Pitchpole Books

AUTHOR GUIDE

Copyright

We hesitate to write anything about copyright because it is laced with complications and potentially very expensive if you get it wrong. This guidance is much simplified and you would do well to do some reading about it. A good start is the www.ipo.gov.uk.

The first principle is that anything created by someone is automatically subject to copyright. For us the most important categories are the written word and images and similar considerations apply to both. Firstly, (with a few qualifications) the copyright belongs to the person who created the work (or perhaps their employer at the time) unless it has been assigned by them to someone else. Secondly, the copyright remains in force for seventy years after the death of the creator (or maybe fifty years if the work is old). Thirdly, you may not reproduce anything currently under copyright without the permission of the copyright owner.

Now one or two more qualifications:

If you are unable to establish the owner of the copyright after reasonable efforts or you have good reason to think that the creator has been dead 70 years or more, you may reproduce but you run the risk that the copyright owner may turn up and claim their rights – acknowledgement and perhaps a fee.

You are probably safe in quoting small sections of copyright work (claiming it is "review") but the individual quotes should not contain more than 300 words and all the quotations from the work, when added up, should not be more than 800 words. If there is only one quote from the work this may be of up to 400 words.

When permission to reproduce images (photos, diagrams, maps, paintings etc) is given it will frequently have the condition that the image is reproduced unmodified, by cropping for example.

So the message is to be very careful about other people's work — as careful as you would like them to be about yours. Get written permission where you need to and acknowledge the contributions to your work. We will ask you for a declaration on copyright material in your work before we agree a contract. This will contain a clause that makes it clear we accept no responsibility for any breach of copyright. Copyright is a matter for the author.

Unacceptable Content

We expect to publish only works that are accurate after being adequately researched and not in any way misleading. We also do not wish to publish anything that is offensive to any groups or individuals and we will not proceed with anything that contains offensive material or we suspect may be libellous or defamatory. We will ask you to sign a declaration that the work has no offensive, libellous or defamatory but that you accept all responsibility if it does.

Spelling

We want you to express yourself as well as you can to your readers and and one our jobs is to help you do this by avoiding things that may distract them. Follow the guidelines below on spelling, punctuation and layout. You could save us some time and yourself some expense.

Poor spelling is one of the quickest turn-offs of all – probably quicker than weak content – so make sure you use your spell checker on your final version. Spelling mistakes turn us off too.

Punctuation

You are the writer so we don't presume to tell you how to punctuate. If we find glaring errors we will point out the problem and may decide not to go ahead with publishing the work.

Layout guidelines

It's not unusual to find that things which look fine in your typescript look odd (and therefore distract) on the book page. Consistency throughout the book is vital. There are also some things that make conversion to ebook format much easier. So consider following these tips on layout.

Chapters

Start Chapters on a new page by using Insert/Page Break and set the format of the title as *Heading2*. This allows us to create tables of contents more easily and much simplifies the creation of ebooks. *Heading 1* should be reserved for the book title and major divisions of the book such as Parts. *Heading3* may be used but any lower ones (*Heading4* etc) are not guaranteed to be reproduced.

Images

Insert images into the text using the command Insert/Picture and caption them. Do not Paste them into place. If it's essential that they are referred to as the text is read, then place them in the text. Otherwise, group them all together and place them at the end.

Photographs need to be crisp and fairly high contrast to reproduce well — particularly in black and white. Of course if the best you have are a little fuzzy and they are essential, then you must use them. But be prepared to be a bit disappointed when they are printed. If you can, convert them to grey scale and print them yourself to check. Line diagrams have to be sharply drawn and images should be scanned to 300 lines per inch (120 per centimetre). This will allow for acceptable quality in both paper and ebook format.

Images should be made available in png or jpg format. As a guide an image will need to be at least 1500 pixels high if it is to fill the page of a book.

Font

Use the same font for body text throughout and do not vary the font size to indicate, for example, quotations. In ebook format such differences may be lost. Use a commonly-available font supported by ebooks: Arial, Times New Roman and Garamond.

Tables

Tables are relatively easy in print books but they can be very difficult to manage in ebooks — because readers (human and electronic) can adjust fontsize and layout. There are ways around this but be aware there is a potential problem.

Spaces and Indents

Put a single space (not a double one) after commas and other stops with no space before them.

Start paragraphs with a first-line indent (of about 0.4 cm) and do this by formatting the paragraphs using the Paragraph Format function of your word processor. Do not use the TAB function to do it as this makes converting to ebooks more difficult. There should then be no spaces between paragraphs.

However there are several exceptions.

It is a general convention to start paragraphs after a heading without a first-line indent and with a bit of space between the heading and the text.

Also, you may like to start the first paragraph of a new chapter with a dropped capital. The first line should not be indented and you will need to have a few lines. If you set the drop to be more lines than there are in the paragraph it may not work. The drop for this paragraph has been set for three lines — which generally seems to look right.

If you wish to emphasise a slight change of subject matter between paragraphs you can insert a small space and the convention is then not to indent the first line. Some authors may insert a symbol to make the change a little clearer. Whatever, there is no first-line indent.

> Do this for the first paragraph of an indented quote but return to normal indented first lines in subsequent paragraphs of the indented section.
> After the indented section, begin the main text with a non-indented first line.

So it should look like this and the above.

Justification and auto-hyphenation

In all printed books the body text is justified to both left and right as it is in this document. It is a feature that translates easily to ebooks so we prefer manuscripts to reach us in that form.

The automatic justification process built into word processors can struggle with lines that happen to have a lot of long words in the wrong places and the spacing is not very successful. Most word processors have an automatic hyphenation option (it has just been used!) which will hyphenate words at the end of lines to achieve a better look. We would normally implement this for printed books. However, since ebooks can set out the page in different ways depending on inbuilt and user settings, this will not work for them. It is something we can change fairly readily so we suggest you do not implement auto-hyphenation in what you send to us.

Titles and headings are usually centred but left-side justification can work quite well.

Quotation Marks

We prefer that you enclose quotations in double quotes ("...") and any quotations within quotations in single quotes ('...'), sometimes called the American system. Some English publications tend to reverse this and this is of course acceptable. If the quotations are long then separate them into an indented section. You may then do without quotes. Many people work with vertical quotes (" and ') which are the same for opening and closing marks (although you will also find sloping versions of these on occasions). Use these if you wish; ebooks generally seem employ them rather than the curly ones — so they may be the future. Whatever you do, be consistent.

To help distinguish the various marks, it is sometime useful to know their Unicode numbers since these are referred to by word processors.

'	Curly single open quotes	U+2018
'	Curly single close quotes and apostrophe	U+2019
"	Curly double open quotes	U+201C
"	Curly double close quotes	U+201D
'	Vertical single quotes and apostrophe	U+0027
"	Vertical double quotes	U+0022

Hyphens and Dashes

Distinguish, if you can, between hyphens (-), en dashes (–) and em dashes (—). Crudely, hyphens

combine words; en dashes indicate ranges (13–17 December) while em dashes are a type of parenthesis. An en dash (U+2013) can be created in Windows by holding down the Alt key and typing 0150 on the numeric keypad. An em dash (U+2014) is obtained on most major word processors by typing two hyphens together. Some publishers prefer a space either side of the em dash, others not. All we ask is consistency through the work. If you have problems with any of this, use a single hyphen for the en dash and a double one for the em one.

Try to be consistent with hyphens. For example, if you write "north-westerly" in one place, don't write "southeasterly" somewhere else.

Brackets

Leave a space before and after brackets but no spaces inside them at the ends (for a better look on the page). Generally, reserve square brackets for a special use — comments by you within quotations.

Names and Italics

Some names are conventionally written in italics. These generally include names of ship (SS *Chitral*), book titles (*For Whom the Bell Tolls*), magazine and newspaper names (the *Sunday Times)* and works of art. Prefixes like HMS and SS are not italicised; the "the" before the name of newspapers is not — unless it is part of the newspaper name. Otherwise enclose names (of houses for example) in double quotes ("Chez Nous"). People's names are not usually italicised or put in quotes unless they are nicknames (Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong). Rather than sprinkling the text with quotes, and provided it does not cause confusion, the quotes may be dropped after the first mention. So if Satchmo lived most of his life in Chez Nous you could write just that.

Italics are also often used to indicate foreign words that are not yet assimilated into the language and they are also used (sparingly) for emphasis.

Dates

Dates are preferred in the format 20 July 2015 — without any st's or th's. They should be used as "The fête on 20 July 2011 was a big success." (There is no need for a "the" before the date.) If you do not wish to repeat a month then we accept usage like "... on 5 July he submitted the manuscript but he had no reply until the 12th." If you wish to write "the twelfth" or "the 12th", it's up to you.

Abbreviations and Stops

We are trying to save on full stops in abbreviations. Where there is no chance of confusion we suggest you leave them out. So: "Mr and Mrs A L Jones", "Lt Col A B C Fotheringay MC DSO DipEd MA", "The United Nations (UN)". (It's probably best not to squeeze people's initial together though.) If you think there may be confusion then do put a full stop.

Think twice before you use an abbreviation in a sentence. So don't put "Fotheringay became a Lt Col in 1946 before being posted." It looks better and there is less scope for confusion to write "Lieutenant Colonel". Some people prefer to put stops after people's initials (so Mr and Mrs A.L.Jones) and that is not a problem — as long as you are consistent.

Of course, check that you use the same abbreviation for something through the work. If there are plenty of them consider including a glossary.

Numbers

Numbers as figures (3, 77, 1234 etc) should never start a sentence. You will also find that small numbers look better written out in sentences. So: "there were just four entries for the competition" usually looks better than "there were just 4 entries for the competition". It seems to us that the rule works up to ten; after that the figures look OK. Figures are always appropriate for dates. Numbers up to 9999 should be written without commas; from 10,000 upwards commas should separate the thousands.

Units

Metric units are much preferred — younger people may well not understand feet and ounces. If you must use older units then make sure you explain them. Miles are still acceptable but it may be wise to give conversions into kilometres. Nautical miles are preferred for distances at sea — essential if you are writing for sea-farers. Call them "miles" but explain at the outset that they are nautical not statute.

In writing units after a number leave one space (so, 45 metres) and use the full unit name rather than an abbreviation (so, not 45 m). However use the abbreviation in tables and in composite unit (so, 125 km/h).

Times

Times can be either 12 or 24 hour clock. Use a colon or full stop to separate hours and minutes. So all these are acceptable: 10:20 am, 14.20, 23:00, 3 pm and 3:07 pm. Be consistent.

Footnotes and Endnotes

With books intended for publication as ebooks it is best not to use footnotes — and since all books are likely to be converted at some point that means don't use footnotes. If you have endnotes arrange for them to be numbered sequentially right through the documents and to be placed at the end. This suits ebooks well and we can easily convert to the conventional layout for printed books in which endnotes are usually numbered by chapter.

References

There are a large number of systems for referencing and the one you use is up to you. For a book for general reading you may find it convenient to use your endnotes to do this.

Indexes

Almost all non-fiction books need an alphabetical index at the end. Most word processor packages have some means of creating an index so have a look at the documentation. It is not a straightforward task so, if you wish, we will give you a quote for doing it — provided you are prepared to make some input yourself.

Ebooks do not usually have indexes because they are easy to search for words and phrases.

2 March 2013