

# HOW TO WRITE AN AMAZING WEB SITE

BY COPYOPOLIS

Experts and visitors agree: Most Web sites are long, boring, frustrating to use and lack information visitors actually want. Whether creating a new site or revising an old one for yourself or a client, follow our pointers to avoid making those mistakes.

**Know thy audience.** Always keep visitors in mind – and write to them. Who are they? Are they there to buy or reinforce a decision? To see if you're legitimate? To find information, or simply out of curiosity? What information do they want? Are they conservative or free-spirited? Answers to these questions help define your message, site structure and tone.

**Respect visitors' time.** You're competing for time, energy, and attention span. When visitors land, you only have seconds to keep them. Make it easy to find information they want. Include your writer in the navigation

process to name sections and structure messages the way visitors think. Don't force them to struggle to find information – and quickly leave.

**Write for the medium.** Because a site isn't sequential or linear, visitors access information in the order they want – more likely scanning instead of reading. So, lifting copy verbatim from printed material won't work. Think about how you wouldn't use a direct mail letter for a brochure or a brochure for a print ad.

Instead, organize information into separate short segments, show only a few points per page and near the top, and build links to essential related information. Use bullets – they're a quick

1 Know what your audience wants. Place major points early.

2 Write for the Web — don't lift existing print copy.

3 Make your site easy to navigate, read and understand.

4 Weave in marketing messages and keywords on primary pages.

5 Keep it short, sweet and no-scroll.

read, emphasize information and provide a welcome visual break. Always write Web copy in clear, simple language so it's extremely fast to read and easy to understand.

**Remember that size matters.** That means using short words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and navigation menus. Write no more information per page than fills a screen. But if you absolutely have to, consider a short scroll (a little on a second screen) or a link to a no-scroll page. Long scrolls, links to links to links, and links to other sites all lose visitors.

**Know thyself.** Who are you? What do you do? What key benefits do



Image courtesy of ablestock.com

customers receive? How are you better than your competitors? Why should someone choose you? What is your brand or image? Build in your marketing messages concisely and smoothly on main pages (without repeating them verbatim). Never create a site that's just a regurgitated list of features.

**Don't get lost in cyberspace.** Printing your Web site address on promotional materials isn't enough. Also think search process. On primary pages, insert into headlines and body copy the keywords prospects use to search for your type of products or services – but make sure copy flows well. And, have reputable sites link to yours. Drive more traffic to your site by hiring a search engine optimization specialist or Web writer who understands what search engines look for and visitors want.

**Make it easy.** A major rule of writing Web sites: It's always more difficult and takes longer than you think it will. To slash time and hassle – and convert more visitors to buyers – team up with a professional Web writer. A pro writes engaging, concise, easy-to-read copy, building in strategic marketing messages to help you achieve your goals. ■



Copyopolis is a joint marketing venture of six Atlanta copywriters. Together, Peter Bowerman, Kathy Couch, Georgia Dzurica, Paul Glickstein, Steve Knapp and Barbara Wilkes have experience in every aspect of marketing communications for agencies, non-profits, and Fortune 500 companies in industries from agriculture to utilities, writing everything from sales literature to scripts to sweepstakes promotions. Don't have a staff or the right in-house talent for a project? Take a trip to [www.copyopolis.com](http://www.copyopolis.com).