

West Coast EDITOR

A MONTHLY FORUM FOR EAC

MEMBERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

TO EXCHANGE IDEAS,

DEVELOP SKILLS AND

SHARE NEWS ABOUT EDITING

SEPTEMBER 2000

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EDITORS'

ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES

RÉVISEURS

BC Branch

It Pays to Inquire

NAOMI PAULS

Self-serve is always cheaper, right? That assumption cost me money recently, and I thought other editors could benefit from my experience.

I had to print out an entire manuscript for copyediting and did not want to tie up (or wear out) my husband's laser printer. I went into Kinko's, logged onto one of their computers and proceeded to do my printing. When it came time to pay the bill, however, my jaw dropped.

For 13 minutes on the computer at \$18 per hour, I paid \$3.90 plus tax. My session total was \$4.45, an entirely reasonable sum. However, to print 145 pages of straight text (granted, on nice laser paper), I paid 49 cents a sheet, for a total of \$71.05 plus tax. My total bill was \$85.44 (ouch). I discovered that to get the same number of pages printed by the staff in the Digital Output department would have cost me 10 cents per page plus a service fee of \$10, for a total (including tax) of

\$26.22—which is more in line with what I had expected to pay.

Later I found out that the \$10 service charge is not a flat fee but a fee per file. In my case, since my manuscript was in five separate chapters, my service cost through Digital Output would have been \$50 (unless I'd spent a few minutes combining the documents). A Kinko's staffer told me that for anything over 60 copies, it costs less to have the staff do the printing. And here's a valuable tip: if you put all your documents into one PDF document (an Adobe Acrobat file similar to the one you're reading), the service charge is waived and you pay only for printing. Depending on how busy they are, you might have to wait to get your job printed (versus being able to go in and do the job yourself), but it would seem that for big print jobs—at Kinko's, at least—it pays not to be a do-it-yourselfer.

Speakers to Watch For

RICK ROGERS

An ability to do fast, efficient and accurate research, to confirm an obscure fact or track down an elusive set of figures, is a skill any editor can find useful.

However, in today's information-rich Internet environment, winnowing reams of data chaff to find a single grain of relevant knowledge can be a daunting, time-consuming task that editors will often creatively avoid.

Never fear because help is on the way. Professional researcher **Barry Patterson** will kick off our fall speaking program at the September 20 meeting with some timely tips on where and how to look for those elusive facts.

Barry honed his research skills during more than two decades with the provincial government. On taking early retirement in 1997, he struck out on his own as the memorably named Purple Gopher Research. Today, companies such as Concord National Advertising and many others rely on his expertise to provide them with a wide range of data.

At our October 18 meeting, **Sylvia Wilson** will provide some advice on smoothing the rough edges of the editor/client relationship. On November 15, authors' agent **Carolyn Swayze** will discuss the author-editor-agent ménage à trois.

Making the Most of Hyperlinks

SHARON BOGLARI

If the Web is a tapestry, hyperlinks are its threads. Editors selecting and weaving those threads require not only skill, but also creativity. Include too many, and the tapestry becomes unfocussed; provide too few, and it loses its lustre. A well-woven Web site has links that are relevant, credible and enticing. Add some punch to your site's hyperlinks by editing with the following guidelines in mind:

Tag only the relevant words

If your hyperlink occurs in the middle of a paragraph, underline only the words that convey where the link leads. This avoids confusion and creates a cleaner page. (Note: many designers are moving away from underlining hyperlinks in favour of using colour.)

Instead of:

The BC branch offers professional development seminars for editors.

Try:

The BC branch offers professional development seminars for editors.

Don't refer to mechanical aspects of the Web

Many users print out Web pages, which make phrases such as "click here" and "scroll down" useless to them.

Instead of:

Click here to find out more about our monthly newsletter.

Try:

More on our monthly newsletter.

It uses fewer words, yet conveys the same information to both print and online users.

Use clear descriptions

Relational words such as "next" and "back" can be ambiguous and they are ineffective navigational aids in the Web context. Be concise, but don't forfeit clarity.

Try: "next member" or "back to membership directory."

Organize your links

If you have a list of six or more links, consider grouping them under mean-

ingful headings. Alphabetical lists are fine for index or search pages, but if you group your topics by content, they will better serve your users.

Use lists where possible to eliminate repetition

Instead of:

Information for editors in Alberta
Information for editors in BC
Information for editors in Saskatchewan

Try:

Information for editors in:
Alberta
BC
Saskatchewan

Use colours that people recognize

Although users can change their Web browser's default colours and fonts, most of us recognize underlined blue text as a hyperlink. If you change the colour of your links, users may not know they are intended to be hyperlinks.

Use meaningful icons

Some Web designers can't resist replacing words with representative icons and graphics. Icons that link to other pages should be clearly presented as hyperlinks and should depict what they represent. For example, a dollar sign on a bank's Web site could mean any number of things, whereas an envelope or postage stamp clearly suggests a link to mailing information.

Do your research and make sure your links work

Users appreciate links to other sites that contain more useful information. Links to reputable sites can add credibility to your own site—but be sure that you want to be associated with whomever you link to.

Check every link when you set up the site, and perform regular checks on both the internal and external links on your site to ensure that they stay current.

Membership News

Cheryl Andrews takes over from Ann-Marie Metten in the role of membership chair this year. Cheryl intends to make the monthly association meetings even more "member-friendly" by identifying executive members, offering name tags to all members and visitors, rearranging the seating and offering coffee and cookies so that people will feel more inclined to visit and network after the evening's speaker.

Cheryl will call all members who have not listed an email address to determine whether they have access to email communications from the branch or whether they would like to join a phone tree with other members who are without email.

Cheryl's other goals for the coming year include increasing membership, helping to raise the profile of EAC, and finding new ways to facilitate members from outside the Lower Mainland who wish to attend branch functions such as monthly meetings and workshops.

A Belated Credit

Naomi Pauls wrote the great review on *Editing Canadian English*, which first appeared on the

Editing on the Edge Web site and was subsequently printed in the June issue of the *West Coast Editor*.



Do Microsoft's Predictions Mean More Work for Editors? What Do *You* Think?

The following was reprinted from the Microsoft Reader Web site <<http://www.microsoft.com/reader/news/future.htm>>

No one can predict the future, but this timeline represents the best estimates of Microsoft researchers and developers familiar with the history of electronic publishing.

- 2000 Microsoft Reader with ClearType™ debuts.
- 2001 Electronic textbooks appear and help reduce backpack load on students.
- 2002 PCs and eBook devices offer screens almost as sharp as paper: 200 dpi physical resolution is enhanced even further with ClearType.
- 2003 eBook devices weigh less than a pound, run eight hours and coast as little as \$99.
- 2004 Tablet PCs arrive with eBook reading, handwriting input and powerful computer applications.
- 2005 The sales of eBook titles, eMagazines, and eNewspapers top \$1 billion.
- 2006 eBook stands proliferate, offering book and periodical titles at traditional bookstores, newsstands, airports—even in mid-air.
- 2009 eBook titles begin to outsell paper in many categories. Title prices are lower, but sales are higher.
- 2010 eBook devices weigh half a pound, run 24 hours, and hold as many as a million titles.
- 2012 Electronic and paper books compete vigorously. Pulp industry ads promote “Real Books from Real Trees for Real People.”
- 2015 Former high-tech rivals unite to fund the conversion of the entire Library of Congress to eBooks.
- 2018 Major newspapers publish their last paper editions and move solely to electronic distribution.
- 2019 Paper books remain popular as gifts, for collectors, for books of fine art and photography, and for those who prefer a print reading experience.
- 2020 Ninety percent of all titles are now also sold in electronic as well as paper form. *Webster* alters its first definition of the word “book” to refer to eBook titles on screen. The new definition for “book” is: “a substantial piece of writing commonly displayed on a computer or other personal viewing device.”

Meet Publishers and Writers on the Street

SHEILAGH SIMPSON

Word on the Street (WOTS) needs volunteers for various shifts on Saturday, September 24. This is the day the streets around the Vancouver Public Library are closed to traffic and the arts take over: tents full of publishers offering their latest titles, tables piled with information about non-profit arts organizations, professional associations (like ours) and private arts-related businesses. Here's your opportunity to see entertainers, listen to readings and experience this event from an insider's point of view by volunteering at the EAC table.

Last year was my first time volunteering at WOTS, and I'm looking forward to being there again. The flow of interested and interesting people, most with questions, was practically non-stop. We gave away, talked about and took orders for books, pamphlets and newsletters.

Volunteers may borrow one of EAC's colourful and distinctive T-shirts during a shift (they look great with black pants or tights).

Less experienced editors, or members new to EAC, can request to be partnered with more knowledgeable editors or EAC members.

Shifts are 1½ hours each with two people per shift. If you'd like to volunteer, please email: <sheilagh@attglobal.net> or call: 604-929-7772 to leave a message stating a time preference (first come, first served!).

The first shift runs from 8:00–9:30 AM to unload and set up. (I'll bring everything to the site and be there until 10:00). Subsequent shifts are: 9:30–11:00, 10:00–11:30, 11:00–12:30, 12:00–1:30, 1:00–2:30, 2:00–3:30, 3:00–4:30, 4:00–5:30 and 5:00–7:00 PM. Packing up will start at 6:00 and we have to be off the site before 7:30.

Wanted

Writers and ideas for articles for
West Coast Editor.

Contact Cathy Brannen at <cbran@telus.net>.

Society of Technical Communicators' Student Award for 2000

The Canada West Coast (CWC) Chapter of the Society of Technical Communicators (STC) is pleased to announce the second Julia Broderick Scholarship award. The spirit of the award is to encourage promising students in their final year of study to participate in STC functions. The CWC is now accepting applications for the year 2000 award. Application deadline is October 30, 2000.

Eligibility is extended to all technical writing students in their final year of study who wish to pursue a career in technical communication, regardless of which post-secondary writing program they are enrolled in.

The \$500 scholarship is to be used toward the following expenses:

- Membership in the STC
- Tuition and fees
- Books and class materials
- STC regional or international conferences
- Technical communication seminars and workshops

The application form and criteria are available at <www.stc.org/region7/cwc/www/JBScholar.html>.

Contact Cathalynn Labonte-Smith at <labsmith@ipsg.mot.com> for more information.

Did you know that the national office has moved?

Editors' Association of Canada
502 – 27 Carlton Street
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1L2
Telephone: (416) 975-1379
Now, you can also call 1-866-CAN-EDIT (or 1-866-226-3348)
Fax: (416) 975-1637
Email: info@editors.ca
Url: <http://www.editors.ca>

Footnotes

Pen In the Following Dates on Your Calendars

Regular EAC meetings are scheduled for the third Wednesday of every month:

- September 20
- October 18
- November 15

YWCA Hotel—Royal Bank Room,
733 Beatty Street (between Robson and Georgia), Vancouver.
7:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Mentor Wanted

I am an up-and-coming editor looking to set up a mentorship with an experienced book editor. I would like to have someone review my work and help me identify where I need to strengthen my skills. I am organized, easy to work with and would need about an hour a week starting in September. I can offer a small hourly fee.

Please contact me, Karen Begemann, at 604-873-4283 or email me at <kbegemann@yahoo.com> if you are interested.

Hotline Update

We're trying something new with the EAC-BC hotline this year. We've been offering clients the option of posting their jobs for all hotline members via broadcast emails. So far, the response has been great. Most clients seem to prefer broadcasting the jobs through email, as opposed to the hotline coordinator pre-screening candidates for them. The response from members has been positive as well. Comments are always welcome!

Karen Aplin-Payton,
<karen@aplinink.com>

WEST COAST EDITOR

West Coast Editor is the newsletter of the British Columbia branch of the Editors' Association of Canada. Views expressed in these pages do not necessarily reflect those of EAC/ACR as a whole.

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Next deadline | **September 15, 2000**

Please email articles to | <cbran@telus.net>

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An editor is someone who never says "whatever."

UNKNOWN [BY REQUEST!]