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Writing for the Web

Duration: 2 Days

Overview:

Aspect Training's 2 day Writing for the Web course aims to provide web content authors and contributors with the fundamental skills and knowledge to express themselves effectively in the web environment. In addition to highlighting the distinctive features of web audiences, web content, web page structure and web writing styles (registers), it also addresses the practical tensions, trade-offs and workarounds involved in realising different web writing objectives.

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- Understand the key issues and decisions involved in writing for the web
- Write website content which is appropriate for and targeted at different types of reader
- Communicate different types of information appropriately on the web
- Order or sequence content to speed readers to their ultimate goals
- Structure information effectively for onsite and offsite readers
- Write modularised content which can be shared, re-used and minimises duplication
- Write web text which helps rather than hinders user navigation
- Write texts which are differentiated and help user search
- Write content which lets users access content in the way that suits them best
- Write easily maintainable and revisable content
- Minimise confusion among readers
- Minimise unwanted queries from readers

Prerequisites:

- A reasonably good command of written English is expected
- Technical knowledge of HTML, XHTML, CSS and other web standards is not required
- Essential, content-related, aspects of these standards (e.g. document structure, metadata, separation of content from presentation, etc) will be covered in the course.

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Course Topics:

Overview

Common objectives, issues and constraints
Target audience(s)
Interactivity
Web standards and conventions
Statutory and contractual requirements
Hypertext
Metadata
Navigation
Document structure

Web Audiences

Differences between Web and Print/Broadcast
Reading versus skimming versus scanning
The need to locate and navigate
Expectations and preferences
Control, interactivity and feedback
The reading context: work, home, travelling
Different Web Audiences
Visitors versus searchers: onsite versus offsite readers
Abilities and disabilities
Focus, inclusivity and exclusivity
Linguistic differences
Age differences
Cultural differences
Physical differences
Levels of knowledge, experience and expertise (specialist or general)

Labelling, Headings, Titles and Summaries

Support for scanning
Support selection
Vocabulary
Brevity
Understandability
Call to action
Out of context presentation
In search results
Indexes and site maps
Page Copy and Copy Writing
Page Structure
Order: The Inverted Pyramid

Page Copy and Copy Writing continued

Discursive style
Plain English
Vocubularly
Sentence structure
Paragraphs
Keyword placement
When to use links
Where to place links
How to label links

Proofreading, Editing and Editors

Responsibility and accountability
Style guidelines and consistency
Lean text and copy writing expertise
Grammar and spelling
'Webifying' offline documents
Selecting content
Sub-editing headings, labels, pull-quotes, etc

Metadata

Why metadata matters
Finding appropriate content
Selecting from similar content
Organising, ordering and indexing content
Re-presenting information in different contexts
The different forms of metadata in a web page
Metadata describing the whole page's subject matter
Page structure and structural markup as metadata
Metadata applying to single page components, e.g. headings, links, images, tables, etc.
General metadata standards
HTML, XHTML and XML metadata
W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
Dublin Core
Specialist metadata standards: some public sector examples
e-GIF and the e-Government Metadata Standard (e-GMS)
Integrated Public Sector Vocabulary (IPSV)
Esd-Standards controlled lists
Local Authority Websites National Project (LAWs)
Practical exercises