

## Writing for E-Learning and for Web-Based CME

*Guest Contributor: Keith Robertson, Medical Writer*

So you have successfully written a training manual; you could now write content for a web-based learning module in the same fashion - right?

Wrong! Audiences tend to develop different reading habits for viewing electronic screens versus standard written pages. Understanding reading habits is a pivotal first step to developing an effective writing style for E-learning and web-based audiences. The writer must adapt style and content accordingly because the reader will not make the effort to adapt his or her reading style to your website – he or she will just surf to another site. Web-based readers are not a loyal crowd.

Any web-based information or training course intended for a broad-based (public) audience must be written concisely and effectively. Otherwise, the reader tends to skip sections and avoid reviewing text that is unclear. As a result, much of the intended message can be lost and the opportunity to communicate is completely wasted.

Here are several questions you have to ask yourself in adapting a CME program for the computer screen:

- Some text is easier to read on the screen than others. How do you select which fonts to use?
- The eye naturally scans across a computer screen in a different pattern than it tends to scan across a printed page. How does this impact the layout of your text?
- Web-based learners do not like to spend time excessive time reading from the web. They like to minimize scrolling and tend not to appreciate jargon. How will this impact the language you choose?

So now that we have explored these facts of web-life, how do we adjust our writing to get our message across? For specific ideas about your project, please contact me at (514) 367-7366.

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