

## **Proposal for presentation, "How to write for the Web"**

By Jane Muder

**Objective:** To plan, prepare, and execute a lunch-hour seminar that will equip UPMC writers with the foundations and fundamentals of Web writing.

**Long-term objective:** To establish concrete style guidelines for UPMC Corporate Communications that will apply to all forms of Web communications.

**Procedure:** I will design a brief presentation that will teach and describe Web writing fundamentals. The course material will be based on my work experience, with additional material selected from Web communications articles and texts. The presentation will be most effective if it is supplemented with a style-guide form handout that the writers can keep.

**Presentation format:** I intend to deliver the lecture in a round-table format. I would prefer that those in attendance receive handouts to supplement my lecture. I will also require a laptop computer with Internet access and a projector for visual lecture support.

**Materials needed:** I will require the following items to launch this presentation successfully:

- Permission and support from key managers within the Corporate Communications department
- An allotted budget of 10-20 additional consulting hours
- Input from key managers regarding UPMC writers' major strengths and weaknesses
- A reserved conference room or reserved lunch station
- A laptop computer with Internet access and a projection screen
- A printer or Xerox machine with which I can make copies of my handouts

**Key lecture topics:** I recognize that the UPMC writing team might need to explore the following aspects of communications to become more proficient Web writers:

- Economy of language -- I will discuss how to eliminate wordiness in all communications.
- An understanding of one's audience, and subsequent development of tone, voice, and intent.
- The process of roughing out an article to be displayed in an electronic format.
- Strategies for creating attention-grabbing headlines, deck heads, and subheads
- Creative ways to present information more concisely, including sidebars and bulleted lists.
- Strategies for avoiding language that is too technical, too high-level, too condescending, or overly friendly.
- Simple ways to write Web-based instructions so that following them is appealing to readers.
- The process of creating hyperlinked text within stories and briefs.

The number of topics I propose to cover in this presentation could exceed the 60-to-70-minute time window allotted. If this is the case, I propose discussing how I might best present these topics in a series of several lectures. It is also possible that communications project managers would benefit from the lecture more than first-level writers might. If this is the case, I can, after further discussion, modify this proposal to suit an audience of editors.

I believe that the search engine optimization process is a topic that stands alone, and could be effectively delivered in a subsequent lecture.

I prefer to supplement my lecture with the aforementioned handouts, as well as examples of how to improve writing so it is conducive to Web formats. A sample of a "compare-and-contrast" technique that could be included in a handout is attached to e-mail with this document.

**Next step:** After all involved have received and reviewed this proposal, I would like to schedule a meeting to discuss this project's approval, planning, and execution processes.

**Supplementary material:** Please review the print article from the 8-21-08 edition of the Jewish Chronicle and my subsequent re-write for Web.

**References:** I have used the following references in the development of this proposal, and will use those references again to supplement the writing course materials:

Anderson, Paul. *Technical Communications: A Reader-Centered Approach*. Boston: Thomson Wadworth Corp., 2007.

Krug, Steve. *Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability*. Berkley, Ca.: New Riders Press, 2006.

Morkes, John and Jakob Nielsen. *Concise, Scannable, and Objective: How to Write for the World Wide Web*. <http://www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/writing.html>, 1997. Accessed Aug. 23, 2008. Supplemented by information from Nielsen-Norman Group, [www.nngroup.com](http://www.nngroup.com)

Rosenfeld, Louis and Peter Morville. *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*. Sebastopol, Calif.: O'Reilly Media, 2002.

Strunk, William. *The Elements of Style*. Mineola, NY: Dover Pub., 2006.