

# The Proof Angel Summary of

## Bits and bobs: September 2014

### How to annoy a scientist

Are you using these [basic scientific](#) words correctly?

OK, so most of us probably don't regard Quantum Uncertainty and Quantum Weirdness as basic, but I suppose it is just a matter of perspective, isn't it?

### How we read

This is clever. The latest research comparing [reading on screens and paper](#).

### Book benches

I like this idea. We need more interesting street furniture. It brightens up our urban areas. These seats [based on classic books](#) will certainly do that. [This link has the maps](#) you need to visit the benches.

### How did writing begin?

A fascinating subject from the mists of time. [How did writing begin?](#)

### The development of ish

Read how [ish became a word](#) in its own right.

### Is typing good for you?

[It might not be](#), but this time it is nothing to do with RSI.

### Disappearing languages

A quarter of our 7,000 spoken languages are at risk of falling silent. Here is an article about the parallels between [biodiversity and cultural diversity](#).



The Proof Angel is the trading name of Sarah Perkins, freelance editor and proofreader.

## The distribution of letters

Ever wondered how the letters are distributed within words? Have a look at [these graphs](#), showing letter frequency at the beginning, middle and end of words. In this analysis, more frequently used words have more weight. The colour indicates the frequency of the letter. Fascinating stuff, but I'm not sure where it gets us.

## Using capitals for acronym

If you get confused about when to use capital letters, you may want to avoid this post about using [capitals for acronyms](#).

## Have publishers had their day?

In the era of self publishing, do publishers still matter? According to the Waterstones blog, [the answer is a resounding yes!](#)

## Read a good book and do some good at the same time

This book edited by [Bridget Whelan](#) sounds like a good thing. A variety of reading matter, and support for a hospice at the same time. That is multi-tasking for you.

## Unusual retreats

Do you long for a quiet place to work? We've just moved house, and I have a proper office at last. At least, it will be a proper office when the rest of the house is finished. At the moment, anywhere that is habitable is crammed with stuff!

Here are some inspiring [places created for thinking](#).

## Why it is so hard to spot your own typos

It isn't carelessness, or lack of skill. It is just how our brains work. [Read more here](#).

## Why does reading on a screen differ from a book?

Do you think books are on their way out? Is an ereader just easier to carry around? Well this research suggests that reality is different. The indications are that readers absorb [less information when reading on a tablet](#). Is that just because we are more used to reading books?

## All about Times New Roman

This short video tells you most of what you need to know about one of the classic fonts, Times New Roman. Find out [where it comes from](#), and why you should use it.

## How classic book covers have changed

Classic books continue to get attention. This post [compares various covers over time](#).

## A word frequency game

Can you guess how frequently any random word is used? [Play this game.](#)

## Getting the right attitude

I've found a post titled "[Why writers self-destruct](#)". It gives 5 ways to thrive instead. Actually, it is a good reminder about positive mental attitude in all sorts of situations.

It comes down to a short list of short sentences:

- Believe in yourself.
- Try hard.
- Get on with it.
- Don't get carried away with yourself

## Shakespeare as an inventor of words

We often hear of words invented by Shakespeare. I always think this is a little odd.

Some friends of mine invented a new word a couple of years ago. They were messing around, and one of them accidentally said "interwebulator" when referring to the internet. The word has caught on, and quite a few of us now refer to looking things up on the interwebulator in our everyday conversations. In context, the made up word is so close to a more usual one that most of us don't need to ask what it means. Only once has anyone ever said anything. He told me he didn't think he had an interwebulator, but he adopted the word himself as soon as the penny dropped.

If I started to use a random sequence of letters, say "queadet" for the internet, it might take a while for anyone else to work out what I meant.

A playwright is getting the story over to the audience. In live theatre, there is no opportunity for rewinding to check what was said. A completely new word isn't likely to help people to understand what is going on. [Find out more about this myth here.](#)

## Tales of manuscript destruction

We all have times when we need a darn good clear out. We've recently moved house, and have had a bit of a frenzy of car boot sales, auctions, and trips to the charity shop.

I suspect that at some stages in that process we have both been a little too ruthless. One day I got rid of the spare coat hangers. Then I remembered the wardrobe in the spare room, which we have yet to organise. Oh well.

I hope we haven't gone as far astray as in this post about [document destruction](#).

## Where do these odd spellings come from?

English spelling has some interesting quirks, reflecting the many influences on the development of the language. Here is the background of [11 oddly spelled words](#).