

Book reviews

New book looks at new tools for editors

Effective Onscreen Editing: New Tools for an Old Profession, by Geoff Hart
 (Online PDF: \$20, <http://www.geoff-hart.com/home/onscreen-book.htm>
 Print: \$34.99 + shipping, <http://www.lulu.com/content/1913171>)
 Reviewed by Cecilia E. Thurlow, cecilia@ceciliaethurlow.com

"For what I have published, I can only hope to be pardoned; for what I have burned, I deserve to be praised."

— Alexander Pope

That quote is one of two introducing Geoff Hart's new e-book on electronic publishing, *Effective Onscreen Editing: New Tools for an Old Profession*, and we can all be thankful that Hart did not burn this useful book. It provides invaluable information to those experienced in this newest form of publishing (onscreen), as well as those schooled in the older publishing methods of hard-copy proofreading, editing and writing.

Availability

Hart's book is available online as a PDF and will be published in a few months in book form (price to come), according to the author. The online version is 723 short, double-column pages, but the upcoming bound version might be a better choice for some readers.

Printed out, the online version will be approximately 170 side-by-side, double-sided pages, making it perhaps as expensive as the bound book when one considers the ink, paper and time involved. Having both onscreen and book versions would be the ultimate choice for some editors, proofreaders and writers.

Content

Hart covers everything pertaining to online editing in 18 chapters and four appendices, running the gamut from "Advantages of onscreen editing" to "Coping when revision tracking isn't

available." Salient points throughout are shaded in green to serve as constant reminders to readers ("Simple tracking," "Checking the author," "Who's responsible?"). Another plus is having the website URLs in a frame instead of the usual underline — they really stand out.

When readers of this book feel overwhelmed by all the technology of onscreen editing, Hart has comforting words for them: "None of these advantages minimizes the editor's role in the editing process: providing human insight into writing problems and applying human experience to solve these problems."

Compensation

Compensation for editorial work is often a hot topic on the EFA discussion list, with some members debating whether to refuse low-paying work on principle (saying that accepting low-paying work hurts all editorial workers) and others saying they must accept low-paying work when they have bills to pay, regardless of principle.

Hart covers the exceptions — "when we really need the work, and are competing with other editors who are willing to work for less money." He mentions organizations such as the EFA (www.the-efa.org) as useful places to get such information on rates and also offers rate-setting information of his own. He encourages pro bono work and working for a lesser rate when the work brings satisfaction to the editor.

End matter

This book has a comprehensive



glossary and a copious index, covering everything you ever wanted to know about onscreen editing. It also has references, a bibliography and the previously mentioned appendices, plus many other useful recommendations too numerous to mention here. It is well worth the \$20 price. ■

Editor's note: Anyone who has purchased the PDF version qualifies for a \$5 discount off the cover price of the print edition. For details about that or special deals for teachers and students, contact Hart at ghart@videotron.ca.

EFA elements

The EFA is becoming more and more truly national in scope: of 1,425 members, 622 are "resident" (NYC metro area) and 803 are "nonresident," including several outside the USA.

- The EFA discussion list recently welcomed its 800th member: **Sandi Frank** of Westchester County, NY.

The retired director of the New York Botanical Garden Press, Frank now works on the other side of the desk, as a freelance indexer and editor. In addition, she teaches "Freelance Book Indexing" at New York University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies and has been actively involved with the American Society of Indexers' "Training in Indexing Course" as an interim course administrator and exam grader. ■