

The Write Plan, LLC Newsletter

- A Technical Writing Solutions Company

Poor Grammar Can Kill Your Reputation and How Clear Is Your Writing?

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What's New ...

Seriously it's December!!!

The year is about over and I hope we all have reflected (or will) on what has happened in our life over the past year. For me I know I am truly grateful for my 2 nieces. Life has been so much better with their births, though I don't get to see them as much as I would like too! :(

The year started out well ... and by the end think it will be even better than I could have hoped for.

Like to take a moment and thank all of you who have been there supporting me over the year as I have to you and look forward to the year ahead with you as well!

Happy Networking!

Chad

"The NetworkING of Pittsburgh"

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About Us

To encourage and promote the growth and success of other business owners. We offer the benefits of years of experience creating the solutions to the problems that are often roadblocks on the path to success.

Instead of enjoying their professions, many business owners are feeling overworked and understaffed. **The Write Plan, LLC** can help you reclaim your original vision by offering friendly, collaborative assistance on large and small projects.

NEED HELP PROMOTING A NETWORKING EVENT?

If your event would be of interest to entrepreneurs and small business owners please submit your event information for inclusion on the monthly networking events calendar by [clicking here](#).

HAVING TROUBLE TELLING OTHERS YOUR BUSINESS EXISTS?

If you would like **over 3,265** other businesses to find your business monthly, why not [advertise](#) within this newsletter.

HOW DO I SIGN-UP TO RECEIVE MY OWN COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER?

If you are looking to receive your very own copy of this newsletter each and every month please submit the form on our webpage http://www.thewriteplanllc.com/Monthly_Newsletter.html

FEEDBACK, QUESTIONS, OR COMMENTS?

Please submit feedback, questions, or comments on the Request Form webpage http://www.thewriteplanllc.com/Request_Form.html

GUESTBOOK

Tell us what you think of our services, newsletter and networking calendar by [clicking here](#).



I have a client who rails about consultants with poor grammar. How big a deal is this?

I can't say how prevalent this is with consultants but I suspect these kind of errors in grammar can be a deal breaker when you are trying to impress a client with your command of language and precision and care taken in communication. What does it say about you when you utter sentences such as "He is the one that (who) conducted the focus group," or "There (They're) probably ready for the presentation," or "I think it would be well (good) to approach a new supplier"? Confusing its and it's is unusually common.

Part of the decline of grammar and spelling has been attributed to the increase in IM/texting, where informality is part of the culture and started when each letter transmitted was a challenge. Another reason is the lack of reading, particularly among younger people. Television competes with reading and the proportion of adults who read a work of creative literature in the past year has declined to less than half. One in four adults have not read any books in the past year.

Tip: You don't know what you don't know. To be sure you are not inadvertently committing grammatical errors, get a list of common grammatical mistakes in speaking or writing. Examples include **five common mistakes** or **ten common mistakes** in business writing.

Our consultancy recently brought in a person to help us improve our writing. We weren't happy about spending the time. After all, we were senior consultants who wrote brilliantly. I can't remember the name but we put our reports and memos through an analysis that told us how clear our writing was (it turned out it wasn't very). Do you know what it was?

You are probably referring to any of several readability formulas. The most popular is Flesch-Kincaid, which looks at how many words in a sentence, how many letters per word, incidence of passive voice and other factors. Consultants, like many practitioners of many professions with specialized vocabularies, tend to puff up language when they write. It is hard to break this bad habit. We do this to explain a complicated concept, but this is when we should be focus on the simple and clear.

There are several tools for doing this kind of analysis. One that uses Flesch-Kincaid is embedded in MS Word, but some criticize it for poor implementation. You can use an **alternative tool** to analyze your text. This tool combines Flesh-Kincaid and other readability formulas to give an overall grade level for your writing.

Tip: Analyze a draft memo to your client with this tool to see just how clear (or not) you write. Use this like training wheels. You don't need to use it for every memo or report, but every once in a while would keep you attuned to improving your readability. After all, your primary goal is to communicate effectively, not impress anyone with your vocabulary.

For a bit of fun, look at the **readability of Presidential inaugural speeches**. President Obama's recent speech was at a 9th grade level, which is excellent for reaching citizens with an understandable message. I will leave you to make your own conclusions about this historical graph of readability over time.

P.S. Since you are probably thinking about it, this tip rated an average grade level of 9.84.

Advertise here



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