Using standard proofreaders' marks

WHAT ARE PROOFREADERS' MARKS?

Proofreaders' marks are a set of symbols, pictographs or short notations that are instantly recognized by editors, typesetters, proofreaders and others in the graphic arts industry.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF PROOFREADERS' MARKS?

While symbols and pictographs have been used since ancient times, little is known about the history of proofreaders' marks. We don't know exactly who invented them or where and when they were first used.

Some experts believe that proofreaders' marks were developed with Gutenberg in the 15th century. With the invention of the printing press, editing and proofreading gained importance because of the need to avoid duplicating printing errors in mass quantities.

What we know is that, over time, proofreaders' marks have become the standard for marking up copy in the editing and proofreading stages before sending it to press.

WHO SHOULD USE PROOFREADERS' MARKS?

Professional editors and proofreaders, as well as *anyone charged with writing or marking up copy* should learn and use standard proofreaders' marks.

Copy is generally marked up in two steps:

1) **Copyediting:** Ideally, copyediting is done before the file is sent to the design department. Unfortunately, this important step is often skipped in the rush to submit a project for publication. The result can be disastrous, adding to the overall cost of printing and causing errors to be incorporated into the typeset copy. Such mistakes, when caught, are corrected at the customer's expense. Worst case scenario: The mistakes are not caught and end up in print.

   At this stage, the author along with another person with authority over the project, check not only for typos, but also for factual and grammatical errors; important information that may have been omitted such as the time, date and location of an event; awkward wording or phrasing; misused words or expressions; style issues (the *University Style Sheet* and the *AP Style Manual* are the official guides); and for anything that might be construed as offensive or reflect badly on the University.

2) **Proofreading:** When copyediting is done well, proofreading is easier. Even when the copy is submitted as an electronic file, however, proofreading a hard copy is still necessary. The computer monitor may show one version, while another appears in print.

   Spell check doesn't catch every mistake. In addition to typos, other errors proofreaders may catch are incorrect fonts, inconsistencies, improper spacing, truncated (or omitted) text, missing design elements, and widows or orphans. On certain projects, more than one round of proofs may be necessary.

   Once the proofreaders are satisfied with the draft, an email with their approval to print is sent to the designer. ***It is the policy of UD Printing & Design to print a project only after receiving approval in writing.***

Following is a chart of standard proofreaders' marks:

Delete and Insert

- Delete, take it out
- Delete and close up
- Delete extra space
- Insert space
- Insert text
- Correct letter

Punctuation marks
(use caret to show point of insertion)

- Insert period
- Insert comma
- Insert colon
- Insert semicolon
- Insert quotation marks
- Insert single quotes
- Insert apostrophe
- Insert question mark
- Insert exclamation point
- Insert hyphen
- Insert parentheses
- Insert dash

Other

- Spell out abbrev.
- Check spelling
- Let it stand
- OK "with corrections"
- or "as corrected"

Style of Type

- Wrong font
- Make lower Case
- Set in LOWER CASE
- capital letter
- SET IN capitals
- Set in Lower case with Initial Caps
- Set in Roman type
- Set in italic type
- Set in lightface type
- Set in boldface type

Paragraph and Position

- Move to right
- Move to left
- Center
- Move up
- Move down
- Flush left
- Flush right
- Align horizontally
- Align vertically
- Break, start new line
- New paragraph
- No new paragraph / run on
- No paragraph indentation
- Transpose letters words or

Technological advances in recent years have lessened the need to use handwritten proofreaders' marks, as more people create PDFs and are versed in using Adobe Acrobat's editing tools. (For our class on "Simplifying the Desktop Publishing Workflow by Using PDFs," refer to the May 2011 issue of **Ink and Toner.**)

Nevertheless, standard proofreaders' marks are still used in certain situations, and are a time-saving tool worth learning.

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Quote of the month . . .

*A little madness in the Spring
Is wholesome even for the King.*

—Emily Dickinson

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                   "Where your project is our project!"

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