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CONTENT WRITING

Content refers to information, in its most basic sense. Therefore content writing, is at its simplest, the process of writing and presenting information. Specifically though, content writing refers to the practice of writing content for the web.

Ever since the internet has taken off as a repository of information and a medium of communication, advertisement and marketing, there has been a similar explosion in the types of content found on the web. From websites to blogs and now social media platforms such as Twitter, TikTok, etc., there are numerous ways in which content is generated and presented.

This section is going to focus on some of the basics of content writing and some of the most prevalent types of content that are being consumed. The demand for writers who can produce this content well is huge and is a lucrative business practice as well. In almost all offices or workplaces now, having a good foundation in navigating these types of content and more importantly, knowing how to generate specific types of content is an invaluable asset for an employee.

TYPES OF WEB CONTENT

There are many types of written content available on the web that need generating. The following list covers some of the more important types you should be familiar with.

Websites

A website is a place which is created to showcase a person, company, product, etc. A website can have multiple pages all of which require specific types of content. There are some standard

pages that are now found in most websites: a Home page, an About page, a hierarchical list of pages that carry specific information and details (products, ideas, portfolios, etc.), a Contact page and an FAQ (frequently asked questions) page.

For instance, a company website will have a Home page that carries the logo and branding of the company with a tagline or a couple of sentences about the company. Their About page would have a brief statement about the company, its history and would have links to the Board of Directors page, the senior employees page, etc. Their Contact page would have phone numbers, email ids and a webform for feedback.

Blogs

Blogs or weblogs are a type of website which are more personal. These are usually started and owned by an individual or company to share longform content such as essays, thoughts, poems, etc., which are more personal and individualistic. Or they could have more in-depth articles and content by employees of a company.

For example, Instagram has a blog where a number of articles related to trending topics, hashtags and other micro-content is created and put up. You can access this at https://about.instagram.com/en_US/blog/.

Digital Media Sites

These sites can range all the way from e-papers or web versions of newspapers and magazines such as *The Indian Express* and *Outlook Traveller* to entertainment and trend sites such as BuzzFeed.

Newspapers and magazines require journalistic content while sites like BuzzFeed require a larger variety of content such as articles on DIY home décor, popular quizzes, entertainment news, etc.

Social Media Platforms

Apart from Facebook, there are a number of social media platforms that not only allow people to post their own content but also allow content to be generated for specific purposes. For instance, Instagram (a subsidiary of Facebook) allows users to maintain a business page for free where each post is dedicated to a product or sale and orders are placed via messaging.

Others platforms such as Twitter and TikTok can not only be used for personal content but are now being used by businesses (large and small) as advertising and marketing platforms as well as for customer outreach and management. For instance, you can tweet about an issue you have faced with the police in your city or with an airline and tag them on it. Not only does it keep the company accountable but forces them to be much more transparent about their dealings. Companies, movie stars, restaurants all have dedicated Twitter pages that need to be regularly updated with written and visual content.

Video Streaming Sites

Sites like YouTube, Netflix and Amazon Prime have vast repositories of visual content. However each of these movies or shows requires blurbs or synopses written for them. YouTube creates content for a variety of genres including children's cartoons and educational shows. Content writers are required to write scripts for these shows, and research learning paradigms and trends to know what will work.

BASICS OF CONTENT WRITING

As you can see there are a myriad contexts in which content writing is required. In order to be a successful content writer though there are a few key points you have to be aware of.

- *Format:* Understanding the format or type of content you have to generate is the first thing to be aware of. Writing an About page for a company like Coca Cola is different from writing an

article on *7 hacks for cleaning your AC*. Familiarise yourself with different types of writing from formal business formats, reports and journalistic articles to blurbs for videos, entertainment and trend articles, etc. Being familiar with a wide variety of writing styles will help you be an effective content writer.

- **Audience:** Know the audience for whom you are writing. If you are creating a blog about home décor for example, you need to figure out what kind of people are meant to read it. Is your target audience young graduates or first time employees looking to furnish their room or rented apartment? Or is it a person who is looking for luxury? If the former then you would want to use DIY tips and tricks for making cheap and affordable material last longer and look better. You would want to use language that is young and trendy instead of slightly more formal.
- **Research:** Always research the area or topic on which you are supposed to write. This might sound like it will take a lot of time but in reality the time you spend on this makes your writing more authentic. It might take less time to write an article about gardening in the summer from your imagination when you have no experience but people will read and trust your information if you take the trouble of researching it. Also the more honest you are in your work the more employers and audiences will believe what you say giving you a certain security.
- **Editing and proofreading:** Take the time to read your writing carefully and correct all grammar, vocabulary and punctuation mistakes. The better written your content is the more trustworthy your content will be.
- **Style:** Most content on the web is consumed in short bursts of time. Because there is so much content to consume users usually don't spend more than a few minutes on an article. Therefore you must:
 - Keep your language simple
 - Keep your sentences short
 - Use a dictionary to find the right words
 - Write in an appealing manner without being boring
 - Write in a manner than can be shared on social media easily
 - When writing an article make sure your headline is catchy and repeatable

- Use the appropriate tone; for example while writing about the latest Bollywood blockbuster you would use a tone suited for a film review. If you were writing about the migrant labour crisis during the Covid-19 pandemic your tone would be serious and formal and not light hearted and jovial.

Look at the following examples of content writing to understand the basics that have been discussed here.

THATSALLFOLKS: About Us page

Thatsallfolks is the world's leading independent digital media company, which connects and uses data and visualisation to reach hundreds of millions of people globally.

Our OTT cross-platform network includes: Thatsallfolks Originals, which creates articles, lists, quizzes, and videos; Thatsallfolks Media Brands, which comprises a multifarious network of identity-driven lifestyle brands including Ninepins, Homeproud, IS/WAS, and Yummilicious, the world's fastest growing social food network; Thatsallfolks Studios, which produces original content across cable, SVOD, film, animated and digital platforms; and Thatsallfolks News, which includes world-class reporting and investigative journalism.

We operate a global organisation headquartered in Chennai and an entertainment studio based in Mumbai, with global offices in countries around the world. Our best work creates authentic audience engagement that fosters real-world impact, like award-winning investigations from BuzzFeed News, and our staple lists and quizzes.

Article headlines and blurb

Who cares for the caregivers?

As Covid-19 cases rise, the strain on our healthcare workers is immense. Who will step into their roles if hospitals overflow?
Is the government looking for alternatives?

FCMG company Blog: Festival specific content

Ramadan has always been about generosity, charity, spiritual reflection and connecting with family and friends—even if we can't physically be together. To help our community around the world celebrate, we're launching the #MonthofMore initiative on our Instagram account as well as all our other social media platforms to inspire everyone to come together, spread kindness and do good.

Here's what we're doing at our company and how you can be part of it:

We're inviting our Instagram community to share their acts of good—big or small—over the course of the month and to encourage others to do the same, using the hashtag #Monthofmore.

It can be something as simple as giving thanks to healthcare professionals, posting a positive comment, or hosting a virtual iftar to bring together friends and family from around the world.

We've put together a few ideas on how you can spread kindness on to help get you inspired! Check out account @welovefcmg for more.

We're starting Instagram challenge #32daysofgiving, where for each day of Ramadan we highlight and donate a month's profit to chosen NGOs, individuals and philanthropic organisations who are doing their utmost to help those who have nothing.

Throughout the month on [HYPERLINK "https://www.instagram.com/instagram/"](https://www.instagram.com/instagram/) @Instagram, we will feature content creators from around the world, who will share moments from their Ramadan celebrations and their ways of giving back.

We can't wait to be inspired by the creative ways our global community comes together to celebrate and spread kindness during the #Monthofmore.

Wishing our community a very Happy Ramadan.

EXERCISES

A. *Prepare a catchy headline for any two of the following topics.*

1. Covid-19 and its effect on domestic airlines
2. Beauty and skin care during isolation
3. Simple recipes using only pantry staples
4. Exercise and its relation to mental health

B. *Now write the appropriate outline of an article for any 2 of the headlines you have written in the previous question.*

C. *Choose any one outline from your answers to the previous question and write content in the following formats.*

1. For a digital media site such as BuzzFeed
2. For an official tweet by a company
3. For an article in an e-newspaper
4. As a blurb for a video/audio file that is linked to your topic