

## Editors' True Confessions

*By Frances Peck*

At EAC-BC's first meeting of the season (September 19), about 35 of us gathered at the YWCA in Vancouver to drink wine, nibble cheese, catch up with fellow editors, and confess our failures. Humility was the watchword of the evening as we tweeted editing lessons we've learned the hard way (using the hashtag LFMF, learn from my fail) or described our embarrassing moments to the group.

The (unofficial) winner, for its black humour and high "uh-oh" factor:

Always turn off autocorrect. My instructor's last name, Vigna, was autocorrected to vagina without my noticing.

The various lessons—about the importance of proofreading, the need for careful estimating, the pitfalls of technology, and more—were too valuable to keep to ourselves, so we're sharing them with *WCE* readers. A big thank-you to those who laid bare their biggest gaffes so that others needn't repeat them.

"Materiel" isn't always a misspelling. Learned the hard way from a military client.

Always review the document, or a good sample of it, before estimating. What's described as an easy edit may really be a nightmare.

Proofread every invoice. I once tweaked my template and got my postal code wrong! Delayed payment, red face.

Say yes to every project and you'll sacrifice quality. I look back on work from hectic times and know it wasn't my best. Ouch.

If you're sending an attachment, attach it BEFORE you write the email and forget to do it.

Before sending a style sheet to the client, don't forget to give it one last A-to-Z sort.

Proofread your invoice template. There is no such thing as the GSH tax.

Mix estimate with educate for big jobs. Itemize the tasks you'll do at each stage. Helps client appreciate the value for the \$\$ estimate.

Make sure all comments to self are deleted from final edit. Author should never see "Boring!" or "Gibberish."

Always estimate based on word count—never on page count.

I edited a dissertation on LaTeX. When the (now) prof gave me the published copy (in person), I saw I'd edited no footnotes.

Your awesome new time-tracking software doesn't do much good if you don't press the "start" button.

Sent out a résumé several times mentioning articles I had published in a "newspaper." Applying for copy-editing jobs.

When signing off with "Regards" in a memo to an author, keep in mind that the G and T keys are in close proximity.