Write Now!

Writing for the Web

Writing for the Web is a great way for new authors to get started on their writing careers. Although the Internet has not replaced print media the way some expected, eventually we may see Web publications eclipse their print brethren. The Web is rapidly becoming the media of choice for the next generation and is changing the way we get information. As an author, you can write content for organizations you care about, or to promote a book, or to make your work more accessible to readers.

Tips for Writing for the Web

In order to write for the Web, there are a few things to keep in mind. First, readers of Web sites have different needs than readers of print material. For example, people tend to read computer screens somewhat more slowly than they do hard copy. As a good rule of thumb, write about half as much as you would usually write for a print article. If you need to provide more content, use hyperlinks to other pages.

As is true for print publications, headers and subheaders help readers scan information and find what they need. Headers also visually break up a page and encourage the reader to keep reading. Bullet points are also helpful for readers who may be looking for specific information, as are lists and pull-out quotes. You can also summarize a page's content at the top of each page to help readers determine whether they want to keep reading.

As for style, similar rules apply to both online content and to print. Write in a conversational tone, using an active voice. Present only one idea in each paragraph, and realize that paragraphs may be read out of order depending on where readers land after searching for specific information. Finally, remember that your readers are from all over the world. English is the official language of high-tech. But there are substantial differences in how English is used in different countries.

Lastly, write about topics you enjoy and find interesting. Bored writers often produce boring prose. Your articles have the potential to reach millions of readers. Make them something that you would want to read. And have fun!

Kathleen Kendall-Tackett, Ph.D., IBCLC, FAPA is owner and Editor-in-Chief of Praeclarus Press. For more information, go to www.PraeclarusPress.com.