



Cassie Hart Copywriting
& Editorial Services



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INTRODUCTION

Hi there, how's your summer going? I can't complain, really. Between taking a few weekend trips (no big vacation plans this year...not with a 3-month-old!), meeting deadlines, and spending time with family, my summer has been a nice combination of functionality and relaxation.

Recently we made our annual trek to the Iowa City Jazz Festival. My husband and I have been attending this wonderful festival for eight years. The past couple of years we've also talked our parents and various friends into coming, and this year we also had our daughter in tow.

Every year I write an overview of the festival and publish it in my personal blog, [JazzWriter](#). I had every intention of doing the same this year. As I settled into my lawn chair, I made sure to keep at least one of the fifty free programs handed to us by festival volunteers clean and unrumpled, and I had my brain tuned into what would soon take place on stage. And then...

“Waaaah!”

Hmmm, I began to think it wouldn't be quite as easy to direct my undivided attention toward the music this year... not with a baby along. It turned out that, of course, this inkling was correct...I think I heard exactly two bands all weekend. And I didn't hear enough of them to attempt writing about their music.

Was I disappointed? Well, yes, somewhat. There were a couple of groups I had really hoped to experience. But then I remembered that this was DD's (dear daughter) first festival experience, and I wanted it to be a good one. I certainly didn't expect her to sit quietly in my lap while I took in the grooves emerging from the main stage...even this first-time mom isn't naive enough to think that this was even a possibility. So we strolled through downtown Iowa City, we danced to the music, we observed the crowd around us. And

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you know what? I may not have experienced the festival exactly the same way as in the past, but I ended up tuning into a lot of new aspects that I had missed before. And I can't say I regret this new outlook at all.

I hope you enjoy time with your families this summer as well...enjoy 'em while they're little, a little bigger, middle aged, older, whatever. If you've got family surrounding you, you're lucky!

All the best,
Cassie Hart

Feature Article

When NOT to use Spell Check features

Ahhh, Spell Check. Isn't it nice to know that this handy word processor feature has got your back when you're in a hurry to create and distribute important documents? You don't have to worry about making typos because Spell Check will catch 'em all.

Or will it?

Using Spell Check as a deciding factor as to whether text is ready for the world to read can result in big trouble. Spell Check only reads words; it doesn't verify that these words have been used correctly in the context of a sentence. Sure, we can blame occasional verbal misuse on the many idiosyncrasies of the English language. (After all, how many other tongues have three or more spellings for words with identical pronunciations—e.g., *two*, *to*, *too*?) We are, however, still expected to use our language correctly when expressing our thoughts. Seemingly small mistakes often stand out in big ways—especially when they show up in professional documents.

Some examples of errors Spell Check will not catch include:

Homophones. These are words that are pronounced identically but are spelled differently and have different meanings. For example:

The sun *shone* brightly through the window.
Have you *shown* your students how to effectively study for the test?

Typos and reversed words or letters. We all fumble at the keyboard every now and then. But be careful not leave portions of words out of your final draft or to accidentally reverse letters so that an entirely new—and unintended—

word appears.

My high son's school basketball team made it to the *champion* last year. I just wanted some peace and *quite*.

Extra words and letters. This error often occurs after changes have been made to the first draft of a document. As long as both words are spelled correctly and the sentence doesn't break any traditional grammatical rules, Spell Check will not flag either word. Ditto for forgetting to add an *s* to make a noun plural.

I went to the store to *buy purchase* milk.
John drank six *glass* of lemonade at the picnic.

So should Spell Check be considered a faulty feature? Certainly not—it is actually quite useful. Just remember that it is only a tool to be used to identify potential errors. It's not an indicator of your computer's "smartness." And it should never be used as a substitute for a proofreader...which is why Spell Check should only be used after text has been carefully reviewed for meaning and clarity by human eyes.

FEEDBACK CENTRAL

Have suggestions or comments about how to make this ezine even better? I'd love to hear from you! Are the articles useful? Have any of these tips helped with your own writing? Send me an [email](#) and let me know how I'm doing!

ABOUT CASSIE HART

Over nine years of professional writing experience has afforded me the opportunity to learn the finer points of writing efficient, effective, and creative copy. Press releases, brochures, newsletters, website content, and articles are among the many types of marketing and promotional communications I regularly generate for clients. To discuss potential projects not listed here (or to obtain more information about any project types listed above) please [contact me](#). All initial consultations and estimates for projects are FREE!

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