Writing for the Web

Applying User Experience (UX) Principles to Your Writing
Grok
(v., informal)
To understand something intuitively or by empathy.
Today

- **Fundamentals**: What does *good* look like?
- **Examples**: Putting it into practice.
What is User Experience (UX)?

A user’s entire interaction with your organization, services, and products. (And your *words.*)

Users come to your website with some problem they’re trying to solve or some goal in mind.

Your job is to help them solve it as easily as possible.
The web is different.
Places Made of Information (h/t Dan Klyn)

- Websites are places made of information.
- Structure created through design and content helps us find our way.
- Thinking about a user’s experience means thinking about what that person needs to be able to accomplish on a website.
Americans spend on average 10 hours, 39 minutes consuming media each day.

Nielsen Total Audience Report, Q1, 2016
Grazing

Scanning

Berrypicking

Wayfinding

Reading
Amount of **words read** during an average web page visit. (2008)  
https://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-little-do-users-read/

Test users who **always scanned** any new page. (2007)  
https://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-users-read-on-the-web/

The **pattern** users follow when reading web pages. (2006)  
https://www.nngroup.com/articles/f-shaped-pattern-reading-web-content/
Some best practices.
Reader-Friendly Writing Techniques

- Direct, concise, and specific phrasing.
- Active voice.
- Structure that supports their tasks.
Try Progressive Disclosure

Clicking on "Formatting" options icon reveals formatting commands

Nielsen Norman Group,
https://nngroup.com/articles/progressive-disclosure
the INVERTED PYRAMID.

LEDE/LEAD
who what when where how

LESS IMPORTANT INFO
facts revealed in the order of importance

QUOTES/INFO

END

http://coschedule.com/blog/newspaper-reporter/
Best practices in web writing support readers across the literacy spectrum.

Summers, K and M. Summers (2005), ‘Reading and navigational strategies of web users with lower literacy skills’
Structure Informs Meaning & Consumption

- Sequence or timeline
- Target audience
- Q&A
- Task
Naturalization: What to Expect

Naturalization is a way for a person to become a U.S. citizen. Below is a general overview of what to expect during the naturalization process. To learn more, read the [Guide to Naturalization](#).

Complete your application. You have decided to apply for U.S. citizenship. Here is what to do next: Review the application instructions. Download the naturalization application. Get two passport-style photos taken. Collect all the documents and evidence you will need to complete your application. Fill out your application.

Review your work and correct any mistakes. Submit your application, two photos, documents and evidence, and the required fees. Find out where to file your application. Make sure to keep your address current with USCIS.

Appear for your biometrics appointment. After we accept your application, we will notify you if we need to take your biometrics: fingerprints, photo, and signature. We will send you an appointment notice if we need biometrics.

The notice will provide you the date, time, and location of the appointment. Appear at the location at the scheduled date and time on the appointment notice.
Compare & Contrast

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   - Review the application instructions
   - Download the naturalization application
   - Get two passport-style photos taken
   - Collect all the documents and evidence you will need to complete your application

2. Appear for your biometrics appointment
   After we accept your application, we will notify you if we need to take your biometrics: fingerprints, photo, and signature.
   - We will send you an appointment notice if we need biometrics. The notice will provide you the date, time, and location of the appointment.
   - Appear at the location at the scheduled date and time on the appointment notice
   - Bring the following documents to the appointment:
# Audience-Based Content Organization

## For Adult Patients
- Adult Cancers
- Clinical Trials
- Integrative Medicine
- Patient & Caregiver Education
- Patient Login
- Find a Doctor
- Make an Appointment
- Insurance

## For Child & Teen Patients
- Pediatric Cancers
- Life in Pediatrics
- Hear from our Patients
- Educational Resources
- FAQs
- Find a Doctor
- Make an Appointment
- Insurance

## For Healthcare Professionals
- Departments & Divisions
- Find a Fellowship
- Continuing Medical Education
- Prediction Tools
- Refer a Patient
- Find a Fellowship

## For Research Scientists
- Clinical Research & Trials
- PhD & MD/PhD Education
- Sloan Kettering Institute
- Find a Researcher
- Research Areas
- Find a Research Position
Recap: Best Practices

- Front-load key information.
- Use short sentences and bullet points.
- Subheadings support wayfinding & scanning.
- Choose a structure that reflects your intent.
- Verbs move a reader through your content.
- Avoid acronyms and jargon.
- Be specific.
- Be concise.
Putting it into practice.
So, Who Is Your Audience, Anyway?

- General public
- Your peers
- Funding agencies
- Prospective donors
- Prospective trainees
- Prospective study volunteers
Exploring Audience Needs With User Personas

Alissa
Sophomore
School of Information
GradeCraft Courses: SI 110

"The Grade Predictor is a lot of fun to use but I find it overwhelming. Grading rubrics would also be useful if they were a little easier to look at visually."

Jason
Senior
History Major
New GradeCraft User

"The interface is really cool and different from what I'm used to. Certain parts still look kind of old-school, though, like the Bades and Teams tabs."

Danielle
Senior
Psychology Major
New GradeCraft User

"Using the GradePredictor to plan out my assignments is great but I have a hard time comparing the descriptions. I'd also love to sort by required and optional assignments."
Prioritizing Your Target Audiences
Activity: Mapping a Basic Content Strategy

User Needs
- What does this user care about?
- What are they trying to learn or accomplish?
- What is their current level of understanding?

Content Strategy
- What is the most important information for this user?
- What format of content would best support this user?
- What level of detail will help this user understand?
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Content Ideas
Outline some content to fit your new strategy.
Questions?
Recommended Reading

**Books**

- **The Content Strategy Toolkit: Methods, Guidelines, and Templates for Getting Content Right** (Voices That Matter) by Meghan Casey
- **How to Make Sense of Any Mess** by Abby Covert
- **Nicely Said** by Nicole Fenton and Kate Kiefer Lee
- **Content Strategy for the Web** by Kristina Halvorson and Melissa Rach
- **Everybody Writes** by Ann Handley
- **Don’t Make Me Think, Revisited: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability** (3rd Edition) by Steve Krug
- **Letting Go of the Words** by Ginny Redish

**Sites & Guides**

- **GatherContent Blog** ([https://gathercontent.com/blog/](https://gathercontent.com/blog/))
- **MailChimp’s Voice & Tone website** ([http://voiceandtone.com/](http://voiceandtone.com/))
- **Nielsen Norman Group** (Reports & Articles) ([https://www.nngroup.com/](https://www.nngroup.com/))
- **18F Content Guide** ([https://pages.18f.gov/content-guide/](https://pages.18f.gov/content-guide/))
Special thanks to the Michigan IT UX Community of Practice for compiling some of these resources.