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## Writing for the Web

by Ivy Hastings

Working in the [Denver Internet marketing](#) and web design space over the past seven years, Fusionbox has had a number of clients who want to write their own website copy. More often than not, this is fine if they remember that writing for the web is much different than writing a brochure, sales letter, or print ad.

Still, it's easy to get carried away and forget the most important commandments of [writing for online audiences](#). Even a small oversight can lead to troubling consequences, for if users aren't reading your copy, they're not being fully engaged and you're losing valuable prospects through your website. In order to clarify the principles of writing for the web, I've included a small list below that will dramatically improve the level of engagement and the quality of your writing.

Here are the basic tenets to remember when writing for the web:

### **Rule #1:**

- Users don't read, they scan.

### **Utilize:**

- Bolded Items
- Short Sentences
- Bulleted Lists
- Short Paragraphs
- Headings and Subheadings

### **Rule #2:**

- The longer the line of text is horizontally on the page, the harder it is to read and comprehend.

### **Utilize:**

- Narrow column widths (there is a reason newspapers are the way they are)
- Left aligned text (never right or center align it)

### **Rule #3:**

- The good stuff should be above the fold to maintain [usability](#) best practices. (The fold is where the browser cuts off at the bottom of the page)

### **Utilize:**

- Calls-to-action and offers above the fold
- Linked keywords above the fold

**Rule #4:**

- Your content makes or breaks your organic search engine ranking.

**Utilize:**

- Keywords and phrases in title, tags, headers, etc.
- Keywords as far up the page as possible
- Use keywords within internal links (but not too often)

**Rule #5:**

- Less is more, except when it comes to search engines.

**Utilize:**

- Less than 100 words per page
- If possible use [Case Studies](#) and [Blogs](#) to add content that everyone may not read but that's important for search engines.

Follow these rules and you'll have happy users who will actually read your carefully-crafted web content, which means more new business leads for you!

*Ivy Hastings is a Project Manager at Fusionbox, a full-service [Denver interactive agency](#) specializing in [web design](#), development, and [search engine marketing](#). A graduate of UC Berkeley, Ivy has published many articles about Internet Marketing and Web Design and Development Best Practices. She currently sits on the Board of Directors for Arts Street, a local non-profit that teaches at-risk youth the craft and business of the Arts. Ivy can be reached at her Fusionbox email: [ihastings@fusionbox.com](mailto:ihastings@fusionbox.com) or at 303.952.7490.*