

## My Thinking About Typos

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I apologise for my typos, however, I submit that recipients have a responsibility to extract meaning from communications, typos and unfamiliar and poor expression notwithstanding.

If they do not, they may be effectively discriminating against those from different cultural backgrounds for whom English is not their first language. And against people from different age and gender backgrounds who use the language differently.

They may also miss critical information!

Some of you may remember the Hon Tim Holding, MP, Minister for Police in one of the Bracks' Ministries.

Some of you may also remember the data leaks from the LEAP system.

Holding claimed he knew nothing about it, which it would seem was true.

However, he SHOULD known about it have because he had been sent a memo that he [didn't read because of typos..](#)

He was transferred out of from the Police ministry.

**For my part, I make typos.** However, I take the view that as a recipient of communications, I have an obligation to extract as much meaning as I can from anything you send me. As an academic who has experience with the peer review process, both as an author and referee I must do this. This also holds for my duties as supervisor ..

**But back to the Tim Holding story..**

**A worst case example of "not reading because of typos or poor expression"**

From the Age story linked to above..

*"Mr Holding found he had to characterise himself as having been foolish to get off an accusation of being something worse.*

*He says he failed to read beyond the first two paragraphs of the memo that would have fully alerted him to a major leak of police files because the memo had mistakes in it. He sent it back and it never reappeared.*

*Another source says, however, that at least one of the mistakes was inconsequential — the author had misspelt his own name.*

*Last week, some of Mr Holding's other correspondents could not resist slipping in a few sly little digs.*

*Liberty Victoria's president Brian Walters, SC, is wondering whether he has come across the real reason why Mr Holding has not responded to his invitation to meet soon after he took up the portfolio. "It might not have reached him — or there might have been a spelling mistake in the letter. I don't know," he wondered aloud.*

*And the Police Association secretary, Senior Sergeant Paul Mullett, is hoping his spelling is up to scratch, too, on a matter dear to his heart. "We don't want him sending back memos because there are spelling mistakes on any issue to do with the Police Career Services Commission!" "*

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