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Hire a Copy Editor

by Dan Poynter

The copy edit is clean up work. Once the manuscript is complete you become more concerned with punctuation, grammar and style. Now is the time to make your information more readable.

There is no such thing as a publishable first draft.
—William Targ, bookseller, collector, editor and publisher.

There is nothing wrong with unpolished writing, but there is no excuse for not having it cleaned up by an editor. Hire a wordsmith, a grammarian, a picky English pro. Look for them in the *Yellow Pages* under "writing". Ask for them in places where people work with words: check writing clubs, local colleges and ask at photocopy shops (or see the sidebar in this article). Interview several editors and get referrals from satisfied customers.

The editor returned the manuscript and the pages were filled with red marks. Attached was an apologetic note saying, "I am sorry for the mess but I thought you would want to know about the errors." The author called the editor and thanked her. "I would much rather that you find the mistakes now than have my readers find them later."

When you publish a book, it's the world's book. The world edits it.
—Philip Roth, *New York Times Book Review*.

I trust my editors. To save time, I send the file attached to email rather than the manuscript on paper. That way I do not have to enter the corrections to the manuscript. The editor edits and corrects at the same time.

Each book presents a different challenge. Some require punctuation corrections while others demand a rewrite. According to Brenner Information Group, editors average sixty-one hours of work per book. Yes, editing is a *rewording* activity.

(sidebar)

Editing and Proofreading

Quinn's Word For Word, Robin Quinn, 10573 West Pico Blvd. #345, Los Angeles, CA 90064. Tel: (310) 838-7098; quinnrobin@aol.com.

Media + (Media Plus), Judith Kessler, 828 Westbourne Drive, West Hollywood, CA 90069. Tel: 310-360-6393; Fax: 310-360-0093; jude001@earthlink.net.

Your book is a member of your family. You want the very best for it. Give it a checkup and dress it well so you can be a proud parent.

 **Writing periodicals:**

Dan Poynter does not want you to die with a book still inside you. You have the ingredients and he has your recipe. Dan has written more than 100 books since 1969 including *Writing Nonfiction* and *The Self-Publishing Manual*. For more help on book writing, see <http://ParaPub.com>.

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 **Book Publishing periodicals:**

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Dan Poynter has written more than 100 books since 1969 including *Writing Nonfiction* and *The Self-Publishing Manual*. He is past-chair of NSA's Writer-Publisher PEG and the founder of the PEG newsletter. For more help on book writing, publishing and promoting, see <http://ParaPublishing.com>.

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(Note to the editor: It is REWORDING not REWARDING). 😊