

УДК 81.42
ББК 81.055

K. K. Kostina¹

NPO "Androidnaya Tekhnika"
ksenia.kostina.02@mail.ru

A. L. Soldatchenko²

ORCID: 0000-0002-4828-4917
Nosov Magnitogorsk State Technical University
cafol@mail.ru

PECULIARITIES OF WEB WRITING

Abstract

The complex of interdependent reasons ensures the relevance of this study. At the moment, there are a large number of different Internet users, which continues to increase steadily. There is also a significant increase in the volume of textual information presented on the Internet, which needs to be effectively conveyed to users and made convenient for perception. At the same time, the model of reading Internet texts differs from ordinary texts, which necessitates the use of appropriate techniques to improve the perception of textual information. The article discusses the characteristic differences between Internet texts and their paper analogues. These differences are explained by the technical characteristics of the Internet, and include interactivity, readability, and technology. The novelty of the research lies in the fact that on the basis of the identified specific features, methods of composing Internet texts are proposed to improve their perception. The practical significance of the work lies in the fact that the proposed recommendations can be used by web writers when creating Internet texts.

Keywords: web writing, internet texts, interactivity, readability, technology

¹ Kostina Kseniya K., Bachelor of Philology, Nosov Magnitogorsk State Technical University (NMSTU), Magnitogorsk, Russia.

² Soldatchenko Alexander L. – doctor of education, professor of department of linguistics and literature, Nosov Magnitogorsk state technical university, Magnitogorsk, Russia.

1. What makes the web different?

The web is a publishing medium, but it is significantly different from broadcast and print media. It is most often viewed on a TV-like screen and can have news / entertainment roles, so it is often subconsciously linked with radio or TV, but there are important differences [3, 2].

Interactivity – the web is much more interactive than TV or radio, you don't just sit back and wait for the next website to come along, you have to find it yourself. This also means you are not bound by someone else's schedule, so there is much greater freedom for the user [3, 2].

It is not as interactive, or as familiar as a book or magazine. It doesn't always have a linear journey, with a contents table, preface, beginning, middle and end. The user has to search [3, 2].

Readability – reading from a computer screen is tiring on your eyes, and much slower than reading from print [3, 2].

Technology – users have varying technology, with varying capabilities. They may be using a slow dial-up connection to the internet, or have older versions of software, so you cannot always determine the user experience [3, 2].

2. Why good web writing matters

As a result of these factors, people read differently on the web. For years, usability researchers have found that web users rarely read entire pages, word for word. Web users: 1) scan pages, 2) pick out key words and phrases, 3) read in quick, short bursts, 4) are action oriented, and expect results quickly, 5) have a specific objective in mind, click and forage in search of bits of information that lead them towards a goal [1, 3].

There is evidence, in fact, that shows that reading on a screen is physiologically more difficult than reading on paper. Reading long paragraphs on a screen hurts the eyes, is laborious and time consuming in a medium known for speed. Users will read longer pages if the content provides detail related to the user's specific goal. However, even though users will read more when the information provides extended data on their topic of interest, good web writing practices should still be employed. It is also important to note that for long content, users may be more likely to print it out to read it. Effective web writing involves having the proper content, written in the right style and formatted for effective scanning [1, 3].

Understanding that people read web pages differently than other media is key to writing and laying out content that will promote your relevant topics. Think about reading a web page like reading a newspaper. When you pick up a newspaper, you don't start with the first word and read all the way to the bottom of the page like you would with a book [2].

You scan the front page for headlines that stand out, stopping on the ones that seem interesting and then you read through the related article. Or you see a headline for a story on page 2 or another section entirely and turn the page to view that story immediately. People approach websites the same way. No matter what page they enter on, they scan the page for something that will keep their interest. Headlines, bullet items, text formatting and clear navigation all help the scanability of your page. If they came looking for something specific, they are immediately on the lookout for more information about that topic of interest [2].

The average person spends about 10 to 20 seconds on a webpage. If they can't find what they are looking for they move onto the next page. Eye-tracking visualizations show that users often read web pages in an F-shaped pattern: two horizontal stripes followed by a vertical stripe. By putting keywords on the F not only will your readers be able to find what they are looking for your page will also be searchable [2, 4].

3. Common content mistakes

In the early days of the web, success was measured in terms of numbers – having thousands of pages with hundreds of thousands of page views and millions of hits meant you had a successful website. Because of the relative ease of publishing to the web, not to mention the low cost, organizations put anything and everything they possibly could on their websites. Designs and technologies may have improved, but many old practices still prevail [1, 3–4].

Here are a few mistakes to avoid. *Do NOT*:

1. *Welcome people to your website and explain what a website is* [1, 4].
2. *Put your mission statement on your home page*, unless this is the most important content your users search for when visiting your site, it should not be on your home page [1, p. 4].
3. *Organize your website and write content to reflect your organization*. Present related tasks and content together on the site, regardless of who does them within your organization. Use language and terms that your audiences use, regardless of what you call them internally [1, 4].
4. *Put every piece of printed content you have on your website*. If your visitors don't need it and you can't maintain it, do not put it on your site [1, 4].
5. *Use "marketese" or promotional writing on the web*. The web is a very direct, informal medium. When your readers scan your content, every word is valuable. Do not fill your pages with marketing "fluff" or needless formalities. Boastful, exaggerated language reduces the likelihood that your content will be read or believed [1, 4].

6. *Post a PDF version of a document unless necessary*, unless the format and integrity of the original printed document must be maintained. PDF (portable document format by Adobe), Word documents or any other printed document type are not intended for the web and pose issues with search-ability, access and readability [1, 5].

4. Writing Style

Traditional academic writing follows a pyramid style – laying a foundation using many sources and supporting research, gradually working up to a logical conclusion. Writing in this style requires your users to do a lot of reading to get to the point. This is not the way to write for the web. Good web writing follows the inverted pyramid style, which is borrowed from journalism. In this style, the most important information is presented first, with additional supporting detail to follow. By putting the main idea first, readers can decide if the content is relevant and either read more or move on, avoiding reading paragraphs of information only to find it was not what they were looking for [1, 5].

When writing for the web it is necessary to: 1) catch your readers' attention in the first few words; 2) start with the conclusion, follow with the details; 3) remember who, what, where, when, why and how; 4) have only one idea per paragraph; 5) use half the word count of traditional writing [1, 5].

Also, when writing for the web it is important to:

1) *write to be found in a search, which means* using words that your target audiences use when searching [1, 5];

2) *be clear, concise and direct, which suggests* using the active voice, cutting wordy phrases, trying to make your sentences or phrases as concise and direct as possible and good word choice [1, 6]. Also, it is better to use simple words. You don't need to impress your readers with your word choice. People read simpler words faster [1, 8];

3) *provide context*, which means providing readers with cues that a particular section or instruction applies to them. It helps readers scan your page. The best way to do this is *to start with something the user already knows*, and then provide the new information. This is known as the "Given-New Principle". Example: "*If your financial aid award includes a PLUS loan*, send the following documentation to the Student Accounts office:" [1, 8];

4) *use parallel constructions*. To improve readability, present similar content in parallel constructions – consistent patterns in the way information is written. People anticipate patterns when reading and grasp information more quickly when patterns exist. Switching patterns requires more mental energy [1, 8];

5) *sentence fragments are o.k.* When writing for the web, complete sentences are not always necessary. There is a difference between coherent fragments or phrases and telegraphic writing. Avoid telegraphic writing – leaving out articles such as “the” or “a” to shorten a sentence. This only makes the sentence more difficult to read and comprehend. Telegraphic writing may be appropriate for navigation, but not in the body of the page [1, 9];

6) *use longer, more descriptive links.* Your users should know what to expect when clicking a link. When providing links in your content (contextual links), choose 7-11 words that are informative [1, 9]. You may also choose to provide brief descriptions with a shorter link to inform your audiences [1, 10].

5. Conclusion

So, proper writing style can dramatically improve usability. Jakob Nielsen measured 5 different versions of the same website (same information and navigation, with variations in wording and format) and found that creating objective, scannable and concise content on a site greatly improved usability. Objective language implies using neutral rather than subjective, boastful, or exaggerated language. Scannable layout suggests using the text in a layout that facilitates scanning. Concise text means using about half the word count as the control condition. The combined version of the text employing all three improvements in writing style together improved its usability by 124% [1, 14].

References

1. DM Best Practices: Writing for the Web. Miami, 2016. 15 p. URL: https://www.uakron.edu/webteam/docs/dm_webwriting.pdf (дата обращения: 26.12.2024). (In Eng.)
2. Web Content Writing. WestChesterUniversity, 2016. 20 p. URL: https://www.wcupa.edu/infoservices/training/documents/courses/Specials/WebContentWriting_Handout.pdf (дата обращения: 26.12.2024). (In Eng.)
3. Writing for the Web. University of Sheffield, 2016. 4 p. (In Eng.)

СПЕЦИФИКА ВЕБ-РАЙТИНГА

Ксения Константиновна Костина

Бакалавр-филолог, менеджер-администратор НПО «Андроидная техника», 455048, Россия, г. Магнитогорск, пер. Мурманский д. 21

Александр Леонидович Солдатченко

Доктор педагогических наук, профессор кафедры языкознания

и литературоведения, Магнитогорский государственный технический
университет им. Г. И. Носова,
455000, Россия, г. Магнитогорск, пр. Ленина, д. 38

Комплекс взаимообусловленных причин обеспечивает актуальность настоящего исследования. На текущий момент существует большое количество различных пользователей интернет, которое продолжает неуклонно увеличиваться. Также наблюдается значительный рост объемов текстовой информации, представленной в интернет, которую необходимо эффективно донести до пользователей, сделать удобной для восприятия. При этом модель чтения интернет текстов отличается от обычных текстов, что обуславливает необходимость использования соответствующих приёмов для улучшения восприятия текстовой информации. В статье рассматриваются характерные отличия интернет текстов от бумажных аналогов, которые объясняются техническими характеристиками интернет, и включают интерактивность, читабельность, технологичность. Новизна исследования состоит в том, что на основе выделенных специфических черт предлагаются способы составления интернет текстов, позволяющие улучшить их восприятие. Практическая значимость работы заключается в том, что предлагаемые рекомендации могут использоваться веб-райтерами при создании интернет текстов.

Ключевые слова: веб-райтинг, интернет тексты, интерактивность, читабельность, технологичность

Для цитирования: *Kostina K. K., Soldatchenko A. L. Peculiarities of web writing // Libri Magistri. 2025. № 2 (32). С. 77–82.*

Поступила в редакцию 22.01.2025