Careers in Professional Writing

**What’s Out There?**

*From the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012-2013 Report:*

Some Highlights of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Writers and Authors” and “Editors.”

- Authors, writers and editors held about 273,000 jobs in 2010, down about 9,000 jobs from 2008. Writers and authors held about 145,900 jobs and editors held about 127,200 jobs.
- Expected growth in employment of Writers and Authors, 6 percent. Expected growth in employment of editors, 1 percent.
- 68 percent of writers in 2010 were self-employed. Most editors, however, are full-time (this may be deceptive because many freelance writers are also editors).
- Growth areas are in online publications and services, and in public relations. Web and multimedia experience are valuable.
- Writers and editors “who have adapted to online media and are comfortable writing for and working with a variety of electronic and digital tools should have an advantage in finding work.”
- **Competition is expected** for writing and editing jobs as many people are attracted to this occupation.

*Note:* Generally speaking, want ads (including online job boards) represent about 15-20 percent of available jobs. Positions available through professional recruiters and placement agencies likewise account for about 15-20 percent. The rest-- networking!

**Categories of Employment in Professional Writing**

- Writing/Editing for Corporations
- Writing/Editing for Nonprofits and Government
- Writing/Editing in the Book Publishing Industry
- Writing/Editing in the Magazines/Blogs
TYPES OF COMPANIES/ORGANIZATIONS THAT EMPLOY WRITERS

- Large Corporations
- Small Businesses
- Internet-based Companies
- Non-profit organizations
- Advertising/Marketing Agencies
- Newspapers/Magazines
- Publishing companies
- Government
- Universities and Colleges
- Television/Radio stations
- Banks/Financial institutions
- Public Relations/Communications Firms
- Science-Related Companies
- Consumer Organizations
- Multimedia Firms
- Professional and Trade Organizations

COMMON JOB TITLES

This list appears on the University of Toronto, Mississauga Career Centre Site. It is an incomplete sampling of job titles within professional writing.

Communications Specialist  Sales Representative
Marketing Manager       Professor
Journalist              Speech Writer
Editor                  Script Writer
Advertising Copywriter   Foreign Service Worker
Public Relations Specialist Secondary School Teacher
Webmaster/Content Developer Sports Editor
Publisher               Publicity Manager
Researcher              Promotion Specialist
Public Affairs Officer   Screenwriter
Editorial Assistant     Productions Assistant
Public Opinion Researcher Corporate Trainer
Community Relations      Reporter
Coordinator             Program Coordinator
Fundraiser              Reviewer (e.g., Book Reviewer)
Librarian               Media Relations Officer
Copy Editor             Fact Checker
News Editor             Grant Writer
Science Writer          Indexer
Public Information Officer Freelance Writer
**TechPow Curriculum—Professional Writing Track**

**Prerequisites and Requirements (as of Jan. 1, 2012)**
- WRIT 280 Digital Tools for Writing and Communication (F, Sp, Su)
- WRIT 301 Professional and Technical Writing Careers (F, Sp, Su)
- INFS 315 Searching for Information (F, Sp, Su)
- WRIT 341 Writing the News in a Digital World (Sp 2013, Sp 2015) OR WRIT 342 Writing for Online and Print Magazines (Sp 2014, Sp 2016)
- WRIT 350I Internship (F, Sp, Su)
- WRIT 371 Editing (F, Sp, Su)
- WRIT 372 Document and Information Design I (F, Sp)
- WRIT 373 Writing and Designing for the Web (F, Sp)
- MDST 485 Communicating with New Media (F, Sp, Su)
- WRIT 461 Writing and Technical Communication Capstone (Sp)

**Electives: Are you interested in writing/editing for corporations or nonprofits?**
- WRIT 341 Writing the News in a Digital World (Sp 2013, Sp 2015)
- WRIT 342 Writing for Online and Print Magazines (Sp 2014, Sp 2016)
- WRIT 377 Writing Grants and Proposals (Sp 2013, Sp 2015)
- WRIT 531 Advanced Writing (Su 2013, F 2015)
- WRIT 532 Writing about Place (F 2014, F 2016)
- WRIT 571 Advanced Editing (Sp 2014, Sp 2016)
- COMM 380 Public Relations Writing (Su)
- MKTG 300 Marketing Principles
- MKTG 348 Advertising Design, Production and Copywriting

**Electives: Are you interested in magazine publishing?**
- WRIT 342 Writing for Online and Print Magazines (Sp 2014, Sp 2016)
- WRIT 341 Writing the News in a Digital World (Sp 2013, Sp 2015)
- WRIT 352 Writing Memoir and Creative Non-Fiction (Sp)
- WRIT 531 Advanced Writing (Su 2013, F 2015)
- WRIT 532 Writing about Place (F 2014, F 2016)
- WRIT 541 Writing for Publication and Profit (F)
- WRIT 571 Advanced Editing (Sp 2014, Sp 2016)

**Electives: Are you interested in book publishing?**
- INFS 338 The Craft and Commerce of Book Publishing (F)
- COMM 380 Public Relations Writing (Su)
- WRIT 541 Writing for Publication and Profit (F)
- WRIT 571 Advanced Editing (Sp 2014, Sp 2016)

**Electives: Are you interested in freelancing?**
- WRIT 541 Writing for Publication and Profit (F)
Other useful courses:
Creative writing and literature courses
Screenwriting courses
Business courses (if you plan to have your own freelance business)

BUT the most important things you can do are
1) Choose a high-quality internship. Do a second internship. Remember internships can be 3-4 credits
2) Develop a content-area specialty (sports, history, medicine, fashion, etc.). Minors are great for this.
3) Start right away building a portfolio.
4) Seize opportunities to network. Attend events, join a professional association.
5) Be nimble. Be prepared to write/edit in multiple formats, genres, and media.
6) Learn technology on your own. Professional writers teach themselves technology skills. Take advantage of Lynda.com
7) Learn LinkedIn. For a free online guide, go to MakeUseOf

RECENT WRITING AND EDITING INTERNSHIPS

Application of Technical Communications
Technical Writing Applications
Advanced Writing, Reporting and Media
Activision CS Internship
Technical Communications Applications
Applications of Technical Writing
Technical Writing/Medical Device Industry
Editor, The Metropolitan
Writing & Editing for a Community Newspaper
Editing, Writing & Researching for Mag
Writing and Editing for Magazines
Website Associate Internship
Newspaper Reporting and Writing
Online Instruction and Training
Writing/Editing Internship
Writing Software Documentation
Marketing & Technical Writing Internship
Technical Writer
Editorial Assistant Intern

Metro State
Brian Lockwood eDesign
Somali Angle Communications, Inc.
Activision Value
Seward Inc.
Asia Global Sourcing Center
Boston Scientific
Metro State
Spokesman Recorder
North American Membership Group
North American Membership Group
Pearson School
City Pages
Metro State
Medtronic
Metro State
Metro State
Goodwill Easter Seals MN
Red Leaf Press
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Manual Documentation</th>
<th>High Emotion Audio</th>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Communication</td>
<td>Phyllis Burdette, CPA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper Copy Editing</td>
<td>The Metropolitan Newspaper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Modules for Int’l. Use</td>
<td>CWA – Metro State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editorial Assistant Intern</td>
<td>Metro State Alumni Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dev. Web Modules for Online Curriculum</td>
<td>Metro State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper Production and Mgmt.</td>
<td>Metro State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing and Designing for the Web</td>
<td>Metro State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing Internship</td>
<td>Thomson Reuters</td>
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<td>Applications of Historical Research</td>
<td>Anoka County Historical Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Writing &amp; Design</td>
<td>Mississippi National River &amp; Recreation Area</td>
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| Application of Adv. Writ. & Editing Skills | Metro State |
| Intranet & Documentation Development | Winthrop & Weinstine |
| Producing, Editing & Graphic Design | Perception Films, LLC |
| Technical Writer Associate Internship | Hewlett-Packard |
| Comprehensive Magazine Production | Minnesota Monthly Magazine |
| Marketing Intern               | Kmeteck |
| Staff Writer Internship        | Metro State |
| Production Office Internship   | Page Productions |
| Professional Writing and Editing | Metro State – CAS |
| Technical Communications Applications | Seward Inc. |
| Wed Training Support Teacher Assistant | Metro State |
| Assistant Publisher/Editor     | Double Dare Press Magazine |
| Web Site Developer/Project Manager I | MnSCU – Human Resources |
| Web Site Developer/Project Manager II | MnSCU – Human Resources |
| Insurance Correspondence Writing | The Hartford |
| Teaching Advanced Writing      | Metro State |
| Grad Internship in Tutoring Writing | Metro State |
| Deployment of a Learning Mgmt. System | Metropolitan Council |
| Applied Technical Writing      | North Star Museum of Boy and Girl Scouts |

**SAMPLE INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION (AS ADVERTISED BY COMPANY)**

**Redleaf Press Intern**
Redleaf Press, a nationally known publisher of books for early childhood professionals located in St. Paul, Minnesota, is accepting applications for non-paid internship programs during the fall and spring semesters and for the summer. The program is designed to expose the intern to all areas of book publishing, including design, production, marketing, sales, and customer service, with a major emphasis in marketing, sales and promotions. Qualified candidates will be a junior or senior enrolled in a Bachelor's degree program in marketing, business, English, journalism, liberal arts, early childhood education, or a related field. Strong writing, communication, and organizational skills are a necessity. Excellent computer skills, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint are desired. Ability to work under deadline pressure and to multi-task is vital. Familiarity with Macintosh platform a plus.
To apply, please submit the following electronically:
- a cover letter explaining your interest in the internship and your career goals
- a resume outlining your education and work experience
- a letter of recommendation from your academic advisor.

E-mail to: Inga Weberg, Sales Manager iweberg@redleafpress.org
For all other internship opportunities, visit Redleaf Press.

**BEING NIMBLE**

The following sample projects were reported in our 2009 survey of 33 local professional writers. This is not a comprehensive list, but it gives you an idea of what professional writers produce:

**Print projects:** books (fiction and nonfiction), news reports and features, specialty magazine news articles and features, marketing brochures, advertising copy, and business and organizational pieces, such as newsletters, annual reports, speeches and grant applications. **Electronic projects:** Web sites, blogs, social media (e.g. Twitter), podcasts, online news media, e-newsletters, video stories and profiles, multi-media productions and campaigns, and scripts for documentary television

**WEB RESOURCES FOR WRITERS AND EDITORS**

**Sites discussed in today’s presentation**
- Non-profit Jobs  [http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/jobs](http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/jobs)
Professional Associations

American Copy Editors Society: www.copydesk.org
American Medical Writers Association: www.amwa.org
American Society of Business Publication Editors: http://www.asbpe.org/
American Society of Indexers: www.asindexing.org/site
American Society of Journalists and Authors: www.asja.org
Construction Writers Association: http://www.constructionwriters.org/
Editorial Freelancers Association: http://www.the-efa.org/
Education Writers Association: http://www.ewa.org/
International Association of Business Communicators: www.iabc.com
Minnesota Magazine & Publications Association http://www.mmpa.net/
National Writers Union: www.nwu.org
Professional Editors Network (Twin Cities): http://www.pensite.org/
Public Relations Society of America: www.prsa.org
Public Relations Society of America, Twin Cities: http://www.mnprsa.com/
Society of Professional Journalists: www.spj.org
Society of Professional Journalists, Minnesota: http://mnspj.org/
Society for Technical Communication: http://www.stc.org/
Society for Technical Communication, Twin Cities: http://www.stctc.org/
Women in Communication (Twin Cities): http://www.awctwincities.org/
Specialized associations: http://writersandeditors.com/specialty_and_niche_writing_57424.htm

Comprehensive Web Sites for Writers

EnhanceMyWriting http://www.enhancemywriting.com/writing_jobs.html
InkyGirl http://www.inkygirl.com/
Poynter Institute: http://www.poynter.org/
The Trade Writer’s Resource http://tradewriter.freeservers.com/
Writer’s Block: http://www.writersblock.ca/
Writers’ Digest: http://www.writersdigest.com/
Writers and Editors http://writersandeditors.com/index.htm
The Writer Gazette: http://www.writergazette.com/
Writer’s Resource: http://www.poewar.com/
Writers Write: http://www.writerswrite.com/

Career Related Sites

Mediabistro.com: http://www.mediabistro.com/
Sunoasis: http://www.sunoasis.com/
Writer’s Weekly (freelancing): http://www.writersweekly.com/
WritingCareer.com http://www.writingcareer.com/
JournalismJobs.com http://www.journalismjobs.com/
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits: http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/jobs
BOOKS

*Careers for Writers and Others Who Have a Way with Words. Robert W. Bly, 2003
*Career Opportunities in the Publishing Industry Fred Yager & Jan Yager, Ferguson, 2009
Opportunities in Writing Careers. Elizabeth Foote-Smith, McGraw-Hill, 2006
*Ready, Aim, Specialize!: Create Your Own Writing Specialty and Make More Money!
Kelly James-Enger, Marion Street. 2008

*Owned by Metro State Library