

Creating Memorable Communications – Tips and Tricks

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ARMA Houston Chapter Workshop (revised)

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Starting points

- What type of communications are you good at?
 - *Many Records and Information professionals are excellent writers*
- Are you aware of your weakness as a communicator?
 - *Often Records and Information professionals are reluctant speakers*
 - *Relating Records and Information Management projects to the business context is essential to obtain support and buy-in*
- What happens when you see an error?
 - *Any distraction reduces the impact of the message*



The “Boring” Agenda

- Why it's important
- Keeping it simple
- Proof-reading
- Web-based communications and social media

We discussed the pros and cons of using templates for communication. While they can speed up creation of content, they may not make a memorable impact for the audience. Consider new ways of designing your written messages and presentations while respecting corporate identity.



Your communications

- Why it's important?
 - Create a positive impact
 - Inform or inspire
 - Enroll others in your initiatives

- What's at stake?
 - Your effectiveness
 - Your objectives
 - Your reputation



Information Organization: how does it work?

- Always provide the information needed first: the “inverted pyramid” concept.
- Give the main information first, and then develop related, secondary, contextual information



Credit: Lecko

Editorial Skills Improve publication structure

- Short title (informative)
 - Option: a subtitle to bring additional information
- A short paragraph which summarizes most of the information and catches the reader's attention
- A picture, diagram, photo, video
- Body of text: Who? What? When? Where? Why / how? (5W)
- A conclusion – short summary or “wrap up” reflection

Some Do's and Don'ts

DO'S AND DON'TS



- **Main information first.** Then develop related contextual information
- Succession of **short sentences**
- Adapt the **vocabulary** to a large audience (popularize / expert)
- Bring **relief**: words in bold
- Avoid temporal indicators such as "last month", "soon"...



- Negative formats:
E.g. Do not forget => remember
- Sentences in CAPITAL letters
- *Colors, colors and colors*

A plan to keep it simple

1. Tell them you are going to say it
2. Say it
3. Tell them what you said

Why?

How?

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Feedback loops?

More information?



Proof reading (Job Aid Takeaway)

- It takes time
 - Approx 15 minutes for every 1000 words
 - Always read twice
 - Ask educated non-specialists to assist

 - Check text structure and coherence
 - Spelling, grammar and typos
 - Numbers and punctuation

 - Don't forget every component of the page



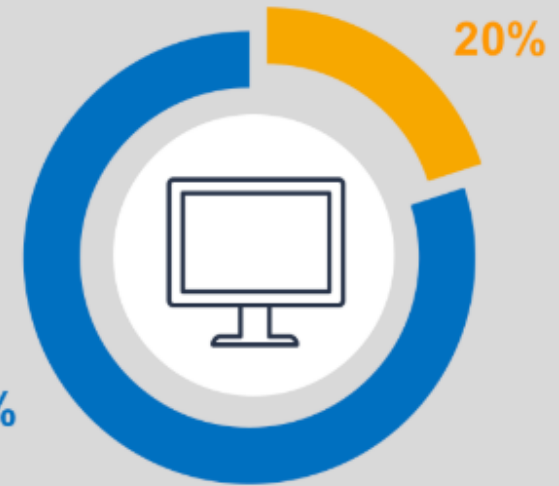
Web-based communications & Social Media





ON A SCREEN, READING IS

25%

slower than on paper



ZAPPING MODE

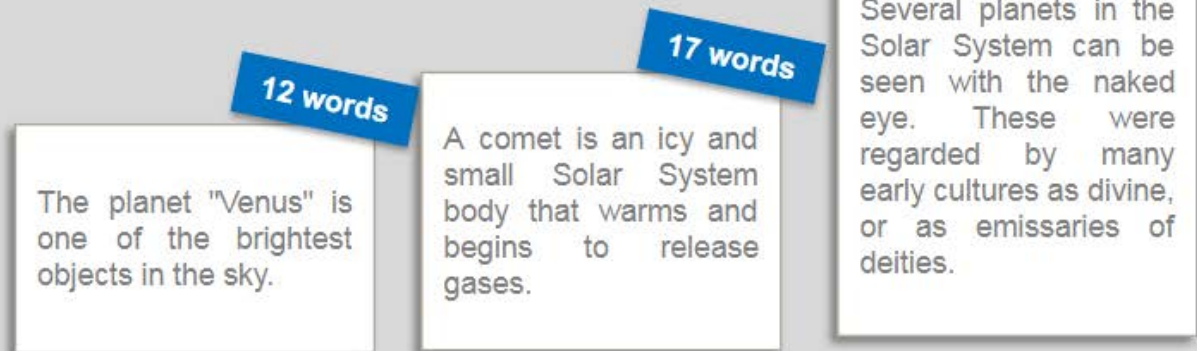
-  Word-by-word reading
-  Diagonal reading

Memory Capacity

15 to 20 words corresponds to the reader average capacity for immediate storage of the information



The key is to focus on **short sentences**



The planet "Venus" is one of the brightest objects in the sky.

12 words

A comet is an icy and small Solar System body that warms and begins to release gases.

17 words

The term planet is ancient, with ties to astrology, science, mythology and religion. Several planets in the Solar System can be seen with the naked eye. These were regarded by many early cultures as divine, or as emissaries of deities.

40 words

Sentence	12 words	17 words	40 words
Memorization	100%	70%	30%



Credit: Lecko

Web-based communication & Social Media



Use pictures/videos

- Add pictures to illustrate your content, not to just make it look good
- Photos representing faces attract more than those representing objects

→ 1 photo = 1000 words!



Use hashtags

- # are used to highlight the topic of your post
- Helps readers to rapidly determine whether your post is relevant for them or not
- Even after several weeks, your post can be found by using the search box

→ Carefully define your key words



Notify people +

- Mention users with the “+” feature to challenge them or highlight their contribution
- Useful to motivate some contributors to share their knowledge or expertise on a subject
- Publicly thank a person

→ Use the button « praise » to highlight a contributor

Credit: Lecko



Power of Communication

- What comes first?

>>> Listening

- What are we trying to achieve?

Fix a problem?

Request a change?

OR

Create possibilities?

Inspire new behaviors?



Summary – why it's important

Your communications inform and inspire others:

- Listen first – pay attention to the pain points in the organization.
- Make a link to the goals, priorities and/or objectives of the audience for each communication.
- Allow yourself time to create quality communications. Be thoughtful and intentional.



Summary – keeping it simple

- Select the right tone to win the attention of your reader.
- Organize your message content, with options to link to more information.
- Adapt messaging to different media channels. Reduce sentence complexity for online resources and use infographics and images.



Summary – style guidelines

- Follow all ***corporate style guidelines*** for your organization and respect the ***rules for branding*** – take advice from your internal experts in corporate communications.
- Always write out **acronyms** the first time you use them. Specialist jargon is only appropriate for experts.
e.g. “The Board of Directors (BOD) meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.”
- Limit the use of fonts/sizes in each communication piece to three (3).



Summary – proof reading

- All content needs proof reading regardless of media.
- Use the proof reading job aid – check all components twice.
- Two pairs of eyes are better than one even when official approvals are not required.



Summary – web communications/social media

- Include web and social media in your communications plan to match your organizational culture.
- Simplify written style and use links .
- Pictures, hashtags and notifications will increase your audience reach.



Follow up questions:



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Thank you for your participation!

We have the power to change OUR future





ARMA Houston 2018 – 2019

Wednesday Workshop Job Aid

Polishing your Business Communications – Tips and Tricks Wednesday March 27th 2019

Proof reading routine

Remember: proof reading takes time: approx. 15 minutes for 1000 words

1. Perform at least **two** readings
 - a. Check text structure and coherence
 - b. Spelling, grammar and typos
 - c. Numbers
 - d. Punctuation

2. Compare translations with original text, sentence by sentence

3. Don't forget
 - Titles
 - Subtitles
 - Picture Captions
 - Relevance of pictures
 - Teasers
 - Headers and footers
 - References, footnotes
 - Dates
 - Decimal marks (US, foreign languages)
 - Title (subject line) of pushmail
 - Tables
 - Technical and scientific terms
 - Job titles