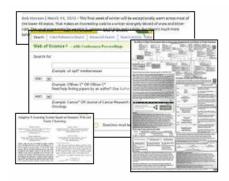
# Content design in practice

25<sup>th</sup> May 2023

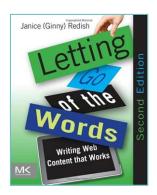
Caroline Jarrett
@cjforms

Jane Matthews @janematthews

# This workshop has one inspiration and three sets of source materials



The writing challenges that we encounter, through work or in professional life



Ginny Redish's book



https://slideshare.net/cjforms



https://editingthatworks.com

#### Introductions

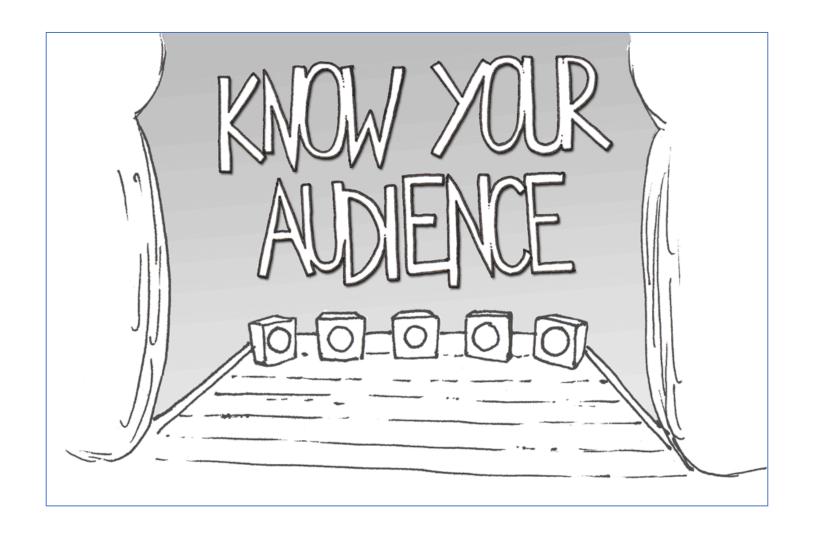
- Your name and role
- Your aims for today's workshop

# Editing that works has 9 steps to improve your content

- 1. Decide about who and why
- 2. Get to know the text
- 3. Put the best bit first
- 4. Slash everything else
- 5. Edit sentences
  - Reveal the actor
  - Kill "should"
  - Use familiar words in familiar ways
- 6. Put "if" before "then"
- 7. Demolish walls of words
- 8. Launch and land on the same name
- 9. Rest it then test it

# Agenda

- 1. Decide on who and why
- 9. Rest it then test it
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#### We work with formal documents

"In essence: a formal document is a document which has been created with care to serve a function ...

Why has this document been created? ...

A resignation letter is created so as to effect a resignation.

A letter in response to a request needs to be understood in the context of the request ...

[Nixon's] letter fulfils its function. Nothing more needed to be said, and so nothing more was said.

In contrast, [the] the Article 50 notification letter of then Prime Minister Theresa May ...

went on (and on) for six pages "

David Allen Green, solicitor and legal consultant



THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

August 9, 1974

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I hereby resign the Office of President of the United States.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger The Secretary of State Washington, D.C. 20520 11.35 AM

T

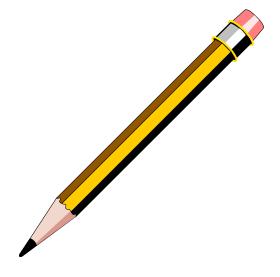
#### 1. Understand who and why

- Who are you writing for?
- Why will the person use what you create?
- Where, when and how will they use it?
- What do you expect them to do as a result of reading it?



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#### 9. Rest it then test it

- Rest: leave it alone for a few hours, then review.
- Test: try it out on someone, preferably a real user.

### Do usability testing on content

Get someone to try using your content for the planned purpose

Extra tip:

Get them to tell you what they are thinking as they work through



### Try some testing

- If you are the user
  - Please use this
  - As you work with it, please identify any problems
- If you're watching
  - Write notes
  - You'll report what you find to the group



# Agenda

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#### 2. Get to know the text

- 1. Work out what the bits are in this text
  - A bit is a paragraph or sentence with a single message
  - If a paragraph has more than one message, split it up
- 2. Apply a headline to each bit
  - The headline has the message of the bit
  - Write each headline as a mini-sentence
  - No standalone nouns
- 3. Rewrite all the headings as headlines, too

Hint: you'll decide which headlines, headings, and bits to keep in the next steps



#### Try deleting the first paragraph or sentence

We'll be doing the major slashing soon

You can get started now by deleting the first bit:

- The introduction
- The first paragraph
- The first sentence



Picture credit: John Sankey

#### I wanted to create a folder in Google Docs

https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/careerdevelopment/how-to-create-folder-in-google-docs



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Career development > How To Create a Folder in Google Docs (Deskto...

#### **How To Create a Folder in Google Docs (Desktop and Mobile)**

#### **Indeed Editorial Team**

Updated February 3, 2023









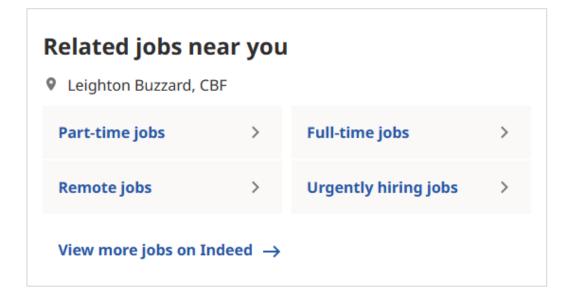


While offices have traditionally relied on physical cabinets to organize files, the prevalence of digital documents requires the use of other storage methods. Professionals who use Google Docs can create folders with Google Drive to organize their documents. Implementing this approach allows you to quickly sort through files and share them with colleagues, thus increasing overall productivity.

#### Scroll

https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-create-folder-in-google-docs

In this article, we explain how to create a folder in Google Docs with multiple methods and discuss the benefits of doing so.



#### What is a Google Docs folder?

A Google Docs folder is a digital bin that contains files you can create via the online word processor. Users create these folders within Google Docs, but the folders themselves live within Google Drive, a cloud-based

#### Scroll again

https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-create-folder-in-google-docs

storage and synchronization service linked to other brand services like Docs. You can give each folder a unique name and store multiple files within it.

Related: 11 Benefits of Cloud Computing 🗹

# How to create a folder in Google Docs on a desktop

Follow these steps to create a folder in Google Docs via a desktop computer:

#### 1. Navigate to the Docs home page

The Docs home page is an interface that displays your existing files and from which you can create new documents. The most direct way to navigate to the home page is to enter "docs.google.com" in your browser's search bar. You can also click to Google Docs from the search page by selecting the grid icon in the upper right-hand corner and selecting the Docs link.

#### And scroll again

https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-create-folder-in-google-docs

#### 2. Log in to your Google account

Your Google Docs files link to your Google account. If you have an account, you can log in from various channels, including the Google search page, Gmail, Drive and the Docs home page. If you don't have an account, navigate to any of the aforementioned channels, select "Create an account" and follow the on-screen instructions.

Related: How To Create a Google Doc on a Computer and a Mobile Device 🖸

#### 3. Create or open a document

Folder creation via Google Docs occurs within an active document. The Docs home page displays two sections. The top section features options for creating a new document, and the bottom section shows your existing documents. Select an option by clicking once on the icon of your choice. If you create a new document, give it a new title. The file saves automatically.

# Bingo! Step 5 is the bit I need

https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-create-folder-in-google-docs

#### 4. Select the "Move" option

In your web browser, here are two ways to select the "Move" option:

- Folder icon: The "Move" folder icon is next to the file name in the top left-hand corner of the document. Click on it once to select.
- "File" menu: The "File" menu is in the toolbar, on the far left side. The "Move" option is below "Rename" and "Add shortcut to Drive."

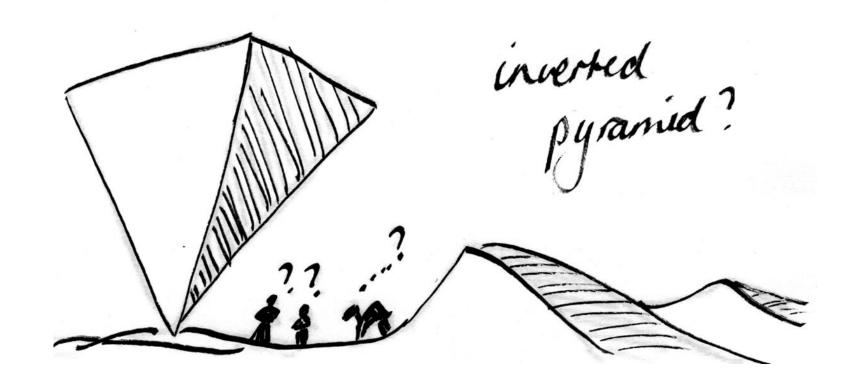
Related: How To Edit Offline in Google Docs (With Benefits)

#### 5. Select "New folder"

When you select the "Move" option, it activates a window of the existing folders in your Drive. The "New folder" option is In the bottom left-hand corner of the Drive window. It appears as another folder icon, with a plus symbol on it. Click on the icon

# Agenda

- ✓ Decide about who and why
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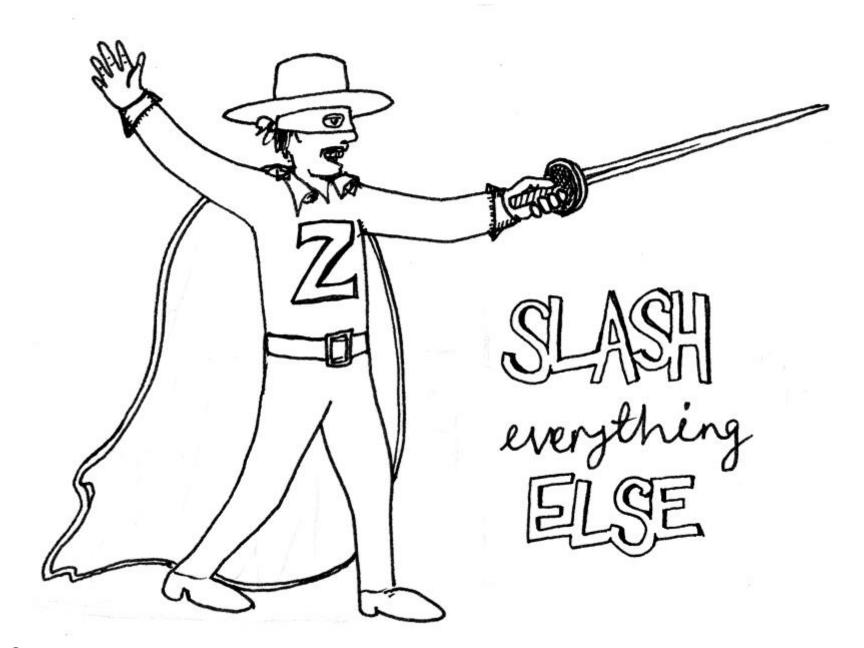
#### 3. Put the best bit first

- 1. Compare the headlines with the purpose
- 2. Choose the one that is most useful to go first the best bit
- 3. Move the best bit and its headline to the top
- 4. Check that things on the same topic are collected together

#### 3. Put the best bit first

- Read this example
- Decide on the best bit





#### Science doesn't have to be verbose

## Can apparent superluminal neutrino speeds be explained as a quantum weak measurement?

M V Berry<sup>1</sup>, N Brunner<sup>1</sup>, S Popescu<sup>1</sup> & P Shukla<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>H H Wills Physics Laboratory, Tyndall Avenue, Bristol BS8 1TL, UK

<sup>2</sup> Department of Physics, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India

Abstract

#### Science doesn't have to be verbose

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#### Abstract

Probably not.

Keywords: quantum measurement, interference, neutrino oscillations

PACS numbers: 03.65.Ta, 03.65.Xp, 14.60.Pq

Published: November 11 2011, J.Phys.A 44 492001

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Department of Physics, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India

## 4. Slash everything else

- Slash by half
- Slash by half again

Write in your own words a continuous summary of the following passage ... [which] contains about 1,500 words ... [the summary] should be about 300 words

SECTION 1. Write your answer to this question in a blue book. Work done in the wrong book will cause delay.

QUESTION I

Write in your own words a continuous summary of the following passage, which is adapted from 
"Historical Inevitability" by Isaiah Berlin (Oxford University Press, 1954), and contains about 
1,500 words. Your summary should give the substance of the passage clearly and accurately, and should 
be about 300 words in length; a substantially longer summary will lose marks.

It is a serious matter when empirical arguments are advanced for an historical determinism which excludes the notion of personal responsibility. For examples we have the great sociological theories of history—the materialistic or scientific interpretations which began with Montesquieu and the philosophes, and led to the great schools of the nineteenth century, from the Saint. Simonians and Hegelians to the followers of Comte, Marx, Darwin, and the liberal economists: from Freud, Pareto, Sorel to the ideologists of Fascism. Of these Marxism is much the boldest and the most intelligent and the least successful in its gallant and desperate attempt to treat history as a science. Arising out of them is the vast proliferation of anthropological and sociological studies of civilised societies, with their tendency to trace all character and behaviour to the same kind of relatively irrational and unconscious causes as those which are held to have so successfully explained the behaviour of primitive societies. We have witnessed the rebirth of the notion of the "sociology of knowledge", which suggests that not only our methods but our conclusions and our reasons for believing them, in the entire realm of knowledge, can be shown to be wholly or largely determined by the stage reached in the development of our class or group, or nation or culture, or whatever other unit may be chosen; followed, in due course, by the fusion of these often unconvincing, but, usually, at least quasi-scientific, doctrines with such non-empirical figments at times all but personified powers both good and bad-as the "Collectivist Spirit", or "The Myth of the Twentieth Century", or "The Contemporary Collapse of Values" (sometimes called "The Crisis of Faith "), or " Modern Man ", or " The Last Stage of Capitalism ". All these modes of speech have peopled the air with supernatural entities of great power, Neo-Platonic and Gnostic spirits, angels and demons who play with us as they will, or, at any rate, make demands on us which, we are told, we ignore at our peril. There has grown up in our modern time a quasi-sociological mythology which, in the guise of scientific concepts, has developed into a new animism-certainly a more primitive and naive religion than the traditional European faiths which it seeks to replace. This new cult leads troubled persons to ask such questions as "Is War inevitable?", or "Must Collectivism triumph?", or "Is Civilisation doomed?". These questions, and the tone in which they are posed, and the way in which they are discussed, imply a belief in the occult presence of vast impersonal entities-war, collectivism, doom-agencies and forces at large in the world, which we have but little power to control or deflect. Sometimes these are said to "embody themselves "in great men, titanic figures, who because they are at one with their age, achieve superhuman results-Napoleon, Bismarck, Lenin; sometimes in the actions of classes-the great capitalist combines, which work for ends that their members scarcely understand themselves, ends towards which their economic and social position "inevitably" drive them; sometimes of huge inchoate entities called "The Masses", which do the work of history, little knowing of what mighty forces they are the "creative vehicles". Wars, revolutions, dictatorships, military and economic transformations are apt to be conceived like the genii of some oriental demonology, djinns, which, once set free from the jars in which they have been confined for centuries, become uncontrollable, and capricionals play with the time that they have been confined for centuries, become uncontrollable. and capriciously play with the lives of men and nations. It is perhaps not to be wondered at that with so have rough of signal or the solutions. with so luxurious a growth of similes and metaphors, many innocent persons nowadays tend to believe that their lives are dominated and metaphors, many innocent persons nowadays tend to believe that their lives are dominated not meraphors, many innocent persons and internal factors—physical nature and the law developed by relatively stable, easily identifiable, material factors—physical nature and the laws dealt with by the natural sciences; but by even more powerful and sinister, and far less intelligible, with by the natural sciences; but by even more powerful and sinister, and far less intelligible. powerful and sinister, and far less intelligible, factors—the struggles of classes which members of these classes may not intend, the collision. these classes may not intend, the collision of social forces, the incidences of slumps and booms, which, like tides and harvests, can securely be social forces, the incidences of slumps and booms, which, like tides and harvests, can scarcely be controlled by those whose lives depend upon themabove all, by inexorable "societal" and "the controlled by those whose lives depend upon themabove all, by inexorable "societal" and "behavioural" patterns, to quote but a few sacred words from the barbarous vocabulary of the new path of a patterns, to quote but a few sacred words from the barbarous vocabulary of the new mythologies. Cowed and humbled by the panoply of the new divinities, men are eager, and seek the new divinities, men are eager, and seek anxionaly, for knowledge and comfort in the sacred books

#### 4. Recap and slash

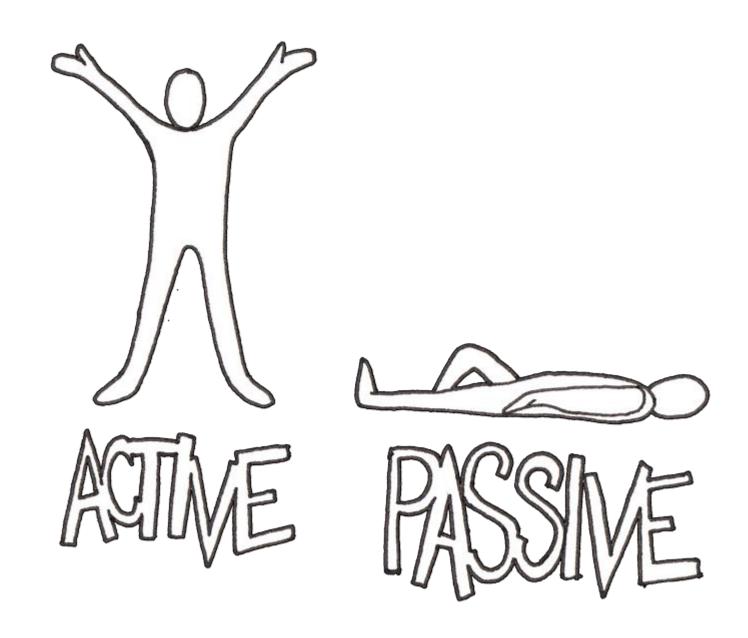
Step 1: Decide about who and why

Step 2: Get to know the text

Step 3: Put the best bit first

Step 4: Slash everything else





#### 5. Edit sentences

- Reveal the actor
- Kill "should"
- Use familiar words in familiar ways



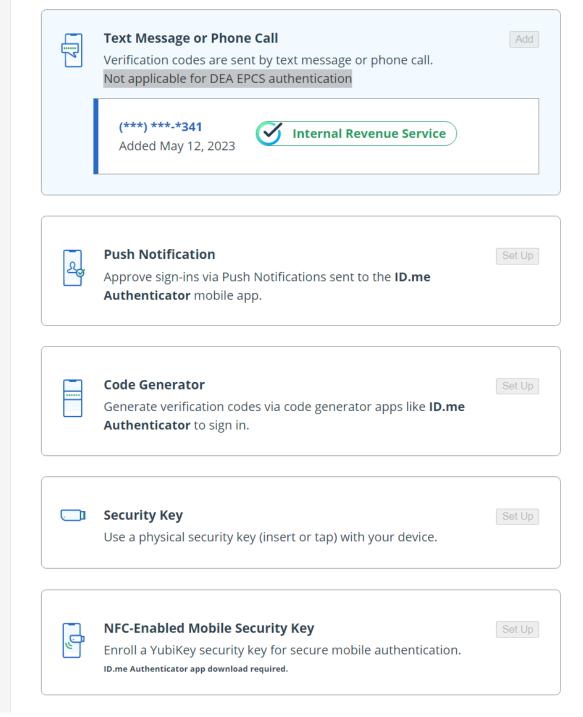
Francis Rowland told me about this picture. We haven't been able to find its origin. If you know it, please let me know.

#### 5a. Edit sentences

Reveal the actor, also known as 'active and passive'



# This site offers several ways to identify yourself. Are these familiar words?



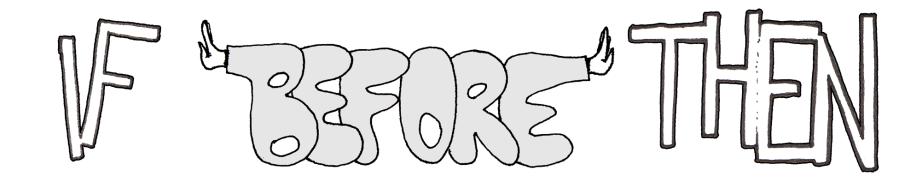
#### 5b. Edit sentences

Use familiar words in familiar ways



## Break

- ✓ Decide about who and why
- ✓ Rest it then test it
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### A short exercise based on Dixon, 1987

• Dixon, P. 1987. "The Processing of Organizational and Component Step Information in Written Directions" Journal of Memory and Language, 26, pp24-35, Academic Press, Inc.



#### 6. Put "if" before "then"

- Keep equivalent items parallel
- First things first, second things second
- Try writing instructions like a recipe



Picture credit: Flickr \_Raúl\_

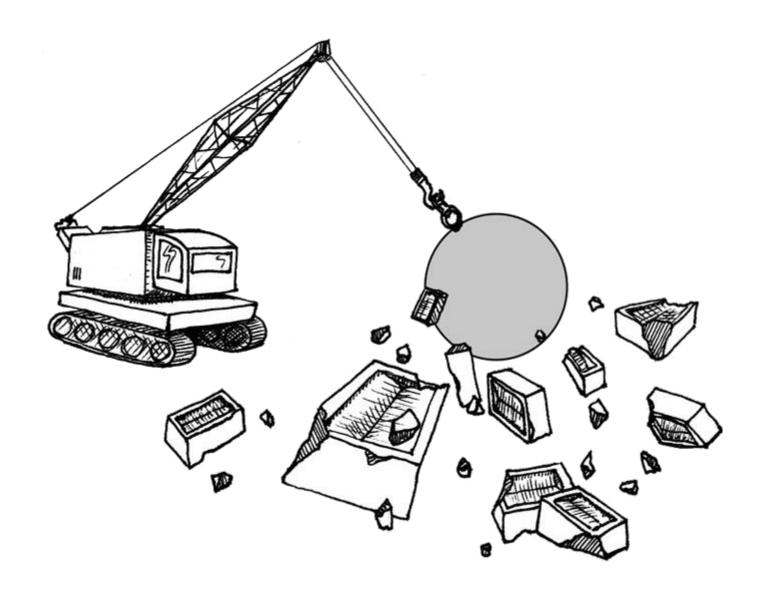
#### 6. Put "if" before "then" and bonus 5. Edit sentences

#### This example has:

- "then" before "if"
- "should"

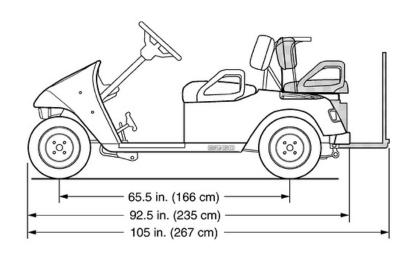
Try sorting it out





#### 7. Demolish walls of words

- Use bulleted lists for items or choices
- Use numbered lists for instructions
- Use visuals when they help
- Use tables to organise repetitive text or data



## Try this example from step 2 to step 7

Step 1: We did this for you

Step 2: Get to know the text

Step 3: Put the best bit first

Step 4: Slash everything else

Step 5: Edit sentences

Step 6: Put "if" before "then"

Step 7: See whether we still have a wall of words!



- ✓ Decide about who and why
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#### 8. Launch and land on the same name

- Give a reward for each click
- Write meaningful links:
  - no 'click here'
  - no 'more information'



Picture credit: Flickr jek in the box

#### Let's think about links and link names

As always, we start with Step 1.

Then have a look at the links in this document.

Can we think of any improvements?



- ✓ Decide about who and why
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- 9. Rest it then test it



## Do usability testing on content

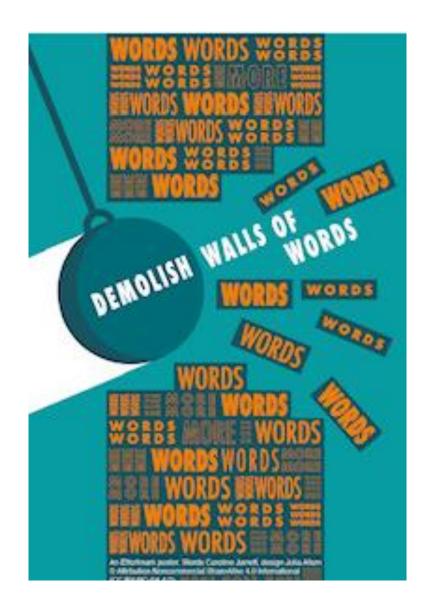
Get someone to try using your content for the planned purpose

Extra tip:

Get them to tell you what they are thinking as they work through



# We have two free posters



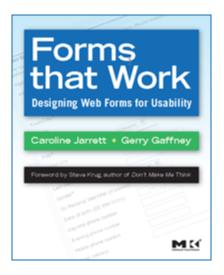


## Wrap up

Let's do a retro????

#### **Caroline Jarrett**

#### @cjforms





Effortmark.co.uk carolinej@effortmark.co.uk

#### Jane Matthews

#### @janematthews

