

For Clients: Editing Workflow

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<http://fidlnfree.com/editor/edit.html>

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This document is in progress. Here is what I have now. My purpose in this document is to give you, a prospective or current client, an overview of my editing philosophy and how I generally work with clients. I also provide specific instructions on my simple but effective version control system. Producing a well written and edited manuscript is a collaborative process that usually entails several exchanges of the document. Keeping track of the most recent version and who worked on it last is critical.

Just a note on my tools: This document was produced using LyX, which is a frontend for LaTeX, a document processing package that is popular with authors who need to represent mathematical equations. This video gives a good overview of the two in the first 3 minutes. However, I usually use conventional word processing software, notably MS Word (2011 currently) or Libre Office.

ToC

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1 Some Thoughts on Writing and Editing

Every writer needs an editor. Editors who write need an editor. I need an editor for my own writing. Errors that my eye goes right to in someone else's writing pass undetected by multiple readings of my own work. Other editors tell

me they have a similar experience. So, there's no shame in needing an editor; writers good and bad need one.

I emphasize this because it often seems to me that writing is mystified as this magical skill that only some special people have. This belief prevents too many of us from writing because we believe we aren't that special kind of person. But no one is born a good writer; good writers are made, by good teachers and by their own persistent practice (and, I would add, by reading). There is a story (probably apocryphal) of a graduate student saying to a visiting professor after her presentation, "You're such an amazing writer. How do you do it?" Her reply is, "First I write it, then I rewrite it, then I rewrite it, then I self-edit, then I give it to an editor, then I rewrite it, then I..." You get the idea. We get better at it, faster and more efficient, with practice, but there is no magic pill that we can take to spew forth brilliant writing on the first try. Not that this doesn't occasionally happen (it's glorious!), but for the most part, good writing is the product of assiduously practiced craft... and strategic collaboration with a good editor or writing coach.

When is the right time to give your work to an editor? Anytime, if what you want is coaching in writing. If more conventional editing is what you're after, it is generally best to do everything you can to complete the manuscript before handing it over. The editing process will not only fix errors but provide fresh input that will hopefully push your writing and thinking forward. Which brings up an important point: Contrary to the common notion that we write down the things we already think, writing for most of us is a process of discovering and developing what we think. It is an intrinsically reiterative process and it is also intrinsically social and collaborative. A piece of writing may start in the mind of one individual, but its reason for being brought into being is to create shared meaning and reaching for shared meaning is an ongoing and social process of discovery. The first step of that process is often sharing your writing with your editor.

I can improve the clarity, precision, and flow of almost anyone's writing at the sentence and paragraph level. Well, okay, not Shakespeare or Judith Butler or Doris Lessing, and certainly not any poets, but for most people's writing, yes. I can also help you organize and shape your argument, in non-fiction work, and help you see where you need more evidence or how you can make better use of your sources, and so forth. I can also ensure that your manuscript is correctly formatted per the publisher's requirements. And I'm a compulsive proofreader, so that's pretty much going to happen no matter what. In the list below I included "Writing and Content Creation" because, often in the course of developmental and content editing, I find myself contributing short chunks of new writing to fill out a point or make a suggested connection. Of course, when I work on projects in fields I have no level of expertise in I definitely do not try to add content, but if it is a field that draws on the common well of cultural theory in the humanities and social sciences I will throw in my two cents, as a suggestion, when it seems appropriate.

I view our work as collaborative and I will actively engage you about your ideas and rhetorical strategies. This is a fancy way of saying I will probably

get in your face and be annoying. Sometimes I think that it is an editor's job to tell people stuff they don't want to hear. I know that as a writer I have certainly been guilty of a crabby response to editorial input—it's right there! I said it black and white! Hmmph! Then I take a breath and realize that, if I can't communicate effectively to my editor maybe I need to do a bit more work. But, at the end of the day, it's your project and you get to have it your way. My job is to help you make it the best piece of writing possible.

2 Types of Editing

[in progress]

Developmental and Content Editing

Writing and Content Creation

Copyediting

Proofreading

3 The Editing Process

The process of editing is a conversation and negotiation between the author(s) and the editor(s) at every step of the way.

1. *Conversation and Negotiation:*

- (a) Initially, we will discuss the project and your needs to determine what type of editing I will provide, and to negotiate the timetable and my fee. I will (usually) compile these understandings into a Letter of Agreement, so that we have a written record to refer to. I will commence work once you have approved the Letter via email and sent me the manuscript and any supporting documents. Once we have agreed that I will edit your document here is what

2. *Filenaming Convention:*

- (a) This is a simple, seat of the pants version control system.
 - i. When I receive your file—**Yourlastname-Projectname.docx**—I rename it **Yourlastname-Projectname_1BT.docx** before I begin working on it. (If your doc is not already named in the format of **Yourlastname-Projectname** I will change it.)
 - ii. Once I have completed my first pass edit of this renamed document I will send **Yourlastname-Projectname_1BT.docx** back to you. When you receive it—before working on it—rename the file to **Yourlastname-Projectname_2XY.docx** (XY = your initials) and edit this copy of the document.

- iii. When you have completed your edits send the file back to me. I will rename it **Yourlastname-Projectname_3BT.docx** before I begin to edit.
- iv. We will continue passing the file back and forth, renaming it each time, until we have a finished manuscript. This system works for three or more editors and/or authors as long as only one person at a time is working on the document. So, in the example below, LM is the second author who goes through the manuscript after XY and I have done a first and second pass. Each author/editor will have a copy of all versions of the file and they will line up in order in your file manager (if the folder is sorted by file name). Thus it will be readily apparent which file is the most recent version and who worked on it last.

File List:	
	Yourlastname-Projectname_1BT.docx
v.	Yourlastname-Projectname_2XY.docx
	Yourlastname-Projectname_3BT.docx
	Yourlastname-Projectname_4LM.docx
	Yourlastname-Projectname_5BT.docx

- vi. If you want additional information in the filename, place it after (to the right of) the initials in order to preserve the sort order.

3. *Track Changes:*

- (a) Do everything with Track Changes on.
- (b) Go through the document. Please read carefully: consider each sentence-level, as well as paragraph-level edit. What you are looking for is anyplace where I have changed your meaning, as well as anywhere you can, in light of my editing, clarify your point.
- (c) Clear all the sentence level edits that you agree with. (See my Quick and dirty Track Changes Tutorial below.)
- (d) Change any misunderstandings to be correct (with Track Changes on) and (preferably) write me a comment/question.
- (e) Respond to my comments and questions.
 - i. This is a discussion between you and I, and the doc may go back and forth a few times. If necessary we can video chat.
- (f) Don't worry about assigning colors for each editor.
 - i. This is not something we can control. If you want my bubbles to always be red and yours to always be green, you're going to be frustrated. The colors that distinguish individual editors can be different each time you open the document. So, the first time I work on the doc my bubbles are red, but when you send it back to me my bubbles might be blue or orange. If you restart your computer and open the doc your bubbles will (likely) be a different color.

- ii. It is possible to specify a persistent color for all the comment bubbles. I typically do this to make the comment bubble easier to distinguish.
 - (g) Note that you can control which bubbles are displayed. See the next section for details.
4. Please do not change any of the formatting. Once I start editing the manuscript we are committed to that document file. In the course of editing there are a number of little things that I change in the formatting and mechanics that I don't track. For example, I delete all double spaces after periods and make sure all periods and commas are inside quotation marks. I do this because these are not things you, the author, need to make a decision on and it reduces bubble clutter.

4 Quick and Dirty Track Changes Tutorial

[in progress]

5 My Fees

I charge \$30 per hour for editing (all types) and \$40 per hour for writing, content creation, and research. In the normal course of editing I often find myself writing a few sentences here and there to flesh out a point or illustrate what I think the author might be trying to say. I consider this to be part of editing. If I am writing entire paragraphs or doing more than doublechecking quotations then I am creating content for you and I will charge that time at the higher rate. We will, of course, discuss this when we agree on my scope of work.

Naturally, you want to have some reasonably accurate idea of how much my editing services are going to cost. I find that it works best, on any project, if we discuss expectations up front. What is your budget? Do I feel I will be able to do what I consider a good job within the budget/time constraints? How can we define the scope of work to stay within that budget? For larger projects I will sometimes negotiate a flat or time-not-to-exceed fee.

6 Bonus Quiz

Since I'm writing this document in LyX I thought I would share the fanciest formula I ever need. One free hour of editing to anyone who can identify what this formula does! (Hint: ♪)

$$c=1200\log_2\left(\frac{f_2}{f_1}\right)$$