

## TYPO TALES: innocent typing mistakes turn costly

The courts awarded one woman a \$75,000 settlement after a careless recruiting company sent her resume to potential employees without noticing that an entire section was in gibberish.

In 2005, a Tokyo firm lost more than \$18.7 million as a result of a typo. A trader intended to sell one share of stock for 610,000 yen, but instead placed an order for 610,000 shares at 1 yen each.

It can happen to you, or to me – or to the writer whose business card listed his title as “poofreader” – and even a venerable institution like the University of Wisconsin. In 1998, the university awarded nearly 4,000 diplomas with the name of the state spelled “Wisconson.” Imagine the cheese on their faces!

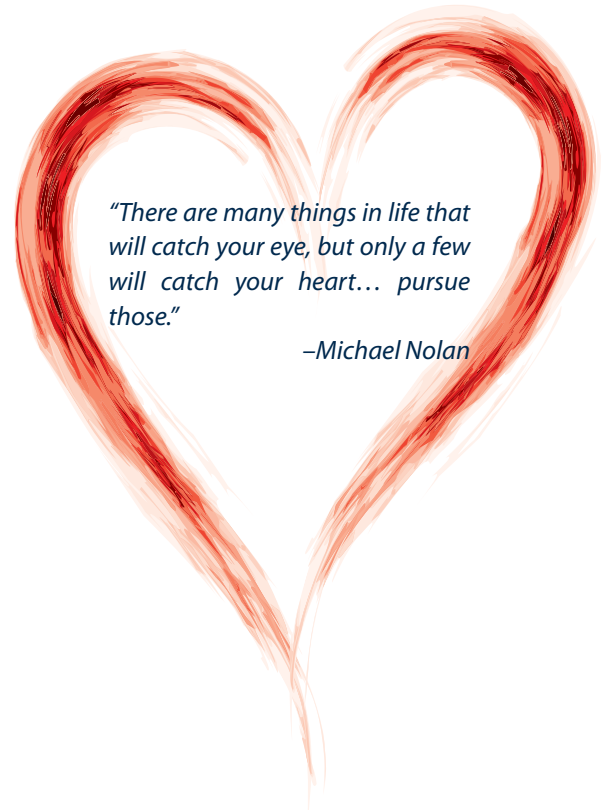
A WEST COAST APARTMENT COMPLEX RAN AN AD TOUTING THEIR  
**“NEWLY REMODED BATHROOMS AND KITCHENS”**

Lawsuits are one way you lose if your contracts, letters, emails or brochures contain misspelled words or improperly placed punctuation marks. One Canadian company lost millions in an ugly 18-month court battle over the placement of a single comma in a 14-page contract.

Typos and poorly constructed sentences lower the credibility of your business. Proofreading is an important skill that goes beyond running spell check in your computer. Spell-checking programs reduce misspellings, but they will not stop you from using the wrong word if it is correctly spelled. Should it say *affect* or *effect*? *Principal* or *principle*? *Complement* or *compliment*?

### SIX PROOFREADING TIPS

- Put it off until tomorrow, when you’ve distanced yourself from the copy and have fresh eyes.
- Always proof from a hard copy, and read every bit of text out loud. Errors in street addresses, phone numbers and emails are easily overlooked, but can cost you in dollars and customers in the end.
- When you correct an error, reread the entire sentence out loud.
- Watch for common errors like *it’s* for *its*, missing end quotes and parentheses marks.
- Start from the end and read backwards. You are more likely to spot errors if you are disconnected from the thought of the sentence.
- Hire an editor or proofreader – an outsider who will approach the text without foreknowledge, and be able to see “holes” in the context as well as the typos. The Write Concept offers these services.



**Happy Valentine's Day**

from Linda Angér and  
The Write Concept, Inc.

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and Drive Results with  
Words that Matter

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