# Paying Attention to Detail

*What to look for and How to look for while reviewing*

## *Do The Math*

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# Attention to Detail – what it is and it is not?

▸ It is not the inability to do a task correctly

▸ It is not about not noticing some that is done poorly

▸ Lack of attention to detail is the <u>habit</u> of not noticing something that you are doing badly but you know how to do well

▸ It happens because we are in a rush or because we lack focus

▸ It manifests as lack of pride in one's work

▸ Good news – Habits can be changed and better habits can be learnt

# Rush personality trait

▶ A lot of us have a 'rush' personality trait

▶ We tend to rush through much of our work

▶ We make errors not because we don't have the skill to perform the task but because we don't take the time to perform it correctly

▶ The best way to slow this 'impatient' behavior down is to STOP every time you make a mistake and have them back up and re-do the entire task.

▶ Because we are impatient to finish we begin to pay closer attention so we are not forced to stop

# Attention to Detail – in the context of errors

▸ This deck will focus on attention to detail in the context of detecting errors either in your own work or while reviewing someone else's work

▸ In your day-to-day work you will find yourself reviewing/QC-ing any of the following artefacts:
  – Storyboards (Power point decks)
  – Codes
  – Numbers (Excel sheets, SAS/R datasets etc.)
  – Documentation (Word etc.)

▸ Given the diverse nature of each of these activities, we will focus on providing some guiding principles, best practices, tips for devising strategies that will increase attention to detail in your work, but refrain from suggesting exact solutions

▸ Each team should determine the best strategy for the context of their work while adhering to the overall principles laid out in this deck

# Do we have any basic science for attention to details?

# Guidelines for review of decks, emails, documents, storyboards etc.

▸ **Always turn the spell check on** (please take time NOW to verify it is on in your laptops now)

▸ **Don't rely entirely on spelling checkers and grammar checkers** (for instance if you type "your" instead of "you're," or "to" instead of "too," or "there" instead of "their," the spell checker won't catch the error.)

▸ **Beware of the unconscious corrections your brain makes** (our brian reads by matching patterns and hence naturally tends to overlook errors by autocorecting the words. In the last sentence there were two errors your brain corrected for. To avoid this natural bias, you need to put extra <u>dedicated</u> focus while reviewing for errors/typos/grammar)

▸ **Read slow, and read every word and try reading out loud** (It forces you to say each word and also lets you hear how the words sound together.)

▸ **Get familiar with your frequent mistakes** (Create a list of frequent mistakes for each deliverable)

# Guidelines for review of decks, emails, documents, storyboards etc. (continued)

▸  **Learn the MOP technique (multiple one-pass technique: look for only one kind of error at a time)**

▸ **Check format last.** Every document has format, even an email, whether it's paragraph spacing, text wrap, indentations, spaces above and below a bullet list or between subheadings and text, and so on.

▸ **Forget the content or story while reviewing for formats, grammar, etc.**

▸ **Check facts, dates, quotes, tables, references, text boxes, and anything repetitive or outside of the main text separately**

# Multiple One-Pass Technique (MOP)

▶ Focus is a very important resource while paying attention to details

▶ Task switching is a distraction and can make one lose focus

▶ However in practice, while looking for errors, we tend to look for multiple errors at the same time

▶ Multiple One-Pass Technique is a way to avoid task switching

▶ It involves focusing on just one kind of error at any given point in time. You review the entire document from start to finish looking for just one kind of error (for instance header font size)

▶ You do multiple similar passes looking for different kinds of errors

▶ Create a list of passes for each deliverable (depending on the context of the deliverable, there could be very different passes)

# Multiple One-Pass Technique (MOP) – Potential Passes

▸ **BASIC SPELLING/GRAMMAR/VERB TENSES PASS:** (Check out Grammar Book. There's a huge discrepancy between how people speak and write and how proper grammar says you should speak and write. So, familiarize with verb tenses)

▸ **SENTENCE STRUCTURE PASS:** Take a look at the length of your sentences. Do you notice a lot of commas, semicolons, and conjunctions? Some of your sentences might be run-ons, so see if you can clean them up by making them shorter.

▸ **CONSISTENCY PASS:** Make sure that there is consistency throughout the document, especially in numbers, symbols, or contractions. Are you using "%" or "percent"? Man-power or manpower? Neither is wrong, but it's important to pick one and use it consistently throughout.

▸ **BUSINESS CONTEXT PASS:** Usually the last pass because after you've edited and tweaked your work, it's easy for it to start sounding disjointed or incoherent.

▸ **OVERALL FLOW PASS:** Usually done after you've edited and tweaked all your work to ensure the work is not sounding disjointed or incoherent

▸ **FORMATTING PASS:** Keep it as the last pass(es). Click through each page quickly and check for inconsistent font sizes, shapes, header positions, missing logo etc. But do it one check at a time)

# Guidelines for review of numbers, datasets, excel sheets

▸ TBD

# Remember…

▸ **Reviewing is a learning process:** You're not just looking for errors that you recognize; you're also learning to recognize and correct new errors.

▸ **You can become more efficient as you develop and practice a systematic strategy**

▸ **Document** and share your learnings for future

▸ Paying attention to detail is a life skill, and not just a work skill

▸ When an attention to detail mindset is developed and used in conjunction with an exception handling mindset, it can be extremely powerful in reducing error-proneness

# Most Common Typos/Errors in Grammar

▸ http://theoatmeal.com/comics/misspelling

▸ http://waxy.org/2003/04/typo_popularity/

# Your    You're

These both use the same rules as "their" and "they're."

*Your* is possessive.
In other words, you own something.

Your new baby alien loves to cuddle,
but he keeps crapping in your
refrigerator at night.

This is referring to **your** alien
and **your** refrigerator.

*You're* is a contraction
of "you are."

You're definitely cleaning out the fridge
tomorrow morning, assuming that little
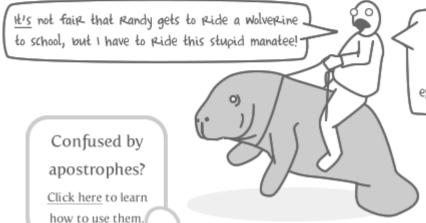beast can't keep his bowels in check.

This translates to "you are
definitely cleaning…"

# Definitely

There is no A in "definitely."

To help you remember, use this:

*If you put an A in "definitely," then you're definitely an A-hole.*

17

# Most commonly misspelled words on the web

- transexual (2860k)
- didnt (1230k)
- doesnt (1080k)
- seperate (804k)
- calender (727k)
- definately (693k)
- recieve (667k)
- offical (366k)
- managment (359k)
- goverment (317k)
- commerical (277k)
- Febuary (245k)
- enviroment (242k)
- occurence (186k)
- commision (167k)
- assocation (134k)
- Cincinatti (70k)
- milennium (32k)

# Grammar

- http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/commonerrorsinenglish.html

- http://www.copyblogger.com/grammar-goofs/

**5. THEN / THAN**

**Then**

The word **"then"** can have a variety of meanings, including **"at a point in time"** or **"in addition to."** As a rule, use the word **"than"** when comparing and **"then"** in all other instances.

**Than**

The word **"than"** is used to compare two different things: "This is bigger than that."

6. LOOSE / LOSE

Please don't mess this up. If your pants are **too loose**, you might **lose your pants.**

*Be careful!*

8.

**IMPROPER USE OF THE APOSTROPHE**

You need an apostrophe in two cases:

**For contractions** ("don't" for "do not forget the apostrophe") **and to show possession** ("Frank's apostrophe means the apostrophe belongs to Frank").

12. **HISTORIC / HISTORICAL**

**Historic**

**Silly alert!**
"Historic" means an important event.

**Historical**

"Historical" means **something that happened in the past.**

**14. LITERALLY**

"I'm literally dying of shame." Bet not. "Literally" means that exactly what you say is true – no metaphors or analogies. Everything else is figurative.

OK!