



Editorial

All of us are aware by now that we can't live without technology and not only at work. With advice, aids, appliances and apps in abundance, we are at the point where we can't see the wood for the trees. Thank

goodness we have advice from Michelle Storm Lane of the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self Employed (IPSE). In this issue, Michelle continues her series of articles introducing us to a raft of technologies there to help us. She is convinced that those who use selected technologies effectively are able to increase productivity, reduce stress, and free up spare time to earn (more?) money – or simply to enjoy life. She even recommends having a robot vacuum cleaner, which at least one of the editors of this section (AR) also fully recommends.

Amy Whereat has been looking at reference management software, and also points out that one way for those working on publications to work more effectively is to use systems that automate low-value tasks. These include keeping track of and

correctly citing and formatting references and bibliographies. She provides us with an interesting overview of the pros and cons of different reference management systems.

As well as working efficiently as a self-employed person, you have to be able to market yourself and your services effectively using personal branding. Channels for this these days are your CV and your LinkedIn profile, and perhaps an executive biography or website – where you describe 'brand You', your value proposition, your abilities and your track record. Matt Craven is an expert in this and has an offer not to be missed for EMWA members: a FREE personal branding consultation. See Matt's article and don't miss this opportunity.

We also publish a question from Ruth Whittington in this issue about challenges when working with procurement agencies or outsourcing departments. This is a real problem we all face at some time in our careers, and we (and Ruth!) look forward to hearing about your experiences.

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Technology you can't live without

Why is it that some people have the magic touch when it comes to technology? Are there some strange magnetic forces within us that cause machines to spring to life in the hands of some, when in the hands of others they go into total meltdown? I have a very technophobic friend who certainly thinks so!

But if you can somehow master the miracle of technology, the rewards are significant. Freelancers who use technology effectively are able to increase productivity, reduce stress, and free up spare time to earn money – or simply to enjoy life.

Could you be making better use of all the amazing tools that are out there?

We asked a range of writers and medical translators for some ideas. This is what they came back with:

Call in the robots

One of the wonders of the modern world is the sheer volume of innovative solutions coming out that allow you to automate repetitive tasks.

Sean d'Souza says that one of his biggest time-saving tools is Text Expander¹. As a writer, he frequently has to type out very similar passages of text in articles or emails. Text expander allows him to programme shortcut keys for each passage – when he hits the shortcut key, the whole passage is automatically pasted into the document or email and he can tweak as necessary without retyping the whole thing. So if you frequently use the same phrases, paragraphs or even pictures, this is one 'robot' that could really speed up your work rate.

Another area that lends itself to automation is bookkeeping – there really is no need to do it all manually when you could quicken the process using online software. Tools like www.getharvest.com allow you to keep track of time spent on projects and to generate invoices automatically. If you're in France, then www.itool.com offers online solutions tailored to the French auto-entrepreneur and small business regimes. For other languages, try www.zoho.com/books, available in Dutch, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. You can find a range of other accountancy software solutions at www.ipse.co.uk/supplier-directory.

Oh, and while you are busy working, a robot could be cleaning your house as well. Heard of the Roomba? This robotic vacuum cleaner zooms around the house hunting for dirt. Its special sensors prevent it from crashing into your furniture or falling down the stairs!² (Editor's note: these robotic vacuum cleaners really do work and save loads of time!)

Cloud control

Whereas in the past we had all our software and data stored on our hard drives, the current trend is for more and more things to be done via the cloud. This means that everything is available simultaneously on your computer, your phone, and online, so that you can access what you need anytime, anywhere – even if you don't have your own computer or mobile device with you.

For example, Frederique David³, a freelance writer and technical adviser, takes advantage of a wide range of cloud-based tools provided by Google. Google Drive allows her to back-up files and share documents as required. Using Google Keep, she takes notes on the go, uploads voice and video memos, produces checklists and assigns colour codes to different types of information. Google Mail provides her with email, which she can check on any of her devices. If her computer breaks, or she loses her phones, all her emails are still available online. She can also share calendars, which is great for team working.

To link these all together she uses Google Apps, for which she pays a monthly subscription fee. This enables her to send emails using her own company domain name, which she feels is more professional than using a generic extension such as @gmail.com. However, if you don't need this, you can still use all of Google's cloud services for free just by creating a Google account.

Frederique also uses www.hubic.com to back up data online and synchronise it between her devices. As she is based in France, she prefers the

fact that Hubic is subject to French law, which gives her greater protection over the privacy of her data, unlike some of the other services such as Dropbox, which are based in the US. Hubic is available in most European countries.

Finally, if you have ever tried to set-up your own email using Outlook or a similar email programme, it probably asked you if you wanted to use POP3 or IMAP. In case you are wondering what the difference is: IMAP is the option that allows you to keep everything on the cloud as described above. Select this option to have a mirror image of your email available online, automatically synchronising with all your devices. Just be sure to keep an eye on the storage space provided by the company that hosts your email – if this runs out, you will stop receiving emails. However, these days it is usually very economical to contract unlimited storage.

A world of information

As early as 1984, at the first ever 'Hackers' Conference', Stewart Brand told Steve Wozniak, the co-founder of Apple: 'On the one hand information wants to be expensive, because it's so valuable. The right information in the right place just changes your life. On the other hand, information wants to be free, because the cost of getting it out is getting lower and lower all the time.'

This is good news for freelancers – if your client doesn't provide you with all the reference sources you need, the internet offers a wealth of robust information that you can access for free.

One of the medical writers we spoke to mentioned www.globalhealthfacts.org as very useful for researching health trends. For example, if you needed to build some 'scene-setting' slides to illustrate disease prevalence rates, this website allows you to download the data for each country in a convenient .csv file that you can use to create your own graphs. Other sources are www.biomedcentral.com and www.pubmed.gov, provided by the US National Library of Medicine.

For academic references, www.google.com/scholar is one of the best ways to search through journal articles. Not everything you find through that will be free to download, but you can set up a free account with <http://about.jstor.org/rr>, which gives you access to a huge range of journals, primary sources and books. The free account allows you to read up to three articles every two weeks. You can subscribe to the paid service if you need more.

Finally, for all the fantastic new inventions that appear in our professional lives every year, Noelia Corte, a freelance medical translator, urges us not

to forget the value of time-honoured technologies: 'To be able to tap into a colleague's knowledge is priceless. I have a group of good professionals and friends who I can turn to.'

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References

1. You can find out more about this tool at <http://www.smilesoftware.com/TextExpander>. You can also listen to Sean d'Souza's strategies for running a freelance business at <http://www.nationalfreelancersday.com/podcasts>.
2. Read about the Roomba at <http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roomba>. A great place to find other time-saving tools is <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/technology/30-essential-tools-and-web-apps-for-freelancers.html>.
3. Frederique David helps French-speaking freelancers to promote themselves on the internet. You can find out more at <http://www.creizic.com>.

The Toolbox

Managing your references saves time and money
Software automates reference management

Freelance medical writing, like any business, is more profitable when efficiently run. One way to improve efficiency is to use systems that help automate low value tasks. A particularly time consuming job during manuscript writing is keeping track of and correctly citing and formatting references and bibliographies.

What does the software do?

Reference management software is very useful for automating this process and some programs include plug-ins that give you direct access from some word-processing programs (e.g. MSWord, Open Office, Pages).

The basic function of reference management software is to create formatted bibliographies, in-text citations, and footnotes suitable for journal publications. However, modern programs offer various different useful features, so it's worth surveying the market before purchasing.

Here are 5 straightforward things you can do with reference management software:

1. Create an electronic library for an article or research topic. This allows you to keep all research documents, websites, and articles in one place. Some programs allow you to send the library to a client or team member, otherwise it can be shared online via a cloud or other online shared facilities. You can even copy references from one library to another.

2. Search online databases, import existing PDF collections or upload websites to the library. Some programs also allow PDF file access so you can highlight and annotate key phrases or sections in references that you might want to include in your article or refer to later.
3. Automatically upload reference information when the reference you have is incomplete or you just need to check a reference either exists or is correctly cited.
4. Choose the exact citation and bibliographic style required by your target journal. Most software packages contain typical journal style guides and additional ones can be obtained from an internet database, and saved for further use.
5. Change the citation and bibliography style with one click, if you need to change journals. No more retyping or reformatting.

Longer term, using a reference management system can save you time *and* money. It helps you to keep your references organised and ensures they are correctly cited. While the software can be purchased by individuals, some universities provide continued alumni access, so this is worth exploring. Some software programs also provide free tutorials and after-sales assistance. For freelancers on the go, several packages now provide telephone and tablet access. Table 1 summarises the main pros and cons from referenced websites for several different programs.

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Table 1: Pros and cons of reference management software

Reference management software						Cons		
Pros								
RefWorks®	Internet-based solution	Mobile device access	Large number of citation styles	Easy to edit citation styles	Free access with Bodleian Libraries subscription for students and alumni	Cannot extract metadata from PDFs	WP plug-in only compatible with MS Word	Very limited offline access
EndNote®	Desktop-based solution with plug-in for Pages, MS Word, Open Office	Copes well with a very large library. Large number of citation styles	Journal abbreviation recognition	Can search & upload references from online databases or PDFs e.g; Pubmed	Can highlight and annotate PDFs	Incompatible with Linux	For advanced features need to buy the software	
EndNote® online	Online collaboration	Mobile device access	Direct ref download button in: Web of Science database™	Free with Endnote®		Word processor plug-in not compatible with Linux	Limited citation styles and storage	
Reference manager®	Desktop-based solution with plug-ins, MS Word	Can share references		Can search and upload online databases		Incompatible with Mac	Limited citation styles	Limited organizational facility
Zotero™	Can make separate collections from one source library	iPhone/ android apps	Useful tools for creating references from websites	Can make notes on the go and store in a library collection	Free access	Compatible Mac, windows, Linux	Limited free storage space (300 MB)	
Mendeley™	Collaborative pdf annotation / notes	iPhone/iPad interface	Showcase your work. Share reading lists with a social network	Free Access	Can search for keywords in references	Manual syncing of desktop application to web account	Limited free storage space	
ColWiz™	Nested folders	iPhone/iPad and android apps	Collaborative research management tools	Can share reading lists with a social network	Access available if with some university libraries	Direct export of refs only with desktop application.		
Papers™	PDF annotation	Social network	iPhone/iPad apps	Large number of citation styles		Need to buy software	Not compatible with Linux	Not able to sync across several computers

The information in the above table is summarised from the following websites:

- <http://ox.libguides.com>
- https://workspace.imperial.ac.uk/library/Public/Reference_management_software_comparison.pdf

The truth about personal branding

It seems that there has been a wave of curiosity since Bianca Miller (finalist in the UK's TV reality business show 'The Apprentice') mentioned that she runs a personal branding business – perhaps some folks think it might be a new concept that she invented along with her hosiery business. The truth is that personal branding has been around for many years and the savvy freelancers, job seekers and contractors realised the importance of developing 'brand You' long ago. What is positive is that Bianca's foray into primetime TV has created some awareness around personal branding, and the more people who start to embrace the subject, the more people will be moving forward with their career.

So let's start with a quick overview! Personal branding is really no different from marketing any

product, service or company – companies have a 'brand' and their products and services follow suit. The same can be said of individual professionals – whether you are seeking permanent employment or self-employed opportunities, you are still selling your services to that organisation, so before you are hired, they will want to explore your brand (i.e. what do you stand for, what is your ethos, or what is your philosophy?). They will also want to explore your value proposition, your abilities, and your track record. These are exactly the same points that consumers consider before buying from companies.

The point of all this is that your externally facing marketing materials need to incorporate these exact same points, and of course, your externally facing marketing materials are your CV and

LinkedIn profile (and perhaps an executive biography or website). By capturing 'brand You', your value proposition, your abilities and your track record, you will be much more likely to convince a potential employer or client that you can add value to their organisation. The key is to think of your CV and LinkedIn profile as a business case and through that business case, demonstrate how you can deliver return on investment on the remuneration that you are seeking.

For more information, The CV & Interview Advisors are offering a FREE Personal Branding

Consultation to all EMWA members; just email your CV to info@cvandinterviewadvisors.co.uk quoting EMWAAFPBC and one of their team will provide a detailed critique of your CV, LinkedIn profile and any other collateral that you might have.

Matt Craven

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Question: Challenges when working with procurement agencies or outsourcing departments

This question was posed during the Freelance Business Forum at the EMWA conference in Florence: 'What can freelancers do if the procurement agency working on behalf of a pharmaceutical company, or the procurement department of a pharmaceutical company won't employ freelancers because they have a policy in place only to employ companies on their preferred supplier list?'. Thank you to Ruth Whittington for asking this question.

We would love to hear your thoughts on this, what your experiences are, and how you have overcome this challenge. We plan to write an article on this topic and, as always, please get in touch with us if you would like to volunteer as the lead author. Please contact either Kathryn or Alistair at the email addresses provided.

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Freelance foraging

Lake Bled, Slovenia

The Slovene and German (not perfect) here say:



Crossing to the island, with a half-hour stay, other arrangements on request.

The Italian version promises you half an hour of expectation, and in the English version, whatever 'the rest' is, you won't get it until you wait half an hour, and then only if you ask for it. We opted to hire our own rowing boat to get to the island.

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