

#pelc11

## Writing for the Web

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## Focus

- Words & Writing
- Page Layout
- Emphasis & Links
- ~~Design~~
- ~~Site Structure~~

## Topics

- General Web Writing Guidelines
- Writing for Blogs
- VLE
  
- Best practice [guidelines](#) not hard-and-fast rules

## Types of Web page

- Information giving
- “Reading” material
  - News
  - Educational resources
- Navigation
- Interaction

## Print vs Web?

- Groups
- 3-mins
- Differences between print and web
  - Physical
  - Our Behaviour
  - Advantages / Disadvantages

## Some Key Differences

- Physical
  - Control
  - Navigation
- Behaviour
  - Users not readers
  - Scan first; sometimes read
  - Impatient

## Wrong Comparison?



- Know your Audience
- Remember **their** purpose

## F-Shaped Reading Pattern



[http://www.useit.com/alertbox/reading\\_pattern.html](http://www.useit.com/alertbox/reading_pattern.html)

## Scannability

- Headings
  - Sub-headings
- Short paragraphs
- Lists – numbered or bulleted
- Start with information-carrying words
  - In headings, paragraphs, links
  - **First 2 words** (or 11-ish characters) count most

## Emphasis (in main text)

- Useful for scanning
  - But too much is distracting
- Which ones are best?
  - CAPITALS
  - **Bold**
  - *Italic*
  - Underline
  - Colour

## Links

- Structural (navigation)
- Within main text (inline)
  - Related material, evidence etc
  - Don't over link, it's distracting

## Writing Links

- Link with page titles or similar text
  - No surprises!
- Unambiguous
  - Be consistent; differentiate
  - Don't make me think!\*

**X** [Click here](#) to view the student video diary

**X** View the student video diary [here](#)

**✓** View the [student video diary](#)

### Reclaim phone money, Ofcom says

Customers of telecoms companies are advised to make sure they reclaim money owed to them when they switch contracts.  
How the mobile network got chatty

### Vodafone in \$2.5bn India tax bill

The Indian tax authorities give Vodafone 30 days to pay the bill over an ongoing court case.

Vodafone makes \$6.5bn China sale

### Tech giants invest in social web

Facebook, Amazon and Zynga invest in a fund to help entrepreneurs develop applications and services for a new era of the social web.

### China unveils own mapping service

An official mapping service called Map World has been unveiled by the Chinese government.

Item Finder for BBC News - Technology

Summary Links Headings Frames Tables Controls

132 links in BBC News - Technology

- BBC Micro gets a new lease of life
- BBC News - Visited
- British Broadcasting CorporationHome
- Broadband Britain
- Business - Visited
- CBBC - Hidden
- CBeebies - Hidden
- China 'rare earths' restriction feared Watch
- China unveils own mapping service**

Click

Click Watch

Display link name and address

Sorting method:

A to Z

Left Click Right Click Route I

## Language

- Use plain language
  - Avoid jargon, slang and clichés
  - Expand acronyms
  - Limit humour
- Conversational
- Active vs passive voice
- Eliminate redundancy
- Proof read

## Active Voice

- Use **active voice**, not passive voice
  - Start with who; then what
- **Passive:** Social security taxes must be paid monthly by employers
- **Active:** Employers must pay social security taxes monthly

## Conversational

- Answer Questions
- Talk to your readers
  - You & Your
  - We & Our (or I / My)
- Use imperatives for instructions
  - Read...
  - Submit...
  - Print...



## Keep it brief

- Remove redundancy
- Use single words where possible
- Short words, sentences and paragraphs!

Setting up your website involves co-operative collaboration between the various members of a team, such as the designer and the commissioner, for example. The method is a simple one. 29 words

Creating your website involves collaboration between team members, such as the designer and the commissioner. The method is simple.

19 words

## Example: Before

### Sending Food to the US

The new ruling requires the person sending the food to electronically file a “prior notice” with the US Food & Drug Administration. A confirmation of the FDA receipt of “prior notice” must be presented to Australia Post along with the parcel. The prior notice form is available at <http://www.access.fda.gov>

From: [www.auspost.com.au](http://www.auspost.com.au)

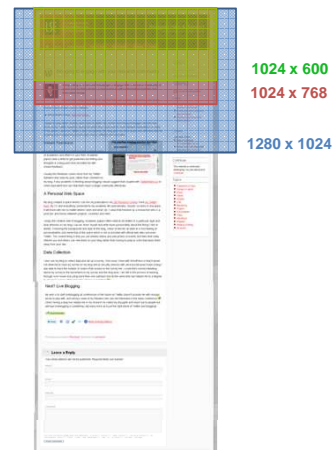
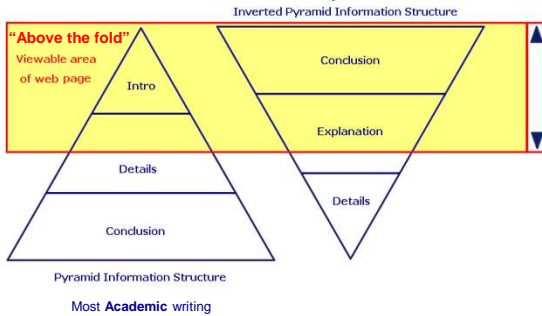
## Example: After

### Sending Food to the US

1. Go to the US Food and Drug Administration [Prior Notice](#)
2. Fill out the form about the food you are sending
3. Print your confirmation page
4. Take the confirmation & your package to Australia Post

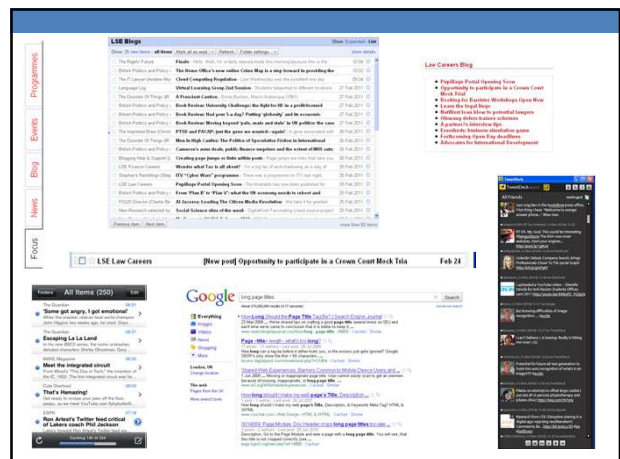
Adapted from: Redish (2007) Letting Go of the Words

## Journalist's Inverted Pyramid



## PICTURE A BLOG

What do your readers see first?



## Post Titles

- Appeal to your audience
- Simple. Specific. Short?
- Easy to understand
- Tell as much of the story as you can
- Entice, don't tease
  
- Spend time writing them

## Post Titles that work

- Strong Opinion
- Meet a need, express a benefit
  - How-to, 7 Things..., 5 Tips...
- News / Announcements
- Conversational: "You"

## Post Summaries

- Always start with a summary
  - Keep it short (1-3 sentences)
  - Highlight key points
- Purpose
  - Ideally: Get your reader to the next paragraph!
  - If not: they have a summary to take away

## Writing for VLEs

- Keep homepages & 'pathway' pages for navigation not content
- Group related information together
- Consistent, unambiguous language
- Differentiate link text
- Add structure: sub-headings, bullets, space...
- Give clear instructions



## Summary

- Scan first, read later (maybe)
- Know your audience and their purpose
- Lead with key information
- Scannability
- Plain language
- Conversational
- Remove redundancy