



Stylebooks guide editors and most writers. Mark Mathes created two newspaper stylebooks for the New York Times Company. [above].

## What Is Line Editing or Copy Editing?

Mistakes in books, publications and the written word everywhere weaken the ability to communicate and damage the reputation of the writer and publisher. Your name is on the cover. Copy editing seeks to improve the accuracy of writing by eliminating mistakes in grammar, punctuation, inconsistencies in style and language and typos.

The professional copy editor is an advocate for the reader, knows who the audience is, and works with the writer to communicate on that level.

**The easier mistakes that a copy editor** tries to catch are spelling, grammar and punctuation, serial commas and subject-verb agreement.

**The harder problems are in style**, errors in compound words, and capitalization. The professional copy editor knows unintentional mistakes are hiding in plain sight.

The Microsoft Word spellcheck is not the basis of copy editing.

**When the writer and editor identify the target audience**, then they can begin building a style sheet that will help make the book consistent, accurate, and on target.

Whether you write a single book or a series, the style sheet is a friend of the author, editor, proofreader and others who contribute to the success of the book in marketing, PR and social media.

**There are many sources for a copy editor** to check in the editing process.

--The copy editor will rely on the Chicago Manual of Style for general book publishing standards.

--The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, for the behavioral sciences, since 1928.

--For journalism and public communications, The Associated Press Style Book, The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage, the Wall Street Journal Guide to Business Style and Usage. The Bloomberg Way and more.

**For each writer, I create with them a unique style sheet** that establishes a guide for their book. Ask me for a sample.

--mark mathes