7.0 AIMS

In this unit we shall be telling you about the importance and method of keeping track of a manuscript that has been submitted to a publisher for consideration and has been duly accepted for publication.

At the end of this unit you will be able to explain the reasons why this must be done and be able to do an elementary amount of tracking as well.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In publishing as in any other occupation, good house-keeping will yield good dividends. An author submits his or her manuscript to a publisher in good faith and in the expectation that it will not be manhandled, kept carelessly or otherwise put in the hands of those who may misuse it. Remember, no publishing house can do without an author and it is indeed rare that publishers can afford the luxury of accepting only commissioned manuscripts. Those who do so are very clear that unsolicited manuscripts are not their responsibility.

Here, we shall deal with the arrival of a manuscript at the desk of the publisher or editor and show you how to keep track of its progress through the various processes it is subject to before being on display on bookshelves. We shall also tell you, in the process, of the reasons for doing so and the benefits of systematic record-keeping to both publisher and author. We shall also tell you that at any given time, a publisher may have several books in the pipeline and therefore, it is imperative that he is able to track the progress of any individual title.

7.2 ARRIVAL OF MSS

In case a publishing house receives an unsolicited manuscript, all publishers will expect that there is a stamped, self-addressed envelope so that it may be returned to the author,
if need be. Else, no publisher will make the effort of returning such a manuscript and it will be simply put into the dustbin.

For this reason, magazines in particular, put such a notice on their editorial pages. However, book publishers have no such arrangement and it is for this reason that potential publishers should be first approached by authors with a book proposal and then only should a full-length book be submitted.

Since we have already told you about what is a book proposal in unit 5 we shall not repeat the information.

Let us now proceed from the point where the publisher or editor has accepted the book for publication. Earlier, the author used to be told that the first copy (not a carbon copy) of the mss should be submitted, complete in all respects. However, with technology, all printouts are clear and this instruction is no longer given. In keeping with this earlier instruction, it was taken for granted that the author had not made multiple submissions to publishers. (We have discussed this elsewhere.) Today, this instruction is no longer given since the author does not wait indefinitely and will submit the mss elsewhere as well.

Sagepub.co.uk for instance, clearly instructs authors that “a submitted mss will be considered for publication on the understanding that the work is original, that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, it is not previously published, and that, if accepted, it will not be published later in the same or similar form in any language without the consent of the publisher”.

Let us proceed on the assumption that the author has not made multiple submissions and that the publisher has agreed to publish the book. (In the first course of this Programme we have already told you about Intellectual Property Rights and a Publisher’s Contract so we will not repeat this information here.)

### 7.3 MANUSCRIPT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Two things need to be done right away.

1) A **Manuscript Acknowledgement Form** (also called Circular) should be filled out and mailed to the author. Telephonic or e-mail acknowledgement may be sent in addition to the written one. Remember, both for legal reasons and for practical ones, the publisher must have written records of all publishing activities—the person in charge at his publishing house may change, the author may die or his heirs may have issues about this, the author may have made multiple submissions, or the publishing house may need a TRACKER for its own scheduling.

The author must be informed through this acknowledgement form that, while every care will be taken to ensure the safety and custody of the mss, the author too must keep his own copy and the publisher will not be responsible for any loss or damage. (This is to ensure the publisher’s own interests!)

2) A **Register or Card file** or even in soft copy, with the author(s) name(s), date of receipt of mss and his address and contact details must be opened for that particular mss. This must have columns for

- author’s name
- title
- date received
- number of pages /illustrations
- specific author instructions if any, regarding return of mss or other relevant instructions, and
- If the mss has been received in soft copy, this must be recorded too.
A Sample Manuscript Acknowledgement Circular/Register of Manuscript with Columns is given below. It contains information about

- Author’s Name
- Date received
- Number of pages
- Number of illustrations
- Date sent to editor/reader/outside expert with dates & fees paid if any
- In-house Readers Report (readability, marketability),
- Outside Expert’s report – technical accuracy. Standard of content, presentation, expert opinion and author’s standing
- House Editor’s Monthly Report (goes to Chief Editor who coordinates work of all editors, copy editors, readers, outside experts etc); This gives position of manuscript under editorial processing, those under various stages of production, promotion and sales suggestions through Chief Editor to sales department.
- Lists of media, addresses of VIPs to whom advance copies must be sent for reviews.
- Pro formas for Revision.

7.4 TRACKING THE PROGRESS OF THE MANUSCRIPT

Why should it be necessary to keep track of what is happening to a manuscript? Most authors are impatient to see their books in print and do not appreciate that, at any time, a publisher will have literally hundreds of manuscripts at different stages of production. Publishers may, therefore, not be as anxious as the author (in the opinion of the author that is) to publish the book.

However, you, as someone who will be involved in the production process will need to keep yourself up-to-date. Publishers do have target publishing dates to coincide with various academic calendars, financial year closing (when institutions try to finish purchases before their budget can lapse), book fairs etc. while authors may have other target dates (an upcoming interview can be one). It is therefore imperative that you, the learner, have a clear appreciation of both perspectives—the birds’ eye view (publisher’s) and the worm’s eye view (author’s) of the situation.

7.4.1 Author’s Instructions are Important

The author has the right to make suggestions regarding the use of fonts, illustrations, colour schemes, a target date and his suggestions must be duly recorded. In addition, she/he may like to have the manuscripts returned (for any reason whatsoever) and this must be honoured if possible.

7.4.2 Record of Work Assignment

A record of whom the work has been assigned to, for what purpose (preliminary reading, content vetting, refereeing, marketability) must also be kept with date of assigning of work, designation and name of person assigned, due date for completion. This will help locate each manuscript at any point of time.

7.4.3 Recording Details of MSS Received

Along with a printout of the book, the author may have sent illustrations (in soft copy or in hard copy), charts, tables etc. He may want to begin each chapter on a right hand
(even numbered) page or may have other idiosyncrasies. Whether this accommodation is possible is a different issue. What is to be done here, without argument or any further discussion with the author, is to record the suggestion made.

7.4.4 Sharing the Information

While an editor is working on the content, a designer may also be working on the layout, colour schemes etc. This information record that is being maintained will be of use to all concerned with the progress of the manuscript and a list of incoming manuscripts could be circulated, or made available, as may be the custom at the publishing house. This will allow others to schedule their work too.

7.4.5 Other Miscellaneous Records

It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of information that will be needed but it is sufficient to say that anything relevant must be duly recorded.

7.4.6 Safe Keeping

Needless to say, a copy of the manuscript as it is received, along with copies of other matter must be put in safe-keeping, in a place other than the place where it is being worked upon. Nowadays it is quite the custom to email such matter to oneself. In the event of natural or man-made disasters, crashing of man or machine, this can be retrieved at another location as well.

7.5 "TRACKING SOFTWARE" FOR THE AUTHOR'S USE

Nowadays, authors are as savvy as publishers, and an author may very well be able to keep track of his mss himself. In such a case s/he is probably using something like http://dolphinsoftware.bc.ca/dolphinftp/WorkingWriter/Working_Writer_v3_Manual.pdf - this is a document and information management system for freelance writers from query letter to paycheck! This is available as on date in demo (free) version as well.

In case the author wishes to have this information in soft copy, it is possible and done in the case of journals or scientific publications where, for example, the date an article about a new invention was published is critical for him to get the patent or other credit.

7.6 RECORDING THE EDITORIAL PROCESS

The editor is the backbone of the entire publishing setup. Glossary production and high visibility along with aggressive and dynamic marketing can only succeed up to a point. The readers will soon reject a book that has poor content. It is therefore critical that the editorial process be foolproof and that meticulous records are maintained. Two or more processes may be taking place simultaneously. Development editing→ Technical editing→ Copyediting→ Proofreading→ Page layout, book design, template creation (by artist or visualizer)→ Indexing (by author once page proofs are in hand) could be the simultaneous processes taking place.

All the above processes must be not only tracked but also the schedule must also be maintained. There are some formats which are used to do the above tracking. They are as follows:
### a) EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT SCHEDULE:
- Movement to editor, reader, outside expert with date
- House reader’s report
- Outside expert report
- House editor’s monthly report (tracking mss under editorial processing, under stages of production)
- Chief editor’s monthly progress report (of all categories of books)

### b) PRODUCTION SCHEDULE (See Section 7.9)

### c) TITLE OF WORK:
- Author’s name
- Editor’s name
- Number of pages
- Number of illustrations
- Dates of receipt of galleys, page proofs, print order
- Movement of proofs to editor, author, return to printer

### d) CIRCUIT MEMO: Movement from author—editor—proofreader

### e) SALES/DISTRIBUTION/PROMOTION DEPTS:
- Register of booksellers
- Inventory of stocks
- Registers such as dispatch and stock
- Mailing lists
- Other sales, distribution and promotion records

### 7.7 RECORDING THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

If the production process is to include the editorial process as well, then the record keeping begins from the date the manuscript is received at the desk of the chief editor and the job is assigned.

The production schedule must take into consideration all of the processes of designing, editing, composing, revising, indexing etc.

By now you must have understood that the progress of a manuscript has to be meticulously maintained. Therefore we give you below a sample production schedule for you to study. It is not necessary that these deadlines be rigidly followed but the steps do have to be followed.

### 7.8 SAMPLE PRODUCTION FORM

What details should a production form have?

From (a) to (i) (below) you can see the items that will influence the production. There may not be adequate paper in stock and/or the approved printer may have other commitments could be two of the items that could ruin the best planned schedules.

#### a) Production Schedule (Text)

Title

Author’s Name
Editor’s Name
No. of Pages
No. of illustrations- ½ tone and line
Date of receipt of galleys, page proofs
Print order movement of proofs to editor/ author/ return to printer etc.
b) Production Schedule (binding, dust jackets etc)
c) Production Costs (affected by quantity) - covering costs of printing, binding
d) Stock Register of Paper
e) Approved lists of printers and rates
f) Costing estimates of different print runs
g) Circuit Memo (This keeps track of the movement of the manuscripts from author to editor to copy editor, proof reader etc.)
h) Designs Department Memo (Chief Artist or Visualiser or Typographer to select text, type, layout of pages, cover design, book jacket design, redraw maps, or illustrations, decide placement in consultation with copyeditor and prepare a Dummy.
i) Sales, Distribution, and Promotion Records: This has addresses of booksellers, retailers, running accounts etc.

7.9 SAMPLE PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

Here is a sample “6 Week Production Schedule” where the author has a deadline for having the published book in hand and the publisher has drawn up the schedule accordingly.

If you look at it closely, you will see that the designer (item 2) and the editor (item 6) were given the work simultaneously. Also, the publisher’s review (item 4) and the author’s review (item 8) were also allocated on the same day. Similarly the page proofs were given to the proof reader (item 13) on the same day as the commencement of the indexing (item 19).

Sample of a 6-Week Production Schedule

(Depending on the production target, the appropriate changes can be made). N.b. This is an aggressive schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Task Name</th>
<th>Duration (Working days)</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Finish</th>
<th>Work allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Receive manuscript &amp; job awarded</td>
<td>0 days (same day)</td>
<td>Tue 1/3/07</td>
<td>Tue 1/3/07</td>
<td>Editor/Project manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>12 days</td>
<td>Tue 1/3/07</td>
<td>Thu 17/3/07</td>
<td>Compositor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>Create design, template, and Sample chapter</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>Tue 1/3/07</td>
<td>Tue 8/3/07</td>
<td>Compositor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>Publisher review</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>Tue 8/3/07</td>
<td>Tue 15/3/07</td>
<td>Publisher contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>Corrections to design implementation</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>Tue 15/3/07</td>
<td>Tue 17/3/07</td>
<td>Compositor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td>Edit</td>
<td>11 days</td>
<td>Tue 1/3/07</td>
<td>Wed 16/3/07</td>
<td>Copyeditor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7)</td>
<td>Copy Edit</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>Tue 1/3/07</td>
<td>Tue 8/3/07</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8)</td>
<td>Author Review</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>Tue 8/3/07</td>
<td>Tue 15/3/07</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step</td>
<td>Task Description</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Start Date</td>
<td>End Date</td>
<td>Role</td>
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<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Prep files for Composition</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Tue 15/3/07</td>
<td>Wed 16/3/07</td>
<td>Print incharge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>First Pages</td>
<td>15 days</td>
<td>Wed 6/4/07</td>
<td>Wed 4/6/07</td>
<td>Compositor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Compose first pages</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>Wed 16/3/07</td>
<td>Wed 23/3/07</td>
<td>Proofreader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Get CIP</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>Wed 23/3/07</td>
<td>Wed 6/4/07</td>
<td>Print Incharge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Proof first Pages</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>Wed 23/3/07</td>
<td>Wed 30/3/07</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Revised Pages</td>
<td>6 days</td>
<td>Wed 30/3/07</td>
<td>Thu 7/4/07</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Compose revised pages</td>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>Wed 30/3/07</td>
<td>Mon 4/4/07</td>
<td>Compositor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Proof revised pages</td>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>Mon 4/4/07</td>
<td>Thu 7/4/07</td>
<td>Proofreader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Author review</td>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>Mon 4/4/07</td>
<td>Thu 7/4/07</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
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<td>3 days</td>
<td>Mon 4/4/07</td>
<td>Thu 7/4/07</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>11 days</td>
<td>Wed 23/3/07</td>
<td>Thu 7/4/07</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Tag first pages</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>Wed 23/3/07</td>
<td>Mon 4/4/07</td>
<td>Indexer</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Proof and revise index</td>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>Mon 4/4/07</td>
<td>Mon 4/4/07</td>
<td>Proofreader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Author review</td>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>Mon 4/4/07</td>
<td>Thu 4/7/07</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Publisher review</td>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>Mon 4/4/07</td>
<td>Thu 7/4/07</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Final Pages</td>
<td>6 days</td>
<td>Thu 7/4/07</td>
<td>Fri 15/4/07</td>
<td>Compositor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Compose candidate final pages</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>Thu 7/4/07</td>
<td>Mon 11/4/07</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Compose Index</td>
<td>0.5 days</td>
<td>Mon 11/4/07</td>
<td>Mon 11/4/07</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Proof candidate final pages</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>Mon 11/4/07</td>
<td>Wed 13/4/07</td>
<td>Proofreader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Insert and verify final</td>
<td>0.5 days</td>
<td>Wed 13/4/07</td>
<td>Thu 14/4/07</td>
<td>Compositor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Out-the-door check</td>
<td>0.5 days</td>
<td>Thu 14/4/07</td>
<td>Thu 14/4/07</td>
<td>Print incharge/Mng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print laser checks, prefetch Files, burn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>CDs for press and Archive</td>
<td>0.5 days</td>
<td>Thu 14/4/07</td>
<td>Fri 15/4/07</td>
<td>Compositor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Post of FTP final deliverable Editor</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Thu 14/4/07</td>
<td>Fri 15/4/07</td>
<td>Managing</td>
</tr>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Bound book date</td>
<td>0 days</td>
<td>Fri 13/5/07</td>
<td>Fri 13/5/07</td>
<td>30FS + 20 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.10 SUMMING UP

In this unit we have tried to give you a feel of the progress of the manuscript from author to bookshelf. We have shown you that the production process is not necessarily linear – many activities that are interlinked are carried out simultaneously. It is so easy to lose track of what is happening if records are not meticulously maintained, particularly if several books are under production at the same time. Since several individuals (by designation) may be looking after activities, the process cannot be individualized—people may move, responsibilities may change.
7.11 FURTHER READING


