

The Four Rules for Writing on the Web

1. Web audiences have short attention spans, so **make sure your writing is concise and benefit-driven**. In other words, write only what you think your audience will be interested in reading—and then edit, edit, and edit some more until you've pared away every unnecessary word.
2. Because even technically savvy audiences can find the Web confusing, **follow Web conventions and use a direct, friendly writing style**. In other words, reserve underlines for links and make sure your copy sounds as though you've written it for a friend you're trying to help.
3. Web audiences may view your writing on a handheld device or through a small window, so **put who you are, what you're writing about, and why anyone should care at or near the top of each page**. If you're good at graphic design, you may be able to communicate who, what, and/or why in a compact space by creating and displaying a logo or other picture.
4. To overcome the anonymity of the Web and help your audience decide whether your writing is worth reading, **always prominently display your author information**. At a bare minimum, list your credentials, your name, and a working e-mail address, either at the top (or bottom) of each page or through an "About Me" navigational link.