Center for Rural Entrepreneurship

Written Style Guide

July 24, 2013

While there are basic rules of the English language that almost everybody can and will agree on, each field tends to have its own quirky way of handling jargon and industry terms that frequently arise and ours is no different. This guide should be shared with any new partners, guest bloggers, interns, new hires, etc.

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Grammar

The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship uses **Associated Press (AP) Style** for grammar, punctuation and word usage with a few exceptions noted in this manual. The Center Written Style manual covers commonly used words and phrases that are specific to our field.

If you are unfamiliar with the AP style guide, please visit www.apastyle.org for the current version in use. And if you haven't looked at a style guide since you were in school (and even then, you might have wiggled out of it), take a look at the AP style guide sometime. It's full of excellent, down-to-earth advice on how to write clear, clean prose that your readers will understand and enjoy. This Center style guide covers commonly used words and phrases that are specific to our field.

Spelling

The Center uses the online **Merriam Webster dictionary** for spelling with a few exceptions noted in this manual. Use the first spelling presented.

Center for Rural Entrepreneurship

Voice

When writing on behalf of the Center, please use a friendly and personable but professional tone. When promoting our work, we tend toward soft sales rather than in-your-face copy.

Titles of Published Works

Always use title case, but do not capitalize:

- articles (a, an and the)
- prepositions of three or fewer letters (such as of, in, and for)
- most conjunctions of three or fewer letters (like as, and, or, and but)
- the "to" in the infinitive form (e.g. to blog)

Pronouns referring to companies

When referring to the Center or to another company, use the third-person singular pronouns "it" and "its". In the United States, a company is treated as a collective noun and requires a singular verb and a singular pronoun.

e.g. The Center anticipates an increase in its third-quarter spending. (Singular verb, singular possessive "its")

Punctuation

PERIOD ●

For use at the end of a sentence that makes a statement. Use one space between the period and the first letter of the next sentence. This goes against the grain for people using the typography instilled by generations of old-fashioned typewriter users, but modern word-processors and fonts nicely accommodate the spacing after a period, and double-spacing after a period can only serve to discombobulate the good intentions of one's software.

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If one is using a mono-space font (like Courier) to
reproduce the effect of an old-fashioned typewriter, then
using a double-space after a period would, indeed, be a
good idea.  This might be useful to remember if one's
e-mail client uses Courier, but usually e-mail fonts are
determined by the receiver's e-mail program, so Courier is
apt to be translated into another font like Times New Roman
or Geneva anyway.
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PHILANTHROPY ™
Transfer of Wealth

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM

measurement research policy

e²

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Commonly Troublesome Words

a

A/B test

Also called split testing; write it with the slash.

Agripreneur

An entrepreneur whose main business is agriculture or agriculture-related. No hyphen used in the word.

ampersand (&)

Use the ampersand when it is part of a company's formal name or composition title: House & Garden, Procter & Gamble, Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway. The ampersand should not otherwise be used in place of and, except for some accepted abbreviations: B&B, R&B.

b

BA

Abbreviation for bachelor of arts. no periods.

beta

Capitalize beta if it is part of an official product name. Otherwise, lowercase it.

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c

clickthrough

(n., adj.), click through (v.) One word when used as a noun or an adjective. Two words when used as a verb. Don't hyphenate, e.g. The company's online ads consistently earn a high clickthrough rate. Click through to the last page to see your score.

e

e²

Abbreviation for "energizing entrepreneurs". Can be written as e2 when there is no ability to superscript the 2.

e.g.

Abbreviated meaning for example. Note periods. Don't include a space after the first period. OK to use when space is a consideration; otherwise, use for example, for instance, or such as. If used, always include a comma after the last period. See also "i.e." and "ex." as each of these has different meanings and are not interchangeable.

ebook

All lowercase (in titles/headlines and at the beginning of sentences, capitalize the "e" but not the "b").

email (n., adj., v.)

One word, no hyphen. Plural: email messages and emails are both acceptable.

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f

501(c)(3)

IRS references for exempt status show 501(c)(3), not 501c3 or 501(c)3.

Facebook

Not FaceBook or Face Book. One word, small "b".

FAO

Abbreviation for Foundation for Appalachian Ohio. First use must be in parentheses following the spelled out name.

g

game plan

Two words, not gameplan or game-plan.

giveback

One word noun which means a behavior or deeply rooted value whereby individuals, families, businesses and/or communities give from their wealth to support those in need and to improve quality of life.

grantmaking

The word "grant" refers to the monetary awards made to nonprofits by foundations, corporations, or government agencies. The term "grantmaking" therefore refers to the practice of giving money.

grantseeking

The practice of raising money.

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i

i.e.

Abbreviation meaning that is. Note periods. Don't include a space after the first period. Okay to use when space is a consideration; otherwise use that is, in other words, or equivalent. If used, include a comma after the last period. (note that "i.e." does not have the same meaning as "e.g.")

k

keyword, key word (n.)

One word when referring to terms that are used on a web page to optimize it for search engines. Use two words in other cases — for example, when key is a synonym for primary or most important.

- An SEO specialist can help you determine the best keywords to use on your web page.

- She heard little else that he said; the key word in the sentence was "love."

l

LinkedIn

"l" and "i" are capitalized.

login (n., adj.); log in, log in to (v.)

One word when used as a noun or an adjective. Two words when used as a verb, which may be followed by the preposition to. Note that sign in is preferred because it sounds less technical.

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m

MBA

Abbreviation for master of business arts. No periods. All Caps.

micro-lender

Not microlender or micro lender. Use hyphen.

micropolitan

One word, no hypen, adjective meaning of, relating to, or being a population area that includes a city with 10,000 to 50,000 residents and its surrounding communities

n

NACo

Abbreviation for National Association of County Officials. Note the lower case O. First use must be in parentheses following the spelled out name.

nonprofit

One word. No hyphen. Not non-profit or non profit.

r

road map

two words, not roadmap or road-map

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s

SEO

Abbreviation for search engine optimization. Always use all caps.

sign-in (n., adj.); sign in, sign in to (v.)

As a noun or an adjective, it's hyphenated. As a verb, it's two words, which may be followed by the preposition to.

- All visitors must sign in on the sign-in page.
- Visitors can sign in to yahoo! mail automatically.
- Choose your preferences for sign-in and security.

sign-up (n., adj.), sign up (v.)

Hyphenate when used as a noun or an adjective. Two words when used as a verb.

- Sign up for the service.
- Fill in the sign-up form.
- Sign-up is free.

site map

t

Transfer of Wealth

Capitalize the words Transfer of Wealth when we refer to one of our studies and when it's the title of a webinar, paper or book. If we are talking about transferring wealth in general, or referring to any wealth studies other organizations have done, do not capitalize.

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TOW or (TOW)

Abbreviated form of Transfer of Wealth. Only abbreviate after it has been spelled out in a document followed with parentheses. Every use after (TOW) can go without the parentheses. Eg.

u

urbanicity

The degree to which a geographical unit is urban.

url

All capitals. Stands for uniform resource locator. Abbreviation is always acceptable. Plural: URLs.

username

lowercase, one word.

v

video camera

videoconference

w

website

whitepaper