ARDITH'S NOTEBOOK

THE FREEDOM TO PUBLISH

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Editorial
Writing with Style: a guide to Style Guides:

As an author, you may believe that imposing any rules on your work will kill spontaneity and stifle your creativity. Don't worry: the style guide is just that, a guide. It allows you to make your points clearly, in a way that avoids anything that will jar your reader into noticing the form of your work over its content.

Every publishing house has a "style," a set of rules telling writers and editors what to do when confronted with those areas of English where more than one method is correct. In Canada, for example, the English language is particularly fluid, with both US and British spelling being considered correct. It is, however, incorrect to use both styles in the same piece of work. Pick one and stick to it.

Similarly, punctuation follows certain styles: will you use a serial or "Oxford" comma or not? Will your ellipses be "open" or "closed"? How will you express dates and times?

Some publishers have developed their own style guides; others use one of a number of published guides. One of the most popular is the *Chicago Manual of Style*, published in 15 editions since 1906 by the University of Chicago Press. Newspapers including the *Globe and Mail* and the *New York Times* and press agencies like Associated Press and Canadian Press also produce style guides for their writers and editors.

The editor responsible for ensuring that your work complies with the "house style" is the copy editor. Copy editors not only ensure that the work is consistent and all the grammar, punctuation, and language usage is correct, but also they may suggest better ways of expressing an idea, or ways to cut unnecessary material. The copy editor isn't "out to get you" by catching you in mistakes. He or she is there to guide you towards producing the best work you can.

Even before a publisher accepts your book, you can ensure that your grammar and usage are correct by consulting one of the good, general style guides. *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr and E B White, often just referred to as "Strunk and White" is one of the best. A new, illustrated edition was published in 2007. Visit your local bookstore or browse online to find a style or writing guide that appeals to you.

Scientific, business, and other kinds of writing will have their own particular style guides. Non-fiction writers in the humanities should consult the *MLA Style Guide* as a starting point for appropriate ways to cite sources, format footnotes, and so on. Those in the sciences will find the *ACS Style Guide*

Marketing
Give them something to talk about: tips on blogging

One of the easiest (and least expensive) ways to get publicity for your work is with a Web log or "blog". It's an online diary that can be as simple or as complex as your imagination allows. You can include it as part of your personal Web site, or you can get space for free from sites like blogspot.com or wordpress.com

Non-fiction authors find blogging particularly helpful as a marketing tool: you can give your readers updated material every day if you want to; or you can post information related to your book and include a link where readers can buy it, either directly from you or through Amazon or another online bookseller.

The important thing to remember about a blog is to be consistent: once you start to build an audience, your readers will keep returning to your site only if they regularly find new material. Update on schedule. You don't have to write pages every day: 200-300 words is plenty, especially if you also include links to appropriate sites, and photos, sound files, and other extra material. (Don't take material from other people's sites without permission, however. Plagiarism is plagiarism, no matter how easy and tempting it is to cut and paste.)

Some bloggers like to include a place where their readers can comment and communicate with each other. This helps to encourage visitors to return to your site. If you have a book to sell, don't forget to link your site to an online bookseller such as Amazon. Check out Amazon's Associates program to find out more about generating revenue from your site.

Editorial: Writing with Style

helpful, not only for scientific citation but also as a clear guide to concise and easily understood commuication of complex ideas.

• *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition. (University of Chicago Press) ISBN 0226 104 036
• *Elements of Style*, 4th edition. By William Strunk Jr and E B White. (Longman) ISBN 978-0205 309 023
• *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing,* 3rd edition. (Modern Languages Association) ISBN 978-087 3522 977
• *ACS Style Guide: A Manual for Authors and Editors*. By Janet S Dodd. (American Chemical Society) ISBN 978-084123 4628

Style Sheets

As the copy editor works on the manuscript of your book, he or she will record any decisions made regarding spelling, punctuation, and other style elements on a "style sheet." The copy editor will decide how to deal with any compound words not found in the dictionary, will check the spelling of any proper nouns and will decide how numbers will be expressed. All of this will be included on the style sheet, which means subsequent proofreaders need not look up everything again: they need only consult the style sheet. A style sheet can be as short as a page, but usually it extends to several pages, depending on the complexity of the book.

When the editor sends you, the author, the edited manuscript of your book, he or she will include a copy of the style sheet. It's a good idea for you to check it, particularly if your book includes a lot of proper nouns with unusual spellings. You can help out your editor by carefully checking spellings before submitting your manuscript.

Production

Cracking the "secret code": a guide to proofer's marks

Once your book has been typeset and designed, you should have another chance to check it for mistakes. There is a universal "shorthand" used by printers, typesetters, and proofreaders to indicate corrections and where they should go. The information appears in two places: a mark in the actual text and a corresponding note in the margin. At one time, they were made with pale blue pencils because the blue would not show up when the galleys were photographed for printing. Now, many editors use red pen because it shows up better on paper.

As the author, you will be expected to check the pages before they go to the printer. You will receive your pages either as a computer file or as actual, physical papers. It will be very helpful to your publisher if you can understand and use at least the most common proofreaders' marks. Your desired changes will be very clear; nobody will have to decipher your handwriting, and the whole process will be smoother.

Some of the most common marks are reproduced below: