

# Preparing materials for translation with the SMOG technique

## Calling All Communicators!

The following article was submitted to the Newsletter in the hope that it provides inspiration and guidance to those interested in improving their written communications, which could be anything from newsletters and fact-sheets to translated work, journal articles or business communications.

by Nyomi Graef and Ross James

We were involved in a project to translate English-language health promotion materials into other languages, in order to train trainers in Indonesia, Cambodia, Mongolia, Russia and the Philippines. The national trainers were to use the translated materials to train community-level health professionals to prepare and implement radio programming for health promotion. Our task in the process was to prepare the materials for translation by improving comprehension and readability levels, and we would like to share some of our experience and advice to help communicators everywhere.

Of the available tools used to evaluate the readability of printed materials the SMOG formula is the most widespread (SMOG = Simplified Measure of Gobbledygoo). The pur-

pose of the formula is to reduce the number of polysyllabic words (words of three or more syllables) in a text, as words of less than three syllables are easier to read. The basic steps are to select 30 sentences from a text, then circle all polysyllabic words. Find the nearest perfect square root for the total of circled words and add a constant of three. This gives the SMOG, or reading grade level, that a person must have reached if he or she is to fully understand the text being assessed. A score of 10 or less is usually regarded as being of a level that most people could understand.

Some grammatical changes are also effective:

- a) Remove verbs that clutter the sentences, e.g.  
*Interviewers should be able to demonstrate friendliness, courtesy, sincerity, and familiarity with the*

*purpose of the study, becomes:  
Interviewers should be friendly, courteous, sincere, and familiar with the purpose of the study.*

- b) Change negatively-worded phrases to be positive and avoid double negatives, e.g.  
*The goal is to avoid under-use of resources, and not miscommunicate the findings, becomes:  
The goal is to increase use of resources, and communicate the findings.*

- c) Use an 'active voice', e.g.  
*Our aim is encouraging further development, becomes:  
Our aim is to encourage further development.*

We would be happy to provide interested readers with a document that describes our experiences in more detail and provides further examples.

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## Licensing and negotiation online workshop

In conjunction with the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and INASP, 5 people are participating on a 5-week distance learning course on *Licensing and Negotiation* from 17 May to 18 June. Colleagues are taking part from the following institutes and organisations: University of Nairobi, Kenya; University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia; University of Malawi, Malawi; INASP.

The course has 5 overall objectives:

- To introduce participants to the legal underpinnings of the licensing

of electronic information resources

- To alert participants to the players and factors at their home institution that affect licensing
- To walk participants through specific terms and conditions and areas that make up a license
- To give participants hints on how to negotiate the terms they need
- To inform participants of what needs to be done after the license is signed.

In collaboration with the ARL, the initial course participants and librarians in partner countries, INASP hopes to be able to develop elements

of the course for wider implementation through its training programmes, adapting modules to conditions experienced within developing countries. It is hoped that modules and full courses will be available for local adaptation and use within individual institutes and library consortia in PERI countries and beyond.

Full course details can be found at:  
<[www.arl.org/training/licensing.html](http://www.arl.org/training/licensing.html)>

Enquiries about future licensing and negotiations skills training can be directed to Martin Belcher or Sarah Durrant at INASP.

<[mbelcher@inasp.info](mailto:mbelcher@inasp.info)> and  
<[sdurrant@inasp.info](mailto:sdurrant@inasp.info)>

INASP are hoping to move AJOL to African management in 2005, and are sending out a specification document to invite expressions of interest from African organisations. If you are interested, please contact Pipa Smart <psmart@inasp.info>

International Workshop on Strategies for Preservation of and Open Access to Scientific Data

This workshop is being organised in Beijing China on 22-24 June 2004 by the Ministry of Science and Technology of China (MOST), and the CODATA Task Group on the Preservation and Archiving of S&T Data in Developing Countries, the Chinese National Committee for CODATA and the US National Committee for CODATA. The workshop will provide an interdisciplinary forum and promote a deeper understanding of long-term preservation, archiving, and open access to scientific data in the developing country context.

See <www.codata.org> for further information

AJOL continues to grow

AJOL continues to grow, accepting new titles all the time. We now have 185 titles from 21 countries in Africa, and over 11,000 articles on the website. Visit us at <www.ajol.info>

## Training materials available from INASP

The following training workshop programmes and associated materials are available from INASP.

### *Introduction to "Using the Internet"*

3-5 day practical workshop. Workshop materials are available in: English, French, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese.

### *Electronic Journals and Electronic Resources Library Management*

4-5 day practical workshop. Workshop materials are available in: English, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Russian.

### *Accessing Information in Developing Countries*

This one day workshop is intended to provide an outline of the issues associated with accessing information in developing countries.

### *Electronic Information Resources for Health Workers*

3-5 day practical workshop. English language only.

### *Web Page Design and Authoring, leading to Library Web Pages*

4-5 day practical workshop. English language only.

### *ICT Troubleshooting for Librarians and Information Personnel*

2 day workshop. English language only.

### *Introducing the Internet for Public Libraries in Africa*

5 day practical workshop. English language only.

### *Proactive Librarianship: Marketing and Public Relations: A Manual for Workshop Presenters*

The manual has been created to provide a practical guide for organisers and presenters of workshops in running successful training events in their own region. English language only.

These training materials are freely available on the INASP website – see <www.inasp.info/training> or contact Martin Belcher for further information <mbelcher@inasp.info>

The next INASP Newsletter will be published in November 2004, and will comprise a special issue on health information (see p.3). Suggestions, ideas and contributions are welcomed, and should be sent to Neil Pakenham-Walsh at: <health@inasp.info>