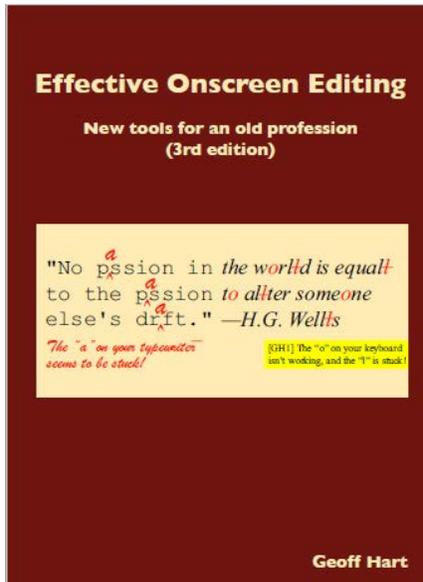


Effective Onscreen Editing: new tools for an old profession, 3rd edition

Geoffrey JS Hart

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Review by Karin Hosking AE ELS

Canadian Geoff Hart started out as a forest ecologist before realising he preferred scientific editing to scientific research. Since then, he has spent almost thirty years as a technical communicator. Late last year, Farid invited me to review another of his books—*Writing for Science Journals* (2014—you can read the review [here](#))—and recently he asked if I'd review another. Why not, I say!

Effective Onscreen Editing: new tools for an old profession (3rd edition, 2016) is absolutely huge. Over 800 pages (the PDF version). It's not the type of book to read from cover to cover, but would make an excellent and comprehensive addition to any editor's reference library. The book has two parts: the first part covers editing more broadly, while the second part provides detailed instructions (supported by web resources) on how to get the best out of Microsoft Word while editing.

There are many advantages to on-screen editing as compared with hard-copy editing—increased accuracy, time saved, greater speed and consistency—and Chapter 2 explores these. Chapter 3 reminds us that writing and editing are human endeavours that promote the

role of the editor as ally and partner, rather than nemesis, of the author. It discusses ways in which editors can effectively and efficiently work with clients, and provides helpful information on things like pay rates, problem solving, relationship management and confidentiality.

Chapters 4 to 18 (Part 2 of the book) go into the nuts and bolts of on-screen editing using Word. The earlier chapters cover basics such as settings, shortcuts and styles; and progressively the material becomes more complex, covering tracked changes, commenting, search tools, dictionaries, style sheets, automating editing using macros, markup languages, backups and more. There is also some very handy guidance on how to use proofreaders' marks in Adobe Acrobat, and on what to check if proofreading (and effectively, software testing) online materials such as web pages. Chapter 17, intriguingly, discusses overcoming client resistance to on-screen editing. Personally, I haven't had anyone insist I use an *actual* red pen since about 2013, but the author provides some well-reasoned arguments in favour of on-screen editing in case I ever strike another *dinosaur* objector!

Geoff Hart writes in an accessible, conversational style, and this book would appeal to both new editors starting out and more experienced editors wanting to finetune their technique and gain extra efficiency. This is a very generous book: not only does it provide a remarkable amount of information for a relatively small (and tax-deductible) price, but purchasers are given access to a web page with links to additional illustrations, resources and screenshots for each chapter. Oh, and there's a detailed and fascinating glossary near the end of the book. I'd never used the words *Gestalt* or *triage* in relation to editing before, but may do so from now on ...

I warmly recommend this book. It is an excellent resource for anyone who edits in Word.

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