

THE CANBERRA editor

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From the President



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Hello Canberra editors!

The four months spanned by this edition of *The Canberra editor* bring CSE to the end of a somewhat tumultuous year.

You will recall that in March, members voted decisively—for the second time—not to wind up the Society and become a branch of a restructured 'head office' Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd). Instead, we voted to remain the independent society of editors we have been for 24 years—at least until CSE's longstanding concerns about the new IPEd's governance, financing and branch administration arrangements are satisfactorily handled, rather than being brushed aside as continuously occurred during the exhausting two-year consultation process. CSE is the only one of the seven editors' societies that now remains independent after 1 July.

The first test of members' decision in March came mid-year at renewals time. After a couple of nervous months for the Committee, the number of renewing and new members was very encouraging, and bodes well for our continuing delivery of the services members have come to expect. At 30 June, CSE's total membership (Life, Full, Associate, Corporate, Student) was 177. At the end of the renewal period (July–August), it was 110, and there has been a steady flow of new members since then.

Many CSE members have, as expected, become direct members of IPEd (attached to the NSW branch in most cases); some have let their CSE membership lapse, while others also remain CSE members (at the newly reduced membership fee). Others have retained only their CSE membership.

Despite this momentous change, CSE remains committed to maintaining a practical working relationship with IPEd, where members can feel included in both organisations. We hope that CSE members, like the direct members of IPEd, will continue to see the same benefits of having societies that represent them, to be encouraged to learn and develop through professional development courses and invited guest speakers, to seek out mentors through the National Mentoring Program, and to strive to increase the depth and breadth of the editing profession, through publications and online forums.

Within CSE, members have provided valuable ideas about the services they wish the Society to provide via a special workshop in July and later a survey of professional development needs. Your Committee will endeavour to make these a reality in 2017.



AGM and post-AGM dinner.
Photos by Farid Rahimi.

At our Annual General Meeting in August, I was re-elected for a second term as President. Several Committee members were also re-elected to their positions, and we were fortunate to have others step forward to fill vacancies. Your full Committee for 2016–17 is listed on the back page. Our only vacant position as we go to press is for our General Meetings Coordinator—which was briefly held by Melanie Davies.

At the AGM, we said farewell to our Treasurer, Ed Highley, who has, like CSE's other five Honorary Life Members, served CSE in many positions over many years.

Ed's Treasurer's Report to the AGM confirmed CSE's very sound financial position, thanks to prudent budgeting over past years, and especially thanks to the financial success of the 2015 biennial IPEd national conference. CSE's substantial reserves, if well-managed, will enable us to continue providing—and sometimes subsidising—quality services to members.

Personally, I enjoyed the AGM particularly because other experienced members gave me a lot of support and worked hard to ensure it all ran smoothly. I thank them for that.

At our well-attended post-AGM dinner, our Immediate Past President, Alan Cummine, entertained us with some outstanding *a cappella* renditions of favourite comedic songs and poems. It was a special night.

Our well-attended general meetings in September and October heard excellent and valuable presentations from David Whitbread and Dr

Andina Faragher, maintaining the high standard of CSE's guest speakers. You should find a report on Andina Faragher's presentation elsewhere in this edition.

Also in this edition you can acknowledge CSE's eight new Accredited Editors, who succeeded in the exam in June this year. Congratulations to you all. In his report, Accreditation Board Chairman, CSE's Honorary Life Member Ted Briggs, has some salutary messages for those contemplating sitting the next exam. I commend those messages to you.

This year also marked the 'retirement' of Dr Janet Salisbury. Janet was a founding and longstanding active member and supporter of CSE, and is best known for creating and building up Biotext, a leading and innovative integrated research/writing/editing/design business. A significant number of CSE members now have careers that have benefited from Janet's vision and enterprise at Biotext.

Our last event of the year was our end-of-year/Christmas dinner. Gathering once again for the great food and atmosphere of University House, we were entertained after dinner by K. J. (Katie) Taylor, a 'Canberra native' and young, award-winning author of fantasy novels. Katie spoke glowingly of a good editor being an author's best friend and ally, with laugh-out-loud stories of the tribulations of modern authors and publishers who 'economise' on their engagement of our profession.

It was a rewarding and uplifting note on which to end a memorable year for our Society.

Please accept my thanks to all members for continuing to support CSE, and especially to those who contribute to making the Society function smoothly and harmoniously.

I trust you all have a safe and joyous Christmas and holiday season, and I look forward to seeing you and working with you in the new year.

Johann Idriss
President

Membership

New CSE members

A warm welcome to these new members!

Full members

Katy Norman
Alison Darby
Jules Jauregui
Deborah Fleming
Martin Holmes (who has rejoined
after a stint overseas)

Associate members

Kyra Miles
Supreeya Jindaphan
Taryn Donohue
Melanie Davies
Lisa Teasdale

We're thrilled that many of our members have renewed their memberships, and we look forward to another great year with the Society!

Linda Weber AE

Membership Secretary and Public Officer

Accreditation Board report, October 2016

Accreditation exam

Of the 85 candidates who sat the exam on 25 June, 40 passed the exam and have become IPEd Accredited Editors. This includes eight who sat the exam in Canberra:

- Alison Darby
- Geoff Dawson
- Lisa Lines
- Matthew Sidebotham
- Mel Martin
- Nigel Brew
- Pam Faulks
- Rachael Willoughby

The exam was held at Cliftons (training and conference centres) in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, and at the Quill Consultancy in Hobart (a partner of Cliftons). In addition, two candidates (both of whom are CSE members) sat the exam in overseas venues under special invigilation arrangements.

The pass rate in 2016 was 47 per cent. This is lower than pass rates in all previous exams, which ranged from 51 to 85 per cent.

The Accreditation Board looked at a number of factors that may have influenced this result. First, we considered whether this year's exam paper was more difficult than previous papers. The exam was produced by the same team that generated the 2014 exam, which had a 63 per cent pass rate, and it was thought that this did not affect the results.

We wondered whether the change to the on-screen format may have affected the results, but candidates generally thought the ability to work on-screen made it easier to complete the paper this year. The screen layout allowed a much simpler presentation of most questions and answers.

The markers also noted many very basic errors that candidates ought to have picked up regardless of the medium by which exam was presented.

Marking was also completed by an experienced team who had all marked previous exam papers, many in the previous exam in 2014. In addition, marking is always reviewed across the whole team of markers to ensure consistency, and marking was considered to be at the same level as in the past.

Further, a high proportion of candidates still did exceptionally well, clearly demonstrating their knowledge and skills as editors.

The marking team observed that many candidates appeared to lack both solid training in editing and broad editorial experience; many did not manage to demonstrate quite basic editorial skills, particularly in Parts 2 and 3 of the paper. Indeed, almost 20 per cent of candidates had less than the recommended minimum three years of full-time experience. Some candidates showed skills in particular specialities, but lacked broader editorial skills. Many candidates ignored the brief not to rewrite in Part 2, and many both introduced errors and missed errors that needed correction. The markers also felt that many candidates made poor choices of questions in Part 3, attempting specialist questions that were beyond their experience.

One of the limitations of our work with Cliftons is that the company works entirely with PCs, and not Macintosh computers. The Accreditation Board wanted to ensure equal access for all candidates, and so organised with Cliftons to hire Macs for those candidates who specified a Mac on their registration form. Unfortunately, on the day, some candidates in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth (but not in Sydney, Canberra or Adelaide) experienced problems with the Macs. These candidates were helped by invigilators when they experienced problems, and were given additional time at the end of the exam to make up for any loss of time or work. Subsequent research has provided some evidence that the problems we encountered are related to the settings used in Track Changes and have a simple solution. The Accreditation Board is working with Cliftons to ensure these problems do not happen next time.

We recommend that editing societies and branches of IPEd continue to offer workshops to members on developing style sheets, working with authors, working to the brief (the difference between copyediting and rewriting, for instance), structural editing, grammar and basic language skills, and the publication process, as well as on basic editorial skills and more specialised skills to prepare editors for the current environment or particular specialities.

In conclusion, the Accreditation Board believes the change to the on-screen format has been a success, and we will continue to develop and refine this format for future exams.

Looking ahead, it is expected that the next exam will be held as early as possible in 2018 (perhaps April or May), and that the exact date will be announced in late 2017. The Accreditation Board would like to have offered an exam in the second half of 2017, but this would have been too close to the 2017 biennial national conference.

Ted Briggs

CSE Honorary Life Member
Chairman, IPEd Accreditation Board

For this issue, and with the accreditation exam now behind us, here is an article that one of Elizabeth Murphy's exam-preparation mentees wrote for *Blue Pencil* (NSW Branch of IPEd). Melissa's article spells out a lot about how the National Mentoring Program works, and shows that it can be enjoyable and that both mentor and mentee can learn a lot from the experience.

Following it, is Elizabeth's response to the *Blue Pencil* article. Elizabeth urges anyone thinking about seeking guidance from a mentor, or anyone who has some skill to offer to a mentee, to get in touch with either Ted Briggs or her (see contact details below), or your local mentoring coordinator. They can send you all the information you need to get started on a really rewarding journey.

Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE emmurphy.words@gmail.com

Ted Briggs AE tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au

Joint National Coordinators: IPEd National Mentoring Program

Accreditation renewal

Editors who gained accreditation in 2011 were required to renew their accreditation this year. Of the 62 Accredited Editors from 2011, 41 have renewed. There were also two renewals from the previous year. This is a lower renewal rate than we'd expect; so we intend to follow up Accredited Editors who didn't renew (and who haven't retired) to find out their reasons for not renewing.

IPEd National Mentoring Program

A mentoring tale, part one

In 2015, I attended the 'Grammar in a Nutshell' workshop delivered by Elizabeth Manning Murphy (DE), and was inspired and entertained by her presentation style. How could grammar be such fun? I approached her and we established a mentorship with the aim of giving me a strategy for the 2016 IPEd exam. Elizabeth was clear that this was to be a mentee-driven arrangement; so I pored over the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*, established a list of areas that I knew were my weaknesses, and we went from there. We conducted our sessions via Skype as I am based in Sydney and Elizabeth is in Canberra. I went to Canberra for one meeting when we got together for lunch—and a switch of the mentor role as I worked with Elizabeth on using LinkedIn.

I felt fully prepared for the IPEd exam after our series of mentoring sessions. Elizabeth was very generous with her time, but I had to deliver the goods. Before each session, I had to practise parts of the exam within the set times we discussed for the exam strategy, or I raised questions about grammar points that I needed to understand more fully. I also boosted my collection of editor references and grammar books based on Elizabeth's guidance. I spent far more time studying these references than I would have done without the impetus of having homework to do for our next Skype session.

An unexpected benefit of mentoring was where our conversations would go. I gained insights into Elizabeth's experience of working with postgraduate students and with government, and her participation with the Canberra Society of Editors. She, in turn, learned of current trends that I knew from my work in book publishing. Anecdotes were shared about Sydney and Melbourne publishers and colleagues. Having the breadth of knowledge to share from our different positions in publishing—and being from different generations—allowed for great exchanges. A friendship has blossomed from our experience.

I was very grateful for having this contact, especially with the solitary nature of being a freelance editor. We shared some personal stories about our lives and this is a great advantage when you don't have colleagues you see every day in the workplace. The proof of the success of this mentorship: I actually enjoyed the exam. I had been anxious about sitting it because I had not sat an exam for many years. This mentorship gave me the confidence to do my best—I couldn't let Elizabeth down!

Melissa Faulkner

A mentoring tale, part two—the other end of the Skype hook-up

Melissa Faulkner ('A mentoring tale', Editors NSW *Blue Pencil*, August 2016) rightly says that her mentorship with me was to be mentee driven. The mentor shouldn't impose anything, but should gently nudge the mentee along a path that will help them to achieve their own goals.

Our partnership for the months preceding the last accreditation exam was very enjoyable for me and, like Melissa, I learned a lot along the way—through swapping stories, chatting about editing and all aspects of the publishing industry, and even getting involved in social media—a foreign country to me.

Our national program is clear about what you can be mentored in: anything at all, provided it has some relevance to editing. Some programs are restricted to mentoring in basic editing skills, some regard participation in a mentorship as a stepping stone to the next level of membership in their organisation. Many people see mentors as wizened

old men with white hair and flowing beards—not so in our program: mentors just need to have a skill that a mentee would like guidance in—age is not a consideration.

Melissa is right about the 'homework'. If a mentorship is to work, there has to be an understanding between mentor and mentee about what preparation the mentee needs to do between sessions, and the mentor needs to allow time to review whatever the mentee sends for checking. It's a two-way thing: we learn from each other, we respect each other in every way, we keep each other's confidences. As mentors we guide, we don't teach (though a little teaching comes into it occasionally). We help the mentee to think through their goals and how to achieve them, we point them in the direction of training if that's required, we discuss with them some of the basic skills required for editing, but we never do work for the mentee—that would be overstepping the boundaries.

Mentors in our program attend workshops before they get started on mentorships. This is to help them understand just what we in this IPEd program mean by 'mentoring' and how to handle situations that crop up in the course of mentorships.

I was delighted to have Melissa as one of several mentees leading up to the accreditation exam, and very pleased to know that she appreciated the partnership. Being a mentor is one of the most rewarding things an editor with skills and experience can do, in my opinion. As in our case, it can certainly lead to lasting friendship. Why not give it a go?

Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE

Mentoring in the ACT

IPEd's mentoring program matches society members who would like to be mentored with those who have indicated their willingness to be mentors. Mentoring can focus on any aspect of professional editing. About eight hours of advice is suggested as the norm, but that can be adjusted by mutual agreement.

Members of any editing society can participate. We've had some new mentorships start in the ACT recently; so it's all happening. If anyone else would like some mentoring or if you are interested in being a mentor, I encourage you to contact me to discuss it further.

Geoff Dawson

ACT Mentoring Coordinator, and CSE Treasurer
geoffdawsonediting@gmail.com

The following permissions were granted for the two articles above to be reproduced in *The Canberra editor* and distributed to all IPEd branch newsletter editors through local mentoring coordinators for republication around Australia:

[Melissa] Originally published in Editors NSW *Blue Pencil*, August 2016.

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VALE Peter Graham Faithfull Henderson AC (1928–2016)

One of the most distinguished CSE members was someone whose quiet, unassuming manner never betrayed his distinction in public life. Peter Graham Faithfull Henderson AC attended CSE general meetings and talked to members in order to learn a bit about editing, an occupation he was enjoying in retirement. I was one of the CSE members consulted, and as a result visited him and his wife Heather (daughter of Sir Robert Menzies) at their Canberra home a number of times. I helped him as he worked his way through a text he was editing and enjoyed conversations with him and Heather that ranged over politics, editing and community involvements.

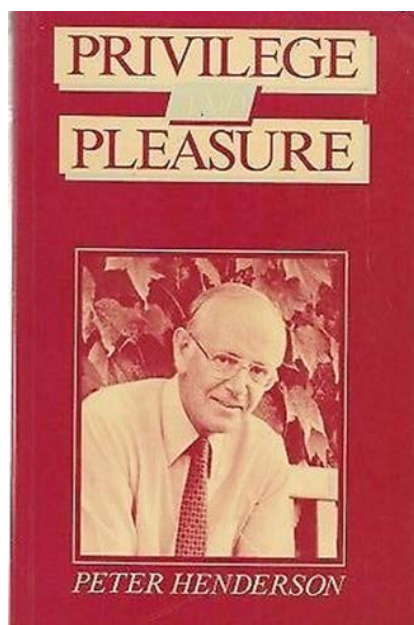
I enjoyed our informal meetings—always a warm welcome, always a cuppa with homemade scones or biscuits, always the same calm, gentle demeanour for which Peter was well known.

Peter lived a full and interesting life, a lot of it in the senior ranks of the Australian Public Service. He was Australia's Ambassador to the Philippines from 1973 to 1975. His highest Government office was as Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs from 1979 to 1984. In 1985, he was made a Companion of the Order of Australia, recognising his distinguished public service. In 1986, his book *Privilege and Pleasure* was published by Methuen Haynes.

His home life was equally fulfilling: he and Heather had four children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was born on 1 October 1928 and died on 25 September 2016.

We who knew Peter as a fellow editor will remember him as a quiet person in a back row at general meetings, good company and always a true gentleman. We at CSE extend our condolences to Heather and the family at this time.

Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE



June general meeting

My year of MasterDocs

Bobby Graham first presented to us in our June general meeting in 2015. Last year, she recounted her career history and how she started to become an editor/publisher. She also recounted how she has become a digital editor in the present world of digital publishing. (See the report written by Alan Cummine in the [2015 June/July issue](#) of *The Canberra editor*.)

In June this year, Bobby presented as the Business Development Manager of **MasterDocs**. MasterDocs is an online collaborative virtual space where authors/writers, editors, consultants, reviewers, designers, IT personnel and publishers may collaborate—most likely remotely—to generate complex manuscripts or publishable content. For example, MasterDocs collaborators may generate large clinical research papers, [government policies](#) or annual reports.

By virtually bringing members of a production team together, MasterDocs saves a publishing venture potentially high costs of bringing team members physically together—of course, it always works with videoconferencing. As a virtual 'Agile Authoring' space, MasterDocs bypasses format fidelity, PC–Mac incompatibility problems or file-type conversion problems. For example, it does away with the need to convert or exchange files or file versions amongst different team members by email, or use compression software to transfer and share large files by email.

Features of MasterDocs allow controlling document versions, adding comments, formatting documents (for example, bold, italic, subscript, superscript, strikethrough, bulleting), setting headings' hierarchy, communicating with bibliography-managing software (e.g. EndNote), and inserting 'live' content (for example, web links, tables, special characters, footnotes, references, images, or perhaps even linked videos).

Bobby outlined some of MasterDocs' benefits which include:

- working anywhere using a personal computer with connection to internet
- assigning different parts of a document to different collaborators
- monitoring a project's progress and documenting its progress history
- controlling document versions
- presenting and formatting content professionally
- publishing on time and fast
- publishing to different outputs/formats (.doc/.docx, .html, .xml, .pdf, .mobi, or high-quality print)
- hosting content securely *high* in the cloud (not in the sky).

Importantly, MasterDocs IT security capabilities comply with the Australian Government requirements.

Attendees of the June general meeting appreciated Bobby's presentation while listening with intent and interest; some, of course, raised questions. One of the questions was how a freelance editor (used to their red pen and editing mark-ups, the Microsoft Word Track Changes tool, or Adobe Acrobat proofreading tools—under the shimmer of their lantern and under the influence of their vin rouge) could use MasterDocs efficiently and correctly if they become part of a collaborative team inevitably bound to use MasterDocs. Bobby mentioned that those new to MasterDocs, but needing to use it, will be trained fully.

Another question was how MasterDocs can handle special characters such as en-dash or em-dash. Bobby mentioned that MasterDocs can handle special characters, but she would get back to us on this question to confirm. I followed up with Bobby on this question by email, and I added whether some routine Microsoft Windows shortcuts for en-dash or em-dash can also be used. She confirmed that MasterDocs has a menu containing special characters that would allow selecting en-dash or em-dash. I thought that Windows shortcuts, Alt + 0150 or Alt + 0151 (on numeric keypad) for en-dash or em-dash, respectively, should normally work using MasterDocs (when used on a PC platform). (One could use Ctrl + minus sign or Ctrl + Alt + minus sign on numeric keypad, respectively, to obtain the same characters.) Bobby confirmed that all those shortcuts work when using MasterDocs. ... well, some shortcut aficionados will be happy.

Farid Rahimi, PhD ELS
Newsletter Editor



PALINDROMES

Palindromes are those strange words which are spelt the same backwards as well as forwards.

The name of the Adelaide suburb 'Glenelg' is such a word; so, too, are the female names, Anna and Hannah.

Palindromes may also be phrases or even whole sentences. For example: 'Amen, icy cinema' and 'Are we not drawn onward, we few, drawn onward to new era?'

There's even a deliberately constructed word meaning 'fear of palindromes'—'aibohphobia'. And guess what? It, too, is a palindrome. And don't forget to check out its deliberately constructed antonym, 'ailihphilia'.

October general meeting

Dr Andina Faragher is an ex-scientist and an IPEd accredited editor; she works as a writer and editor at Biotext. She is interested in clear and concise writing, and in telling about science using clear English. She works at Biotext, which is an editing and publishing company comprising a team of editors, writers and designers. Biotext specialises mainly in health, biomedical, agricultural and environmental sciences. Biotext released AMOSS on 4 October this year after three years developing it.

Andina Faragher presenting to the October general meeting.

Photos by Farid Rahimi.



Australian manual of scientific style (AMOSS) launched 4 October 2016

During the 2015 [Write](#) | [Edit](#) | [Index](#) conference, I learnt about Biotext's initiative to compile a scientific communication guide—*Australian Manual of Scientific Style (AMOSS)*. At CSE's October meeting, our guest speaker [Dr Andina Faragher](#) presented about AMOSS.

Andina is one of the authors and the chief proofreader of AMOSS. Other [Biotext authors](#) who worked to compile this manual are Carrie DeHaan, Kirsten Duncan, Kylie Evans, Dr Julie Irish, Dr Sarah Olesen, Dr Janet Salisbury and Dr Richard Stanford. The AMOSS design and production team members are Hannah Angus, Rachael Dash, Kirsten Duncan, James Ferguson, Andrew Fleming, Lyndal Fleming, Dr Richard Stanford and Dr Carolyn Weiller.

Andina mentioned that Biotext was in a good position to produce a manual like AMOSS: over the years, Biotext had generated many training courses, an in-house style manual, a wiki, and other in-house training materials about communicating scientific and technical manuscripts or reports. The AMOSS production team of Biotext used their expertise to consolidate their in-house body of knowledge in a single, user-friendly online resource after collating Australian and international scientific conventions, and by involving and consulting Australian experts.

According to Andina, AMOSS is a researched and well-tested online resource specifically for the Australian audience. It presents the conventions of scientific communication relating to different scientific disciplines with relevance to the Australian context: AMOSS comprehensively deals with Australian-specific language or preferred

terms relating to its environment, flora and fauna, or its history. As released now, AMOSS is a live, online resource which is continually being developed. But it may be presented in print in the future; and if there is enough interest, an online forum may be set up in conjunction with AMOSS.

AMOSS is for everyone who writes, edits or publishes scientific/technical information. Users of AMOSS may include academics, researchers, students, government employees, science communicators, editors, educators, or journalists.

In her talk, Andina outlined the needs for compiling such an online manual:

- The *Style Manual for authors, editors and printers, 6th Edition*, presents only limited science-related material, such as SI units (Chapter 11) or referencing styles (Chapter 12), and it is outdated, especially in relation to online communication.
- Lack of an Australian science style manual had led science communicators to use overseas resources (for example, the *Scientific Style and Format* by the [Council of Science Editors](#), or *The Chicago Manual of Style*).
- Resources on style and designing infographics are scattered and diverse.
- Science's social context and societal impact necessitate accurate, clear interpretation and delivery of scientific information to the public.

While generating AMOSS, the Biotext team surveyed the needs of its potential users and endeavoured to fill in the gaps in areas outside biology

and health—physics, maths, Earth sciences. They referred to leading scientific journals, professional societies and overseas science style guides. They invited some expert scientists to review AMOSS as it was being developed.

AMOSS presents three main sections plus Resources:

1. **Writing** covers clear English, types of scientific publications and accessibility online.
2. **Editing** covers basics in spelling and usage, punctuation, scientific terms, discipline-specific issues, and the referencing style preferred by AMOSS.
3. **Showing** discusses how best to present tables, figures, images, infographics or other visual information.

Resources contains:

- lists of selected useful publications or online resources that would help with writing or editing scientific material
- brief, printable guides for downloading in .pdf format
- a list of terms to watch out for
- examples of proper usage of commonly misused words or scientific terms.

AMOSS does not cover highly technical, discipline-specific details (for example, chemistry, genetics or mathematics) but it links to relevant web resources. So it does not cover details of scientific communication theory or practice.

The meeting was attended by 32 CSE members, including two new members and some editor–scientists or scientist–editors. Attendees listened eagerly and watched an AMOSS demo by Andina. Andina demonstrated some parts of AMOSS and gave some examples that were specific to the Australian context, showed some of the quick guides, and referred to some misused terms. Her demonstration was followed by many questions by the attendees. One question was on the use of the Oxford comma and another editor questioned the punctuation-minimalistic usage of 'eg', 'ie', 'etc' in relation to screen-reading software. For example, 'eg' can be read 'egg' by screen readers according to the 'Inside GOV.UK' blog, which suggests eliminating such abbreviations.

Attending members then joined in discussions and continued enjoying the networking nibbles until it was time to leave the National Library's Conference Room.

Farid Rahimi PhD ELS

Newsletter Editor

Australian manual of scientific style

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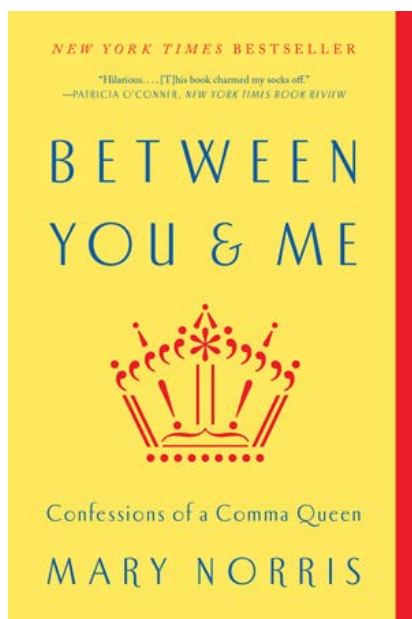
Between You and Me: Confessions of a Comma Queen

Mary Norris

2016, WW Norton & Company, Inc., New York

Printed: 240 pages (ISBN 978 0 393 35214 6)

Ebook: ISBN 978 1 925 09580 7



Review by John Linnegar

If you've ever watched one of the Comma Queen's [YouTube clips](#) on aspects of grammar (and you should), you will have 'met' the author of this delightful book—Mary Norris's first publication after more than 35 years in publishing! And if you enjoyed reading Lynne Truss's *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*, you'll love this New Yorker's offbeat style too, described variously as "full of witty insights", "winningly tender", "confiding", "humble, helpful and ... hilarious", "very funny, lucid and lively" and "so engaging that it's easy to forget you're learning things".

The title of this slim volume says it all: it's part grammar and style, part memoir, and Norris artfully, quirkily weaves the two into a no-holds-barred tale that leaves few grammar stones unturned or skeletons in the closet.

After a variety of odd jobs while studying towards an MA in literature, Norris experienced a seminal moment in 1977, one that turned her thoughts and ambitions towards the craft she has practised and honed at *The New Yorker* since the Seventies. In her own words:

"I started reading *The New Yorker* in graduate school in Vermont. I sometimes visited my brother in New York. He had gone to the Art Students League, where he made friends with a woman in his portrait class named Jeanne Fleischmann. She was married to Peter Fleischmann, the chairman of the board of *The New Yorker*. ... On one visit, I picked up a copy of the magazine ... dated February 24, 1975. ... It was the fiftieth anniversary issue.

"Eventually, I met the Fleischmanns. I was doing research for my master's thesis, on James Thurber, and while Peter was away on business he let me sit in his office and look through bound volumes of the magazine.

"It was the summer of 1977 and there were some wonderful things in *The New Yorker*: ... John McPhee's series about Alaska, 'Coming into the Country'. I had never read McPhee before, and I was dumbstruck, as much by the sweep of his subject matter—Alaska—as by his precise, loving placement of words."

In describing the view from the window of his neighbour, in Eagle, Alaska, McPhee writes:

"The Scotts have all that [Alaskan wilds] framed in their Thermopane—a window that could have been lifted from a wall in Paramus and driven here, to the end of the end of the road. The window is synecdoche, is Eagle itself—a lens, a monocular, framing the wild, holding the vision that draws people up the long trail to the edge of things to have a look and see."

Norris responds:

"Synecdoche: what was that? The context defined it for me—a small thing writ large—but I looked it up anyway. ...

"I cannot explain the effect this word had on me, except to say that it made me ecstatic. ... In addition to what the word was describing ... it was a window onto the writing itself. ... I made up my mind to move to New York in the fall of 1977."

Several (menial and varied) jobs later, and at her second attempt, Norris landed a job at, yes, *The New Yorker*. In her inimitable style, she describes her test and interview:

"I flunked the test for the typing pool. It was on an electric typewriter, and I was used to a manual—at least, that was my excuse. ... The interview in the editorial library was like the one at the dairy [years before] in that I didn't have to lie to get the job. I wanted to work at *The New Yorker*, and once I got a whiff of the library—that bookish, dusty, paste-and-paper smell so peculiar to libraries—I felt that I was in my element. ...

"That was more than thirty-five years ago. And it has now been more than twenty years since I became a page OK'er—a position that exists only at *The New Yorker*, where you query-proofread

Book reviews continued

pieces and manage them, with the editor, the author, a fact checker and a second proofreader, until they go to press. An editor once called us prose goddesses; another job description might be comma queen. Except for writing, I have never seriously considered doing anything else."

So there you have it: how Mary Norris became the 'comma queen' at *The New Yorker*—in her own words. And I've quoted the "grammar geek with a streak of mischief" (Marilyn Johnson) *in extenso*, because the real strength of this book is not just the "good language sense" (as Ben Yagoda labelled it) she shares but the delightfully anecdotal manner in which she weaves episodes from her life story with her enthusiasm for proper language usage. To give but one example:

"Nobody knows everything—one of the pleasures of language is that there is always something new to learn—and everybody makes mistakes. Regularly, my grasp of the subjunctive slips, and I need to visit the grammatical equivalent of a chiropractor. On my way out of the house one morning, I grabbed a usage manual to read in the car while I waited for the street cleaner to go by, in the street ballet called alternate side of the street parking, during which New Yorkers who own cars but are too cheap to park them in lots or garages compete for a legal spot. 'The subjunctive sounds scarier than it is and has a tendency to fill people with horror,' I read. Uh-oh."

Typical of her writing style, she then launches seamlessly into a mini-lesson on the subjunctive mood, as she does with spelling issues, relative pronouns, the apostrophe, gender and the use of personal pronouns, and—of course—the use and abuse of the comma. And if this doesn't pique your interest, consider some of her chapter titles: *That witch!* (the that vs which headache); *The problem of heesh* ("Our language problems with gender are not as complicated as German or as exotic as John Lennon's silk pajama, but they are endlessly controversial."); *Who put the hyphen in Moby-Dick?* (in the epitaph to the chapter, Norris reveals that it was a copyeditor who dunnit); *A dash, a semicolon and a colon walk into a bar*; *Spelling is for weirdos* (in which she offers a fascinating account of the compilation and publication of Noah Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* in 1828 and its subsequent publication by George and Charles Merriam as a single volume (hence Merriam-Webster today)). This chapter contains the following snippet with which we can all identify:

"Spelling is the clothing of words, their outward visible sign, and even those who favor sweatpants in everyday life like to make a *bella figura*, as the Italians say—a good impression—in their prose. A misspelling undermines your authority. And an eye for the misspelled word can give you an edge in the workplace. It was a spelling mistake that gave me my first break at *The New Yorker*."

In the chapter on the use of 'that' and 'which' in relative clauses (either defining or non-defining), *That witch!*, Norris shares the following amusing anecdote:

"Not long ago, a young editorial assistant getting her first tour of the [magazine's] offices paused at my door to be introduced, and when she heard I was a copy editor she jumped back, as if I might poke her with a red-hot hyphen or force-feed her a pound of commas. *Relax*, I wanted to say. I don't make a habit of correcting people in conversation or in print—unless it's for publication and they ask for it, or I'm getting paid."

I end this review, unashamedly sold on Norris, with the epigraph she chose for *Between You and Me*:

Of course, when you correct the errors of others,
do so with kindness, in the hope that later writers
will be as kind when they correct yours.

—Francis A Burkle-Young and Sandra Rose Maley,
The Art of the Footnote

For me, this just about sums up Norris the OK'er and copyeditor: humbled, helpful and a genial guardian of grammar. And in it lies a message for the "you and you and you" to whom she dedicates her book.

Effective Onscreen Editing: new tools for an old profession, 3rd edition

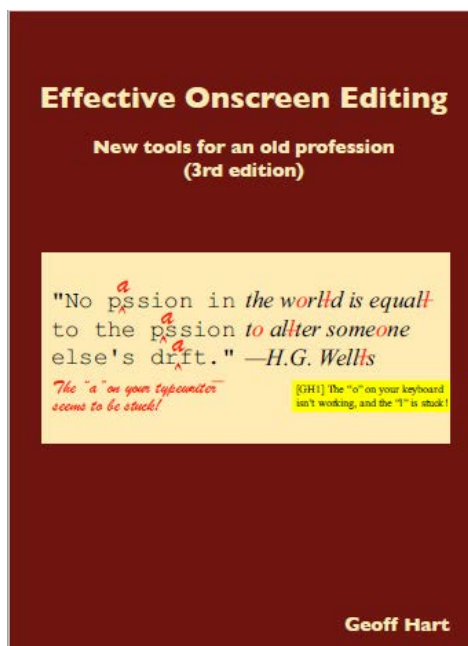
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Review by Karin Hosking AE ELS

Canadian Geoff Hart started out as a forest ecologist before realising he preferred scientific editing to scientific research. Since then, he has spent almost thirty years as a technical communicator. Late last year, Farid invited me to review another of his books—*Writing for Science Journals* (2014—you can read the review [here](#))—and recently he asked if I'd review another. Why not, I say!

Effective Onscreen Editing: new tools for an old profession (3rd edition, 2016) is absolutely huge. Over 800 pages (the PDF version). It's not the type of book to read from cover to cover, but would make an excellent and comprehensive addition to any editor's reference library. The book has two parts: the first part covers editing more broadly, while the second part provides detailed instructions (supported by web resources) on how to get the best out of Microsoft Word while editing.

There are many advantages to on-screen editing as compared with hard-copy editing—increased accuracy, time saved, greater speed and consistency—and Chapter 2 explores these. Chapter 3 reminds us that writing and editing are human endeavours that promote the

role of the editor as ally and partner, rather than nemesis, of the author. It discusses ways in which editors can effectively and efficiently work with clients, and provides helpful information on things like pay rates, problem solving, relationship management and confidentiality.

Chapters 4 to 18 (Part 2 of the book) go into the nuts and bolts of on-screen editing using Word. The earlier chapters cover basics such as settings, shortcuts and styles; and progressively the material becomes more complex, covering tracked changes, commenting, search tools, dictionaries, style sheets, automating editing using macros, markup languages, backups and more. There is also some very handy guidance on how to use proofreaders' marks in Adobe Acrobat, and on what to check if proofreading (and effectively, software testing) online materials such as web pages. Chapter 17, intriguingly, discusses overcoming client resistance to on-screen editing. Personally, I haven't had anyone insist I use an *actual* red pen since about 2013, but the author provides some well-reasoned arguments in favour of on-screen editing in case I ever strike another *dinosaur* objector!

Geoff Hart writes in an accessible, conversational style, and this book would appeal to both new editors starting out and more experienced editors wanting to finetune their technique and gain extra efficiency. This is a very generous book: not only does it provide a remarkable amount of information for a relatively small (and tax-deductible) price, but purchasers are given access to a web page with links to additional illustrations, resources and screenshots for each chapter. Oh, and there's a detailed and fascinating glossary near the end of the book. I'd never used the words *Gestalt* or *triage* in relation to editing before, but may do so from now on ...

I warmly recommend this book. It is an excellent resource for anyone who edits in Word.

Where can you get a copy? Hard copies are available from [Lulu.com](#) for AUD\$47 (plus postage) at the time of writing. Electronic versions (PDF and EPUB) can be purchased via the [author's website](#) for US\$28. I received the electronic versions for this review; so I read the PDF. The PDF is easily searchable; so if you're a greenie like me, you may want to buy the ebook version and save a tree.

Punctuation..?

User Design, 2nd edition, 2012

Print: 35 pages (ISBN 978 0 9570712 2 3)

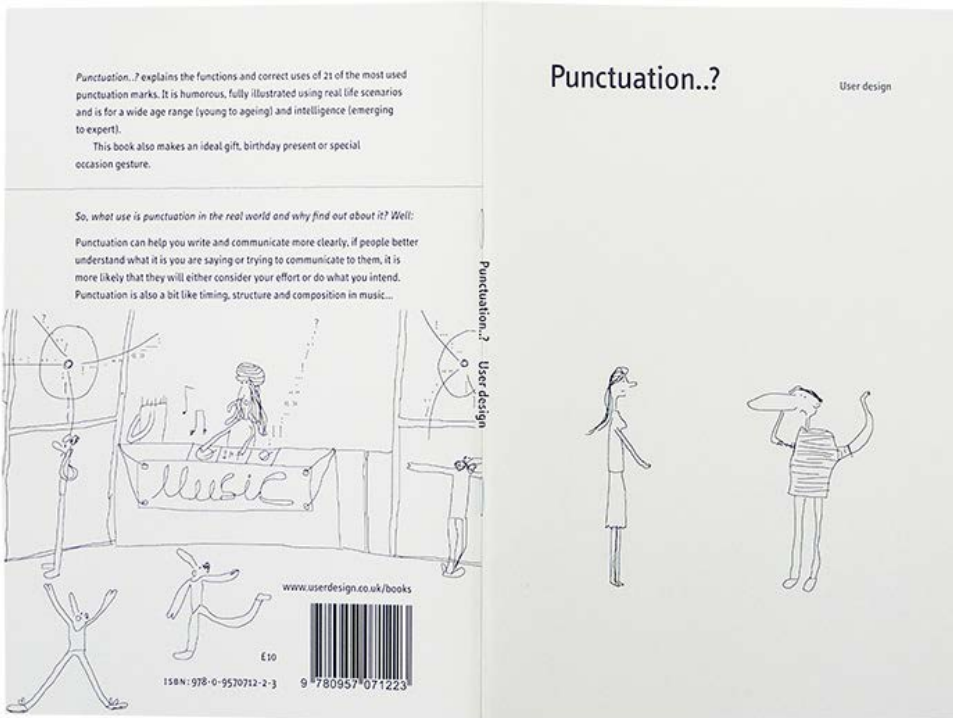
Review by Farid Rahimi PhD ELS, Newsletter Editor

The book *Punctuation..?* by User Design is a handy 35-pager which guides the reader on how to use some 21 punctuation marks. It is written using brief and clear English; so it does not take a long time to read over. And its potential readers need to have only some basic grasp of grammar to understand and practise punctuating their written masterpieces—as guided by this book. User Design supplements use of every punctuation mark with one or two examples; most examples are illustrated through—or relate to—simple but clever greyscale cartoons.

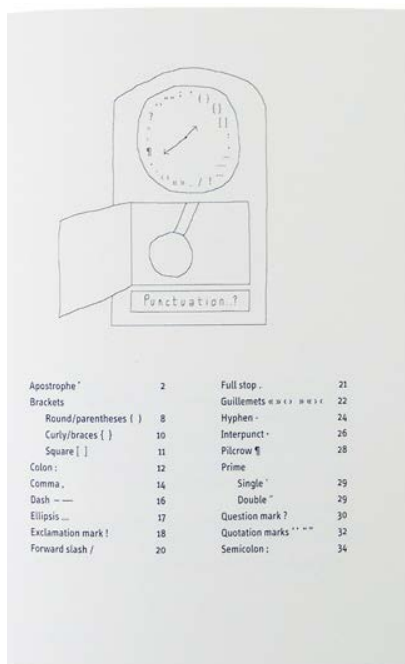
The cartoon illustrations that accompany descriptions of the punctuation marks are a unique feature of this book. They occupy the top half of each page, leaving the bottom half for text. This design results in a light and eye-pleasing layout on each page. Overall, the combination of cartoons and text complements the book's brief prose. Laudable work!

Punctuation..? also introduces uses of some uncommon punctuation marks such as pilcrow (¶), interpunct (-·) and guillemets («»). Interestingly, the Microsoft Word Symbol box contains pilcrow and interpunct, but the Word spellchecker highlights them as incorrect spellings. Pilcrow is called so in

the description of it by the Microsoft Word Symbol box, but interpunct is called 'middle dot', and guillemets are called 'left-pointing' and 'right-pointing double angle quotation marks' by Word. The same naming is applied to these characters by the Microsoft Windows Character Map. After reading the title of the book and pondering a bit, I asked myself, "Does one use a space then full ellipsis followed by a question mark, or no space with two full stops followed by a question mark—such as in the title of this book?" The same question applies to an exclamation mark; how would you combine one with ellipsis? *Punctuation..?* could not answer this question for me, perhaps because it is a brief quick guide on punctuation, not a detailed one that drills down questions like mine. Well, it may have simply been a matter of choice or style. Meanwhile, I discovered that some of the reviews of this book erroneously 'corrected' its title—sort of—and used full ellipsis before the question mark; for example, see the reviews by [editage Insights™](#), [American Copy Editors Society](#), [theguardian](#), and [forbiddenplanet international BLOG](#), also linked through the [User Design website](#). The authors of these reviews erred because they did not use the exact title of the book as it was 'designed' and presented. But were they meanwhile correct when using full ellipsis—although without an initial space? To find an answer, I referred to my library. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th Edition, mentions that the full set of three full stops (ellipsis) should be used with a question or an exclamation mark (or other punctuation marks). Well, that was my answer. Perhaps, it would have been best that the title



Punctuation..?'s outside front and back cover (above), and page 1 (below).



Keyboard shortcuts for pilcrow, interpunct and guillemets

- Type '00B6' then press Alt + X or Alt + 0182 to type a pilcrow (¶)
- 00AB and then Alt + X or Alt + 0171 for opening guillemets («)
- 00BB and Alt + X or Alt + 0187 for closing guillemets (»)
- Alt + 0183 for interpunct (·)

See [here](#) for more.

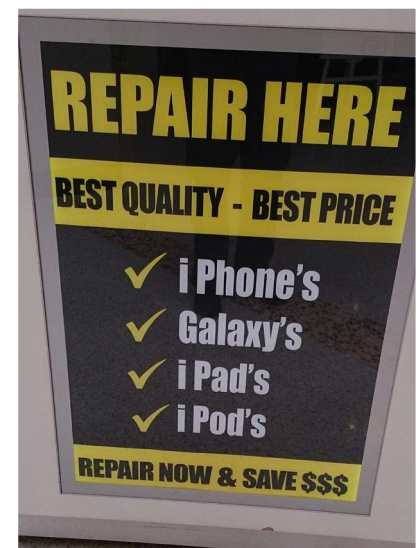
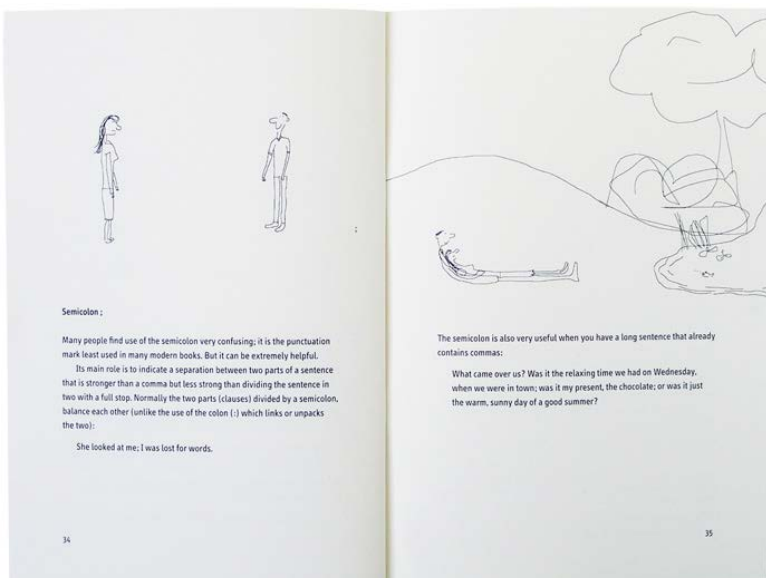
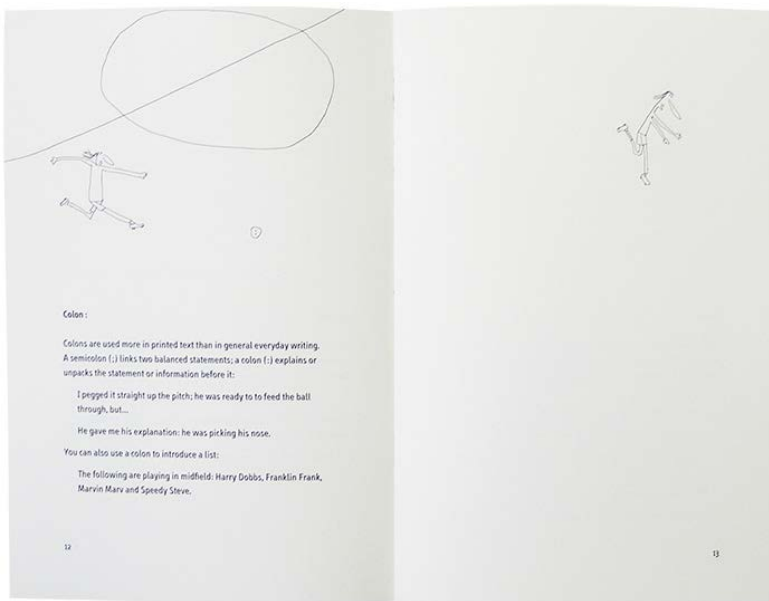
Punctuation..? did not generate this contentious *point on punctuation*—or better still, I should not have noticed or raised it. But it seems I'm not the only one who noticed this: Mary Norris had already commented on this fact in one of her articles published in *The New Yorker* magazine in 2012, titled '[Semicolons; So Tricky](#)'.

"The title '*Punctuation..?*' employs a hybrid of an ellipsis and a question mark, with the point of the question mark doing double duty as the third dot in an ellipsis. To me it looks off balance—a triumph of design over tradition—partly because there is no space between the word and the ellipsis. If I had invented the interrogative ellipsis, I think I'd have gone with '*Punctuation???*' Or maybe '*Punctuation;*' it would have the effect of suggesting that you supply your own subtitle."

Apart from the contentious title, I found an example on page 12 read, "he was ready to to [sic] feed the ball through, but... [sic]" This and some other occasions suggested to me that the book would have benefited from proofreading to correct mistakes, like doubled 'to', or ironic punctuation shortcomings, like consistent lack of a space before ellipsis, or some missing commas here and there.

Otherwise, *Punctuation..?* can be a great gift to a high-school graduannd or a university student right here in Australia; or, better still, one can gift it to the yellow-penned sign-writer who had designed the sign reproduced on this page. Grocers [Grocer's] would benefit from it, too.

Pages 12–13 and 34–35



Note also the erroneous, extraneous spaces following the small i's in i Phone, i Pad, i Pod—instead of iPhone, iPad, iPod; and the hyphen replacing a spaced en-dash.

Photo by Farid Rahimi

Hyphenophilia

Yes, I've heard it: some may argue that they don't need to learn keyboard shortcuts *par coeur* or otherwise; nor do they need to use them. I still hope for shortcuts to be on the tips of some editing fingertips by now. But I'm giving you another break—no Keyboard Shortcuts in this issue of the newsletter.

Out of curiosity, I have to learn how to use Word Macros to control an en-dash or an em-dash—as some editors do—but I'd argue that Macros are not needed when one can use shortcuts simply to use dashes (or a minus sign) properly.

Or hyphens, for that matter: A quote published by *The Canberra Times* online reads, "Professor Collignon also communicated that there is no record of any *Nocardia* [sic.] being passed from person-to-person." See the full article [here](#).

After reading this about potential exposure to *Nocardia testacea* at CSIRO, I wondered if the article quoted spoken words. If it did, how did the writer of the article come up with the weird construction 'from person-to-person'? Now, try to read the hyphenated words as a unit, as they're supposed to be read when hyphenated. Don't you think you'd ask yourself, 'from person-to-person ... to what?' ... I'm puzzled, but I'm sure many *The Canberra Times* readers may not have been puzzled because they would have read it *en passant*, 'from person to person', without thinking that something may be missing.

If it did not quote spoken words, then the writer needs to review the use of hyphens.

Farid Rahimi PhD ELS

Newsletter Editor

ENGLISH AS SHE MIGHT ONE DAY BE SPOKE

An oldie but a goodie:

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the European Union rather than German, which was the other possibility.

As part of the negotiations, the British Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a 5-year phase-in plan that would become known as 'Euro English'.

In the first year, 's' will replace the 'soft c'. Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard 'c' will be dropped in favour of 'k'.

This should klear up konfusion, and keyboards can have one less letter.

There will be growing public enthusiasm in the sekond year when the troublesome 'ph' will be replaced with 'f'. This will make words like fotograf 20% shorter.

In the 3rd year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling can be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible.

Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horibl mes of the silent 'e' in the languag is disgrasful and it should go away.

By the 4th yer, people vil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing 'th' with 'z' and 'w' with 'v'.

During ze fifz yer, ze unesesary 'o' kan be dropd from vords kontaining 'ou' and after zis fifz yer, ve vil hav a sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubl or difikultis and evrivan vil find it ezi to understand ech oza. Ze drem of a united Urop vil finali kum tru.

Und after ze fifz yer, ve vil al be speking German like zey vunted in ze first plas. If zis mad you smil, pleas pas on to oza pepl.

COMICAL COLLECTIONS

Once again we present a collection of clever 'sayings' from a 'circular' email that arrived in my inbox, courtesy of my literate garbologist mate in Harden-Murrumburrah. Not recently, I must confess, but in January 2015. No doubt many of you will have received it through one of your own 'e-networks'.

But for those who haven't, or would like to be reminded of the fun we can have with our language, here it is. The email was headed *The philosophy of ambiguity*. Not all of these sayings are ambiguous, but they are clever and play with other idiosyncrasies of the English language.

The spelling should tell you it originated in the USA. I left out a few that didn't make me chuckle or appreciate the cleverness, or were seamier than I thought appropriate.

Have a safe and joyful Christmas.

Alan Cummine

Immediate Past President

I went to a bookstore and asked the saleswoman where the self-help section was. She said that if she told me, it would defeat the purpose.

If man evolved from monkeys and apes, why do we still have monkeys and apes?

Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

What if there were no hypothetical questions?

If a deaf child signs swear words, does his mother wash his hands with soap?

If someone with multiple personalities threatens to kill himself, is it considered a hostage situation?

Is there another word for synonym?

Where do forest rangers go to 'get away from it all'?

What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?

If a parsley farmer is sued, can they garnish his wages?

Would a fly without wings be called a walk?

If a turtle doesn't have a shell, is it homeless or naked?

Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?

If the police arrest a mime, do they tell him he has the right to remain silent?

How do they get deer to cross the road only at those yellow road signs?

What was the best thing before sliced bread?

One nice thing about egotists: they don't talk about other people.

Do infants enjoy infancy as much as [some!] adults enjoy adultery?

How is it possible to have a civil war?

If one synchronized swimmer drowns, do the rest drown too?

If you ate both pasta and antipasto, would you still be hungry?

If you try to fail, and you succeed, which have you done?

Whose cruel idea was it for the word 'lisp' to contain the letter 's'?

Why are hemorrhoids called 'hemorrhoids' instead of 'assteroids'?

Why is there an expiration date on sour cream?

If you spin an oriental person in a circle three times, do they become disoriented?

Can an atheist get insurance against 'acts of God'?

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Schedule for next newsletter

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The editor welcomes contributions by email: newsletter@editorscanberra.org.

All articles must be in .doc format.