

The format of this project is important. That is, who needs yet another stack of papers stapled together clamoring for room on a crowded desk, or another electronic folder, for that matter? I snooped around Barnes & Noble looking for ideas, and finally came up with a solution.

The secret is to use a notebook that can be propped up at an angle for easy reading. I used a small three-ring binder that folds back and can stand on its own: it's a 1" Avery Economy View notebook, 7" x 9", about \$5. I also bought a pack of 5.5" x 8.5" sheet protectors for \$4, and a pack of Write-on Self-Stick Tabs for about \$3. So the hardware for my notebook is about \$12.

I then prepared the manual so there is one step on each sheet. I printed on 8.5" x 11" paper then folded each page in half to insert in my sheet protectors. You'll notice that the text is thus landscape.

My point is that it's best to focus on one step at a time. I prop up my little notebook, flip to the appropriate page, then perform that step completely before flipping the page to the next step. If I'm interrupted, I know just where I am by glancing at the display notebook.

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Please let me know if you have any questions.

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Electronic Copy Editing

17 Steps to an Error-Free Manuscript

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Step 1. Keep track of your time.

Decide ahead of time how long you will spend on each phase of the project, and track your time electronically (e.g., using TraxTime).

Knowing how long you should spend on each phase of the project will help you stay focused, and prevent last-minute panic or skipped steps.

Step 2. Confirm you have and can open all files listed on the BTF.

Compare each file/chapters against the book transmittal form (BTF) or other list of files/chapters. Contact the PE if there are any discrepancies.

Unzip files if necessary, and open each individual file, including illustrations. Contact the PE immediately if any files don't open.

Step 3. Review PE's instructions.

Carefully reread all emails from the PE and reread the BTF. If anything is unclear, contact the PE right away for clarification.

Step 4. Create a single file for the ms.

Create one large file with all chapters/components, with the exception of any illustrations.
Name this file, for instance, All CE Smith 10-09.docx

Step 5. Run and/or create your macros.

Run and/or confirm your macros. In addition to the Editorium macros, which you can purchase, I use the following:

1. A macro for inserting queries for the author. For instance, “ctrl/t” on my computer gives me **[[AU:]]**. I have it set up so my cursor ends up in front of the close brackets, in the correct position for typing a question. I can simply type ctrl/t then my question, without pausing or looking at the keyboard.

2. A macro for flagging troublesome words. Without tracking, globally underline the following potentially troublesome words with the **dotted bolded underline**.

000	end result	only
- [hyphen]	ensure	over
%	etc.	percent
/ [slash]	exact same	since
&	farther	that
also	further	time period
around	i.e.	under
as	illion	which
assure	impact	while
data	indices	wide
e.g.	insure	
employ	manmade	

(cont)

Remember to remove underlines before submitting the chapter.

3. A macro for quickly inserting a bookmark. I use “StartHere,” for instance. I also have a macro for locating and deleting that bookmark when I want to return to that spot.

4. A macro for flagging citations in the text. I use **[xd]** to flag citations in the text and in the reference list.

Step 6. Check notes and superscripts.

Make sure each note superscript has a note and that each note has a superscript.

Do a global search for superscript. You can catch any misplaced superscripts, such as 19th, at the same time.

Step 7. Prepare and submit copy editor introduction.

Prepare a letter of introduction for the authors. (I assume for simplicity this is a multi-author book.) Ask them, e.g., how they want to be addressed (first name or last name and title), to verify e-mail address(es), whether chapters should go to one author or all authors or separate authors depending on the chapter, and about any periods of unavailability.

Explain that they will receive a sample chapter first that they should review carefully for level of copy edit.

Explain how you will express comments or queries, and suggest how you would like them to respond.

Give your e-mail address for contact. My experience has been that email is usually adequate, and that giving out your phone number can be a mistake with some authors. If a phone call is necessary, I recommend asking for a good time to call, then making the call myself.

Review your letter carefully, comparing names and dates against the BTF, being sure to eliminate spelling or grammatical errors!

Finally, send it to authors, and cc the PE.

Step 8. Create a new style sheet.

Create a style sheet.

Keep it open any time you are working on the ms to be sure to add to it as you go. Maintain a record of the treatment of special items not covered by the style books, style sheets, or dictionary being used.

Step 9. Make sure each citation is in the references, and each listing in the references is cited.

My preferred method is to go through the references one cite at a time and search for instances of use in the text. As you read, any in-text citations not in the references will lack your flag. Query the author for any citations in the text not found in the references, and any in the references not found in the text.

If there are inconsistencies with spelling or dates, research it quickly on the Internet and provide a recommended spelling or date for the author to confirm.

Step 10. Protect quotes and extracts.

Unless there are very few extracts and quotes, it is worth the time at the start of the project to change the font to single underline. This will eliminate the risk of changing quoted matter during your read.

Remember to remove underlines before submitting the chapter.

Step 11. Read first chapter verbatim, with tracks hidden.

First, turn on tracking or password protect the document. Change view to “Final.”

Edit for grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, and other mechanics. Pay special attention to the underlined words.

Make sure art or other elements are placed correctly and ensure that all art is called out. (Check with the PE if nothing is called out, because it might be a style choice for the ms.)

Be alert to illustrations or reprinted material from another source. All such reprints should be on the permission log. If not, check with the PE or query the author.

Confirm illustrations are numbered sequentially. (If there are no numbers or captions, check with the PE. Some mss do not include numbers.)

Edit illustrations for brevity, consistency, parallel construction, and use of capitals and lower case.

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Point out verbatim repetition of text, tables, or figures.

Eliminate excess words that do not further the argument.

Make sure all long text is set as an extract, depending on style guide.

Check for internal consistency of facts.

Check all urls in the references, notes, and/or bibliography. Query the author on any that don't work.

Keep a running list of acronyms in the style sheet to ensure they are consistent. If you spot any discrepancies, check for the accurate spellout online.

Step 12. Read first chapter verbatim second time, with tracks showing.

Change view to Final Showing Markup.

This read should go quickly, but must not be skipped. Any number of errors could be hiding in the text after your first read. The author is liable to lose confidence if he or she finds them during his or her review.

In addition to reading for author mistakes, double-check any of your edits and/or queries.

Step 13. Submit first chapter.

Submit first chapter (not front matter) to the author as a sample. This is the opportunity for the author to confirm or change your level of copy editing.

Before submitting, separate it from the rest of the ms and label it, e.g., CE 01 Smith Chap 1.docx.

Password protect before submitting.

Depending on the author's response, adjust your level of copy editing (catch more or fewer errors and inconsistencies, as requested).

Step 14. Continue copy edit through manuscript.

Still working on the manuscript as one document, read each chapter twice as you did for the sample chapter, then separate and relabel the chapter.

Submit each as you finish it. Submit one chapter per e-mail to avoid losing any of them.

As the chapters come back from the author, review comments/queries quickly (reply to author if needed). When they come back, relabel them, e.g., Rvw 01 Smith Chap 1.docx and stash them in a folder named Reviewed.

Step 15. Clean up chapters returned from the author.

Once all chapters are copy edited and reviewed, start clean up.

First, combine all reviewed chapters into one file and save it to a folder labeled Final.

Before starting the clean-up phase, reread the BTF and all emails from the PE and author.

Change tracking so each author's marks are in a different color.

Review each change and/or author's response. By asking Word to show you only one reviewer at a time, you can be alert to an author who writes notes to you haphazardly through the text without setting it off with brackets.

Turn Track Changes off and accept all changes.

If there are any unanswered queries, insert note to PE re: unanswered queries at the beginning of chapters.

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Do a final spell check.

Search for and replace all double spaces with one space only.

Search for two commas or two periods in a row.

Search for a space before a comma or a period.

Search for and delete unnecessary tabs.

Search for and delete unnecessary hyphens.

Make sure periods and commas are inside quotation marks.

Cap words of four letters or more in headings and titles within the text.

Cap nouns before numbers (Section 1, Section 2, Group A, Group B).

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Italicize book, journal, newspaper, and magazine titles in text as well in references. Remember, titles in the text are presented in title case.

Check that en-dashes are used with two items of equal weight.

Make sure each open quotation mark has a close mark, and vice versa.

Use Word to compare each cleaned-up chapter with each original chapter to be sure no text was dropped inadvertently.

List ms page numbers of all nonoriginal material in style sheet, or the permissions editor.

Check that all notes are numbered correctly. Verify that the number of notes in the text matches the number of notes in note section.

Check that superscript endnote numbers are properly placed in the text.

Check chapter titles vs. notes vs. TOC.

Spend time with References/Bibliography. Make sure they are correct. **Do not rush this step.**

Step 16. Read ms the third and final time.

Separate out the chapters again, relabeling them, e.g., FN 01 Smith Chap 1.docx. Reread the final time as you go.

Do not make any substantial changes at this point without clearing it with the author or PE!

This third read should be quite rapid, but again should not be skipped. The ms will go from you to layout. Any errors will be expensive to fix once the ms is laid out.

Step 17. Upload or email ms.

Upload or email the ms, and let the PE know you have done so. Don't forget to also upload/email the style sheet and any illustrations.

Finally, don't forget to bill the client!