



# Be Tech Ready

September Is National Disaster Preparedness Month

At the approach of a storm or any other disaster, here is a checklist to be sure you are ready.

## CHARGE ALL YOUR GADGETS IN ADVANCE -

Do it now, while you can!

This is especially important if you live somewhere where the power is likely to go out.

Remember to charge up any portable battery packs and rechargeable batteries that you might have (you might not need them, but they may help a neighbor out of a bind). Keep all your devices on charge for as long as possible just in case the power goes out. Remember too that this is a good time to charge up power banks.

If the power starts browning out, it might be a good idea to move your chargers to a UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) if you have one in case they or the devices connected to them are damaged.

## BLOW THE DUST OFF YOUR RADIO

The internet might go down, along with your phone and power, but the radio will still work.

If you have one handy, make sure that the batteries are fresh and that you know how to use it (do a quick Google search in advance for local radio stations you can tune into; 95.9fm WATD is a local Marshfield station that will have local information.)

## KEEP AN EYE ON THE WEATHER

Here are a selection of websites that will let you do just that.

You might also want to link to a local weather station and news site:

Weather.gov (<https://www.weather.gov/>)

Weather Underground (<https://www.wunderground.com/>)

LiveWXRadars – full of ads but good radar (<https://www.livewxradar.com>)

## FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH ANY EQUIPMENT YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE

Not sure how your portable battery pack, generator or new weather app works? The time to be figuring this out is now, not when you're hip-deep in water, and the lights are out!

Download (and print out) any manuals you might need now.

## WEATHERPROOF YOUR DEVICES

If you have weatherproof cases for your smartphones and tablets that you don't normally use, now is the time to put them on

If you don't have a custom case, then use a Ziploc bag. And if you have one of those little bags of silica gel that comes with all sorts of things, throw one of those into the bag with your device as it'll help absorb any moisture that makes its way into the bag.

## BACK UP YOUR DATA

There are a number of productivity apps for mobile devices that make this easier than ever, using your phone's camera as a scanning device.

Capture electronic versions of important documents such as insurance policies, identification documents, and medical records. Don't forget to include your pet's information.

Back-up your computer to protect photos and other personally important electronic documents. Scan old photos to protect them from loss.

*More on page 3...*

*From the desk of*

DAVID SNELL



September is often a month of transition with “back to school” and “vacation time is over” mentalities. Earlier this year, we had hoped that September would be “back to in-person meetings,” and it would look a little more 2019-style normal.

Sadly, the Delta variant has brought setbacks, and Pam and I are back to wearing masks in the super-market even though we are fully vaccinated. The grandchildren are too young for the vaccine, and we don’t want to put them at risk.



These factors and others have convinced us to downsize our offices from 4,000 sq ft to 2,000 sq ft. And, since we were moving, it only made sense to make the location more convenient for Beth and Justin; Xander starts First Grade, and Sarah will be in Pre-school. Twelve minutes from their home is much better than fifty minutes, so we have taken space on Main Street in downtown Wareham Village.

Pam is sad that she will not be able to host meetings like she did until the Pandemic. We will have a small meeting room and a video studio, so I know she plans new ways to stay closer in touch. Expect a video tour in early October. And, of course, we love visitors, so be sure to visit if you are in the area

Those are the only changes that we anticipate. We’ll still provide exceptional on-site service as well as our friendly remote support. Cyber security and security in general remain top of mind for us and our clients. . If you have any questions, please call or email me at [David@ACTSmartIT.com](mailto:David@ACTSmartIT.com).

Take note of our front page article “Be Tech Ready!”. Being prepared is the object of “September is National Disaster Preparedness Month”. Although we participate in this Ready.gov program every year, it seems a little different. It seems a little less “prepared” at a time when we think we need to be even more “ready for anything!”



Pam has put together a new checklist of advice, useable plans and revised some of the previous years’ guidelines. You can find more helpful information at [ACTSmartIT.com/September](http://ACTSmartIT.com/September).

*David*

# The Possibilities of PR

Steve Dubin, PR Works | [sdubin@prworkzone.com](mailto:sdubin@prworkzone.com)



We are often asked, “why PR”? How will a press release help my business and my brand? Especially when you can’t always guarantee coverage. While that might be true, we can guarantee that nothing will happen if you don’t. A recent release reminded me of that.

Clean Franchise Brands announced the retirement of one of its franchise owners for one of its newest acquisitions, Pressed4Time dry cleaners. Clean Franchise Brands is the long-time owner of Lapels Dry Cleaning, and its newest acquisitions are Martinizing Dry Cleaning, 1-800-DryClean, Dry Cleaning Station and Bizziebox.

Yours truly received a call from the retired franchise owner thanking me for my work on the release and how it was well received by his family. Then he shared a nugget that demonstrates the power of possibility PR brings.

In addition to family members, the franchise owner

heard from an old Air Force buddy who somehow saw the release online. His friend had joined the Secret Service after his Air Force days and the retiring franchise owner had not heard from him in 40 years.

***That’s right, 40 years!***

After seeing the release his friend contacted Martinizing Dry Cleaning who then connected him to the retiring franchise owner.

Now does this do anything for Clean Franchise Brands? Not directly. Though building goodwill among franchise owners can only be a good thing. And for those of you who believe in karma, these kind of things do tend to have their own rewards at some point in time.

The possibilities of PR are endless. Like anything else though, nothing happens until you make something happen. Email us and get started.

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## Be Tech Ready - September Is National Disaster Preparedness Month

(Continued from front page...)

Keep your contacts updated and synced across all of your channels, including phone, email and social media. This will make it easy to reach out to the right people quickly to get information and supply updates.

Consider creating a group list of your top contacts.

Create a group chat via a texting app or a thread for family/friends/coworkers to communicate quickly during a disaster.

Sign up for Direct Deposit and electronic banking through your financial institution so you can access your payroll funds and make electronic payments wherever you are. can sign up by calling (800) 333-1795 or at GoDirect.org.

### BE TECH SAVVY

Think before you click on any link or attachment. Disaster events bring cybercriminals out with phony offers and donation requests

If you **must** access your email or company network from public wifi, use a VPN to keep your data secure.

***For much more Disaster Preparedness and a printable checklists, visit [www.ACTSmartIT.com/September](http://www.ACTSmartIT.com/September)***

# Kick These Old Grammar Rules Away, Part 2

by Susan Rooks, [www.GrammarGoddess.com](http://www.GrammarGoddess.com) | 508-272-5120



## Why kick these old grammar rules away?

Well, as you saw in Part 1, in modern-day writing, they no longer always apply. Like all languages, English – in its various guises – evolves. The rules for using it also evolve.



Of course, if you're writing very formal documents or writing to a very formal person, you might want to stick with the old rules.

But for regular stuff, here are three more old rules you can safely disregard.

**1. Never use contractions in business writing.** *Writing used to be far more formal than we see in the 2020s; much of our writing now includes emails, texts, or short letters. Since those are largely informal, using contractions is perfectly fine!*

Of course, it helps if you know how to form them ...

Forming contractions of words is easy enough; we've been doing that for all of our school / work life. We know that we remove one or more letters from two words, then we combine what's left and use the apostrophe to indicate where the letter (s) used to be.

I have = I've    he will = he'll

Jane cannot = Jane can't    Joe is going = Joe's going

**BUT:** Frank will not = Frank won't

Are you with me so far? You know the apostrophe goes where the letters were. So why is it so difficult to understand how to form contractions of years? We remove the first two numbers of a year like 1964, and we're left with 64. Where does the apostrophe go?

### WHERE THE FIRST TWO NUMBERS USED TO BE!

The class of 1956 = the class of '56 (**NOT** the class of 56')

I've always loved the 1960s music = the '60s music.

Back in the 1880s = back in the '80s

Back in the 1980s = back in the '80s

(Of course, context is vital; be sure you used the full version before creating a contraction.)

**2. Always follow the rules for using *who* and *whom*.**

To follow that rule depends on knowing how to use those pronouns and how formal you want or need to be.

*Who* and *whom* are pronouns, and they're supposed to be used the same way *I* or *me*, or *they* or *them* are used. *Who* is meant to be the subject of a sentence or verb, and *whom* is meant to be the object.

But again, real life and communication smarts butt heads with grammar rules, and this is one time when common sense needs to win.

**To whom did you give it?** (Really proper.)

**Whom did you give it to?** (Proper but not so natural.)

**Who did you give it to?** (More natural but not quite so proper.)

See how to use *who* and *whom*: <https://grammargoddess.com/monday-grammar-checkup-who-or-whom/>.

**3. Always use singular pronouns when referring to a single person.**

OK, this one is tough for many of us, including me. But writing *he/she* or *s/he* or *he or she* is even more awkward than using the plural *they*, *their*, or *them* when we don't know the gender of the single person we're writing about.

**BUT:** If we're writing about a man or boy, we use the masculine forms. If we're writing about a woman or girl, we use the feminine forms. (Reality check 2021: If you don't know for sure, use the default *they/their/them*.)

**NO:** Each **mother** should pick up **their** kids at 1 p.m.

**YES:** All **mothers** should pick up **their** kids at 1 p.m.

**YES:** Each **mother** should pick **her** kids at 1 p.m.

**YES:** **John** will pick up **his** check at noon.

We can also rewrite some sentences so that we don't have to use as many pronouns, especially when we're writing about what a job title will do without knowing who will fill the role. One of the easiest changes is to put the job title in a plural form, with the following pronouns also in plural form.

**NO:** When an **administrator** reads a résumé, **he** should ...

**NO:** When an **administrator** reads a résumé, **he or she** should ...

OK (but not great): When an administrator reads a résumé, they should ...

**YES:** When **administrators** read a résumé, **they** should ...

**YES:** When **secretaries** ... **they** ...

**YES:** When **carpenters** ... **they** ...

*Just takes a little imagination, right?*

If you create articles, blog posts resumes, web content, social media profiles, or nonfiction/business-related books—or for companies that publish an annual report or other public documents—Contact Susan for help with editing, copy editing, or proofreading services

Email [SusanR@GrammarGoddess.com](mailto:SusanR@GrammarGoddess.com) or call 508-272-5120

# Criminal Records Search: County vs. Statewide

By David C. Sawyer, Safer Places, Inc. | [DSawyer@SaferPlacesInc.com](mailto:DSawyer@SaferPlacesInc.com)



What's the best approach to searching for possible criminal records? Did you know you have choices and the best answer isn't the same from one state to another? If we put aside federal court searches and private database searches for a moment, we're left with a county search or a statewide search.

Some states offer access to a central repository of records that are aggregated from county courts across the state. Some county court records are available electronically and if all courts in a given state allow electronic access, we can quickly scan all counties simultaneously. Where neither of these scenarios are possible, we send a court researcher to the court to use their public access terminal (PAT) or submit a request to the clerk of courts (Clerk assist courts usually slow the process).

Cost is also a factor. Access to statewide repositories may cost more than a single county search, but not always, especially if the court charges a fee to access the records. If the subject has resided in more than one county, a statewide search is almost always less expensive and it will include all counties in that state so it could uncover a record you may otherwise have missed.

To help our clients decide the best searches to order and to be as transparent as possible in the various searches we offer, we have created a state-by-state list of available and recommended searches.

## Here's some examples of what you should know when deciding on the best searches for your situation:

**MA** – each court within the county is a separate search. We include Superior Court and one District court. A statewide search (CORI) includes all Superior and all District court records across the state.

**NH** – County searches are limited to specific courts (same as MA) and each court charges a fee – A State Police search covers the entire state. A special authorization form is required but no longer needs to be notarized.

**ME** – All Counties charge a fee so a statewide search is actually less costly than searching a single county.

## Safer Places Inc also has a monthly podcast. Previous topics have included:

- Background Checks: Is Fast, Accurate, & Cheap Achievable?
- Adverse Action Requirements: Saying "No" to a Job Applicant Based on Background Check Results
- Massachusetts Paid Family Medical Leave: What Employers Need to Know
- Database Searches in Background Checks
- Social Media Searches; we know you're doing them! But, should you?

Safer Places boils down the podcast into a fast-paced 30-minute presentation so you'll have a good understanding of the topics.

Check out their YouTube Channel at <https://bit.ly/3iXNfK>

September's FREE Podcast: **Continuous Screening: Is Once Enough?**

Wed. September 22 @ 1:00 Register at <https://www.SaferPlacesInc.com/>

**podcast**



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# Watch Out for These Two Internet Scams

By Kevin McNally, [www.InteractivePalette.com](http://www.InteractivePalette.com) | 781-930-3199



If your business has a website, there's a good chance you've received an invoice in the mail for an annual domain listing on the internet or an email stating that you are violating copyright laws. At Interactive Palette we are seeing a lot of messages from clients asking if these are legitimate; therefore, we thought we would take a minute to share what we have been seeing.

Below are examples of two common scams we see repeatedly throughout the year.

	Date Website Number Return By	8/19/2020 242-3848 9/23/2020	<b>WEBSITE LISTING SERVICE</b>
<b>DOMAIN NAME:</b> .ORG			
<b>DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES:</b> ANNUAL WEBSITE DOMAIN LISTING FROM OCTOBER 1, 2020 THRU SEPTEMBER 30, 2021			\$228.00
<b>TOTAL FOR ANNUAL LISTING:</b>			<u>\$228.00</u>
<b>SUBSCRIPTION INCLUDES:</b> Annual Website Domain Listing on internet directory Complete details located online at <a href="http://www.domainlistings.directory">www.domainlistings.directory</a>			
<p><i>This website listing offer is provided to leading websites throughout the United States to enhance their Website exposure and expose them to new customers through our directory. We are not a Domain Registrar and we do not Register or Renew Domain Names. The listing period is for 12 consecutive months and must be renewed annually if you wish to maintain your Domain listing and keep it active on our online website directory.</i></p> <p><b>THIS IS NOT A BILL. THIS IS A SOLICITATION. YOU ARE UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO PAY THE AMOUNT STATED ABOVE UNLESS YOU ACCEPT THIS OFFER.</b></p>			
<b>We Appreciate Your Business!</b>			
<small>INQUIRIES: Domain Listings LLC   Website: <a href="http://domainlistings.directory">domainlistings.directory</a> Customer Service E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@domainlistings.directory">info@domainlistings.directory</a>   Phone: 702-998-0222 Do Not Contact: <a href="http://domainlistings.directory/dnc">domainlistings.directory/dnc</a></small>			

## Domain Listings "Website Listing Service"

Companies like Domain Listings prey on small businesses who may think they need to pay a fee to have their business website listed on the internet every year.

Below is an image of the fake invoice received by one of our clients and here is [a link to a PDF example](#).

[www.Bit.ly/3myN71J](http://www.Bit.ly/3myN71J)

Not all fraudulent invoices will look exactly like this example, but this is a very common one that is received by most businesses.

## Fake Copyright Infringement Warnings Used to Spread Ransomware

Recently, a client received this email claiming that one of their images is violating copyright law. This is a fraudulent email that is used to spread ransomware.

We have seen this email several times at Interactive Palette. After researching if there was any validity to this, we discovered many websites reporting the fraudulent nature of the email. On the right is an image of the actual email received by our client.

Name: Becky  
Email: [Duncanstudio436@hotmail.com](mailto:Duncanstudio436@hotmail.com)  
Message: Hello!  
My name is Becky.  
Your website or a website that your organization hosts is infringing on a copyright protected images owned by me personally.  
Check out this document with the URLs to my images you used at [REDACTED] and my earlier publications to obtain the proof of my copyrights.  
Download it right now and check this out for yourself:  
<https://firebasestorage.googleapis.com/v0/b/files-d6e6c.appspot.com/o/download-3mfdlnn30f.html?alt=media&token=232963bd-6a3d-4ba0-a232-303ecf544860&l=902741092665284423>  
I believe you've intentionally infringed my rights under 17 U.S.C. Sec. 101 et seq. and can be liable for statutory damages of up to \$140,000 as set forth in Section 504(c)(2) of the Digital millennium copyright act (DMCA) therein. This message is official notice. I seek the elimination of the infringing materials described above. Take note as a service provider, the DMCA demands you, to remove and disable access to the copyrighted materials upon receipt of this particular letter.  
If you do not cease the utilization of the aforementioned copyrighted content a court action will be initiated against you.  
I do have a good self-belief that use of the copyrighted materials referenced above as allegedly violating is not approved by the copyright owner, its agent, or the law.  
I declare, under penalty of perjury, that the information in this letter is correct and that I am currently the legal copyright proprietor or am authorized to act on behalf of the owner of an exclusive and legal right that is presumably infringed.  
Regards,  
Becky Duncan  
07/26/2021  
searchre

**We hope this has been helpful. If you receive a bill you are unsure about please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.**

# LinkedIn Profile Advice

By Jeff Young (#The LinkedIn Guru) and Stella Da Silva (#Stellalicious)



**Jeff:** Some people will tell you to make your profile about who you are... I won't.

I will tell you to make your profile about who you WANT to become. I will tell you to make your profile about your "customer" and "audience". Tell them what value you will bring and how you will bring it.

Some people will tell you to make your profile a copy of your resume... I won't.

I will tell you that your resume and your profile are two DIFFERENT tools. Some of the information should be the same, but there is so much MORE you can do on your profile because you have so much more space.

Both your resume and profile need to be focused (a resume should be focused on a specific job, your profile should be focused on a future goal and/or career).

A rule for your resume is to NEVER use first person. A rule for LinkedIn is that you should ALWAYS use first person.

Some people will tell you that you should adopt EVERY new feature that comes along on LinkedIn... I won't.

I will tell you that you should adopt a new feature if and when it matches your style and will add value to you and your brand. For example, I have adopted "Creator Mode" making me look like many others, but if I adopt "Cover Story" it will be in a totally different way than most "talking heads" videos.



**Stella:** Before I even start talking about your profile, there are a few things I say. Know your WHY! What are your intentions exactly and what do you want LinkedIn to do for you?

LinkedIn has quite a few features for you to set up a profile with new ones such as creator mode and cover story recently rolled out. But guess what, you may not need all the features to function well on LinkedIn.

If you are a jobseeker, your profile should be about what VALUE you can bring to your potential employer.

If you are looking to generate leads by either selling a product or service, then your profile should be about you having a solution to a problem that the consumer is or may be having. Your profile should be telling me how you would solve my problem.

You really don't have to follow the CV/Resume format and you can be as creative as you want by adding articles, videos, pictures. Jeff and I have both done this.

Remember this is YOUR profile page. Bring your personality, your vibe to it!!

*"The best piece of advice we could give anyone is DO WHAT WORKS FOR YOU if what you do helps you achieve your goals out here on LinkedIn. After all, being who YOU are is one of the best things you can do!"*

Go to Jeff and Stella's LinkedIn page and hit "Subscribe" for more useful information

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## SAFER EVERY DAY

HOW TO BECOME A HUMAN FIREWALL - ONE DAY AT A TIME!

### How strong is your password?

You know that password12345 is a BAD password but do you know if your password, especially your most important email password is strong?

Go to [HowSecureMyPassword.net](http://HowSecureMyPassword.net) and see how long it would take to crack your password (passPHRASE).

A friend told me that his password is "incorrect" because his login always says that. HaHa![HowSecureMyPassword.net](http://HowSecureMyPassword.net) says "incorrect" would take 2 minutes to crack.

Add a few capital letters, numbers and symbols and "InC0rrecT#" would take 5 years to crack.



[www.ACTSmartIT.com/safer](http://www.ACTSmartIT.com/safer)

## SAFER EVERY DAY

HOW TO BECOME A HUMAN FIREWALL - ONE DAY AT A TIME!

### Why Is It Called Phishing?

Like a person fishing lures a fish with bait, a hacker lures their victims with the bait of information they would like or are curious about.

It is reported by Computerworld that the "F" is replaced with "PH" as a nod to Phone "phreaking" where the F was replaced with PH by people hacking phone systems in the early 1970's.

When you are tempted to click on a suspicious link offering you "tasty" information, picture yourself with a hook in your mouth and your money or credentials gone!

Think before you click!



[www.ACTSmartIT.com/safer](http://www.ACTSmartIT.com/safer)

These are just two examples of ACTSmart IT's daily "Safer Every Day" posts. Monday thru Friday we post a suggestion or other information to help you stay safer in this crazy, dangerous world.

Too busy to visit? Have "Safer Every Day" delivered to your inbox! Go to [ACTSmartIT.com/safer](http://ACTSmartIT.com/safer) and sign up—it's FREE!