

Professional Development Workshops for Editors

Wednesday, 7 September, Dockside Conference Centre, Sydney

Speketh so Pleyne: Plain English for Editors

Presented by Dr Neil James, Executive Director, Plain English Foundation

Many writers and organisations give lip service to writing in plain language, yet still produce hard-to-fathom documents. Others argue plain English does not apply to their work. So what exactly is plain English, and where is it relevant for editors to apply it? Although plain language has grown considerably in method and influence in the last 50 years, its core concepts are very old. Neil will illustrate 15 core principles as they emerged historically over 2,000 years:

- Write for your audience
- Match the text to the content
- Use the simplest words possible
- Cut the clutter
- Prefer the active voice
- Avoid jargon and cliché
- Write in short sentences on average
- Punctuate for clarity
- Match the readability to your audience
- Have a clear core message
- Structure to foreground key information
- Maximise coherence
- Use document design
- Measure the outcomes
- Test with your audience

This workshop will interweave practical exercises with historical illustrations of how great writers supported the case for a plain style in literary as well as in everyday documents. It will place the recent moves to legislate for plain language into their

historical context, and explore the challenges and opportunities these present for editors.

About the presenter: *Dr Neil James is executive director of the Plain English Foundation, which combines plain English training, editing and evaluation with a campaign for a more ethical public language. His latest book, Writing at Work, critiques how public language is used and abused, and suggests how it can be radically improved. Neil is also the editor of Writers on Writing and The Complete Sentimental Bloke. He has also published over 60 articles and essays on language and literature in publications as diverse as the Times Literary Supplement and the Daily Telegraph. Neil speaks regularly about public language in the media, where he features on the ABC local radio network.*

Writing and Editing for the Web

Presented by Simon Hillier, Get There Writing Services

This workshop is designed for people building a new website or improving current website copy, or for anyone writing and editing for the web who wants to understand its potential challenges and opportunities. You will receive up-to-date practical guidance to enhance your internet writing and editing skills

Topics will include:

- Internet writing—write and edit for the internet; how people read online; how to build a relationship with your web audience or several different audiences; planning for website writing; and what makes a good or bad website?
- Layout and web writing techniques—laying out your page; images, fonts and copy; effective web copy for readers and search engines (SEO) using keywords, titles, metatags, headlines, subheads, paragraphs, bullet points and hyperlinks; calls to action; and tools for web writers and editors
- Increasing visitors—creating effective email newsletters; driving more traffic to your website for free; developing article ideas; and considering the different types of articles, what to include, and

where to publish them on the internet • New opportunities—including blogging for business; RSS (Really Simple Syndication); and tagging, social media and video. Group and individual exercises are included throughout the day.

About the presenter: *Simon Hillier has 14 years experience as a web copywriter and online marketer, including eight years with leading e-commerce companies travel.com.au and lastminute.com. In 2005, he set up [Get There Writing Services](#), specialising in web content writing and consultancy. Simon has conjured up words for scores of small, medium and global businesses. He has written, polished and edited books and ebooks for Australian, US, UK and European publishers, companies and inspiring individuals. His articles have appeared in magazines, newspapers and websites around the world. In addition to running corporate and government workshops, once a semester he slips on his tweed jacket with elbow patches to teach at Sydney University CCE.*

Editing Oral History for Publication

Presented by Linda Shopes, Historian, editor and consultant in oral and public history

Sponsored by the [CAL Cultural Fund](#)

Editing oral history for publication is essentially an act of translation: it turns one kind of event—a conversation between two people—into another kind of event—reading about that conversation by a third party. It is also an opportunity to extend dramatically the reach of oral history: to get the interviews we so carefully record and process out of the archives and into the realm of public culture.

In this all-day, hands-on workshop, participants will learn how to translate oral history transcripts into material that is suitable for publication in print or online, whether as book, booklet, article or some other format. During the morning session, workshop participants will consider both varied approaches to editing oral

history for publication and specific strategies for remaining faithful to a narrator's language and intent, while adapting the conventions of speech to those of print. During the afternoon, workshop participants will discuss each other's work in light of the morning presentations.

Topics will include: • Working with the words—how (much) to intervene in verbatim text • Contextualising the words—helping the reader locate the narrative in time and place • Interpreting the words—getting at the meaning underneath the words • Special Problems—dealing with inaccuracies, misrepresentations and lies; telling the truth and potential harm to narrators; and issues of interpretive conflict and other challenges in publishing oral history.

To facilitate discussion, participants are required to submit 8–12 pages of a work in progress, ranging from raw transcript to draft publication to publication proposal to polished manuscript, at the time of registration. Material is to be submitted as a Word document to Linda Shopes; it will then be precirculated to all workshop participants to read in advance of the workshop. Participants will also be asked to read Shopes's article, 'Editing Oral History for Publication,' appearing in *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 31 (2011): 1–24, which will also be sent in electronic format to registrants in advance of the workshop. This workshop is limited to 10 participants to facilitate intensive work.

About the presenter: *Linda Shopes is a past president of the [Oral History Association \(USA\)](#). She has worked on, consulted for, and written about oral history projects for more than thirty years. Linda has co-edited Palgrave's Studies in Oral History series, served as co-contributing editor for oral history for the Journal of American History and has been co-editor of Oral History and Public Memories with Paula Hamilton at UTS.*

Editing for Museum Exhibitions and Publications

Presented by Jennifer Blunden, Words on the Wall

consultancy

Museums and galleries produce vast amounts of text for exhibitions and a diverse range of print and multimedia materials, offering staff and freelance editors an unusually varied and stimulating range of projects. This practical, interactive workshop explores in detail the particular features and challenges of editing within a museum context, with a special focus on exhibition text.

Topics will include: • The museum as a unique language environment... and a unique publishing environment • The diversity, needs and particular characteristics of museum audiences • Key findings from recent research into communication in a museum context and implications for editors and writers, including a critical look at a number of common frameworks and assumptions about language • The interaction of design, context, language and style • The editor's role, in particular in defining and managing the project brief, and in balancing issues of scholarship and accessibility • 'Top 10' principles and practice of good (museum) editing • Resources, contacts and organisations—tips for finding museum work.

In an exhibition, the visitor experience is non-linear, informal, multimodal and often social, where written texts become as much a part of a social interaction as a means of imparting information and ideas. This places a number of unique demands on exhibition texts and the language they use. Through discussion, review and a range of practical exercises, this workshop will help editors develop the skills needed to work on museum exhibition and publication projects.

About the presenter: *Jennifer Blunden is a writer and editor who specialises in developing texts for museum exhibitions and publications. She was formerly the senior exhibitions editor at the Powerhouse Museum and the Art Gallery of NSW. She currently works as a writer and editor at Freeman Ryan Design and, through her consultancy Words on the Wall, consults to a number of cultural institutions around Australia. Jennifer has a background in linguistics and language development, a Masters*

degree in Public History and is currently undertaking a doctorate at the University of Technology Sydney, looking in particular at the strategies used by museum writers and editors in creating (written) exhibition texts.

Indexing for Editors

Presented by Glenda Browne, Author of *The Indexing Companion*

Indexing is a crucial part of the publishing process—you may create quality content, but you need tools such as indexes to get the best out of it. This workshop takes the point-of-view of the editors who commission indexes, as well as the people who create them.

Topics will include: • Planning and commissioning indexes—planning your approach; commissioning an indexer; and writing useful briefs • Selecting index entries—indexing jargon; what to include in the index; how to word headings and subheadings; indexing names; and software overview • Index structure—structuring indexes, including page numbers, cross-references and filing rules; and style requirements • Editing and evaluating indexes—identifying errors and perfecting style.

Mini-exercises throughout the course illustrate basic techniques. Online exercises are available to provide more practice.

During the workshop there will be a Question and Answer session covering any problems participants want to raise. Please send these questions to Glenda Browne in advance to assist with planning the session.

About the presenter: *Glenda Browne has been a freelance indexer since 1988. She has also worked as a teacher and writer. Glenda is co-author of Website Indexing (Auslib Press, 2004) and The Indexing Companion (Cambridge University Press, 2007), and author of The Indexing Companion Workbook:*

book indexing (*Glenda Browne and Jon Jermeay, 2009*). Glenda teaches indexing at Macleay College and for the [Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers \(ANZSI\)](#), and is Vice-President of the NSW Branch of ANZSI. Glenda was awarded Highly Recommended in the ANZSI Medal for her index to *The Indexing Companion* and was the winner of the Ig Nobel Award for Literature for an article about indexing.

Running a Freelance Business

Presented by Julie Harders, Lan Wang, Abigail Nathan, Denise Holden and Lyn Fernance

[This session will be held at the Star Room venue]

Freelancing puts you in the control seat but also poses many challenges. As well as editing expertise you need business nous, marketing skills and the flexibility to work with different—and sometimes difficult—clients. This workshop, presented with input from successful freelancer editors, covers a range of topics of interest to established freelancers or those just starting on the independent path. Participants will be involved in several exercises and have the opportunity to pose questions.

Topics will include: • Setting up your business • Marketing, including use of social media • Managing your workload and your clients • Taxation and superannuation.

About the presenters: *The workshop coordinator Julie Harders has run her own writing and editing business for more than a decade after working as a senior communication manager for such organisations as the Film Finance Corporation and the Premier's Department. Julie enjoys the challenges presented by new clients and new subject matter. She is passionate about producing high quality communication. Lan Wang will deliver tips on technology for your home-based business. Lan is Publishing Manager for a government agency and she has worked inhouse and out-of-house in roles ranging from copy and structural*

editor, to typesetter and designer, to project manager and publishing program manager. Lan has also been a guest lecturer at RMIT and Melbourne universities. Abigail Nathan will speak on social media as a tool for marketing your freelance business. A copywriter and sub-editor, she is now a freelance editor specialising in speculative fiction. Abigail is the managing director of [Bothersome Words Editing and Writing Services](#) and she is a permanent fixture on Twitter:

[@BothersomeWords](#). Denise Holden will tackle quoting and costing your jobs. Denise has survived working freelance since 1997. She works primarily for corporate clients and in the last 14 years has learnt a lot about the pitfalls of quoting on projects. She has an MA in Writing and a Graduate Certificate in Editing & Publishing. She is a past editor of the newsletter [Blue Pencil](#). Lyn Fernance is keen to help demystify tax and superannuation for small business owners, especially sole traders. Lyn is an accountant specialising in small business and has clients from the publishing world. She is a director with Ken Crossman & Co Chartered Accountants.

To book a place, [register online](#)