



Readability



SIMPLE IS BETTER

Kai Raymer, Web and New Media

Sept. 29, 2017



Readability

READ AND SUMMARIZE THIS

Use predictive analytics as a decision support tool to drive a forward-looking analysis of scenarios, response effectiveness, and critical correlations that can complicate or escalate events.

Better understanding of the drivers of extreme events, whether external developments or internal process interactions, can help build a robust, flexible and dynamic crisis management program.

The objective for enhanced analytics is not to predict events, but to help companies develop more meaningful warning indicators, and an increased awareness of their leverage in preventing or managing 'runaway' crises.



Readability

NOW READ AND SUMMARIZE THIS

Learn from the past

If you know what causes crises, you can prepare for them. Analyze what's happened in the past to help you predict what might happen in the future.

Benefit and impact

Doing so will let you spot the warning signs that a crisis is unfolding. You can stop it from escalating or even happening at all.

Readability

WHAT'S IT MEAN?

- Readability: the ease with which a reader can understand written text.
- Involves many factors, including:
 - Word length
 - Sentence length
 - Paragraph length
 - Formatting



Readability

- What we'll cover:
 - Writing style and standards
 - Benefits
 - Examples and tools





Readability

WRITING STYLE AND STANDARDS

- How can you make your content more readable?

CONCISE TEXT

- Use fewer words
- Active voice
- Short sentences

SCANNABLE LAYOUT

- Bullet points
- Headings

Readability

WRITING STYLE AND STANDARDS

- Write less, people will read more.
- People will read more if your content has:
 - Short paragraphs
 - Short sentences
 - Short words



Reading is hard

CONSIDER LITERACY LEVELS

- Newspapers aim for a 7th grade reading level.
- 70 percent read at intermediate level.
- 97 percent can't understand 11th grade-level text.



Use math when you write

READING LONGER WORDS REQUIRES MORE EFFORT

- Word length:
 - 5-character words
 - 2-syllable words
- Sentence length:
 - 8-14 words ideal; 21 words max
 - People read short and long sentences differently
- Short sentences add power to your message.





Use math when you write

- Paragraph length
 - Good paragraph length: 1-3 sentences, 42 words
 - 25 words max for FIRST paragraph
 - Write inverted pyramid style
- Use the 1-2-3-4 rule
 - 1 main thought, expressed in
 - 2 to 3 short sentences, taking up no more than
 - 4 lines on the page

Navigation and mobile

MAKE YOUR CONTENT LOOK GOOD, EASY TO NAVIGATE

- Short paragraphs, help people move through your story.
 - Especially true for mobile devices (mobile vs. desktop viewing)
- Ask yourself: “how does this look on mobile?”





Other tips for readability

- Personal pronouns
- Reduce unfamiliar words.
- Infographics
 - For in-depth information or statistics



Benefits

WHY SHOULD YOU WANT BETTER READABILITY?



AUDIENCE REACH



**INCREASE
READERSHIP**



CREATE ACTION



SAVE \$\$\$



Benefits

AUDIENCE REACH

- Better readability allows you to more easily reach your audience.
 - Declining literacy rates
 - Varying audiences and platforms

- Remember: “How does this look on mobile?”



Audience reach

- People want to get and read information at a level below their reading capacity.
 - Most people read at an intermediate level.
 - Don't assume that CEO or Dean can digest your wall of text.



Benefits

INCREASE READERSHIP

- Better readability means you'll increase your readership.
 - Make your content easier to read and digest.
- No. 1 way to increase your readership: make your message easier to understand.
 - Average web page visit: 28 seconds



Benefits

“I’d lecture a bunch of chemists or engineers about the importance of not saying, ‘it would be appreciated if you would contact the undersigned by telephone at your earliest possible convenience’ and instead saying, ‘please call me as soon as you can.’

“That was revealed wisdom to these people.”

- Dave Barry, Pulitzer prize-winning humorist. (Long and stuffy words are hard to read)

Benefits

WRITE “LOWER,” BE EFFECTIVE



COMPREHENSION

Easy copy =
easy to
understand



RETENTION

Easy copy =
easy to
remember



ACTION

Take action for a
cause, sign
up/attend an event.

Benefits

SAVE MONEY!

- Bad writing is costly
- Navy and FedEx readability projects





Readability

- To summarize, better readability means:
 - Easier audience reach
 - Broader audience reach
 - Create retention, action
 - Improved efficiency (save \$\$\$)

Examples and tools

IS YOUR CONTENT READABLE?

- We'll cover:
 - Yoast
 - Blog example
 - Additional tools





Yoast SEO

WORDPRESS PLUGIN

- Gives readability assessment before you post
- Updates in real time
- Shows areas for improvement
 - Flesch Reading Ease
 - Transition words
 - Long paragraphs



Yoast SEO

- How do you add and gauge readability?
 - Let's do an example.



Readability

EXAMPLES AND TOOLS

- Use these to improve your rating:
 - Yoast SEO
 - Hemingway App
 - Press release example
 - StoryToolz Readability



Readability

EXAMPLES AND TOOLS

- Microsoft Word Readability checker
 - File->Options->Proofing->Show readability statistics

Readability

Be like these guys. They know readability.

