



digital practices



Writing web content

NOV 13th 2020

WEEK 3

- 1 Why good content matters
- 2 What good content looks like
- 3 How you create good contents

Why good content matters

WHAT WE DESIGN FOR... THE REALITY...

Read
Read
Read
Read
[Pause for reflection]
Finally, click on a carefully chosen link

Look around feverishly for anything that

- a) is interesting, or vaguely resembles what you're looking for, and
- b) is clickable.

As soon as you find a halfway-decent match, click.

If it doesn't pan out, click the Back button and try again.

IMAGE © STEVE KRUG - "DON'T MAKE ME THINK"

■ What good content looks like

Typography

- Set a legible sans serif font as the default
- Make the default text size legible
- Set a medium line length as the default
- Don't write in all capitals
- Underline only links
- Use italics sparingly
- Don't let headings float
- Don't centre text

Heading

- Answer your site visitors' questions
- Write from your site visitors' point of view
- Keep any questions short
- Consider starting with a keyword
- Use key message bites as section headings
- Distinguish headings from text
- Make each level of heading clear
- List headings at the top as links
- Do the headings stand on their own?

Headlines

- Use your site visitors' words
- Be clear instead of cute
- Think about your global audience
- Try for a medium length (about eight words)
- Use a statement, question, or call to action

- Combine labels (nouns) with more information
- Add a short description if people need it

Sentences

- Talk to your site visitors, use “you”
- On social media “I” is fine; writing for an organization, use “we”; be consistent
- Write in the active voice (most of the time)
- Write simple, short, straightforward sentences
- Cut unnecessary words
- Give extra information its own place
- Keep paragraphs short (lists or tables may be better)
- Start with the context
- Put the action in the verbs
- Use your site visitors’ words

How you create good content

Inverted pyramid

- Good practice for web writing
- Place information in order of importance
- Start with a conclusion of the main facts
- Other facts are included in descending order of importance

Overall, good content is..

- appropriate
- useful
- user-centred
- clear
- consistent
- concise
- supported

Useful tools

- Hemingway App [\[http://hemingwayapp.com/\]](http://hemingwayapp.com/)
- Grammarly [\[https://www.grammarly.com/\]](https://www.grammarly.com/)
- Ginger Grammar Check [\[http://www.gingersoftware.com/grammarcheck\]](http://www.gingersoftware.com/grammarcheck)
- Readability test tool [\[https://www.webpagefx.com/tools/read-able/\]](https://www.webpagefx.com/tools/read-able/)



Reading & references

- **Don't make me think, Steve Krug** [<https://www.sensible.com/dmmt.html>]
- **GovUK Style guide** [<http://gov.uk/guidance/style-guide/a-to-z-of-gov-uk-style>]
- **BBC News style guide** [<https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/en/collections/news-style-guide>]
- **Guardian and Observer style guide** [<https://www.theguardian.com/guardian-observer-style-guide-a>]
- **Reuter Handbook of Journalism** [<http://handbook.reuters.com/index.php?title=A>]
- **writing good copy for the web (collected links)**
[<http://help.eyedeal.london/tips/writing-good-web-copy/>]

Practice

Introduce yourself

Write a short passage of text to tell your story (e.g. why you chose this MA for study / how you are feeling about the online learning / why you selected your chosen brief). The aim of this exercise is to experiment with different phrasing to express yourself and to practice adding content to your website.

Remember: you can always edit/delete anything you've published later.

develop your tone of language

As exercise, write 3 draft versions of your story and focus on establishing 3 different methods of story telling. Think about the phrasing, the tone of language and this will be perceived. Experiment with the 3 different angles listed.

to-do list

- ① **write the draft of your story**
2-3 paragraphs or more
- ② **text version 1: formal**
make a copy of your original draft a and rephrase it to reflect a formal tone
- ③ **text version 2: informal/personable**
make a copy of your original draft and edit the phrasing for a more friendly tone
- ④ **text version 3: quirky**
make a copy of your original draft and work on a fun version with lots of personality
- ⑤ **get feedback**
publish your drafts to your website or send per email - and ask your fellow students, your friends, family or me, your tutor, for feedback on your text.

Homework

About me / about this site

Make a start on the about page of your project website. Consider your experiments with the different phrasing of the exercise to find a fitting tone for the 'about' text. You could keep the focus on yourself, as author of the website - or you could change this to become a page about the website itself, entirely up to you ;)

At this point, you will hopefully have decided on your subject and the mission of your website. Use this task to produce an initial version of the 'about' page. Once your site is complete, revisit this page and revise it to reflect your final content.

prompts

- ① who is your site for?
- ② how can you best express your site's mission?
- ③ what is the rationale and context of your chosen subject?
- ④ what tone is expected or most effective?
- ⑤ what will your site visitor want to know about your website and its aim?

to-do list

- 1 **write the 'about' story**
2-3 paragraphs or more
- 2 **edit the text for easy reading**
focus on short sentences and add subheadings as fitting, keep your tone consistent and clear
- 3 **publish your final text** publish the completed text to your site.

PROJECT PROGRESS

- ★ BRIEF: subject decision
- ★ CONTENT: about page

