

On the Professional Competencies and Managerial Roles of Technical Editors in the New Media Era: Postprint

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Abstract

Technical editors constitute professional technical personnel within the book and periodical publishing industry. As information technology continues to develop, China has progressively entered the new media era, wherein forms of information dissemination have begun to transform. This has rendered competition in the book market increasingly intense, consequently imposing heightened requirements on the personal qualities and professional competencies of technical editors. They must not only maintain sound professional ethics but also possess certain management capabilities to keep abreast of the pace of contemporary development.

Full Text

The Professional Qualities and Management Functions of Technical Editors in the New Media Era

Abstract: Technical editors are specialized professionals in the book and periodical publishing industry. With the development of information technology, China has gradually entered the new media era, and the forms of information dissemination have begun to change. This has intensified competition in the book market and placed higher demands on the personal qualities and capabilities of technical editors. To keep pace with the times, they must possess not only sound professional qualities but also certain management functions.

Keywords: technical editor; professional qualities; management functions

The advent of the new media era has brought both opportunities and challenges to the media industry. As people increasingly turn to digital media for information, technical editors—vital players in the publishing sector—must enhance

their specialized expertise and effectively exercise their management functions to meet these new challenges. In this context, technical editors serve as a crucial link in the book publishing chain, responsible not only for providing recommendations to other editorial staff and striving for publication quality, but also for pursuing innovative and aesthetically pleasing book designs while ensuring high-quality content. They must consider costs across all aspects of publication to achieve cost-effective production.

1. Professional Qualities of Technical Editors in the New Media Era

1.1 Professionalism

As specialized professionals, technical editors must first and foremost demonstrate professionalism by remaining at the forefront of technological development and mastering continuously evolving printing and binding technologies. Through accumulated experience, they should develop the ability to recommend specialized production techniques suited to particular types of publications, including decisions about publication format and binding methods. Additionally, excellent technical editors must maintain independent judgment and the capacity to uphold professional standards rather than simply following trends. For instance, when some editorial staff seek to reduce production costs by requesting the use of ordinary 60g offset paper for four-color books, a technical editor who fails to insist on appropriate materials will inevitably compromise publication quality and sales performance. Not only will the cost-saving objective remain unmet, but the technical editor will also bear responsibility for abandoning professional principles.

1.2 Responsibility

Technical editors must demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility in their work. During final proofreading before printing, a lack of responsibility might manifest as a cursory review—taking only minutes—whereas thorough verification requires several times or even dozens of times longer. The same task performed with different levels of responsibility yields markedly different outcomes, directly affecting final publication quality. A responsible technical editor carefully examines the submitted manuscript, verifies consistency in basic information such as book titles and author names on covers and copyright pages, checks uniformity in fonts and font sizes throughout the text, and confirms dimensional consistency between covers and interior pages.

1.3 Innovation

In an era of constant development, technical editors must cultivate innovative consciousness. No industry allows for stagnation without risk of elimination, and technical editors must particularly embrace change to remain at the technological vanguard. With continuous advancements in science and technology,

printing and publishing techniques are constantly evolving. As technical professionals in the publishing industry, they must not cling to outdated methods but actively study new technologies and processes, elevating themselves through innovative practice.

Innovation extends beyond technology to mindset. The media that technical editors have worked with for decades are undergoing transformation, prompting concerns about being left behind by rapid technological change. While not everyone must master the most cutting-edge printing and publishing technologies, they must possess the willingness and ability to acquire new skills through diligent study. In today's rapidly developing digital publishing landscape, the very existence of technical editors in their current form may be questioned if paperless publication becomes universal. Only by maintaining innovative consciousness can technical editors achieve continuous capability enhancement.

2. Management Functions of Technical Editors in the New Media Era

2.1 Management of Book Binding and Layout Design

Effective implementation of design schemes and precise fulfillment of technical requirements demand that technical editors manage book binding and layout design. First, they must provide clear specifications and detailed instructions for binding and layout design, prepare material samples and process benchmarks, and thoroughly understand the final publication state. Second, they must oversee the execution of design, typesetting, printing, and binding processes, verifying consistency in format, headings, and illustrations with original designs, ensuring timely material availability, and confirming technical feasibility. Finally, they must guarantee smooth progress in printing and binding, monitor publication status in real time, and promptly address any unexpected issues to ensure successful completion.

2.2 Management of Book Quality

As publications, book quality is paramount—affecting the survival and development of publishing houses. While quality encompasses many dimensions, design and printing quality fall under technical editors' purview, placing substantial responsibility on their shoulders. To effectively manage design and printing quality, technical editors should: (1) understand and master relevant process standards, strictly adhering to them throughout production; (2) follow established workflows without skipping steps to save time, particularly for critical stages like proofreading and sample verification, which require meticulous examination rather than 侥幸心理; (3) establish quality control checkpoints at each production stage to ensure quality through comprehensive control; and (4) personally verify critical stages, conduct timely inspections of quality control points during printing and binding, rapidly identify and resolve issues, and eliminate quality risks before they escalate. Simultaneously, technical editors must ef-

fectively manage raw material quality, including ink and paper, to safeguard overall publication quality.

2.3 Management of Printing Costs and Schedules

Printing costs constitute a significant portion of publishing production expenses. Managing these costs and reducing production expenditures represents a key responsibility for technical editors. Competent technical editors must understand printing cost structures and calculation methods, maintain clear awareness of expenses across all production stages, and closely monitor raw material market conditions and supplier developments. Practical cost management approaches include: (1) establishing cost settlement standards based on supplier pricing and market conditions to fundamentally control production costs; (2) optimizing typesetting and printing workflows, ensuring economical print runs, and strengthening quality management to prevent waste from reworking due to quality issues; and (3) mastering and flexibly applying various cost accounting techniques to minimize unnecessary expenditures.

Printing schedules represent another critical dimension of production costs. Schedule management involves unified planning and oversight of design and printing timelines, coordinating progress across all stages to optimize publication cycles. In practice, pressure to accelerate market release continuously compresses printing schedules, creating significant stress for technical editors and potentially compromising quality. Effective schedule management demonstrates a technical editor's competence, requiring: (1) careful planning of publication timelines based on requirements, specifying production cycles for each stage with appropriate buffer time to minimize printing duration; (2) flexible production allocation and scientific process arrangement to ensure timely material supply and on-time or early completion; and (3) regular on-site inspections to monitor production status and address issues immediately. After printing, technical editors must also manage warehousing and quantity verification. Additionally, their management functions include supervising printing vendors and making rapid adjustments in response to changes in vendor personnel, equipment, or technical capabilities.

3. Conclusion

In the new media era, intensifying competition in the book market and evolving production methods have placed higher demands on technical editors' personal qualities and capabilities. To keep pace with development, they must possess not only sound professional qualities but also certain management functions. Technical editors' professional qualities and management functions significantly impact book quality. Only by fully leveraging their role can publishers produce the highest quality books in the shortest production time at the lowest cost in this new media era.

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