

CLEAR LANGUAGE AND DESIGN

Letter #12

March 2015

CLAD website back online with a refresh

Our website has moved to <http://clad.tcclld.org>, where we've developed a cleaner, more mobile-friendly look.

To the many colleagues who got in touch to ask us when we'd be back up, sorry for the inconvenience! A new **Tips & Tools page** (<http://clad.tcclld.org/measuring-readability/>) replaces our old Readability Assessment Tool. We are recommending a new online tool for measuring reading level. **Visit us** (<http://clad.tcclld.org>) to find out more. We have also just posted an extensive list of recommended resources.

To get continuous feedback on your reading level and guidance on style as you draft, we recommend a software product called StyleWriter by Editor Software in the U.K. We believe it provides good value to writers who have already had some clear language training and who want to keep getting better. **Click for a free trial** (<http://www.editorsoftware.com/>).

Many thanks to our friends and former hosts at Copian (formerly the National Adult Literacy Database) for 15 years of brilliant technical support.

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The CDC Clear Communication Index

primary audience
communication
everyday language
familiar
objective
risk explanations
numbers
main message
health behaviors

Resources: An assessment tool from the Centers for Disease Control

If you work in the area of health literacy, check out this new widget from the CDC for evaluating health materials.

This is not a reading level assessment tool, but rather a questionnaire-style scoring system that offers tips as you go. For most questions, you can click to get excellent examples, like this one, illustrating how to present a main message:

I had a couple of quibbles. Early on, the Index asks you to select your primary audience from a rather limited drop-down list, with an option to select “other.” A discussion about working with multiple audiences would have been helpful here.

I couldn’t quite make sense of this question:

“Does the material explain what authoritative sources, such as subject matter experts and agency spokespersons, know and don’t know about the topic?”

By clicking “example” I got this clarification: “Acknowledge uncertainty about data, findings, recommendations, guidance and action steps. What we know today may not be fully accurate or sufficient to answer all of the public’s questions.”

Now that I understand the question, I think that there is likely a more elegant way to phrase it. Here’s a suggestion: “Have you explained what experts know and what they are still uncertain about on this topic?”

Thanks to Adrienne Baltadjian at Durham Region for telling us about this tool, which you will find at www.cdc.gov/ccindex/.

Keeping Your Hands Clean on a Cruise

To stay healthy and clean, wash your hands with warm water and soap.

Main message is at the top of the first page

When to wash your hands:

Before:

- Touching your hand to your mouth, including
 - › Eating,
 - › Drinking, and
 - › Brushing your teeth.
- Helping a sick person.

After:

- Going to the bathroom.
- Changing diapers.
- Touching high-hand contact surfaces such as
 - › Door knobs,
 - › Elevator buttons, and
 - › Railings.
- Returning to your cabin.
- Helping a sick person.
- Blowing your nose.

How to wash your hands:

1. Wet your hands with warm water.
2. Apply a generous amount of soap.
3. Rub your hands together for 20 seconds.
4. Rinse your hands.
5. Dry your hands with a paper towel.
6. Use the paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door.



The Irish speak up for simplicity

Research commissioned by Ireland's National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) reports that almost 95% of Irish adults are in favour of doing away with jargon, small print, and gobbledegook. Almost half found government documents, legal jargon, and financial information hard to understand.

This year NALA will partner with the Plain Language Association InterNational (PLAIN) for its 10th international conference, to be held at Dublin Castle from September 17-20. The conference theme is "Clearer communications, greater efficiency and effectiveness." Get the details at <http://plain2015.ie/>

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