

# Guidelines for Group Editing

## Fundamental Truth:

In a group editing process the one thing that everyone will agree on is that no two people will edit any document the same way.

- Therefore, the objective of a group editing process is to create a document that fully meets its core purpose while being free of spelling and grammar errors.

## Recommendations for group editing:

- Compromise or ignore the small areas where alternate wording does not impact the purpose of the document. Focus on the material that shifts the intent or meaning of the document.
- Judiciously use the reply-all function in email. Everyone needs to be involved in the discussion if the issue is fundamental to the document's purpose or if the purpose is not fully defined. However, recommendations for small changes only need to be forwarded to the lead editor.
- Do help the lead editor to identify spelling and grammatical errors, but with some recognition of stage of development and turnaround response time. Such errors become more critical as the document nears completion. Also, if a draft has already initiated a number of reply-all discussions, it is likely that someone will have already responded to the lead editor on spelling and grammar errors. However, the lead editor may still be looking for comments on errors if there appears to be no group editing activity.
- Compromises may have to be negotiated where conflicting recommendations cannot otherwise be merged together.
- In a few cases the lead editor may have to make a judgment call and take the course of action that stays closest to the original intent of the document in her opinion.

Ross A. Wirth, Ph.D.  
3/1/2006