

Transcript from the Freelance Friday #EFAChat, July 31, 2015

Topic: Ethics for Editorial Freelancers

- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) Welcome to the Freelance Friday tweet chat! Use hashtag [#EFAchat](#) to be included in today's transcript.
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) Today's [#EFAchat](#) is being moderated by Lucy Spencer, a copyeditor from Northwest Indiana.
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) This [#EFAchat](#) will cover some of the ethical issues that editorial freelancers face.
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) [#EFAchat](#) Let's introduce ourselves. Where are you from, and what do you do?
- [Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) Hi! I'm a book editor and indie author in San Antonio, TX. [#EFAchat](#)
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) Hi, Michelle! Thanks for joining the [#EFAchat](#) today.
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) Don't be shy - if you're listening to this [#EFAchat](#), let us know!
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) Hi, Michael! Good to see you. [#EFAchat](#)
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) [#EFAchat](#) Q1: What should be on a list of the top three ethical concerns for freelance editors?
- [Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) A1: Not allowing the content you edit to seep into your own work, if you're also a writer. [#EFAchat](#)
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) Hi, Helen! Glad you could chat with us today. [#EFAchat](#)
- [Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) [#efachat](#) Being familiar with and adhering to ethical codes pertinent to freelancing. the-efa.org/res/code_TOC.p...
- [Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) [#efachat](#) [the-efa.org/res/code_TOC.p...]
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) We were thinking the same thing, Michael! Does anyone else have a go-to resource for a code of ethics? [#EFAchat](#)
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) Great point, Michelle! Never "borrow" from another author's work. [#EFAchat](#)

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) I also found this resource from the Am Soc of Bus Pub Editors (ASBPE): ow.ly/Qlz0Z #EFAchat

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) #EFAchat Q2: What's an example of editorial activity that is not illegal but still unethical?

[Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) For medical writers: American Medical Writers Association-- Ethics & Medical Communication; amwa.org/ethics_medical... #efachat

[Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) Q2: Ghostauthoring and related; AMWA Ethics FAQs, amwa.org/amwa_ethics_fa...; which I wrote@: #efachat

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) #EFAchat Q2 is a tough one. I'm thinking about failure to be transparent. Not illegal, but still morally questionable.

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) #EFAchat Q3: Would you ever write a review of a book you edited - say, on Amazon?

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) @Michael_Altus Good examples! #EFAchat

[Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) A3: No. I wouldn't feel right about doing that, even if I loved the book. Even with adding disclosure, it would be weird. #EFAchat

[Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) @EFAFreelancers Hahahaha! Exactly. #EFAchat

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) #EFAchat Q4: Ethical dilemma or business decision: would you tell an author if you subcontract some of the work?

[Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) A4: I've always been up front with clients about subcontracting content writing, but I wouldn't sub editing work. 1/2 #EFAchat

[Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) A4: I'm too picky, and I'd end up editing the subcontractor's work anyway. I'd rather just do it myself and know it's done right. #EFAchat

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) If you're just joining the #EFAchat, welcome! Jump in at any time!

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) #EFAchat Q5: If you quote a flat fee and the job takes only half the time, do you discount your invoice or charge as quoted?

[Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) @EFAFreelancers I can see that point. Not going to explain step-by-step editing process. May as well teach them how to edit. :-)
#EFAchat

[Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) Excellent guide: The RIGHT Way To Avoid Doing Wrong: a Multistep Model for Making Ethical Decisions; FREE; amwa.org/files/About%20... #efachat

[Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) [@EFAFreelancers](#) But if I'm advertising my editing experience and skill, client needs to know if I'm not the one doing the work. #EFAchat

[Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) [@EFAFreelancers](#) Also, I base my rates on my experience and skill. Wouldn't be right to charge the same for a subcontractor. #EFAchat

[Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) [@EFAFreelancers](#) At least, I wouldn't feel right doing that. #EFAchat

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) #EFAchat Q6: Ethical dilemma or business decision: would you fib a bit about your experience with a certain style guide just to get hired?

[Deborah Brody @dbmc](#) [@EFAFreelancers](#) A5. Charge what you quoted, unless it is an ongoing relationship that will have ore work. #EFAChat

[Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) [@DBMC](#) Hi Deborah! :-) #EFAchat

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) [@DBMC](#) So that's more of a business decision for you? I can see how you might bend a bit for a very good client. #EFAchat

[Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) A6: #efachat

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) [@Michael Altus](#) That's true - quotes can be considered part of the contract. Hopefully there are more wins than losses! #EFAchat

[Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) A6: (sorry) Not an easy answer about fibbing (oops... exaggerating) about one/s experience #efachat

[Deborah Brody @dbmc](#) [@EFAFreelancers](#) Yes, a business decision. If you constantly charge less, you are going to make less! And clients will expect that. #efachat

[Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) A6: Ethical dilemma or business decision? It's both. I wouldn't go so far as to state, (cont'd) #efachat

[Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) ...when I've never actually seen it. #efachat

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) [@Michael Altus](#) Could one say, "if you've seen one style guide, you've seen them all - I'll just look things up as I go"? #EFAchat

- [Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) A6 (correction): "Oh sure, I'm familiar with it!" when I've never actually seen it. [#efachat](#)
- [Lisa Rowan @lisatella](#) [@DBMC @EFAFreelancers](#) Clients don't need to know how long it takes me to complete a task. It's irrelevant to their needs. [#efachat](#)
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) [#EFAchat](#) Q7: How hard would you push if the work was plagiarized? Let author tumble, recommend changes, tell the publisher, or quit?
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) [@ChiPubNetwork](#) Love the Grandmother Code! If Grandma wouldn't like it, it's probably wrong. [#EFAchat](#)
- [Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) [@EFAFreelancers](#) Yes, but a little less "flip". Get ahold of the manual, look through it, and then explain, it's okay. [#efachat](#)
- [Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) If flat fee, then client doesn't need to know. If hourly rate, then obviously client needs to know. [#efachat](#)
- [Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) [@DBMC @Lisatella](#) Agreed. As long as their deadline is met, all is well. [#EFAchat](#)
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) [#EFAchat](#) Q8: If you discover that the author insists on being unethical, do you blast it on a "Bad Clients" website or let it go?
- [Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) A8: Don't work with them, don't refer them, but also don't blast anything about them. That's asking for bad karma. 1/2 [#EFAchat](#)
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) [#EFAchat](#) Q9: When was the last time you were faced with an ethical problem? How did you handle it?
- [Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) A8: However, I have previously privately informed colleagues about bad clients to help them avoid trouble. 2/2 [#EFAchat](#)
- [Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) A7: In medical pub, plagiarism is big no-no. I would inform the journal editor, or , perhaps [retractionwatch.com](#) anonymously [#efachat](#)
- [Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) A8: Discuss with client. If client won't change, then resign from project and inform journal editor. [#efachat](#)
- [EFA International @efafreelancers](#) [#EFAchat](#) Plenty of organizations have advice for ethical behavior in your niche. Read! It may save you a lot of trouble.

[Michelle Lowery @michelledlowery](#) Have to get to a meeting. Thanks for the chat! Have a great weekend, everyone! [#EFAchat](#)

[Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) Again, I suggest The RIGHT Way To Avoid Doing Wrong: a Multistep Model for Making Ethical Decisions. Free. [#efachat](#)

[Michael S. Altus @michael_altus](#) Remember, ethics is a difficult, uncomfortable topic. One can lose popularity contests (and income) for trying do the right thing. [#efachat](#)

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) [@Michael_Altus](#) Interesting resource. Plagiarism is definitely a big no-no all around. [#EFAchat](#)

[EFA International @efafreelancers](#) It's time to end today's [#EFAchat](#). The written transcript will end here. Thanks for a great discussion! See you next time.