

West Coast EDITOR

A MONTHLY FORUM FOR EAC

MEMBERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

TO EXCHANGE IDEAS,

DEVELOP SKILLS, AND

SHARE NEWS ABOUT EDITING

JANUARY 2000

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Register early for the EAC-BC Spring professional development workshops. Look for the Spring brochure in the mail in early January 2000.

Editors' Association
of Canada



Association canadienne
des rédacteurs-réviseurs

BC Branch

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Networking Dos and Don'ts

DAVID BERMAN AND SEAN SILCOFF

Talk to any networking ace and you'll probably hear that even though it isn't exactly rocket science, few people network well. "Because networking has become so popular and because so many people have been doing it, you get to realize who the phonies are pretty quick," says Michael Stern, a Toronto-based executive recruiter. Here's a list of some basic dos and don'ts to help you survive in the networking jungle.

DO: Be sincere. Networking is an exchange of information and support, which means you have to represent yourself honestly. Otherwise, you are simply using people. "You get to be pretty good at knowing if there's any depth to people and how real they are," says executive recruiter Rod Malcolm of Toronto-based Korn/Ferry International. "I wouldn't help anyone I thought was a turkey, or superficial, or pompous, or who I just didn't feel good about."

DO: Focus your networking. Think about the ways in which you can benefit from a larger network of friends and contacts—and then determine where you are likely to meet these people.

DO: Expand your networking beyond your field. Sure, accountants talking to other accountants about accounting may be a sexy thought, but the wider your network, the greater the payoff. Other professions and interests will expand your range of information and make you more effective in the workplace. Talented CEOs, by necessity, are good at this since they deal with several constituencies—employees, corporate directors, shareholders, and the general public.

DO: Open your ears and shut your mouth. "Ninety-nine percent of good communication is listening," says Dan Rees of Optim, International Inc., a sales training and sports marketing company based in Ajax, Ont. "You're only able to shut up for [99 percent of the time] if you're really interested in what the other person has to say."

DO: Improve your memory. Contact management software programs are a great way to keep tabs on your various colleagues. But don't overuse them: asking someone if he's looking forward to his birthday three weeks from now is overkill.

DO: Join a group. It doesn't have to be an overt networking group where people in your profession gather to toss around ideas and information; it can be a charity, a board of trade, or even an athletic club.

DON'T: Look for an immediate payoff. Networking is about building relationships, and relationships don't develop overnight. "Something may pay off tomorrow, it may pay off a year from now, or it may simply be that you've helped X who in turn helps Y who in turn helps Z who in turn helps you," says Barbara Moses, president of Toronto-based BBM Resource Consultants Inc.

DON'T: Think only about yourself. Helping others with job referrals or information today may translate into a more valuable network in the long term. "It's not about me getting ahead," says Rees. "It's about making my network successful."

DON'T: Be shy. Wallflowers are not natural networkers, but they can overcome their introverted predisposition with a little effort. Networking is like any other skill: it needs practice and determination. "Networking does not come naturally," says Anne Baber, a networking author and speaker based in Lenexa, Kan. "Some people say they are born with the gift of the gab, but the rest of us need to learn how to do it."

DON'T: Stop networking. Once you've built a modest-sized network or achieved what you were looking for (a good job, for example), keep building your list of contacts. If you say you're going to do something for somebody, do it. Be mindful of important contacts and make sure to stay in touch.

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DON'T: Use gimmicks to get noticed. Even an overly folksy letter or a dressed-up résumé on coloured paper can send the message that you're trying too hard. "You often do get noticed, but in a negative way," says Malcolm.

DON'T: Feel you have to keep in touch with top contacts incessantly. "I don't see the point of always having to phone up people to maintain the relationship," says Val Campbell, a fundraising consultant based in Toronto. "To me that's admitting the relationship's not strong, if you always have to be promoting yourself like that."

DON'T: Treat contacts like numbers. The best networkers are genuinely interested in people and don't ask the same three questions of everyone they meet. "I wouldn't have a pre-set list of things to say," observes Rees.

This excerpt from the article "Have Rolodex, will go far," originally appeared in *Canadian Business*, November 13, 1998. Reprinted with permission.

Networking Pays

One of the many benefits of joining a professional association is the people you meet. While networking will not get you your dream job, it can provide you with information about your industry and its companies that you can't find at a library. Some tips for effective networking: *First*, be specific about what you're asking for from people. Don't cast too wide a net. *Second*, understand networking etiquette. Don't grab for as many business cards as possible just for the sake of collecting them. *Finally*, follow up. Don't let those valuable contacts slip through the cracks.

Taken from *My Big Sourcebook: For People Who Work with Words or Pictures*, written by the staff of EEI Communications (Virginia: EEI Press) 1996.

NOVEMBER PROGRAM

Moving Beyond Housekeeping

ANN PAULSEN

At the prospect of a discussion about rates, members and guests packed the meeting in November to hear the opinions of three long-time EAC members, all of whom are or have been successful freelance editors: Nancy Flight, Lois Richardson, and Georgina Montgomery.

While no one walked away with a list of specific rates editors can charge for specific work, attendees did leave with a new perspective on editing.

"If you allow yourself to think you are only going in, cleaning up the thing, tidying, polishing, ironing out wrinkles," Georgina told the group, pointing out how standard housekeeping terms reflect the "female" side of editing, "then you think you're charging too much." She urged editors to think rather in terms of the value they add to a client's work. "We're in there to strengthen and hone and focus the writing, battling away, taking charge of a weakling piece of writing, turning it into a god or goddess."

Nancy commented that, according to anecdotal evidence, men command higher rates for editing than do women—because men ask for more money. She said editors must become financially savvy, develop a clear picture of their financial needs, and set their rates accordingly. "Editors have to educate clients as to what they're worth," she admonished. "Learn negotiating skills. The onus is on all of you."

Panel members acknowledged the difficulty of specifying actual figures, because rates vary: work for corporations and governments commands more than textbooks, which pay higher than trade books; prose pays better than poetry, which is the rock bottom of all. In addition, editors with more experience can charge more than a person new to editing.

What is too low for a newcomer? In book publishing, no one should work for under \$20; outside book publishing, the absolute minimum would be \$25. Editors charging lower rates not only undercut themselves by placing little value on their services, they undercut the rest of the profession.

How do newcomers get the necessary experience? Take a junior position, volunteer for a non-profit organization, work on the EAC newsletter, make contact with editors who can subcontract work, or join a group working through *Meeting Editorial Standards*.

Once the rates are set, how does an editor make sure a client pays? Lois offered this advice: "Put everything down in writing, right from the beginning . . . it can be a letter or e-mail, stating what you understand of the project and rates." She said it's also important to put any client-directed changes in writing immediately, so the client is aware of the resulting increased cost. Upfront or incremental payments indicate client satisfaction with the editor's work, and they constitute a legally binding contract.

In the end, editors must place value on their work and educate their clients accordingly.

Housekeeping? Not anymore. Think instead, "content engineering."



The farewell cake that was presented to Claudette Reed Upton at the November BC branch meeting before she left for the Cayman Islands. PHOTO: ANN PAULSEN

Choosing Editing Software

An Obscure Swiss Text Editor Offers Best Value for Editors

SHARON BOGLARI

I have a confession to make: I'm a Microsoft Word fan. In fact, last month I hopped on the Gateswagon and purchased Office 2000 for PC. As a package for small business, I give Office 2000 the nod, but for editors who use Word purely for editing or writing, there is very little new in Word 2000 to justify upgrading from Word 97.

Word Upgrade Offers Little New to Editors

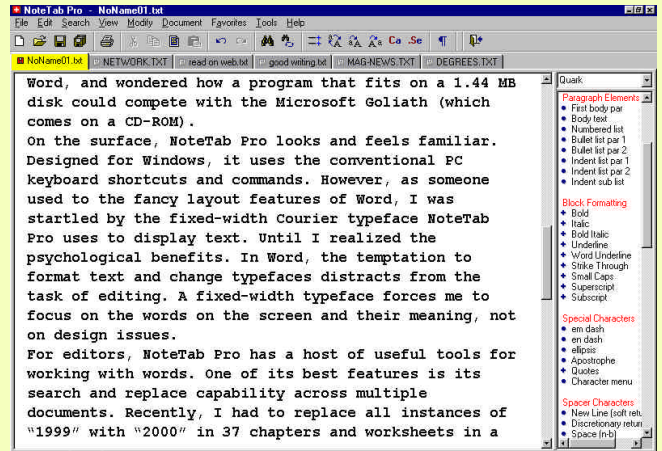
Like most "upgrades" these days, many of the nifty new features in Word 2000 cater to the Web crowd. Editors, however, will enjoy the new Collect and Paste command that lets you copy more than one item to the Clipboard at a time. Now you can collect information from many sources and paste it into one place—a handy tool for reorganizing a manuscript. The new Click and Type function lets you position text, tables, and graphics anywhere on the page, and the Tables feature has been improved with the ability to nest a table within a table. Neat ideas for desktop publishers, but for editors, not a significant change over the old version.

I was pleased to see though that previous incompatibility problems between earlier versions of Word and upgrades have been addressed in Word 2000. Word 2000 is fully backward compatible with Word 97. I saved a document with a table in Word 2000 and it opened seamlessly in Word 97.

An Alternative to Microsoft?

A few days after installing Word 2000 on my home computer, my managing editor threw a 3½" floppy on my desk and suggested I test-run NoteTab Pro, an award-winning Swiss text-editing program he has been using for years. I had never considered an alternative to Word, and wondered how a program

The Courier typeface forces you to focus on the words on the screen and their meaning, not on design issues.



that fits on a 1.44 MB disk could compete with the Microsoft Goliath (which comes on a CD-ROM).

On the surface, NoteTab Pro looks and feels familiar. Designed for Windows, it uses the conventional PC keyboard shortcuts and commands. However, as someone used to the fancy layout features of Word (Word 2000 now has the option of showing font names as samples of the font), I was startled by the fixed-width Courier typeface NoteTab Pro uses to display text—until I realized the psychological benefits. In Word, the temptation to format text and change typefaces distracts from the task of editing. A fixed-width typeface forces me to focus on the words on the screen and their meaning, not on design issues.

For editors, NoteTab Pro has a host of useful tools for working with words. One of its best features is its search and replace capability across multiple documents. Recently, I had to replace all instances of "1999" with "2000" in 37 chapters and worksheets in a book, each one in a separate file. In Word, this would have meant opening 37 files and performing the Search/Replace function 37 times. With NoteTab Pro, I simply opened all the files (the software handles extremely large file sizes and displays multiple files at a glance as tabs on the toolbar

and ran the Search/Replace command once. In under 30 seconds, all 37 documents displayed "2000."

Other multiple document features of NoteTab Pro include a function that will count occurrences of a word or phrase across open documents (useful for proving to authors just how often they have overused pet phrases).

As in Word, you can assign keyboard shortcuts in NoteTab Pro to cut down on mouse usage, although I found the learning curve quite a bit steeper than that for programming Word keyboard macros. (See my article in the December issue of *West Coast Editor* for more uses of macros.)

However, unlike Word, NoteTab Pro allows you to program the right mouse button with commonly used

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What You Need to Know

Word 2000 retails for CDA\$519. The upgrade is CDA\$139. Visit <www.microsoft.com>.

NoteTab Pro sells for US\$19.95. The Standard edition sells for US\$9.95, and the Light edition is free from <www.notetab.com>.

Both products are available for PC only.

functions such as changing capitalization; alphabetically sorting text; matching brackets and parentheses; and automatically joining lines that have been split by hard returns (as in text that has been copied and pasted from e-mail messages or reformatted through text conversions). And for the mathematically challenged, you can calculate mathematical equations right in the text.

Word is still my software of choice for general word processing. For performing mechanical copy editing changes, substantive editing, and general writing, however, NoteTab Pro gets my vote. At a mere \$20, it is a powerful text editor that breaks the back of mechanical editing tasks—but not the bank.

Editor hotline

● Hire an Editor

● Member Registration

Visit the new EAC-BC online Hotline registration form!

www.editors.ca/bc/hotline

With the click of a mouse, you can let the Hotline Co-ordinator know your editing experience, the kinds of work you specialize in or prefer doing, and when you are available for freelance work. The Hotline is a valuable service offered only to EAC members, and helps match registered members with clients looking for part-time, contract, or full-time editors.

Not on the Web? You can register with the Hotline by calling 604.681.7184

On Editing Fiction

A veteran editor cites several unpredictable factors that can affect a book's editorial development, including "the chemistry involved, the personality, the stage the author is at in their career.... It's not a very logical process."

Spotted in *Quill & Quire*, (September 1999) in an article on Michael Holmes withdrawing his first novel from House of Anansi due to creative differences over the novel's editorial direction.

Footnotes

Welcome to new member **Cheryl Andrews**. Cheryl has done some political editing and self-published book editing. In addition to attending editing workshops and courses, she has been working on her business skills by taking a course for self-employed professionals who do contract work.

JANUARY EAC-BC EVENT

Listening to Books

Who listens to books? Many people do, although they're not necessarily the people who read books. In the same demographics as Internet users, listeners tend to be highly educated, their time is constrained, and they know what they want. And they're into serious multi-tasking (think listening while driving, doing housework, or watching little Janie take dancing lessons).

Join us at our January meeting, when George Plumley, of Stuffed Moose Audio, and Pam Withers, of Publisher's Edge, will tell us more about the thriving industry of audio publishing.

Wednesday, January 19, 2000
YWCA Hotel – Royal Bank Room
733 Beatty Street, Vancouver
(between Robson and Georgia)
7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

WEST COAST EDITOR

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