
Next meeting

24 November

7 pm

Brassey
Restaurant
Barton

**Guest speaker:
Ian Meikle**

Ian Meikle, a life-long journalist, describes himself as coming from the 'pole-dancing end of publishing' – the popular press.

Ian has been senior editor at several newspapers, including *The Advertiser*, *The Australian*, and *The Canberra Times*. He has also worked in television as director of news and current affairs at Channel 7 in Adelaide; and he spent three years as MD of Pacific Publications, Australia's second-biggest magazine company (publisher of edifying titles such as *New Idea*, *TV Week* and *Girlfriend*). He now owns and cheerfully edits the weekly, glossy *CityNews*.

Ian is a Member of the Order of Australia and solemnly promises that, given an appropriate level of alcohol consumption, his speech will seem funny, even if only to himself.

Newsletter of the Canberra Society of Editors

Volume 19 • Number 10 • November 2010

President's report



This is the last newsletter for 2010. We'll be seeing the year out with our annual end-of-year dinner on 24 November at the Brassey. The menu looks great, and an interesting guest speaker will be there. I hope to see many of you there as it should be an enjoyable evening.

Our general meetings have now moved to the Emeritus Faculty at the Australian National University. Everyone who attended the October meeting agreed it is a delightful venue and very suitable to the needs of the Canberra Society of Editors. We will be holding our general meetings there in 2011.

The feedback from members about the new website has been very encouraging. A few people have suggested improvements, which we have implemented as we've had time.

If you do see something that needs changing, please let us know via the contact form on the website. It is your Society, and so your contribution counts.

There is no news from IPEd for this issue, but they have been busy. Following in the footsteps of the Canberra Society of Editors (or so we like

to think!), IPEd has just launched its new-look website.

I'm sure Ted Briggs, the IPEd delegate, will be only too happy to take your comments back to the IPEd website team.

Preparations for the next accreditation exam are well underway. If you are even thinking about sitting the exam, contact Larissa Joseph and let her know.

Our October general meeting was to include a presentation on managing media in a crisis. The presenter was unable to attend at the last minute, and so we were left with the opportunity to have an extended discussion about possible training, topics for general meetings and other matters.

Some of the ideas that came out of that discussion are on page 2. That's not the end of matters, by the way. We're always looking for new ideas and anyone is most welcome to contribute to the Society.

Cathy Nicoll

Christmas dinner—BOOK NOW

This year, the Canberra Society of Editors will be celebrating Christmas at The Brassey restaurant in Barton on 24 November. The cost will be \$40 for members, which includes two courses and a drink. A menu is on our website at <www.editorscanberra.org>.

You must book by 16 November to secure your place

Email our Treasurer or contact us at <<http://www.editorscanberra.org/about/contacts/>> to make a booking and tell us your choice of dishes from the menu.

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Training news:

Training and plans for more

Our training survey is still online and waiting for more of your ideas.

A discussion at the October meeting gave us some ideas (see right), but please let us know if there is anything else you would like training in.

You can respond via email or via the website: <<http://www.editorscanberra.org/survey-2010/>>. Please respond to the survey so we can provide the training you need!

The original survey questions are below.

Survey of training needs still open

- [1] In which of the following subject areas would you welcome a training course?
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| i Editing and proofreading practice | v Grammar and/or writing style |
| ii Indexing practice | vi Wordprocessing |
| iii Editing business practice | vii Other editing and publishing software (e.g. InDesign) |
| iv Project management | viii Website design, implementation and maintenance |
- [2] Can you suggest course topics (and presenters) not listed in Question 1?
- [3] Do you prefer full-day or half-day courses?
- [4] Do you prefer weekday or Saturday courses?
- [5] The cost of courses is usually in the order of \$150 for full-day courses and \$90 for half-day courses. Do you have any comments on the cost of courses?
-

Some good training ideas so far:

Structural editing
Fiction editing
Design for those who want more
Project management
Using styles in Word
Shifting to Word 2007 (or 2010, or 2011 ...)
Templates in Word
Annual report briefing
Grammar
Using new technologies

From the editor

Welcome to the November issue of *The Canberra editor* and the last for 2010. It's a little thin on the ground for articles, but I can only thank our regular contributors for making it possible.

This year the Society has seen many changes in its communication outlets. We have a wonderful new logo and website and the design of your newsletter is progressing.

The Society has a new meeting place – Fellows Lane Cottage at ANU. It's small but proved to be a very pleasant venue with a lectern and access to equipment for presentations.

As managing editor, I would like to thank all who helped in the newsletter's production: former editor, Gil Garcon; Cathy Nicoll for typesetting and Martine Taylor for proofreading.

Finally, my thanks must go to Peter Judge, Elizabeth Murphy, Hilary Cadman, Martin Holmes and Anne Reed for their regular contributions. And to Kim Wells, Damaris Wilson, Chris Johnson, Ed Highley, Ted Briggs, Dallas Stow, Brian O'Donnell, Carolyn Page, Natalie Maddalena and Gil Garcon for their articles.

I look forward to working with you in 2011.

And don't forget our Christmas dinner on 24 November at The Brassey in Barton.

Kerie Newell

Pausing with purpose

Punctuation is all those little dots and squiggles that get put in and after sentences. There are quite a few of them, and sometimes they get confused. Let's see if we can clarify the whole situation to make punctuation easier to cope with, and easier for you to explain to an author whose work you are editing.

First, punctuation is for meaning, not for decoration. It takes the place of pauses in speech, tone of voice, facial expression and even body language. It is the reader's guide to how you want him or her to interpret your writing. Many years ago, punctuation in some legal documents was actually forbidden – it had to be left open to the reader (probably a judge) to put his or her own interpretation on the words. This put a tremendous strain on writers who had to make sure that whatever words they put on paper would be interpreted exactly as intended by the writer. Thankfully, we have punctuation to help.

Next, let's look at what I call the hierarchy of punctuation. If we take the comma (,), the semicolon (;) and the full stop (.) as the three basic punctuation marks, how do they relate to each other? I call the comma a quarter stop, the semicolon a half stop and the full stop ... well, what else?

The main use of the comma is to tell the reader where the author wants you to take a small pause, as in these sentences:

- *Take your books, pens, paper and dictionary with you.* (separating items in a series)
- *Peter, the managing director, is sick today.* (setting off words in apposition)
- *We did not go to Europe this year, but we did go to Japan.* (with conjunction, joining two main clauses)
- *Finally, let's look at this sentence.* (after an introductory word or phrase)

The main use of the semicolon is to make a much stronger pause than a comma, but not as strong as a full stop, as in these sentences:

- *We did not go to Europe this year; we did go to Japan.* (joining two main clauses without using a conjunction)
- *Peter, the managing director; Jane, the company secretary; and Martha, the advertising manager, will all be at the meeting next week.* (separating items in a series when there is already a comma within any of the items)

The main use of the full stop is to make a very definite major pause. It can only be used after a complete sentence (that is, a group of words having a subject and a verb at least), as in these sentences:

- *We did not go to Europe this year; we did go to Japan.* (joining two main clauses without using a conjunction)
- *Peter, the managing director; Jane, the company secretary; and Martha, the advertising manager, will all be at the meeting next week.* (separating items in a series when there is already a comma within any of the items)

The main use of the full stop is to make a very definite major pause. It can only be used after a complete sentence (that is, a group of words having a subject and a verb at least), as in these sentences:

- *We did not go to Europe this year. We did go to Japan.* (optional alternative to using a semicolon between the two sentences)
- *It is cold in this room because the window is open.* (marking the end of a complete statement)
- *Please close the window.* (marking a polite request, where a question mark would be inappropriate)

The question mark (?) and the exclamation mark (!) carry just as much weight as the full stop – note they each contain a full stop.

- *Why didn't you close the window when I asked?* (marking a direct question which is a complete sentence)
- *Run for your life! The building's on fire!* (marking the end of a highly emotional sentence)

There are other uses for all these punctuation marks, but let's concentrate on just these.

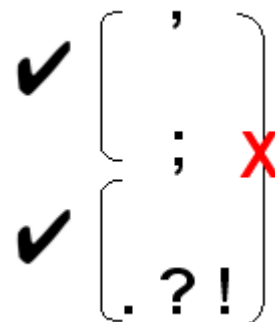
My hierarchy of punctuation is a good guide to what you can and cannot do with the main three.



(continued next page ...)

You can sometimes substitute a comma for a semicolon or a semicolon for a comma.

You can sometimes substitute a full stop for a semicolon or a semicolon for a full stop.



You can never substitute a comma for a full stop or a full stop for a comma.

Pausing with purpose (continued)

As we have seen, the full stop can be used to separate two sentences (main clauses) about aspects of the same topic, or the semicolon can be used if the writer wants to keep the two sentences close together. And the semicolon is used to separate items in a list which already have commas in them.

The most common error occurs when we write a run-on sentence:

- *The director announced that all staff would receive a bonus at Christmas, this was greeted with cheers.*

This is incorrect – it is sometimes called the comma fault. We can't use the comma to substitute for a full stop here.

Each sentence is complete and the second sentence deserves its own initial capital:

- *The director announced that all staff would receive a bonus at Christmas. This was greeted with cheers.*

In this article, I have looked at punctuation that appears *in* and *after* sentences. Other punctuation, such as quotation marks, appears around sentences. All punctuation is there to help the reader know what the writer intended - and the editor's job is to make that intention as clear as possible.

Elizabeth Manning Murphy, 2010

Reference: Murphy, Elizabeth M, 1989, *Effective writing: plain English at work*, Pitman, Melbourne.



Thinking about words: truth and meaning

A word never—well, hardly ever—shakes off its etymology and its formation. In spite of all the changes in and extensions of and additions to its meanings, and indeed pervading and governing these, there will persist the old idea.

J L Austin, quoted in Burchfield, *The English language*.

As a small boy at school I was drilled by my physics master in the various laws of physics: Newton's Laws of Motion and of Gravity, Conservation of Momentum, Laws of Thermodynamics and so on, and among them the Law of Conservation of Matter: 'Matter cannot be created or destroyed'. He drove these laws into our young consciousnesses with a metre ruler aimed unerringly at our knuckles, and as you see, it worked—I have never forgotten them. They have joined the accumulating clutter of useless knowledge clogging my grey cells, and there they will probably remain until the day I die.

I was in the 'science stream' at school, but it has been my good fortune since to have had the opportunity to study languages and, more importantly, to study *language*. The outcome of that study is all mixed up in those grey cells with whatever went before, leading me to think that we also need a Law of Conservation of Language: 'Words cannot be created or destroyed'. You may well reply, 'Whoa! Our language is in constant evolution—today's English is different from yesterday's', and you would be right. But every word in our modern vocabulary has its pedigree, and as editors our understanding of that pedigree is often our key to correct usage.

A lot of these little articles of mine deal with the history of words, to give an insight into their relationships and meaning. We call this their *etymology*, but what does that actually mean? The Greek word *etymos* means 'true', and

there is a little-used English word *etymon*, in use from the 1500s, meaning the primitive form of a word—the OED says 'the word or combination of words from which it has been corrupted'. I would take exception to 'corrupted', preferring to think of it as having 'evolved or changed in current use'.

We have some conspicuous examples of changes of use, the most obvious recently being the hijacking of the word 'gay' by the homosexual community. Back in the 1950s, 'gay' generally just meant merry and bright, and 'coming out' was something nicely brought up young women did when they 'entered society' (and the marriage market).

The earliest instance in the OED of 'gay' with its homosexual connotation is 1951. Before then, back to the 17th century, a man might be a 'gay dog', implying an immoral or dissipated lifestyle but no more. A gay woman in the 19th century was a prostitute.

In the 1857 *Punch* cartoon, one of the two miserable-looking women standing on the street corner in the rain, says, 'Ah! Fanny! How long have you been gay?' And to rub it home, the poster on the wall behind them is for a performance of *La Traviata*, an opera about a courtesan.

The word 'gay' reached us from the French *gai*, known since the 12th century. They currently define *gai* as being 'of a carefree disposition, smiling, looking at the world in a positive light'. French Wikipedia examines the American and English usage of 'gay', but suggests that while the

Thinking about words (continued)

French look objectively at that usage they do so without overly seeking to emulate it. 'Gay Paree' still largely retains the innocence of its gaiety—if a centuries-old reputation for heterosexual licentiousness can be considered innocent!

So where did the original *gai* come from? My French source suggests that it may be borrowed from the old Occitan word *gai*, 'petulant, gay', which in turn comes from a Gothic word *gaihi*, with links to modern German *jäh*, meaning 'abrupt', carried to France perhaps by the troubadours. The OED, however, says that 'the ulterior etymology is disputed: the link to *gâhi* swift, headlong (modern German *jäh*), is now generally abandoned. An etymon (there's that word!) more satisfactory with regard to both sense and phonology is Old High German *wâhi* pretty'. Who do you believe? See how the experts delight in contradicting each other.

'Occitan', by the way, was simply the far south of France, the region now known as Languedoc. That too has a history, relating to different dialects in the southern and northern parts of France. In the south, they made a sound like *oc* for 'yes', compared with *oui* in the rest of the country, the two regions in the Middle Ages being called the Lands of *Oc* and *Oïl* respectively. *Oc* and *oïl* were thought to derive from the Vulgar Latin for 'yes',

which was either *hoc* or *hoc ille*, literally 'this' or 'this is it'. There was a third derivative *si*, still used for an emphatic 'yes' in French and as the normal word for 'yes' in Spain and Italy.

So what? you may say, but this was simply an example to show where you can get to by trying to push things back a little further. Look up 'today' in the OED and you are referred to 'day', where you are told that, whatever you might have thought, 'day' has nothing to do with Latin *dies*. Instead it comes from old German, which in turn comes from the Proto-Indo-European root *dheg* with links to 'burning'—it is the period when the sun burns and shines. 'Today' then just means 'this day'. But modern

German for 'today' is *heute*, and this they reckon comes from Latin *hodie*, 'today', which makes the right kind of sound except that it seems logically wrong to separate the origins of 'day' and 'today'. The French, Italians and Spanish did take their words for 'day' from *dies*: *jour*, *giorno* and *dia*. They also took their words for 'today' from *hodie*, with *hui*, *oggi* and *hoy* respectively. But somewhere around 1100 some bright scribe in France thought he should make the today-ness doubly certain by adding *au jour de*, giving 'the day of today'. Other scribes thought this was a great idea, so it was copied and re-copied, getting stuck at *aujourd'hui* ever since, to the anguish of small boys learning French who find it a shocker to spell correctly. And *hodie*? Try a contraction of *hoc die*, 'on this day'...

How far back do you go in search of truth or meaning? When you are puzzled by the precise meaning (or meanings) or implications of a word, you can often find some indirect help from its pedigree or its past usage. As editors, we are professional word-mongers, and we need to be certain—to keep a jump ahead of our clients, to justify our claim that we know more about these things than they do.

Peter Judge



Sources:

J L Burchfield, *The English Language*, OUP 1985 (1987, 2002). The quotation is from J L Austin, 'A plea for excuses', in *Philosophical Papers* (1961), vi, 149. *Oxford English Dictionary* Second Edition on CD-ROM (v. 4.0), 2009. *Le Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé*, at <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/tlf.htm>>

The cartoon is from *Punch* magazine in 1857 illustrating the use of 'gay' as a euphemism for being a prostitute.

The poster on the wall is for *La Traviata*, an opera about a courtesan. Image from <[http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gay_\(homosexualité\)](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gay_(homosexualité))>.

An efficient way to manage references



If you are still editing in-text citations and reference lists by hand, you may be interested in the various types of reference management programs. These programs are useful to editors as they make it easy to:

- add citations to text
- generate a bibliography, with items in the correct numerical or alphabetical order
- switch from numbered citations to author-date (or vice versa)
- apply a specific style (e.g. from a particular style manual or journal) to the citations and bibliography.

If used properly, a reference management program also does away with the need to check citations against the reference list and vice versa.

Such programs work by storing the various elements of a publication (e.g. author, title, date, publisher and edition) in a database. The referencing program links to a word processing program such as MS Word by means of an additional toolbar. An icon in this referencing toolbar is used to insert a citation in a document; this creates a 'live' link between the citation in the document and the relevant reference in the database.

Once citations have been inserted, another icon in the referencing toolbar can be used to generate a bibliography. The program settings can be adjusted to change the format of references, including whether they are by author–date or by number, how they are ordered in the text (e.g. alphabetical or date order), and how they are displayed in the bibliography in terms of punctuation, order of the various elements of the reference and so on.

Of course, references still need editing within the program. This might involve, for example, ensuring that all elements in a reference are in the right place, fixing spelling mistakes and changing hyphens to en dashes in number spans.

I first came across reference management software a few years ago when clients started sending documents containing live *Endnote*¹ links. As I had no experience with the program, this was daunting. However, after working through the training materials available on the *Endnote* website, I realise how much easier the editor's job is when references are supplied as a reference management database file.

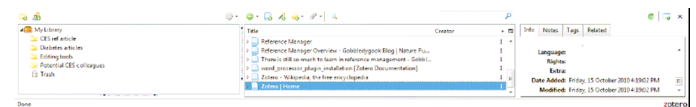
Software options

There are several commercial reference management programs that are widely used, including *Endnote* and *Reference Manager*², which cost several hundred dollars each.

However, there are cheaper alternatives; for example, *Zotero*³, a free referencing program that apparently functions much like the commercial versions. I've chosen *Zotero* as the focus of this article because it is compatible with Windows, Mac and OpenOffice applications, and it scored well in some recent reviews of reference management programs^{4,5}.

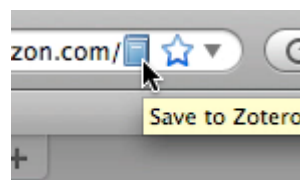
Using Zotero

Zotero is an extension for the web browser *Mozilla Firefox*⁶. Once installed, the link to the program appears in the toolbar at the bottom right-hand corner of the browser. Clicking on the link brings up a toolbar across the bottom of the screen that contains a 'My Library' folder, a list of the references in the folder, and details of whichever reference is selected, as shown below. The user can create subfolders within the library; for example, I created a 'CES ref article' subfolder for this article, containing all the websites and articles that I planned to cite.



It is simple to add items such as websites, articles and other publications to the database directly from the internet rather than typing them in manually. This helps to avoid errors such as spelling mistakes; it also ensures that specific elements of the information are entered into the correct fields in the program, and thus appear correctly in a reference list.

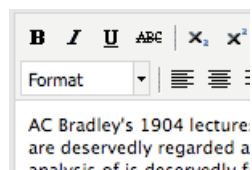
For example, imagine that I want to add the article *Blood and organ donation patterns of trauma surgeons* to my *Zotero* library. This article is available from PubMed, an online database that contains millions of citations for biomedical literature⁷. When I go to the page for this particular article in the PubMed website, using *Mozilla Firefox*, an extra icon appears in the address bar, as shown below.



Clicking on this icon immediately adds the details of the article to my *Zotero* library. The information added includes the author, abstract, journal title (in full and abbreviated), volume, issue, page span, publication date, ISSN and URL.

References (continued)

Also, there are tabs for adding notes on the citation (as shown below), tags and links to related items in the *Zotero* library.



By creating a group, I can also share a library with other *Zotero* users. Groups can be public with open membership (anyone can view the group online and join it instantly), public with closed membership (members must apply or be invited) or private (only those invited to the group can join).

I highly recommend *Zotero*. I did have some trouble adding the *Zotero* toolbar to Word 2007, but sorted this out by watching the instruction video (which showed me what the toolbar should look like), and then removing and reinstalling the program. Once I'd got it up and running, I found it was easy to use (easier than some of the commercial programs I've tried), and it certainly made referencing this article much less onerous than the manual system used for previous articles.

Hilary Cadman

1. EndNote – Bibliographies Made Easy. At <http://www.endnote.com/>
2. Reference Manager. At <http://www.refman.com/>
3. Zotero | Home. At <http://www.zotero.org/>
4. Comparison of reference management software – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. At http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_reference_management_software
5. Reference Manager Overview – Gobbledygook Blog | Nature Publishing Group. At <http://blogs.nature.com/mfenner/2009/03/15/reference-manager-overview>
6. Mozilla | Firefox web browser & Thunderbird email client. At <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/>
7. PubMed home. At <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>

Discount on *PerfectIt*

PerfectIt is a useful and user-friendly program that picks up inconsistencies in a document; for example, in spelling, hyphenation, capitalisation and bullet-point punctuation. To download a trial version of the program, go to www.intelligentediting.com

IntelligentEditing is offering a 15% discount on *PerfectIt* for members of the Canberra Society of Editors.

To claim your discount, please contact us at Hilary Cadman <hilary@cadmanediting.com>.

Out and about

Welcome to new members

The Canberra Society of Editors would like to welcome its new members.

CSE vacancies

Membership Secretary

The position of membership secretary is still vacant. The task for this position is to receive membership applications, pass them on to the committee, and contact the applicants to advise them of the outcome.

CSE newsletter typesetter

There is still an opening for someone to format/layout/typeset the newsletter. All it involves is putting the edited text into a Word document (or software of choice) and then sending it out for proofreading. Please get in touch with us if you can help at kerie1@optusnet.com.au or contact Cathy Nicoll.

Who was the fish?

I was delighted to read in "Minister approves Googong pipeline" (October 30, p3) that according to Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities Minister Tony Burke, there were "strict conditions set on this project which were developed with help from a fish and an environmental flow expert".

Who was the fish and how did he or she help the minister?

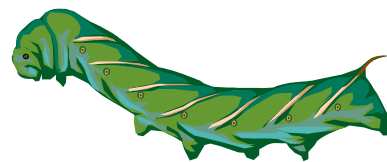
And why was only one fish consulted?

Andrew Gosling, Stirling

Letter to the editor, *Canberra Times*, 3/11/10

Caterpillar heights

This was in Michael Quinion's 'World Wide Words' for 7 August.



The issue of the Raleigh News and Observer of North Carolina last Saturday, Paul Keene tells us, ran this headline above the fold:

'Caterpillar to build new plant.'

He suggests, 'after years of deprecations, the little critters want to make it up to us.'

If you have any invaluable information for this column, please contact the editor at <kerie1@optusnet.com.au>.

Don't forget: dinner at the Brassey

The November meeting will be our annual end-of-year dinner. This year we are at the Brassey.

See you there!

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The Canberra editor

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