



Book and Journal Publishing

A Guide to the Industry and Career Opportunities

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1 Introduction

To publish: to prepare and distribute to the public a book, journal, magazine, etc; from the Latin *publicare*, to make public. Thus the dictionary defines the process. But what do publishers *do*? And has the advent and widespread availability of wordprocessing software and hardware actually made publishers of us all?

In 1999 UK publishers produced some 108,000 new book titles, with direct and retail sales amounting to nearly £3.2 billion. Publishers, therefore, are in the business of making money by producing and selling books (and journals and magazines, and increasingly by delivering information and entertainment by electronic means). They serve three major markets:

- General, or Trade or Consumer Publishing – bestselling fiction and mass-market paperbacks, for example
- Children’s books – a specialist and growing area of General publishing
- Educational, academic, reference, scientific, technical, medical and professional – providing information for the specialist reader, often in international markets.

Although the industry is characterised by a number of large, multinational corporations having diverse interests across a range of subject areas, there are many hundreds of smaller publishers serving the needs of particular markets. For those seeking to enter the industry it is the larger companies that offer the best opportunities for anyone without experience because they have the demand and resources necessary for recruiting and training new staff. However, working for a smaller company has its own advantages, not the least of which is the wider variety of work that may be done by each person: there tends to be less demarcation of jobs in smaller organisations.

However, competition for places is generally fierce. Almost invariably a graduate-level qualification is required, whatever area of publishing is involved. Some of the larger companies offer structured, graduate training schemes, and it is often worthwhile approaching their personnel departments to find out what is currently available. Specialist knowledge is valued, for example in science, technology and medicine or in areas such as teaching and education. General skills such as computer literacy, and secretarial and administration skills are also useful.

Publishers, as business organisations, act as intermediaries between the author and the reader, but there is more to it than that. The process begins with the generation of the work, very often – and especially so for the academic and professional markets – because the publisher will commission an author to write to meet an identified need.

Thereafter the author’s work will be subject to the attention of readers and referees, editors, typesetters, proofreaders, graphic designers, production controllers, printers, binders, warehouse and delivery staff, promotion executives and sales personnel before reaching the reader. Supporting this plethora of activities will be experts in rights and contracts and financial management.

There is in publishing a need to balance creativity with commercial reality. It is said that someone, somewhere, when asked what makes a good book promptly replied: ‘one that sells out’. That may be a little too harsh, because one of the attractions of a book can be its aesthetic qualities – the care and attention taken with the choice of typefaces, the design of the pages and the cover, and the quality of the binding are all

aspects of a book yet to be matched by any palmtop computer. However, such aesthetic qualities may well be less important for the delivery of high added-value information for the specialist academic and professional markets, and especially those in which the learned journal is the prime source of current data and opinions. Nevertheless, aesthetic qualities, usually much loved by editors and a source of puzzlement to management accountants, play their part in selling a product. We ignore them at our peril.

For the academic and professional markets there is an increasing trend towards delivery electronically rather than in traditional book or journal printed format. It is now technically within the scope of most authors to publish their work without using an intermediary such as a commercial publisher. However, academic and professional publishing relies heavily upon the system of peer-group review, in which an author's work will be subject to independent scrutiny before it is accepted for publication. The independent review adds further value to the author's material and establishes its credibility: the review process remains a critically important part of the role of the publisher.

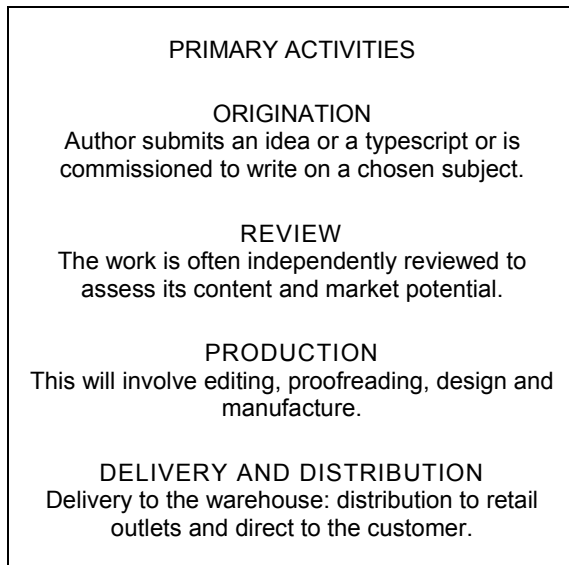
So, despite the complications of electronic media, the book remains, as Giles Clark¹ suggested 'an enduring medium through which ideas and knowledge are communicated, and a society's culture portrayed; and as such it is a prime resource for the student, the general reader and the media. The diversity of books and publishers is vitally important to a democracy'.

The publishing process from origination to delivery, and its related activities, can be summarised in terms of primary and related activities:

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES	RELATED ACTIVITIES
<p style="text-align: center;">ORIGINATION</p> <p>Author submits an idea or a typescript or is commissioned to write on a chosen subject.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MARKETING AND SALES</p> <p>Marketing to provide market research information, assist with product development and to inform the market of product availability; sales to generate income.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">REVIEW</p> <p>The work is often independently reviewed to assess its content and market potential.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONTRACTS AND RIGHTS</p> <p>Contracts specify what the author must do and what the publisher will provide and pay; rights are sold to exploit a work more fully, for example from book clubs, film and TV.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">PRODUCTION</p> <p>This will involve editing, proofreading, design and manufacture.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ACCOUNTS AND ADMINISTRATION</p> <p>Accounts staff will be involved in financial planning and general administration such as staff payroll and royalty payments to authors; Administration will include office management and basic services and specialist areas such as computing.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">DELIVERY AND DISTRIBUTION</p> <p>Delivery to the warehouse: distribution to retail outlets and direct to the customer.</p>	

2 Product development and production

As we have seen, the publishing process involves the expertise, skills, knowledge and experience of a wide range of specialists. We will concentrate now on the ‘front-end’ activities of commissioning, editing, design and production – that is, the work needed to generate the work and then process it for printing and delivery – and career opportunities they offer.



Commissioning

Although not exclusively so, the process of commissioning a work is an activity mostly encountered in book publishing as far as the publisher is concerned. For journals, it is usually the case that obtaining contributions will be the task of an editor who is generally not directly employed by the publisher.

What, then, does a commissioning editor do? As with other jobs in book publishing, the requirements of a commissioning editor (the terms sponsoring editor and senior editor are also used, amongst others) have been comprehensively described in the relevant Occupational Standards². Essentially the job is one of finding, developing and matching ideas having market potential to appropriate authors.

The key tasks are:

- identifying and assessing the publishing market
- developing and supporting projects and authors
- maintaining a publishing programme
- contributing to marketing and sales activities.

Identifying and assessing the market

Bearing in mind the definition of a good book as ‘one that sells out’, it is critical for a commissioning editor to know where the books are likely to sell: current markets for existing titles and how those markets will react to new ones, and possible new markets for current and new books.

Developing trends, national and international, must be identified. For example, is there an increasing demand in consumer publishing for a particular subject or genre? are there new developments in science, technology or medicine which need to be addressed – and so on. With academic and professional markets it is clearly an advantage for the commissioning editor to have relevant, specialist knowledge of the subjects concerned.

Developing and supporting projects and authors

The company will have an overall publishing strategy which should identify the areas to be covered and their markets and the type of product the company will generate to meet identified needs. Within the context of the strategy a commissioning editor will be required to match ideas with authors, with an awareness of the resources available to do so and the financial objectives that must be met.

However, ideas will arrive unsolicited as well as being developed by the editor. It would be an unusual publishing company that indeed failed to receive any suggestions for new books and offers to write them. The editor must therefore be prepared to apply some process of filtering, to reject those ideas that do not meet the strategic plan; and, for those that might have sales potential, to encourage and guide the author to produce what is needed. And, of course, existing authors will generally be interested in having their next book published by the same company.

All of this means that the editor must develop skills in negotiating and diplomacy. Encouraging someone to write, and advising an author that the submitted material is not suitable, both require personal qualities of tact and understanding.

Maintaining a book publishing programme

The publishing programme has two elements: the front list and the back list.

Front-list titles are those yet to be published (and for some companies the front list also includes the titles published within the current calendar year). These are the books that are planned to generate revenue in the future: they will require investment in the present.

The editor must make sure that authors deliver their typescripts³ on time and that the material supplied meets the contracted requirements such as length and number of illustrations. The typescript will generally be sent to an independent reader or referee for appraisal and, if changes are recommended, the editor must inform the author (sometimes not an easy task: writers can be very sensitive about having to change their creations). Checks for legal problems must be carried out – for instance, to identify possibly libellous material.

When a final typescript is agreed it must be handed over to the editing and production staff who will deal with copy-editing, typesetting, printing, binding and delivery. Throughout those procedures the commissioning editor must remain involved: the book is essentially the editor's responsibility, and progress needs to be monitored carefully to ensure publication as and when planned.

During the final stages the editor will be involved with sales and promotion staff to decide how many copies should be produced in the first print run. This is a critical decision: printing too many can involve costly manufacturing and storage charges, and printing too few may mean being unable to meet customer demand. Sadly there is

no single, magic formula which can be used to determine the optimum first print order. Accumulated wisdom and experience, assessment of markets and native instinct all combine in such circumstances.

Back-list management involves monitoring the performance of published titles and making decisions on reprinting, revising and reprinting, preparing new editions or putting titles out-of-print.

Reprinting is exactly that: a book will have an initial print run and if it sells well further copies will be ordered to meet demand. Many publishers derive substantial revenue from their back list: take a look, for example, at Penguin paperbacks to see how many are in reprint editions.

Revising and reprinting provides the opportunity to update a book without necessarily changing it completely. This is a useful exercise for reference books where, for instance, some of the content may change but the majority does not and the new material can easily be incorporated.

New editions take the process one stage further. In such circumstances the content of a book may need revision to such an extent that simply to incorporate the new material becomes too complex and costly. The book then becomes essentially a new product, perhaps using some of the original but, sometimes, with the entire contents being rewritten and redesigned.

And, finally, the hardest decision for many editors: putting a book out-of-print. If a title is not selling well, there comes a time when the cost of keeping it available, in a warehouse, has a significant impact on the revenue the book generates. If there is little hope of improving the sales performance the decision is taken and the book is declared out-of-print.

(However, there may be other factors that influence the decision to put a poor-selling title out-of-print. For example, a publisher may decide to keep all books from one author in print, so that the entire collection remains available, even though some individual titles sell relatively badly.)

Putting a title out-of-print can be a critical time for the relationship between the author and the editor. The author must be informed of the decision (and is usually offered the opportunity to purchase remaining copies at a discount) but in a way that recognises the disappointment an author will almost certainly feel about a book which sold less than expected.

In any book publishing programme a balance must be kept between the front list and the back list. As we have said, the front list is the publisher's investment for the future, often involving substantial amounts of money, but one from which the subsequent returns cannot be guaranteed. Revenue from the back list, as the actual return on previous investment, is used to finance the new titles being developed. Too much front list can drain investment funds; too much back list exposes the publisher to the risk of insufficient income in the future to invest in new products which may sell better or to run the other operations of the company.

Contributing to marketing and sales activities

An editor needs to know about the markets for which the books are intended and will often have expert awareness of market needs and trends. That expertise will be used by the promotion and sales departments in their efforts to publicise and sell the titles.

Typical of the activities in which an editor may be involved will be press receptions, product launches, trade and technical conferences, and so on. In addition, the editor will almost certainly be required to present the new titles to the sales force, particularly where books are to be made available through retail booksellers. The sales representatives, whose job it is to visit bookshops and persuade them to take copies of new titles, must know what distinguishes the new book from its competitors: not so difficult if the author is an international name, more so if it is a scientific textbook in a crowded market.

To repeat: a good book may well be ‘one that sells out’ and, in a market that receives over 75,000 new products each year, the commissioning editor should keep that phrase in mind every time an interesting idea arises.

Editing, proofreading, design and production

The activities of a commissioning editor in persuading authors to write, or exercising judgement on which unsolicited material to accept, are the front end of the publishing business. However, they will count for little without the skills, knowledge and experience of those involved in editing, design and production. Indeed, it is these areas of expertise that almost invariably separate a professionally published book or journal from the one published by its author.

The author’s typescript is the raw material. It must be carefully processed so that the final product has added value, making it attractive to potential readers and commercially acceptable to the publisher.

Editing

There are three main elements to the process of editing an author’s material.

The first covers the need to ensure consistency and accuracy throughout the text: for instance, ensuring that units of measurement are the same, that spelling and grammar are correct, that the treatment of quotes and references is according to the style adopted by the publisher, that illustrations are integrated with the text, and so on. It obviously helps to have a command of the language, an eye for detail and a very good memory to capture and recall the myriad often small but important matters that arise.

The second, and often parallel, process is that of substantive, or intrusive, editing. Here the editor will be considering what the author has produced in terms of clarity of language, style of writing, the possible need to divide long sections into shorter paragraphs, explanation of unfamiliar terms and abbreviations, and items such as headings and cross-references. The editor must also be alert to possibly contentious material – for instance, the use of sexist or racist language, or material that might be inappropriate to other cultures. Highly developed diplomatic and negotiating skills are needed, especially when an author is asked to change something.

Editing for style, consistency and presentation is normally carried out on a hard copy typescript. However, authors increasingly write their material using a computer and will submit the final product on disk or as an e-mail attachment as well as hard copy. Editors must therefore acquire the necessary – and different – skills for editing on screen rather than on paper.

And, third, there is the process of ‘marking up’: that is, indicating on the typescript how the text is to be printed – for example, where italics and bold type are required,

the different typefaces needed for the main text and chapter and section headings. Depending on the way in which the editor prefers to work or, often, the time available, this last process can be carried out as a separate function to the first two or in parallel with them. The former is preferable because editing for style and content requires a different sort of attention to that for preparing the material for printing. In some publishing companies the process of marking up may be done by the designer rather than an editor; and designers will be involved in the original selection of typefaces, page design and so on (see below).

Proofreading

When the material is edited and marked up, it is typeset (or, if submitted electronically, is formatted to suit the design requirements of the book or journal) and a proof copy of the typeset material is provided. These proofs are read against the original to ensure that the typesetter has followed all of the instructions correctly (for example, using the correct typefaces) and that there are no inadvertent mistakes introduced such as transposed letters or repetition or omission of lines of text. The use of an author's electronic version will of course reduce, but not necessarily eliminate, the susceptibility to typesetting errors.

Proofs are usually sent to the author for correction. Since this may be the first time the author has seen the material since it was originally written, and the time interval can be several months, it can happen that the author will use the proofs as a means of introducing new material. Unless there are very good reasons for doing so, publishers tend to discourage such changes because they are costly to incorporate (although less so now that typesetting is electronic rather than manual). The author will also have sight of any editorial changes to the text in terms of style and presentation – the intrusive editing – and negotiations may be necessary to agree on whether the original or the edited material is preferable.

Before the advent of electronic setting and page design (see below) it was common for the typesetter to supply the proofs in 'galley' format, that is without any attempt to put the material into the required page format. It was necessary to paste up a copy of the galley proofs later⁴ so that the text and illustrations were in the required positions as they would appear on the printed page. However, computer technology provides for automatic page layout, so that the text and materials can be positioned on the page as they are produced (as was this publication, using wordprocessing software to input the text directly into the format chosen). This eliminates the need for galley proofs and physical paste-up, so the first proof can be a page proof.

Once the first set of proofs has been read and corrected it is sent back for amendment, and a second, amended, set (or page proofs) may be supplied. Again, the proofs must be checked, this time to ensure that all the corrections identified have been done and that in making the corrections no new mistakes have been made. A final proof will be supplied from the film before printing, but at this stage only major errors (such as missing artwork) can be corrected.

Design

Designers involved with book or journal production will provide expert knowledge and guidance on items such as the selection of the typefaces to be used, the size of the page and the number of columns of text it will have (especially important for journals,

less so for books where single-column design is more prevalent), the selection and use of illustrations, design of the cover (critical for books such as mass market paperbacks, which rely a great deal on the cover design for attracting potential buyers), and methods of binding.

For books, designers must be able to interpret the requirements of the commissioning editor and produce suggestions for the size and page layout and the front cover that will best present the book's contents. For journals, the requirement is slightly different because the chosen design will apply to each issue and the page layout may be more complex.

Computer literacy is now almost axiomatic for designers. Nearly all graphic design work, from front covers to page layout, is now done on screen rather than on a drawing board. Indeed, the introduction of the Apple Macintosh computer in the 1980s, and its ease of use, revolutionised the design process in publishing and related industries. The speed with which designs can be drafted, changed and finalised using a computer has significantly affected the productivity of designers and has also introduced new means of artistic expression. Page design on screen is a far less arduous task than the physical process of cutting and pasting galley proofs.

The skill of the designer shows itself in the overall balance of the final book or journal: the selection of typefaces, the use and position of illustrations and, for books in particular, the design of the cover. None of that comes simply from using a desktop publishing system.

Production

Production staff are part of the team involved in the transition from typescript to finished product. Their principal role is to ensure that the processes of typesetting, proofing, printing, binding and delivery take place as and when planned. In addition, production staff may be involved in areas such as cost estimating (essential for determining the likely recommended price of a book or journal) and advising on the selection of paper and board for the pages and covers, although these latter tasks are often delegated to the printing company.

It was the case that the production elements of the publishing process were handled by those with specialist knowledge of manufacturing and related topics. However, publishers seem increasingly to be introducing the role of production editor in which the skills of editing, and possibly proofreading, or the management of freelance editors and proofreaders, are combined with the ability to specify typesetting, printing and binding requirements.

Project management skills of the highest order are essential for anyone involved in production. Books and journals all have individual as well as common features; each will have its own schedule requirements and publication date. All of that must be managed simultaneously, and it is rare for *nothing* unplanned to happen on the journey from author to reader.

Expert knowledge of printing and binding processes, of dealing with illustrations, and of budget and timetable planning are all required, as is the ability to negotiate with printers and other suppliers – especially when they fail to supply what was specified.

3 Other activities

Marketing and sales

The same general techniques used for marketing any consumer goods are employed by the publishing industry. There is a need to promote the books, for example through the retail trade or, particularly with specialist titles and journals, by direct mail or through university and college bookshops. Press advertising, press releases, jackets, catalogues and promotional literature are all used to announce the arrival of a new work.

Selling, for books, is generally carried out by representatives, either employed full time or working under contract to one or more publishers, who visit retail and specialist bookshops and other outlets. In larger companies, representatives may also be used for export sales.

In consumer publishing, marketing can also involve activities such as publicity and public relations – for example, organising author tours and signing and interview sessions.

Contracts and rights

These are two separate, but linked, aspects of publishing.

Contracts are first needed between the publisher and the author(s), principally to determine and agree the conditions under which the author(s) will deliver the required material and the financial rewards they will receive once the book starts to sell. Typically the commissioning editor will negotiate the terms with an individual author, within company policy and practice, and as far as possible a standard form of contract will be used.

Whatever the requirement, it is usual for larger publishing companies to employ someone with legal training and specialist knowledge of contracts.

Subsidiary rights are the means by which a book can be further exploited, for instance by selling the rights to translation, to book clubs, for publication in newspapers, and for TV, film and video production. In larger companies staff will be employed specially to negotiate and sell rights. Once the rights sale is agreed a suitable contract is drawn up and agreed.

Distribution

This is a critical, if sometimes undervalued, aspect of the publishing process. It benefits no-one if a book is given lavish attention through the processes of editing and manufacture if it cannot subsequently be distributed efficiently to retailers or individual customers. Given the vast product range involved – remember those 108,000+ new titles and new editions published in 1999 in the UK, let alone the existing back-list titles? – the logistical problems of storage and delivery can be appreciated.

Many publishers devolve the distribution to specialist organisations having the necessary skills and facilities for large-scale storage and delivery. Others will operate their own warehousing and distribution services, and it is not unusual for large publishers with their own distribution facilities to be used by smaller companies.

Accounts and administration

Skills and knowledge of accounting and financial management are essential for the proper management of any business, and publishing is no exception. In larger companies management accountants will be employed to provide expert guidance and advice in the preparation of budgets and business plans and in producing regular financial reports on the state of the business and the annual report. The accounts department will be involved with matters such as royalty payments to authors, administration of payroll for staff, and collection of income and payment of bills.

Information technology

Publishing is increasingly dependent upon computer technology from the submission of authors' material on disk or by e-mail to cost estimating, design, project management and fundamental business planning. With the move away from mainframe computing there has been a reduction in the need for large numbers of computer specialists – the data processing department – but there remains a need for technical user support and, increasingly, expertise in the use of new technology to produce, for example, multimedia products.

Websites and electronic delivery

Special IT skills are necessary for website design and for the delivery of content electronically. Designing the presentation of text and illustrations in this context requires the knowledge and ability to use the facilities available only in the electronic medium: for example, establishing links within and without a journal article for, say, references to other work. The designer must work closely with the editors to ensure that access to the content is quick and intuitive: browsing the web tends to be a brief activity and users can become impatient and unforgiving if a site takes too long to open and, when open, is difficult to navigate.

Summary of jobs in publishing

Typical Job	Involves	Desirable knowledge and abilities
Commissioning editor Acquisitions editor	Meeting authors Keeping abreast of markets Agreeing new projects Back-list management	Negotiating skills Market awareness Specialist knowledge Education to graduate level
Development editor	Project management of lists and liaison between commissioning editor and production staff	Project management skills Knowledge of production processes
Copy-editor Desk editor Editor Production editor	Preparing text and illustrations for printing Dealing with authors, production and design staff and freelance workers Proofreading	Project management skills Specialist subject knowledge Eye for detail and command of English Computer literacy Education to graduate level

Designer	Producing or commissioning illustrations, cover designs, page layout Selecting typefaces	Formal training and qualifications in graphic arts Computer literacy, especially DTP applications
Production controller Production editor	Dealing with typesetters, printers, binders, paper merchants Cost estimating	Training in production and manufacturing processes and procedures Computer literacy
Marketing executive Product executive	Promotional activities	Knowledge of marketing techniques including market research Copywriting skills Interpersonal skills Formal or specialist education or training
Sales representative	Direct selling to retail and other outlets	Negotiating skills Specialist sales training Languages, especially for export sales Outgoing personality
Contracts manager Rights executive	Selling rights	Negotiating skills Languages
Accounting staff	Management accounts Business plans and budgets Financial reports	Formal accountancy training and qualifications
Support staff	General administration Computers	Administration skills and training, with specialist IT knowledge and qualifications
Warehousing and distribution	Deliveries from printers Storage Distribution to customers	Knowledge and experience of logistics management

4 Career and work opportunities: a summary

Commissioning

Commissioning, by its nature, is perhaps the role with the highest profile and potential rewards attached – and, with them, the higher risk if something goes wrong. For commissioning editors involved with academic and professional publishing, a high level of subject knowledge and the ability to research new and developing markets are priorities for successful list-building. Negotiating and financial management skills must all be developed. A personal network of contacts is crucial as a source of both potential authors and reviewers of submitted work.

Typically, commissioning editors are employed full-time by publishers. Most will have been educated to first-degree level, although the subject studied is of less importance. It obviously helps, for example, to have a good understanding of science

and technology if those are the areas covered by the publisher, but the ability to assimilate details of specialist topics can overcome any shortfall in expert knowledge.

Editing and proofreading

These are the two primary tasks involved in preparing an author's material for printing. Each requires particular skills, abilities and experience. Expert knowledge of a subject is often highly valued, particularly for scientific and medical publishing where complex terminology is used. A good command of English and an eye for detail are essential, as is the ability to manage projects. Computer literacy is increasingly important, but having legible handwriting is still useful – especially for marking up typescripts!

Editing and proofreading offer perhaps the greatest opportunities for freelance work, increasingly so as the publishing industry seeks to reduce its overhead costs by employing fewer in-house copy editors and proofreaders. Successful freelance editors and proofreaders require the same abilities, knowledge and experience as their counterparts employed full-time; indeed, the skills of project management probably need to be more highly developed for those working at home than for those in a structured office environment.

The major difficulty for those seeking to enter the world of freelance editing and proofreading is probably the fact that as publishers shed full-time staff those same individuals often remain employed as freelances; and they have the advantage of industry experience and personal contacts. For those interested in proofreading and editing as new careers, obtaining sufficient experience will be the main problem to be overcome.

Design

As noted above, most designers study graphic design and obtain a formal qualification before starting their career. Design is therefore a specialist area of publishing which requires particular skills and abilities and the elusive aesthetic awareness that attaches to the title 'designer'.

Freelance opportunities for suitably skilled designers are good. Very often a publisher will employ a small number of designers in-house, and they in turn will rely on a team of freelances to accommodate an often fluctuating supply of work. The design process is not restricted to page layout and covers for books and journals. Promotional and sales literature must be produced, often reflecting the content and style of a publication, and the same freelance designer is sometimes used for both.

Production

For production staff, knowledge of manufacturing processes such as typesetting, printing and binding together with an awareness, if not practical experience, of editing and proofreading is usually required.

However, the comparatively recent job of production editor requires a wider range of skills. The ability to deal with freelance editors and proofreaders is increasingly important as these two functions are handled more and more outside the publishing company. Production staff must therefore be able to brief their freelances and to assess the work produced. Production staff tend to be employed full-time.

Other activities

For sales and marketing jobs, a general background and possibly qualifications from a similar role often provide the necessary training and experience. The particular requirements of the publishing industry can then be acquired. For sales representatives the ability to negotiate with customers – typically bookshop managers – is axiomatic, as is the ability to assimilate detailed information about the books themselves. Similar requirements apply to selling rights, where there is a need to be able to identify market opportunities and then exploit them. Language skills are very useful, and often essential, for sales representatives and rights executives.

In specific functions such as contracts and accounting, appropriate professional qualifications are usually necessary: specific experience of publishing is not essential. Similar criteria apply to the support activities such as administration, warehousing and distribution: knowledge and experience of the generic requirements are normally sufficient.

Career opportunities

Jobs	Opportunities
Commissioning editor Acquisitions editor	Usually employed full-time: high profile, responsible for growing the list of titles available.
Development editor	Usually employed full-time, involved with in-house staff, authors and suppliers.
Copy-editor Desk editor Editor Production editor	As managers, employed full-time in-house. Freelance opportunities can be good: small and large publishers make use of external editors and proofreaders, but seek assurances on ability and quality of work.
Designer	Design managers generally full-time. Good opportunities for freelance designers, including involvement with sales and promotional materials. Website design increasingly important.
Production controller Production editor	In-house, full-time: involves liaison with other in-house staff and external suppliers.
Sales and marketing	Usually in-house, some knowledge of sales or marketing techniques and experience preferred. Can involve a wide range of activities, including attendance at trade exhibitions, product launches and author tours. Sales staff sometimes employed freelance.
Rights	Essentially a specialised sales role. Usually in-house. Extensive involvement in negotiations with publishers and others. Requires good sales techniques.
Contracts, IT, accounting	Generally in-house, although IT skills often outsourced when required. For contracts and accounting recognised professional qualifications required: knowledge of publishing not essential.
Administration and distribution	Specialist skills and knowledge needed: experience of publishing not essential.

5 Finding a way in

Adaptability is a useful attribute for those seeking to enter the publishing business with little or no experience or knowledge. It is worth applying for a range of jobs for which your background and education may be suitable rather than concentrating on one particular area such as commissioning. Having found a way in it may be somewhat easier to find a more suitable position. It is said that the best jobs in publishing go to those already in publishing; in other words, experience is highly valued.

Almost invariably education to degree level is now a prerequisite for many jobs and particularly for commissioning editors: formal, specific training and qualifications are necessary for areas such as design and production. However, publishers servicing specialist markets – for instance, schools – will often recruit teaching staff as commissioning editors or sales representatives on the basis of their knowledge of the market.

For the tasks of editing and proofreading, for many the point of entry to publishing, there is often the requirement for some knowledge and experience although the larger publishing companies do provide training for new, usually graduate, recruits.

Entry to other areas such as sales, marketing, rights, and so on, is generally by opportunity and relies less on specific knowledge of publishing. The skills and experience required are generic to a greater extent than, say, those for editing and proofreading and so transfer from other industries is easier.

6 Freelance opportunities

There are many: most will require experience and knowledge of the industry and specialist skills. The largest areas of opportunity are in editing and proofreading. For those with experience – and the network contacts – the prospects are reasonable. For those without the essential knowledge, skills and experience it can be difficult, but not impossible, to obtain work.

Freelance editing and proofreading is not particularly well paid. Publishers tend to set their own rates according to the type and complexity of work involved, and payment may be on the basis of the number of pages or words, or an hourly rate. An overall single fee for a particular job may also be quoted.

There are two organisations offering expert guidance and training for freelance editors and proofreaders new to the industry:

Society of Freelance Editors and Proofreaders (SFEP)

SFEP is a membership organisation which has the twin aims of promoting high editorial standards and achieving recognition of the professional status of its members. For those planning to work freelance, SFEP can offer benefits such as training and contacts within the membership network. The address for SFEP is given below.

The Publishing Training Centre (PTC)

Recognising the need amongst prospective freelance workers for technical knowledge, and a measure of practical experience in editing and proofreading, the Publishing Training Centre has developed two distance learning courses which have been well received by students and employers:

- Basic Editing by Distance Learning
- Basic Proofreading by Distance Learning.

Both courses contain practical exercises designed to develop essential skills and knowledge.

Although the main focus of PTC's activity is the continuing professional development of those employed in companies, some of its open courses are of interest to prospective freelance workers; for instance, Proofreading For Editors, Copy-Editing Skills, Book Publishing: An Introduction, Picture Research and a variety dealing with electronic publishing and IT skills.

7 First steps

- 1 Read *The Guardian* (Mondays), *The Independent* (Wednesdays), *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* (Thursdays). *The Guardian* (Mondays) has probably the largest selection of nationally advertised media jobs. Local newspapers in areas where there is a concentration of publishing companies – for instance, Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh and Bristol – are also useful sources for job vacancies.
- 2 Read *The Bookseller* (weekly), *Publishing News* (weekly) and *Book People* (monthly). All carry classified advertising.
[Jobs advertised tend to be for those with some experience and knowledge of the industry, but trainee appointments do occur and the advertisements will give an indication of the companies currently recruiting.]
- 3 Register with the relevant recruitment agencies, for example Astron, Meridian, Judy Fisher Associates, Judy Farquharson. Although they tend to deal more with those having some experience of the industry, they are sometimes asked to recruit trainees.
- 4 Talk to any one you know in the publishing business; find out what they know about job opportunities. Initiative is another useful attribute.
- 5 Read the available literature. There is a list of recommended books included here.
- 6 Find out about companies that interest you. Ask for their current catalogues and company reports.
- 7 Prepare a concise (3 pages at most) CV. Take great care in producing it: you will be sending it to people whose job it may be to criticise and correct bad grammar, poor spelling and inaccessible layout designs. If you intend to send the CV unsolicited to publishing companies, accompany it with a handwritten letter briefly explaining what your particular interests are and what you feel you could contribute to the organisation. (Use handwriting not necessarily because publishers employ graphologists but because it helps if you have clear, legible script, especially if you are interested in becoming a proofreader or editor where instructions are handwritten and must be unambiguous.)

- 8 Apply for a range of positions for which you feel suitable and able to do the work to an acceptable level of competence. Remember that, once in the industry, moving to another, more interesting and appropriate job may be easier.
- 9 If you are called for interview, make the effort to find out as much as you can about the company. Ask for a catalogue and sales literature from the marketing department, and check any entries in *The Bookseller*, especially the large Spring and Autumn Books issues produced each year (these give a good indication of front list – that is, new titles – activity).

8 Training and qualifications

Pre-entry courses (selection)

Briefly, courses are offered at:

London College of Printing and Distributive Trades

Loughborough University

Middlesex University

Napier University

Nottingham Trent University

Oxford Brookes University

Plymouth University

Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

Thames Valley University

West Herts College/University of Hertfordshire

The Publishing Training Centre has produced a directory of all the pre-entry publishing courses currently offered in the UK.

Post-entry courses (selection: see address section for details)

Publishing Training Centre

As the recognised Industry Training Organisation, the Publishing Training Centre offers a wide range of short courses for those in book and journal publishing. New courses are developed to reflect market trends and needs – recent introductions have covered Internet and Multimedia publishing.

PTC also offers distance learning courses for Basic Proofreading and Basic Editing. These are especially suitable for those seeking freelance work and those who are new to the subject.

London School of Publishing and Public Relations

Offers evening courses in editorial, production, magazine editorial, picture research, DTP, rights, contracts, children's publishing, sales, marketing and commissioning. Entry is strictly postgraduate.

Society of Young Publishers (SYP)

Runs a programme of evening events and organises careers clinics.

Women in Publishing (WiP)

Courses cover a full range of publishing topics and personal development skills.

Qualifications (post-entry)

Academic courses

There are several postgraduate qualifications available, typically at MA level. Amongst those offering such courses are:

City University

London College of Printing and Distributive Trades

Middlesex University

Napier University

Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

Thames Valley University

University College, London

University of Stirling

University of Wales, Cardiff

West Herts College

Institute of Publishing

The professional body representing individuals working in the publishing industry in its entirety. Formally launched in 1999 the Institute has plans to develop short courses, seminars and workshops designed to help with the continuing professional development of its members. Membership is available at three grades: student, for those enrolled on recognised academic courses; associate, for those new to the industry; and full, for those with acceptable levels of knowledge and experience.

Society of Freelance Editors and Proofreaders (SFEP)

The Society will soon be able to offer Accreditation (based on success in its tests for editing and proofreading) and in the meantime offers Registration (based on work experience and references or by an appropriate NVQ).

9 Bibliography

This is a selected list of recommended books covering various aspects of the publishing industry, including practical guides to basic skills such as editing. Most are available from *Book Publishing Books*, the unique mail-order service from the **Publishing Training Centre** which offers a list of over 100 titles on publishing and related works.

Title, Author and Publisher	Notes
INSIDE BOOK PUBLISHING A Career Builder's Guide, 3rd edition <i>Giles Clark</i> Blueprint	A highly readable and well recommended introduction to the industry.
EDITING, DESIGN AND BOOK PRODUCTION <i>Charles Foster</i> Journeyman/Pluto Press	Covers the basic techniques of copy-editing, design considerations and dealing with suppliers.
BOOK COMMISSIONING AND ACQUISITION <i>Gill Davies</i> Blueprint	Deals with list building, working with authors and backlist management.
COPY-EDITING, 3rd edition <i>Judith Butcher</i> Cambridge University Press	The standard reference for the industry: essential for desk editors and proofreaders. Highly recommended.
BASIC EDITING: THE TEXT BASIC EDITING: THE EXERCISES <i>Nicola Harris</i> The Publishing Training Centre	Provides a step-by-step introduction to practical editing skills and covers all the important topics.
HOW TO MARKET BOOKS, 3rd edition <i>Alison Baverstock</i> Kogan Page	An authoritative work and highly recommended.
BOOKS & PUBLISHING ON THE INTERNET <i>Roger Fernyhough</i> Internet Handbooks	A useful introductory directory of all things to do with internet publishing.

10 Magazines, newspapers and journals (selection)

BOOK PEOPLE

Chappell-Thorne

Published monthly, this is a new (launched 2000) newsletter for those in the book publishing business, with a particular but not exclusive emphasis on production. Free circulation, apply to the publisher for details.

THE BOOKSELLER

Whitaker

Published weekly, this is the pre-eminent trade magazine for bookselling and book publishing. Can be found in most public libraries.

THE INDEPENDENT

(Wednesday edition)

Features on the media and publishing, with some classified advertising.

LOGOS

Whurr Publishing

An international scholarly journal published quarterly and covering all aspects of the publishing business. Of interest for the articles: does not normally carry classified advertising.

MEDIA WEEK

EMAP Business Communications

Deals with the advertising industry, but does overlap to an extent with publishing, especially trade and consumer magazines.

PUBLISHING NEWS

Publishing News Limited

Published weekly. Tends to deal more with books and authors than people in the industry. Carries some classified advertising.

11 Useful addresses (selection)

INSTITUTE OF PUBLISHING

Hamilton Court
Gogmore Lane
Chertsey
KT16 9AP
Tel 01932 571932
Fax 01932 569749
E-mail mail@instpublishing.org.uk
Website www.instpublishing.org.uk

LONDON SCHOOL OF PUBLISHING

69 Notting Hill Gate
London
W11 3JS
Tel 020 7221 3399
E-mail Isp@easynet.co.uk

PUBLISHING TRAINING CENTRE, THE (PTC)

45 East Hill
Wandsworth
London
SW18 2QZ
Tel 020 8874 2718
Fax 020 8870 8985
E-mail publishing.training@bookhouse.co.uk
Website www.train4publishing.co.uk

PERIODICAL PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION (PPA)

Queens House
28 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6JR
Tel 020 7404 4166
Fax 020 7404 4167
E-mail info1@ppa.co.uk
Website www.ppa.co.uk

PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION, THE (PA)

29b Montague Street
London
WC1B 5BH
Tel 020 7691 9191
Fax 020 7691 9199
E-mail mail@publishers.org.uk
Website www.publishers.org.uk

12 Recruitment agencies

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47 New Bond Street

London

W1S 1DJ

Tel 020 7493 8824

Fax 020 7493 7161

E-mail info@jflrecrit.com

Website www.jflrecruit.com

ASTRON LIMITED

77 New Bond Street

London

W1Y 9BD

Tel 020 7734 4940

E-mail goastron@globalnet.co.uk

JUDY FISHER ASSOCIATES

7 Swallow Street

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W1B 4DE

Tel 020 7437 2277

Fax 020 7434 2696

E-mail info@judyfisher.co.uk

Footnotes

¹ *Book Publishing: A Career Builder's Guide* 2nd edition (Blueprint).

² *The Occupational Standards for Publishing (2001)* are available from the Publishing Training Centre.

³ It is rare now to receive a genuine manuscript.

⁴ Literally: the galley proofs would be cut into the required length and these pieces were stuck onto a layout grid using special adhesive that would enable the text to be moved several times until the desired layout was achieved: hence 'cut and paste'.