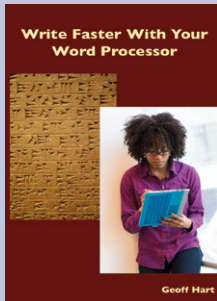- Breaking into Tech Writing
- Developing a good rapport with your team
- Using alternatives to replace text

# Write Faster With Your Word Processor

## Mastering tools to work smarter.

**Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★**

*"A comprehensive reference with tips for concentrating on your writing by improving the way you use tools and plan / structure your work."*

By **Geoff Hart**. Diaskeuasis Publishing, Canada (2021).
Printed version: 15 USD 352 pages + index.
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Reviewed by **Katherine Judge FISTC**.

## Introduction

The book discusses using your word processor to increase your writing speed. It provides hints and tips for helping you work smarter with Microsoft Word for Windows or Mac. There are plenty of tips even for a seasoned Word user.

The reviewed version is in PDF format with 548 pages. That's a lot of pages and even the blurb on the website says don't read it cover to cover use it more as a problem-solving resource. The book is aimed at anyone who's creating a book or writing a very long document.

The book isn't about the craft of writing although there are multiple instances throughout the book where you will find tips in this area. As page 3 states:

*"...stop focussing on the mechanics of writing and pay more attention to the craft."*

## Content

The book contains 4 parts:
- Part 1: Get started
- Part 2: Write your first draft
- Part 3: Revise your draft
- Part 4: Appendices and miscellaneous resources

In addition to the parts there is an extensive table of contents and index making navigation easier as well as a long glossary for those terms you need to look up. All of these are a necessity in a book which the reader is going to use for researching information.

Each chapter has a link to a web page for up-to-date images.

## Part 1: Get started

There are three chapters in this part with advice for using the book effectively, personalising your computer and developing safeguards. I found this part very wordy and time consuming to read, but I also found that there were lots of useful tips within the information.

## Part 2: Write your first draft

The eight chapters in this part look at the writing aspects of creating an outline and revising it. This part also looks at how you can set up your word processing software so that you get the most out of it by creating styles and templates, and quick ways to navigate and select text. Useful time-saving features you can customise such as automatic formatting, AutoCorrect, and AutoText are explained. These features can save you time and are worth the initial time investment.

## Part 3: Revise your draft

As you create your draft, this part (six chapters) provides tips and guidelines for ensuring consistency throughout your final book or documentation.

Keeping track of characters within a novel to ensure consistency for things like the character's back story, their habits, likes, dislikes and sayings is vital for creating a book which absorbs the reader and doesn't question the reader's recollection of a character. I think this quote in the book (page 211) sums up consistency:

*"Inconsistency is something readers never notice – until they trip over an inconsistency."*

Geoff Hart discusses using style sheets and style bibles for keeping track of these consistencies. As a technical communicator, I found the recognised publishing term "style sheet" difficult to read as every time I read it, I thought about it as a file for storing and applying formatting.

## Part 4: Appendices and miscellaneous resources

This part has useful information on creating backup strategies, protecting yourself from injury while using a computer and helpful keyboard shortcuts.

## What I would have liked to have seen

I felt that the book was missing information about working with word processors in the cloud and storing your work there.

It's biased towards Word and long documents and doesn't look at chunking, which is prevalent in technical writing, but instead the book gives a holistic approach to streamlining your tools and processes so that you can concentrate on the writing.

## Summary

This book is a reference source. It's not intended to be read cover to cover. With that in mind there's a comprehensive table of contents, an index and a glossary, making navigating the book easy.

The book contains lots of useful tips and information about ways of working smarter in your writing, using a word processor, as well as how you plan, structure, and write your novels or documentation.

This book is for anyone searching for a comprehensive reference with tips for concentrating on your writing by improving the way you use tools and plan / structure your work. ∎

### About the author

**Geoff Hart** is a freelance writer, editor, and translator who specialises in working with authors who speak English as a second language but must nonetheless publish in English. He's worked as a technical communicator since 1987.

For more information on Geoff's work and publications: www.geoff-hart.com