

# *Writing for the Web*

Suzanne Wayne

June 14, 2005

# Introduction

---

Suzanne Wayne

Promotional Copywriter

Smeal College of Business

[suzwayne@psu.edu](mailto:suzwayne@psu.edu)

# Why Writing for the Web

---

## One Answer – The Medium

“...79 percent of our test users always scanned any new page they came across; only 16 percent read word-by-word.”

Jakob Nielsen

# Writing Considerations

---

- Audience: Who are you writing for?
- Purpose: Why are you writing this?
- Tone: How are you going to say it?

# Writing Considerations

---

- Shorten Your Text
- Make Text Scannable
- Create Clear, Meaningful Links
- Build Chunky Paragraphs
- Make Comprehension Easy

# Shorten Your Text

---

- Cut any paper-based text by 50%

# Shorten Your Text

---

- Cut any paper-based text by 50%
- Make each paragraph short

# Shorten Your Text

---

- Cut any paper-based text by 50%
- Make each paragraph short

Example 1

# Shorten Your Text

---

- Link to supplemental materials

# Shorten Your Text

---

- Link to supplemental materials
- Use tables, charts, or graphs when appropriate

# Shorten Your Text

---

- Link to supplemental materials
- Use tables, charts, or graphs when appropriate

Example 2

# Make Text Scannable

---

- Use meaningful headlines and subheads

# Make Text Scannable

---

- Use meaningful headlines and subheads
- Highlight key words, phrases, and links

# Make Text Scannable

---

- Use meaningful headlines and subheads
- Highlight key words, phrases, and links
- Turn any series into a bulleted or numbered list

# Make Text Scannable

---

- Use meaningful headlines and subheads
- Highlight key words, phrases, and links
- Turn any series into a bulleted or numbered list

Example 3

# Create Clear, Meaningful Links

---

- Make a link's content clear.

# Create Clear, Meaningful Links

---

- Make a link's content clear.
- Make the link the emphatic element in the sentence.

# Create Clear, Meaningful Links

---

- Make a link's content clear.
- Make the link the emphatic element in the sentence.
- Shift focus from the links to the subject

# Create Clear, Meaningful Links

---

- Make a link's content clear.
- Make the link the emphatic element in the sentence.
- Shift focus from the links to the subject
- Identify media objects appropriately

# Create Clear, Meaningful Links

---

- Make a link's content clear.
- Make the link the emphatic element in the sentence.
- Shift focus from the links to the subject
- Identify media objects appropriately

Example 4

# Build Chunky Paragraphs

---

- Assign one main idea to each paragraph

# Build Chunky Paragraphs

---

- Assign one main idea to each paragraph
- Put the main idea of the paragraph first

# Build Chunky Paragraphs

---

- Assign one main idea to each paragraph
- Put the main idea of the paragraph first
- Put your conclusion in the first paragraph of the article

# Build Chunky Paragraphs

---

- Assign one main idea to each paragraph
- Put the main idea of the paragraph first
- Put your conclusion in the first paragraph of the article

Example 5

# Make Comprehension Easy

---

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence

# Make Comprehension Easy

---

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence

Example 6

# Make Comprehension Easy

---

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence
- Eliminate turning verbs into nouns

# Make Comprehension Easy

---

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence
- Eliminate turning verbs into nouns

Example 7

# Make Comprehension Easy

---

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence
- Eliminate turning verbs into nouns
- Avoid ambiguity

# Make Comprehension Easy

---

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence
- Eliminate turning verbs into nouns
- Avoid ambiguity

Example 8

# Make Comprehension Easy

---

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence
- Eliminate turning verbs into nouns
- Avoid ambiguity
- Use active voice

# Make Comprehension Easy

---

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence
- Eliminate turning verbs into nouns
- Avoid ambiguity
- Use active voice

Example 9

# Make Comprehension Easy

---

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence
- Eliminate turning verbs into nouns
- Avoid ambiguity
- Use active voice
- Make positive statements

# Make Comprehension Easy

---

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence
- Eliminate turning verbs into nouns
- Avoid ambiguity
- Use active voice
- Make positive statements

Example 10

# Penn State Web Considerations

---

- Penn State Style
  - Web Style Guide:  
<http://webstyleguide.psu.edu/>
  - Penn State Editorial Style Guide:  
<http://publications.psu.edu/>
- Departmental Style

# Conclusions

---

- Practice your writing skills.
- Have others review your writing.
- Cut. Revise. Cut. Revise.
- Test your site regularly.

# References

---

## **Online:**

Nielsen, Jakob – “Writing for the Web”

<http://www.sun.com/980713/webwriting/>

Will-Harris, Daniel – “Writing for the Web”

[http://www.efuse.com/Design/web\\_writing\\_basics.html](http://www.efuse.com/Design/web_writing_basics.html)

## **Books:**

Price, Jonathan and Lisa, *Hot Text: Web Writing that Works*, New Riders, 2002.

Usborne, Nick, *Net Words: Creating High-Impact Online Copy*, McGraw Hill, 2002.

# Questions?

---

- Ask Now!
- E-mail me later!

SuzWayne@psu.edu