



Apricot Zebra editorial services

Substantive editing

The substantive edit is generally part of the content development stage of a publication. The editor's goal is to ensure that the document communicates effectively with the specific audience and accurately conveys the author's intended messages. The editor ensures that the material is engaging and readable without reducing the quality or accuracy of content. This may involve:

- > analysing and distilling the key points and messages that need to be communicated
- > applying the principles of plain language and accessibility/inclusiveness
- > understanding and being sensitive to content and context
- > ensuring that the text is engaging, informative and comprehensive.

The editor helps to develop text that engages the reader using plain, direct language; informative headings; clear structure; and useful readability aids.

Substantive edit is the first stage in the editing process. It is carried out on a Word document using track changes.

For more information about substantive editing, see our [Substantive edit checklist](#) on our website.

Copy editing

Copy editing is about ensuring the completeness, consistency and accuracy of the document for publication. The copy editor identifies possible errors and suggests changes to improve the document. The goal is to ensure that the document is consistent, accurate and complete. At the copy editing stage, we meticulously check every line and element of the document, including:

- > grammar and syntax
- > punctuation
- > spelling
- > style consistency
- > language
- > use of acronyms
- > tables and figures

- > cross-references
- > footnotes and captions.

Copy editing is usually done after the substantive edit and before the proofread. It is generally carried out on a Word document using the track changes function.

For more information about copy editing, see our [Copy edit checklist](#) on our website.

Proofreading

Proofreading is the final editing step in the publishing process. The proofreader corrects final errors in textual and visual elements. The aim is to ensure that the material is complete, consistent and correct. The proofreader will mark up definite errors in the document, but they will not copy edit the document.

Before the document is sent for proofreading, it should be in its final form. Generally this is when it has been laid out by a graphic designer and the text has been through all internal sign-off processes. The proofreader usually works on the PDF of the designed document.

Proofreading is not a substitute for copy editing. If your document has not been professionally copy edited, it will probably need to be copy edited rather than proofread. If the document has not been copy edited, there will be a large number of changes at proofreading stage. Because the master document will be in a specialist publishing format such as Indesign, the graphic designer will have to transfer all of these corrections to the master document, and this can greatly increase the cost of the graphic design work. It can also disrupt the publishing schedule.

For more information about proofreading, see our [Proofread checklist](#) on our website.

Indexing

Apricot Zebra indexers are highly experienced. In line with indexing best practice, our indexes:

- > enable readers to find information quickly and efficiently
- > anticipate how readers will search for information
- > do not index identical information in different parts of the report multiple times
- > do not include entries that are confusing or not helpful to the reader
- > are accurate, concise and unambiguous and contain references to all key terms and subjects
- > are completed in line with accepted industry standards including ISO 999:1996 *Information and documentation — Guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes*.

We use Cindex indexing software in writing our indexes. Cindex software assists the indexer in sorting index entries; however, it does not automatically generate the index. Accurate and effective indexes can only be compiled by human indexers: computers cannot identify key concepts and select the entries that will be relevant for readers.

For more information about indexing, see our [Indexing FAQs](#) on our website.