

Writing Do's and Don'ts for Communicators

Howard Sholkin
Director, Communications & Marketing
Programs

IDG Communications

howard_sholkin@idg.com

508 766-5610

@hsholkin

#prbootcamp

think tech, think idg » mobile » social media » broadcast » lead generation » research » events » online » print

Ready, Fire, Aim Audiences and objectives come first

THINK TECH THINK IDG

IDG
INTERNATIONAL DATA GROUP

BUILDING AND SUPPORTING YOUR TECH BRAND IN DEMANDING TIMES

IT leaders today need to address the issues of industry consolidation, growing dominant industry brands, and perhaps most importantly, the merging of business IT with personal IT as the power of consumer "pull" will become a major factor in IT purchases.

“74% OF THE IT DECISION-MAKERS SAID THEY EMBRACE CONSUMERIZATION OF IT AND 48% SAID THEY ALLOW EMPLOYEES TO USE THEIR OWN DEVICE FOR WORK EITHER IN THE OFFICE OR AWAY. 42% SAID THAT CONSUMER DEVICES HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE LIST OF APPROVED WORK TOOLS.”

Source: The Consumerization of IT in the Enterprise, IDG Enterprise, 2011

Tech marketers tend to spend about one-half of their budget on brand and one-half on demand. Is this the right balance? Should you invest more in your brand? Marketers have more choices than ever as to how to spend their marketing dollars. IDC's CMO Advisory Service tracks more than 40 separate program spending choices. This fragmentation significantly complicates marketing decisions.

THE 2011 PROGRAM SPEND MIX — THE 'FEDERATED' VIEW (ALL DIGITAL ELEMENTS ARE CONTAINED WITHIN THE CATEGORIES SHOWN)



Source: IDC 2011 Tech Marketing Benchmarks

HOW BUYERS GET WHAT THEY NEED: RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF CONTENT DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

TODAY



IN TWO YEARS



Source: IDG Connect 2011

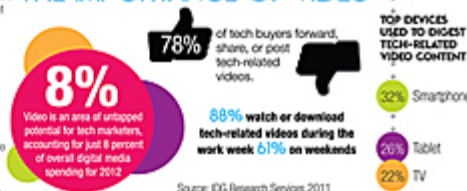
With IDG media, IDG World Expo's technology and entertainment events, and IDG research and consulting, marketers have the resources to confront difficult challenges and choices. IDC's CMO Advisory Service provides detailed benchmarks on multi-channel investments and tracks spending shifts among the world's most successful tech marketing companies. CPOworld®, CIO®, Computerworld®, CSOs, DEMOS, InfoWorld®, ITworld®, Network World®, Macworld®, and PCWorld®, combined with the IDG TechNetwork of independent sites, allows you to communicate with your prospects online, in-person, and in print.

PERFORMANCE UNDER PRESSURE

The IDC's CMO Advisory Service predicts that tech marketing will change more in the next five years than it has in the past 25 years combined. However, for the past two years, IDC has found that marketing budgets (which increased by 3.5% in 2011, led by digital) have run at about one half the pace of revenue growth.

IDG helps marketers make the most of their digital media investment. At a multinational level, IDG Connect provides services to help sales and marketing professionals assess, plan, and execute web-based lead generation programs with agreed to objectives. Unlike traditional shot-in-the-dark email marketing, IDG Connect uses its global data on millions of IT buyers to identify sales-ready prospects for you based on where they are in the buying process. IDG Market Fusion® research-based services include content and social media assessments to optimize marketing content for your prospects.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VIDEO



Source: IDG Research Services 2011

Writing

What will motivate readers to care and remember?

Source: Prof. Bonnie Meyer
Penn State
#prbootcamp

What	How	Example
***Antecedent and consequence	Show cause and effect, if ... then.	A bylined editorial may use this approach.
***Comparison	Present two or more opposing viewpoints.	Political speeches often use this approach.
Description	Develop the topic by describing its component parts, such as attributes, specifications or settings.	Newspaper articles, for instance, explain who, what, when, where, why and how.
Response	Organize by remark and reply, question and answer or problem and solution.	Case studies focus on problem, solution, results.
Time-order	Relate events or ideas chronologically.	Company profiles often use this approach.



 COLLAPSE VIEW
 CUSTOMIZE VIEW

FEATURED

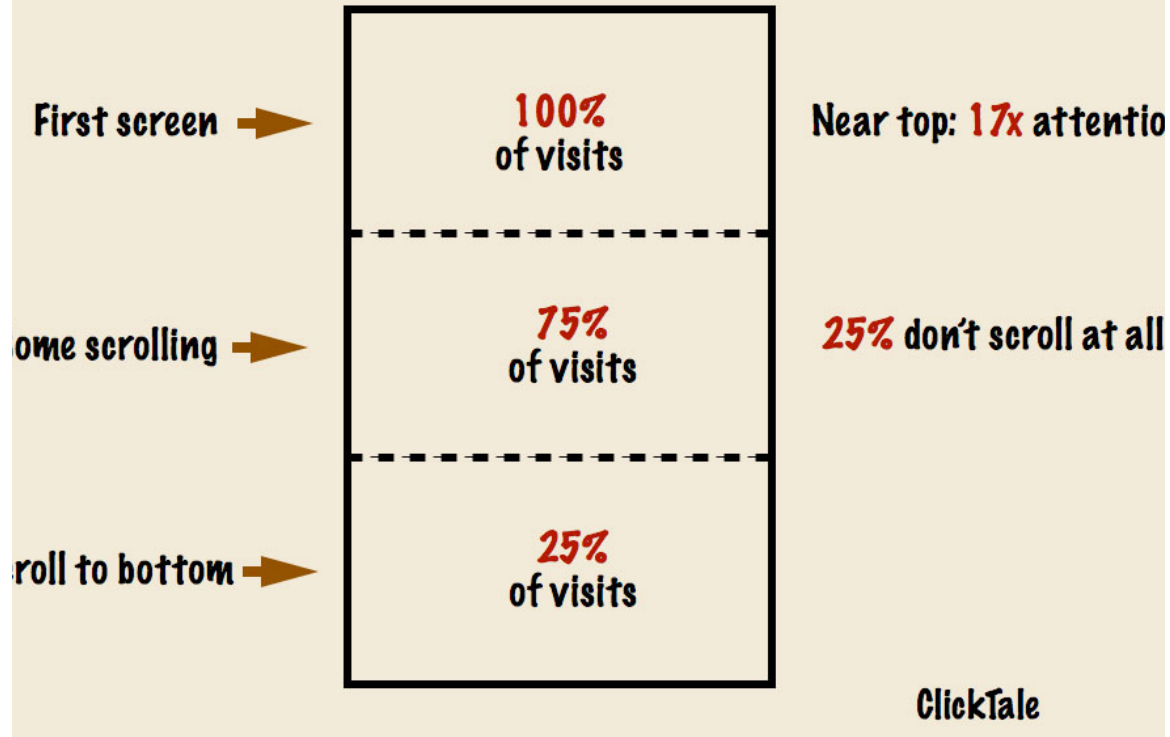
RECENT POSTS

RESEARCH

VIDEO

WHAT EVER YOU'RE SPENDING
ON MOBILE, SPEND MORE.

Where visitors look



Source: Jakob Nielsen 2011 eye tracking research

#prbootcamp

Easy on the eyes

- Write heads & sub-heads
- Use bullets
- Highlight with bold
- Try italics
- Vary length of words, sentences, paragraphs
- Avoid passive voice

#prbootcamp





[Sign In](#) 

[About](#)

Readability Statistics of Entered Text

▼ Reading Levels

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	Grade 9.5
Automated Readability Index	Grade 11.6
Coleman-Liau	Grade 14.1
Flesch Reading Ease	53.3/100
Gunning fog index	Grade 13.1
Laesbarhedsindex (LIX) Formula	48.4 = school year 9
SMOG Index	Grade 11.9
Average grade level	Grade 12 (mean of above)

► Sentence Information

► Word Usage

► Sentence Beginnings

[« Analyze Something Else](#)

Chuck's other stuff: [StoryChuck](#)
Problem with one of the tools? [Let me know.](#)

© 2012 Chuck Heintzelman
 Page rendered in 0.0094 secs



IGS mobile survey news release

www.storytoolz.com

Number of characters	3,965
Number of words	732
Characters per word	5.42
Syllables per word	1.64
Number of sentences	49
Words per sentence	14.9
Number of short sentences	26 (53%, 10 words or less)
Number of long sentences	9 (18%, 25 words or more)
Number of paragraphs	5
Sentences per paragraph	9.8
Number of questions	0 (0%)
Number of passive sentences	15 (31%)
Longest sentence	52 words long
Shortest sentence	1 word long

IGS mobile research news release
Woo Hoo! StoryTooZ scanned your text (624 words) against a list of 2, 673 cliches and found no matches

#prbootcamp



And, Write for the Ear

Helps with Proofing

- Read aloud to catch awkward wording, long sentences other glitches that your eyes miss
- Supports your conversational, informal writing
- Proofing requires multiple sets of eyes
- Ann Wylie: 2 sentences/paragraph (web)
3 sentences/paragraph (print)

What do you think are the top 20 buzzwords?

Top Buzzwords

2011 BusinessWire News Releases

- Solution
- Best
- Leading
- Top
- Cloud
- Innovative
- Largest
- Innovation
- Extensive
- Leading
- Leader
- Exclusive
- Premier
- Fastest
- Great
- Sustainable
- Real-time
- Dynamic
- Innovator
- Provider

Source: Schwartz MSL



#prbootcamp

Social writing for business

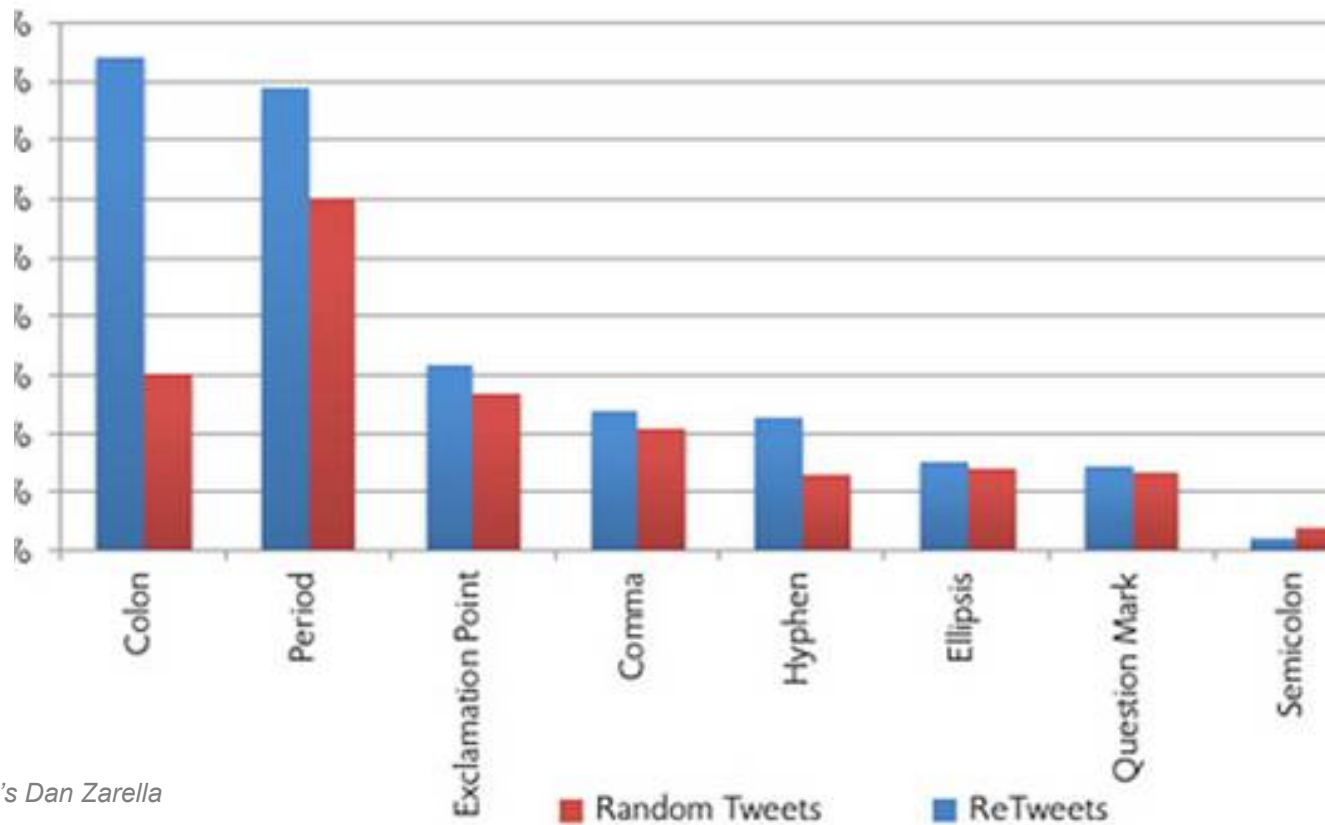
- Focus on reader, not you
- Write interesting headlines (not just for Twitter)
- Ask questions, opinions
- Provide links

#prbootcamp



Punctuation counts on Twitter

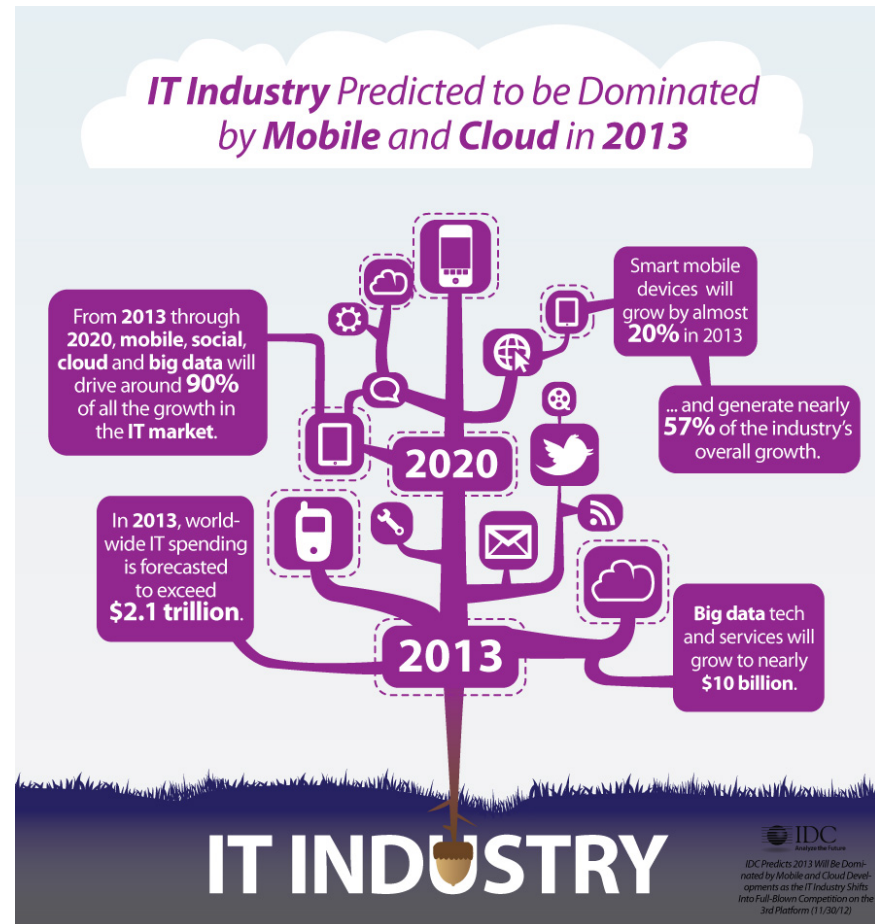
Punctuation Types



Source: HubSpot's Dan Zarella

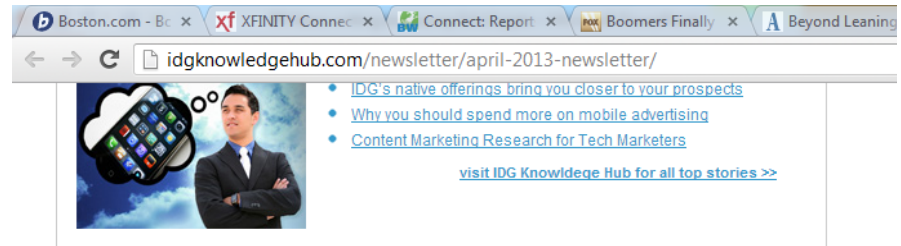
Infographics

Produce graphic visual of information, data, or knowledge intended to present complex information quickly and clearly.



eNewsletter

- Build interest starting with subject
- Avoid spam filters, 50 or less characters in subject line
- Hook readers with a headline
- Draw them to first sentence and click



Native@IDG: Digital Marketing Brings Your Messages Closer to Your Prospects

Native@IDG is a new portfolio of five offerings to connect tech brands with their audiences across editorial, video, mobile and social. Native ads are presented based on a reader's identified interests.

- [Learn more about how IDG can help you connect with your prospects.](#)

Social, Mobile, Video Insights About Your Prospects

IDC's first-ever CMO ROI Matrix report finds three contributing factors to marketing leadership: Invest more in marketing and new roles that bring people together and innovate around the self-educated customer. IDC identifies a few marketing leaders.

- [See how you compare.](#)

Mobile Ad Spend Reaches 11%

IDC reported that mobile as a percentage of all digital spend broke single digits last year for the first time. IDC's Karsten Weide found Facebook, Pandora, and Twitter dominate mobile display advertising. At a BtoB Digital conference last month in San Francisco, Weide gave his recommendations for digital marketers for the rest of this year.

- [Watch Karsten's interview here](#)

Steepest PC Shipment Decline Ever

According to IDC, worldwide PC shipments dropped almost 14% last quarter compared to the same time last year. The downward trend began last year and has picked up due in part to the popularity of mobile devices.

- [To see the impact on PC vendors, click here](#)

Want Car Tech Expertise or Reach Prospects Who Do? Turn to TechHive

TechHive, IDG's newest consumer site, and renowned auto site, edmunds.com, have teamed up to provide extensive car tech information. Whether you want to learn the latest car tech, want to buy a vehicle, or need to market to prospects, TechHive can help.

- [Check out the techiest cars of this year.](#)



RESEARCH

[One Segment of Tech Marketers Heavily Focused on Content Marketing](#)



EVENTS

[Marketing + Technology: Ad Age and BtoB Conference](#)

When it comes to content marketing strategy, you should

The May 20 conference in New York City will focus on the



[Sign In](#) 

[About](#)

Readability Statistics of Entered Text

► Reading Levels

▼ Sentence Information

Number of characters	2,702
Number of words	497
Characters per word	5.44
Syllables per word	1.65
Number of sentences	25
Words per sentence	19.9
Number of short sentences	10 (40%, 15 words or less)
Number of long sentences	4 (16%, 30 words or more)
Number of paragraphs	1
Sentences per paragraph	25.0
Number of questions	1 (4%)
Number of passive sentences	5 (20%)
Longest sentence	56 words long
Shortest sentence	3 words long

► Word Usage

► Sentence Beginnings



IDG Knowledge Hub newsletter

#prbootcamp

Number of characters	2,702
Number of words	497
Characters per word	5.44
Syllables per word	1.65
Number of sentences	25
Words per sentence	19.9
Number of short sentences	10 (40%, 15 words or less)
Number of long sentences	4 (16%, 30 words or more)
Number of paragraphs	1
Sentences per paragraph	25.0
Number of questions	1 (4%)
Number of passive sentences	5 (20%)
Longest sentence	56 words long
Shortest sentence	3 words long

IDG Knowledge Hub newsletter

Woo Hoo!

StoryToolz scanned your text (*504 words*) against a list of 2,673 clichés and found no matches.

Tell them what you told them

- Start with audiences and objectives
- Take time, speed can kill
- Shorter increases chances it will be read
- Write for eyes and ears
- Mix it up: words, sentences, paragraphs, punctuation
- Think visually (infographics, video)
- Proof with multiple sets of eyes

#prbootcamp



Resources

- www.wyliecomm.com
- www.storytooz.com
- www.ragan.com
- www.prsa.org
- www.iabc.com
- www.danzarrella.com

OR

Google search: good writing tips=264,000 results

#prbootcamp