

## Befriending the Big Hairy Beast - Tip #8

### *Reset Spell Check*

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Have you received a contest entry or manuscript back from someone who appeared to have bled all over the page? The circled spelling mistakes are so basic, Microsoft Word should have picked them up (e.g., their is spelled thier). The phrase "Invest in a good dictionary and proofread your material before you submit it!" is highlighted and followed by a dozen exclamation points. To make it worse, you open your manuscript in Word and run spell check again only to find that the application does not catch the errors. The first thought in your head is that Word is a piece of junk.

But the real horror is discovering it is YOUR OWN FAULT!

How can that be? You pushed F7 to run the function and even ran it again from the Tools menu (Tools > Spell Check). The darned system should have caught it. But you forgot one tiny detail--to reset the spell check.

When you are working with large documents, it is not unusual to run spell check many times. As the system evaluates your words, the Spelling and Grammar dialog box appears and prompts you to take action on errors. Sometimes, in haste, you click the **Ignore All** button without realizing it. Once this button is selected, it sets a flag in the document telling the system that this is NOT an error and to skip it the next time around. Don't get me wrong, there are times when you have to deviate from standard spelling, and this button keeps the same mistakes from popping up on these special words all the time. But this button tends to get clicked by accident in your rush to do a final check of that 400 page manuscript before it goes out the door. There are other flags that get set along the way, but we won't go into them here. What you need to know is how to reset the spell check so the flagged words are evaluated again. To be safe, follow these steps before running the final spell check on all of your submissions.

### Reset Spell Check

1. Open Microsoft Word.
2. Select **Tools > Options**.
3. Select the **Spelling & Grammar** tab.
4. Click the **Recheck Document** button located at the bottom of the Options dialog box.

5. Click **OK**.
6. Go to the beginning of your document and run spell check again (**F7**).

**DISCLAIMER:** Microsoft Word's spell check is not foolproof. Some words can be spelled correctly but are used in the wrong context. For instance, write and right. You still need to proofread your work.

**TIP:** With respect to spelling issues, it helps to work backwards, meaning you start with the last word on the last page of your manuscript and work towards the front one word at a time (read it backwards). This method helps prevent your eyes from reading over what your brain believes should be there.

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