Chuck Letourneau wrote his article “The Plain Web” on September 27th, 2002. He argues that specific guidelines should be a requirement in order to make the web understandable. These guidelines are to ensure that anyone who visits a website should be able to get the information that is needed. The standards extend into making the web accessible for people with disabilities. A person who is blind or visually impaired will have access to text-to-speech functionality. A person who is deaf or hard of hearing will have access to text transcripts of audio clips. There also should be guidelines regarding the comprehensibility of the words on a webpage. This constitutes the reduction of technical jargon. The webpages themselves should also follow a similar format. This means consistent page layouts, recognizable graphics, and easy to understand language for all users. Comprehensibility involves limiting paragraphs to a single idea, stating the topic sentence at the front of the paragraph, avoiding complex sentence structures, avoiding the passive voice, and linking meaningful phrases so that they make sense when read out of context or alone. In doing so, not only do we make the web easier for people with disabilities, we make the web easier for everyone.

By creating a set of standards, making the web easier for everyone can save a lot of time for people. I found stating the topic sentence right away to be noteworthy, especially in the case of text-to-speech. The visually impaired must find it aggravating to have to wait for the middle of a paragraph to be told what the overarching theme of whatever link they are attempting to click on. In addition, technical jargon could confuse people. If a menu system, or link system in a website, is full of technical jargon people could get lost searching for what they need. This could potentially lead to people ignoring a service that is meant to help them. If this outcome occurs, it could be argued that the service is a failure. These standards can be applied directly to the software industry. If a product meant for the general population requires immense technical knowledge it probably won’t sell. In addition, when designing software, standard communication practices offers a better possibility of inter-departmental input. Non-technical staff will be able to critically analyze and offer their expertise without needing to understand the technical details. This could save time for a company in many areas including design, testing , and implementation.