Writing for the Web

Increase usability of your site by writing and formatting for the web
Did you know?

- 79% of users scan web pages rather than reading word-for-word
- Reading text on a computer screen is 25% slower than reading from paper
- To write effectively for the web you use 50% fewer words than you would for print
Scannability

• Use bulleted or numbered **lists** to organize content. **Lists slow down scanning** and can draw attention to important text.

• Write in **inverted paragraphs**. Start page with conclusion of the remaining content.

• If possible, run your content through and “editor” for grammar, punctuation and consistency.
Scannability

• Each paragraph should contain one main idea. Use a second paragraph for the next idea, and so forth.

• Web users can be critical and are in a hurry. Design your content so they can quickly get what they want.
Text treatments

• **Bold** text to emphasize key words. Bold only key-words, not entire sentences

• **Italics** can be used to emphasize more text. Use for a sentence but not a paragraph

• If you “color” text for emphasis, **avoid blue**. Blue is reserved for hyperlinks.
Headlines

• Make your top headline the largest. Try to use no more than 4 levels of headlines.

• Write brief, clear headlines
Lists

- When the order of text is important, use numbered lists
- Use unnumbered lists when the order of text is not important
- If possible, use no more than 9 items in a list
- Try to limit lists to two levels: Primary and secondary
Hyperlinks

• Describe the information to be found in the link (link address, for more information, format of the information such as .pdf or .doc). A web user does want to be surprised by a giant documents.
Hyperlinks

• Use hyperlinks to provide supplemental information such as definitions, background, reference and related web sites.
Resources

- Online Dictionary, thesaurus, translator
- Basic HTML
- Special characters reference sheet