

J. Michael Locke

Musings

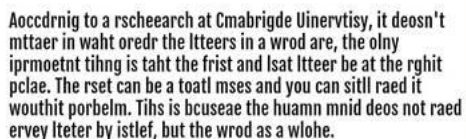
#67: The Invasion of Typos May 29, 2020

Modern technology has unleashed a world of typos. I find this sad as it normalizes sloppiness.

Start with mobile devices. It is very difficult to write a lengthy email or text using your thumbs and get everything right. Some people proactively apologize for the inevitable typos with a line under their signature.

Add to this, the dreaded “autocorrect” where the software assumes it knows better than you and will change what you type. If you don’t go back and reread, you often will send a message which might be incoherent due to the autocorrect “god.”

Volume and lack of a second reader leads to typos. These musings are a good example. You likely can tell which ones Heather had a chance to review before they went out and which ones she did not. I am embarrassed when folks email back pointing them out (but appreciate the emails) and often ask “how did I miss that?” The human brain is agile and you can read what you think you wrote. I love this poster at Jimmy John’s (the source of much scholarly thought and a quick, good sandwich):



Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

I don’t have a recommendation on what to do about this. If we accept typos, we accept mistakes. We embrace being casual. We will all start dressing like Mark Zuckerberg. Call me old fashioned but I think work should demand more. No T-shirts, sandals and accepted typos for me.

Back to work.

jml

Second Thoughts

Mitch Daniel’s interesting oped in Washington Post: *“Forty-five thousand young people — the biggest student population we’ve ever had — are telling us they want to be here this fall. To tell them, “Sorry, we are too incompetent or too fearful to figure out how to protect your elders, so you have to disrupt your education,” would be a gross disservice to them and a default of our responsibility”*. Full article: [why-we-have-a-responsibility-to-open-purdue-university-this-fall](#)