

# Fact not Fiction

## The Benefits of Having Properly Written Content

Writing for the Web is like no other kind of writing. It's a skill in itself, and one which many writers fail to address properly. Their ghastly, common mistake? Long, wordy prose.

It is categorically and unequivocally true to say that there is no greater evil than the darkness that lurks inside the beating heart of densely written, indulgent wordy prose.

See what we mean?

Web page writing is to sell and inform, for goodness' sake, not to win a literary prize.

### The write idea

People read web pages differently to other media. It's harder to read text on a computer monitor than on paper. The monitor's glare tires the eyes. And anyway, almost 80% of users only scan a web page rather than reading it word for word.

Some points:

- Think electronically – get your head out of the 'paper writing' mindset
- Before writing, ask yourself *why* visitors have come to your site. What do they want to know?
- Grab visitors with headlines, but don't try to be clever
- Keep it short, concise and punchy
- Keep it simple
- Keep it interesting, but straightforward and functional
- Keep it relevant
- Let the visitors to your site have the information they are looking for in the quickest way possible

## **Write for your audience, not for you**

*Always* write from your audience's point of view and, if you can, include a unique selling point (USP) in your grabby headline.

Don't bombard visitors to your site with information. Breaking text up into small paragraphs of no more than 50 words is key.

Paragraphs should also only include one self-contained idea, even if it's a single sentence.

## **Consider Accessibility**

*Accessibility* is the practice of making websites as easy to use as possible for people with disabilities. Worldwide, millions of people have disabilities that make it difficult to use badly produced websites. So this is a hugely important subject.

Here's a tip to get you started: Blind people and the partially sighted often skip through the links on a web page. This makes it vital that links make sense out of context. 'Click here for more information on our latest holiday offers' is a lot more useful to a blind web user than 'Click here' or 'Find out more'.

## **Cut, cut, cut**

No, that's not Spielberg talking, that's us.

Take anything you've written and pare down the text to the bone. Cut it in half, and then cut it in half again. Then again. You'll be amazed by how many words can go, and yet still all the info you want to put across is still there.

## **SEO writing**

Question: What's the use of having a brilliantly written website if internet search engines fail to pick it up?

Answer: No use at all

Internet search engines (like Google) help users find web pages on a given subject. The search engines maintain databases of websites and use programs to collect information, which they then index.

SEO means 'search engine optimisation'. This is a marketing technique of preparing a website to enhance its chances of being ranked in the top results of a search engine (once a relevant search is undertaken).

Placing and positioning the right amount of 'key words' on your web pages means that your website stands a greater chance of rising up the search engine rankings.

### **And the benefits of having properly written content?**

- Visitors will stick with your site
- They'll read all of it
- They'll return to it and recommend it
- They'll feel you are talking to *them*
- They'll appreciate that you get straight to the point
- They'll appreciate your honesty
- They'll reach for their wallets
- You'll make so much money that you'll be checking your place on the rich list on a wireless laptop as you lay on a beach somewhere in the Caribbean, while all the wordy guys are scratching their heads and wondering where on earth they went wrong!

Good luck.

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