



Web Content Writing

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Web Content Writing

Introduction

Understanding that people read web pages differently than other media is key to writing and laying out content that will promote your relevant topics.

Think about reading a web page like reading a newspaper. When you pick up a newspaper, you don't start with the first word and read all the way to the bottom of the page like you would with a book.

You scan the front page for headlines that stand out, stopping on the ones that seem interesting and then you read through the related article. Or you see a headline for a story on page 2 or another section entirely and turn the page to view that story immediately.

People approach websites the same way. No matter what page they enter on, they scan the page for something that will keep their interest. Headlines, bullet items, text formatting and clear navigation all help the scanability of your page. If they came looking for something specific, they are immediately on the lookout for more information about that topic of interest.

- Make sure all main pages are easily scannable.
- Keep your visitors' interest by making your headlines and navigation items obvious and relevant.
- Use appropriate text formatting, such as bolding and *italicizing* to draw the eye to important points.
- Don't hide your links to other content by changing the color or removing the underline.
- These cues help visitors quickly find what they are looking for.

Web content writing is all about writing informative and factual content. Web content is simple, straightforward and generally written to inform and educate.

- Short, straightforward sentences
 - Long sentences tend to be complicated.
 - One or two ideas per sentence is plenty. More than that confuses people, they can't see the main point.
- Good Headlines
 - Summarize an entire web page in a few words.
 - Subdivide long pages into smaller chunks, each with a sub-headline.
- Keywords
 - Keywords answer the question: What is this page about? Or what does this page do?
 - Page titles should contain main keywords from the page
- Hyperlinks
 - Should be left aligned
 - Avoid link-spatter; these are links placed throughout a paragraph or page
- Plain Language
 - Is obvious and clear
 - Web pages should be written for the reader, not the writer
 - Do not use jargon
- Literacy Levels
 - Homepage or Summary should be written at a 5th grade level
 - Content at an 8th grade level
 - Supporting information at an 11th grade level

Remember, not all the world has a broadband connection, and even if the bandwidth is available, you shouldn't feel you need to use it all. You need to get your message to the potential client as quickly as possible, so while your page needs to look good, it also needs to be lean.

F-Shaped Pattern for reading web content

The average person spends about 10 to 20 seconds on a webpage. If they can't find what they are looking for they move onto the next page.

Eye-tracking visualizations show that users often read web pages in an F-shaped pattern: two horizontal stripes followed by a vertical stripe. By putting keywords on the F not only will your readers be able to find what they are looking for your page will also be searchable.



Eye-tracking study by Nielsen Norman Group; for more about the study go to www.useit.com

Process for Selecting Web Content

1. Put the content you now have on the topic aside. This may be difficult but you should rethink your topic without being constrained by what the site now says.
2. Check strategy and architecture. Find out how this topic fits (or not) into your organization's/department's:
 - Content strategy
 - Marketing strategy
 - Social media strategy
 - Information architecture
3. Adopt a persona's perspective. Think about the topic from your site visitors' point of view.
 - Which persona(s) is this for? Put yourself in those personas' place.
4. List questions. What would those personas ask about the topic?
 - Who? What? Why?
5. Put the questions in logical order.
 - Which question would the person ask first? Which next?
 - Go through your list until you have all the questions in an order that is logical to your site visitors.

6. Cut, paste, rewrite, edit.
 - Now go back to the content you set aside in Step 1.
 - Use it as source material to answer the questions you have written down.
7. Look over what's left in your original.
 - Do your site visitors care about what is left?
 - Is any of it critical for your site visitors to know?
8. Get more answers.
 - If you have questions in your list for which you do not have an answer find the right person and the information.
 - If it's a question people will ask, taking this step will save phone calls later.
9. Read your new draft.
 - Does it flow logically?
 - Are the questions in your site visitors' words?
 - Are the answers short, straightforward, and clear?
10. Discard what you have not used.
 - If your site visitors neither need nor care about the information why include it?
 - This may be the most difficult step of all, but remember that the web is about what people want and need to know, not about saying all there is to say on a topic.

Process for Cutting Down to Essential Messages

1. Start with your new draft. Go through the steps in the Process for Selecting Web Content section.
2. Focus on the facts. Cut the fluff!
3. Focus on your site visitors and what they want to know.
 - Cut out words that talk about you or the organization – unless your site visitors want or need that information.
4. Put your new draft away for a day or two.
 - Then, take it out and see if you can cut some more without losing your essential messages.
5. Read it out loud.
 - Ask a colleague to read it out loud. Ask a few representative site visitors to read it out loud.
6. Listen carefully and revise.
 - Don't ask people for their opinion of the content. Ask them to tell you what the content said.
 - What's important is whether they "got" their answers and your key messages.

Guidelines for Keywords

1. Keywords answer the question: What is this page about? Or what does this page do?
 - People type keywords when searching.
 - Search engines find pages with matching keywords.
 - Search engines create a summary from text that includes the keywords and show the summary in the search results.
2. Think about your target audience searching for your page.
 - Which words would they type?
 - Which words would get a successful result?
 - Your jargon is not their jargon

Example of good and poor keywords

| Good Keywords (specific) | Poor Keywords (vague) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Large breed dogs | Dogs |
| Antique furniture restoration | Our business |
| US foreign policy Middle East | Foreign policy |
| Social Security benefit payout | Social security |
| WCU Board of Trustees | Who we are |

Guidelines for Focusing on Conversations and Key Messages

Note: The most important thing to remember is to think INFORMATION not document!

1. Give people only what they need.
 - Do they really care about the entire history of your project? Probably not.
 - Do they really want to hear how much you welcome them before you show them what you have to offer? Probably not.
2. Think “bite, snack, meal”
 - Bite = headline, link, or both plus a very brief description.
 - Snack = key message or brief summary. The snack can be a bit on the home page, a separate bold or *italicized* line at the top of an article, the first bit of information in a blog post, or the summary to a very large report.
 - Meal = the details. The meal can be the rest of an article or blog post, a deeper web page linked from the snack, or the full report.
3. Start with your key message
 - Key message first = inverted pyramid style, the main point comes first.

Inverted Pyramid Writing: you start with the conclusion; the inverted pyramid is top heavy, all of the essential information is located at the top of the document. Minor details fall to the bottom

Image from realityburst.com

On the web, the more information you give people, the less they understand.

Be selective about what information you put on a web page to avoid confusing people.

One page, one topic: that’s the rule.

If you want to say extra things, best link to another page with that information.


4. Break down walls of words.
 - Large blocks of text that look like wall-to-wall words are barriers.
 - Whether your site visitors are on large screens, tablets, or mobile devices, very short paragraphs or bullet points work best.

Here is an example of where paragraphs are not the best way to convey information quickly.

Large, clear headline with a call to action.

Picture with a clear message: Call us!

Make an Appointment



To make an appointment with a provider based at Harborview Medical Center, call 206.620.6000 or toll-free 1.877.520.5000, 7 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. weekdays and Saturdays, and 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Sundays.

To make an appointment with a provider based at UW Medical Center or at any of our seven UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics, call toll-free 1.877.520.5000, 7 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. weekdays and Saturdays, and 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Sundays.

We can schedule an outpatient appointment for you with physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants at Harborview Medical Center, UW Medical Center, including its clinics at Roosevelt and the Eastside Specialty Center, as well as our Seattle-area UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics in Belltown, Factoria, Federal Way, Issaquah, Kent/Des Moines, Shoreline and Woodinville.

The UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics are often able to offer same-day or short-notice appointments. Appointments can be made by calling the UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinic where you would like to be seen.

The top two paragraphs are almost identical.

The third paragraph has information that should come first.

The most anxious person's needs are answered last.

The clinic link does not go to a list of addresses and phone numbers.

Screen shot from: <http://uwmedicine.washington.edu>

Notice how all the important information is buried in the paragraph. The visitor cannot get to it quickly.

Here is the same paragraph revised. All the important information is easy to find.

😊 A more informative headline has info that was buried in the third paragraph.

😊 The most anxious persona's content comes first.

Make an Appointment with a doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant



Need to see someone today?
The UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics can often arrange same-day or short-notice appointments. Call the [UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinic](#) where you would like to be seen.

Need an appointment for another day?

Call us.

Monday - Saturday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

206-520-5000 or toll-free 1-877-520-5000
for appointments at

[Harborview Medical Center](#)

[UW Medical Center](#) (including Roosevelt Clinic and Eastside Specialty Center)

[UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics](#) (Belltown, Factoria, Federal Way, Issaquah, Kent/DesMoines, Shoreline, Woodinville)

😊 Fragments, not paragraphs, make content easy to grab.

😊 Headings clearly show two different situations.

Suggested revision by Janice Redish

Guidelines for Headlines that Work Well

1. Use your site visitors' words.
2. Be clear, not cute.
 - Site visitors scanning links on the page may not connect what they want with the cute phrasing you've used.
 - A search engine may not place the article high in its results because the headline doesn't have the keywords it is matching.
 - An example of a bad headline: this person wanted to tackle the question of whether to use an even or odd number of response categories in a survey:
 - The headline read: "Piggy in the Middle" with this headline how would anyone know what this is about?
 - Perhaps a better headline would read: "Odd or even number of survey response categories; what works best?"
3. Think about your global audience.
 - If you want what you write about to have a global reach, be aware of abbreviations, acronyms, and idioms that only locals understand.
 - Example: Pap rally will be held in SSU. We may know it means Sykes Student Union but many others may not.
4. Try for medium length (about eight words)
 - Use more keywords that site visitors are looking for and that search engines can match.
5. Use a statement, question, or call to action.
 - Statement headlines put the key message first. Don't use all caps in the headline. Bold and text size are better ways to show that this is your headline.

A statement: Francis Harvey Greene Library acquires collection of rare Shakespeare books

A question: Are you paying too much for college tuition?

A verb phrase makes a call to action: Flu Shots are available, make an appointment today

6. Combine labels (nouns) with more information
 - Nouns by themselves announce topics. They don't work well as headlines for articles or information pages; they don't give enough specifics for people to know that's what they want.
 - Training resources (weak headline)
 - Training resources for HR team leaders (strong headline)
7. Add a short description if people need it.
 - A headline should serve by itself as the "bite" that entices people to want the snack and then the meal. Offer a brief description; it will help people select the right link.

Help Me Choose a Major

Help Me Apply for Financial Assistance

Put Headings into Old Content as a First Step

1. To become familiar with the content you have, go through it, trying to write a heading for each paragraph. That can be a useful first step in revising. But don't just add headings to old content.
 - If you find it difficult to write a heading for a section of text, it probably means that section is not clear or covers too many points all jumbled together. Clarify the content. Break it into smaller sections.
 - If you find yourself writing the same heading over different sections of content, it probably means the material is not well organized. Reorganize it to be logical for your site visitors.
2. Create an outline. Don't worry about using numerals or letters etc. Right down the headings you are going to use in the order you are going to use them, without any text under them.
3. Write from your site visitors' point of view. Write as if you were recording both sides of the conversation. One good way to do that is to use:
 - "I" for the site visitor in the question
 - "you" for the site visitor in the answer
 - "we" for the organization
4. A heading can be in the form of a question. Keep the questions short:
 - Long questions take up precious space.
 - Headings are **bold** or *italicized*, and large blocks of **bold** or *italicized* are difficult to read.
 - Despite the power of headings, some site visitors use the headings only as landing spots to see where new sections start. They don't actually read the headings.
5. Verb phrases as headings. Many web conversations are site visitors asking "How do I...?"
 - If you have a series of questions do not start each question with "How do I?"
 - People will have a hard time finding what they want.
 - Take away the repeated words and start each heading with the action word.

Distinguish Headings from Text

1. Make headings easy to see at a glance. Use **bold** or *italics*, that stands out, keep the following in mind:
2. Make each level of heading clear.
 - Make the hierarchy or the headings (different levels) obvious
 - Differentiate levels by size spacing and placement
 - **Size**
 - Type size for the headline <H1> should be bigger than for the headings <H2>
 - If you use <H3> headings and don't change the placement, make them smaller than your <H2> headings.
 - About 3 points difference is often good.
 - **Spacing**
 - The headline might also have more space after it than other headings.
 - It's critical to put headings close to the text they introduce.
 - Don't center headlines or headings.
 - People usually scan down the left margin of the content, they'll miss the centered headings.

Example of headings.

The screenshot shows a website for West Chester University with a navigation menu. The main content area is titled 'Eating Habits' and is divided into four sections: Home, Meals, Food, and Diet. The 'Food' section is highlighted. On the left side, a list of headings is shown with arrows pointing to the corresponding text in the 'Food' section. The headings are: h1 for 'Eating Habits', h2 for 'Food', h3 for 'Vegetables', h3 for 'Fruits', h4 for 'Apples', h5 for 'Granny Smith', h4 for 'Oranges', and h3 for 'Dairy'. Each heading is followed by a paragraph of placeholder text.

Guidelines for Tuning up Your Sentences

1. Use “you” throughout
 - Make the information inviting and personal by addressing your site visitors directly.
 - Use “you” throughout: the content will be both understandable and more engaging.
2. Use “you” to be gender-neutral
 - Third person singular pronouns (he, she, him, her, his, hers) are gender-specific. If these pronouns are used some site visitors will think that you mean only people of that gender.

The example below is a website that is supposed to give physicians help on how to move a practice from one state to another. Notice how it doesn’t talk to the physician.

The advice starts with an implied task. It doesn't tell the reader to do the task.

“Ask” is an imperative verb. It addresses the reader directly.

The second sentence is 39 words long and includes several points.

The “physician” is the person the writer is talking to. The writer has already spoken directly to the physician with the imperative “ask.” Why not continue to speak directly to the physician with “you”?

The first sentence mentions two points:

- requirements
- time

The second sentence explains why the two points are important, but it gives the rationale for time before the rationale for requirements.

Paragraph taken from www.ama-assn.org

Here is the same page revised.

Start with an imperative, rather than just implying the action “contact.”

Talk directly to the doctor. Use “you.”

Separate contacting from asking. Give each action its own sentence.

Use a bulleted list, even for two items like this.

Divide the information into two shorter paragraphs.

Break the original second sentence into two short sentences. Put them in the same order as the two bulleted items.

Give each reason its own sentence. The average sentence length drops from 33 to 16 words.

Contact the licensing board where you want to practice. Ask for

- a copy of its current licensing requirements, and
- the average time it takes to process applications.

Reading the requirements will help you understand any potential problems you may have in applying. Finding out about the processing time will help you plan when to close your current practice or when to move.

Suggested revision by Janice Redish (author of Letting Go of the Words, Writing Web Content that Works

3. Use “I” and “we”

- You can set the style of the site in two ways.
 - Picture the site visitors asking the question.
 - Picture the site asking the question.
- When the site visitor asks the question:
 - “I” and “my” in the question (the voice of the site visitor).
 - “you” and “your” in the answer (the site is talking to the site visitor).
 - “we” and “our” for the organization that is answering the question.

This is an example of using “I” and “We”

How do I become a volunteer?

At the shelter **we** are always looking for volunteers. Apply to become one now to gain some valuable work experience – and satisfaction of helping a good cause.

- When the site asks the question:
 - This often happens in forms
 - Use “you” and “your” in the question (the site asking the site visitor)
 - “I” and “my” in the answer (the voice of the site visitor)
 - “we” and “our” for the organization that is asking the question

An example from Amazon.com

amazon [Your Account](#) | [Help](#)

Sign In

What is your e-mail address?

My e-mail address is:

Do you have an Amazon.com password?

No, I am a new customer.

Yes, I have a password:

[Forgot your password?](#)

Sign In Help

Forgot your password? [Get password help.](#)

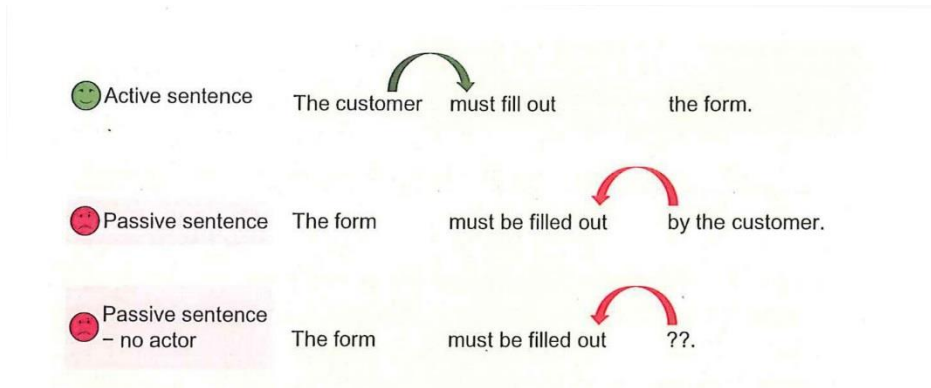
Has your e-mail address changed? [Update it here.](#)

[Conditions of Use](#) [Privacy Notice](#)
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www.amazon.com

- For an organization, use “we”.
 - “We,” “us,” “our” are best when you are writing on behalf of a group, your team, your division, your organization. It’s what you would say in a conversation. Most web sites do this on the Contact Us page.

4. Write in the active voice most of the time.
 - Sentences in the active voice (active sentences) describe “who does what to whom.”
 - In an active sentence the person or thing doing the action (the actor) comes before the verb.



Taken from Letting Go of the Words, Writing Web Content that Works

- Sometimes the passive is appropriate. Sometimes the focus belongs on the object. You may need the passive to avoid blaming or scaring your site visitors.
 - However an entire web page in the passive is boring and difficult to understand. It's not conversational.
5. Write short, simple sentences.
 - Try to keep the sentences to about 10 to 20 words.
 - Cut the fluff.
 - Keep each sentence to one thought or two tightly connected thoughts.
 6. Cut unnecessary words.
 - Sometimes, sentences are longer than necessary because the writer uses several words where one (or none) will do.


Example:

Due to the fact that business is good at this point in time... instead try

Because business is good now... **because** and **now** each take the place of five words.

7. Give extra information its own place.
 - If extra information takes a person off on a tangent, they may lose track of what the sentence is about.
 - A sentence with many commas probably has extra information stuffed into it.
 - Think of your site visitors, the questions they would ask, and the order in which they would ask them.
 - If different pieces of information are needed at different times, separate those pieces.
 - Keep the main parts of the sentence together (subject – verb – object).
 - Put the key message first.
 - Pull out extra information and make each piece its own sentence or fragment.
 - Consider using visuals, fragments, and lists where they convey the information quickly and accurately. Example of information stuffed into a paragraph

Interested persons, on or before June 14, 2013, may submit to the Hearing Clerk, 1000 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20000, written comments regarding this proposal. Faxed comments will be accepted at 202-555-1234. To submit comments electronically, go to this site:

 The first sentence isn't too long (26 words), but the writer interrupts the main thought twice.

Taken from Letting Go of the Words, Writing Web Content that Works

The revised sentence matches the order in which site visitors need the information: key message first, then answers to people's questions in the order they would ask them.

We invite you to comment on this proposal.

Deadline: June 14, 2013

Submit written comments



electronically at
www....



by mail to
Hearing Clerk
1000 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20000



by fax to
202-555-1234
Attn: John Jones

Taken from Letting Go of the Words, Writing Web Content that Works

8. Keep paragraphs short.
 - Keep paragraphs short, just a few sentences.
 - People do not want to read long drawn out paragraphs. **Remember long paragraphs are bad for mobile devices.**
 - A one sentence paragraph is fine.
9. Start with the context.
 - Start each paragraph with a topic sentence. A sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph is about.
 - Note: sometimes to write clearly you have to find out more information than you originally had.
 - Consider using the pattern, “if, then.” It follows the readers logic and makes you put the first things first, second things second. You almost always need the “if” in the “if clause,” but you don't actually need the word “then” in the “then clause.”
 - For example, “If it's raining, take an umbrella.” No need to use the word then.
10. Put the action in the verb
 - Don't bury the action in a noun.

Example of a weak sentence:

Retention of these records for seven years is a requirement for licensees. (**Retention is a noun hiding a verb.**) (Is, is a weak verb.) (**Requirement is a noun hiding a verb.**)

Example of a strong sentence:

Licensees must keep these records for seven years. (**Must keep is a strong verb.**)
 You must keep these records for seven years.

Taken from Letting Go of the Words, Writing Web Content that Works

This table gives you the most common endings for nouns that hide verbs. Use the table to help you move the action out of nouns and put the action where it belongs – in the verb.

| Look for this | As in this example | Which should be this verb |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| -al | denial | deny |
| -ance | maintenance | maintain, keep |
| -ence | concurrency | concur, agree |
| -ment | assignment | assign |
| -sion | transmission | transmit, send |
| -tion | recommendation | recommend |
| -ure | failure | fail, if you don't |

Taken from Letting Go of the Words, Writing Web Content that Works

11. Use your site visitors' words.

- Think conversation as you construct paragraphs, sentences, lists and tables, and when you choose words.
- Only use special words that have specific meaning in your field if everyone you are conversing with shares your special language.

- Always use plain language. Offer short, simple words that make your content more conversational.
- Using short, simple words is not “dumbing down” your content. It’s respecting your busy site visitors’ time.

| Instead of this | Try this | Instead of this | Try this |
|-----------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| ascertain | find out | obtain | get |
| attempt | try | prior to | before |
| compensation | pay | purchase | buy |
| component | part | request | ask for |
| inception | start | subsequent | next |
| initiate | begin | terminate | end |
| inquire | ask | utilize | use |

Taken from Letting Go of the Words, Writing Web Content that Works

Note: Research has shown that using these guidelines for clear writing for the web helps both low-literacy and high-literacy site visitors.

Guidelines for Useful Lists

1. Use bulleted lists for items or options. Lists help people:
 - Skim and scan
 - See how many items there are
 - Check off items mentally
 - Find a specific item quickly

Example of a list in a paragraph. This makes it difficult for the visitor to make a note of all the items.

Camp Voyageur

About CV Prospective Families Camp Family Information Employment

Packing List

Once registered for camp, campers receive a complete packing list to prepare them for their time in the northwoods. Camp is the perfect place to wear out old clothes, and we encourage campers not to overpack. Campers need a wool or fleece top, wool socks, rain gear (jacket and pants or poncho), wind pants (top and bottom that dry out quickly), broken in trail or hiking boots, shorts, swim trunks, t-shirts, sleeping bag, bedding for use in the cabin and little else while at camp. Bring you musical instrument, books and hobbies.

Annotations:


- If the centered headline were at the left margin, it would draw our eyes down into the paragraph.
- Even the partial list here should be a list.
- The writer uses both “campers” and “you” (“your”). Why not “you” for the camper throughout? Even if the camper’s parents are reading this, they’ll know that “you” is the camper.
- “you” = typo for “your”
- Proofreading your content is important (see Chapter 14).

www.campvoyageur.com

Notice how much easier it is to read this bulleted list.


Packing for camp

After you register for camp, we'll send a complete list of what to pack for your time in the northwoods.

 Pronouns help the conversation.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Don't overpack.
- Bring old clothes.
- Be sure you have
 - a wool or fleece top
 - wool socks
 - rain gear (jacket and pants or poncho)
 - wind pants (top and bottom that dry quickly)
 - trail or hiking boots (broken in)
 - shorts
 - swim trunks
 - t-shirts
 - sleeping bag
 - bedding for use in the cabin

 The list makes the page much easier to scan.

And, of course, bring your musical instruments, books, and hobbies.

Suggested revision by Janice Redish (author of Letting Go of the Words, Writing Web Content that Works)

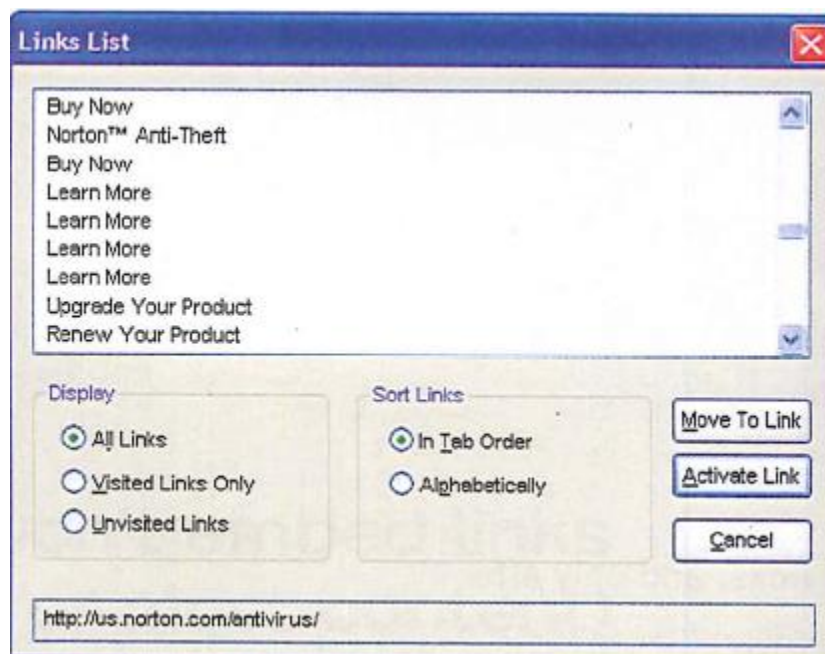
2. Use numbered lists for instructions.
 - With a numbered list, site visitors can:
 - See at a glance how many steps there are.
 - Check off steps.
 - Read one step, do it, and find the next step easily when they come back to the list.
 - Do the steps in the correct order.
 - Do all the steps.
 - With a numbered list, you as a content author can:
 - Be sure you have not left out a step.
 - Put the steps in the correct order.
 - Check that the procedure works well.
3. Keep most lists short.
 - Short (5-10 items) is best for unfamiliar items.
 - If people will not immediately recognize all the items in the list, break up long lists.
 - Long may be okay for very familiar lists.
 - Some lists can be long because your site visitors immediately understand the topic of the list. An example of this would be a list of U.S. states or capitals.
 - Try to start the list items the same way.
 - People are very pattern-oriented.
 - Wrap lines under each other.
 - Don't wrap the text back to the beginning of the line, have the new line start under the bullet or number.
 - Put what happens on a line by itself.

Guidelines for Writing Meaningful Links

1. Don't make new programs links by themselves.
 - Many organizations create programs with unique names. Once people know the name it may make sense. However it's meaningless to new people coming to your site for the first time.
2. Think ahead: Launch and land on the same name.
 - The first thing people check as they move through web sites is, "Did I get where I thought I was going?"
 - If the link and page name don't match visitors may have a moment of confusion.
 - Matching is very important now that so many visitors use mobile devices. Page load times can be longer for mobile devices. People can become frustrated if they didn't get the content they were expecting.
 - Both should have almost all the same words but most certainly the same keywords.

Note: **SEO** (Search Engine Optimization) Launching and landing on the same name helps your SEO. Some algorithms may lower your SEO score if the headline as a link and the headline on the page don't match.

3. For actions start with a verb.
 - For example instead of using just the word **Accounts** use **Go to Accounts** instead.
4. Make the link meaningful.
 - Most people scan web pages first focusing on headings and links
 - **Click here**, **Here**, **More**, **Read More**, etc. give no clue about what will appear
 - Blind web users scan with their ears. Screen –reading software helps them do this by allowing them to pull the links on a web page into one list. This can be very frustrating.



JAWS from Freedom Scientific, reading links on a page at us.norton.com/products

- **Click here** is not necessary. Most site visitors know that something that looks like a link is a link.
- **More**, or **Learn More** by itself isn't enough

The image shows three examples of link placement on a job site with annotations:

- Example 1:** "Get Your Future Started" with a picture of a person. The link "Join Monster Today!" is highlighted with a green arrow and a smiley face. A note says "Action verbs = calls to action". Below it, "Become a member now and post a resume to get found by thousands of employers. Get job alert emails, apply to jobs in just one step, and much more." is also highlighted with a green arrow.
- Example 2:** "Accelerate Your Job Search" with a picture of a woman. The link "Get new jobs emailed to you!" is highlighted with a green arrow and a smiley face. A note says "This link is useful whether you are looking or listening." Below it, "Save your customized job search and get new job alerts sent to your inbox. Create a saved search today." is highlighted with a green arrow.
- Example 3:** "Monster Resume Writing" with a picture of a man. The link "Learn More" is highlighted with a yellow arrow and a sad face. A note says "An action verb phrase would be better than this noun phrase." Another note says "Learn More isn't as useful as the other two links."

www.monstor.com

- Most people notice the pictures first, then the blue links, and then after that they read the headlines and the text.
5. Don't embed links for most content. Avoid link spatter.
 - Remember an embedded link is always a distraction.
 - When someone follows an embedded link they leave your information in the middle of what you are saying. It's like switching conversational topics mid-sentence.
 - Keep links left aligned.

Example of link spatter

Links **placed randomly** throughout text are called link-spatter. They can make the page look **disorderly** and confusing. **This paragraph** shows how a **page can appear** if links are **spattered** throughout the **text**.

6. If you want people to read your entire sentence, paragraph or list, don't invite them to leave by embedding links. Site visitors don't often come back once they've left your page.
 - Put links at the end, below, or next to your text.
 - At the start of a paragraph.
 - Straight after the relevant paragraph.
 - In a list.
 - In Headlines.
7. Make bullets with links active, too.
 - Whenever you use bullets next to links, (circles, squares, numbers, etc.) include the bullet with the text in the clickable area.

Getting from the Draft to the Final Copy

1. Read, edit, revise, and proofread your own work.
 - Think of writing as revising drafts.
 - Read what you wrote.
 - Check your links.
 - If your content includes links, click on each one.
 - Check your facts.
 - Make sure what you say is accurate.
 - Let it rest.
 - Read it out loud.
 - Use dictionaries, handbooks, style guides.
 - Run the spell check but **don't rely on it.**
 - Proofread
 - Because the spell checker isn't perfect, you should also proofread what you wrote. Go through what you have written line by line from the end of your copy back up to the beginning. This helps you look at each word separately instead of getting caught up in reading for meaning.
 - Share drafts with colleagues
 - Work with colleagues to fit the content strategy
 - Share partial drafts
 - Have someone read it out loud
 - Ask what your key message is
2. The Readability Test Tool takes the text on your web page and gives a score for the most used readability indicators.
 - www.read-able.com