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Dear Reader,

Web marketing is growing in popularity because it's more cost-effective than print marketing. This issue contains tips for writing short, snappy web copy that your audience will be able to absorb quickly.

The great thing about the Internet is that you're only a click away from any other site. The downside for marketers is the same thing: potential customers are only a click away from *any* site. If web users don't easily find what they're looking for on your site, they'll click away to another one.

Happy web writing,

Elizabeth Cockle

Elizabeth Cockle
Copywriter and Buzzword Banisher

In this issue...

- Three Simple Tips for Web Writing
- Buzz Off : *Disintermediation*
- Parting Words

Three Simple Tips for Web Writing

1. **Keep it short.** This principle applies to all marketing copy – but especially to web copy. Research shows that readers tend to scan when reading on-screen text. To help readers scan efficiently:
 - Use simple, direct language (that means no buzzwords!)
 - Use no more than 17-20 words per sentence.
 - Ensure that paragraphs are no more than 6-8 lines long.
 - Cut out any information readers don't need.
2. **Break it up.** A single, unbroken mass of text filling the screen is like the Great Wall of China: big, grey, and impenetrable without studying it hard. Instead of putting readers off with a monolithic wall of text:
 - Break your text into chunks.
 - Stick to one idea per paragraph. Start with the point, then give the details.
 - Use headings and subheadings, bullets and numbered lists.
 - Emphasize key words.
3. **Help readers read.** It's easy to bemoan the decline of literacy in the Internet age, especially with the rise of emoticons and text-messaging. But the fact is, it takes 25% longer to read from a monitor than from the printed page. To make your web text more legible:
 - Use sans serif fonts such as *Arial* or *Verdana* (**ECBuzz** and the **EC Writing** website use *Verdana*).
 - Reserve other fonts only for special situations such as headings and logos.
 - Avoid writing text in all-caps. This takes up 30% more space and slows reading by a further 15%.

Buzz Off : *Disintermediation*

Disintermediation refers to the withdrawal of money from banks and other savings institutions in order to invest these funds directly with end users. The term originated in the late 1960s. Since then, it's come to describe any business or financial transaction in which intermediate agencies are bypassed – a process made much easier by the Internet.

Disintermediation is one of those clunky, multisyllabic buzzwords designed to avoid calling a spade a spade. It's not surprising that in 1997 *PC Magazine* dubbed it "the buzzword from hell". So our advice is to cut out *disintermediation* and go back to *cutting out the middleman* (or *cutting out intermediaries*, if you will:

Is there a buzzword you would like to banish? Send your suggestion to writer@ecwriting.com, and we'll do our best to send it packing in a future issue.

Parting Words

"It is well-known what a middleman is: he is a man who bamboozles one party and plunders the other."

– Benjamin Disraeli, British Prime Minister and statesman (1804-1881)