

Writing & Presentation for the Web

Best Practice Guidelines for Groups in iCAN



Plain English



- ▶ 'Have something to say, and say it clearly as you can. That is the only secret of style'.
- ▶ Communicate clearly and concisely using plain English.
- ▶ This will capture the reader's attention and help them to get your message quickly and easily.

Why do people go online?



1. Scan & browse the site to find areas of interest
2. Scan sub-headings to find key information
3. Skim text for keywords/phrases
4. Read to get detail
5. Click to interact

How do users 'read' the web?

- ▶ Reading online versus printed material
 - ▶ 79% of users scan the page instead of reading word for word
 - ▶ Reading from a computer screen is about 25% slower than on paper
 - ▶ Web content should have 50 % of the word count of its paper equivalent

Follow the 'F' pattern



- ▶ First, users read from right to left across the top of the content area
- ▶ Next users move down the page a little then read across in a 2nd horizontal movement
- ▶ Finally, users scan the left side of the page in a vertical movement

Making the most of online communication

1. Linear versus non-linear

Readers of the printed page usually turn pages sequentially starting at the beginning and moving through to the end. Web users might not start at the home page or move in a way that you can predict.

- ▶ Pages should stand alone
- ▶ Use links effectively
- ▶ Use pages effectively
- ▶ Use sub headings

Making the most of online communication

2. Impatient scanners

Most online readers are very impatient, they don't read every word or line and they want to find and absorb information very quickly

- ▶ Say what it does on the tin
- ▶ Put the most important information/words first
- ▶ Write in chunks and use Subheadings
- ▶ Use lists & bullets

Making the most of online communication

3. Reading less

Reading online is slower and less comfortable than reading print. What does this mean for writing online?

- ▶ Write less
- ▶ Write shorter
- ▶ Write simpler
- ▶ Write stronger
- ▶ Write to the readers

Online Writing

'The finest language is mostly made up of simple unimposing words' George Eliot

KISSSS your text!

Keep it:

- ▶ SHORT
- ▶ SIMPLE
- ▶ STRONG
- ▶ SINCERE

Using Images

On the web, images are more important than text

- ▶ It is better to have images & no text, than text & no images!
- ▶ 1 image per 1 – 2 paragraphs
- ▶ Space images on page to look attractive
- ▶ Always give images a title and a credit/permission
- ▶ Always get permission to reproduce images
- ▶ Can use images as a link to another page or website

Think about what works for you

Critique some webpages to find out what works for you,
& will therefore work for others

Compare these two web pages on Our Irish Heritage:

- ▶ [The Mushrooms and Toadstools of Drummin Wood](#)
Notes from an autumn ramble
- ▶
- ▶ [Isaac Weld](#) Topographer and Artist

What works, what doesn't work?

Preparing an article for the web

- Check spelling & grammar
- Decide whether to use whole article or a summary + pdf

Whole article:

- Divide into sections & apply sub-headings
- Check references & use 'footnote' format
- Check you have copyright info for images & upload via media library
- Create page with images



Summary + pdf

- Use 1st paragraph or write a short overview
- Save Word doc as .pdf & add via media library
- Create page with images & .pdf

