

## RESOURCES *and* SOLUTIONS

**PEN MEMBER** Terry Evans, from Fort Worth, Texas, reviews editing software for newsletter readers. — Margo Dwight, editor of *Networking News*

### Review of PerfectIt 3 editing software

**TERRY EVANS**

**I'VE SEEN INFORMATION** technology professionals shake their heads in disgust as they fixed something I messed up while trying to install and use new software on my own. So when I say that PerfectIt 3 is an accommodating program, it means anyone can use it. Effortless installation, thorough instructions and drop-down comments for all functions make it virtually foolproof.

Basically, PerfectIt 3 checks for and shows you things it thinks may be errors — things that the spell-checker will ignore and that you, the writer or editor, may overlook.

One of its most valuable characteristics is checking consistency in such facets as spelling, use of accents, capitalization and hyphenation. For instance, it will flag the use of “great-grandmother” in some sentences and “great grandmother” in others. If there’s disagreement on common elements in any number of sentences, the software will show every one of them, and you can tell it which to fix.

It will show you words that may be malapropisms — like “cocked” in one place and “clocked” in another.

Much attention is given to initialisms and acronyms. It gives you a chance to

decide whether an acronym is commonly used as the subject’s name — such as NASA — so it doesn’t require definition, or so uncommon you have to define it — such as MARVEL for Machine Assisted Realization of the Virtual Electronic Library. It also spots an initialism or acronym used earlier in the copy than where it’s defined, catches a definition used more than once, and tells you when an acronym or initialism is used only once, so there’s

no point in using it at all. However, it will not carry over the checks through multiple files, as someone editing a 30,000-word manual or non-fiction book may desire.

You can tell PerfectIt 3 to comply with styles commonly used across the globe or with your own customized style-sheet preferences.

After the checks, there are several “Tasks and Reports” you can tell the program to do, from accepting all tracked changes, to generating a report of changes, to updating the table of contents, to compiling all the comments you’ve made, to removing the comments altogether.

Running the program on an edited copy of one client’s novel, I thought I found a flaw in the software’s check-for-brackets-and-quotes-left-open function. The error notification appeared in several places where the quotes were obviously closed. So I sent a sample to Daniel Heuman, managing director of Intelligent Editing Ltd., which publishes the software, and asked about it.

He noticed that the copy contained two different styles of quote marks. “That first open quote is a curly quotation mark, but you’ve closed the quote with a straight quotation mark,” he wrote.

He noted that, ideally, PerfectIt 3 would point out that exact discrepancy, but such a function could confuse both the developer and the user.

*continued, p. 8*



*Retired last year after a three-decade career in newspapers, Terry Evans is a freelance writer and fiction editor.*

---

*PerfectIt 3 continued from p. 1*

“In the meantime, I think it’s doing the right thing by at least highlighting the error somehow,” Heuman wrote. “That said, let’s see how many other people write in with similar complaints. If a lot

of people end up with similar issues, I may need to think of another way around these instances.”

Because PerfectIt 3 caught so many errors I missed and made me stop and

reconsider some things I did in the edit, I think it proved its value. So, on a 1-to-10 scale, with 10 being “you should buy this software now,” PerfectIt 3 gets at least a high 9. —

---