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Weaving words for the web

By Yvette Nielsen

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WHILE Luddites toll the death knell for books, we who have made the transition to "new media" look to the future with confidence.

The Internet does not spell the end of the written word but the beginning of fresh opportunities and renewed status for professional writers throughout the world.

Since becoming disillusioned with the world of print journalism at the dawn of the 90s, I have sought new challenges and, following a baptism of fire in the bureaucracy, I pursued short-term freelance work.

Newsletters, media releases, proofreading, editing and copywriting have been my staple diet for three years, and a surprisingly satisfying one at that.

Freelancing also provided time to learn about the new communications medium, which sparked my interest a few years ago when commissioned to write corporate copy for a pioneer web site developer.

As more businesses, individuals and organisations have considered the question of "when" rather than "if" they should set up an on-line presence, competition in web site development has intensified.

Gradually, the gulf has widened between sites developed using professionals - web content writers, graphic designers, programmers and marketers - and sites hastily thrown together on a Saturday afternoon with a "do-it-yourself" web-authoring package.

The content manager or writer has been the missing link in the web development process - until now.

Weaving words for the web

As web design houses wake up to the fact that a successful site needs more than pretty pictures and nifty applets, people with strong communication and organisational skills are in demand.

Just as a desktop publishing package does not transform a writer into a graphic artist, a web-authoring program does not turn a graphic designer, computer programmer or marketer into a wordsmith. We each have our own talents and should respect the differences.

You don't have to "surf" far on the web before striking poor writing, bad spelling or just plain offensive copy.

To secure our future and prevent mass bastardisation of the English language, writers must promote their skills now and not be intimidated by the technology.

If you can use a word-processing program, you have enough technological know-how to write for the web. The emphasis is on "information" not "technology".

Writing for the online reader requires more discipline than even journalism. The experts say people between 25% and 40% more slowly on screen as the eyes tire more quickly than on paper.

Web users will not tolerate long-winded prose, unless it's for a literary site or on a topic in which they are deeply interested.

Writing for web sites is not simply a matter of rehashing existing print material - the web is already clogged with so-called "brochureware".

Clean, concise, active, purpose-written copy is essential to the development of this new medium and the web writing profession as a whole.

If you haven't yet taken your first dip in cybersurf, head to your local Internet café or library and take the plunge.

Even if you don't want to weave words for the web, you'll have a ball spinning yarns with other writers via chat rooms, newsgroups, web sites and email.

Like it or love it, the future's online.

Yvette Nielsen writes a popular weekly web sitereview column for Brisbane News magazine, has developed her own site at <http://www.brizcomm.com.au>, and conducts web content workshops on how to structure, write and promote sites. Subscribe to her weekly newsletter for free tips and site reviews at

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The History Of Rugs

By James Adams

The history of rugs is quite amazing. The weaving of rugs and carpets dates back to at least 500 BC. Rugs are made by weaving, at least this is how they started making rugs. Weaving is nothing new, our ancestors have been doing it for thousands of years. The first weaving that was done was to make baskets. They made baskets out of anything that was pliable, leaves, grass, twigs and whatever materials could be found at the time.

The most common material used for rugs back then was most likely goat and sheep hair. Later on the Chinese produced wool piles. Some of the first Chinese rugs and carpets were made out of cotton and wool backings.

Some of the first looms were made with two branches that looked like a fork and connected by a crosspiece. The binding threads were then flattened with a bar usually made of wood. They later learned to dye the threads with various natural colors from fruit, vegetables, animals and bugs.

In 1769 a machine was invented by a Richard Arkwright. The machine was designed to spin thread onto a bobbin. Not too many years later a machine was designed to spin a thousand threads at a time. Eventually it progressed to where we are at today.

An archaeologist in the 1950's found a rug that dated back to 500 BC or before. It was found in a frozen state in Siberia. It was a knotted rug of Turkish descent. This just goes to show you that rugs are by no means something new. Our ancestors have been using them since the beginning of time.

Before people ever started weaving hunters would use the animal hides they got off of their prey to make clothing, rugs, maps and other various things. Today rugs are mass produced by machines and most people have forgotten the history behind rugs. When buying your next rug, remember the history of rugs!

Learn more about the history of rugs at



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