Web Content Training
Who we are

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• www.isu.edu/marcom/
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Why are you here?

• CMS Transition
  – Current status
• ISU marketing initiatives
• Design/opportunity
Course outline

• Reading/writing for the web
• Audience
• Best practices
• Planning your content
• Now what?
A ‘first look’ at your website

• Credibility
• Grammar/spelling
• Internal vs. external
How/why is writing for web different?

- How do people read on the web? They don’t.

**Link the number to the correct statement:**

79%: slower reading speed online vs. print
25%: of people scan a web page then move on
50%: fewer words than its printed equivalent
How users “read” on the web

• Users → Info
  – ‘Scanability’
    • F-shape
Readability

• Attention span
  • ‘Satisficing’

• Grade Level
  – Vocabulary
Readability, cont.

- Flesch-Kincaid
  - Word → spelling and grammar → options → [Make sure ‘Show readability statistics’ is checked]
Readability, cont.

Make it easier to read

Use what you have learned to cut the text down to about half the words and make it online user friendly. The current Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level is 26.6.

Rewrite the paragraph to lower the readability score:

The United States of America is filled with internationally recognized attractions which draw large crowds of people every year, without fail. In 2010, some of the most popular places were Times Square (37,600,000 visitors), The Las Vegas Strip (30,000,000), The National Mall and Memorial Parks (25,000,000), Faneuil Hall Marketplace, 20,000,000), Disney World’s Magic Kingdom (17,100,000), and Disneyland (14,900,000).
Audience

• Who is your audience?
  – Useful for ‘everyone’ = useful for no one

• Tactics
  – Focus groups/user testing
  – Surveys
  – Class activities
  – Others?
Best practices

• Your website should not be static
  – Update content with relevant and current information
  – This goes back to credibility
Best practices, cont.

• Content = clear, obvious

• Questions to ask:
  – What is the purpose of your content?
  – What is the take away/message?
  – Who is the content written for?
Best practices, cont.

- Be precise, not cute or clever
- Headings and subheadings
  - should be clear, stand alone out of context
  - readers should know what they will read about
  - questions are often good headings

### Headings Task:

Suggest alternative headings. The information in parentheses provides some background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Heading</th>
<th>Suggested Alternative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Organization’s existing framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in a page about ethics in the Organization)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in a page about press accreditation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Internet- Your Choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(too much slogan, and too general)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Best practices, cont.

KISSS S S S

--- keep it short, simple, strong, and sincere ---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short – cut the word count</th>
<th>Simple – get the point across the first time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; You must ensure that you hand in your assignment on time. (11 words)</td>
<td>&gt; Identify the verb (and who is doing it)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Ensure you hand in your assignment on time. (8 words)</td>
<td>&gt; Consider: Having taken a two-hour lunch break, my boss gave me a severe reprimand. (Who took a two-hour lunch break?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Ensure your assignment is on time. (6 words)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong – be clear and authoritative</th>
<th>Sincere – be human</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; You need to get buy-in from your target audience.</td>
<td>&gt; Remember that you're writing for real people, so use every-day English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; If you have a call-to-action, this is a good way to measure if your message is strong enough.</td>
<td>&gt; Further to our recent communication, please find enclosed the requested information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Thank you for contacting us. I enclose the information you requested.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Best practices, cont.

• Use active voice, rather than passive voice

• Use personal pronouns to connect with and engage your audience
  – We, our, us
  – You, your
Best practices, cont.

• Formal vs. informal
  – Web writing should use informal tone and language to keep readers engaged
Best practices, cont.

- Lists need to be parallel
  - 2 types of lists:
    - Ordered (numbered)
    - Unordered (bulleted)

Right or Wrong?

Are the lists below parallel? Why or why not?

Students should:
- pay tuition
- buy textbooks
- come to class

When compared to their peers who live off campus, students who live on campus tend to have:
- higher GPAs
- higher rates of graduation
- do better in their studies
- be more engaged in campus activities.
From Formal to Informal

This text about the University is very formal. Use what you’ve learned to write a more informal version of the content for the web.

The University
The University is a combination of Schools, Faculties, Departments and Colleges. The Colleges are governed by their own statutes and regulations, but are integral to the make-up of the University.

Colleges
Students live, eat and socialize in one of the University’s 7 autonomous Colleges. Each College has its own internal procedures. They select their own students, subject to University regulations, and most admit both undergraduate and postgraduate students. College representatives sit on the University Council and Finance Committee.
Best practices, cont.

- Clear links
- Links = road signs
  - Don’t say “click here”
  - Don’t use URLs

(https://www.isu.edu/marcom)
Best practices, cont.

• Emphasizing content
  – Bold/italics- use sparingly
  – Underline links only
  – Avoid using all capitalized letters
  – Never use multiple exclamation points! Use exclamation points sparingly.
Best practices, cont.

• Use white space
  – Easier on the eyes
  – Separates your message/content from clutter
  – Walls of text are a barrier to content
Best practices, cont.

• Photos/videos: quality, relevance
  – Limit stock photos
  – No clip art

• Eric Gordon, University Photographer
Best practices, cont.

- Accessibility
  - Video transcription
  - Social media
  - Websites
- Alt-text
Best practices, cont.

• Consistency, consistency, consistency.
  – Identity and brand standards
  – University Style Guide
  – Web best practices

Next:
  – How to execute these best practices and put them to work for you and your site
How to execute, cont.

• Entry points
  • Google
  • Direct links

• Again: Think like your audience

What’s missing if this is an entry point?

In 1967, he had the idea of playing both football and basketball in a domed structure. The doors of Holt Arena opened in September 1970 with a 64-34 win over UNLV.

For the current listing of courses, and registration form, please see our brochure, or if you have questions, you can contact us at (208) 282-3156.

An informational webinar will be hosted by Kim Smith on Oct. 3, 2016 from 8 a.m.-10 a.m. and repeated on Oct. 15, 2016 from 1-2 p.m.
How to execute, cont.

Plan your content:
1) Identify audience
2) Key message
3) Power words
4) Skeleton outline
5) Draft

revise, edit, repeat.
How to execute, cont.

• Planning your content: key messages, power words, and skeletons

Sell the idea!

You are running out of parking spaces at the university, and your job is to sell the idea of riding bicycles instead of driving.

You have to write two pieces of content; the first should be aimed at the students and the second one at the students' parents.

What messages do you want to convey to the two audiences and what words will you use?
How to execute, cont.

**Key message & power words**

- List your key message:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Students’ parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- We have previously talked about “power words”. List 5 power words for each audience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Students’ parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:</td>
<td>1:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:</td>
<td>2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:</td>
<td>3:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:</td>
<td>4:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:</td>
<td>5:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources

• List on CMS page:
  – [isu.edu/cms/training/resources/](isu.edu/cms/training/resources/)
How to execute, cont.

• What should a good home page look like/do?
  – Guidelines for Homepage Usability- NN/g

• What makes a good “about” page?
  – About Pages to Engage Users and Build Trust- NN/g
Before and after best practices

• Same information, different result
Welcome to Idaho State University Housing!
The mission of University Housing is to provide secure, clean, and affordable living learning environments that promote student engagement by encouraging and supporting opportunities for academic success, personal development, community building, and well-being of each individual resident.
Our goal is to provide safe, clean, and affordable living learning environments for students. According to the American Council on Education, students who live on campus are more likely to succeed academically than students who live off campus. This includes earning higher grades and being more likely to complete a college degree.

When compared to their peers who live off campus, students who live on campus tend to:
- Do better in their studies.
- Have higher GPAs.
- Be more engaged in campus activities.
- Have higher rates of graduation.

We provide reasonably priced rooms close to everything on campus.

As a housing resident, you’ll have the opportunity to experience:
- Over 50 programs and events each semester.
- 24-hour K-Fac and computer labs.
- On-site laundry in every building.
- 12 on-campus dining options.
- More than 200 resident assistants, with someone on-site 24 hours a day.

You’ll also have the advantage of being part of a larger community of new students sharing similar experiences. This includes Resident Assistants and Resident Directors who act as resources for support and advice.

Do you need more reasons to apply for housing at ISU? Learn more about our housing options, and prepare to experience the benefits of "living on".

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www.isu.edu/housing
Now what?
Questions?
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