How do people read online?

They don’t!

Instead, they:

• skim, scan and select
• browse before diving in
• take quick little glances and occasional very brief stops
• read a little at a time, mostly in short bursts
• grab what they need and get onto their goal.
Less is more

Less content

• is easier to manage
• is more user-friendly
• costs less to create
Planning your web content

Web content is useless unless it supports:

1. A key business objective such as:
   - Promotes events & training classes
   - Encourages citizens to become patrons

2. Users in completing a task
   - Search catalog for an item
   - Find a study room
   - Library hours/directions
   - How long can I keep my book?
Questions before writing

Before you write anything, ask yourself:

• Why am I creating this page?
• Who am I talking to?
• What is my main message?
• Does the user need it?
• What do I want the user to do after reading it?

Every page must have a clear purpose!
Content accessibility

Content is truly accessible only if it can be used by people with disabilities.

Patrons with disabilities must be able to use everything:

- Links
- Buttons
- Form controls
- Images
- Etc

WEB ACCESSIBILITY = EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

AN ACCESSIBLE WEBSITE PROVIDES EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE TO:

GET INFORMATION LEARN WORK COMMUNICATE
Use descriptive link text

Not descriptive:
To complete the online Reserve Form, click here.

Descriptive:
Complete the online Reserve Form.

Never use “Click here” to describe a link
- “Click here” is not descriptive for screen readers
- Links are given extra weight by search engine spiders, so avoid “Click here”.
Human readable URLs

Not descriptive:
http://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/0,2351,7-160-50206_18637_18649-2090--,00.html

Descriptive:
http://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/accessibility_policy
• Keep button labels short and action oriented.
• Avoid ‘Go’ or ‘OK’ as button labels. Instead, use the appropriate verb or phrase, such as ‘Submit’ or ‘Give feedback’.
Alert users of outside content

- Adobe PDF
  - Michigan institutions:
    - Michigan Sales and Use Tax Certificate of Exemption

- Microsoft Word
  - ERMI License Elements
    - Mel Gale Cengage Learning databases (except...)
    - Mel Gale Cengage Learning GVRL, Oct 2011-...

- Microsoft Excel
  - ERMI license element worksheet
    - CSA, CultureGrams, eLibrary, ProQuest, SIRS

- PowerPoint
  - Presentations
    - Click here to watch 'The Great Totes Extravaganza!' (2011 Mel...)
    - From Here to There: Adventures in RIDES (2011 Mel...)

- Open in a new window
  - Mel is made possible by grant funds from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) administered by the State of Michigan through the Library of Michigan. Additional funding is provided by the State of Michigan.
Contrast

Color picker tool: ColorZilla for Firefox

Color Contrast Checker: WebAIM
http://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

Both size texts failed the contrast checker for the search button
Red/green color blindness

Don’t use color as the only indication of what to do!

Use labels instead:
AVOID USING ALL CAPS

Caps are:
• Difficult to read
• Portray shouting
• Relay urgency

This includes navigation items like menus, footer, buttons, etc.
Instead of this:

Upcoming Programs

Storytimes

Our Preschool (ages 3 - 5) storytimes will begin on Tuesday, January 20th and will run through Thursday, April 17th. Join us for great times with stories, movies, songs and crafts.

Tuesdays @ 1:30 pm
Thursdays @ 10:30 am

Toddler Time (up to age 2) program will begin Wednesday, January 25th and end on April 16th. Join us for stories, lapsits, fingerplays, music and movement activities.

Wednesdays @ 10:30 am

Try this:

About the Library

Welcome to the Oakland County Adams-Pratt Law and Research Library!

Our mission is to provide free and open access to specialized collections and services that are generally not found in libraries for the general public, elected officials, and county employees. In support of our mission, the Oakland County Library Board administers the following collections that comprise the Oakland County Libraries: the Adams-Pratt Law Library and the Research Libraries. Please feel free to...
Images – text equivalents

Text information MUST be provided for web content that is not textual.

Non-text items include:

• Images
• Image buttons
• Charts/graphs
• Audio files
• Multimedia files that include both audio and video
<alt> attribute: every image must have valid ‘alt’ text

Why use the “alt” attribute (commonly known as “alt text”)?
• Provides text equivalent for blind users
• Indexed by search engines
• Can add additional information for the user
Images that don’t convey information

What type of images don’t convey information?
  - Spacer images
  - Design images
  - Background images

Use null alt text: alt=""
(alt=quote quote with no space in between)
User assistance (help!)

Indianapolis Public Library

Wayne State University Libraries

Popular Links
» Branch Hours
» KDL Newsletters
» Room Rental Info.
» Your KDL Library Card
» Su tarjeta de la biblioteca
» Other West MI Libraries
» Your Local Legislators
» KDL’s Value to YOU
» Share Your KDL Story

Kent District Library

Purdue University Libraries
Go back and check your work

Check your work:
• before you publish your stuff
• after you see it online
• again next week (the article will be different the next time you look).

Keep asking yourself:
• Is this clear?
• Is there a simpler way to say this?
• Is there a shorter way to say this?
• Is this even necessary?
Questions?

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Internet Librarian
October 27, 2015
Monterey, California