

The development of professional standards for editing in South Africa

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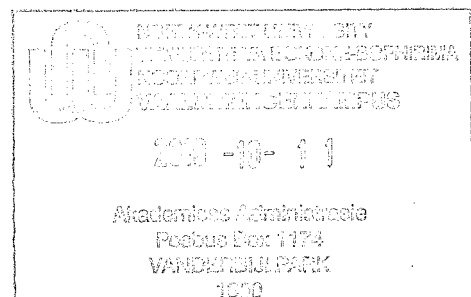
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Soli Deo Gloria.

ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR EDITING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Currently, South African editors do not have a prescribed set of professional editing standards. The absence of standards is cause for concern because it reflects the largely unregulated status of the South African editing industry. An important problem arising from the lack of standards is that there is no way in which the industry can determine the competence of its practitioners. In addition, the absence of standards also affects other areas of the industry, such as training, accreditation, regulation and professionalisation. As a consequence, editors struggle to obtain professional recognition for their work.

Against this background, this study postulates that the development of standards for South African editors is possible and necessary. However, because the South African editing industry is highly diversified in terms of the various contexts in which editors may work, the development of standards needs to be based on the identification of shared or core tasks and skills that are essential for the everyday work of all editors, together with the identification of tasks and skills specific to certain sectors. This may lead to the development of a set of core standards for editors, supplemented by sector-specific standards. The focal point of this study is the first of these two aspects: the development of core standards for editors in South Africa.

In order to develop core standards for South African editors, this study comprises a literature review and empirical investigation. The literature review analyses the status of the South African editing industry, and also contributes to the identification of a comprehensive list of tasks and skills involved in editing. The empirical investigation is based on a survey questionnaire (utilising the tasks and skills identified in the literature review) designed to collect data on which tasks and skills form an essential part of South African editors' work. The questionnaire was sent to a stratified sample of South African editors, reflecting the four sectors identified for the purposes of this study: editing for book publishing, editing for mass media, technical editing and academic editing. The data collected from the questionnaire was analysed utilising various statistical methods, in order to extrapolate core (or shared) tasks and skills among South African editors. These core tasks and skills were used to draft a document outlining core standards for South African editors, which was tested for accessibility and clarity by means of a semi-Delphi study.

Key words: editing, editor, standard(s), standardisation, regulation, professionalisation, South Africa

UITTREKSEL

DIE ONTWIKKELING VAN PROFESSIONELE STANDAARDE VIR REDIGERING IN SUID-AFRIKA

Daar is tans geen voorgeskrewe professionele redigeringsstandaarde vir Suid-Afrikaanse redigeerders nie. Die afwesigheid van hierdie standaarde is kommerwekkend omrede dit die grootliks nieverwante status van die Suid-Afrikaanse redigeringsindustrie reflekteer. 'n Belangrike probleem wat weens die afwesigheid van standaarde ontstaan is dat die industrie nie kan bepaal hoe bevoeg die praktisyns is nie. Die leemte wat weens die afwesigheid van standaarde ontstaan beïnvloed voorts ander aspekte van die industrie, soos opleiding, akkreditasie, regulering en professionalisering. Die leemte kan ook daartoe lei dat redigeerders dit moeilik vind om professionele erkenning vir hulle werk te verkry.

Teen hierdie agtergrond veronderstel die huidige studie dat die ontwikkeling van standaarde vir Suid-Afrikaanse redigeerders nie slegs moontlik nie, maar ook noodsaaklik is. Aangesien die Suid-Afrikaanse redigeringsindustrie egter hoogs gediversifiseer is ten opsigte van die verskeie kontekste waarin redigeerders kan werk, behoort die ontwikkeling van standaarde gebaseer te word op die identifisering van gedeelde of kerntake en vaardighede wat belangrik is vir die alledaagse werk van alle redigeerders, asook die identifikasie van take en vaardighede wat vir bepaalde sektore van belang is. Dit kan lei tot die ontwikkeling van kernstandaarde vir redigeerders, en kan aangevul word deur sektor-spesifieke standaarde. Die fokus van die huidige studie is die eerste van hierdie twee aspekte, naamlik die ontwikkeling van kernstandaarde vir redigeerders in Suid-Afrika.

Ten einde kernstandaarde vir Suid-Afrikaanse redigeerders te ontwikkel, word 'n literatuurstudie en empiriese ondersoek in die studie ingesluit. In die literatuurstudie word die status van die Suid-Afrikaanse redigeringsindustrie geanaliseer, en dit lewer ook 'n bydrae tot die identifisering van 'n omvattende lys van take en vaardighede wat van belang is by redigering. Die empiriese ondersoek is gebaseer op 'n vraelys-opname (gebaseer op die aanwending van die take en vaardighede wat in die literatuurstudie geïdentifiseer is) wat ontwerp is om data in te win ten opsigte van die take en vaardighede wat 'n belangrike deel vorm van Suid-Afrikaanse redigeerders se werk. Die vraelys is aan 'n gestratifiseerde steekproef van Suid-Afrikaanse redigeerders gestuur. Die steekproef reflekteer die vier sektore wat vir die doeleindes van hierdie studie geïdentifiseer is, en sluit in redigering vir boekuitgewers, redigering vir massamedia, tegniese redigering en akademiese redigering. Die data wat deur middel van die vraelys versamel is, is deur middel van verskeie statistiese metodes geanaliseer ten einde

kerntake (of gedeelde take) en -vaardighede onder Suid-Afrikaanse redigeerders te ekstrapoleer. Hierdie kerntake en -vaardighede is gebruik om 'n dokument daar te stel waarin kernstandaarde vir Suid-Afrikaanse redigeerders uitgestippel word. Die kernstandaarde is verder getoets vir toeganklikheid en duidelikheid deur middel van 'n semi-Delphi ondersoek.

Sleutelwoorde: redaksie, redakteur, standaard(e), standaardisering, regulasie, professionalisering, Suid-Afrika

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The day that an editor picks up a manuscript without some sense of anticipation is probably the last day that he or she should be at work. – A.D. Williams –