

## Subject-verb agreement isn't so easy

Dear Subscriber,

Our main feature in this issue will talk about the sometimes vexing topic of subject-verb agreement. We all learned at some point the simple rule that a subject and its verb must agree in number; that is, a singular subject takes a singular verb, and a plural subject takes a plural verb. Why, then, does Amy Einsohn list 25 subject-verb agreement rules? We'll break down agreement into three types—formal, notional, and proximity—and talk about each one in turn.

From our contributors, you'll find

**Currents:** Guest editor Mark Farrell on saving the semicolon

**Technically Speaking:** Dick Margulis on troubleshooting e-mail problems

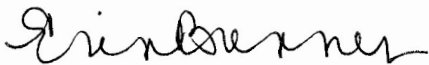
**In Style:** Norm Goldstein on copyeditors and search engine optimization

—plus **In the News** with Andrew Johnson, Mark Peters's **Dictionary Update**, and a lot of little nagging questions answered in **Ask the Editor**.

And although we mentioned in our TK section last month that Phillip Blanchard would be opining on plain English this month, we had to delay this by one issue—I promise it will be well worth the wait!

Don't forget that you can e-mail questions to me ([editor@copyediting.com](mailto:editor@copyediting.com)) or to our Tech Speak contributor ([technicallyspeaking@copyediting.com](mailto:technicallyspeaking@copyediting.com)) at any time.

Cheers,



Erin Brenner

Editor

*Copyediting*

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Don't miss our October and November conferences! Read more about these sessions by clicking on the links to the right.

**Libel lurking everywhere**

Thursday, October 20

Speaker: Charles DeLaFuente

**Medical copyediting, part 1:**

**The mechanics of medical editing**

Thursday, November 17, 2011

Speaker: Daniel Sosnoski

## ► RESOURCES

What's a dictionary good for?  
by Erin Brenner

We look to the dictionary to provide authoritative answers to our questions. If we want to know how a word is spelled, we look it up in the dictionary. If we want to know what a word means, how it's divided, or even some of its history, we look it up in the dictionary.

Did you notice, though, that I said “the dictionary,” as if there were only one dictionary and it were the ultimate authority on language? It's a

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## THE QUIZ

Choose the right word in each sentence.

(1) The HR department kept James's *personal/ personnel* file updated with all the complaints about his work habits.

(2) When they get back, they should try to incorporate some of that raw beauty from the Rockies' color *palate/palette/pallet*.

(3) The judge's ruling was *unexceptional/unexceptionable*.

(4) Huskies, malamutes, and Samoyeds wouldn't even be *fazed/phased* by that weather.

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## ► IN DEPTH

### Agreeing to disagree: Subject, meet verb

by Erin Brenner

Subject-verb agreement sounds easy: match the subject with a verb of the same number. But, as I discussed in a June **Copyediting blog post**, this one simple rule has many “overrides.” In this article, we'll review three types of subject-verb agreement—formal, notional, and proximity—and discuss when each is appropriate ... or not.

#### Formal agreement

Copyeditors are most comfortable with formal agreement. Also called grammatical agreement or simple agreement, this is the rule most of us learned in elementary school. Formal agreement states simply that a singular noun goes with a singular verb and a plural noun goes with a plural verb:

Barbara is running the craft fair this year.  
She is certain she can run the fair on her own.  
The other parents want to help out.  
They don't know if Barbara will let them.

It doesn't matter if our subject is a noun (e.g., *Barbara, parents*) or a pronoun (e.g., *she, they*), we're still matching singular with singular and plural with plural. That's formal agreement, period. Determining whether you have a singular or plural subject can sometimes be tricky, but once you've determined the subject's number, you're home free. Here are a few notes to remember:

- A subject made up of nouns joined by *and* takes a plural verb: She and I run every day.
- When a subject is made up of nouns joined by *or*, the verb agrees with the last noun: She or I run every day.
- Connectives, phrases such as *combined with, coupled with, accompanied by, added to, along with, together with, and as well as*, do not change the number of the subject. These phrases are usually set off with commas: Oil, as well as gas, is a popular heating choice.

It's true that if you follow formal agreement, your grammar will be correct. This is especially helpful on deadline, when time to parse out grammar is at a premium. But it's also true that if you always follow formal agreement, you may end up with copy that sounds stilted and, well, formal.

Today our writing is much more natural, much closer to how we speak. And grammarians and linguists are discovering that our

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Phillip Blanchard on  
plain English (really!)

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grammar supports such writing. Enter the idea of notional agreement.

### Notional agreement

Notional agreement is when the subject and verb agree based on the intended meaning behind the words, as in

None of the peas are left on Sean's plate.

With formal agreement, we'd recognize that *none*, a singular pronoun, is the subject of the sentence and thus requires *is* to be the verb: "none is." However, the notion behind *none* is *peas*, a plural noun. Notional agreement allows us to instead say, "none are left." As a native English speaker, I don't get a nails-on-chalkboard feeling when I read "none are left." But such a rule wasn't taught to me in school. Does that make it wrong? Why isn't this taught in elementary school?

According to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage (MWDEU)*:

We do not know who first realized that notional agreement exists as a powerful force in English grammar, but it must be a fairly recent discovery. The 18th-century grammarians never tumbled to it, even though their examples for correction showed it being widely followed. Most school grammars are based on their 18th-century forebears and do not mention notional agreement. And many (perhaps most) usage commentators seem likewise unaware of it.

Absent any evidence from our elementary school grammars, how do we know that notional agreement is legitimate? For starters, consider some examples that native speakers don't even give pause to, in speech or writing.

Sheryl doesn't watch news programs because the news is always so negative.  
Located in the western Pacific Ocean, the Philippines has a tropical marine climate.  
Mathematics was my weakest subject in school.

Notional agreement isn't limited to a

few exceptions the strict grammarians have granted us, either. There are other cases that make sense to a native speaker's ear. Collective nouns, such as *team* and *committee*, can take either a singular or plural verb, depending on whether the emphasis is on the group as a whole or on the individual members. Pairing a collective noun with a plural verb is more common in British English but isn't unheard of in American English:

The football team is practicing night and day for the Super Bowl.

Boston's school committee disagrees about what to cut from the school budget.

Indefinite pronouns are another area where notional agreement can come into play, as in the first example in this section: "None of the peas are left on Sean's plate." *None*, *each*, *no one*, *nobody*, and the other indefinite pronouns can all take a plural verb when the intended meaning is plural. Most usage guides and grammars will accept this structure, even, perhaps surprisingly, H. W. Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (1926).

There are several instances in which the prescriptivist Fowler supports notional agreement. For example, Fowler allows that *majority* could be a singular noun meaning "the one of two or more sets that has a plurality, or the more numerous party." In this usage, he writes, "as [with] other nouns of multitude, either a singular or a plural verb is possible, according as the body is, or its members are, chiefly in the speaker's thoughts." Then, at *none*, he writes, "It is a mistake to suppose that the pronoun is singular & must at all costs be followed by singular verbs &c.; the OED explicitly states that plural construction is commoner."

Contrary to what formal agreement says, sometimes when we have a compound subject, a singular verb is warranted.

Peanut butter and jelly is my favorite sandwich.

In this example, the sense of the subject is clearly singular. We're talking about one kind of sandwich that mixes peanut butter and jelly. We mean something different if we say

Peanut butter and jelly are my favorite sandwiches.

In this case, I have two favorite sandwiches: one made with just peanut butter, the other with just jelly. Allowing a compound subject to join with a singular verb lets the reader know that you regard that subject as one unit rather than separate parts.

### Proximity agreement

"Grammarians," says Amy Einsohn in *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, "have also observed that certain constructions 'sound right' to educated native speakers of English, even though the constructions defy formal or notional agreement. Such constructions exemplify the principle of attraction (or proximity), under which the verb tends to take the form of the closest subject." As in Einsohn's example

For those who attended the second day of the annual meeting, there was an early morning panel and afternoon workshops.

We know that *there* can take either a singular or plural verb, depending on its intended antecedent. The antecedent here is the morning panel *and* the afternoon workshops, however, so that *was* should be a *were*. Why does agreement like this happen?

Fowler writes, "The excuse for this in speaking—often a sufficient one—is that one has started one's sentence before fixing the precise form of the subject, though its meaning may have been realized clearly enough."

Fair enough. And if we're dealing with a direct quote, we can leave such agreement alone, knowing that the audience will get the intended meaning. We seem to be hard-wired to understand such syntax: all the proximity examples I reviewed were understandable. For instance:

For the first time there is introduced into the Shipyard Agreement clauses which hold the balance equally. (Fowler)

The state of the Olympic Games were...uncertain. (Garner)

The Directors believe that the effect of the above resolutions are in the best interests of the Company and strongly recommend you to vote in favour of them. (*Cambridge Grammar*)

If we understand the sentences as

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they stand, are they grammatical? No. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* calls proximity agreement a processing error: “the subjects are relatively complex, and the verb has been made to agree with a plural NP [noun phrase] within the subject rather than with the singular subject NP itself.” Consider this example from *Cambridge Grammar*:

In this case a woman may continue to use both names provided the use of both commonly known names are disclosed.

The verb phrase *are disclosed* has been paired with *names*. However, the names themselves do not need to be disclosed, just the *use* of them. Says *Cambridge Grammar*, “English clearly has no general rule saying that the verb agrees with the proximate preceding NP.”

Yet if we understand proximity agreement sentences, why do we need to fix them? In spoken language, we are more forgiving of errors that don’t get in the way of our understanding. The speaker in some ways is making things up as she goes along. But in writing, when the audience can’t use other clues to discover meaning or give feedback to confirm understanding, we must ensure a stricter following of grammar rules. If the writer or editor does not fix such errors, he or she is, according to Fowler, like a waiter who serves a meal on a dirty plate. “He... is indecently & insultingly careless.”

Once we’re out of the safety of direct quotations, we copyeditors are duty bound to fix proximity agreement. It means paying close attention; it can be easy to overlook these errors. (The plus side is that if we miss these errors, with luck our readers will, too.) When editing, ensure that you match up each verb with its subject. Ask who or what is doing the action. When you’re not sure, dust off those sentence-diagramming skills you

learned in fifth grade. Once you’ve correctly paired each verb with its subject, edit accordingly.

Be warned: some may argue for leaving well enough alone. After all, you understood the sentence, and the audience will, too. Fowler makes a case for sometimes leaving proximity agreement in a sentence.

There were a table & some chairs in there.

There were a plain deal table in there & some wicker armchairs which Jorgenson had produced from somewhere in the depths of the ship.

In the first sentence, *there* refers to *table* and *some chairs*, making *there* plural. Logically enough, *were* is the right verb choice. Of the second sentence, Fowler says changing *were* to *was* would be an “improvement” because the table and chairs have been made “less the equivalent of ‘some articles of furniture’, by describing one as plain deal & the others as wicker.” Additionally, the author has attached a long relative clause to *armchairs* but not to *table*. As a result, the relative clause (*which Jorgenson had produced...*) has been cut off from *table* in order to “shift *in there* to an earlier place.” As descriptivist as I can sometimes be, I just can’t like Fowler’s solution. I’d much rather recast that horrid sentence into something not only grammatical but also in the active voice. It quickens understanding because you don’t have to wonder whether *in there* and *the depths of*

*the ship* are the same place. You know immediately that Jorgenson got all the items from the same location.

From somewhere in the depths of the ship, Jorgenson produced a plain deal table and some wicker armchairs.

Jorgenson produced a plain deal table and some wicker armchairs from somewhere in the depths of the ship.

## Conclusion

Subject-verb agreement is one of those topics that noneditors often toss off as easy, and in some cases it is. But we copyeditors know that in many more cases, we have to put some knowledge and intelligence into making a subject and its verb agree. Formal, or simple, agreement will never be wrong, but it won’t always sound right. Developing your ear to the rhythm and nuances of English can help you identify those times when formal agreement might not be the right choice.

Though authors and supervisors may argue the point, you can defend choices of notional agreement, especially when you have experts like Bryan Garner and Amy Einsohn to back you up. Notional agreement can bring a more natural rhythm to the copy, making the grammar and usage invisible to readers and allowing them to focus solely on the message.

And when a difficult author fights for his proximity agreement, you can quote *MWDEU* to him or her: “Proximity agreement may pass in speech and other forms of unplanned discourse; in print it will be considered an error.” ■

## THE COPYEDITING JOB BOARD

Job seekers recently read about these positions on the *Copyediting Job Board*:

- Acquisitions Editor, Human Kinetics
- Managing Editor, Internet Website, Saudi Aramco
- Sr. Web Content Editor, Lakeshore Learning Materials

Go to the **Copyediting Job Board** to apply for these or other great editing jobs. The Job Board is free to job seekers, and you can get new job notifications delivered to your inbox. Why wait? Find your dream job today!



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# IN THE NEWS

by Andrew Johnson

## Judge those metaphors

Following reports that members of the judiciary sometimes employ dictionary definitions to bolster contentious legal decisions comes the story of Kenton (KY) circuit court judge Martin J. Sheehan, who seems to prefer a lighter tone in his writing.

In his July 19 order dismissing the jury trial in the legal malpractice case of *Barbara Kissel v. Schwartz & Maines & Ruby Co., LPA, et al.*, Sheehan expressed that the news of a settlement had

made this Court happier than a tick on a fat dog because it is otherwise busier than a one legged cat in a sand box and, quite frankly, would have rather jumped naked off of a twelve foot step ladder into a five gallon bucket of porcupines than have presided over a two week trial of the herein dispute, a trial which, no doubt, would have made the jury more confused than a hungry baby in a topless bar and made the parties and their attorneys madder than mosquitoes in a mannequin factory.

In the overserious world of courtroom litigation, Sheehan's figurative language and good humor must make his colleagues merrier than a bunch of bullfrogs in a barrelful of beetles!

## Consolidating and centralizing and outsourcing, oh my!

The *Hartford Courant*—the oldest newspaper in the United States—will have much of its content and layout produced in Chicago, according to an article in the *Chicago Tribune*.

By outsourcing all its copyediting and design to the Tribune Company, the *Courant* has joined an industrywide trend toward centralization. In association with the outsourcing, the Hartford-based newspaper's CEO and publisher, Richard Graziano, announced plans to eliminate numerous newsroom positions to achieve "a meaningful and significant cost savings."

Media analyst Ken Doctor worries about the loss of accuracy, local knowledge, and institutional knowledge caused by shifting editing and design responsibilities from local personnel to staffers in distant locations, but other experts see consolidation as a necessary evil.

"It's all driven by revenue pressure," said Douglas Arthur, a media analyst with the investment banking advisory firm Evercore Partners. "The revenue pressure of a cyclical downturn...is leading managements to...squeeze more money out of costs" in an industry that has seen advertising revenues decline by 50 percent since 2005.

In 2009, Tribune Company began its Media on Demand project, which consolidated editing resources in Chicago for several large newspapers, including the *Baltimore Sun* and *Orlando (FL) Sentinel*. The project saves the company \$8 million to \$9 million a year.

## Amazon now a major publishing concern

As though watching Borders declare bankruptcy in February and liquidate assets in late July hasn't provided enough satisfaction, Amazon continues to pursue dominance in the book world. Since

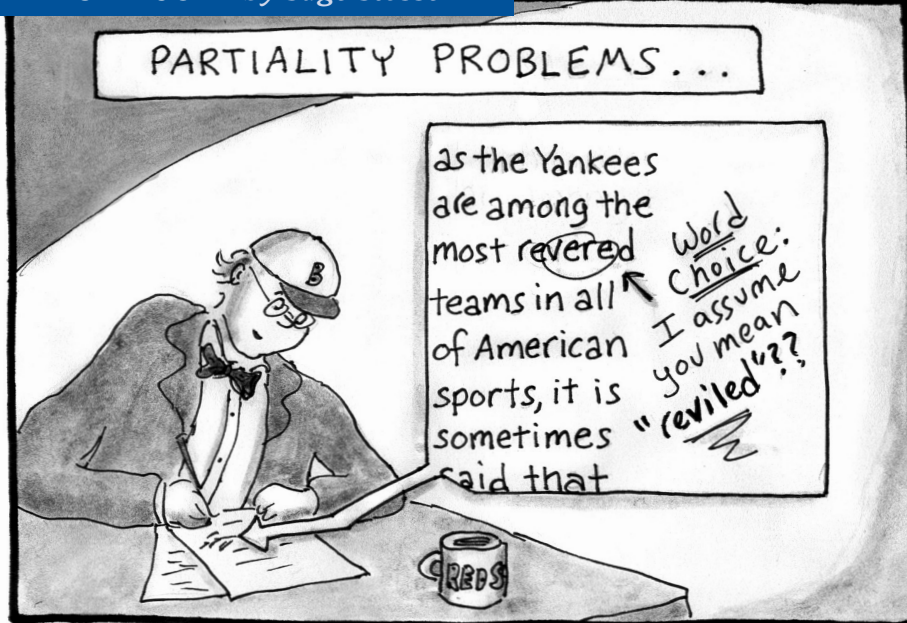
unveiling its new publishing unit, Amazon Publishing, just before the Book Expo America trade show in May, Amazon has signaled its resolve to dominate book publishing by hiring executive staff, developing its distribution relationships, and creating new imprints.

In an August 5 article in *Publishers Weekly*, booksellers, agents, and publishers expressed concern over Amazon's recent activities. According to one Atlanta bookstore owner, Amazon's incursion into book publishing affirms that the company "has long wished to take over the book industry from top to bottom."

While some insiders decry Amazon's approach and expect that Amazon will soon monopolize the book industry, many people will derive benefits from Amazon Publishing. Unpublished authors will have new opportunities to publish their writing, literary agents may find better royalty arrangements for established clients, and copyeditors could tap into a high-volume market for their services.

"Like many publishers, we do outsource some copyediting for our books," said Jeff Belle, vice president of Amazon Publishing. "There are a lot of talented editors out there who have set up their own shops, and we're happy to work with them where it makes sense." ■

## INSIDE JOKE by Sage Stossel



# CURRENTS

## Saving the semicolon: A worthy endeavor, but is it a lost cause?

by Mark Farrell

Pity the forlorn semicolon—it's the polar bear of punctuation, the Maytag repairman of the world of letters. However, it need not be on the endangered species list because the semicolon serves a noble purpose: it provides an elegant break or pause in a compound sentence, as well as an alternative to overusing conjunctions.

The semicolon is not in danger of extinction, if only because it will always be needed to separate clauses containing internal commas. But the neglected semicolon is not nearly as popular as its cousin, the colon, which is often found hanging out in inappropriate places. Colons are frequently doubled up; in my editing work, I often find myself having to delete a double colon where two appear consecutively with no intervening period. Usually, they are used to introduce a list of items and then appear again in the first element of that list. Colons are frequently found sticking their noses in where they're not wanted, separating verbs or prepositions from their objects.

With the semicolon, it's more often the case that one of its primary functions, grouping a series of items, has been overlooked. But in its other primary function, separating two independent clauses, it has gradually fallen into disuse. This is most likely because the conjunction is readily available, serves much the same purpose, and, frankly, is more accessible for everyday writing purposes. Writers, in general, tend to be more familiar with using conjunctions and have better learned how to use conjunctions in their work. And perhaps today's fast-paced world of instant communication doesn't lend itself to pondering such nuances as when a semicolon would provide an appropriate break in a sentence; people are favoring a no-frills approach to getting their points across.

But I extol the virtues of the semicolon whenever and wherever I have the chance. The semicolon can be used to allow the

reader to pause briefly without the intrusion of a conjunction. Consider the following sentence:

*The Godfather* is considered one of the best films ever made, and it features a superb performance by Marlon Brando.

There's nothing grammatically incorrect in constructing the sentence that way, but the semicolon can connect the thoughts in a way that the conjunction can't. Read the same sentence with a semicolon inserted in place of the comma-conjunction construction:

*The Godfather* is considered one of the best films ever made; it features a superb performance by Marlon Brando.

The appearance of the semicolon lends an air of reflection that's not achieved by joining the clauses with a conjunction. In reading the latter sentence, we know that one of the reasons the film is considered great is Brando's acting and that the writer will further explore his performance. We can also assume that there are other reasons that may be explored as we continue reading. In the first example, the *and* leaves us with a sense that "that's that"—here are two things the writer is going to say about the movie, and anything to follow is not as important, which is probably not the writer's intention.

Increasingly, however, writers—professional and nonprofessional alike—are eschewing the semicolon. A **recent article** in the *Australian* by Imre Salusinszky notes this trend and attributes it to "the various pressures of texting, email, journalese, 'plain English' and PowerPoint" and asserts that the "career of the semicolon appears rapidly to be approaching a full-stop," at least among journalists. The author maintains that semicolon use has been relegated to "middle-aged" journalists who increasingly find their beloved punctuation mark deleted by their younger colleagues at the copy desk. Today, the comma is the workhorse that coordinates "ideas within a sentence. And as sentences get shorter, there is less of that work to do," Salusinszky writes.

The semicolon has also been stigmatized as a domain of the egghead. According to an **article** in the *Chicago Tribune* by Mark Jacob and Stephan Benzkofer, the legendary New York City mayor Fiorello LaGuardia was said to have used the insult "semicolon boy" to demean an intellectual bureaucrat.

Is there anything we can do to head off the demise of the semicolon? I teach reading, writing, and grammar for students from grade 4 through college freshmen, and if their response to the semicolon section of my lessons and lectures is any indication, probably not. My reviews of the purpose and use of the semicolon are usually met with disinterest, at best. I think they view the semicolon as a quaint anachronism, if they think about it at all. "Oh yeah, it's that weird combination of a colon and a comma" is what they seem to think. The semicolon appears in the practice writing of only the best and most thoughtful of my students; most rely on the crutch of conjunctions to support their sentences.

This is not to say the situation is hopeless. Perhaps, as they advance, young writers will take a shine to the semicolon and view it as a useful tool for improving their writing. And author Salusinszky gives a wink and a nod to the emoticon as another reason the semicolon will stay off life support. It will continue to be used to express a knowing smile or look of admiration in this form: ;-).

That less-than-serious usage aside, I can't say I'm optimistic about the prospect of a semicolon revival; I rather fear it's one of those punctuation marks that will continue to wither on the vine. As writers and editors, we can continue to do our part to stave off the demise of the semicolon by using it thoughtfully and in its proper context. ■

*Mark Farrell is an editor and educator who lives in Greenbelt, Maryland. Farrell grew up in Massachusetts, where he attended Stonehill College and Boston College. He received an MA in American studies from BC in 1989. He is a teacher for a youth foundation and tutors several students while continuing his freelance editing and writing career. He enjoys basketball, golf, music, and reading.*



# ASK THE EDITOR

by Erin Brenner

**Our use of *Europe Practice* to describe the firm's law practice in European countries has been called into question because "it sounds funny." *European Practice* is the suggested alternative. The problem is that we refer to our other geographical practices as *Asia Practice*, *China Practice*, *Japan Practice*, etc. Is it grammatically incorrect to refer to our law practice in Europe as *Europe Practice*?**

**Eunice Martinez  
Business Development Managing Editor  
Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP**

Nouns, even proper nouns, can function as adjectives without becoming adjectives (i.e., they aren't changed with an adjectival ending), as in *shoe store* and *coffee cup*. Sometimes an attributive noun and its adjectival form can mean the same thing, as with *prostate cancer* and *prostatic cancer*, but sometimes they can't, as with *a study group* and *a studious group* (both examples come from *The Chicago Manual of Style*).

The question, then, is whether there is a difference in meaning between *the Europe Practice* and *the European Practice*. My sense is that a European practice might not have to be in Europe, whereas a Europe practice must be in Europe; that is the Europe practice couldn't have a branch office in, say, India. But a European practice, would deal with European issues whether or not the office is located in Europe. The European practice might have a branch office in India to deal with European matters in India. But that's just me. Others might see it differently.

A risk with choosing the noun form is what Wilson Follett called "noun plague." When a sentence has three or more nouns acting as another noun's modifiers, the sentence can cause a miscue; readers won't know how to parse those nouns until they get to the end of the sentence. *Garner's Modern American Usage* offers this example: "Consumers complained to their congressmen about the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's automobile seat belt 'interlock' rule." If there's a risk of noun

plague, you may want to stay away from *Europe Practice*.

Absent a rule governing the choice between the noun form and the adjectival form (I couldn't find one), I'd suggest letting your ear be your guide. Native speakers intuitively pick up on shades of rules that linguists and other language experts can't explain. To my ear, *European Practice* sounds better than *Europe Practice*, though I can't say why.

All the forms you give have corresponding adjectival forms. Whichever way you go, they should all follow the same pattern.

**You've probably answered this before, but I don't know what to do about a lot of computer stuff, such as *e-mail* or *email*; *Internet* or *internet*; *Web site*, *web site*, *Website*, or *website*.**

**Einar Olafsson  
Minneapolis, MN**

If *Copyediting's* archives are correct, we haven't tackled this question for a while (2009 being the latest article I can find). Because language changes constantly, it's worth revisiting the question.

A publication's house dictionary will list entries for *e-mail*, *Internet*, and *website*, as long as it's an up-to-date dictionary, so your first choice is to follow your house dictionary (or your favorite dictionary) and be consistent. However, dictionaries are infrequently updated, and it's easy to look outdated when you follow an older dictionary too closely.

A better choice is to follow your house style guide's spelling preferences for these and similar Internet-related terms. Style guides update more frequently than dictionaries. *The Chicago Manual of Style* was updated in 2010 and uses *e-mail*, *Internet*, *web*, *website*, *web page*, and *World Wide Web*. *The Associated Press Stylebook* updates yearly, and its 2011 edition recommends *email*, *Internet*, *World Wide Web*, *Web* (as a shortened form of *World Wide Web*), *website*, *Web page*, *webmaster*—style decisions that *The Yahoo! Style Guide* also recommends (except *Web page*; Yahoo uses *webpage*).

Following your house style guide should be suitable, unless your audience

is part of the Internet industry. If that's the case, try to determine what the industry standard is and follow that. You can discover the industry standard simply by taking note of what other industry publications do and following suit.

**Hello! I would like to get your opinion on the following sentence from a recent issue of *Food & Wine* magazine: "It was these influences—Asian flavors, farmers'-market ingredients—that formed the foundation of Reusing's culinary DNA." My question is regarding the construction of *farmers'-market*. I tend to see a lot of overhyphenation, which I try to curb when I'm editing, but if this punctuation is correct, I may have to rethink that. Can you let me know your thoughts on this?**

**Stephanie Fallon  
Copy Editor  
QVC Creative Resource Group**

What you have here is a noun phrase made up of a head noun—*ingredients*—and a compound noun acting as a modifier—*farmers' market*. This is different from having two adjectives working as one unit to modify a noun. In the latter case, you'd hyphenate the compound adjective. In the former, you need to know if you have a permanent or temporary compound.

The first thing to decide, then, is whether *farmers' market* is a permanent open compound. Although one or two resources spell it *farmer's market* and one spells it *farmers market*, the majority of the dictionaries I checked have it as *farmers' market*, making it a permanent open compound.

From here, we need only ask if any style or usage manual allows a permanent open compound to be hyphenated. None of the style manuals I checked do. *Chicago* lists several open compounds used adjectivally, including *post-World War II years* and *country music-influenced lyrics*. The open compound is treated as one word and is joined to another word with an en dash to form a compound modifier. (*Chicago* details how to hyphenate temporary compounds in its **hyphenation table**.)

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## ▶ASK THE EDITOR

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*The Gregg Reference Manual* gives an example that's even closer to *farmers' market ingredients: workers' compensation insurance*. Here we have the same structure: a noun phrase in which the head noun is modified by a permanent open compound. Notice that there's no hyphen between *workers'* and *compensation*, even though they modify *insurance*.

Given all this, you should be safely able to argue that *farmers' market ingredients* does not take a hyphen.

I would like your thoughts on a construction I run into a lot that seems wrong to me. Here are the two examples I've encountered most recently, in a Bible commentary I'm editing:

They were tentmakers, a trade they transported to Corinth.

Timothy often acted as an emissary from the apostle to a church, a role he is about to assume in Corinth.

It seems to me that in these sentences, *a trade* and *a role* are not logical as appositives. Tentmakers are persons, not a trade, and—in this sentence—*an emissary* refers to Timothy himself, a person, not to a role. Would you agree with these assessments? I am not puzzled about how to rewrite the sentences, but I'm wondering whether you agree that they should indeed be rewritten to express the relationships between the nouns in question logically.

Bob Banning

I agree that in both your examples the noun phrases in question are acting as appositives. If the nouns in question are people, the appositions should also be people.

In the first sentence, I understand *trade* to mean “an occupation or craft,” such as the editing trade, which seems the most likely definition. It's actually the second most common current definition of the word in all the dictionaries I checked, the first being “the buying and selling of goods or services,” clearly not what is meant in your sentence. Other definitions don't seem to fit the sentence, either, and among all the definitions, not one refers to a person. I would agree,

then, that *trade* is not a logical appositive of *tentmaker*.

*Role* is a bit different, however. One common definition is the character or duties a person assumes in a society or group. Examples given in the dictionaries I checked include *mother*, *caregiver*, *director*, *teacher*, *villain*, and *matchmaker*. All refer to people who do a specific job or take on a specific set of responsibilities. *Emissary*, a representative of a group, could easily be added to that list. I would conclude that, unlike *trade*, *role* could be an appositive for a person.

I have a very specific training request and thought you might know of—or could develop—something that would help. The title would be something like “Legal Citation for Non-Lawyers.” I am editing a proposal that references Arizona Senate Bill 1070, the controversial immigration one. The APA style guide on which I normally rely cites *Bluebook*, but *Bluebook* assumes that I know where to look for the latest and most official version of the law, and I don't. I wouldn't even know how to start! And that's for something that made national headlines, not an obscure statute in a corner or a court case that wends its way through the system for a decade.

I can't be the only person who needs to know these kinds of things and doesn't have ready access to a legal librarian.

Loretta J. Bohn  
Editor-Writer  
RTI International

I did some digging around online and found a few sites that might be useful in verifying bills and laws. The place to start seems to be the Law Library of Congress, which offers the **Guide to Law Online** on its site. It looks to be quite comprehensive, citing resources for international and multinational law, individual countries' laws, US federal laws, and US state laws.

For example, if you click on **U.S. States & Territories**→**Arizona**→**Bills of Arizona** (under “**Legislative**”), you will be led to the Arizona State Legislature's site. From there, you can click on **SB1051** through **SB1100**, which will take you to a page where you can click on **SB1070** and get the latest information on the proposed immigration bill.

The Library of Congress offers **THOMAS**,

a searchable database of federal senate and congressional bills. The US House of Representatives' **Office of the Law Revision Counsel** hosts a database of the **U.S. Code**, which you can download or search from the site.

One of my reporters insists that an event in its third consecutive year should be called a *second annual such-and-such*, following the slim reasoning that it did not become an annual event until they completed the second one. I think it should be, quite obviously, *third annual*. Who's right?

Ryan Lewis  
Editor  
*The Allegan County News*  
Allegan, MI

Stick to your guns on this one. If this is the third year an event is being held, it is the third annual event. It sounds like your reporter is getting hung up on the issue of *first annual*. Bryan Garner notes that *first annual* is “a promoter's wish, not a fact”—at least until after a second occurrence of the event happens a year later. After that second occurrence, the event becomes, by definition, annual. There have been two occurrences of the event, a year apart: the first annual event and the second annual event. We have to count the first year for the second year to be considered annual.

*The Associated Press Stylebook* advises against using the phrase *first annual* and suggests that copy notes that “sponsors plan to hold an event annually.” But that's specifically for describing events that have yet to happen or that have only happened once. After the second occurrence, we're free to use *first annual* and to count all the events that have occurred. ■

## DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR ASK THE EDITOR?

Send your questions to Erin at [editor@copyediting.com](mailto:editor@copyediting.com). We reserve the right to edit reprinted letters for length and clarity.

## ► RESOURCES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mindset dictionary users lapse into frequently, particularly when they want to validate their positions. But it's a mindset that drives Grant Barrett, lexicographer and former *Copyediting* contributing editor, crazy.

In his May 19 audio conference, **All About Dictionaries**, Barrett emphasized that language speakers are the highest authority on words and their usage. We create language, play with it, change it. Dictionaries, Barrett said, "are snapshots of a language at a given time and place." Lexicographers study how words are used and record in dictionaries what they find.

All dictionaries, whether print or electronic, are limited by resources and knowledge. "By their nature," said Barrett, "they're incomplete." No dictionary will capture every word's every definition or usage. Even if a dictionary *could* capture all of a word's current uses, language doesn't sit still. By the time a print dictionary hits the bookshelves, at least some of its definitions are outdated or headed that way. Electronic dictionaries fare a bit better, updating frequently, but lexicography still takes time, and language isn't waiting for *Merriam-Webster's* next update.

Barrett pointed out other ways that dictionaries aren't as reliable as we think they are. A word's first recorded use listed in any dictionary can almost always be antedated, he said. We're constantly finding examples of earlier uses. Etymologies can be shaky, too, though Barrett did point to *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* and *The American Heritage Dictionary (AHD)* as examples of dictionaries that do a good job with etymologies.

But I love my dictionaries! I must have half a dozen lying around my office and twice that number bookmarked in my browser, never mind all the specialty dictionaries scattered here, there, and everywhere. I tell my copyediting students to check their house dictionaries first; it's a copyeditor's first line of defense. But if so many dictionaries are bad at defining words and are suspect in other areas, what *are* they good for? And what should a copyeditor use to make spelling, meaning, and usage decisions?

### What a dictionary is good for

Barrett isn't just a lexicographer; he's

also a working editor. He faces the same questions as the rest of us every day. He told audio conference attendees that dictionaries are good for affirming our decisions. In other words, we shouldn't go to dictionaries to find out the unknown (they don't contain everything, remember), but we can use them to confirm our opinions or theories. That's especially helpful when an irate author questions your every decision. Being able to point to a perceived authority can get more of your corrections accepted.

Dictionaries are also good for settling disagreements. If half the editors in your department want to use *comprise* to mean "to compose" and the other half want to limit *comprise's* definition to mean "to consist of," then choosing to follow one dictionary's opinion can soften the blow for one side or the other. (Of course, there may be a fight over which dictionary you use, but we'll get to that in a minute.)

And let's face it: a busy editorial department, especially a department of one, doesn't always have time to check several dictionaries or to do original research to see how a word is used. Using a house dictionary, selected based on its fit with your copy, can mean getting the job done on time. But, Barrett warns, using one dictionary exclusively and never checking any others can lead to copy that sounds stilted or institutional. Be sure to check other dictionaries and do some of your own digging when you can.

### How can I choose a house dictionary?

Few copyeditors get to choose their house dictionary. For most of us, someone above us or before us either has already made the choice or has decided to follow the dictionary that the chosen style manual uses. Still, it's worth getting the lowdown on the major dictionaries, even if you can use that information only to choose which dictionaries to compare your house dictionary with. And if anyone has the lowdown on the different dictionaries, it's Barrett.

The first thing to understand is that just because a dictionary uses the term *Webster* in its title doesn't mean it's descended from Noah Webster's work. *Webster* is no longer a trademarked term, so any publisher can use it to make its dictionary seem more authoritative. Being descended from Webster's work doesn't make one dictionary better than others, either. "Dictionaries lose value as they

age," said Barrett. "Dictionary-makers do a poor job of including new words." If a dictionary's database hasn't been significantly updated in 50 years, it's not going to have terms like *applet*, *e-mail*, and *foodie*. How useful is an outdated dictionary to you?

Look for a dictionary that is as up to date as you can get. Check it for new words, such as *Internet*, and modern definitions, such as that for *computer*. Remember, you don't have to follow any dictionary precisely, but if you don't want to sound stiff and outdated, go with a modern dictionary.

Here's a brief rundown of some of the most common dictionaries:

- *The Shorter OED*: This work is one of Barrett's favorite dictionaries. Although it has a lot of Britishisms, it treats Americanisms "well," he said.
- *AHD*: This is another of Barrett's preferred dictionaries, used in conjunction with *The Shorter OED*. It's larger than some of the other popular dictionaries, and this is a case where bigger is better. The usage panel isn't perfect, said Barrett, but it's "better than one person's opinion."
- *New Oxford American Dictionary (NOAD)*: If you're going to go with *NOAD*, go with the second edition. The third edition is "basically a British dictionary with the Britishisms purged," according to Barrett.
- *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (MWC)*: This is a small dictionary, and some of the definitions haven't been updated in 150 years.
- *Webster's New World College Dictionary (WNW)*: Used by the Associated Press, the *New York Times*, and many other news organizations, *WNW* is very prescriptive and outdated, according to Barrett.
- *Random House Webster's Dictionary*: Random House is no longer updating its dictionary.

### How can I use dictionaries?

Use your house dictionary for spelling choices. When it comes to deciding if a word can be used the way your author has used it, "your best bet," said Barrett, "is to go to a dictionary-definition aggregating site, such as **OneLook.com**, and look up your questions in more than one dictionary." OneLook aggregates 131 dictionaries,

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# TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

## Trouble-free e-mail, part 2: Fixing what breaks

by Dick Margulis

You use e-mail. You probably use it every day. If you understand how e-mail works and never have trouble with it, this article is not for you. But if you're fuzzy on the details and you sometimes encounter problems when you're communicating with a client, read on.

The e-mail disasters I read about are almost always preventable. Sometimes they can be fixed after the fact, but sometimes they can't. And of course they always occur minutes before a critical deadline, when you're stressed anyway and most likely to be distracted and to make a mistake. In those situations, good e-mail habits can keep you from triggering a catastrophe. But if the worst happens, it helps to know what to do next.

Even if you're careful and thoughtful and follow good e-mail practices, stuff happens. Here are some of the problems that crop up from time to time.

### Messages to my client are bouncing

When you get a message that is not from your client but is from the client's mail server (or your own) saying your message could not be delivered, that's called a bounce message. Read the message. Is your client's mailbox full? Call your client. If the client's voice mail is also full, go to plan C—FedEx. Is the username you typed unrecognized? Check your typing. Check it again. Is your mail domain on a blacklist for sending spam? Send the message from an alternate e-mail account on a different domain. If that bounces, too, log into your webmail account and send the message from there or from your smartphone. If that doesn't work, try a different webmail account. If possible, stay in voice contact with your client until the problem is resolved.

### My client's messages are not getting through to me

First, check that you haven't allowed your own inbox to become full on your mail server by failing to download messages to your computer and to delete them from the server. Then see if you can view your client's messages in your webmail interface or on your smartphone. If you can, there may be a problem with a large attachment that is failing to download before your mail client times out. Retrieve the attachment from webmail and delete the message on the server.

If that isn't the problem, your mail server may be rejecting messages from your client's domain. Offer your client one of your other e-mail addresses to send to. If there is still a problem, create a mailbox for your client on *your* domain, and walk your client through accessing the mailbox through webmail. When you're done with the job and will no longer be dealing with the client, remember to delete the mailbox.

### An attachment disappeared

If you or your client sits inside a corporate firewall, or if one of you has a particularly aggressive and intrusive ISP, certain types of attachments may be stripped from a message, either outgoing or incoming. Double-check that the file was actually attached. If it was,

try changing the file extension to one that you know can go through. For example, if you have successfully exchanged .doc files but cannot exchange .zip files, change the file extension on your desktop from .zip to .doc and attach that. Be sure to tell your client how to change the extension back again before trying to open the file.

### The client opened the attachment, but it doesn't look the same as what I sent

Explain to your client how to save the attachment to a folder on the desktop before trying to open it. Problems can occur when someone opens an attached file from inside the e-mail program and then saves it to the desktop. This is especially true when one of you is on a PC and the other is on a Mac. Always save the attachment to a separate file before opening it.

### I'm suddenly getting hundreds of bounce messages for e-mail I never sent

Your e-mail address is being spoofed (faked, in other words) to send out spam. You did not cause this to happen. Nobody at your ISP thinks you caused it to happen. There is nothing wrong with your computer. The spam is not being sent from your computer. And there is nothing you can do to prevent this or to stop it once it starts. It will subside in a few days and disappear altogether in a week or so. Take deep cleansing breaths, and be careful not to accidentally delete a real message that you want to read.

### My client is on AOL

That's a shame. Why did you accept this person as a client? There are two problems with dealing with a client who is on AOL. The first is that, although AOL is better than it used to be, there can still be problems with large attachments. The second is that many (perhaps most, certainly not all) AOL users still access their mail through the proprietary AOL interface. That means they probably do not have a clear idea of how to save an attachment or where to find it on their computer if they do manage to save it. So you may have to do more handholding than you bargained for, just to get through the mechanics of communicating with your client over the course of the project.

If you can set up a webmail account for the client on your own domain and instruct the client on how to use it, your relationship may improve. Sometimes, though, this is a major challenge. See if your client has a neighbor or relative who can stop by, do the setup, and provide hands-on training.

### I accidentally spent four hours editing an attachment instead of a saved copy of the document. Now my work is gone.

All may not be lost.

1. Open the same attachment again or a different attachment in the same mailbox.
2. In Word, select **File→Save As**, and immediately take your hands off the keyboard and mouse (critical).

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## ►TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

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3. Take a moment to collect your thoughts, calm your jittery hand, and read the rest of this procedure. Breathe. Have coffee. Whatever works for you.
4. Set the view in the **Save As** dialog box to show file details. Click the **Date Modified** column heading to sort the files in date order. If the most recent date is at the top, great. If the oldest file is at the top, click the **Date Modified** heading again to reverse the order.
5. Make a written note (on paper or in a text editor) of the file path and the filename of the most recently saved document file.
6. Click the **Cancel** button to close the **Save As** dialog box.
7. Close the Word document (the attachment you opened in step 1).
8. Navigate to the folder whose path you wrote down and open the file whose name you wrote down. That should be your edited file. If so, immediately resave it to a working folder where you will be able to find it again.

If the document you opened was the unedited attachment, you have some more searching to do to find the edited file.

1. In Word 2003 or 2004, click the **File** menu. Look at the list of the most recently used files at the bottom of the menu for a likely candidate. Start at the bottom and work up. In Word 2007, click the **Office** button at the top left. The list of recent files appears on the right side of the page that opens. In Word 2008 or Word 2011, click **File—Open Recent**. In Word 2010, click the **File** tab and then the **Recent** button.
2. If that didn't work, use your desktop search tool to find a phrase in the document. It's OK to use a phrase that you did not edit (refer back to the attachment to be sure you have it right). A long phrase shortens the search and produces a shorter list of documents to check. Restrict the search to documents created in the last day. In Windows, it's important to ensure that your search parameters include searching all hidden files and folders, because the file you are looking for is likely hidden.
3. If you find the document, remember to resave it to a work folder where you can find it again.

If none of these techniques work, further investigation is not really warranted; stop wasting time and redo the work.

### **My mail disappeared. Poof. Gone.**

If you are talking about mail that is on a mail server or in the cloud somewhere, and you never downloaded mail to your own machine for safekeeping, now you know why I advise downloading it. If you are lucky, your mail will be restored (possibly missing several hours' or days' worth) in time, once the server is back up and running correctly.

If you are talking about mail on your own hard drive, here is a series of troubleshooting steps to try.

1. Close your mail client. Close other applications. Shut down your computer and restart it. Try again. If that worked, life is good.
2. Navigate to where your mail is supposed to be stored. If it appears to still be there, the problem is that your mail client has lost track of where to look for it. The exact details of how to remedy that situation vary between mail clients and are beyond the scope of this brief article. But the general principle is to find where the pointer is stored (often in a **prefs.js** file or in a registry setting) and to restore the pointer to the correct location.
3. If it looks as though the preferences file may be the source of the problem, close the file, close the mail client, save a backup copy of the preferences file (**prefs-backup.js** for example), delete the preferences file, restart the computer, and try again. The program should generate a clean, new preferences file. However, you may need to copy some information from the saved backup. If everything is now working OK, you can discard the saved backup.
4. If the client is looking in the right place but cannot open the mail file, the file may be corrupt. This can happen if the mail is stored in a compressed binary format or database file rather than in a plain text format. In that case, restore the file from your last backup. This will result in the loss of any mail traffic since the time of that backup, so you may have to e-mail several people to get copies of missing correspondence. Restoring from backup can also result in some odd artifacts (duplicate messages, extra folders), necessitating some cleanup effort on your part.

If none of those steps are successful, or if you are in the middle of one and don't know how to proceed, seek technical help, even if you have to pay for it. If the first support representative you speak with does not seem to understand the gravity of the situation and asks you to do something that seems as if it might result in the permanent loss of your data, do not lose your cool and start yelling. Instead, ask politely if your case can be "escalated to second-level support." Use that exact phrase. If the answer is no, ask to speak to a supervisor. Repeat the request to the supervisor. If the answer is still no, write down names, the date and time, and the case number. Then start yelling.

Sometimes it can feel as if your computer is inhabited by poltergeists, whether you believe in ghosts or not. But the more you know about how things work and how to troubleshoot problems, the more mastery you have over your tools and your working conditions. I hope you never have to use any of these procedures and that just knowing about them strikes fear into those poltergeists' hard little hearts. ■

*Dick Margulis has been involved in editing and typographic design since 1959. He started his **own business** in 2004 to produce high-quality books for self-publishing authors and others. His **blog** focuses mainly on editing, book design, and publishing.*

## ► RESOURCES

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including *AHD*, *MWC*, and *WNW*. Compare the definitions. If your author's use is listed in a respectable dictionary, consider allowing his or her usage, keeping the audience in mind. (For more on how to decide to keep a word or change it, see “**Copyediting Tip of the Week: Should you refudiate neologisms?**”)

Comparing dictionaries will also allow you to see a word's most common definitions. If several dictionaries agree on a meaning, chances are your audience will, too. Remember to check usage guides and

style manuals for word usage as well. I tell my students to check their dictionaries first, not last. A dictionary is your first line of defense, but it's not your only defense.

### But wait, there's more

Barrett's audio conference on dictionaries covered more ground than what's here, including how to do your own lexicographic detective work. If you missed the conference, you can purchase an audio recording and the detailed handout in *Copyediting's* **online store**. You can also hear Barrett talk about words each week with Martha Barnette on **A Way with Words**. ■

## THE COPYEDITING TIP OF THE WEEK

You don't have to wait for the next issue of *Copyediting* to get more rock-solid advice on language and editing. Sign up to receive the free *Copyediting* Tip of the Week in your inbox!

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## THE QUIZ ANSWERS

*The Quiz is on page 1.*

Did you choose the correct words?

(1) *Personal* refers to something belonging to a particular person, something done in person, something related to a person, and so on. *Personnel* refers to either a group of people who work for a company or a department within a company that deals with employees' needs. Although the file in the sentence is about one person and is somewhat private, it is limited to James's work life at his company. The right choice is *personnel*.

(2) A *palate* is a preference of flavors in food, the roof of one's mouth, or the taste of something, such as wine. A platform used for moving things is a *pallet*. The term can also mean a straw mattress or a small bed. A range of colors is a *palette*, as with the colors found in the Rocky Mountains. *Palette* can also refer to the board an artist uses to mix paints or the range of tone in music.

(3) *Unexceptional* describes something that's plain or ordinary, while *unexceptionable* means without exception or objections. So was the judge's ruling ordinary or without objections? The correct meaning will depend entirely on context.

(4) *Faze* means to disturb, bother, or embarrass, while *phase* means to adjust, conduct, or plan in sections. *Fazed* is the right answer. ■

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# DICTIONARY UPDATE

by Mark Peters

**Carmageddon**, *noun*. The feared traffic disaster that was expected to occur after a 10-mile section of Interstate 405 within Los Angeles was shut down for 10 hours on July 15–16. *Carmageddon* is also the name of a video game, and the term is similar to *Snowmageddon*, a recently popular term for blizzards and heavy snowfall.

Killer bees never did swarm the Southwest, the Y2K bug was squashed, the world didn't end on May 21 and "Carmageddon" wasn't. Now that we've finished freak-ing out about the weekend closure of 10 miles of the 405 Freeway, can we do something about the fact that it's Carmageddon every single

day in West Los Angeles?  
—*Los Angeles Times*,  
July 19, 2011

**+1**, *verb*. On Google+, a new social network, this is the equivalent of "liking" on Facebook: a way to show you enjoy or approve of something with one click. The past tense and present participle *+1'd* and *+1'ing* are also used. Also *plus one*.

I should stop there, though, and get back to recruiting my army of middle school students, who will troll Atlantic stories *+1ing* stories.  
—*The Atlantic*, July 14, 2011

**planking**, *noun*. A fad involving lying down in a public place and taking a picture that's then posted on the web.

Planking is a summertime sensation around the world, but new evidence emerged this week indicating the comedic practice is at least two decades old.  
—CNN.com, July 13, 2011

**owling**, *noun*. Like planking, owling is a fad, but it involves taking pictures of yourself in an owl-like pose. As the example shows, new variations keep popping up.

Owling involves perching in a crouch, somewhat like the bird, on top of things: fences, kitchen counters, mailboxes. It's not to be confused with that "craze" from last month, coning.  
—*Toronto Star*,  
July 15, 2011 ■

## IN STYLE

### Writers, start your (search) engines

by Norm Goldstein

Of all the abbreviation shrapnel that has splattered from the explosion of websites, none is potentially as hazardous to good writing as *SEO*.

Search engine optimization (SEO) is a way of writing and editing that uses keywords and keyword phrases that search engines will pick up, organize on a list, and rank according to their frequency and other criteria.

A newspaper headline earlier this year defined it another way: "Web Words That Lure Readers."

It is, in a sense, an electronic reincarnation of print headlines—find the words that will attract readers—only here, it attracts search engines.

Journalism schools around the country are now incorporating SEO in their classes, most of them adding it to discussions of headline writing and warning of its potential abuse. At the University of North Carolina (UNC) School of Journalism and Mass Communication, associate

professor Bill Cloud said, "We stress using keywords, being straightforward and not teasing, and using words that people will search for."

UNC's Ryan Thornburg, assistant professor and author of *Producing Online News: Digital Skills, Stronger Stories*, said in an e-mail, "SEO is often done poorly and underperforms compared with expectations. Expectations are sometimes that changing a few words will magically draw millions of visitors. Instead what happens is you end up with lower writing quality and not much bump in traffic. Good SEO should improve (or at least not harm) writing and moderately increase traffic."

*The Yahoo! Style Guide* reminds editors what they face: "Implement SEO without turning your text into nonsense."

But this caveat is often said more in principle than in practice, as highly competitive website publishers battle for the most viewers.

There's the warning label: the drive to appeal to search engines rather than to readers by seeding copy with search words may lead to lower-quality writing.

Preventing that is the latest challenge for online copyeditors, the last defense for better copy. ■

► Thursday, October 20, 2011

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90-Minute Audio Conference | with Charles DeLaFuente



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What exactly is libel? It's a false statement about a person or company that harms that person or company. It's what the legal system calls a tort, no different than the damage a driver who hits another car does. Libel can crop up anywhere: in a report of a confession, a restaurant review, a headline over a photo caption, an advertisement, or comments about a competitor's products or practices. In this audio conference, you will learn what copyeditors can do to detect and eliminate libelous statements and what protections different organizations have.

## HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL LEARN:

- What fair comments are and why they can't be libelous
- How media, companies, and others are—or aren't—protected from libel suits under the law
- Different places where libel can lurk

## Date:

Thursday, October 20, 2011

## Time:

11:30 A.M. — 1:00 P.M.  
Eastern

10:30 A.M. — 12:00 P.M.  
Central

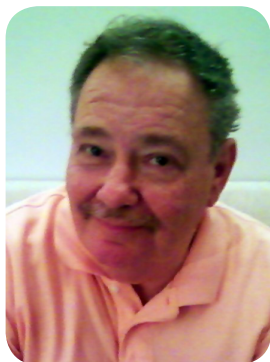
9:30 A.M. — 11:00 A.M.  
Mountain

8:30 A.M. — 10:00 A.M.  
Pacific

## \*Price:

\$199 (Copyediting subscribers)

\$229 (nonsubscribers)



## YOUR PRESENTER

**Charles DeLaFuente** has been a journalist and lawyer for decades. He began his career as a reporter for suburban New York newspapers and for United Press International. He became a city editor of one of New York's tabloids for several years, then left to attend law school. After graduating and practicing for a few years, he returned to journalism, first at UPI, then at the *New York Daily News* and at the *Times-Union* in Albany, NY. He was editor-in-chief of the *Record*, a small paper in Troy, NY, near the state capital, before joining the *New York Times* as a copyeditor in 1998.

DeLaFuente has led a seminar on libel at the American Copy Editors Society's annual meetings for the last six years. He has taught the same material to newspaper, magazine, and trade publication staffs.

## OPTIONS FOR REGISTRATION:

- [www.copyediting.com/libel](http://www.copyediting.com/libel)
- Call us at 1-888-303-2373

\*PER DIAL-IN SITE/Unlimited attendance, one phone line.

PRESENTED BY  
**Copyediting**  
BECAUSE LANGUAGE MATTERS

► Thursday, November 17, 2011

# Medical copyediting, part 1: The mechanics of medical editing

90-Minute Audio Conference | with Daniel Sosnoski



REGISTER NOW

Have you considered specializing in medical editing? The field is attractive for editors and writers because, unlike most publishing sectors, the healthcare industry is strong and growing. In part one of our medical copyediting series, we ask how you crack into this niche market. What special skills do you need? How does medical editing and writing differ from other kinds of journalism? If you are looking to move in this direction, this presentation can help you decide if you're ready. Be ready for the Q&A following the talk.

## HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL LEARN:

- The most common publications and publishers in the field
- The challenges of medical editing, reference works and style sheets, and how to handle the ever-pesky lists of references
- Tips on handling the MD and PhD author
- Resources for job hunters

## Date:

Thursday, November 17, 2011

## Time:

11:30 A.M. — 1:00 P.M.  
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Mountain

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Pacific

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## YOUR PRESENTER

**Daniel Sosnoski** is the author of *Introduction to Japanese Culture* and editor-in-chief of *Chiropractic Economics* magazine. He has been the staff editor for numerous medical associations and is the founding editor of the Pub Med-indexed *Journal of Clinical Lipidology*. He has been a member of the American Medical Writers Association and currently belongs to the American Society of Business Publication Editors.

## OPTIONS FOR REGISTRATION:

- [www.copyediting.com/medediting](http://www.copyediting.com/medediting)
- Call us at 1-888-303-2373

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