



# Improve Your Website Copy – Five More Mistakes

## Introduction

This is part too of a short series looking at basic mistakes that often make it threw to websites and in some cases to people's CV's (curriculum vitae). Yes, the too should be two and threw should be through. Correctly written English increases your credibility with your audience and helps to create that all-important favourable first impression.

### 1 Who's or whose

**Whose** is a 'belonging' to word, associated with or owned by a person eg whose house, whose dog is this? etc. also for example, the man whose watch is broken – the man has a watch belonging to him and it is broken. **Who's** is a shortened or contracted version of **who is**, with the ' character replacing the missing letter; in this case the missing letter is **i**. As highlighted in part 1, in English the ' is often used to indicate that a letter is missing or has is simply not used any more. On websites and for written documents it is better to use **who is** instead of **who's**. This also applies to other shortened phrases such as we'll, we've etc.

### 2 To or too or two

To is one of the most commonly used words in English and is used in a number of different ways. With the infinitive of a verb eg to go, to do etc. an infinitive is the base form of the verb ie the verb without any tense or person associated with it. Normally when tenses or people are associated with a verb the form of the verb will change. Eg with the verb go; he goes, he went.

The word to can be used in sentences as a preposition eg he went to the house. Traditionally sentences were deemed to be incorrect if they ended in a preposition eg the house is a place I would like to go to. But today this is more acceptable, but would not normally be found in for example the broadsheet newspapers.

Too is an adverb, or modifier. Other adverbs include easily, happily and very. For example the coffee was too strong. If it is unclear whether too or to should be used try substituting another modifier. In the example, is it '**the coffee was to strong**' or '**the coffee was too strong**', we can use 'the coffee was **very strong**' in place of **too/to strong** so the correct word to use is too.

Too can also mean 'as well'. Can Tom come too? – Can Tom come as well?

Two is clearly the number 2.

### 3 Sounds the same

Many words in English sound the same but have a different spelling and consequently have a totally different meaning. The reliance on a word processor's spell checker or grammar check will not highlight these types of mistakes.

He is a navel officer. He is a naval officer. Navel – scar in the centre of the abdomen. Naval – relating to the navy and ships.



Other examples include illicit and elicit, practice and practise, through and threw, whole and hole, bowl and bole, queue and cue, break and brake.

#### 4 The easily confused

There are many words that can easily be mistyped, some of these will be highlighted by the word processor's spelling and grammar check, but many will not. So rather than rely on, for example Microsoft Word, which may also use American English not British English, be aware of some of the more common mistakes and errors.

Quite and quiet, contract and contact, wring and ring, form and from, vitae and vita, really and rely, here and hear, were and where, whole and hole, bye and by.

There are many more that can be added to this list and demonstrates the need to manually check and carefully read the document text rather than rely on automatic tools that are supplied with the word processing packages.

#### 5 American spellings

As much as we like our American cousins, they cannot spell, or more correctly they tend to use American English rather than British English. However it is not totally their fault because Noah Webster, when producing his *American Dictionary of the English Language*, decided to change some of the spellings. However when working for British companies or applying for jobs in UK it is better to use British English rather than American English.

Common spelling differences are (UK then USA): labour and labor, colour and color, centre and center, through and thru. In many cases the American version of a word uses a 'z' instead of a 's', eg creating the American -ize instead of the British -ise, but today most companies and organizations (organisations) do not differentiate between the two. But do avoid American terms such as burglarize – 'He did not burglaize the house' or deplane - 'We have arrived at London airport and will deplane'.

#### Summary

The company's website can be the company's curriculum vitae and as for individuals, a company will be also be judged by the quality of its website and the website content. With some thought, care and attention to detail, the website content or curriculum vitae can be grammatically correct, informative and pleasant to read.

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