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Guidelines for
easy-to-read materials

Revision by Misako Nomura, Gyda Skat Nielsen and Bror
Tronbacke on behalf of the
IFLA/Library Services to People with Special Needs Section

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Introduction

These guidelines have three main purposes: 1) to describe the nature of and the need for easy-to-read publications; 2) to identify the main target groups for these publications; and 3) to offer suggestions to publishers of easy-to-read materials and those organizations and agencies that serve persons with reading disabilities.

Easy-to-read publications are needed by people with various levels of reading disabilities. To a great extent, the needs of these groups are similar, and it is possible for several countries to cooperate in producing easy-to-read materials. Libraries play a key role in the easy-to-read field.

This publication is the second edition of the Guidelines for Easy-to-Read Materials. Many developments have taken place in the easy-to-read area since the first edition was published in 1997, not only in terms of technical solutions, but also the situation for disabled persons has changed. The modern society makes great demands on all and today all citizens are expected to be well informed and make their own decisions, including persons with disabilities.

A working group from IFLA's Library Services to People with Special Needs (LSN) Section is responsible for the revision of the Guidelines. The working group members are **Misako Nomura** (Japan), **Gyda Skat Nielsen** (Denmark), and **Bror Tronbacke** (Sweden).

We hope that these guidelines will stimulate and contribute to the publication of easy-to-read materials around the world and will provide useful information for editorial and outreach work.

1 What is easy-to-read?

There are two slightly different definitions of the term "easy-to-read" One means a linguistic adaptation of a text that makes it easier to read than the average text but which does not make it easier to comprehend; the other definition means an adaptation that makes both reading and comprehension easier.

The aim of easy-to-read publications is to present clear and easily understood texts appropriate for different age groups. To achieve such a product, the writer/publisher must take into consideration content, language, illustrations, as well as graphic layout.

2 The need for easy-to-read

Providing easy-to-read materials is a matter of democracy and accessibility.

International studies show that in most countries more than 25 percent of the adult population does not reach the level of literacy or reading skill expected after nine years of formal education. In several countries, this figure is as high as 40-50 percent.¹

It is a *democratic right* that all people have access to culture, literature and information – and in a comprehensible form. It is of vital importance that all citizens have access to information about what is going on in society. In order for an individual to exercise his/her democratic rights and to control his/her own life, this person must be well informed and capable of making make choices.

Quality of life is another important factor. Being able to read gives a person a tremendous amount of self-confidence, by enabling him/her to expand his/her view of the world and take control of his/her own life. Through reading people are able to share ideas, thoughts and experiences, and to grow as human beings.

3 The support for easy-to-read

Reading promotion and the need for easy-to-read materials are strongly supported by the *Convention and Standard Rules of the United Nations*, the *UNESCO Public Library Manifesto*, and the *Charter for the Reader* by the International Publishers' Association and the International Book Committee.

¹ International Adult Literacy Surveys (IALS), 1998

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the United Nations in 2006. The Convention has been ratified by a number of states and is legally binding for those states.

The Convention states that a disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society.

The purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities. It covers a number of key areas such as accessibility, personal mobility, health, education, employment, habilitation and rehabilitation, participation in political life and equality and non-discrimination.

The Convention recognizes the importance of accessibility to information and communication. The Convention states that information in accessible formats, such as easy-to-read, has to be provided as a reasonable accommodation. "Reasonable accommodation" means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case. Easy-to-read publications must be considered as necessary accessible formats.

The Standard Rules of the United Nations

In 1993 the United Nations adopted a document called *The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities*. The Standard Rules are not compulsory, but they strongly encourage specific national mandates, as they are adopted by individual states. Rule No. 5 declares that governments should develop strategies to make information services and documentation accessible for different groups of persons with disabilities and should encourage the media, especially TV, radio and newspapers, to make their services accessible. Rule No. 10 states that people with disabilities should be able to participate in cultural activities on an equal basis and that states should develop and implement methods to make literature, films and theatre accessible to persons with disabilities.

UNESCO and IFLA: Public Library Manifesto and School Library Manifesto

In 1994 UNESCO adopted the *Public Library Manifesto*. The Manifesto proclaims UNESCO's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information-and as an essential agent in the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.

"The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific service and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever

reasons, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.”

The *School Library Manifesto*, adopted in 1999, aims to define and advance the role of school libraries and resource centres in enabling students to acquire the learning tools and learning content that allow them to develop their full capacities; to continue to learn throughout their lives; and to make informed decisions.

The Charter for the Reader

The International Publishers’ Association and the International Book Committee jointly adopted *The Charter for the Reader* in 1992. The Charter declares that reading is the key to our cultural and scientific heritage and promotes international understanding. Democracy depends on well informed citizens. The written word is an essential element in an individual’s critical capacity. Reading is crucial for an individual’s personal development and his/her focus on the outside world and on other people.

The Charter also states that publishers have obligations to readers and that they should aim at quality in editorial, production and service terms. They should also strive to meet the social needs of diverse population groups and, if necessary, seek economic subsidies where publication would otherwise be impossible.

There is a need for information on reading and reading needs. The only way to make reading available to everyone is for publishers, libraries, and other information providers to work in partnership with cultural, educational and social organizations that engage in the promotion of reading. Such an alliance of public and private interests offers the best hope for meeting the broad scope of universal reading needs.

4 Target groups

There are many causes of reading difficulties and several types of individuals who, because of a disability or other disadvantage, can benefit from easy-to-read materials.

Firstly we can identify two main groups:

- 1) *Persons with a disability* who have a permanent need for easy-to-read products; and
- 2) *Readers with limited language or reading proficiency* who, for a period of time may find this kind of material useful. For these persons, easy-to-read publications can be a door-opener and a useful training resource. These materials can create interest and be a tool to improve reading skills.

The two main groups of easy-to-read users are further sub-divided into age groups:

- *Adults*
- *Young adults*
- *Children*

These guidelines focus primarily on materials for adults, young adults and school-age children.

The following section describes in more detail the specific population groups who can benefit from easy-to-read materials.

Not all people in a specific target group have the need for easy-to-read materials. It is also important to recognize that there is often an overlap among those groups that can benefit from easy-to-read materials.

Persons with disabilities

A wide variety of disabilities can cause reading problems and thus create a need for easy-to-read materials. A single individual may also have multiple disabilities.

Persons with dyslexia and other reading difficulties

The term “reading difficulties” is hard to define. It is a broad term for a variety of conditions. A common characteristic is the discrepancy between a person's intellectual level and interests and his/her reading ability and comprehension.

Persons with dyslexia constitute a particular group with reading problems. Dyslexia is defined as the inability to learn to read and write well, in spite of normal intelligence and sufficient effort.²

Persons with dyslexia have difficulty in decoding words and/or in spelling them but no problem understanding the words. It is estimated that between five and ten percent of the world’s population suffers from dyslexia. Most individuals with dyslexia manage to read quite well. Some, however, need easy-to-read materials.

Persons with intellectual disabilities

Intellectual disability is a cognitive disorder. Sometimes the terms “intellectually disabled persons”, “mentally disabled persons” and “persons with learning disabilities” are used interchangeably.

The degree of intellectual disability is related to intellectual capacity as well as to social and personal development. Intellectual disability is usually divided into three levels:³

² International Dyslexia Association (IDA)

³ Department of Health and Human Services, USA.

- Mild
- Moderate
- Profound

A person with a mild intellectual disability may possess close to normal intelligence. Many people with a mild intellectual disability are able to read fairly simple texts. Some individuals with a moderate disability can also learn to read short easy-to-read-texts. Those with a profound intellectual/cognitive disability cannot read by themselves but may enjoy having somebody else read for them.

There is no need for further classification since individual differences, needs and capabilities are more important than a classification based on IQ.

Approximately one percent of the world's population is intellectually disabled. In highly developed countries this figure is normally generally lower; the higher percentage in less developed countries is likely due to lack of nutrition and adequate medical care.⁴

Persons with neuropsychiatric disabilities

Neuropsychiatric disabilities are disabilities caused by a variety of brain malfunctions. These disabilities often cause learning problems, attention deficit disorders, as well as lack

of motor and impulse control. Neuropsychiatric disabilities include a range of diagnoses, including ADHD, autism, Asperger Syndrom and Tourette Syndrom.⁵

ADHD is an abbreviation for "attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder". It is a generic term to describe symptoms of concentration, motoric and perception disturbances. ADHD is not an intellectual disability, although it is often accompanied by some form of intellectual disability.

Concentration difficulties and perception disturbances often lead to reading, writing or other learning problems. ADHD symptoms generally diminish over time; some of those affected with ADHD may still find easy-to-read materials helpful.

Autism is a disability characterized by severe and pervasive impairments in several important areas of development: reciprocal social interaction and communication, as well as behavior and imagination. **Asperger** Syndrom is a high-functioning type of autism, while **Tourette Syndrom** is characterized by impulse deficits.

Persons with neuropsychiatric disabilities often suffer from additional disabilities.

Pre-lingually deaf persons

Persons who are born deaf are also known as childhood deaf or pre-lingually deaf persons. They have been deaf from birth or from an early stage in life. Because of

⁴ Inclusion International

⁵ The National Board of Health and Welfare, Sweden

the deafness, verbal language development is disturbed or severely delayed. Many people deaf from birth have sign language as their first language and communicate well through this language. In regard to written language, however, they often have limited understanding of abstractions, metaphors and linguistic jokes.⁶

Deafblind persons

Deafblind people can be divided into the following groups:

- Persons who are born deaf and blind (or have become deaf and blind early in life);
- Persons who become deaf and blind later in life.

Persons who are born deaf and blind communicate by tactile methods and have limited understanding of both written and spoken language.⁷ They often need easy-to-read materials transcribed into braille.

Persons who become deaf and blind later in life may be mainly deaf or mainly blind. Those who are mainly deaf and later become blind have sign language as their first language.

They perceive the printed text as a foreign language and generally have limited understanding of metaphors. They may also find easy-to-read materials in braille useful.

Those who are mainly blind and later become deaf have spoken language as their first language and their braille skills are often comparable to those of blind people who are not deaf.

Persons with aphasia

Aphasia is a speech disorder caused by impairment of the passive and/or active speech centers in the brain. This condition is often caused by a cerebrovascular disorder, brain tumor or accidental brain injury. Organic diseases that affect the brain, e.g., Multiple Sclerosis or Parkinson's Disease, may cause aphasia in their advanced forms.⁸

Persons with aphasia have problems in active usage of language. They have normal intelligence. Sometimes semilateral paralysis and problems with memory occur. Aphasia can be divided into several forms with different symptoms. The need for easy-to-read materials varies among persons with aphasia, according to their symptoms.

Persons with dementia

Dementia may be caused by such ailments as Alzheimer Disease, Vascular Dementia or Frontotemporal Dementia. Persons with dementia often experience

⁶ World Federation of the Deaf

⁷ Deafblind International

⁸ Association Internationale Aphasie (AIA)

difficulties with standard language and problems reading standard texts. Such problems with communication usually lead to decreased social interaction and affect the ability to cope with everyday life.⁹

Experience from activities with Reading Representatives indicates that easy-to-read texts can be used by persons at both early and moderate stages of dementia. Easy-to-read materials make it easier to understand and to communicate and may bring back memories temporarily. Reading aloud is also a very stimulating activity. (See also under Reading Representatives.)

Persons with limited reading skills caused by other factors

Non-native language speakers, people with limited education, and even native speaking children, represent groups of readers who, temporarily or permanently, may find easy-to-read books and newspapers beneficial.

Recent immigrants and other non-native language speakers

New immigrants fall into this category. Not only do they speak a different language, but they may also come from different cultural, religious or educational background. During the assimilation period, and even later, immigrants may find easy-to-read materials helpful.

Poor readers

Functional illiteracy may be the result of multiple factors, e.g., lack of education, social problems or mental illness. Functionally illiterate persons are unable to read and understand texts at a level necessary to function in a modern society. Easy-to-read materials can be of great value to them.

Children

Easy-to-read books and easy-to-read newspapers may also be useful for children approximately up to the fourth grade level.

Is it possible to unify the needs of different target groups?

Can the needs of different target groups be combined? This question has been discussed extensively. There are, of course, differences in the purposes and the life situations for which people need easy-to-read materials. Criteria have been

⁹ The Dementia Association, Sweden

developed, tested and adjusted for various groups, mainly based on experience from publishing. Nevertheless it is generally agreed that more factors unify the target groups than separate them. Many easy-to-read books and other publications can be used by people with different reading problems.

All easy-to-read products will not suit all readers in all target audiences. The individual reader's interests and experiences are almost as important for a successful reading experience as are the readability and comprehensibility of the book.

The circle of readers is often wider than expected. It is important to match each reader with the appropriate easy-to-read publication. This is primarily a publicity and marketing issue.

Reading and understanding

Successful reading is not just a matter of decoding words. Reading should also lead to the acquisition and stimulation of thoughts and emotions. Reading does not always mean reading on one's own. People with severe reading handicaps benefit very little from trying to read easy-to-read books by themselves. But reading aloud in a group or listening to a story is also a cultural experience, and reading together with others is a meaningful form of communication and a pleasurable experience.

5 Editorial work

What makes a text easy-to-read?

Early publishers and editors of easy-to-read materials tried unsuccessfully to develop detailed guidelines for this type of publications. They attempted to identify specific factors that made a text easy to read. Researchers and reading specialists today have generally abandoned such efforts and rely more on experience and evidence based outcomes.

The easy-to-read concept pertains not only to **language and content**, but includes also **illustrations, design and layout**.

The following recommendations for editorial work are of a general nature. Obviously the aims of the following types of publications differ: easy-to-read **literature** should mediate

a literary creation told by an author, **news information** should convey news as a journalistic product, and publications of an **informational nature** (government, commercial, etc.)

should be an effective transference of comprehensible information.

Language and content

We have identified some broad guidelines and factors that make a text more easy to read and understand:

- a) Write concretely. Avoid abstract language.
- b) Be logical. The action should follow a single thread with logical continuity.
- c) Action should be direct and simple without a long introduction and involvement of too many characters.
- d) Use symbolic language (metaphors) sparingly. Such language may be misunderstood by some readers.
- e) Be concise. Avoid several actions in a single sentence. Arrange words in a single phrase on one line, if possible.
- f) Avoid difficult words but use language that is adult and dignified. Unusual words should be explained through context clues.
- g) Explain or describe complicated relationships in a concrete and logical manner, where events take place in a logical chronological framework.
- h) Encourage writers and illustrators to get to know their target audience and be informed about what it means to have reading difficulties. Let them meet *their* readers and hear about their experiences and daily life.
- i) Test the material with actual target groups before it goes to press.

If this general advice is followed by editors and publishers, easy-to-read materials can substantially reduce the reading problems of persons with intellectual/cognitive disabilities, as well as those who suffer from various learning or reading disabilities, including dyslexia. Simplicity does not have to be patronising. A well-made book in simple language can actually be a positive experience for anyone to read.

Literary works

Do not limit the author's freedom too much. Do not place too many restrictions on writers, illustrators and photographers. One must never forget that writing and illustrating are creative processes that are seldom successful with too many restrictions. It is impossible to write a prescriptive manual for this kind of work.

Do not be dogmatic. Let fiction be fiction. It should be fun and stimulating to create easy-to-read materials. Books should entertain and engage the imagination. Let the writers and other creators experience the *challenges* of easy-to-read work.

It is difficult to write in simple language. Writing for easy comprehension can be a tightrope walk between simplicity and banality. In the short telling of a story each word is distinct and has great impact. The important thing is having a good story to tell. It is particularly difficult to adapt existing literature into easy-to-read. It becomes a question not only of creating a good easy-to-read text, but also of retaining the atmosphere and emotions created by the original author. But an adaptation is always a *retelling*, not a translation.

See Appendix for examples of easy-to-read texts. For examples of easy-to-read books from various countries, see under Contacts and Addresses.

Newspaper work

Book publishers determine language levels and content according to the particular target groups for each title. An easy-to-read newspaper, by contrast, generally maintains consistency in language level and content complexity, while allowing for slight variations among articles depending on subject matter. An easy-to-read newspaper, however, has the same news criteria as a regular newspaper. The main objective for an easy-to-read newspaper is to communicate news and report events, however complex, in a clear and straightforward way.

The elements that make a news article easy-to-read are generally the same as those that apply to a book. Clever headlines, technical terms and symbolic language are common in standard newspapers. An easy-to-read paper should avoid this type of presentation but should make abundant use of relevant illustrations. A clean and simple layout is essential.

Standard newspapers are often heavy with facts, but articles in easy-to-read newspapers should focus more on placing facts in a specific context and providing background explanations.

Complicated subjects are hard to explain in a brief format. Using special feature stories is one way to do this; subjects like e.g. an election process or religious beliefs and practices lend themselves to such feature stories.

Not all news, however, *can* be communicated in simple terms. But do we expect every reader to understand all content in a standard newspaper? And how many people are truly interested in everything?

For examples of easy-to-read newspapers from various countries, see under Contacts and Addresses.

Information about society

In addition to news, it is important for everyone to have access to comprehensible public documents and information about society and government, e.g. about the election process and citizen's rights and responsibilities. It is also crucial to obtain comprehensible information from businesses, insurance companies, banks, and other entities offering products and services.

Illustrations

It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words. In the context of easy-to-read materials, illustrations often play a more important role than in other types of publications. A picture which concretely depicts what is described in the text improves understanding and clarifies the message.

A picture can also convey an added dimension to the text. There has been much discussion about how to use *non-realistic*, e.g., abstract pictures, in the easy-to-read publications.

This type of art often invites wide and divergent interpretations. Experience indicates that non-realistic pictures work well for an easy-to-read audience, including intellectually and cognitively disabled persons (who understand and interpret the world in a concrete manner). An abstract picture can, for instance, communicate an atmosphere or emotion described in the text. It is therefore important that the picture *agrees* with the text. A picture which leads in the wrong direction or does not communicate the same feeling as the text will be confusing for people with serious reading difficulties.

Illustrations should also be placed in direct connection to the text.

Pictograms

A pictogram or pictograph is a symbol which represents a concept or an object by illustration. Easy-to-read materials with pictograms help persons with intellectual and cognitive disabilities understand content.

Design

Layout and design

The layout of easy-to-read materials should be clean and attractive. Wide margins and generous spacing make a text more accessible. The cover design should relate to the content.

The text should be in blocks with a limited number of lines per page. Words of a single phrase should fit on a single line, i.e. each sentence should be broken off at a natural speech break.

Books and newspapers should have an attractive appearance and, if aimed at adults, should avoid a childish impression. An easy-to-read book should look like a "real" book.

Paper, typeface and print

The paper should be of substantial quality. There should be sufficient contrast between background and illustrations. Colored backgrounds and typefaces should be used carefully.

The typeface should be clear and fairly large. Experience indicates that a clear serif type (like Times and Garamond) or a clear non-serif type (like Helvetica and Verdana) are good choices for running text parts. A type size of 11 – 12 points is recommended.

Logotype, back-cover blurb

Easy-to-read products should be clearly labelled. A logotype that stands for easy-to-read is a practical way of achieving this. Products that qualify for an easy-to-read logo should meet specific requirements concerning language, content and design.

The blurb on the back cover of easy-to-read books should give a good description of the content and indicate the level of difficulty.

Levels of difficulty

Easy-to-read materials should be produced at various levels of difficulty. As mentioned previously, the reading ability even within groups with the same reading problem can differ significantly. People with intellectual and cognitive disabilities are not a homogenous group and their capabilities range from the borderline normal intelligence to severe mental disability.

6 Genres and media

There is a need for all kinds of easy-to-read literature and information. Today most publications can be made available in a variety of media formats, including print, electronic, and audio. Books are often available as audio books, and electronic versions of newspapers are generally available on the Internet.

Print-media

Literature

Easy-to-read literature should include both fiction and non-fiction, including original easy-to-read creations, as well as adaptations of classics. All genres should be available, such as novels, short-stories, mysteries and suspense, poetry, travel books, etc.

Some people may object to the adaptation and simplification of a classical novel into an easy-to-read text. They may see the easy-to-read product as a "watered down" product. Without the availability of an easy-to-read version, however, many people

with reading problems would be excluded from a large part of their cultural heritage. For others who are unused to reading, easy-to-read books can open doors, create interest, and provide an opportunity to improve reading skills.

News and informational materials

For many people, access to easy-to-read versions of news and other informational materials represent their only way of exercising their democratic right to stay informed. The audience for these types of publications is probably larger than that for books.

Many people find it difficult understanding the regular news media. Newspaper articles are often too long and contain difficult language and many specialized terms. Further, the reader is expected to have substantial background information to fully understand the reports. Television news flicker by at a pace too rapid for many people.

Magazines

Magazines on various topics are enjoyed by many people for entertainment, as well as self-improvement and development. Magazines with easy-to-read text are therefore highly valued by people with reading difficulties.

Electronic media and other non-print formats

Various kinds of electronic media may be of great benefit to persons with limited reading skills, including the following:

Audio

Audio formats, like talking books and papers, are beneficial for many readers, not only the visually impaired, but also people with reading problems. DAISY is a widely used standard for producing and presenting information in audio or multi-media formats.

Television - moving pictures

TV and other moving pictures like films and DVD/BluRay have the potential of reaching persons with severe difficulties in reading and understanding. Moving pictures are very effective tools for those who have difficulty comprehending and for people with attention disorders and those with hearing impairment. A selection of TV programs, both newscasts and informational programs, should be available, and such programs should ideally include subtitles.

CD, DVD, MP3, etc.

Modern technology is definitely of benefit to people with disabilities. Electronic information formats, such as CD, DVD and MP3 can be very useful for many persons with reading difficulties, if the information is presented at various functional levels that allow the user to proceed through the material at a level he/she masters. The electronic format should also include user friendly help functions.

It is also crucial to adapt the equipment and software to the needs of persons with intellectual, cognitive or other disabilities. Matching the needs of the user with the appropriate equipment and content presentation requires the development of a correct interface.

DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System)

DAISY is an accessible multi-media presentation of easy-to-read materials which is very useful for persons with reading and comprehension problems. This technology was developed and is maintained as an international standard for digital talking books by the DAISY Consortium. (<http://www.daisy.org>)

DAISY Multimedia can be a talking book or a digitized text, as well as a synchronized presentation of text and audio produced according to DAISY Standards. These materials can be distributed on a CD/DVD, memory card or through the Internet. The DAISY multimedia materials can be accessed by computers using DAISY playback software, mobile phones, and PDAs.

DAISY with audio only is also useful in conjunction with printed easy-to-read materials.

A book in DAISY format can be read with standardized daisy players, mobile phones, and MP3 players, while requiring very limited navigation.

Web sites

Web sites on the Internet have become extremely important for conveying all kinds of information as well as for enabling interactive communication between the public, government agencies, and business entities.

The layout of web sites should be clear and simple. Web sites should be constructed for easy navigation, and the content should be accessible at various reading levels. Links to additional resources should also be included. A special easy-to-read site connected to the main home page is an alternative solution.

The aim should be to create accessibility to all people. Information about web accessibility standards is available on the website of World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

7 Publishing process

Publication

Easy-to-read materials can be developed by different types of publishers. For example, regular commercial publishing houses may produce an easy-to-read version in conjunction with the standard publication. This production method is in agreement with the principle of “normalization” and full integration of people with disabilities into the mainstream of society.

On the other hand, organizations dedicated to easy-to-read publications have certain advantages, since they employ staff with specialized skills and knowledge about the requirements of the target groups, the unique editorial work, and marketing strategies.

Copyright

Copyright gives the copyright holder of an original intellectual or artistic work exclusive rights to the work for a period of time. Copyright also gives the creator the right to be credited for the work.

Copyright laws have, to some degree, been standardized through international conventions, but variations still exist among nations. Normally the copyright extends to 70 years after the death of the creator.

The copyright holder may be the creator of the work but can also be another person or a commercial enterprise, e.g. a publishing company. The copyright holder has the right to determine who may translate the work or adapt it into other formats. The copyright holder also has the right to benefit financially from the work.

Copyright does not cover ideas and news information, only the form or manner in which the content is disseminated. Copyright laws require permission from the copyright holder before an easy-to-read adaptation is made of an original literary work.

The easy-to-read work would itself also be covered by copyright.

The rapid development of technology such as electronic media and Internet may raise new questions of copyright as it creates new ways of producing easy-to-read materials.

Economics

Does a sound economic base exist for the publication of easy-to-read books and newspapers? Or is this an activity that can survive only through subsidies from public or private charities?

Production costs for easy-to-read materials are, of course, dependent on sales, the number of copies produced, and the level of editorial work and design. Production costs are generally higher than those for standard publications of the same genre.

Do conditions for self-sustainability or, even, profit exist? The answer may be "yes", based on the experience of the Scandinavian countries, where data indicate that most easy-to-read titles can pay their own way with sales of between 3,000 and 5,000 copies. A weekly easy-to-read newspaper with 8 – 12 pages can probably break even with 15,000-20,000 subscribers.

8 Marketing

Marketing considerations

Much work is involved in creating and publishing easy-to-read books and newspapers. But publication is only half the job. A good product does not sell itself – it must be *marketed*. And marketing makes special demands.

How does one market a product based on the written word to culturally "disadvantaged" people and individuals with limited ability to express their own interests? Or, for that matter, to people who are not used to reading and seldom visit a library or a bookstore?

Traditional marketing techniques are not adequate in this case, since it is not a question of marketing only. Before an easy-to-read product can be sold, a receptive attitude and an active interest must exist among the primary targeted audiences as well as their associates, families, and caregivers.

Personal contacts are very important in dealing with people who do not normally read.

It is often necessary to go through intermediaries to reach these primary users. Unless such contacts have been established, marketing efforts and advertising will not be effective.

Reading representatives

Those who have the greatest reading difficulties and who often have limited access to culture are, as mentioned earlier intellectually and cognitively disabled persons. They are not likely to make spontaneous requests for books and newspapers and they often perceive books and newspapers as strange and intimidating. And people in their immediate surroundings, family and caregivers, often are not aware that news and literary works can be a source of great pleasure to the disabled. This is also the case in regard to people with dementia.

The activity of reading a book aloud gives all involved the opportunity to explore new topics for conversation. The reading aloud activity is especially beneficial for people

with dementia, whose memories from times past are often recalled – if only temporarily.

Example: The Swedish Organization of Reading Representatives

The Centre for Easy-to-Read in Sweden strongly encourages reading and the publication of easy-to-read materials. An organization of *reading representatives* can also be strong advocates as in Sweden, where these groups work in connection with local and regional cultural, social and educational programs. The reading representatives act as intermediaries for people who are not likely to otherwise come in contact with books, news and information. The reading representatives are employees who, in addition to their other duties, are responsible for arranging read-aloud sessions at daycare center and group homes for people with intellectual disabilities and dementia.

The reading representatives project was started in 1992 by the Swedish Centre for Easy-to-Read and the Swedish National Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability. Today one or two reading representatives, who are responsible for arranging reading sessions, reading circles, library visits, etc., are available at almost every daycare center and at many group homes all over Sweden. All Swedish counties have study circles managed by caregivers for intellectually disabled persons who have been trained as reading representatives. Recently similar reading circles have been organized for persons with dementia.

The Organization of Reading Representatives places emphasis on culture and encourages reading. Reading is promoted as a natural component of daily life, and caregivers and family are encouraged to assist in this activity. Local government agencies, libraries, schools, adult education organizations and societies for disabled persons have formed a coalition with responsibility for establishing a program of reading sessions in their respective communities.

The outcomes of the reading representatives project have been very positive:

When intellectually disabled persons were provided with a book, more were able to read than was first expected. Many had significantly more knowledge than had previously been evident, and the reading circles created an interest in different subjects and gave rise to questions and discussions. The book helped these persons put into words thoughts and ideas they had not been able to express before. For most participants the book became a possession of great value.

People with dementia also enjoy read-aloud sessions which lead to the introduction of conversation topics and increased activity and group contact.

These efforts to influence attitudes and encourage reading have lead to increased support for the publication of easy-to-read books and newspapers.

The role of libraries

Public libraries have always played a key role in the easy-to-read field. The majority of easy-to-read books are sold to libraries. This means that the success of easy-to-read books in reaching the readers depends to a large extent on libraries and librarians who promote easy-to-read materials and provide guidance to people with reading difficulties.

Generally readers of easy-to-read materials are not familiar with libraries. Both public and school libraries must participate in outreach efforts to these client groups. The success of libraries in this area depends on four basic factors:

- Ability of libraries to work with the targeted groups (people in group homes, daycare centers and other residential facilities, organizations for people with disabilities and caregivers)
- Knowledge of the special needs of the readers, through training, if necessary.
- Knowledge and expertise in selecting easy-to-read materials.
- Ease of access to easy-to-read materials; these materials should be clearly identified and displayed.

Library staff should be able to assist all customers, including people with special needs. A designated staff member should be responsible for ensuring that information about library materials and services is accessible for to all (brochures, posters, web pages, etc.). Library staff can also provide literacy programs for those who want to learn how to read or provide referral to other literacy services.

Cooperation among all types of libraries is also important - and public and school libraries should cooperate with special libraries, like those for the blind and visually impaired.

9 Need for scientific research

There is a need for more research about reading difficulties and the concept of Easy-to-Read. Easy-to-read publishing should have a solid scientific foundation and be able to learn from new research findings. This research could include different disciplines like linguistics and education, as well physical and intellectual/cognitive disabilities, and graphic design.

10 The Easy-to-Read Network

The international Easy-to-Read Network is open to all who are interested and engaged in easy-to-read matters.

The aim of the network is to
- inform people about easy-to-read and increase the knowledge of the easy-to-read concept,

- make people aware of the needs for easy-to-read,
- be a place for contacts all over the world on easy-to-read matters,
- make exchange of information, ideas, and experiences possible,
- facilitate cooperation between people and organizations in different countries.

The Easy-to-Read Network also has the purpose to

- encourage joint venture projects,
- raise funds for joint venture projects,
- encourage and initiate research about easy-to-read,
- arrange courses and other programs in easy-to-read,
- stimulate new easy-to-read development.

The network also occasionally arranges seminars and conferences.

The network welcomes publishers, producers, writers, journalists, illustrators, photographers, marketers, librarians, and other interested persons and organizations.

More information about the Easy-to-Read Network is available at www.easy-to-read-network.org

Glossary of terms

This is a selected list of terms. For a more complete list, see IFLA publication Glossary of Terms.

BluRay

Blu-Ray is basically the same format as DVD but make it possible to store greater amounts of information.

Blurb

Information written on the back-cover of a book in order to draw attention to its content.

Braille

System of printing for blind people. Letters are printed as raised dots which can be felt with the fingers.

CD, CD-ROM

Abbreviation for “compact disc – read only memory”. A disc on which a very large amount of data such as text, images and sound is stored in digital format. The information on the CD-ROM can be accessed by a computer with a CD-ROM drive.

DAISY

Abbreviation for Digital Accessible Information System. Daisy is a standard for producing and presenting audio and multimedia information.

Disability

A disability, which an impairment causes, is the “restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.” It is a limitation in function *at the level of the person*, for example, difficulty in seeing, hearing, moving about.

DVD

Digital Versatile Disc or Digital Video Disc. DVD is a compact disc for the storage of films and other moving pictures. HD-DVD and Blu-Ray are basically the same format as DVD but make it possible to store greater amounts of information.

E-books

E-book is short for electronical book. The e-book may be equivalent to a conventional printed book. E-books are usually read on personal computers, or on dedicated hardware devices, known as e-book readers. Many mobile phones can also be used to read e-books.

Functional literacy

Generally defined as a level of literacy sufficient to cope with the requirements of daily life; i.e. to read and to write short sentences, read short notices and brief articles in newspapers etc. A rule of thumb is that about nine years of basic

education are required to achieve functional literacy. Functional literacy increases with the complexity of society.

Handicap

A handicap is a “disadvantage resulting from an impairment or disability.” It exists within *the context of socioeconomic roles*, placing disabled people at a disadvantage when compared to non-disabled people. Examples of a handicap include being unable

to use public transportation, being socially isolated, being confined to a bed.

Physical or mental disability that prevents a person from living a totally normal life.

Illiteracy

A person who does not reach the level of functional literacy would be illiterate. See Functional Literacy.

Information Technology (IT)

Various digital technologies used to create, store, analyse and transfer information through computers or telecommunication devices.

Interface

When you talk about the user interface of computers and computing software, it refers mostly to the presentation on screen and how easy it is to operate.

Layout

Arrangements of text, illustrations and graphics in a publication.

Logotype (logo)

Special design of a name, initials or symbols used by companies and organizations for advertising or product identification.

Metaphor

Imaginative way of describing something by referring to something else which has the qualities you want to express. A metaphor is intended or regarded as a symbol.

MP3

Originally Moving Picture Experts Group (MPEG) Audio Layer 3, more commonly referred to as **MP3**, is a digital audio encoding format. This encoding format is used to create an MP3

file, a way to store a single segment of audio, commonly a song, so that it can be organized or easily transferred between computers and other devices such as MP3 players.

Multimedia

Programs and products which integrate the use of various media such as text, graphics, sound and video to convey information.

PDA

Abbreviation for Personal Digital Assistant. It is a light weight and hand-held computer used

as a personal organizer with multiple functions.

UNESCO

Abbreviation for United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Web site

Web sites are usually known as a home page of a company or an organization published on the World Wide Web on the Internet.

W3C

World Wide Web Consortium. W3C is an international community that develops standards to ensure the long-term growth of the Web.

Contacts and addresses

A selected list of national easy-to-read activities

Austria

Atempo BetriebsgesmbH
Grazbachgasse 39, 8010 Graz
www.capito.eu

Belgium

Wablieft
Kardinaal Mercierplein 1
2800 Mechelen
www.vocb.be

Denmark

På let dansk
Fortunstraede 3,1
1065 Copenhagen
www.paaletdansk.dk

Finland

The Plain Language Centre – LL-center
Tölögatan 27 A
00260 Helsinki
www.papunet.net/ll-center

Germany

Büro für Leichte Sprache Lebenshilfe
Bremen Waller Heerstrasse 55
28217 Bremen
www.lebenshilfe-bremen.de

Greece

Special Vocational Training Centre ESEEPa
S. Nikolakopoulou 13
N. Psychiko
Athens
www.eseeepa.gr

Japan

Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities
1-22-1 Toyama Shinjuku-ku
Tokyo 162-00052
www.dinf.ne.jp

Inclusion Japan
8F Zenkoku Tobacco Center Bldg
2-16-1 Nishi-shinbashi, Minato-ku
Tokyo 105-0003
www.ikuseikai-japan.jp

Latvia

Valdes Priekssedetaja
Maskavas 285/6
Riga LV 1050
www.vvagency.lv

The Netherlands

Y-Publicaties
1017 BX Amsterdam
postbus 10208
1001 EE Amsterdam
www.y-publicaties.nl

Norway

Norwegian Centre for Easy-to-Read – Leser søker bok
Bygdøy alle 58 B
0265 Oslo
www.lesersoekerbok.no

Klar Tale/NTB
Postbox 6817 St Olavs Plass
0130 Oslo
www.klartale.no

Lettlest Forlag
P.b. 38 Falkum
N-3705 Skien
www.llf.no

Spain

Associació Lectura Fàcil
Ribera 8 pral.
08003 Barcelona
www.lecturafacil.net

Sweden

Swedish Centre for Easy-to-Read – Centrum för lättläst
Box 9145
102 72 Stockholm
www.lattlast.se

Sesam
Fria Tidningar
Rusthållarvägen 133
128 Bagarmossen
www.fria.nu

A selected list of international organizations

Easy-to-Read Network

www.easy-to-read-network.org

Inclusion International

KD.2.03, University of East London, Docklands Campus,
4-6 University Way, London E16 2RD, United Kingdom
www.inclusion-international.org

International Dyslexia Association

40 York Rd., 4th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21204

DAISY Consortium

www.daisy.org

Appendix

Easy-to-read Literature

Example:

The Count of Monte Cristo

by Alexandre Dumas

Original version in English:

Marseille – Arrival

On February 24, 1815, the lookout at Notre-Dame de la Garde signalled the arrival of the three-master *Pharaon*, coming from Smyrna, Trieste and Naples. As usual, a coastal pilot immediately left the port, sailed hard by the Château d'If, and boarded the ship between the Cap de Morgiou and the island of Riou.

At once (as was also customary) the terrace of Fort Saint-Jean was thronged with onlookers, because the arrival of a ship is always a great event in Marseille, particularly when the vessel, like the *Pharaon*, has been built, fitted out and laded in the shipyards of the old port and belongs to an owner from the town.

Meanwhile the ship was drawing near, and had successfully negotiated the narrows created by some volcanic upheaval between the islands of Calasareigne and Jarre; it had rounded Pomègue and was proceeding under its three topsails, its outer jib and its spanker, but so slowly and with such melancholy progress that the bystanders, instinctively sensing some misfortune, wondered what accident could have occurred on board. Nevertheless, those who were experts in nautical matters acknowledged that, if there had been such an accident, it could not have affected the vessel itself, for its progress gave every indication of a ship under perfect control: the anchor was ready to drop and the bowsprit shrouds loosed. Next to the pilot, who was preparing to guide the *Pharaon* through the narrow entrance to the port of Marseille, stood a young man, alert and sharp-eyed, supervising every movement of ship and repeating each of the pilot's commands.

One of the spectators on the terrace of Fort Saint-Jean had been particularly affected by the vague sense of unease that hovered among them, so much so that he could not wait for the vessel to come to land; he leapt into a small boat and ordered it to be rowed out to the *Pharaon*, coming alongside opposite the cove of La Réserve. When he saw the man approaching, the young sailor left his place beside the pilot and, hat in hand, came and leant on the bulwarks of the ship.

He was a young man of between eighteen and twenty, tall, slim, with fine dark eyes and ebony-black hair. His whole demeanour possessed the calm and resolve peculiar to men who have been accustomed from childhood to wrestle with danger.

"Ah, it's you, Dantès!" the man in the boat cried. "What has happened, and why is there this air of dejection about all on board?"

"A great misfortune, Monsieur Morrel!" the young man replied. "A great misfortune, especially for me: while off Civita Vecchia, we lost our good Captain Leclère."

Example:

The Count of Monte Cristo

Easy-to-read version in English:

In Marseilles

On 24 February 1815 a French ship came sailing into the port of Marseilles in south of France. The name of the ship was Pharaon.

Beside the pilot,
who was to guide the ship into the harbour,
stood a young sailor, leaning against the railing.
He was at most twenty years old.
He was tall and slim,
he had beautiful dark eyes
and his hair was black.
He looked strong and steady.
His name was Edmond Dantés.

The young man stood and watched a small rowing boat which was hurrying towards the Pharaon.
A man in the rowing boat waved eagerly to him.
"Oh, it's you, Edmond Dantés" he called.
"Why do you look so sad, my young friend?"
"We have suffered a great misfortune, Mr. Morrel",
answered the young man.
"We have lost our captain!"