

# Digital swag that helps editors work faster AND prove their worth

Everyone loves a freebie. Here's how creating useful digital resources can help you work faster with existing clients and prove your worth to clients-to-be.



# 1. Lootie love

At the 2018 SfEP annual gathering of editors, I ran a workshop on editorial branding and gave each of the delegates a bag with Post-It notes, a bar of chocolate, a course discount voucher, and lots of tissue paper. The tissue paper was useless but pretty. The other goodies went down extremely well.

The loot from the Noirwich Crime Writing Festival included a stack of thrillers, a pen, a bag and a poster. I was delighted – around forty quid’s worth of bootie to add to the excellent panel discussions and lectures.

The swag from the one-day SfEP mini conference in Toronto included a pen, a pencil, a notepad and a travel mug. My mug served me well to Schiphol, where my jet-lagged brain let

me down. Now, someone in Amsterdam is drinking their coffee out of an SfEP-branded Thermos. Lucky them. Thirsty me.

Still, it got me thinking about how we can create digital swag bags for our clients.

Am I going to talk about content marketing yet again? No, I’m not. Well, I am, but only as an aside.

You can use these digital freebies on your website, of course, but I’m thinking less about marketing here (honest!) and more about quotations and editorial reports, and how you can add value and save time simultaneously.

## 2. What to include

What you include is up to you. I recommend creating resources that will be most useful to your target clients.

Mine often struggle with holding narrative viewpoint, punctuating dialogue and overwriting. Yours might trip up over academic citations, referencing or jargon overuse.

To the right is some of the swag I often give away when I'm quoting or reporting:

How do tools like these help us quote and report better and faster?



### 3. Quotations

You've been asked to quote for a job. The writer included a sample, which you've evaluated. Now it's time to hit them with your estimate. Which one of these is most likely to win you the gig?

- 'Thanks for asking me to quote for copyediting your book. Having assessed the sample you kindly provided, I can confirm that the price will be £1,350. I'd love to work with you so please do get back in touch if you'd like to continue the conversation.'
- 'Thanks for asking me to quote for copyediting your book. Having assessed the sample you kindly provided, I can confirm that the price will be £1,350. While evaluating the text, I noticed that you struggled a little with standard dialogue

punctuation and tagging. There were also some viewpoint switches that marred what was, in the main, compelling writing.

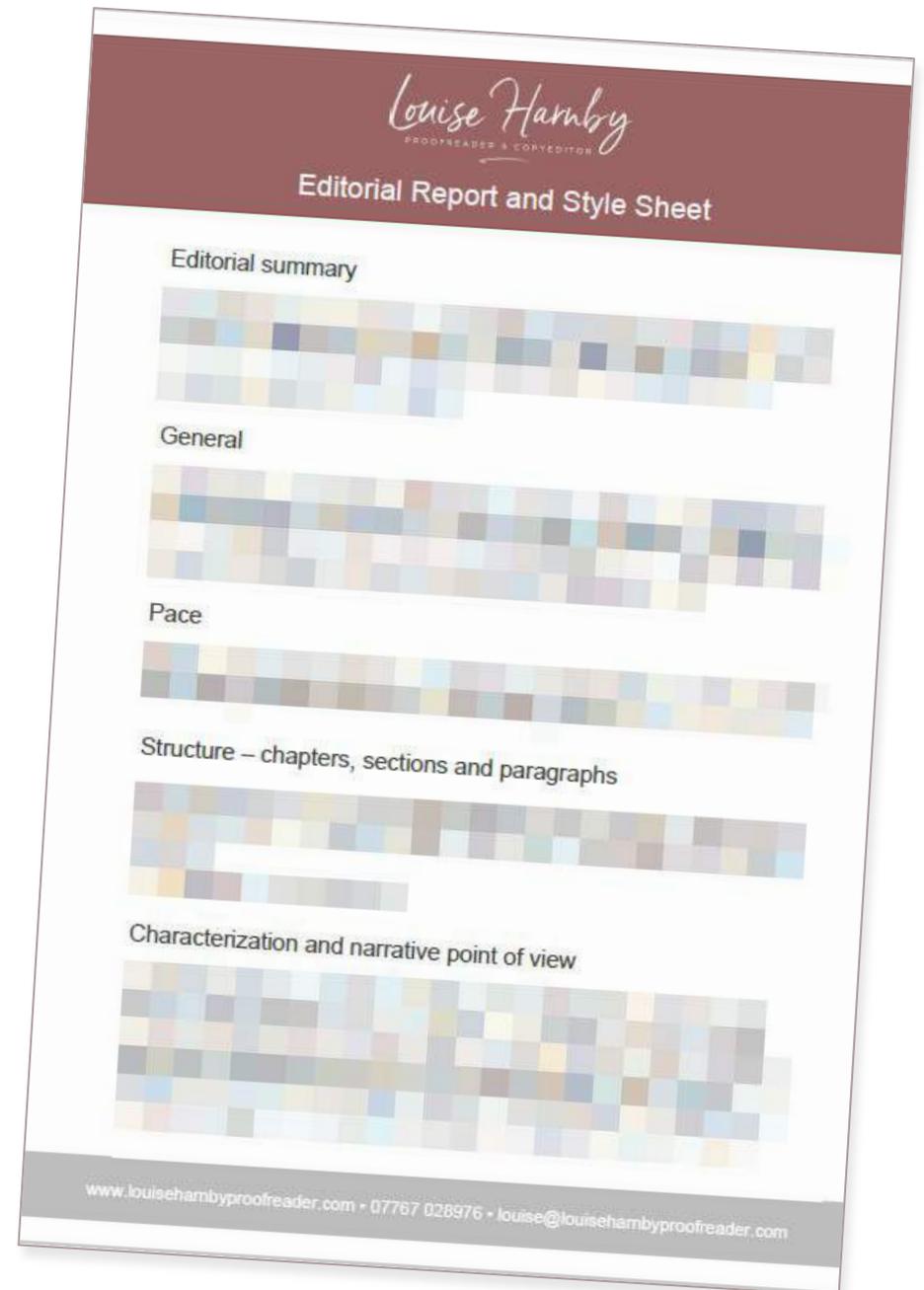
Furthermore, the scene setting in the chapters you provided was gripping but there were occasions (paras 3–12, p. 46; para 7, p. 49) when the character could have been unveiled more creatively.

Attached are some articles and booklets that will help you hone your sentence-level craft: one on how to punctuate dialogue, a second on tagging and action beats, a third on narrative point of view, and a fourth on character description. I hope you find them useful. I'd love to work with you so please do get back in touch if you'd like to continue the conversation.'

## 4. Editorial reports

You're about to return a job. You attach an editorial report outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the project and how you approached the edit. Which report will take the longest to write and eat into your hourly rate?

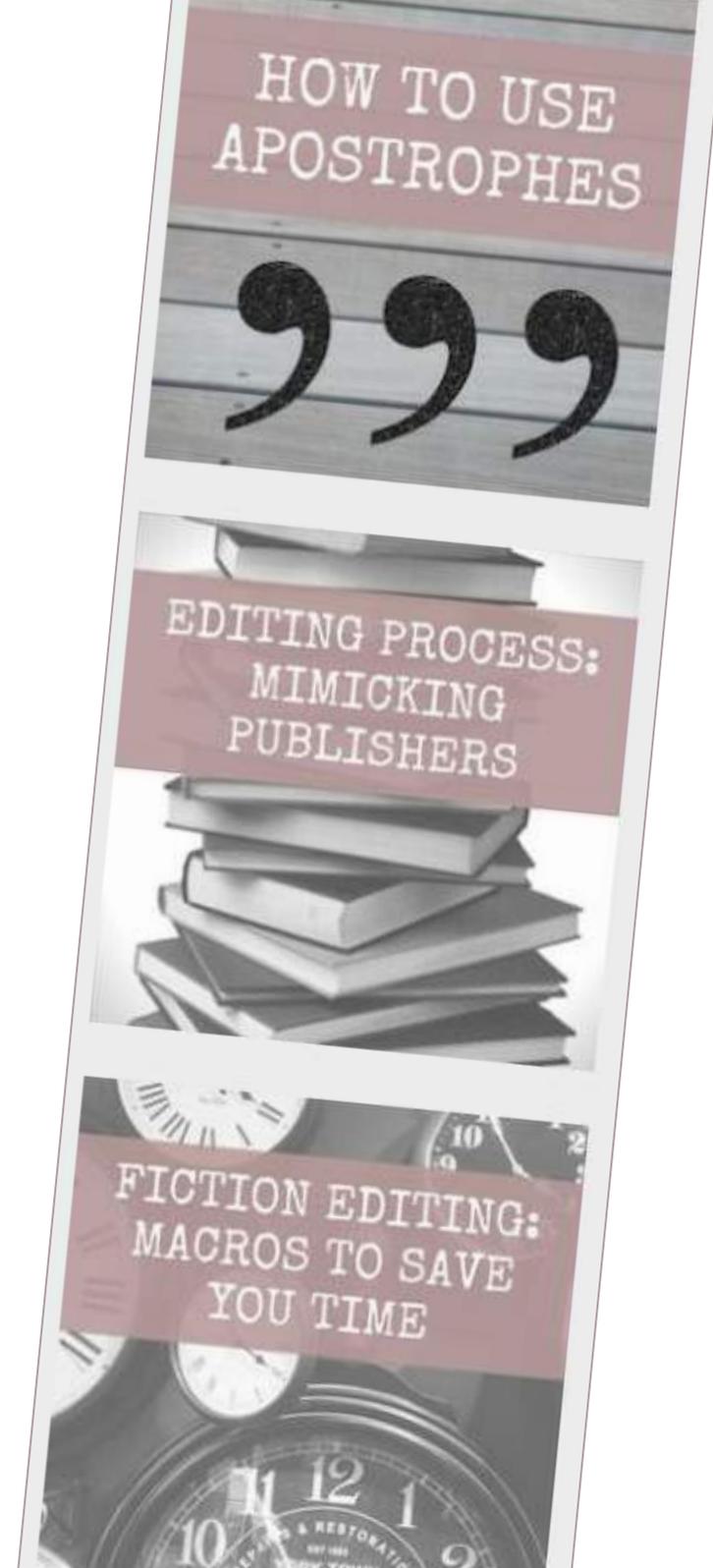
- The first version identifies one or two examples of each problem, shows how you fixed them, and explains in detail why those fixes were necessary.
- The second version identifies one or two examples of each issue, shows how you fixed them, and lists additional PDF attachments (or links to them if they're online) that provide a comprehensive explanation of the problems and solutions.



## 5. Swag, efficiency and stealth marketing

Yes, you need to invest time in creating the resources in the first instance, but once you've done that you can use them over and over. It's valuable swag for your client and long-term efficiency for you.

These resources, while useful and relevant to our quotations and our reports, go the extra mile. We might appear to be quoting and reporting but, in fact, we are marketing our editing businesses by stealth. We are showing that we are engaged, that we are experts, that we know our stuff and are prepared to take the time to share it.



## 6. Summing up

None of us is entitled to editing work. None of us can expect to be paid X or Y on the grounds that 'we're worth it'. Worth has to be proved. Loot, swag, content ... call it what you like ... giving clients relevant, useful stuff is one step on that journey.



# ABOUT LOUISE

Louise Harnby is a professional fiction editor. She specializes in helping independent authors prepare their novels for market. Louise worked in-house for two international publishers for 13 years before setting up her editorial business. She has also published several books on the business of editing and proofreading and co-hosts The Editing Podcast. You can find out more about her at [www.louiseharnbyproofreader.com](http://www.louiseharnbyproofreader.com)



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