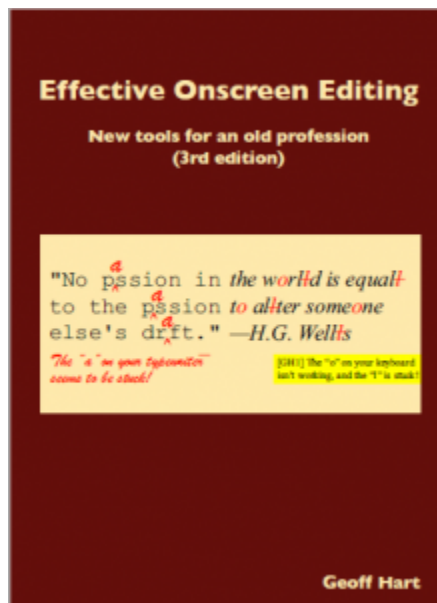# Corrigo

The Newsletter of the STC Technical Editing SIG

Book Review: Effective Onscreen Editing (3rd edition)

by AElfwine Mischler

Hart, Geoff. 2016. *Effective Onscreen Editing: New Tools for an Old Profession* (3rd ed.). Diaskeuasis Publishing, 827 p. (PDF version).

Whether Word has ever tempted you to smash your computer or you just want to do some word processing task more quickly, you need this book.

Geoff Hart published the first edition of *Effective Onscreen Editing* nearly ten years ago. It was so popular that he wrote a second edition and has now produced a third.

The PDF version has been reformatted to be suitable for use on tablet, desktop, and laptop computers. The third edition contains a new discussion of collaborative real-time editing over the Web, enhanced discussion of automatic text features and their use in editing, and updated information on protecting your files and yourself while you work, and revised and updated the discussion of proofreading PDF files and online documents such as Web pages. Other changes and additions are listed on Hart's website.

Hart says that his goal is to teach the thought process involved in editing onscreen, not to teach Microsoft Word. To that end he presents the book in two parts: the PDF or print book and the exclusive Web pages that illustrate the editing tools. The techniques, he says, should be applicable to any word processor, but he gives examples from Word because it is the most popular word processor in use. In the third edition there are separate Web pages for Windows and Mac versions, and the pages can be downloaded and read offline. The illustrations are taken from Windows 2010 and Mac 2011. Hart

hopes to eventually add illustrations from later versions of Word to the website.

The author suggests that you not read through this book from cover to cover. Rather, from time to time take five or ten minutes to learn something new that will save you many minutes or hours over your career.

This book is not just about using WP software. Hart discusses the whole process of editing from determining your rates, negotiating with authors, setting a contract, following up, archiving, and more.

In the section on collaborative writing, Hart does not give much detail on the technical questions because the technologies are changing so fast. Rather he presents several different ways to work collaboratively. Is it better to have everyone connected by voice or should the meeting be by text only? Hart discusses the advantages and disadvantages of different work models so that you can choose the best for your situation.

I reviewed the PDF version, reading it in Adobe Reader on iPad and on a PC. Hart has provided not only great content but also generally easy navigation. The page numbers in the table of contents and index are linked to their pages. There are also many bookmarks linked to main topics and chapter openings. My only complaint is that the chapter openings are not on the top level, so they are not visible when the displayed bookmarks are collapsed. When you view the PDF on a PC this is less of a problem because you can expand all the bookmarks. On the iPad, however, you can only see the top level and you have to tap on each bookmark in turn to see its lower levels. Sometimes you have to go down three or four levels to reach a chapter opening. Hart often tells the reader to see more in a given chapter, but it is not so easy to reach the chapter as I would like.

But that annoyance seems minor when you look at the amount of information in this book: how to customize your keyboard and screen display, add cusomized dictionaries, insert special symbols, deal with Asian languages, prevent wrist and eye problems, and much more.

Who should have this book? Definitely editors, and writers would also benefit. I would even recommend it for your favorite college student. With the holiday gift-giving season fast approaching, add this to your shopping list. *Effective Onscreen Editing*, 3rd edition, is available at http://geoff-hart.com/. (The second edition, which covers Word 2003 and 2007 for Windows plus Word 2008 for Mac, is still available, in case you know anyone who is still using older versions of Word.)

Ælfwine Mischler is the managing editor of Corrigo *and offers copyeditng and indexing services at www.MischlerEditorial.*

This entry was posted in Process, Review, Tools, Word and tagged Editing, Geoff Hart, Microsoft Word, word processing on October 5, 2016 [http://stc-techedit.org/corrigo/book-review-effective-onscreen-editing-3rd-edition/] by AElfwine Mischler.