

The Top 10 Tips for Presenting Web Copy Effectively

1. **Put who, what, and why “above the fold.”** (Because few Web readers scroll, who you are, what you’re writing about, and why anyone should care should all appear at the beginning of your copy.)
2. **Put important stuff first.** Web readers skim rather than read, so put the main idea of each page at the top of each page, and the main idea of each paragraph at the beginning of each paragraph.
3. **Use headings, bullets, and lists.** These conventions help readers pick out what’s important to them quickly and easily.
4. **Keep paragraphs short.** White space breaks up a long chunk of text and makes reading easier for your audience.
5. **Repeat the important stuff.** Web readers tend to skip around a lot, so repetition of important concepts helps ensure they’ll read them at least once. (To avoid cluttering your copy, consider adding repetition through links.)
6. **Include pictures, animations, sound clips, and other multimedia extras only if they support your text.** Extras are great, but only if you’re sure your readers a) have fast connections, b) haven’t disabled playback in their browsers, and c) won’t be distracted, confused, or annoyed by your additions.
7. **Delete jargon and “weasel” words.** Don’t make your audience guess at what you’re saying. Be blunt. If you must use jargon (because, for example, your audience expects it), consider adding a definition link so that folks who stumble upon your site can understand it.
8. **Use bold for emphasis.** On the Web, underline means link--and italics can be hard to read.
9. **Include a lot of links.** Links both emphasize words and terms visually, and allow you to keep your main text uncluttered.
10. **Present your credentials.** Your content, style, and the links you’ve chosen to include all contribute to your credibility on the Web—but for maximum credibility you also need to include details about yourself, including a working e-mail address.