

# Writing for the Web

*(A.K.A.  
“Trying to get  
people to give a  
darn”)*

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Thursday, August 9, 2012



# You can:

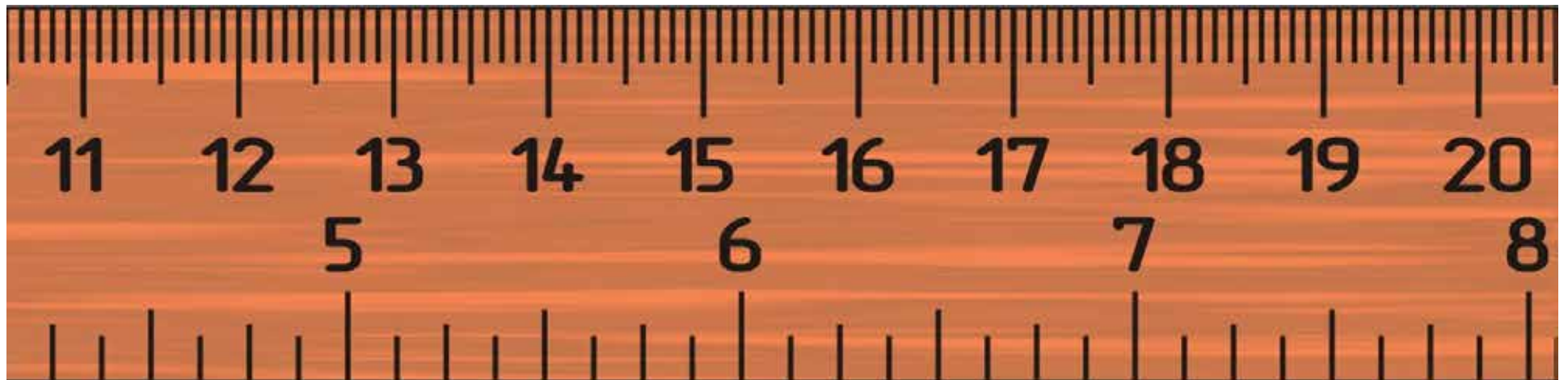
- Keep their attention
- Not turn them off
- Write more convincingly

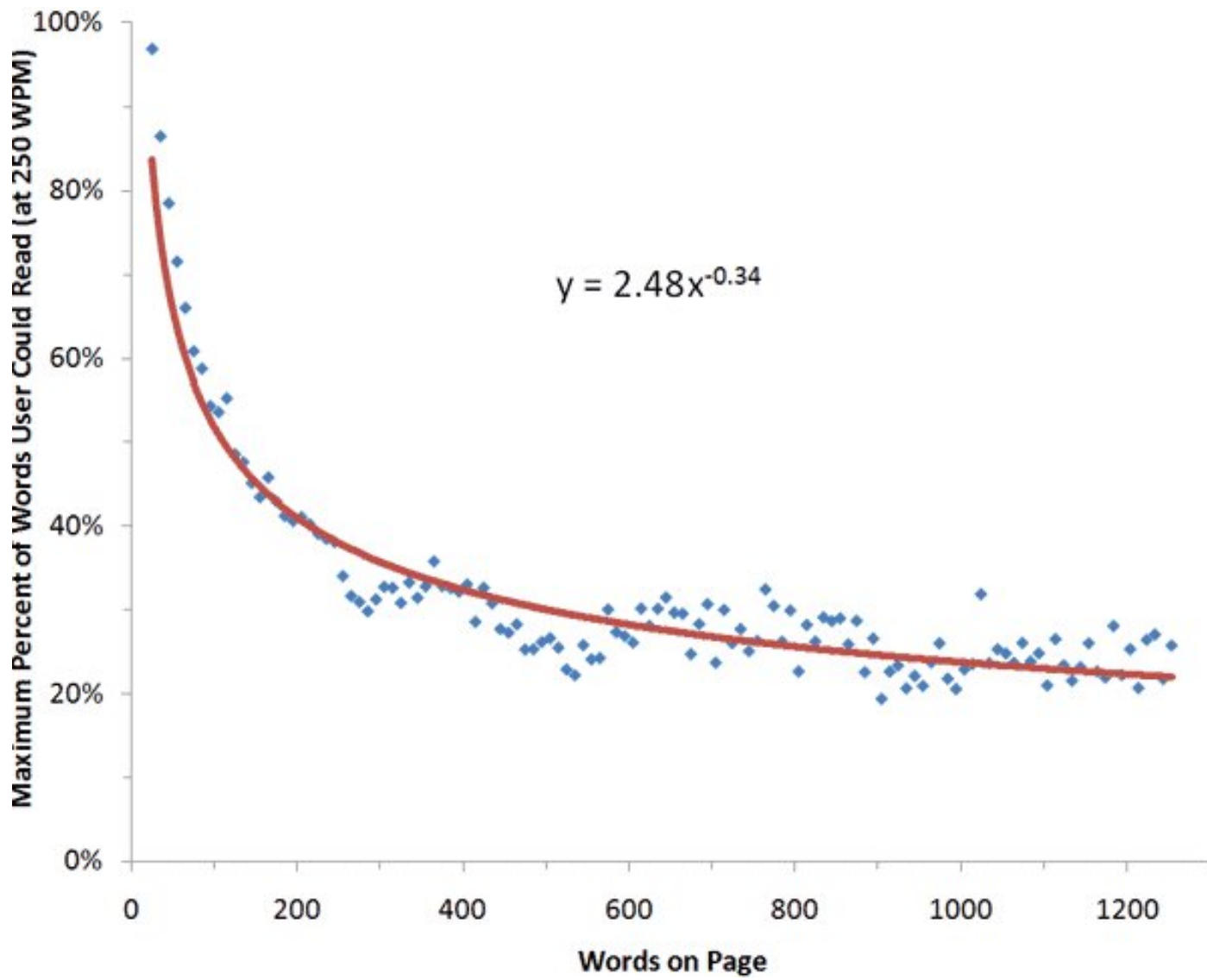


**How do you feel about reading this text? This might be a perfectly acceptable way to write a research paper or novel but websites aren't for reading. Sorry to break it to you. People don't want to read your website. They want to find your information. They're on a mission and all of the extra text you're putting on the screen is getting in the way of letting them accomplish their goals. The end.**

*From Aaron Schmidt, [walkingpaper.org](http://walkingpaper.org)*

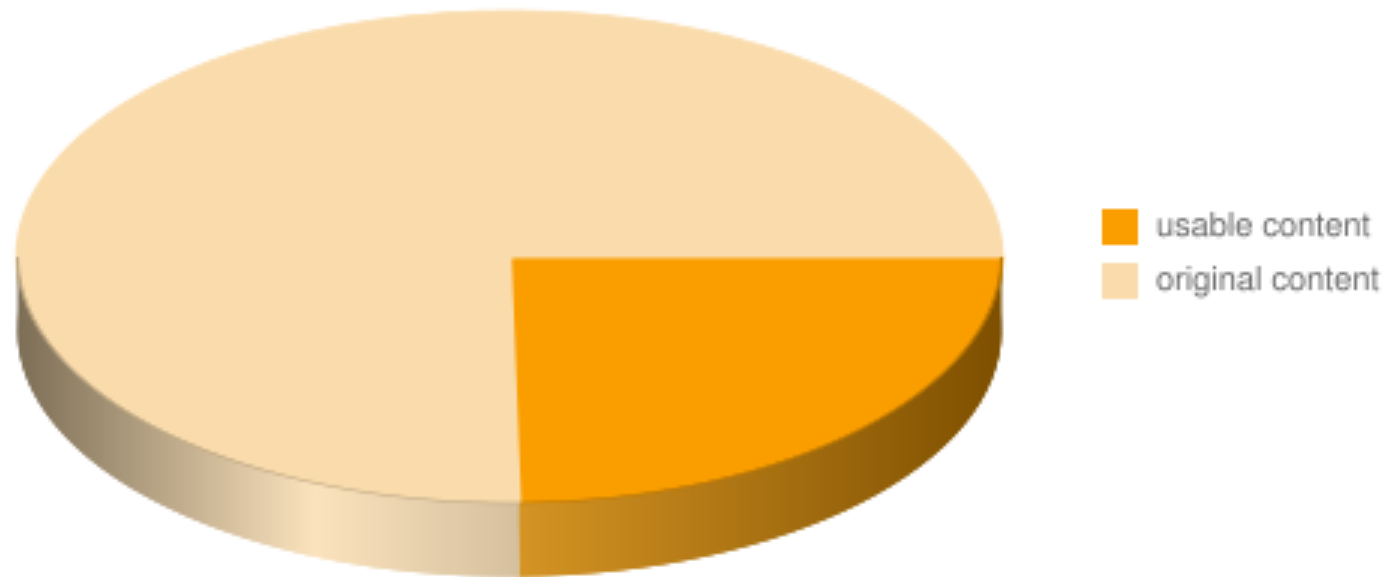
# LENGTH





**On average, web users read almost 100% of a page's content only if it is 25 words or less.**

# Krug's Third Law of Usability



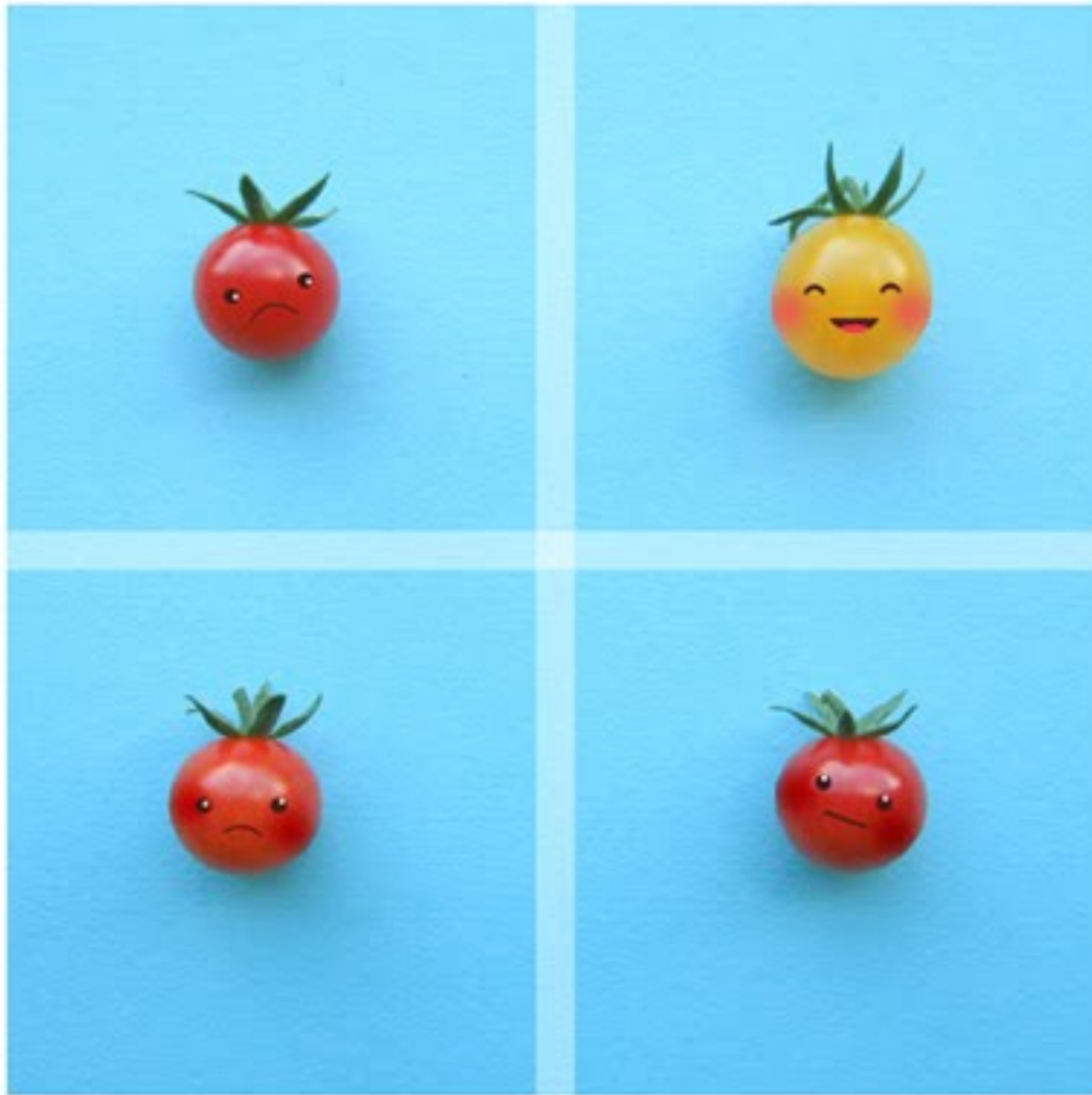
**How do you feel about reading this text? This might be a perfectly acceptable way to write a research paper or novel but websites aren't for reading. Sorry to break it to you. People don't want to read your**

People don't want to read your website. They want to find your information. All of the extra text you're putting on the screen is getting in the way.

**the screen is getting in the way of letting them accomplish their goals. The end.**



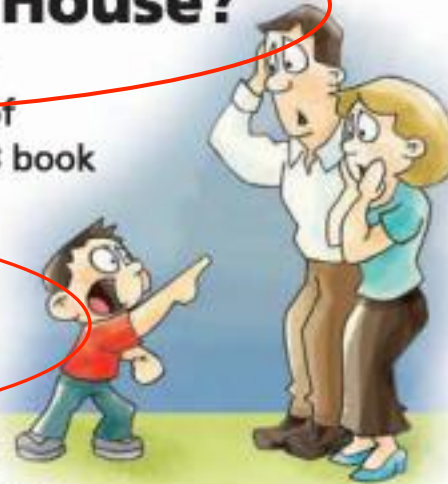
People **scan** text. They look for items that stand out and may be important. They look for bullet points, headers, graphics, and items surrounded by white space. They look for hyperlinks. They look for items that are somehow **different** from the other things on the page and might somehow be immediately relevant.



<http://mrs.oshimbo.com/2010/10/10thingsidontlike.html>

## Who's in Charge at Your House?

Welcome to the 25th Anniversary of *1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12*. Thousands of parents have said, "It works like magic!" The 1-2-3 book has sold over 1,250,000 copies, been translated into 20 languages, and it is consistently the #1-selling child discipline book on Amazon.com. Why? **1-2-3 Magic is simple, easy-to-learn, and it works—quickly.**



The brand-new 4th Edition of this evidence-based program has been expanded to allow for over three dozen reader-suggested improvements. Also included are new chapters, such as Kids, Tweens & Tech, new illustrations, *1-2-3 Magic* stories, resources for further reading, research on *1-2-3 Magic* and an expanded Index.

With humor, keen insight and proven experience, Dr. Phelan breaks down the task of parenting into three straightforward jobs:

**Job #1: Controlling Obnoxious Behavior:** Learn an amazingly simple technique to get the kids to STOP doing what you don't want them to do (whining, arguing, tantrums, sibling rivalry, etc.).

**Job #2: Encouraging Good Behavior:** Learn several effective methods to get your kids to START doing what you do want them to do (picking up, eating, going to bed—and *staying there!*, chores, etc.).

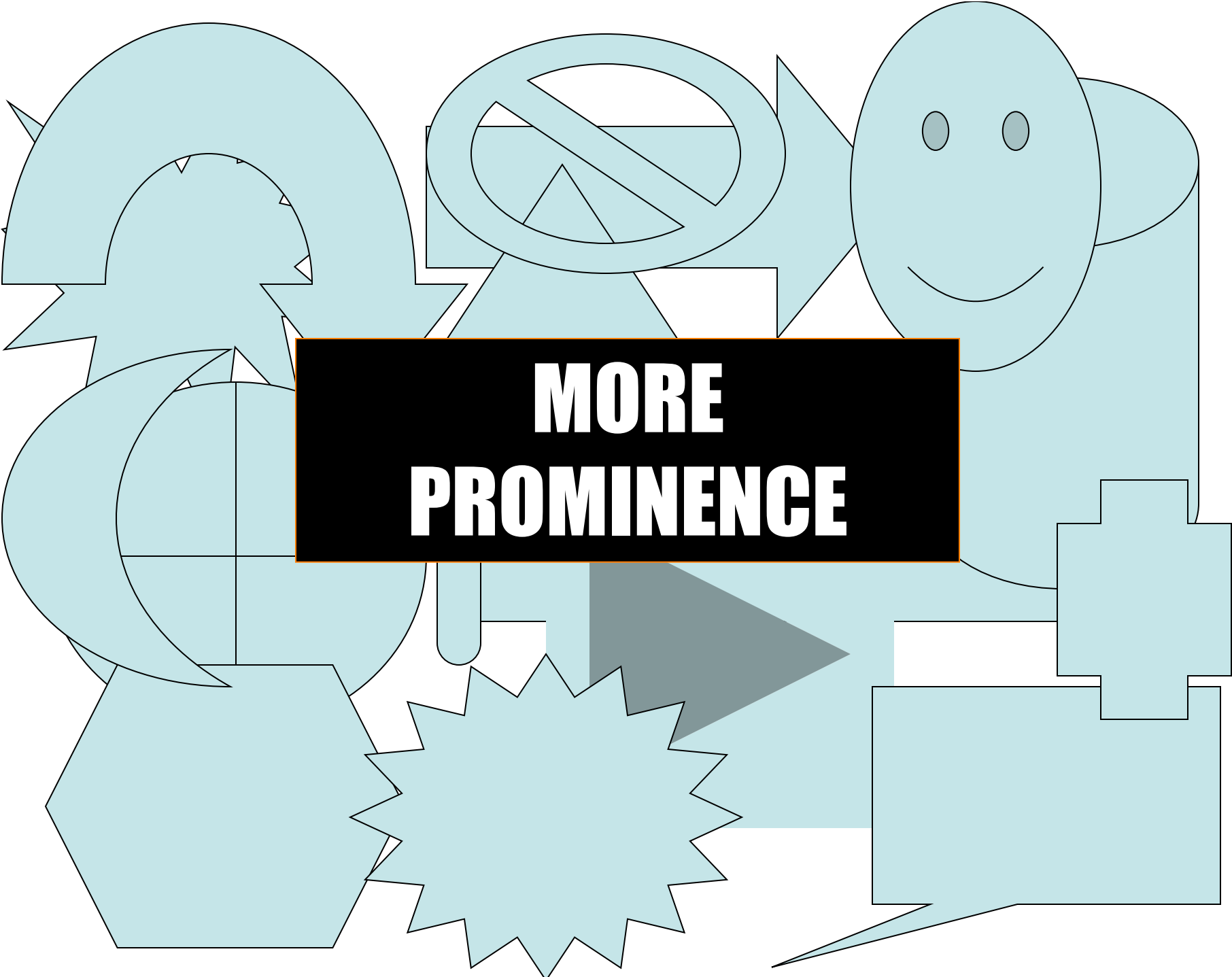
**Job #3: Strengthening Your Relationships:** Learn powerful techniques that reinforce the bond between you and your children.

**“...bullets are like flashing Christmas lights”**





**LESS NOISE**



**MORE  
PROMINENCE**

**Less  
Page  
Length**



[http://www.yourlibrary.org/node/11452?  
ddbox00=429&ddbox01=464&x=73&y=13](http://www.yourlibrary.org/node/11452?ddbox00=429&ddbox01=464&x=73&y=13)

<http://www.yourlibrary.org/reference>

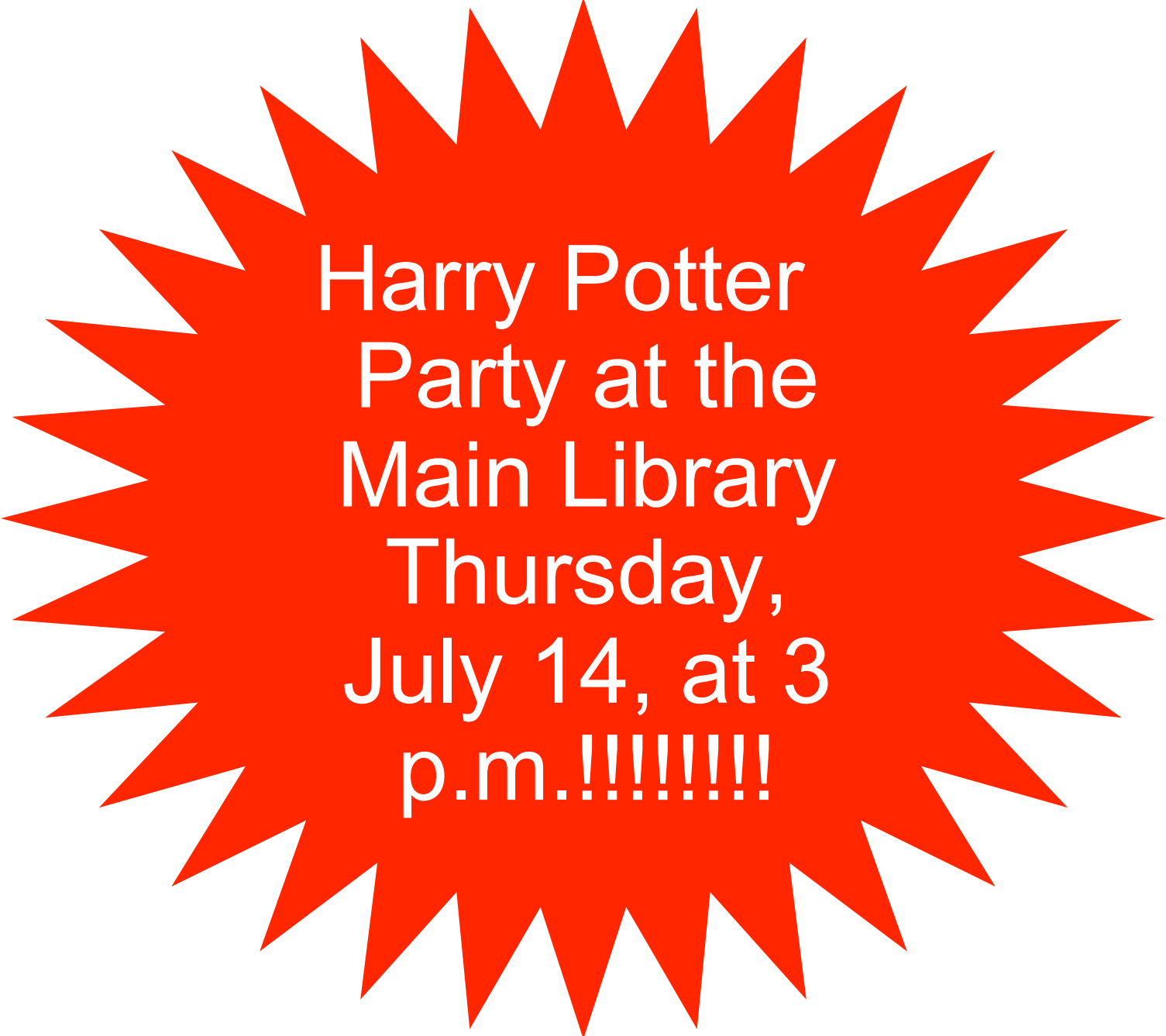
# QUALITY



PLEASE  
STOP  
SCREAMING  
AT ME.

Please?



A large, red, multi-pointed starburst shape is centered on a white background. Inside the starburst, the text "Harry Potter Party at the Main Library Thursday, July 14, at 3 p.m.!!!!!!!" is written in white, sans-serif font, centered and stacked vertically.

Harry Potter  
Party at the  
Main Library  
Thursday,  
July 14, at 3  
p.m.!!!!!!!



Click

here

[Click here to access your account](#)

[Access your account](#)




OMG!

[http://www.scribendi.com/advice/the\\_correct\\_use\\_of\\_acronyms.en.html](http://www.scribendi.com/advice/the_correct_use_of_acronyms.en.html)

# Don't bury the lead

- “Mitt Romney, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, wouldn't say Sunday whether he'd repeal President Barack Obama's decision to stop deporting certain young illegal immigrants. “
- “In an interview, Romney would say only that his administration would seek longer-term solutions to the problem of illegal immigration, and that Obama's new directive, announced Friday, was temporary fix. “





What happens  
when you write  
**CLEARLY?**

- 84% are more likely to **trust** you
- 60% + are more likely to be **interested** in what you are selling/saying

TALK

ON

PAPER

Content  
should not  
be written by  
passive-  
voiced staff  
members.

**Write in the  
active  
voice.**

Selling  
your  
content



**WIN A VACATION!** SEE PAGE 79

# Family Circle

**Walk Off 10 Pounds!**  
Join Our Easy Slim-by-Summer Challenge

**Pasta Favorites**  
in 15 Minutes or Less

**Get Organized!**  
Simple Ways to De-Clutter Every Room

**Diet Success**  
New Products That Can Help You Lose Weight

**14 Tips for a Bigger Tax Refund**

**SPECIAL SCHOOL REPORT**  
**High-Tech Ways Teens Are Cheating**

**WOW! \$1.99**

# allure

**GET SEXY NOW**  
52 IDEAS FOR UNUSUAL HAIR, MAKEUP, AND STYLING

**10-Second Hairstyles**  
That Look Like You Did It

**Skincare Secret Weapons**  
And 15 Other Tools to Try

**HOW TO:**  
What to Do About Blue Jeans You'll Love

**Summer Pretty Make**

**Jeans You'll Love For Day and Night**

**Ali Larter**  
From Jersey Girl to "It" Girl to Plus

# G

**LOOK SHARP - LIVE SMART**

**THE CONTINUING EDUCATION OF ZAC EFFRON**

**JUST IN CASE**  
OBAMA'S WAR CHASING THE TALIBAN IN ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS PLACES

**HAVE YOU DECIPHERED AMERICA'S NEW TAGS FOR FOOD?**

**SMART CLOTHES FOR TOUGH TIME**  
WE SHOW YOU HOW TO GET MORE MILEAGE (AND STYLE) OUT OF YOUR WARDROBE

**WALK YOUR WAY SLIM**  
SO LOW CELLULITE

**HOW TO BUILD A BETTER BACHELOR PARTY**  
Don't Waste Your Money on a Stripper

# SHOPE

**WALK YOUR WAY SLIM**  
SO LOW CELLULITE

**cottage living**  
great kitchens!

# O

**THE OPRAH MAGAZINE**

**UNEXPECTED WAYS TO GET HAPPIER**

**WEIGHT BLOSSIT OFF**

**TOO TALL, TOO SMALL, TOO SPECIAL**  
6 Women Turn Us Into a Segue

**THE YOU SE D UP!**  
what you think, love

# healthy cooking

**Taste of Home**

**all your favorites made lighter!**  
76 HEALTHY RECIPES

**SLIP INTO HEALTHY**

**Smart ways to live well**

# Prevention

**POWER UP YOUR HEALTH**  
74 Tips You Won't Read Anywhere Else

**Nature's ULTIMATE Pain Killer**

**EAT TO:**  
Beat Hunger  
Boost Immunity  
Keep Weight Off

**AGE BEAUTIFULLY!**  
Top Docs Share Their Secrets

**3 TOP FATIGUE FIGHTERS**  
p. 28

**BEST VITAMINS for women 40+**

**2 New For SEND THE SOA**

**Sneaky WA YOUR SL**

**Natural Remedies That Work**

# Woman's Day

**270 How To Ideas**

**Easy No-Cook Dinners**

**Slimmer Hips in 6 Weeks**

**1-Minute Lessons**  
From Parties to Eyebrows

**How to Look 10 Years Younger**

**Free**  
Natural Remedies That Work

**You Can Have It All**

# Men's Health

**GET BACK TO SHAPE**  
9 DAYS!

**THE EASY WAY TO HARD ABS!**  
p. 137

**YOUR BEST BODY EVER!**  
GET IT NOW! KEEP IT FOREVER!

**HEALTH, FITNESS, SEX TIPS**

**The #1 Thing That Makes Sex Every, Very Good**

**SLIM-DOWN CHECKS SMART WOMEN EAR BY EAR**

# InStyle

**What to Wear NOW!**  
and INTO FALL

**SUPER EASY SEXY HAIR**



HOW or WHY  
and BENEFIT

= WIN\*

\* (\$how||\$why)+\$benefit=\$win



Learn more about  
the library's  
research  
databases



How to make  
your research  
faster & more  
productive

Feature

Benefit

Experience

- **Feature** New database
- **Benefit** Higher quality information
- **Experience:** Blow away your teachers or professors. Credible, professional sources add information to your research not available via Google and make you look like a more committed student .



**WHY?**

Where's your **CTA**?



## Four kinds of CTAs

- Place an order;
- Enroll, subscribe, enter;
- Get a quote;
- Learn more.

Make 'em  
stronger!



“The goal of the copy is to connect with the reader, and guide them towards an action.”

*Peep Laja, owner of Markitekt.com*



# Making headlines

## r 'historic' history

His advisers point out that if the Hurriyat had attended, it would have been a huge feather in his cap. Especially since it is widely acknowledged to occupy the middle ground in Kashmiri politics, between the militancy on the one hand and the Indian establishment on the other.

redeem  
to keep  
nde

Headlines do 3 things



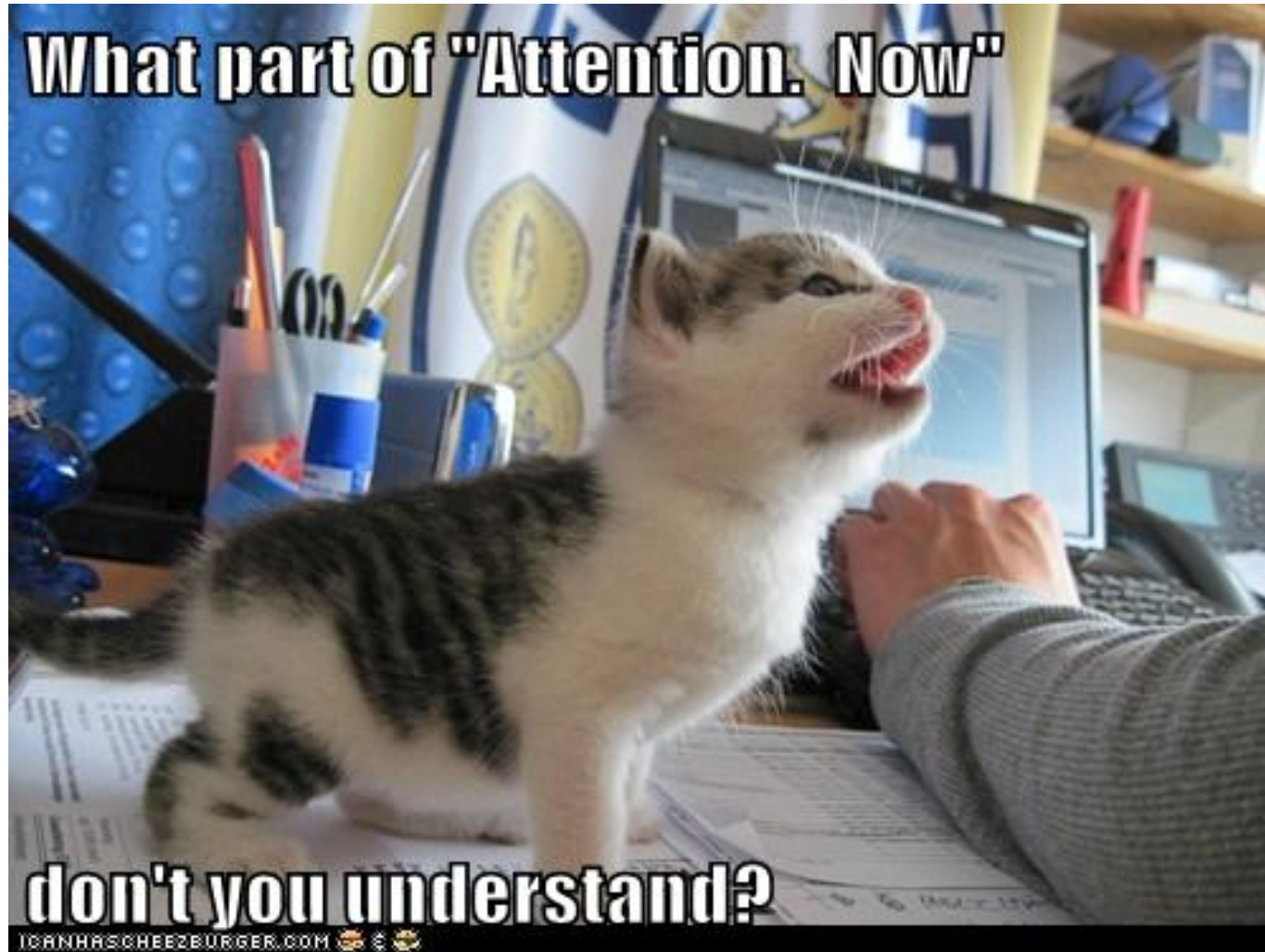
# 1. Communicate importance



## 2. Succinctly convey story essence

**MAN  
BITES DOG,  
DOG THREATENS  
LAWSUIT**

### 3. Grab attention



Write the headline **FIRST**



Include **location**

***Branch gets new checkout  
machine***

**versus**

***Belpre branch library gets  
new checkout machine***

Think **keywords**

***Local man wins summer reading contest***

**versus**

***Belpre man wins stuffed monkey in library's 2012 summer reading contest***



Why do list posts **work**?

“If there’s one thing that turns online readers off, it is the 17-line, multi-idea, complex paragraph”

*Chris Lake, eConsultancy, Digital Marketers United*

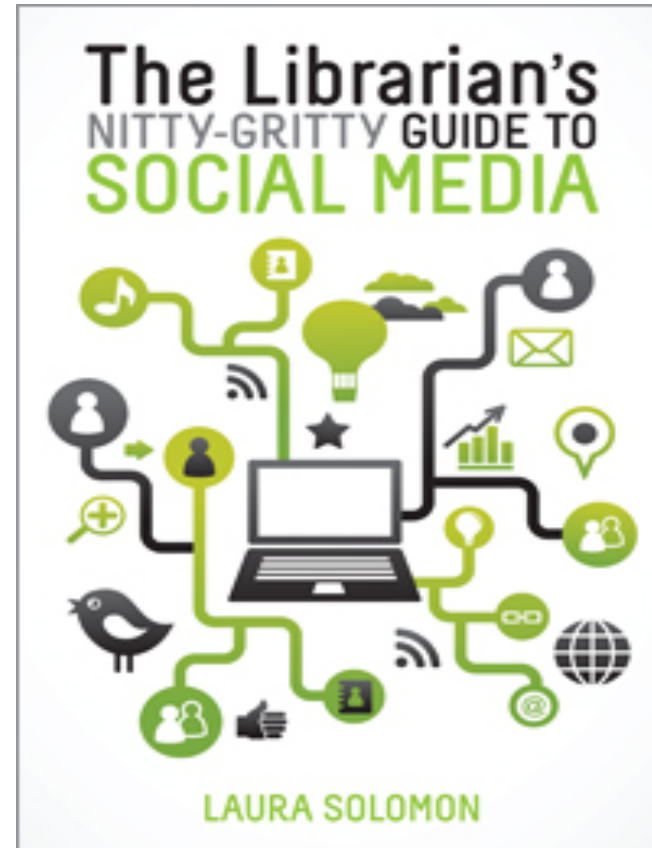
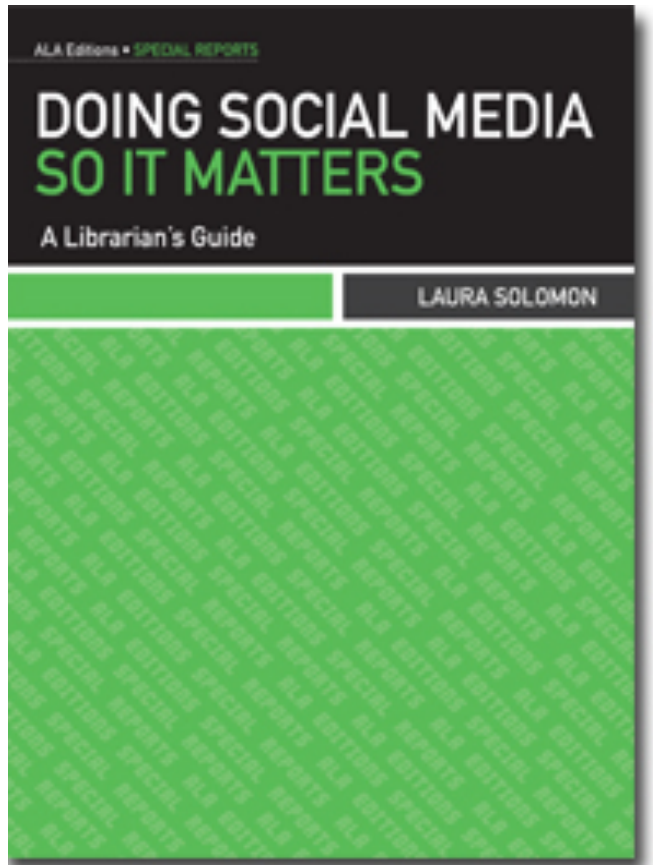
# Practice



## **Rewrite this!**

A patron must have a library card in good standing to use the public computers managed by the Library's reservation software.

(Absolutely shameless plug)





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<http://www.facebook.com/lurasolomon>



<http://www.linkedin.com/in/lurasolomon>



[laura@designforthelittleguy.com](mailto:laura@designforthelittleguy.com)



<http://www.meanlaura.com>



<http://www.slideshare.net/lurasolomon>

Thank you!





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