SOURCES SELECT ® *Resources*
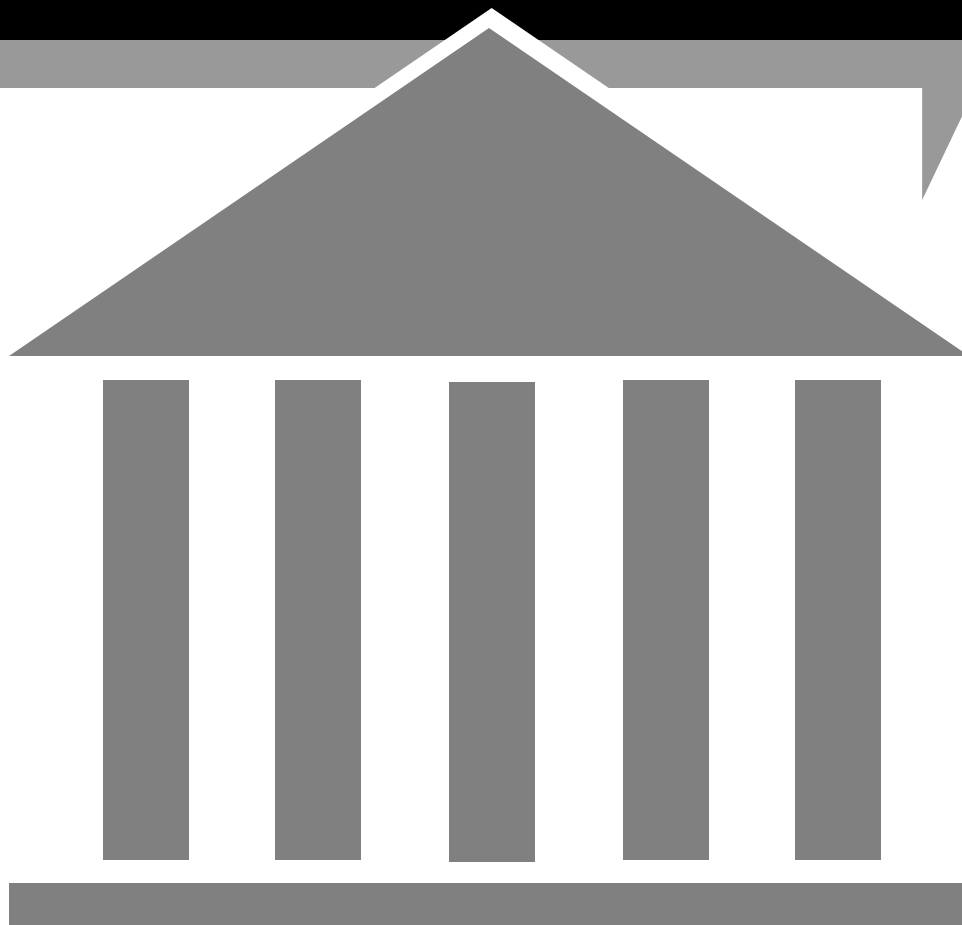
DEAN'S DIGITAL WORLD

By Dean Tudor

Help for News Junkies

Over the past few months, RSS as a Web-Internet entity has really taken hold. More people are aware of it, and more people are using it. It has even made it into mainstream media (e.g., Jack Kapica's "RSS holds promise for on-line news delivery," *Globe and Mail*, April 1, 2004: NOT an April Fool's column). A Google search shows more articles in magazines and on various Web sites. RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary or RDF Site Summary. It is a way of distributing news headlines, summaries, and weblogs on the Web. This RSS newsfeed requires a "news aggregator," a program that can read the XML (extensible markup language) coding of the news headline and opening paragraph or summary or deck. For this sub-head, it all depends on how the original news source wants to handle it. Some of the better ones will send a summary rather than a teaser. You can buy the aggregator program (shareware) at a reasonable cost or download freeware such as FeedReader (www.feedreader.com). Yahoo and Google drill-through directories will find them for you (just enter "news aggregators") and check to see which ones are free. Try one or more of the freeware until you feel comfortable with the technology, and then check the sharewares for added features that you might need. All RSS newsfeeds are usually free for private use; most are free for non-profits. Commercial operations must pay a fee.

News junkies love it…To find any story, just click on the headline, and a browser window will open for you to read the original Web site. AND NO ADS!! …until you get to the originating site… Keeping up with the news, for freelancers without the assistance of a corporate media library, has never been easier.

A good value of RSS is that it runs in the background, collecting news headlines while you work away on the Internet. Of course, you must be connected, and it helps to have broadband so that this collecting and your own work do not slow down to a crawl. You can set up the news aggregator to collect every 10 minutes through to every 10 hours. You can keep the program minimized and these headlines will pop up as a separate window, sort of like a news alert, which is what they are. Of course, you can turn this feature off, but then why are you bothering to collect news so frequently if not to check it all the time? You can specify anywhere from 5 to 50 headlines for each collection. You can archive (keep on your computer) the headlines anywhere from one session to over a month. Of course, since the headlines are connected to the original URLs, the headlines are only as good as the site's original archives. The *Toronto Sun* currently does not offer archives beyond one day, so you are out of luck if you try a URL that is more than a day old. Most papers are good for one or two weeks. Magazines and broadcast sites are extremely variable. Magazines do not put up everything, of course, and broadcasters reuse URLs constantly, in attempts to keep up to date.

Any Web site can set up an XML RSS feed: large media concerns such as the *New York Times*, CNN, CBC, right down to community papers and your next door neighbour's Weblog. Of course, there is too much news floating about, which means that you must get specific for your own needs. I am assuming that readers of this column are all journalists and writers, either employees or freelancers. I am assuming that you also have an interest in breaking stories in "news" and in subject specialties. For example, a news aggregator is perfect for a freelancer specializing in the business beat, or science, or sports. My own specialty is the wine beat, and since I got my RSS loaded, I can barely keep up with just the wine news.

Finding XML feeds is easy: there are a dozen or so major collectors that will gather news from thousands of news sources (newspapers, magazines, broadcast, blogs, etc.). You can use them for breaking or latest news, and also search—and set up—for specific topics. If all you are interested in is a specific product, such as Gothic Epicures food, then just enter that phrase, and whatever is published will be available. But since you are so specific, do not expect many hits over the course of a week. You would be better off searching for an industry. I usually search (and encode) "wine OR winery OR wineries OR winemaker" automatically catching all the plurals. This satisfies me. I even have an RSS feed patched into my Web site, so you can visit www.deantudor.com and find a link to NewsTrove's search for wine articles.

If you find a news service with an orange rectangle button somewhere on its page, that will be a free invitation to pick up a URL for the XML feed. You can cut and paste this URL into your news aggregator. I have several subscriptions to stand alone XML feeds, from the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe*

and Mail, and the CBC. You subscribe—for free—by category: each has a "national" feed, each has a "local" feed (in my case, Toronto), and each also has "business," "entertainment," "sports," "world," "breaking." I also have a Toronto Blue Jay feed; you could add your own favourite sports team. The media companies do not seem to have specific search XML feeds.

For those specific search feeds, just go over to the major collectors. An added bonus from the collectors is this: should you NOT want a news aggregator, or only have occasional use for the news, then you could just bookmark the main site of the collectors and go over once in awhile to pick up the leading stories. They will all be displayed on the page, ready for you to click through to the original site. Here are some collectors (news sources include CBC, CNN, BBC, *NY Times*, and thousands more):

www.newsisfree.com (or xml.newsisfree.com)
www.syndic8.com
www.moreover.com (or p.moreover.com)
www.newstrove.com
www.newzcrawler.com
www.blogstreet.com
www.2rss.com
www.allheadlinenews.com
www.feedster.com
www.topix.net (or rss.topix.net)
myrss.com
feedroll.com

…just pay attention to the instructions, and you are away!!

I also have single sites such as SauteWednesday, Decanter, and TizWine.

Typical subject search URLs to cut and paste will look like this:

• p.moreover.com/cgi-local/page?o=rss&c=Consumer:%20food%20and%20drink%20news

• www.allheadlinenews.com/cgi-bin/news/xml/newsxml.cgi?search=wine

• www.allheadlinenews.com/cgi-bin/news/xml/newsxml.cgi?search=winemaker

• feedster.com/search.php?q=wine+winery+wineries+winemaker&sort=date&ie=UTF-8&limit=50&type=rss

There is a special source of RSS at Voidstar. The programmer there has developed a Google application that takes any search you do at news.google.com and turns it into an RSS feed. You can have as many searches done as you wish. Here is the URL I use for wine searching:

www.voidstar.com/gnews2rss.php?num=50&q=winery+OR+wineries+OR+winemaker

Unfortunately, this developer has had a few "cease-and-desist" letters from Google, and the URL may be history after Google launches its IPO. However, in that case, Google would probably offer its own XML feed. It already has daily E-mail news alerts with URLs, based on your specific searches. The news alerts are pretty good. I still have my Google wine alerts by E-mail. During the Toronto mayoral elections in 2003, I had Google E-mail news alerts for the three leading candidates.

And speaking of Google: news has come that after the IPO, Google will unleash its version of free E-mail accounts. It will be fast, employ a full-scale search mechanism, and

offer ONE GIGABYTE of free storage. At the same time, it will offer connecting URLs to subject matter in your stored E-mails, including adverts…So there will not be any adverts, but there will be URLs directing you to the adverts. Hmmmmmm…

You will see in another place in this section the beginnings of a revitalized book review column. I just want to re-emphasize that there is a lot of knowledge packed into such book items known as "textbooks." These are usually referred to as Shelf-Help books, specializing in solutions that are supposed to be readable by college students (and hence by active journalists?). Often, they come with study guides or discussion "study" questions. And they always come with further readings and footnotes. There are a few in the book review section, but here are some other textbooks that I have been living with lately. They were sent to me by sales people at their respective publishers, for review purpose and for alerting my students to their existence. All of them can be supplemented by the free Web resources listed on my MegaSources site (up continuously since 1994), www.ryerson.ca/~dtudor/megasources.htm

First up is *Mass Communication in Canada* (Oxford University Press, 2004, 333 pages paper covers, ISBN 0-19-541804-2), now in its fifth edition. The authors are academics Rowland Lorimer from Simon Fraser and Mike Gasher from Concordia. The book was last revised in 2000 (and first published about two decades ago; I used it at that time in my Canadian News Media course at Ryerson University). It was a slighter book back in the 1980s. The authors also state this time out that their fourth edition (2000) "did not take the Internet seriously enough." Wow—I have never seen an admission like that in print…Anyway, this is a text meant for Canadians, covering all things Canadian plus some communications theory. New this time are more illustrations, readings and bibliography, annotated Web sites, and an updated glossary. And of course, it takes into account the huge impact that the Internet has had. Chapter topics deal with print journalism (mostly newspapers, not much on magazines), broadcast journalism (radio, TV, satellites, "new" media), communication law and policy and privacy in Canada, media ownership (hard to be current in this area!), and the media treatment of specific recent events such as 9/11, Canadian elections, the 2003 Iraq war. There is just one small mention of NewsWatch Canada, in a reprinted article, not an original text. Also, in reading the communications theory chapter I found the word "implicatures" defined parenthetically as "(implied meanings)." When I went to the glossary, it told me that implicatures was "implied meanings." According to the index, the word is never used anywhere else in the book. So I am no further ahead. Minor skewering aside, the book has value for its four major concerns: law and policy, media ownership, profession of journalism, and news technology. It is well worth reading.

On a more mundane but extremely useful level are computer workbooks. Most manuals supplied by software manufacturers are unreadable or bloated; the computerized versions are hampered by silly wizards. You will have to turn to computer workbook specialists for the real goods. I like *WORD 2003; basic functions* (Logitell Publishing, 2003, 344 pages, $29.95, ISBN 2-89580-146-0 paper covers, with CD-ROM ISBN 2-89580-147-9) as put together by Stella Gardonio. There is also an advanced book, as well as help for other Microsoft and WordPerfect products, all at usually just $29.95. The spiral-bound book lies flat for readability while you are engaged with a computer. The CD-ROM has seven

folders of files for the 206 (!) exercises. These you can transfer to a hard drive or diskettes, and then play around with them. Exercises are sorely lacking in regular computer manuals: how else to learn save by experience? The major topics here include how to use the Help package that comes with Word, managing files, creating a document, modifying a document, printing, formatting, moving and copying text, revising and proofreading. It gets tricky when you move on to creating and formatting tables. This is an excellent guide. It is useful, clear, logical, and inexpensive.

At the other extreme, but only on the price spectrum, is *Internet & World Wide Web; how to program*, 3rd ed. (Prentice Hall, 2004, 1535 pages paper covers, ISBN 0-13-145091-3, $118.95, with an accompanying CD-ROM) by the team of H.M. Deitel, P.J. Deitel and A.B. Goldberg. They have written other texts on Java, C++, .NET. They are international corporate trainers, so they can make it all seem so easy. This book is meant for students with little or no programming experience, for Web-based applications and object technologies. Absolutely essential if you are to forge ahead with your own Web site. The authors cover the fundamentals of markup languages (HTML, XHTML, XML), scripting languages (JavaScript, ColdFusion, Perl and CGI, Python, and others), Web servers (IIS, Apache), and relational databases (SQL). Other fundamentals are given for Web page authoring, ActiveX, security, multimedia speech synthesis, and cascading style sheets (CSS). Case studies illustrate such topics as how to build an online message board or how to build a video game. They give hundreds of examples, most with screen shots. There are extensive exercises, some with answers, in this self-guided tour. Scattered throughout are hundreds of tips on performance, portability, error-prevention, and programming errors. The CD-ROM has plug-ins (e.g. Adobe Acrobat) plus 30-day trial versions of Macromedia stuff, Microsoft Agent, and the like. Each chapter concludes with a listing of Web resources for further reading. There are plenty of appendices with character sets, number systems, codes and columns. Since the second edition, the authors have added new material on ColdFusion, Dreamweaver, and Flash. There is also extra information at www.deitel.com and www.prenhall.com/deitel, along with free newsletters, Web sites for their other books, and (pay-for) training courses via E-mail. There is something here for any journalist involved with the Internet.

And for the minimalist, there is the basic *The Basics; a rhetoric and handbook* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2004, spiral bound, ISBN 0-07-249198-1, $2 at Amazon.ca) by Santi V. Buscemi. It is touted as a clear non-technical discussion of grammar, along with other aspects of the writing process (including research). It too has exercises which have been integrated with the topics, one of the few brief handbooks with exercises for self-teaching (shelf-help). Useful for upper high school students and college attendees as well, and an inexpensive refresher for working journalists and editors.

Dean Tudor, Wine Writer and Professor Emeritus of Journalism, Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada www.ryerson.ca/~dtudor

From the

PERIODICAL WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

Copyright/Copyleft?

By Guenther Krueger

Copyright law, like what exactly goes into sausages, is one of those things we don't really want to know too much about. It's probably boring, has little to do with me, and in the end, isn't it just corporations getting more money than they deserve? Answer: yes, no, sometimes. It's always difficult to jump into the minefield of who owns what, who should pay for reproduction rights, and just exactly how does the law interpret these things anyway?

Like many things in 2004, from marriage to spam to global warming, the situation regarding copyright is in flux. As photocopying is replaced by scanning, and digital is becoming the norm, who is free to do what is a murky business. The Canadian *Copyright Act*, blueprint for all these activities, is in the process of being revised, but the law is one thing, social forces another. And rather than give you a comprehensive overview of the law (for that, I highly recommend the *Online Copyright Law Course* provided by Access Copyright), I'll explain a bit about the social forces that are polarizing debate on the issues.

What do you believe about copyright? Is it an inherent right in which creators can legally protect their hard-earned and often underpaid efforts? Or is it an erosion of democracy and a drain on culture where every time you want to use something—anything—created, you must first ask permission and then pay for it? These are not simple questions. Courts wrestle with them just as you might. It's confusing to think that travel writers submitting a piece to a national newspaper are paid a pittance only to see their work go on-line and read in Baku and Mombasa, while Time Warner Inc. and Bertelsmann discuss mergers and deals that stagger the imagination. Who is getting what? Is it deserved?

It's enough to make you throw up your hands and leave it to the federal government. That would be nice, but they're looking for feedback too. As a board member of Access Copyright, The Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency, a freelance writer, and a creator myself, I know where I stand. I want copyright protection for my work, I want Access Copyright to collect money on my behalf, and I'd like to be paid for the secondary use of my work, yes every time. But of course that's not a universally shared belief.

Copyright is part of a larger body of law dealing with intellectual property. In an increasingly global environment, interpretations are no longer purely domestic, but increasingly international. As technology changes, so do contexts. So we now have to define a work and an author and increasingly we must determine what is "public" and how much protection to afford, both here and throughout the world in an online environment.

As the world goes digital, a number of problems are emerging that will be included in upcoming legislation. These include the question of whether the Act should be amended to give rights holders an exclusive right to make their copyright material available online on an on demand basis; whether the Act should be amended to prohibit tampering with rights management information that is normally used to identify works; whether sanctions should be provided for those who circumvent technological protection measures; and finally, whether Internet Service Providers (ISPs) should be liable for copyright violations.

Creators like myself have a visceral feeling when we see our work copied illegally, mis-used out of context, or even plagiarized. We don't like it and we seek retribution. But educators and many business people have quite a different world view. The so-called Copy Left movement thinks that the public domain where works are freely available is an important part of cultural activity. Many educators in Canada believe that works should be available to all students to use as they wish. Some even argue that all creations are just recycled ideas, since there is really nothing new under the sun.

While the arguments continue, there are some things you can do. First of all, think about where you stand. Then if you're not sure, read a bit. Familiarize yourself with the work of Access Copyright or Copibec. Take the online course. Access Copyright not only collects money and distributes it back to creators and publishers, but it also takes a strong stand on all things copyright, whether it's influencing legislators or closing down illegal copyshops. Of course, if you are firmly planted in the Copy Left camp, you might not agree with everything that this non-profit organization undertakes. But most people in that group who dismiss copyright initiatives and licensing are usually not informed. They have vague ideas about who gets what and reductionist theories that are overly simplistic. I think the more you understand, the more you will agree that a balanced approach is possible.

Copyright is about equity and fairness. But it's also about how we feel about culture in Canada. If we underpay writers initially and then add insult to injury by taking their work and distributing it in lucrative databases, can we expect to read top-quality work and have a lively and articulate exchange of ideas in print? Of course not.

In the end, it's not really about whether business is hampered with expensive and cumbersome rules and regulations or whether an individual writer is paid a few pennies every time something is copied. It's about supporting those organizations that are working hard to balance everyone's needs and interests. Access Copyright, like our democratic system itself, is far from perfect, sometimes quite messy and rancorous. But it's a useful structure, an organization where all voices are heard. Like copyright itself, it's a work in process.

Guenther Krueger is a member of the Periodical Writers Association of Canada and also a member of the Board of Directors for Access Copyright.

*For more information about the Periodical Writers Association of Canada, please see their listing in this issue of **Sources**.*

From the

EDITORS' ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

Emphasis Added

By Faith Gildenhuys

We all find ourselves looking for ways to convey our oral inflections when we are writing. We convey importance by giving some words more emphasis than others—but how can we do this in print?

Everyone is faced from time to time with the temptation to emphasize importance by using capital letters. However, while capital letters in a text may appear to add significance to the words they begin, in fact, tests have shown that they can distort the message of the sentence that they are in. Reading correctly is based on expectations built up over time and graphic deviance, of which capitalization is an example, can be confusing. But so are the conventions governing when to use it and when not.

The first consideration must be the audience for whom you are writing and its traditions. Business publications are more apt to use capital letters than a film-and-video trade publication. In referring to the presence of a politician at a meeting, a business newsletter might say, "a Cabinet Minister was on hand," while the film-and-video publication might talk about "a cabinet minister."

A second consideration is aesthetic. What will the text look like if the writer uses capital letters consistently throughout? A picket fence? And then there is fashion. Currently, the trend is, whenever in doubt, to use lowercase; capitals are considered old-fashioned and conservative.

But capital letters obviously have a place, and that is in the names of things and people and their titles. The difficulties are in determining what is a title and what is not. It is definitely the Ministry of Agriculture, but the ministry, without a specifying element, is a generic term (could be any ministry). It's the writer's choice, governed by the traditions of the organization to refer to a specific ministry as the Ministry or the ministry after it has been first identified.

If the title strays from its official form, the writer must decide whether or not to capitalize; it could be the agriculture ministry or the Agriculture Ministry. The same choice presents itself with plurals. It is the Legislature of British Columbia, but it could be either the Ontario and Alberta Legislatures or legislatures.

People's titles can be confusing as well. It is definitely Premier Dalton McGuinty, but it is Gordon Campbell, the premier of British Columbia (one of a whole line of premiers). If a modifier is added before the title, it usually signals the use of lowercase: The former premier Brian Peckford.

A title standing alone that describes a role rather than the person fulfilling it is not a true title and therefore is lowercase: The lieutenant governor represents the monarch. Difficulties arise, however, with titles that are also job descriptions, such as principal, headmaster, and the like.

Directions are normally lowercase, east, west, north, south, as are seasons, spring, summer, fall and winter. But when a direction refers to a specific group of provinces, for examples, the West (BC, Alberta, etc.), it is capitalized.

And just to make things totally arbitrary, there is mine and yours. Elizabeth is Canada's Queen, but Juan Carlos is king of Spain.

As with all such ambiguities in writing, the author, in using capitalization, should study similar publications as a guide and, above all, be consistent.

Ready access via word-processing to a variety of type fonts tempts most of us to create the appearance of emphasis. *Italics* and **boldface** are the most common and we often see underlining and quotation marks used for emphasis as well. But unless you adhere to certain conventions in using them, your desire for greater clarity of expression may produce the opposite result and confuse your readers.

First, italics are more difficult to read than normal type. While you may be drawing attention to the word or phrase, the effort that your reader must put into deciphering it may mean that the sense of the phrase is masked. Then there are the special cases for italics, such as book titles and foreign words. You want to avoid using italics for emphasis in documents in which you are also italicizing titles so that the reader isn't initially confused by the word or phrase. Italics should definitely be used sparingly in Web texts, as they are extremely hard to see on a monitor.

There are certainly no problems reading boldface type but it is so distinctive that it can overshadow the adjacent text. Bold is good for headings, less useful inside the body of a document.

Underlining seems like a leftover from the days of the typewriter, when we didn't have any italic fonts available for personal use—at least not before the Selectronic typewriter. In a typescript, underlining a word or phrase alerted a typesetter that this should be set in italics. Underlining doesn't seem to have made much of a transition to the computer and is now relegated, if used at all, to headings, along with boldface.

The use of quotation marks for emphasis is slightly different from using a variety of fonts. We use quotation marks primarily for dialogue and to indicate that we are talking about the word itself, not what it means: The word "alphabet" comes from combining the first two letters of the Greek alphabet. However, it is worth noting how frequently we see common words quoted, to indicate that they are being used in some special sense, and often we're left guessing just what this sense might be. Sometimes it is slang or jargon: He gave me the "skinny" on the new account. Or a colloquial word or phrase in a more formal text: She was

"head over heels" for our business plan.

These marks draw perhaps more attention to the word or phrase than the writer intends. Before using them, ask yourself whether the word needs the marks—is the word "skinny" now so much a part of the language that it needs highlighting?—and whether greater clarity is gained by using the marks, or might be better achieved by using a different word.

The same considerations should hold for using colloquial phrases. Would "enthusiastic," without quotation marks, be a better choice than "head over heels"? Sometimes colloquial phrases liven up a document, but they should be used sparingly. And finally, in North America single quotation marks (' ') should not be used for emphasis or selection, except when quoting inside a quotation.

Faith Gildenhuys is president of the Editors' Association of Canada. She has been a freelance editor and writer since 1997, working on publications ranging from government policies and procedures manuals to non-fiction trade books to private memoirs.

For more information about the Editors' Association of Canada, please see their listing in this issue of **Sources**.

From the

CANADIAN SCIENCE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION

# The Art of Bringing Science to Fiction
A *Science Writer's Ramblings*

By Alex Brett

I spent the morning on the top of Mauna Kea in Hawaii, traipsing around a God-forsaken observatory with my buddy Morgan O'Brien, an investigator specialized in research fraud. It was no tropical vacation. The wind ripped across the summit, the dome was Arctic cold, and the first symptoms of altitude sickness—nausea and a brutal headache—had just set in. To compound our problems, no one in the observatory would talk to us despite the fact that one astronomer was dead—possibly murdered—and another had just disappeared.

So what's a nice science writer like me doing in a place like this? Or more precisely, what's a nice science writer like me doing writing stuff like this, since the above scene happened entirely in my head.

In May of 2003, the Dundurn Group in Toronto published my first Morgan O'Brien mystery, *Dead Water Creek*. After a life of working in labs or writing about them, the novel was my first serious attempt at fiction, and the road from science writer to fiction writer was not a Sunday drive. I did, though, learn several things along the way, so for all of you science writers secretly percolating a novel in the recesses of your minds, this is what I've discovered so far.
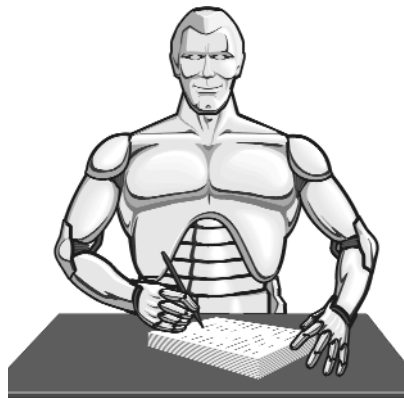
1. Science makes good fiction.

Science is abundant in the essential elements of fiction. It is competitive, both for funding and publication. It attracts independent, intelligent, idiosyncratic people, and then teaches them that what they do holds the key to "truth." This gives you, as a writer, powerful characters driven by powerful motives. Add to this that science is almost completely self-regulating, so open to abuse. That's a heady mixture to work with, and one that few writers without some background in science are willing to explore.

2. Fiction is about people; not plots, technology, information or issues.

When I started the Morgan O'Brien series I had issues I wanted to tackle, statements I wanted to make, but I ran into a problem. The characters refused to behave. They had their own agenda, driven by who they were and what they wanted, and I had no choice but to let them play it their way. Yes, I could have forced them to spew statements, to take noble action on various issues, but I would have produced a boring book, and readers would have responded appropriately by throwing it in the trash.

3. Fiction is bloody difficult to write.

Many of your skills as a science writer can be transferred directly to fiction: the ability to structure information, present it creatively, and use concise and effective language. But there is one crucial difference. In science writing we begin with fact—concrete and immutable—to construct a compelling story. In fiction, we fabricate fact. So rather than building on a solid foundation, we begin with something that is essentially plastic, and has an annoying habit of changing, even crumbling, in the middle of a story, particularly if some of the other pieces you fabricated didn't quite fit. For someone used to a solid foundation it can be very disconcerting.

4. Not everyone shares my enthusiasm for science.

Most of the people in literary publishing—editors, agents, and publishers —come from a background in the arts.

Many worked hard at university to avoid taking even a single course in science. This doesn't bode well for our future. There are, however, exceptions, and you have to find them. Once you do, they have an immediate attraction to your work simply because of the science content. It's a foot in the door. The trick is finding the door.

5. Persistence pays (although not in cash).

Dead Water Creek was written over a period of about two years, interspersed with freelance projects. It then took two years to find an agent, and another two years to find a publisher. Patience is a virtue in the world of fiction. A vow of poverty also helps. Writers of mystery series tell me that you can't hope to get out of the red until you have 5 or more books on the shelf. Of course, science writing is only marginally better.

6. Rejection is my middle name.

As a science freelancer, I was well suited to deal with rejection, but I found that rejection wasn't the primary problem. In fiction publishing in Canada, your biggest "challenge" will be to get the manuscript read (see #4). A first novel in a science setting? Well that sounds unsaleable! When the manuscript is finally read, you can count on numerous rejections, sometimes after tantalizing waits of six months, ten months, two years. So how do you deal with rejection? I celebrated each one with a bottle of cheap champagne. It was hard on the liver but good for the morale.

7. Publishing is a crapshoot.

Rejection is a fundamental part of the publishing process. Writers often say that it hones your talent. I don't agree. I rarely got any useful rejections, other than "No" scrawled across a post-it note and slapped on the query. What I did learn, though, was that publishing is a game of chance. Rejection doesn't mean you've written tripe. It doesn't mean you're a sub-species of writer. It means that that particular editor doesn't like science, is allergic to fish (*Dead Water Creek* is about salmon), or just slotted a science mystery into their schedule the day before your manuscript arrived. It's not all about you. Unlike dice, though, the probabilities in this game are not independent. The more you send out the query, the greater your chance of it landing in the hands of that elusive agent/editor who really loves science. Remember, you're not looking for *an* editor or agent, you're looking for the *right* editor or agent.
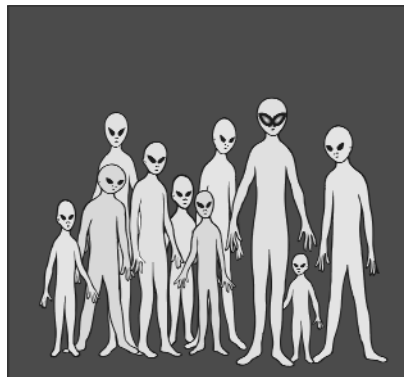
8. Find others like yourself, then go forth and multiply.

Writing is a lonely business. As science writers we're used to that. In fiction writing, though, timelines are long and rejections are capricious. The only way to stay sane is to laugh your head off at the whole darn mess, and the best way to do this is with others like you. The fact that you belong to CSWA is a good sign. For fiction there are numerous national and community groups specializing in different genres and styles. Seek them out, make contact, attend meetings, then whine. It's the only way to make it through.

9. The reward is in the journey, not the destination.

Somewhere into year six I hit the wall. *Dead Water Creek*, I decided, would never be published. Worse still, I faced the reality that I might never pub-lish a word of fiction. I moped around the house for a week. Should I file my experience under "F" for failure? Hang up Morgan O'Brien and simply walk away? Then I had a revelation. (Champagne may have been involved.) It didn't matter if my fiction never saw the light beyond family and friends. I had to do it whether I wanted to or not. It was just too much fun to consider giving up. Two months later Dundurn made me an offer.

10. Try this at home, kids.

So for those of you with the fiction addiction, by all means try this at home. If you want to write fiction more than anything else in life then clear the decks, make no more excuses, and get the thing done. But a word of warning. Writing fiction in Canada is a long and perilous road with an uncertain destination. If there's anything else you want more in life (for example a new car, stable relationships, a pension plan or a steady income) then hang on to that day job.

Now you'll have to excuse me. Mauna Kea awaits.

Alex Brett can be contacted at alexbrett@sympatico.ca or through her Web site at www.alexbrett.com . She would be happy to talk to fellow CSWA members afflicted with the fiction addiction.

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For more information about the Canadian Science Writers' Association, please see their listing in this issue of **Sources.**
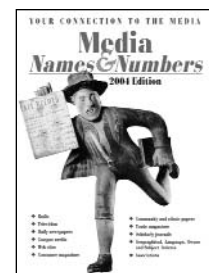
BOOK REVIEWS

Books of Interest

Reviewed by Dean Tudor
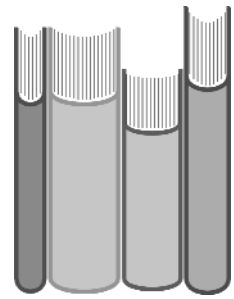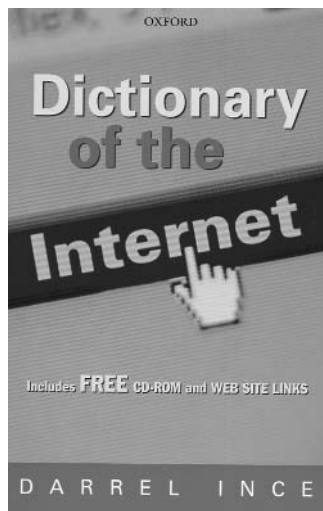
Reference Books

DICTIONARY OF THE INTERNET

Darrel Ince

Oxford University Press

2001, 340pp, 16.99 pounds sterling, ISBN 0-19-280124-4 paper covers

Contains CD-ROM

Ince, an academic teaching computer, is the author of over 28 books in the field. This dictionary has about 3600 entries, mostly jargon from networking and Internet usage, with many abbreviations and technical terms (derived from TCP/IP protocols). Areas covered include E-mail, Web, E-commerce, security, intranets. There are internal cross-references to other entries. Typical words include handshake, route tracing, asynchronous learning, and copycat page. Among the abbreviations are all the popular chat room/forum phrases. However, while there is RTM (Read the Manual)—a phrase I have NEVER EVER seen—there is no mention of what I have seen: RTFM (which inserts the appropriate word F*cking). In addition, a section on emoticons only shows ten of them. The accompanying CD-ROM of eight megabytes has the full text of the book, with hyperlinks between entries and to external websites. Its website at Oxford has all the updates since 2000 (www.askoxford. com/worldofwords/internet). While these can be downloaded, they cannot be added to the CD-ROM. Here, you can toggle between UK and US viewpoints, and you can check out links to the OED, Quotations, and History of English. Ince also produces research (on the website) which shows that the Internet leads to a brand of English that suppresses local variations.

Some interesting facts: Internet words do manage to make it into regular English dictionaries.

What I don't like about this resource: most print entries have the word LINK in them, which takes up space and means nothing in the book; it refers only to the CD-ROM, which, by the way, cannot be loaded onto the hard drive—it must remain in the bay.

What I do like about this resource: definitions are succinct, with no derivation or history.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: 83.

THE BOOK OF THE YEAR
#### a brief history of our seasonal holidays

Anthony Aveni

Oxford University Press

2003, 192pp, $25US, ISBN 0-19-515024-4

Aveni, professor of astronomy and anthropology at Colgate University, has crafted a readable narrative which traces the origins of our modern holidays. American modern holidays, to be precise, although some are celebrated round the world. Round the Christian world, to be precise. No harm in this, but the book needs to be more upfront about these cultural restrictions. Not even Canada is included in the "American modern holidays" listing. There are no entries for Canada in the index, and of course the gap widens when Aveni discusses Thanksgiving Day as a strictly US thing. Indeed, he characterizes Labour Day (or is that "Labor Day"?) as "exclusively American." Hel-lo!! The European equivalent is May Day, which gets a good discourse in the chapter on May. His book is chronologically arranged, by month, in narrative form. He focuses on the involvement of food (e.g., Easter eggs, turkey), games (football at Thanksgiving), rituals (New Year resolutions), characters (Santa Claus, Easter bunny), and the impact of the changing calendar through the seasons. First up is New Years Day. He traces the development of celebrating, noting that in 153 BCE the Romans declared that the New Year
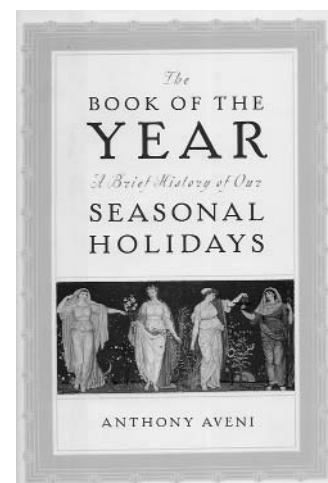
began when the sun came back after the winter solstice, to appear as the first crescent moon after the winter solstice. The Christians stuck to the first day of spring as a new year until 1564 in

B O O K   R E V I E W S

Catholic France and 1752 in Protestant England. April Fools Day developed from those "fools" who still celebrated the New Year after March 24 or so. The rest of the book goes on to deal with Groundhog's Day, St.Valentine, Easter, Halloween, Christmas, plus the two equinoxes and the two solstices and whatever else I have already mentioned. Throughout it all there are the issues of divination, calendars, astronomy, fertility, foods, rites, sex and death, all filtered through the Greco-Roman-Judaic-Christian tradition.

Some interesting facts: the Library of Congress has assigned a number of subject headings to this book, such as "Biological Rhythms," "Chronobiology," and the more apt "Archaeo-astronmomy."

What I don't like about this resource: its reference value is impaired by the narrative. Still, it is a good read.

What I do like about this resource: there are bibliographic references and notes for further explorations.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: the book is useful for journalists plotting an annual daybook, looking for seasonal stories. Give it an 88.

THE OXFORD GUIDE TO FAMILY HISTORY

David Hey

Oxford University Press

1993, 2002, 246pp, $19.95US,
ISBN 0-19-280313-1 paper covers

This book was first published in 1993 and revised in 1998. There is a claim in the book that this is a reissue of the 1998 edition, although the bibliography seems to be updated through 2001. Strange. Anyway, Hey has taught

local and family history at the University of Sheffield, and he is the author of other Oxford reference books in this area. He clearly shows how to trace family origins through the basics of research: where to begin, where to find records, how to decipher early styles of handwriting. And, of course, it all happens in Britain. The first 150 pages is a history of British family names, mobility and stability of families, society and attitudes, immigration and emigration. The balance of the book is a guide to the records that exist in Britain (census, marriage-death-birth records, trade directories, parish registers, probate records, tax assessments, military records, apprenticeship, health tax, poll tax. The work concludes with an index to surnames.

Some interesting facts: A section presents an interesting history of the movement of Brits around the world.

What I don't like about this resource: it is only useful for poking around in Britain, although Hey does write about general search principles that can be applied elsewhere. Maybe if the title had the word "British" in it…

What I do like about this resource: there are many illustrations of typical documents, archive records, grave markers, people, houses, estates, and monuments.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: for researching your ancestors in Britain, give it a 93.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT the bibliography

Paul R. Burden

Information Today

2000, 181pp, $22.50US,
ISBN 1-57387-101-X paper covers

"Knowledge Management" is a holistic process that demands organizational commitment. It involves the logical structuring of information (accession, storage, retrieval, and provision) within a company, in order to do the most good (i.e., maximize delivery of profits). Such information sharing can help people save time, speed work, and lower costs. The bibliography has been based on an earlier one published in *Knowledge Management for the Information Professional* in 1999. The basic procedure has been to search under the two main terms, "Knowledge Management" and "Intellectual Capi-

tal." Thus, Burden found a total of 2101 references: 404 books in print as of 2000 (through amazon.com and *Books in Print)*, 1505 articles from databases such as ABI Inform, ERIC, Infotrac, NTIS,) 186 websites (with a slight inconsistency in listing them, and including one FTP site) viewed from January through July 2000, and 6 videos,
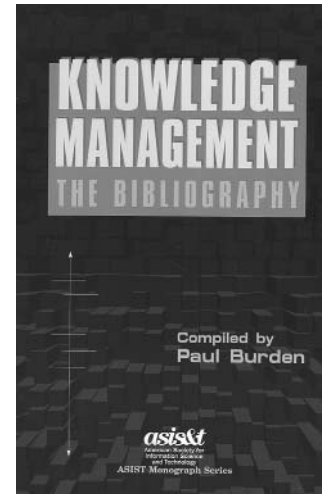
really too slight to matter (and why not also audio tapes?). So then, this is a useful guide to the pre-2000 burgeoning literature—but with no annotations. The heart of the bibliography is the section on articles, subdivided into sixteen categories dealing with information audits, information technology, intranets, training, E-commerce, and competitive intelligence. There is no subject index, which is tough on the books section (at least the articles have been categorized.) Articles are always to be preferred anyway since the titles are always most specific, e.g. "seven ways to get the skinny on a company" or "a spy in the boardroom." There is a database index to indicate where the bibliography was researched. And there is an author index, which told me that most people wrote only one article, except for some like Thomas H. Davenport and Lawrence Prusak who both appear to be the most prolific with nine references. Paul R. Burden was not even listed…

Some interesting facts: you too can update this book through 2004 by using the same steps in the process, namely, searching the same databases listed with a year parameter (2000 and after). Actually, the best website with up-to-the-minute information is the KMNetwork, www.brint.com/km.

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What I don't like about this resource: I got leery right away when the contents page reported that there were 3606 citations: they had counted the articles twice! Also, since the Internet never sleeps, the websites are probably hopelessly out-of-date by now. This is not the book's fault: it was copyrighted 2000. A simple Google search under the two main terms will probably pull up a lot of recent hits.
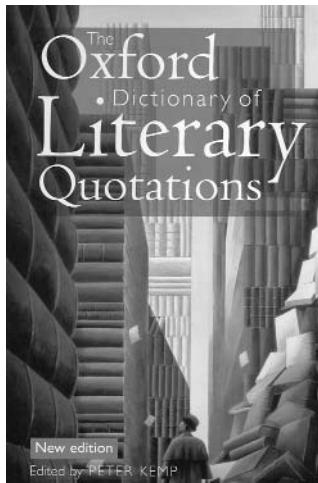
What I do like about this resource: you can pick a handful of relevant items and get to them quickly.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: 85.

THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF LITERARY QUOTATIONS
Second Edition

Peter Kemp

Oxford University Press

1997, 2003, 490pp, $48,
ISBN 0-19-866281-5

Peter Kemp is currently fiction editor of the *Sunday Times* and a former academic. He leads a team of seven in the sourcing and culling of literary quotes. The current edition has about 4000 quotations, all arranged by subject in one alphabetical sequence blending topics and authors, with a chronological arrangement within each subject. Over 900 additions are new. There has been a general modernizing with contemporary references to Harry Potter and to Inspector Morse. More quotes have been added from the Colonies (North America and Australia). New themes since 1997 include Solitude, Interruption, Omission, Graffiti, and Epitaphs. Cross-references are includ-

ed, e.g., Mystery *see* Crime and Mystery; Humour and Comedy *see also* Irony, Wit and Satire. The source materials range from classical literature through crime novels through journalism. Themes cover the literary life, individual writers, morality, death, characters, words, ballads, science fiction. It is still an eclectic work, a book to dip into when looking for the bon mot.

Some interesting facts: most people are only in once, although Ian McEwan has 11 quotes, Milton has 24, and Shakespeare and Shaw a lot more.

What I don't like about this resource: one didn't need to be a literary type to be in here. For example, there is a quote from Marilyn Monroe on men and poetry which gives her life dates and the date the quote was made but not where it was made (diary? article? said to who? where? why?). Other quotes are equally vague.

What I do like about this resource: there is an extensive keyword index and an author index referring to page and quote number.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: 90.

THE ORIGINAL CANADIAN CITY DWELLER'S ALMANAC
facts, rants, anecdotes and unsupported assertions for urban residents.

Hal Niedzviecki and Darren Wershler-Henry

Viking Canada

2002, 246pp, $25,
ISBN 0-670-04338-9 paper covers

This is a fun survival guide to the Canadian city: how we live, what we do, who we are, everything that defines the Canadian urban dweller. As such, it might not be interesting to ex-urbanites or even to those who live in other cities not mentioned nor covered. Niedzviecki is a novelist and commentator, editor of *Broken Pencil* magazine. Wershler-Henry is a critic, editor and author of five books. Some—maybe most—of this highly eclectic book had originally appeared in the *Globe and Mail, Geist, This Magazine, Masthead*, and other magazines. Chapters are arranged by theme, with breakdowns for each appropriate or relevant city. They deal with the bad stuff first: alien-

ation, mental illness, crime, racism. All of these exist in rural areas too, but they are highly magnified in an urban setting. The chapters hit the highlights of most major urban areas in Canada. Other topics include transportation (traffic, public transit, rollerblading), tools such as ATMs and cell phones, drugs, coffee, web cams surveying the cityscapes. Attractions have a section:
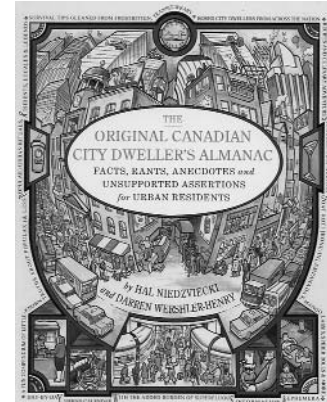
where to party, hangouts, sports, sex, food, restaurants, recipes (macaroni and cheese), shopping at box stores and malls, bookstores, record stores (both vinyl and CD). There are major chapters on real estate (apartments, landlords, condominiums but not developers nor office towers) and politics. There is even a "Today in History" calendar, with birthdays and events for each day in the year. If I missed anything, then go ahead and pick it out of the generous index. Everything here is well written; these are well-told stories.

Some interesting facts: the section on watering holes has a nifty history of bars in Canada; don't overlook this chapter. Similarly, there are short histories of Canadian TV and magazines.

What I don't like about this resource: the endnotes are mainly changeable websites. Overall, this is a depressing book.

What I do like about this resource: there are various lists such as Ten Top School Supplies and Top Ten Fizzy Drinks.

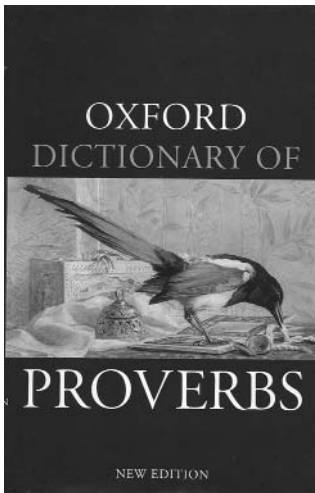Quality-to-Price Ratio: 91, as an enjoyable read and source for story ideas.

B O O K R E V I E W S

OXFORD DICTIONARY OF PROVERBS
New Edition.

Jennifer Speake

Oxford University Press

1982, 1992, 1998, 2003, 375pp, $39.95,
ISBN 0-19-860524-2

For a book of pithy proverbs, this reference tool sure gets "updated" a lot…Speake is the editor of the *Oxford Dictionary of Foreign Words and Phrases and the Oxford Dictionary of Idioms*. Here, a proverb is a common saying that offers advice. It has the status of a universal truth, and it could be used to prove an argument. Here are 1100 proverbs, 40 new coinages, and about 400 updated examples, as well as annotations and current citations from around the English-speaking world. So there is that limitation of language. Entries are in alphabetical order, followed by meanings, histories (all dated and sourced), and current usages. There are plenty of internal and entry cross-references.

Some interesting facts: For the proverb "there is no such thing as a free lunch," she doesn't give a history. While it might be useful to economists who coined the phrase, unless you know what a "free lunch" is, the proverb really has no meaning. It comes from saloons offering a free lunch to entice drinkers and to ward off those who opposed straight drinking.

What I don't like about this resource: I found the entry for Parkinson's Law puzzling. It is listed as "work expands so as to fill the time

available." The complete phrase includes, at the end, "…for its completion" What happened here? Also, some phrases that have quasi-proverb status are not here, such as "Bob's your uncle." Certainly it fits.

What I do like about this resource: there is an extensive thematic and keyword index plus a bibliography of major proverb collections and works cited, although my favourite was not included (*Taxi Driver Wisdom*, Chronicle Books, with such as "New shoes always hurt" and "You're not any safer in First Class").
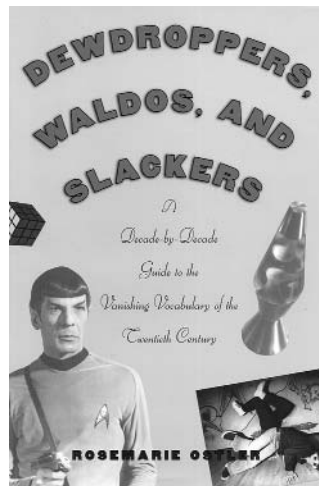
Quality-to-Price Ratio: 90.

DEWDROPPERS, WALDOS AND SLACKERS
a decade-by-decade guide to the vanishing vocabulary of the Twentieth Century

Rosemarie Ostler

Oxford University Press

2003, 239pp, $41.50,

ISBN 0-19-516146-7

Ostler is a linguist, a librarian, and a freelance writer in the field of words. The book's subtitle gives its coverage, to words and phrases no longer with us (in the sense that hardly anybody ever uses them anymore and few know their original meanings). Almost 3000 such words are covered here, and they are mainly North American white slang from fads and trends that came out of technology, music, the armed forces, rhymes, and animals. There is neither

jargon nor ethnic slang in this book. Quick definitions are given, so there is little etymology. For instance, she says that "groovy" (a word that is also now coming back) originated from "in the groove," but she does not say that "in the groove" is a musical reference to the grooves of a 78-rpm shellac record. "Hubba-hubba" has no reference to the Perry Como monster hit. Some explanations seem incomplete and ask more questions than they answer. For example, for "dime novel" she says that most of them cost only a nickel. So why did the term "dime" get used? Why not "nickel novel" (same beginning consonant, two syllables each, words end in "-l")? No answers…On page 213 she lists some "goodbye" equivalents. And there are some that didn't make this list, although they are in the main body by decade. She uses "toodle-pip" but ignores "toodle-doo" (from her chapter on the 1920s). She uses "see you in the funny papers!" which evolved into "see you at the movies!" She ignores "it's been a slice" (1990s) and "bye-ee" (1970s). She also fails to note when some words come back, such as 1920s' "lounge lizard."

The book is arranged in chronological order. Each chapter covers a decade, although 1900–1919 was done in one. The chapters begin with a linguistic, historical and sociological snapshot for the decade. All the words are in the index, in alphabetical order, so you just need to look up a word and then go to the appropriate page to view it in context. There is an extensive bibliography to references. The major source seems to be the journal *American Speech*.

Some interesting facts: it is important to note that some words keep coming back to life, with newer meanings.

What I don't like about this resource: she does the 1990s, but this decade is still too close for vanishing words. Also, the word inventory is distinctly American: there are many words and phrases here from the past 50 years that I have never, ever heard of.

What I do like about this resource: Ostler does a good job with a nearly impossible task

Quality-to-Price Ratio: this is an excellent book for journalists-writers, as a source of ideas and as a verification tool. 95.
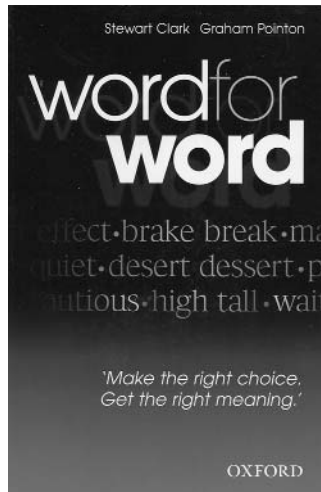
B O O K   R E V I E W S

WORD FOR WORD

**Stewart Clark and
Graham Pointon**

Oxford University Press

2003, 250pp,
ISBN 0-19-432755-8 paper covers

The authors, both academics, try to explain the differences between word usages. Here are about 3000 examples that are confusing because they look alike, sound alike, or seem alike. Entries are alphabetically arranged, and words are grouped together for easy comparison. Each entry has definitions, sample sentences, spelling and pronunciation guides, and usage advice. There are indications for American English (AE) and British English (BE). About 100 sidebars cover topics such as the major overall differences between AE and BE, tips on language traps, genitive cases. There is good coverage of homographs (words that are spelled the same but mean different things).

Some examples: Asian (for people) and Asiatic (for geography), ability and capacity, cite – site – sight, choose – select – pick, interval (BE) and intermission (AE), responsible and accountable, scissors and pair of scissors, pore and pour.

Some interesting facts: the authors deal with the use of the semi-colon (now in decline) and other punctuation marks.

What I don't like about this resource: it still takes some guesswork to look things up since there is only one entry, e.g., abuse and misuse. There is neither entry nor cross-reference back from "misuse" to "abuse." You have to use the index to catch this usage.

What I do like about this resource: there is a goof-proof section on how to use the book, as well as a nice bibliography of 26 items.
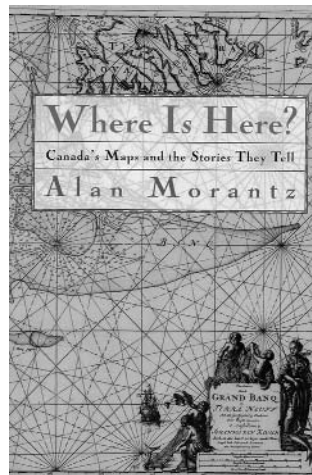
Quality-to-Price Ratio: 90.

WHERE IS HERE?
Canada's maps and the stories they tell.

Alan Morantz

Penguin Canada

2002, 256pp, $35, ISBN 0-14-301351-3

Morantz was a former editor of *Equinox* and is now a freelance writer. This book is a continuation of research that he did as a project for *Canadian Geographic* magazine's 70th anniversary issue, a special issue on mapping. Morantz tries to show how maps and the art of map-making have shaped us as Canadians and what they reveal of who we are. Maps are the sources of comfort: where are we? here! (okay, so where is here?). Canada's most enduring heroes are not revolutionaries but explorers, such as La Verendrye, David Thompson, et al. These were the guys who made the early maps. And I remember this from school in the 1950s. But teaching these themes may have been because they were safer and easier than teaching about revolution and change. Morantz begins with aborigines who charted the lands with stories, songs and stones. He then introduces an eclectic selection of Canadian maps, commenting on how the map was produced, what and whose reality did it reflect. He includes New France, missionaries, the strive for a western passage, land surveyors, census maps, road maps, "pictorial maps" of towns in book form, comparative maps, aerial maps, and orienteering maps. Place names are also covered, but just in passing.

Some interesting facts: the appendix is an interesting timeline of significant dates in Canadian surveying, mapping and charting, adapted from a 1996 book.

What I don't like about this resource: its reference value is slight.

What I do like about this resource: there are illustrations of aboriginal drawings and pictographs. The book is well written; it engaged me.

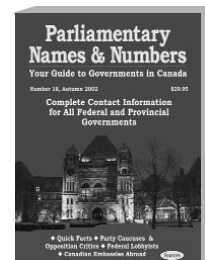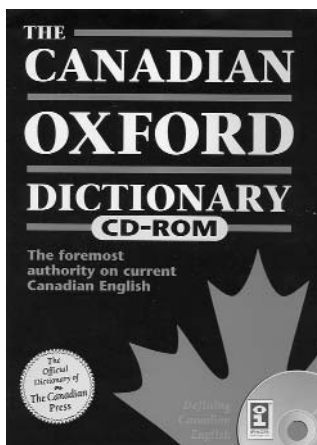Quality-to-Price Ratio: as a regular book, 88. Reference value, 81.

BOOK REVIEWS

Computer Books for Journalists

THE CANADIAN OXFORD DICTIONARY CD-ROM

Oxford University Press

2001, CD-ROM plus booklet manual,
ISBN 0-19-541800-X

Well, it took me four tries to install it. The screen froze twice and my laptop crashed once. Sources' Publisher himself tried twice before abandoning it. Nevertheless, I got it, and I didn't first have to unload other programs from memory. The problem may be with the iFinger software: although the manual says you need Internet access, you only need it to get to the iFinger site for updates to the software program, not to the dictionary. You don't need to go to the Oxford site, for there are no updates on that site. All of the data are on the hard drive. The user interface is a small text box, which can be closed or opened easily. The text is the complete *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, which can now be used in different modes and ways. Access is by holding the cursor over a word in a document or an Internet site. The word appears in the box, and a click pops up the *COD* entry. You can also just type the word in the box, or you can select with keystrokes and by highlighting. There is built-in access to when a definition refers to another entry, via hyperlink. The text can be copied from the *COD* to your document or to your printer. Only headwords in the *COD* are retrieved.

Derivatives and inflections go to the base word. Compounds will go to the first word clicked, followed by the next word. For example, "cold fusion" will produce "chicken cold" and "cold fusion." Homographs are presented one after another. And the dictionary is not case sensitive. You can even add your own entries to the dictionary file (but not to the *COD* itself). You create your own lookup database or import from a plain text database.

Some interesting facts: the History function goes back beyond 50 word searches, should you need such a record.

What I don't like about this resource: will not work on Windows 95, and you'll need "power-user rights" to run on Windows NT4/2000. Also, the clicking feature does not work on non-Internet Explorer browsers; you'll have to enter the word manually.

What I do like about this resource: creating your own dictionary expands the use of the software to just one lookup. It is also easy to use.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: depends on your installation problems, average 85.

INTERNET MARKETING INTELLIGENCE research tools, techniques, and resources

Edward Forrest

McGraw-Hill Irwin

2003, 224pp,
ISBN 0-07-282111-6 paper covers

Forrest is a business professor at the University of Alaska. This basic text should tell one how to use the Internet for market research. He uses a lot of sophisticated data gathering and analysis tools. The major topics are competitive intelligence, consumer intelligence, environmental intelligence, and the use of marketing tools (survey, focus groups, product testing). He covers the basics of E-mail, search engines, cookies, server log files, newsgroups and discussion groups, as well as data

sources available (with tests for reliability and validity). He also deals with the issues of "law and ethics," with material on user privacy, consumer protection, data security, intellectual property, fair use, trademarks and copyrights.

Some interesting facts: the illustrative material includes many screen shots.

What I don't like about this resource: while it has material on how to use the Internet more effectively, it has a narrow, academic range for journalists, and even for some PR types.

What I do like about this resource: plenty of references for further reading, plus an important glossary.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: 85.

INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGIES IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE APPLICATIONS.

**F.W. Lancaster and Amy Warner**

Information Today

2001, 214pp,
ISBN 1-57387-103-6

Lancaster is a major writer and award winner in the area of information technology; he is now a professor emeritus at the University of Illinois. Warner is his associate. This is a technical study, funded by the Special Libraries Association, surveying the applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to library

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INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGIES in Library and Information Service Applications

F.W. Lancaster and Amy Warner

ASIST Monograph Series
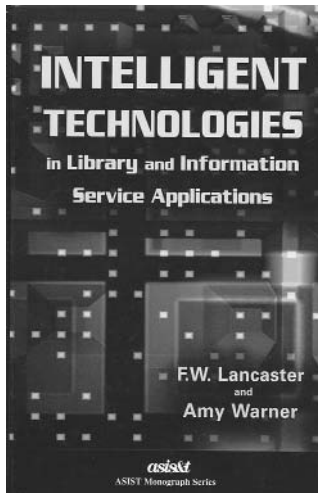
information service environments. Much of the existing literature is speculative, but not so the applications. The object of the study was to identify what AI apps can be applied to libraries, what is available and operational now. Lancaster and Warner look at different cataloguing systems, "intelligent" indexing, referral systems in a reference context, database selection, information retrieval text processing, machine translation, intelligent interfaces, medical diagnosis, speech technology, computer vision scanning.

Some interesting facts: the idea here is to have the computer use an expert system to identify problems and propose solutions, a sort of "if…then…."

What I don't like about this resource: Google's AI computerized ranking schemes was not covered.

What I do like about this resource: appendices include "sources for keeping current with new developments in advanced technologies,' which are mainly scholarly journals and websites.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: 81.

WRITING FOR THE INFORMATION AGE

Bruce Ross-Larson

W.W. Norton

2002, various pagings, $34.99,
ISBN 0-393-04786-5

The subtitle of this book is "light, layered, and linked," and that is about it. A lot of this used to be called "chunk writing," a term that came into use during the early Web days. Website creators were obsessed with retaining eyeballs, and they wanted all the important writing restricted to one webpage

viewed as a screen shot with no scrolling. It was an advance on *USA Today*'s snapshot journalism. Keep the story short and simple (KISS), or later day pyramid writing. Ross-Larson is founder of the American Writing Institute and author of other Norton books (*Edit Yourself* [don't you wish], *Riveting Reports* [as if], *Effective Writing*). Here are 100 or so techniques for engaging readers in the information age, to produce writing that allows them to find quickly and easily what might be of interest. He describes each technique in a nutshell (literally), and provides examples and comments. Each technique is on two pages, left and right hand sides (convenient to photocopy once under fair use), with appropriate cross-references to related material in the book and elsewhere. There are also

WRITING FOR THE INFORMATION AGE

Bruce Ross-Larson
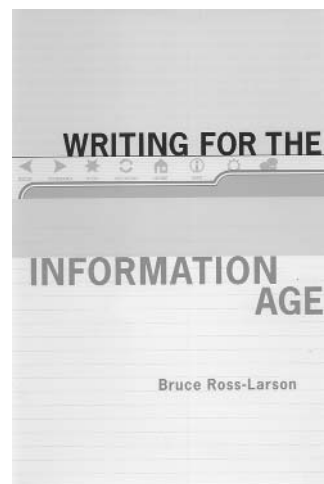
plenty of screen shots for illustrative examples. Some techniques include attention-sustaining devices (engaging titles, light openings, revealing headlines, bulleted lists, pull quotes), structure (solve a problem, illustrate a concept, tell a story, open a pyramid), paragraphing (short leads, verb forms, asking questions), sentences, words and phrases. He concludes with bibliographic endnotes for sources and credits for the technologies, plus an index.

Some interesting facts: the basic idea is to organize content in progressive form, with easily digested details for the reader to consider, and then to provide a link to other topics.

What I don't like about this resource: not for beginners. One still needs grounding in the rules of grammar and parsing.

What I do like about this resource:

he practises in this book what he preaches. It is extremely useful for journalists contemplating web writing, E-mailed newsletters, and CD-ROMs.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: 95.

THE WEB LIBRARY building a world class personal library with free web resources

Nicholas G. Tomaiuolo

Information Today

2004, 408pp, $44.95,
ISBN 0-910965-67-6 paper covers

The Web Library: Building a World Class Personal Library with Free Web Resources
By Nicholas G. Tomaiuolo
Edited by Barbara Quint
Foreword by Steve Coffman
Web Links & Updates
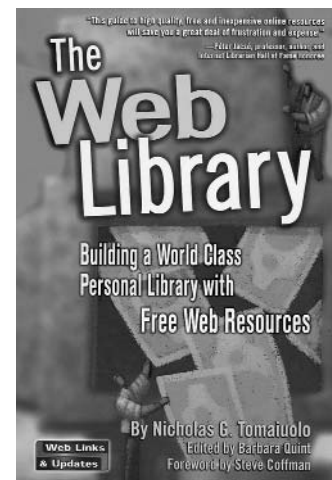
Nick Tomaiuolo is a college librarian in Connecticut; he is also obsessed with finding free information on the Web. I really want to like this book, but currently its website has all of the links, and you can download the source documents. Try library.ccsu.edu/library/tomaiuolo/theweblibrary.htm. The site also keeps the book up-to-date, for of course new resources appear all the time. Pages 361–383 have a printed list of all the referenced websites. For that matter, you can use my own Mega-Sources at www.ryerson.ca/~dtudor/megasources.html. It's free too… Having said that, I think that the book is extremely useful for its coverage of magazine and journal articles (FindArticle, MagPortal), reference works, online indexes and databases (Medline, ARC, CrossArchiveSearching), books in E-text, newspapers and E-mail news alerts, broadcast archives, experts and librarians (real people), images, special collections. His URLs are annotated and he uses screen shots as illustrations. He gives additional material such as a look behind the

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scenes of a newspaper and broadcast news website. He has sidebars of interviews with people who created websites and reference works. He even discusses plugins and toolbars, which are needed for advanced searching. The main sources of free stuff are Project Gutenberg, universities, government agencies, associations, and commercial sites with adverts. However—and I cannot emphasize this too strongly as I was a university professor in this field—you still need to interpret what you find.

Some interesting facts: he compares some pay-per-view services for their prices. Pay-per-views can be used for FREE as the article sites allow free indexing and citations. You can save this as a file and build a bibliography, without having to read—and pay for—the articles.

What I don't like about this resource: I don't see anything about RSS, XML, and news aggregators. The book is copyrighted 2004, not earlier, so time is not an element here.

What I do like about this resource: he points out the limitations of the free services, although he does have a few disclaimers and "no liability" statements.
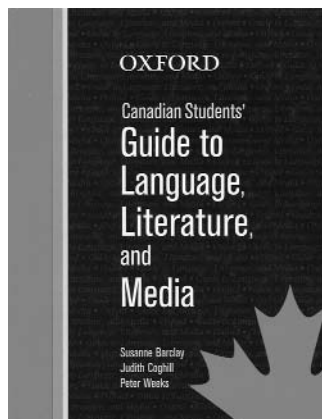
Quality-to-Price Ratio: for the book, 90. Unrated, if you merely use the website.

Media Books

CANADIAN STUDENTS' GUIDE TO LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND MEDIA

Susanne Barclay, Judith Coghill, Peter Weeks, Norm Olding, Don Quinlan

Oxford University Press

2001, 410pp,
ISBN 0-19-541675-9

This book is meant for secondary schools, independent use, or small group study. Its chapters cover poetry (analyzing and responding, understanding meaning, form, and style), narrative texts (novels and short stories), drama, essays (articles, reviews, speeches), personal writing (memoirs, letters, journals, diaries, reflective essays), reports for business and science, business and technical writing (including resumes), and media (styles of newspaper writing, film and video story boards, radio, TV, Internet). In other words, just about everything except children's books… Each chapter has sections which include definitions, explanations, samples from professional writers (some of which are annotated), charts, and strategies.

Some interesting facts: there are samples from Canadian writers too.

What I don't like about this resource: attempts too much in one book. For journalists and researchers, there may be whole sections here of little interest.

What I do like about this resource: grammar is covered in the context of the chapter's topic, although there is also a separate section for usage. The book also has material on how to do research.
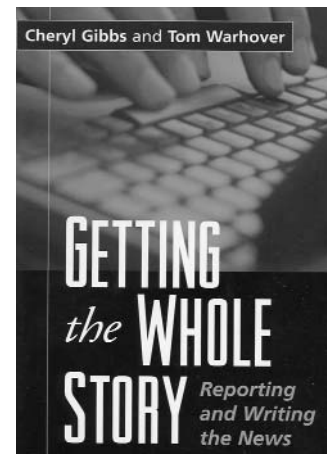
Quality-to-Price Ratio: 85.

GETTING THE WHOLE STORY
reporting and writing the news

Cheryl Gibbs and Tom Warhover

Guilford Press

2002, 451 pp,
ISBN 1-57230-795-1 paper covers

Gibbs and Warhover are American academics. This book is an introductory text for the American newspaper stream in colleges. It covers the five Ws plus How, beats, a bibliography for further reading, and exercises for the classroom or assignments. It looks into gathering information, conducting interviews, framing stories, writing organized articles, working with editors (in a positive vein: no horror or confrontation or personnel stories), photographers, public service (=Yankee) journalism. All examples are US, with AP style, US libel laws, etc. There is the obligatory section on grammar, spelling, tips and advice.

Some interesting facts: why this book? From the opening, "Our goal was to create a textbook that puts the 'whys' of journalism together with the 'hows'". I have the easy answer, since students are not stupid: DISCIPLINE.

What I don't like about this resource: I checked the index, and there were NO entries for Internet, E-mail, Web, Usenet, discussion group, forum. There was one page reference to "online editor." Research has a few entries… Hello? Hello?

What I do like about this resource: "further reading" is broken into categories "in print" and "on the web"…hello? hello? Why is this here if the book doesn't talk about the Internet?

Quality-to-Price Ratio: 51 for us in Canada, 79 for Americans, 82 for newspaper streamers.
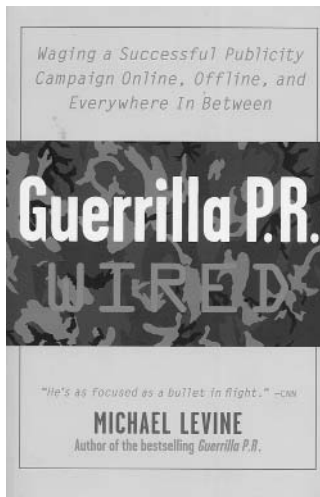
B O O K R E V I E W S

GUERRILLA P.R. WIRED
waging a successful publicity campaign online, offline, and everywhere in between

Michael Levine

McGraw-Hill

2002, 281pp, $25.95,
ISBN 0-07-138232-1 paper covers

Levine heads a monster PR firm in Hollywood (Levine Communications Office). In 1993, he published *Guerilla PR* for the pre-Internet world. This revision, with a new title, is practical, with street wisdom, and written in a gung-ho style, directed at small companies who cannot afford a PR firm and do all their own marketing. It is almost solely devoted to the Internet, with tips and advice on promoting oneself, what to put on a home page, how to create ones own marketing campaign, how to get people to look at ones website and keep them there, how to use a website to get coverage in publications or TV. It is all low cost: all one needs is ones own time. And it is all in the "buzz." Chapters are devoted to E-mail, bulletin boards, chat rooms, contests, damage control, spin doctors, E-zines, follow-ups, gatekeepers, graphics, information overload, working with journalists, website planning. The book appears to be extremely useful for small associations as well.

Some interesting facts: he gives the example of the movie Blair Witch Project, which had an Internet site that garnered millions of hits before the movie was even distributed.

What I don't like about this re-source: not really "guerilla" as in underground, lefties, alternative press. Just for low-rent companies.

What I do like about this resource: the appendices have lists of US media outlets, with addresses, phone numbers, websites, but no personal names. CP manages to get included here.
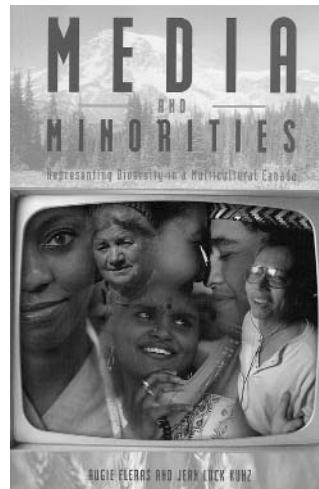
Quality-to-Price Ratio: 90.

MEDIA AND MINORITIES
representing diversity in a multicultural Canada

Augie Fleras and Jean Luck Kunz

Thompson Educational Publishing

2001, 198 pp,
ISBN 1-55077-123-X paper covers

Fleras is a professor of sociology at the University of Waterloo; Kunz is a research associate with the Canadian Council on Social Development. Together, they examine the politics of media minority relations in a multicultural Canada. They say that the situation is here and now, will it change? They look at how "constructions" of race, ethnicity, and aboriginality are interpreted by the mainstream media, and then published and read. They also look at media coverage of minority women and men by way such as clichés and stereotypes, asking the question: "Is this conscious manipulation by the media?" Other chapters look at both media initiatives and diversity initiatives to improve minority coverage in the media. There are case studies. Basic conclusion: authors admit to some ambiguous and contradictory data.

Some interesting facts: it covers both Canada and the US, movies and advertising as well.

What I don't like about this resource: it doesn't seem to recognize Ryerson University's School of Journalism and how it has contributed to studies on diversity. It also doesn't comment much on the diversity levels in the newsroom itself.

What I do like about his resource: glossary is valuable.
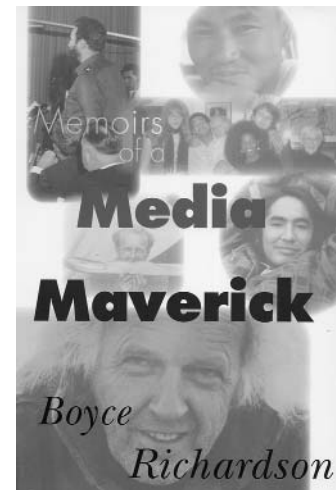
Quality-to-Price Ratio: 82.

MEMOIRS OF A MEDIA MAVERICK

Boyce Richardson

Between the Lines

2003, 278 pp,
ISBN 1-896357-80-6 paper covers

When I read an autobiography, I always check out the index to see what the author has to say about people or things. Here, Richardson has a lot to say about Conrad Black, Izzy Aspler, Lord Beaverbrook, et al. Read it for yourself as you plough through this engaging memoir of a radical socialist who also was a recognized journalist/writer/filmmaker. Born in New Zealand, he ended up—by 1959—as features writer for the *Montreal Star*, interviewing luminaries such as Castro and Leonard Cohen. In 1960, he was posted to London, England. In the eight years he worked abroad, he received maybe two telegrams. He was with the *Star* until 1971, quitting to write books. He then joined the National Film Board as a researcher and a writer, later moving into direction and production. His career, beginning as a newspaperman in New Zealand in 1945, has spanned five decades. And he

B OOK R EVIEWS

is still crusty. The book is loaded with pictures of his family and his work environments. His bibliography and filmography (both listed) include materials on Canadian aborigines, Chinese, the environment, and multinational companies.

Some interesting facts: From 1945 to 1971, he was a staff journalist. How did he last so long with only a handful of employers (the *Winnipeg Free Press* in 1954, then the *Montreal Star* until 1971)?

What I don't like about this resource: he says that journalists do tend to take themselves very seriously. Not the ones I know, but maybe I know the wrong ones.

What I do like about this resource: he goes out of his way to always say that journalism is not objective.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: 88, an enjoyable read.

THE FORM OF NEWS
a history

Kevin G. Barnhurst and
John Nerone

Guilford Press

2001, 326pp,

ISBN 1-57230-791-9 paper covers

Barnhurst and Nerone are Chicago academics; the former wrote *Seeing the Newspaper* in 1994. This book under review was originally to be a study of the layout and typography of the newspaper's front page. It expanded to become a history of newspaper design in the USA, the ways of writing, how papers are organized, presentation values of typography, space and pictures, and the impact of changing technology such as TV and the Internet. The time frame is 1750 through 2000.

Basic topics include advertising displays, the front page, and tabloids. Examples are from typefaces, reportage, columns, headlines, and photography. The illustrations are all archival; examples include the *Hartford Courant*, the *Chicago Daily News*, *Harper's Weekly*, the *New York Times*,
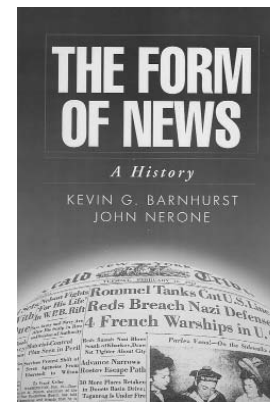
and the *Times of London*.

Some interesting facts: The book grew out of previously published (or presented) papers contributed to academic journals and conferences.

What I don't like about this resource: despite the inclusion of the *Times of London* (love that front-page advertising!), it is US based, which is unavoidable for us in Canada.

What I do like about this resource: there is an extensive bibliography for further reading.

Quality-to-Price Ratio: 82.

B O O K   R E V I E W S

The City of Montréal Style Guide: A Handbook for Translators, Writers and Editors

by Victor Trahan

Ville de Montréal, 2001

$22.00 comb-bound
ISBN 2-89417-719-4, 293 pages

Reviewed by Kathy Sauder

A style guide, like any reference work, is not so much read in the ordinary way, from front to back, as referenced and applied to one's own work in progress. A style guide for writers and editors that addresses the added challenge of translating French into English is going to be especially appealing to anyone working in Canada. Its value is broader than the title would suggest. At the same time, *The City of Montréal Style Guide* is a fine example of how good "house style" evolves, and how any organization can shape its own.

The story behind the guide, though not part of the book, will interest the user. Six years in the making, it began essentially as a style sheet connected to a specific project. Some style decisions are taken at the outset, the rest evolve through the life of a project. In this case the project was a major by-law consolidation undertaken by the City of Montréal in the late 1990s. The huge revision of 10,000 by-laws included their translation into English. Certified translator Victor Trahan was involved in it for four years, and for this project he developed a style "sheet" of about 40 pages, his log of usage and style decisions necessary to keep the consolidation work consistent throughout. By the time his guide had ballooned to 500 pages, it had long since become a labour of love consuming all his non-work hours.

Its usefulness throughout city government was apparent as Trahan regularly answered queries from employees, contractors and freelancers. For publication, he refined it to its current 293 pages, at which length it is both wide-ranging and concise. On any given topic, he surveys the other published guides, and includes them in a comprehensive bibliography at the back of the book

As you would expect, much of the material is specific to the City of
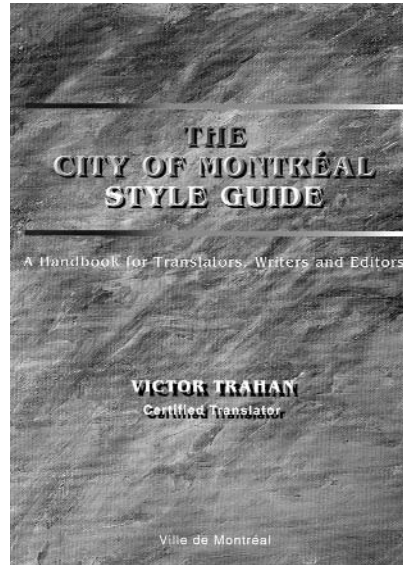
Montréal, interpreting, for instance, the city's system of by-law numbering, naming and referencing; elsewhere four pages are devoted to the prescribed style for referring to city departments and committees. Yet the guide also addresses the more universal considerations of capitalization, grammar, hyphenation and non-sexist language, for example. Organizing all this material alphabetically by topic or key word was probably the wisest course. (These alphabetic entries, sub-topics and cross-references are fully indexed at the back of the book.)

Each entry includes many examples of correct and incorrect usage or style or translation. These are often followed by a clarifying summary of the issue—and the issues are legion. Trahan writes about controversies surrounding the use of particular words and phrases in a way that makes the reader's ultimate choice easier. He helpfully distinguishes between matters of correctness and matters of style, and he frequently condemns vocabulary that is "worn threadbare." But his bottom line in many disputes is: "There are weightier matters to consider."

The book's lightheartedness is intimated by page 2, where Trahan addresses the rule for using "a" or "an" in the example "a historian," then brings it home with "a hysterical historian." He relies rather heavily on clever or inadvertent historic quotes to sum up a dilemma or to provide an example. I marvel that he found a Diefenbaker quote to illustrate the proper use of "that" and "this." His own opinions are

often quotable. On the tendency to capitalize for emphasis: "It's an escalating war that never ends, and it's really up to us to stop it."

If the distinction among possible usages is clear to the editor but likely lost on the reader, Trahan's advice is to seek a simpler way. His guide is not rigid in its recommendations; rather, consistency is its motto. Another might be "Eliminate redundancy," making it useful to writers at all levels of government.

Reviewers have all emphasized the book's value to translators and editors whose first language is not English. The entries that deal with inadvertent Gallicisms in English, or Frenglish, are most instructive, showing how they creep in when French is translated literally. "Three days' delay" may in fact be "three days' notice," "manifestations" actually "demonstrations," and "a reunion in my bureau" much more accurately "a meeting in my office."

My particular problem is the opposite one, and I found the guide goes a long way to solving it: how best to include French in an English context. How does one translate style? Copy editors and proofreaders who are not trained translators can use Trahan's work because he deals with what we have suspected instinctively, that apart from rules for written French and rules for translating French into written English, we must also have conventions for incorporating French into an English context. The Canadian market is full of "hybrid" text, such as this very publication.

As a simple example, I will no longer feel doubtful when I retain the accents in Montréal and Québec in an English description or the hyphens in a French street name; yet I may jettison the conventional parentheses from a mailing address, or substitute "Street" for "rue" while maintaining "Ile." In all these decisions, individually minor, consistency is still the overarching rule.

Ordering information: Electronic versions also available. $22 all-inclusive. Cheques should be made payable to the City of Montréal and sent to: Victor Trahan, Direction du greffe, City of Montr*éal, 275 Notre-Dame St. E., Ste. R134, QC H2Y 1C6*
Phone: (514) 872-2666
E-mail: vtrahan@ville.montreal.qc.ca