

# Improve User Experience - Recommended Resources

Questions? Email Melissa - [melissa@melissaegg.com](mailto:melissa@melissaegg.com)

## Usability-related

**Don't Make Me Think, Revisited** by Steve Krug - The new edition of this classic usability text was released in January 2014. It's a fast read packed full of usability tips, and it's perfect if you are creating a new website or redesigning an existing one.

**Alertbox – the Nielsen Norman Group e-newsletter** - This usability research and consulting group offers many report and studies you can purchase, but they also provide very helpful information in a free weekly newsletter. This is a nice way to keep abreast of usability issues.

**Usability.gov** - The federal government has good information on usability and content strategy here as well as links to more resources. See <http://www.usability.gov>.

**Smashing Magazine** – This online resource is a great place to visit to keep up with trends in website design. I've also found it has a good amount of usability related articles. See <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/usability-and-user-experience/>

## Content-related

**Content Strategy for the Web, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition** by Kristina Halvorson and Melissa Rach. This is the classic content strategy book by Kristina Halvorson, the front-runner in the field. This clear and practical book walks you through the steps of web content production, process, implementation, and maintenance. This is a terrific first read on content strategy.

**Content Strategy at Work** by Margot Bloomstein. This book has useful examples, success stories, and case studies to understand how the practice of content strategy can help projects of all sizes.

**Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die** by Chip and Dan Heath. This engaging book, sometimes used in strategic communication (public relations) classes, helps readers understand the characteristics that make content memorable. It has fun examples and useful advice.

**The Functional Art: An Introduction to Information Graphics and Visualization** by Alberto Cairo. This thorough book by an experienced leader in the field has theory, real world examples, and tips. It can help you decide what type of infographic might work for a particular situation by explaining important items you need to consider.

**Photography Classes at Lynda.com** by Ben Long. This photography expert can help you improve your photography and photo-editing skills quickly. If you don't have time to take a photography class, consider watching some of Ben's tutorial's online. Specifically look for his Foundation of Photography classes on composition, exposure and lighting. You can pick and choose which videos in the tutorials will be most helpful to you. See <http://www.lynda.com/Ben-Long/748177-1.html>.

## Content Decision Questions

### **Who?**

Who is our primary audience?

Who are other audiences who have an interest in this piece of content?

### **What?**

What's the story?

What's the point? What's our main message?

What's essential for a viewer to get?

### **When?**

When does a user need this content?

When will we make it available?

When will it be updated or removed?

### **Where?**

Where are our users spending time?

Where will our users be when they see this content?

Where could this content be placed on the website? On social media? Elsewhere?

Where can you afford to put it?

### **Why?**

Why is this information/story important to our audience?

Why now?

Why this piece of content and not another?

### **How?**

How are we going to tell this story?

How will we overcome internal obstacles to tell it?

How much time do we have to make it?

How are we going to make this? In house? Contract out?

How will we pay for this?

How can we make this shareable for others?

## Content Checklist for Engagement

(from Professor Steven Duke at Northwestern)

Does this piece of content. . .

. . .make them smarter?

. . .give them something to talk about?

. . .look out for their interests?

. . .have an element of surprise/humor?

. . .inspire?