

# Editorial Processes 1

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2025-10-13

## Content strategy and editorial quality

### Preface

#### Github repository

[heinzwittenbrink/slides-editorial-processes](https://heinzwittenbrink/slides-editorial-processes)

#### Goals and plan of the course

1. Know what editing, editorial processes and an editorial team is
2. Be able to do consulting for an organisation about the forming and management of an editorial team
3. Know important factors and influences for the future development of editorial teams
4. Handle editorial roles and processes in your master thesis

Das Ziel ist, dass wir als Gruppe lernen.

We all know these processes, and we all have experience with editorial processes that are not optimal. Conversely, good quality is also related to well-established editorial processes. We also want to collect and reflect a lot of our experience, with the questions:

Which factors outside the editorial office play a relevant role? Where alternatives are possible?

#### Base for grading

- Please write (individually) short minutes after every session.
- Please write a short summary of what you have learned at the end of the course and include a reflection about the relevance of editorial quality for your actual or future professional practice.

#### Goals today

Understanding the basics of *the craft of editing*

- Content strategy and editorial praxis
- What is editorial quality?

- Editorial quality and search

## **Second and third aspect**

- Reviewing the editorial process of contentstrategy.at
- Understanding the editorial roles of contentstrategy.at
- Perspective: Ethical and social aspects of editing

## **Plan of the course**

- Content strategy and editorial quality
- Editorial quality and standards
- Editorial team structure and power dynamics
- Editing and AI

## **Timetable for today**

9:00 - 9:15: Introduction

9:15 – 9:45 Input: Editing as a root of content strategy

9:45 – 10:15 Practical experience with editing

10:15 - 10:30 Coffee Break

10:30 – 11:15 Input: Editorial Quality

11:20 – 12:00: Group work: Editing and line editing

12:00 – 12:15 Break

12:15 – 13:00: Editorial roles and contentstrategy.at

## **Context**

- Editing of articles for contentstrategy.at
- Documenting a part of this course for contentstrategy.at
- Work done for contentstrategy.at
- Protocol?

## **Possible Lecture Reports**

- What is editorial quality?
- Editing and AI
- Types of editorial organisation
- Editorial roles and workflow

## **Possible literature reviews**

- Kissane, Elements of content strategy (Review)
- Plotnik, Elements of editing
- Google on content quality

# Web editing as a root of content strategy

## Editorial practice in our group

- Edititing in my work
- Editorial tasks
- Editorial roles

## Literature

- The elements of content strategy ([Kissane 2011](#))
- The elements of editing ([Plotnik 1982](#))
- Google search central on editorial quality  
([googlesearchcentralCreatingHelpfulReliableb?](#))
- Google Quality Rater Guidelines ([Google 2025](#))

## Kissane



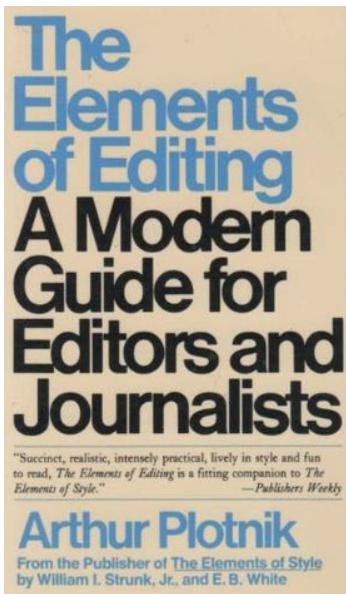
[The Elements of Content Strategy, A Book Apart](#)

## About Erin Kissane

[Erin Kissane's small internet website](#)

[@kissane@mas.to](mailto:@kissane@mas.to)

## **Plotnik**

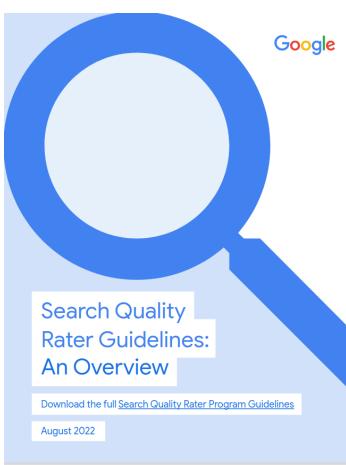


The Elements of Editing: A Modern Guide... book by Arthur Plotnik (Plotnik 1982)

## **Plotnik online**

The elements of editing : Internet Archive

Google



Google search central on editorial quality ([googlesearchcentralCreatingHelpfulReliableb?](#)), Google Quality Rater Guidelines ([Google 2025](#))

## **Question to the group: Further sources?**

### **Editing as a component of content strategy**

As their content specialists, the more we know about solid editorial practices, the better we can help our clients with the transition to the new world of distributed online publishing.

Kissane ([2011](#)) p. 21

## **Editing as a root of content strategy**

Editorial work is so closely related to content strategy that questions about the difference between the two often arise. From the outside, content strategy can look quite a lot like the sort of editing found in magazines and newspapers. The editorial world, and that of publishing in general, has a lot to offer us.

Kissane (2011) p.16

## **The importance of editing**

- Editors as delegates of the audience
- Editors as guarantors of quality
- Editors as packagers of information

## **Roles of the content strategist and the editor in chief**

They also need someone to decide how best to communicate it, who should make it, and so on—a sort of combination editor-in-chief and air traffic controller. They need a content strategist.

Kissane (2011) p.1

## **Content strategists as managing editors**

Those who do content strategy work from within organizations tend to fill roles quite similar to those of a traditional managing editor: they plan and oversee the communication of new themes and ideas, manage schedules, and collaborate with writers and other content producers.

Kissane (2011) p.69

## **Examples**

(Senior) Content Strategist & Editor (m/w/d)

Content Strategist - Weber Shandwick

## **Content strategies have to be translated into editorial decisions**

- Dependencies of content strategies and content strategists from editors
- Content strategy is about channels, not items
- Content channels can only be managed by editors

## **Why editorial is important**

In my experience, it is very easy for brilliant information architects (or UX people who do information architecture) to underestimate the importance of editorial planning, voice and tone, and detailed guidelines for content creation Kissane (2011) p. 59

## **Editors cannot be replaced by specialists**

If you rely on internal experts without a dedicated editor and approval process, you're courting trouble. Kissane (2011) p. 66

## **Editing as necessary skill and craft**

But the truth is, none of these tools can replace a skilled in-house editor. If your client will be creating and managing more than a few dozen pages of content, they'll need an editor or internal content strategist to keep things running smoothly. Kissane (2011) p. 69

## **Editing is about authority and leadership**

Content creation encompasses writing, illustration, information visualization, metadata and text-equivalent production, and interface writing, and is supported by creative direction and old-fashioned editorial leadership. Kissane (2011) p. 62

## **Editing as continuous handling of complex situations with unexpected components**

The essence of editorial work lies not in style guides and arguments about grammar, but in the ability to cultivate relationships, manage chaos, and serve readers. It's not a profession to be learned from books, but these three very different takes will help. Kissane (2011) p. 78

## **Real world editing**

But real-world editing is much more about crack organizational skills, a habit of developing practical communication ideas, and the ability to deal firmly and diplomatically with the whole crew of people involved in getting a book, newspaper, or website from concept to delivery. Kissane p. 17

## **Tasks of editors and editorial teams**

- maintaining consistency (often with style guides)
- correct language
- passion for getting the story
- development of themes and narrative arcs
- reactions to outside events
- managing writers and creators
- maintaining balanced variety

## **Editors as advocates of the readers**

Editors worth their salt work not for writers or publishers, but for readers. Kissane (2011) p. 17

Paradoxically, it's only by working tirelessly for our readers that we can genuinely serve our clients and employers Kissane (2011) p. 18

Acting as a user advocate doesn't make you an impractical idealist. As we've learned from our editorial colleagues, if your content doesn't work for the user, you've already failed. User advocacy is simply a way of ensuring that a project achieves business goals. • Kissane (2011) p. 47

## Storytelling as a focus for editors

Whatever corner of the publishing world they come from, editors know how to help other people tell the best, most engaging stories they can tell. Content people with backgrounds in journalism or publishing usually have the basics of storytelling down cold, but the rest of us can learn from the storytelling principles of these fields—from the basics like building a lead that hooks the reader (and supporting it with facts and quotations) to sophisticated techniques for layering in secondary narratives. Kissane (2011) p. 18

## Discussion: Editing for print and digital

### Content and packaging

Some lines of fair play can be drawn, but lightly. A manuscript's *content* ... is the author's province ... But the *form* of the final product—its organization, pace, packaging—is what editors like to think is their speciality. (Plotnik 1982)

## Editorial Quality

### Google: Quality and SEO

[Creating Helpful, Reliable, People-First Content | Google Search Central | Documentation | Google Developers \(Google Search Central, n.d.\)](#)

### Content criteria

- Information
- Analysis and interpretation
- Balance
- Originality

### Readability criteria

- Appeal
- Concreteness and clarity
- Color and tone

### Impact criteria

- Enlightenment
- Force
- Relevance

# **Line editing**

## **Line editing 1**

Sentence by sentence, line by line:

- carry the author's meaning?
- are my revision's more effective?
- effectiveness of every phrase (grammar)

## **Line editing 2**

- numerical/factual/judgmental error
- typos
- details of footnotes etc.
- quotes, links, attributions

## **Line editing 3**

- step back, whole and part
- sexism, racism, ageism, ethnocentrism,
- structure: title, subtitle, lead
- cleared additions with th author

## **Exercise (groupwise)**

- Form groups of 4 people
- Analyse one article of contentstrategy.at using the criteria in Plotnik (1982), pp.28/29 and Google (-@ Google 2025)
- Make a list of editorial problems and of suggestions for improvement
- Present the results to the whole group.

## **Sample articles:**

- Content for Complex Digital Environments: The Basics  
<https://www.contentstrategy.at/lecture-reports/content-for-complex-digital-environments>
- Strategy meets organisational communication: A discussion of 4 approaches  
<https://www.contentstrategy.at/lecture-reports/strategy-meets-organisational-communication-a-discussion-of-4-approaches>

## **Summary and questions**

- What did we learn for our practice?
- What should we learn for our practice?
- Where do we need a revision of our editorial guidelines?

## **References**

- Google, ed. 2025. "Search Quality Rating Guidelines." September 11.  
<https://static.googleusercontent.com/media/guidelines.raterhub.com/en//searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf>.

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