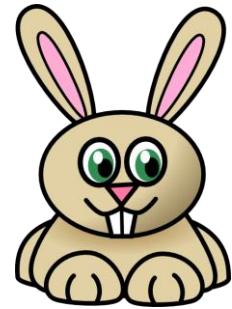


The Wild and Wacky World of Typos, the Bane of an Author's Existence

by *Harriet Hodgson*



When I'm working on a book I try hard to be accurate. Yet when I read what I have written I always find typos. In a recent Facebook post I said I must have slept funny because I had a stiff neck. Instead of the word "funny," however, I wrote "bunny." I logged in again, apologized for my typo, and said I hadn't slept with a bunny.



The error made me laugh and it made others laugh too. In a reply, a friend said she had sent an email to someone, starting with the word "Hello." Only she left off the letter o and her email began, "Hell Bill." Her admission made me laugh out loud. I think many authors have typos in their manuscripts; they come with the writing territory.

When I was in high school I took a year-long typing course. At the end of the course, students were qualified to be professional secretaries. The word typing is going out of favor and I guess I'm supposed to say "keyboarding" instead. The Aeonix Publishing group describes many typing and formatting errors in its website article, "Common Typographical Errors."

Reversing letters is one of these errors and something I often do. Apparently it is a common error among people like me who were trained in touch typing. I have another common error and it is word reversal. I am a health and wellness writer and often use the word "medication." Instead of this word I may type "meditation." It's a strange mix-up.



Aeonix thinks self-published authors need to avoid errors that make their book look unprofessional. Examples include overusing bold and italics, narrow margins, and excessive page decorations. Dashes have changed since I was in high school. I was trained to end a word, leave a space, insert the dash, leave a space, and continue the word or sentence. Modern dashes, on the other hand, touch the ending letter of the preceding word and beginning letter of the next word.

Another one of my mistakes is leaving two spaces after a period. Modern publications have only one space after a period, a look that I don't like. But I know I must change with the times. Richard Nordquist writes about errors in his about.com article, "Typos." He says automatic typos are errors that usually involve one letter. One wrong letter can change the meaning entirely, Nordquist points out, as with typing "prostate" for "prostrate."

Before I submit a manuscript to the publisher I proofread manuscript again and again, and still find typos. I try to proofread emails and Facebook posts too, but sometimes I forget. One time I wrote a post about a new book idea popping into my head. Instead of popping, it turns out I wrote "pooping." (It's that one-letter error again.) Within seconds I was getting emails that read "Too funny!" and "Hilarious!"



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Part of me will always be the high school student in typing class, learning how to format business letters and address envelopes. Another part of me will always be the author who is trying to improve her manuscripts. I am grateful for the book ideas I have and for all of my published books. Writing is my life and I love it!

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Harriet Hodgson has been a freelancer for 35+ years and is the author of 31 published books. Her latest releases are "Happy Again! Your New and Meaningful Life After Loss" and "Help! I'm Raising My Grandkids." Please visit her website and learn more about this busy author. <http://www.harriethodgson.com>

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