


Writing for the web
EUI
November 2010


Els Aerts – AGConsult
Web usability & Information architecture

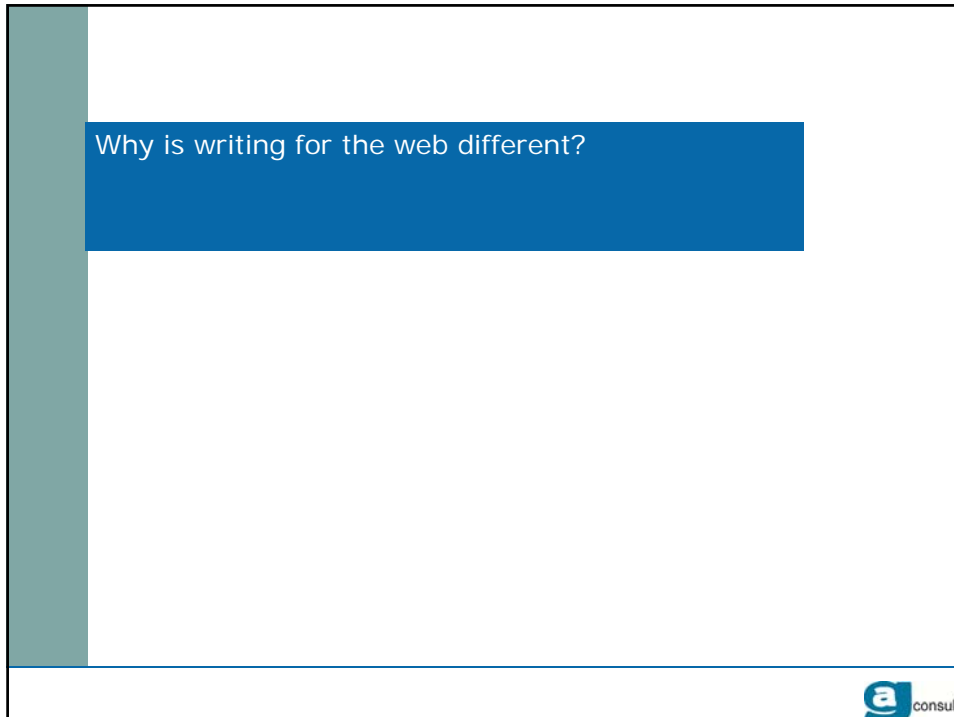
www.agconsult.be
www.webusability-blog.com
www.twitter.com/els_aerts



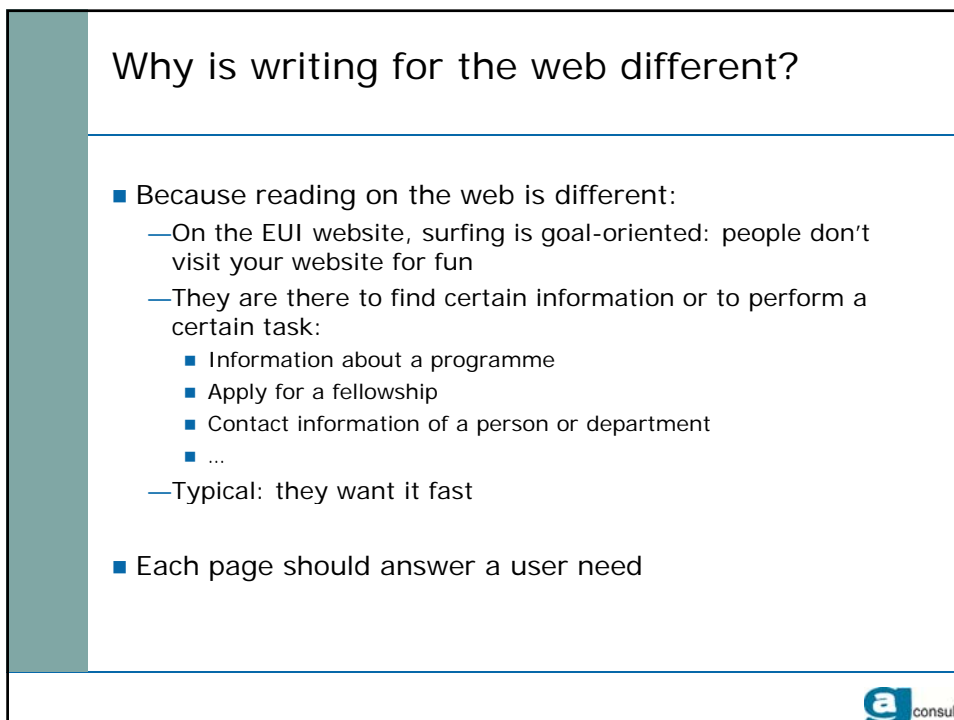

Overview

- Why is writing for the web different?
- Target audience and goal
- Structure
- Scannability
- Simplicity
- Links
- Images
- Correct and up-to-date
- Search engine optimisation
- Results of good web writing






Why is writing for the web different?



Why is writing for the web different?

- Because reading on the web is different:
 - On the EUI website, surfing is goal-oriented: people don't visit your website for fun
 - They are there to find certain information or to perform a certain task:
 - Information about a programme
 - Apply for a fellowship
 - Contact information of a person or department
 - ...
 - Typical: they want it fast
- Each page should answer a user need



People don't read online?

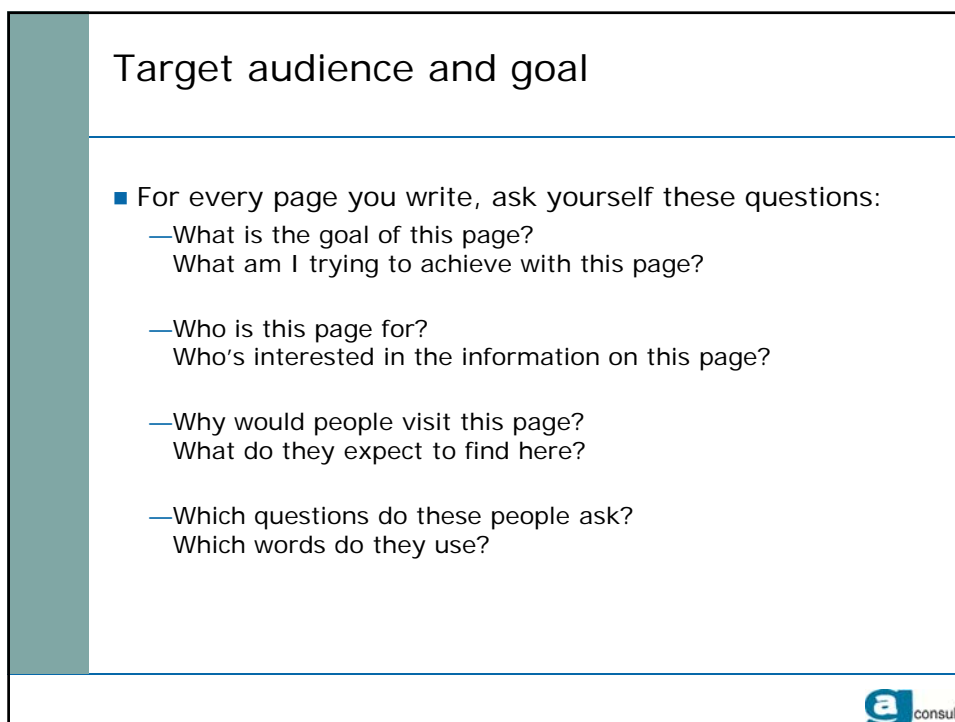
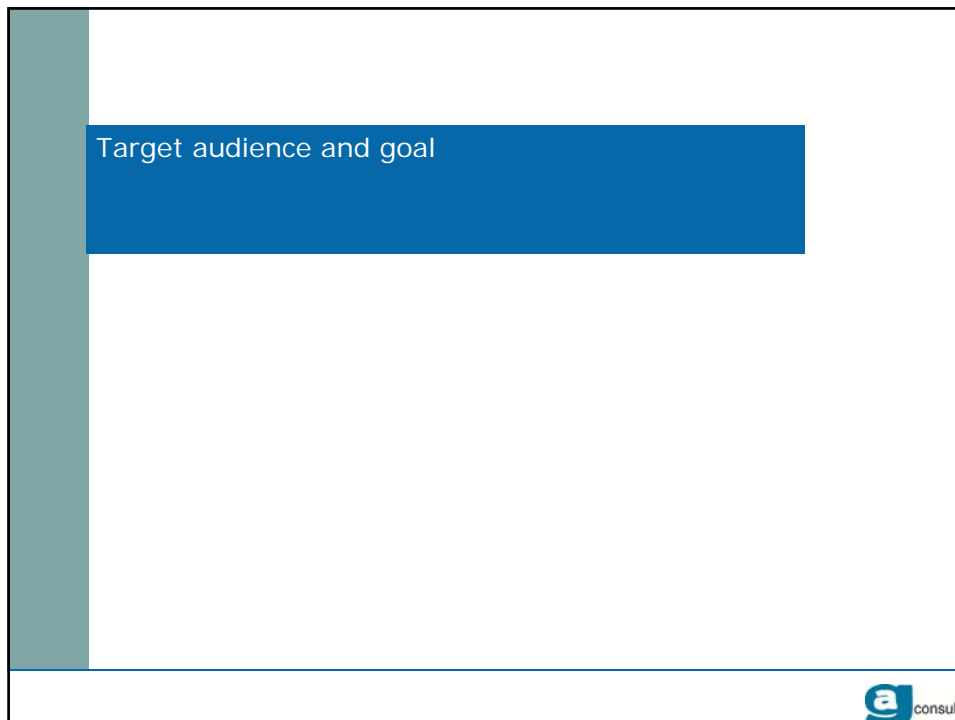
- Of course they do
- But: reading on the web is different:
 - People only start reading once they think they've reached their 'destination page'
 - People scan web copy rather than read it word for word
- Why is this?
 - Internet has always been a fast medium
 - Google has reinforced the need for speed



Reading on the web is different

- Computer screen versus print: 25% slower
- 79% of online readers scan instead of read
- Most people only read 75% of the page length
- On the average web page, people only read 28% of the copy





A bit of research goes a long way

- How can you know what people really want?
And which words they use?
 - Frequently asked questions (especially via email)
 - Online questionnaire
 - Google Insights for Search:
www.google.com/insights/search/
 - ...



Global English

- Most of your visitors are not native English speakers
Adapt your writing to accommodate these visitors
- Avoid:
 - Words with multiple meanings
 - Complex metaphors
 - Idioms or expressions non-native readers might not understand



Structure



Structure

- Different page types require a different structure
 - Overview pages
 - Detail pages



Overview pages

- What is an overview page?
 - Every page between the homepage and a detail page
- Purpose of an overview page?
 - Get the reader to the right detail page as fast as possible
- 2 things are important
 - Clear layout
 - 'Content blocks'
 - Horizontal harmony improves scannability
 - Meaningful links or short, clear copy



Good overview page with links

The screenshot shows the VIB website with a navigation menu (Home, Research, Training, Business opportunities, About VIB) and a breadcrumb trail (Home > Research). The main content is organized into three columns: Research areas (listing fields like Bioinformatics, Cancer, etc.), Model organisms (listing species like Arabidopsis, Drosophila, etc.), and Research services (listing services like Sequencing and genotyping, etc.). Below these columns is a search bar for VIB group leaders and a list of departments across two campuses (Ghent University Campus and K.U. Leuven Campus).

Good overview page with short texts

The screenshot shows the University of Oxford website with a navigation menu (ADMISSIONS, DIVISIONS, COLLEGES, VISITORS & FRIENDS, INTERNATIONAL, RESEARCH, ENTERPRISE, ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY) and a search bar. The main content features several short text articles with images, including 'One third of Oxford's students and academic staff, including 63% of full-time graduate students, come from outside the UK', 'The India connection', 'Oxford: British and International', 'Oxford Around the Globe', 'International Collaboration', 'Globalisation Research', and 'International Support Services'. The page also includes a 'Back to top' button, 'Print page' button, and 'Recommend this page' button.

Good overview page with short texts

The screenshot shows the 'Apply to the EUI' page. It has a blue header with the EUI logo and navigation links: 'About the EUI', 'Programmes & Fellowships', 'Departments & Centres', 'Research', 'Seminars & Events', 'News', and 'Services & Admin'. Below the header is a search bar and a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > About the EUI > Apply to the EUI'. The main content area is divided into four columns: 'Ph.D. Researchers', 'LL.M. Researchers', 'Academic Visitors', and 'Postdoctoral Fellows'. Each column contains a short paragraph of text and a link. On the right, there is a 'Latest News' section with two news items: 'Energy Transparency Award Ceremony' and 'The Lisbon Treaty one year on by Maroš Šefčovič, Vice President of the European Commission'. A vertical sidebar on the left contains a list of links: 'President's Welcome', 'Organization', 'Brief History', 'Why Choose the EUI', 'Apply to the EUI', 'Job Opportunities', 'Visitors', 'Facts & Figures', 'Alumni', 'Tenders', 'Safety & Security Policy', 'How to Reach Us', and 'EUI Campus'.

These pages don't offer a good overview

- <http://www.eui.eu/About/Alumni/Activities/Index.aspx>
- <http://www.eui.eu/About/Alumni/Publications/Index.aspx>
- <http://www.eui.eu/ProgrammesAndFellowships/Index.aspx>

consult

Detail page

- What is a detail page?
 - An end page in the information structure
 - A page without underlying pages
- Purpose of a detail page?
 - Create interest in an event
 - Explain how the application procedure works
 - ...



Detail pages

- 1 page = 1 message
- Inverted pyramid
 - Informative titles and leads (5 W's)
 - Put the most important information first
 - 1 idea per paragraph
 - Put the most important point in the first sentence of the paragraph.
 - Structure information in a way that is most convenient for the reader



Titles and leads

- Title
 - Give information
 - Avoid unknown abbreviations, idioms and difficult words
 - Use telegram style
 - Put the most important word first
 - 6 words maximum
- First paragraph
 - News, events
 - Extra information: 5 W's
 - Other pages
 - Short summary of what the page is about
 - 5 lines maximum



Informative titles

Mauro Cappelletti Prize

Linz-Rokkan Prize in Political Sociology

The title should make clear what an article or page is about.
The first article is about the 2010 winner of the prize.
The second article is about a new prize. There's no winner yet.
But that's not clear from the titles.



Informative titles

The title should make clear what an article or page is about.


The first title assumes everybody knows who Karel De Gucht is. That is not the case.

The second title doesn't assume anything. Much better.


Never overestimate your audience.

Visit of Karel De Gucht

Leading World Authority on Competitive Strategy, Michael Porter, Speaks at IESE



Informative leads




Astronaut Frank De Winne receives UGent honorary doctorate

On 17 November 2010, Belgian astronaut Frank De Winne receives an honorary doctorate of Ghent University. The presentation of the degree takes place during the academic meeting within the framework of 175 years of Engineering at UGent. [> Read more](#)

The lead contains answers to the basic questions:

- Who: Frank De Winne
- What: Honorary doctorate
- When: 17 November 2010
- Where: Ghent University



Keep leads short: don't duplicate the page

Family, Kinship and State in Contemporary Europe Vol. 3: Perspectives on theory and policy, Patrick Heady and Martin Kohli (eds)



Kinship is at the heart of European society, sharing with the state responsibility for welfare and social reproduction. But the workings of kinship and their connection to state policies remain controversial. Received theories have had to be revised in the light of social and demographic change and accumulating evidence of long-standing cultural differences.

With Family, Kinship and State in Contemporary Europe, the editors and their collaborators have gathered a three-volume array of historical, sociological, and ethnographic data that examine these issues and introduce readers to the types of kin relationships found around contemporary Europe.

In this volume the authors use network data to measure the extent of mutual assistance between relatives and explore its connection to residence and marriage patterns, intergenerational relationships, gender roles and fertility.

They go on to review the findings of the whole study – drawing critically on theories of altruism, reciprocity, cultural continuity and socio-economic change. The book closes with some recommendations for policy.

This is a very long lead.
It makes you wonder what more the actual page about the book is going to tell you.



Family, Kinship and State in Contemporary Europe

Vol. 3: Perspectives on theory and policy

Patrick Heady & Martin Kohli (eds)

Campus



Kinship is at the heart of European society, sharing with the state responsibility for welfare and social reproduction. But the workings of kinship and their connection to state policies remain controversial. Received theories have had to be revised in the light of social and demographic change and accumulating evidence of long-standing cultural differences. With Family, Kinship and State in Contemporary Europe, the editors and their collaborators have gathered a three-volume array of historical, sociological, and ethnographic data that examine these issues and introduce readers to the types of kin relationships found around contemporary Europe.

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Table of Contents

- 1) Introduction: towards a political economy of kinship and welfare
(Patrick Heady and Martin Kohli)
- 2) Family, kindred and marriage
(Patrick Heady, Siegfried Gruber and Zhonghui Ou)
- 3) Remembering the forgotten kin
(Michael Schnegg)
- 4) Perspectives on theory and policy

Not much apparently. Keep the lead on the previous page short.
That way, you don't push exactly the same info on people twice.

Structure for the reader

- Shouldn't the history of the EUI start with when it was founded?
—<http://www.eui.eu/About/HistoryofEUI.aspx>
- The important information on this page is who won the prize this year. Why is that at the end?
—<http://www.eui.eu/About/Alumni/News/2010/10-08-MauroCappellettiPrize.aspx>



Scannability



Make texts easy to scan

- Keep sentences short (max. 15 words)
- Keep paragraphs short (max. 5 sentences)
- Leave whitespace between paragraphs
- Use bullet lists
- Short pages: subheadings
- Longer pages: subheadings or jump links



Make texts easy to scan

- Make important words stand out:
 - Don't use:
 - Cursive
 - Capitals
 - Colour
 - Underlining
 - Do use:
 - **Bold**



Use the CMS settings

- Use the standard settings in the CMS to create subtitles, lists, etc

=> Important for users with a visual impairment!



1 idea per paragraph

Book Donations

The EUI Library welcomes donations of materials in formats, subject areas and languages relevant to study and research done at the EUI.

Gifts are accepted without conditions. The Library reserves the right to dispose of donations as appropriate. They can be included in the collections, exchanged with other libraries or given away.

Donated books are evaluated by librarians in charge of collection development and recommended for inclusion where relevant.

When donated books are included in the collections, the name of the donor (persons or institutions) is inscribed in the book. Donors are invited to accompany their gift with contact information and are also welcome to insert their own bookplates.

The Library does not advise on monetary value of donations, or of materials that might be candidates for donation.

Every paragraph contains new information.
Sometimes, that means a paragraph contains only one sentence.
That's perfectly fine.



Use bullet lists

- Don't write:

What makes us so successful in today's competitive environment, is our [unique organisational structure](#), [exceptional people](#) and [cutting-edge technologies](#).

- But write:

What makes us so successful?

- [Unique organisational structure](#)
- [Exceptional people](#)
- [Cutting-edge technologies](#)



Use bullet lists

- Don't write:

The heads of the four departments and the Director of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies are ex officio members of the Research Council.

- But write:

Members by virtue of position:

- Heads of the 4 departments
- Director of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies



Use bullet lists

Explore our research and development activities in the fields of [mental illness](#), [neurological disorders](#), [anaesthesia and analgesia](#), [gastrointestinal disorders](#), [fungal infections](#), [allergies](#), [cancer](#), [biotechnology](#) and [women's health](#).

Research Overview


<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental illness • Neurological disorders • Anaesthesia and analgesia • Gastrointestinal disorders • Fungal infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergies • Cancer • Biotechnology • Women's health
--	--

Research and development activities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergies • Anaesthesia and analgesia • Biotechnology • Cancer • Fungal infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastrointestinal disorders • Mental illness • Neurological disorders • Women's health
--	--

Better, but still not great.
The title isn't ideal and the order of the list doesn't make sense.

Clear title and logical order.



This is not a good way to present a list

Who this concerns

A broader cross-section of the European public will benefit from the ACCEPT-PLURALISM research. These include:

Policy Makers at the European and national level
Local and Regional Authorities (planning and implementing policies for immigrant and minority social and cultural integration)
Non Governmental Organisations (minority and immigrant associations)
Journalists – Media Professionals
Education policy officers - High School Teachers and Students
Academics and Graduate Students



Use the settings in the CMS to create lists

The Five Year Limit

All researchers admitted to the Institute from 2000 onwards are expected to submit their thesis within five years. In some cases the actual defence may take place after the expiry of the five year limit.

Exceptions to the five year rule are these cases where registration has been interrupted or suspended for some reason:

- (i) if you have had a paid stage or assistantship which has caused your EUI grant to be suspended at some point,
- (ii) if you have had maternity or paternity leave,
- (iii) if you have undergone compulsory military service,
- (iv) if you have suffered a prolonged medical illness certified by a recognized medical practitioner, or
- (v) if your student status itself has been suspended for some other reason duly approved by the Admissions Committee,

then the deadline for submission of the thesis will be extended to take account of the relevant period of interruption or suspension.

The full set of rules can be found in the Academic Rules and Regulations for the Doctoral programme web link.



List of words: no punctuation needed

Quick Links

- ⌘ [Researchers' Guide 2010-2011](#)
- ⌘ [Researcher Representatives](#)
- ⌘ [Job Market](#)
- ⌘ [Testimonials](#)
- ⌘ [How to Reach Us](#)
- ⌘ [Max Weber Programme](#)
- ⌘ [Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies](#)

Correction is offered for:

- ➔ Seminar papers
- ➔ June papers
- ➔ Forum papers (Department of Economics)
- ➔ 2nd-year chapters (max. 60 pages)
- ➔ Articles, conference papers, working papers, etc. can also be corrected, at the discretion of the English Unit



List of sentences: use full stops, not semicolons

Output

The output of ACCEPT-PLURALISM to its target audiences includes:

- The ACCEPT PLURALISM website (www.accept-pluralism.eu) containing updated information on the ongoing relevant research;
- E-mail Alerts on relevant to the research events sent (in English) to academics, NGOs, policy makers and the media at the national and European levels;
- Academic publications in the project's web site and in peer-reviewed scientific journals in different languages making ACCEPT PLURALISM's findings accessible to the scientific world at large;
- Policy briefs relevant for politicians at the European Union, Council of Europe, national and local levels, and for journalists;
- National events and three European Workshops presenting the ACCEPT PLURALISM's work and enhancing exchange of views with policy-makers, practitioners, representatives from NGOs and civil society, as well as with the academic community;
- A Handbook on Ideas on Diversity and Tolerance in Europe in plain language for non expert local and national policy makers and for secondary education teachers and students. The Handbook will explain the main concepts related to tolerating and accepting diversity, highlighting specific policies and practices from different EU countries.



Use subheadings to visualise structure

Conditions of Award

Eligibility

The fellowships is open to established academics with an international reputation. Former professors or fellows of the EUI are eligible after three years have elapsed since their last contract with the EUI.

Nationality

Candidates of all nationalities are eligible.

Languages

Fellows should speak at least two EU languages, one of which should be English.

Duration

The fellowship lasts 3-10 months. Candidates must indicate their intended length of stay in the application. The Department of Political and Social Sciences normally expects fellows to stay a minimum of 5 months. Fellowships are not normally awarded for the months of July and August.

Residence

Fellows must live in Florence for the duration of the fellowship so that they can take an active part in the academic activities of their Department.

Stipend

The monthly stipend is € 3,000. The amount of the grant for successful applicants whose normal place of residence is within 90 km of Florence will be fixed at a lower rate.



Departmental Profile and Research Themes

The principal focus of the Department of History and Civilization is on the history of Europe, from the medieval and early modern period to the present. Within the department European history is studied from a variety of perspectives, using a wide range of approaches. In terms of interdisciplinarity the department encourages cooperation with the social sciences, and in terms of research agenda, places a strong emphasis on the development of comparative history and transnational history. Naturally, with so many researchers and professors coming from all European academic traditions, the department celebrates Europe's diversity.

At the same time the department is strongly committed to common aims and objectives in an attempt to move beyond national perspectives on history, to integrate national historiographies into distinctly European perspectives, putting them into broader methodological and thematic contexts, and to relate historical research critically to the concerns of contemporary Europeans.

In terms of research projects, the first focus is on the construction of empires, nations and regions as well as on the entanglements among the different social groups within them. Rethinking space as an analytical tool of historical research implies reconsidering the variety and variations of the geopolitical, cultural and social constellations—and conflicts—that make up Europe. Here new research questions emerge. Focusing on empires we ask whether the construction of Europe should be conceived of differently—perhaps as one example amongst many—of the construction of empires. In studying the nation states and regions of Europe our research projects examine issues of borders and frontiers, processes of cultural and intellectual exchange, and the conflicts and the forms of violence that shape Europe's spaces, including war, expulsion, persecution and displacement. The reality and problems derived from European integration in the long run and in its most contemporary developments is also a concern of the department. Thus, the representations of what shaped Europe and the interlinking among different societies both within it and between Europe and other Civilisations in the *longue durée* lie at the heart of our work agenda.

The second research focus is the study of ideas, discourse and memory. The department is a European microcosm of the debates on the relationship between social, economic and cultural history, of the study of memory, and of Europe's cultural and intellectual traditions. The department's aim is to be at the vanguard of epistemological and methodological innovation, cultivating a rich and distinctly European plurality of perspectives for the study of different problems and periods.

Plurality, diversity and dialogue are keywords within the department. Specialists in social history examine social actors, social practices, social contexts, networks and clusters with special attention to cross-border relationships. Others are students of cultural and intellectual history and analyse cultural practices and actions, the history of science, the transfer of concepts among social groups and political spaces, and the shifts and changes of the languages of politics and science. Those interested in economic history examine the history of

A text as long as this needs subheadings.
It makes the page easier to scan and more appealing to read.

economic aspects of globalisation
partment contributes to the study of
perspective.

Use jump links to visualise structure

- Jump links are a clickable index at the top of the page
- They provide fast and easy access to the main areas of the page
- They give the reader an overview of the page content without having to scroll

Why no jump links on these pages?

- <http://www.eui.eu/ServicesAndAdmin/AcademicService/PracticalInformation/IDCardsPermitsVisasImports.aspx>
- <http://www.eui.eu/ServicesAndAdmin/LanguageCentre/Registration/Index.aspx>
- <http://www.eui.eu/DepartmentsAndCentres/PoliticalAndSocialSciences/DoctoralProgramme/GrantInfo.aspx>



Underlining is for links only

Tested Assessment of Language Ability

Candidates invited for interview must sit language assessment tests.

Spoken and written tests in English (similar to the TOEFL or IELTS test) are obligatory for all candidates who are non-native speakers of English.

These take about 90 minutes and can be taken at any time during the interview period. Interviewees holding an English language proficiency certificate are not exempted from the test.



Highlight text in bold

Leaving the EUI Checklist

- **Contact address:** Leave a full contact address with your Department and with Academic Service. Return all material (books, locker keys) and pay any outstanding bills or fines. Check that your Library account is clear and closed.
- **Language Centre & Computing Service:** Return all DVDs, manuals, CDs and settle any outstanding fees for courses, etc.
- **Outstanding payments:** Settle outstanding debts, such as loans, Van Breda payments, Crèche, EUI accommodation rent or bills. Call 2667 or email contabilita@eui.eu to know the amount due. Payments should be made by bank transfer to the EUI account: Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze c/c 69156/00, IBAN IT 75 Z 06160 02800 000069156C00, SWIFT CODE CRFIT3F
- **EUI card:** Return your EUI badge/card to the porters at your EUI site.
- **Key to EUI flats:** When your contract ends return the keys in person to Logistic Service (Housing Office). If you do not, the deposit will not be reimbursed.
- **Italian Ministerial ID Card:** This card is the property of the Italian state and must be returned to the Ministry. To do this return it, even if it has already expired, to michela.menicagli@eui.eu, ext. 2373, Room 24, Bank Corridor.

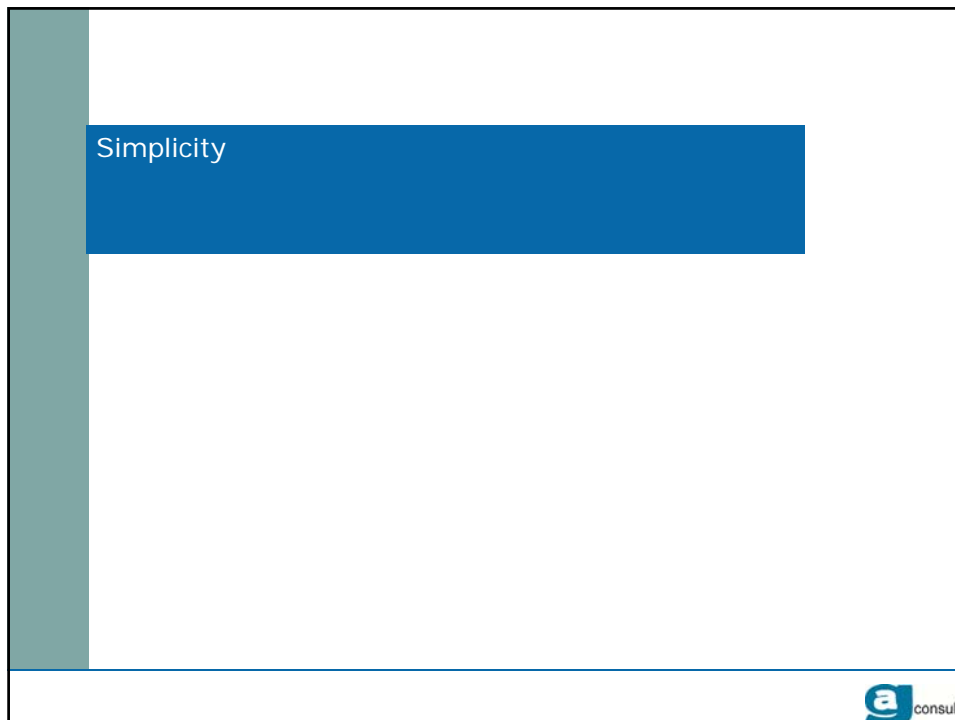


Too much bold? Nothings stands out

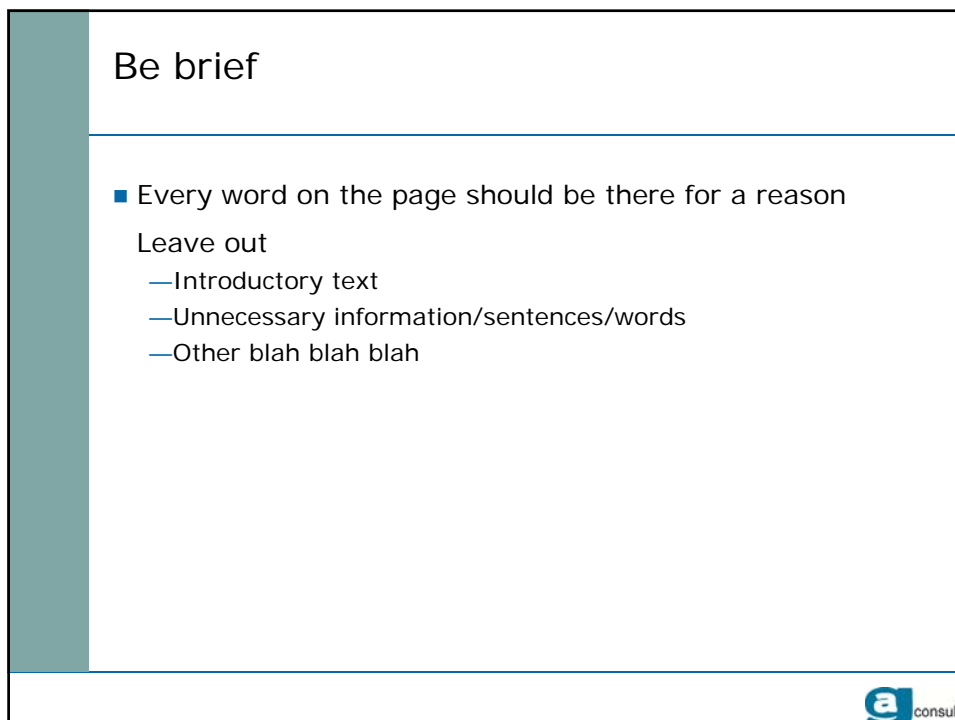

This Project called "**Un c@ppuccino per un PC**" [**A C@ppuccino for a PC**] (Italian Law of 6 December 2005) is designed for all **students regularly enrolled in University degrees (bachelors, MSc, PhDs and Specialized Masters)**. This program aims to help students to purchase laptops in two different ways:

- **A loan guaranteed by the Government in collaboration with specific financial institutions** (Italian version) for a maximum value of **€1200**. The loan is to be paid back over a period of **12 to 36 months** (on average **€1 per day**, the price of a cappuccino).
- **A Government contribution (bonus)**
All **students who are entitled to exemption from University fees** in accordance with **DPR 306 of 25 July 1997 art. 3, c.4**, (Italian version) can also take advantage of an extra Government contribution of **€200** on top of the loan. The bonus will be issued in the form of a reduction to the net price of the PC including VAT and any discounts. Therefore, those students receiving the Government bonus are entitled to a guaranteed **loan for a maximum value of €1000**.





Simplicity




Be brief

- Every word on the page should be there for a reason

Leave out

- Introductory text
- Unnecessary information/sentences/words
- Other blah blah blah



Avoid stating the obvious

Unnecessary. Leave it out.

Tenders

Information on open Calls for Tenders at the EUI are published on this page.

Tender for the in-house Service of Travel Management and Organisation of the European University Institute

- Lettera d'Invito [it](#)
- Documentazione Completa [it](#)
- Allegato 1 - Offerta Economica [it](#)
- Allegato 2 - Calendario Festività 2010 [it](#)
- Capitolato Speciale di Appalto [it](#)

Deadline: 19/11/2010, 12.00 (Central European Time)




No intros, no excuses

Irrelevant information the reader is not interested in. Leave it out.

Practical Information

See the links below for more information about some extracurricular aspects of life at the EUI and in Florence. This section has been drawn up by Academic Service, based on our experience in dealing with everyday issues such as assisting researchers or members of staff in finding a doctor or dentist or providing advice on health or insurance matters. The information supplied is meant purely as a guide and whilst every effort has been made to keep the information accurate and up-to-date, the Institute cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions, however caused.

- [New and Current Researchers and Fellows](#)
- [Prospective Researchers and Fellows](#)
- [ID Cards, Permits, Visas](#)
- [Tax Codes, Imports & Vehicles](#)
- [Health & Accident Insurance, Researchers & Fellows](#)
- [Leaving the EUI](#)




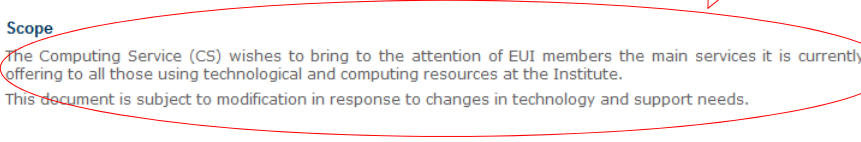

No intro's, no excuses

What We Provide

Scope
The Computing Service (CS) wishes to bring to the attention of EUI members the main services it is currently offering to all those using technological and computing resources at the Institute.
This document is subject to modification in response to changes in technology and support needs.

Contents


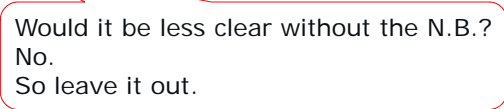
1. Hardware Policy and Procurement
2. Software Procurement
3. Equipment Monitoring
4. User Support
5. General Services
6. Service Hours
7. On-campus IT facilities



Every word should be there for a reason

Opening Hours

- + Monday-Saturday 08.30-22.30
- + Sunday: closed
- + (N.B. Only EUI members, partners of EUI members and Alumni registered for library access can enter the library on Saturdays)



Be brief

- Don't write:

Its current members are as follows:

- But write:

Current members:



Keep it simple

- Plain language
- No jargon
- Use abbreviations appropriately
- Simple sentence structure
- Active voice
- Address the reader directly
- Use the imperative for instructions
- Give examples
- Avoid 'relative' time indicators



Use plain language

Enrolment and Induction

Children of EUI members can enrol from 1 September to 31 August on presentation of the following:

- certificato d'idoneità (certificate attesting that the child is fit and healthy)
- copy of vaccination certificate
- list of food intolerances or allergies
- a completed and signed [registration form](#) emailed or sent to [Gloria Peruzzi](#) at least 1 month before the child is due to attend

Induction to accustom children to their new surroundings takes place over two weeks and a parent may be present.

After the induction period, children should not be visited except to be taken out to lunch.

Induction should be arranged beforehand with the supervisors and can be done throughout the year.



Use plain language

Dean of Studies

The [remit](#) of the Dean of Studies, [Prof. Martin van Gelderen](#), is the co-ordination of studies at the EUI.

Prof. van Gelderen chairs the [Admissions Committee](#) and the [Doctoral Programme Committee](#) (DPC).

The Dean of Studies carries out his functions in close cooperation with the DPC, the [Academic Service](#), the faculty of the four [Departments](#), researchers and administrators.



Use abbreviations appropriately

Max Weber Programme for Postdoctoral Studies

The overall aim of the Max Weber Programme (MWP), the largest postdoctoral training programme in the Social and Human Sciences in the world, is to support the fellows in the development of a successful academic career.

The most important benefits of the programme lie in the professional schooling it offers fellows. To this end they are affiliated with one of the EUI teaching departments, where they participate in seminars and workshops.

Within the MWP, a broad variety of activities are organized for the fellows throughout the year with an individual focus on really developing to be internationally competitive.

The Max Weber Programme is geared to developing the academic skills of postdoctoral fellows, while leaving ample time for individual research agendas.



Use abbreviations appropriately

Gender and Sexual Diversity

The LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) caucus at the EUI

We are delighted to announce the formation of a LGBTQ caucus at the EUI for the very first time in its 30-year plus history, accompanied by its own forum and email address.

The reason why the LGBTQ community at the EUI is being semi-formalized in this way is because we feel that this minority needs an organized, active, and visible presence in the plethora of social activities on campus, and because we feel that that the university environment is in grave need of a pink touch.

The LGBTQ caucus at the EUI operates as a society or social club promoting gender diversity through a variety of events, mainly informal weekly gatherings on campus or attendance at events elsewhere.

The social network forum, LGBTQ, serves as a noticeboard where members of the community can post their ads and announcements, or where you can simply send it to us and we will post it for you.

Mail internal and external enquiries to lgbtq@eui.eu



Keep sentences short and simple

- Don't write:

Given the multilingual nature of the Institute and world-wide communication at the academic level, researchers have the opportunity to learn other languages at the Institute Language centre - read more on this service on the centre's [website](#).

- But write:

Researchers can learn other languages at the institute's [Language Centre](#).



Don't use semicolons. Start a new sentence.

An online/electronic version of the reference is sufficient; an additional hard copy is not required.



Use the active voice

- Don't write:

The following information must be included in the application for it to be considered complete.

- But write:

You must include the following information in your application.



Imperative voice for instructions

- Don't write:

Applicants should note that the EUI will keep them informed by e-mail of all developments in their application. Candidates are therefore kindly requested to refrain from contacting the Institute to enquire about the outcome of their application.



- But write:

Do not contact us to enquire about the outcome of your application. We will keep you informed by e-mail of all developments in your application.



Address the reader directly: say 'you'

- <http://www.eui.eu/About/JobOpportunities/RequestsAndComplaints.aspx>



Give examples

Living in Florence

Average monthly expenses for a person living in a single room in a flat-share

Basic Goods & Services	Approximate Monthly Expenses (€)	Notes
Rent	400	For a single room in a 3-person flat-share
Electricity	40	Approximate monthly average
Gas & Heating	40	Costs more in winter than in summer
Telephone	30	Basic standing charge plus some local calls
Transport	35	Monthly bus pass
Supermarket, food, drink, essentials	250	Basic food & essentials
EUI lunches	70	20 weekday lunches at €3.50
Breakfast/coffee bar	50	
Shoes, clothing	60	
Other expenses	80	Emergency, medical, postage, etc.
Leisure	100	Indicative figure for meals, drinks out, etc.
Total	€1,155 approximately	



Avoid relative time indicators

- Don't write:

Your login and password will expire next week. Make sure to renew them in time.

- But write:

Your login and password are about to expire.
Renew them before 1 December 2010.



Links



Use links the right way

- Avoid meaningless links
- Keep links short
- Only link to useful information
- Don't put a link in the first paragraph of a detail page
- Don't put too much links in a text but group them at the bottom
- Avoid 'naked' urls
- Make urls and email addresses clickable



Avoid meaningless links

- Don't write:
Unsure about your spelling? If you need an online dictionary [click here](#).
- But write:
Unsure about your spelling?
Use an [online dictionary](#).



Avoid meaningless links

Previous publications

- EMU Rules: the Political and Economic Consequences of European Monetary Integration, [by] Torres, F., A. Verdun and H. Zimmerman



Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2006

This book is a significantly revised version of the previous in-house (and non-commercial) publication. It was the announced intention of the editors to pursue their work on the topic and find a good commercial publisher for it. The volume has new papers (and a preface by Paul De Grauwe) and one entire section was cut; its coherence is substantially increased (authors had the time to take each others' contributions into account and to follow the suggestions of the editors and discussants); it has also been substantially updated and edited.

- Governing EMU: Economic, Political, Legal and Historical Perspectives [by] Torres, F., A. Verdun, C. Zilioli and H. Zimmermann, Florence: EUI Press, 2004

See edited proceedings [here](#) , and the volume cover [here](#) .

Tender for the in-house Service of Travel Management and Organisation of the European University Institute

- Lettera d'Invito [it](#)
- Documentazione Completa [it](#)
- Allegato 1 - Offerta Economica [it](#)
- Allegato 2 - Calendario Festività 2010 [it](#)
- Capitolato Speciale di Appalto [it](#)



Avoid meaningless links

Computers and Internet Points on Campus

Type of Resource

- Research PC = Computer Room PC with full research software suite, USB support, etc. (as per [on-line specs](#)), EUI users ONLY (EUI account needed)
- EUI Visitor PC = Office PC with basic software suite, USB support, etc. (as per [online specs](#)), official EUI visitors ONLY (EUI Visiting account needed - provided by secretaries)
- Totem = A terminal for Internet browsing, available to anyone (no login needed)
- Jack PC = A terminal for Internet browsing + USB support, available to anyone (no login needed)
- Network Sockets = Sockets to be used with personal laptops, network cables NOT provided

Areas where wireless networking is implemented are covered [elsewhere](#).



Avoid meaningless links

International Legislation

Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 14 May 1954, in force 7 August 1956, 249 UNTS 240

[Text](#)

[Reservations and declarations](#)

[States parties](#)

Protocol for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 14 May 1954, in force 7 August 1956, 249 UNTS 358

[Text](#)

[Reservations and declarations](#)

[States parties](#)

Second Protocol to the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 26 March 1999, in force 9 March 2004, 38 ILM (1999), at 769

[Text](#)

[Reservations and declarations](#)

[States parties](#)

Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 14 November 1970, in force 24 April 1972, 823 UNTS 231

[Text](#)


[Reservations and declarations](#)

[States parties](#)



Make links meaningful

Printing / Copying / Scanning for EUI Members

- Printers 1-5 and all the photocopying machines are reserved for EUI members
- The number of pages printed in the Library is deducted from a user's print quota, [check your print quota](#)
- If your print quota is finished, fill in a [Print Quota Renewal Form](#) 
- EUI members can scan from the 5 photocopy machines; 4 in the copy room on the ground floor and 1 on the top floor
- Scanned pages are sent to a common folder, see [instructions for scanning](#)



Keep links short

- Don't write:
[Click here for more info on how to submit publications](#)
- But write:
[How to submit publications](#)



Don't link to pages that aren't useful

- <http://www.eui.eu/ServicesAndAdmin/AcademicService/PracticalInformation/HealthAccidentInsuranceResearchersFellows.aspx>
- <http://www.eui.eu/ServicesAndAdmin/AcademicService/DoctoralProgramme/GrantInfo/Index.aspx> (Latvia)



Don't put a link in the 1st paragraph

Max Kohnstamm, 1914-2010 Website People Events

Posted on Tuesday 2nd November 2010



Max Kohnstamm, the founding President of the European University Institute from 1976 to 1981, died peacefully on October 20.


He contributed greatly to setting the EUI on its feet and to establishing its reputation for advanced scholarship and doctoral training in the humanities and social sciences in Europe.

Kohnstamm was born in Amsterdam and obtained a degree in History from the University of Amsterdam in 1939. Following a period of internment during the German occupation of the Netherlands in World War II, he served as private secretary to the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina.

He was later Secretary of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community, working closely with Jean Monnet.

One of the founding fathers of the European Community, he remained a prolific commentator and analyst of European Affairs throughout his life.

An interview with Max Kohnstamm is available on the [European Navigator website \(ENA\)](#). Browse the Interviews section.



Avoid 'naked' urls


'Information about visas' would have been a much better link.

I am a non-EU citizen. Do I need a visa and how can I get one?


Researchers and Fellows who are non-EU nationals should check thoroughly with their local Italian Consulate or Embassy for visa requirements before travelling to Florence.

For information about visas go to: http://www.esteri.it/visti/index_eng.asp

N.B. If you think you will need the special card issued by the Italian Foreign Ministry, you should apply for a 'visto di tipo D per missione lunga durata' for the duration of your EUI scholarship (i.e. initially for one academic year until 31 August). This is very important for the issue of the Ministero degli Affari Esteri card after arrival in Italy.



Links to non-html files

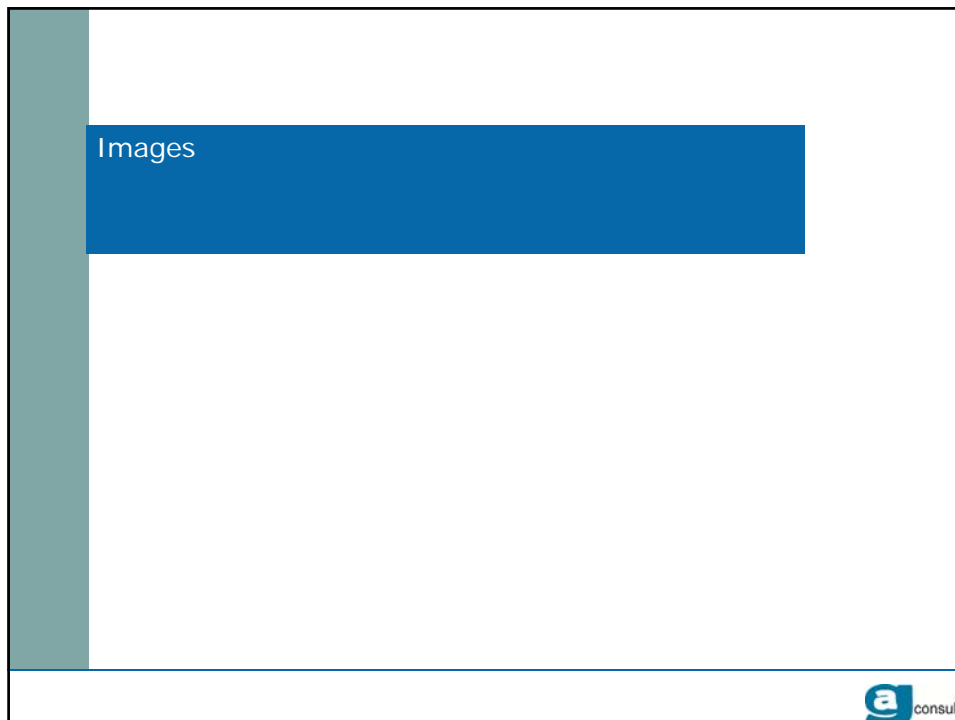
- When to use non-html files?
 - Long texts (over 5 pages)
 - Meant to be read offline
 - How to announce links to non-html files?
 - Mention the file format (e.g.: PDF) and size (e.g.: 125 kB, 6 pages) in the link
 - Open the file in the same browser window
 - Use an icon as an extra indication
- E.g.:  [Application form \(PDF, 125 kB, 2 p.\)](#)



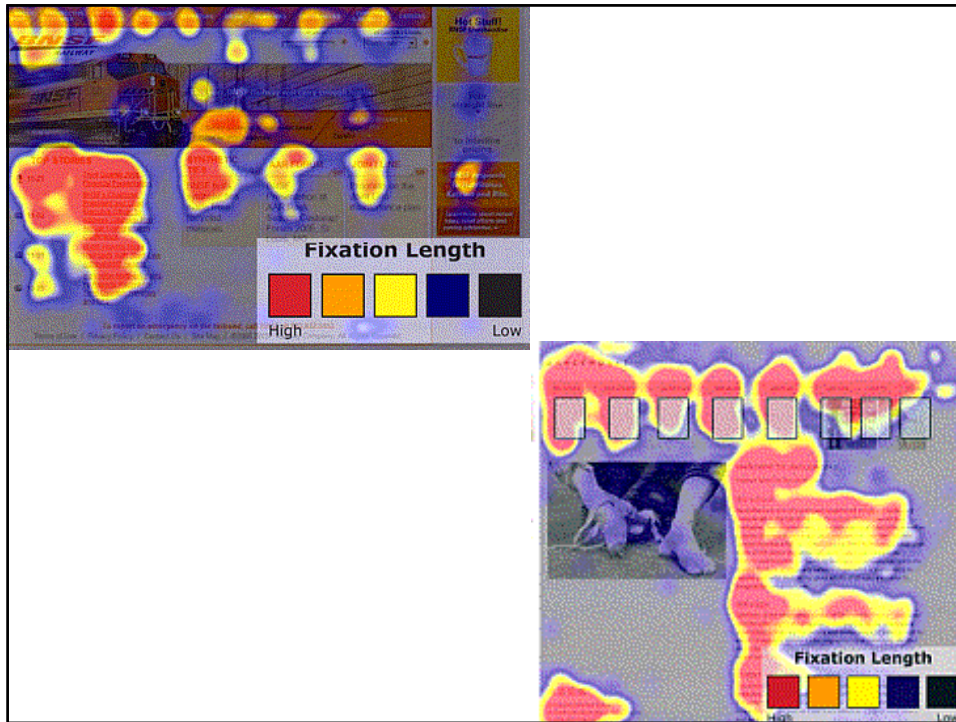
Why PDF?

- <http://www.eui.eu/About/Alumni/Publications/Newsletter.aspx>





A slide with a white background and a thin black border. On the left side, there is a vertical grey bar. The word "Images" is written in a large, black, sans-serif font at the top left. Below it, a thin blue horizontal line separates the title from the content. The content consists of two main bullet points, each starting with a blue square. The first bullet point is "Facts about images", followed by two sub-bullets: "—Images take up a lot of space" and "—On most pages, text is more important than images". The second main bullet point is "Use images only if they are an added value, not as decoration". In the bottom right corner, there is a small logo consisting of a blue circle with a white 'a' inside, followed by the word "consult" in a small, black, sans-serif font.



Why is this image at the top of the page?

- <http://www.eui.eu/DepartmentsAndCentres/RobertSchumanCentre/Research/SummerSchools.aspx>



This page needs images

Testimonials

The History Department at the EUI is a wonderfully diverse and stimulating community. Diversity here means not only many tongues and many nationalities, but many traditions, practices and concepts of history. It is a place full of opportunities for the open-minded.

The busy calendar of research events ranging from conferences to more intimate book presentations and workshops means that each researcher becomes part of a huge academic network, that cuts across national boundaries and disciplinary fields.

Given how competitive and internationally mobile the academic profession has become, the History Department at the EUI offers something truly unique, the ability to understand and be understood in a wider intellectual community.

Serena Ferente

Ph.D. (former HEC researcher), Lecturer in Medieval European History, Department of History, King's College London

The Department of History and Civilization at the EUI enhances different backgrounds and diverse historiographies. Thanks to its flexibility, it is truly interdisciplinary in its approaches to history.

The doctoral programme certainly helps to consolidate methodological and linguistic assets to obtain best chances to tackle the current internationalisation of academia.

More generally speaking, the experience of the international environment of the EUI is meant to strengthen existing skills in order to insert them into joint projects within the existing seminars provided by the History Department.

While learning the prerequisite skills to succeed in writing a Ph.D., the need for isolation is also of utmost importance, and it is facilitated by all the privileges offered to researchers (namely the language courses and correction service, interlibrary loans and job counselling).

The flexibility offered by workshops and thesis writing seminars in comparison with more formal encounters caters to the diversity of needs of researchers.

Valérie Hayaert

Ph.D. (former HEC researcher)



Images: alt-tag

- Every informative image needs an alt-tag or alt-attribute that describes the image
- Purely decorative images can have an empty alt-tag: alt=""
- Limit the number of characters in the alt-tag to 80 (max. length braille line)



Informative images

- Brief factual description



—Don't write:

- Picture of the 2009-2010 graduation ceremony

—But write:

- 2009-2010 graduation ceremony



Text in images/graphic text

- Literal repetition of the words in the image



—Don't write:

- Logo

—But write:

- Education and Culture DG Lifelong Learning Programme



Complex images

- Description above or below the image

or

- Link to a page with a description

- Examples of complex images:

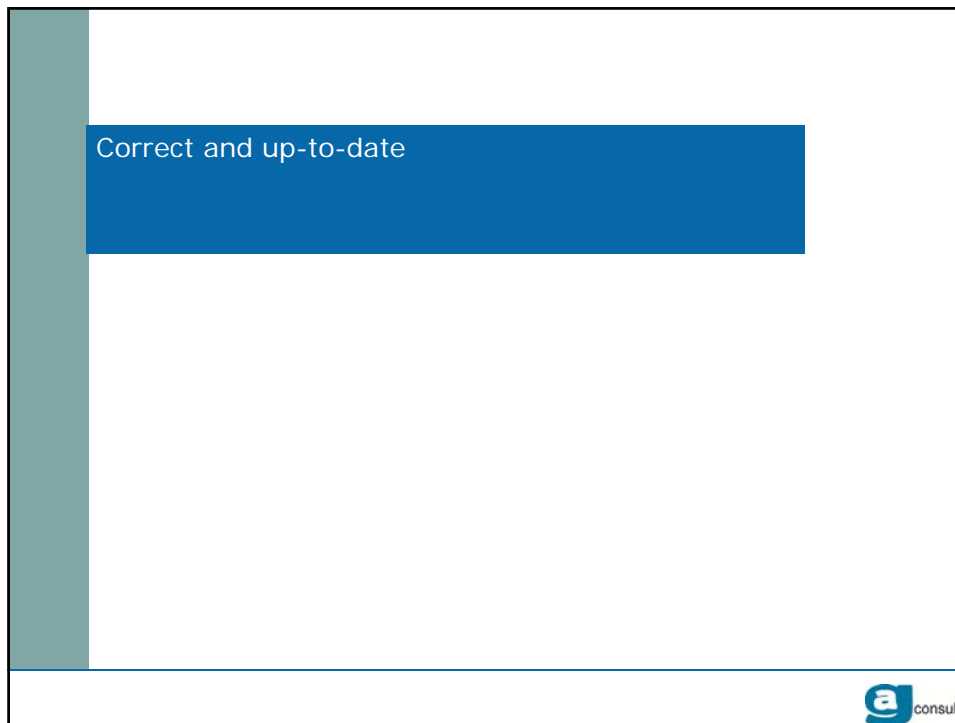
—Roadmaps

—Charts

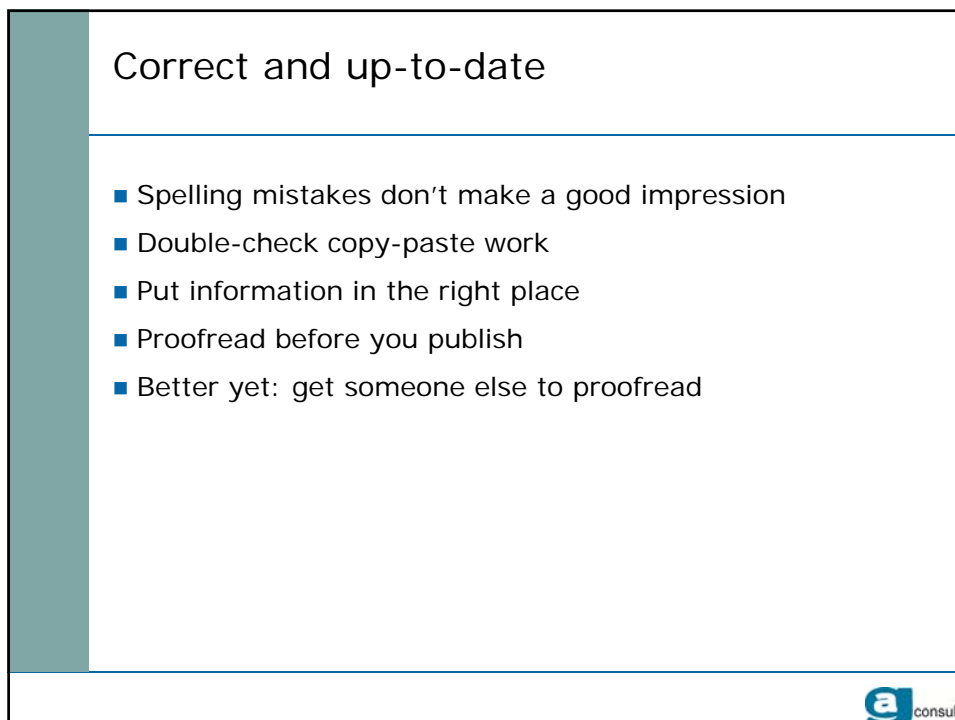

—Posters

—...






Correct and up-to-date



Correct and up-to-date

- Spelling mistakes don't make a good impression
- Double-check copy-paste work
- Put information in the right place
- Proofread before you publish
- Better yet: get someone else to proofread



Revision is a must

- Spend at least 25% of your time revising existing pages
- Quality trumps quantity:
 - Get rid of pages that are never visited
 - Take bad pages offline
 - No content is better than bad content



Double-check copy-paste work


Two thirds requirement and first installment

The first installment of six months is payable on the basis of evidence that the researcher has completed at least two thirds of the thesis at the very latest by the beginning of the fourth year. By the end of the 33rd month of registration

(normally this will be May), researchers should present evidence to their Department that they have made the requisite progress. In cases where the requisite progress cannot be clearly demonstrated at that stage, the researcher may resubmit evidence of progress by the end of the 36th month of registration (normally this will be August). In either case, the final decision on approval of the first installment of payment is made by the Admissions Committee.




Correct and up-to-date




The EUI is not only a place of academic excellence, but is also a place where I met many interesting people and made good friends. It has a unique international atmosphere, and a spirit of intellectual exchange and debate.

Christian Dustmann graduated from the EUI in 1992. He is Professor at University College. Christian has worked in applied microeconomics and labour economics (in particular the economics of education and wages and mobility) and on labour migration. He is also Director of CReAM (Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration)




I found a stimulating international environment and a comprehensive sequence of excellent first-year courses in Quantitative Economics and Econometrics. During my staying at the Institute I was exposed to a large number of seminars by leading researchers in all fields of economics. The faculty was first-class and I benefited from the advice of my supervisor as well as other staff.

Gabriele Fiorentini is Professor of Econometrics at the University of Florence. He is an economist and graduated from the EUI in 1995




EUI students are justly sought after by politicians, such as the European Commission, of the excellent of the European Commission. I not only programmes with the placement demia. European policy and and finance, his Ph.D. in EUI in 2002



During my three years at EUI, I was introduced to frontier research and a new culture. This had a permanent impact on my life: I still collaborate on much of my research with my EUI classmate Akos Valentinyi and spend a large chunk of the year in the South of Europe (currently at Carlos III in Madrid).


Berthold Herrendorf graduated from the EUI in 1996. He is currently an Associate Professor at the W.P. Carey School of Business at the Arizona State University. Berthold works on macroeconomic theory and his current research is about cross-country productivity differences

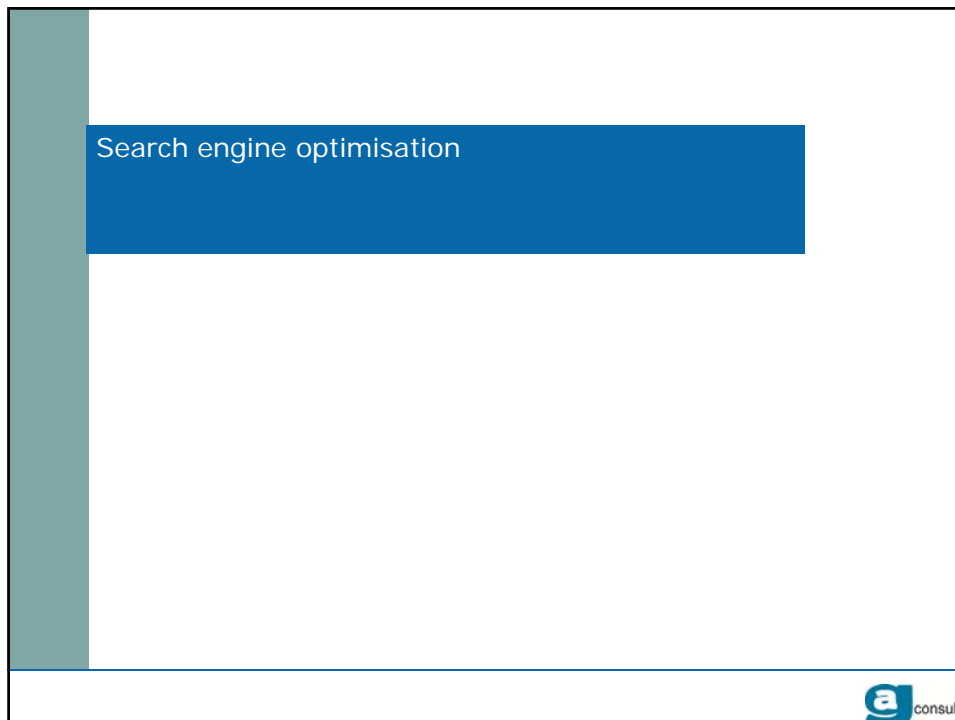
Testimonials from people who graduated over a decade ago?
Are the EUI's golden years in the past?



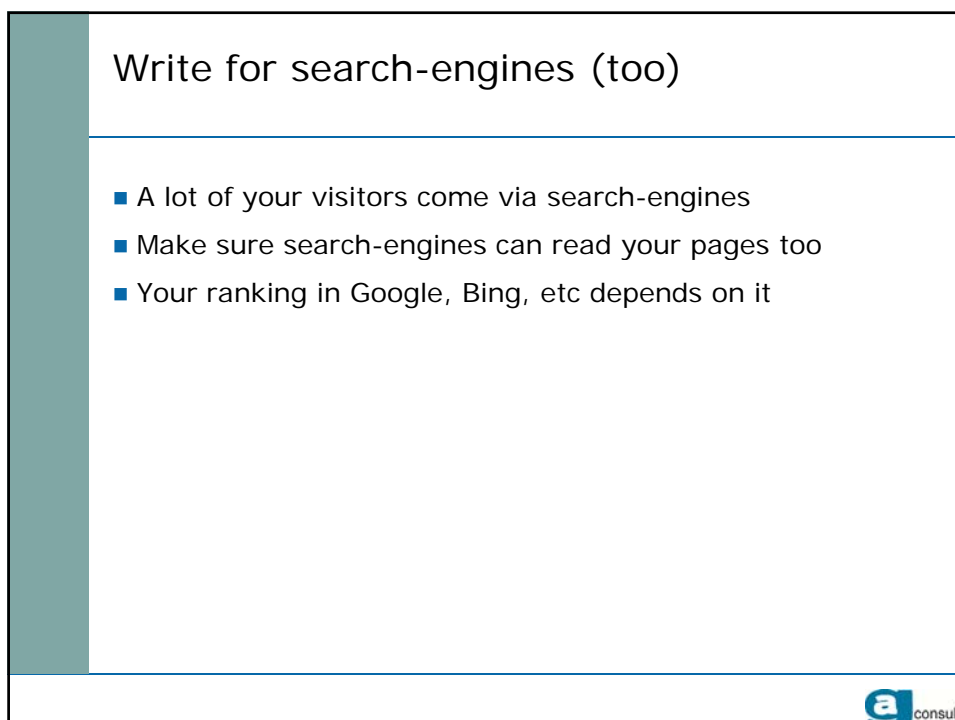

Puzzling pages

- An empty page? Why is it still there?
 —<http://www.eui.eu/About/Alumni/Publications/EuropeatLarge.aspx>
- What's this page about?
 —<http://www.eui.eu/DepartmentsAndCentres/HistoryAndCivilization/DoctoralProgramme/Jobmarket.aspx>
- What's library copyright info doing under Electronic Resources?
 —<http://www.eui.eu/Research/Library/ElectronicResources/Copyright.aspx>
- Not a lot of dissemination going on here...
 —<http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Dissemination/Index.aspx>
- ...






Search engine optimisation



Write for search-engines (too)

- A lot of your visitors come via search-engines
- Make sure search-engines can read your pages too
- Your ranking in Google, Bing, etc depends on it



Optimise for the right words

- Which words do people type into a search engine if they're looking for the information on a particular page on your site?
- Use the words your visitors use:
<http://www.google.com/insights/search/#>



Header tags and meta tags

- Header tags (Google)
 - Main page header: h1
 - Subheaders: h2, h3, etc
- Meta tags
 - Title tag (Google)
 - Max. 66 characters
 - As few words as possible
 - Keyword at the front
 - Legible and attractive
 - Unique for every page
 - Description tag (Readers)
 - Max. 155 characters
 - Clear and attractive for readers



Title-tag and description tag

[European University Institute - Summer School](#) ✓ ☆ 🔍

The Academy of European Law was founded in 1990 by Prof. Antonio Cassese and ...
[www.eui.eu](#) › [Departments and Centres](#) › [Law](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

[ERA – Academy of European Law](#) ☆ 🔍

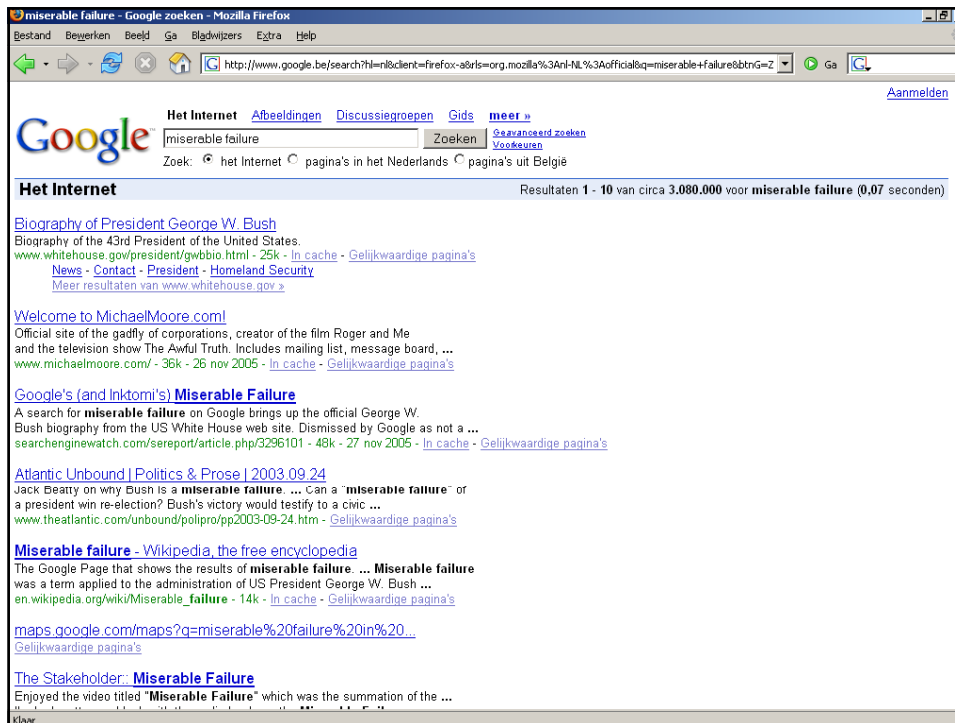
The Academy of European Law (ERA) offers training in European law to lawyers, judges, barristers, solicitors, in-house counsel and academics.
[www.era.int/](#) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)



Links

- Links should contain the keyword
- All links to the same page should be the same
- Create clusters of related pages
- Example: miserable failure






Synonyms


- Don't use too many synonyms on one page
- Stick to one word and use the synonym once on the page

Results of good web writing




Writing takes time...

Writer: 10 minutes	10 minutes
---------------------------	-------------------




Reader: 15 minutes	15.000 minutes
1.000 readers x 15 minutes	Total: 15.010 minutes

Big thank you to Gerry McGovern for these slides: www.gerrymcgovern.com




... but it's worth it

Writer: 60 minutes	60 minutes
---------------------------	-------------------




Reader: 5 minutes	5.000 minutes
1.000 readers x 5 minutes	Total: 5.060 minutes

Big thank you to Gerry McGovern for these slides: www.gerrymcgovern.com



Results of rewriting text for the web

- Reading speed: 180% faster
- Task time: 80% faster
- Memory: 100% better
- Subjective satisfaction: 37% better



Interesting websites

- www.web-usability-blog.com
Our own blog on web usability and web writing.
Riveting stuff.
- www.useit.com/papers/webwriting
Usability guru Jakob Nielsen on writing for the web.
- www.gerrymcgovern.com
Gerry McGovern is a worldwide authority on managing web content.
Interesting weekly newsletter.



Contact information

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 - Fax: +32 (0)3 293 00 22
 - Mail: els.aerts@agconsult.be
 - Twitter: http://twitter.com/els_aerts

