EON
Editorial Office News

Column: *President's Message*

June 2009

More on Image Quality

From the President - Jason Roberts

This column offers a couple of tips to determine the properties of an image and whether they fit the minimum standards as defined by your production editor, offers a superior way to convert PowerPoint slides into TIFF files, and starts off with a suggestion for a *free* alternative to Photoshop.

A Free Alternative to Photoshop

Picking up on my article 'Fuzzy Logic' from the April issue of *EON*, for many of us we cannot afford, or, in all likelihood, *really need* Photoshop to handle any of the graphics issues we may face in our editorial office roles. Several members asked me, in response to that April article, if I knew of an alternative to Photoshop.

The free software I use instead of Photoshop is GIMP (www.gimp.org). GIMP most certainly helps you work with images or can be used for determining if images are serviceable. GIMP and Photoshop are often contrasted to one another, though they are not directly comparable. I

guess if you are a power-user these differences are obvious. Maybe the bells and whistles of Photoshop are important when it comes to manipulating holiday photographs but, as we should not be engaging in any manipulation of article figures, I don't think those tools are of interest to us in an editorial office context.

When I switched from a PC to a Mac I simply took up using GIMP rather than purchase another version of Photoshop.

Determining Image Properties

Most of our journals run with fairly detailed instructions on minimum image standards. Truthfully, eyeballing some images is all you need to determine if an image is going to look absolutely horrible when reproduced. Some of you may work at journals that use a system with in-built image quality control software. If not and you are so motivated, there are a couple of ways to look at the image quality. Remember, as I noted in April's issue

of *EON*, the PDF or HTML proof of a manuscript does not necessarily provide you with the actual resolution of an image, merely the resolution of the image as rendered in the PDF or HTML proof – the act of converting the image file for viewing in the proof lowers the resolution.

For those of you who have Internet Explorer on your machines (which I appreciate excludes a lot of Mac users) you can try the following steps:

1. Open the image file using Internet Explorer
2. After you have located the file, right-click and select Properties.
3. In the latest version of Internet Explorer click the Details tab and the image properties will be presented. (See figure 1)
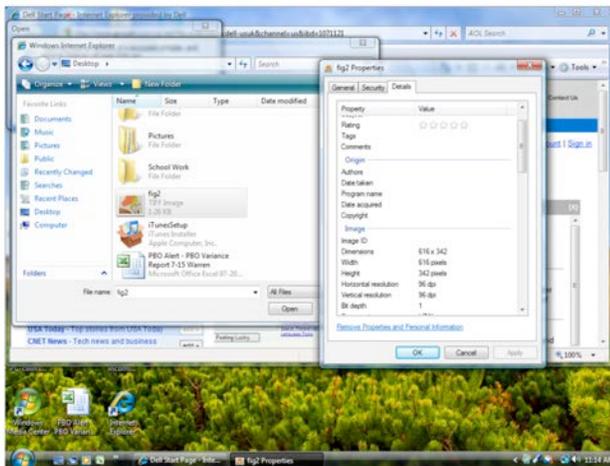

Figure 1. Finding image properties using Internet Explorer

If you decide to use GIMP:
1. Click on Image from the menu bar
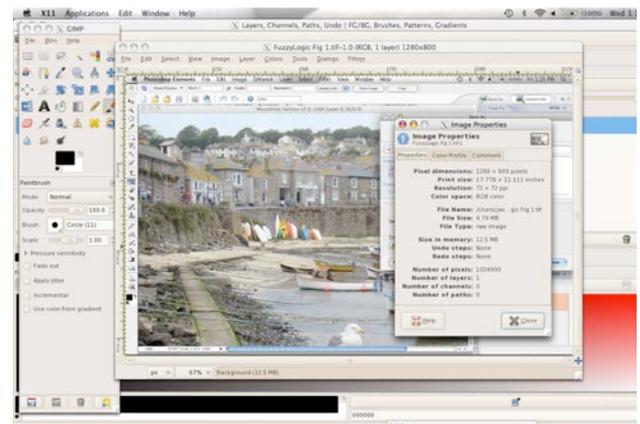2. Select Image Properties (see figure 2)

Figure 2. Checking image properties in GIMP

Converting PowerPoint Slides into TIFF files

As I mentioned in April's article, most publishers prefer to receive TIFF files (or EPS files for line art). I know my publisher does accept PowerPoint slides, but I believe they generally do not prefer this file format. If your publisher resolutely refuses to accept PowerPoint files, the obvious solution is to save PowerPoint slides as TIFF files. For years I have simply been using Save As to resave the PowerPoint image in a TIFF format. You can certainly do this; but then I recently came across discussion on this topic that offered a warning: a simple Save As reduces the figure resolution. An alternative is to first save the image as a PDF from PowerPoint then convert the PDF into a TIFF file. To convert the PDF to a TIFF file if you do not have Adobe Acrobat, simply open the PDF in GIMP and then Save As a TIFF file. As the file size could become rather large, select LZW compression when prompted. It's a little bit of a tortuous route but Figures 3a and 3b illustrate the difference in quality (and the data in the Image Property boxes illustrates the slightly higher resolution in the image first saved as a PDF, then converted).
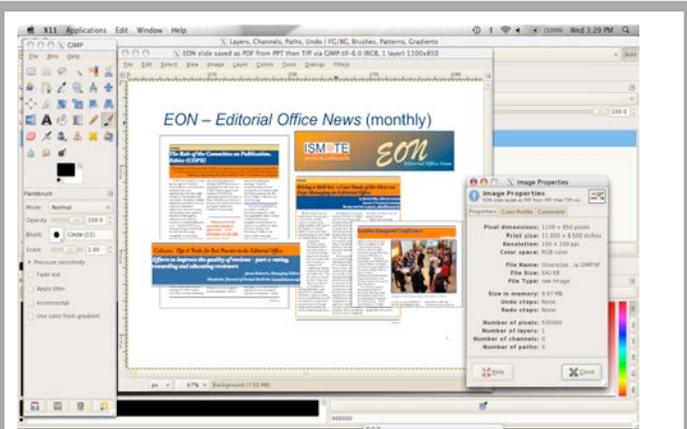
Image Quality   *continued*

Figure 3a. PowerPoint image saved as a PDF. The PDF is then opened and re-saved as a TIFF file in GIMP.

Figure 3b: Lower resolution file when saved as TIFF directly from PowerPoint.

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Free Resources for Editorial Professionals

by Katy Ladbrook
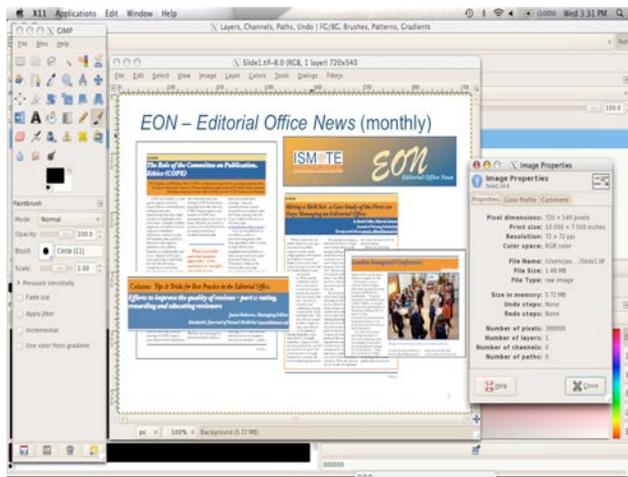*Editorial Manager*
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Most of us rely on our employers to provide the technical resources we need to deliver editorial management. Licenses for operating systems and software are expensive - if I add up the cost of all the programs on this work computer it comes to hundreds and hundreds of pounds.

As a volunteer and freelancer, I want to be able to offer the same professional standards from my home computer, but would struggle to afford the same software I use at work. Instead I have come to rely on open source/ free software, tools, and operating systems as an alternative to buying the commercial equivalents. Some of these are so good I also use them at work instead of the packages we have paid for. I can remember one situation in particular when an Internet Explorer virus struck and I used Firefox to download the security patch, saving my work computer.

The culture of open source software is inclusive, user-driven, and friendly. The interfaces are intuitive, and when you click on help you'll get instructions written in Human. The programs are developed by people who actually use them and are driven to design a better alternative to the mainstream. All users are permitted to change and improve the software and this constant adaptation means you get a well-maintained, polished application. The programs experience fewer viruses and offer more updates, which are of course free to download.

Free Resources

Following on from the article 'Useful (Free) Resources on the Web' by Jason Roberts in *EON* (October 2008), I have listed below ten open source/free software packages I use as an editorial professional, but there is also free software out there designed for scientific, financial, video, design, healthcare, and security applications. Check out Wikipedia (the biggest free, user-led encyclopedia) for a massive list of available packages. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_open_source_software_packages

Top Ten Free Solutions

1. Scribus – Open source desktop publisher allowing professional standard page layout design. More similar to InDesign than Quark.
www.scribus.net/

2. Open Office – A free, friendly alternative to Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. The help and training functions are particularly usable and in good, plain English.
www.openoffice.org/

3. eT Blast – A text similarity based search engine for published literature. Great for finding new peer reviewers and experts.
www.invention.swmed.edu/etblast/etblast.shtml

4. GIMP – Open source image editor very similar to Photoshop. Can read, create, and edit most image file types. [Editor's note: *See also Jason Roberts' article "More on Image Quality" on page 1.*]
www.gimp.org

5. Weebly – Very, very easy website and blog creator. Friendly interface allows you to design, register, and publish your own website for free and, for a few quid, buy your own domain name.
www.weebly.com/

6. Diino - Online back-up and file sharing. Automatically backs up your work everyday. Files and back-ups can be accessed remotely and you can synchronize data between your home and office computers.
www.diino.co.uk

7. Doodle - Meeting scheduler. Makes arranging meetings between loads of people much easier.
www.doodle.com

8. Fire Fox – Open source web browser. Faster, safer, more stable than Internet Explorer.
www.mozilla-europe.org/en/firefox/

9. Kaspersky – Internet security. Free online anti-virus scanner.
www.kaspersky.co.uk/

10. Ubuntu – Linux operating system. If you want to take it a step further and say goodbye to Windows. The system is usable, stable, and offers a complete package of programs. A new version is released every six months, but you may want to install one of the lite systems designed for older computers – why not revive an old machine?
www.ubuntu.com/

ISMTE Career Center

ISMTE has partnered with Job Target to set up our own Career Center online. This service enables job seekers to post résumés and employers to post jobs in our specialized field. There is no obligation or charge for those who post their résumés. **Check it out!** **www.ismte.org**

Interviewing: Making the Process Work for You

by Adrienne Lea
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You sent out forty resumes, two companies indicated interest, and finally you have an interview scheduled. Nerves before the interview are inevitable, but *use* them — they'll give you plenty of energy to prepare for the interview and present yourself to advantage.

Doing Your Homework

It always shows if a candidate has not done the requisite homework. Sometimes it's the only difference between two qualified candidates.

Company background

Learn everything you can about the organization. If you cannot find information online, call the reference librarian at your local public library. How did the organization get started and why? Has it ever changed hands? What are its main goals and agendas? If it's a for-profit, be sure to look at the 'for investors' page on the company website; it will provide a lot of valuable information. Many non-profit societies post archives sections, and some post their board minutes.

Mission statement

Know the mission statement of the organization before you walk in the door. You should know it in any case, but some interviewers love to ask this as a trick question.

Competitors

Everyone has competition – you may learn as much about an organization from its competitors as you learn from the company's own data.

Geography

If you do not absolutely, positively know the location of your interview, *go* there the day or the week before. I have interviewed many people who got lost and showed up late for the interview; none was ever hired. Someone who does not do the basics for an interview is not going to do the basics on the job.

Writing a Résumé

Your closet

Keep your look conservative and make sure you wear the clothes rather than let the clothes wear you. If you love a skirt but it doesn't quite fit, if you have a suit with sleeves just a bit too long - anything you might be conscious of while talking – leave that item in the closet.

Finally, as part of your homework for this interview, keep working aggressively to find other jobs. You will perform much better during the interview if you do not feel this is the only egg in the basket.

Answering All Those Questions

At the end of this article are a few typical interview questions and comments about each. Scads of sample questions are available online. Answer questions out loud – you take shortcuts when you answer only in your head, and speaking will point out places you might stumble during an interview. Don't skip the hard questions: your strengths and weaknesses, what would your co-workers say about you, an example of how you handled conflict in the workplace.

Don't assume you know what will be relevant to the job: You don't know what the person interviewing you might think is relevant.

Phone interviews

If you have a soft voice, stand up, your voice carries better over the phone line. Turn off your computer. Shut the door. Put the dog outside. If you're at home, don't wear your sweatpants – you don't need to wear a suit for a phone interview, but you should feel you are actually interviewing, not getting ready to take a nap.

Listening to All Those Questions

Your preparation should serve as a foundation, not a script. So *practice but don't over-rehearse;* otherwise you limit your ability to listen. Experienced interviewers know when you are just searching your mental Rolodex for which of your prepared answers seems the closest fit. Practice enough for confidence; don't turn yourself into a robot.

Remind yourself just before you enter the building to listen to *everything* asked. It is so easy to listen to the first two thirds of a question, think 'Oh I've got that one,' and end up giving an incomplete answer.

Personality - Yours

You have a personality; use it. Interviewers feel better if they develop a feel for the person interviewed. Again, it's about going in prepared and confident so you can show yourself to advantage, not hiding behind what you think are proper answers.

Personality – Theirs

You're not guaranteed a good interviewer. Maybe the person hasn't done much interviewing and is also nervous; maybe s/he is tired. If the interview isn't going well, try to engage that person – ask how s/he started at the company, for instance. And take note of the *organization's*

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personality: Are people comfortable with each other? Does it seem like a workplace or a mausoleum? Pay attention as you're walking around.

Don't Forget...

...*if you want the job, say so before you leave.*

You may be worried about their interest in you; they may be unsure of *your* interest. Sometimes it's hard to say 'I am really interested in this position'; you feel you're putting yourself on the line. But you've gotten this far, so take the plunge.

...*to send thank you notes*.

People expect thank you notes. Send them by e-mail the same evening, or the next day at the latest, to everyone who interviewed you. Follow up with handwritten notes, at least to the main interviewers. Both electronic and handwritten can be brief, but should be specific to the job and to what you learned from the conversation you had with the person to whom you're writing. Again, both should indicate your interest in the position.

Finally, do not be afraid to sell yourself. During the interview *it is your job* to accurately assess and explain to someone who doesn't know you why you are a good candidate for the position. All the reasons you are a great candidate are in your head, not the interviewer's. It's up to you to make your great qualities part of the discussion.

Appendix 1
Interview Questions

Tell me about yourself.

Do not give your autobiography. Start with how you entered the field ('I first started working as an editor in _____') or, if you're just out of school, try for relevance ('I graduated recently and am interested in this job because of my internship experience/summer job/academic training.'). Most interviewers are more interested in *how* you handle this question (can you give an organized and succinct response) than in what you say.

Interviewing

Where do you see yourself in five years?

You'd be amazed how many people say, 'Doing this job.' Don't. You might say, 'I hope to have learned so much overseeing the production of this journal that I have the opportunity to advance by (taking on more journals, moving to a different position).'

What are your professional strengths and weaknesses?

Strengths: if you're very organized or good at multi-tasking, say so. Give a brief example. Remember these are professional not personal strengths. Don't start off with 'I'm good with people,' instead you might say, 'I excel at team building/customer service/working with clients.' Weaknesses: think about weaknesses that inform your approach to work, and make sure you indicate how you overcome the weakness. 'I tend to take on too much, so over time I have learned to set priorities' or 'I'm better at proofing text than numbers, so when I review budgets I perform more cross-checks to make sure I'm accurate.'

Give me an example of how you have addressed and resolved conflict in a workplace.

There's conflict and then there's conflict. No one wants to hear about personal problems at another workplace, but you might explain how you resolved managing two projects with competing deadlines.

Why should we hire you over other candidates?

Take this as an opportunity to offer information about yourself that hasn't yet been elicited. You might say, 'Your journal has a very high rejection rate; while other candidates might have similar qualifications, beyond managing peer review well I excel at working with frustrated authors in a positive way and making sure they have a good experience with the editorial office.'

What would co-workers say about you?

'She has a good sense of humor' – might be true, but it's not so impressive in an interview. 'She has the ability to defuse tense situations and focus people on achieving the end result' is a much better answer.

Interviewing

What would a supervisor say about you?

'I always get my work done on time.' Well, that should be a given. Better to say (if true) 'She excels at meeting deadlines and reaches out to help others when she has extra time.' Another great response is 'He works independently but makes sure I stay informed about the progress of all work for which he's responsible.'

Why are you interested in leaving your current job?

Your current job, or boss, or company, may be awful but don't even hint at that. No matter how justified, you always sound like a disgruntled employee. What you can say is 'I have been fortunate to be given more complex responsibilities during my time at XYZ, but the organization is small and further advancement opportunities are limited.'

What qualities do you think are important in a leader?

I like this question and often ask it myself, and it often tells me a lot about how the candidate handles supervising and being supervised. Think about this – what do you value in leaders you have observed. If you have supervisory responsibilities, think about what you struggle with most, not just what you do well. Try to make this answer something beyond 'communication,' – while important, it's overused.

How much money do you make now?

I wish potential employers didn't ask this question but they do. Deflect if possible – you might say 'I would rather discuss what you think the appropriate range is for the position.'   Some employers ask this to find out if they can afford you, but some ask to find out how low they can go with an offer – that's reality. And you have to gauge how to answer the question – sometimes it's better to provide your salary than alienate the person interviewing you.

Profile of a Freelancer - Part II

by John Curley
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In part one of this profile, I described how I came to be a freelancer and how my work has evolved over the past 20 years. In part two, I will focus on daily tasks, standards of documentation, and interactions with other editorial personnel.

Juggling More Than One Job

Although some freelancers only want to accept and complete one job before accepting another, to make a full-time living at freelancing, one must have several jobs in the pipeline at one time. Before I came to publishing, my job in a busy human-resources office taught me how to multi-task, as well as prioritize. I work on both periodicals and books, and although periodicals move down the production line on a mapped-out schedule over the course of a year, one often encounters twists, turns, and complete halts. Little of the production process is set in stone. So, sometimes several projects land on my desk at one time. In fact, this is more often the case than not. Earlier in my freelancing career, this caused me great anguish. It still introduces stress into my life, but I have learned how to tame it. When all points seem to be converging, it is helpful to me to draw up a plan for myself, which begins with the most urgent task on my to-do list. Sometimes this is not so easy to identify. Sometimes it fluctuates day-by-day, or even hour-by-hour. The important thing is to keep making forward progress.

In publishing we live by the deadline, and it is easy to feel overly threatened by the pressures of multiple obligations, and to even become paralyzed. I have avoided burnout by taking a more tempered approach. Prioritizing is the first step, and I try to be focused on the current task and not get distracted by the other tasks in line, breathing down my neck. If I truly find myself in a bind and need to borrow time from one job to complete another, I am up front about this with my client. Certainly the client would rather know I need more time than to just be left hanging. Usually I phrase this as a progress update and give my best estimate for when I will actually complete the job. Better to avoid this situation altogether if possible, but we all get in time crunches. Sometimes a job just takes longer than I had anticipated. Sometimes a job gets delayed for reasons beyond my control (e.g., unresponsive authors, power outages, family emergency). I hear of freelancers who, after agreeing to take a job, beg off at the eleventh hour and send the unfinished job back to the client, but to me this would be an avenue of last resort.

E-mail has become the primary communication medium between me and the rest of the publishing world. The day begins and ends with answering and posting e-mails. People

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requesting information in an e-mail are hoping for a speedy response, and I do my best to comply. Almost all of the production work I do on my ten periodicals hinges on information I receive in e-mails—from the client (publisher or production house), author, or compositor. For example, after page proofs are posted for author review, I am charged with compiling their e-mails or faxes containing corrections and to keep a tally of which authors have submitted corrections. More often than not I have to chase down a few (or more) for each issue. For many periodicals, managing editors (MEs) or editors-in-chief also send me corrections, and I occasionally have to follow up with them as well. When I have a complete set of corrections for a given issue, I forge ahead, integrating them into the master set and proofreading the article for both author and printer errors. Not so long ago this was all done on hard copy; now I can mark up the PDF electronically.

Although variety helps to break up the day, to reduce the magpie aspect of jumping from task to task, I prefer to gather everything I need for a job—for example, proofreading an issue of a journal—and then work through it from beginning to end. This helps me focus on the job at hand. On a daily basis, I might plow through e-mails in the morning, followed by several hours of proofreading, copyediting, or indexing (with breaks for lunch and dog walks). On a weekly, basis I might spend one to three days proofreading and integrating author corrections on a given issue of a journal before moving on to the next journal, or to copyediting a chapter of a book, or to generating an index.

Documenting Everything

A large proportion of the production tasks for the journals I proofread are handled by a source outside the publishing house. In this era of contracted work, as the proofreader I have to be an extra-strong link in the production chain. Many of the authors themselves have a shaky command of the English language, and the copyediting is arranged by a compositor outside the United States. Even at the post-typesetting stage, a good many articles that cross my desk still require a great deal of shoring up. This often involves follow-up with the author or editor, and I always document anything noteworthy in my cover letter to the production editor when I submit the completed job. I strive to be succinct, but my job is all about details, so my notes reflect this. It is crucial to inform the production editor about any hanging issues or loose ends, as well as to remind them of any follow-up tasks that still need to be performed (e.g., substitution of art, integration of further forthcoming author corrections). Hopefully this information eases the life of the periodical's production editor.

One tool essential to the copyeditor or proofreader of periodicals is the style sheet. A publisher often has a house style guide, and this is a good starting point. Beyond general house style, however, every periodical has its quirks and specific stylistic features, and these must be outlined in its style sheet. The style sheet usually is composed by the ME or production editor, with the input of the editor-in-chief, compositor, copyeditor, and proofreader. Once generated,

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this document serves as a valuable reference source for the copyeditor and proofreader.

As for books, it is absolutely critical for the copyeditor to maintain a style sheet. Fifteen or 20 years ago, the ME would send the copyeditor the whole book in manuscript form, with a return date of two months later. Now, firm bottom lines and accelerated schedules require large books be edited and returned piecemeal, usually by a team of copyeditors rather than just one. Multiple copyeditors on one book introduces the possibility of multiplicity of styles, not to mention conflicts of opinion. All the more reason for a master style sheet, composed from the contributions of the whole team, and maintained by the lead copyeditor or the production editor—somebody has to act as the clearing house and be granted the authority to make stylistic decisions. Lacking this, too much time is wasted by members of the production team trying to nail down answers to style questions instead of moving ahead with the work of editing.

Interacting with Production Staff

Freelancing is a solitary existence. My contact with clients and colleagues is almost entirely limited to e-mail—it is almost a novelty to get a telephone call. With such infrequent personal contact, it is important to pave the way with courtesy at every opportunity, and most of my colleagues share this outlook.

Most of the people I interact with are kind, fair, and intelligent. I have long-term relationships with many of them and enjoy

getting their repeat business. However, once every few years I'll find myself in a less than optimal situation with a client. Some projects themselves are fraught with difficulty—this is not so unusual—but with some clients, it seems *every* job is a nightmare: The ME might quote me a flat fee to edit 900 manuscript pages, but when the job arrives the tally shows 1,200 manuscript pages; the material provided might be incomplete and in rougher shape than I was led to believe; my e-mail inquiries for clarification on style issues or other concerns might go unanswered; the other copyeditors on the job may be unresponsive or confrontational; the client might be constantly nipping at my heels, asking 'How's it coming?'; or the project may be on a rushed schedule and I am compelled to put in long hours, but then my invoice isn't paid for several months. Worst of all, if anything at all goes wrong on the project, the freelancer, being a contracted player, can be an easy scapegoat.

My Worst Freelancing Horror Story

About 12 years ago I received a terse phone call from a production editor asking why I had not returned tables that were to accompany the manuscript I copyedited. I told her I thought I had indeed attached the tables to the back of the copyedited manuscript and asked if she could please have a look again and let me know for sure. After hanging up, I did an exhaustive search of my office, looking for the purloined tables, but they weren't there. After a couple of days I called back the production editor to ask if

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the tables had turned up, and she unapologetically informed me they were attached to the back of the manuscript. I remarked it was extremely worrisome to me when it was implied I had misplaced this material. Shortly thereafter I received an ugly letter from the ME stating I had been terminated from this publisher's stable of freelancers. At the time, I still had a stack of manuscripts from this publisher on my desk. Maybe the ME who fired me didn't realize, or bother to check, that I still had work for them in progress, but I assumed the expectation was I would finish the work. Needless to say, my motivation to do so was practically nil. However, I remember making a conscious decision to follow through with my original commitment, as an exercise in personal ethics. But would you really fire someone in the morning and expect them to work until the end of the day? In hindsight, I was relieved to be released from this publisher, since they had demonstrated similar troubling, incongruous behavior all along. I suspected there may have been some internal problems, and later I received reports from colleagues that they had also experienced chronic difficulties dealing with this publisher.

Tight schedules seem to be endemic to our line of work. But when every project for a particular client is a rush job, I begin to wonder how long it sat idle on someone else's desk before it was shipped out to me, to be completed ASAP. No job is improved by being rushed. The more time a copyeditor has to refine a manuscript, the better.

It is seldom easy to detect in advance which clients are going to be problematic. Sometimes colleagues will give me a heads up, or a red flag will boldly wave before my face at the outset. I would like to give people the benefit of the doubt, however, so usually I have to be burned a few times. As much as I dislike turning away work, ultimately I steer clear of such clients, since it is not worth the anguish of the experience, and the possible damage, however undeserved, to my reputation.

Concerns of a Freelance Proofreader

1. Exploitation. It is often difficult for freelancers to rightfully stand up for themselves without fearing they will be cut loose because they are perceived as being 'difficult.' For example, I have often been asked to perform extra duties without being offered extra pay, and I have followed through as an act of good faith. When I later asked for an increase in pay, my requests were 'passed along' or went unanswered.

2. Mistaken identity. A lot of copyediting is being contracted to lower-paid offshore workers who are not native speakers of English. I find the quality of much of this work is substandard. To add insult to injury, I suspect authors mistake the copyeditors' poor work for my own (since authors may not be aware that publisher, copyeditor, compositor, and proofreader are all separate entities).

3. Inflated projections. I am sometimes led to believe an abundance of work will be coming in the future (e.g., because of big

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contracts in the offing) that ultimately doesn't pan out, or am slated to receive a book for copyediting that is delayed for weeks, or doesn't arrive at all. Raising false expectations like this, however unintentional, may lead freelancers to turn down other jobs so as to not over commit.

How Can the ME Aid the Proofreader?

1. Be organized. If information can be more logically supplied by the editorial office when the manuscript is sent into production (e.g., dates of acceptance, contact information), this would cut down on the busy work of chasing authors for it via queries, which are extremely time consuming for the copyeditor to compose, for the authors to research and address, and for the proofreader to integrate into the final proof (or chase the author for follow-up).

2. Be positive. No matter how good my work is, feedback is almost always offered in negative terms. MEs and production editors can get a lot of mileage out of positive feedback, and these 'warm fuzzies' don't cost anything.

3. Be flexible. Nobody likes working with somebody who is rigid to a fault.

4. Don't burn your bridges. I might have been able to work through the difficulties with that one client who mailed me a pink slip had they not chosen to end our relationship so decisively.

5. Stay abreast of technology. Some clients have designed templates to be used for electronic copyediting. That is, macros are in place so that the copyeditor can assign established codes to various text elements. This adds tremendously to speed and efficiency for the copyeditor, and ease of use for the compositor.

6. Develop a relationship. Get in touch and ask questions about how to make each other's job easier.

At the end of the day, I try to make myself valuable by doing quality work. This means being thorough, timely, and respectful. In return, these qualities are also admirable in the people I work with. We're all on the same team.

Praise for Irene Hames' (ISMTE member) book,
Peer Review and Manuscript Management in Scientific Journals

"...a timely and well-informed book. Newly appointed editors will find masses of useful information and practical tips. Seasoned editors will be inspired to reassess and refine their own procedures." (*Polar Research*)

"An excellent and must-read book for journal editors ... It will also serve as a valuable resource for anyone interested or involved in the peer-review process." (*PsycCritiques*)

Buy your copy with your ISMTE discount. Go to the Members link at www.ismte.org for details.

Welcoming New Editors

by **Kristen Overstreet**
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In the summer of 2007, a brand new editor (had never been an editor before) and I replaced the existing editorial team for the *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (JANAC)*. Last summer I helped transition another new editor onto a journal (*Perspectives in Psychiatric Care [PPC]*) where the former editor was retiring after 9 years. This year, I had expected to transition new co-editors, one in March and one at the end of the year, into their new roles at another of my journals. However, that journal is now ceasing publication – a process I will write about in a future column.

With a little nudging from an *EON* colleague, I saw the benefit of writing up the transition experience, and then from this backwards position, the benefit of having a system in place for welcoming new editors.

Editors may receive welcome packages/ information from their publishers or societies, but in addition to these, they need journal-specific information. When the existing editorial office, or at least the managing editor, are allowed to stay in place, the incoming editor benefits, and the people with whom the new editor will be working can aid in the transition process.

During the *JANAC* transition, the new editor and I had the opportunity to work with the old editorial team. We overlapped by six weeks and were able to learn about the journal, the online manuscript submission system, and the journal workflow from them. The old and new editors worked together to choose the manuscripts for the next issue of the journal,

and the old managing editor and I worked together to send the manuscripts into production. As soon as the new editor began her role, she was assigned to all new incoming manuscripts, having the old editor available to help her. This overlap period was extremely beneficial in allowing for a smooth transition. In this case, the old editorial team had enough accepted manuscripts in the system to fill the issue we all worked on together and the next issue that we, as the new editorial team, would be responsible for on our own. This decreased our stress level considerably.

During the *PPC* transition, I was the constant variable. I had worked for the old editor for 18 months and was comfortable with the journal. The new editor had been an editorial board member for the journal and so had some background with it. She, too, had the opportunity to work with the old editor on an issue before assuming the position and taking responsibility for her first issue on her own. There were enough accepted manuscripts in the system for the issue the editors did together and about half of the next issue the new editor would be responsible for. Having an issue's worth of manuscripts accepted for the new editor to work with was ideal for a bi-monthly publication *(JANAC)* and a half issue of accepted manuscripts worked well for the quarterly journal *(PPC)*. More accepted manuscripts may have caused a backlog and unhappy authors.

As far as who 'got the credit' for the issues, with the quarterly journal, both editors' names

appeared on the issue that both worked on and the issue in which half of the manuscripts had been accepted by the old editor. With the bi-monthly, the new editor's name appeared as the editor for the first issue in which she was contracted as the editor – even though the old editor had accepted all the manuscripts. *JANAC* had the funds to pay both teams for one month. The new *PPC* editor overlapped with the old editor by working without pay until her term officially began.

It is helpful to have a transition period in which the old and new editors can work together. The period of one issue of the publication worked well in my situations. More time might have caused issues between the editors as far as who would take responsibility for which manuscripts, and may have 'pushed' the old editor out before s/he was ready. Despite having the opportunity to put out an issue with the old editors, the new editors still felt overwhelmed when they were on their own. They had learned a lot in a short period of time and were not yet comfortable with all the new information.

Therefore, I began putting a list of resources together that might be useful for the new editor I was preparing to transition into a co-editor position in March 2009. These came off the top of my head and included ScholarOne Manuscripts™ instructions (our online manuscript submission and review system), the most recent annual report, a list of resources such as Web addresses for COPE, ICMJE, and ISMTE. Then I read a presentation from the 2008 INANE conference called "The First 100 Days of a New Editor" by Susan Gennaro, editor of *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* (available at http://www.nursingeditors.org/docs/

2008abanoitaly_1st100days.pdf). This presentation reminded me that it would be helpful for my new editor to have a contact list of the editorial board, a list of the members of the review panel (the feasibility of this would depend on the size of your journal), and an organizational chart with job descriptions.

Next, I read the Client Welcome Pack that our publisher, Wiley-Blackwell, sent the new editor, and this reminded me that he would need the journal's website and ScholarOne Manuscripts™ URLs, the most recent list of the top accessed articles, the most recent publisher's report, a copy of the Copyright Transfer Agreement form, an update on where we stand with our page budget for the current volume, notes on how the production schedule and workflows might differ from what is presented in the Client Welcome Pack, and information on how to recruit manuscripts and reviewers.

Then, I queried the new editors I had transitioned in 2007 and 2008 to ask them if they had suggestions for what would have been helpful information for them to have when they started their editor roles. They suggested, a list of commonly made mistakes – how to avoid them and what to do if you make them, expectations for board members as well as their status (how long had they been on the Board), a list of the articles in the system and their status, and the status of the next issue due to production.

Now, however, I began to wonder if all this information would so overwhelm my new editor that he would, a) step down immediately, or b) ignore all this information and consider me a liability to his good mental health.

New Editors

How to Make the Bulk Digestible

If you're sharing an office with your new editor, or at least have the opportunity to see her or him in person, you can prepare a notebook with all the relevant materials included. If, however, like me, you are working remotely from your new editor, you will need to prepare the materials in an electronic format to send to the new editor for electronic archiving or printing.

Organize the hard-copy or virtual notebook by major headings that will make sense to someone who is new to the publication business; include a table of contents and the actual resources. The new editor can use the 'notebook' as a reference guide. He or she can access information for the issue at hand instead of/or in addition to reading it cover to cover (See Appendix A – and please let me know via the discussion forum what information I have missed.).

Summary

New editors are likely to feel overwhelmed when they take on their new roles, but with a reference guide and their managing editors' help, they will feel comfortable more quickly and will have the assurance of knowing where to have their questions answered.

Appendix A

Table of Contents
Editorial Teams
- Organizational Chart
- Editorial Office (include hours worked and responsibilities)
- Editorial Board (include names, areas of expertise, date joined and date term ends)
- Review Panel (if large, just number, areas of expertise, breakdown of locations, and ratings; if using ScholarOne Manuscripts, a Reviewer Summary Report can be run; if using Editorial Manager, a Reviewer Performance Report can be run, etc.)
- Publisher (include website, contacts, and descriptions of how they work with the publication)
    - Marketing Team
    - Production Team
    - Advertising/Sales Teams
- Society (include website, publication liaison, etc.)

Publication Information
- Workflow
- Publication's website
- Online submission system address and instructions (make sure to set up the new editor's account in your system)

Contact Information
- Editorial Office Personnel
- Editorial Board
- Publisher contacts, including production, marketing, advertising, sales
- Society contacts

Policies
- Author guidelines/information for manuscript submission
- Appeals process for rejected manuscripts
- Conflict of interest
- Continuing education process
- Advertisements

New Editors
continued

Resources
- Location of the *Process and Procedures Manual* for your publication*
- Reports
  - Annual Report
  - Top Accessed articles
  - Most Recent Publisher's report
  - Minutes from the last Board meeting
  - Page budget for the current volume
  - Information on recruiting manuscripts and reviewers

- Copyright Transfer Agreement
- List of commonly made mistakes
- List of pending articles and their status
- Update on the next issue due to production
- Websites of other organizations
  - COPE
  - ICMJE
  - ISMTE
  - WAME

*See *Docu Drama: Assembling a Procedures Manual for the Editorial Office,* p. 9, September 2008 issue of *EON.*

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Please see the website for details: www.ismte.org

Pooh-Bah with a Keyboard

by **Nick Rushby**

Editor, The British Journal of Educational Technology

bjeteditor@oxon.blackwellpublishing.com

All journals have one thing in common: They are all unique. The opportunities for journal editors to get together and share their experiences are few and far between. As a result, journals and their editors evolve into diverse life forms. So *The British Journal of Educational Technology (BJET)* is unique and so, I assume, is its editorial office.

Although *BJET* looks like a society journal, it is 'owned' by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTa) and published by Wiley-Blackwell. BECTa is very much a sleeping partner, and so we operate without any society influences despite being a peer-reviewed journal. We have an international editorial board with a core of active members, three corresponding editors who have geographical responsibilities, and an international panel of more than 100 reviewers. The majority of these colleagues are from academia, although a few are from the world of commercial and industrial training. So, despite its title, the Journal is *international* (not just British) and covers *training* technology as well as educational technology.

The editorial office comprises one person —myself—with lots of backup from the team at Wiley-Blackwell, without whom *BJET* would not be the journal it is today. I am the editorial assistant, the editor, and the editor-in-chief. The role is somewhat similar to that of Pooh-Bah in *The Mikado,* who combined the offices of First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Backstairs, Archbishop of Titipu, Lord Mayor (both acting and elect), and was also Lord High Everything Else.

I became the editor more than 15 years ago at the end of a one-year handover from the previous editor, who left an enviable reputation for quality. Administratively the journal was a nightmare. It was published by NCET, which later became BECTa, and was the only periodical they published. About half of the manuscripts arrived in machine-readable form (many on diskettes in strange formats), while the other half were in the form of typescript, often with annotations in pencil. The typesetters produced galley proofs, and part of the editor's task was to decide on the pagination as well as the make-up of each issue. Librarians were frustrated with the difficulties of renewing their subscriptions because NCET had no systematic process in place to charge for the Journal.

So, having edited other journals in the past, my first priority was to find a suitable publisher and to persuade NCET it was in their best interest to relinquish control of production, subscriptions, and budget. We looked at three publishers and decided Blackwell Publishing (now Wiley-Blackwell) was the best fit for our aspirations. It is a decision we have had no reason to regret over the years.

Pooh-Bah

continued

Wiley-Blackwell deals with the world-wide marketing, the IT (websites, etc.), and production, which has recently moved from the United Kingdom to Singapore. Despite my repeated entreaties on the necessity of visiting the new production team, my pleas seem to fall on deaf ears!

During my tenure, *BJET* has developed from three issues with a total of 240 pages per year, to six issues with 1,152 pages per year. The editorial office dealt with more than 360 submissions in 2008, and this figure is set to rise for 2009. As a part-time editor (my day job is running a training consultancy), I find this is only possible because we use a Web-based editorial tool—in our case ScholarOne Manuscripts™. We are now in our fifth year of using ScholarOne Manuscripts™, and the configuration has changed nicely to meet our evolving objectives. Those of you who have used ScholarOne Manuscripts™ will know the Editorial Office Center (which in my case includes the tasks of the editor-in-chief) tracks the manuscripts at each stage of the review process from initial entry into the system, through review and revision, to final rejection or acceptance, and into the production system.

A typical day in the *BJET* editorial office is not so much a day as a series of episodes that take place from 06:30h to 22:30h, fit in between the commitments of the day job. It involves a balancing act between the routine tasks of manuscript processing, dealing with exceptions to that routine, and finding time to step back and consider the strategic direction of the Journal.

I read (or at least skim) all of the incoming manuscripts to check they are relevant, contain something new, and are written in a version of English the reviewers will be able to understand. About half of the submitted material is rejected at this point. For the rest we have an unusual form of single-blind reviewing in which the reviewers bid for manuscripts in a weekly auction. This usually means manuscripts get out to the reviewers within a week to ten days.

Next there is the (fairly) routine task of reading the reviewers' comments and taking the appropriate action: either rejecting the manuscript or (most often) sending it back for revision (the record so far is six revisions), ultimately accepting about one in five submissions.

There are exceptions where the reviewers disagree fundamentally about the merits of a submission (get a third opinion from a trusted member of the editorial board), where the reviewers' comments on a revised manuscript are a total variance with those for the earlier version (help the author to make sense of the contradictions and wonder—privately— whether the reviewers have all been reading the same paper), and where the authors disagree vehemently (and just occasionally, abusively) with the final decision. (I trust my reviewers to give an honest opinion and the editor's decision is final.) Fortunately, I have never had a serious case of plagiarism that has escaped the eagle eyes of the *BJET* reviewers, although when editing another journal many years ago, I was embroiled in a nasty case that threatened to end up in the California courts. *BJET* focuses on learning technology rather than life sciences and so ethical issues are rare.

Strategy is the really interesting stuff. There are two issues at the moment. One is developing the emerging markets in China

Pooh-Bah

(where we now have a corresponding editor) and India, which we have yet to tackle. The second is developing our colleagues on the reviewer panel. The growing stream of papers from China has highlighted cultural differences between Western academic papers and those from the East. Some reviewers feel all papers must be grounded in quantitative research, with their hypotheses confirmed or disproved by statistics. In contrast, the Chinese papers, and some interesting papers from the West, are far more philosophical and qualitative in nature. These often attract heavy criticism for their lack of a quantitative methodology. But *BJET* is not just a research journal. My aim is to publish contributions that are interesting, that make people think, and which take us beyond what is already known in the field. So, if anyone out there has experience with cultural diversity development for reviews, please let me know.

And so… back to the editorial office. Pooh-Bah has e-mail in his in-box. 🌐

Calendar of Events

Editorial Manager User Group Meeting
18-19 June 2009
Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA
www.editorialmanager.com/homepage/
emugregistration.asp

ALPSP - Journal Development
24 June 2009
London, UK
www.alpsp.org

ALPSP - "Online Communities: What Can Scholarly Publishing Learn From Other Industries?"
7 July 2009
London, UK
www.alpsp.org

International Academy of Nursing Editors - 28th Annual Meeting
26-28 July 2009
Chicago, Illinois, USA
www.nursingeditors.org

EQUATOR Network Workshop
Key Guidelines for Reporting Health Research Studies
9 September 2009
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
www.equator-network.org

ISMTE American Conference
August 4, 2009
Baltimore, MD, USA
www.ismte.org

Speakers:

Kent Anderson: *Ideas for Your Journal in the Current Economic Climate*

Peter Binfield: *What is the Future of Online Publishing*

ISMTE European Conference
August 25, 2009
Oxford, UK

www.ismte.org

Speakers:
Harvey Marcovitch: *How Editors Deal With Publication Fraud and Misconduct*

Roy Pounder: *Without Authors and Reviewers, Journal Publishing Will Die*

2nd EQUATOR Annual Lecture
by Richard Horton, Editor-in-Chief of *The Lancet*
9 September 2009
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
www.equator-network.org

6th International Congress on Peer Review & Biomedical Publication
10-12 September 2009
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
www.ama-assn.org/public/peer/peerhome.htm

European Association of Science Editors
10th EASE General Assembly and Conference
16-19 September 2009
Pisa, Italy
www.ease.org.uk/easeconfdocs/
1stCircular-2009.pdf

ALPSP - Commissioning Book and Journal Content
25 November 2009
London, UK, www.alpsp.org