

Quotes and Notes

Owen Edwards (no relation), writing in *Town & Country* magazine, has written about the etiquette of e-mail:

E-mail veterans contend there's no point in putting any literary effort, never mind proper spelling, into Internet exchanges. After all, they argue, most recipients just hit delete and the message vanishes. But that's like saying it's pointless to use good grammar on the phone, since the conversation fades away as it takes place. Words, like music, reverberate in the mind, and, as Enzo Ferrari proved, elegance and speed are not incompatible.

It's true. And to my mind at least, even more so because so-called good grammar is intended to ensure that the message is as precise and understandable as possible. So, unless e-mail messages (or telephone messages) are intended to communicate nothing, they should be as easy to understand as possible.

So much for my sermon to the choir.

Easing Cross-Platform Problems

Do you use a Macintosh? If so, you are outnumbered in this world and probably even in your company. Cross-platform problems abound, and the underdog, Macintosh, is usually expected to find a way to get along with the king, usually Windows or NT. You may find help in this task at John Rizzo's Web site, *MacWindows* (1). In addition to special reports on problems and solutions, the site reports news that may have an impact on compatibility, solutions, tutorials

on how Macs and Windows work together, and other practical information for people whose work must cross platforms. Much of the information is also available in his book *Macintosh Windows Integration* (2). Hardware and software options for increasing compatibility are reviewed also in Eric Adams's column in the April 1999 issue of *Desktop Publishers* (3).

Newsletter News

Word Engines Press in Airdrie, Alberta, Canada, sponsors a Web site patterned on one of its books, *A Manager's Guide to Newsletters: Communicating for Results* (4). The site is a good source of free information about all aspects of newsletters. The free reports can be downloaded in PDF format for easy reading or printing. Subjects are as diverse as distribution options for e-mail newsletters, tactics for newsletter planning, and 25 ways to use an employee newsletter. The link list is helpful, too.

Another treasure is the site for *Put It in Writing*, a northern California company that specializes in newsletter writing, design, and production (5). The site offers many tips for people who write newsletters, as well as a number of links. Check it out!

Quality Issues

Someone (I wish I could remember who!) recently referred to the Web as "the biggest vanity press in the world". And so it is. As is true of other vanity publications, some are excellent and some are decidedly not. In this morass, how do we ensure that our own pages are continuously excellent and recognized? Certainly it is easy to throw material on a site and forget that it is there, allowing

the passage of time to reduce the message to an anachronism. We have started adding a date of review to the date of original placement or update so that when a page is reviewed, but no update is determined to be necessary, the time of the review will be evident to the viewer. We hope that this date will keep our pages from being ignored out of hand because they are over a year old.

Further on the issue of vanity press, it is clear from the excellent sites on the Web that are published by individuals that we are all enriched by this new venue for self-publishing.

Let's chat: sedwards@ulna.bwh.harvard.edu.

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References

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2. Rizzo J. *Macintosh Windows integration: integrating your Macintosh with Windows 95/98 and Windows NT*. Morgan Kaufman Publ, 1999.
3. Adams EJ. In *Harmony: cross-platform tools for a dual-platform world*. Desktop Publishers, page 44, April 1999.
4. Word Engines Press Inc. *A manager's guide to newsletters*. www.managersguide.com (10 May 1999)
5. *Put It in Writing*. Newsletter writing and design. put-it-in-writing.com (10 May 1999)