

february 2008

# WEST COAST EDITOR

NEWSLETTER OF THE BC BRANCH OF THE EDITORS' ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

THE  
BOOK  
IS  
DEAD

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# WEST COAST EDITOR

February 2008

West Coast Editor is the newsletter of Editors' Association of Canada, BC Branch (EAC-BC). It is published eight times a year: September, October, November, January, February, March, April, and May. Views expressed in these pages do not necessarily reflect those of EAC or EAC-BC.

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# EDITOR'S VIEW

Welcome to the February issue of West Coast Editor. Since 1999, when Bill Gates predicted that sales of e-books would equal those of paper books within 10 years, anxiety levels in the publishing industry have been on the rise.

Lately, however, anxiety levels have peaked, flooding onto the pages, screens, and airwaves of the media. You can't open a newspaper, news portal, magazine, or e-zine and you can't turn on your television, satellite radio, iPhone, or BlackBerry without reading "The Book Is Dead. Long Live Facebook!"<sup>1</sup> or "Apocalypse Soon."<sup>2</sup> After a few minutes of this, you're convinced that books are going digital and print is dead.

Consequently, we decided we simply couldn't put it off any longer: we had to weigh in on the issue. Is the book dead? Is print obsolete? Should we shut down all the printing presses and start looking for new jobs?

In this issue you'll find "Long Live the Book" (pages 6-7), an article that posits there will always be a market for books, no matter what their format. You'll also find a selection of excerpts ("It's Dead!" page 8; "It's Alive!" page 9) in which various writers, editors, and business people declare their allegiance to the print book. Or not. Finally, you'll find "Alinguicity: The Real Threat" (page 5), an article that advises us not to worry about how people choose to "consume their books." Worry instead about the rise of the alinguistic adult and the devastating effect it will have on all books—both print and digital.

One last note. The "Choose your Wheels" competition closes on February 20, 2008. There is still time to submit your 50-word entry to westcoasteditor@editors.ca telling us which vehicle epitomizes either the BC editor or the BC writer (or each or both). Winners will be announced in the March issue.

1. "The Book Is Dead. Long Live Facebook!" Mark Booth, <http://www.booktrade.info/index.php/showarticle/13066>, accessed January 30, 2008
2. "Apocalypse Soon," Jon Evans, *The Walrus*, September 2007

# FEATURE WRITERS

**Jeanne Ainslie** ("Long Live the Book," pages 6-7) is managing editor of West Coast Editing and public relations co-chair of EAC-BC.

Jeanne is also a published author of novels and articles and is currently writing a non-fiction book entitled *Who's Your Daddy: Men Who Drive Women Crazy*.

**Hugh Macdonald** ("Alinguicity: The Real Threat," page 5) is a poet, playwright, and editor. He is also a jack of miscellaneous trades, having worked as a technical writer, a methods analyst, and a writer of puff pieces for a weekly newspaper. He is currently editing a series of online training courses and is writing his second play.

Since his first conversation with a stranger on June 15, 1949, he has been obsessed with saying what is meant and meaning what is said.

## Canadians Still Buy Books

“The retail book business in Canada generates annual sales in excess of \$1.5-billion, much of them through one company—Indigo Books and Music—but overall sales through traditional book retailers are ‘flat’ at a time when Canadian publishers are releasing more new titles than ever.

...

“Are there too many books, especially new books, in the market? The Turner-Riggs study suggests that may be the case. While Canadians, unlike Americans, continue to be book buyers and readers (average time spent reading: 4.5 hours a week; average number of books read each year: 17; percentage of Canadians who buy at least one book a year: 81), they have been faced with a steady increase in the number of new Canuck titles available to them.”

Source: “Canadian book industry ‘flat’ as titles flood market,” James Adams, *The Globe and Mail*, February 2, 2008

## Illiteracy Rules

The *Globe and Mail* columnist Michael Kesterton reports that “some pundits think that the printed word will eventually be a quaint relic...”

Citing futurist William Crossman, he says that voice-in/voice-out computers “will allow the world’s millions of functionally non-literate people to access all information via the Internet and the Web without having to learn to read and write. Our great-great-grandchildren won’t know how to write or read text, and it won’t matter. They will become as skilfully ‘literate’ in the information technology of their generation as we are in ours.”

Source: “Social Studies: A Daily Miscellany of Information,” Michael Kesterton, *The Globe and Mail*, September 4, 2007

## Not Dead Yet

“The report of my death was an exaggeration.”

Mark Twain, 1897

Source: *Concise Dictionary of Quotations*, Wm Collins Sons & Co, 1986

## Ludic Reading is...

...a “trance-like state that heavy readers enter when consuming books for pleasure...” For years, researchers at Microsoft have attempted to understand how print books draw readers into this “rabbit hole of absorption.” The term was coined by Victor Nell in *Lost in a Book*.

Source: “The Future of Reading,” Steven Levy, *Newsweek*, November 26, 2007



## Drive-by Editorializing



“...with a gun in the library,” Cheryl Hannah, December 2007

## EDITOR'S INBOX

### Technological breakthrough: bio-optic organized knowledge device

BOOK is a revolutionary breakthrough in technology: no wires, no electric circuits, no batteries, nothing to be connected or switched on. It's so easy to use that even a child can operate it. Compact and portable, it can be operated anywhere (even sitting in an armchair by the fire), yet it is powerful enough to hold as much information as a CD-ROM.

BOOK is constructed of sequentially numbered sheets of paper, each capable of holding thousands of bits of information. The pages are locked together with a custom-fit device called a "Binder" that keeps the sheets in sequence. Opaque Paper Technology (OPT) allows manufacturers to use both sides of the sheets, thus doubling information density and cutting costs. Experts are divided on the prospects for further increases in information density; for now, BOOKs with more information simply require more pages.

Here's how it works. Users navigate from sheet to sheet by "flicking" their fingers. A standard Browse feature allows users to instantly navigate to any sheet. Many BOOKs come with an Index feature that pinpoints the location of any information and allows for instant retrieval. BOOK never crashes or requires rebooting, although, like other devices, it can become damaged if coffee is spilled on it, and it will become unusable if it is dropped too many times on hard surfaces.

An optional BOOKmark accessory allows you to open BOOK to the exact place you left it in a

previous session—even if BOOK has been closed. BOOKmarks fit universal design standards; thus a single BOOKmark can be used in BOOKs of all manufacturers. Users can also make personal notes next to BOOK text entries with optional programming tools called Portable Erasable Nib Cryptic Intercommunication Language Styli (PENCILS).

Portable, durable, and affordable, BOOK is being hailed as a precursor of a new entertainment wave. BOOK's appeal seems so certain that thousands of content creators have committed to the platform and investors are reportedly flocking to invest. Look for a flood of new titles soon.

*This email has been languishing in my Inbox for years. While I have found versions of it all over the Internet, I have not been able to verify authorship. —Ed.*

### 4.5 megabytes is huge

Thanks for the latest issue of West Coast Editor. I'm sure I shall enjoy reading it, but is there any way that the size of the PDF file being sent out can be reduced? 4.5 MB is HUGE!

*Penny Gray-Allan,  
West Vancouver*

*We will try to restrict the size of the West Coast Editor PDF edition to 3MB or less. —Ed.*

### Huge email attachments

[Have you considered posting] West Coast Editor on the BC section of the editors.ca website? I am sure that a

bit of programming could be done to make the magazine accessible only to members (use the Members' Area log-in to view it). The email would then be just a sentence or two to let us know that the latest edition is on the site. No more huge email attachments....

*Lynn Kisilenko,  
Vancouver*

*For the past several months, we've been unable to upload West Coast Editor to the EAC-BC page of the editors.ca website. Please bear with us: we hope to have the problem fixed within the next couple of weeks. —Ed.*

### Gift-toting cover art

Since the publication of the West Coast Editor Winter 2007 issue, several people have asked me where they can buy the glamorous gift-toting light bulb lady that appeared on the cover. Sadly, I have no idea. As you know, West Coast Editor operates on a limited budget and I build the cover art out of things found lying around my home, office, or the homes of unsuspecting family and friends! The light bulb lady was created out of two old Christmas tree ornaments. —Ed.



*Please send "Editor's Inbox" email to channah@editors.ca. Email may be edited for clarity or length.*

# ALINGUISITY: THE REAL THREAT

*Wake up! The problem is bigger than mere print.*

BY HUGH MACDONALD

We hear a lot these days about the future of the book: the book is dead, the book is alive, the book is irrelevant. But I think everyone is missing the point. While I agree that the future of the book is important, I believe we are facing a far greater problem: the emergence of the alinguistic<sup>1</sup> adult. If society drifts into alinguicity, the question as to whether we read our books in print or digital format will be irrelevant: people might be able to read the words, but they will be unable to understand what they mean.

## Alinguicity defined

By alinguistic adult, I do not mean someone who uses the tedious filler words, non-standard grammar, and coarse language seen in the following: “Like man can you like tell me where the bus stop is?” and “Pass me them \*#~^>% bolts over thar, will ya.” Both examples are entirely comprehensible. I mean someone who has very limited ability to convey meaning and an equally limited ability to understand simple declarative statements—in other words, someone who is linguistically incompetent.

Forty years ago, if someone asked me for the location of the local branch of the Humongous Universal Bank,<sup>2</sup> I could say, “Go to the corner, turn left, and you’ll find it in the middle of the block.” My questioner would then proceed to do exactly that.

Today, there is a reasonable chance the same instruction will produce a blank look: my questioner will then accost someone else, ask for instructions again, and then proceed in the wrong direction. There is also a very good chance that my questioner will not be able to formulate the query intelligibly and I will have to ask a number of

questions to determine that “the, you know, the place like where you get the money” is the Humongous Universal Bank and not the We Gut Your Pay Cheque Cash Store<sup>3</sup> nor the Usurious Friendly Loan Against Your Wages Emporium.<sup>4</sup>

So I was not surprised when George Bush confirmed his linguistic incompetence last year by referring to APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) as OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) and by referring to the Australian troops serving in Iraq as Austrian. We live in an image-driven world that sells everything from cat food to economic policy using a combination of fast-moving frame shots and meaningless cachet words. Mr. Bush is simply a man of his time.

## Origins of alinguicity

In *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, Neil Postman suggests this phenomenon began with the invention of photography and continued with the development of television and motion pictures. But perhaps George Orwell illustrated it best in “The Principles of Newspeak,” his appendix to *1984*, when he described the purpose of newspeak as “not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of IngSoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible.”

Over the past century, society has devolved to the point where Orwell’s fictional nightmare is becoming real, not by way of Oceania’s brutal and crudely primitive techniques, but by seduction. Over the past century, we have been seduced by increasingly sophisticated advertising that relies on images accompanied by language

that, in courts of law, has been proven meaningless: neither truth nor lie. Other agents of seduction include politicians (who have always known how to say nothing in 1,000 words or more and are better at it than ever), corporate public relations staff (who are just as adept as the politicians and sometimes more so), and television (the universal and pre-eminent medium for delivering meaningless speech).

We shouldn’t allow ourselves to be caught up in the debate over how people choose to consume their books. Instead, we should ask ourselves whether a largely alinguistic population can survive. Literate and illiterate, for the last 50,000 years<sup>5</sup> we have at least been linguistically competent: it is difficult to imagine us having achieved the scientific knowledge and technological sophistication of today without that proficiency. While my generation will not live to see if these speculations are valid, my infant grandson’s generation may do so: something I do not wish upon him. So what should we do? I have no idea. I feel much as an Ancient Roman, circa 500 CE, would have felt: aware my culture is dying and equally aware I am unable to resuscitate it. 🙄

## Author notes

- <sup>1</sup> To my knowledge, no major dictionary contains this word. I’ve encountered it only in a reference to a paper titled “The Alinguistic Child,” published in a 1974 issue of the journal *Mental Retardation*.
- <sup>2</sup> In the spirit of impartiality, I have created a generic bank, thus forestalling any allegations against EAC-BC of touting specific institutions. One cannot be too careful.
- <sup>3</sup> See note 2.
- <sup>4</sup> See note 3.
- <sup>5</sup> Some thinkers suggest a much longer period: possibly several hundred thousand years. The controversy over when we began to speak can be strident and sometimes downright hostile.

# LONG LIVE THE BOOK

*Can print survive in a digital world?*

BY JEANNE AINSLIE

“The book is dead. Long live the book.” In 2006, media consultant Jeff Jarvis caused a firestorm in the publishing industry when he wrote these words in his *Media Guardian* column, arguing that the book is an outdated means of communicating information and that “any medium that defines itself by its medium is in trouble: newspapers, broadcasting and books must be valued for their substance over their shape.”

It’s no secret: the world has been bitten by the digital superbug. Everywhere we look, we see the evidence. Commuters get their local news via satellite instead of terrestrial radio or tune out altogether and receive their daily morning news on their iPhones. Analog music has been all but wiped out. Even Luddites who refuse to give up their landlines make their phone calls through digital networks.

So what does this mean for that artifact from the Gutenberg era, the print book? Will the new digital technology mean the eradication of the old? Will reading a print book become a nostalgic act enjoyed by a niche group of people who cling to the tactile and olfactory experience of flipping through the pages of a book? Is the print book dead?

## **A book by any other name**

Before we ask ourselves if the book is dead, we need to first define what we mean by “book.” Do we mean the content and information contained within its pages, or do we mean the paper-and-ink-based technology? In other words, is a book less of a book when it is digitized?

Some argue that the process of digitizing a book changes how people interact with it—the information is constantly updated, corrected, and discussed through links to related knowledge databases—and, therefore, creates an entirely new entity. This, of course, is an extension of “the medium is the message” argument first proposed by Marshall McLuhan in his seminal book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. According to McLuhan, because the medium of film and TV changes the content, the medium is more important than the meaning or content.

However, if the message (i.e. the book content) is not changed when the medium changes, then “the book” remains. The book in this process can be seen as a fossil that is preserved in another form (print to digital), such as bone to limestone or leaf to amber. And just as fossils are subject to the effects of water and pressure, so, too, are digitized books subject to continual refinement.

This view that a book is a book, no matter what its technology, appears widespread as witnessed by the ambitious project of a universal library currently underway by Google and Columbia University libraries. These projects seek not to kill the book but merely to change its technology; according to a current posting on google.com, “our goal is to improve access to books—not to replace them. Indeed, we’re working closely with publishers to develop new tools and opportunities for selling books online.”

## **Best of breed**

However, if the digitization of books does not signify the death of books, does it signify the end of Gutenberg’s paper-and-ink technology? Apparently not, according to Brian Napack, president of Holtzbrinck Publishers, who recently said, “Books are not obsolete, nor are magazines, nor textbooks. Our role as publishers is to publish information, entertainment, education, and ideas in whatever media and formats are appropriate.”

In fact, the print book is emerging as the preferred choice when reading for pleasure since novels and magazines are convenient reading in bed, at airports, or at the beach.

The digital book (and by extension the entire resources of the Internet with its vast stores of easily updated information) is emerging as the preferred choice when reading for information. Credit Suisse analyst Gary Balter recently told investors, “Book retailing is an industry with very little if any growth as the Internet becomes the first source to answer most questions and offers books for lower prices.”

### **The threat is real**

No matter how you approach the topic of digitization, the publishing industry fears it. At the October 2007 Frankfurt Book Fair, more than 1,300 publishers, retailers, agents, and librarians were asked to identify the challenges and threats faced by the publishing industry and to predict emerging trends and areas of growth. More than 53% of respondents identified “digitization” as the biggest challenge and 50% identified “competition from other media and sources of entertainment” as the biggest threat (see sidebar.)


Another threat to the print book comes from the very real possibility that reading for pleasure is in decline. In a recent report based on approximately two dozen studies of government data, the National Education Association concluded that reading for pleasure is in decline. Similarly, critic-at-large Caleb Crain wrote in the *The New Yorker* article “Twilight of the Books” that “there is no reason to think that reading and writing are about to become extinct, but some sociologists speculate that reading books for pleasure will one day be the province of a special ‘reading class’.” Caleb further remarked, “many Americans prefer to learn about the world and to entertain themselves with television and other streaming media, rather than the printed word.”

### **The future of print**

Frankfurt Book Fair respondents were also asked to identify major growth areas in the coming years. And once again, digitization topped the list, with 44% of respondents naming e-books and 41% naming audio books as major areas of growth (see sidebar.)

Print and digital information can co-exist to their mutual benefit. One technology does not replace the other: instead each new technology gives us more choices about how we communicate. Do we drive or fly? Do we watch TV or go to a movie? Read a book or search the Internet?

In fact, digital books enhance the value of print books by promoting computer-powered literacy to people who do not have access to libraries or bookstores. Additionally, new technologies are retrieving print, with the Project Gutenberg website alone ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)) averaging 2,000,000 digital book downloads per month. Finally, digital books are a boon for authors whose works are unpublished, out of print, or out of stock. “Far from the web reducing the number of readers,” says Sue Thomas, Professor of New Media at De Montfort University, “it is giving text the biggest boost since Gutenberg.”

But digital books will never replace print books for readers who love the tactile, sensory experience of reading. The book is alive, and new technology does not necessitate the eradication of the old: reading the latest cell phone novel or spending time on Facebook simply cannot replicate the sensory experience and feeling of sanctuary that comes with turning through pages of print. Long live the book. 

### **Biggest challenges**

- digitization (53%)
- increasing globalization (24%)
- user-generated content (22%)
- territorial rights battles (15%)

### **Biggest threats**

- competition from other media and sources of entertainment (50%)
- over-publishing (31%)
- piracy (23%)
- literacy levels (17%)

### **Major areas of growth**

- e-books (44%)
- audio books (41%)
- books in translation (27%)
- educational publishing (27%)
- graphic novels/comics (18%)
- children’s literature (17%)
- commercial fiction (15%)
- literary fiction (10%)
- poetry (3%)

Source: “Frankfurt Book Fair survey reveals the challenges facing the book industry worldwide,” Frankfurt Book Fair press release, [http://www.buchmesse.de/en/presse\\_pr/pressemitteilungen/details/16110/content.html](http://www.buchmesse.de/en/presse_pr/pressemitteilungen/details/16110/content.html), accessed February 6, 2008

# IT'S DEAD!

"...It is worth remembering that paper is only the latest in a long line of reading 'technologies' that were made obsolete each time an improved solution emerged. Pictures drawn on rock gave way to clay tablets with cuneiform characters pressed into the clay before it dried. Clay gave way to animal skin scrolls marked with text, and then to papyrus scrolls. By 100ad [sic] the codex had arrived, but it was not until the ninth century that the first read paper book was produced. In Europe, paper was rare until after Gutenberg's breakthrough...."

"It is hard to imagine today, but one of the greatest contributions of e-books may eventually be in improving literacy and education in less-developed countries. Today people in poor countries cannot afford to buy books and rarely have access to a library. But in a few years, as the cost of hardware continues to decline, it will be possible to set up 'virtual' public libraries which will have access to the same content as the Library of Congress."

Source: *The World in 2000*, "Beyond Gutenberg," Bill Gates, 1999

"Until a few months ago, I was a great champion of the 'tactile experience,' of holding the thing and its art in your hands. Then I went browsing through a Borders bookstore in California, where I saw and experienced a Sony Reader.... As I stared down at the Sony Reader, for the first time in my life I could envision myself abandoning paper for digital books. It was a revelation."

Source: "Apocalypse Soon," Jon Evans, *The Walrus*, September 2007

"Microsoft's Bill Hill has a riff where he runs through the energy-wasting, resource-draining process of how we make books now. We chop down trees, transport them to plants, mash them into pulp, move the pulp to another factory to press into sheets, ship the sheets to a plant to put dirty marks on them, then cut the sheets and bind them and ship the thing around the world. 'Do you *really* believe that we'll be doing that in 50 years?' he asks."

Source: "The Future of Reading," Steven Levy, *Newsweek*, November 26, 2007

"Young people in wealthy countries have lost their interest in books, preferring instead television and Internet... a 'revolution' whose effects the world has not reflected enough upon."

Source: "Nobel laureate laments pull of Internet 'inanities'," Agence France-Presse, quoting British novelist and Nobel Laureate Doris Lessing, *The Vancouver Sun*, December 8, 2007

"Electronic book sales climbed 24 per cent in 2006 to \$54 million, according to the Association of American Publishers. They comprised less than one per cent of the \$24.2 billion in sales for U.S. publishers last year."

Source: "Is this the future of books?" Bloomberg News, with files from Kelly Sinoski, *The Vancouver Sun*, November 20, 2007

## On the Fence

"Both e-books and sheaves of paper have pros and cons. Sheaves never lose battery power; you can flip through them quickly, use them as bricks, or take them to the bath; and they are still relatively cheap. On the other hand, digital readers can store hundreds of e-books, including those available for free, and their contents can be updated, searched, and annotated."

Source: "Apocalypse Soon," Jon Evans, *The Walrus*, September 2007

"Computers may have taken over every other stage of the process—the tools of research, composition and production—but that final mile of the process, where the reader mind-melds with the author in an exquisite asynchronous tango, would always be sacrosanct, said the holdouts. In 1994, for instance, fiction writer Annie Proulx was quoted as saying, 'Nobody is going to sit down and read a novel on a twitchy little screen. Ever.' Oh, Annie. In 2007, screens are ubiquitous

(and less twitchy), and people have been reading *everything* on them—documents, newspaper stories, magazine articles, blogs—as well as, yes, novels."

Source: "The Future of Reading," Steven Levy, *Newsweek*, November 26, 2007

"Book publishing is a dinosaur industry, and there's a big scary meteor on the way.... Even the august New York Times now has more readers online than 'onpaper' (for the moment a neologism). The broadsheet's publisher, Arthur Sulzberger Jr., has speculated that in five years' time it might stop producing a print edition. Magazines are way ahead of him. Many scientific journals don't bother printing physical copies."

Source: "Apocalypse Soon," Jon Evans, *The Walrus*, September 2007



# IT'S ALIVE!

“Michael Moritz, the venture capitalist who built a personal US\$1.5-billion fortune discovering the likes of Google, YouTube, Yahoo and PayPal, and taking them public, may seem preternaturally in tune with new media. But it is the imprint of old media—books by the thousands sprawling through his California house—that occupies his mind. ‘My wife calls me the Imelda Marcos of books,’ says Mr Moritz. ‘As soon as a book enters our home it is guaranteed a permanent place in our lives.’”

Source: “Men of many words,” Harriet Rubin, National Post, September 1, 2007

“Coping with the problems of the new book market will take creative thinking from publishers, librarians, authors, and readers. But it’s clear by now that the book needs not last rites but fresh air and exercise.”

Source: “So Many Books, So Few Readers,” Edward Tenner, <http://www.princetoninfo.com/200405/40512c03.html>, accessed October 19, 2007

“...Hardly anyone tends to buy e-book readers, apart from hard-core gadget freaks. Why? Perhaps it’s because the experience of reading a real book is so different from reading text on a screen, and that tactile experience is still a big part of the attraction for book readers. Amazon’s screen uses E Ink, which makes it far easier to read than some earlier e-book devices, but at the end of the day the reality is that you’re still reading on a plastic gizmo.”

Source: “Kindle: The Kind of Device Only a Geek Could Love,” Mathew Ingram, The Globe and Mail, November 21, 2007

“...It’s not surprising, when making mental lists of the most whiz-bang technological creations in our lives, that we may overlook an object that is superbly designed, wickedly functional, infinitely useful and beloved more passionately than any gadget in a Best Buy: the book. It is a more reliable storage device than a hard disk drive, and it sports a killer user interface. (No instruction manual or ‘For Dummies’ guide needed.) And, it is instant-on and requires no batteries.”

Source: “The Future of Reading,” Steven Levy, Newsweek, November 26, 2007

“There’s something kind of comforting about a book—the texture of the paper, you can dog-ear the corners—it’s like a comfort food,’ said Patricia Schroeder, president of the Association of American Publishers. What’s more, a book can prop open a door, steady a table with a wonky leg and give off heat when it burns. Can a Kindle do that?”

Source: “Avid readers aren’t ready to curl up with a Kindle instead of a good book,” Editorial, The Vancouver Sun, November 22, 2007

“Tyler Brule had the perfect opportunity to turn his back on magazines and focus exclusively on the burgeoning electronic media in 2002 when he sold his stake in Wallpaper, the phenomenally successful publication he founded six

years earlier. Instead, he’s thrown himself back into that risky business with Monocle, a London-based journal that covers everything from politics and business to culture and design. Brule doesn’t empathize with magazine publishers who whine that they’re losing readers to digital media—he thinks they just ‘got lazy. What magazines need to do is to challenge the sector they’re in,’ says the Winnipeg-born journalist. He points to Japan and Korea, two countries that are highly digitally sophisticated but also have flourishing print sectors.

There, magazines ‘are tactile

and wonderful and doing everything that print should be doing, which is engaging you through touch,’ he says. That’s something the electronic media will never be able to do...”

Source: “World misunderstands Canada, publisher says,” Joanne Blain, The Vancouver Sun, August 24, 2007

“Book publishing...is doing just fine. Statistics Canada reported last year that book publishers took in revenue of more than \$2 billion in 2004, up 12.5 per cent from the previous survey of the industry in 2000. Profits were \$235 million, representing a profit margin of roughly 11 per cent. Two-thirds of the 330 book publishers surveyed were profitable.”

Source: “Avid readers aren’t ready to curl up with a Kindle instead of a good book,” Editorial, The Vancouver Sun, November 22, 2007

## On the Fence

“There’s a general consensus that scientific, reference and educational tomes work well as ebooks, while trade books (i.e. popular fiction and non-fiction) don’t. ‘Electronic [books] are good for content that changes quickly [and] is information based,’ says Curwin Friesen, president and Chief Operating Officer of Friesens Corporation, a book printer in Altona, Manitoba.”

Source: “Seeing Through the e-Book Threat,” Nate Hendley, [http://www.natehendley.com/writing/nh\\_sample4.html](http://www.natehendley.com/writing/nh_sample4.html), accessed October 19, 2007

# etcetera

## UPCOMING EAC-BC EVENTS

### MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM: FINANCIAL DOUBLE-HEADER

February 20, 2008

Are you wasting time looking after your own books? Not sure if you're overpaying the taxman? Want relief from your paperwork nightmare? If so, this session is for you.

The guest speaker will be Randall Orser, owner of the bookkeeping service Number Crunchers, and one of the founders of the Institute of Professional Bookkeepers of Canada.

Randall will discuss how much bookkeeping is reasonable for a small-business person to do for herself. When do you call in the bookkeeper? And how much to you leave to the bookkeeper before you bring in the accountant? What can an accountant do that a bookkeeper can't—or shouldn't—do?

Randall will also discuss some oft-overlooked deductions and strategies that every independent editor and writer should be aware of.

We will draw for a door prize at the end of the evening. The winner will receive free admission to one EAC-BC workshop.

Time: 7:30 pm

Cost: Free for EAC members; \$10 for non-members; \$5 for students with valid ID.

Where: YWCA Health and Wellness Centre  
535 Hornby Street  
Welch Room, 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
Vancouver

YWCA is located on the west side of Hornby Street between Dunsmuir and Pender, one block northeast of the Burrard SkyTrain Station. Parking for the evening is available across the street for \$4.00 after 6:00 pm. Street parking is also available although it is metered until 8:00 pm.

Information: [www.editors.ca/branches/bc/meetings.html](http://www.editors.ca/branches/bc/meetings.html) or [bcprograms@editors.ca](mailto:bcprograms@editors.ca)

### WORKSHOP: EDITING FICTION FROM THE INSIDE OUT

March 1, 2008

Instructor: Lois Peterson

See the notice on page 12 for more details.

Where: SFU Harbour Centre Campus  
515 West Hastings Street, Room 7000  
Vancouver

Information: [www.editors.ca/branches/bc/workshops](http://www.editors.ca/branches/bc/workshops) or contact Christine McPhee or Ricki Ewings at [bcworkshops@editors.ca](mailto:bcworkshops@editors.ca)

### SPRING 2008 EAC-BC WORKSHOPS

April 12, 2008: Clear and Concise:  
Guidelines for Style  
Instructor: Frances Peck

May 3, 2008: Essential Research  
Skills for Editors  
Instructor: Susan Safyan

## NEW EAC-BC MEMBERS

A WARM WELCOME TO ALL

Melodie Anderson, Vancouver  
Sara Boddy, Nelson  
Kathryn Britt, Vancouver  
Fred-Eric deRosa, New Westminster  
Angel Desjarlais, New Westminster  
Amanda Goldrick-Jones, Vancouver  
Jennifer Hepburn, Burnaby  
Julia Horel, Vancouver

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM PAST EAC EVENTS DECEMBER 1, 2007 WORKSHOP: STRATEGIES FOR BOOK EDITING

*Speaker: Mavis Andrews*

*Reviewer: Jeanne Ainslie*

Book editing is a special skill that, in addition to editor expertise, requires detailed knowledge of the process of writing fiction and non-fiction. So I was pleased to attend Mavis Andrews' Strategies for Book Editing workshop this past December at SFU Harbour Centre Campus.

In a comprehensive and detailed examination of the strategies and techniques for book editing, Mavis advised us to see the book the same way the author does and to do as little as possible to make it as strong as possible. Our job is not to rewrite—it's not our book.

Additionally, Mavis reminded us that we need to know the expectations of genre. In fiction, for instance, plot, character, setting, and voice are important. We need to look for a plausible plot, engaging characters, details of setting, and a unique voice. In non-fiction, however, relevance of subject, structure, content, and readability are important.

In an exercise designed to explore the requirements of a variety of genres, Mavis invited several of us to go to the blackboards, where, prompted by fellow workshop members, we wrote down expectations of the following genres:

- self-help and how-to,
- autobiography and biography,
- memoir,
- historical and travel,
- children's,
- academic.

Some of the expectations related to stylistic editing, while others to structural or substantive editing. Mavis advised us to use these expectations to analyze missing or weak factors and to consider these expectations when editing other specialized fields such as science, medicine, and technology.

#### **FEBRUARY 2, 2008 WORKSHOP: ON-SCREEN EDITING**

*Speaker: Joanna Gould*  
*Reviewer: Jeanne Ainslie*

Joanna Gould presented a dynamic and informative onscreen editing workshop at SFU Harbour Centre on February 2. Overall, we learned that when it comes to online and onscreen editing, less is best. And—good news—we learned that editing onscreen and online texts opens up more employment opportunities.

Joanna began the workshop by teaching us how to adapt to the technology of onscreen editing. We learned how to navigate, how to access editing functions with menus, toolbars and key combinations, and how to access hidden characters and functions. We also discussed how to improve our efficiency.

Next, Joanna reviewed with us how to edit Word documents: how to track changes, insert notes, and format different sections of a document independently. Again, we discussed

how to improve our efficiency, and we learned how to create macros, prevent undesired word splitting, and edit with design considerations in mind.

In the last two segments of the workshop, we discussed the implications of editing text destined for an on-screen setting and how to edit website texts.

#### **NOW YOU KNOW THE TOP 5 GRAMMAR ERRORS IN MAGAZINES**

In a talk she gave to members of the BC Association of Magazine Publishers on January 26, 2008, Frances Peck discussed the top five grammar errors in magazines.

Here's the list (in random order):

1. agreement,
2. pronoun case,
3. dangling modifiers,
4. commas (defining & commenting),
5. commas (with series of adjectives).

#### **BRITISH COLUMBIANS ARE AVID READERS**

Have you heard? The pollsters at Ipsos Reid report that we British Columbians read an average of 33 titles a year. Here are the rest of the

statistics: Atlantic Canadians read an average of 22 titles a year; Ontarians, 19; Albertans, 18; Quebecers, 16; Manitobans and Saskatchewanians, 15.

Source: E/Fax-Totum, Volume 16, Number 1, Association of Book Publishers of BC, January 3, 2008

#### **CELLPHONE NOVELS SELL**

Have you heard? In Japan, cellphone novels, republished in print book form and then sold in bookstores, have “not only infiltrated the main stream, but have come to dominate it.”

Source: “Thumbs Race as Japan's Best Sellers Go Cellular,” Norimitsu Onishi, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/20/world/asia/20japan.html?th&emc=th>, accessed January 20, 2008

#### **CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS WEST COAST EDITOR SEEKS STORIES**

Ideas for articles? Contact Cheryl Hannah at [channah@editors.ca](mailto:channah@editors.ca).

April 2008: The Business of Editing  
Deadline for submissions:  
March 12, 2008

May 2008: Editing Fiction  
Deadline for submissions:  
April 16, 2008



After conducting “Grammar Bootcamp” at Camp BCAMP, Frances Peck speaks with audience members Colleen Seto and Linda Frear. *Left to right:* Frances Peck, Colleen Seto (Alberta Magazine Publishers Association), and Linda Frear (Island Parent Magazine.)

# Editing Fiction from the Inside Out

## March 1, 2008

Understanding how “story” works is the key to editing fiction. Whether you edit your own work or the work of others, this workshop is for you. In this workshop, you’ll work with author and editor Lois Peterson to gain insights into the art of effective storytelling, and to acquire strategies for interpreting “what is on the page” and determining what it still needs. You will also learn how to refine the elements that combine to convey a compelling story.

As this will be a hands-on workshop, Lois asks that you bring with you three double-spaced copies of a work in progress: the first ten pages will do.



### **Date**

Saturday, March 1, 2008, 11:00 am to 5:00 pm

### **Location**

Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre Campus  
515 West Hastings Street, Room 7000  
Vancouver

### **Cost**

\$100 for EAC members who register by Saturday, February 16, 2008  
\$120 for EAC members who register after Saturday, February 16, 2008

\$160 for non-members who register by Saturday, February 16, 2008  
\$180 for non-members who register after Saturday, February 16, 2008

### **Information**

Contact Christine McPhee or Ricki Ewings at [bcworkshops@editors.ca](mailto:bcworkshops@editors.ca)

### **Registration**

Find details about online registration and registration by mail at [www.editors.ca/branches/bc/workshops](http://www.editors.ca/branches/bc/workshops)

### **About the workshop facilitator**

Lois Peterson’s fiction has won awards and appeared in literary journals in the US, the UK, and Canada. She has more than a dozen client manuscripts to her credit, and two adult novels of her own “in the drawer.” Her latest book, *Tansy Here and Now*, is geared toward young readers and is due to be published by Orca Book Publishers in the fall. Lois has taught creative writing for more than fifteen years.