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# Bookworm

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS (WA) INC.

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April 2009

## From the President

### Editing in the era of connectivity



If you do a Google search on 'global financial crisis', you'll find 30,500,000 hits for the world and around 593,000 for Australia. Google says there are about 195 countries in the world so the average is roughly 156,000 hits per country (notwithstanding the US hogging of the Superhighway and the countries that don't record these things or are too small to use the Internet).

Does this mean Australia is five times more in crisis than most countries? Probably not. Google is a useful tool but we all know to use it with caution.

The phrase 'global financial crisis' must now outstrip the number of times we heard 'weapons of mass destruction' not long ago. Wikipedia tells me that the global financial crisis emerged in September 2008 when I was just getting used to the boom. Now I have to start thinking about belt tightening and rising unemployment ... again! I've been through it already. But that was before the Internet. Now I keep my finger on the pulse of financial disaster minute by minute.

The wonders of technology are multiplying every day. Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, Twitter, Flickr, blogs and wikis (Wikipedia, Wiktionary, Wikiquote, Wikibooks, Wikisource, Wikimedia Commons, Wikispecies, Wikinews, Wikiversity) offer a host of publishing realms that are augmented constantly. 'Wiki' is a Hawaiian word meaning 'fast'. These platforms can help your writing, editing and general business networking. Everyone involved in publishing should familiarise themselves with these terms and dive right into the deep end of technology – now. Don't let the millenials have all the fun! (If you're not aware, that's the current term for people born between 1981 and 2002).

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The Society's hard-working and mostly newly elected committee doesn't have \$10.4 billion dollars to spend the way Kevin does but we are determined to stimulate you this year! I am delighted to have been elected as your President. We're bringing you some new perspectives on favourite topics this year – how to survive as a freelancer, how to design print and web pages that lure customers or readers to do what you want – and updated information on what this website stuff is all about.

We've got some practical tips about printing and paper, and we'll help you prepare for the next accreditation exam.

Our recent members' survey found that about 90% of our members are freelancers. We have a growing list of new members who are not yet working in their field of dreams – editing. 'How do I get there?' is their query. Part of the answer is 'networking', especially when you live in an isolated city like Perth where the major focus is on digging something out of the ground. Networking means finding out what others in the industry are doing, how they get and keep their clients, and how they invoice and make money. The other part of the answer is 'Become a good editor.' Our May workshop will take you back to the basics of editing practice. Get out your hard hats and prepare to be up-skilled in areas you thought you knew or perhaps don't know you don't know.

Thinking about the whirlwind of activity in 2009 gets me inspired. I hope you will be too.

*Robin*

**Robin Bower**  
**President**

### Next Meeting



**Topic:** Starting and surviving as a freelance editor (Panel discussion)

**Date:** Tuesday 21 April 2009 **Time:** 7.30 pm

**Venue:** Subiaco Community Centre (Activity Room) 203 Bagot Road, Subiaco

Entrance: Glass double doors opposite courtyard; Activity Room left

Parking: street parking and Crossways Shopping centre car park opposite

**Cost:** \$5 non-members

**RSVP:** [josmith@wordsmithwa.com.au](mailto:josmith@wordsmithwa.com.au)

### *About our Panelists*

The haphazard operations of the various small businesses of her early employment led **Rosina Pedalina** to 'find a better way'. So she undertook a Master of Business Administration at UWA and then joined the Small Business Development Corporation as a Business Advisor. Rosina's expertise in business start-ups, financial marketing and analysis and marketing will be poured out for us during our panel discussion on editing the freelance way.

'I did it my way' will probably be the theme of our two SoEWA members on the panel, **Georgia Richter** and **Amanda Ellis**. Georgia has fifteen years experience as a freelance editor, writer and lecturer and now works with Fremantle Press as Publisher and Editor of Adult Fiction and Poetry. Amanda is a journalist and sub-editor with industry publisher Aspermont and a director of her own company, Quenda Communications.

We anticipate some tips on how to survive as a freelancer. Bring your note pads, your questions and even a guest or two. You are sure to enjoy this stimulating panel.

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## Report on February 3, 2009 Meeting

by *Katie Lemmerts*

Cari Jansen presented a summary of the features of **Adobe Acrobat** that can help editors.

Acrobat is not just for designers. Most editors who work electronically use Microsoft Word, give the words to the designers and cross their fingers. If your Word document is set up correctly, the files that are later produced by the designers are cleaner and better, and there's a good chance your designer's invoice will be smaller.

The key is **Word's style sheets** – paragraph styles and character styles. If we learn to use these properly they will flow into the design pages which end up in the PDF that goes to the press. (Cari is not a Word instructor, but Polly Delany is our resident guru.)

If your Word document is set up correctly, the files that are later produced by the designers are cleaner and better, and there's a good chance your designer's invoice will be smaller.

The major advance Cari showed us was **Acrobat's interactive editing feature**. This is an online collaboration which allows you to email PDFs of your work to colleagues for review. They can **mark up and comment** using a range of tools such as highlighters and comment boxes, and all of the comments come back to you, the owner.

Taking this to an even greater level is the **real-time Internet version**. If everyone is online at the same time they can see the comments as they appear and interact instantaneously. When you receive a PDF this way it

prompts you to connect, takes you to the correct site and gives you access to chat-room style features.

This feature requires you to own the full version of Acrobat, but a bonus is that you can enable the interactive features for colleagues or clients who only have the Adobe Reader. This is free, so no one has a good excuse for not having it installed. So you only need one professional (paid) copy.

**Mac users** are told that some of the Acrobat features are only available in Acrobat Pro Extended which runs on Windows. However, this is easily overcome by using **Parallels or Boot Camp** – we know this works because Cari was using a Mac!

We can also lodge "feature requests" with Adobe online to encourage them to upgrade the features for Mac OS X in future versions. But for now, if you're on Mac, just do a bit of research into which version you need before you hand over the cash. Cari also showed us **Typefi Publish**, which automatically sends a standard Microsoft Word document into an InDesign file and then turns it into a PDF that's ready to go to the press. The Word document had been set up using style sheets and

was a large document, with chapters and so on. In about two minutes we saw the computer do layout and pagination and then bring up a finished PDF. So where do you go from here?

I'm happy to dig through my notes for anything specific that you remember from the meeting or want to know because you couldn't attend the meeting.

Email [prez\\_ups@yahoo.com.au](mailto:prez_ups@yahoo.com.au) and I'll do my best! *Katie*

#### Research websites

Acrobat - [www.adobe.com/acrobat](http://www.adobe.com/acrobat) - all you need to know about the various versions of the software including video tours.

Acrobat.com - [www.acrobat.com](http://www.acrobat.com) - the website for online PDF sharing, you can join as a guest to have a look around.

Typefi - [www.typefi.com](http://www.typefi.com) - you can contact Cari at [cjansen@typefi.com](mailto:cjansen@typefi.com)

#### Need training?

Prepress Skills Centre - [www.prepress-skills.wa.edu.au](http://www.prepress-skills.wa.edu.au) - they're in West Perth.

Cari also has a website - [www.carijansen.com](http://www.carijansen.com) - with assorted tips and resources.

Need more info?

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## **Report on the EditorsWA AGM March 3, 2009**

*by Tatum Hands*

Another year gone, another AGM rolls around – this one perhaps more eventful than the last. (OK, I confess I missed last year's AGM, so seeing our illustrious President put random members in complicated strangleholds to 'persuade' them onto the committee might be quite the norm.) We were advised by Carla (channelled through Polly) that we, as a society, are rich. Yes rich! And I'm not talking about our wealth of talent; apart from our impressive bank balance, we have \$3,104.01 in a term deposit! In this challenging economic climate that one cent could make us or break us, so I say 'hats off' to our retiring treasurer for this savvy investment.

What became rapidly clear during the evening was that our retiring committee members had done such a great job that their shoes were going to be very hard to fill.

But thanks to President Pearmain's mastery of the penetrating stare, her talents of verbal persuasion and her ... well, let's just leave it at that ... we now have all office bearer positions filled. Oh, except for the big kahuna: the President.

Yes, it's true, our erstwhile and entertaining President has retired; not only from the position, but also from the profession. She has left to learn how to say, 'Give me 400ml of ephedrine, stat!' and to practise complicated gymnastic routines so that she can confidently catch babies flying out of women's ... well, let's not go there either. After three calls for nominations for President fell on deaf ears, we are left without a glorious leader. So our first job in the weeks to come is to persuade those of our

colleagues who might show a glimmer of interest to nominate. I am reliably told (by our immediate past president herself) that all this venerable position requires is writing a short piece for Bookworm each month, chairing committee meetings and following up with people who have agreed to do various tasks. That's not so hard is it? Sure, it will be difficult to emulate Emma's inimitable style and sardonic wit but there will be heaps more chocolate biscuits around for the lucky replacement.

I am sure our heartfelt appreciation for our hardworking retiring and returning committee members was evident to all at the meeting. And our thanks went (through enthusiastic applause) to those brave enough to nominate for vacant positions. We are fortunate to have such dedicated people in the society and I, for one, salute you.

[Never fear, Tatum. Emma told you it would all work out. And so it has. We have 'President' – and her name is Robin Bower! ED]



## Spotlight on Allan Watson

[<allan@roundhousepress.com>](mailto:allan@roundhousepress.com)

Allan joined EditorsWA in 1980



Can you believe the Melbourne *Herald* once recruited students to write/edit an encyclopaedia over the long vac? I was one of the lucky applicants – there's a tale I could tell about that – and the result of our efforts of half a century ago can still occasionally be found in op shops in the form of the pretentiously named *New International Illustrated Encyclopaedia*, resplendent in red and green livery.

As things turned out I continued working on it part-time during the following year (failed a final-year unit, if you must know) and was encouraged by the editor of the project to call myself "Science Editor". I really loved the work.

Years later I took on the (voluntary) editorship of a bimonthly magazine, *Crux*, published by the Australian Student Christian Movement.

When I applied for the position of Publications Officer at the University of Western Australia back in 1965 these two chunks of experience stood me in good stead. These days, of course, they would scarcely have counted at all, but I'm talking about another era.

This was a new position at UWA – until my appointment, some faculty admin person had fitted the work in with their real job – and the University brass had not imagined that, if they wanted to see an improvement in the institution's official publications, they might have to spend some money on items like graphic design, so I found myself developing some skills in this area. This has been greatly to my advantage in my later life as a freelancer – I've designed several books for UWA Press and other clients while principally working as an editor.

It's been useful, too, in my current incarnation as proprietor of Round House Press, set up recently to publish an excellent and important book (Kath Jordan's *Larrikin Angel: A Biography of Veronica Brady*) that no real publisher was prepared to take on. This has been another great learning experience.

Will we (i.e. I) publish more books? Who knows?

*If you would like to appear in the **Spotlight**, send 350 words about yourself to [mabelka@elink.net.au](mailto:mabelka@elink.net.au) (If you are a member of Editors WA but you're not actually an editor, we'd like to hear your story too.)*

## **IPEd Notes: February 2009**

### *News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited*

The IPEd Council met in Adelaide on 14-15 February. Also participating were the new (Larissa Joseph) and outgoing (Karen Disney) chair of the Accreditation Board (AB), and the new convenor of the Communication Committee (CommComm), Rowena Austin. Discussions were wide ranging, as will be evident from the agenda, which is on the website. The minutes of the meeting will also be there in due course.



### **Some highlights:**

A discussion paper from CommComm raised, among other things, the matter of IPEd 'branding'. Each of the societies (the Members of IPEd) has its own brand but, at present, nowhere is it mentioned that they are members of a national body. In short, IPEd currently presents no brand to the wider world. As a first step towards establishing IPEd as the nationally recognised representative of the editing profession, it was agreed that the societies should be asked to take simple steps to identify themselves as Members of IPEd on their websites, publications and documents.

For its part, CommComm is preparing materials focusing primarily on promoting accreditation to employers and editors who may not be members of their local society. These will include a media release, an advertisement, a poster and a compact brochure.

**CredAbility 9**, published in society newsletters and available on the IPEd website, provides a wrap-up on the first accreditation examination. Council agreed that the second exam should be held later this year, with an announcement of the date to be made four months before the event.

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The exam this year will again be 'on paper', but there are plans for electronic delivery in 2010 if possible. The AB is initially focusing on on-screen rather than online delivery and on offering an on-screen exam as an alternative to a handwritten exam in the first year at least. All facets of electronic delivery are being investigated by a subcommittee headed by Pam Peters (NSW).

Increasing the professional development opportunities available to working editors is a high-priority objective of the Council, and it proposes to harness the resources of the member societies as a big first step towards its achievement. All of the societies have training programs for their members, and many of the workshops and other events that constitute these programs are transportable. IPed aims to provide the logistical and other support to 'roadshow' training events between the societies and other interested groups. To catalogue all that is available, Anne Surma, convenor of the professional development committee, will be contacting society training officers.

Susan Rintoul, chair of the organising committee for the national conference to be held in Adelaide on 7-9 October this year, joined the meeting to outline an informative and stimulating program in progress, and some exciting ancillary events. The committee's call for papers closes on 27 March. Of the high-profile keynote speakers invited, prominent refugee advocate and human rights lawyer Julian Burnside has already accepted. Mr Burnside has a strong interest in 'the word' and 'truth' and their corruption in the doublespeak of the usual suspects.

The conference organisers realise that the costs of travel and accommodation make it hard for many editors to consider attending. To help defray such costs, members of the SA society will be able to offer billets to some out-of-state registrants. Discounted, early-bird registration will be available from April. Visit the conference website at <<http://www.editors-sa.org.au/?q=node/66>>.

The minutes of the Council teleconference held on 30 November 2008 are now available on the IPed website.

*Ed Highley*

IPed Secretary <[www.iped-editors.org](http://www.iped-editors.org)>

## **EditorsWA survey results**

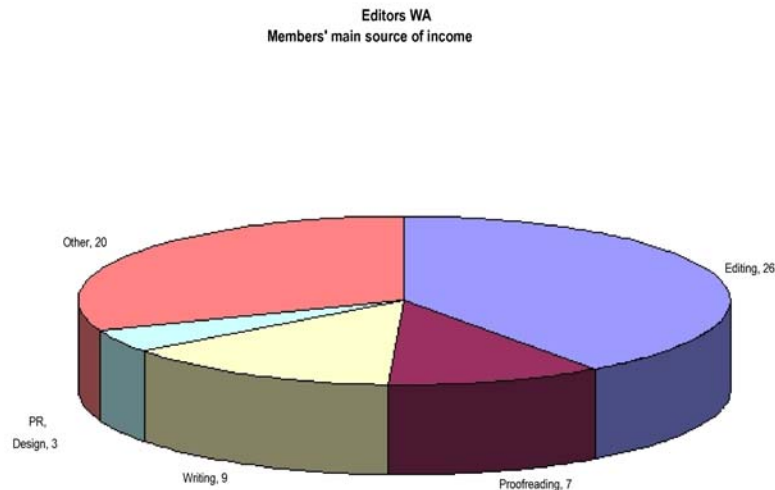
*by Carla Morris*

The membership survey that was sent out with members' renewal forms yielded some very interesting results. So far sixty-three members have replied and I am sure that more responses will trickle in as others finally remember to renew their membership!

We already know, just by observing the attendance at any of our meetings, that our membership is largely made up of women. Many are raising small children and

this affects their ability to work part-time. Less obvious is that many of our members are retirees, who perhaps take on editing as an extra source of income or as something to keep alert minds active. The vast majority – three-quarters – of our members, therefore, only work part-time.

[Enlarge on screen](#)

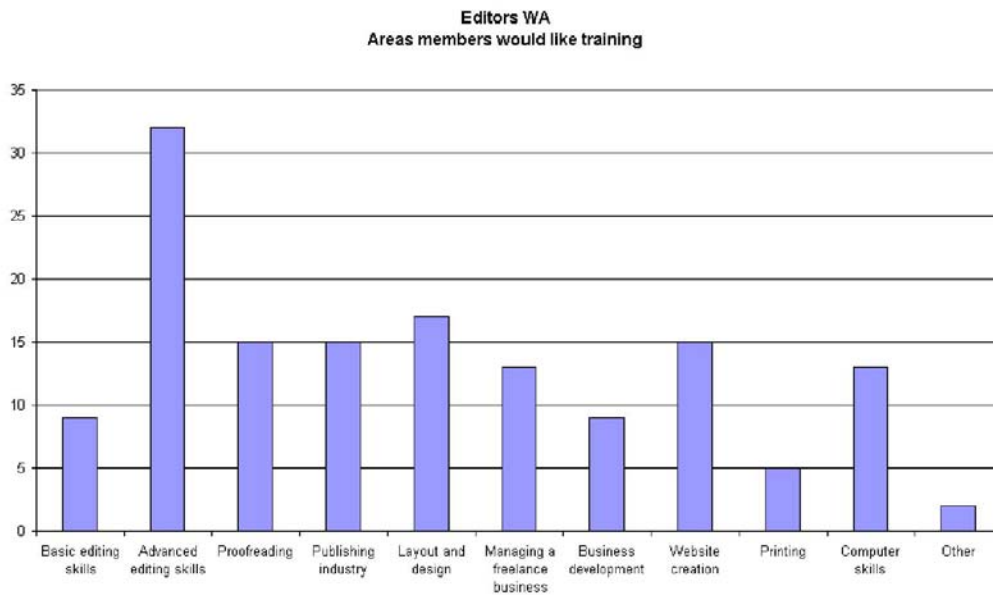


Two-thirds of our members spend less than half of their working week editing. Given that only about a quarter of our members work full-time, for most members editing is only a relatively small part of their week. Those who responded to the question about their main source of income were split evenly between other related (or unrelated) fields and editors and proofreaders, which together accounted for half the responses. Among those who responded to the survey, only three people met criteria that would allow them to be called full-time editors – i.e. they worked full time and spent more than three-quarters of their time editing. I know that I am one of them but who are the other two!? More than twice this number were either unemployed or on a pension.

The survey seems to indicate that at least half of our members fall into the category of 'aspirational' editors – they are not yet working as editors or confident about their skills, but hope to work in the profession someday, or they hope to do more of what is currently just a small part of their working week. For this reason it is even more important for us to focus on training.

Building the strength of our members' skills will improve the credibility and profile of editing. Instead of meaning more competition, I believe that training more people should unearth more opportunities. Our industry still has such a small pool of people and such a low profile that many businesses outside of publishing do not yet recognise that they need an editor's help. We need to change their thinking, but to do this we need to get our skills up so we have more people ready to tackle that semi-literate annual report, brochure or website with panache. Eventually, we will achieve world (word) domination!!

Enlarge on screen



Our members seem to be overwhelmingly supporting the national accreditation exam. Only a quarter said that they would not be sitting the exam. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these are often people later in their careers who are ready to go into full retirement. Those who have little experience might not be signing up to sit the exam in 2009, but they do have it on their to-do list for later. I am assuming that the strong support is partly because our members recognise that in Western Australia, where we lack access to a recognised tertiary course to train editors, accreditation is our one way to introduce and maintain the high professional standards to which we aspire. (Hey, editors have a reputation as perfectionists! We don't want to be shoddy about what we do!) The support for accreditation might also be related to the professionalism that IPEd and our delegates are showing in developing and running the accreditation process.

From the survey we also were able to see some clear directions where people would like training. The most popular response was advanced editing skills. We also had some members volunteer to talk about their fields of expertise. This information will be incredibly helpful to our new committee as they try to prepare meeting topics and training courses this year.





## Contacts: EditorsWA

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*Editors WA Web Site:* <[www.editorswa.com](http://www.editorswa.com)>

**Deadline for next Bookworm:**

**Tuesday 5 May 2009**

## LATE NEWS

### From April IPed Notes

Keep an eye on the '**Upcoming events**' list on the IPed website for notices about training courses and workshops in the wider world that may benefit your career in the editing and communication business. Indeed, '**Getting the message across**' is the theme of the **2009 national conference** to be held in **Adelaide on 8-10 October**. Through a link at the IPed website you can keep abreast of an increasingly exciting conference program. This is an event you should try hard to get to. *Ed Highley*