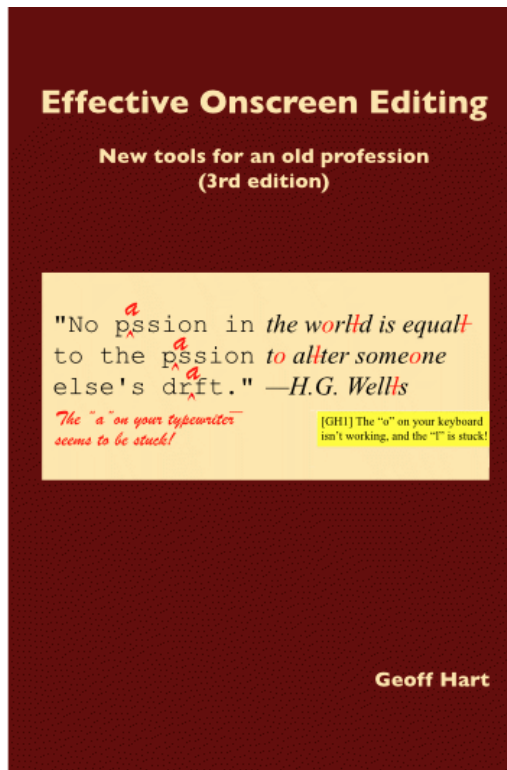


## Book Review: 'Effective Onscreen Editing'



The title of Geoff Hart's book *Effective Onscreen Editing* (3rd edition) by no means conveys the full gamut of what this book contains. Indeed, it turns out to be over 800 pages long, covering topics as diverse as how to securely transfer files, set pay rates and help your eyes focus, as well as the topics you would be expecting, such as how to manage macros, styles, templates, shortcuts and Track Changes (plus much more).

Geoff has many years' experience as a freelance scientific editor and technical communicator. So he approaches the topic with a great deal of technical knowledge and also a realistic idea of how the editing process works. He says that he's not aiming to teach how to use Microsoft Word, but to teach the 'thought process involved in editing using a word processor'. In practice, however, the examples *are* based on Microsoft Word, given it is the default word processor of most editors, so you can certainly treat the book as a very detailed 'how to' for using Word.

Although it's clear that Geoff doesn't think too highly of Word on the Mac for editing, the procedures cover Windows and Mac computers and software. He starts by looking at how your computer is set up and what you might want to customise – going through the various keyboard, mouse and display settings. Then he goes through all the settings in Word's Options dialogue box. If you haven't investigated these already, you may well find some tweaks to your settings that improve your workflow. Then it's on to the details of working in Word, dealing with clients, managing projects, automating your editing, creating and using style sheets, backing up and still more. I hope you are getting the message that this is a very comprehensive book!

Geoff deals with his material in a nicely straightforward manner. True to his goal, he gives a simple explanation of why things work in a particular way (for example, why applying a style to selected text doesn't necessarily change the style of all the text) and then explains how to achieve what you want. I'm sure that everyone will find useful tips and solutions that they weren't aware of, simply because the book has so many and goes into such

detail. For example, in discussing templates, he goes on to explain how to transfer templates between documents and between Macs and Windows machines, as well as making suggestions on incorporating boilerplate text, customised toolbars, macros and shortcuts or even a customised dictionary into your templates. The book is accompanied by a website where Geoff provides many images and links (so that he can keep things updated in this fast-changing field).

One of the interesting areas covered in this book is the editor's relationship with their clients. For example, there's quite a discussion on different ways to collaborate on an editing project, and also suggestions on how to use Track Changes to make it easier for the author to review them (something that came up with one of my clients recently!).

If you are at all interested in how to use your computer and word processing software more efficiently, this editing-focused book will give you lots of ideas. It may even help you tackle tasks (like learning to use macros competently, ahem) that you've been hesitant to do without a guide.

Hart, G 2016 *Effective onscreen editing: new tools for an old profession*, 3rd edn, Diaskeuasis Publishing, Pointe-Claire, Quebec.

US\$28 (or US\$5 for students) for the PDF and EPUB versions (you get both). It's also available in print form.

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