Writing for the Web:
Top 10 Principles

Leslie O'Flahavan, E-WRITE
@LeslieO
Department of Homeland Security
Web Content Speakers Series
March 28, 2013

e-write.
Writing for online readers

Thanks for the opportunity to be part of your speaker series!

FDA

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

eia Independent Statistics & Analysis U.S. Energy Information Administration

CDC

NIH National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

e·write. Writing for online readers

© E-WRITE 2013

Today's topics

1. The seven principles of writing for the web
2. The three principles of being part of the federal web writing community
3. DHS content review

© E-WRITE 2013

Part 1: The seven principles of writing for the web

7 traits of plain language web content

1. Doable
2. Scannable
3. Readable
4. Findable
5. Clickable
6. Personal
7. Deep

© E-WRITE 2013

1. Doable = Task-oriented

Helping people *do things online* (complete tasks) is web content's highest calling

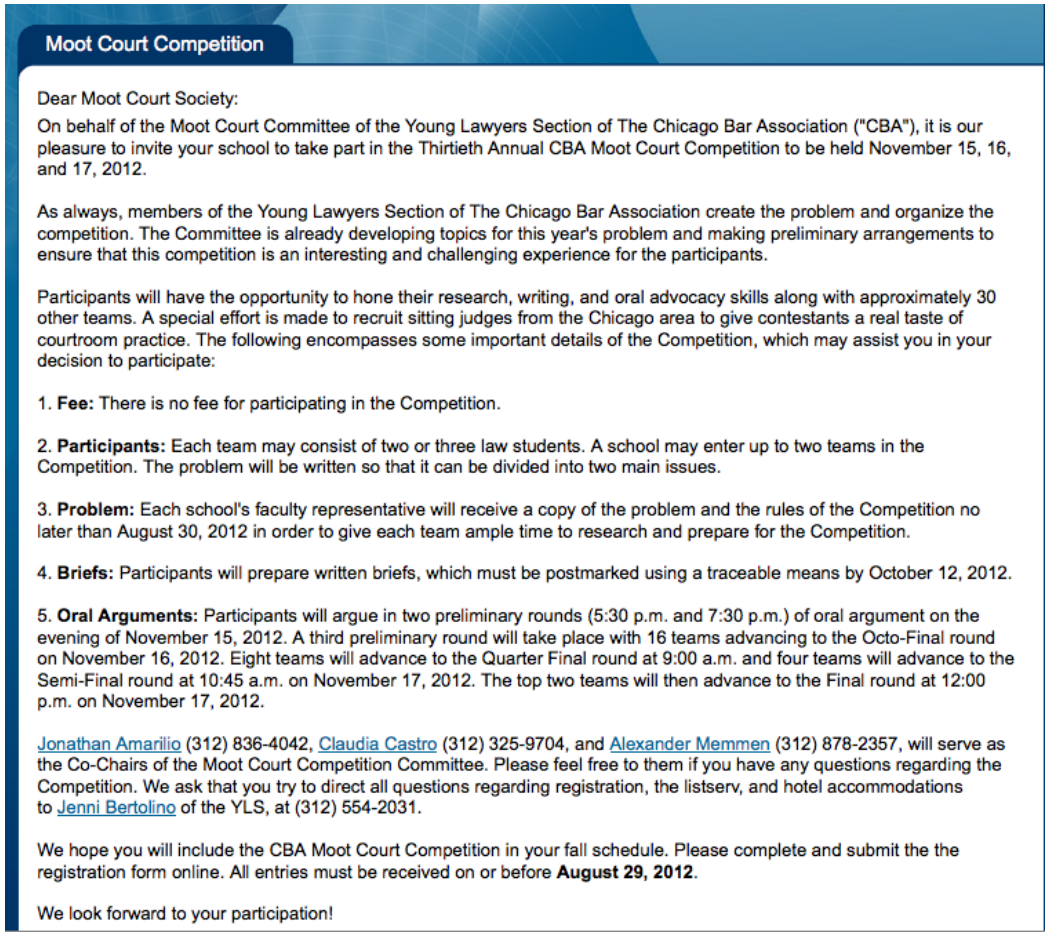
- Some web writing helps people *know*
- Some web writing helps people *do*
- Best practice: focus on top tasks

© E-WRITE 2013

Task-oriented web content

© E-WRITE 2013

Does this content help the reader complete a task?



Moot Court Competition

Dear Moot Court Society:

On behalf of the Moot Court Committee of the Young Lawyers Section of The Chicago Bar Association ("CBA"), it is our pleasure to invite your school to take part in the Thirtieth Annual CBA Moot Court Competition to be held November 15, 16, and 17, 2012.

As always, members of the Young Lawyers Section of The Chicago Bar Association create the problem and organize the competition. The Committee is already developing topics for this year's problem and making preliminary arrangements to ensure that this competition is an interesting and challenging experience for the participants.

Participants will have the opportunity to hone their research, writing, and oral advocacy skills along with approximately 30 other teams. A special effort is made to recruit sitting judges from the Chicago area to give contestants a real taste of courtroom practice. The following encompasses some important details of the Competition, which may assist you in your decision to participate:

1. **Fee:** There is no fee for participating in the Competition.

2. **Participants:** Each team may consist of two or three law students. A school may enter up to two teams in the Competition. The problem will be written so that it can be divided into two main issues.

3. **Problem:** Each school's faculty representative will receive a copy of the problem and the rules of the Competition no later than August 30, 2012 in order to give each team ample time to research and prepare for the Competition.

4. **Briefs:** Participants will prepare written briefs, which must be postmarked using a traceable means by October 12, 2012.

5. **Oral Arguments:** Participants will argue in two preliminary rounds (5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.) of oral argument on the evening of November 15, 2012. A third preliminary round will take place with 16 teams advancing to the Octo-Final round on November 16, 2012. Eight teams will advance to the Quarter Final round at 9:00 a.m. and four teams will advance to the Semi-Final round at 10:45 a.m. on November 17, 2012. The top two teams will then advance to the Final round at 12:00 p.m. on November 17, 2012.

Jonathan Amarilio (312) 836-4042, Claudia Castro (312) 325-9704, and Alexander Memmen (312) 878-2357, will serve as the Co-Chairs of the Moot Court Competition Committee. Please feel free to them if you have any questions regarding the Competition. We ask that you try to direct all questions regarding registration, the listserv, and hotel accommodations to Jenni Bertolino of the YLS, at (312) 554-2031.

We hope you will include the CBA Moot Court Competition in your fall schedule. Please complete and submit the the registration form online. All entries must be received on or before **August 29, 2012**.

We look forward to your participation!

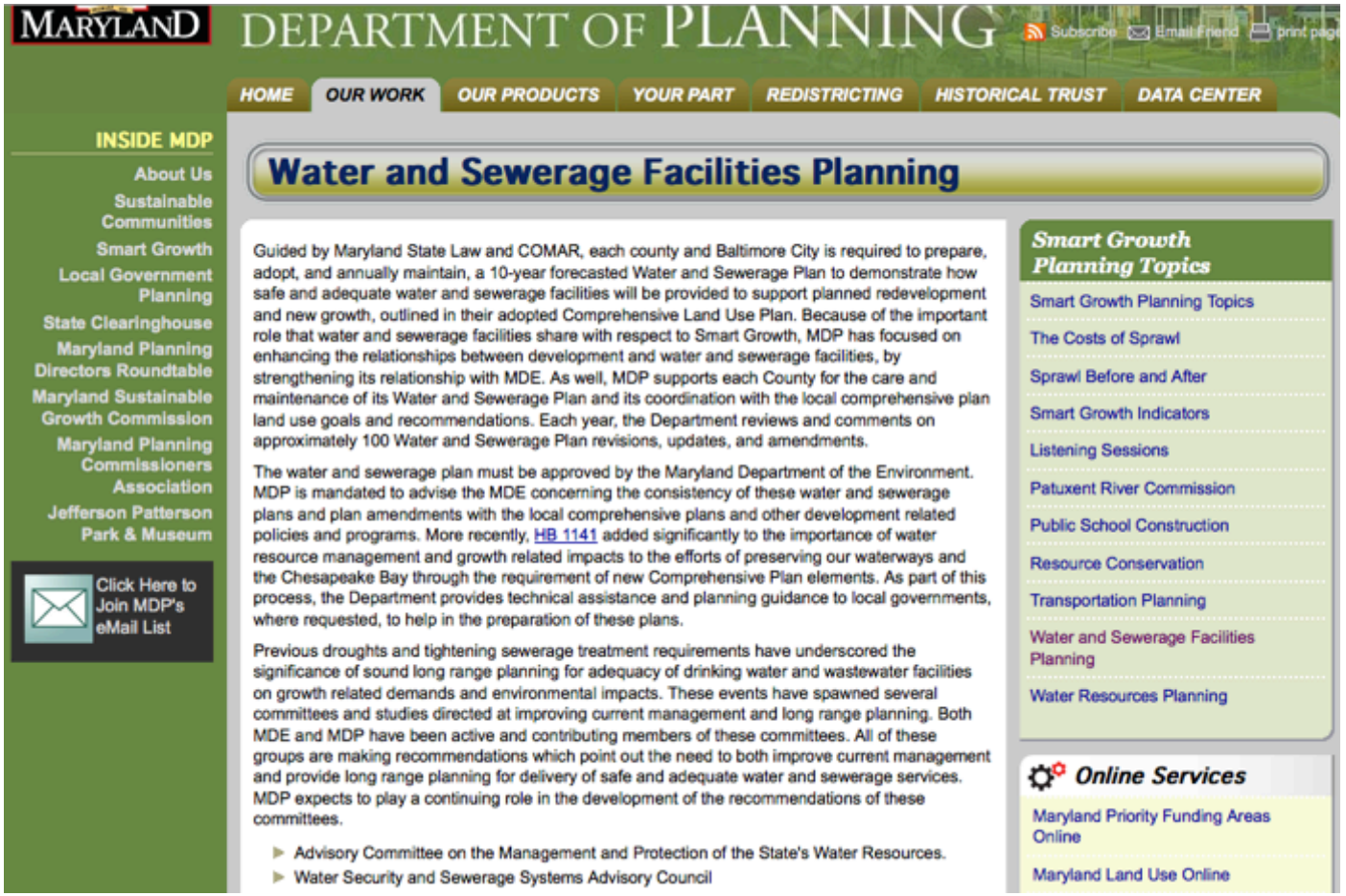
© E-WRITE 2013

2. Scannable = “I didn’t HAVE to read it all”

- **Use vertical lists** – numbers and bullets – purposefully
- **Use white space** to show how ideas are grouped
- **Use headings**. Choose *message* rather than *topic* headings whenever possible
  - Message heading = clause
  - Topic heading = phrase

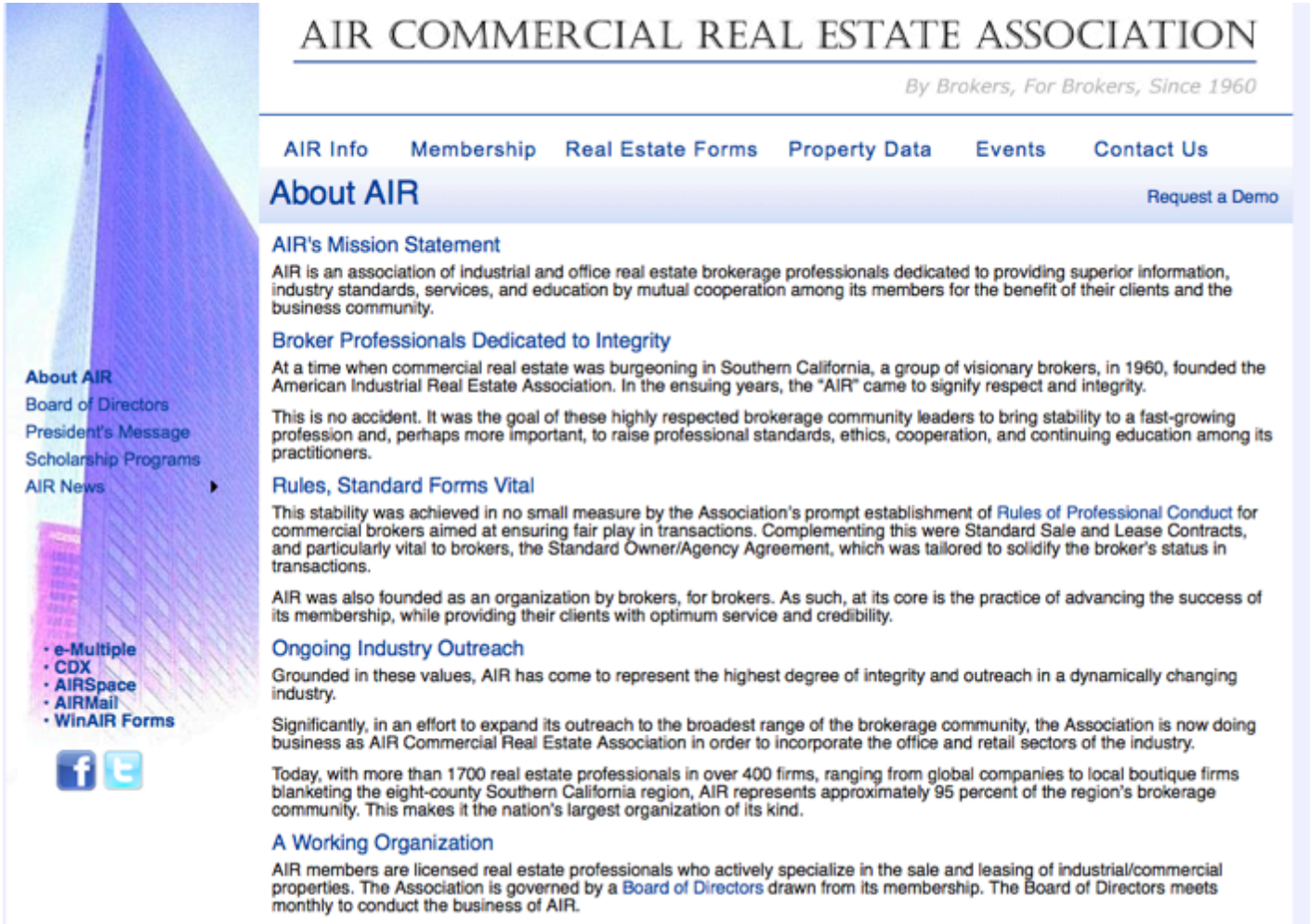
© E-WRITE 2013

Not scannable - wall o' words



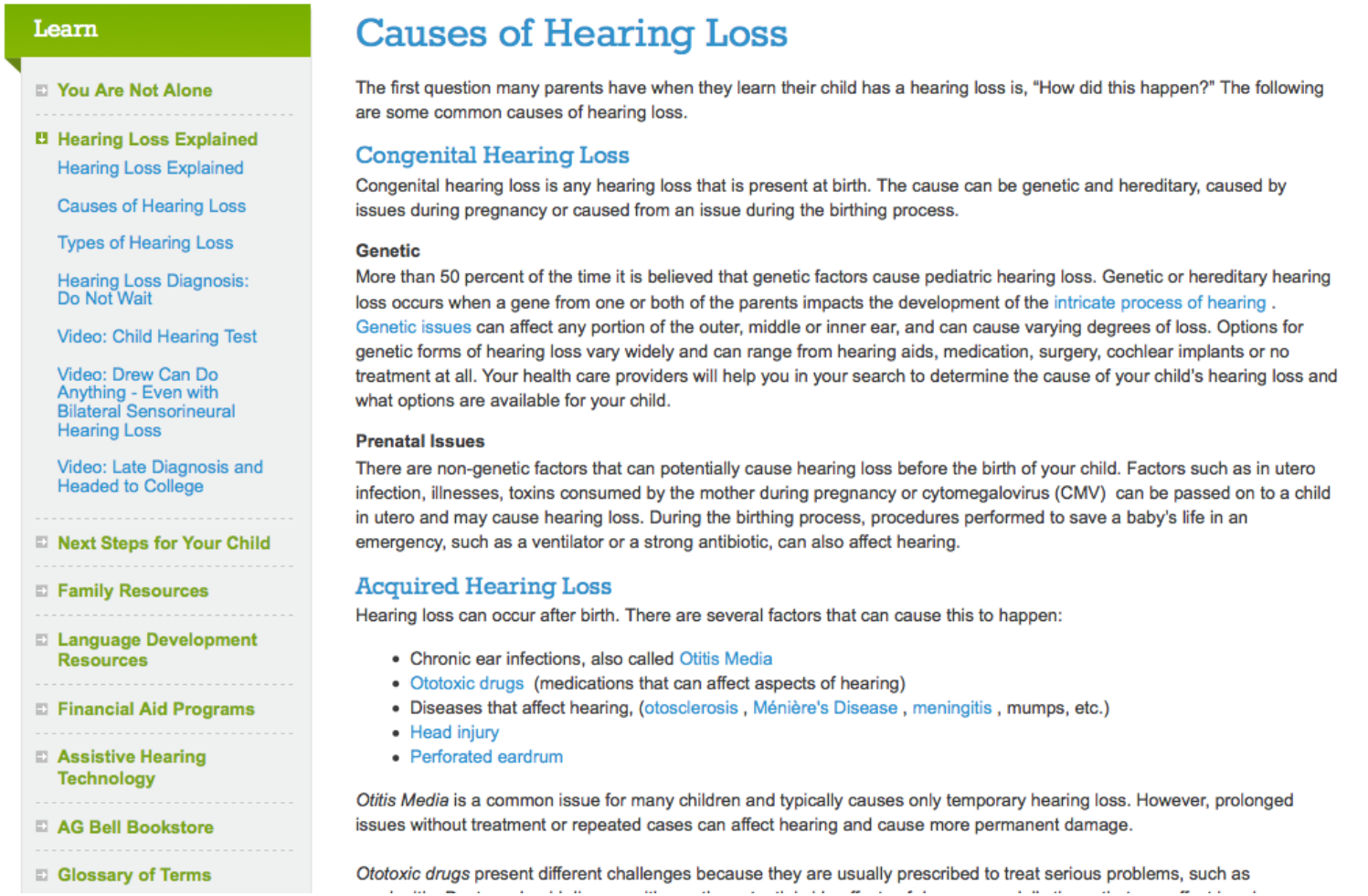
© E-WRITE 2013

Not scannable – weak headings



© E-WRITE 2013

Scannable …ahhhh



Learn

- You Are Not Alone
- Hearing Loss Explained
  - Hearing Loss Explained
  - Causes of Hearing Loss
  - Types of Hearing Loss
  - Hearing Loss Diagnosis: Do Not Wait
  - Video: Child Hearing Test
  - Video: Drew Can Do Anything - Even with Bilateral Sensorineural Hearing Loss
  - Video: Late Diagnosis and Headed to College
- Next Steps for Your Child
- Family Resources
- Language Development Resources
- Financial Aid Programs
- Assistive Hearing Technology
- AG Bell Bookstore
- Glossary of Terms

Causes of Hearing Loss

The first question many parents have when they learn their child has a hearing loss is, "How did this happen?" The following are some common causes of hearing loss.

Congenital Hearing Loss

Congenital hearing loss is any hearing loss that is present at birth. The cause can be genetic and hereditary, caused by issues during pregnancy or caused from an issue during the birthing process.

Genetic

More than 50 percent of the time it is believed that genetic factors cause pediatric hearing loss. Genetic or hereditary hearing loss occurs when a gene from one or both of the parents impacts the development of the intricate process of hearing . Genetic issues can affect any portion of the outer, middle or inner ear, and can cause varying degrees of loss. Options for genetic forms of hearing loss vary widely and can range from hearing aids, medication, surgery, cochlear implants or no treatment at all. Your health care providers will help you in your search to determine the cause of your child's hearing loss and what options are available for your child.

Prenatal Issues

There are non-genetic factors that can potentially cause hearing loss before the birth of your child. Factors such as in utero infection, illnesses, toxins consumed by the mother during pregnancy or cytomegalovirus (CMV) can be passed on to a child in utero and may cause hearing loss. During the birthing process, procedures performed to save a baby's life in an emergency, such as a ventilator or a strong antibiotic, can also affect hearing.

Acquired Hearing Loss

Hearing loss can occur after birth. There are several factors that can cause this to happen:

- Chronic ear infections, also called Otitis Media
- Ototoxic drugs (medications that can affect aspects of hearing)
- Diseases that affect hearing, (otosclerosis , Ménière's Disease , meningitis , mumps, etc.)
- Head injury
- Perforated eardrum

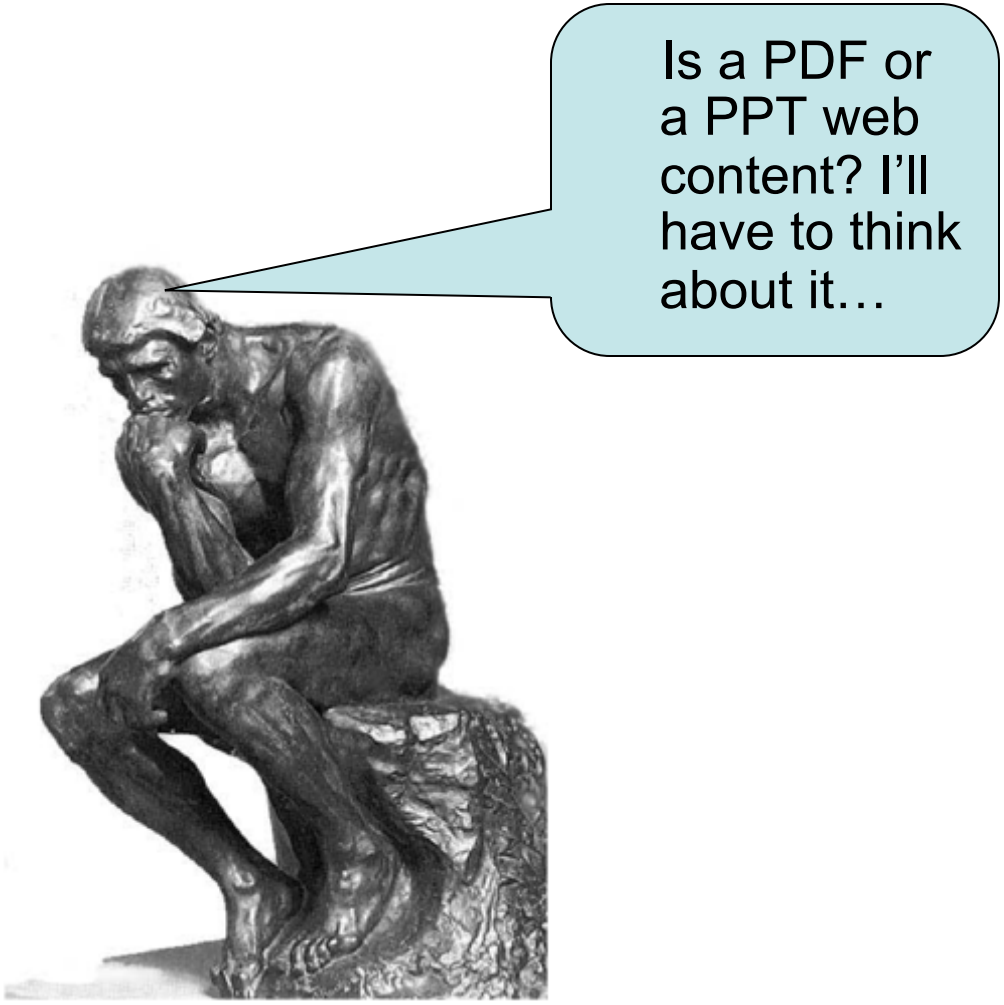
Otitis Media is a common issue for many children and typically causes only temporary hearing loss. However, prolonged issues without treatment or repeated cases can affect hearing and cause more permanent damage.

Ototoxic drugs present different challenges because they are usually prescribed to treat serious problems, such as

e-write. Writing for online readers

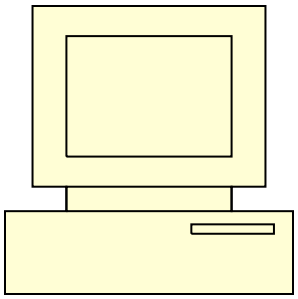
© E-WRITE 2013

3. Readable = easily read online



© E-WRITE 2013

Write for communication, not dissemination

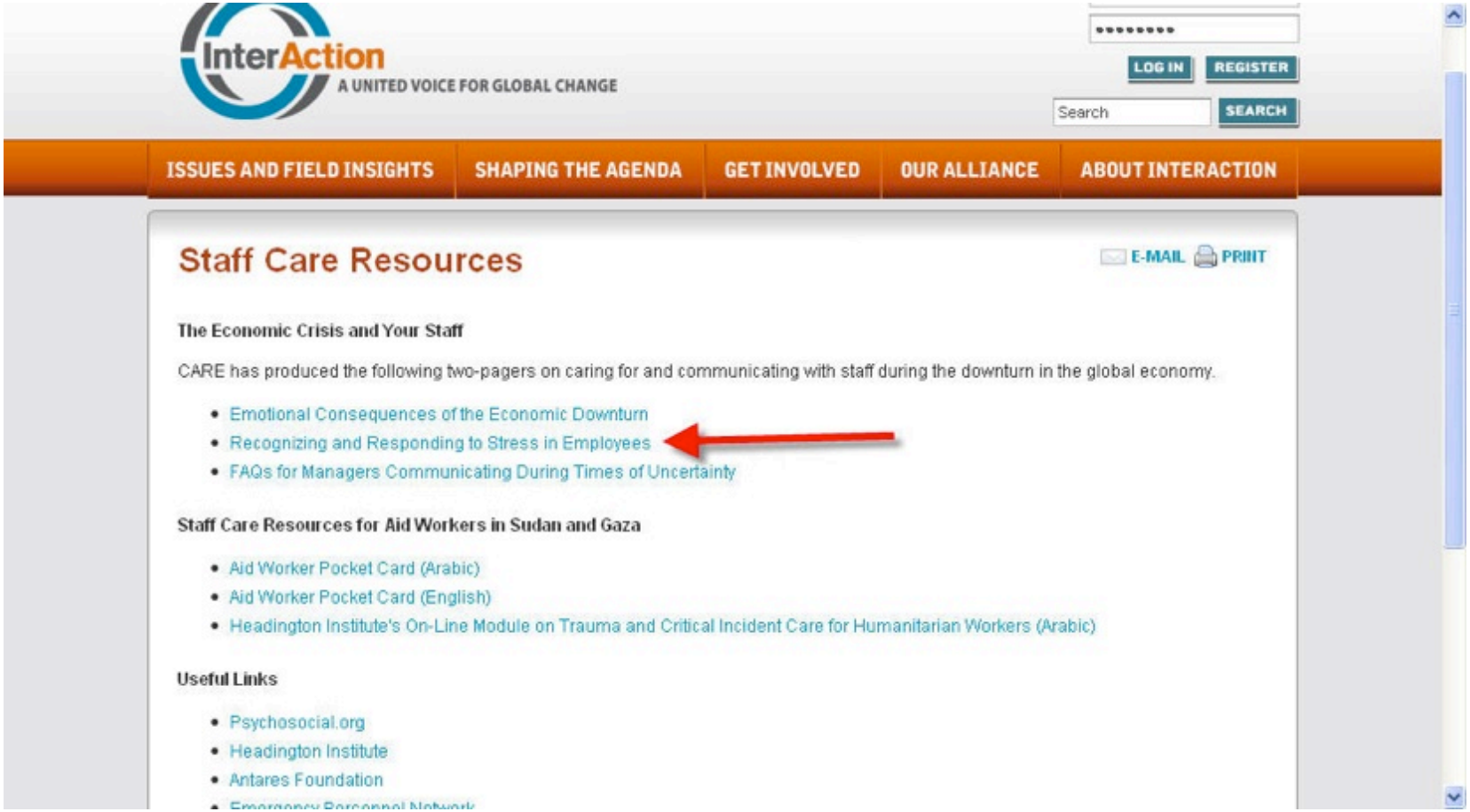


When your web writing communicates, users …

- Can find your content online
- Can read and understand your content while looking at the monitor
- Will value your content

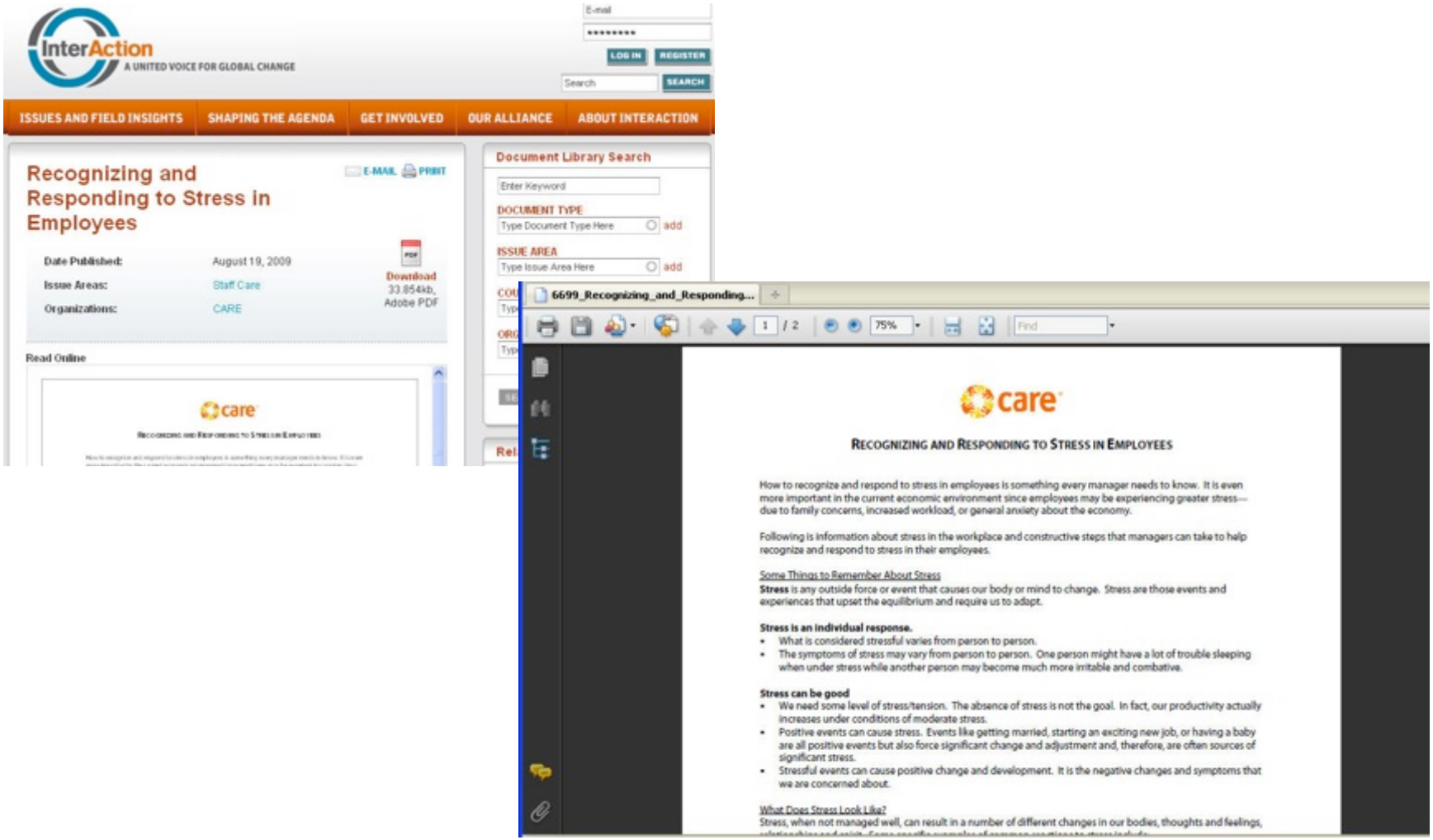
© E-WRITE 2013

Is this an example of communication or dissemination?



© E-WRITE 2013

Communication or dissemination?



© E-WRITE 2013

Tried-and-true strategy for writing readable content:

Write a *bite*, a *snack*, and a *meal*

© E-WRITE 2013

Write a *bite*, a *snack*, and a *meal*

How content-hungry is the reader?	How much content does the web writer provide?
• Bite	
• Snack	
• Meal	

© E-WRITE 2013

Sample *bites*, *snacks*, and *meals*

Homeland Security

Subscribe | Contact Us | Site Map

Home | Topics | How Do I? | Get Involved | News | About DHS

Home > Topics

Topics

- Border Security
- Citizenship and Immigration Services
- Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
- Cybersecurity
- Disasters
- Economic Security
- Homeland Security Enterprise
- Homeland Security Jobs
- Human Trafficking
- Immigration Enforcement
- International Engagement
- Law Enforcement Partnerships

Topics

Border Security
Protecting our borders from the illegal movement of weapons, drugs, contraband, and people, while promoting lawful entry and exit, is essential to homeland security, economic prosperity, and national sovereignty.

Citizenship and Immigration Services
American citizenship speaks to our character as a welcoming country that bestows upon us all of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
Safeguarding civil rights and civil liberties is critical to DHS' work to protect the nation from the many threats we face.

Cybersecurity
Our daily life, economic vitality, and national security depend on a stable, safe, and resilient cyberspace.

Disasters
Whatever the disaster, as the federal government's emergency management and preparedness agency, FEMA is part of a team of responders

Economic Security
America's economic prosperity, and the world's, depends increasingly on the flow of goods and services, people and capital, and information and technology across our borders

e-write. Writing for online readers

© E-WRITE 2013

Sample *bites*, *snacks*, and *meals*

What Do Volunteers Do?

Learn about the work and requirements for six program areas: education, youth and community development, health, business and information and communications technology, agriculture, and environment.

Where Do Volunteers Go?

Explore the world through an interactive map with in-depth information on the countries where Peace Corps Volunteers serve.

What's It Like to Volunteer?

Get an insiders' view of what the Peace Corps experience is like, straight from the mouths of the Volunteers themselves through videos, photo galleries, and stories.

How Do I Become a Volunteer?

Find out how you can qualify for an assignment overseas, learn about the application and placement process, what can make you a more competitive candidate, and more.

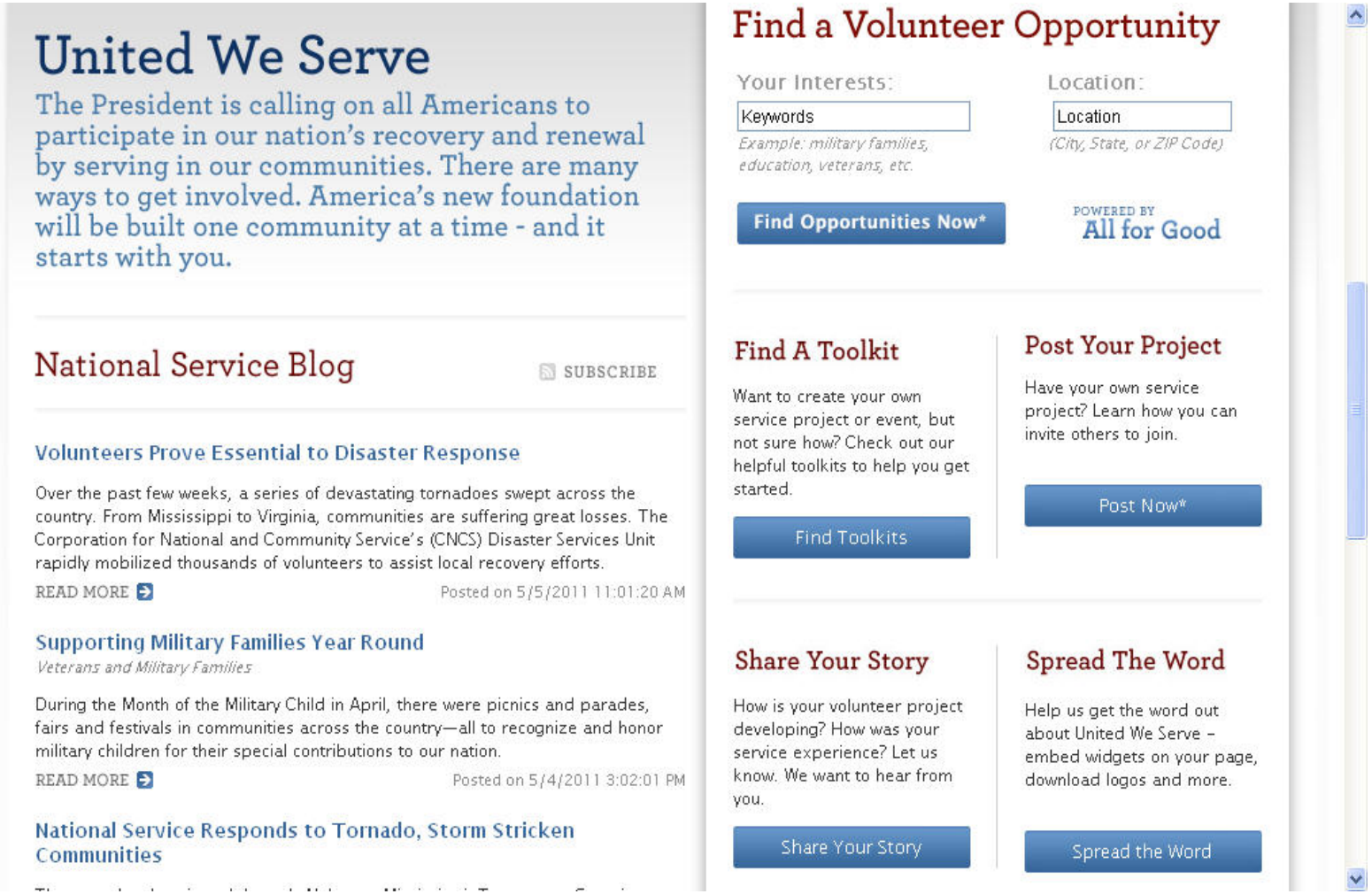
Who Volunteers?

Peace Corps has thousands of volunteer opportunities for Americans aged 18 or over who are interested in public service abroad. See photos and videos of Volunteers who reflect the many faces of America.

What Are the Benefits?

Discover the financial, professional, educational, and medical benefits of Peace Corps service.

Sample *bites*, *snacks*, and *meals*



United We Serve

The President is calling on all Americans to participate in our nation's recovery and renewal by serving in our communities. There are many ways to get involved. America's new foundation will be built one community at a time - and it starts with you.

National Service Blog

SUBSCRIBE

Volunteers Prove Essential to Disaster Response

Over the past few weeks, a series of devastating tornadoes swept across the country. From Mississippi to Virginia, communities are suffering great losses. The Corporation for National and Community Service's (CNCS) Disaster Services Unit rapidly mobilized thousands of volunteers to assist local recovery efforts.

READ MORE — Posted on 5/5/2011 11:01:20 AM

Supporting Military Families Year Round

Veterans and Military Families

During the Month of the Military Child in April, there were picnics and parades, fairs and festivals in communities across the country—all to recognize and honor military children for their special contributions to our nation.

READ MORE — Posted on 5/4/2011 3:02:01 PM

National Service Responds to Tornado, Storm Stricken Communities

Find a Volunteer Opportunity

Your Interests: Keywords
Example: military families, education, veterans, etc.

Location: Location
(City, State, or ZIP Code)

Find Opportunities Now*

POWERED BY All for Good

Find A Toolkit

Want to create your own service project or event, but not sure how? Check out our helpful toolkits to help you get started.

Find Toolkits

Post Your Project

Have your own service project? Learn how you can invite others to join.

Post Now*

Share Your Story

How is your volunteer project developing? How was your service experience? Let us know. We want to hear from you.

Share Your Story

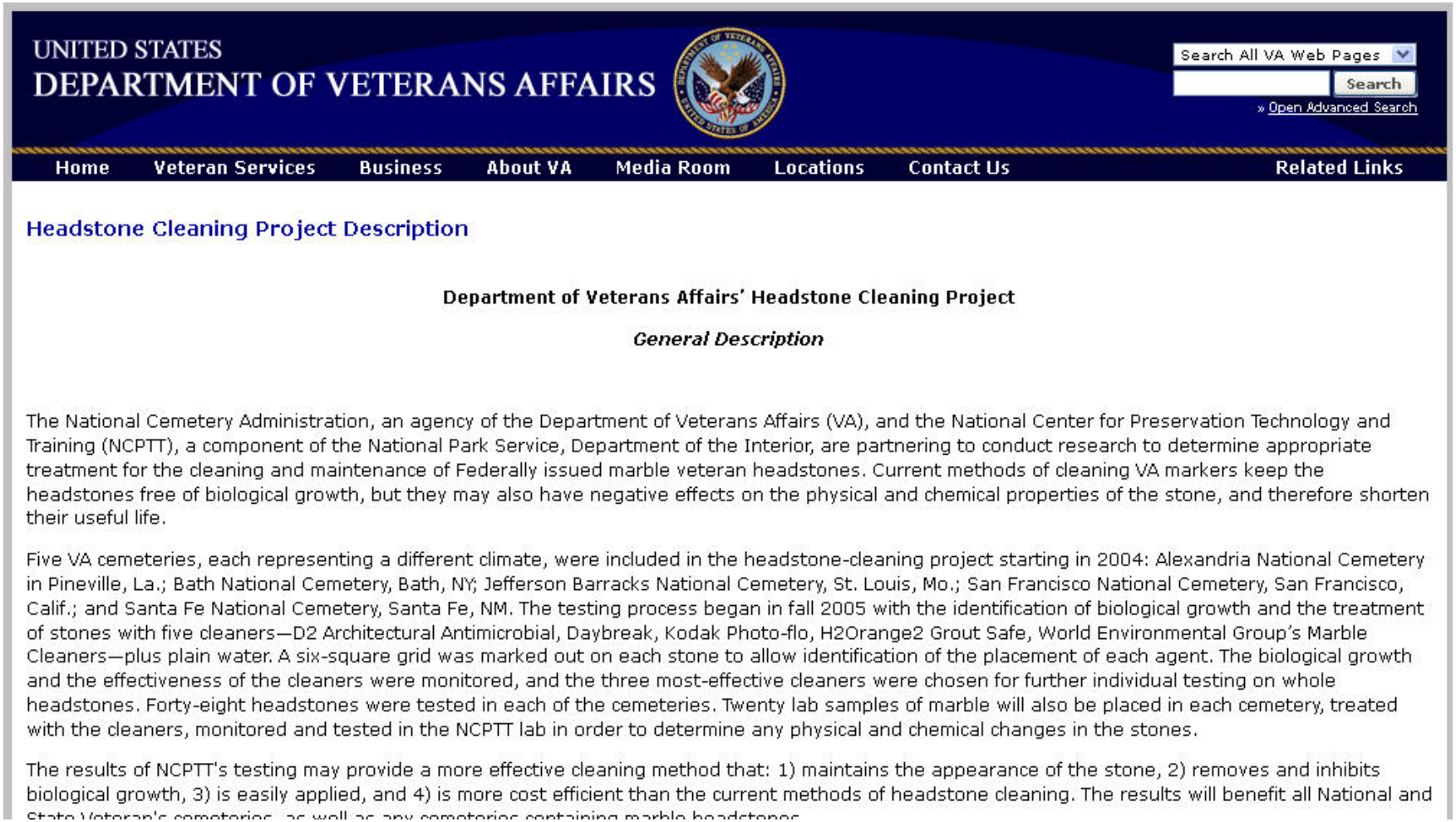
Spread The Word

Help us get the word out about United We Serve – embed widgets on your page, download logos and more.

Spread the Word

© E-WRITE 2013

Practice writing a *bite* and a *snack*



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Search All VA Web Pages
Search
» Open Advanced Search

Home | Veteran Services | Business | About VA | Media Room | Locations | Contact Us | Related Links

Headstone Cleaning Project Description

Department of Veterans Affairs' Headstone Cleaning Project

General Description

The National Cemetery Administration, an agency of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT), a component of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, are partnering to conduct research to determine appropriate treatment for the cleaning and maintenance of Federally issued marble veteran headstones. Current methods of cleaning VA markers keep the headstones free of biological growth, but they may also have negative effects on the physical and chemical properties of the stone, and therefore shorten their useful life.

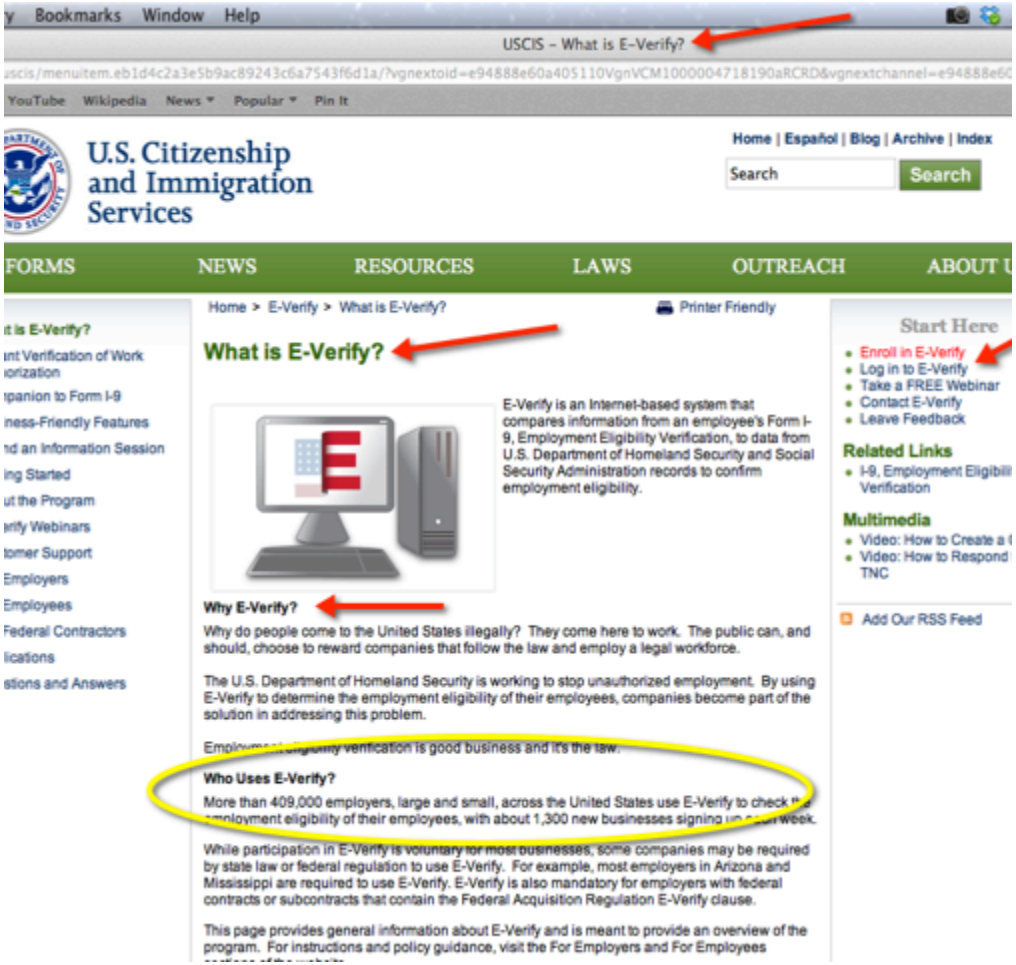
Five VA cemeteries, each representing a different climate, were included in the headstone-cleaning project starting in 2004: Alexandria National Cemetery in Pineville, La.; Bath National Cemetery, Bath, NY; Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, Mo.; San Francisco National Cemetery, San Francisco, Calif.; and Santa Fe National Cemetery, Santa Fe, NM. The testing process began in fall 2005 with the identification of biological growth and the treatment of stones with five cleaners—D2 Architectural Antimicrobial, Daybreak, Kodak Photo-flo, H2Orange2 Grout Safe, World Environmental Group's Marble Cleaners—plus plain water. A six-square grid was marked out on each stone to allow identification of the placement of each agent. The biological growth and the effectiveness of the cleaners were monitored, and the three most-effective cleaners were chosen for further individual testing on whole headstones. Forty-eight headstones were tested in each of the cemeteries. Twenty lab samples of marble will also be placed in each cemetery, treated with the cleaners, monitored and tested in the NCPTT lab in order to determine any physical and chemical changes in the stones.

The results of NCPTT's testing may provide a more effective cleaning method that: 1) maintains the appearance of the stone, 2) removes and inhibits biological growth, 3) is easily applied, and 4) is more cost efficient than the current methods of headstone cleaning. The results will benefit all National and State Veteran's cemeteries, as well as any cemeteries containing marble headstones

e·write. Writing for online readers

© E-WRITE 2013

4. Findable – by search engines *and* humans



- Browser window title tag
- H1 heading
- Bolded sub-headings
- Hypertext links
- Keyword-rich content

© E-WRITE 2013

5. Clickable = well-written hypertext links

1. Make sure “What you click is what you get”
2. Choose meaningful words for links; choose verbs if possible and tie them to concrete nouns
3. Make links as specific as possible
4. Avoid *click here*

© E-WRITE 2013

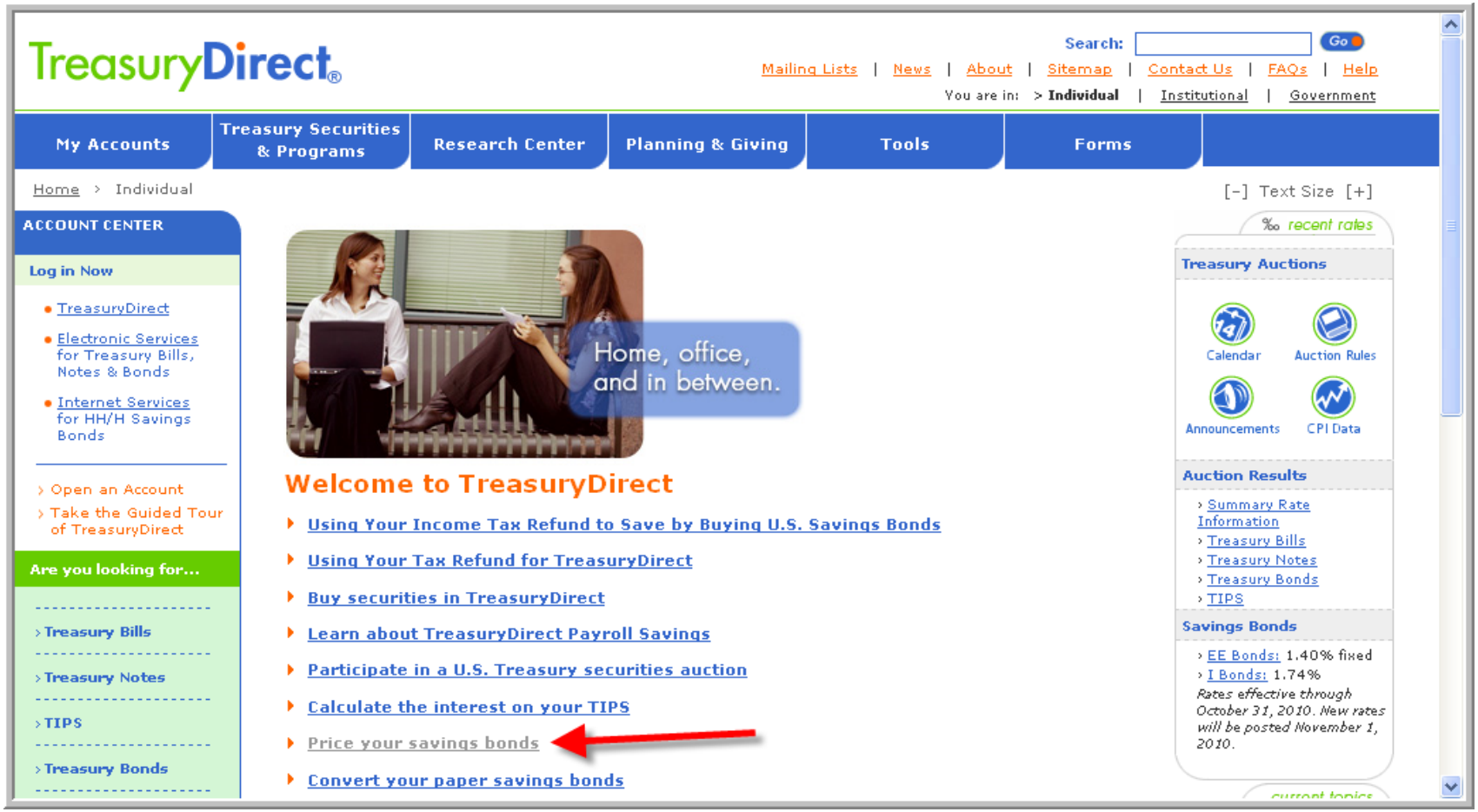
Write meaningful hypertext links

Q. How do you decide *what* and *how much* to link?

A. Each embedded hypertext link should support the message of the page

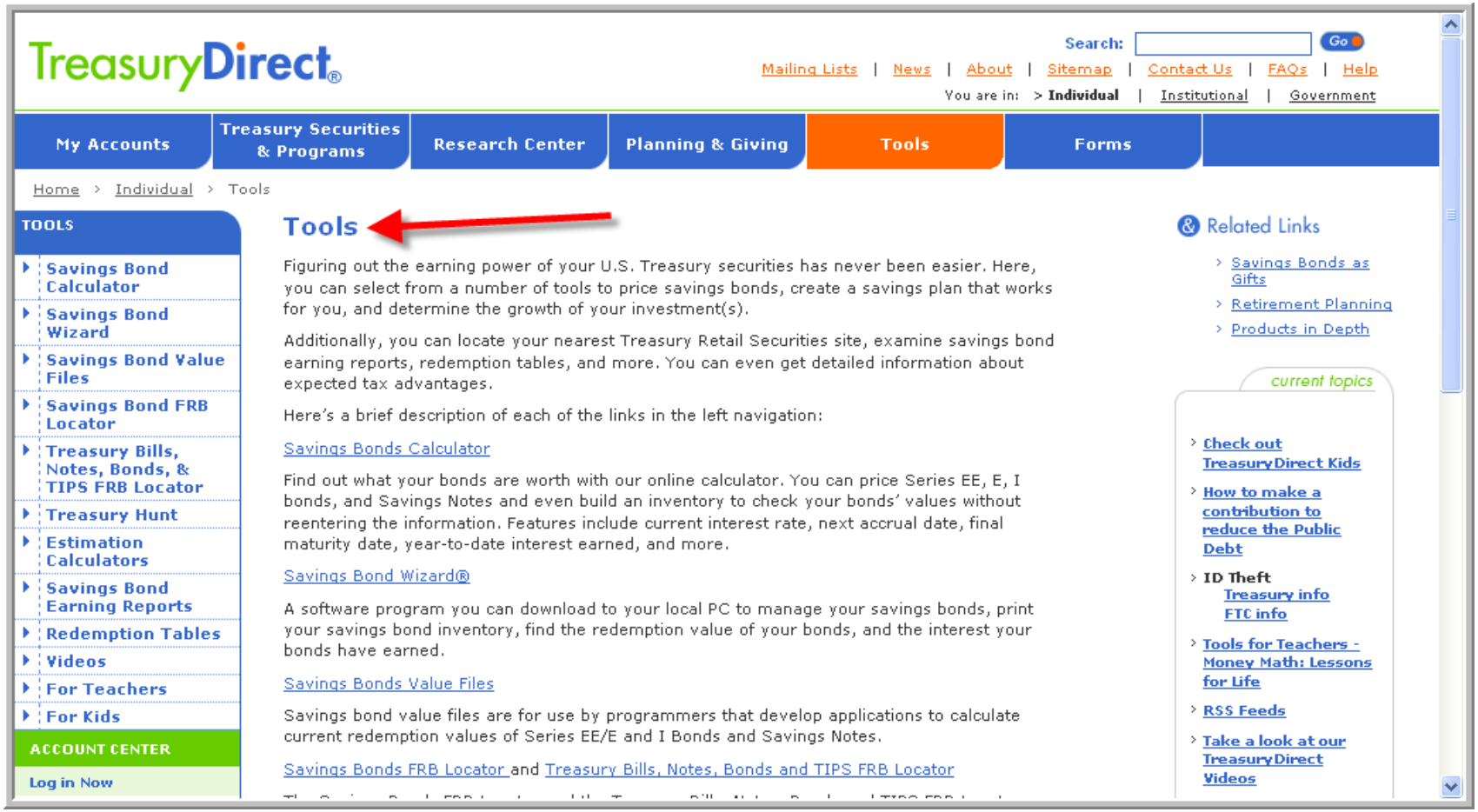
© E-WRITE 2013

Make sure “what you click is what you get”



© E-WRITE 2013

“Price your savings bonds” → “Tools”



© E-WRITE 2013

Revise these click-here links

- Click here to join as a Gold Corporate Member
- Click Here to Read about our Executive Exam Waiver for Managers
- Click here to fill out our contact form

© E-WRITE 2013

6. Personal = content as conversation

(G. Redish, *Letting Go of the Words*)

Clinical Trials and Insurance Coverage

Posted: 05/08/2009

Clinical Trials and Insurance Coverage

- Clinical Trials and Insurance Coverage
- Things you can do ...
- How health insurers decide to cover clinical trial costs
- Ways to learn more

Page Options

- Print This Page
- Print This Document
- View Entire Document
- Email This Document
- Bookmark & Share

Popular Resources

- Dictionary of Cancer Terms
- NCI Drug Dictionary
- Search for Clinical Trials

Things you can do to get your health insurance to cover a clinical trial

There are several steps you can follow to deal with insurance coverage issues when deciding to enter a clinical trial. Here are some things to try:

- **Work closely with your doctor**. Ask your doctor if there is someone on his or her staff who can help with health insurance issues. This person might be a financial counselor or research coordinator. Or, this person might work in the hospital's patient finance department.
- **Work closely with the research coordinator or research nurse**. Ask the research coordinator or nurse if other patients have had problems getting their health insurance companies to cover their costs. If so, you might ask the research coordinator or nurse for help in sending information to your health insurance company that explains why this clinical trial would be appropriate for you. This package might include:
  - Medical journal articles that show patient benefits from the treatment that is being tested
  - A letter of medical necessity
  - Letters from researchers that explain the clinical trial
  - Support letters from patient advocacy groups.

Helpful Hint: Be sure to keep your own copy of any materials that are sent to your health insurance company.

- **Work with your health insurance company**. If your doctor does not have a staff person to help with insurance issues, call the customer service number on the back of your health insurance card.
  - Ask to speak to the benefit plan department.
  - Ask if your health insurance plan covers routine patient care in clinical trial.
  - If your health insurance covers routine patient care in a clinical trial, ask if an authorization is

© E-WRITE 2013

This content is *not* a conversation

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
Public Health Laboratory

Phone: (805) 781-5507 Fax: (805) 781-1023 www.sloPublicHealth.org/lab

SLO Public Health Laboratory Services – Animal Testing

Rabies Testing
If you observe a wild or domestic animal exhibiting unusual behavior or you are involved in an animal bite or exposure event, contact:
San Luis Obispo County Animal Services 781-4400
Do not attempt to handle the animal.

Insect Identification
The SLO Public Health Laboratory can identify a number of insects or arthropods for county resident customers on a fee-for-service basis. Bring the insect in a plastic container or zip-top bag to the Public Health Laboratory service window at the Public Health building at 2191 Johnson Avenue, San Luis Obispo. Payment may be made by Visa or Mastercard.

© E-WRITE 2013

7. Deep = Lead to more + more content

© E-WRITE 2013

Part 2: The three principles of being part of the federal web writing community

© E-WRITE 2013

1. Learn about plain language

- The 2010 law
- The PL community
- DHS' PL efforts

of the
United States of America
AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday, the fifth day of January, two thousand and ten

An Act

To enhance citizen access to Government information and services by establishing that Government documents issued to the public must be written clearly, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Plain Writing Act of 2010".

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to improve the effectiveness and accountability of Federal agencies to the public by promoting clear

Plain Language.gov
Improving Communication from the Federal Government to the Public

Popular Topics
Regulations
Health Literacy
Financial
Before–and–After

Federal Plain Language Guidelines
March 2011 - Rev. 1, May 2011

Plain Language – It's the Law
Agency Requirements
Agency PL Webpage
PL in Federal Agencies

Plain-Language Training
Training Resources

Tips & Tools
Starting a Plain-Language Program
Planning a Plain-Language Website

FEMA

What are you looking for?

About the Agency
Leadership
Careers
Policies
Budget
State of FEMA
Strategic Plans
Former Administrators
Resources

Plain Language Act

Our promise to you: Writing you can understand

We at the Federal Emergency Management Agency are committed to writing all of c language, starting October 2011.

Our goal is to use plain language in any document that:

- Is necessary for obtaining any of our benefits or services or for filing taxes
- Provides information about any of our benefits or services
- Explains how to comply with a requirement that we administer or enforce

You can learn more about plain language in the government at Plainlanguage.gov.

e-write. Writing for online readers

© E-WRITE 2013

DHS plain language efforts: USCIS videos

© E-WRITE 2013

2. Use fed-focused web writing resources

© E-WRITE 2013

Great stuff for web writers at HowTo.gov

© E-WRITE 2013

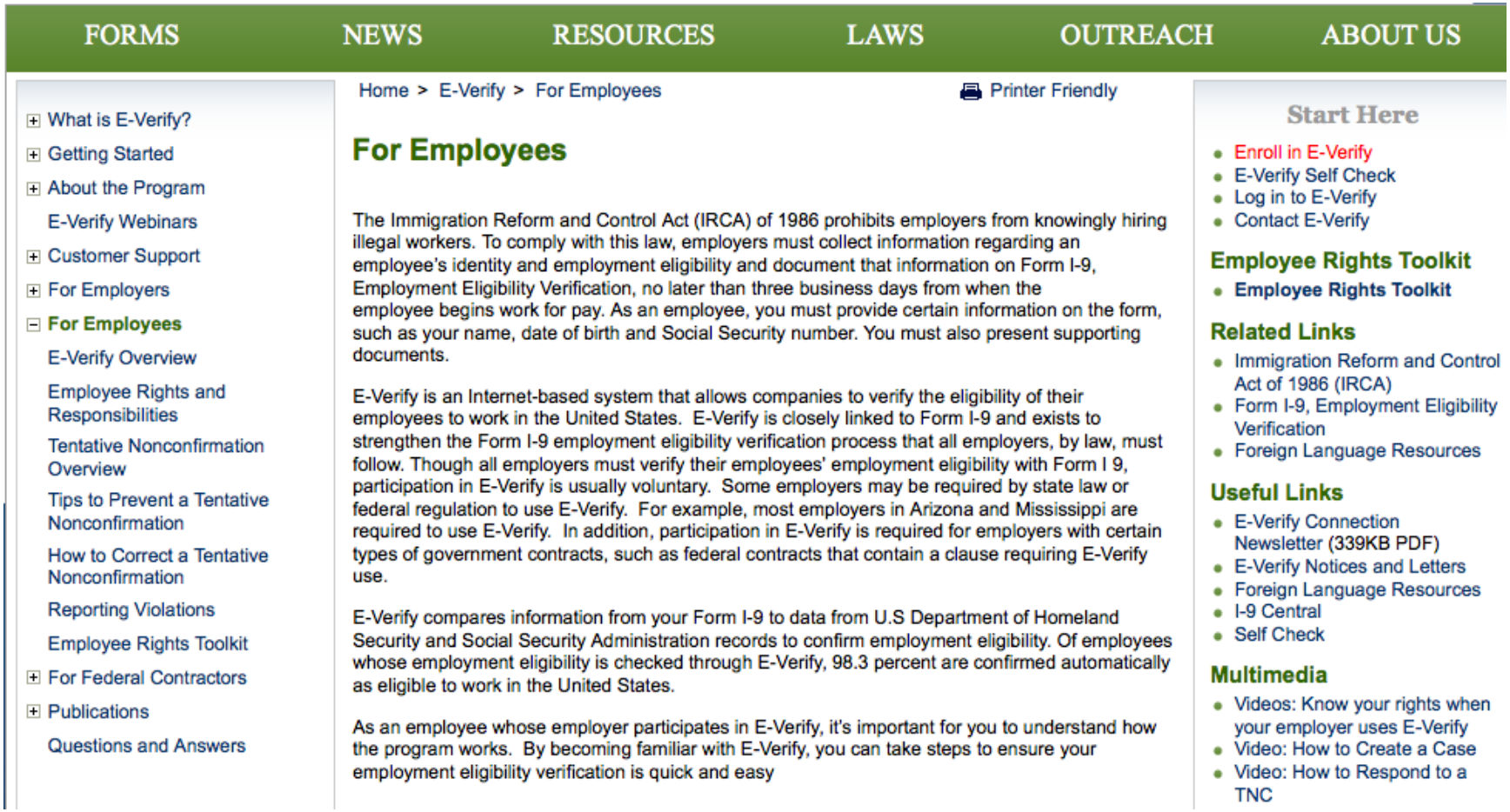
3. Look for opportunities to test your content on real people

© E-WRITE 2013

Part 3: DHS content review

© E-WRITE 2013

“We are commencing a content scrub…”



FORMS | NEWS | RESOURCES | LAWS | OUTREACH | ABOUT US

- What is E-Verify?
- Getting Started
- About the Program
- E-Verify Webinars
- Customer Support
- For Employers
- For Employees
  - E-Verify Overview
  - Employee Rights and Responsibilities
  - Tentative Nonconfirmation Overview
  - Tips to Prevent a Tentative Nonconfirmation
  - How to Correct a Tentative Nonconfirmation
  - Reporting Violations
  - Employee Rights Toolkit
- For Federal Contractors
- Publications
- Questions and Answers

Home > E-Verify > For Employees

Printer Friendly

For Employees

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 prohibits employers from knowingly hiring illegal workers. To comply with this law, employers must collect information regarding an employee's identity and employment eligibility and document that information on Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, no later than three business days from when the employee begins work for pay. As an employee, you must provide certain information on the form, such as your name, date of birth and Social Security number. You must also present supporting documents.

E-Verify is an Internet-based system that allows companies to verify the eligibility of their employees to work in the United States. E-Verify is closely linked to Form I-9 and exists to strengthen the Form I-9 employment eligibility verification process that all employers, by law, must follow. Though all employers must verify their employees' employment eligibility with Form I 9, participation in E-Verify is usually voluntary. Some employers may be required by state law or federal regulation to use E-Verify. For example, most employers in Arizona and Mississippi are required to use E-Verify. In addition, participation in E-Verify is required for employers with certain types of government contracts, such as federal contracts that contain a clause requiring E-Verify use.

E-Verify compares information from your Form I-9 to data from U.S Department of Homeland Security and Social Security Administration records to confirm employment eligibility. Of employees whose employment eligibility is checked through E-Verify, 98.3 percent are confirmed automatically as eligible to work in the United States.

As an employee whose employer participates in E-Verify, it's important for you to understand how the program works. By becoming familiar with E-Verify, you can take steps to ensure your employment eligibility verification is quick and easy

Start Here

- Enroll in E-Verify
- E-Verify Self Check
- Log in to E-Verify
- Contact E-Verify

Employee Rights Toolkit

- **Employee Rights Toolkit**

Related Links

- Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA)
- Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification
- Foreign Language Resources

Useful Links

- E-Verify Connection Newsletter (339KB PDF)
- E-Verify Notices and Letters
- Foreign Language Resources
- I-9 Central
- Self Check

Multimedia

- Videos: Know your rights when your employer uses E-Verify
- Video: How to Create a Case
- Video: How to Respond to a TNC

e·write. Writing for online readers

© E-WRITE 2013

Questions? Comments?

Contact info:

Leslie O'Flahavan, E-WRITE

Leslie@ewriteonline.com

301-989-9583

www.ewriteonline.com

@LeslieO

www.linkedin.com/in/leslieoflahavan

© E-WRITE 2013