

Writing



for the web

Writing for the web (thumbnail)

presented by

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What we'll cover

- Introduction
- Good writing and editing
- What makes a good web site?
- Design matters
- Getting into it
- Content is key



Why “writing for the web?”

- Primary purpose is to make large amounts of information accessible online
- Text remains the core of most web sites

From *Writing for the Web* by Crawford Kilian



What does that mean for us?

We want to produce information that is:

- Easy to find
- Easy to read
- Easy to understand



Characteristics of good writing

- Clear
- Consistent
- Complete
- Correct



Is good web text different?

Good web text has a lot in common with good print text. It's plain concise, concrete and "transparent..."

From Crawford Kilian in *Writing for the Web*



Reading on the web

- Web users don't read
- They:
 - skim
 - scan
 - look for trigger words*

*See: Jakob Nielsen's www.useit.com and *Designing Web Usability*



What makes a good web site?

“A truly ‘high joltage’ web site is one that supplies the information its readers are looking for.”

From *Writing for the Web* by Crawford Kilian



Three main ingredients

According to Crawford Kilian:

- Orientation
 - What the site's about, how it's set up
- Information
 - Should be clear, coherent, correct
- Action
 - Clearly identifies what the user should do

From *Writing for the Web* by Crawford Kilian



What is design?

In a nutshell, design is:

- Arranging objects, words, items, pictures, controls, information according to a scheme, standard, theme...



Design for web sites

Incorporates:

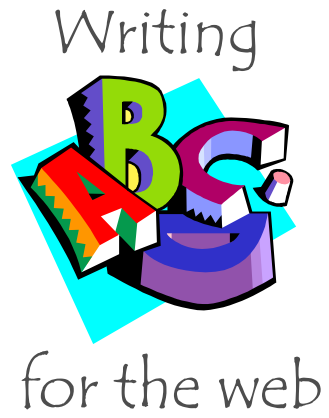
- Visual design
- Human factors
- Usability



Visual design

- What looks good and why
- Visual management of information*
- Leads the reader's eye through the page*
- Creates visual logic*

*From Yale Center for Advanced Instructional Media
<http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual/pages/>

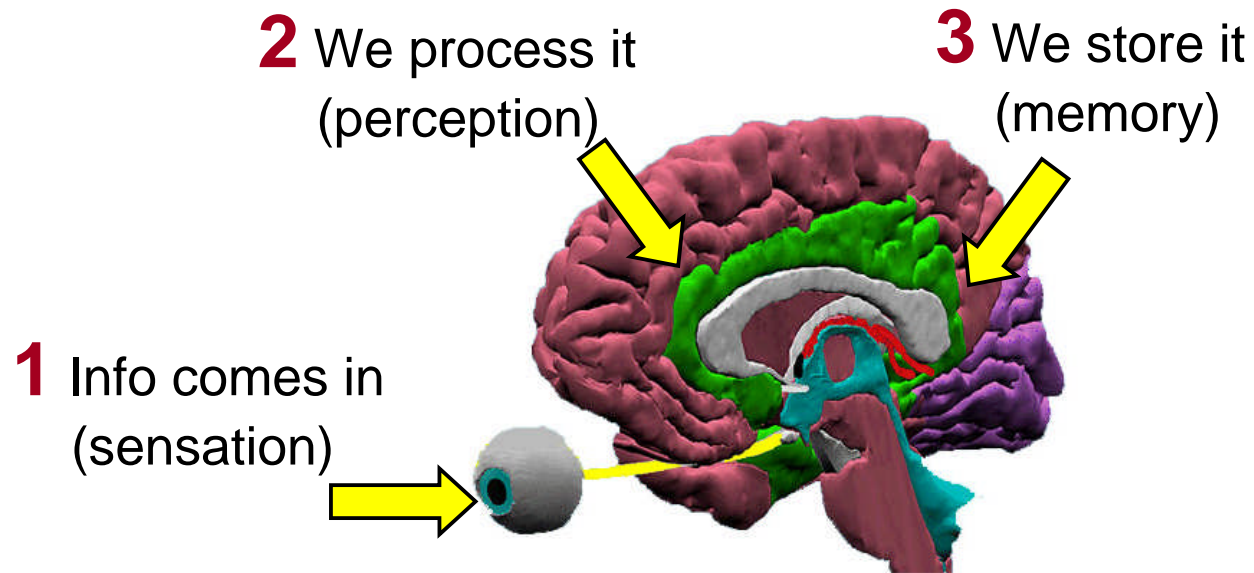


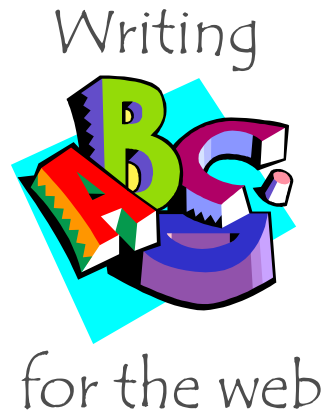
Web design concepts

- Layout
- Graphics
- Typography

What is human factors?

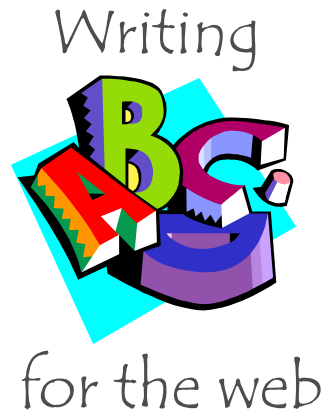
- How we deal with information





Usability means...

- Designing for users
- Testing to get it right



Access and navigation

- What helps
- What doesn't



Cuing readers

Make “getting it” easy with:

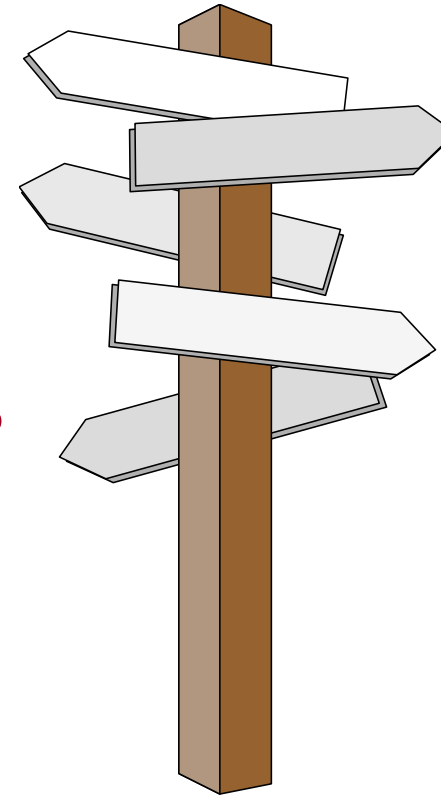
- Chunks
- Lists
- Headings (aka telegraphing)
- Descriptive links (leave a scent)
- Menus
- Buttons



Navigation is...

- ... visual guidance
- ... about wayfinding

**Help your users
find their way!**





Content is key

- Less is more
- Morkes and Nielsen research: cut words by 54% and users thought site was more complete
- They also tested the usability of presenting the same info in different ways:
 - Objective language: 27% better
 - Scannable layout: 46% better
 - Concise text: 58% better
 - Combined version: 124% better

From Jakob Nielsen, *Designing Web Usability*, p. 105



10 rules for web writers

- Cut the fluff
- Say it like it is!
- Say it right!
- Know your place
- Keep active (it fits!)
- Be strong!
- Break it up
- Avoid jargon
- Stay parallel
- Make it personal



What we covered

We talked about:

- Good writing
- Good web sites
- Importance of design:
 - Visual design
 - Human factors
 - Usability
- Access and navigation
- Content



The bottom line

Writing for the web is...

... more than
just writing