**THERE, THEY'RE, THEIR... ME? MISPELL??**

Surprise! The world is changing.... and with those changes come shifting norms of acceptability in all phases of life. To those raised with respect for traditions and heritage, it may seem like we, as a society, are losing our grip on civility. We used to practice penmanship. We learned how to tell time on a round clock with hour hands and minute hands (how retro!) and we used to know how to spell while typing. With regard to grammar and spelling, the tide is shifting *to*... or is it *two*? Or ***too***? Since the proliferation of texting, it seems that traditions and habits are dying (dyeing?) hard. If you think this is weird (or is it wierd?) your.. I mean YOU'RE not alone. As newer shorthand versions of communication gain in popularity, each one's blueprint affects other modes of self expression. As we all get more accustomed to these new "dialects," we fall victim to their pitfalls... People, welcome to the world of misspelled texting and how supposedly innocent oversights conspire to degrade our abilities.

Before we completely go full circle with our written communication and emojis become full blown hieroglyphics and communication reverts to pictograms, let's consider the skills that are in danger of falling by the wayside. As writers, authors and editors, we cannot help but be affected by contemporary trends. Earlier this year, an article in Business Insider (**HS - here's the link if you want to embed** <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-words-millennials-misspell-the-most-2016-1> ) chronicled what happened when a group of millennials turned off their spell check. Actually it was done at the office of Blend, an app used for texting. Samples from random users ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-four were taken. You may think the result of this experiment was **weird** (that was one of the words), and it **definitely** was (that was another), but the third most misspelled word was .... **Budweiser**(?). No judgements (or is it *judgments*?) but maybe some moderation in use of the third word might aid in correctly spelling the first two? The makeshift study also revealed that geography played a roll in spotting misspelling trends... West coasters seemed to have challenges with double letters in words... there may be no "i" in team but there are two "u's" in vacuum. The trigger finger that tends to hit the "s" key copped out when spelling "possession". We suppose some people think that 3 "s's" can go as long a way as four and tended to spell the word as "possesion."

On another note, and not uncoincidentally, we came across an article containing Google's map of the most misspelled words in every state. If you'd like to check your state's trickiest word, click here... <http://time.com/4349629/common-misspelled-words-state-google/> .

So what are the five most commonly misspelled words in texting? Although it's difficult to be so selective, there is consensus on these:

* A LOT... this happens a lot... or is it "alot?"
* THERE, THEIR, THEY'RE
* INDEPENDENT (In the "good ole days" we were taught that "you don't DANCE with indepenDENCE.")
* YOUR, YOU'RE
* AFFECT, EFFECT

There are HUNDREDS of examples of commonly misspelled words. Sometimes spell check stubbornly goads us to accept versions of words we know, deep down, to not be accurate. As authors, editors, writers of novels, manuscripts, theses, dissertations, papers, and all forms of printed self expression, it is paramount to encourage the presence of those vanguards of veracity... those sentinels of sanity... the dictionary (NOT *dictionery*) and the thesaurus (**HS- Do you want to make a joke and say, "No relation to brontosaurus... she wrote Jane Eyre..."**).

As creators of the written word, it is our mandate to maintain consciousness and vigilance when spelling, and even as new technology does so much of our thinking for us, we must keep in mind that before we can share our thoughts, we should know how to spell them. Whether freelance or full time, it's important to consult with and hire professionals to insure the written material you create is the best it can be.