

## How to distinguish between an edit and a proofread

Does your project require the expertise of an editorial professional, but you are unsure to what degree? Fear not. You are not alone.

A significant number of clients I have worked with are initially unsure whether their work is in need of an edit or a proofread. Allow me to help and show you the differences that exist between the two.

### 1. It's only words (or is it?)

After many hours spent in front of your screen and significant periods of procrastination, your content is ready...or is it?

I can't stress enough how utilising the services of an editorial professional can further enhance your work. The reason being, we are looking at the work with fresh eyes and from a completely different perspective.

No matter if you elect for an editor or a proofreader, a person within this profession should make suggestions and recommendations as to how you can add extra polish to your manuscript.

Ultimately, your project represents you and your organisation, so ensuring it hits the mark with the correct tone is vital.

### 2. The edit

Underneath the umbrella of the 'edit' are copy editing and content editing.

Copy editing involves editing fresh from the source (so, in this case, you, the author). The purpose here is to check typos, basic grammar, inconsistencies, style (is there a house or a preferred style?), structure and to raise editorial queries relating to sense, references, abbreviations and heading levels. Minor suggestions are also highlighted at this stage.

Content editing includes elements of crossover with a copy edit, though this stage delves deeper into the editorial process. It can include restructuring, and conducting research into queries concerning references and abbreviations. A content edit can also initiate suggestions to the author for potential rewriting, if required.

Both copy editing and content editing do not necessarily require a subject area background. Although this may be of benefit, the ultimate job of the editor is to see things from the reader's perspective, breaking things down and ensuring clarity of message.

### 3. The proofread

Proofreading may be a term you are more familiar with.

Often, in the world of editorial, the proofreader and the editor are separate people, as fresh eyes to the project can highlight new things. Take a published book, for example (it doesn't matter whether it is printed or digital). The editor will edit the content **before** it goes to a designer. The proofreader will view the document **after** it has been designed.

The reason for this? We are all human and mistakes can creep in at the design stage, or it may be the editor missed something at the outset.

As the second pair of eyes, a proofreader will read through the designed content for consistency and be able to check layout. If requested to do so, a proofreader can also perform a 'proof check' against the editor's file to ensure everything the editor submitted to the designer has been included.

#### **4. Where next?**

If we are to delve deeper, there are other options available that supplement the edit and proofread, but I hope the information presented here brings you clarity as to the differences between the two.

If you want to find out more, or have a project you wish to discuss, please do get in touch by connecting with me on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) or by emailing [craigsmith18@hotmail.com](mailto:craigsmith18@hotmail.com)

*By Craig Smith of CRS Editorial*

