

# Strategies for Effective Web Writing

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LibraryLinkNJ Webinar

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# Learning Objectives



- Identify the various types of web content your library sends out into the world
- Initiate the development of established voice and tone guidelines for your library
- Write web content using best practices and strategies

# Agenda

- What web content do libraries send out into the world?
- Why do users end up at our content?
- How do we read on the web?
- How can you approach learning about your audience?

## Status check and short question break


- Why are voice and tone important?
- What's your library's personality activity
- How can I write effectively for the web?
- Bringing it all together

Q&A

**Hello.**







"...writing well is part habit, part knowledge of some fundamental rules, and part giving a damn. We are all capable of producing good writing. Or, at least, *better* writing." - Ann Handley, *Everybody Writes* (pg.1)



**What web content do libraries  
send out into the world?**



## Short Answer Poll #1

Enter all the ways you can think of that libraries interact with users in writing on the web.



**Web pages**

**Guidelines &  
Policies**

**Instructional  
Content**

**System  
messages**

**Email, chat,  
text**

**Interface  
language &  
microcopy**

**Newsletters**

**Blog posts**

**Social Media**



## **Web copy**

Different types among  
web pages...

Support

Policies & General Info

## **Web copy**

...and so much more  
beyond that.

Support

Policies & General Info

Interface

Live Interactions

Editorial

Outreach & Marketing

**Why do users end up at our content?**

# Need information or answers

**Web pages**

**Guidelines &  
Policies**

# Trying to accomplish or troubleshoot something

**System  
messages**

**Web pages**

**Instructional  
Content**

**Email, chat,  
text**

**Interface  
language &  
microcopy**



# Anticipated

**System  
messages**

**Email, chat,  
text**

**Newsletters**

**Blog posts**

**Social Media**

# **Sphere of their life**

**Newsletters**

**Social Media**

## Empathy

Consider your users  
potential emotional state.



**Help documentation  
or how-to**

## Empathy

Consider your users  
potential emotional state.



**Help documentation  
or how-to**

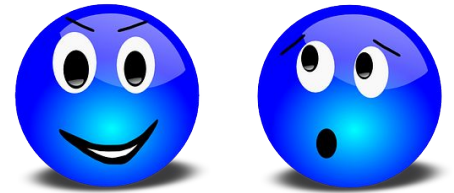
Downloading ebooks takes 15  
steps.

We know downloading ebooks is a  
little tricky, follow these steps to  
get reading!

## Empathy

Consider your users  
potential emotional state.

**Reading blog post or  
newsletter**

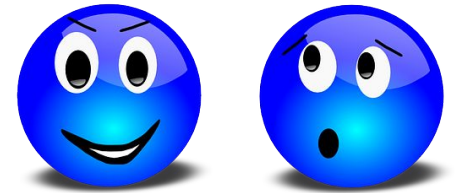


## Empathy

Consider your users  
potential emotional state.

New Books Available

Reading blog post or  
newsletter



Check Out Over 100  
New Mysteries!

# Empathy

Consider your users  
potential emotional state.

**Error  
message**



**Success  
message**

## Empathy

Consider your users potential emotional state.

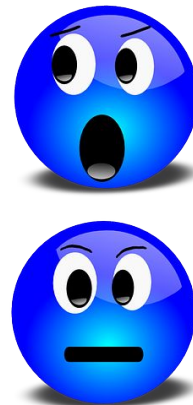
Error. Your request could not be processed.

Oops! Something went wrong. Use the Ask Us link for help.

Success.

Yay! We got your request and will let you know when it's ready.

**Error message**



**Success message**



**How do we read on the web?**

## Short Answer Poll #2

Enter words that describe how  
**you** read on the web.



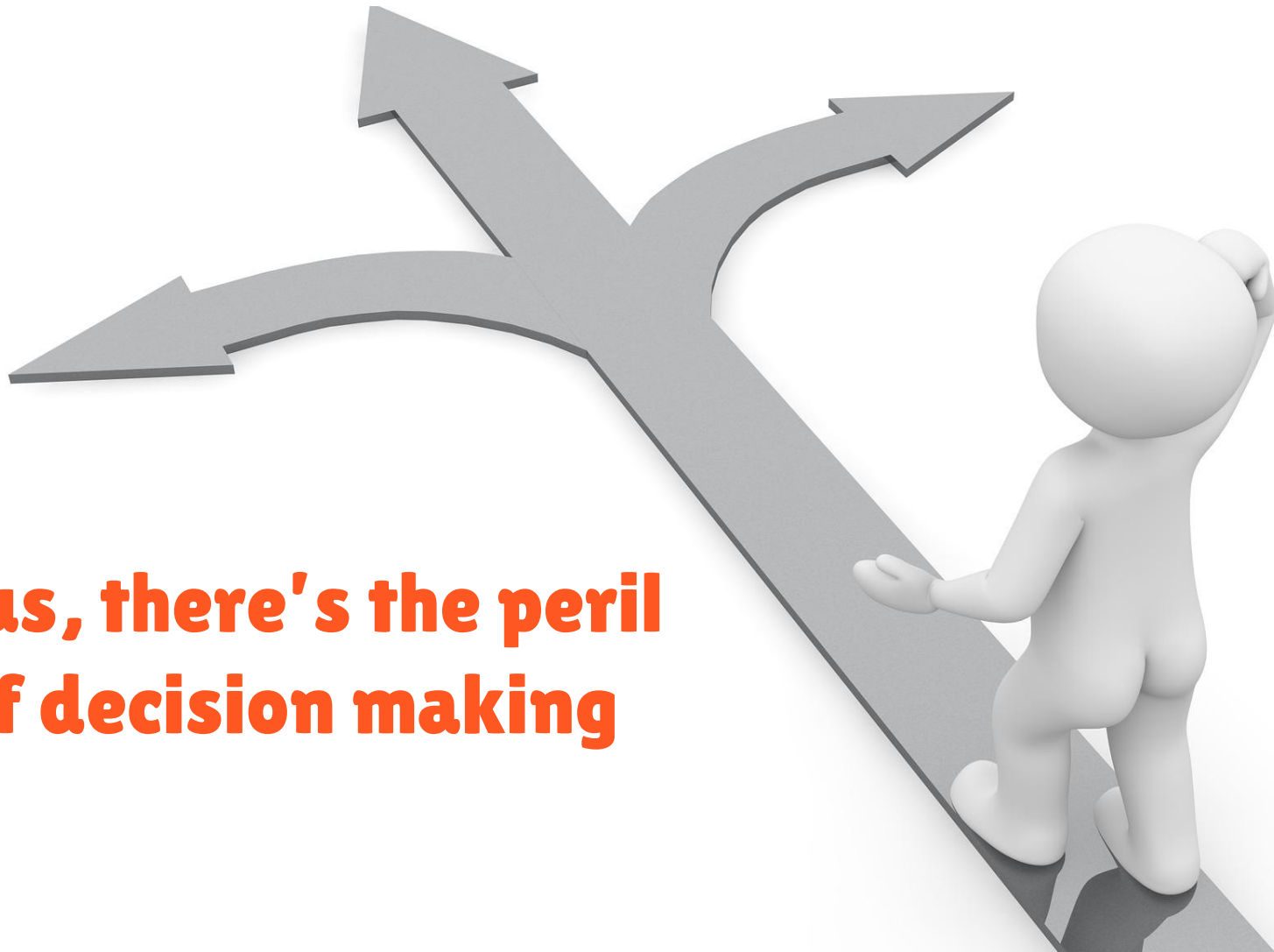




**Instead, we scan...**

**...and read in  
an F pattern**





**Plus, there's the peril  
of decision making**

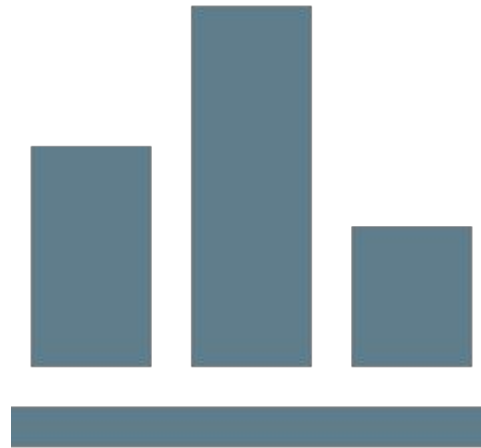
**How can you approach  
learning about your  
audience?**

# Identify primary audiences

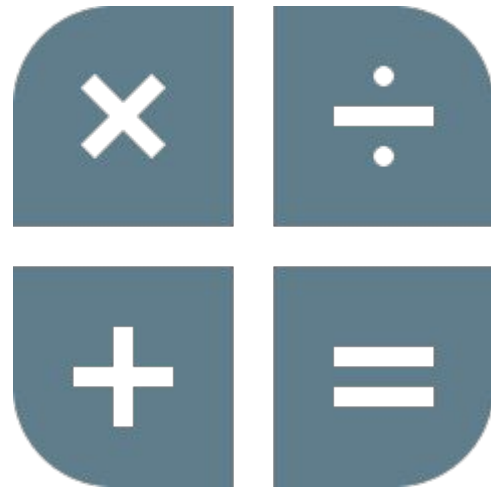




# Demographics



# Library Statistics



# Surveys somebody else did



**Make it a habit**



# Consider creating personas



## Short Answer Poll #3

Enter your initial thoughts on who you think your library's primary audiences are.



**Status check & short  
question break**

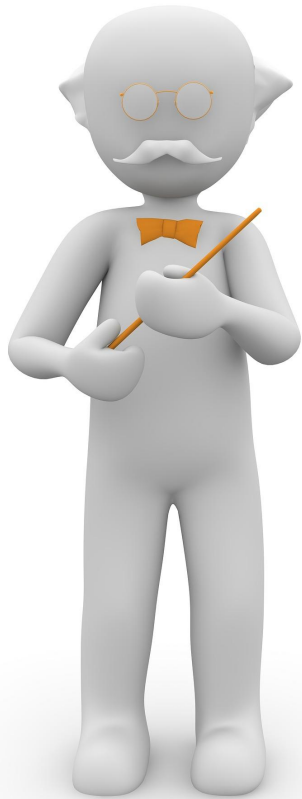
**Why are voice and tone  
important?**



**Voice**



# Tone



**What's your library's  
personality?**

## Short Answer Poll #4

1. If your library was a person, how would you describe them?
2. How do you want people to feel when they visit your website?



## Short Answer Poll #5

Enter two this-not-that statements about your library's personality.

### Examples:

Welcoming, but not jargony

Helpful, but not overbearing

Knowledgeable, but not preachy



## Short Answer Poll #6

Enter two specific examples of when you will want to employ a shift in tone.

### Keep in mind:

- Type of copy
- Audience
- User's emotional state



**How can I write effectively for the web?**

# Writing for the web essentials



**Inverted  
pyramid**



# Writing for the web essentials



**Structure**

# Writing for the web essentials



**Scannability**

# Writing for the web essentials



**Save time of  
the reader**

# Writing for the web essentials



**Conversation**

# Writing for the web essentials



**Style choices**

# Writing for the web essentials



**Links**

# Writing for the web essentials



**Be....**

## Short Answer Poll #7

Enter your favorite web writing tip that you will put to work right away!





**Bringing it all together.**

# Social Media



U-M Library @UMichLibrary · Jan 5

How did Wolverine Press print a quarto of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*? (And what is a quarto?) [ow.ly/WFj1z](http://ow.ly/WFj1z)



2 3



Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library

November 20, 2015 · 🌐

The Friends of the Library will offer a \$2 book sale in the FOL book st on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.



Like

Share

27 people like this.

Top Comments

28 shares



Write a comment...



Pauline Jones Can u pick the ones u want?

Like · Reply · 1 · November 20, 2015 at 7:30pm



Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library Yes. You purchase the empty bag and then fill it as full as you can!

Like · Reply · 1 · November 21, 2015 at 1:37pm



Josie Bell Does it have to be cash or can we use a debit card?

Like · Reply · November 30, 2015 at 5:44pm

View 4 more comments



Champlain Library @champlib · 3 Sep 2015

The bookstore has changed since 1975. (P.S. the library has books on reserve): [champlain.edu/academics/libr...](http://champlain.edu/academics/libr...) #tbt #campchamp



1:11 PM · 3 Sep 2015 · Details

🔄 ❤️ ⋮



Ferguson Municipal Public Library via Sac and Fox National Public Library

Yesterday at 5:31pm · 🌐

Come to your library to learn more about how the code talkers served our nation.



Flags to Fly at Half-Staff on Navajo Nation to Honor Code Talker Ernest Yazhe

Published January 16, 2016 WINDOW ROCK- The Navajo Nation Office of...

NATIVENEWSONLINE.NET | BY NATIVE NEWS ONLINE

Like

Comment

Share

22 people like this.



Write a comment...

📷 😊

# Newsletters



Skimm for January 7th

Skimm'd from Vegas

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

'I regret it every day' -- [Joe Biden](#) on his decision not to run for president. Looks like Kanye's got some competition. #2020

SKIMM THIS [f](#) [t](#)

## KIM JONG-UH OH

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### THE STORY

Earlier this week, North Korea said it dropped the [H-bomb](#). Yesterday, the US said 'profanity's not necessary, and pretty sure you're lying.'

### BACK UP.

In between [questionable haircuts](#) and [snooping on Hollywood](#), North Korea has been talking about upping its nuclear game and threatening war for years. Not good, since NK's a dictatorship that does not play well with others. Despite heavy UN sanctions, the country's been trying to bulk up its small-scale nuclear program for a while, and has conducted three nuclear tests in recent years. And then earlier this week, North Korea said it tested a hydrogen bomb. Which is kinda like Khaleesi, the mother of nuclear tests.

### WHAT'S THE REACTION BEEN?

The US and South Korea called Kim Jong-un's bluff, with the US saying early analysis is ["not consistent"](#) with a hydrogen bomb test. Still, the incident made the international community

in between [questionable haircuts](#) and [snooping on Hollywood](#), North Korea has been talking about upping its nuclear game and threatening war for years. Not good, since NK's a dictatorship that does not play well with others. Despite heavy UN sanctions, the country's been trying to bulk up its small-scale nuclear program for a while, and has conducted three nuclear tests in recent years. And then earlier this week, North Korea said it tested a hydrogen bomb. Which is kinda like Khaleesi, the mother of nuclear tests.

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### theSKIMM

If NK's claims are true, it would mean the country is a much bigger nuclear threat than everyone previously thought. There's a [short list of countries](#) (including the US, Russia, and China) who have tested a hydrogen bomb, and no one wants North Korea to join that club.

SKIMM THIS [f](#) [t](#)

## REPEAT AFTER ME...

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### WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOU HEAR [CHINA'S STOCK MARKET IS STILL STRUGGLING...](#)

Chipotle can relate. Yesterday, the chain announced that it's facing a [federal criminal investigation](#). This comes after hundreds of people have [gotten sick in recent months](#) after eating its food (some with E. coli, some with norovirus, all with lots of extra time in the bathroom). The criminal investigation is in connection with one norovirus outbreak that made more than 200 people sick at a location in Cali. This burrito bowl of problems caused sales to drop more than 30% last month. Chipotle's CEO has promised to make the chain the "safest place to eat." But for now, sales are still Mexi-coma status.

SKIMM THIS [f](#) [t](#)

### WHAT PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT...

Yesterday, the Texas state trooper who arrested Sandra Bland was [charged with perjury](#). Reminder: Bland is the 28-year-old black woman who was stopped by a state trooper over the summer for failing to signal a lane change. Their interaction got heated, and Bland was arrested. She was then found dead in her jail cell three days later. Officials said her [death](#)

[was a suicide](#). But there have been questions over how [her arrest](#) actually went down, especially because some of the interaction happened off-camera. The state trooper said he was just trying to safely conduct a traffic investigation. But yesterday, a grand jury 'found that statement to be false.' The state trooper was fired and faces up to a year in jail.

### WHAT TO SAY TO YOUR FRIEND WHO'S HAVING A BACHELOR PARTY IN VEGAS...

Party like a tech star. CES — aka Consumer Electronics Show, or product show-and-tell for tech companies — is going down in Sin City. And the new toys are shining, shimmering, splendid. Intel released an [X-ray helmet](#) that lets you see through things like faulty pipes. Sexy. A secretive [car company called Faraday Future](#) unveiled a concept for an electric car that could make Tesla sweat. And a lot of people said the word 'disruptive.' In other news that makes Christmas come again for your techie friends, [Oculus Rift went on preorder](#) yesterday. It's that virtual reality headset that people have been freaking out about for a while. It sold out in less than 15 minutes, even though it costs \$599. Force is strong with that one.

SKIMM THIS [f](#) [t](#)

### WHAT TO SAY TO YOUR FRIEND WHO STILL HASN'T SEEN "MAKING A MURDERER..."

Beware the spoilers. Yesterday, [Gov. Scott Walker \(R-WI\) said nah](#) to [pardoning Steven Avery](#) and his nephew Brendan Dassey, the subjects of the Netflix documentary series everyone's been watching. Avery was wrongfully convicted for sexual assault and served 18 years in prison... then he and Dassey were convicted of murder in a different case and sent to prison. There are questions over whether they were wrongly convicted. Thanks to Netflix, the questions have gotten so loud that hundreds of thousands of people have signed a petition to have Avery pardoned. President Obama was also petitioned to pardon Avery, but Walker's actually the only one with the power to do it. Outlook: very hazy.

SKIMM THIS [f](#) [t](#)

## THING TO KNOW

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[Ken Griffey Jr. and Mike Piazza](#): New kids on the Baseball Hall of Fame block. You already know their names for their epic careers in the 90s and 2000s, but now you know they're officially a big deal. Plus, Griffey got the highest percentage of votes ever while getting elected. Play ball.

SKIMM THIS [f](#) [t](#)

# Borrowing page

## Can I check out materials?

You may check out materials if you are:

- a Norwich University student, faculty or staff member
- an alumni of Norwich University
- a member of the Friends of Kreitzberg Library (FOKL)
- a guest (non-Norwich faculty, staff or student) living within a 50-mile radius of campus
- a faculty member from a Vermont Consortium of Academic Libraries (VCAL) institution

Students, faculty and staff need their Norwich University ID card. Alumni, FOKL members and community guests will be given a library card. VCAL faculty members must bring a valid VCAL library card from their home library.

## Contact Us

Tom Blood  
Circulation Supervisor  
[tblood@norwich.edu](mailto:tblood@norwich.edu)  
802.485.2176

## What can I check out?

### You may check out:

- Books
- Government documents (excluding the US Code, and rare or valuable documents)
- DVDs and videos
- CD-ROMs (with some exceptions)
- Audiobooks

### Sorry. These need to stay in the building:

- Reference materials
- Periodicals
- Microfiche or microfilm
- Maps (excluding topographic maps)
- Indexes
- Special Collections materials
- Hourly reserve items (may be checked out but cannot leave the library)

## How long can I keep materials?

### Books

- Undergraduate students: 45 days
- Graduate students: 90 days
- Staff: 45 days
- Faculty: 90 days
- Alumni, FOKL members, guests and VCAL faculty members: 45 days

### Other Materials and Exceptions

- DVDs and videos: 45 days
- Popular Reading: 45 days
- Reserves: Vary (2 hours; 4 hours; 1 day; 5 days). Hourly reserves are in-house only.

## What if I need to keep materials longer?

Sign in to your [online account](#) to renew online. You can also request a renewal in person at the Library Services Desk or by phone at ext. 2176.

Materials borrowed from other libraries can be renewed as long as the due date has not passed. Renew [online](#) (consult [this guide](#) for assistance) or by contacting the ILL department at [nuill@norwich.edu](mailto:nuill@norwich.edu) or ext. 2182.

## Is there a fee if I return materials late?

- No, but if an item is 30 days late our system automatically declares it lost and charges a replacement fee (\$50 minimum).
- Your checkout privileges may be suspended if library materials are not returned.

## What if the item I want is already checked out?

Visit or call the Library Services Desk (ext. 2176) to request a hold. We will notify you by email when the item is returned and hold it for seven days.

## What if you do not have the item I want?

Request items not available in our collection through [Interlibrary Loan](#) using the online form. Keep in mind it may take about 10 days to arrive. Plan ahead!

## How can I suggest items for you to purchase?

We welcome suggestions for additions to our collection, although budgets will not always guarantee their purchase. To submit a suggestion, either speak to a librarian at the Reference Desk or [email us](#).

# Recommend Readings & Tools

## Books

**The Content Strategy Toolkit: Methods, Guidelines, and Templates for Getting Content Right** (Voices That Matter) by Meghan Casey

**How to Make Sense of Any Mess** by Abby Covert

**Nicely Said** by Nicole Fenton and Kate Kiefer Lee

**Everybody Writes** by Ann Handley

**Don't Make Me Think, Revisited: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability** (3rd Edition) by Steve Krug

**Putting the User First: 30 Strategies for Transforming Library Services** by Courtney Greene McDonald

**Letting Go of Words** by Ginny Redish

**Useful, Usable, Desirable: Applying User Experience Design to Your Library** by Aaron Schmidt and Amanda Etches

**Badass: Making Users Awesome** by Kathy Sierra

## Misc. Stuff on the Interwebs

**GatherContent Blog** (<https://gathercontent.com/blog/>)

**MailChimp's Voice & Tone website** (<http://voiceandtone.com/>)

**MailChimp Content Style Guide** (<http://styleguide.mailchimp.com/>)

**Nielsen Norman Group** (Reports & Articles) (<https://www.nngroup.com/>)

**UX Booth** (<http://www.uxbooth.com/>)

**UX Thought of the Day** (<http://ux-thought.tumblr.com/>)

**Weave: The Journal of Library User Experience** (<http://weaveux.org/>)

## Tools

**Hemingway editor** (<http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>)

**Readability Score** (<https://readability-score.com/>)

**Q&A**

**Thank you!**

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