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THE CANBERRA

# editor

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Volume 20 • Number 2

March/April 2012

next meeting

30 May  
6.00 for 6.30 pm

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Emeritus Faculty  
Building 3T  
Fellows Lane Cottage  
ANU

### **The editor's companion**

There will be no meeting in April because the last Wednesday of the month is ANZAC day. The speaker at our next meeting, on 30 May, will be Janet Mackenzie DE. She will talk about the second edition of her book *The Editor's Companion* which was launched at the IPEd conference in Sydney last September. Janet is an honorary life member of the Society of Editors (Victoria) and has been involved in the development of the accreditation scheme from its beginnings.

### **eBooks Editors can make eBooks better**

**Sarah Hazelton has worked as an in-house editor for Random House Australia and Murdoch Books, and has recently started freelancing. Sarah is a long-time consumer of eBooks with a passionate interest in quality assurance.**

This seems obvious to us: after all, is not the role of the editor always to improve quality? But when working on a text that will exist in both print and eBook forms, there are practical steps that editors can take to dramatically improve the quality and consistency of both formats.

I am going to discuss some of the things that I have learnt as an editor doing eBook quality assurance in-house for trade publishers. Some I have been taught by learned colleagues, some I have learnt by making mistakes. I am also a long-time consumer of eBooks, and some of these things I have picked up through my own observations as well as participating in discussions with other readers.

Trade eBook programs are relatively new in Australia and changing very fast. Therefore, this paper will describe both a general snapshot of the situation at the moment, as well as the developments we are likely to see in the next few years. This paper is written from the perspective of an editor, rather than an eBook production specialist, and so its focus is general rather than technical.

In the first part of the paper I will proceed from first principles in briefly describing the three pillars of eBook knowledge. In the second part I will set out how editors can use this knowledge to improve eBooks through planning and quality assurance processes.

### **Why do we care?**

Is eBook production part of the role of the editor? Well, not yet. Most trade publishers currently do not require editors to take full responsibility for the conversion of print files to eBooks. That said, as editors we build our careers on dedication to quality; as eBooks become a larger part of the Australian book market (estimated at four per cent by value, but growing significantly), they are becoming an increasingly visible and viable part of what publishers produce. In order to maintain their reputations and relevance, publishers need to ensure that eBook products are of comparable quality to the print editions. As the eBook market grows, more digital-first and digital-only enterprises are emerging, such as Pan Macmillan Australia's Momentum imprint.

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## 1. The three pillars of knowledge – devices, formats, readers

We already know how to think like print readers; we have been reading print books for a long time. It is time that we also learn to think like readers of eBooks.

### *The first pillar—know your devices*

If you have anything to do with making an eBook, it is essential to have a basic familiarity with how they work. The barriers to eBook reading have never been lower; free, legal eBooks are widely available on the internet and you can read them on a laptop or desktop computer using free software such as Adobe Digital Editions or Calibre. The other most common ways to read are either dedicated eReaders, such as the Kindle, or multifunction devices such as the iPad. Even if you do not own one of these devices yourself, chances are someone of your acquaintance will be willing to lend you theirs for an evening. Knowing how people are reading is an essential part of making eBooks, because eBooks provide a very different reading experience to print. There are also technical limitations.

E-ink readers, which are the closest we currently get to the look of ink on a page, are at present only available in black and white, with colour e-ink expected in the next few years. There is a 'flash' of a second or two when you turn the page, while the page refreshes, so they are slower to navigate than a physical book. Some of the older models cannot handle hyperlinks. More recent models have data connections so you can seamlessly switch between reading on your Kindle and reading on the Kindle app on your Smartphone or iPad.

eBooks are extremely portable—hundreds can fit on one lightweight device—and they are searchable, which is particularly useful for readers of nonfiction. eBooks are often cheaper than print books, and you can buy the next one in a series in under a minute, even at 3.00 a.m. when all the physical stores are closed.

Of course, there are also cons. At this stage, eBooks are not always well formatted. The eReader or format you choose may become obsolete quite quickly, or the DRM (digital rights management) might mean you cannot transfer purchased books to a new device. If the battery dies, you are bookless.

### *The second pillar—know your format Reflowable eBooks*

Given that flexibility to the reader's preferences is a key part of eBooks' appeal, we editors must learn to let go of the idea of the page as it exists in the print edition.

The majority of eBooks on the market exist in a reflowable format called EPUB. A reflowable eBook is a long column of text and images, coded in XML using CSS style sheets. Unlike a print book, where text is frozen in place, a reflowable eBook will look different from device to device depending on the preferences of its reader. eBooks are particularly suited to some readers with special needs, who find that the devices' light weight and adjustable text size enable them to overcome physical barriers to reading such as arthritis or failing eyesight. But it is not just type size that can be adjusted. If you do not like serif fonts, all of the ereading devices have at least one sans-serif option for the body text. You can usually adjust the leading and justification to suit your preferences as well.

This makes reflowable eBooks suited to straightforward narrative, but their ability to reproduce complex formatting is limited.

## **Fixed-layout eBooks**

For highly illustrated titles, such as cookbooks and children’s picture books, the fixed-layout eBook is currently the best option. This format retains the design and illustration elements of the print book. Fixed-layout eBooks are similar in appearance to PDFs: for example, the text size is increased by zooming in on the page as a whole.

These eBooks are only really suited to reading on tablet devices or computers. A fixed-layout eBook designed for the iPad looks terrible on the Kindle—it is very difficult to make sense of the information because all of the context from the page design is lost.

Some books also take electronic form as apps, but as their development follows a different process to ‘true’ eBooks, they are outside the scope of this paper.

## **Future formats**

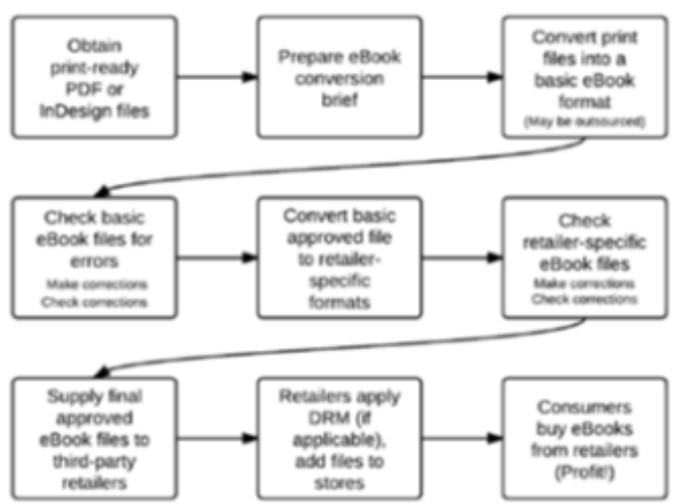
Reflowable and fixed-layout eBooks are the dominant formats for now. However, technology and the market are changing so swiftly that nothing is guaranteed. Keep an open mind and avoid relying too heavily upon any one standard or device at this early stage. For example, many reflowable eBooks currently use the EPUB2 standard, but at some point EPUB3 will become the norm. EPUB3 may require some adjustment to existing conversion processes; it also provides better support for embedded media files such as video and audio clips, which opens up broader possibilities for the production of ‘enhanced’ eBooks in the future. The eBook market is also so young in Australia that best practice for eBook production has not yet been established. It is essential for publishing teams to be willing to revise processes based on feedback from colleagues, authors, retailers and consumers.

## **The third pillar—know your readers**

The ways in which readers experience eBooks are different to print. It follows that their expectations are also different when starting to read an eBook. Someone reading an eBook selects a file from a menu. They then page forward until they reach something that they want to read. It is much harder to skip through front matter in an eBook, especially on an e-ink reader where the page-refresh delay adds a second or two to each page-turn. With this in mind, eBooks purchased on the Kindle automatically open on the first page of the main text, skipping any prelims. Sometimes decisions that would have minimal impact on the print edition can particularly annoy eBook consumers. They can also affect whether or not someone buys the eBook.

## **2. Practical steps to improve parallel print and eBook production**

A basic sample eBook production process for trade frontlist books might look like the following flowchart:



## **Sample eBook conversion process**

It is likely that publishers will integrate eBooks into their workflow at some point, so that accurate EPUB files can be generated with the touch of a button at the same time as the print-ready PDF. This is already possible, but it is a fair way off for most Australian trade houses. Therefore, we will focus on the scenario in the Sample eBook conversion process. Keeping the eBook in mind throughout the production process can save time and money. An eBook optimised for the format and accompanied by a clear conversion brief is much less likely to require costly, time-consuming corrections before being made available for sale.

### **Plan for parallel production— Acquisition**

The first step is to confirm that an eBook is going to be produced. Some authors choose not to grant the publisher eBook rights. Also, under the restrictions of the current technology, some titles (such as children's picture books) may be unsuitable for conversion. If you know that the publisher will not (or cannot) produce the eBook, you can focus on making the best possible print book. Second, review the budget. It might need renegotiation if the additional costs of licensing design, illustration and third-party permissions for a digital edition have not been considered. If the profit and loss forecast signed off at the acquisition stage needs to include eBook conversion costs as well, check that they are included. A realistic, signed-off acquisition budget may help to clarify expectations and streamline the end stages of the title's production.

### **Editing**

Consider how the content of the book might be experienced in the future. Will it always exist as a whole? If the book is non-fiction, a collection of short stories or serial-style fiction, it might be a candidate for 'chunking'—selling each chapter separately. If this is the case, your editorial approach might include ensuring that each chapter is independent enough to stand alone, while also fitting within the book as a whole.

Keep an eye out for any text elements or special characters that you would normally flag in a text design brief. Many elements that could be tricky in a print edition could cause problems in the eBook; the earlier you can discuss the best way to present them across both editions, the better. This is particularly important for works in translation.

### **Design**

Some text elements from the print edition are relatively straightforward to include in a reflowable eBook:

- body text
- block quotes
- chapter heads
- manual page breaks, for example at the end of chapters
- inline images and captions
- endnotes
- hyperlinks.

Reflowable eBooks' flexibility makes them highly suited to simple narrative works. However, they also have limitations. The following elements of a print edition can prove difficult or impossible to reproduce in a reflowable eBook:

- footnotes
- picture sections
- text in multiple columns
- detailed text-level hierarchy, for example sub-sub-sub-subheadings
- different fonts to denote different 'voices' in fiction
- indexes with page references.

Some of these text elements will become easier to reproduce in reflowable eBooks as the technical capabilities improve. Some other elements, such as blank pages, have no place in an eBook and should be removed.

Dinkuses [the decorative flourishes that divide sections of text] are important in an eBook because they can help signal text transitions that might otherwise be lost. Ideally, a reflowable eBook would not have any white space except as provided by the eBook's CSS style sheet for line and paragraph spacing. Using white space or a double-paragraph return to communicate a text break is ambiguous on an eReader, because placement is unpredictable in a reflowable eBook: the white space might split over a page-turn or fall somewhere else that the reader may not notice it, creating confusion. If a device is set for very large type and wide leading, what would otherwise be a small white space might end up as an entire blank screen. Using an image or a centred character as a dinkus gives a much better and more accurate result. Dinkuses are fairly simple to include in eBooks, for example as small, scalable images, and they are not affected by font changes.

Some conversion processes also strip out any white space; it is time-consuming and expensive to manually identify and re-add those text breaks during the quality assurance process. If your house style is to omit a dinkus at the top of a print page you might need to provide special instructions to add those omitted dinkuses to the eBook file during the conversion process. This is a classic example of learning to think outside the page.

## **Pre-publication: eBook quality assurance**

Many publishing houses own a collection of e-reading devices. This is essential, because otherwise how can we truly test our eBooks? The same eBook file will render differently on different devices, and there are some errors that cannot be picked up without thorough testing. I once tested an eBook that was fine on a PC in Adobe Digital Editions, fine on a Kobo eReader, but cut off all but the first five pages when viewed via the Kobo app on an iPad. Our production staff solved the problem through extensive consultation with Kobo's technical staff—but we would never have otherwise known about it until a customer complained. Test your eBooks as thoroughly as possible within time and budget constraints.

### ***What to look for***

Ideally, every format of every eBook would receive an in-depth proofread. This is the best way to ensure the quality of the finished product. However, in some circumstances this is just not feasible. In that case, editors who are performing quality assurance checks might consider the following kinds of questions (see table next column). This is a framework for development and personalisation; it is by no means an exhaustive checklist.

- Cover:
  - Is it included?
  - In colour?
  - Is it final?
- Table of contents:
  - Is it accurate?
  - Is it comprehensive (but not over-comprehensive, i.e. going over 2–3 pages)?
  - Are all of the entries correctly hyperlinked in both directions?
- Body text:
  - Spot check for conversion errors
  - Ligatures (e.g. 'flew' as 'fl ew')
  - Character combination errors (e.g. 'rn' as 'm' and 'cl' as 'd')
  - Are quotation marks the right way around, and curly, not straight?
  - Has the text been digitised via OCR scanning? If you find many of the above kinds of errors, the eBook probably needs a full proofread.
  - Are special characters and non-standard text elements rendering accurately? This is worth checking over multiple devices, as some devices offer more support than others.
  - Capitalisation – Check chapter heads and paragraph openings for accuracy, particularly if they have been changed from drop caps, all-caps or small caps.
  - Are all text breaks present and consistently treated?

Indexes:

- Are the entries correctly hyperlinked in both directions?
- Are the correct indentations/ entry levels retained?

Images and captions:

- Is their placement okay? Do they resize proportionally to the text (if required)?
- Has permissions information been retained and appropriately presented?

• Imprint page:

- Has information relevant only to the print edition been removed, e.g. impression numbers, printer credits, FSC logos?
- Has any extra information about the eBook been added, e.g. specific eBook copyright information or credits?

## Conclusion

Editors can make eBooks better without too much extra effort by firstly being familiar with the three pillars of eBook knowledge—devices, formats and readers. Second, editors can improve eBook quality by planning for parallel print and digital production from the earliest possible moment and by performing quality assurance checks before publication. These steps will help to ensure editors' relevance far into the digital future.

*This article was first published in the October 2011 issue of The Blue Pencil, the newsletter of the NSW Society of Editors. Permission to republish was obtained from the newsletter editor.*

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## A new President

### **Elizabeth Manning Murphy**

This is as much of a surprise to me as it must be to you—so this will be brief. Gil Garcon has been unable to continue as President because of illness, and I nominated for the position until the next AGM. My nomination was accepted and here I am. I look forward to presiding over committee meetings which will work on your behalf towards greater recognition of editors in the community through avenues such as accreditation and providing the kinds of training programs you want. Your committee has a number of projects in hand to help advance the profession in Canberra, and your wishes and needs will be listened to.



I welcome Karen Hosking to the position of Vice-President and Connie Stamos as Training Coordinator. And I welcome the following new full members to the Society—Dr Andrew Watts, Alan Cummine, Dr Shona Batge, Connie Stamos, Lindsay Nesci, Belinda Henwood and Gabrielle Lhuede. Also welcome to new student member Helen Cory; and new associate members Janine Keirs, Georgia Kartas and Jackie Eager.

There will be no general meeting in April as the date coincides with Anzac Day, but we look forward to welcoming experienced editor and author from Melbourne, Janet Mackenzie, to speak to us at our next general meeting on Wednesday 30 May. Janet is the author of *The editor's companion*, the second edition of which was launched at the IPEd conference in Sydney in September 2011. I look forward to introducing her and catching up with you all at that meeting.

I thank you for your support, and I feel honoured to be stepping into Gil's shoes for the time being. I wish him complete recovery from his illness.

# **News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited (www.iped-editors.org) January—February 2012**

## ***Ed Highley***

The IPEd Council met once, on 5 February, during the period covered by these notes. The meeting was by teleconference.

## ***Revision of ASEP***

While the Christmas—New Year period might have been a quiet time for many of us, not so for Queensland's Kerry Davies AE who was busy planning for, then facilitating, the workshops to consider the revision of the Australian Standards for Editing Practice that were held by the SA, Tasmanian, Victorian, WA and NSW societies (in that order) in the weeks beginning 12 and 19 February. The Queensland society held its workshop during December last. Kerry and a member of each state society will continue to be busy for some time collating and reporting on the outcomes of the workshops, to finalise a draft revised set of standards. The IPEd Council extends its thanks to all who participated in the workshops and contributed to this essential professional activity.

## ***2012 exam and team***

Ongoing busyness is also the experience of IPEd's Accreditation Board (AB), having tentatively set 13 October 2012 as the date for IPEd's fourth accreditation exam. The Exam Lead Writer has been appointed and, following a call for volunteers made to all accredited editors, there is now a team of 10 IPEd assessors who will work with the Lead Writer to develop the exam paper.

## ***Patron***

IPEd is delighted to announce that Emeritus Professor Roland (Roly) Sussex OAM has accepted the Council's invitation to become a Patron of the Institute. Professor Sussex is an emeritus professor of Applied Language Studies at the School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies of the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.

The Council was attracted to Professor Sussex by his strong interest in the day-to-day use and evolution of language. He contributes to talkback programs on language and linguistics on ABC radio in Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and the Northern Territory, and writes a weekly column, 'Wordlimit', for the Brisbane *Courier-Mail*. Chairman of the State Library of Queensland and President of Alliance Française de Brisbane are among Professor Sussex's other current positions.

We are looking forward to Professor Sussex's engagement in IPEd activities.

## ***New policies***

The IPEd Council recently drafted a new 'Policy on communication and information dissemination' and revised its 'Policy and procedures on costs of meetings and IPEd-sponsored events'. Both can be read on the members-only area of the website.

Currently being drafted is a new 'Policy on IPEd use of information about society of editors' members'. The development of this was initially stimulated by Council's desire to overcome the reticence of some societies to provide contact details that would streamline the procedure for giving their members access to the privileged information on the IPEd website. It has since evolved into a more general privacy policy. The draft policy has been sent to society committees for comment, and the view of the Arts Law Society of Australia on its content is also being sought.

## ***UK SfEP***

As foreshadowed in the last IPEd Notes for 2011, we can now report that formal notification has been received from the UK Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) that IPEd AEs and DEs who apply for membership will be accorded automatic acceptance as 'Ordinary members', and that IPEd certification will count toward becoming an 'Advanced member' of the society. Details of membership requirements can be found on the society's website <[www.sfep.org.uk](http://www.sfep.org.uk)>. One IPEd Accredited Editor has already been accepted for advanced membership of SfEP.



## On-screen editing

### *Alan Cummine*

I don't mind admitting I have plenty to learn about computer programs—even user-friendly ones. Although relatively competent with MS Word, I still use but a mere fraction of the features that would make my writing and editing life so much easier.

My attitude was changed at the March meeting of CSE. Scientist and science writer and editor, Hilary Cadman, gave an engaging presentation about her personal experience with on-screen editing software tools that can make an editor's life easier and more productive.

Expanding on her several helpful columns about on-screen editing in *The Canberra editor*, Hilary delivered her talk in three parts—add-ins for MS Word, shortcuts and quick access, and help to navigate Word documents. A four-page handout was a useful aide memoire as we listened and watched Hilary demonstrate the applications on screen.

Of her three Word add-ins, Hilary is the most enthusiastic about *PerfectIt*, available from [Intelligentediting.com](http://Intelligentediting.com), with a 15 per cent discount for Society members. *PerfectIt* contains macros that detect inconsistencies in such things as capitalisation, punctuation, abbreviations, spelling and table numbering. It is very user-friendly and allows the editor plenty of control.

*Editor's Toolkit* includes macros that allow the user to do diverse editing tasks using only one or key strokes. Hilary finds this program less user-friendly, but even the few of its many features that she regularly uses save her a lot of time. *Editor's Toolkit* is available from [editorium.com](http://editorium.com).

Hilary also makes good use of *Phrase Express*, available from [phraseexpress.com](http://phraseexpress.com). It is much like the 'autocorrect' function in MS Word, but works across all other MS applications as well.

I'm sure we are all familiar with the shortcuts provision in Word, but perhaps make inadequate use of it. Hilary certainly persuaded me to use shortcuts a lot more, as well as the quick access toolbar, both permanently and temporarily for separate projects. I've already printed out my own shortcuts list and have it on my desk, just as Hilary suggested.

Like Hilary, I too have never investigated the *Select Browse Object* button in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen. But I'll certainly be using it now to help me move around a document more quickly than before.

This excellent talk was, in effect, a 'farewell' from Hilary, who is soon to move to the NSW north coast. We wish her well and thank her for her generous contributions to our community.

## Indexing course and July meeting

### *Introductory book indexing course*

The NSW Branch of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers (ANZSI NSW) is planning a two-day Introductory Book Indexing course in July 2012 at Thomson Reuters, Pyrmont, Sydney.

The course will be held either over two Saturdays (7 and 14 July) or on Saturday and Sunday (7–8 July). The society is seeking expressions of interest so it can confirm the dates. If you are interested in attending, please email [glendabrowne@gmail.com](mailto:glendabrowne@gmail.com) with your preference for dates.

This course is a two-day introduction to the principles of book indexing and includes:

- Indexing context (working with editors)
- Indexing processes (reading, highlighting, indexing, editing)
- Project planning
- Wording of entries and creation of cross-references
- Headings, sub-headings, locators
- Names of people, places and organisations
- Alphabetical order and other filing conventions
- Style of entries
- Editing and evaluating entries
- Indexing software — a brief introduction.

The course is presented in lecture format, class discussions and exercises, and take-home exercises. Students receive a substantial workbook and lunches and morning and afternoon teas are provided. Cost will be \$600 for the two days with reductions for ANZSI members and long-distance travellers. More details will be provided once the date has been confirmed.

### **Regional conference in July**

In July ANZSI NSW will hold a regional conference with the ACT Branch in Bowral on the topic of ebooks, and towards the end of the year hope to run a half-day course on embedded indexing. Details will be put on the ANZSI website ([www.anzsi.org](http://www.anzsi.org)) when known.

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#### Newsletter schedule

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

The editor welcomes contributions by email to: [<kerie.newell@bigpond.com>](mailto:kerie.newell@bigpond.com).

All articles must be in .doc format.

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