

I'm sure you and your students will enjoy this project as much as we enjoyed it. We shared these stories at our Open House with parents, later with senior citizens at a near-by senior center, with two University of Minnesota language arts methods classes, and most of all, with the younger students for whom they were actually written.

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#### WORD PROCESSING IS TERRIFIC, BUT.....

by J. H. Foegen

Whenever useful innovation appears on the market, something else to take the joy out of it seems not far behind. With word processors, that "something" was in fact always present; it's just more visible today. "Laziness" can get in the way of better writing.

Problems in using such hardware are already being flagged. Alleged dangers to health from extended exposure to display screens are argued repeatedly. Another problem can be isolation, as users interact more with the intriguing machine, impersonal data and "modem relatives" and less with in-the-flesh fellow workers at the job site.

A relatively-overlooked third difficulty can be a "perverted" use of speed. Few would argue the advantage of fast re-typing of new drafts of written material. The printer can quickly produce another perfect "original"---although many think it is less than perfect if a low-quality, dot-matrix type is used. No longer does each word have to be laboriously keyed again.

Unfortunately, therein lies an ambush for the unwary. If appropriate hard and software are available, they will be used. Human nature leans toward the easy way out, even without delib-

erately wanting to go that route. In this case, moreover, excellent rationalization is at hand; if we have the equipment, it would be illogical and inefficient not to use it to its fullest potential.

Creatively as otherwise, however, now-possible haste can make waste. If a new copy can be made easily, careful revision might be less likely. Such attention used to be routine among people who committed ideas to paper conscientiously; it is being given, in fact, to this article as it is being re-typed. Copy seemingly perfect after surviving three drafts still appears flawed after a "cooling off period." Typographical errors, redundancies and even words omitted due to excessive speed become obvious.

Catching such errors can be done easily with a word processor, of course. But the question is, will it be done? Laziness is not the only reason for not doing so. If a deadline is approaching, or if in a hurry for any other reason, even a little extra time might seem too much when copy can be reproduced readily with little effort. Greed might reinforce the need for speed; re-cycling material rapidly can sometimes mean pleasing the boss, not to be overlooked when considering the next performance or salary review.

Duplication without thought is less good, in other words, than creative evolution and improvement. A second, quickly-done, letter-perfect copy is fine as far as it goes. Improving each time, however---and being "forced" to proof word for word while re-typing---is better. This is not an argument in favor of scorning new technology by any means. It is only a reminder that "the flesh is weak," at terminals as in other situations.