Writing for the Web

Tips and best practice
Tuesday 28th July – The Hive

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Lecturer in Computing
DEFINE CONTENT GOVERNANCE

Who is in charge of your site's content, who has input, and how content gets published.

Answer the following questions and share them with your team:

- Who writes the content?
- Who edits the content?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Who approves the content?
- Where do the content requests come from?
- When is this content due?
- Who uploads the content?

Answering the questions above will help clarify roles and responsibilities.
User experience tutorial: How people read on the Web | lynda.com

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTUPpRjLjU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTUPpRjLjU)
How people read online:

- People read differently online than in print.
- In print, readers delve deep and are not easily distracted by things to click on.

**People online:**
- Read 20% slower vs. print.
- Are task focused rather than looking for an immersive experience.
- Scan the page rather than read every word.
- Don't expect your content to work if you simply copy and paste from print.
GOALS SHOULD GUIDE YOUR CONTENT CREATION PROCESS

Answer the following questions to guide this process. It's best to answer all of these questions with the key stakeholders present.

- What are the communication goals of this page?
- Who is the audience?
- What are the key calls to action?
- What is the function of this page?
- Can this content be shorter or more skimmable?
- Can you eliminate redundant content?
- Is all the content relevant?
How users scan

In this image, heat maps track readers' eye movements. You can see that they focus mainly on the left side of the page, as well as on the first few sentences of each paragraph.

So what does this mean?

• Put your most important content at the top of the page.
• Use sub-headers throughout your text for improved scannability.
• Make the first two words of your headers the most important.
Heat Map of Google Search Results
CONTENT STRUCTURE

Use the inverse pyramid to structure your content.

- Start with the most important information
- Follow with supporting details
- Finish with related information
WRITE CONCISELY
Get to the point……

People don't read.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of…</th>
<th>Use…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>despite the fact that</td>
<td>although</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the event that</td>
<td>if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it is important that</td>
<td>must, should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has the opportunity to</td>
<td>can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it is possible that</td>
<td>may</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>due to the fact that</td>
<td>since</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AVOID REDUNDANT PHRASES
Say more with less

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of...</th>
<th>Use...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>advanced notice</td>
<td>notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>end result</td>
<td>result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final outcome</td>
<td>outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extra bonus</td>
<td>bonus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborate together</td>
<td>collaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unintended mistake</td>
<td>mistake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THINK LIKE A DESIGNER

- Develop an eye for aesthetics
- Sections should be balanced
- Writers should have a say over how their words are presented onscreen
One of these sections is unbalanced
FORMAT SMARTER

- Bullets are a great way to improve the scannability of your text. You can enhance those bullets by adding sub-headers (when appropriate).

**Before: bullets are long and hard to read**

**How does CCA stand out?**

- CCA is among the top 25 colleges in California (out of 787) that ranks highest for return on investment (ROI), as determined by Affordable Colleges Online
- US News & World Report ranks CCA as one of the top graduate master of fine arts programs including Ceramics, Graphic Design, Industrial Design, Interior Design, Painting/Drawing, Photography, and Sculpture
- BusinessWeek magazine named CCA as one of the world’s best design schools
- Princeton Review designates CCA as “one of the most environmentally responsible colleges in the United States and Canada.”

**After: bullets with headers improve scannability**

**How does CCA stand out?**

- **Top 25 in ROI**
  Affordable Colleges Online found CCA to be in the top 25 out of 787 colleges in California for ROI (Return on Investment)
- **Top graduate master of the fine arts programs in the US**
  Reported by US News & World Report
- **World’s best design school**
  Reported by Business Week magazine
- **One of the most environmentally responsible colleges in the US**
  Reported by the Princeton Review
PROOF EVERYTHING

- Test your links
- Remove typos
- Get extra sets of eyes to check your grammar and sentence structure
- Copy errors reflect on your business and your reputation
- Take this step seriously.
SEO and Keywords

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ml1-FAKwDy8
Keyword Tips

- Titles
When writing a title, try to keep it below about 65 characters, and include one of your target keywords or phrases so it's easier for searchers to identify that your results are relevant to other query.

- Descriptions
Descriptions are also shown in search results but they don't have a direct impact on rankings. They exist to tell searchers why they should click on your result. Use one of your target keywords or phrases in your meta description so they know your content is relevant to their query.
Keyword Tips

▪ Headings and Content
It's important to use your keywords in your headings and content, as visitors are much more likely to stay on a page if they can see the terms they had searched for on it. However, it's critical you use these keywords naturally -- so write for readers first, not search engines.

▪ URLs - It's a good idea to include keywords in your URL if they accurately describe the page contents.
Google’s guide to good SEO practices

https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/35769
Image file names ALT tags

- You can also look at including keywords in a natural way in your image titles and alt text. This seems minor -- and it isn't going to impact your search rankings as much as other things on this list -- but it helps Google find your site in image searches, improves accessibility for people with poor vision using screen readers, and is also used as a minor search ranking factor.

- Accessibility issues can have legal implications.
Create Guidelines to Follow

- Example guidelines from the University of California Riverside
- http://cms.ucr.edu/writing_web_content.html
How can you apply these lessons in the real world?
People read differently online than in print. They are Task Focused.
Chicago PD
When does pursuing justice become criminal?

Tune in at 9pm
Watch the previous episode on Demand 5

On tonight
17:00 5 News
17:30 Neighbours
17:00 Cowboy Builders
18:00 Cops
17:00 Diagnosis Murder
18:00 CSI: New York
17:00 Scrubs
17:25 That '70s Show
17:00 Teleshopping
17:30 Teleshopping

Full Schedule

Channel 5 shows
Tweets from a list by Channel 5

Neighbours
30m
NeighboursTV
Image: finds herself in grave danger in today's episode. NeighboursTV.com
Show Photo

Sue Ryder
65m
Sue Ryder
"Things could be better". Michael Howard's clear message to Jeremy Hunt about end of life care. SueRyderTV.com
Show Photo
When is Home and Away on?
Chicago PD
When does pursuing justice become criminal?

Watch full episodes

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Channel 5 shows

Tweets from a list by Channel 5

Neighbours

Image: finds herself in grave danger in today's Neighbours. pic.twitter.com/3wMrnG5MvV

Teleshopping

Image: "Things could be better." Michael Howard's clear message to Jeremy Hunt about end of life care. See HospiceUK?

New on Channel 5

Text: The Tiny Tugboat
Wed 22 Jul

Boothed Up Bodies
Tue 21 Jul

Chasing Monsters
Tue 21 Jul

Benefits By The Sea: Jaywick
Tue 21 Jul

Sue Ryder

Image: Sue Ryder

"Things could be better". Michael Howard's clear message to Jeremy Hunt about end of life care. See HospiceUK?
Wednesday 22 July

Daytime

18:00 Police Interceptors

Evening

17:00 5 News (3)
17:30 Neighbours (3) (AD)
18:00 Home and Away (6) (AD)
18:30 5 News (3)
19:00 Police Interceptors (5)
19:55 5 News (3)
18:00 Can’t Pay? We’ll Take It Away (3)
19:00 Teen Mom 2
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<th>5USA</th>
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<td>18:30</td>
<td>Home and Away  (AD)</td>
<td>5 News  (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>Police Interceptors  (AD)</td>
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Daytime

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Are Students Task Focused?
Yes...
when deadlines are near
Panic, urgency, stress
So... be concise
MacBook
Light. Years ahead.
Novelists are paid by the word

Web authors should not be!
Think more, write less
Not all web writing tips will apply to you
You'll NEVER believe which two stars got into a fight on the red carpet last night!! CLICK to find out which starlet they were fighting over!! ---> http://bit.ly/1b7quT9
There is no need to drive traffic to your site

- Your audience is already there
- You do not need advertising revenue
Let’s pick a real world example of a website at random...
Think like a student

When is Freshers Week?
Search

Search For timetable

Results (29)

University Staff Member to Walk Hadrian's Wall in Support of Bereaved Parents
A Timetabling Officer from the University of Worcester is joining hikers from all over the world to walk along the historic Hadrian’s Wall.

Offer holders
This section is for international students who have an offer of a place at the University of Worcester.

Flexible study options
Some Institute of Education courses offer a flexible, modular approach, allowing you to study at your own pace.

CREST
The University of Worcester is the local co-ordinator for the British Science Association’s CREST Scheme.

Courses (0)
See all Courses

Staff profiles(0)
See all Staff profiles

News stories(4)
This is an SEO problem

The keyword is missing
Search

Search For

Results (2)

Your first week
During your first few days on campus, we run a series of events to help you settle in, find your way around and prepare for university life; this is called "Welcome Week™".

Netball Takes on Basketball in Sporting Success Stories at the University of Worcester
In recent years the University of Worcester has become synonymous with basketball — a game that has dominated much of the University’s sporting prowess.
Your first week

Your guide to Induction

During your first few days on campus, we run a series of events to help you settle in, find your way around and prepare for university life; this is called ‘Welcome Week’.

Welcome Week is made up of central and departmental orientation events. There are both formal and social activities, which provide an excellent introduction to your course and student life. You can take a look at a previous guide to get a better idea of how the week unfolds.

You will be able to access the Welcome Week Guide from your SOLE page when you register.

The Students’ Union also run ‘Freshers’ Week’, which offers a wide range of events to introduce you to the social and sporting side of life at the University.
This is a content problem
The information is missing
What you want to say

vs

What the user is trying to find
Your first week

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This is a content problem

Unfamiliar abbreviation
This is a also content problem

No link to SOLE page
Let’s try another site...
Freshers' Week 2015, more info coming very soon...

Tue 21 Jul 2015
This is a database problem

The information is too far in the future
Let’s consider another common student task that might be familiar to you
I need this book...
Where do I look?
This is an SEO problem

...many possible reasons
Where do I look next?
Viv asked me to include examples of good and bad websites
So, let’s look at a large, recently opened gold-clad public library in the West Midlands
REWITING THE BOOK
THE LIBRARY OF BIRMINGHAM

The Library is open Monday - Tuesday 11am - 7pm, Wednesday - Saturday 11am - 5pm.

NEWS & BLOGS

News: Big Hoot’s Little Hoot - decorated by local schools as part of the owl trail

Blog: Mobile Library Reading Group Welcomes Local Author A A Abbott

News: British Library partnership for Shakespeare’s 400th Anniversary in 2016

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tom Palmer’s Rugby Reading Game
Tue 18 August 2015, 2:00pm

Business and Learning - Work Club
Thu 23 July 2015, 11:00am

Album 31 Photography Exhibition
Thu 23 July 2015, 11:00am

LATEST TWEET

Did you know we are home to 100s of postcards featuring the golden age of US railways?
http://t.co/mKwKfEBlau
http://t.co/7bipvUSbbw2

Follow us on Twitter

FOLLOW US

Facebook
YouTube
Twitter
Good or Bad writing for the web?
Mission Statement

The Library of Birmingham is rewriting the book for 21st century public libraries. Offering world-class facilities and resources, we aim to transform lives through learning, knowledge and culture and provide an exciting and inspiring visitor experience to all.
What you want to say

vs

What the user wants to read
Back to finding that book...
Search Results

Your search - adobe edge animate - did not match any documents.
No pages were found containing "adobe edge animate".

Suggestions:
- Make sure all words are spelled correctly.
- Try different keywords.
- Try more general keywords.
What went wrong?
This is a design problem

Getting designers to fix things is not always straightforward
Online Catalogues for the Library of Birmingham

Library Catalogue

Here's a link to our online catalogue where you can search our stock, reserve it online, renew the items you already have, and update your personal details when necessary.
Online Catalogues for the Library of Birmingham

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Here's a link to our online catalogue where you can search our stock, reserve it online, renew the items you already have, and update your personal details when necessary.

View all Events
Online Catalogues for the Library of Birmingham

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Welcome to Birmingham Libraries online catalogue

This library provides an extensive collection of books, DVDs, CDs, magazines, and other resources to support your learning, reading and listening pleasure. Use our online service to join online, search the catalogue and review books that you have read.

When you have a library card and PIN you can reserve items and decide which library to collect them from, renew your loans and see your personal details.

****We are currently unable to process stock suggestions but hope to reintroduce the service as soon as possible****

UPDATE - Access to stock

Material in the closed stack area of the Library of Birmingham is now being made available on specified dates. You may request items with an A or B in front of the classification number, which you have located in the catalogue.

See Access to stock for details of stack days and how to apply.
Is this a link labelling problem?
Is it a basic design problem?
I haven’t the foggiest to be honest.
Welcome to Birmingham Libraries online catalogue

This library provides an extensive collection of books, DVDs, CDs, magazines, and other resources to support your learning, reading and listening pleasure. Use our online service to join online, search the catalogue and review books that you have read.

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This is a text problem

Think about what the user will be looking for, and where they will look
Welcome to Birmingham Libraries online catalogue

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See Access to stock for details of stack days and how to apply.
## Anywhere: ADOBE EDGE ANIMATE (Keywords)

Your search found 3 records. Displaying records 1 to 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Collection</th>
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<tr>
<td>Library of Birmingham</td>
<td>Reference: SIS Collections</td>
<td>IT9 ANI</td>
<td>Not for loan (Set: 29 Nov 2013)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. **Adobe Edge Animate** : the missing manual  
   Grover, Chris  
   O'Reilly, 2012  
   220

2. **Brilliant Adobe Edge Animate** / Steve Johnson, Perspection, Inc.  
   Johnson, Steve, 1961-  
   UK edition.  
   Harlow, England : Pearson, [2013]  
   320 pages : illustrations (colour) ; 24 cm  

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### Refine Results By:

- **Fiction/Non-Fiction**
  - Non-Fiction (1)

- **Publication Date**
  - 2013 (1)  
  - 2012 (2)

- **Personal Author**
  - Johnson, Steve, 1961- (1)  
  - Labrecque, Joseph (1)  
  - Grover, Chris (1)

- **Topic**
  - Computer animation (1)
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3. Learning Adobe Edge Animate
   Labrecque, Joseph
   Packt Publishing Limited, 2012
   345
Let’s look at another large, recently opened gold-clad public library in the West Midlands
Shakespeare’s Europe, Europe’s Shakespeare
24 June - 22 July
Explore The Hive
An exhibition by sequential illustration students

Download The Hive What’s On guide

Using the library
The Hive is home to a huge range of print and online resources all of which can be discovered through three online catalogue searches: Library search, Archaeology search and Archive search.

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How to use the Public Wi-Fi

Recommended by The Hive team
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24 June - 22 July
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Catalogue search

Recommended by The Hive team

Kim Edwards
The Memory Keeper’s Daughter

Colin Wilson
Soleran: Spirit

Benjamin Black
Jason the Rapist

Audrey Niffenegger
The Time Traveler’s Wife

Nathaniel Hawthorne
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The Hive is home to a huge range of print and online resources, all of which can be discovered through three online catalogue searches:

Library catalogue search

Search through the records for The Hive’s quarter of a million titles to find details of the books you can access in the building, as well as simultaneously searching the stock of all County branches. Links to online resources, such as Ancestry and a range of research databases, can also be found here.

While this search is available to all, if you are a University of Worcester student, you should log in at http://students.worc.ac.uk/ as usual to ensure access to your full range of educational resources.

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Paper copies of many of our older journals are held in The Hive’s archives. They can be requested in advance by completing the online form here. You will receive an email with further information on where to collect the journal, and how to return it when you have finished. Please allow at least 24 hours when placing your request, to ensure that it is ready when you arrive at the Hive.

This applies to journals held by the library (details on the library catalogue), and published before 1968.

LibGuides: support in finding information

The University of Worcester’s LibGuides site gives lots of useful advice about searching for information, using resources and referencing information. Students preparing for university will find a guide written especially for them. Some of the search tools, e.g. tailored Google searches, are available to everyone while others may request University of Worcester student or staff account details. Go to LibGuides for more information.
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The information we wanted!
Conclusion
Applying these lessons in the real world is not always easy
Applying these lessons in the real world is not always easy but it does help your users.
A final thought
How many words have you seen on screen while I was talking?

...and how many did you read?
An interesting blogpost discussing the academic library

- http://musingsaboutlibrarianship.blogspot.co.uk/2014/10/how-should-academic-library-websites.html#.VazHbPlViko

2 Library websites thought to be well designed

- http://library.stanford.edu/
- http://libraries.mit.edu/