Introduction

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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

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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

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- 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

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- 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
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.
- 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”

**Books:**
Questions?

- Ask Now!
- E-mail me later!

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