Technical Writing Can Make Better Editors

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Defining Technical Writing

Technical writing and traditional editing are rather similar, while at the same time being very different. One is very methodical, where the technical writer transforms specialized information into something others outside of their niche field can comprehend. In contrast, the editor reads a text for publication by making mild alterations and corrections to the author’s work.

Reflection

As someone who’s been practicing some form of editing or another for most of my life, making corrections and clarifications comes almost second nature to me. Writing and consolidating specific information, on the other hand, does not. Because I want to go into book editing and publishing, technical writing wasn’t something I was particularly interested in.

Technical writing allowed me to create multiple types of different documents, learning to convey technical information in a clear and concise fashion. It also, I think, helped me to be a better editor.

In learning how to consolidate and rewrite material even for niche material, I have gotten better at doing so for literary articles, blogs, and fiction pieces, being able to make fuller and more encompassing edits.

Process

For this particular technical writing piece, an infographic, I had to take information about microplastics from several different sources, of varying levels of technicality to make a hypothetical infographic for the citizens of Charleston.

As a matter of process, my main task was to highlight key points about microplastics and rewriting them in my own words. Then, I had to go back to edit and consolidate my work to ensure that it fit in the template I designed.

Most of my preliminary writing was done in a word document before I pasted it into a Canva template where I completed my editing.

A link to a resizable copy of my infographic can be found at http://bit.ly/microplastics_tw.