

Reviews

REEDER, ROBERT C.

Sourcebook of Medical Communication

C. V. Mosby, 1981. £18.50

The American penchant for encyclopaedic texts is evident in this book which aims in its 308 pages to cover the whole field of scientific 'communication'. There are sections on writing, speaking, artwork, audio-visual aids and even planning of scientific meetings. In all 26 authors, mostly plastic surgeons, cover such topics as style in medical writing; the podium presentation; medical illustration techniques; meeting planning and media and press encounters.

The book is mostly *by* American surgeons *for* American surgeons. The subtly different needs of Europeans and physicians are not catered for; the section on medical illustration techniques, for example, is devoted wholly to the illustration of plastic surgery. Despite this there is some useful information here if the user cares to find it. The cartoon presentation of all the stages involved in publishing is worth a look by anyone who is ever involved in the process, and the section on planning a poster session should be compulsory reading for anyone contemplating this means of presentation. The sections on setting up a scientific meeting and meeting planning would make good introductory reading for those who suddenly find themselves responsible for organizing a conference. Some of the appendices are useful, for example, the notes on proof-correction and the summaries of requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals.

Unfortunately other sections are not so universally useful – the notes on copyright relate entirely to United States law, the information on legibility is not the clearest explanation of what will reproduce, and the section on office sketching is written by an enthusiastic amateur artist. Others will find it difficult to put into practice. The medical photography section is poor in that import-

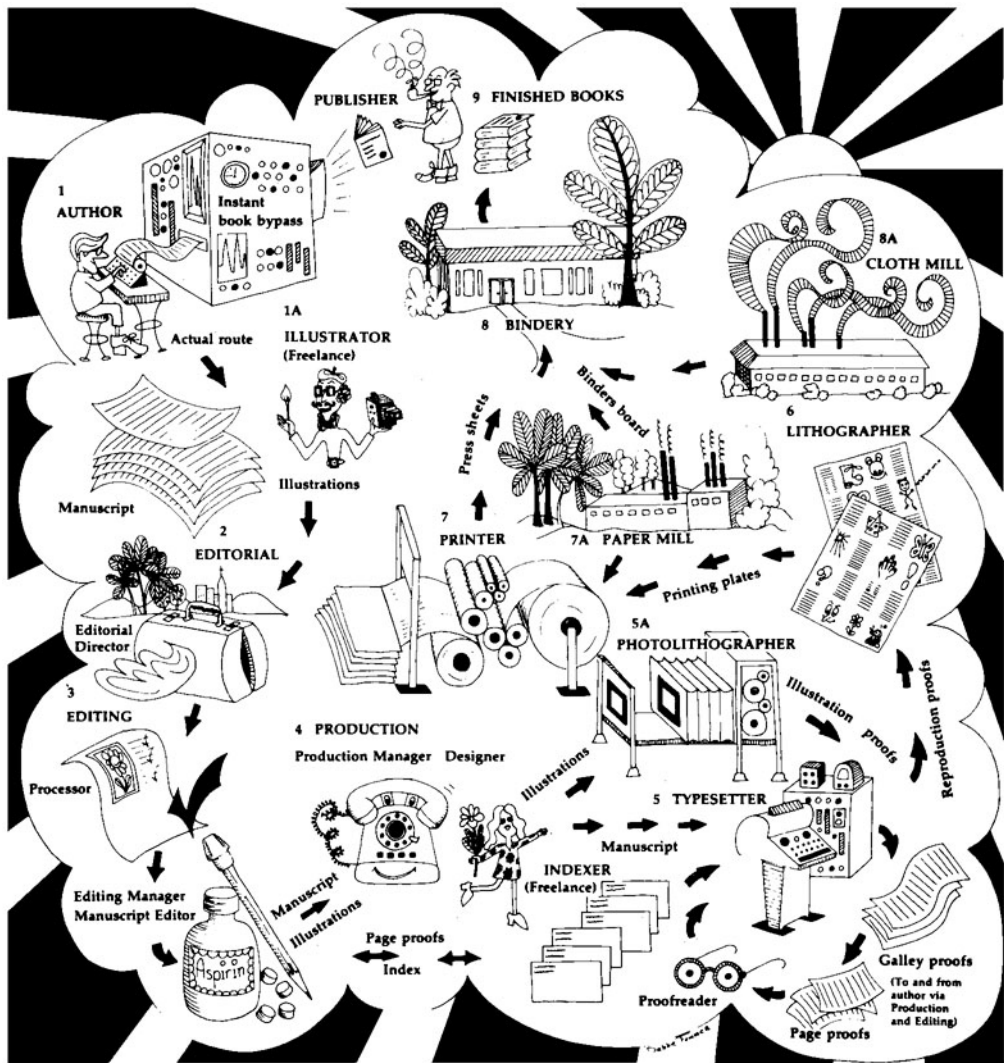
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ant principles such as standardization are swamped by a vast amount of very basic information about equipment which is better found in texts on amateur photography.

It is not clear what this book intends to do. If it is to inform the medical user about the principles of illustration then it contains irrelevant basic material; if it is designed to be

a comprehensive practical text it is sadly inadequate and occasionally inaccurate. There is much useful information here for the young doctor embarking on a career of teaching, publishing, speaking at meetings and so on but he must be prepared to sort the relevant from the irrelevant and pay over £18 for a paperback book.

A. R. WILLIAMS



The stages involved in the publishing of a book from the *Sourcebook of Medical Communication* by Robert C. Reeder.