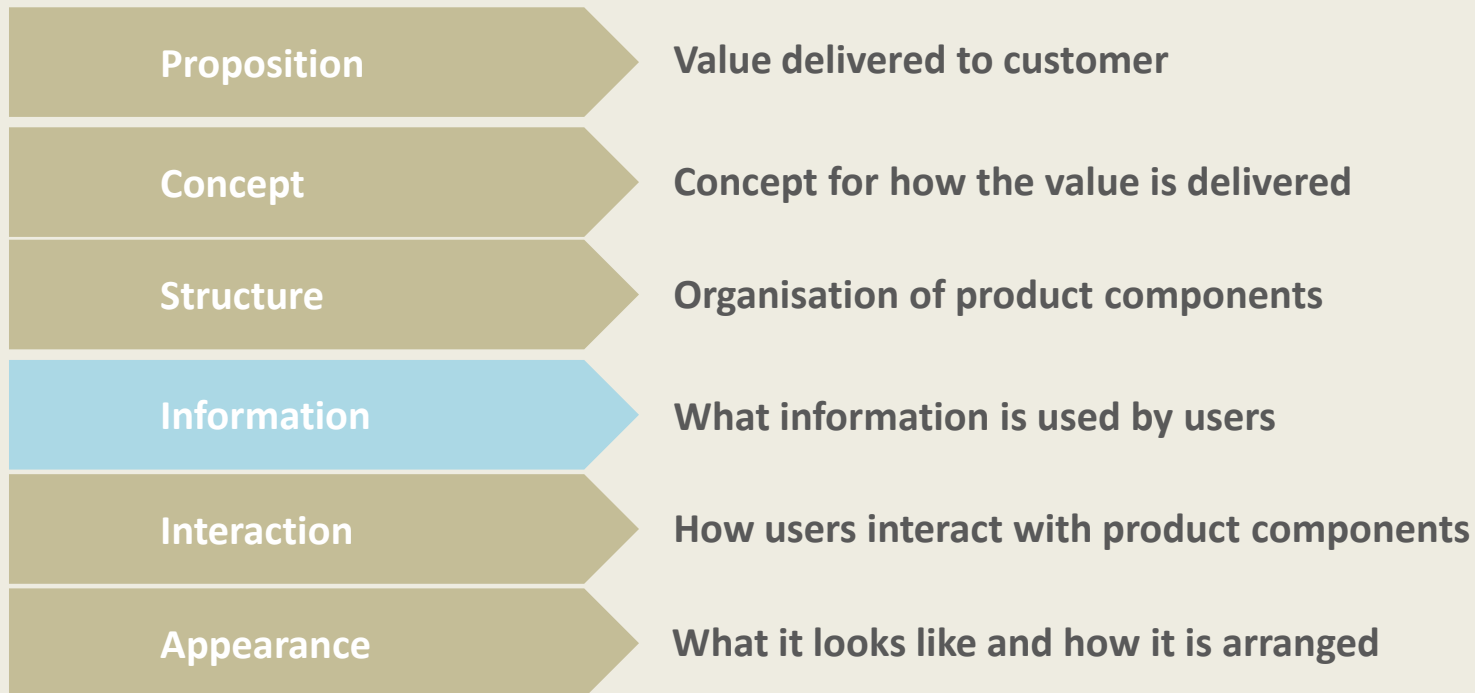


Producing content

The elements of user experience



...one view of it. [Here's another one](#)

Identifying content needs

- Now you've got a rough structure, you can start thinking about **what content you require** for the site for example: an "About us" page, product information, contact details
- If you're dealing with an existing site, or have lots of pre-written material, you need to conduct a content audit
- You can often do this automatically using a tool such as [Xenu Link Sleuth](#)
- See also: [Doing a Content Inventory \(Or, A Mind-Numbingly Detailed Odyssey Through Your Web Site\)](#), [How to do a content audit](#)

What to look out for

On the web, these things matter most about content:

- **Quality** – users need to see quality content to gain trust in your site
- **Relevance to user goals** –the content needs to match what users are looking for
- **Succinctness** – don't waste your site visitor's time!
- **Scanability** – the ability of users to quickly scan the page to relevant information
- **Legibility** – reading from a screen is tiresome, don't make it harder than it needs to be
- **Authenticity and Credibility** – if your content doesn't come across as credible, visitors will leave

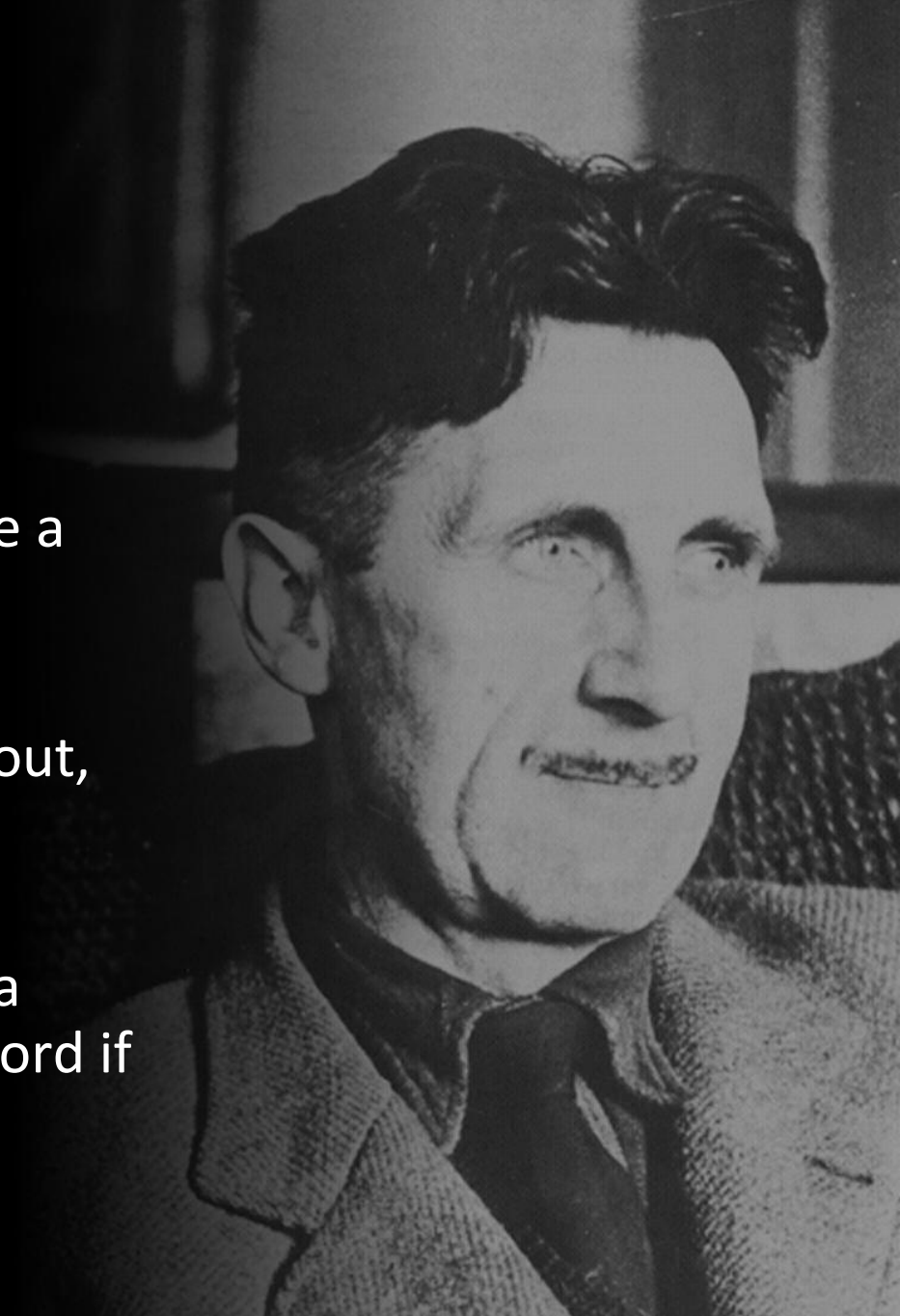
Make sure the content is of high quality

- **No spelling errors or typos** – use a spellchecker (SHIFT + F7 in Dreamweaver)
- **Good grammar**
- Provide **engaging**, well-written text (be creative!)
- **Avoid jargon & acronyms**
- **Follow a style guide** if possible e.g. webstyleguide.com, [Apple's style guide](#)
- See also [The Elements of Style](#)

Be succinct!

George Orwell's tips:

1. **Never use a long word** where a short one will do.
2. If it is possible to cut a word out, then always **cut it out**.
3. **Never use a foreign phrase**, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday equivalent.



Make pages scannable

- **On the web, people scan-read** looking for salient words and the next hyperlink that seems to be the closest match to their goal (the 'scent of information')
- This process is also called '**information foraging**' [Jakob's alert on this topic](#)
- This is very similar to the way we read newspapers. Why? What are the design implications?

Make pages scannable

Allow users to scan-read the page to find relevant content:

- Use **meaningful headlines**
- Split text into paragraphs with **sub headings**
- **Bullet points** are useful
- **Highlighting** and *emphasis* where appropriate
- Good **visual hierarchy** of text, e.g. [Boxes and arrows](#) versus [Useit](#)
- **"Inverted pyramid"** style of writing: summarise first, e.g. [BBC](#)
- Compare these pages: [HROD Consultancy](#), [Craig's list](#), [The Guardian](#)

Make pages scannable

- **Avoid pages becoming too long**
- Generally users don't have a problem to scroll a little if they think they will find what they are looking for
- **However, try to split up very long pages** (but provide printable versions of the full text)
- **It's 25% slower to read from screen** than paper
- **Avoid horizontal scrolling**
- **Be concise** – avoid waffle
- **Avoid [scrollstoppers](#)**

Make it legible

- **Use plain backgrounds**, [Circlemakers](#) is an example how not to do it.
- **Don't write in uppercase**
- **Avoid small font sizes** for key content
- **Avoid long paragraphs** of text
- **Avoid wide fixed column widths**

IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO READ FROM A SCREEN ANYWAY. PUTTING EVERYTHING IN UPPERCASE MAKES IT EVEN HARDER BECAUSE IT REDUCES THE SPACING BETWEEN LETTERS. IT ALSO MAKES IT SOUND LIKE YOU ARE SHOUTING ALL THE TIME. SO THE BEST THING TO DO IS AVOID IT UNLESS YOU REALLY NEED TO.

Links

- [Writing for the Web](#) (from Jakob Nielsen)
- [Writing for the Web](#) (from Dartmouth College)
- [Writing for the Web](#) (from Gerry McGovern)