

JR GD

justinreillygraphicdesign

print  
web  
brand

WRITING FOR WEBSITES

## JRGD – GUIDE TO WEBSITE CONTENT

**This document has been created to help you collect content for your website and to ensure that your business brand identity and core message is maintained throughout.**

Think of your website as your hardest working salesperson. Where else will you find a sales representative that works for you day and night, seven days a week and exposes you to a local, national and international audience?

More than any other application, a website simulates the brand and personality of a company. Its' palette of informative content, sound, movement and colour creates an easily accessible and interactive company experience. You want that first point of contact to be a positive experience.

It's the next best thing to reality, and in some cases it's more efficient, more user friendly, and faster. The browser is in charge. Aside from access to meaningful information, the internet provides the potential client with a no-pressure sales environment. Therefore, getting the website content and the design right is very important for your corporate branding and presenting your company in a positive light.

The best websites understand their customers, and respect their needs and preferences.

**A company's website should quickly answer these questions:**

- > **Who is the company?**
- > **Why does anyone need to know?**
- > **What's in it for the browser?**

JRGD – Guide to Website Content (cont.)

## TIPS FOR WRITING FOR THE WEB

The following information has been gathered from Sun Microsystems, a US based leading computer and systems software company.

Writing for the Web is very different from writing for print:

- > 79% of users scan the page instead of reading word-for-word
- > Reading from computer screens is 25% slower than from paper
- > Web content should have 50% of the word count of its paper equivalent

As a result, Web pages have to be clear and concise, using highlighted keywords (hypertext links serve as one form of highlighting; typeface variations and colour are others) meaningful sub-headings (not “clever” ones) bulleted lists, one idea per paragraph (users will skip over any additional ideas if they are not caught by the first few words in the paragraph) the inverted pyramid style, starting with the conclusion half the word count (or less) than conventional writing.

## CREDIBILITY

Credibility is also very important to Web users, since it is unclear who is behind information on the Web and whether a page can be trusted. High-quality graphics, good writing, and use of outbound text links can increase credibility. Links to other sites show that the authors have done their homework and are not afraid to let readers visit other sites. A few hyperlinks to other sites with supporting information increase the credibility of your pages. If at all possible, link quotes from magazine reviews and other articles to the source.

Other important points are:

- > Users can enter a site at any page and move between pages as they chose, so make every page independent and explain its topic without assumptions about the previous page seen by the user.
- > Make the word count for the online version of a given topic about half the word count used when writing for print: Users find it painful to read too much text on screens, and they read about 25 percent more slowly from screens than from paper.
- > Users don't like to scroll through masses of text, so put the most important information at the top.
- > Web users are impatient and critical, they have not chosen your site because you are great but because they have something they need to do.
- > The Web is an informal and immediate medium, compared to print, so users appreciate a somewhat informal writing style and small amounts of humour.
- > Do not use clever or cute headings since users rely on scanning to pick up the meaning of the text.
- > Use simple sentence structures: Convoluting writing is even harder to understand online.

JRGD – Guide to Website Content (cont.)

## INFORMATION STRUCTURE

To assist you in building your site, please fill in the following:

**What is the main message of the site?**

<please enter your response here>

**Who is your target audience?**

<please enter your response here>

**What are your main objectives?**

<please enter your response here>

**What is the purpose of the site? Is it an information-based site designed to inform your customer? Is it an online brochure? Is it an e-commerce site that requires your visitor to purchase something?**

<please enter your response here>

**How is the information going to be broken up, what are the page titles? (This will form the foundation of your main navigation)**

<please enter your response here>

*JRGD – Guide to Website Content (cont.)*

**Who are your major competitors? What are they doing?  
Please enter their websites:**

*<please enter your response here>*

**What is it that will make your site unique?**

*<please enter your response here>*

**Please list 20 -25 words that people would use to search for your company or services/products  
through search engines on the internet: (this will be used in the meta tags)**

*<please enter your response here>*

**Please write a brief description (max. 20 words) that will be used as your descriptor in search  
engine listings ensures that you use key words.**

*<please enter your response here>*

JRGD – Guide to Website Content (cont.)

## CHECKLIST OF FEATURES:

Please indicate from the following what functionality you would like incorporated into your website:  
Please provide more details if required.

### Building the site:

- > static website
- > static website with flash components
- > full flash website
- > e-commerce capabilities including shopping cart and online secure payments
- > form on contacts page
- > form to collect additional data from browser
- > form to subscribe to e-newsletter
- > blog
- > video message
- > the ability to be able to modify and update information on the site

### In addition to the site:

- > search engine optimisation – speak with designer
- > submission to all global search engines
- > Google Adwords campaign (to correspond with key words)
- > e-newsletter to work inconjunction with the website
- > other promotional material required to promote the website – speak with JRGD about this

JRGD – Guide to Website Content (cont.)

## **SAMPLE PAGES FOR A BASIC SITE**

### **Homepage**

This is a very important page as it is most likely the entry point for your viewers.

Who are you?

Why do we need you?

What's in it for me?

What important aspects of your business would you like to highlight with special links or buttons to those areas?

### **About us page**

Who are you?

Is there something that you offer that makes you different? Eg. Customer service focussed etc.

Could contain your mission statement.

What are you committed to?

Could contain download PDFs of annual reports, for further reading.

### **Products/Services page/s**

A section/s that contain information about your products/services.

### **Case Studies/Testimonials**

Build your credibility and enhance your product/service offering by listing past jobs or projects.

It also another opportunity to showcase your work.

### **Events page**

Up and coming events that you or an organisation that your customers would be interested in attending.

### **News page**

This would need to be regularly maintained to ensure that fresh information is there to entice the reader back to your site. It could contain news from your company or news that relates to your field that your customers would find of interest and useful.

### **Contact Us page**

Every website should have one.

Include all contact details including an email address.

Could include a subscribe to our e-newsletter form.

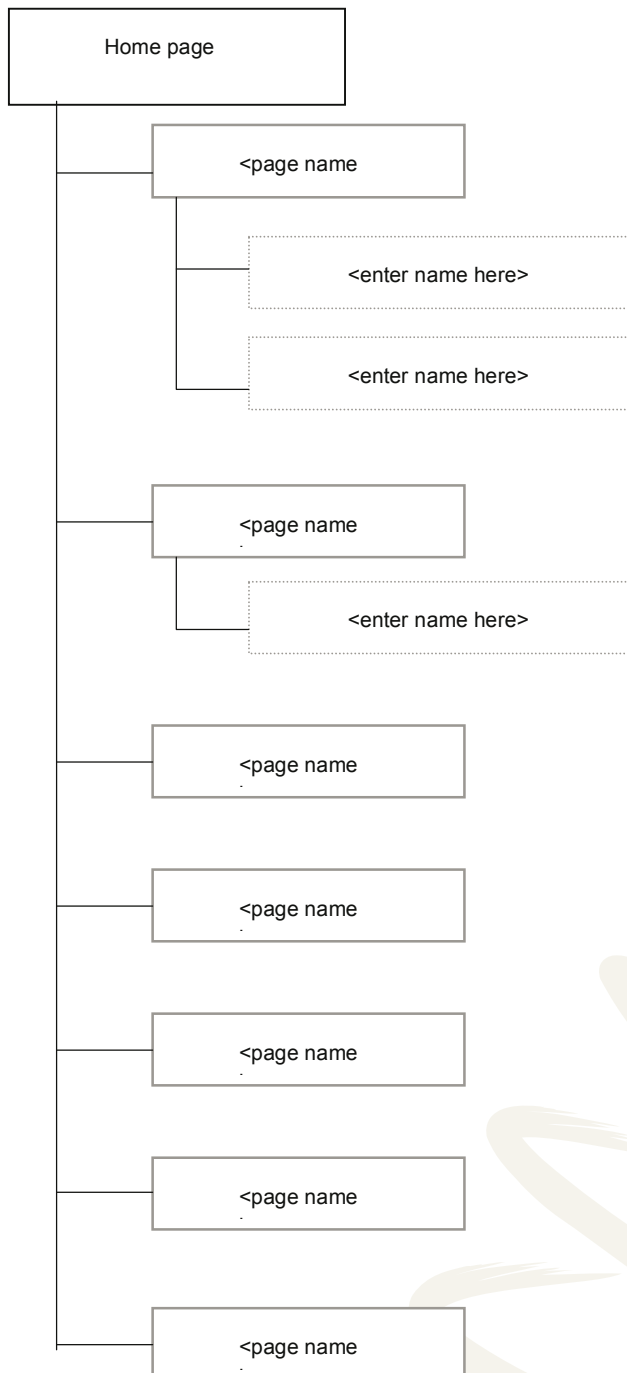
Could include an enquiry form.

Could include a map showing the location and any parking etc.

JRGD – Guide to Website Content (cont.)

## SIMPLE SITE MAP

Please feel free to fill this in or draw it up on a piece of paper, it will assist you to visualise the structure of your site.



*JRGD – Guide to Website Content (cont.)*

- ∞ Puns do not work for international users; find some other way to be humorous.
- ∞ Add by-lines and other ways of communicating some of your personality. (This also increases credibility.)

Keep the message easy to read:

- ∞ 79% of Web users scan pages; they do not read word-by-word.
- ∞ Design your web document to be clear and concise with its written message. Assess what tells the story best, a picture, diagram or limited text – choose the best option that delivers the message easily.
- ∞ To make keywords stand out, use highlighting liberally. Highlight about three times as many words as you would when writing for print.
- ∞ Highlight only key information-carrying words. Avoid highlighting entire sentences or long phrases since a scanning eye can only pick up two (or at most three) words at a time.
- ∞ Highlight words that differentiate your page from other pages and words that symbolize what a given paragraph is about (for example, do not highlight the word “Sun” when writing for the Sun Web site since all the pages are about Sun.)
- ∞ Bulleted and numbered lists slow down the scanning eye and can draw attention to the important points.
- ∞ Each paragraph should contain one main idea; use a second paragraph for a second idea, since users tend to skip any second point as they scan over the paragraph.
- ∞ Start the page with the conclusion as well as a short summary of the remaining contents (“inverted pyramid” style).

JRGD has specialist web copywriters available to assist, however it is beneficial for you to understand that there is a different process to writing for the Web versus print or editorial.

*JRGD – Guide to Website Content (cont.)*

Please don't hesitate to call the studio anytime throughout production should you have any queries or require clarification of anything regarding your website.

Kind regards,



Justine Reilly  
Director, JRGD

**T** 02 6685 9835  
**M** 0423 143 506  
**E** juzzy@jrgd.com.au