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EDITING SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION IN THE AGE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

The need to properly edit typed-written manuscripts before they are published is not new in the academic circles. What is relatively new is that editing tasks can be handled with the aid of a word processor through “Track Changes,” a useful feature on Microsoft Word which keeps track of the editors activities on the drafts. This paper examines the practice of editing scholarly communication vis-à-vis the application of modern technologies to ensure manuscripts meet acceptable publishing requirements in all matters of grammar, usage, style, diction, spelling, punctuation, among others.

Key Words: Author Queries, Editing, Information and Communication Technology, Writing

Introduction

Writing scholarly works, such as term papers, long essays, theses, dissertations, conference or seminar papers come with their challenges. The challenges may border on lumping what is relevant and what is not relevant, as well as putting together a hurried, unorganised or disjointed writing (Olaofe, 2010). The challenges could be due to bad writing habits, inability to know what to write, how to write, how to form sentences or how to organise the work (Oryila, 2015a). The drafts may also carry errors as a result of constraints of time, accidental

language slips, insufficient data, family distraction, work pressure, emotional instability, material want or absence of library and information sources to adequately source what is written (Aghadiuno & Oryila, 2017). All these negatively affect the overall health and fitness of the draft if not cured.

However, there are many people who do not view writing academic works as a daunting challenge. In any case, whether writing academic works do not present any challenge to the writer or not, publishing an academic work requires that the manuscript meets acceptable publishing fitness. This is where the role of the editor is very important. However, much of these editing services, for a long time now, are done manually by editors. Friends who are good at language use are also invited to help, but in many situations, the pressure of time and personal demands do not allow them to give absolute attention to the draft. Some authors or scholars even do it themselves which, though normal, may not bring out the best from the manuscripts. Indeed, the practice of searching for “qualified editors” has seen the eruption of non-professionals whose only qualification is that they have a pair of eyes! But, times and conditions have changed the pace and quality of publishing and academic communication.

The revolution brought by Information and Communication Technology has made it necessary, not just to typeset manuscripts electronically, but also to edit manuscripts with various tools and applications on the computer with ease, applying the various typographical tricks to give the manuscripts shape and form. It is a development every academic or editor should embrace. It is in the light of this that this paper examines the practice of editing scholarly communication in the age of Information and Communication Technology vis-à-vis manual editing which was in vogue in the time past and, in some cases, even now, especially among academics or editors who are not computer literate. The paper also differentiates between the professional and non-professional editor, and argues that in the modern society, editors who lack computer skills, knowledge and training are out-dated and cannot adequately function or handle the task of editing scholarly works.

Defining Editing and the Task of the Editor

The term “editing” does not lend itself to easy definition. This is because even people who go to the computer centres *to proofread* their typed-written manuscripts call what they do editing. In the entertainment industry, the touch given to video or musical clips is also known as editing. This has blurred the distinction which exists between the professional touch given scholarly communication and musical or video clips.

However, Sharpe and Gunther (1994, p.1) capture what editing means in academic or literary communication thus:

Editing is a broad-ranging concept, an art as well as a craft. In crossword puzzles, the word edit is the answer to a whole list of clues: review, revise, alter, redact, refine, emend, correct. The craft can be learned fairly easily by diligent attention to the rules of grammar and the conventions of usage and style. To master the art, however, rules are not enough; this mastery requires a special sensibility, a finely tuned ear, and an instinct that comes only with years of experience.

From the definition, editing implies fixing errors on drafts and making it publishable. Editing, therefore, entails all the activities draft owners or professional editors carry out on manuscripts to make the manuscripts fit and publishable. It is on this note that Aghadiuno and Oryila (2017) define editing in the following terms:

Editing is any activity undertaken to shape and fine-tune a manuscript. Editing encompasses all activities carried out to fix errors in a manuscript by someone who possesses the requisite knowledge, skills and capacity, such as reviewing and improving all aspects of grammar, language usage, punctuation, spelling, diction, style, methodology, theory, characterisation, organisation, discussion, facts and general problems of craft intended to give the manuscript a presentable and publishable outlook (p.3).

Generally, editors perform a variety of tasks on manuscripts, which make their role in the publishing industry vital. The tasks of editors have been explained by Aghadiuno and Oryila (2017) in much detail and summarised here.

Editors as Reviewers: Editors review the quality and potential value of manuscripts before publication. This task is essentially carried out by the editorial review committee or board before a particular manuscript is accepted and, accordingly, allowed to pass through the editing process. Editors determine whether manuscripts make substantial contribution to knowledge before they are considered worthy academic documents. They also determine the type of editing a work needs and the strengths and weaknesses of the author.

Editors as Grammar Police: Editors act as grammar police in all matters of language usage, punctuation, spelling, style, tone, among others. Editors detect errors in the draft and raise flags on aspects of grammar that would affect the understanding of the publication. They identify aspects of the manuscript that violate rules of grammar, usage, style, punctuation, among other.

Editors as Writers: Although, editing skill is different from writing skill, being an editor implies a regular or occasional scribbling of sentences. In many occasions, what editors do is to write and re-write sentences, sometimes running into paragraphs upon paragraphs. This practice builds their writing skills, as they correct poor constructions to maintain the sense the writer wants to make. Editors find better ways of expressing ideas and making meaning. In fact, it is difficult to find an editor who is also not a writer. This, however, is not to say every editor is a writer.

Editors as Readers: Editors are keen and prolific readers, and their love for reading is enormous. But, editors read not just with the eyes, they read with their entire senses—putting their sense of hearing, touch, taste, smell, specific, general, history, scepticism, people, self, implication, problems, solution, reading, involvement, detachment, curiosity, irony, form and words into function. Editors sift intently or critically to uncover all aspects of meaning from the draft which may not be apparent to the untrained mind or eyes.

Editors as Proof-readers: Although, in strict editorial process, proof-readers are not considered as editors, it is their duty to find errors of consistency, style, grammar, among others, which might have been overlooked by the editor. Before completing their jobs, editors

ensure that edited manuscripts are free from errors before printing or publishing. As a result, after the usual behind-the-scene work on the draft, editors move to proofread the draft over and over again to fix minor remaining issues which might escape the editing tools.

Editors as Mentors or Teachers: Editors are teachers in their own right because they nurture young authors into the craft of profitable writing. Some editors spend time coaching the young on how to write. They hold seminars, webinars and classes on how to write and self-edit or self-publish one's work, as seen with the emergence of freelance editors who offer writing and editing tips to individuals or groups online.

Editors as Thinkers: Editors are thinkers. They think deeply before they edit other people's works. Editors deploy the principles of logic to make sense of troubling senses in a draft, arriving at the intention of the writer before effecting corrections. Where the editor is not able to make sense of the work, he queries the sense the author is trying to make in series of flags.

Editors as Learners or Students: Editors are also students. Editors are students of knowledge, who love to learn the meaning of new words, information or facts. Editors engage in fact-checking to be guided when working on drafts. This improves their knowledge and capacity to carry out the task of editing.

Editors as Decision Makers: Editors manage and take a variety of editorial decisions, such as getting a reviewer, sending out manuscripts for reviews, issuing letters to authors on the status of their manuscripts, determining manuscripts publishable or unpublishable fitness, setting publishing dates, enforcing journal ethics and policy, receiving feedback from reviewers and queries from authors and agents, among others. The decisions of the editors help in sustaining a high editing and publishing culture.

Editors as Publishers: Some editors are responsible for publishing the manuscripts they work on. They do this by arranging with a publisher to publish the manuscript. Some editors set up their publishing firms to help them publish the works of their clients.

Editors as Censors: Editors serve as censors of publishable and unpublishable content. Editors detect what should go into manuscripts and publications. They ensure that what is

publishable does not give rise to action in piracy, copyright infringement, libel or any criminal or civil litigation.

Editors as Libraries: Editors are repositories of ideas, knowledge and expertise on a wide variety of subjects. They gain this by working on dozens of jobs. Editors know a little about everything and, in a situation where they lack such knowledge, they seek additional information about a subject before going fully into working on the manuscripts.

Editors as Organisers: The editorial process requires effective co-ordination of activities, such as commitment, time, money and energy. It requires only those who can efficiently organise and co-ordinate editing tasks. Editors are organised people who do not allow laziness and procrastination to interfere with the line of their jobs.

Is Editing as a Profession?

Scholars often make a distinction between the various jobs, occupations, vocations and professions people do to eke a living. From the examination of the literature, editing qualifies to be called a profession, even though the training, knowledge and skills that produce editors lack common standards, programmes for continuing education and also depend on the expertise of individual editors.

Editing is a profession. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* (2005), a profession is “a type of job that needs special training or skill, especially one that needs a high level of education” (p.1159). Editing, therefore, satisfies the requirement of a profession. An acceptable level of standard knowledge, skills and training is required before one can adequately be accepted as an editor that knows his or her job. However, many people think they can edit manuscripts by the possession of a pair of eyes! This has often led to poor results after the material has been published. Editing involves putting the entire human senses into use simultaneously. Although, there is hardly any published material that is free from errors, works edited by non-professionals often retain significant number of annoying errors known in less formal language as the “devils error.”

Techniques of Editing Scholarly Communication

Broadly speaking, there are two techniques of editing scholarly communication: manual editing and computer-aided editing. The two differ in the kinds of typographical tricks deployed in fixing the manuscripts.

Manual Typographical Tricks in Editing Manuscripts

The typographical tricks employed in manual editing consists of special copyediting marks or proofing symbols which are used when editing manuscripts to show the nature of the errors and their corresponding fixes as well as flag queries.

The general issues which repeatedly appear in a draft include errors of typesetting, grammar, spelling, punctuation, usage, paragraphing, capitalisation, alignment, omission, transposition, font type, font size, among others. Errors of typesetting imply that the document is not typed according to the specified standards. Grammar issues are concerned with how the writer makes appropriate use of correct words in forming sentences. Punctuation fixes resolve inappropriate use of punctuation markings to give a document a neat outlook and make it easily readable (Oryila, 2015b). Language has appropriate forms, and errors of usage take care of appropriate forms of usage in particular contexts. Capital letters are expected in a draft, and knowing where to use them is essential. Here is a sample of proofing markings sourced online, but its corresponding application on hardcopy drafts is not done here for mechanical reasons.
















































		Delete			Flush Left		Set in Bold Face Italic
		Insert			Flush Right		Set in Light Face
		Join			Center Horizontally		Wrong Font
		Move closer			Center Vertically		Hyphen
		Space			Move to the next line		En Dash
		Add Space			Move to the preceding line		Em Dash
		Delete Space			Indent 1 em		Superscript
		Transpose Word			Indent 2 ems		Subscript
		Transpose Letters			Paragraph		Comma
		To separate two or more marks			All Caps		Apostrophe
	<i>Stet</i>	Let it Stand (ignore correction)			Small Caps		Period
		Move Left			Caps & Small Caps		Semicolon
		Move Right		<i>Caps</i>	Capital Letter		Colon
		Move Up		<i>lc</i>	Lower Case		Quotation Marks
		Move Down		<i>Rom</i>	Set in Roman		Parentheses
		Align Vertically		<i>ital</i>	Set in Italic		Brackets
		Align Horizontally		<i>bf</i>	Set in Bold Face		

Figure 1: Sample of Proofing Marks Sourced Online

It should, however, be noted that these proofing marks are conventional, though some editors and proof-readers sometimes create others to suit their kind of job. Where such is the case, the marks should be explained.

Computer-Aided Editing

Computer-aided editing involves the use of a computer device to edit manuscript, such as an application, software or word processor. This work is mainly concerned with editing soft copies typeset with a word processor or Microsoft Word.

Modern technology has afforded the editor with applications and tools with which the job of editing could be done with precision and ease. On every word processor, there is now a feature called “Track Changes” with which the modern editor now uses to edit manuscripts.

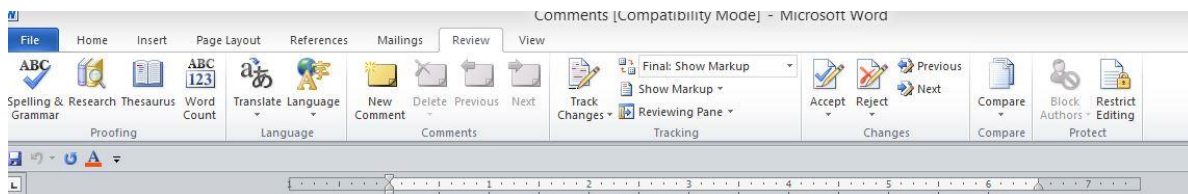
What is Track Changes?

Track Changes is a function in Microsoft Word that helps in editing, proofreading, or correcting a typeset document with ease by activating the button which keeps track of all the

changes an editor makes to a document. The changes can be followed and may be accepted or rejected by the author. It also allows the author to note and appreciate the changes that the editor has made on the draft. It is, therefore, a highly recommended feature for editors. This makes the job of an editor easy.

How to Edit Using Track Changes

To start using Track Changes, the editor is required to first turn the function button on. To do this, the editor should go to the Review Tab, and click on the Track Changes button. When the button changes colour to deep, it means it is on. The following screenshot shows the items which appear when the editor clicks the Review Tab:



In order to keep track of the changes, the editor makea sure that Microsoft Word is set for Show Final Markup on the Review Tab. Changes made to the document may come in red or blue to indicate the kinds of corrections being made. Thin lines appear on the left hand side of the page, and they indicate items that have been deleted or added by the editor. The changes made to the document may be accepted or rejected one after the other. It may also be accepted or rejected at once. At the end of accepting or rejecting the changes, the Track Changes feature should be turned off so that writer can resume normal typing on the document.

Sample of Typographical Tricks Used in Academic Works

Editing is generally done on the body of the works by the use of features which allows the author to reject them or not by clicking the Accept or Reject button on the Track Changes.

Abstract

This paper seeks to mirror Nigeria's experience as an amalgam of nations, striving to be one indissoluble country. It examines the different political, social and economic crises the country which has since suffered since its independence in 1960, suffered different kinds of social, economic and political difficulties. Using an artistic approach, the paper concludes that the crises are motivated along ~~The most disturbing of these troubles are the ones occurring on the~~ ethnic, religious and political lines for personal gains and selfish interests. ~~The paper examines from the effect of the civil war that ravaged the country shortly after its attainment of self-government.~~

Figure 2: Computer-Aided Editing of Academic Manuscript

Abstract

The study evaluated authorship pattern, author collaboration and spread of authorship in Bayero Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies (BJIS) across the 6 geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The study was carried out quantitatively. 61 articles published in The Bayero Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies from 2008 to 2013 were surveyed. Descriptive statistics was used to make analysis and, data collected were presented in tables using frequency and percentage. Findings of the study revealed that the Bayero Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies has poor implication for author collaboration; its collaboration index is 0.35. 65.6% of articles published in BJIS were single authored and 75.4% of authors in BJIS come from the north-west zones of Nigeria. Knowledge is shared among 4 geographical zones of Nigeria, while 2 other zones do not have a share in the knowledge transferred through BJIS. The study indicates that the focus of scholarly publishing and intellectual works in Nigeria needs to be remodeled towards collaborative authorship, in order to achieve excellence, enhance expertise and foster cross-fertilization of ideas among scholars. And, there is the need for the journal to improve on its spread and visibility by enhancing its reach to other parts where it has no presence. It is recommended that the rewards system for intellectual and scholarly work by joint authors scholars should be favourably reviewed so that the (greed appetite and selfish) interest for single authorship would will diminish.

Keywords: Author collaboration, ~~A~~authorship pattern, ~~author collaboration~~, knowledge transfer

Figure 3: Computer-Aided Editing of Academic Paper

Recommendations

1. The reward system for scholarly and intellectual works in Nigeria should be remodeled towards enhancing collaboration. The discrimination in rewarding single authored works vis-à-vis co-authored works should be reviewed to foster the cross-breeding of ideas among scholars across regions, nationalities and peoples of the world, ~~and even from different regions of the world than a single authored publication.~~
2. Publishers of scholarly works should make their journals accessible online as this will help market their journals to other regions of the country, especially those they are yet to establish any contact with.
3. The funding of journals by institutions, such as Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND), Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), among others, ~~and etcetera~~ should highly consider collaboration of authors vis-à-vis the spread of journal across various geopolitical regions of Nigeria as a yardstick for providing funds for journal publishing.
4. Publishers of scholarly journals should carry out frequent assessments of where the articles they publish emanate from and use such assessments to achieve balance in the spread, visibility and patronage of their journal.

Figure 4: Computer-Aided Editing of Recommendations

collaborated because of the interdisciplinary nature of veterinary research. As a result, 83.55% of articles surveyed through the CABI database were co-authored works, while were based on author collaboration only 16.5% were single authored papers/documents.

Pandu, Maharana and Chattar (2013) shows that the place where a journal originates from influences authorship. The study indicates that, for a six-year period it was revealed that single authorship of 68.7% was dominant, while two and three authors' contribution was less than a quarter of single authorship. The highest number of publications came from the United Kingdom and this is because JIL originates there while the lowest came from countries such as USA/California, Ireland, Italy and Tanzania. Perhaps, this could be because JIL does not care much to publish works by authors from other countries or authors in other countries are not interested in publishing in the journal. is oblivious to authors or because they are disinterest to publish in it.

Apart from place of origin, Jan and Ridwana (2016) shows that the collaboration of more than three authors is very prevalent across 22 states of India in the field of fishery due to, the pool of information from various places required for fishery research, while, more than three-author contribution dominates authorship in the journal. Out of the 22 states covered, Kerrala has the highest number of contribution of articles, while Skim, Pondichery and Arunchal Pradesh had the lowest contribution of 0.13%.

Figure 5: Computer-Aided Editing of Body of Academic Work

As it is stated, despite the heavy presence of Hausa in the northern states (there are now 36 of them) and the creation of more states within the region which has created a situation in which some minority languages are now dominant, that is, 'major' at the state level even though 'minor' at the national level. Examples include: Tiv (Benue), Kanuri (Borno), Igala (Kogi), Alago (Nasarawa), etc.

Figure 6: Computer Aided Editing of Body of Introduction of Academic Work

Author Queries in Manuscript Editing

In editing a word document, editors often make elaborate comments on the drafts on issues which cannot be immediately fixed without first seeking clarification from the authors. These comments or remarks are made by way of "author queries." Aghadiuno and Oryila (2017, p.8) capture what is meant by author queries thus:

Author queries are questions by way of short notes, comments, suggestions or explanations written for the author in the process of editing a manuscript intended to help the author address obvious lapses in organisation, citation, diction, grammar, style, theory, methodology, analysis, logic, tone, exposition, point of view, characterisation, setting and general weaknesses in writing craft. They are editorial reviews on technical aspects of writing made in the course of editing which help to increase a manuscript fitness and health as a suitable and publishable piece of writing.

Author queries could dwell on how the editor wants to do the work. For example:

Commented [S1]: This work is edited according to British English in matters of usage, spelling, punctuation, etc. I am also conversant with American English, and if your intention is to use American English, kindly get back to me.

Figure 7: Author Query on Language Use

They may seek to remind the author about rules in a style guide as in:

Commented [S2]: In APA style, abstracts are not set off in italics, except that is in line with publishers. I will leave the abstracts in italics, but that this is how the publishers want it. Again, remember to set off titles of *Bayero Journal of Information Studies BUIS* in italics anywhere it occurs.

Figure 8: Author Query on Use of Writing Guide

Authors are told to be consistent in query flags as noted here:

Commented [S3]: At some points in the draft, you swap Bayero Journal of Information, Bayero Journal of Information Studies, Bayeo Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies. I am at a loss at which you intended.

Figure 9 Author Query on Consistency

The query explains why a certain term cannot be used in a particular context. For example:

The killing of security men by militiamen cannot be termed 'extra-judicial'. It will be so called if the militia were a legitimate government or state group. I substitute this with 'brutal'.

Figure 10 Author Query on Choice of Words

Editing by the Use of Editing Software

Editing scholarly communication can be handled by the use of editing software, editing toolkits and file cleaners. OMoore-Klopf (2016) lists some of the editing tools editors use to include NoteStripper, *FileCleaner*, PerfectIt, *ReferenceChecker*, *Edifix*, among others. Some of these editing packages are bought or accessed free. Some work online and offline. Again, some of the editing suites are used to test the originality of the manuscripts. If much of the draft is pirated, this can be detected through piracy test.

Identifying Plagiarism and Piracy in Typed-Written Manuscripts

Plagiarism and piracy are a serious academic fraud which brings down the reputation of an author. One of the roles of the editor is to help authors to properly document sources of their works in order to be free from the charge of stealing another authors ideas. In other words, editors help writers to properly cite authors whose works are used to support the points made by in the manuscripts. But, what specifically is meant by plagiarism and piracy?

Plagiarism and piracy are linguistic as well as legal problems. In identifying plagiarism as a linguistic phenomenon, Pecorari (2008) categorises plagiarism into three, namely, *textual plagiarism* (i.e., when the writers intention to deceive is not clear); *prototypical plagiarism* (i.e., writing with intention to deceive); and *patchwriting* (i.e., writing without intention to deceive). Textual plagiarism can be viewed as an umbrella term for patchwriting and prototypical plagiarism. As a result of its seriousness, Pecorari places emphasis on textual plagiarism and lists three criteria to determine it: (1) the presence of linguistic similarity between the old and the newtext, (2) the presence of repeated words

and/or ideas, (3) the lack of attribution to a previous text. In more general language, plagiarism occurs when people indulge in acts, such as copy and paste, redrafting, paraphrasing, translation,

Plagiarism is also a legal issue that develops from its manifestation as a linguistic problem. As a legal problem, plagiarism can lead to imprisonment term. Different countries have laws stipulating stiff punishment for those involved in plagiarism. Besides the punishment, plagiarism brings down the reputation or integrity of a writer when it is uncovered. In many publishing houses or academic publishing houses, different software packages are used for detecting plagiarism. Patil and Bomanwar (2016) identify the following software and tools:

1. PlagAware (<http://www.plagaware.com/aboutplagaware>)
2. PlagScan (<http://www.plagscan.com>)
3. Ithenticate (<http://www.ithenticate.com/index.html>)
4. Check for plagiarism.net (<http://www.checkforplagiarism.net>)
5. Plagiarism detection.org (<http://www.plagiarismdetection.org>)

As noted by Patil and Bomanwar (2016), software tools which are commonly used for checking plagiarism include: EVE, CopyCatchGold, Word Check, Glatt, Moss, JPlag, Google, Yahoo, Alta/Vista, among others.

Implication of Editing Manuscripts Using ICT

The paper has raised issues with serious implications on writing and editing manuscripts with the aid of computer applications and software.

Editors, like writers, need to have laptop computers or desktop computers to be able to apply computer editing applications to drafts. Those who have no computers will not be able to edit using computer software. Besides having computers, writers and editors need to

be conversant with computer editing tools to be able to use the applications. For editors, it is important that they acquire the skills of editing manuscripts using computer applications to advance their trade and enhance their professional status, knowledge and skills. Having the knowledge and the skills will also lead to improved efficiency among editors. This is because manual editing takes time and, if adequate care is not taken, the same mistakes could occur after the documents have been manually edited. Besides, manually edited documents do not look neat.

In the digital age, where good editors have volumes of work to do, it is important that they use computer in editing manuscripts. With editing toolkits, editors can make substantial inputs on the general outlook of the documents. Not all typists are editors. Leaving the task of editing drafts to typists is not helpful as they may not be conversant with the editing practice. Editors who work with computer system are best suited to work or make contributions on how the final published work will look like.

With the development of plagiarism tools, editors will not need to go far before detecting elements of plagiarism in a work. Early detection of inadequate citation issues will help the editor fix them to avoid running afoul of the law on plagiarism. Similarly, internet tools, such as Google, provide means by which the editor can verify works, sources, facts, among others, in order to deliver a quality job to the clients. This saves the editors time and boost efficiency. More financial investment into electronic or computer devices means that editors charges will be improved and better living as an editor.

Conclusion

Developments in Information and Communication Technology have brought new challenges to the modern editor. Manual editing which was in vogue in the time past is now gradually given way to editing by the use of Track Changes on the Microsoft Word or other word processors. The efficiency of the feature makes it necessary to be appropriated by the modern editor in carry out editing tasks. Using the word processor makes it possible for the writers and editors to have an idea about the final outlook of the manuscript.

Suggestions

1. Editors of academic works must try to upgrade their skills in the use of modern computer tools, application and devices in carrying out the task of editing scholarly works.
2. Publishers must endeavour to provide the necessary computer tools, applications and devices to help editors within the organisation to perform their editing tasks.
3. Editors should endeavour to read their works in Read Mode or in such forms where they can visibly identify proofing errors which might have gone unnoticed in the course of the editing task.
4. In editing or making Reviewer Comments, editors must endeavour to be brief so as not to confuse the writer of the draft. Long and often confusing remarks do not help the writer in resolving the queries in the draft.
5. Abbreviations or unconventional typographical tricks used on the drafts in the course of the editing should be explained to the writer by way of notes.

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