

## Editing Digital Content

In addition to normal text editing (grammar, punctuation, 'sense', placement of information in relation to other information, etc.), there are some unique extras to check when editing digital content. Some of these are listed below.

### *Web pages, online animations/tutorials*

Check	Notes
Structure	See if you can get a diagram of the website's structure
Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navigational: Menus, submenus, sidebars, headers, footers, breadcrumbs, back to top, next, previous, etc.</li> <li>• Links to other pages on same site, to external web pages, to external files (use a link validator)</li> <li>• Sitemap: Does one exist? Is it complete? (they usually aren't)</li> <li>• Are link mechanisms used consistently? (e.g. all underlines, all hovers, menus do one thing/internal links do another, visual indicators as to links [see CNN.com and News.com.au examples])</li> </ul>
Images	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they all display?</li> <li>• Do they all have alt/title tags? (hover to see if you get a tooltip, or use one of the test/validation applications to show alt/title text only)</li> </ul>
Colours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can they be seen by those who have a visual impairment? (use a validator)</li> <li>• How do they print on a black and white printer? (light colours may not print at all)</li> </ul>
Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test they work (including <b>Search</b> function, if it exists)</li> <li>• Test that required fields give a meaningful validation error message early enough if data is missing or incorrect</li> </ul>
Printing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test print a "print friendly" page - did you get what you expected to? was it really print friendly?</li> <li>• Test print pages (use FinePrint, PDF to save paper) to see if anything in the layout causes information to go missing on printing (e.g. large images, fixed width tables etc.); a good designer will have used a special CSS just for print to avoid these issues.</li> </ul>

### *CHMs and similar*

Check	Notes
Table of Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links</li> <li>• Parallelism in wording of topic headings</li> <li>• Logical hierarchy</li> </ul>
Index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links</li> <li>• Consistent wording (e.g. gerunds or imperatives for verbs)</li> </ul>
Other links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Browse links (if used)</li> <li>• Related topics links (if used)</li> <li>• Popup glossary links (if used)</li> <li>• Other navigational links (as for Web Pages above)</li> <li>• Links to other pages etc. (as for Web Pages above)</li> </ul>
Topic headings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parallelism</li> <li>• Watch out for headings starting with "How to...", "To..."?</li> <li>• Overview topics: How are these differentiated in various sections of the Help file?</li> </ul>

# Resource List

## Web browsers

What	Where	Cost	Notes
FireFox	<a href="http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/">http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/</a>	Free	Tabbed browsing; deals better with W3C standards for HTML and CSS
Internet Explorer	<a href="http://update.microsoft.com/windowsupdate/">http://update.microsoft.com/windowsupdate/</a>	Free	Comes with Windows; updates from Microsoft

## Software to make your life easier

What	Where	Cost	Notes
StyleWriter	<a href="http://www.editorsoftware.com/">http://www.editorsoftware.com/</a>	\$160.00 US	Add-in to Word that runs through a document looking for correct grammar, style, active/passive sentences etc. You can use it to edit 'on the fly' if you agree with the suggested change. You can set it to run different acceptance rules for various document types.
Fine Print	<a href="http://www.fineprint.com/products/fineprint/index.html">http://www.fineprint.com/products/fineprint/index.html</a>	\$49.95 US	Printer driver that allows you to 'print' to 2, 4, or 8 pages per page, or to a booklet.
Web Accessibility Toolbar	<a href="http://www.nils.org.au/ais/web/resources/toolbar/index.html">http://www.nils.org.au/ais/web/resources/toolbar/index.html</a>	Free	Checks how a web page looks at various resolutions, validates the HTML and/or CSS, checks for accessibility issues.
Developer toolbar for FireFox	<a href="http://chrispederick.com/work/firefox/webdeveloper/">http://chrispederick.com/work/firefox/webdeveloper/</a>	Free	Similar to the above, but more for developers, so doesn't have the same emphasis on accessibility.
Snagit	<a href="http://www.techsmith.com/products/snagit/default.asp">http://www.techsmith.com/products/snagit/default.asp</a>	\$39.95 US	Screen capture program – objects, regions, entire windows, menus, scrolling areas, text only, etc.
ScreenRuler	<a href="http://www.microfox.com/">http://www.microfox.com/</a>	\$24.95 US	Measures the size on any screen object in various units of measure (e.g. pixels); has a magnifying capability too.
MindManager	<a href="http://www.mindjet.com/us/">http://www.mindjet.com/us/</a>	\$349.00 US	Concept mapping, brainstorming, ideas mapping – whatever. Lots of pre-designed templates for things such as meetings, interviews and so on.
Skype	<a href="http://www.skype.com">http://www.skype.com</a>	Free	Computer-to-computer phone calls; need headset or speakers/microphone; broadband recommended.

## Websites/web articles

### Style, design, editing

What	Where	Notes
InformIT - Web Design Guide	<a href="http://www.informit.com/guides/content.asp?g=webdesign&amp;seqNum=135">http://www.informit.com/guides/content.asp?g=webdesign&amp;seqNum=135</a>	Section on Content has some good guidelines and things to look out for; use sidebar navigation to go to other sub-areas of the Content section.
Vischeck	<a href="http://www.vischeck.com/vischeck/">http://www.vischeck.com/vischeck/</a>	Allows you to see the world as colour blind people do. Also allows you to check graphics/images and web pages online to see if they pose problems for the various forms of colour blindness
IBM web accessibility guidelines	<a href="http://www-306.ibm.com/able/guidelines/web/accessweb.html">http://www-306.ibm.com/able/guidelines/web/accessweb.html</a>	Checklist
Web Style Guide	<a href="http://www.webstyleguide.com/">http://www.webstyleguide.com/</a>	The definitive guide!
Research-based web design & usability guidelines	<a href="http://usability.gov/guidelines/">http://usability.gov/guidelines/</a>	"This site provides over 50 of the top Web design and usability guidelines based on research studies and supporting information from the field."
The Technical editor's Eyrie	<a href="http://www.jeanweber.com/">http://www.jeanweber.com/</a>	Jean Weber's site
All about technical editing	<a href="http://www.jeanweber.com/about/index.htm">http://www.jeanweber.com/about/index.htm</a>	Also from Jean Weber
The Electric Editors	<a href="http://www.electriceditors.net/">http://www.electriceditors.net/</a>	"The Internet community for editors, proofreaders, indexers, translators and publishers"

## Fonts, white space, etc.

**Hint:** Do a Google search for:

- fonts +online +print +study +readability
- "white space" +online +print +study +readability

What	Where	Notes
Readability Research	<a href="http://www.stcsig.org/usability/topics/readability.html">http://www.stcsig.org/usability/topics/readability.html</a>	Links to many research papers on readability; put together by the Usability Special interest group (SIG) of the Society for Technical Communication (STC)
Readability	<a href="http://deyalexander.com/resources/readability.html">http://deyalexander.com/resources/readability.html</a>	Links to web articles and research on readability of web pages and online content
"A Comparison of Popular Online Fonts: Which is Best and When?"	<a href="http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/3S/font.htm">http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/3S/font.htm</a>	Studies various fonts at 12pt size for readability, usability, user preference, etc. (Wichita State University: Software Usability Research Lab)
"So, What Size and Type of Font Should I Use on My Website? "	<a href="http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/2S/font.htm">http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/2S/font.htm</a>	Examines readability of Times New Roman and Arial at various sizes. (Wichita State University: Software Usability Research Lab)
"More about fonts"	<a href="http://www.humanfactors.com/downloads/feb02.asp">http://www.humanfactors.com/downloads/feb02.asp</a>	Compares the various research into the readability of fonts on the web.
"Fonts for the web"	<a href="http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/research/fonts.shtml">http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/research/fonts.shtml</a>	Suggests the best choices and gives a rationale for these suggestions.
"All you wanted to know about Web type but were afraid to ask"	<a href="http://www.wpdfd.com/editorial/wpd0704news.htm#feature">http://www.wpdfd.com/editorial/wpd0704news.htm#feature</a>	All about Windows and Mac fonts; safe choices; best fonts to use, etc.
"The latest word on fonts for the web"	<a href="http://hid.fidelity.com/q22002/fonts.htm">http://hid.fidelity.com/q22002/fonts.htm</a>	"Traditionally, the view has been that serif fonts, such as Times New Roman, are the better choice for printed pages while sans serif fonts, such as Verdana, are the better choice for online viewing. The argument has been that the serifs aid in letter recognition when the font is being shown at the high resolutions commonly used in print, but that they just add visual "noise" when the font is being shown on lower-resolution screens. Recent research at Wichita State University has been somewhat inconclusive in determining whether there are any real differences in the readability of fonts online, at least for the commonly used fonts such as Times New Roman and Verdana. Consequently, we decided to conduct a study of those two fonts in particular, assessing their readability at different sizes when viewed on the Web."
"Text Width and Margin Width Influences on Readability of GUIs"	<a href="http://hubel.sfasu.edu/research/textmargin.html">http://hubel.sfasu.edu/research/textmargin.html</a>	
"Finding Information on the Web"	<a href="http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/2W/whitespace.htm">http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/2W/whitespace.htm</a>	"Does the Amount of Whitespace Really Matter?" (from Wichita State University: Software Usability Research Lab)

What	Where	Notes
"Reading Online Text"	<a href="http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/62/whitespace.htm">http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/62/whitespace.htm</a>	"A Comparison of Four White Space Layouts" (from Wichita State University: Software Usability Research Lab)
	<a href="http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/11243/90872">http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/11243/90872</a>	(look near the end at the numbered list)
"Paper vs Pixels: Pt 1"	<a href="http://www.wpdfd.com/editorial/wpd0804news.htm#feature2">http://www.wpdfd.com/editorial/wpd0804news.htm#feature2</a>	Designing for screens.
"Paper vs Pixels: Pt 2"	<a href="http://www.wpdfd.com/editorial/wpd0904news.htm#feature2">http://www.wpdfd.com/editorial/wpd0904news.htm#feature2</a>	Font size, colour, resolution
"Paper vs Pixels: Pt 3"	<a href="http://www.wpdfd.com/editorial/wpd1004news.htm#feature2">http://www.wpdfd.com/editorial/wpd1004news.htm#feature2</a>	Navigation, plug-ins, browsers
"Paper vs Pixels: Pt 4"	<a href="http://www.wpdfd.com/editorial/wpd1104news.htm#feature2">http://www.wpdfd.com/editorial/wpd1104news.htm#feature2</a>	Technical issues, bandwidth
Eyetrack	<a href="http://www.poynterextra.org/eyetrack2004/main.htm">http://www.poynterextra.org/eyetrack2004/main.htm</a>	Research into how people scan web pages/online content
Graphics and Screen Captures	<a href="http://www.techwr-l.com/techwhirl/magazine/technical/screencapgraphicshomepage.html">http://www.techwr-l.com/techwhirl/magazine/technical/screencapgraphicshomepage.html</a>	"This feature area includes articles and summaries about graphics and screen captures as used in technical writing environments."

## Writing/printing for the web

What	Where	Notes
"The unexploited craft of web writing"	<a href="http://www.shorewalker.com/section1/web_writing.html">http://www.shorewalker.com/section1/web_writing.html</a>	"The difficulties of screen reading often force readers to print items out rather than absorb them as pixels. And the dynamic environment of the Web encourages visitors to forget what they saw just minutes earlier, making the fight for attention becomes even tougher. As Web usability expert Jakob Nielsen has pointed out, Web page visitors don't read: they scan, searching for nuggets of useful, credible knowledge amid the info-torrent. The Web writer must cater to that behaviour."
"All the views that's fit to print"	<a href="http://www.shorewalker.com/section1/quilty_printing.html">http://www.shorewalker.com/section1/quilty_printing.html</a>	"The bottom line: if keen users are likely to print your Web pages, you should probably make it easier for them to do so. Whenever you produce technical documentation, or any piece of print stretching for more than 200 words - anything which looks like a "read" - you should presume that some of your most involved clients will want to print it."
"TEXTerity or The 10 commandments of text design"	<a href="http://contentology.myblogger.com/blog/ContentologyBLOG/archives/2003/6/12/611297.html">http://contentology.myblogger.com/blog/ContentologyBLOG/archives/2003/6/12/611297.html</a>	Some good hints on how to write for the web
"Creating a PDF document from a CHM file"	<a href="http://www.cybertext.com.au/tips_HTML_pdf_from_chm.htm">http://www.cybertext.com.au/tips_HTML_pdf_from_chm.htm</a>	

## Books

Title	Bibliographic Details	Notes
<i>Don't make me think! A common sense approach to web usability</i>	KRUG, Steve New Riders Press, 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed, 2000; 0789723107	"Don't make me think" is Krug's First Law of Usability: <i>"When I look at a Web page it should be self-evident. Obvious. Self-explanatory. I should be able to 'get it' - what it is and how to use it - without expending any effort thinking about it."</i>
<i>Microsoft Manual of Style for Technical Publications</i>	Microsoft Press, 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed, 2003; 0735617465	Style guide for writers of computer books, online Help for software, and the like. Supposedly 'the bible' for Microsoft's technical writing team, but there are enough variations in Microsoft's own products to think that they don't all follow it faithfully!
<i>Read me first! A style guide for the computer industry</i>	Sun Technical Publications, Prentice-Hall, 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed, 2003; 0131428993	Similar to the Microsoft one, but from Sun's perspective. Again, originally written as an in-house style guide for their own writing teams.