

Writing for the Web

Writing for the Web
(A.K.A. "Trying to get people to give a darn")


Laura Solomon
Library Services Manager
OPLIN
laura@oplin.org

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Thursday, August 9, 2012



You can:

- Keep their attention
- Not turn them off
- Write more convincingly

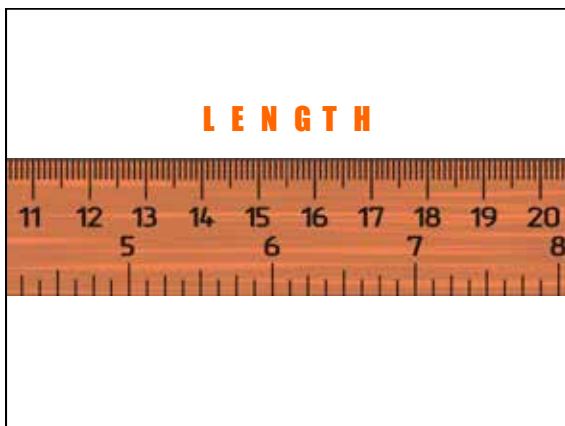


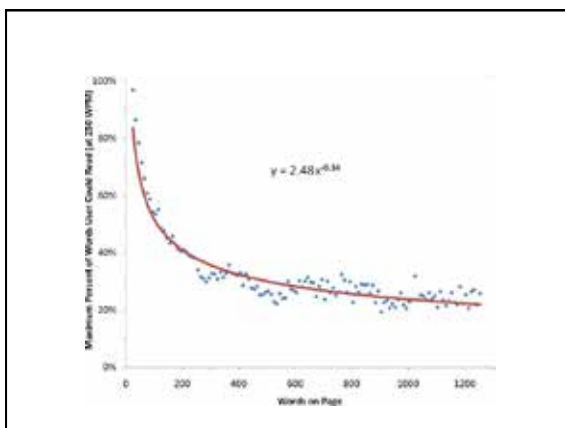
How do you feel about reading this text? This might be a perfectly acceptable way to write a research paper or novel but websites aren't for reading. Sorry to break it to you. People don't want to read your website. They want to find your information. They're on a mission and all of the extra text you're putting on the screen is getting in the way of letting them accomplish their goals. The end.

From Aaron Schmidt, walkingpaper.org

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Writing for the Web





On average, web users read almost 100% of a page's content only if it is 25 words or less.

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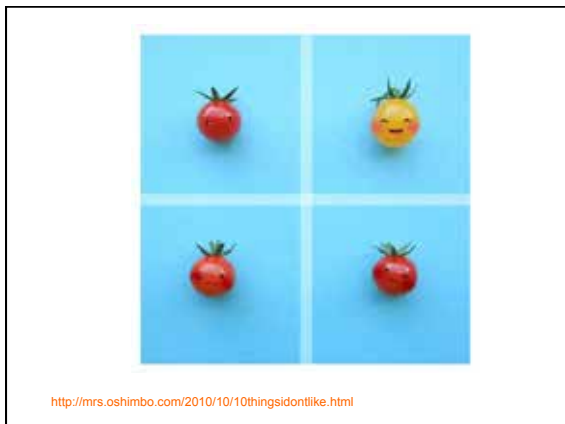
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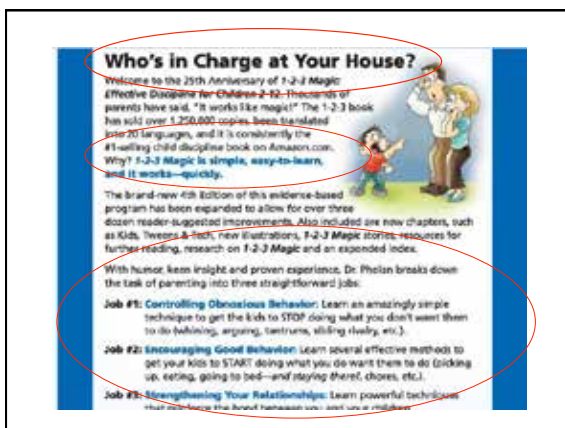
the screen is getting in the way of letting them accomplish their goals. The end.

People **scan** text. They look for items that stand out and may be important. They look for bullet points, headers, graphics, and items surrounded by white space. They look for hyperlinks. They look for items that are somehow **different** from the other things on the page and might somehow be immediately relevant.

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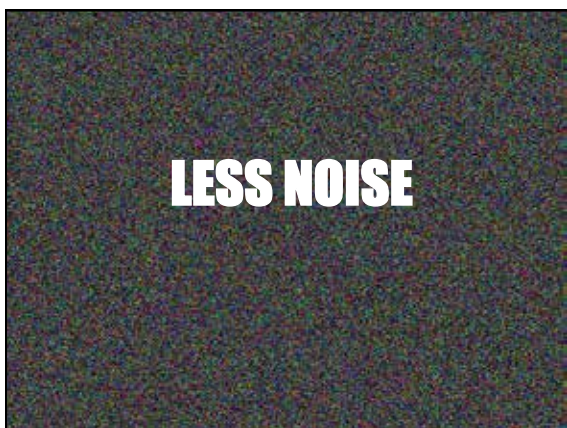


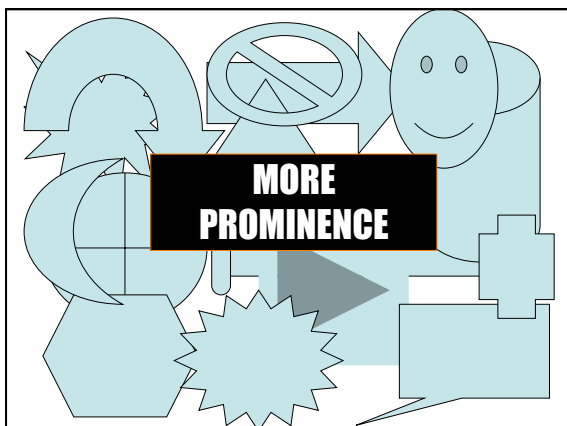


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Writing for the Web

**Less
Page
Length**

[http://www.yourlibrary.org/node/11452?
ddbox00=429&ddbox01=464&x=73&y=13](http://www.yourlibrary.org/node/11452?ddbox00=429&ddbox01=464&x=73&y=13)

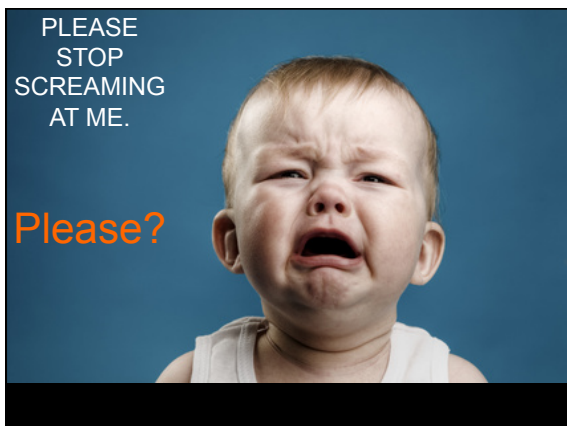
<http://www.yourlibrary.org/reference>

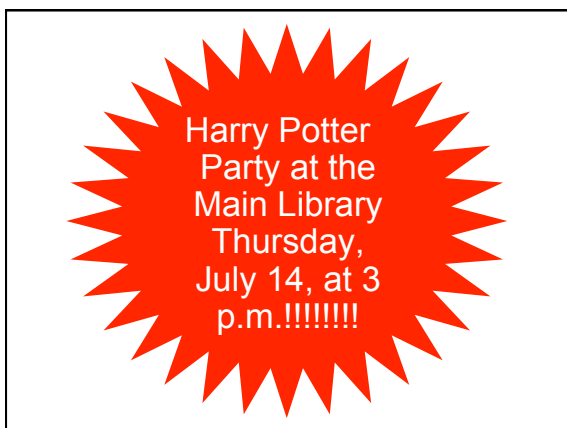
QUALITY



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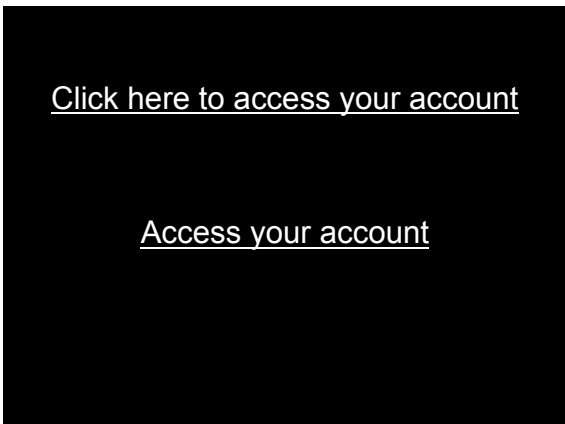






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Don't bury the **lead**

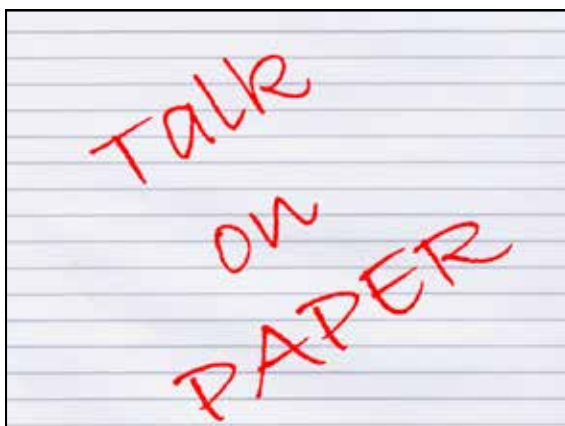
- "Mitt Romney, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, wouldn't say Sunday whether he'd repeal President Barack Obama's decision to stop deporting certain young illegal immigrants."
- "In an interview, Romney would say only that his administration would seek longer-term solutions to the problem of illegal immigration, and that Obama's new directive, announced Friday, was temporary fix."

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Writing for the Web



- 84% are more likely to **trust** you
- 60% + are more likely to be **interested** in what you are selling/saying



Content should not be written by passive-voiced staff members.

Write in the active voice.

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Writing for the Web

HOW or WHY
and BENEFIT
= WIN*



* (Show||\$why)+\$benefit=\$win

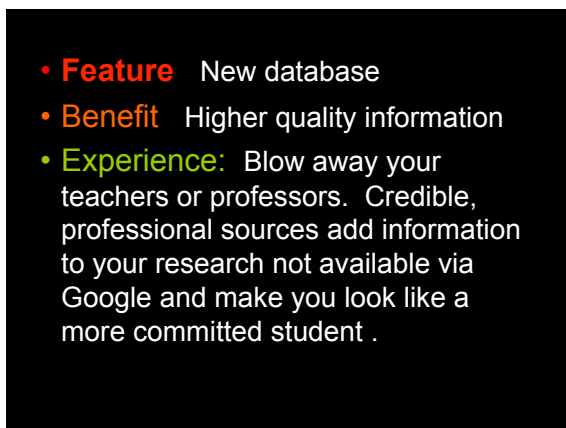
Learn more about
the library's
research
databases

How to make
your research
faster & more
productive

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Writing for the Web

Where's your CTA?



Four kinds of CTAs

- Place an order;
- Enroll, subscribe, enter;
- Get a quote;
- Learn more.

Make 'em
stronger!



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“The goal of the copy is to connect with the reader, and guide them towards an action.”

Peep Laja, owner of Markitekt.com



Headlines do 3 things



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Writing for the Web

1. Communicate **importance**



2. Succinctly convey story essence

**MAN
BITES DOG,
DOG THREATENS
LAWSUIT**

3. Grab **attention**



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Writing for the Web

Write the headline **FIRST**



Include **location**

Branch gets new checkout machine

versus

Belpre branch library gets new checkout machine

Think **keywords**

Local man wins summer reading contest

versus

Belpre man wins stuffed monkey in library's 2012 summer reading contest

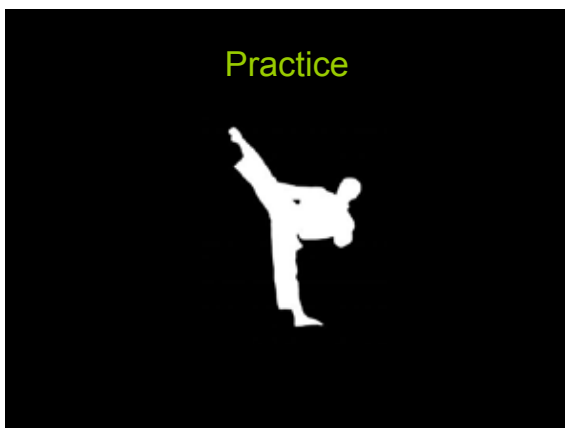
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Why do list posts **work**?

“If there’s one thing that turns online readers off, it is the 17-line, multi-idea, complex paragraph”

Chris Lake, eConsultancy, Digital Marketers United



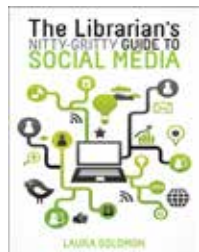
Rewrite this!

A patron must have a library card in good standing to use the public computers managed by the Library’s reservation software.

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(Absolutely shameless plug)



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Thank you!





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