https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content Writing and designing content Use this guidance to create content that's clear and findable. Content types Structuring content Referencing and attribution User research and content Only create content that meets a need. Find out about users and their needs through user research. Clear language and writing style Use plain language. Write short and simple sentences in active voice. Plain language and word choice Sentences Voice and tone Findable content Write and design content that is easy for the user to find with a search engine. How people find information Understanding search engines Keywords and search engines On-page optimisation Editing and proofreading Editing and proofreading help ensure consistency so content meets user needs and expectations. Security classifications and protective markings https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/user-research-and-content User research and content Only create content that meets a need. Find out about users and their needs through user research. Create content that meets a real need Only design and write content that meets a real person's need. People using government services usually don't have a choice to go somewhere else to meet their need. They don't read government content for fun. They are using it to get something done. Find out about users and their needs through user research. User research helps you: understand the user, their needs, behaviours and motivations work out the problems you are trying to solve with content reduce the risk of creating content that is not useful or usable have more certainty about what to write. Digital Service Standard requirements You must understand the needs of the users of your service to meet the Digital Service Standard: Criterion 1. Understand user needs. Write for the user, not 'an audience' Writing for an audience is not the same as writing for the user. The content we write might have more than one user with a range of different needs. It's not enough to imagine one kind of user. You need to do user research to learn about the range of users and their contexts. It's important to find out about their specific and diverse needs. A user's needs and context may include: a primary language that is something other than English assistive technology they use to read the content a range of devices they use to access the content with the availability and speed of their internet access Content types Structuring content Referencing and attribution a need for a paper or non-digital way to access content. Accessibility considerations Do user research to help you to understand how to meet the needs of all users. Include people with disability in your user research to avoid creating any barriers for them. Adjust the research approach to the context The way you research changes based on the kind of work you are doing and its context. If you can, work with a user researcher to plan the approach. Policy or project work In a policy or project context, you may be writing material that is only intended for an internal use. Only a few people might read it. In this context you may not need to do research with the people who will read the content. You might need to find out about the subject of the content you are working on. If you are writing about other people, make sure you are not making assumptions about them. This includes other people working in government as well as end users. Service design and delivery User research is critical to the service design and delivery process. In this process, everyone in the team takes part in research through the Discovery, Alpha, Beta and Live stages. From Discovery and into Alpha stage, the research is generative. It's about gaining insights about users, contexts and needs – usually through face-to-face interviews. When the team moves into Beta, the research becomes evaluative. It's about testing that the content and the design is meeting the user's needs. Read the DTA's digital guides to find out about the role of user research in service design. Example You are a policy officer working on a short progress report for a senior manager. The report updates the manager on a government policy your team is developing. As you write the report you check for assumptions about the people the policy will affect. You identify some untested assumptions so you raise this with the team for more research. Example You are a content designer working on a government service. Your team follows the service design and delivery process. Communication and website teams Teams that work on content owned by other areas of the organisation use research in different ways. In some cases, the communications or web team may be able to lead the work and follow the service design and delivery process. In other cases, they may organise user research to support the business area. User research is a team sport If you are creating content you need to be part of the user research process. It is best if you can observe research sessions led by an experienced user researcher. Then help to synthesise and analyse the research. In a team that is delivering a service, everyone is part of research for at least 2 hours every 6 weeks. This include writers, content designers and editors. People who work on content must be part of the discovery process. They need to observe research sessions and contribute their perspective in analysis. Content designers, writers and editors notice things that other people may miss. They provide a critical content lens on the work. Discovery stage: you observe research sessions with users and help to analyse them. The user researcher plans and leads the sessions to help the team learn about the users and their needs. Alpha stage: you help the team experiment with different content formats. You join research sessions to see if the prototypes help meet the user needs. Beta stage: you work with the team to design content for the whole service. You observe people in usability sessions interact with the content you have designed. After analysing the research as a team, you improve the content. Live stage: you and the team spend time each sprint reviewing user feedback and analytics. If there are areas that need more exploration, the researcher plans targeted research. Example You are a writer and editor working in a corporate communications team. Your team supports several business areas that own most of the content on the website. The team's approach to research changes based on where content is in a content lifecycle: Intent: as a team you audit website content to identify what is and is not used. Plan: you join members of another team in watching user research sessions. The team observes users interacting with their content, to identify pain points. People from both teams take part in a session to analyse the research. Create, check and revise: you observe readability tests of your content with end users. You edit the content in response to the user experience. Maintain: you watch usability testing of content on your agency's website. You observe users having trouble understanding a form. Following the session, you work with the business area that owns the form to improve it. Remove: you help review analytics and user feedback to flag pages that have low traffic. You provide a report to the business area to recommend removing the pages. Some research is better than none User research is a craft. If possible, get an expert to lead research. This will help you uncover as much as possible and manage bias. If you or your team are not able to access a user researcher or to talk to users, at least do desktop research. Desktop research Desktop research includes looking at website analytics to identify search keywords and topics. It also involves exploring forums and social media to find out the questions people

are asking and the words they use. When you look at search data be aware that people use different words to search for and to talk about things. Search terms can also be different based on the forum and site they are using. Desktop research will not provide the same quality of insight as you get from talking to users. It is better to do this than no research at all. It's also helpful to do desktop research as well as interviewing users. Previous research Review existing relevant research as part of your desktop research. This includes research by other teams and academic research from outside government. When you review existing research, be aware that the context will be different. There may also be gaps in the research. Use existing research as a starting point. It's not helpful to research the same thing over and over. Market research is different from user research User research helps you understand users, their needs and the context for services. Market research and stakeholder engagement are different types of research. They cannot give you the same insights you get from user research. If you have a choice, do user research. It can be helpful to do market research and stakeholder management as well. User research: know the user User research: uses qualitative research (feedback) and quantitative research (statistics) focuses on the 'why' (including people's underlying needs, motivations and the goals they are trying to achieve) and the 'what' (what people actually do), as well as the usability of what is being designed provides deep insights into user needs and behaviour uses small-scale and often iterative techniques (for example, interviews, feedback, usability testing, sample-size testing, field studies and workshops) aims to understand user needs and fix usability problems helps to design content and services that are accessible and usable for all users Market research: know the market Market research: uses quantitative research (statistics) focuses on the 'what' provides broad information uses wide-scale techniques (for example, focus groups, randomised control trials, surveys, analytics, and website split testing) aims to understand market preferences and how to reach that market helps to measure characteristics across the population to build market share in a particular segment Stakeholder engagement: know the community Stakeholder engagement: focuses on the 'who' and the 'how' provides insights that support issues management uses techniques that are contextualised to the scale and complexity of the issues aims to manage the influence of people and groups helps the design of processes to deliver an outcome Release notes The digital edition introduces a new topic, user research and content. This topic draws on ideas related to user experience and design thinking. The topic is central to content strategy and content design. Content strategy and content design were not discussed in the sixth edition. The sixth edition covered planning, monitoring and evaluating products in parts 1 and 5. Those parts were not within scope for the Live release of the digital edition. The Content Guide pointed people to advice on user research in the Digital Service Standard. About this page References Bruce L (2019) 'Get a head start on digital projects: include content from the Discovery phase', GatherContent blog, accessed 21 July 2020. Government Digital Service (2016) Content design: planning, writing and managing content, GOV.UK, accessed 1 November 2019. Government Digital Service (2017) User research for government services: an introduction, GOV.UK, accessed 22 July 2020. Reichelt L (2017) 'The critical difference between user research and market research', Digital Transformation Agency blog, accessed 1 November 2019. Reichelt L (2018) 'From insights to actions. Or, what should we do with this research?', Medium, Medium Corporation, accessed 1 November 2019. Varcoe L (2018) 'Better content, less content', Digital Transformation Agency blog, accessed 1 November 2019. Last updated This page was updated Tuesday 14 May 2024. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/clear-language-and-writing-style Clear language and writing style Use plain language. Write short and simple sentences in active voice. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/findable-content Findable content Write and design content that is easy for the user to find with a search engine. On-page optimisation Editing and proofreading Security classifications and protective markings Grammar, punctuation and conventions Content types Structuring content Referencing and attribution How people find information Design content based on the ways users find information. Understanding search engines Metadata, keywords and page structure are important. Write and design content so users can easily find it with search engines and voice search. Keywords and search engines Keywords reflect core ideas and topics in content. Choosing the right keywords will support people's ability to find the content they need when they search for it online. On-page optimisation Make content easy for people to find using search engines. Include keywords in URLs, metadata and content. Create accessible links to high-quality content. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/editing-and-proofreading Editing and proofreading Editing and proofreading help ensure consistency so content meets user needs and expectations. Editing is integral to clear content Editing is part of the work of any team that creates and publishes content. Editing helps content meet user and business needs by ensuring it is: appropriate for the audience easily understood free from errors, consistent and complete. Digital Service Standard requirements You must make sure content is clear, accurate and consistent to meet the Digital Service Standard: Criterion 6. Consistent and responsive design Criterion 9. Make it accessible Accessibility requirements User needs: I can understand any information contained in an image. I can access equivalent information to anything contained in a video or audio file. I can change the content's presentation without losing information or structure. I can find and navigate the content and determine where I am on the webpage. I can avoid making any mistakes with my inputs, and correct any that I might make. Fundamentals: You must make sure content is consistent, has a clear structure and is error free to make it accessible for all users. Make sure content uses plain language. This helps all users and is essential for some. Avoid (or explain) unusual words, phrases and idioms. Expand all acronyms on their first use. Make sure other content elements, including captions, transcripts, alt text, link text, headings and instructions are accessible to all users. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines success criteria: Content types Structuring content Referencing and attribution 1.1.1 Non-text content – level A 1.2.2 Captions (prerecorded) – level A 1.2.3 Audio description or media alternative (prerecorded) – level A 1.3.1 Info and relationships – level A 1.3.2 Meaningful sequence – level A 1.3.3 Sensory characteristics – level A 2.4.2 Page titled – level A 2.5.3 Label in name – level A 3.3.2 Labels or instructions – level A 2.4.6 Headings and labels – level AA 3.3.3 Error suggestion – level AA 2.4.9 Link purpose (link only) – level AAA 2.4.10 Section headings – level AAA 3.1.5 Reading level – level AAA 3.1.3 Unusual words – level AAA 3.1.4 Abbreviations – level AAA 3.3.5 Help – level AAA Types of editing (levels) There are different levels of editing. Each involves specific tasks that happen at certain stages in content development. The aim in any level of edit is to meet user needs and

make sure content is fit for purpose. Substantive editing focuses on content, style, structure and meaning The substantive edit reviews structural and textual elements when the draft content is complete. Substantive editing shapes text to make meaning clear. It also improves the structure, usability, language and presentation of the content. It is sometimes called a structural edit. Before starting, agree on the scope of the substantive edit in the team. The substantive edit can: conduct a plain English review to check sentence length, replace complex words with simpler alternatives and remove jargon check the design of the content to make sure it is the best possible format reorganise content to improve the flow of information and navigation identify gaps in the content or any information that can be removed reword content to make it easier to understand and to achieve consistent voice and tone check compliance with specific government requirements. The style sheet is updated through a substantive edit to record any decisions that can inform a copyedit. Substantive editing is not rewriting or fact-checking Substantive editing does not: write a significant amount of new content (but it can include advice to add more content) substantially rewrite to shorten text (but it can involve advice to delete content) choose the right typeface or apply formatting styles (but can include checking bolded, italicised and underlined font) fact-check, such as checking names of people and places, dates, citations, quotes or links to external content. An editor can rewrite or fact-check content, but these are separate tasks to substantive editing. They should happen before any editing begins. Copyediting focuses on consistency and accuracy Copyediting happens once the content is settled, for example, after the substantive edit. A copyedit shows whether content is consistent, accurate and complete. Before starting, agree on the scope of the copyedit within the team. An editor might identify substantive issues with the content during the copyedit. The team should decide how it will address those issues. If there is any more substantive editing or rewriting after the copyedit, the content will need to be copyedited again. During copyediting, an editor: corrects issues with language in line with the style sheet aligns the style of references and citations with agreed referencing style comments on inconsistencies in voice and tone. A copyedit also checks for issues or inconsistencies with: design, layout and function illustrations, tables, headings, sequences, internal links and other elements. The style sheet is updated during a copyedit to record style decisions. Copyediting is not substantive editing or rewriting Copyediting does not: restructure content (other than to make sentences clear and grammatically correct) write new content or shorten text rewrite text to unify voice or edit for plain English (other than to deal with isolated issues) format or design text fact-check check external links embedded in the content (other than a spot check in case there are systemic issues). Proofreading is about quality control Proofreading is a quality-assurance process. It happens after the copyedit. It is a final check on visual and textual elements. A proofread confirms that the content: is correct is complete meets the organisation's requirements to publish. Proofreading gives assurance: the content is ready to 'go live' the printing press can start running. Proofreading compares the content that is about to go live or to print with a master copy. The master copy is the current copy of the approved text. The master copy should be error-free so the proofreader can check for any introduced errors. A proofread compares the master copy with: the publishing platform the design proof from the designer a printer's proof from the printer. The proofread makes sure nothing gets changed or missed in any of these steps. The style sheet is a critical tool for this task, even though proofreading is not editing. (What many people call 'proofreading' is what editors call 'copyediting'.) The style sheet ensures proofreaders' work follows earlier style decisions. Proofreaders do not make changes to content. Proofreaders query issues such as: content that is different to the master copy, including changes, introduced errors and missing content missing or incorrectly placed elements such as links, page numbers, table headings and captions design elements like typefaces, heading styles and hierarchies, page breaks and spacing obvious errors in spelling or grammar, checked against the style sheet anything that goes against the decisions in the style sheet. The proofreader's queries go to whoever is responsible for resolving particular issues. There can be several rounds of proofreading until no errors remain. Each time proofing corrections are made, the proofreader should check the content again. Each check ensures there are no flow-on errors to the text, layout or design. 'Blind proofreading' is when there is no master copy. This requires an experienced proofreader, because there is no authorised version to compare against. Proofreading is not editing Proofreading is not editing and it is not a substitute for copyediting. Proofreading does not include checking: for inconsistent language, spelling or grammar non-textual elements, such as the content of tables or illustrations. Proofreaders notice issues and query them. Proofreading is not a chance to have another round of editing, add more content, or add new functions to content. Proofreading is better with 2 people Proofreaders are most effective when working in teams of 2. The team is: a copyholder, who reads aloud from the master copy a reader, who checks the final version for changes and errors and marks up the content. This approach is especially helpful when checking complex, data-rich content, such as: mathematical or scientific content annual reports long financial tables. A style sheet is a useful tool The style sheet is a living record and a tool for communicating decisions in the content team. It helps to ensure quality and consistency. A style sheet includes decisions about: the dictionary you follow any spelling variations any variations you are making from this manual or your organisation's style guide. It can also include any style decisions informed by user research on user needs and accessibility. An editor adds to the style sheet as they edit, including elements such as: spelling capitalisation grammar punctuation. The updates ensure the style sheet records all decisions. Updates remove the need to repeat the decision-making process on any aspect of the content. Keeping a style sheet up to date means all team members can use the same style, making the content as consistent as possible. Australian standards set out specialist skills and know- how The Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd), in consultation with all Australian editing societies, has developed the IPEd standards for editing practice. This resource sets out the core standards that professional editors should meet. It is the foundation for IPEd's national accreditation scheme. Release notes The digital edition provides an overview of editing and proofreading. It does not provide short- hand markup for proofreading, as the focus is on the digital environment. The sixth edition had a chapter on editing and proofreading that focused more on print. The Content Guide did not include information about editing and proofreading. About this page References Flann E, Hill B and Wang L (2014) The Australian editing handbook, Wiley, Milton. Canberra Society of Editors (2000) Commissioning checklist, Canberra Society of Editors website, accessed 23 April 2020. IPEd (Institute of Professional Editors) (2013) Australian standards for editing practice, 2nd edn, IPED, accessed 10 March 2020. Lynch PJ and Horton S (2016) Web style guide, 4th edn, Yale University Press, New Haven and London. Mackenzie J (2011) The

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Last updated This page was updated Wednesday 3 November 2021. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/security-classifications-and-protective-markings Security classifications and protective markings Use protective markings for government information. Follow your organisation's procedures to add them. Add protective markings to government information If you are working with government information, follow organisational procedures to assess and apply protective markings to sensitive and classified information. The protective marking will usually be in all capitals at the top and bottom of a page. Information is assessed and given protective marking to identify if it is sensitive or security classified. Information might be identified as 'Unofficial', 'Official' or 'Official: Sensitive'. Information might be security classified as 'Protected', 'Secret' or 'Top Secret'. Other protective markings include caveats (such as codewords and special handling instructions) and information management markers. Caveat markings are mandatory and information management markers are optional. All sensitive and security classified information, including emails, carry protective markings. Information metadata is also marked. Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) requirements include how the information is classified and marked, and what this means for its storage, handling, access and disposal. For more information, consult the PSPF webpages. Or consult your organisation's protective security policy. Security classification requirements The Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) explains how protective markings should be formatted. To achieve clearly identifiable protective markings, the PSPF recommends: using capitals, bold text, large font and a distinctive colour (red preferred) placing markings at the centre top and bottom of each page separating markings by a double forward slash to help clearly differentiate each marking. When you write for the Australian Government, be aware of PSPF requirements for government information. Follow organisational procedures to apply security classifications and protective markings to content before referring to the PSPF. Agency implementation of the PSPF is supported by the Department of Home Affairs. Content types Structuring content Referencing and attribution Use initial capitals to write about protective markings In general content, use an initial capital unless you are reporting how the protective marking actually appears on the page. In that instance, write the marking as it appears and use quotation marks. Release notes The digital edition provides detailed information about security classifications and updated information on information management obligations. This responds to users' needs for clear information about security in the digital environment. The sixth edition did not include information about the Australian Government protective security policy, the classification of information or protective markings. The chapter 'Restrictions on publishing' in the sixth edition focused on legal protections such as copyright, privacy and defamation. The Content Guide did not include information about security classifications. About this page References Department of Home Affairs (n.d.) Applying the Protective Security Policy Framework, protectivesecurity.gov.au, accessed 28 September 2023. Department of Home Affairs (n.d) Information security, protectivesecurity.gov.au, accessed 28 September 2023. Department of Home Affairs (n.d) Policy 8: classification system, protectivesecurity.gov.au, accessed 28 September 2023. Department of Home Affairs (n.d.) Security of government business, protectivesecurity.gov.au, accessed 28 September 2023. Co-created by This page was co-created by Attorney-General's Department Example Only those with an existing Negative Vetting 1 security clearance are considered for supervised temporary access to Top Secret information. The field report was stamped 'TOP SECRET'. and Department of Defence. Last updated This page was updated Thursday 6 June 2024. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/user-research-and-content User research and content Only create content that meets a need. Find out about users and their needs through user research. Create content that meets a real need Only design and write content that meets a real person's need. People using government services usually don't have a choice to go somewhere else to meet their need. They don't read government content for fun. They are using it to get something done. Find out about users and their needs through user research. User research helps you: understand the user, their needs, behaviours and motivations work out the problems you are trying to solve with content reduce the risk of creating content that is not useful or usable have more certainty about what to write. Digital Service Standard requirements You must understand the needs of the users of your service to meet the Digital Service Standard: Criterion 1. Understand user needs. Write for the user, not 'an audience' Writing for an audience is not the same as writing for the user. The content we write might have more than one user with a range of different needs. It's not enough to imagine one kind of user. You need to do user research to learn about the range of users and their contexts. 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In this context you may not need to do research with the people who will read the content. You might need to find out about the subject of the content you are working on. If you are writing about other people, make sure you are not making assumptions about them. This includes other people working in government as well as end users. Service design and delivery User research is critical to the service design and delivery process. In this process, everyone in the team takes part in research through the Discovery, Alpha, Beta and Live stages. From Discovery and into Alpha stage, the research is generative. It's about gaining insights

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If you or your team are not able to access a user researcher or to talk to users, at least do desktop research. Desktop research Desktop research includes looking at website analytics to identify search keywords and topics. It also involves exploring forums and social media to find out the questions people are asking and the words they use. When you look at search data be aware that people use different words to search for and to talk about things. Search terms can also be different based on the forum and site they are using. Desktop research will not provide the same quality of insight as you get from talking to users. It is better to do this than no research at all. It's also helpful to do desktop research as well as interviewing users. Previous research Review existing relevant research as part of your desktop research. This includes research by other teams and academic research from outside government. When you review existing research, be aware that the context will be different. 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Reichelt L (2018) ‘From insights to actions. Or, what should we do with this research?’, Medium, Medium Corporation, accessed 1 November 2019. Varcoe L (2018) ‘Better content, less content’, Digital Transformation Agency blog, accessed 1 November 2019. Last updated This page was updated Tuesday 14 May 2024. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/clear-language-and-writing-style Clear language and writing style Use plain language. Write short and simple sentences in active voice. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/clear-language-and-writing-style/plain-language-and-word-choice Plain language and word choice Plain language can express complex ideas. Engage people with words they can understand quickly: use the list on this page. Clarify expressions people might be unfamiliar with. Use everyday words Choose words that people are familiar with. Unfamiliar words make content harder to read and understand. Accessibility requirements User need: I can read and understand text, even if the content includes unusual words and shortened forms, or features languages other than English. Fundamentals: Write in plain language. This helps all users and is essential for some. Avoid (or explain) unusual words, phrases, idioms and so on. Expand all acronyms on their first use. Avoid using double negatives. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines success criteria: 3.1.5 Reading level – level AAA. Level AAA requires a lower secondary education reading level, after removal of proper names and titles, (year 7 or between 12 and 14 years old) 3.1.3 Unusual words – level AAA Editing and proofreading Security classifications and protective markings Grammar, punctuation and conventions Content types Structuring content Referencing and attribution Like this Email your receipt by 5 pm today to claim the prize. Not this You are required to disclose financial documentation in a timely manner or you will be deemed to be disqualified from this prize offer. 3.1.4 Abbreviations – level AAA Use ‘we’, ‘you’ and ‘us’ if you can Use personal pronouns (like ‘we’, ‘you’, ‘us’) when it suits the voice and tone. A direct, active voice and tone helps to engage users. Active voice and tone makes it clear who must do what. Avoid jargon Remove jargon, slang and idioms. Use inclusive language People can relate to content when it uses inclusive language. Choose words that respect all people, including their rights and their heritage. Learn about the words people use Find out if your word choice matches the words people will use to find the content. What is obvious to you might not be obvious to them. Including the everyday words and phrases you discover also helps people understand your content. People engage more readily with familiar language. You can build insight through user research and content testing. For example, you can check whether: you are using unfamiliar jargon Like this We will assess your application within 30 days. [Active voice makes who is doing what clear. Personal pronouns ‘we’ and ‘your’ support a direct tone.] Not this Applications are assessed within 30 days. [Passive voice makes who is doing what less clear. There are no pronouns in this sentence.] Like this They changed their decision in response to new information. Not this They changed their decision in light of new information. [‘In light of’ is an idiom.] you need to highlight unfamiliar concepts and explain them. Check search engine analytics for terms people are using to find related content online. You can discover useful search terms and keywords to include in search engine optimisation. Choose simple words, not complicated expressions There is usually more than one way to express something. Find the simplest, clearest option. Replace longer words and phrases with simpler alternatives. You can use this table as a starting point. Words to avoid and plain language alternatives Don’t write this Try this instead acquire buy, get additional more, extra adequate number of enough address the issue solve the problem answer the question advising in relation to advising on, advising about amongst among a number of some, many, few (or tell people how many there were) approximately about as a consequence of because ascertain find out assist help, support, guide at a later date later, soon (or tell people a specific or rough timeframe) at this point in time now attempt (verb) try cease stop, end cognisant of aware of, know collaborate with work with collaborate with work with commence start, begin concerning about consequently so create a dialogue speak, discuss, talk deliver, drive say what you are doing – for example, ‘increasing’ ... desire want despite the fact that although (or break up the sentence to avoid this phrase) disburse pay discontinue stop, end dispatch send due to the fact that because exit (verb) leave give consideration to consider impact, impact on (verb) affect implement apply, install, do, start in order to to in receipt of get, have, receive in relation to in regards to in respect of about, on in the event that if, when inquire ask is unable to can’t, cannot it is requested that you declare declare leverage use, build on make an application apply make a complaint complain Don’t write this Try this instead make a complaint complain manner way methodology method notwithstanding even though, though, even if, despite obtain get, have presently now prior to before primary main provide a response to respond to provide assistance with help, support pursuant to under reach or make a decision decide require need, must subsequently after table (verb) – unless tabling a document in parliament address, discuss, release thereafter then, afterwards until such time as until upon on utilise use whilst while with reference to with regard to with respect to about Don’t write this Try this instead Keep words and phrases with special meaning to a minimum People can be unfamiliar with words you need to use, for example: official titles Acts of parliament names of organisations. For names and terms with special meaning, follow style rules and conventions. This helps users scan content. Be selective about shortened forms, such as abbreviations, contractions, acronyms and initialisms. Some shortened forms are better-known than the full form of the term, for example ‘DNA’. Check a dictionary to see if the acronym or initialism is listed. Shorten only the words and phrases that are well known or used many times in your content. Shortened forms can help people read and understand content, but too many can be difficult to keep track of. Spell them out the first time you use them. Shortened forms can be a type of jargon that is not suitable in plain language content. Try to avoid them altogether if they are used only once or twice. You can include technical or specialist terms if your research shows your audience uses them. But start with plain language words as the default to keep the reading level accessible. Plain language helps everyone. To help people understand specialist or technical content: explain terms – for example, use a glossary include a short summary without using specialist terms. In content with many specialist terms, reserve shortened forms for the most frequently used terms only. Spell out other terms in full. Release notes The digital edition has practical guidance on plain language. It relates plain language to writing in the English language. The sixth edition and Content Guide referred to ‘plain English’ only. About this page Evidence GOV.UK (2016) ‘A-to-Z: words to avoid’, Style guide, GOV.UK. Example The Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) helps government agencies create digital services. GOV.UK (2019) Content design: planning, writing and managing content, GOV.UK. New Zealand Government (2020) ‘Plain language’, Content design guidance, Digital.govt.nz.

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2020) 'Plain language', Canada.ca content style guide, Canada.ca. United States Government (n.d.) Plain language, plainlanguage.gov. W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) (n.d.) 'Understanding Success Criterion 3.1.5: reading level', Understanding WCAG 2.1, W3C website. References Australian Public Service Commission (2018), APS values, APSC website, accessed 9 October 2020. [Public Service Act 1999, s 10.] Content Design London (2019) 'Plain English', Content Design London readability guidelines, Content Design London website, accessed 19 November 2019. Content Design London (2019) 'Specialist terms', Content Design London readability guidelines, Content Design London website, accessed 20 November 2019. Cutts M (2013) Oxford guide to plain English, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK. European Commission (2016) How to write clearly, Publications Office of the EU, Luxembourg, accessed 6 May 2020. 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'Use simple words and phrases', Plain language, plainlanguage.gov, accessed 22 September 2020. Victorian Law Reform Commission (2017) Plain English and the law: the 1987 report republished, VLRC website, accessed 22 September 2020. W3C (Worldwide Web Consortium)(2020) Making content usable for people with cognitive and learning disabilities [working draft], W3C website, accessed 2 December 2020. W3C (Worldwide Web Consortium)(2016) 'Readable: understanding Guideline 3.1', Understanding WCAG 2.0: A guide to understanding and implementing WCAG 2.0, W3C website. Wright N (n.d.) 'Keep it jargon-free', Resources, plainlanguage.gov. Last updated This page was updated Monday 7 August 2023. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/clear-language-and-writing-style/sentences Sentences Clear sentences in active voice improve readability. Keep sentences short to help people scan content. Write plain language sentences Standard English sentences are built on subject–verb–object order. This structure forms the basis of plain language writing. Keep sentences to an average of 15 words and no more than 25 words, especially for digital content. Too many words, phrases and clauses affect people's ability to scan sentences. Sometimes it's hard to avoid longer sentences – for example, if you have to include a long department name. Sentences over 25 words can usually be broken up using different techniques, like using lists. Accessibility requirements User need: I can read and understand text, even if the content includes unusual words and shortened forms, and features languages other than English. Fundamentals: Write in plain language. This helps all users and is essential for some. Avoid (or explain) unusual words, phrases, idioms and so on. Expand all acronyms on their first use. Avoid using double negatives. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines success criterion: 3.1.5 Reading level – level AAA. Level AAA requires a lower secondary education reading level, after removal of proper names and titles (year 7 or between 12 and 14 years old). Use active voice Use active rather than passive voice. Active voice helps users understand who is doing what. It Editing and proofreading Security classifications and protective markings Grammar, punctuation and conventions Content types Structuring content Referencing and attribution can also help people know exactly what their responsibility is. The difference is clearest with action verbs: Active voice: the grammatical subject is performing the action in a sentence. Passive voice: the grammatical subject is undergoing the action. Construct positive, unambiguous sentences Words, phrases and sentences can have more than one meaning. Write exactly what you mean and construct your sentences so there is no ambiguity. Write sentences so they are positive rather than negative. Avoid double negatives Double negatives can lead to misunderstandings, so avoid them. Example Eligible students can access the subsidy by completing the application. [Active voice] The subsidy can be accessed by completing the application. [Passive voice] Example Active voice: The student filed the application. ['The student' is the grammatical subject, who did the filing. 'The application' is the object.] Passive voice: The application was filed by the student. ['The application' is the grammatical subject, but did not do the filing.] Like this The graduate with a broken leg sat at the desk. [The graduate has a broken leg.] Not this The graduate sat at the desk with a broken leg. [Either the graduate or the desk could have a broken leg.] Like this Include these documents when you apply. Not this You can't submit your application if you don't include these documents. Eliminate unnecessary words Make each word work for its place in the sentence. Sentence structure is clearer if each word plays a necessary role. Clear sentences improve readability. It helps to test the combination to know which words are necessary. Keep the words that play a critical function in the sentence. Remove all the words except the subject, verb and object (if applicable). Check if the sentence is grammatically correct when you remove the other words. Build the sentence back together, leaving out any words that aren't absolutely necessary. Adverbs and adjectives are usually good candidates to leave out in this kind of test. Check if the basic meaning of the sentence remains, and if it's grammatical. Then check if the words you've removed are really working to keep their place. Testing combinations as you write will also help create concise and easily understood headings, fragment lists and descriptive links. Word combinations affect punctuation, spelling, capitalisation and formatting. For example, there are rules about the use of commas between adjectives and the use of hyphens between adverbs and verbs. Check guidance about types of words and their function. This guidance relates closely to other Write this It was acceptable … Not this It was not unacceptable … Write this We provide statistics for trade reports. Contact us with trade data requests and we'll respond within 2 business days. [This is concise text that communicates relevant and necessary information. It uses 19 words.] Not this Our team will happily provide you with any statistics you might be seeking for the purpose of producing better and more factually accurate trade reports. Let us know if you're seeking specific trade data and we'll seek to provide it to you as soon as we can, usually within 2 business days. [This text uses unnecessary adverbs, adjectives and contains irrelevant information. It uses 52 words.] style rules in grammar, punctuation and conventions. Be precise Avoid unnecessary words. Keep the words needed to make meaning clear. Avoid using 'there is' and

‘there are’ when they only add extra words and not meaning. Vary sentence structure Vary your sentence structure to suit the content. Sentence structures can be simple, compound or complex. This depends on the number of clauses they contain and how clauses work together. Simple sentence structures are easier to scan. People understand meaning through the order of words in a sentence. A simple sentence construction has fewer parts to take in. Compound and complex sentences can add variety and flow to your writing. Sentences should still be easy to scan, even using these structures. Complex structure is harder to follow, regardless of a person’s literacy level. Complex structures take more effort to read, even if they are punctuated properly. Like this Call us if you have any questions. Not this If you were unsure about any of the information or needed more details, you are welcome to telephone our office to acquire what you needed. Write this If anything doesn’t fit within this framework ... Not this If there is anything that doesn’t fit within this framework ... Like this You can delete your application within an hour of applying. [‘Within an hour of applying’ modifies the main clause.] Not this You can, within an hour of applying, delete your application. Build simple phrases and clauses Sentences consist of phrases and clauses. Each group of words carries out a different function. Phrases and clauses are groups of words that work as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs or prepositions in sentences. You can build layers of meaning by combining different types of words, phrases and clauses. Layering sentences makes them more complex. Some common constructions used in bureaucratic writing are complex and unnecessary. They add words but not meaning. Instead of bureaucratic language, use plain language words and terms. For example, use a verb instead of the noun that relates to the verb. If you use the noun instead, you have to change the verb into the noun and usually add other words. Use fewer than 3 adjectives or nouns at a time Phrases that combine more than 3 adjectives or nouns are difficult to understand. Rephrase sentences to break up strings of adjectives or noun trains. You can often rephrase the string of adjectives or noun train as a clause. Follow the rule to keep sentences short and their structure simple. [The modifier is inserted into the main clause. This structure is complex and slows down reading.] Example The plane arrived. The plane arrived in Darwin. The plane arrived in Darwin carrying freight. The plane arrived in Darwin carrying freight that needs inspection. The plane arrived in Darwin carrying freight that needs inspection for dangerous goods. The plane arrived in Darwin carrying freight that – before being unloaded – needs inspection for dangerous goods. Like this Please apply. [‘Apply’ is the verb.] Not this Please make an application. [‘Application’ is the noun that relates to the verb ‘apply’.] Write this Avoid using ‘if’ and ‘unless’ together Don’t use words such as ‘if’ and ‘unless’ in the same sentence. Use ‘other than’ carefully When you use ‘other than’, make sure it’s clear which words are included in the exception. Avoid ‘such ... as’ and ‘being’ Don’t use the ‘such ... as’ form. Use ‘and’ instead of ‘being’ or ‘not being’. The goal is to analyse how we can reallocate human resources. The analysis will inform our business plan. Not this The human resource reallocation analysis will inform our business plan. [‘Human resource reallocation analysis’ is a noun train that is difficult to understand.] Like this From 1 October, your partner can sign forms on your behalf. Not this If your partner signed the form on your behalf, we can accept it unless they signed it before 1 October. Write this A person who is younger than 60, other than a teacher ... Not this A person other than a teacher who is younger than 60 ... Like this Take appropriate steps. Not this Take such steps as are appropriate. Release notes The digital edition has practical guidance on plain language: It discusses plain language sentences and relates grammatical concepts to the principles of plain language. It consolidates information from the sixth edition and highlights the basics about clauses. It takes a different approach to the sixth edition by breaking grammar topics into specific subject areas like ‘phrases’ and ‘types of words’. It provides an overview on types of words to introduce grammatical concepts about parts of speech and how they relate to sentence structure. The sixth edition called types of words ‘word classes’. It had summary information about parts of speech on pages 68 to 70. This formed part of Chapter 5 on grammar. The sixth edition and Content Guide referred to ‘plain English’ only. The digital edition relates plain language to writing in the English language. The Content Guide did not have any in-depth information on grammatical concepts. About this page Evidence Content Design London (2020) ‘Simple sentences’, Content Design London readability guidelines, Content Design London website, accessed 6 April 2020. GOV.UK (2019) Content design: planning, writing and managing content, GOV.UK. New Zealand Government (2020) Plain language, Digital.govt.nz. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2020) ‘Plain language’, Canada.ca content style guide, Canada.ca. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2020) ‘2.6: Use simple sentences’, Canada.ca content style guide, Canada.ca. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2020) ‘2.7: Use short sentences and paragraphs’, Canada.ca content style guide, Canada.ca. United States Government (n.d.) ‘Be concise’, Plain language guidelines, plainlanguage.gov. Write this A person who is 70 or over and has a driving licence ... Not this A person who is 70 or over, being a person who has a driving licence ... United States Government (n.d.) Plain language, plainlanguage.gov. W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) (n.d.) ‘Understanding Success Criterion 3.1.5: reading level’, Understanding WCAG 2.1, W3C website. References Dixon JC and Bolitho B (2005–2019a) Course notes and exercises: English grammar for writers, editors and policymakers, Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University, Canberra. Dixon JC and Bolitho B (2005–2019b) Report writing, Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University, Canberra. Cutts M (2013) Oxford guide to plain English, Oxford University Press, Oxford. European Commission (2020) English style guide: a handbook for authors and translators in the European Commission, European Commission. European Commission (2016) How to write clearly, Publications Office of the EU, Luxembourg, accessed 9 September 2020. 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Tasmanian Government Communications (2012) Plain language in communication: guide, Tasmanian Government Communications website, accessed 19 November 2019. University of Chicago

(2017) Chicago manual of style, 17th edn, University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Truss L (2003) Eats, shoots and leaves: the zero tolerance approach to punctuation, Profile Books, London. W3C (2023) 'Readable: understanding Guideline 3.1', Understanding WCAG 2.0: A guide to understanding and implementing WCAG 2.0, W3C website, accessed 27 March 2024. Last updated This page was updated Wednesday 27 March 2024. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/clear-language-and-writing-style/voice-and-tone Voice and tone Writing style is a result of voice and tone. Adjust your style to meet user needs. It influences whether and how people engage with content. Adapt writing style with tone and voice Writing style describes the way you express ideas in content. The tone and voice you use influence the writing style for any type of content. Tone is the way you express ideas. It includes the words you use, the way you put them together and their level of formality. Voice captures who is writing – a persona people understand when they engage with the content. Voice can be objective and institutional or personal and friendly. Adapt tone and voice to engage users, so the content can meet their needs. For example, briefs for ministers will use a different tone and voice to a speech or information on a website. Align tone to context Tone is created by 4 elements: choice of words viewpoint Editing and proofreading Security classifications and protective markings Grammar, punctuation and conventions Content types Structuring content Referencing and attribution Example By registering with us, you can access a range of member services online. [Standard tone] Online services are only available to members who have registered. [Formal tone] Example Over the next 3 years, the department will bolster its investment in cyber security. [Institutional voice, standard tone] Our investment in workforce capability will create an 'army of cyber experts'. [Personal voice, standard tone] grammar level of formality. Word choice Word choice will influence how users respond to you and your organisation. The smallest details, such as using contractions, can affect how content comes across. Viewpoint The way the user relates to the content can depend on what pronouns feature in sentence structure. The second person (using the pronoun 'you') is active, direct and personal. It can be more engaging for people reading and using government content. Using the first person singular (the pronoun 'I') is rarely suitable in government content, except in correspondence. Grammar Grammar is about sentence structure. It affects the way your writing sounds and how easy it is to read. Formality Formality is about how closely you follow standard English and how familiar the tone of content needs to be. Choose how formal tone should be The appropriate level of formality depends on what the relationship is between content and its user. There are 3 levels of formality: formal standard informal. A formal tone creates a distance between the content's persona and the content's reader. An informal tone suggests a relationship that is more casual and intimate. A standard tone sits between these 2. It is appropriate for most government content. It creates little distance, but not too much familiarity, into the relationship with readers. Example Guests should be seated 15 minutes before the performance starts. [Formal] Why don't you come in early and grab a seat before things get started? [Informal] Standard style is the easiest for many people to understand. Formality does not affect plain language. Formal tone Formal tone: doesn't use contractions is literal – words are used with their dictionary meaning doesn't use metaphor, slang or idioms often uses the third person (he, she, they, them). Legal writing, policies, reports and ministerial letters often adopt a formal tone. You can also use it in emails and letters when you have not yet met the person you are writing to. Formal tone is used in ceremonies and to show respect for someone in authority. Standard tone Standard tone combines formal and informal tone. Most people find standard tone easiest to understand. Standard tone: can use contractions and personal pronouns doesn't use metaphors, idioms or slang. You will probably use standard tone for most government content. This includes: emails and letters online government services corporate communications media releases articles. Informal tone Informal tone uses contractions and personal pronouns. Informal tone can use metaphors and idioms, which can have a negative effect on inclusion. Metaphors and idioms are not plain language. You should not use slang when writing on behalf of government. Informal tone is often used in social media and blogs. Your writing might also become more Example Please arrive 15 minutes before the concert starts. [Standard] informal as you get to know the people you are writing to. Identify the right voice Voice is sometimes called a persona. It refers to the personality implicit in the content. Voice can be objective, formal and institutional, or it can be personal and friendly. The right voice for content will depend on the persona fit for the content. Voice and the elements of tone are closely connected. Voice can create a tone of equality (a relationship between equals) or one that assumes authority (power is unequal). A voice, or persona, can be: supportive, friendly, positive and empowering expert, impartial and balanced serious and authoritative, but reasonable, legitimate and measured. Check your organisation's style guide to see if it has advice about the organisation's voice. If not, a safe place to start is with a basic government voice. It is the voice of a 'definitive source' and is: respectful clear and direct objective and impartial. A respectful writing style: uses inclusive language expresses ideas in everyday words 'speaks' to people – using the pronoun 'you', for example doesn't use inflammatory language, such as name-calling or sarcasm doesn't speak down to people, but isn't too familiar either. A clear and direct writing style: is in plain language uses active voice is concise structures ideas makes it easy for people to understand what they need to know or do. Write this We will not be funding any new projects this year. Not this Objective and impartial writing: relies on facts doesn't include opinion is balanced and non-biased. The difference between fact and opinion can be subtle. Viewpoint affects perception of whether information is neutral or impartial. Adjectives and adverbs can also affect whether the information comes across as fact or opinion. Release notes The digital edition has mostly new content on voice and tone. It uses the terms 'voice' and 'tone', but does not use the term 'register' as described in the sixth edition. Instead, this edition uses voice and tone to describe different aspects of register. The Content Guide had brief advice on voice and tone in 'Writing style'. About this page References General Services Administration (n.d.) 'Voice and tone', 18F content guide, 18F Content Guide website, accessed 9 September 2020. Kelleher T (2009) 'Conversational voice, communicated commitment, and public relations outcomes in interactive online communication', Journal of Communication, 59(1):172–188, In-flight projects will be funded subject to FAS FMDC approval. Other projects have not passed the first capital bid round and are deemed unsuccessful. Write this There was 15 mm of rain last summer. This made it the driest summer for 120 years. [The viewpoint is impersonal. The timescale of 120 years gives an objective benchmark for the fact.] Not this Only 15 mm of rain meant last summer was the driest we've ever had. [The viewpoint is personal because of 'we' (a personal pronoun). The adverb 'only' could also imply subjectivity.] doi:10.1111/j.1460-

2466.2008.01410.x. Mackenzie J (2011) The editor's companion, 2nd edn, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne. New Zealand Government (2020) 'Tone and voice', Content design guidance, digital,govt.nz, accessed 22 December 2022. NSW Government (2022) 'Finding a tone of voice', Digital service toolkit, Digital.NSW website, accessed 12 December 2022. Nordquist, R (2019) What is Tone in Writing?, ThoughtCo.com, viewed on 4 January 2020. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2020) 'Tone', Canada.ca content style guide, Canada.ca, accessed 9 September 2020. University of Maryland Global Campus (2022) A word about style, voice and tone, Online Guide to Writing and Research, University of Maryland Global Campus website, accessed 21 June 2022. University of Reading (2013) GOV.UK content principles: conventions and research background, GOV.UK website, accessed 4 May 2020. Wheaton College (2009) Style, diction, tone and voice, Wheaton College, viewed on 15 October 2019. Last updated This page was updated Wednesday 5 July 2023. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/findable-content Findable content Write and design content that is easy for the user to find with a search engine. On-page optimisation Editing and proofreading Security classifications and protective markings Grammar, punctuation and conventions Content types Structuring content Referencing and attribution How people find information Design content based on the ways users find information. Understanding search engines Metadata, keywords and page structure are important. Write and design content so users can easily find it with search engines and voice search. Keywords and search engines Keywords reflect core ideas and topics in content. Choosing the right keywords will support people's ability to find the content they need when they search for it online. On-page optimisation Make content easy for people to find using search engines. Include keywords in URLs, metadata and content. Create accessible links to high-quality content. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/findable-content/how-people-find-information How people find information Design content based on the ways users find information. Learn how users search for information Do user research so you can work out how content will: be found using different search strategies answer the questions users ask present the way users think it will use everyday language – many search queries are voice search. Include the main words and phrases that people search for. This is part of search engine optimisation (SEO). People use different strategies Finding useful information online takes time and effort. People use different ways to: look for information browse through search results or content assess the search results and content. As people search for information, they often change what they're looking for. The way people look for information also changes with context. It can depend on someone's emotional state, their environment and what they are looking for. But some people always use the same strategies to find content. People go straight to information if they: know about the topic trust the source have used the source before On-page optimisation Editing and proofreading Security classifications and protective markings Grammar, punctuation and conventions Content types Structuring content Referencing and attribution know about the source because other people recommended it have already found similar information in that source have found the same content before. Digital Service Standard requirements You must understand the needs of all users of your service and create content they can access to meet the Digital Service Standard: Criterion 1. Understand user needs Criterion 9. Make it accessible. Finding information requires a range of skills A successful search for information requires these skills: operational skills – entering a URL in the right place, or putting the keywords in a search engine formal skills – navigating across different websites without getting lost information skills – choosing the right information that will help the user strategic skills – choosing the right words to find the right content. People may use navigation, site search or both People use government websites to complete a task or find information. They will browse using navigation tools (menus and links), or use the site's search function. They might also do both. Navigation When browsing, it is easier for people to recognise a familiar term than it is for them to remember the right keyword for a search. For this reason, some people prefer to navigate using menus and links. Others need to browse to discover new sources of information. Some people won't browse because site search is more effective for them. Site search People tend to use site search: as a fallback when they can't find what they want using navigation tools if they are looking for a particular document or product. To help people who prefer to find information through site search, remember: Complex websites need site search for finding content. On very large websites, site search is often the best way to find pages that contain specific phrases or keywords. These pages hold content that navigation tools might not discover. People may also use the site search function on the search engine results page, if the site is configured to show this. Familiar page structures are easier to search Familiar structures work best because people understand and expect them. The effort goes into scanning and reading, rather than searching through content. Use the guidance on content structure. Accessibility requirements User needs: I can find and navigate the content and determine where I am on the webpage. I can change the content's presentation without losing information or structure. I can predict the webpage's appearance and how I will operate the content. Fundamentals: Write clear page titles. This is the first thing to appear in search results and the first words heard by screen reader users. Organise content in a clear order using section headings. Make sure all users can navigate through all content in the intended order, regardless of the technology they are using. Use the same navigation elements consistently across services. Make sure the user can understand where they are within the website or service. Write link text that makes the destination and purpose of the link clear. Write clear and concise headings to help users find the information they're looking for. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines success criteria: 2.4.2 Page titled – level A 2.4.5 Multiple ways – level AA 2.4.6 Headings and labels – level AA 2.4.10 Section headings – level AAA 1.3.2 Meaningful sequence – level A 2.4.8 Location – level AAA 2.4.3 Focus order – level A 3.2.3 Consistent navigation – level AA 2.4.4 Link purpose (in context) – level A 2.4.9 Link purpose (link only) – level AAA Release notes The digital edition has an online focus for how people find information and how people read. It does not directly address how people find information in printed material. It has similar information on scanning and reading print and digital content. The sixth edition had information on how people find information online and in print. It included information on indexing that is not part of the digital edition's Live release. The digital edition omits some information from the sixth edition on eye movement. The sixth edition explained how readers absorb information. It included information about context and patterning, attention spans, style and layout, and images (called 'illustrations'). It referred to the use of moving images to get users' attention. This information sits on other pages in the digital edition, which are linked to types of structure. The Content Guide did not

address this topic, but had related information on writing for search engines and navigation labels. About this page References Aerts E (2010) ‘Navigation versus search’, Usability blog, accessed 13 November 2019. Berget G and Sandnes FE (2019) ‘Why textual search interfaces fail: as study of cognitive skills needed to construct successful queries’, Information Research, 24(1), accessed 12 November 2019. Cardello J (22 June 2014) ‘The difference between information architecture (IA) and navigation’, Nielsen Norman Group, accessed 13 November 2019. Coiro J (2012) ‘Understanding dispositions toward reading on the Internet', Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 55:645–8, doi:10.1002/JAAL.00077. Fisher K (2008) ‘Information behaviour in everyday contexts’, Incite, 29(8):22, accessed 13 November 2019. Fitzgerald T (18 August 2016) ‘Searchers and browsers: the personality types of UX’, UX Booth, accessed 13 November 2019. Gócza Z (2015) ‘Myth #16: Search will solve a website’s navigation problems’, UX Myths, accessed 13 November 2019. Hajibayova L (2019) ‘Exploring individuals’ patterns of personal information management practices: factors influencing the representation, organization and credibility assessment of information’, Information Research, 24(3), accessed 13 November 2019. Huvila I (2016) ‘Affective capitalism of knowing and the society of search engine’, Aslib Journal of Information Management, 68(5):566–588, doi:10.1108/AJIM-11-2015-0178. Jefferson F (12 April 2016) ‘The structure of content and why it’s so important’, Medium, accessed 1 November 2019. Jones W (2007) ‘Personal information management’, in Jones W and Teevan J (eds), Personal information management, University of Washington Press, Seattle. Katz MA and Byrne MD (2003) ‘Effects of scent and breadth on use of site-specific search on e- commerce web sites’, ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction, 10(3):198–220, doi:10.1145/937549.937551. Lavery K (2017) ‘Sync or swim: Internet searches’, Screen Education, 84:100–105. Lynch P and Horton S (2016) Web style guide 4th edn, Yale University Press, New Haven and London. National Research Council (2012) ‘Appendix B: Literacy in a digital age’, in Improving Adult Literacy Instruction: Options for Practice and Research, The National Academies Press, Washington, DC, doi:10.17226/13242. Pérez-Rodríguez A, Delgado-Ponce A, Marín-Mateos P, Romero-Rodríguez LM (2019) ‘Media competence in Spanish secondary school students. Assessing instrumental and critical thinking skills in digital contexts’, Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 19(3):33–48, doi:10.12738/estp.2019.3.003. Putro NHPS and Lee J (2017) ‘Reading interest in a digital age’, Reading Psychology, 38:778– 807, doi:10.1080/02702711.2017.1341966. Spool JM (2001) ‘Are there users who always search?’, UIE, accessed 1 November 2019. Summers K and Summers M (2005) ‘Reading and navigational strategies of web users with lower literacy skills’, Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 42(1), doi:10.1002/meet.1450420179. Thompson P (2013) ‘The digital natives as learners: technology use patterns and approaches to learning’, Computers & Education, 65:12–33, doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2012.12.022. van Deursen AJAM and van Dijk JAGM (2016) ‘Modeling traditional literacy, internet skills and internet usage: an empirical study’, Interacting with Computers, 28(1):13–16, doi:10.1093/iwc/iwu027. W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) (2020) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Overview, W3C website, accessed 16 May 2020. Weblium (2019) ‘Website navigation design: 12 best practices’, Weblium blog, accessed 1 November 2019. Last updated This page was updated Thursday 4 March 2021. https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/writing-and-designing-content/findable-content/understanding-search-engines Understanding search engines Metadata, keywords and page structure are important. Write and design content so users can easily find it with search engines and voice search. Search engines help users find content Search engines: index websites (using algorithms) search the index organise the results. Examples include Bing, DuckDuckGo, Google and Yahoo. Search engines use a process called indexing to look for content. Algorithms (automated procedural instructions) do the indexing. To index the content, algorithms use keywords in titles and metadata. The HTML