accept’ button and select ‘Accept all changes shown’ to accept (and thus remove) all the formatting changes.

When moving a paragraph of text, I specifically turn off track changes. This avoids the whole paragraph being marked as changed text, which would mask any editing within the paragraph. Instead, I add a comment noting that I have moved the paragraph.

## **View only changes from specific reviewers**

When a client returns a file and has tracked their changes on top of yours, it can be difficult to see the client’s changes, even though Word will have assigned a different colour for each reviewer.

There are two options for making it easy to see the changes from the client:

# Software tips and tricks

- Accept your changes:
  1. Go to 'Show markup', click on 'Reviewers' and untick all the reviewers except for you.
  2. Click on 'Accept' and select 'Accept all changes shown' to accept (and remove) all your changes.
  3. Go back to Show markup', click on 'Reviewers' and then on 'All reviewers', to see all the remaining changes (now that your changes have been accepted, any remaining changes will be from the client).
- Hide your changes:
  1. Go to 'Show markup', click on 'Reviewers' and untick your name.
  2. The only changes visible will be those from the client. (The disadvantage of this approach is that if you have tracking turned on, and make further changes while going through the client's changes, all your changes will suddenly reappear).

## **Sending tracked documents to clients**

Even though I track all insertions and deletions, I encourage clients to look at the edited document without the tracking visible. Extensive changes can look a bit alarming and they make the text difficult to read. With Word 2003, if a tracked document was emailed with changes hidden, it appeared that way when the recipient opened it.

However, with Word 2007, the changes in a tracked document show up whenever the document is opened, so sending a document with changes hidden is not an option. To overcome this, I save a second version of a tracked document, add 'accepted' to the file name and accept all the changes. I send both versions to the client and suggest they work from the 'accepted' version, and refer to the tracked version only when necessary.

## **Conclusion**

Tracking and review functions are versatile tools and well worth getting to know. However, if you find these functions confusing, or have a senior's moment and realise that you've been editing for hours with tracking turned off, there is an alternative. Simply use the 'Compare' function to compare your final edited version to the client's original text; this will produce a new version with all changes tracked.

*Hilary Cadman*

## **The May committee meeting proposed to include in the newsletter articles about software tips and tricks that might be helpful to members. So here goes...**

If I am editing using Microsoft Word (I use Word 2003), my favourite shortcut is Ctrl-Alt-M. It inserts a comment at the cursor location and naturally I tend to want to do that quite often.

Ctrl-Shift-G is another useful shortcut. If I come across a sentence that is just too long, I select the sentence and then use Ctrl-Shift-G. This tells me how many words there are in the sentence. Then I use Ctrl-Alt-M to insert a note explaining that 'A 56 word sentence is a bit long so...'. In practice, I have found this to be more effective than just proposing the change.

There are many ways of selecting text, but my favourite is one to use for oddly shaped pieces of text; click at the start of that piece of text, hold down the Shift key and then click at the end of the piece of text.

Adjusting table column widths can sometimes be tricky. You can select the column border and drag it to where you want it, but sometimes it just doesn't seem to want to go there. What is happening is that it is 'snapping' to an invisible grid. If you hold down the Alt key while you drag the border, you override the grid and can control the border location precisely.

If there is some software issue that you find annoying and would like covered in a later article, send me an email at <odonnell1@netspace.net.au>.

*Brian O'Donnell*





# Thinking about words: witnessing a protest

*Timeo danaos et dona ferentes.* Virgil, *Aeneid* (II, 49)

Laocoön, a priest of Troy, was right to say, looking out at the wooden horse in which the Greek warriors were hiding, 'I fear the Greeks, even when they bring gifts'. But saying it did him no good—the gullible Trojans wheeled the horse into their city, and the concealed warriors opened the way for the Greek army to charge in. The city was destroyed, the men were massacred, the women taken into slavery, and Laocoön and his twin sons were killed by the great serpents sent by Minerva.

As I write this in mid-May, are we seeing an opposite scenario? The European community is offering the Greeks a \$110 billion package to prop up their failing economy, and yet Greek protesters want to refuse it, not wanting the belt-tightening that would be part of the deal. Should we now fear the Greeks refusing gifts? (Well, perhaps, not exactly *gifts* ...) Are their protests a 'Trojan horse' that could trigger another global financial crisis?

The Greek government has accepted the package—it is a sizeable mass of the people who are being violently awkward. *Protesting*. And *protest* is an odd word in this context, when you pull it apart and think about it. Writers in the 16th century already referred to the *pros et contras*, the pros and cons of an issue; in this light, the riots in Athens seem more like *con*-tests than *pro*-tests—the demonstrators are *contra* the offer and *pro* refusing it. When the word 'protest' was first used it had the sense of a positive statement, perhaps when something had been called into question. When Hamlet asks Queen Gertrude how she likes the play within the play, the Queen replies, 'The lady doth protest too much, methinks.' The Queen didn't mean that the lady objected—on the contrary, she had just been swearing life-long fidelity to her recently slain first husband. In Shakespeare's day to protest meant to 'vow' or 'declare solemnly'. It was rather that the lady *affirmed* so volubly and at such length that she lost credibility. When you protest your innocence in court, you use this same meaning, although you might later protest *against* a guilty finding.

'Pro' has, of course, a variety of applications besides being a prefix-*cum*-preposition in the way described above. It gives a sense of forward movement in the words 'propel' or 'proceed'. It can mean 'standing in

place of', as in 'pronoun' or 'pro-consul'. Pro can even be an abbreviation for 'professional' or 'prostitute', an uncomfortable pairing.

But what of the root part of protest, the '-test'? Almost every instance of 'test' in the English language goes back to the Latin *testis*, a witness. *Testing* was formerly very much focussed on assaying the purity of gold and other precious metals. However, without being tried in the refining fires you may nowadays safely sit IPEd's accreditation test, to witness your competence and obtain a *testimonial* of quality as a 24-carat editor. In the original meaning of 'protest' you were bearing witness in favour of something, *testifying* or *attesting* it. Your last will and *testament* witnesses your intentions to dispose of your property, and if you leave it all to the local cats' home your ailurophobic descendants may *contest* it, bearing witness against it. Quite incidentally, *testis* also refers to those inconspicuous male organs that contribute to the next generation, but here the OED says 'etymology uncertain'. No such uncertainty for the French, whose biggest dictionary states firmly that *testicules* (from the Latin diminutive *testiculi*) are '*considérés comme les signes, les témoins de la virilité*'. And *témoin* just means 'witness'.

So where does our English word 'witness' come from? It has to be related to *wit* in some way, which originally meant 'know'. It comes from the Old English verb *witan*, to know (modern German *wissen*); its first person singular is *I wot*, as in *I wot not*. So a witness is someone who knows, perhaps by having observed some event, or who is qualified to *attest* to a signature. If you are sane you have your *wits* about you, but we more often think of 'wit' in relation to humour. The French call wit *esprit* (like the clothing brand) and somebody who is witty is said to be *spirituel*. This can be a bit confusing, particularly as *spirituel* may also have its English meaning, and *esprit* also means 'spirit', as in the *Saint Esprit*.

If you test something you are proving something about it, and originally 'prove' meant simply 'test'. 'Prove' and 'probe' have common origins, evolving apart in obedience to Grimm's Law, where f, v, b and p swap around in many European

# President's report

languages as words develop. Sayings like 'the exception proves the rule' and 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating' both require the modern reader to change prove/proof back into 'test' in order to make sense. 'Proof' also has a very special connotation. The strength of scotch whisky is now printed on the label as 40% alcohol (or 42% or whatever), but it used to be so much under- or overproof. Before 1980, the alcohol content of a drink was defined in Britain in terms of 'proof spirit'. This measure began in the 18th century to ensure that British sailors' rum rations weren't watered down. A little was poured on gunpowder, and if the wet powder wouldn't burn the rum contained too much water and was called 'under proof'. If it just passed the test it was '100 degrees proof', actually 57% alcohol by volume. Anything more than 100 is 'overproof'. So my 40% scotch is well under proof—in fact, only a modest 70% proof. Americans arbitrarily define proof as twice the alcohol percentage, so there it would be 80% proof, but no stronger for all that ...

This topic has wandered away from protests and become rather thirst-inducing. I shall resist the temptation to think about possible *reproof* or to wonder if I am becoming an old *reprobate*, and pour myself a little something on the rocks. This will do nothing for the Greek economy or the Australian balance of payments, but will help to keep some industrious Scot in full employment. I can indulge myself, and *prove* myself a benefactor at the same time.

Peter Judge

#### Sources:

*Oxford English Dictionary* Second Edition on CD-ROM (v. 4.0), 2009.

*Le Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé*, at <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/tlf.htm>>.

*The Cambridge Guide to English Usage*, Pam Peters, 2004.

## **We've had a busy month with discussions around a new look for the society, IPEd involvement and issues around membership.**

The proposed new website is still in development, and you can have a preview of the proposed structure at [www.wb2615.net/cse](http://www.wb2615.net/cse). If you have an entry in the freelance register, you should definitely have a look at the proposed structure for that. Send any feedback back to me so we can make any necessary changes. Our current hosting arrangement finishes at the end of this month, so we hope to have the new version up and running by then.

Our support for IPEd continues, and we are looking for ways to increase society involvement in IPEd's activities. If being more involved in advancing the editing profession at a national level is something you want to be involved in, then please get in touch with me or Ted Briggs (our IPEd delegate) so we can point you in the right direction.

Finally, there was some suggestion that we should adjust our membership rules to take accreditation into account. A small subcommittee met to discuss this, and there was further discussion at the last general meeting. We suggest no change with respect to formal recognition of qualifications—including accreditation—in our rules at this stage (see next column). There was some discussion about whether other criteria should be considered, such as members' association with the Australian Capital Region. At this stage there is no more than a discussion, and we invite members to contribute your views to the debate.

Cathy Nicoll





# Is your confusion showing?

**You want to edit that heading? So do I. But there are many people who wouldn't spot the error in it, so I'm going to highlight just a few common confusions and hope that these will alert you to keep your eyes peeled in your own writing and when editing others' material.**

*You're*, eh? Well, that should be *your*, not *you're*. There are two rules at work here. The first is the use of the apostrophe to indicate omission. When we leave letters out of words, we replace them with an apostrophe. So *you are* becomes *you're* in casual speech—but that's not what's intended here.

The second rule concerns case in personal pronouns. *Your* is the possessive form of the pronoun *you*. Personal pronouns in English have what's called case—subjective, objective and possessive case. This follows the old Latin case system, though is not as extensive as in Latin.

- You (subject) may accompany me (object) when we (subject) visit our (possessive) school.

Note that while the apostrophe is used to indicate possession in nouns (the *dog's* tail) and some pronouns (*anyone's* guess), it is not used to indicate possession in personal pronouns—precisely because there is a special form of the pronoun for possessive in a case system (*my/mine, your/yours, his/his, her/hers, its/its, our/ours, their/theirs*).

So, the heading should be *Is your confusion showing?* You 'own' the confusion, so the correct form of the pronoun is *your*—possessive case.

Just to confuse you further, how about *its* and *it's*?

The same rule applies. *It* is a personal pronoun, so is part of the personal pronoun case system, and when we mean the possessive form, we use *its* (no apostrophe):

- The cat had a mouse in *its* mouth.

When we mean the abbreviated form of *it is*, we write *it's*:

- *It's* a fine day.

There is a very common confusion about the use of the apostrophe to indicate simple plural. Generally, the apostrophe is quite unnecessary.

You may see these:

- Today's specials: onion's, apple's, orange's
- I bought three DVD's yesterday.

They should be:

- *Today's* specials (meaning specials of today—possession): *onions, apples, oranges* (simple plural—the 's' is all that is required)
- I bought three *DVDs* yesterday (simple plural).

The only time an apostrophe is necessary to indicate plural is in something like *Mind your p's and q's* where *p* and *q* are lower case and reading *ps* and *qs* would be difficult.

Here's another confusion involving apostrophes that you wouldn't normally encounter in writing, but it is very common in speech:

- He's coming to the movies with us and then we're going to *he's* place for supper.

*He's place* should be *his place*—he owns the place. *His* is the possessive form of *he*, and is pronounced with a short 'i'—not an 'ee' sound.

Sometimes placement of the apostrophe is a problem. It is correct to put an apostrophe where letters are left out of a word, but it needs to be exactly in the right place. So, the shortened form of *would not* is *wouldn't*, not *would'nt* because it's the word *not* that has had the letter 'o' left out.

Other instances of omission of letters include:

- Jack *O'Brien* (where *O'* means *son of*)
- we leave at one *o'clock* sharp (where *o'* is short for *of the*)
- ... and a clumsy one that I hope you won't use, unless absolutely necessary in conversation in a novel: *wouldn't've* (meaning *would not have*).

Where do you put the apostrophe to indicate possession in such compound expressions as:

- the policy of the Department of the Attorney-General
- the umbrella of my brother-in-law?

You put them at the end of the compound:

- the Attorney-General's Department's policy
- my *brother-in-law's* umbrella is black
- my three *sisters-in-law's* dresses were specially made for them (but: my three *sisters'* dresses were different colours).



# Letter to the editor

Have you noticed that where there is a plural owner (as in *sisters'* above), the apostrophe goes after the s?

Where there is joint possession, one apostrophe and s are placed after the second of the two 'owners' or 'associates':

- *Mary and Joan's* room is the second on the left.

Where the possession is not joint, each name takes an apostrophe:

- *Peter's* and *Paul's* rooms are on opposite sides of the corridor.

Enough confusion over apostrophes? Well, I'll be back...ah, does *I'll* stand for *I will* or *I shall*, or doesn't it need an apostrophe at all?

Let's look at that another time.

*Elizabeth Manning Murphy*

*My comment in the March issue about Elizabeth 'coming out of retirement' might have led some of you to think that Elizabeth had retired altogether. That is not the case; Elizabeth has simply retired from being a monthly contributor. We can look forward to more contributions from Elizabeth in the months to come.*

*Editor*

## What were you saying?



A clipping from the *Canberra Times* of Saturday 5 June. The greengrocer's apostrophe is quite shameful in this context—you might want to join them, but I don't think you'd want to employ them! It gives a new meaning to 'iconic'...

*Peter Judge*

IPEd proposes to increase the levy that the CSE pays to it on our behalf as CSE members. What's in it for us?

IPEd is a private company in which we, individual CSE members, are not shareholders. IPEd has no obligations towards any of us who finance it through our society. More astoundingly, IPEd councillors now no longer represent their society's interests. Instead, our CSE delegate to IPEd is obliged, by the corporations law and IPEd constitution, to make decisions that promote the interests of IPEd rather than the interests of the CSE, let alone the interests of CSE members. Seeing we pay for IPEd to exist in the first place, isn't this a bit odd?

Yet each one of us, regardless of CSE membership status and whether IPEd-accredited or not, is expected to allow over 40% (55% for associate members) of our CSE subscription to go to that private company.

Accreditation, by its very nature, promotes accredited editors over those who choose not to be accredited. Yet, those who have been denied accreditation by IPEd through its now flawed exam (but that's another story) have to support IPEd to the same extent as our IPEd-accredited colleagues. It's like us being members of a union (CSE) which finances a political party (IPEd) that prevents us from earning an income. Odd, isn't it?

I find it odd that IPEd accredits editors who are not members of societies and who pay no annual levy. I find it odd that IPEd has no funds to do a professional evaluation of its exam process for which candidates pay \$500, but can finance competitions and prizes for non-society members. I find it odd that IPEd is busy promoting itself with funds compulsorily levied from the editors whose professional status IPEd refuses to recognise. I find it very odd that we have to finance a private company over which we have no control.

There is a fundamental injustice in this arrangement. It is perhaps time for us CSE members to find out whether the private company that we have to pay for exists for our benefit or for its own. The law is quite clear: IPEd comes first, and we CSE members don't get a look in. So why should we finance it? Or finance it to the extent that we do?

*Gil Garcon*





# English alive: CSE or the CSE?

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A number of errors slipped in when this article first appeared in April. We have now corrected these errors so you can read Anne's contribution as it was intended to be. Editor

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## There is widespread use of initialisms with and without the definite article even within the same document.

Let's look at the shortened forms of Australian Government departments and agencies.

They are:

- acronyms (FaHCSIA, AusAID, DIAC)
- abridgements (Finance, Customs)
- initialisms (NHMRC, DSTO, DVA).

No one uses the definite article before the acronym or abridged form:

- \* *The ASIO* is Australia's security service.
- \* The agency provides policy advice to *the Customs*.

As acronyms are pronounceable, speakers may perceive them as proper nouns, most of which do not carry the definite article.

There is no such consensus, however, when initialisms are used. From the February 2010 Senate Estimates:

Senator Lundy—I certainly would like to know how the women's national league is performing on *ABC*.

Mr Scott—Sure. The other thing I will add is that *the ABC's* commitment to sport does not just extend to television, of course.

Although both utterances are made in the same social context, one speaker uses the article before *ABC* and the other does not.

Mr Scott uses the article in a noun phrase, *the ABC's commitment to sport*, with *ABC* in the possessive case. Senator Lundy omits the article in a prepositional phrase, *on ABC*, with *ABC* in the objective case. Perhaps the grammatical context determines whether the article is used.

However, a scan of government websites reveals initialisms with and without the definite article irrespective of grammatical structure:

*AGS* provides legal and related services in support of the full range of activities of Australian Government departments and agencies.

*The AFRC* aims to deliver the latest relevant research to family relationship service providers.

This reality has major implications for the costs of services delivered *by DPS*.

The portfolio is responsible for the investigation of all complaints received *by the AFP*.

I am proud of *DHS's* continued association with a community organisation, *VISACT*.

Traditionally, much of *the CDPP's* work has not involved crime directed at individual victims.

Perhaps writers' notions determine whether they use the article. I know of a manager in the Child Support Agency, for example, who intentionally uses *the CSA* in external correspondence but *CSA* in internal correspondence. It seems that when communicating with those who belong to the agency, she personalises the concept, seeing *CSA* as a name rather than an initialism, and so omits the article.

The co-occurrence of *the CSE* and *CSE* in one of our own articles may be similarly motivated:

The next meeting will be an informal session where we will gather ideas about how such a scheme could operate, and what would be the benefits to mentees, mentors, to *CSE*, and to the editing profession in general.

...

You should come to the meeting if you are new to *the CSE* and would like to make the most of your membership to expand your networks and develop your career.

In the first sentence the author is writing from the perspective of a long-term member and may be using *CSE* as a personalised name. In the second sentence the author is writing with new members in mind and may be using *the CSE* from a formal perspective.

The Senate Estimates example, however, contradicts this notional explanation: the senator says *ABC*; the *ABC* representative says *the ABC*.

Given this mayhem, I suggest that we guardians of consistent style insert the definite article where it is omitted before initialisms in formal contexts.

Anne Reed

\* The star is a device in linguistics that goes in front of a sentence to indicate unacceptable usage.

## Membership Renewal Form

Membership year 1 July–30 June

Membership expires on 30 June each year. Please renew **before 31 July** to remain financial.

**Note:** Only full members are eligible to vote at general meetings or be listed in the freelance register. Associate members who are currently employed in editing or publishing, or who have had appropriate experience in the past, may apply for full membership.

### How to pay

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<b>Please include your last name with your deposit</b>			

Cheques/money orders payable to Canberra Society of Editors

The form is also available on the website [www.editorscanberra.org/renewal\\_form.pdf](http://www.editorscanberra.org/renewal_form.pdf)

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PO Box 3222  
Manuka ACT 2603

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# It's membership renewal time again!

All memberships expire on 30 June—please renew before the end of July in order to remain financial. You can find a renewal form on page 11 of this newsletter and on the CSE website.

The fees for 2010–11 are:

- \$60 for full members,
- \$45 for associates,
- \$30 for students
- \$225 for corporate associates.

Please pay by EFT or direct deposit if possible. This is quicker, more efficient and less costly for the society than handling cheques. Payment details are included on the renewal form. Don't forget to send the form back as well so we have your contact details correct.

Payments by cheque or money order will still be accepted but are not our preferred method.

Contact the treasurer, Margaret Millard <margaret.millard@ozemail.com.au> if you have any questions about renewal payments.

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