

The Canberra



Newsletter of the Canberra Society of Editors volume 19 number 4 May 2010

Next meeting

26 May

6.30 pm

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

He will focus on the 48-page brochure he writes and edits as part of his campaign.

And we will follow up the meeting with our usual monthly dinner.

Last month and the lost weekend

Our April meeting was one with a difference: it was a joint event with the Reel McKoy Film Society. The feature was a 1945 movie, Billy Wilder's *The Lost Weekend*. For Canberra editors, the movie is a cautionary tale about the potential effects of rejection slips and negative editorial advice.

The Lost Weekend documents the devastating effects of alcoholism as a would-be writer (played by Ray Milland), apparently a gifted writer while at college, is unable to cope with his failure in the real world. We learn about the unfortunate woman who falls in love with him (Jane Wyman), and his brother (Philip Terry), both of whom keep hoping for reform. We learn also about how intimidating a blank piece of paper in a typewriter can be, and how easy it is to procrastinate rather than put fingers to keyboard.

Although disturbing in its theme, and slow to our modern tastes, the movie was groundbreaking in its time. It was the first to use the theremin—which most of us now recognise as the precursor to something scary, alien or strange in a movie. In this movie, it is used to show

the desperation of the alcoholic in needing another drink but wanting to be free of his addiction. *The Lost Weekend* was also one of the first to film effect of the 'character walking toward the camera as neon signs pass by'.

For editors the message is clear. Be kind in your comments and author queries, as you never know how the unfortunate author might respond.

Cathy Nicoll

The *Style manual*: expressions of interest invited

Time for a seventh edition of the *Style manual*? The Department of Finance and Deregulation has invited expressions of interest (EOI) for the 'Exploration of Solutions for the Australian Government's *Style Manual*'. The EOI is for the production, publication and distribution of the seventh edition *Style manual* in hard copy and digital format. See <<https://www.tenders.gov.au/?event=public.atm.show&ATMUID=858F170C-B6D8-3AB0-AA58907B761ABAAA>>.



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Training news: program for 2010

The next scheduled training course is 'Building and maintaining an online presence', presented by Michael Cairns. Details are below.

After the success of David Whitbread's full-day course on graphic design in 2009 and his half-day course in March this year, we are hoping to persuade him to present a full-day course later this year.

In December 2008, Martine Taylor did a survey of members' training needs and we have been using the results of that survey to plan training courses for 2010. One of the identified training needs was advanced techniques in MS Word.

Brian O'Donnell's February course on templates was planned in response to this need and we are also planning a full-day course on advanced MS Word techniques for later this year.

Expressions of interest please!

We are considering scheduling a half-day course on use of styles in MS Word, which Brian O'Donnell would present. All we need is a few expressions of interest emailed to martin.holmes-forte@bigpond.com

Numbers of people who attended Cathy Nicoll and Claudia Marchesi's March 'Editing essentials' course requested an encore. So, one or two emails, and we will ask them to do another, moving on from where they left off.

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
6255 8142 0431 268 948

With the abundance of free web technologies to promote yourself and your work online, it is often hard to disseminate which ones will offer the simplest and most effective platform for sharing your information. Discussion about the pro's and con's of some of the more prevalent 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 together 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.

A solution for Word worries



Over the past 10 years, I've spent most of my work time at the keyboard, so I think of myself as someone who is quite confident with MS Word—I know how to use templates and apply styles, and I'm familiar with a few keyboard shortcuts. However, I have some blank spots; for example, I've always had difficulty with macros and bookmarks (I never quite grasped what these were) and with headers and footers (which seem to take on a mind of their own).

When I worked in a small business, I could usually find a bright young person to help me out when I hit problems with Word; however, as a freelancer, I've had to become much more self-reliant. Luckily, one of my young colleagues passed on a wonderful piece of advice that has made this transition to independence much easier. She explained that the way to find an answer to a problem is not to access the Word 'Help' function, because this rarely helps. Instead, the solution is to type the question into a search engine, which will then throw up a range of responses, at least one of which is likely to contain the answer to the problem. The idea is that someone out there will already have had the same problem, and it will have been answered by someone (apparently there are people out there who love to spend their time providing solutions to Word problems, just for the fun of it). The box below gives an example of how searching can provide answers when 'Help' is no help.

Comparison of 'Help' and 'Search'

Imagine that you want to know how to insert a nonbreaking space (the one that glues together the text on either side of the space; for example, between the title and the name in 'Dr Spock'). Typing 'nonbreaking space' into Word's help function first causes it to stop and think for a minute or two, after which it brings up four different topics, none of which are relevant. Using the term 'inserting a nonbreaking space' is no better; it narrows the answer to just one topic, but that's about hyphens, not nonbreaking spaces.

Google, on the other hand, does a much better job. In response to the phrase 'inserting a nonbreaking space', in 0.3 seconds it comes up with up 28 300 results, and the first three hits all

provide the right answer (that is, to hit ctrl + shift + spacebar).

Internet searching for answers to my Word problems has been a lifesaver for me in moving from Word 2003 to Word 2007; in particular, because it led me to the Wordtips website, which provides 'tips, tricks and ideas' for users of Word.

There are two versions of the website:

- <http://word.tips.net/> for those using Word 2003 or earlier versions
- <http://wordribbon.tips.net/> for those using Word2007.

On both websites, users can sign up to receive a weekly newsletter. The newsletters contain a selection of tips on a particular topic, advertisements for books that amalgamate sets of tips, and a link for submitting a question about a problem with Word (or answering someone else's question). I like the newsletters because they have introduced me to parts of Word I didn't know existed. For example, I didn't realise that Word 2007 has some ready-made templates, with matching covers, headers, footers and text boxes (they're called building blocks).

Searching within the Wordtips website not only helped me to sort out my issues with macros, bookmarks and headers and footers, but also showed me how to:

- customise the ribbon in Word 2007 (the ribbon is a new way to access frequently used commands and options; it replaces the drop-down menus from previous versions of Word)
- create my own keyboard shortcuts for tasks such as inserting a row in a table or applying a particular style
- select non-sequential blocks of text or select text vertically rather than horizontally (useful for fixing the initial capitalisation in a bulleted list, when you don't want to mess with the capitalisation in the text of the bullet points)
- create a form in Word, where some cells are locked and others can be completed by the user, either as free text or from a drop-down list.

I now apply the 'just Google it' approach to all my technical problems, not just those with Word, and find that it saves a lot of time and frustration.

Now, if it could just sort out my teenager ...

Hilary Cadman





Thinking about words: it may or it might not

With all the momentous issues that engulf us locally, nationally and internationally, there was a discussion last month in the letters page of the *Canberra Times* on the vexed question of which is ‘right’: may or might?

There have been a couple of afterthoughts since, but when I began to think about this Suzanne Hayes of Yarralumla seemed to have fired the last shot on 9 April with, ‘The difference between “may” and “might” is a grammatical one, but if the grammar is right, the sense is obvious. “May” refers to the present, “might” to the past. Thus, “he may still find a solution” implies possibility; “he might have found a solution” shows that he closed off that possibility.’ Suzanne, do you really believe that? Whatever the fictional *he* may or may not have intended, the *writer* might have meant to leave that possibility open.

What is more, if you reverse the ‘may’ and ‘might’ in Suzanne’s examples, they have (to my mind) almost exactly the same sense. ‘Might’ is certainly the past tense of ‘may’, but that is irrelevant in this discussion. I can write, ‘Suzanne *may* have been wrong in her assumptions’, referring to a past action. ‘He *might* find a solution tomorrow’ is perfectly grammatical but talks about the future. Which you use depends more on context and implication than on *when* something happened.

Pam Peters, in *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage*, compares ‘May I have a cup of tea?’ with ‘Might I have a cup of tea?’, pointing out that ‘may’ is the standard English polite form and ‘might’ sounds perhaps overanxious. She goes on to say that even ‘may I’ may sound over-polite, and ‘can I’ might be more usual. In doing so, she opens a whole can of words (yes, I meant *words*) and launches us into thinking about modal verbs more generally.

Modal verbs? I believed that years of English lessons in an English grammar school, ripping complicated and intensely boring sentences apart and putting names to the bits of resulting debris, should have made me familiar with most grammatical terminology. However, it was only

when I began learning German that I became aware of this word ‘modal’. There, sure enough, modal verbs are constantly and conspicuously used to modify or change other verbs to show such things as *ability*, *permission* or *necessity*—he can swim, may I come?, we ought to go. And rather like Molière’s Monsieur Jourdain in *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, who suddenly learned from his philosophy tutor that he had been speaking prose all his life, I found that I had always been using modal verbs without realising it.

There are six modal verbs in German and three in French, but Peters gives a table showing nine in English: can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would (four of these are past tenses of others in the table, so there are really only five different verbs), arranged to show differing degrees of permission, possibility, ability, obligation, necessity, inclination and prediction. Looking at these, we realise that the may/might discussion is only hinting at the possible ways to convey nuances of meaning. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *modal* as ‘of or pertaining to the mood of a verb’, which begs the question of why verbs (like writers) have moods. They are, in fact, a hangover from Latin grammar, neatly explained by John Milton back in 1669: ‘There be four Moods which express the manner of doing; the Indicative, the Imperative, the Potential or Subjunctive, and the Infinitive.’ We mostly know Milton as a poet, the writer of *Paradise Lost*, but he was a public servant and a polymath whose prolific writings extended to translation, history, education and even seditious pamphlets advocating the execution of Charles II!

‘The infinitive?’ Modal verbs have infinitives in Latin, French or German, but not in English. Such verbs are defective—you can’t say ‘to must’ or ‘to shall’. Or ‘to ought’, come to that, but ‘ought’ isn’t a ‘proper’ modal verb, and was formerly used as the past tense of to owe (or as a dialect variant of ‘nought’). In its modal role it is unusual in that it is always followed by ‘to’ when it has the sense of ‘should’ or ‘must’, and nowadays is increasingly replaced by these words. ‘Have’ is in much the same boat when used as an auxiliary. Apart from

Modal verbs give a writer sensitive control over degrees of permission, obligation or compulsion.

Letter to the editor

giving us the past tense ('I have done this'), it also has quasi-modal applications like 'I have to do this', 'I had the house painted'.

So we have now accumulated eleven possible modifiers of our verbs, and often all of them work happily with their verbs: I can go, I could go, I may go, I might go, I must go, I shall go, I should go, I will go, I would go, I ought to go, I have to go. But if actions aren't happening today, the possibilities narrow: 'I may arrive last week' sounds as if you are stepping into a time machine. 'I can go yesterday' doesn't sound feasible. 'I can go tomorrow' is fine, but we need 'I could go yesterday' (or even, 'I could have gone yesterday'). Try the others and you will soon see how some work with 'yesterday' and some definitely don't. We are stumbling over 'sequence of tenses', the pressure to use consistent tenses for verbs in a sentence. It doesn't matter with future events, because English like other European languages allows the present tense to refer to the near future: 'I'm dining with the Smiths next week', where the meaning is 'I will be dining...'. But if there's some doubt about other commitments, we could say, 'I might dine with the Smiths next week' or 'I could perhaps dine...', and nobody will cavil at the use of a 'past tense' modal verb in a future context.

What do we conclude from all this? Modal verbs give a writer sensitive control over degrees of permission, obligation or compulsion. As editors we should respect the writer's choice of a particular construction unless there is something that we find grammatically shocking. But in that case I suspect we will be looking at something a little more fundamental than the difference between *may* and *might*.

Peter Judge

Sources: *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage*, Pam Peters, 2004. *Oxford English Dictionary* Second Edition on CD-ROM (v. 4.0), 2009. *Encyclopædia Britannica* 2009 Ultimate Reference Suite. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modal_verb>.

I was excited to read about the capabilities of the editing software *Perfectit* described by Hilary Cadman in the April newsletter.

What a disappointment to find it works only with *MS Word*.

Large enterprises and at least one nation's government (Denmark's) are adopting the ISO-standard open source document format (ODF) as their official document format so editors would be wise to gear up to deal with ODF files if they haven't already done so. The increasingly popular open source software suite, *OpenOffice* (downloadable free of charge), and *MS Office 2007 SP2* allow users to read, edit, and save documents in ODF. If you prefer to stick with older versions of *MS Word* then a plug-in is available from Oracle at http://www.sun.com/software/star/odf_plugin/.

As far as I can see, there is not yet an extension for *OpenOffice* that can do all that *Perfectit* reportedly can, but there are extensions such as *Writer's Tools*, *Paragraph/Sentence Filter* and *AltSearch* that help boost the program's already substantial editing features.

I am curious to know how many society members are familiar with ODF format; how many can open ODF documents; and how many actually edit using free open source software such as Sun's *OpenOffice*, or IBM's *Symphony*.

Kim Wells

Word macros for editing

Paul Beverley of Archive Publications in the UK has written a book on using Word macros for editing. The book is free and available from his website at <www.archivepub.co.uk/TheBook>. It's still a work in progress at 35 000 words, but you could find it useful even now.

Work opportunity

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal is looking for an experienced legal editor to edit its *Practice manual*. See the notice board on our website for more detail.



Discovering XML for editing

Dave Gardiner is currently a part-time in-house project editor with a legal publisher, and edits XML-based online and looseleaf print products using DocBook schema.

There seems to be a stirring about the ‘next big thing’ for publishing. XML (extensible markup language) is starting to creep into editors’ vocabulary. Editors may have come across XML through Word 2007, which can save word processing documents in Microsoft’s version of this language. Perhaps they may have used XML in a publishing organisation or had exposure to it with desktop publishing software. XML is being touted by various players in publishing as the next format in which to produce publications. ‘Single-source publishing’ is a term to describe the workflow that is based on XML technologies, where content stored in one source is used to produce publications in several formats and for various media: print, web, PDAs and so on.

Despite years of marketing spin that has promised XML will result in greater efficiency and reduced costs for producing publications by ‘reusing content’, implementation of such single-source workflow has been limited to large publishers—and even then it is used primarily for typesetting, practically at the end of the workflow. But is XML useful across the whole workflow, particularly for one-off publications? I am setting out to see how the format can be used more effectively, by implementing it right at the start—with editing.

I am considering a broad framework as a starting point to test and accommodate the totality of XML publishing:

- developing effective and efficient editing methods, stylesheets for various media, and typesetting options
- trialling software for authoring
- time trials to compare against conventional production workflow, and
- identifying specialists for aspects of editing, design and usability testing.

My first taste of XML came two years ago, when I produced RSS news feeds for a web portal. It didn’t make any sense to me. I just downloaded a

news feed from another website, worked out where to put the text and ‘tags’ or elements that defined the title, date and news, and uploaded the XML file to ‘go live’. I had some HTML experience, so understanding the structure of XML code wasn’t totally foreign. And because XML is a text-based format, I could modify files in a text editor. Then I landed a job as an editor with a publishing house, and I had to learn XML to edit publications. With specific in-house training, I took to it like the proverbial duck. I learned a new language and new terms: chunks, elements, attributes, nesting, validation. Despite using XML every day, it took six months to become comfortable with it; and there were still many aspects of markup I needed to discover.

Now 18 months down the track, I have an appreciation of how XML can be used to its potential—and on the other hand, where it is just plain awkward. Editing with XML gives you wider exposure to the publishing workflow because you need to consider in much greater detail how text should appear in the final product, and consequently add elements and attributes to that text. At a basic level, the editor starts to format text for output, traditionally the domain of the desktop publisher. Yet, with the experience of an enterprise-wide XML publishing system that aims to reduce the turnaround time for producing documents, it is obvious the workflow continues to parallel the conventional stages of production. There is still a necessity to work with Word documents in the early stages of editing, as authors may need to review edits in ‘track changes’. Typical of editing, a Word document may go back and forth between author and editor until a final draft. Once past this stage, editors then mark up the text in XML ‘chunks’ (files). This is effectively typesetting the text; the editor takes on the role of desktop publisher by copying and pasting from Word documents, and also specifying appropriate elements and attributes that aid in defining the final appearance of content. A draft PDF document is then generated, printed, proofread, more corrections made to the XML to modify incomplete markup, and a press-ready PDF is the end result. It is a laborious process, one that is likely similar amongst large publishers.

Editing workflow

There are inefficiencies in such a workflow right from the start. Granted, an XML workflow is only as good as the software implemented to manage the content. But the necessity of needing to edit initially with Word, because authors provide and need to review proofread material in this format, is merely transplanting conventional editing practice into a single-source workflow, there is no time-saving solution at this stage. Subsequent typesetting of content by the editor, and generating PDF documents that are sent to authors for review, bring about further delays. Although the XML files may contain all the text and graphics, producing a draft PDF or RTF would be necessary for authors to review. This is 'roundtripping' (moving from one format to another then back) just to take in edits.

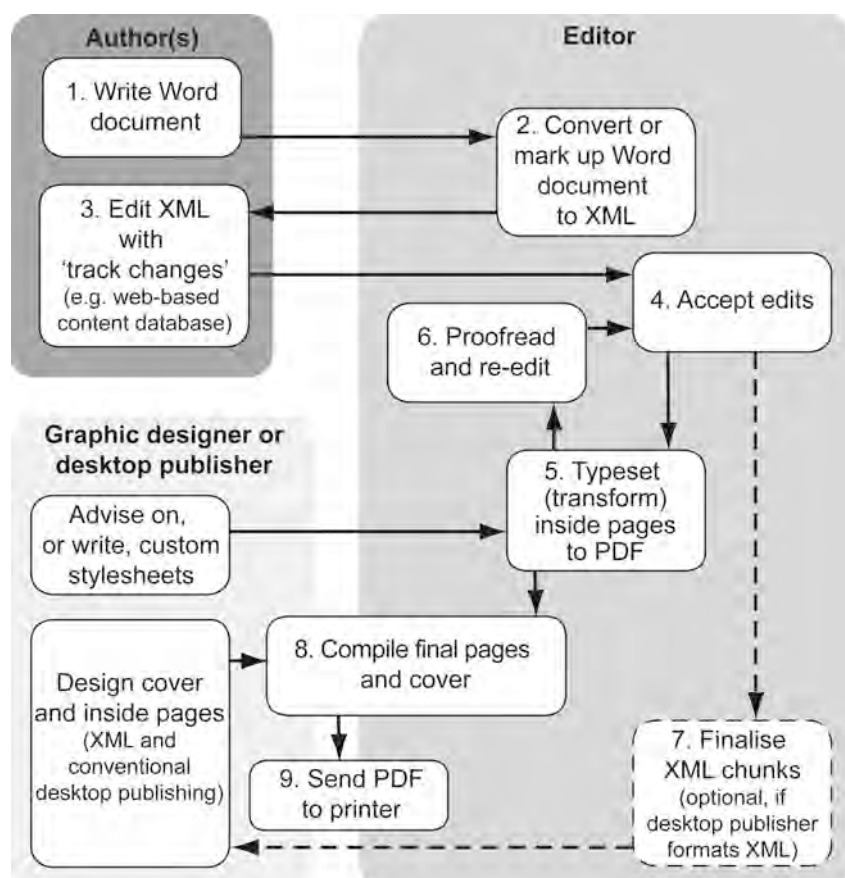
While such a workflow might be sustainable on a large scale, as for publishing houses, it is not likely to translate well when scaled down to single users or very small teams. The current state of XML software makes it almost feasible for editors to start moving into single-source publishing to supplement word processing-based editing. Almost, because although there is a considerable offering of well-developed and affordable editing and authoring packages that approach the basic functionality of word processors, there is no effective workflow that would reduce the time to produce documents.

Extending services with typesetting

If editors are to implement XML, they may need to include typesetting in their services—not only because XML standards and supporting publishing businesses are yet to be developed, but also because production time is most likely to be reduced when editors control the whole production process. The process of structured editing involves marking up content, which encroaches into the typesetting stage. There is a much larger aspect of formatting XML content for presentation—that of developing customised stylesheets. These are text-based files that define the style of text and tables, the layout of pages, and even how issues like widows and orphans are displayed, in fact, everything that affects final presentation. I discuss these later.

The figure shows a typically familiar workflow that commences with the author sending a document to the editor. The departure then from

conventional editing is that the document is marked up as XML. The document must remain as XML to avoid roundtripping, so reducing the time to take in edits. This, of course, assumes the author has access to XML authoring software for reviewing the content. The editor would control the whole production process for expediency, because in a conventional workflow, a desktop publisher would typeset the document and set up styles with advice from the author, and this requires accurate scheduling to meet the press deadline. There are inevitable delays as the desktop publisher manages several publications and liaises with the editor.



The rationale for devolving the typesetting stage to the editor is that during editing markup, XML documents are partly formatted by selecting appropriate elements and attributes; ensuring valid document structure, for example, is one aspect of formatting for presentation. Because the editor's markup partially achieves formatting, XML can encourage the editor to complete the formatting, by applying stylesheets to generate press-ready PDF documents. An additional consideration is the need for expertise in document design, preparation of graphics and development of stylesheets, which means collaboration with a desktop publisher may be required. Another imperative for the editor to



assume greater control over production is that the infrastructure and expertise within the publishing industry is undeveloped to support XML production. So with very few XML publishers and practically no stylesheet designers, editors (who are increasingly diversifying into desktop publishing and graphic design) are probably best placed to start building the framework for XML publishing.

This XML publishing workflow model could be adapted for use by freelance editors, as a first step in developing a framework within which XML editing for one-off publications becomes feasible. Far from being a 'tried and tested' approach, it is intended to spark discussion about how XML editing could be developed, what publishing players might be involved and, importantly, why editors should consider XML as an adjunct to their specialist services. Now I will take a step back to put forward some points why XML needs to be developed at the 'grass roots' level while it is also gaining strength in the higher echelons of publishing houses.

E-books and digital publishing

The marketing of e-books is obvious, with information technology developers involved in the e-book reader market. Apple's recently launched iPad having spawned further interest ('New device provides plenty of kindling for Amazon sales', *The Weekend Australian*, 3-4 April 2010, p. 25). Book retailers have established sales and distribution channels for e-books to respond to consumer demand (this is the same market as for print books anyway). Numerous websites and blogs about e-books appeal to authors wanting to exploit this market (google 'writing e-books'). And the recent Digital Revolution symposium by the Australian Publishers Association showed how large publishers are handling the challenge of digital products. But where is the talk about editors 'getting on board'? After all, we are a critical part of the workflow—we get involved right at the start of the publishing process. With publishers saying they are committed to digital publishing, just who will ensure that digital content is produced to a high standard to satisfy increasing consumer demand?

While neither closely scrutinising the media about trends in editing nor having expertise as a commentator, I do perceive a 'top-heavy' approach to developing digital publishing.

Of course, large publishers have the resources and markets to justify the move to a digital workflow, which is why much discussion currently focuses on the mass market. Publishers occasionally outsource to freelancers, and if publishers need to make their move to a digital workflow faster than anticipated, there may be increased demand for editors with XML skills to take up that workload. This is not just supposition—at the Digital Revolution symposium in February, Stephen Page of Faber and Faber stated that 'editors have to make e-books' and 'we have to become experts in XML, we have to know how to use the technology. And so our project editors, the people who make the books, are, over the next 12 months, going to undergo training that will turn them into people who can do XML corrections ...' It would be efficacious for some freelancers to be skilled enough to handle outsourced work for when it does happen in Australia. Now what we need is some indication from publishers as to this potential work in the long term so editors can better gauge the demand and 'skill up' in relevant technologies accordingly.

The market

Apart from preparing for potential outsourcing from publishers, is there demand from other sectors of the market for XML editing? There appears not to be a great deal at present, as I have approached a few freelancers with XML skills and they are not receiving regular work. One exception is the technical communication market, where tech writers use XML authoring to prepare documentation for online help and IT manuals. This is one area worth looking at more closely to determine emerging trends.

Acquiring skills

A proposal for editors to start skilling up (and to collaborate in small, multi-skilled groups to provide some form of 'technical bridge' between authors and publishers) may be required to generate interest in e-book publishing from existing clients. If there are not the freelancers available, publishers will need to stretch their in-house resources to handle the workload. XML editing will progress slowly if momentum trickles only from the top down.

One issue that makes it easier to start learning XML is the relative affordability of editing and authoring software. There are free open source

But where is the talk about editors 'getting on board'?

XML editors to start with, which allow you to become familiar with concepts. Several hundred dollars will get you some reasonably well-developed and supported editing software, while over \$2000 will buy software suites that also handle stylesheet design and database management to integrate with a content management system. Then you may need to consider buying typesetting ('transformation processor') software that lets you produce output for PDF, HTML and epub formats—another several hundred dollars. But if editors work in groups for the proposed 'one-stop editing and typesetting' service, then overall costs could be shared. Editors working on their own may not need to buy both editing and transformation software; there is likely to be demand for only editing services, while transformation of XML content could be handled by a publisher, for example.

Editors would choose what XML services to provide. Let's face it, adopting XML is a huge undertaking, as there are several schemas that editors may need to become familiar with just for editing; and if typesetting is also considered as part of the service, the basics of XSL and XPath must be learned to be able to modify document design to clients' specifications. Editors must specialise in various aspects of XML, as it is not realistic for individuals to be proficient in everything. For instance, one could be a specialist in DocBook editing, or DITA stylesheet design, or epub usability testing.

How do editors learn XML? There are various training providers—one has an introduction to XML with InDesign. Be careful with your choice of training. I have undertaken a few short courses by specialist training organisations, and was confused by the complexity of material presented, and the lack of relevance for editing and publishing. The material was too high-level and technical, as it was pitched at programmers and developers. I thought I had a head-start with 18 months full-time experience in XML markup, but even that didn't give me enough knowledge to fully comprehend the training material. There appears to be few entry-level courses for editors (although a graduate technical communication course that includes XML was established this year), so it would be a matter of sharing relevant knowledge amongst editors to acquire the skills.

More time for editing

The proposed workflow model is an initial framework based around the need to demonstrate how XML could be handled across both the editing and typesetting stages. This is because editing a document in XML realistically takes two to three times longer than editing using a word processor, due to the need to add valid markup (XML tags) to the content for various output formats. A perceived advantage of this extended editing time is that editing could continue almost until a publication is ready for press—which is great for multi-authored documents that require constant liaison with writers, or where copyright permissions might take some time to obtain. One must consider the combined stages of editing and typesetting to assess the feasibility of XML, because the basic editing and content markup stage encroaches some way into the typesetting stage. The real challenge is to then complete the production process with typesetting to ensure that XSL stylesheets are developed sufficiently so that presentation of documents meets clients' requirements, and that the time to transform content is minimised. I feel it would be very easy to blow out the time involved to modify customised stylesheets for each document, and consider that some form of 'standard layout' may very well be required for some documents (such as reports) to keep to schedule, at least in the early stages of adopting XML for editing.

One major drawback of typesetting using the text-based stylesheets is the time it takes to preview the effects of changes to text and page styles. It involves transforming XML content into a PDF, proofreading, making changes to stylesheet code and transforming again. This might be done dozens of times to fine-tune the layout of a document (whether you use a basic desktop setup or an enterprise-wide publishing system); hence the need for standard document stylesheets that minimise the time required for typesetting edits.

Why learn XML?

So, after outlining how I think XML editing could unfold—and I certainly welcome other perspectives, as this is very much a collaborative arena—why should editors learn XML? Why on earth would you want to, after all the effort that's needed to learn and implement it, and with little

Editors would choose what XML services to provide.



perceived benefit as yet? My motivation is that there will be a market for freelancers soon. The happenings amongst large publishers is a sign that XML is coming (the technology has been around since the mid-1980s and is rapidly gaining adoption), and I'm hopeful that research to develop the skills and processes needed will help to bring those markets to fruition sooner rather than waiting for markets to trickle down from publishers. By developing efficient processes, services and products at the grass roots level,

it may be possible to approach prospective clients with 'trial services' and generate demand while still keeping in step with publishers' requirements. In the meantime, research and development into XML editing needs to continue, and editors are invited to collaborate on this work.

For resources about XML editing in Australia visit xmleditoz.net.au.

Dave Gardiner

XML terms

Attribute A specific feature of an element that provides finer control of how that element is to appear in a transformed document, or how an element is to be handled. For example, a `<link>` element placed around the text 'Table 2.1' can have an attribute 'linkend' in the tag, which specifies the name of the bookmark to link to; by clicking on the text in a PDF document, the user can jump to that table elsewhere in the document.

Chunk An alternative name for an XML file that contains content, such as a chapter of a book. Chunks (parts of a document) can be combined into a larger document, or each can be transformed to produce individual chapters. 'Chunking' refers to how files are broken down into smaller, more manageable sections for display as web pages.

Element Text-based code, written within angle brackets in an XML document, which affects how text is interpreted by stylesheets, and therefore how it is presented in a transformed document. For example, a paragraph in an XML file using DocBook schema would have the tag `<para>` at the start, and `</para>` at the end. 'Element' could be considered synonymous with 'tag'.

epub A publishing standard for formatting electronic books for display on handheld e-book readers, based on extensible hypertext markup language (XHTML) and cascading stylesheets (CSS).

Nesting The arrangement of how certain elements need to appear within other elements for document markup to be valid, according to the rules of the schema being used. For DocBook, the elements to mark up an image must be nested in the order:
`<mediaobject><imageobject><imagedata>
</imagedata></imageobject></mediaobject>`.

PDA Personal digital assistant, a mobile device that functions as a personal information manager and has the ability to connect to the internet.

PDF Adobe portable document format.

RSS Really simple syndication, an XML file format that web browsers use to display news items; a web manager can create and upload a RSS file to their website for web users to subscribe to a news feed and be alerted to news items.

RTF Rich text format, a Microsoft document format that allows word processing documents to be read on different computer systems.

Stylesheets XML files that define every aspect of document layout and content presentation, and which are interpreted by a transformation processor to create a readable document. Schemas are distributed with standard stylesheets, but users can create customised stylesheets to modify things like the dimensions of master pages (margins, columns, headers and footers, etc.), text fonts, line and paragraph spacing, and imposition of graphics.

Validation Checking that the elements, attributes and values in an XML document conform to the rules of the schema, and that they are declared (defined) properly. Validation ensures that elements are correctly placed with respect to other elements, so that the content can be transformed.

XPath XML Path language, coding in an XSL stylesheet that is used to select particular elements relative to other elements, so that styles can be applied to text. For example, an XPath expression can be written to 'select the first letter of the first word of the first paragraph that follows a chapter tag'; this expression can be followed by character styles to define the typeface, font size and colour for a drop capital for every chapter in a book.

XSL Extensible stylesheet language, a broad term to describe the different types of coding used to transform XML content into PDF, HTML or epub documents. XSL is a term used interchangeably with XSL Transformation (XSLT) (the coding to specify content styles), XSL Formatting Objects (XSL-FO) used specifically to produce PDF documents, and XPath used to select elements.

IPEd Notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited April–May 2010

At its two most recent meetings— all meetings are being held by teleconference during 2010—the IPEd Council has been planning for a busy year ahead. There are several substantial projects in the pipeline, in all of which the council will be seeking the active engagement of the members.

An IPEd Occasional Papers series has been launched. Details of this have been or will be published in all the society newsletters and are also posted on the IPEd website. This series aims to encourage editors and those working in editing-related fields to share their ideas, views and reflections on editing as theory, as practice and as a profession. It is a high-level professional endeavour that the council proposes to link to a special presentation at each biennial national conference. Get your writing caps on.

The council's Communications Committee has sought tenders from four design firms for work to redevelop the IPEd website and a decision on which one will be awarded the contract is imminent. We are seeking a major redesign of the site to improve its functionality and information, and present images that align with the principles, standards and aspirations of our profession. As mentioned in the March IPEd Notes, the SA society is lending IPEd \$5,000 under very generous terms to support the website work, the final cost of which will be over \$10,000.

The current website has served IPEd well over the past few years and we acknowledge the enormous contributions made by Mike Purdy of the Canberra society in building it and keeping it up and running.

The Accreditation Board is focusing on requirements for re-accreditation and will soon be seeking assistance from editors accredited in 2008 to provide feedback on its proposals. The board is also hard at work in reviewing the exam development model and continues to investigate the possibility of delivering the exam onscreen, a major undertaking that may require some specialist outside assistance.

Also in gestation is a national register of professional development opportunities. This activity is focusing first on the training activities of the societies, enlisting the assistance of their training officers. The net will then be cast wider, to other agencies and the tertiary education sector. As regards the societies, a major aim is to identify training events that, with IPEd support, might be transportable, so that members right across the country can gain access to the, often formidable, skills and experience held by particular individuals and societies.

The March IPEd Notes mentioned that judging for the 2009 Barbara Ramsden Award for excellence in editing had been completed. The winner, announced at the National Literary Awards ceremony on 19 March, was *Grand obsessions: the life and work of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin*, written by Alisdair McGregor, edited by Nicola Young and published by Penguin Lantern. The judges, Stephanie Holt (Victoria) and Virginia Wilton (Canberra), also highly commended *Darwin's armada* by Iain McCalman, edited by Meredith Rose (Penguin Viking), and *Smoke in the room* by Emily Maguire, edited by Emma Rafferty (Picador). IPEd looks forward to continuing its sponsorship of this award.

Another important national award in the profession is the Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship managed for the Literature Board of the Australia Council by the Australian Publishers Association. The fellowship is named after the distinguished Australian literary editor and honours her contribution to Australian letters. It offers the recipient an attachment to the editorial department of a US publishing house or houses, and a literary agency, for up to 12 weeks. The winner of the 2009 fellowship was Alexandra Nahlous, an editor with Allen & Unwin. The NSW and Queensland societies, which have been among the financial sponsors of the award for some years, have agreed that it would be appropriate for IPEd, as the national body, to take over this role on behalf of all the members.

At their 11 April meeting, councillors considered IPEd's budget for 2010–11. They noted that the



institute will end the current fiscal year in a sound financial position. In light of rising operational costs and the aforementioned project activities, however, they agreed that it would be prudent to increase the member levy for 2010–11 from \$20 to \$25 per society member. This will be the first increase since October 2006, when the seed fund that supported the work leading to the incorporation of IPEd on 22 January 2008 was established.

Ed Highley Secretary

Please note that IPEd members are the societies that make up IPEd Ltd. Individual editors are not members of IPEd; they are members of the societies. *Editor*

Correction to the IPEd annual report 2008–09

The IPEd annual report 2008–09 distributed with the February newsletter reported that:

The Chair of the Accreditation Board during the period of this report was Karen Disney (SA), with Robin Bennett (Qld) standing in on occasions.

In fact there were two chairs of the board during 2008–09: Karen was chair until 18 January 2009, at which time our own Larissa Joseph took over.

My apology for this mistake, which was mine.

Ed Highley

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