The Craft and Business of Language Editing and Copyediting

Continuing professional education is vital for an author’s editor and can include annual meetings like CSE’s; web-based instruction; audio conferences; online courses from an editorial freelancers association; university editing certificate programs; reading science, editing, and publishing blogs; and webinars.

Kurt Spurlock talked about what it’s like to work with a large author-services company. On the business side, because the company is responsible for finding customers, the amount of available work is not entirely within an editor’s control. This means that papers to edit could sometimes be scarce, though establishing—and maintaining—relationships with customers is itself a lot of work and may not appeal to every editor. In addition, basic business interactions such as securing customer payments are taken care of by the company, and there is consistency in what editors are paid. Editors enjoy the reliability of a paycheck that arrives on time and an accounting department to handle problems. Technological advantages of working for a company are that it provides the website interface for authors and editors use the same portal for uploading and downloading manuscripts as authors use.

On behalf of second-language English speakers, an audience member spoke about concerns of cost and timeliness when using an editing service and suggested authors use a service such as Grammarly, which is inexpensive and easy to use. O’Moore-Klopf cautioned that such programs cannot understand the nuances of language and ideas that a human being can handle much better. Finally, O’Moore-Klopf was asked how she set the pace when working with many clients, and she replied, “I have many years of experience, so I know how fast I can edit.” She offers to do two rounds of editing to limit costs and asks to see the manuscript first so she can make a ballpark estimate and let authors know what to expect.

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