Writing for the Web
Creating A Successful Web Page

Copy/Text

Visuals

Formatting
Creating A Successful Web Page

1. What is my MESSAGE
2. Who is my AUDIENCE
3. How do I want my audience to REACT (Call to Action)
4. How will they FIND the information

Copy/Text  Visuals  Formatting
How People Typically Interact with Web Pages

• 96% of the time, visitors come to a page looking for specific information*
  • Scan the page to make a snap judgement – is this for me?
  • Look for keywords or terms of interest
• People spend 74% of their viewing time on the top portion of the page**
  • Read about 20-28% of the copy

*Xerox Parc Study/ **Nielsen Norman Group
How You Lose Your Page Viewers

• The content is not intended for me
• The content is too technical/confusing
• There’s too much to read/digest
• The page is obviously out of date or appears out of date
• The writing and/or photography is poor
• The page is trying to sell me something
How Can You Engage Your Page Viewers?

Copy/Text + Visuals + Formatting
Create Solid Copy

• Keep it conversational, but professional
• Talk directly to your audience – “you”
• Use active voice
• Say the important stuff first – don’t bury the lead
• Don’t use terms they won’t understand
• Write in short sentences and short paragraphs – “chunks” are easier to scan
• Use concise subheads
• Use bullets/numbers to break up copy
• Use keywords in your copy and headlines
• Proper grammar and spelling count!
Add Strong Visual Elements

• Use engaging, quality photos that add to what you are saying. Don’t use them for the sake of using them.
• Avoid stock images – people may have seen them elsewhere or they look like “ads”
• Use charts and diagrams to help explain or display information
• If videos are included, keep them short and relevant to the page they are on
Use Proper Formatting

- Keep headings and sections parallel
- Don’t underline words or phrases – implies it’s a link
- Don’t overuse bold face or italics
- Avoid all caps – basically, that’s yelling
- Don’t double space after periods
- Include links, but don’t overuse them
- Don’t use terms like “click here” or “follow this link”
Other Reminders

• Websites are not linear
  • Your page could be the first page someone sees on your site
• Answer questions; don’t raise more
  • People come to a page to solve a problem, find help or get information
• Be careful when you “date” your page – can look old fast
  • Raises question of the accuracy of the information
• Update pages frequently