

SMART GUIDE TO DUMMIES & OTHER PUBLISHING TERMS

It is only in publishing that bleeding into the gutter could be considered aesthetically pleasing. Or a post-mortem not thought of as something grim. If you have ever wondered about the mysterious language journalists speak, this booklet is for you. It is a collection of important publishing terms succinctly explained, so that you can discover in no time why dummies are in fact highly sought after. Enjoy.

The process

1. PLANNING

It all begins with the editor drawing up a list of story ideas. The editor then meets with the rest of the editorial team to discuss potential articles and select the ones that will really strike a chord with readers. With a finalised list of contents (or book list) in hand, the editor is ready for the planning meeting with the client.

2. COMMISSIONING

Once the ideas have got the client's approval, the editor can start to commission journalists. Everything must be completed by the deadline, so this date is burned into everyone's memory.

3. PRODUCTION

The editor is the first stop and has to approve every article. If it passes muster, the subeditor checks facts, fine-tunes style and grammar, and comes up with catchy headlines.

The art director and designers develop the visuals: a photo shoot is organised or, if needed, pictures are sourced from image banks and photography archives.

As soon as the subbed copy is received, the designers start making up the pages. Throughout the page makeup stage, pages are pinned on the wall for the art director to review and suggest improvements.

After this, the subeditor checks the copy again and makes changes if necessary. Despite repeated checks, small errors may still crop up. The proofreading stage is the final check to ensure all mistakes have been weeded out.

Before sending the client the first dummy, there is an internal review with the creative director, editorial director and publisher, who may decide on further copy and design changes.

Following the client's feedback on the dummy, the team make copy and design changes and put together a second dummy by an agreed date so that the client can review changes. At the second feedback session final changes are discussed and then made by the subeditor and designers. Finally, the magazine is signed off by the client.

4. REPRODUCTION

Repro can begin once the client has signed off. This process takes seven days and no further changes should be made. Asking for ANY changes during repro is a very bad idea: they're expensive and may cause mistakes to slip in.

5. PRINTING

After repro, PDFs are sent off for printing, which takes 10 days. Making changes at this stage is a considerable undertaking that will cost you dearly, and should therefore only happen under extraordinary conditions.

With the magazines hot off the press, the final step is adding carrier letters and other printed material for distribution.

6. POST-MORTEM

Far from being a grim thought, this is the very thing that allows a magazine to thrive. A regular assessment and analysis of the last issue ensures that the next one is even better.

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