Abstract: How do written grammatical & typographical errors affect our initial social judgments? We often form snap judgments based on sparse online “profile” information alone (Stecher & Counts (2008a, 2008b)). In two experiments, we found that individual grammar preference and production of errors were linked to variability in judgments about both email readability and suitability as a housemate. In general, homophonous grammatical errors (e.g., your/you’re) affected judgment and readability more severely than typographical errors (e.g., teh) or hypercorrections (e.g., invited John and I).

Introduction:
In Experiments 1 & 2, we measured individual production of grammatical errors, attitudes about grammar, and the impact of grammatical & typographical errors upon participant perception of the authors’ character traits and habits. In Experiment 3, we will measure how noticeable hypercorrections & homophonic grammatical errors are.

Predictions:
• Hypercorrections & typos will influence negative judgments less than homophonic grammatical errors.
• Negative social assessment will correlate to participants’ production of non-standard forms.
• Prescriptivists will be more prone to negative evaluation

Design: Experiments 1 & 2
Transcription of Recorded Monologue
Intent: Evaluate participants’ tendencies in producing grammatical errors
Participant Bio Questionnaire
Intent: Elicit participants’ exposure to/use of views towards “good” grammar
How important to you is good grammar?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(not at all) (very important)

Email Evaluation
Experiment 1: Grammatical vs. Typographical Errors
Intent: Investigate the effects of grammatical errors and typos on social judgments/perceptions
• 12 written matched-guise “email” narratives evaluated on a 5-pt Likert scale for a variety of characteristics
• 4 conditions: error-free; homophonic grammatical errors; typos

Experiment 2: Grammatical vs. Hypercorrection Errors
Intent: Investigate the effects of grammatical errors and hypercorrections on social judgments/perceptions
• Identical to Experiment 1, except hypercorrections rather than typographical errors.

Example text: My name is C.J. and its (it’s) going to be great to be out of the dorms. I like to practice my guitar, and they’re (their) hating the loud music where my bandmates and myself (!) live. We’ve been having lots of disagreements about whom (who) actually has the right to decide when it has to be quiet. If you’re (your) into music, and would like to jam with my friends and I (me), hit me back. Trust me, it’s going to be a great year!

Experiment 1
• Both typos & grammar errors decreased readability
• Grammar attitude predicted errors produced (R=.49)
• Figure A—Error production predicted readability cost of grammar errors (but not suitability cost)
• Figure B: Grammar attitude predicted suitability cost

Experiment 2
• Hypercorrections didn’t decrease readability
• Figure C: Grammar attitude predicted readability costs of homophonic errors
• Figure D: Error production predicted suitability costs of homophonic errors, but not costs of hypercorrections
• Grammar attitude unrelated to suitability costs

Experiment 3: Editing Task
Intent: Determine “natural” grammar
• 24 randomized “email” responses to housemate advert
• Half contain typos, homophonic errors, & hypercorrections

Conclusion
• Grammar attitude & production predict homophonic error costs, but vary in weight
• Experiment 3 will clarify whether homophonic errors are more noticeable than hypercorrections

References: