

## Copywriting & Usability for the Web

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To make your web pages work as hard as possible for your business, it's imperative that you mesh usability with salability throughout your text. In other words, your text must both sing to the heart and dance for the eye. Here is a checklist to illustrate:

✓ My content talks about how I will solve my visitors' problems in a concise, to-the-point fashion. I talk about benefits first and describe features later.

*Usability tip: Use bulleted lists with important terms near the beginning of each list item. Where appropriate, hyperlink list items or key terms within each item to other pages.*

✓ Each page makes a specific call to action—there is no doubt in my visitors' minds what they should do next.

*Usability tip: Hyperlink that call to action or help your visitor do what you are asking using a bold phone number, email link, or some other clear direction.*

✓ I add informative, helpful content to my site on a regular basis (articles, blog posts, free downloads, giveaways, contests, etc.). This fresh content is easy to find and I periodically notify my database when substantially new content has been added.

*Usability tip: On your home page add a sign up box and/or provide an excerpt from newly added content (i.e. article headline and snippet).*

✓ I know that visitors may enter my site via a page other than the homepage. Therefore, no matter which page visitors use to enter my site, they will know exactly where they are and what business I am in.

*Usability tip: Use succinct, compelling, topically relevant headlines to reinforce that your visitor has in fact come to the right place.*

✓ I only talk about "me" or my company on my About or Profile page, and even then only mention what is important or relevant to my audience.

*Usability tip: Resist the temptation to talk about yourself on the home page which wastes the precious few seconds you have to capture your audience's attention. Also resist calling your About/Profile page anything other than "About" or "Profile"!*

✓ I use compelling and informative headlines to help my reader skim for relevant content and lead them toward the answers or solutions they desire.

*Usability tip: Bold your headline, keeping the font size and style consistent throughout your site. Avoid using italics which can be difficult to read.*

✓ Each page conveys a distinct topic of interest and does not go off on subjects tangential to the main subject. Instead, related topics are mentioned via helpful text links.

*Usability tip: Be succinct and keep your most important information above the fold whenever possible, but especially on the homepage where users are less likely to scroll down for more information.*

√ All products and services marketed on my site are related to one another and thus can all be sold to an easily identifiable target market.

*Usability tip: Instead of putting one long list of services on a single page, break off into tightly focused pages that focus on an individual product or service.*

*\*BONUS: This will help your SEO because search engines index pages, not web sites, thus giving you more opportunity for keyword diversity and ultimately increased search engine exposure.\**

## Questions and Answers

[Jeannine] ?

[Jeannine] How much copy is too much especially on your home page?

[Karri] Excellent question Jeannine. A lot of the "gurus" will say "how ever much text it takes to get your message across but nothing more." I don't think that's a helpful answer although it's true.

[Karri] On the home page I like to see at least 50% of the text fit "above the fold." This is just my personal preference and in a perfect world, I'd like to see 75%+ above the fold. Does everyone know what the "fold" is?

[mlzambos] yep

[Karri] You are going "below the fold" if you have to scroll down to see what else is on that particular web page.

[mlzambos] It is before you have to scroll down to see the rest

[Karri] And people don't like scrolling on the homepage!

[Jeannine] thought so

[Karri] Correct Michelle.

[Jeannine] then I have a problem on my home page. lol

[Karri] So, Jeannine, if you write out a bunch of text in a Word document, you will see that it doesn't take much to fill a computer screen in an Internet browser, especially once you factor in your website header, navigation, graphics, etc. Probably under 500 words, maybe more like 250 words.

[Jeannine] you're right.

[PattyD] ?

[Karri] And Jakob Nielsen (my hero 🤖), will tell you that users only actually "digest" a wee handful of the actual words on your home page. So make every word count and don't be literary, tempting as that is.

[Jeannine] I've thought that my home page was too wordy

[PattyD] You were talking about services...Are you saying that desktop publishing should be on one page, administrative on another, and so on?

[mlzambos] If my header was smaller I would be great

[PattyD] Should you have one main page and then link to these pages?

[Karri] People just don't read web pages like they do traditional print media (newspapers for e.g.). They are super impatient and sometimes inefficient. They want some answers and they want'em right now.

[Karri] I think about 150-200 pixels is probably ok for a header but no more than that if possible.

[Karri] Hi Patty. Yes, I am saying that. It's more work but is a great boost to SEO. You are in effect diluting the "punch" of your page if it talks about many different services when they truly each deserve their own page.

[mlzambos] Patty good question I wonder the same thing

[Jeannine] ?

[Karri] Yeah, I think having a main services page with links to all your other services is a good idea. But only if you have a somewhat lengthy portfolio of services, not just one or two.

[PattyD] Thank you Karri

[Karri] Here's the SEO advantage (off topic slightly): With a page for each major service you offer you have the ability to optimize for approx. 2-3 key phrases. So, instead of just 2-3 keywords, you can optimize for 2-3 multiplied by the # of service categories you offer.

[Jeannine] ok, so basically what you're saying is get rid of the services page and add like desktop publishing, word processing pages or what ever your specialty is?

[Karri] The usability / copywriting advantage is that you can specify the benefits and features for each which builds trust and gives your prospect a clearer picture of how the working relationship with you will actually look in practice.

[Karri] Jeannine: What I see more commonly is a main services page (which people have come to expect in my mind) and then branch off from there into sub pages. Does that make sense?

[Jeannine] then also on these services pages should you put your rates there for that particular service?

[mlzambos] Karri here is an example of a services page that would need to be broken down correct. <http://www.mnmsupportspecialists.com/Services.htm>

[mlzambos] This is a don't do page.

[Karri] Jeannine: I think that yes, you should make mention of your rates in close proximity to each service, or at least provide an in-text link over to the rates page.

[mlzambos] I can take each section though and make those in to separate pages with the section title as a link to the page

[Angela] ?

[Jeannine] <http://www.ivc4u.com/services.html> here is another don't do page?

[Karri] Michelle: Yes, with such a rich portfolio I think you could definitely branch off. It's probably information overload in the current format. Perhaps create a handful of broad service categories and build a more detailed page around each category.

[Angela] Karri, do you ever find that usability and SEO conflict with each other?

[mlzambos] Great question Angela

[Karri] Michelle, I just looked closer at your service page. There are 7 categories there. I bet you could create 7 very content rich categories around each one. The result being 7 more opportunities for the search engines to find you as well as the whole trust building exercise with your clients ...

[Karri] Jeannine - I think that is another good example too.

[Karri] Hi Angela: Not really because the search engines algorithms (formulas I guess you could call them) are designed to "behave" like users. If you do what makes sense for your users you will automatically be helping yourself in terms of SEO.

[Angela] That's good to know! Those algorithms must be pretty smart! 😊

[Karri] That is such a good question b/c people often think that search engines are powered by voodoo instead of user behaviour and user goals on the 'net.

[Karri] Indeed, the algos are pretty complicated and no one but the folks at Google / Yahoo / MSN / etc. know how they work. They do change once and a while and there is always speculation over how they rank pages.

[Karri] It's really all about content because content drives everything on the net, not pretty pictures or fancy graphics or hi-tech flash pages.

[Karri] People just want answers to their questions and they want them as quickly as possible.

[mlzambos] Okay I have a ?

- [Karri] We often forget how much the web has changed since the days of dial up (sorry Michelle 😊) and low-tech processors. People can click from one site to another with amazing efficiency so they just want to get in and get out.
- [Karri] Fire away Michelle!
- [mlzambos] **Being on dial-up I really understand the importance of descriptions in Pictures, will this also help with my SEO too?**
- [Karri] There is so much debate about this. Here is the best answer I can give you and big SEO gurus would probably agree: Use alt text where it makes sense to use it. If my graphics were turned off and I was using a screen reader, where would I need the alt text in order to preserve the meaning?
- [Karri] But don't abuse this feature either. Use alt="" (no description) if the picture is just a pretty picture, know what I mean? The algos are good at seeing where people have "over-optimized" and theory goes that they don't like it much.
- [Karri] Does that answer your question Michelle?
- [mlzambos] **Okay so like my Logo and industry professional sites and those things but not just for any old graphic. I can do that.**
- [Karri] Yes, I think you've got it.
- [mlzambos] **okay are there any other questions?**
- [Karri] Only use alt text where it enhances the meaning/content integrity.
- [Karri] Are there any other questions about copywriting specifically?
- [Angela] ?
- [mlzambos] **No I just outsource that. Not my job as I say**
- [Angela] **Are there any specific copywriting books or resources you would recommend?**
- [Karri] 😊
- [mlzambos] **That is Laurie D's Job for me**
- [Karri] Yes! Karon Thackson's Copywriting Course ... you might be able to get your hands on it through Tawnya's VA Shop but I can't remember now. It's usually bundled with Jill Whalen's Nitty Gritty of Writing for the Search Engines. A good value IMO.
- [Angela] **Thank you!**
- [Karri] Also, try typing "AIDA copywriting" into a Google search. Lots of articles out there about this process.
- [Angela] **Does AIDA stand for something in particular?**
- [Karri] Yes. Attention. Interest. Desire/Decision. Action.
- [Karri] Get your reader's attention (usually with a great headline).
- [Karri] Stimulate their interest (benefits/emotions/intrigue/etc.).
- [Karri] Help them make the decision to buy/inquire (factual info/persuasion/etc.)
- [Karri] Give a specific call to Action (i.e. boss them around! 😊)
- [Angela] **LOL**
- [Karri] Then within that process of course you have to think about your target market and how they think, feel, behave, etc.
- [Karri] It's amazing how many sites never actually ask for the business. A basic tenet of sales in any industry: ASK and you shall receive!
- [mlzambos] **Okay it is 2:00 / 12:00 are there any other questions for Karri?**
- [Jeannine] **that's the hard part**
- [Angela] **Great job, Karri! Very interesting stuff! 😊**
- [Jeannine] **thank you Karri**
- [Karri] It is Jeannine, but it works if you know how to hold their hand through the buying process so to speak. Once they have the warm fuzzies they're yours.
- [Karri] This has been so much fun!



[Jeannine] lol

[mlzambos] Thank you Karri it was very informative. If you send over your check list I will be glad to add today's Q&A to it.

[Angela] :applause:

**MichelleM enters this room**

[Karri] I'll do that right now Michelle and it's been a total pleasure conversing with everyone here.

[mlzambos] Hi Michelle Medd

[Karri] Hi Michelle. 😊

[MichelleM] Hi sorry I am late, will this be posted so I can read it later?

[mlzambos] You guys are free to stay here and chat but I need to move on to my next thing. I will see you all soon. Yes Michelle Tawnya is on Holiday but we will get it up on my server in the mean time so check the forum for the link

[Karri] Yep, I believe Michelle will be doing this for us over on the forum.

[MichelleM] thank you so much

[Angela] Thanks SO much, Karri! 😊

[Karri] I must also run off to get some work done but thanks again for inviting me to do this.

[mlzambos] Thank you again Karri for you time today.

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