

Web Content Guide

Aside from the pictures and the style, a web site's content continues to be the driving force behind any web site. You can have beautiful pictures but if there's no content behind it, it will eventually fall.

Below is a list of guidelines to follow when generating web content.

This is from the site - <http://www.frogloop.com/care2blog/2009/2/27/10-best-web-content-practices.html>

- 1) **Get To The Point:** When a user visits your website you have about 5 seconds to grab their attention before they click off. A good site gives users the information that they need quickly and efficiently. This does not mean adhering to a defined word or character length for every piece of content, but rather ensuring that you say what you need in the shortest, clearest way possible. A good rule of thumb is to write out your content as a first draft without thinking about length, then come back to it a day later and cut it down by half. Repeat process. You'll find it's not hard after spending a little time away from it to cut down unnecessary text and still convey the relevant information.
- 2) **Make Webpage Scannable:** In addition to keeping things short, make them easily scannable. Using headings and lists so that the main points of information you are trying to convey can be read by quickly scanning the page.
- 3) **Use Landing Pages Strategically:** Landing pages should give an overview of each web section. Integrate any relevant and current "take action" items such as "sign the petition to stop Big Oil from drilling in the Arctic Refuge." Provide links to resources, fact sheets, and important articles so users can easily click to read more.
- 4) **Search Engine Optimization:** Integrate keyword-rich content into your website that your target audiences want to read.
- 5) **Use Compelling Images And Headlines:** Images can help draw your readers in and help connect them to your organizations mission and initiatives. Try to attach at least one compelling image to each page. Also try and use headlines, par"you" or "your" where possible.
- 6) **Be Consistent:** Use the same terminology and nomenclature throughout your site. For example, use "Donate" or "Contribute" but not both (Donate is probably preferable in that instance).
- 7) **Develop A Style Guide:** Decide on style choices, e.g. how to write abbreviations, when to use caps, formatting dates, etc. Compile the style guide into one document and distribute it to all staff who will be updating the website.
- 8) **Be Objective:** Try to avoid hyperbole and use of buzzwords.
- 9) **Use the Active Tense:** Users will engage more readily with content written in the active tense. Eg "It was decided" is less engaging, and inspires less confidence, than "We decided."
- 10) **Find Your Voice And Know Your Audiences:** While it's important to determine the kind of voice you want your website content to project it's also critical that you tailor each web section to your target audience. Writing for "Hill staffers" will have a much wonkier tone then writing for college activists which will have more of a casual tone.