Write Faster, thanks to Geoff Hart!

Toiling for more than one master, many knowledge-workers give short shrift to their electronic interface. Besides wasting time, such a choice hastens data loss and repetitive stress injuries.

Wordsmith Geoff Hart has developed an answer to our prayers: a comprehensive and down-to-earth guide to harnessing the full powers of our workstations. The book is available in three formats: print, e-book, and PDF.

Based on Hart's 30 years of teaching writers and editors, *Write Faster* builds on his *Effective Onscreen Editing* (4th edition, 2019). Hart offers nuanced answers for many of our nagging questions, including

- *Where are my files?*
- *Why does my word processor hurt me?* and
- *Isn't there a way to automate this action?*

Though the new work overlaps with *Onscreen*, *Write Faster* updates its guidance through Microsoft Word 2019 (both Mac and PC editions). Hart notes that most of his tips apply to any operating system and word-processing software.

Write Faster takes both experts and newbies by the hand, thanks to its engaging style. Readers will appreciate Hart's glossary, which offers authoritative definitions of terms such as *antialiasing*, *macro virus*, and *non-breaking space*. Perhaps most importantly, Hart clearly informs readers on issues dividing writers; rather than taking sides in the Apple vs. PC debate, he lays out the merits of each side. Hart speaks his mind on software's nagging limitations and offers fixes for many of Word's challenges.

The advice offered by this book will help maximize writers' efficiency. As part of the *Write Faster* site, Hart includes a "Things Not to Do" section, an indispensable resource for those of us who apprenticed on typewriters. Two strategies Hart offers are (1) eliminating the vestigial carriage return (ENTER key) and (2) creating your own page-numbering style. Appendix I advises adopting the Dvorak keyboard scheme in place of the less efficient QWERTY. Appendix II, devoted to the health aspects of our work, advises on our choice of lighting and keyboard.

https://news.naiwe.com/2022/02/18/book-review-write-faster-with-your-word-processor-2/

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT WRITERS & EDITORS

Both writers and editors will enjoy Hart's proactive approach to exploiting what our computers can do, warding off writing-specific trauma, and keeping manuscripts safe from prying eyes. To ensure the safety of our data, Hart advises us to buy an uninterruptible power supply (UPS), which will secure our files even during blackouts.

Hart puts readers in touch with some of the best resources available. Hart's hotlinks, provided in the electronic edition, point us to resources such as Eyesafe, a brand devoted to reducing the eyestrain of onscreen work, and StretchWare, a tool that regularly reminds us to limber up. Hart includes links to the work of peers such as Paul Beverley, author of *Macros for Editors* and Jack Lyon of *Mastering Word for Publishing Professionals*.

Hart's #1 tip? Create Word styles for every occasion. That way, you won't spend your time, and that of your teammates, fiddling with your ruler or space bar every time you begin a new document.

Based on Hart's broad coverage, nuanced discussion, and abundant links to complementary work, we recommend *Write Faster* to writers and editors seeking to work more efficiently.

Jon Hartmann copyedits academic, business, and literary work, specializing in writing by non-native speakers of English.