My presentation in brief

• What’s contractually binding?
• Problems with briefs
• Attributes of a good brief
• A typical brief ...
• Deliverables & performance standards
• Elements of a contract
• An editor’s brief: elements
• Negotiation & ‘cooling-off’
• Absent or flawed brief
Meetings and discussions
Telephone/Skype calls
Emails and letters
Quotations/estimates
Formal supplier contracts
Briefs and briefing documents

What’s contractually binding?
Problems with briefs
Clients are not well informed, so briefs are ...

- not thoroughly thought through ×
- too skimpy and inadequate ×
- lacking essential information ×
- too long and florid ×
- difficult to make sense of ×
- overwhelming ×
- forgettable! ×
Attributes of a good brief

- Sufficiently supportive
- Based on a knowledge of the required skills
- Covers the essentials of the task
- Appropriately detailed and ‘revealing’
- Spells out the deliverables

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A typical brief usually covers ...

- Handover date and deadline
- Fee for the job

A typical brief usually neglects ...

- Deliverables
- Performance standards
DO NOT ALLOW LOOPHOLES IN BRIEFS TO DISADVANTAGE YOU!
IF NECESSARY, WRITE YOUR OWN BRIEF, OR PLUG HOLES.
So what are these deliverables and performance standards?

• Let’s look, then, at the elements of a typical publisher’s contract with a service provider ...
Elements of a contract: Checklist

The necessary clauses in a contract are ...

• The contracting parties
  The function and designation of the supplier
  What the supplier will supply: nature; quantity; medium
• The brief – the specifications of what is wanted
• Responsibilities of the supplier
• Reporting lines and procedures
• Standards and quality requirements
• Confidentiality and conflict of interest
  • Penalties

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Elements of a contract: Checklist2

- Presentation: what will be delivered, in which format
- Delivery – times and schedules
- Failure to deliver to the required standard
- Penalties for non-delivery
- Payment – amount; payment terms; payment dates
- Payment and copyright: ownership
- Attribution and acknowledgements
An editor’s brief: Elements

• Deadline, fee & performance standard(s)
• Correspondence, consistency, correctness
• Structural, substantive or copy-edit?
• Heavy, medium or light edit?
• House style & style sheet
• Illustrations, case studies, etc
• Coding or tagging (production mark-up)?
• References and cross-references
• Preferred editorial reference works
Negotiation & ‘cooling-off’

• Preferably receive brief face to face
• Ask questions to clarify – either at briefing or by follow-up email
• Negotiate on basis of *seen* document
• Allow a reasonable ‘cooling-off’ period to consider the brief and the job itself - before committing yourself
Absent or flawed brief?

• If necessary, submit a written brief of your own appropriate to the particular job
• Or supplement or fill in the gaps in the client’s brief with elements of your own
• Email or hand it to the client for approval, prior to commencing work
Thank you for your presence. Are there any questions?
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Briefs: Yes, you really are only as good as them!