

PA ENTERPRISE

DeskDemon's Magazine for Executive PAs, Office Managers and Secretaries

February 2013

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Office Romance – proceed with caution!

Head in the Clouds? Cloud Computing explained

Time Management: Time is money, so save it!

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Vodafone Smart Tab II

Now available on Vodafone UK business price plans

The compact new Vodafone Smart Tab II is the ideal mobile workmate for sales reps, site managers, many public sector workers and anyone else who often works in the field – helping them to keep connected and stay productive when they're on the go.

The Smart Tab II has a 7-inch WSVGA (1024 x 600) touchscreen display, and a single core 1GHz processor. It can hold up to 32GB of data – plenty of room for documents and emails.

The tablet runs on Android Ice Cream Sandwich, which gives users easy access to their emails, the latest news, and more than 600,000 apps through Google Play - this includes a growing number of tablet-enabled business apps. The front and rear facing cameras and 7 inch display are encased in a compact design just 11.5 mm thick and weighing 400 grams - providing the benefits of a laptop but without the extra weight.

The Smart Tab II is available to businesses of all sizes from £24.17 then £16.67 per month over 24 months (ex VAT) - so it's perfect for the cost conscious. The monthly data allowance starts at 2GB of mobile internet and 1GB of Wi-Fi but can be increased depending on the price plan.

Forget chocolates – it's got to be Finger Candy™ this Valentine's Day!

Looking for a Valentine's gift that's light on calories and big on 'wow' factor? Then look no further than award-winning British jeweller, Nicholas James' new Finger Candy™ collection of occasion rings.

Nicholas James has created a sterling silver ring range characterised by a single, precious stone setting, available in a multitude of coloured gems including pink, yellow and orange sapphires, green tsavorite, as well as white, brown and black diamonds. The bands' silver base can be specified in a variety of finishes and textures such as black rhodium, pink or yellow gold plated, polished, brushed, sandblasted and anodised. Part of the joy of the range comes from the endless possibilities available, especially as multiple rings are collected over time.

So this Valentine's Day remember bunches of roses are so old hat – now you can opt for a bunch of rings instead. The fun, spontaneous Finger Candy™ range retails from £95 to £295. Visit Nicholas James to create a terrifically tasty, finger licking' tower of candy!

www.nicholasjames.com



New research predicts a 'low' in sleep this February

As the UK eases itself into 2013, the newest results from Sleepio's Great British Sleep Survey suggest that we are on the brink of a post New Year's 'sleep dip'.

The survey of over 21,000 UK adults predicts that February will be the worst for sleep until the winter months hit later this year. Key findings suggest that:

- We will spend an average of 8 minutes longer trying to get to sleep, alongside a further 10 minutes awake during the night than we will in March.
- Almost one third more people will suffer from low energy in February than in March.
- Women are particularly affected, experiencing sleep quality 7% worse in February than their average for the rest of the year (versus a 5% dip for men).

It's not all bad news however. The survey, commissioned by clinically-proven sleep improvement programme Sleepio.com, suggests that we should see a boost in our sleep in March, with a 14% increase in the nation's average Sleep Score, an overall measure of sleep quality, and a 26% fall in those who felt frustrated due to their sleep.



Majority of SMEs unprepared for RTI

81% small businesses still in dark about payroll shake-up in April

New research reveals that only 19% of small businesses are aware and prepared for the introduction of HMRC's new RTI (real-time information) payroll system happening this April.

The Crunch survey shows that 46% have no knowledge of RTI, whilst a further 35% admit they are only vaguely aware of the forthcoming legislation.

Steve Crouch, Financial Director at Crunch Accounting said: "These new stats clearly show that despite HMRC's claims that their communications campaign for RTI is on track, there's still not enough information from the

government about this huge change to the payroll system.

"There's still time to get organised, but small businesses should start planning now. Small and medium-sized businesses need to be fully RTI compliant by April 2013, so talk to your payroll provider if you're unsure or if they haven't yet informed you about changes," added Crouch.

The introduction of RTI aims to improve the flow of National Insurance and tax information between HMRC and employers to keep records in real time. Payroll information including salary, income tax and National Insurance will need to be submitted monthly rather than annually, and will eventually replace P35s and P14s.

The new RTI scheme will be a requirement for large businesses later this year, but there will be eventual penalties starting in 2014 for all businesses that are not RTI compliant.

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Add a splash of colour to your working day with the help of Paper Mate's new InkJoy range and be one of the first to claim an InkJoy 100 Assorted Fun Colours pack of 10.

Designed to bring the joy back to writing, the new InkJoy has been labelled as the world's most stolen pen and comes in a selection of 10 bright and bold colours. Its revolutionary ink system also gives you the best in effortless writing every time.



To be one of the first 100 to claim an Inkjoy 100 Assorted Fun Colours pack of 10, simply [CLICK HERE](#) to complete the online form



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Whether you are entertaining your most important clients, or treating your friends and family, there is only one way to see all the biggest names in music this summer – Club Wembley.

Wembley Stadium has become synonymous with some of the world's largest and most astonishing concert events. With an array of performances lined up for 2013, including Bruce Springsteen, Robbie Williams, Roger Waters and The Killers, don't miss

your opportunity to see music industry legends grace the stage under the famous Wembley arch.

Impress your guests, strengthen client relationships and motivate your staff. Boasting an abundance of versatile and modern suites, Wembley provides a first-class hospitality experience for you and your guests to cherish.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information and to view the events lined up for 2013

Have your say...

Complete our Online survey

This month's question:

"How do you book most of your hotel rooms for your business travellers?"

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Winter weather travel disruption – advice from Acas



When the weather makes it difficult to travel, employers and employees should consider how this could impact on the workplace.

“There is no legal right for staff to be paid by an employer for travel delays.”

Key points to remember

Employees are not automatically entitled to pay if unable to get to work because of bad weather

There is no legal right for staff to be paid by an employer for travel delays (unless the travel itself is constituted as working time or in some situations where the employer provides the transport). However, employers may have contractual, collective or custom and practice arrangements in place for this. Discretionary payment for travel disruption might also be of use. Some organisations offer discretionary payments for travel disruption or have their own informal arrangements for this purpose. Such arrangements are normally contained in staff contracts or handbooks or through collective agreements.

Be flexible where possible

A more flexible approach to matters such as working hours and location may be effective if possible. The handling of bad weather and travel disruption can be an opportunity for an employer to enhance staff morale and productivity by the way it is handled for example is there opportunity to work from home. Think about other issues such as

alternative working patterns or who can cover at short notice.

Use information technology

Information technology could be useful in enabling a business to run effectively if many employees are absent from work, for example using laptops or smartphones.

Deal with issues fairly

Even if businesses are damaged by the effects of absent workers they should still ensure that any measures they take are carried out according to proper and fair procedure. This will help maintain good, fair and consistent employment relations and help prevent complaints to employment tribunals.

Plan ahead

Consider reviewing your policy and thinking about how you handle future scenarios. It would be best to put an “adverse weather” or ‘journey into work’ policy into place that deals with the steps employees are required to take to try to get into work on time and how the business will continue if they cannot. You need to decide how to deal with lateness and what will happen with regard to pay. Having such a policy should mean, there is much less scope for confusion and disagreement.

How can staff keep difficulties to a minimum?

Think about how you plan to get into work. Trains, buses and trams might be operating reduced timetables or be running earlier or later than normal. Car and bicycle travel may be delayed by road closures and slower driving. Have you arranged an alternative route or travel method to get in and get home? Have you considered the benefit of giving yourself a little extra commute time?

Think about what arrangements you have in place if your child cannot get to school, your normal childcare provider is unavailable or if your child’s school is closed. Do you have a practical back-up arrangement? Make sure you know how to get in touch with your employer if you are unable to get into work and that you have a means of communicating with them if you are going to be delayed.

If you are affected by the weather, is there some way you can work around this or keep the difficulty to a minimum? Think about if you have the option to work from home, alter your hours or if there is anything else you could discuss with your employer to help the situation.



Consider how your employer can deal with your workload in your absence. Can you let your manager know where everything is with a phone call? Do you need to let your employer know if any deadlines are at risk?

If some staff manage to get into work but others can not but still get paid is that fair?

Employees are not legally entitled to receive payment if not at work, some employers realise adverse weather doesn't happen often and may be flexible where possible. It can be frustrating for those who can get to work while others can't but not all situations are the same and it probably won't go unnoticed by managers.

What happens if the schools are closed and parents can not come to work?

In emergency situations an employee is entitled to take unpaid time off to look after dependants, although this would not normally apply to a situation where the employee was required to look after their children as a result of not having any childcare arrangements. In extreme weather conditions this could be seen as an emergency situation.

It's important to point out that this is **Time Off for Dependents** and as such an employee is entitled to as much unpaid time off as a tribunal decides is reasonable to make alternative arrangements for childcare. In other words, the right to time off may vary as per each individual's circumstance. Whilst some employers may offer this as holiday that is only with agreement from the employee and only if the employer wants to offer/accept it.

Employers may wish to see if some staff could work from home.

www.acas.org.uk

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The InkJoy 100 range comes in a selection of 10 bright and bold colours including blue, red, lime green, magenta, pink and purple, making them great for keeping your work life in order by using them to colour code important documents. Finally its translucent colour tinted body gives the pen a modern and refreshing look, which has led it to be labelled as the world's most stolen pen!

For more information on the full range of Paper Mate InkJoy pens visit:
inkjoy.papermate.com

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PA Enterprise Travel



Aer Lingus announces new 'Sky Dine' experience

Aer Lingus has announced its new premium three course meal choice, 'Sky Dine', available to pre-order now for customers travelling in economy class on transatlantic flights between Dublin, Shannon and the USA. The first meals will be delivered on board on the 14th February.

The meals, created by Aer Lingus Head Chef James Keaveney in close partnership with Sean Cotter from Catering, North America, are each complimented by a choice of red or white.

The **Steak House** meal (pictured) consists of fillet of beef, sautéed potatoes with onion, spinach topped with tomato tartar, mushrooms and served with peppercorn sauce. Chocolate mousse by Lily O'Brien or cheesecake, is served for dessert.

The **Cod with Salsa Verde** meal option is a fillet of cod topped with salsa verde crust, served with baby potatoes and steamed fresh vegetables. Dessert is a delicious seasonal fruit salad.

A third option is **Chicken stuffed with Irish black pudding**, wrapped in bacon, served with colcannon mash potato and steamed root vegetables. Chocolate mousse by Lily O'Brien or cheesecake is served for dessert.

Similar to the Sky Deli Pre-Order Meal Service on flights to UK and Europe, customers travelling on USA flights can pre-order up to 90 days in advance of travel while making their booking or by adding it to an existing booking via the "Manage Booking" facility on www.aerlingus.com.

United increases frequency from Heathrow

United Airlines will add an additional daily flight between London Heathrow and Houston on 31 March.

With the launch of the extra frequency, the airline will offer its new First class product on the route for the first time, providing passengers with flat beds and an upgraded service.

From 2 April, United will operate three daily services between the two cities.



PA Enterprise Travel



Europe's most stylish airline named

Russian airline Aeroflot has been named as the most stylish airline in Europe by Skyscanner.

Despite Russia being voted one of the least stylish nations in a recent poll by the travel research site, Aeroflot's red uniforms have won over passengers, it said.

Some 1,200 decided the Russian's uniforms were more stylish than British Airways' red, white and blue outfits, which came second in the survey.

German airline Lufthansa, with its blue suits and yellow scarves, has pipped the traditionally chic French into third place, while Finnish airline Finnair flies the flag for the Nordic region and completes the top five most stylish European airlines.

Most stylish airlines:

1. **Aeroflot**
2. **BA**
3. **Lufthansa**
4. **Air France**
5. **Finnair**

Budget airline Flybe, which recently ran a promotional campaign with actress and TV presenter Kelly Brook, came sixth.

Bmi regional expands outside UK

Bmi regional is to launch flights from Bremen in Germany to Toulouse in France, which will be its first route on mainland Europe.

Chief Executive Cathal O'Connell said the launch, on 4 March, indicated the airline's ambition to grow outside Europe.

"This new route is the perfect addition to the seven new routes we have rolled out since bmi regional established itself as an independent airline in 2012," he said.

The new routes are: Bristol to Aberdeen, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Manchester to Antwerp, and Birmingham to Gothenburg, Lyon and Toulouse.



Head in the Clouds?

By Paul Pennant

Not so long ago when I was a PA, if I wanted to work on a document I would either need to be at work, take it away on a memory stick or disk or email it to myself. On several occasions I would lose track of which was the most up to date copy. Thanks to cloud computing my personal and professional life has become much simpler. Let me explain.

What is cloud computing?

The term cloud computing refers simply to storing your data in the internet.

How does it work?

Despite being called a techy by many friends, I was very nervous about using the cloud. However, after a few weeks of usage I cannot believe how I survived without it. In the days of old we relied on storing data largely in a physical location; work; home or on a portable device. With cloud computing you store your documents in the internet. Wherever you are in the world as long as you have access to the internet you have access to your files.

As a trainer of PAs I have many handouts and am continuously looking to update them. Up until recently I would store all my documents at my office. Occasionally I would email new documents to my Outlook account and work from them on my laptop. When I designed a new course I decided to save it to the "cloud". I was extremely nervous. A few days later I was on a train, went online and updated my handouts. That evening I went online in my hotel room and worked on the handouts again. I could not believe that we had not been doing this for years!

Let's say you have a CV that you want to keep up to date. Store it in the cloud. Wherever you are can amend, update and email your CV.

Fancy sending your friend photos of your wedding? Not so long ago you may get extra prints and post them to friends. Then with the digital revolution we started emailing them and clogging up the memory of our computers. Now you can store all your images in the cloud and (into relevant folders if you wish) press the "share" button and enter your friends' email addresses. They will then receive an email that gives them a link to your online folder. Depending on your settings you can either allow them to view them or edit them or both.

Where can I access the cloud?

The leading players in the market at the moment are Dropbox, Google Drive and SkyDrive. Amazon has recently entered this marketplace. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages. I opted for Microsoft's SkyDrive as my main cloud account as I already had a hotmail email account and use Microsoft daily.

How much does it cost?

For most users it will be free. Dropbox gives you 2GB of storage, Google Drive 5GB and SkyDrive 25GB. You can pay a few pounds a month to upgrade.



Cloud Security

My greatest fear over the cloud was how safe were things that were stored in the air? For the last two years I have not lost a document. These companies reputations are too heavily invested to allow business and personal customers data to be lost. It is predicted that in a few years with internet penetration getting even better that cloud computing will be seen as the norm.

Paul Pennant was a former PA and is now owner and Managing Director of www.todaysPA.co.uk a company that travels the world training PAs, EAs and Office Professionals.

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Article taster...

There are a whole host interesting, informative and 'must-read' articles on DeskDemon.com

Here are a taste of just a few - click on the links to read the full stories online.



Next Interview Face of Petites Collection, Rachel Stevens

British fashion brand Next have recently launched their Spring Summer petite collection, modelled by the stunning Rachel Stevens, who is a perfectly proportioned 5'1. Are you under 5'3 and need some help when it comes to shopping? Are you searching for that perfect petites maxi dress or pair of high waisted jeans but struggle with the length? Well, Next chatted to the face of their petites clothing range - Rachel Stevens - to help answer some of those common questions.

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Best Western Launch First Ever Kids Club

Great Britain's largest group of independent hotels, Best Western, has launched its first ever Kids Club, BW Kids, to encourage children to get out and explore Great Britain. The aim is to get kids more involved in their trips away and enjoy the travel experience.

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Launched as part of the group's redevelopment of its family friendly hotels, BW Kids intends to keep intrepid young explorers entertained and show it's enjoyable to discover cool, new things in the UK.



Basic Guidelines for Conference Organising

By Brantley Graham

Guidelines on how to organise a conference will always differ according to the type of event. Given below are the basic guidelines that are required to organise a conference:



Strategic Planning

Identify your target audience; define your goals and objectives for the conference; decide on a theme for the event; decide on the type of approach that you would want for the conference; conduct meetings with the venue staff to sort out the strategic planning requirements

Budget

A well-planned budget is a vital tool for the success of a conference. Consider all areas of the conference and work out a cost for the event. Once your budget is finalised, it is vital that you stick to it until the end of the event. Include the costs for the venue hires, speaker's fees etc. Also include other costs such as, hotel accommodation and transport charges. Remember to always have at least a 10% to cover unforeseen expenses.

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What to Wear to an Interview

by Adrian Addison

Going to an interview can be a stressful time for many. Try to feel comfortable by wearing something that will make you look professional, whilst giving a good impression to the interviewer. It makes sense to dress your best at an interview even if the job you are applying for doesn't require this. First impressions are lasting ones, so make yours good.



Travel Itineraries

By Nicky Christmas

A well organised travel itinerary is an essential service that assistants can provide for their managers. Think about all the different bits of paper you have to keep with you – tickets, hotel details, travel guides. Well along with the usual stresses of travelling your boss also has to attend meetings and act professionally when in many cases they are dealing with jet lag and the continuous business activities back in the UK office. A detailed itinerary, constructed by you, will help them enormously. It will enable them to be organised when you cannot be there to do that for them.

1 / 1 46.3% Comment Share

Please fill out the following form. Highlight Existing Fields

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flight #: _____	departure time: _____ arrival time: _____
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Office Romance - Proceed with Caution!

By Paul H Croteau

While office romance can occur at any time, it seems that the month of February, and especially Valentine's Day, focuses a bit more attention on the issue. And the issue for organisations is whether or not their managers should or should not interfere in the private lives of their employees. But, is a romance at work really a private affair? The answer is, sometimes yes and sometimes no.

For instance, a workplace romance between a manager and a direct reporting employee is particularly dangerous for organisations. This is a power relationship that might lead to favouritism, breaches of confidentiality and concerns about professional ethics. This type of romance can also put the organisation at risk, especially if the relationship ends badly. At the very least, when a workplace romance doesn't work out, the individuals still have to interact every day creating a constant reminder and perhaps a sense of failure which can potentially impact productivity. Worse even, a sexual harassment lawsuit might well follow. Inevitably, someone will feel the need to leave the organisation.

In general, workplace romances can lead to excessive gossip and

a general feeling of negativity. People will stop being as open and sharing and may feel like they are at a competitive disadvantage.

While everyone knows that an organisation can't legislate against workplace romance, it is strongly suggested that managers receive training in how to deal with this type of situation. As well, it is important that managers be fully aware of your sexual harassment policies and be prepared to take immediate action.

So, if workplace romance can't be legislated, then it is up to individuals to be as professional as possible. This means that you need to:

♥ Think carefully about your personal risk before engaging in a workplace romance. What consequences could occur as

a result? How will you handle things if the romance doesn't work out? Are you prepared to transfer to another department and/or leave your current employer?

♥ Think carefully about how your actions might impact your colleagues and/or the organisation. Would your relationship be viewed as harmful? Would it be respected? Is there a potential for conflict of interest? Will you be creating jealousy or ruining another friendship?

♥ Familiarise yourself with organisational policies, particularly the policies related to workplace behaviour, sexual harassment, respect in the workplace and make sure that you abide by them.

♥ Retain your work commitment. Especially in



the early throes of a romance, you will have the tendency to wander from your worksite to visit your loved one or you may be spending too much time on the phone. Stick to your job and get your work done to the best of your ability.

♥ Be discreet by ensuring that you avoid public displays of affection. Otherwise you will make people feel uncomfortable.

♥ Keep your personal communications personal; in other words, do not use company email to send personal notes.

♥ Respect other peoples' personal boundaries as in most cases they won't want to hear about your romance. Not only is this a waste of company time,

you will probably be sharing more than what people are comfortable with. Therefore, don't discuss your relationship with anyone else.

♥ As with any relationship, choose a workplace romance wisely. Determine if there is truly any commonality and/or if the only thing you have in common is work. Long term relationships need to be based on substance.

♥ If you do go ahead with a workplace romance, decide together how to present your relationship at work. Seek out advice from your human resource manager and determine how you will relate to each other at work; set some rules for yourself.

We spend a good deal of time in

the workplace and so it seems natural that this might be a good place to find a loved one. This path however can be fraught with many pitfalls that can cause problems for everyone concerned. In general, the safest choice is to avoid a workplace romance whenever possible.

Paul Croteau, managing partner, is known as one of Manitoba's leading executive search professionals. His more than 25 years of experience in the recruitment of senior management and executive leadership professionals are the foundation to his solid reputation for developing a deep understanding of his clients' needs, enabling him to provide exceptional service and successfully meet the complex challenge of matching the right leader to his clients' business needs. He can be reached at paul@legacybowes.com

Time Management: Time is Money, so Save it!

By Shirley Taylor

I've known people who roll their eyes when someone mentions 'time management,' and mutter under their breath, "I don't have TIME to worry about time management." The problem with that attitude is that good time management doesn't have to take much time or effort at all. The changes you make in your habits don't have to be huge. Even small changes can make a big difference when added together.

There are many things you can do that will help you be more efficient without having to waste an hour a day trying to save fifteen minutes of work. Here are a few ideas you can try:

Only touch a piece of paper once

Okay, this one doesn't totally fit today's computerised world, but it does apply, and it can be modified to fit our current needs. For example, many business people have an IN box. It might be your top drawer or an actual box sitting on your desk. Don't thumb through the items in your IN box, reading them over and over so you can choose one that you want to work on. Pick up the next item in the box, do it, and move on to the next. You'll save time because you won't be reading each item multiple times a day to see

whether you want to do it.

Actually, the same can hold true for computer work. Unless you are expecting something you need in your email, don't open and read everything you get immediately when that little 'you've got mail' tone goes off. Chances are you'll go back to whatever you were working on originally and have to re-read the email again later when you decide what action, if any, is required of you.

Prioritise

Whether you take ten minutes first thing in the morning, or ten in the morning and ten right after lunch, prioritise your work for the day. You'll save time because you won't be ruffling through projects constantly during the day, trying to figure



out which one you should work on next. Take a few minutes to line the day's work out in an orderly fashion. Of course, you have to be flexible - new jobs come in constantly that take priority, but don't stop what you planned to do unless absolutely necessary.

Personally, I've always used the last ten minutes of the day to clean up my desk and prioritise my work for the next day. I love coming in to that nice clear desk in the morning, knowing right away what my schedule is. I even stack my workload in the correct order, so the first job is right on top!

Use lists

Lists can be helpful in so many ways. Use a list on your calendar to prioritise your work. Use a list on a project to line out the steps you need to take to complete it. One of the biggest ways you'll save time is by not making false starts and having to go back and redo work because you forgot a step.

A note of caution, however: Don't become so enamoured of lists that you spend more time on lists than on work. In all honesty, I once worked with a young lady who made lists of her lists. True story! She had so many lists that she made a list of them so she wouldn't forget to update each one. I think most of us would agree that this is defeating the purpose of saving time by using lists.

Avoid distractions

Are you easily distracted? Can you see out the door of your office to the hallway? Do people walking by catch your eye? Do they stop and lean in the doorway to chat?

If you waste time because you are distracted by others, move your office layout so you can't see out the door anymore. Perhaps security requires that your computer not face the hall. If that's the case, arrange a plant in front of your desk on a file cabinet so it blocks most of the doorway. Explain to people who come in to chat that you are sorry but you have a close deadline and don't have time to chat. After a while, people will get the idea and stop bothering you.

Don't multi-task

I bet this one surprises you, right? The difficult part about multi-tasking - such as typing an email and talking on the phone at the same time - is that you aren't giving your full attention to either task. You're more likely to take the wrong message or make a typo when your mind is on the other task. What a waste of time to have to call the person back to correct your message, or re-open the file so you can correct the typo and print it out all over again!

While these tips might be perfect for your situation, you should be able to come up with other ways to save time that only apply to your own work profile. For example, once upon a time, I worked on files each day. I did particular things to a file and then took it back to the file room and filed it away correctly. It dawned on me one day that I must walk back and forth to that file room at least twenty times a day, so I decided to set aside a few minutes before lunch each day to file ALL the files from the previous afternoon and that morning. I saved about a half hour a day - yes, I timed it - by doing all the filing at once. It's very likely you can find specific time-savers for your workday too!

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