

## Differences Between Web and Print Media

PRINT	WEB	USABILITY ISSUES
Physical accessibility - readers must possess a copy of publication or visit a place where they can access a hard copy of it	Virtual accessibility - anyone with access to the Web can locate information online, anywhere they can access the Web through a network or wireless access point	<i>Many print publications not made available online, browser compatibility and other technical issues not taken into consideration</i>
Limited navigability - cannot be searched electronically, awkward to switch pages or documents	High navigability - can be searched electronically, easy to switch between pages or documents	<i>Sites may be difficult to navigate or search, documents not tagged/labeled/headlined properly, print documents repurposed instead of adapted for Web (difficult to search)</i>
Reading hard media - easy on eyes, portable, depends on environment for reading conditions, continuous view, not customizable	Reading light (soft media) - hard on eyes, may not be portable, depends on hardware for reading conditions, interrupted view, may be customizable	<i>Documents meant to be read in print form are published on Web, poor text design and Web design make it hard to read online, user may have old equipment</i>
Dated - print publications are fixed to the date of printing and must be reprinted to make current	Current - even static content pages can be kept current to the minute; dynamic pages call data when requested	<i>Web not kept up to date; approval process holds up publication of current info;</i>
Complex text structure - text written in longer sentences and paragraphs, denser text, emphasis on reading, word count 50% more than online	Simple text structure - "chunked out", short sentences and paragraphs, emphasis on scanning and perusing, word count 50% less than print	<i>Web staff may not know how to "Webify" text, signal/noise ratio is too high, too hard to scan, too much "clutter" instead of "clicks", users give up and bailout</i>
Formal language - formal tone and language, grammatical, narrative style, may be passive or active voice, emphasis on text rather than graphics	Informal language - informal tone and language, concise like ad copy, active voice like newspaper copy, emphasis on design and layout,	<i>Poor communication results, writing sounds stiff, false and artificial (read <a href="#">The Cluetrain Manifesto</a>), takes readers too long to get to the point of the copy, users bailout</i>

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Passive reading - readers can only read what is printed, will read front to back cover, can read faster, and sometimes read word for word ( <i>exception</i> ), referenced documents are not always included	Interactive reading - readers can interact by clicking links or objects, can read any pages in any order, read 25% more slowly ( <i>Nielsen</i> ), only 16% read word for word ( <i>Nielsen</i> ), 79% of users just scan text ( <i>Nielsen</i> ), referenced documents are linked and can be read online	<i>Not enough cross-referencing of internal links or provision of external links, no opportunities for user feedback or customization, false assumption that users will read word for word, not enough use of layout and graphic techniques to improve readability</i>
Targeted readership or area demographic - editors can target a demographic and may know something about who will read publication	Global readership - while users can be targeted, anyone with Internet access may be able to read content	<i>Content is too localized and is out of context for non-targeted or non-local users, site objectives not clearly targeting primary users</i>
Distributed documents - reader must be given a copy, cannot change or extract content easily, document may be dated	Downloadable documents - anyone with access to the Web can download a copy, may be able to change or extract info, document may be current	<i>Options to copy, save, extract or view printer-friendly content not available, terms of use not clear, not enough cross-referencing of links</i>
Carefully edited, reviewed and approved - publications have been through several readings and edits and proofs before finally going to print, publishing cycle may take long time (1 day - several years)	Quickly edited, reviewed and approved - online publications may not have had the same editorial scrutiny, may not have been proofed well, and may be published instantly, publishing cycle may be within minutes	<i>Sloppy spelling, grammar and structure, emphasis on publication rather than editorial process, risk of errors that may offend or annoy readers or may result in legal issues</i>

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