Introduction

Suzanne Wayne
Promotional Copywriter
Smeal College of Business

suzwayne@psu.edu
Who are you?

- Name
- Unit/Campus
- Primary Web Responsibility – Writer/programmer/content supplier
- Why are you here?
Web Content Issues

- What issues are you facing?

- What issues do you want to discuss today?
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
Preparing to Write

- Audience: Who
- Purpose: Why
- Tone: How
Audience: Who are you writing for?

- Identify primary audience.
  - Primary audience dictates majority of purpose, tone, and information presented.

- Identify any secondary audiences.
  - Necessary to identify these other audiences to keep in mind as writing.
Purpose: Why are you writing this?

- To educate an audience
- General promotion
- To move an audience to action

Keep audience in mind when determining purpose.
Tone:
How are you going to say it?

- Formality of language
- Word choice

Keep audience and purpose in mind when determining tone.
Preparing to Write

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

Exercise 1.A
Get the Content

- Develop a network
- Help your contacts help you
- Build a work flow process
  - Let technology work for you
  - Consider how you are going to access this information
Get the Content

- Develop a network
- Help your contacts help you
- Build a work flow process
  - Let technology work for you
  - Consider how you are going to access this information

Exercise 1.B
Writing Considerations

- Shorten Your Text
- Make Text Scannable
- Create Clear, Meaningful Links
- Build Chunky Paragraphs
- Make Comprehension Easy
- Write for Search Engine Optimization
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 and Exercise 2.A
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 and Exercise 2.B
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 and Exercise 2.C
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 and Exercise 2.D
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 and Exercise 2.E
Make Comprehension Easy

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence
Make Comprehension Easy

- Limit the number of clauses per sentence

Example and Exercise 2.F
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 and Exercise 2.G
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 and Example 2.H
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 and Exercise 2.1
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 and Exercise 2.J
Write for Search Engine Optimization

- A Little Information about Search Engines
- Two Types
  - Crawler
  - Human
Write for Search Engine Optimization

Crawler-Based Engines – Three Factors

1. Crawler or Spider Function
2. Index of pages
3. Software for ranking – algorithm
Write for Search Engine Optimization

1. Pick your target keywords
2. Place these terms appropriately
   1. .html title tag
   2. Meta tags – keywords and descriptions
   3. Headers
   4. Body Copy
Write for Search Engine Optimization

Factors you cannot control as easily

- Links to your page on other sites
- Searchers clicking on your page in search results
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
Penn State Editorial Style

- Penn State Information
- Technology Terms
Departmental Style Guides

- Penn College CICR: Penn College Style Guide
- AIS Web Style Guide
- Penn State Libraries: Web Style Guide
- Smeal Style Guide
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!

SuzWayne@psu.edu