

# Foreword

For the past five years, every time I've given a talk about usability I've had a slide near the end to remind me to recommend *Letting Go of the Words*.

Here's what I say when I get to it:

"This is probably one of the best pieces of advice I can give you:

If you know *anyone* who writes or edits for the Web, they *have* to have a copy of this book."

When I say it, I always see some people nodding their heads in agreement (more with each passing year). To drive the point home, I pick one of them and ask,

"I'm right, aren't I? It really is a *great* book, isn't it?"

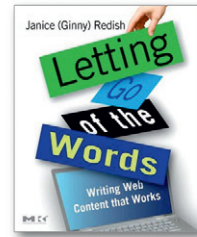
The response is always some very enthusiastic variation of "Yes!"

Personally, I think the first edition was so good that it could have stayed just the way it was for many more years.

And I can tell you from experience that there are two things that strike fear in the heart of any author facing the prospect of writing a second edition:

1. **New topics.** There are always things worth adding – things you've figured out since you wrote it, and things that have suddenly become important to your readers. The problem is working them in. Since it usually feels like a miracle that you got the whole thing to hold together and make sense in the first place, if you do more than just drop a paragraph in here and there, you know there's a good chance you might end up feeling like a kid who's taken a clock apart. Not good.

## A great tip



2. **New examples.** People who haven't written a book full of examples have no idea how hard it is to come up with them. It takes a ridiculous amount of work, so they're precious. Letting an old one go, and finding a new one to replace it, can be a terrifying prospect.

Just thinking about these makes me want to reach for the TV remote.

But not Ginny.

She didn't just throw in a paragraph here and there about SEO, content strategy, accessibility, mobile sites, or social media. She figured out what we really need to know about them, and made them play nicely with all the other concepts she'd already explained so well. She embedded them, like war correspondents.

In fact, she didn't just update the book. She rethought and rewrote the whole darned thing.

Knowing her as I do, I'm afraid it's just a case of too much integrity: She couldn't not do the right thing.<sup>1</sup>

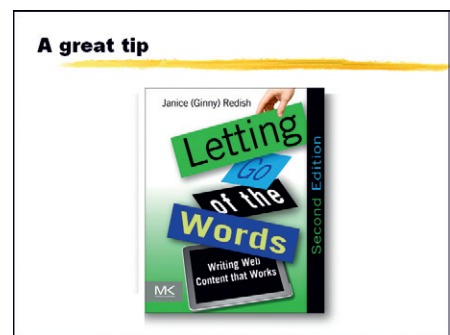
And then there's her pesky passion for wanting the written word to be clear and understandable and accessible for everyone.

Oh, well. Leave it to Ginny to take something so useful and make it even better.

So here's my revised recommendation when I give talks from now on:

"If you know someone who writes or edits words that appear on a screen, buy them a copy of this book. They'll be your friend for life.

If you own the first edition, give it to a friend and buy this one for yourself. Like *Godfather II*, it's that rarest of creatures: a sequel to something great that's even better than the original."



Steve Krug  
Brookline, Massachusetts, April, 2012

---

<sup>1</sup>No, I didn't throw in a double negative just to make Ginny crazy. Even Ginny would acknowledge that saying things clearly sometimes involves bending the rules.