

Example style guide

by Jean Hollis Weber

This document accompanies "Developing a Department Style Guide," published at <http://www.techwhirl.com>, and includes a sample outline of a style guide.

Some of the sections include some detailed sample text; others do not. Please note that the examples shown here are not necessarily the "correct" choices, or the "preferred" choices, or the "best" choices; they are simply **examples** of things to include. Your project may require additional items, especially if your writing will be used on a Web site.

Style Guide for XYZ Corporation

Follow this style guide when writing or editing materials to be published by XYZ Corporation, to ensure that documents conform to corporate image and policy, including legal requirements, and to improve consistency within and among our publications. Use this style guide as part of the specifications for your writing projects, along with:

- XYZ Corporation Technical Writing Process Guide
- XYZ Corporation Document Design Guide

References

This style guide lists decisions we have made for this company. It supplements several standard style guides, dictionaries, and other reference material. If you can't find something in our style guide, look in these references or refer your question to the departmental editor.

Dictionaries

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1994, is the preferred source.

Style Manuals

This guide takes precedence over all other sources.

The Chicago Manual of Style, 14th Edition. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Read Me First! A Style Guide for the Computer Industry. Mountain View, CA: Sun Microsystems, Inc. 1996.

Grammar/Usage Guides

For questions about grammar, consult any of the following:

Webster's Dictionary of English Usage. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1989.

Skilkin, Marjorie E., and Robert M. Gay. *Words into Type, 3rd Edition*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

Strunk, William, Jr., and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style, 3rd Edition*. New York: Macmillan, 1979.

Online References

[Fill in as appropriate]

Mechanics

Graphic Elements

Include drawings, figures, tables, and screen shots, whenever it seems useful or otherwise appropriate. Give each graphic element an informative caption.

Refer to each graphic element at an appropriate place in the running text.

For graphic elements used on Web pages, such as navigation aids, icons, photos, and other images, always include alternate text within the IMAGE tags. For example...

Hyphenation

Punctuation

Use standard American punctuation. [If some of your writers are more used to British punctuation, you may need to add an example or two here.]

Use of Language

General

Use short, simple, easy-to-understand words and sentences.

Avoid the passive voice, except where appropriate. [You may want to include an example of an appropriate use.]

In general, use the present tense and, where appropriate, the imperative mood ("Do this.").

Use strong subject-verb constructions. Avoid weak constructions such as "There are."

Be concise; avoid wordy phrases.

Writing Style Guide Example

Wenbin Ji



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