

Kaleidoscope: A final report on the worldwide *Langscape* Project

PAM PETERS of Macquarie University, New South Wales, Australia, provides the second part of a two-part concluding review of a project which is an important contribution to the creation of her prospective international English style guide (to be published by Cambridge University Press).

The *Langscape* Project, as its name suggests, began with geographical assumptions about variation in English usage. The surveys carried out through *English Today* in 1998–9 presented items on which usage in Britain and North America is known to vary. All these items related to the written word, and are divergent areas of editorial style for British and American writers and publishers. They are aspects of the two major print standards identified by McArthur (1997), used in the UK and the US respectively, but also beyond their bounds, in different permutations and combinations by other English-users. At this point the geographical bases for British and American style and usage give way to historical and political factors that have established them elsewhere – aspects of a more abstract linguistic landscape.

Even in the home bases of British and American style, there are social and cultural factors that impact on usage, written and spoken, diversifying the patterns of preference. In Johnson's (1990) analysis of lexical variation in southern USA, sociolinguistic parameters such as urban/rural affiliation, education, race, age, (and to a lesser extent sex), all turned out to be more significant than region. With so many factors involved, uniformity is hardly to be expected, and the items surveyed by *Langscape* rarely turned up uniform preferences (100%) – only in cases where the returns in a particular category were very small. Sociolinguistic variation across regional speech/writing communities has therefore been the subject of discussion in most of the *Langscape* reports published so far (see ET56–60, and 62–63).

The geographical factor also fades in importance among the supraregional writing communities that establish themselves through the electronic media. Some argue that this e-English is the cradle of the future world standard, because of its enormous reach. It is another question whether the forms of usage we read on screen are likely to become (a) more normative and (b) more influential than those disseminated by large scale print publishing. The *Langscape* surveys were returned in both print and electronic form, and so shed some light on the language preferences of supraregional reading/writing communities, and on their affiliations in relation to the British/American divide. The medium-based preferences emerging from the *Langscape* surveys are highlighted as we revisit the six questionnaires, and take in additional data filed since the publication of the earlier reports.

We also take the opportunity to thank the hundreds of people who responded, and the teachers and word-watching groups who filed whole sets of returns. A roll of honor listing the major contributing institutions and groups appears on p.20. We gratefully acknowledge the work of the Simplified Spelling Society, and its editor-in-chief Christopher Upward's commentary on *Langscape* 1 and 6, published in ET55 and 63. Thanks are due also to Cambridge



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Table 1: Age-based differences in the use of e before suffixes

	Overall	%	Age 1	%	Age 2	%	Age 3	%	Age 4	%
	(1162)		(10–24)		(25–44)		(45–64)		(65+)	
			(302)		(459)		(342)		(47)	
aging	329	28%	58	19%	160	35%	94	27%	13	27%
ageing	838	72%	242	81%	300	65%	253	73%	35	73%
apeing	620	56%	183	63%	253	58%	156	47%	22	50%
aping	491	44%	106	37%	180	42%	177	53%	22	50%
eying	103	9%	18	6%	45	10%	33	10%	7	15%
eyeing	1051	91%	282	94%	408	90%	310	90%	39	85%
overawing	720	67%	196	71%	284	66%	203	66%	29	73%
overaweing	348	33%	81	29%	147	34%	106	34%	11	28%
likable	275	24%	52	17%	119	26%	88	25%	14	30%
likeable	894	76%	250	83%	341	74%	261	75%	32	70%
liveable	814	70%	237	79%	319	70%	224	66%	25	54%
livable	341	30%	64	21%	137	30%	116	34%	21	46%
sizeable	893	77%	258	87%	336	73%	258	75%	33	69%
sizable	271	23%	40	13%	125	27%	87	25%	15	31%
usable	623	54%	130	43%	252	55%	208	61%	26	57%
useable	535	46%	169	57%	208	45%	133	39%	20	43%
abridgment	227	20%	58	20%	73	17%	77	23%	18	40%
abridgement	898	80%	234	80%	369	83%	258	77%	27	60%
acknowledgement	844	72%	234	78%	340	73%	236	68%	23	52%
acknowledgment	326	28%	67	22%	123	27%	113	32%	21	48%

University Press and Kevin Taylor for their support of the project; and especially to Tom McArthur and *ET* for providing the forum for *Langscape*.

Final accounting

As of 31 August 00, there were 707 additional questionnaires wherewith to update the results of the six questionnaires. Their input and statistical analysis were carried out at Macquarie University's Style Council Centre by research assistant Adam Smith, who also generated the tables reproduced in this article. Without this assistance, the large volumes of data would have been difficult to synthesize, and his contribution to the management of the project and demonstration of the findings has been invaluable.

Langscape 1: the ubiquitous letter e

There were 351 extra questionnaires to include in the final report, including large batches from England (124), from North America (102) and from Australia (82). They were well spread across Age groups 1, 2 and 3, but added little to group 4. Since both region and age proved to be important factors in the interim report published in *ET*56, it was of no small interest to see whether they affected the final results. As it emerged, the overall ratios of *e*-less to *e*-full spellings did not change by more than 3% in any of the three sets of words put to the test (those such as *aging/ageing* where *e* may appear at the junction of stem and suffix; those like *avocadoes/avocados* where *e* belongs to older forms of the plural; and those like *aesthetic*, where *e* may replace the classical digraphs *æ* (and *œ*).

Table 1b

	Overall (1162)	%	Age 1 (302)	%	Age 2 (459)	%	Age 3 (342)	%	Age 4 (47)	%
judgment	302	25%	54	18%	116	24%	107	30%	24	53%
judgement	897	75%	249	82%	362	76%	253	70%	21	47%
lodgement	908	83%	260	88%	369	85%	242	78%	26	60%
lodgment	186	17%	36	12%	65	15%	68	22%	17	40%
bony	658	57%	143	47%	263	58%	215	63%	30	63%
boney	503	43%	159	53%	193	42%	129	38%	18	38%
cagey	920	81%	242	82%	367	82%	266	79%	34	74%
cagy	219	19%	53	18%	83	18%	70	21%	12	26%
dicy	291	25%	65	22%	118	26%	94	28%	12	26%
dicey	854	75%	231	78%	332	74%	247	72%	34	74%
gamey	851	76%	225	77%	340	77%	244	74%	35	74%
gamy	268	24%	67	23%	101	23%	85	26%	12	26%
nosy	577	49%	114	37%	234	51%	201	58%	21	45%
nosey	594	51%	192	63%	228	49%	143	42%	26	55%
pricey	688	60%	198	66%	262	58%	190	56%	30	64%
pricy	459	40%	100	34%	189	42%	150	44%	17	36%
stony	722	62%	126	41%	297	66%	252	74%	38	81%
stoney	434	38%	179	59%	154	34%	89	26%	9	19%
wirey	331	29%	134	44%	121	27%	65	19%	8	17%
wiry	814	71%	168	56%	326	73%	273	81%	38	83%

In *ET56*, the familiar British-American difference over the use of classical digraphs emerged for almost all words in the set from *an(a)emia* to *(o)estrogen* (the only surprise being that Americans too preferred *amoeba*). These (and all other regional findings in the interim reports) were based strictly on the subset of respondents who were born and still resident in the country nominated. Yet it was a question as to how different the results would be if they were simply calculated on the basis of residency. This was done for this report, and though the reference populations were enlarged by this, the results did not change dramatically. In the UK results, the support for the “British” option fell slightly (1–4 %) in most cases, and the “American” options came back from some absolute positions (*hemorrhage* fell from 100% to 90%; *septicemia* from 98% to 92%). The findings correlate with the increasing diversity among British and American pop-

ulations, and the impacts of mobility and migration felt everywhere. Since this heterogeneity is an inescapable fact of 21st-century English, we have used current place of residence as the basis for calculating regional statistics in the rest of this report (rather than birth plus residence).

The earlier report noted that age was a factor in the preference for *-oes* plurals, and that younger respondents (10–24, 25–44) in both the UK and the US seemed to endorse the trend. With extra data for the first three Age groups from the late questionnaires, this trend emerged even more strongly. There were fewer exceptions to the pattern, as *cargos* and *torpedos* turned into majority preferences with 60% and 53% respectively, and *volcanos* reached 50%. This is clearly the way of the future and a neat example of regularization in the plural system. Not so neat is the trend emerging for words such as *lik(e)able*, where younger respondents are clearly leading the fray on the

less regular spellings, as shown in Table 1 (pp. 10–11).

Many of the results in Table 1 show a clear pattern of stratification, with the highest percentages of support for *e*-full forms showing among Age 1 respondents. The trend was evident among younger respondents from both Britain and America, though more pervasive for the former (i.e., registering on more of the items queried). This correlates with corpus evidence for British, American and New Zealand English from the 1960s to the 1990s, compiled by Sigley (forthcoming). The trend is away from the time-honored “rule” of dropping *e* before suffixes beginning with vowels, and keeping it before those beginning with consonants. The rule for the latter now seems to be being applied to all derivational suffixes, and even those like *-ing* which may be either derivational or inflectional. This generalization of the rule probably reflects the lack of attention to spelling and grammar in English curricula since the 1970s.

In the earlier report little could be said about possible correlation of medium (print or electronic) on results. Since then large numbers of electronic returns have been added in, making a population of 230, and substantial enough for comparison with print returns. The differences are often large, as in use of classical digraphs, shown in Table 2 (p. 13).

The figures make it plain that print-users are more committed to the use of classical digraphs than their web-using counterparts. We know from cross-tabulations that the web-users are not all Americans, who make up about a third of the group. The results must therefore reflect usage in a variety of geographical locations, not all of which employ British style. The web respondents seem readier to shed those cumbersome digraphs than their print counterparts, often making them the majority form.

Langscape 2: to capitalize or not to capitalize

An additional 147 questionnaires have now been processed on the matter of capitals. These served to enlarge the numbers in Age 1 and Age 2, and to almost double the returns from the USA, so that with 128 returns it is larger than that of UK residents (98). There are also substantial numbers from Australia and New Zealand (96), from Europe (78) and from Asia (49). With such a range of source countries,

Langscape 2 provides a balance of the known regional forces identified in *Langscape 1*.

Langscape 2 examined the use of capital letters on individual words and expressions such as *alsatian*, *back bench*, and their use in reference to the same entity in successive sentences (i.e., discursal use of capitals). They were measured in terms of *Never*, *Always* or *Sometimes* (with explanations). The effects of the extra questionnaires on overall results was twofold. Where the *Never* changed on the individual word/expression, it always increased slightly 1–4%, whereas the *Always* went both ways – showing no very consistent trend. More striking than both was the larger increase in the *Sometimes* vote. The net effect makes less absolute the use of capitals. Still, it is clear that younger respondents are more inclined to regular capitalization. It remains an open question whether this means an ongoing trend towards greater use of capital letters, or rather that they will fine-tune their practices as the years go by.

Another force, that of the medium, may nevertheless work to reinforce the use of capitals. In the final tally for *Langscape 2* there were substantial returns of both printed and electronic questionnaires (print 301, web 184), and inviting further comparisons. On the overall tallies for capitals on individual word/expression, the results for the two media diverged, with the print returns often registering higher levels for the use of capitals, via elevated A scores, complemented by lower N and/or S scores. Yet the results on discursal use of capital letters went the other way. Web users showed themselves less likely to take the capital letter off words in proper names on the second appearances, as shown in Table 3 (p. 14).

For four out of the five items, there are big differences in the results for print and web respondents, and the direction is always the same. The trend is there even in the plural reference (to the presidents of the USA and Russia), where one might expect lower case. These findings suggest the commitment of web-users to the outer form of the word and maintaining its regularity – and resistance to fine-tuning words in the context of ongoing discourse. It suggests a concentration on the immediate reference rather than references connected by cohesion, and less engagement with the on-going semantics. It may have something in common with the web-users’ preference for the more formal option in issues of grammatical agreement (see next section). The interesting effect overall is

Table 2: Print and web-based results for the use of classical digraphs. Differences of 20%

	Overall (1162)	%	Print (932)	%	Web (230)	%
aesthetic	966	83%	769	82%	197	86%
esthetic	197	17%	164	18%	33	14%
anemia	405	35%	296	32%	109	48%
anaemia	744	65%	625	68%	119	52%
anaesthetic	786	68%	693	71%	147	64%
anesthetic	366	32%	282	29%	84	36%
archeology	441	38%	361	39%	80	35%
archaeology	724	62%	573	61%	151	65%
faecal	710	63%	601	67%	109	48%
fecal	416	37%	298	33%	118	52%
hemorrhage	408	36%	297	33%	111	48%
haemorrhage	727	64%	608	67%	119	52%
leukaemia	561	48%	469	50%	92	40%
leukemia	600	52%	462	50%	138	60%
medieval	867	74%	707	75%	160	69%
mediaeval	311	26%	239	25%	72	31%
orthopaedic	622	53%	518	55%	104	45%
orthopedic	543	47%	417	45%	126	55%
paleolithic	679	61%	523	59%	156	68%
palaeolithic	436	39%	364	41%	72	32%
paedophile	660	58%	562	62%	98	43%
pedophile	477	42%	345	38%	132	57%
septicemia	614	57%	467	54%	147	66%
septicaemia	467	43%	391	46%	76	34%
amoeba	995	88%	784	86%	211	93%
ameba	142	12%	125	14%	17	7%
diarrhea	418	36%	308	33%	110	48%
diarrhoea	734	64%	614	67%	120	52%
esophagus	413	37%	301	34%	112	48%
oesophagus	702	63%	582	66%	120	52%
homeopathy	877	76%	680	74%	197	86%
homoeopathy	270	24%	239	26%	31	14%
oestrogen	773	68%	656	72%	117	50%
estrogen	366	32%	250	28%	116	50%

that web-users seem to capitalize fewer items but are more inclined to fix them in the word they do invest with them.

Langscape 3: differing on agreement

Both the initial report (*ET58*) based on 398 questionnaires, and this final roundup with 110

Table 3: The use of capital letters for items repeated in discourse

	Overall (484)	%	Print (301)	%	Web (184)	%
Minister	190	40%	100	34%	90	50%
minister	283	60%	192	66%	91	50%
Gallery	272	58%	163	56%	109	60%
gallery	200	42%	128	44%	72	40%
University	226	48%	120	41%	106	58%
university	247	52%	171	59%	76	42%
Bank	324	68%	190	65%	134	74%
bank	151	32%	104	35%	47	26%
Presidents	280	59%	143	49%	137	76%
presidents	192	41%	148	51%	44	24%

extras, embody a remarkable number of responses from North America. There were 266 from the US and Canada, 85 from the UK as a whole and Eire, and 104 from Australia and New Zealand. The questionnaire focused on issues of grammatical agreement where British English is known to be more liberal than American English, and less concerned to maintain formal agreement. British English often allows for notional agreement (e.g., singular with composites such as *Harrods* or *bed and breakfast*, and plural with collective nouns such as *clergy* or *panel*). So for Britons, grammatical agreement is no burning issue, whereas Americans may be moved to affirm their stance. The extra inputs served to underscore the American preference for formal agreement with collective nouns, along with the acceptance of notional agreement for quasi-coordinates and correlatives formed with *neither/nor* and *as well as*, both of which emerged in the previous report. The enlarged UK response was slightly less oriented towards notional agreement on collective nouns, and may represent a turning of the tide, back in the direction of formal agreement. This has been noted over longer periods in particular contexts (see Bauer, 1994).

In the earlier report, differences between electronic and paper returns were also noted, with electronic respondents more inclined to formal agreement where there was a choice. Cross-tabulation of the enlarged data set (print 309, web 199) proved that this was not occasioned by a predominance of American returns among the web-users: in fact they made up just about one third of that group, and were complemented by

respondents from various other parts of the world. So once again it looks as though one's association with the electronic medium is indeed a factor in linguistic choice. The electronic respondents made the opposite choice to print-based respondents on agreement with *panel*, and when the subject was *any of the paintings*, in each case preferring the singular by very large margins (respectively 77% as opposed to 44%, and 79% as opposed to 39%). On other items where the two groups agreed (by majority) on the form of agreement, there were still considerable differences in their rates of endorsement. The web respondents' vote for formal agreement was always higher, indeed 20% higher for complex subjects such as *a spate of terrorist attacks*, and *the uncertain status of foreign advisers*. The web respondents' preference may be explained by the fact that formal agreement is tied to grammatically explicit elements of the clause, which become more important anchor-points in screen-reading. The screen window may somehow constrain wider semantic construction of the text, and foster more literal attention to the wording. Be that as it may, these late findings confirm those found earlier, and highlight an area of usage where web usage is at once more regular and more conservative than that associated with print.

Langscape 4: plurals for Latin loanwords

In the final roundup, there were 37 additional questionnaires to add to those analysed in *ET59*, mostly from England and Australia.

Among the 166 returns of this questionnaire there were relatively few from the US (only 22), which could correlate with the fact that English plurals for Latin borrowings are more generally used in American than British English, as indicated in their representative dictionaries (*Webster's* 1961 and *Oxford* 1989). Yet the American preferences shown on the questionnaires did not always reflect that general pattern, and on some items showed stronger endorsement of Latin plurals than did the British – most notably *syllabi*, where the American vote was 36% higher. Behind that we might catch the ghost of Miss Fidditch! More American data on this front would be welcome.

The preference of younger respondents (Age 1 + 2, i.e. 10–24 and 25–44) for English plurals was noted in the earlier report, and this was generally confirmed with the additional data, though with some notable exceptions. The younger respondents returned higher endorsement than Age 3 + 4 (45–64 and 65+) for *fungi* (by 6%), *octopi* (by 7%), *syllabi* (by 14%); *hydrae* (by 8%); *millennia* (by 3%), *moratoria* (by 6%) – but these are clearly a minority of the 36 words tested from the first and second Latin declensions.

In the final account, there were 118 responses in the printed medium and 48 electronic, still not a large enough population on which to base firm conclusions about the preferences of those connected with the two media. The differences between the two did not show consistent trends across the various categories of loanwords. Web-users preferred the Latin plurals for *foci* (11% higher than print-users) and *fungi* (4% higher); but for *gladioli* and *termini* it was the print-users who proved more latinist with votes 16% and 13% higher on those two). It is unclear whether the unfamiliar, scientific loanwords tend to be given English plurals by default, or are over-likely to retain their Latin ones when users have to look them up in the dictionary. Multiple factors are at work, which are difficult to separate in relatively small sets of data.

Langscape 5: jots and tittles

An additional 55 questionnaires were processed in this survey of word punctuation, where issues such as the use of full stops in abbreviations – as in *etc.*(.), *Park Ave.*(.) and *Mr.*(.) – and apostrophes in inflected expressions such as *St Helen*(')*s*, *MP*(')*s* and *OD*(')*ing*

were put under the spotlight. The new data came from people resident in Australia, the UK and Asia; there were few responses from North America (only 16 among the overall tally of 156).

The overall results showed some consistent differences from those published in *ET60*. Most notable were the consistently higher results for the use of stops in abbreviated titles and common words. Thus, the overall percentages shown in Table 4 below are higher by 1% to 6% on all items except e.g., *A.D. 1066*, *U.K.* and *U.S.A.*, where they remained the same. This is all the more noteworthy, given the dearth of replies from North America, whose standard style (as per the *Chicago Manual of Style*) has been to maintain the use of stops in all kinds of shortened forms, while British style was inclined to do without them in contractions like *Mr*, where the last letter of the word was retained (as opposed to “true abbreviations” such as *Prof.*). The contractions/abbreviations distinction was first articulated by Fowler (under “period in abbreviations”) in 1926, and seems to have become standard British editorial practice only after World War II, first described in Butcher's *Copy-editing* (1975). As a dichotomy it is beset by anomalies, e.g. what to do when an abbreviation is pluralized.

The results for *para*(.) and *paras*(.) shown below suggest a growing trend to give them both stops, rather than apply the abbreviation rule to the first and the contraction rule to the second. The result for *paras*. is underscored by the fact that 60% of those in Age groups 1 + 2 would give it a stop, as opposed to 49% of those in Age groups 3 + 4. These findings, and the higher rates for *Boulevard* and *dept* (both up 6%), and for *Mrs* and *Ms* (both up 4%), all suggest that the British punctuation distinction between contractions and abbreviations may be on the wane.

Among the nonpossessive uses of apostrophes, there are also some notable trends. They included slight increases in using apostrophes to separate strings of letters or numbers from inflections, as in *IOU's* and *767's*, though the increases of 1–4% still did not put any of them above 28%. There were increases also in the use of apostrophes to separate the inflection from the stem in *ad hoc* verbs such as *henna'd* and *prorata'd* (up 6% and 8% respectively). This again was one of Fowler's recommendations, but is still used by less than a third of respondents in preference to the regular *hennaed* and

Table 4: Divergent usage of stops in abbreviations from print-based and electronic returns

	Overall (156)	%	Print (94)	%	Web (62)	%
etc.	103	71%	58	69%	45	73%
etc	43	29%	26	31%	17	27%
e.g.	112	73%	65	71%	47	76%
eg or eg.	41	27%	26	29%	15	24%
i.e.	115	75%	68	74%	47	76%
ie or ie.	39	25%	24	26%	15	24%
10:00 AM	39	27%	23	27%	16	27%
10 am	105	73%	62	73%	43	73%
A.D. 1066	58	37%	40	43%	18	29%
AD 1066	98	63%	53	57%	45	71%
D.H.Lawrence	110	68%	69	73%	41	62%
DH Lawrence	51	32%	26	27%	25	38%
J.Arthur Rank	105	70%	63	74%	42	66%
J Arthur Rank	44	30%	22	26%	22	34%
Franklin D. Roosevelt	108	69%	67	71%	41	65%
Franklin D Roosevelt	49	31%	27	29%	22	35%
St. Louis	83	52%	59	62%	24	37%
St Louis	77	48%	36	38%	41	63%
Fleet St.	94	59%	62	65%	32	49%
Fleet St	66	41%	33	35%	33	51%
Park Ave.	88	55%	57	60%	31	48%
Park Ave	71	45%	38	40%	33	52%
Sunset Blvd.	83	52%	55	59%	28	43%
Sunset Blvd	76	48%	39	41%	37	57%
Dr.	71	46%	50	53%	21	34%
Dr	84	54%	44	47%	40	66%
Mrs.	67	43%	46	49%	21	34%
Mrs	88	57%	47	51%	41	66%
Ms.	59	38%	41	44%	18	29%
Ms	97	62%	52	56%	45	71%
Prof.	102	66%	64	69%	38	62%
Prof	52	34%	29	31%	23	38%
Rev.	99	65%	60	66%	39	64%
Rev	53	35%	31	34%	22	36%

Table 4b

	Overall (156)	%	Print (94)	%	Web (62)	%
Sr.	72	48%	48	54%	24	39%
Sr	78	52%	41	46%	37	61%
St.	81	53%	56	60%	25	41%
St	73	47%	37	40%	36	59%
B.B.C.	21	13%	19	20%	2	3%
BBC	135	87%	74	80%	61	97%
N.A.T.O.	21	13%	19	20%	2	3%
NATO	135	87%	75	80%	60	97%
U.K.	32	20%	25	27%	7	11%
UK	125	80%	67	73%	58	89%
U.S.A.	36	23%	29	31%	7	11%
USA	122	77%	64	69%	58	89%
cont.	115	78%	67	76%	48	80%
cont	33	22%	21	24%	12	20%
dept.	91	61%	63	68%	28	48%
dept	59	39%	29	32%	30	52%
mgr.	82	57%	60	69%	22	39%
mgr	62	43%	27	31%	35	61%
para.	91	63%	57	66%	34	59%
para	54	37%	30	34%	24	41%
paras.	78	55%	54	65%	24	41%
paras	63	45%	29	35%	34	59%
pl.	106	71%	64	70%	42	71%
pl	44	29%	27	30%	17	29%
sing.	109	73%	66	74%	43	72%
sing	40	27%	23	26%	17	28%
King's Canyon	89	61%	58	67%	31	53%
Kings Canyon	57	39%	29	33%	28	47%
King's Cross	86	56%	60	66%	26	42%
Kings Cross	67	44%	31	34%	36	58%
St Alban's	76	50%	55	60%	21	34%
St Albans	77	50%	36	40%	41	66%
St Helen's	76	50%	53	59%	23	38%
St Helens	75	50%	37	41%	38	62%
1960's	45	28%	38	39%	7	11%
1960s	116	72%	60	61%	56	89%

Table 4c

	Overall (156)	%	Print (94)	%	Web (62)	%
767's	40	26%	33	36%	7	11%
767s	114	74%	58	64%	56	89%
IOU's	34	22%	29	32%	5	8%
IOUs	119	78%	62	68%	57	92%
MP's	33	21%	27	29%	6	10%
MPs	121	79%	65	71%	56	90%
RSVP's	30	20%	25	27%	5	8%
RSVPs	121	80%	66	73%	55	92%
P's and Q's	61	40%	47	52%	14	23%
Ps and Qs	90	60%	43	48%	47	77%

prorataed. On the other hand, apostrophes are clearly disappearing from conventional expressions such as *bullseye* and *crows feet* (both down 9%) in the enlarged data set. There were consistent decreases also in the use of apostrophes in generic uses of the possessive, as in *boys grammar school* and *journalists association*, down to 40–50% of respondents. So while grammatical uses of the apostrophe seem to be on the decline, its uses as a visual separator are probably increasing.

One other aspect of *Langscape 5* invites discussion: the often substantial differences that emerged from analysing the print-medium returns separately from those sent electronically. As Table 4 (pp. 16–18) shows, the web-users are much less inclined to use stops in abbreviations than their print-using counterparts – except on very common Latin ones such as *etc.*, *e.g.*, *i.e.* On most other kinds of expression for dates, addresses, names and titles, and common initialisms such UK and USA, they are often 20% less given to using stops.

These different levels of commitment to using stops in abbreviations were also found for print and web-users in the items that tested uses of the apostrophe. Again the web-users' use of apostrophes was often very substantially lower for expressions such as *1960's* (28% down), *MP's* (19% down). Both findings suggest that those who work continually with computer screens are less inclined to depend on the "jots and tittles" of the printed page. The rather low resolution of the ordinary screen would of course have something to do with this, but it presents a counterforce to the more general tendency to put stops

back into contractions. This could foreshadow substantial differences between the print standard and emerging electronic practices.

Langscape 6: Gemini

There were just 7 additional questionnaires to add to those reported on in *ET62*, and so few changes in the numerical results for the final data set of 144 returns. Among those there were only 14 returns from the US, so the findings are based very much on respondents from the British sphere of influence. This makes all the more interesting the substantial divergences in the deployment of single or double letters in the results printed below in Table 5. Of particular interest are the higher, often much higher commitment to spellings with single *l*.

The spellings with single *-l* are of course more regular in terms of orthographic rules (Peters, 1995), and much more typical of American than British style. Yet even though Americans are under-represented in this data and a small minority among the web-users, the more regular patterns of spelling always get a stronger backing from this heterogeneous electronic community than from the print-using community. The differing rates are most noticeable among the past tense forms of verbs, where for *channeled*, *labeled*, *reveled*, *unraveled*, the differences are 20% or more. These are also the forms where the doubled *l* is at its most gratuitous, since it creates a string of five letters (*-elled*) for an unstressed syllable. In the electronic returns, the more regular spellings are endorsed by between 28% and 64% of respondents, mostly above

Table 5: Print and electronic results for spellings with single or double l

	Overall (144)	%	Print (80)	%	Web (64)	%
channeled	44	30%	16	20%	28	42%
channelled	104	70%	66	80%	38	58%
enameling	49	34%	27	33%	22	34%
enamelling	96	66%	54	67%	42	66%
equalled	110	75%	62	77%	48	74%
equaled	36	25%	19	23%	17	26%
initialed	74	49%	30	36%	44	64%
initialled	78	51%	53	64%	25	36%
labeled	40	26%	14	17%	26	37%
labelled	114	74%	69	83%	45	63%
marvelous	41	27%	13	16%	28	42%
marvellous	109	73%	70	84%	39	58%
medalist	86	59%	47	58%	39	60%
medallist	60	41%	34	42%	26	40%
paneling	42	29%	19	24%	23	34%
panelling	104	71%	60	76%	44	66%
pedaler	49	34%	21	27%	28	44%
pedaller	94	66%	58	73%	36	56%
revelled	114	79%	71	89%	43	66%
reveled	31	21%	9	11%	22	34%
rivalled	87	60%	50	63%	37	56%
rivalled	59	40%	30	38%	29	44%
totaling	101	66%	58	71%	43	61%
totaling	51	34%	24	29%	27	39%
trialled	77	55%	44	57%	33	52%
trialed	64	45%	33	43%	31	48%
unravalled	98	66%	61	75%	37	55%
unraveled	50	34%	20	25%	30	45%

34%. This makes them important variants, in an experimental population where there are few Americans.

Towards an electronic standard for English

Unedited electronic communication is not renowned for stylistic perfection. Yet in questionnaires such as those presented in the *Langscape* surveys there is no reason to assume that variant spellings and usages reported are the results of carelessness. Rather they show

that individual orthographic habits may be more diverse than the closely edited print standards might suggest. Most interestingly, the preferences of electronic communicators emerge as being more inclined to regularity in style and usage than those of the heterogeneous populations who have responded to *Langscape* surveys.

This has been demonstrated in their greater commitment to the regular spellings of *likable*, etc, reported earlier (ET56), and to single *l* spellings in suffixed words, seen in Table 5. Though not heavy users of capital letters by

comparison with others, they nevertheless maintain them consistently through discourse (see Table 3). They are more inclined to use formal agreement in constructions that facilitate notional agreement. Whether this is motivated by grammatical preference or the more limited scope of the computer screen, the outcome is the same in terms of linguistic form chosen. The impact of the computer screen can also be seen in the web-users' disinclination to make too much of stops in abbreviations or apostrophes.

So the electronic standard, if we may call it that, may be driven by two kinds of forces, technological and sociological. The technological limitations of the computer screen and the psycholinguistic pressure it exercises on screen readers would explain the more formal and thus often more regular choices made by electronic communicators. Equally they are – more often than most – confronted by the diversity of English written usage, through the global connections of the Internet, and aware of the need for standardization.

A similar combination of forces helped to forge the print standard in early modern English. The printed page at first confronted readers with a diversity of forms (witness the works of Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde), and made greater regularity a desideratum. This awareness, promoted by new technology, went hand in hand with socio-cultural drives towards more standardization in English, with its growing status as an important European vernacular.

In half a millennium the arena for standard English is greatly enlarged, but the same forces present themselves in contributing to the development of an electronic standard. □

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Langscape Roll of Honor

We salute the following 29 institutions and groups for their energetic contributions to the *Langscape* surveys.

- Alsager School**, Cheshire, England
Anderson University, College of Science & Humanities, Dept. of English, Anderson, Indiana, USA
Aquinas College, Stockport, England
Burrough-Boenisch J and associates, Wageningen, Netherlands
California State University, Northridge, Department of English, California, USA
Cambridge University Press, Publishing Division, Cambridge, England
Canberra Institute of Technology, Canberra ACT, Australia
Cornelsen Publishing House, Berlin, Germany
Deakin University, Learning Resources Services, Woolstores Campus, Geelong, Australia
Deakin University, School of Social & Cultural Studies in Education, Burwood Australia
Department of Immigration & Multicultural Affairs, Darwin, Australia
Eurocentre World of Language, Cambridge, England
Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Institut für Anglistik/Amerikanistik, Germany
Harvey Smith, J. and associates Surrey, England
Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, Language Centre, Kowloon, Hong Kong
Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education, School of Arts, Singapore
Nicolay Volker, and associates Oerlinghausen, Germany
NSW AMES Distance Learning Program, Burwood, NSW, Australia
Randwick Boys High School, Randwick, Australia
Redcar & Cleveland College, Redcar, United Kingdom
School of Arts, National Institute of Education, Singapore
Sprach and Interkultur, Vase, Sweden
Taunton's College, Southampton, England
The Queen's English Society, London, England
University of Central England, School of English, Faculty of Computing & Information Studies, Birmingham, England
University of Oxford, Dept for Continuing Education, Oxford, England
Uplands Community College, East Sussex, England
Volkshochschule, Bern, Switzerland
Words Alive, Campbelltown SA Australia

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