

BUSINESS WRITING

SYNTAX
TRAINING



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Talk, tips, and best picks
for writers on the job.

Product Review: PerfectIt

Yesterday I tested [PerfectIt](#), a proofreading software program, by using it on my 400-page book manuscript in Word, which I have read several times. I was interested to see the possible errors PerfectIt could find for me.

I was pleased that the PerfectIt Pro version found many inconsistencies--things it would be hard for me to identify over so many pages, and virtually impossible for Microsoft to find and flag. PerfectIt was especially strong in identifying inconsistencies in my use of hyphens. Although I am quite knowledgeable about using hyphens, my knowledge did not translate into consistency over the entire manuscript. PerfectIt flagged these inconsistencies and more:

- pressure-washer/pressure washer (the hyphen is wrong)
- coworker/co-worker (I prefer the closed-up version)
- handwritten/hand-written (the hyphen mistakenly appeared once)
- lay-off/layoff (the hyphen is wrong)
- first-rate/first rate (the hyphen is correct)

PerfectIt also found a few capitalization inconsistencies; for example tweet/Tweet, Bcc/bcc, and Sales/sales. Although Sales needed to be capitalized as the name of a department, the flag helped me recognize a couple of places where I varied my style.

PerfectIt flagged my contractions too. Although I want to use contractions for a breezy, conversational style, I was surprised to see the hundreds of contractions I used. I found many opportunities to spell out the phrase and come across more emphatically. Because the software flags each contraction separately, I was also able to recognize the number of sentences I began with "It's," as in "It's a good idea to. . . ." That information helped me edit for conciseness.

PerfectIt Pro also identifies inconsistencies in the punctuation of bullet points and lists, words spelled more than one way, numbers rendered differently, unidentified abbreviations and acronyms, and unlabeled tables.

Because of the improved consistency and correctness of my manuscript, I highly recommend PerfectIt for anyone who writes long documents or team-written documents in Word.

PerfectIt discount: Daniel Heuman, Managing Director of Intelligent Editing Ltd, which produces PerfectIt, is offering a 15% discount for readers of Better Writing at Work through April 30. Just use the coupon code SyntaxTraining (one word) when you buy. (Note: I do not benefit financially in any way from your purchase or from this unsolicited review. Nor am I a friend of Daniel Heuman, although he seems like a decent person!)

You can visit the [PerfectIt website](#) for a demo or 30-day free download, or purchase the product here. Please ask the Intelligent Editing folks your questions about the product--I am just a satisfied user.