

Those who attended 'Editing in Context', the national editors conference held in Melbourne in October 2005, heard many stimulating papers and had the pleasure of meeting new colleagues as well as catching up with old friends. There was more discussion of language immediately afterwards at 'Style Council'. In this issue, *The Fine Print* presents edited versions of selected papers from both conferences, although most articles are new fare. We would like to thank the organisers of 'Editing in Context' and 'Style Council' for their kind permission to make conference papers available to a wider audience.

Peter Donoghue's warnings about Big Retail, Big China and Big Technology make sobering reading. The paper identifies developments that editors ignore at their peril. Michael Webster also issues cautionary words. On the basis of the trends he identifies, book editors need to understand the competition for the 'entertainment dollar' far better than most of us do.

Andrew Ryder examines the language of the academy, and the comments he makes from the perspective of a scholar in Britain are equally valid in Australia. Jennifer Blunden questions the necessity of 'dumbing down' language for museum and gallery audiences. Her suggestions have relevance to editors beyond the walls of museums and galleries. Sue Butler, publisher of *The Macquarie Dictionary*, takes readers on a fascinating behind-the-scenes tour of Australian slang.

Bryony Cosgrove's interview with Alex Miller deepens our understanding of the many different relationships that authors and editors can forge, particularly when they work together on more than one book. The interview with Renée Otmar and Loma Snooks allows readers to 'listen in' as two highly experienced editors assess the professional developments they have observed during diverse and successful careers. Be sure to read to the end for the insights on the idea of editorial perfection.

Mentoring is a hot topic in Australian editing circles and the experiences in the indexing profession that Max McMaster outlines provide valuable lessons. Editing is a more varied profession than most outsiders know. Janet Salisbury and Hilary Cadman introduce science editing to the uninitiated — biological sciences in their case.

Two important Australian books for editors have been published in the past six months. The reviews by Neil Lovett (*The Macquarie Dictionary*) and Rosemary Luke (*At the Typeface*) provide a tantalising dip into the contents of these volumes, which are likely to become part of the standard collection for editors. *TFP* also runs reviews of books that are not new but which deserve wider readership. Paula Grunseit's review of *Lost Libraries* raises an old issue, the destruction of books, that can take new forms with the power of digital technology to harvest and control words. Janet Mackenzie discusses Stephen Pinker's *The Language Instinct*, pointing to its 'analysis of the detailed workings of language' as the most interesting aspect for editors. They are books that have outlived the usual commercially allotted shelf life.

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