Analyzing New Trends in Proofreading in the Digital Publishing Environment: Post-Print

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Date: 2023-10-08T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

To guide proofreading professionals in proactively adapting to the digital publishing paradigm, this paper analyzes the challenges confronting proofreading in the digital publishing environment and investigates emerging trends from perspectives including paperless workflows, increasingly complex objectives, and intelligent model integration. In response to the evolving landscape of proofreading work, measures such as accelerating functional transformation and enhancing knowledge structures are proposed, aiming to effectively address changing demands, steadfastly safeguard publication quality standards, and facilitate the reform and development of the publishing industry.

Full Text

Preamble

Journal Type: ChinaXiv Cooperative Journal
Title: Exploring New Trends in Proofreading Work Under the Digital Publishing Environment
Author: General Editorial Office, Henan People' s Publishing House Co., Ltd., Zhengzhou, Henan 450018

Abstract: To guide proofreading personnel in actively adapting to the digital publishing landscape, this paper analyzes the challenges faced by proofreading work in digital publishing environments and explores new trends from perspectives such as paperless objects, complexified objectives, and intelligent models. In light of the evolving proofreading landscape, measures including accelerating functional transformation and improving knowledge structures are proposed, aiming to effectively respond to changing demands in proofreading work, steadfastly defend publication quality lines, and safeguard the reform and development of the publishing industry.

Keywords: digital publishing; proofreading work; intelligent model; functional transformation; exploring patterns
CLC Number: G232.2
Document Code: A
Article ID: 1671-0134(2021)04-092-03
DOI: 10.19483/j.cnki.11-4653/n.2021.04.025
Citation Format: Zhou Li. Exploring New Trends in Proofreading Work Under the Digital Publishing Environment [J]. China Media Technology, 2021(04): 92-94.

Introduction

Against this backdrop, as society gradually forms a paperless operational environment, an increasing number of industries are adopting paperless office practices, and personnel have become accustomed to using computers for information input and output. In the publication process of books and other publications, proofreading plays multiple roles in standardizing format and controlling content quality, which is crucial for the healthy and sustainable development of the publishing industry. With the digital development of book acquisition, editing, and processing, traditional typesetting technologies such as typing and casting have been replaced by computer typesetting. Both authors and editors are accustomed to creating and transmitting manuscripts using computers. With the electronic transformation of manuscripts, publishing units have begun to arrange for editors and proofreaders to process directly using computers. Unlike the past practice of first proofreading and processing paper manuscripts to obtain drafts, then having editors send them for typesetting to form proofs, the object of proofreading in the digital publishing environment is no longer the original manuscript.

1. Challenges Faced by Proofreading Work in the Digital Publishing Environment

Proofreading work permeates multiple stages of the publication process. Overall, it can be divided into upstream three-review stages and downstream stages including thorough reading, red verification, and export. In digital publishing environments, most publishing enterprises have begun adopting digital acquisition and review models, and most manuscript authors actively submit electronic manuscripts, effectively improving upstream review efficiency. The digital format also allows for preprocessing of manuscript style and format, bringing considerable convenience to typesetting. However, downstream proofreading work faces numerous challenges.

Because rapid content entry via computer in early stages increases errors involving phonetically or graphically similar characters [1], the use of various text input software with built-in “predictive”functions makes habitual errors common during text entry. Since such errors do not involve incorrect characters, they

are difficult for proofreading software to detect and require manual character-by-character examination. During initial review, unintentional cursor movements, copy-paste operation errors, and similar issues also generate errors. Transmitting manuscripts via wired or wireless networks, affected by transmission media and other factors, can cause problems such as text loss and image distortion, creating significant difficulties for proofreading work. Therefore, in digital publishing environments, manuscript error rates increase, requiring re-proofreading based on new proofs after initial proofreading, which can lead to omissions and content understanding discrepancies in publications. If traditional publishing methods are used, increasing proofreading frequency raises costs and extends publication processing cycles.

Under digital development backgrounds, this also reduces publication market competitiveness and fails to meet modern publishing needs. In digital publishing environments, proofreading personnel must master new manuscript processing rules and conduct proofreading operations according to paperless office workflows. However, while responding to challenges brought by object changes, proofreading personnel must also keep pace with publication rhythms, making proofreading work prone to omissions. The publication and rapid dissemination of electronic publications amplify these errors, negatively impacting society and creating substantial work pressure for proofreaders who face the dilemma of balancing proofreading speed and quality.

2.1 Paperless Object Trend

Through paperless transformation, the proofreading object becomes a combined form of original manuscript and proof, saving intermediate steps and meeting the rapid publication demands of the digital era, but also increasing proofreading difficulty coefficients [2]. Because during proofreading, electronic manuscripts with diverse styles, formats, and high error rates provide no reference original manuscript, making it difficult to accurately judge logical errors, missing sections, and similar issues. Meanwhile, proofreading work requires correcting various technical errors such as inconsistent full-width/half-width characters and improper italicization, increasing workload and pressure.

To alleviate proofreading pressure, some publishing units require authors to self-proofread electronic manuscripts, using software like Adobe Reader to strengthen manuscript revision, and converting to PDF format documents after computer typesetting to accelerate publication pace. However, for non-professionals, manuscript proofreading is not simple, so manuscript content error rates remain high, and issues such as line mixing and missing characters may occur during author self-proofreading, requiring proofreaders to discover and correct various errors to ensure content clarity. With paperless object development, proofreading personnel need to master new manuscript processing rules and conduct proofreading operations according to paperless office workflows.

2.2 Complexification of Objectives Trend

In traditional proofreading work, the objective emphasized "checking for differences," requiring the original manuscript to be the sole standard. Through character-by-character verification, proofreaders confirmed whether differences existed, ensuring proof content matched the original manuscript and avoiding content errors caused by typesetting issues. However, in digital publishing environments, where various electronic texts are applied, emphasis is placed on completing text content proofreading during editorial processing, promoting integrated "editing-proofreading" development. Under this trend, the traditional proofreading objective of checking differences gradually weakens, while greater emphasis is placed on checking for correctness, promoting the complexification of proofreading objectives.

So-called "checking for correctness" requires not only correcting explicit errors in logic and grammar but also judging whether manuscripts contain hidden errors in ideology, politics, and common knowledge, enabling timely correction through bold questioning. Therefore, in practice, proofreading serves as assistant editing, requiring various operations including detailed examination, error correction, and gap filling, undertaking partial editorial tasks and forming a junior editor status that supplements and perfects digital publishing editorial work. In digital publishing environments with increasingly mature proofreading objectives, objective levels should be clarified, incorporating technical errors, common knowledge errors, and scientific errors into proofreading objectives to safeguard publication quality control.

While emphasizing the "checking differences" objective in proofreading work, adjusting proofreading objectives in combination with "checking correctness" requirements can introduce more proofreading methods such as internal proofreading and rational proofreading, providing guidance for scientific proofreading work and maintaining important status in the new era of publishing industry development. Currently, with the complexification of proofreading objectives and shortage of publication resources, some publishing units directly assign editors to undertake proofreading work, eliminating dedicated proofreading positions to ensure comprehensive manuscript control. However, differences between proofreading and editing work still exist, with different thinking modes; complete merging creates "blind spots" that affect manuscript quality. To avoid this problem, it is necessary to recognize proofreading objective development trends, select personnel who meet certain levels of knowledge and technology for proofreading work, ensure they can use associative, reverse, and fidelity thinking to complete manuscript proofreading, and then have editors make judgments from holistic and logical perspectives to achieve overall publication quality control.

2.3 Intelligent Model Trend

In digital publishing environments, proofreading work typically adopts three models: the traditional "three proofreads and one thorough reading" model

for manuscript editing, the manual + proofreading software model, and the intelligent review model. Compared with traditional proofreading models, the manual + proofreading software model can increase proofreading speed. During personnel confirmation of various errors, detailed text annotations can be made directly using various proofreading software. With software assistance, personnel can standardize proofreading symbol usage, ensuring manuscript revision opinions are accurately expressed so editors can quickly complete proof revisions based on annotations. Using software for manuscript systematic checking allows proofreading personnel to confirm whether the same issues appear later in the manuscript, reducing occurrences of missed corrections and incorrect corrections. There is no need to mark every required revision; marking only at the first problem location can prompt editors to complete systematic corrections.

However, the above methods still cannot quickly complete proofreading of various errors including technical errors and logical errors. The intelligent review model can utilize intelligent review systems to conduct manuscript review, increasing proofreading speed while improving proofreading accuracy. For example, using the "Founder Intelligent Assisted Review System," the system includes content and format checking functions. Content checking is further divided into three functions: character/word checking, knowledge checking, and logic checking, capable of completing checks for variant characters, sensitive words, outlines, and more. Under the support of advanced technologies such as graphic recognition, knowledge graphs, and structured engines, and relying on data support from general word databases, rule databases, and specialized databases, the system can automatically classify manuscripts and complete automatic proofreading through intelligent analysis.

Using this proofreading model, personnel can first use the system for rapid manuscript proofreading, confirming each issue identified by the system one by one, accelerating proofreading work efficiency while ensuring quality. Through the system platform, personnel can query academic names, dictionaries, industry terminology, etc., solving the problem of single knowledge structure and ensuring the "checking for correctness" objective can be smoothly achieved. Therefore, in digital publishing environments, publishing models will develop toward intelligent directions, using human-machine combination methods to quickly solve problems such as homophones with different forms and repeated input, adapting to the digital development needs of the publishing industry by improving proofreading quality and efficiency.

2.4 Online Work Trend

In traditional proofreading work, publication proofreading could be completed independently with reference to original manuscripts, requiring minimal communication. However, in digital publishing environments, proofreading work difficulty continues increasing, and without original manuscript reference, it is necessary to strengthen communication with authors, acquisition editors, and related personnel to ensure effective proofreading work. With the populariza-

tion of the Internet, proofreading work can be conducted online, using networks to transmit manuscripts anytime and anywhere, and strengthening information exchange with relevant personnel.

Using various instant communication platforms such as WeChat and QQ, proofreading personnel can transmit text, images, voice, and other information, communicating efficiently with personnel and completing remote proofreading work quickly. With the online development of proofreading work, it also breaks through temporal and spatial limitations. As long as there is communication network access, staff can work in any space including homes and public places, without wasting time on commuting. Proofreading platforms are no longer limited to computers; digital proofreading can also be conducted on tablets, mobile phones, and other platforms, ensuring proofreading work can keep pace with publication rhythms. Accurately grasping publication progress and feeding back difficult problems encountered in proofreading can accelerate revision processes with relevant personnel assistance, shortening publication cycles.

Using networks for online transmission of proofs or corrected manuscripts can ensure timely delivery of relevant documents, reducing risks caused by human loss during pickup and delivery processes. According to institutional norms, proofreaders can use Word for proofreading and then complete paperless proofreading in PDF format, ensuring content accuracy when proofs are returned to publishing units [4]. Furthermore, the online development of proofreading work also alleviates the problem of insufficient proofreading personnel. When necessary to shorten publication cycles, non-dedicated proofreaders can be arranged online to conduct preliminary proofreading work, followed by dedicated proofreading personnel taking over, saving personnel energy while effectively accelerating proofreading progress. In digital publishing environments, publishing institutions also need to achieve socialized operations, cooperating with multiple publishing units to conduct business. Through online channels, human resources can be shared, selecting suitable proofreaders according to different publication natures, solving the problem of insufficient proofreading personnel reserves while ensuring publication proofreading quality, thus providing strong technical support for promoting the healthy development of the publishing industry.

3.1 Accelerating Functional Transformation

As proofreading personnel, it is necessary to recognize the development situation of proofreading work in digital publishing environments, accelerate personal functional transformation, and inject new vitality into proofreading work. Facing changes in proofreading objects and objectives, proofreading personnel need to establish new service concepts, transforming from the past emphasis on "being responsible for the original manuscript" toward "being responsible for readers" and "being responsible for society." Establishing modern proofreading concepts, facing complex proofreading objectives, proofreading work difficulty will continuously increase, and personnel responsibilities will also increase, requiring

personnel to enhance their sense of responsibility and mission, maintaining rigorous and responsible attitudes when facing diverse objects.

Treating publications as cultural carriers and establishing a noble sense of cultural mission enables proofreading personnel to strengthen manuscript proofreading from the perspective of disseminating excellent culture, ensuring national advanced ideas can be promoted [5]. Conducting proofreading work from this perspective requires familiarity with new media characteristics, mastery of manuscript types prone to ideological errors, and adoption of scientific proofreading methods to eliminate all errors in manuscripts as much as possible, fulfilling proofreading duties with dedication.

3.2 Improving Knowledge Structure

Conducting proofreading work in digital publishing environments requires personnel to not only possess high-level language proficiency and cultural literacy but also to dabble in multidisciplinary knowledge to calmly cope with increasingly complex proofreading work. Therefore, proofreading personnel should improve their knowledge structure, aiming to become "generalists"and growing into excellent proofreading workers who accumulate rich proofreading experience to ensure both proofreading quality and efficiency can be improved.

In daily proofreading work, personnel should maintain an attitude of "live and learn," paying attention to accumulation bit by bit to ensure their knowledge breadth and depth continuously increase and can provide assistance for modern proofreading work. Regarding manuscript errors discovered regularly, they need to be categorized into common knowledge errors, language errors, ideological errors, and other types. Through systematic organization and summarization, measures to avoid errors should be proposed to demonstrate good professional literacy. In an era of continuous knowledge renewal, systematic learning time should be arranged to regularly update and supplement editing and proofreading theoretical knowledge. In work, details should be emphasized to strive for creating high-quality publications. Furthermore, frequently used new standards and norms should be mastered to update original knowledge structures. For infrequently used standards and norms, lookup paths should be confirmed to make scientific judgments based on authoritative information when needed.

3.3 Exploring Error Patterns

In digital publishing environments, proofreading personnel need to face heavy proofreading tasks and should also strengthen exploration of error patterns to conduct proofreading work efficiently and with high quality, strengthening publication proofreading quality control from the source. Practical experience summary shows that when proofreading objects change, character-type errors are mostly word, grammar, and standardization errors, which can be further divided into low-frequency and high-frequency error types for targeted proofreading work. Technical errors mainly concentrate on consistency between tables

of contents and hierarchical headings, text expression logic, homophones with different forms, etc. Common knowledge errors concentrate on expressions of different regions and periods, etc. Scientific errors concentrate on accuracy and authenticity of numbers and data. Proofreading ideological errors requires attention to authors' understanding levels of national policies, documents, and leadership speeches to ensure political correctness.

Analyzing error sources for different errors reveals that causes can be divided into three categories: original manuscript errors, editorial processing errors, and computer typesetting errors. Strengthening feedback can reduce errors from the source, steadfastly defending the publication quality line.

3.4 Mastering Advanced Technology

To meet the intelligent development trend of proofreading models, personnel should continuously learn and master advanced technologies, skillfully using various software and intelligent review systems to conduct proofreading work, completing manuscript content comparison and analysis online, and accurately judging information correctness through Internet queries anytime. In the short term, proofreading work cannot completely separate from paper manuscripts, but using digital scanning and other tools can quickly complete manuscript electronic processing, then using automatic proofreading technology to complete preliminary proofreading, improving proofreading efficiency.

After skillfully applying various proofreading software and intelligent systems, proofreading personnel can gradually separate from paper manuscript carriers and skillfully conduct digital proofreading work, enabling proofreading work to orderly connect with upstream digital acquisition and editing work and continuously accelerate publication speed. According to the needs of full-process digital manuscript development, proofreading personnel should strengthen learning of relevant technologies, establish scientific digital proofreading workflows through continuous practice, and summarize proofreading methods and techniques. Furthermore, regarding technology introduction and learning, proofreading personnel should learn from and exchange with peer publishing enterprises, compare gaps in digital publishing development, grasp industry advanced technologies, and targeted improve personal skills and technical levels to become industry exemplars leading proofreading work development.

Conclusion

As professional proofreading personnel, it is necessary to recognize the challenges digital publishing brings to proofreading work, accurately grasp changes in proofreading objects, objectives, models, and other aspects, thereby accurately positioning personal work and timely updating work concepts to complete functional transformation. In practical work, relevant knowledge learning should be strengthened, quality problem source control should be enhanced through error pattern exploration, and advanced technology should be intro-

duced to improve proofreading efficiency, thereby better adapting to the new digital publishing business format and effectively maintaining the industry status of proofreading work.

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(Executive Editor: Hu Yang)

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.