

ProSkills I (a) - Written Communication

Written communication is important for Web Developers.

Avoiding Common Mistakes in Written Communication

Most written communication errors can be easily avoided, yet are often overlooked. It's particularly important to catch writing errors on a personal Web site or on line resume, which often help determine the first impression that a colleague or potential employer forms of you. Whether you are pressed for time, don't pay attention to detail, or have never learned the basics of good writing in the first place, these guidelines should help turn your writing into works you can be proud to claim.

Plan and Focus Your Writing

- Think about your audience. Who will read what you write? What knowledge do they already possess, and what attitudes might they have about your subject? Who will be viewing your Web documents, and what will they expect to see?
- Be clear about why you are writing in the first place. Are you writing to inform, or do you want action to be taken? Do you hope to change a belief or simply state your position? For a personal Web site or resume, make sure you understand what information potential employers and professional contacts will mostly likely be looking for.
- Research your topic. Provide all the necessary information the reader will need to make a decision or take action, if needed. If facts are included, be sure you can substantiate them. For a resume, ensure all your dates are accurate, and look up the exact names of organizations, institutions, and endorsements.
- Don't be afraid to rewrite or revise. If it's an important document, consider having someone else read it so you can determine whether your meaning is clear. At a minimum, read what you have written out loud to determine whether the message and impact come across as you intended. For online documents, continue the revision process on a regular basis so your documents do not become inaccurate or outdated.

Check Grammar and Spelling

Text editing programs remove all excuses for not checking your spelling and grammar in written communications. Keep in mind that spellchecking doesn't catch every error, so be sure to review your work carefully. Hiring managers are often inundated with resumes for a job opening, and an error in spelling or grammar is sometimes all it takes for an otherwise promising application to be rejected.

Set the Right Tone

When you write informal communications, you may use abbreviated or incomplete sentences and phrases or slang. In the workplace, however, you must carefully consider the tone of your written communication so you don't unintentionally offend your readers. Using contractions is considered friendly and is usually all right, but it is never acceptable

to use offensive language. Anything you post about yourself online may be viewed by colleagues or a prospective employer, no matter how informal the context, so be sure that anything you write reflects well on you.

Write Clearly and Accessibly

When you write, your language should be free of buzzwords and jargon that will weaken your message, or make it difficult for your reader to understand your meaning.