What’s New and Different

DDD Self-Directed Time
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Why a style guide is important

- It presents a consistent, recognizable voice
- It is one of the tools in our content strategy toolkit
- Others have already spent a lot of time thinking about this so we don’t have to
Focus

- Style and voice
- Content for the web
- Use interface
- Procedures
General observations

- Instead of Correct and Incorrect, now Microsoft style and Not Microsoft style
  - Doesn’t presume that the Microsoft way is the only way
- Shift toward a lighter, friendlier tone in writing
- Introduces first wave of new style and terminology
  - Intent is to set some groundwork for future guidelines
Style and voice

- Grammatical choices
  - Make every word count – users scan
  - In general, use second person
  - Use the present tense
  - Use first person sparingly

- Punctuation
  - Use exclamation points and semicolons sparingly

- Contractions
  - Use to create a friendly, conversational tone
Style and voice (continued)

- Bias-free communication
  - Don’t use racial, cultural, sexual, and other stereotypes.
  - Don’t use slang that may be considered profane or derogatory.
  - Don’t use the generic, masculine pronoun unless you have no other choice.
    - **Microsoft style**: A user can change the default settings.
    - **Not Microsoft style**: A user can change his default settings.
  - Do not equate people with their disabilities – focus on the person, not the disability.
    - **Microsoft style**: Customers who are blind can use these features.
    - **Not Microsoft style**: The blind can use these features.
Style and voice (continued)

- **Anthropomorphism**
  - Definition – attributing human characteristics or behavior to things that are not human
  - Avoid – it’s a metaphor and may be interpreted differently by people from different cultures
  - OK to use if metaphor is well-established and its limitations are clear (example: the child object inherits the attributes of its parent)
Content for the web

- Content types include text, images, audio, video, and interactive presentations

- Text for the web
  - Make text scannable
  - Use lots of links – keeps content concise and scannable
  - Limit link text to four keywords or fewer – short links are easier to scan
  - Link to background and related information rather than summarizing
Content for the web (continued)

- **Video**
  - Video titles should clearly indicate the content
  - Keep videos short - < 2 minutes is a good target
  - Videos should tell a story with a beginning, middle, and end
  - Use the same voice that you use in other content
  - Timing is difficult
  - Avoid references to earlier parts of the video
  - Include captions to improve accessibility
  - Consider a branding element to open and close video and a URL for more information
Content for the web (continued)

- Blogs
  - Blog frequently and on a regular schedule.
  - Tone should be friendly and informal.
  - Respond promptly to customer comments.
  - If you plan to archive posts, add a disclaimer to old content.
  - Tag each blog entry with keywords to help readers find related entries.
    Example: www.balloon-juice.com
  - Use other social media tools, such as Twitter and Facebook, to raise awareness about your blog.
Content for the web (continued)

- Help users find your content:
  - Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
  - Social Media Optimization (SMO)

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
  - Focus on keywords, links, titles, and descriptions
  - Keywords
    - Know what terms users search for
    - Use these terms early and as often as possible
  - Links
    - Link liberally to other content
    - Many incoming and outgoing links that use your keywords improve your position in search results
Content for the web (continued)

- Search Engine Optimization (continued)
  - Titles
    - Use most important keywords early in the title
    - Use no more than 10 to 12 words, or about 65 characters
  - Descriptions
    - Appear in search results
    - Include keywords in the description and put them as close as possible to the beginning
    - Should be no more than 160 to 170 characters
    - Examples: Microsoft Office, Google Apps
Content for the web (continued)

- Social Medial Optimization (SMO)
  - Use social media like Twitter, Facebook, forums, newsgroups, and YouTube to promote content
  - Use social media technologies, such as bookmarking, blogging, RSS feeds and other sharing technologies to improve SEO by increasing the number of well-formed inbound links
  - You need to have the resources to post and monitor frequently (once a week is a reasonable target)
The user interface

- **Natural user interface (NUI)**
  - Type of interface where users interact more naturally with a device through gestures and speech instead of an input device such as a keyboard and mouse
  - Developing content for NUI will generate the need for new style and terminology

- **New – explanation of the Windows Phone user interface**
The user interface (continued)

- **Ribbon**
  - Introduced in Microsoft Office 2007
  - Definition – a rectangular area that fits across the top of an application window
The user interface (continued)

- Ribbon (continued)
  - Use lowercase for ribbon (capitalized in Office 2007, lowercase in Office 2010)
  - Use *on* the ribbon, not *in* the ribbon

*Microsoft style:*
On the **Home** tab, in the **Font** group, click the arrow next to the **Text Highlight Color** icon, and then click the color that you want.

On the **Review** tab, in the **Comments** group, click **New Comment**.
The user interface (continued)

▪ Gesture
  • Refers to a motion that the user can make to interact with the hardware or software.
  • OK to use title capitalization for gesture names.

  *Microsoft style:* The Help Me gesture displays the Help screen.

▪ Speech
  • Interaction with a program by using voice commands.
  • Enclose voice commands in quotation marks.
  • Punctuation preceding the command or within the command is not necessary unless needed to avoid ambiguity.
  • Always capitalize the first word in a voice command.

  *Microsoft style:* To call Jim, say “Call Jim Knox mobile.”
The user interface (continued)

- **Key names**
  - Spell key names as they appear (no longer all upper case)
  - Spell out the special characters that could be confused with an action
    - *Microsoft style*: Shift + Plus Sign (not Shift + +)
  - It’s OK to add symbol in parenthesis, as in Plus Sign (+)
Procedures

- Document conventions
  - Write a procedure so that all steps fit on one screen or page.
  - OK to use right angle brackets for menu items (File > Open).
  - If a command name ends with a colon or ellipsis, do not include this punctuation.
  - Do not use the descriptor button unless it helps avoid confusion.
  - You don’t have to end a procedure with “click OK.”
  - Use bold formatting for user input and italic formatting for placeholders.

Microsoft style:
In the Date box, type April 1.
Type password.
Procedures (continued)

- **Pen-computing procedures**
  - Use tap and double-tap.

- **Touch procedures**
  - When referring to hardware buttons and keyboard, use *press*.
  - When referring to elements on the screen, use *tap* and *double-tap*.
  - When referring to moving one or more fingers to scroll through items on the screen, use *flick*. Don’t use *scroll*.

- **Sensor procedures**
  - When referring to elements on the screen, use *hover over*.
Procedures (continued)

- Cloud computing technology
  - It’s increasing and evolving
  - Two and a half pages of terms and definitions
  - Examples of terms:
    - hosted service
    - Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)
    - private cloud
    - software as a service (SaaS)
    - tenant
Procedures (continued)

- **Security**
  - Don’t make statements that convey the impression or promise of absolute security.
  - Be careful when you use the words *safe, private, secure,* and *protect.*
  - Use qualifiers such as *helps* and *can help* with these words.
  - Provides guidance for use of some terms.
    Examples: antimalware, bot, hack, malicious code, spyware.
Procedures (continued)

- Version identifiers
  - When you list different versions of a product, list the most recent version first

  *Microsoft style:* Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP
  *Not Microsoft style:* Windows XP and later
Practical issues of style

- Capitalization of titles and headings
  - Microsoft recommendation – use sentence-style capitalization for titles and all headings, regardless of level
    - Less formal
    - Easier for a worldwide audience to read
Recommendations

- Add mobile terminology to our style guide
- Explore using Description metadata to improve SEO (can we do this in Drupal?)
- Future self-directed day – group of DDDers work on redoing the DDD style guide
- Note to self - explore the idea of project style sheets