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The Daily Star

DHAKA, FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 2015

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NEXT STEP

SEVEN FREE TOOLS THAT WILL IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS



Writing can be a chore. And that's not even half the story. Once you're done, there's a whole different world of pain awaiting you. A world consisting of proofreading, rephrasing, sitting on a draft for weeks and finally, more editing. Most of us can't even flesh out a full draft on our first go. Even before the very first line has been written, we start tapping the backspace key or 'ctrl z' our way out of whatever woeful dribble we'd just concocted. But once we've overcome the existential crisis of coming up with the perfect opening line, it gets better. For a while. Anyone who deals with a considerable amount of writing wants to get better, whether that means making less grammatical mistakes or refining your style. While making visible improvement can take anywhere between months and years, the good news is that there are plenty of online resources to expedite the process. And even if you're not in the writing business, it doesn't hurt to be able to post Facebook statuses in flawless English. Say goodbye to your writing woes with these seven free online tools.

CALMLY WRITER

Calmly Writer was "designed to help you focus on writing". Available on any browser, it is a simple and clean text editor with a distraction-free user interface. Best thing is you don't need to sign up. A hundred percent devoid of any screen clutter, you won't be getting distracted any time soon with this

handy app. Calmy also features a focus mode which highlights only the paragraph you are working on. Complete with text formatting and compatible with keyboard shortcuts, this is a chic and smooth writing experience that's worth a try.

HEMINGWAY

It's hard to put Hemingway into

one single category. This app is a game changer for those of us who struggle with long, complex sentences. Copy paste your writing into the white space provided and it will highlight long-winded sentences in yellow and dense sentences in red. With a whole range of editing options like hints for shorter words and a readability

meter, Hemingway is smart, user-friendly and the go-to tool for any writer.

CLICHÉ FINDER

This app requires no explanation. Paste your text in the box and watch Cliché Finder work its magic in seconds. Any phrases that are overused to the point of being annoying are highlighted in red so that you can reword, rewrite and test again for improved quality. Cliché Finder is simple and easy to use, but it falls short of perfection in that it doesn't provide alternatives for your ungainly hackneyed banter.

ONELOOK REVERSE DICTIONARY

Have a word in mind but can't quite remember it? Let OneLook's Reverse Dictionary do your work for you. Describe a concept and get back a list of words and phrases related to that concept – plus better alternatives. Paired with Cliché Finder, Reverse Dictionary is your one-way ticket to literary stardom.

BLOG TOPIC GENERATOR BY HUBSPOT

HubSpot's Blog Topic Generator is an intelligent title generator for your articles. You get three fields to fill in with terms (preferably nouns) that you'd like to write about and voila, you get five perfectly worded titles that sound just like something out of BuzzFeed. The app comes with a disclaimer that the algorithm isn't perfect, but

I'd like to disagree. Blog Topic Generator is a gem that will help you come up with ideas for articles more than you can imagine.

WRITEPLS

Search for writing advice on Google and you'll regret ever having done so. Writepls makes things easier for you. It gives you seven categories to pick from: general, fiction, non-fiction, e-mails, online courses, growth hacking and books. Each category contains a collection of the best writing advice out there and related information and sends it straight to your inbox.

GRAMMARLY

Last but not least, the top dog of web writing apps. Grammarly is like Word's AutoCorrect except it's for the internet. A Chrome plug-in, Grammarly will catch embarrassing grammatical mistakes and silly typos before your emails and Facebook posts go live. It goes a step further with its contextual spell-checker that will save you from mixing up commonly confused words. Never write another sentence with a missing preposition or a misused punctuation mark with this clever must-have app.

AMIYA HALDER

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Old Faujians Association holds career development session

Passion is the difference between having a job and a career. So it is important to first know oneself before selecting a career. This suggestion came from one of the panellists at the career development and counselling session organised by the Old Faujians Association (OFA) on August 21, 2015 at Baridhara. The session was open for alumni and participants from different universities seeking career mentoring. The panel of speakers consisted of eminent corporate personalities.

In an interactive session, the speakers suggested that participants be proactive and think in terms of win-win situations by balancing logic with creativity. Matiul Nowshad, Vice Chairman of OFA and Chief Corporate and People Officer of Robi Axiata, emphasised the importance of cultural fit for career development.

One participant and jobseeker who was not getting call backs, was advised him to find out how he might not fit the position. Being



relevant is vital and CVs should be created according to the employer's needs, the panel added.

Mohammed Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, OFA alumnus and Managing Director of Lanka Bangla Finance, also mentioned that rapid switching of jobs should not be encouraged because one must put in time and continuous effort in order to get positive results.

Kishwar Imdad, General Manager of Operations at Apollo Hospitals

Dhaka and Secretary General of OFA, announced that OFA will arrange this sort of career bridging program regularly for young professionals and students. He also suggested other organisations and alumni associations to come forward with similar initiatives so that career development can become a positive social movement.

SHUVASHISH ROY

PRESS RELEASE

Asia's most influential digital media professionals right here in Bangladesh

The 6th Chief Marketing Officer Council (CMO) Asia Award for excellence in social media and digital marketing salutes the most innovative online marketing and communications initiatives in the highly competitive and dynamic media arena in the continent.

The title of Asia's Most Influential Digital Media Professional was won by Arshia Aziz, Head of Marketing, Communications and Digital of the British Council in Bangladesh; Riyad Shahir Ahmed Husain, CEO of Magnito Digital; and Ovick Alam, Co-founder of Web-Able. The accolade celebrates the best practices and talents in today's digital, mobile and social media industry.

The award ceremony was held between 11th and 12th August as part of the 24th edition of World Brand Congress at Pan Pacific, Marina Square, Singapore. The World Brand Congress is an annual event to celebrate and explore the power of brand building. It is a meeting place for business leaders and influential marketing organisations from across the globe.

Emphasising on the transformation in the industry, Arshia said: "21st century marketers focus on multimedia content creation, online marketing, search engine optimization, social media, mobile media, and digital apps".



Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

How your desk is destroying your productivity

You go out for a midday snack with your co-workers. You come back to your desk after what seems like a good half-hour, but is actually more. You jerk your non-responsive mouse around for a while because your PC's gone to sleep. And voila, you're ready to get back to work. Oh wait, what was it that you were doing exactly? Beep beep buzz buzz. You have a new message in your inbox. Must check that. And since you're on your phone anyway, why not play a little Happy Jump. Or maybe today's the day you're finally going to solve the Rubik's cube that you keep on your tabletop to show people how intelligent you are. If only you could find it amongst the heaps of papers and candy wrappers. Now, what was it that you were doing exactly? Can't get to work? It's not your fault, it's your desk's.

Desktop playthings

First thing's first. Get rid of that Rubik's cube. At least put it away in your drawer. Although there's a career advice article somewhere that advises you to keep toys on your desk to boost brainpower, they are a source of distraction most of the time. Like that co-worker who keeps inviting you to smoking breaks every 15 minutes, desk toys are counter-productive and depending on your workplace culture, potentially unprofessional.

Now we all love decorating our personal space with fun trinkets, but make it a point to keep out of sight things that are either causing you to take frequent breaks or need to be moved around a lot to make space for your work things.



A cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind. Or a weak arm.

Papers and sticky notes

I, for one, have a habit of keeping work papers or class notes on my desk, in my direct field of vision, to remind myself of all the things I still need to attend to. This isn't efficient. In fact, it's promoting a very bad habit because by the end of the week I have a leaning tower of paper that is so unappealing that I don't want anything to do with it. File your paperwork or separate it into meaningful sections and put it away in a cabinet or your drawers. Better yet, trash it. Anything you don't need goes straight to the bin.

Do not clutter your desktop with sticky notes because you want it clean for your current work. Unless you have excellent self-control, avoid sticky notes because it gets really easy to overuse them. Have too many and it's hard to keep track. They also have a tendency to fly off, owing to their exceptional aerodynamic quality.

Instead, learn to keep to-do

lists. Put up a mini-whiteboard on your cubicle wall for reminders or be a grown-up and use a planner.

Sitting for hours on end

Does none of the above apply to you? Are you more of the workaholic type who'd rather stay put until the biannual financial report's all done? Well bad news buddy, long periods of inactivity are not good for your health or your brain. It shouldn't take a genius to understand that sitting in front of a computer screen too long is mind-numbing. Since you're already so efficient, it shouldn't be too hard to take timed breaks and get active (for 15 minutes long every 45 minutes or so). Stay on top of your game by going for a walk or doing some quick push-ups.

And if nothing helps, get a small standing desk that's just big enough for your computer, a piece of paper and a pen.

AMIYA HALDER