



# Standards and Guidelines for Writing

- u Each of you (separately!) write a procedure. In this procedure explain to your grandmother how to calculate the money she has to pay to order one coffee for 1\$ and one sandwich (for 1, 2, 3... N \$).
- u Fill in the persona details from Targeting-Content-workbook.
- u Write a document to explain:
  - u what the calculator app is used for.
  - u how to sum the price of the coffee plus the price of the sandwich.





# Why do we Need Standards for Writing?

- Ø Branding reasons – match style of writing with the company brand
- Ø We want to bring content that looks and is perceived as consistent and clear from the users
- Ø We need to define rules that allow us to bring clear information to the target users

# Who Needs S&Gs for Writing?

- u User assistance developer (technical communicator or technical writer)
- u Content editor
- u Translator
- u Software architect
- u Product owner
- u Software developer
- u Usability experts (UX)

# Results from Using S&Gs

- u Well organized content
- u Simplicity
- u Conciseness
- u Preciseness



# Good Organization/Structure

Structure your content logically. Pay attention to how you will organize:

- u Headings
- u Paragraphs
- u Sections
- u Tables
- u Bulleted lists
- u Numbered lists

# Conciseness

- ∅ Avoid redundancies
- ∅ Link to information instead of copying text
- ∅ Use visual aids (diagrams, schemes, screenshots, etc.)

# Simplicity

- & Use simple language and grammar.
- & Use short sentences.
- & Use positive formulations.
- & Do not use long series of nouns that modify one another or a long series of prepositional phrases. Instead, split them up into smaller, manageable parts.
- & Use American English



# Precision

- & Write true information J
- & Use correct and consistent terminology.
- & Use correct navigation paths.
- & Use correct product or component names.

# Verb Choice

& Use precise verbs.

**C** Change / Save / Delete/ Import / Create...

**D** Maintain

Can or May?

- & Can = possible for the user or the system.
- & May or might = possible state or outcome.

# Verb Choice

- & MUST = an absolute requirement
- & MUST NOT = “shall not” – absolute prohibition
- & SHOULD = “recommended” – there may exist valid reasons in some circumstances to ignore a particular item
- & SHOULD NOT = “not recommended”
- & MAY = “optional” – you can choose whether to implement this action or not.



# Active Voice & Present Tense

- & Use active voice. Passive voice → no info who is doing what to whom or to what.
- & If appropriate for text type and context, address the user directly with “you”.
- & Define clearly who does what (the user, the application, the system admin).

# Terminology

- & Discuss terminology together with developers, POs, UI designers.
- & Use correct and consistent terms.
- & Be careful inventing your own terms or jargon.
- & Do not use the same word to mean different things → umbrella terms.

# Consider in Addition

- & Contractions (don't/can't/mustn't) → decide depending on your style
- & Humor → avoid – what sounds funny to you might be offending to others
- & Gender → do not assume the gender of your users; use formulations such as “him or her”, “his or hers”
- & Jargon words or idioms → avoid them



# Use Tools

- u Use a spell-checker!
- u Search for existing terms/expressions on the web

# UI Messages and Text on Screen

