

#CIEP2021

Returning to its usual early September slot, the CIEP's annual conference stayed online in 2021. Over 370 people attended from time zones across the world, with speakers in the UK, Australia, Argentina, Canada and the United States. Recordings of all sessions have been made available to attendees, so it truly was a bumper offering for everyone. The session summaries provided here are in the order that the sessions occurred.

Sunday 12 September

CIEP chair Hugh Jackson closed the 2020 conference with moving words, and many of us had tissues at the ready as he opened this year's.

The chair's opening remarks

Hello and welcome back to the CIEP conference. Another year has passed, summer is slowly turning to autumn, and it is my absolute joy to be able to see you all again. Of course, to some people I'm not saying *welcome back* but *welcome* for the first time. We're so very pleased you could make it. This year, I'd like to extend a special welcome to members of our partner organisations; I very much hope you will enjoy the experience of conference.

Right now, if all had been well, we would have been basking in the bright warm sun and cloudless skies of Glasgow in autumn. We should have been gathering in excitement in a conference room, sitting next to strangers who will soon become friends, and grasping pastries and mugs of steaming coffee – or, as Beth describes them, disappointing beverages. We would have shaken hands and hugged, and long into the night we would have talked and laughed. While we might have been in one place, though, we wouldn't all have been together, because many of our friends and colleagues have only been able to come to conference these last two years because it has been online. When we board planes or trains, or get into our cars for long drives to another city again for an in-person conference – and I promise we *will* do – we will have to find a way to do so as one body, bringing everyone along with us and leaving nobody behind.

There's something special about our conference. It would be easy to say that it's all about the learning or about the social interaction – and those *are* top-notch, by the way: if you're here for the first time, you should know you're in for a real treat – and it's not simply that the people you meet here at conference are just plain nicer than people you meet everywhere else – which is also true – but I think it's something more

than that. I've been to plenty of conferences, and I'm sure you have too, that have had all those elements but haven't had that something special, that buzz of excitement, that crackle of activity that you get *here*. I've been wondering what it is, how to explain it, and I think it's this. Once a year, we get to come together and not only is there brilliant learning and socialising and lots of lovely people, but we're also reminded that we're a vital part of something bigger than ourselves, a mission with a history that was here long before us and will thrive long after we are all gone. A profession that spans the continents and unites us in our delight in something so simple but so powerful as the written word, the careful arrangement of dots of ink on paper or pixels on a screen.

I left you last year with the thought that, whatever happened over the following year, whatever struggles we'd have as a profession, we'd weather them together. I've never been so proud of being a member of this community as I have been this last year, because of how well I've seen you all come together. I know it's not been easy, and I fear it might stay difficult for some time, in any number of ways. I can't promise broad, sunlit uplands, and no responsible speaker would. The road ahead is also not yet obvious. But when so much closed down in spring last year, editors kept on going. In the absence of theatres, galleries, concerts, sports events and schools, the need for that power of the written word felt desperately important, whether that was the enormous quantities of new research, scientific *and* social, trying to make meaning out of what at times felt senseless and plotting a course through to the light ahead, or new human stories that, indeed, tried to do exactly the same thing. Book sales rocketed, because people needed to read but also to write, to express new feelings and fears and hopes and understandings that they hadn't had before. When things became bleak, people instinctively reached out for the power of the word, and you were there to make sure it was the right word. Thank you.

But where did *we* go? Where did we take refuge when our professional lives became difficult? When our businesses went quieter? When we couldn't see our friends? When our families refused to have another flaming conversation about some funny typo we found in a newspaper? But also when we were just starting a business in the middle of a pandemic and needed to know how to get that first client, finish that first training course, make that first cold call to a publisher? What happened when our words failed us? Where did we go then? We came here, to be together. And the CIEP and its members have been here throughout, with kindness, authenticity and hope. When the world closed down, we opened up. All of this is to say, whether I'm saying to you *welcome* or *welcome back*, what I'm really saying is *welcome home*. You'll be glad you came. And it's my great privilege to declare the conference open.

Changing your mindset to market your business

Kate Sotejeff-Wilson reviewed **Your marketing mindset**, presented by Malini Devadas.

Malini broke down marketing itself into three stages.

1. **Messaging:** Choose a niche. Who do you help? How do you help them? Create a message that this audience cares about.
2. **Marketing:** Be visible. Share your message and connect with your ideal clients. You need to be where they are.
3. **Money:** Ask for the sale. Invite interested people to work with you.

One word comes up in all three of those stages: your marketing mindset is all about **you**.

In the context of marketing for sole traders, your mindset consists of your beliefs about yourself. It does not mean denying systemic injustices or negative feelings. But it does mean taking action. Selling your services involves you as a person.

Is what you tell yourself about your marketing true? What could you change?

Mindset blocks

Fear of rejection is often behind mindset blocks. One resonated with me: doing 'busy work' that does not get you clients (like designing the perfect logo). Another is mistaking beliefs for facts, such as 'no author will pay more than £40 per hour' (so I won't raise my rates). Self-sabotaging is one more: you might miss a deadline to send a quote ('they wouldn't have hired me anyway'). All this is normal. Most of us have thoughts like this, as the audience affirmed. Successful business owners keep going anyway.

To identify and reframe these thoughts, you need to be honest with yourself. Malini sets out how to do this in six steps.

Breaking down the blocks

1. See where you got stuck. To do this, you need to have specific goals (eg not 'work on my website' but 'write my "about me" page for an hour at 10am Wednesday'). If you are still stuck, you need to ...
2. Notice the thoughts and feelings about the task you are avoiding (eg 'I don't have enough qualifications' or 'I'm scared people will think I'm a fraud').
3. Sit with the discomfort. Do not try to ignore it.
4. Explore the thought. Try journaling or coaching to express it.
5. Reframe your beliefs (eg 'writing an "about me" page is not conceited – it is sharing my skills to help authors').
6. Take action (or not). Which is worse: doing nothing (eg not earning enough) or doing something (eg some may think you're conceited)? Decide to continue or stop.

Next time you wonder what's stopping you from doing something to market your business, try those six steps. You might just change your mindset.

Kate Sotejeff-Wilson translates, copywrites and edits for academics at KSW Translations, and facilitates Ridge Writing Retreats. Born in Wales to an English father and a Polish mother, she is now also a Finn. An Advanced Professional Member of the CIEP, she is deputy coordinator of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting Polish Network and vice-chair of Nordic Editors and Translators.

It's not your book!

Umber Khairi reviewed **Guiding principles for developmental fiction editing**, presented by Sophie Playle.

'Remember, it's not your book!'

That was one of the important principles of developmental editing that Sophie Playle reminded us of repeatedly throughout her well-attended session at the 2021 conference.

Her presentation was useful for both experienced editors and relative newbies to fiction editing because it revisited what exactly developmental editing consists of. Sophie emphasised the need to formulate a framework of guiding principles to steer your work as a developmental editor

Before understanding what developmental editing is, one needs to understand what it is not. Sophie made this clear, reminding us that as a developmental editor you are not acting as a beta reader – a reader whose response is essentially subjective and reactive. Neither are you acting as a copyeditor; your role as a developmental editor is to help the author get the foundation and structure of the book right, rather than polishing it and adding finishing touches. Here, she used the analogy of acting as an architect or engineer rather than as a professional involved in the decorating and finishing work on a building.

Sophie shared the four guiding principles she uses as a developmental editor. She said these help to keep you focused on the nature of your role. Her four principles are:

1. It's not your book
2. Define your service
3. Be objective
4. Understand the 'rules'.

As she elaborated on these four points, Sophie pointed out that having clear principles in place can 'keep things consistent and give you a clear sense of direction'...

Sophie emphasised the importance of remembering 'It's not your book'; it's not the developmental editor's job to rewrite the book. Instead, you should aim to understand the author's goal and simply help them to make it the best book they can. This is where communication with the client is key. Sophie pointed out that it is fundamental to understand the author's objectives – what they are trying to achieve with their book and their publishing goals (eg mainstream commercial or a family history project). Once you have understood their intent, you should make sure you are empathetic to

the author's vision; also, when you give feedback, do not be didactic or overbearing, rather 'frame your feedback as suggestions'.

In terms of the second point – that you need to define your service – this is obviously key in any job that we, as editing professionals, take up but it is especially crucial in developmental fiction editing. Authors may be confused as to what exactly this involves and some may be under the impression that the developmental editor will magically transform the book, rather than help the author to work on pulling it all together. Sophie mentioned that you can choose how to name and define the service you are providing and what exactly it will entail. She added that the author must be made aware that you won't be copyediting their work – the only line edits a developmental editor will make relate to the 'bigger picture' in terms of the book.

Her third guiding principle related to the question of objectivity and here Sophie emphasised that in developmental editing work, 'analysis is key ... tastes will vary but analysis is not opinion'. She mentioned that analysis should be rooted in theory so a developmental editor should have some knowledge of this as well.

The last principle was that a developmental fiction editor should understand the 'rules', that's to say the conventions and expectations of different genres (romance fiction will have different expectations and 'rules' from a crime thriller, for example). She said it is true that convention can be flexible but that it is rare that authors can successfully subvert genre conventions – some do experiment but very few succeed.

There was a lively and useful Q&A session following Sophie's presentation and quite a few participants seemed interested in the courses on developmental editing that she offers through her business, Liminal Pages with several people asking if these could count towards CIEP points for upgrading.

All in all, this was an extremely interesting and engaging session and one which provided clear and constructive guidance.

Umber Khairi is a new CIEP member and has a background in journalism (print, then news websites, then radio). She took early retirement from the BBC in 2018 and she is co-founder of the independent, journalist-owned magazine, Newslime, in Pakistan. She is a compulsive proofreader. Areas of interest include South Asia, Islamic culture, the news media, current affairs, new fiction and health and nutrition.

Moving to med comms

Mary Hobbins reviewed **Moving to med comms**, presented by Alison Hillman and Liz Jennings.

What is med comms?

These hugely experienced medical editors first met at the then Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) conference in 2019 and currently work in-house for global med comms consultancies (Oxford PharmaGenesis and Lucid Group, respectively). They described how working in medical communications covers a broad range of services from publication planning, journal articles and drug monographs to commercial, marketing and training materials. Freelance opportunities include design, project management and writing as well as editing and proofreading.

What are the attractions of working in med comms?

Both agreed that this is a growing industry with an ongoing need for freelance and in-house editors. They shared a short film that gave some insight into the various in-house roles and included colleagues talking about the appeal of this area of work and what they get out of being in med comms (interesting content/ variety in subjects and project types/ high standards/ innovation/ autonomy/ part of a collaborative team/ energising environment).

Liz described some of the in-house benefits: career progression, personal development and training, good rates of pay, flexibility in working hours and opportunities to work from home (which has accelerated since the pandemic). Freelancer benefits include the interesting variety of work available, long-term collaborative relationships and being a part of producing purposeful, beneficial material (a poll they ran on current pay bands suggested that most of the participants fell into the £25–£30ph range for both editing and proofreading).

What background do you need?

Some med comms companies prefer a science degree; others are happy if you have a language or arts-based degree and/or previous scientific experience. Alison emphasised that you should be willing to work to tight deadlines, have both editing and proofreading skills and be proficient in PowerPoint. You must also be willing to undertake an editorial test, whatever your experience, and this is likely to take the form of two tasks: an editing task and either a PowerPoint reformatting and checking task or a proofreading task.

However, she stressed the most important attribute is enthusiasm!

How do you find work in this area?

The first aspect they both noted was that it doesn't matter where you are based in the world – this might actually be helpful to meet tight deadlines! If you aim to become an in-house employee, do your research for the kind of employer that you would like to work for and approach them about available openings. Use LinkedIn to locate likely organisations to approach as well as scanning job listings on the platform. For freelance opportunities, the MedComms Workbook website lists freelancers for a subscription. If you have an entry in the CIEP Directory, make sure your qualifications and/or experience are clear so that med comms organisations can find you with keywords.

Keep up to date with what's going on in med comms. The CIEP **Medical Editing** training course is well worth investing in, if you haven't already, as this is highly regarded in the industry. You could also explore some e-learning courses on LinkedIn, Udemy, etc (some are free) and join the Facebook medical editors group. Another free source of information is the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries (ABPI) website and Code of Practice, which gives guidelines on use of language in med comms materials.

Don't wait for potential opportunities to come to you – be proactive and make contact. Express your readiness to do an editorial test to work with your preferred clients; network and follow up any previous contacts you may have in the med comms industry.

Alison and Liz displayed two practice exercises to try (a slide and a figure) with a litany of problems to think about; they discussed some dos and don'ts of language (based on the ABPI's Code of Practice) and rounded off their session with a thought-provoking list of some terms to watch out for and understand (eg efficacy vs effectiveness; incidence vs prevalence; seriousness vs severity).

Mary Hobbins is an *Advanced Professional Member of the CIEP* providing editorial services to commercial businesses and publishers of academic journals, professional textbooks and training materials. When not working, she often finds herself riding pillion somewhere in southern England.

Authenticity reading for good representation

Emma Naito reviewed **Authenticity reading: Helping writers craft accurate and respectful representation**, presented by Crystal Shelley.

Have you seen the video where, one by one, Black movie fans stand in front of a poster of Chadwick Boseman as Marvel superhero the Black Panther and tell him what his portrayal of the role meant to them?

In all these scenes, the overwhelming sentiment was the same: good representation of Black characters makes a world of difference.

The power of representation

Crystal Shelley showed us this video as an opening for her highly anticipated CIEP2021 session on how authenticity reading leads to respectful representation.

Her point: good representation matters.

Representation can shape how we see ourselves and are seen by others. Good representation is empowering and affirming; poor representation can be harmful or invalidating.

And it's to support more good representation that authenticity reading plays a role.

What is authenticity reading?

Crystal defines authenticity reading as 'a service that evaluates the representation of identities or experiences in writing' – especially when the writer doesn't have that identity or lived experience.

Many of us may be more familiar with the name 'sensitivity reading', but Crystal prefers 'authenticity' because the focus is on representing the real, lived experiences of people.

Authenticity reading evaluates the writing for biases and identifies potentially harmful elements. A reader could, for example, flag wrong words (eg the wrong Chinese word for 'grandfather') or words that are disrespectful, 'othering', condescending or misrepresentative (eg calling someone 'exotic' based on their ethnicity or labelling a person with a disability a 'sufferer').

Crystal likens authenticity reading to beta reading, where the reader gives the writer

- comments on what worked well and what may be adjusted
- overarching feedback on plot, characterisation, cultural elements (in a report)

- sentence-level feedback on inaccurate words/phrases, harmful terms, disrespectful language, etc (as comments in the manuscript)

What authenticity reading is not

Crystal debunked a few of the misconceptions about authenticity reading.

It's not censorship. Critics say sensitivity readers are looking to be offended. But the reader (like any editor) is there to help the writer produce more credible work. And the reader has no power to censor words; the author has the final decision.

It's not representative of the whole community. An authenticity reader is responding from their personal lived experience; they are not speaking for whole communities. And similarly, there's no such thing as one authentic experience. Two people could identify as, say, a Black gay man but have entirely different experiences.

It's not a stamp of approval nor a shield from criticism. Just because a work has had authenticity feedback doesn't mean that the writing is officially sanctioned or that there won't be people who respond negatively to the writing.

It's only needed for heavy topics like trauma or suffering. Authenticity reading can be helpful for any kind of writing.

Who can be an authenticity reader?

You can become an authenticity reader for certain

- social identities: eg race, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities
- experiences: eg caregiving, adoption, incarceration
- subgroup culture: eg military, gaming, fandom

An authenticity reader should closely match the identity or experience being represented; sometimes multiple readers are needed.

If you want to provide authenticity reading services, you might consider things like:

- It's an evolving field with little formal training available and no guidelines for what should be included in your offer or on pricing.
- You are being asked to draw on your pain, anger, trauma and may therefore need to set boundaries.
- You may also have to consider how to protect yourself (eg NDA, pseudonym, no acknowledgements).

Publishers and authors are increasingly aware of how publishing harmful writing could cause real reputational and financial losses. Authenticity readers can offer them a valuable service.

I don't plan to become an authenticity reader. But do I feel I can now better explain to clients what authenticity reading is and recommend it if it might benefit the manuscript.

And as an East Asian woman who spent a good chunk of her youth in the US, seeing Crystal, an East Asian woman from North America, on the screen was itself affirming. Good representation is important, indeed.

Read or direct your authors

- **Writing the other: A practical approach** (Nisi Shawl and Cynthia Ward)
- **Incomplete guides** (Salt and Sage Books, booklets on various topics)
- **Conscious style guide**
- **Writing the other**
- **Writing with color**
- **Writing diversely**

Directories (other than CIEP, EFA, ACES, etc)

- **Editors of color database**
- **Quiethouse editing**
- **Dot and Dash**
- **Salt and Sage Books**
- **Binders Full of Sensitivity Readers** (FB group)

Emma Naito is a bilingual scholarly editor who loves clear, plain English. She edits for social science academics and international development organisations. Emma grew up between Tokyo and the US East Coast and is now based in Bangkok. She has a master's degree from the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, and sings classically.

Stylish editing

Abi Saffrey reviewed **Using Word styles**, presented by Jill French.

This session allowed people who have not yet completed the CIEP's Word for Practical Editing course to benefit from Jill French's calm and clear approach to explaining something that many editors, let's be honest, are a bit bamboozled by.

Microsoft Word is packed with tools and functions that many editors never use, but styles are incredibly useful even when a client (or manager) does not ask for them to be applied to a document.

Jill explained that a style is a pre-set combination of font features (size, bold) and paragraph attributes (spacing, indents). Existing styles can be applied or amended using the Style section of the ribbon at the top of the Word window, or by expanding that into the Style Pane (by clicking on the little arrow in the bottom-right corner). As well as applying styles to text, it is possible to add 'direct formatting' using the Font and Paragraph options on the ribbon. Direct formatting only affects that one occurrence of the text, whereas Styles can be modified to amend all occurrences throughout the document.

Jill walked us through elements of the Style Pane, including the very useful Style Inspector. The little icon with a magnifying glass gives all the style details of a selected character, word or paragraph. Jill then moved on to cover applying built-in styles, creating new styles and amending a style. As well as looking at the font elements of a style, she covered elements of paragraph formatting, including line spacing, indents (or not) and page breaks. The latter was one of my major takeaways from this session – it's possible to add a line break to a style; so, for example, each chapter can start on a new page if you add a page break to the chapter heading style.

Jill briefly looked at how styles can help with reordering content. Via the navigation pane (on a PC found on the View ribbon), or by clicking Ctrl+F, it's possible to see the sections of the document under 'Headings'. Within that pane, it's possible to drag one heading to above/below another, which reorders the text within the document – mind blown!

To share styles, it's possible to share a document with the styles within it, or create a template document (filename.dot) that can be used as the basis for new documents or attached to existing documents.

Jill finished the session by highlighting how Word styles can save time, keep documents under control, and make them (and you) look professional.

The session was a very comprehensive introduction to Word styles, and demonstrated the importance of using this functionality in everyday editing life.

Learn more about working in Microsoft Word in the CIEP course **Word for Practical Editing**.

Abi Saffrey has been tinkering with Microsoft Word documents for over 20 years. She's an Advanced Professional Member of the CIEP, offering editorial project management and copyediting to a variety of organisations that publish digital and printed content.

Quick! Talk!

Ben Dare reviewed the **Lightning Talks**.

Lightning Talks are unique at the CIEP conference – hosted by Robin Black with his usual honest and unexpected insights, the odd flash of self-revelation, and the maintainer of the consistently affirming atmosphere. As quick as each talk is (five minutes – do you fancy giving it a go next year?), I couldn't possibly fit every pearl into this article. But I'll try to give you a flavour:

Emma Naito: The most powerful people in the world

Emma works with many Englishes. But despite growing up speaking English, being Japanese means Emma is still spoken to as if English is a foreign language to her. With some awesomely honest thoughts on language and identity – hers and others' – Emma's talk certainly made me think. Growing in awareness of language and identity – both our own and other people's – makes us better editors, Emma says. Editors are powerful. How will you use that power?

Joely Taylor: Bothersome backsides and other photo failures: a brief intro into editing photography

Key takeaways:

- Avoid the dreaded rear-view
- Look for fine details: embarrassing, offensive, not safe, illegal, visible personal details, etc
- Check the caption!
- Are there issues around copyright, printability, suitability, quality?

Wow. What a lot to think about. A superb reminder not to glance over photos while editing and think, 'Well there's no text there to worry about, I'll move on!'

Sam Kelly: How proofreading helped me commentate on football

A proofreader never knows what they'll get asked to do! So should you be asked to commentate on your next local derby:

- Do your homework (read a guide)
- Keep it clear (don't give two characters/players the same name)
- Focus (even when boring)

- Watch those changes (midfielder substituted for a winger = moving text from one PDF page to another).

Okay, so football's not my thing, but I'll keep this in mind for whatever public speaking I'm asked to do!

Alison Shakspeare: Sussing out self-publishers

To work smoothly with an SP client, ask yourself: What's the author looking for? And remember these rules:

- Editing/proofreading is always needed
- Something is always missing
- It's always longer and more expensive than they thought
- Clarity = happy authors.

And with some key questions to ask, Alison shows me it's good to keep the whole of the publishing process in mind with SP authors. But it sounds like it could be fun!

John Ingamells: Learning Korean

A lightning tour of language – and recent history: did you know that John worked for the British diplomatic service? No? Me neither. The presentation shows how different Korean script is from the English alphabet. The Korean alphabet dates back to 1446 (the language is of course much older). It has fourteen consonants, ten vowels and one bank holiday. But you might find yourself counting in Korean or Chinese, and it's good to know your audience before you choose your sentence ending. Phew!

Michelle Ward: Bringing history to life

I must admit I didn't realise the breadth of the re-enactment life. You could meet famous people (Bernard Cornwell and Sean Bean, and Prince Charles). You might make your own clothes, or sew up a bayonet hole at least. You will learn how to:

- Shoot a rifle
- Dress practically
- Cook over a fire
- Dress wounds
- Take an enemy position.

Not forgetting the dances and parades. If banquets get mentioned, I might just be in.

Ben Dare copyedits/proofreads for projects on sustainable food systems and sustainable living (and almost anything else when asked nicely). His greatest desire is to find a bit more spare time for gardening, but he spends most of his non-work time with family, triathlon training or coastguarding (and, of course, ironing).

Monday 13 September

Funny poet here

Julia Sandford-Cooke reviewed **My unedited and unproofread life**, by Ian McMillan.

'Funny poet here' read the sign for one of Ian McMillan's readings. Those three words sum up his wise and hilarious talk on 'precise language' but he repeatedly used another word too – 'joy'. And so delegates spent a happy half hour giggling at their desks, with added unintentional humour from the Zoom closed captioning struggling to render Ian's distinctive Yorkshire accent.

You might know Ian McMillan as the presenter of Radio 3's *The Verb* for the past 20 years, as a regular guest on the Radio 1 evening show in the 1990s, as the author of oft-anthologised poems and newspaper columns or as a prolific **Twitter** chronicler of life's quirks. But he still claims that people often mistake him not only for a dead American novelist of the same name but also for Ian McEwan, Ian McKellen and fellow performance poet Ian Bland ('If I was called Ian Bland,' he said, 'I'd change it to something dynamic like Ian Fantastic'). But he is certainly one of a kind.

Always with an eye on his editorial audience, he launched into a series of anecdotes about the ambiguous signs, posters and lists he'd picked up from libraries and village halls around the country. ('I bet collecting notices is something you do on the sly.') From 'Do not trip over the feet' to 'Where can we go to watch people play badminton and eat our sandwiches?', he highlighted the poetry in everyday writing.

'These notices,' he said, 'are a conduit of joy – they are wrong in a way that makes you think language is amazing. Even when it's wrong, it's wrong in a way that makes it feel right.'

He described language as our playground, our building blocks and our scaffolding. 'If we use it imprecisely, it starts to squeak ... (But) at the edges of imprecision, there can be a kind of poetry and there can be a kind of joy.'

He also had good advice on freelance life: 'Whenever [clients] ring up, always say yes, as it leads to exciting adventures.' Maybe adventures such as (almost) reading a sonnet about bleach ('the champagne of the smallest room') in a specially constructed wooden loo for National Toilet Day and then critiquing the poetry of 'a very small woman, about the size of one-half of a cruet set'.

Perhaps it doesn't matter if our own work adventures aren't quite as memorable. Ian explained: 'We are all telling stories – rubbing the truth a bit to shine a light on it. I want to be two things at once – a precise writer but one that lets the light in.'

And isn't that also what we editors are all aiming for? To spark illumination and, yes, joy?

Postscript: 'Barnsley's busiest man' responded personally to every appreciative tweet about his talk – and there were many. Let's hope he can make good on his promise to write a 'theme song' for **the Linnets** to perform at our next conference. What a joy that would be!

Julia Sandford-Cooke of **WordFire Communications** has spent more than 20 years in publishing. She writes and edits textbooks, proofreads anything that's put in front of her, speaks very bad Dutch and posts short, often grumpy, book reviews on her blog, **Ju's Reviews**.

How to be a LinkedIn leader

Liz Dalby reviewed **How to be a LinkedIn leader**, presented by John Espirian.

Most of us are probably already on LinkedIn because it's a relatively simple and free way of having a professional online profile. And many of us know it as an extension of a traditional paper CV – it's a place to show off your skills and achievements, in the hope of being noticed by a potential employer. However, whether or not anyone will actually notice you among the throng is another question. As with any form of social media, there are positive ways in which you can make yourself stand out, and there are also ways in which you can draw attention to yourself – even to the point of being restricted or banned – for all the wrong reasons.

John Espirian, former member and director of the SfEP (as it was then), has gone on to develop a significant following for his advice on how to make LinkedIn work better for you, alongside his own work as a technical copywriter. The thing that's immediately noticeable about John's Zoom presentation is his background. Where the rest of us might make sure we'd cleared the household mess out of the way or arranged a suitable book or two in view, John is totally on-brand with his trademark blue background, and even a QR code to scan, which takes you directly to his own LinkedIn profile. That, right there, is a lesson in message and branding, and he hasn't even opened his mouth!

John introduces his session as 'the whistle-stop version of the LinkedIn Leaders' Playbook', his course on how to get the best out of LinkedIn. He starts off with a list of 'don'ts' – things to avoid doing if you want to have success on LinkedIn, including trying to get too many connections too quickly. This is because it doesn't allow you to get to know each new contact individually. He emphasises the importance of establishing personal contact with your connections throughout, whether via written messages or voice messages – while keeping it non-salesy and human.

Of course one of the things you may want to do on LinkedIn is share your content, but don't even think about setting up a so-called 'engagement pod', where you are part of a group of people who all like and comment on each other's posts. It's not just bad form and a bit tacky, it's against LinkedIn's rules, and it's an example of a practice that could get you banned, as is automating actions such as bombarding similar accounts with the same message. Take care!

A positive thing to aim for, John says, if you do it slowly and organically, is reaching 500 connections, as beyond that point LinkedIn won't show exactly how many connections you have. Presumably, you could appear to be on a par with Elon Musk, or whoever, to the casual observer or passing HR person or commissioning editor.

Next, and perhaps most immediately relevant to anyone who's a relative beginner, is how to make your profile as good as it can be. John has clearly analysed all of this at a granular level, so you don't have to. Before applying his tips, he recommends checking your profile views, so you have something to measure against when assessing the changes you've made. Some of his tips are very basic, such as moving away from the default profile and banner images. But it's also important to consider the placement of the two in relation to each other – don't let your profile photo obscure anything you want people to see on the banner.

Most important is your profile headline. This is what people will see when you comment on other posts, for example, so make sure you get it right and make it interesting. On a mobile device, they'll only see the first 40 characters. So even though you have 220 characters to play with, John doesn't advise using anywhere near that number.

Next most important is your About statement, which can be 2,600 characters long but only the first three lines will be seen. State what you do, who you do it for, and how to get in touch. You want to make clear what value you bring to a project, and you might put killer quotes or list high-profile clients here, too. Other consistent pieces of advice are to break up walls of plain text with lists, for example (especially for mobile reading), and show a bit of personality! Again, end with multiple ways people can get in touch with you. Make it clear exactly what you provide.

John also mentions publishing your prices (via a link to your website), which he's well known for advocating. This is to avoid interaction with timewasters who are not ever likely to pay what you charge for your services. Finally, he uses the device of a secret word in his About section, which is a way of testing whether people who connect with him have read his profile. It's also a conversation starter. Again, it's all about personalisation.

Next, he moves to Recommendations. He has a tip for asking for recommendations, which involves adding a link to the bottom of invoices or email signatures, for example, to take the pain out of asking contacts directly for Recommendations. However, they will need to be connected to you on LinkedIn to be able to do this. A further tip is customising your LinkedIn URL. It's this attention to detail that makes John's advice so useful – and this kind of thing is very easy to do, but has outside effects in terms of making your profile seem cared for and polished.

Other areas he covers in the session include the difference between following and connecting (try to get people to follow you first by switching to follow-first mode, but only if you're regularly putting out content); best practice when it comes to connecting and building your network (you've guessed it – make it personal, even using voice

notes if you dare); creating content that clients will care about (using his CHAIR model); articles versus posts (even if you write an article, you'll still need to craft a shorter-form post to make it visible to your network); the anatomy of a successful LinkedIn post (use emojis, make the most of the plain text format with lists and white space, and focus on getting engagement and comments), view counts and commenting etiquette.

John ends with a surprising statistic – that only 1 per cent of people on LinkedIn are content creators. This means that if you become one of them, you will really set yourself apart, which is what it's all about in a crowded marketplace like ours. And his final takeaway is that 'conversations are gold'. That's really the message he conveyed throughout the presentation. Yes, there are technical tweaks you can make to tighten things up and make yourself visible. But to get the most from the platform, you have to show up as yourself, and engage.

The presentation was clear and consistent, packed with useful and actionable information. Throughout, it was impossible to forget who was presenting, too – John's bitmoji alter ego was there, walking us through the slides, which were beautifully created in line with his branding. All in all, it was a highly polished and professional insight from someone at the top of his LinkedIn game, but useful and accessible to everyone, at any stage of the journey.

Liz Dalby has been an editor since 1998, and freelance since 2008. She works on non-fiction projects of all kinds, for publishers, businesses and independent authors. She's also one of the commissioning editors on the CIEP information team.

Could a monkey own copyright for a selfie?

Kerrie-Anne Love reviewed **Editors and copyright**, presented by Pippa Smart.

About a decade ago, an inquisitive macaque monkey named Naruto used a wildlife photographer's camera to take a self-portrait. When David Slater claimed rights to the image after it was shared on social media, he was sued by animal rights group PETA which said Naruto was the owner. Slater eventually won copyright (and agreed to donate 25 per cent of the royalties to charity) but, as Pippa Smart explained in her conference session, 'Editors and copyright: Myth-busting and good practice', the case itself had wider ramifications.

Copyright, she observed, is a subject many people find intimidating or dull. 'The problem is that copyright comes up when there's a problem,' she said, 'so to many people copyright is a problematic issue, rather than an intellectually challenging issue that protects the rights of the creators.' For editors, a good understanding is essential.

Starting with a quick-fire quiz, Pippa – who has worked in academic and research publishing for 30 years – proceeded to take us on a 'whistle-stop' tour of copyright law that was packed with thought-provoking case studies.

She explained that raw data isn't protected and can be interpreted in artworks, animations, graphics, movies, and so on. Essentially, creativity is protected; for copyright to apply, the work has to involve some form of expression or intelligence. That's where Naruto's court case is relevant. The US court found that copyright can only be granted to something that has 'intelligent intent', so animals and machines don't have rights. This has implications for the increasingly sophisticated area of works generated by artificial intelligence.

Pippa also touched upon social media and issues with image rights, permissions and the difficulties posed by so-called 'orphan works', where the copyright owner can't be traced or identified. Likewise, there are pitfalls with open access licensing, more commonly found in academic publishing and publicly funded research, that allows reuse without permission. She emphasised the need for editors to always check because, for example, a work might be freely available but you may not be allowed to reuse it without seeking permission.

Another aspect to consider is that copyright is finite and usually lasts the lifetime of the author, plus an additional 70 years. But international laws differ and are subject to change. While copyright may have expired in the country where a book or a creative work is being published, the publisher may need to seek permission in other territories.

In some countries, for example, France, an author's moral rights may last forever, but there is no provision under US copyright law. Pippa advised that 'no matter where you're publishing, attribution and integrity should always be upheld'. It is good editing practice to ask for permission and check your facts and sources.

And finally, she made an interesting point that I had never really reflected upon. While copyright is protected by law, plagiarism is not illegal – although it may involve some degree of infringement and is widely seen as unacceptable!

The session covered a lot of ground in just an hour, and while the basics may seem relatively straightforward, as Pippa showed, there are plenty of grey areas. Just ask Naruto.

For guidance, see the Society of Authors website and its **Guide to Copyright and Permissions**.

Kerrie-Anne Love copyedits fiction and memoir for independent authors. She has 30 years of publishing experience and is an Advanced Professional Member of the CIEP. Now based in Australia, she works with clients around the world.

How blogging can boost your business – and be fun

Marga Burke reviewed **Blogging: Making it work for you and your business**, presented by Liz Dalby, Claire Bacon and Kia Thomas.

When I became a freelancer 12 years ago, I was interested in starting a blog, but the advice I read soon put me off, giving me the impression I would need advanced content marketing skills and the willpower to stick to a rigid schedule. So I was fascinated to hear three established bloggers give their perspectives during a relaxed panel session at this year's CIEP conference.

Far from prescribed lists of uninspiring topics, Claire, Liz and Kia all emphasised the value of writing about what interests you, connecting with your readers, and showing what kind of person you are – whether you're writing for potential clients or fellow freelancers.

Blogging for clients

Claire's blog is aimed at her clients, who are scientists, and offers tips to help them improve their writing. While her choice of audience aligns with conventional blogging advice, Claire was clear that she targets this readership because it suits what she enjoys writing about.

Claire bases her posts on advice and explanations that she finds herself giving clients frequently. This is not only a source of ideas and material, but it also saves her time down the line; when future clients struggle with the same issue, she can refer them to her blog post.

Although there are other factors involved, Claire has had four times as many referrals since she started blogging. Her blog has also led to online teaching work for universities and given her the confidence to write a CIEP guide.

Blogging about freelancing

Liz writes her blog for other freelance editors, with the aim of building community. Similarly, while some of Kia's posts are aimed at clients, at the moment she prefers to write about freelance life. Both see their blogs as a way to connect with others and to show who they are.

As the three panellists explained, in a crowded field where many editors have the same technical skills, a blog can reflect your personal 'brand' and help you stand out. Posts that show you are fun and approachable (Kia), passionate about helping people

(Claire), or thoughtful and sensitive to others' needs (Liz) can reassure readers about what it would be like to work with you.

Both Liz and Kia confirmed that their blogs have gained them clients and opened up other opportunities, such as speaking at conferences.

Tips for new bloggers

If you've been inspired to start a blog, here are some tips from the speakers:

- Find your own voice and write about what you want to, not what you think you 'should' write
- A list of planned topics can be helpful to get you started but shouldn't be a straitjacket
- Topics don't need to be original if you give your own personal take
- Read and share others' blogs; they're likely to reciprocate
- Guest posts are an option if you don't want the commitment of your own blog.

For me, it was refreshing to hear that a business blog doesn't have to follow a set formula, but can be enjoyable, creative and personal. I came away from the session feeling motivated to banish impostor syndrome and market my business in a new way. As Kia put it, 'There's only one you, and you can't be an impostor in your own life.'

Marga Burke *helps researchers get published by editing health-related journal articles, particularly for authors who have English as a second language. She is also a medical translator from French and Italian to English and an aspiring authenticity reader. Outside work, she loves writing poems, sings in two choirs and has run a marathon.*

Knowledge (about your business) is power

Abi Saffrey reviewed **Business data for freelancers**, presented by Maya Berger.

Business data is the key to making informed decisions.

Maya Berger is an experienced freelance editor who loves data, and in this session, she highlighted the importance of gathering data and then using that data to make smarter business decisions and meet business goals. Maya highlighted a few areas where freelancers can record information and use it to answer specific questions.

Tracking your time

- How many days off have you taken this month/season/year?
- How many sick days?
- How many weekend days have you worked?
- How many hours are you working each day/week/month?
- When are the busy times?
- How many days off do you want next month/season/year?

By tracking hours and days worked, you can identify whether you have the work-life balance you want, whether you need to set/adjust boundaries, or whether you can take action to enable you to work fewer hours or on different days.

CPD

- How does the content within a CPD activity relate to the editorial work you do and the way you run your business?
- Is the time spent on the activity proportional to how much it's going to help you and your work?
- How do you change your working practices/approach after undertaking a CPD activity?

Tracking the hours spent on watching webinars and reading blog posts – and the topics they cover – can show that too much time is being spent on one topic that may not be directly relevant to your work. Or not enough learning or practice time is being allocated to a tool or issue you deal with every day.

Job satisfaction

- Are the projects you're working on moving you towards a desired goal?
- How many of your projects are in a subject area you are interested in?
- Which projects drain you or engage you?
- What kind(s) of work can you look for that will improve your job satisfaction?
- Have you taken enough time off to stay energised and motivated?

Business expenses

Freelancers must record allowable business expenses for the tax authorities.

- Are you subscribing to a tool or service you rarely use?
- Is there a paid-for ad-free version of an app that you use every day?
- Do you use a tool/service more for personal tasks than for work ones?

Knowing what you're spending your money on can provide the momentum to cancel a subscription, or invest in something that will make each project go more smoothly.

Rates/fees

- Do you earn enough to cover your living (and business) expenses?
- Do your rates reflect the work done, and your skills and expertise?
- Do your rates cover the time spent on querying, invoicing, communicating and logging the project details?

With this information, you can make an informed decision about raising your rates, and ensure that you build admin time into quotations and fees.

Income

- How much did you quote?
- How much money did you receive?
- How many hours did you estimate the work would take?
- How many hours did the work actually take?
- Was the money worth the time and effort?
- Were there any other benefits or costs?

- How many projects has a client offered you over a year? How many did you work on?

Client data

- Where did you find your client?
- How did you approach them? Did it get you work?
- Where did your client find you?
- Why did they approach you?
- Did they provide feedback?
- Do they want to work with you again?

It's possible to collect a huge amount of data about our businesses – we can harness that information and turn it into practical actions and goals, rather than leaving it in a file somewhere to gather dust. The information can help us to understand our value and present that to existing and new clients. It's good to start small with a spreadsheet or two. Maya set attendees the challenge of tracking one new aspect of their business over the next week; I was still in a post-conference daze and didn't manage it, but the session's given me loads of ideas for what to look at over the coming months (and I'll record how long I spend tinkering with my spreadsheets).

Maya has created a suite of integrated Excel spreadsheets for freelance editors, for the easy management of income, expense and project data: **The Editor's Affairs (TEA)**.

Abi Saffrey has enjoyed using spreadsheets for over 20 years. She's an Advanced Professional Member of the CIEP, offering editorial project management and copyediting to a variety of organisations that publish digital and printed content.

Conscious and inclusive editing

Suzanne Arnold reviewed **Conscious and inclusive editing: Understanding conscious language and the editorial role**, presented by Crystal Shelley.

Words can uplift, empower and inspire, says Crystal. But they can also invalidate, marginalise and erase. 'Language ... has the power to perpetuate stigma and stereotypes and to misrepresent.'

Editors have an opportunity to help authors recognise and replace potentially harmful language before it's published.

What is conscious language?

Conscious language is rooted in compassion, choosing words to reflect our intention.

For example, many wheelchair users dislike the phrase 'wheelchair-bound' because it implies the chair is a negative thing, whereas they see it as a tool that helps them go about their daily lives. So if we say that someone is wheelchair-bound, it's often inaccurate and can be stigmatising.

'Many conscious language issues are unintentional': most of us don't deliberately offend or upset people. The problem is using words or phrases unthinkingly or out of habit – perhaps terms that we were taught as children or hear other people use.

Why care?

This isn't about the author's intent, but the impact on readers.

Language conveys our values and beliefs, and so, unintentionally using harmful language can affect reputation. It can also, of course, have real-world consequences, including negative reviews, bad publicity, even cancelled contracts or financial loss.

What can editors look out for?

First, don't worry if this seems daunting. We all have to start somewhere and learning can be an ongoing process.

To help us watch out for potentially problematic language, Crystal gave the following pointers, with examples.

Ask yourself whether the language is:

- disrespectful (eg using 'pow wow' to describe a meeting at work strips the term of its cultural significance)

- stigmatising (eg 'crazy' – even if it's not being used to stigmatise those with mental illness or whose behaviour seems 'different', it may provoke an unintended emotion in the listener or reader)
- inaccurate (eg 'wheelchair-bound')
- biased (eg default 'he')
- excluding (eg referring to 'both' genders)
- outdated (eg 'oriental', 'senile')
- dehumanising (eg 'illegal immigrant' – we may think of phrases such as this as 'the norm', but they strip people of their humanity and individuality)
- presumptuous (eg Columbus 'discovered' America – people lived there long before he arrived)
- judgemental (eg 'suffers from')
- rooted in oppression.

How can editors raise these issues with authors?

Don't feel afraid that you're trying to impose your own views or biases on the text. We raise these issues because 'they may interfere with the author's ability to get their message across effectively to readers'.

And that's the key to giving feedback – keep it focused on the reader and potential unintended effects on them. Keep it constructive and professional, offer suggestions for other wording they could use and share links to relevant resources.

Find out more

You can learn more from Crystal's **blog posts**. She also sells **conscious language toolkits** (one for writers and one for editors), which include lists of problematic terms explaining why they could do harm and suggesting alternatives.

The **Conscious Style Guide** is another good source of information.

In summary

This statement of Crystal's reminds us why it's worth making the effort: 'Most readers won't notice the absence of harmful language, but they'll notice its use.'

Suzanne Arnold is an Advanced Professional Member who specialises in copyediting and proofreading non-fiction for adults.

Tuesday 14 September

Easy English

Anna Baildon reviewed **Easy English: The principles of writing for people with low literacy and what editorial professionals can learn from them**, presented by Cathy Basterfield.

What is Easy English?

One of the reasons I attended this interesting session is that Easy English is a new concept for me.

Cathy described Easy English as 'writing for people who haven't got functional literacy'. She showed us examples of Easy English documents which made it clear that this is the polar opposite of the writing styles we often work with as editorial professionals. But Cathy emphasised the myriad texts which we encounter in our daily lives and which are inaccessible to many people.

Cathy has many years' experience in speech pathology and working with people who use non-verbal communication. Our chair, Hugh Jackson, noted that Cathy pioneered the development of Easy English, so we were in good hands. Delegates contributed some thought-provoking questions, most of which Cathy answered in the time available.

Why do people need Easy English?

Easy English caters for people with the lowest levels of literacy. This may be related to a disability or other reasons. It was sobering to consider the impact of being unable to access information that I take for granted – Cathy mentioned the significant health, social and economic consequences – and to see data showing that a surprisingly large proportion of adults do not have the literacy to manage day-to-day tasks.

Easy English is most commonly used for information that people need, such as health information or terms and agreements. (I learned that there is an accessible information standard that all NHS and adult social care providers in England are legally required to follow.) Easy English is generally not used for the cultural, leisure and news content which people with higher literacy read for pleasure and engagement reasons. Cathy said that research shows that people with low literacy do want to read these richer types of material. This demonstrates an even greater potential for applying Easy Read approaches.

One very interesting point Cathy made was that Easy English can be effective for people with higher literacy levels. She gave an example of a document about court proceedings that was useful to someone at an intensely stressful and emotional time.

Some nuts and bolts

Cathy used example texts to demonstrate some Easy English techniques. We learned that we should use:

- a lot of white space
- directly relevant illustrations (not photographs) to help convey the meaning of the text
- short words and sentences
- minimal punctuation
- positive phrasing
- bullets to separate items in a list.

I liked the idea of 'unpacking the language' so that the meaning becomes accessible.

Headlines I'll remember

- It's hard to write in Easy English!
- Access to written information should not be a reading test. It should be enabling.
- Access to information is a right. 'Access' means that a person reads, understands and knows what they can do.

I agree with conference organiser Beth Hamer that Cathy gave us 'a different perspective' and challenged our assumptions. I can see that Easy English is related to plain English and Easy Read, but that it goes further. I would like to explore these specialisms after I've completed my core training. In the meantime, it will be interesting to spot opportunities where I can use the principles in more subtle ways in my work.

Thank you to Cathy, who joined us live from Melbourne where it was late evening.

Useful resources

Cathy's website: <https://accesseasyenglish.com.au>

CIEP guide: Editing into Plain English <https://www.ciep.uk/resources/guides/#EPL>

CIEP training course: Plain English for Editors <https://www.ciep.uk/training/choose-a-course/plain-english-editors/>

Anna Baidon is an Entry-Level Member and is relishing CIEP training to strengthen her expertise. She has worked in niche librarian roles in higher education and has significant experience in wrangling non-fiction copy into a publishable state. Anna has degrees in English literature and librarianship and a lifelong affinity with words. She plans to freelance, offering both copyediting and proofreading services.

Near! Far!

Katherine Kirk reviewed **Fiction line-editing essentials: Narrative distance**, presented by Louise Harnby.

Louise Harnby is one of the most helpful editors around, and her **Switching to Fiction course** will earn you two points towards CIEP membership upgrades. This year, conference attendees got a taste of that high-quality content with Louise's fabulous introduction to narrative distance. In her session, she explained:

- what narrative distance (or psychic distance) is
- why it should be dynamic, not static
- how problems with narrative distance connect to showing vs telling, info-dumping, head-hopping and other common pitfalls
- how editors can show writers how to adjust narrative distance to make their writing stronger.

Discussed in more depth in *The Art of Fiction* by John Gardner, narrative distance is a stylistic tool that affects point of view, showing versus telling, and more. It's all about the relationship between reader and character: how deep in the character's head is the reader, and how connected are they to the character's emotions? To understand narrative distance, editors should know about narrative perspectives and their effects. Second-person is creepily intimate, third-person objective has the widest narrative distance, and third-person omniscient may have some intimacy between the reader and narrator, if not the characters. Editors who want to learn more about these would get a lot out of the CIEP's **Introduction to Fiction Editing** course.

Louise describes narrative distance as a continuum that readers can zoom in and out of. The level of intimacy should gently ebb and flow. When it leaps around, that's where problems come in. Overreliance on a wide degree of narrative distance makes the writing static and can result in info-dumping (and pace-killing). Spending too long in an intimate distance, putting emotion before description and action, can feel sentimental and overblown. Jumping too far from one degree to another can be jarring, like shifting gears too fast. Head-hopping is where the perspective leaps abruptly from one character to another, and readers get confused or can't invest in the character's experience. Some authors might overuse filter words (noticed, watched, felt) to avoid head-hopping, but this adds a degree of distance between the immediacy of the experience and the reader.

Louise says editors should not be too prescriptive regarding narrative distance. Instead, we should use our instincts and acknowledge subjectivity. A small change

that shifts the narrative distance can have a huge effect on pace, emotional impact, and characterisation. We can use techniques like:

- free indirect speech
- removing filter words and words like 'suddenly' or 'instantly'
- using characters' full names
- changing direct speech and thought to reported speech or thought.

Being aware of narrative distance helps editors with the flow of prose, the shifts of intimacy with a single narrative style, and shifts of viewpoint. It helps authors to know how and why to fix problems, and it helps readers to enjoy the story more. Within a day of Louise's talk, I'd already applied it to my own work. I can't wait to see the lightbulbs pop on over my clients' heads when I explain narrative distance to them.

Katherine Kirk is a fiction editor who lives halfway up a volcano in Ecuador. She works on all types of fiction for adults, especially Science Fiction and Literary Fiction. She also edits Tabletop Role-playing Game (TTRPG) content. Katherine spends far too much time on social media, and is an Intermediate Member of the CIEP.

Feedback, kindness and humility

Sheila Korol reviewed **The editing educator: What you need to know about teaching editors**, presented by Erin Brenner.

Feedback, kindness, and humility were just a few of the keywords that stood out in Erin Brenner's session on what you need to know about teaching editors.

Having started her own business, **Right Touch Editing**, in 2005, Erin has been training other editors since 2012. So, speaking from ample first-hand experience, she presented on how teaching can lead to both more income and a deeper understanding of our own editing craft through building relationships with students.

Who's the best editing instructor?

The first part of Erin's session addressed knowing whether we're ready to teach. Since editing takes time to learn, her advice was that editors should have at least two to three years of solid experience first in order to consolidate their understanding of editing procedures, tools, and publishing processes.

Since public speaking is also likely to be a skill we don't use much in our editing lives, Erin advised on ways to gain experience and confidence in this area. This might be through recording and reviewing your presentation style, joining a group like Toastmasters, or giving short and free talks to small local groups.

A point Erin stressed early on was what she viewed as the 'right traits' helpful to both editing and teaching. These include:

- **Humility:** accepting we will never be perfect and we will make mistakes
- **Kindness and patience:** giving our students time and space to struggle and learn
- **Firmness:** setting deadlines and teaching students to be accountable
- **Open-mindedness:** accepting that multiple solutions exist and recognising all good work.

How do we teach?

In the second part of her session, Erin explained the importance of editors knowing not only the right content to share with students but also the means of elaborating on and organising information in a way that will help students better retain knowledge in their long-term memory. Some of the key techniques she shared for accomplishing this knowledge transfer include:

- **Low-stakes testing:** breaking down knowledge into frequent, smaller tasks such as quizzes, skills practice, and participation to reduce student anxiety
- **Modelling:** anonymously sharing both right and wrong work produced in the class
- **Giving detailed feedback:** identifying and explaining problems and how to solve them
- **Praising:** always encouraging, motivating, and building students' confidence by frequently pointing out their correct answers.

Where to find teaching opportunities?

Compared to a few decades ago when few options existed, editors today have a multitude of teaching opportunities through several different teaching platforms, timelines, and institutions. Teaching turnover tends to be high in many regular programmes, so the demand is certainly there for interested editors. Places to look for work include colleges and universities, professional training programmes, and editing organisations. Other ideas include searching job boards, cold-calling editing programmes, or networking with instructors. Additionally, more and more editors are now creating and marketing their own individual programmes. It's worth noting, too, that editors can always reach out to a wider range of language-related fields such as communications, journalism, and marketing.

Overall, if you're an editor thinking of branching out into teaching, Erin's presentation was filled with thoughtful and practical ideas to start you on your way.

Sheila Korol is from Canada and an Intermediate Member of the CIEP. An experienced English literature teacher, she lives in Hong Kong where she has set up shop as a freelance proofreader and copyeditor for independent authors, academics, and educational publishers. Find her on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).

Don't get left behind

Umber Khairi reviewed **Don't get left behind: Career development for freelancers**, presented by Suzanne Collier.

Suzanne Collier is both a Careers Adviser as well as somebody with many years of experience in book publishing, so this was a very useful conference session for CIEP members – particularly those who are new to freelance work or who have recently set up their own businesses.

Suzanne said that most of the freelancers who contact her for career advice have one main question: how can we keep up to date? She said that this is a major concern because of the 'overwhelming speed' with which the industry is changing and technology is advancing: 'Publishing almost got dragged into the twentieth century and is now sort of speeding through the twenty-first.'

She pointed out that freelancers can often feel isolated and invisible, so it's easy for them to feel hard done by and get left behind. However, the key thing is to remind yourself that this is a job, your job, and you have to make an effort to update skills and keep abreast of developments within the industry. Suzanne emphasised the importance of taking responsibility for your development, and with the availability of many free resources, this does not have to be an expensive proposition.

She said that social media – despite sometimes being a 'cesspit of hell' – is a great resource, adding that you need to make it work for your business by finding the right people or organisations to link to. Suzanne advised that you follow publishers, individuals and organisations who are relevant to your business and then stay informed of what they talk about or do.

Suzanne also spoke about the importance of LinkedIn and gave some very clear advice on things that do not work on this platform. These include what you write in your bio: for example, she said you should not put in vague terms like 'publishing professional' or write 'I help people to ...' but instead be specific and focus on keywords and skills. And don't just wait around till people contact you via LinkedIn, but engage with others on the platform.

Suzanne reminded freelancers that they need to make an active effort to remain connected to their industry by joining networks and by knowing what is happening in their field. She recommended signing up for free news updates relating to their relevant industry, so for example, for book publishing she mentioned Bookseller, BookBrunch, Publishers Weekly and Publishers Lunch.

Another way of keeping abreast of what's happening in your field is by attending events; this, she said, you should regard as CPD. At this point in the talk, we learned

that many years ago Suzanne was a certified aerobics instructor and she cited the example of being required to have a certain number of hours of training/teaching to keep her aerobics accreditation updated. Freelancers, she said, should use this same logic and invest the time and money needed to attend events like book fairs or conferences – in other words, treat this as part of keeping their ‘accreditation’ current. She said book fairs were a great place to see ‘what was going on and who’s who’ and to meet people in the profession. She mentioned that the Frankfurt Book Fair might be partly virtual this year, so that may be a good opportunity for many people who might otherwise not be able to attend.

Suzanne also pointed out that being thorough in one’s work should extend to researching potential clients as well as industry trends. She said freelancers need to know what is happening in, say, a particular publishing house or genre and suggested making regular visits to bookshops and libraries to see what’s being produced, what it looks like in the finished form and how it’s being marketed.

In terms of free resources, Suzanne mentioned **Google Digital Garage** (where you can get free online certification for Google products), **Codecademy** and **Coursera** and said it was a good idea to check what was available in terms of Adobe training and also to check out the **Independent Publishers Guild (IPG) Skills Hub**. Here, she also said that although the LinkedIn training, **Lynda** is paid-for training, free trials of this are often available so it’s worth checking on this.

The main thing that Suzanne stressed throughout this conference session was that keeping up to date is not just about updating your tech skills, it is about keeping informed and aware of what is happening in your industry – of the trends (whether in terms of tech or genre), debates, products and other developments – and looking for resources and networks that can inform and educate you. She also identified podcasts as a very useful resource and gave the example of the Extraordinary Business Book Club as one such podcast. Suzanne herself has a weekly careers podcast on her website **Bookcareers.com** and she recommended that, as an editing and proofreading professional, you should look for, and identify, podcasts that are relevant to your work.

Later on in the session, she answered a question many of us ponder: ‘How important is having a niche area to one’s career progression and opportunities?’ Suzanne’s view was that while this could help you in some ways it could also hinder you and that it was probably better to ‘have some niche areas but also to keep editorial skills transferable’.

This was an inspiring session as it was a reminder of the many advantages of being a freelancer – you get to design and direct your CPD and develop your networks with no

office politics or annoying boss being involved! However, as Suzanne Collier made clear in her talk, you do need to be proactive in this and not let yourself become complacent.

Umber Khairi is a new CIEP member and has a background in journalism (print, then news websites, then radio). She took early retirement from the BBC in 2018 and she is co-founder of the independent, journalist-owned magazine, Newslime, in Pakistan. She is a compulsive proofreader. Areas of interest include South Asia, Islamic culture, the news media, current affairs, new fiction and health and nutrition.

CMOS in PerfectIt

Marieke Krijnen reviewed **How to check text with *The Chicago Manual of Style for PerfectIt***, presented by Daniel Heuman.

In one of the most joyful announcements of the year, a perfect union was proclaimed: The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) and PerfectIt (PI) had been working together to integrate the former into the latter! Like anyone who uses PI and CMOS religiously, I was thrilled.

I adore CMOS. A client has called me 'the Yoda of Chicago style'. I cite passages from the manual as if they're from a holy book ('Changing a dash in a quotation is permissible; CMOS 17, 13.7'). I say 'Chicago' when referring to the style, not the city (leading to interesting misunderstandings with my husband, a UChicago alum). I was first introduced to CMOS when a publisher took a chance on me, a newbie editor, asking me to proofread a forthcoming book and check that CMOS 16 was followed. I completed the job within a week and spent long, very long hours scrolling through the manual's digital version and typing search terms. I discovered that this magical book had something to say about pretty much everything one could possibly wonder about while editing non-fiction. I ordered a hard copy soon after that, and it has little bookmarks all over it. If I had the nerve to get a CMOS tattoo, I probably would.

I'd like to say that I have memorised most of CMOS by now. However, it's more accurate to say that I am aware of the things CMOS says something about, without me necessarily always knowing what it says precisely about, for example, headline capitalisation, when not to use an ellipsis, how to style the original titles of translated works, and so on. A good editor knows how to look things up, right?

PI's union with CMOS is so great because it saves you hours of research. I was delighted that Daniel Heuman, PI's CEO, was coming to talk about this happy union at the CIEP conference. He was joined by Russell Harper, the principal reviser of the 16th and 17th editions of CMOS. And so off we went into a session jam-packed with useful info.

The CMOS plugin for PI checks your manuscript and flags anything that does not seem to conform to Chicago style. It also displays the actual CMOS entry so you can judge for yourself whether the suggested change should be applied. No more opening up the digital edition or your book and looking for the precise entry; it's right there on your screen! In the actual CMOS online font and style, people. And if you want to see the full entry, just click on its red number and it will take you straight to the digital style guide!

Daniel explained that PI's philosophy is that 'people make the best editing decisions' and that PI seeks to provide the 'technology to help people edit faster and better'. Therefore, the integration of CMOS into the software does not mean that decisions will be made for you. Instead, the plugin searches the text for you and teaches you the principles of Chicago style.

Not everything in CMOS is included in the check, but the plugin will check for hyphenation, abbreviations, numbers, centuries and decades, punctuation, and possessives, with 'a focus on style and usage that form the basis of house styles'. Checks are thus not exhaustive, false positives may come up, and context needs to be considered. PI can't think of every possible exception. For example: 'daughter-in-law' is usually hyphenated, but when a sentence such as 'a daughter in law school' is flagged, PI relies on you, the editor, to see this and not apply the suggested hyphenation. The takeaway: context is everything, so always carefully check PI's suggestions!

After a live demo, we learned that the new CMOS style in PI can be combined with any other style in the Windows version. Combining the CMOS style with the UK spelling style is not yet recommended, however. Instead, switch off 'spelling variations' when running the CMOS check and then run the UK-style check with all options off except for 'spelling variations'. Daniel is planning to eventually provide a solution to combine CMOS with other spelling and dictionaries, and he is open to cooperating with other style guides to develop similar plugins. Hence, this wonderful thing can only get better!

Marieke Krijnen is an academic copyeditor and an Advanced Professional Member of the CIEP. She obtained a PhD in Political Science and has a background in Arabic and Middle East studies and urban studies. In her free time, she enjoys trains, birds, and playing violin. She's on **Twitter** as @MariekeGent.

Benjamin Dreyer in conversation with Denise Cowle

Cathy Tingle reviewed **Benjamin Dreyer in conversation with Denise Cowle**.

The plenary session of this year's CIEP conference was particularly eagerly anticipated by those of us who enjoy Benjamin Dreyer's expertly crafted Twitter posts and devoured his fun yet bracing book *Dreyer's English: An Utterly Correct Guide to Clarity and Style*. Benjamin Dreyer has a way with words, and in this short talk and longer interview with Denise Cowle, the CIEP's marketing and PR director, he didn't disappoint – even over a jumpy connection which added to the feeling that he really was speaking to us live from New York.

Like many of us, Benjamin Dreyer came to editing after trying other things. Following a casual-sounding introduction to the production editor of St Martin's Press by a writer friend who spotted his talent, he was given some freelance proofreading work. It became an apprenticeship in copyediting. In those days, editing was done on hard copy. 'I was seeing what sort of questions copyeditors asked. I saw there was more to this than "let me fix your spelling and let me see your subjects and verbs agree".' Asked by Denise whether he would tell new editors to start out by proofreading, Benjamin advised: 'You should get your feet wet doing proofreading. It's a lower-risk job, for us and for you. It's one of the best ways to really learn how the editing works, to really see what the copyeditor does.'

Moving on to employment at Random House, Benjamin worked among some of the leading lights of editing including Bob Loomis who had been there such a long time that he remembered Faulkner visiting the office.

Random House has no house style: 'Every book has to be approached on its own terms, with fresh eyes, with a fresh brain, to try to make the book into the best possible version of itself that it can be.' This has been the mission of Benjamin Dreyer's working life. He tells new editors: 'Read the first 25 or 30 pages of a manuscript with your hands behind your back. Pay attention to what's going on before you start working on it.'

As Random House's copy chief, Benjamin famously only has one copyediting client these days: Elizabeth Strout, author of the Olive Kitteridge books, an arrangement that came about after Benjamin walked into her then editor's office and pronounced her latest book 'remarkable'. How did he find the experience of being edited when *Dreyer's English* was in production? He asked for a particular copyeditor, much as Elizabeth Strout did with him, and described his editor's method, of providing him with a better version of his own text, as 'wonderful'. 'You sound more like I sound than I sound', he would say to her: a standard of editing for us all to aspire to.

You can't interview Benjamin Dreyer without asking certain questions, and Denise did this expertly. One was about his outspoken disapproval of those who eschew the series (or serial, or Oxford) comma. I held my breath. But Benjamin protested a certain amount of tongue-in-cheek mischief, and explained: 'There has to be this balance of truly, earnestly wanting to help and to get them to laugh, to pay attention.' And so a stooshie – a great Scottish word that Denise used and Benjamin wrote down for future use – was avoided.

Right at the end of the interview – if there had been credits they would have been rolling – Denise posed the question suggested by Louise Bolotin but that we all wanted answered: 'Why when Random House merged with Penguin was the new company not called Random Penguin?' We weren't the first to ask, it seems: 'Everybody wanted and prayed that Random Penguin would be the way. People designed rogue logos. But we ended up being Penguin Random House. And that's OK too.'

And then it was over, and so was the conference, and after we'd mopped ourselves up following CIEP chair Hugh Jackson's closing remarks, those of us who tweet headed back to Twitter where we found a lovely message from Mr Dreyer: 'I just had a spectacular time talking to the wonderful folk at [@The_CIEP](#), and we didn't come to cross-cultural blows! #CIEP2021.' Utterly correct.

Cathy Tingle *is an Advanced Professional Member of the CIEP. She is a non-fiction copyeditor and proofreader, runs copyediting training for Publishing Scotland and is a member of the CIEP information team. You can connect with her on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).*

#CIEP2021: A surprising journey

This year's CIEP conference was held online, from 12 to 14 September. Attendees from all over the world logged on to learn and socialise with their fellow editors and proofreaders, and a number of delegates kindly volunteered to write up the sessions for us. It was Dayita Nereyeth's first conference, and she didn't know quite what to expect.

Hesitation

I'll be honest. When I signed up for the CIEP conference I hardly knew what to expect. Before this, I had never attended a conference for editorial professionals. I was interested in some of the talks, but at face value, it was another commitment, another series of hours in front of a screen, another bunch of Zoom calls, another three points for my CIEP upgrade, another ...

On hearing CIEP chair Hugh Jackson's opening remarks, something in me shifted. He spoke about the community's resilience and welcomed us home. I then let go of my initial hesitations and opened myself up to an experience unlike any other. In a place I never would have imagined – a symposium of editors – I found connection, balance, power, joy, and hope.

Connection

At the networking events, I was probably the youngest person in every breakout room – I gathered this from anecdotes about careers that had begun before I was born. I had much to absorb. In most cases, I chose to listen. While spectating was useful, I also discovered that a good way to break the ice was to ask a question.

Still, networking is never easy. And the Zoom format had its own challenges – the added constraint of the screen and the awkward dance of unmuting and beginning to speak only to hear someone do the same, followed by sheepish apologies and an uncomfortable pause before the conversation could continue.

Any awkwardness from Zoom networking dissipated on Twitter. Tweeting up a storm via #CIEP2021 was a fun way for delegates and speakers to connect. As I listened to talks, I tweeted what I resonated with, quite aware of my editor-proofreader audience.

Balance

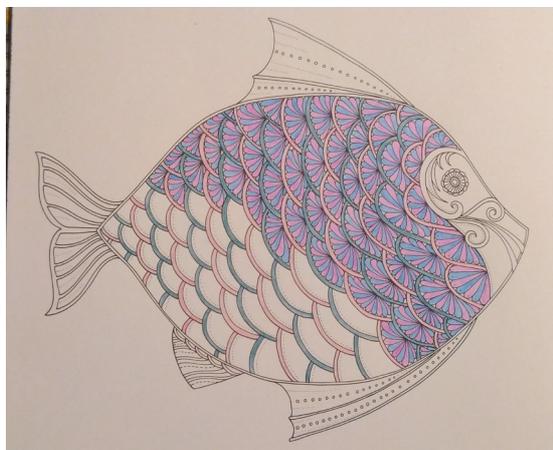
A theme that emerged in many sessions and my personal approach to the conference was to find balance: in considerations of right and wrong, in prioritising the author's voice, and in life.

'Isn't language amazing? Even when it's wrong, it's kind of right.' With this, Ian McMillan summarised what it means to work in this profession. When we impose preference or style, we risk losing an author's intention and charm. But precision in language is everything, so we traverse a middle way between the rights and the wrongs. In the same vein, Erin Brenner reminded us that there is no single correct way to teach editors.

Sophie Playle's approach to fiction editing was eye-opening and applicable to any genre. One message stood out: what you edit is not yours. This is fundamental because it helps to weed out ego and personal preference from the editing process. Like Ian and Erin, Sophie invited us to find a working method rather than giving us a singular recipe.

Similarly, on marketing, Malini Devadas emphasised taking small steps, sitting with discomfort to understand it, and redirecting negative energy towards productivity. She also urged us to find a work-life balance, which I've been interested in for a while now.

I got creative with discovering this balance during the jam-packed conference. To be kind to myself (my eyes, in particular), I looked away from the screen during talks and took the opportunity to colour. I also attended some off-camera sessions horizontal, from bed. Still, I slowly yielded to Zoom fatigue. I didn't follow speakers or other delegates into 'Wonderland' after presentations; I took breaks to recharge. No doubt, it was easy to make these choices because I knew that all the sessions were being recorded. I had to live with missing the more ephemeral interactions.



'Fish fish fish fish fish.' – Ian McMillan

Power

Several sessions emphasised the power that English speakers have. And as editors, we are responsible for shaping not just the what but also the how, of words. From making language accessible using Cathy Basterfield's Easy English to incorporating Crystal Shelley's invaluable insights on conscious and inclusive writing, we can effect change in many ways.

It's easy to take literacy for granted. Before listening to Cathy's talk, I hardly considered the amount I read every day; even a grocery bill or signpost can seem like a reading test to someone with low literacy. Importantly, as editors, we are gatekeepers, working on prevention rather than cure. 'If we're waiting to follow, we're never going to catch up,' Crystal told us. This is crucial. We are change-makers – we can discourage harmful trends ('died by suicide' instead of 'committed suicide') and encourage inclusive writing (using the singular 'they' to embrace all genders).

Joy

In addition to educational and profound moments during the conference, there was lots of good fun.

A highlight was the quiz, orchestrated by Beth Hamer. Despite knowing the answers to only four of the 60 questions, I ended up on the winning team (my teammates can take all the credit). I had heard great things about the quiz so even though I'm not a night owl, I stayed awake until about 3am to play (I definitely spent the last couple of rounds asleep with my eyes open).

The lightning talks were fun, bite-sized presentations, a refreshing change from the longer ones. It was incredible how much information the speakers packed into five minutes. Each one's interests and personality echoed Ian McMillan's words about the joy and excitement in language.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention how happy Jill French's play-by-play presentation of Word Styles in action made me. I've only recently begun to automate certain aspects of editing, so it was extremely satisfying to witness her logical process and put it to immediate use.

Hope

Listening to Benjamin Dreyer in conversation with Denise Cowle was an excellent way to wrap up the conference. On revealing that Penguin Random House has no house style, so each manuscript is dealt with on its own terms, Benjamin touched on these themes of connection, balance, power, and joy in editing. He encouraged editors to

listen to authors rather than going in with expectations (exactly how I should have approached this conference). As other speakers did, he also reminded me about the people behind the words. It's easy to forget about the humans when all we see are tracked changes, comments, emails, and tweets.

At the end, Hugh gave a moving speech that took us back to the CIEP of the past and offered hope for its future. Before I knew it, the conference had flown by. I stayed on Twitter for a while longer, unwilling to leave this space that I was initially reluctant to enter.

The links to recordings of the conference sessions arrived the following day, as promised, releasing me from my conference withdrawal. I now have the chance to revisit talks and dig into those I couldn't attend live.

For now, I've gone (relatively) quiet on Twitter, and my engagement with editors I'm not directly working with is dormant. But my participation in this vibrant community will continue. I initially thought this conference would be a 'one and done' affair. But after attending, networking, tweeting, learning, listening and sharing, this time around, I think I'll return. If only to listen to one of Hugh's calming speeches, colour another sea creature, give a lightning talk, or win next year's quiz (so long as Beth includes a 'musicals' section) 😊

Dayita Nereyeth is an editor, a dancer, and an Alexander Technique teacher trainee based in Bangalore, India. She is a senior editor at **The Clean Copy**, where she has worked since 2017. Dayita primarily edits academic manuscripts in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. She is passionate about making text simple and clear. You can find her on **Instagram**, **Twitter**, and **Facebook**.