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>>Hello thank you for joining the webinar. Our speaker today is Stacy Robison she is president and cofounder of Connecticut health. She has created numerous tools for health officials including health literacy online, a guide to writing and designing easy-to-use website. She is the coeditor of the HH HFF action plan and oversee its plain language [ Inaudible ] development to the award-winning website help find her dog off . And healthy be -- hell finder.gov and healthy [ Inaudible ] .gov.

>> Thank you. This is Stacy and I am going to talk about health letters he and plain language and what that has to do with creating excellent websites. Before it started I would like to put a plea out. To ask questions. Ask those in the chat box and I will hopefully make a note to myself to pause periodically during the presentation and take some questions. Do not hesitate to type those in the box and I will try to get to all of them.

>> what I am going to cover in the next hour or so, is the background on why we want to make our health websites to his -- easier to understand and who is going online for health information and what they are looking for. Will go over basics of plain language. I will try and talk about it specifically how it relates to websites. And how to use the user design -- user centered design website and go through some specific strategies. That hopefully you can use in your everyday jobs and I will break this down into thinking about audience content, display, organization, navigation and evaluation.

>> That is our jampacked agenda. First of background information and I am guessing this is not new information for anyone participating in the 11 are today. We know that folks are online. 74% of adult and 95% of teenagers, and these are the latest numbers from depute Internet [ Inaudible ] that they are going up by the hour. when this really exciting things for those of us in that health area people are looking for health information and it's the popular activities second to e-mail and eight in 10 Internet users, which translates to 61% of adult. They are looking for health information online. Six and -- six in 10 of those say that their most recent research have an impact on their health. One of the other trends that are interesting and online health seeking behavior is that folks are often looking for information for someone else. which has implications of how you want to organize and package your content.

>> At the same time, we have these folks going online more and more people, and we know they are looking for health information and at the same time we often know that we have this big problem of health letters he that week -- literacy that we talk about a lot.

>> As many as half of US adults, have limited literacy skills. As many as 9/10 American adults have the limited literacy skills. There's a reason why those numbers are different but we all know that healthcare information in the health-care system is often challenging and unfamiliar and requires a lot of skills like reading charts and numeracy and things like that. It's also done in a larger context of stress and uncertainty. Those factors contribute to someone's health literacy skills. Another interesting trend that is happening is that we know older adults are going online more and more. It is great but we often know these populations are affected by different age-related changes that affect vision, hearing and cognition. We have an interesting scenario that allow more Americans are going online but we also know that we are dealing with some of these challenges when it comes to reading and text and understanding health information and terminology. Also using in searching for information online. What do we do about this? This is where I think those of us in the web world, there is a synergy between this idea of usability and idea about health letters he. -- Hold literacy. -- Health literacy. And it being the ability to understand and use health information in the everyday life. Help literacy -- health literacy is the usability of the website. Rather than feeling overwhelmed by this problem nine and 10 adults struggle with, and what would we do, however going to improve 90% of the populations health letters he spills and -- health literacy skills we can do a ton by simple buying the information in making the website more clear and understood -- and easier to understand.

>> with folks and let managers who can play a huge role in improving health literacy and that is [ Inaudible ]. I'm hoping that after hearing the today -- can take

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some concrete actions that in the long run it will help improve health literacy in this country .

>> Before I got too far element to put up some stats because this is a question that I get a lot. Some of you may also have this question about if you make it too simple -- if you make it too simple -- you are going to turn off the rest of your user base. Effect is that is not true and we know it is not true. This is one study that we looked at comparing a prototype website where they used a lot of the strategies we are going to talk about today to make the website easier to understand for folks with limited literacy skills and they did a comparison with the original site. Not only did folks with limited [ Inaudible ] but folks with hires -- with higher literacy did better also . Hopefully this gives the concern that paying too much attention to some of the strategies and make websites more simple is going to turn off more sophisticated users and it is not true. We all prefer simple click easy to understand information especially when we are using the Internet.

>> A couple quick slides on plain language and how plainly which fits into the bigger picture. Designing health websites. We all know of the plain writing act of 2010 and folks in the government are thinking about plain language and what it means and how it applies to not only publications and forms but how it will apply to website as well. This is a timely topic.

>> What is plain language?

>> It is a strategy for making written and oral communication easier to understand. It's not exactly the same thing as health literacy is one strategy that we use to help improve health letters he. -- literacy . It's using simple language and define technical terms. Use an active voice. Break complex information into short chunks. Put the most important information first. There's a lot of overlap in terms of plain language strategies and good web design and good web usability. Again another bonus for this synergistic effect between plain language and usability. A lot of these best practices verge and come together and we are looking at a health website.

>> One other piece, because using simple language and breaking information, it is something that a lot of us are start -- starting to use and becoming more familiar with. Some folks might be less familiar with in terms of a plain language strategy is the idea of putting context first. This is also helpful whether the information is on a printed page or if it is on a screen. In the first example, writing in green is the new information. Reducing animal food products and substituting low-fat or nonfat for whole dairy products can lower the amount of cholesterol in your body. The user has to read all through the green text. And hold all that information in their head. They are reading all this and they do not know why and trying to understand and remember this. They stood in a know why until they get to the end of the sentence. Then they know this is lowering the amount of cluster on my body. If we start first with that context, you can lower the amount of Lester O. in your body by -- you can lower the amount of cholesterol in your body by ask why in the.

>> That is one simple trick to think about as you are putting content on the web -- on the website, what's the new information and what is the context and how can you put that context first.

>> I want to talk about user centered design. This is a piece of the puzzle and a really key piece for those of us in the web usability management world. This is our process at Connecticut health. We do a lot of user center design and we see this as an ongoing [ Inaudible ] process . We do informative research and make perfect types and tested again and fix our prototypes and test it again. Beasley folks are going to be at different stages in website development and you may not have the luxury of where -- at some point and go all the way through. But you can go into any point in the cycle. Something like, at the beginning talk about something like this researching the user, doing focus groups and interviews and tests flow analysis. Collaging is interesting to make that we sometimes use here at Connecticut health and that is exactly what it sounds like but getting users to create a collage of some other feelings of the topic for the website or the agency depending on the purpose of the website. You can get a sense of look and feel and get a little bit of the subconscious images and themes that they have in their head. Once you have a good sense of your user and we might move on to thinking about what is the content and how is it organized on the site, labeled and we will talk about this more. And we get to the fun stage of designing and letting prototypes and doing prototype and using testing and it is always a work in progress. The cool thing about thinking the

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user centered design process and how it relates to plain language and health letters  
he -- literacy , beginning different information from the beginning and from end  
users you will get a good sense of what their knowledgebase is and information  
preferences. If you reflect that in your site you will ultimately have a site that  
is easier to use.  
>> I will talk about specific strategies and we will go so to -- go through some of  
these and after one or two I will stop after each and see if there are any questions  
about the mechanics of this and how you might be able to do this in your day-to-day  
work.  
>> As I mentioned in the beginning we will go through six key areas. I want to call  
out that a lot of these are directly from a great resource. Health letters he online  
-- health literacy online .  
>> What this is, a bunch of research that we did across about 15 different studies  
with more than 750 users to help us develop the federal website help find her dog  
of. -- Help find her.gov --  
>> We were specifically using different testing strategies and going to different  
prototypes to understand how did these interact with information on the screen and  
how are they reading it and understanding it. We also took those findings and try to  
match them up with what we know about the best practices in web design and usability  
and accessibility so we actually can you take a look at the guide we try to match it  
up with specific guidelines in your research aced design and usability guidelines  
published by GSA. We tried to match some of those up. We are taking actual user data  
and informative research data and mentioning up with best practices is a helpful  
resource and most of what I'm going to talk about today minus a few examples, you  
can find in the guide. And courage folks to take a look and keep a copy by their  
desk.  
>> Before I go too much further I want to put out, main philosophies and main  
findings in working on these federal websites over the years and make sure that they  
are usable for folks. For often than not it is the fault of the website, it's a  
poorly designed website more than it is the skill or the experience of the users.  
And that is what is contributing to users online. The good news about thinking about  
it this week is that we actually have a huge impact on how folks access and use  
health information.  
>> Let's go to audience. We have to start with audience because we are user sensor  
for Mac --.  
>> This probably work that you have done already unless you are in the exciting  
position of building the site from scratch. A lot of us are working on existing work  
-- existing websites for Mac is which --. It's interesting to check in and update  
your user profile and motivations and goals especially as you keep adding more  
information to your website. Think about who are the users and why are they coming?  
And humbly you can use some web analytics to think about what pages are they coming  
for and what information are they coming for and what are they trying to do. That is  
usually the first place that we start.  
>> Different testing methods that you might do to get at some of this is the basic  
individual interviews and focus groups. We also do the collaging, sometimes do  
personas and scenarios. Sometimes a niche deaths -- next verdict on personas and  
they can be helpful if you have done a lot of work in terms of talking to users. You  
have done your focus groups and you're using that data and turn it into persona in  
order to make it usable data. These are two examples of personas that we are working  
on recently for a new federal site. You can see the types of information that we try  
to put into persona. We actually refer to these as we are developing site. We often  
talk about or will -- or Keira. Is a way to help you keep your users in a top of  
mind when you're doing some of your work for Mac it is eight --.  
>> It is fun and you can use different information on your persona. At the very  
bottom we went to try and capture the users familiarity and experience with  
technology. We made this slide chart that we use four different books and that would  
also help us make sure that our site was meeting the diverse needs of users.  
>>This is a [ Inaudible ] way to do a persona . You can grab a stock photo and do  
some bowl at. -- Bolus -- bullets.  
>> Were thinking about healthy people website and what are folks looking for in the  
different people that are coming to the site. What are the priorities and coming to  
do and taking all that into account as we start to build out our site.  
>> That's a little background on audience. Let's move into content. I think content

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is the most important part of your website. We want to start by getting the content right before we spend too much time thinking about the other pieces. We know that reading content and information online on a screen is different than how folks read print information. We want to keep that in mind. Sometimes the tendency to take a print pace and turn it into a PDF, and stick it up on a website and hope that people will read it that way. We know that is not how folks use information online. We have a great opportunity to make information either more digestible and understandable and usable because we are dealing with a different context. We have more flexibility.

>> What do web users want? This is something that we found after doing a bunch of testing with hundreds of different users. They came down to two main things, understand the problem and know what it is and find out how to take action. A lot of times we heard folks when they are looking at a health website, tell me what you want me to do. Now that we know that information we can build our health website around that question. The challenge, can we help them answer this question and about the 20 to 30 seconds that they are staying on a webpage. We went to try and show them from the home page, yes you are going to find your answers on the site.

>> Healthcare.Governor , they have a rotating banner but they make it user-friendly and at the beginning they, right away say you can explore your coverage options. You have a way to get assistance and get consumer assistance in your state. Right away they know the folks are coming here with questions and one of the biggest questions is how do I get health insurance.

>> They are trying to answer that right off about -- right off the bat.

>> They're trying to speak to target audiences and let them know that they are going to find their answers on this website. They are use of a homepage.

>> At a glance, how do we make usable and reader content. You want him put the most important information first -- you want to put the most important information first because it's easier for people to process and they may not be looking too much further. You do not want to bury it down below. Describe the health Havey are and the health issue -- health behavior and health issue..Too much information. You and to provide specific actions that searching for coverage and how to get started and this is stuff one. -- Step one. Plain language and use accurate content which is another given but critical for those of us who might be working in the federal [ Inaudible ] .

>> Another huge piece of content is to engage users. We have a great opportunity because of the medium we are working on because we are working on a dynamic website and it is not just a fact sheet or printed page. How to take advantage of that? We want to do that by inviting user to interact with the content and it could be simple or obligated. -- Complicated. We know if we get folks to interact with the information online we will increase the level of engagement and in the end it will increase the chance that they will take some of the behavior that we want him -- want them to take.

>> It could be simple, or the ability to e-mail information to someone. Or to print something out. You could have a simple poll on your homepage or on a different landing page of your site where folks can answer yes or no questions with a radio button and see what other people answered. You do not have to collect any personal information that can be specific to that site visit. You can have something simple like a BMI regulator. -- A. or. -- Check it later -- calculator. A way that they can self select for Taylor that information. Looking for information on health insurance and you will start to be my filter and click on that and get more tailored information.

>> Any of those things are ways that you are getting users to interact with your content and ultimately that will in gauge the more.

>> This is an example from web M.D. web M.D. Right on their home page Ima once users click they will see the answer and now they are in your site. They are on a secondary level page and looking out content. It is a great way to get folks involved.

>> This is another example of what we did on help find her dog of. -- A healthfinder.gov. when folks come to the site they don't have to sort through -- we put this box on the home page and call it my help find her. -- My health finder. They put in information and hit start and they are getting tailored information and it is a link into more content on the page. Off of this results page, we also do an Amazon.com model so we may say, and be interested in some of the other topic. We are

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giving them a more tailored experience as they navigate through the information on the website.

>> What about the user testing and user centered design techniques. How do we use that in terms of content? This couple different ways. One is that you can use card serving -- sorting and most of us think of us as card sorting, as a way to categorize group information. In a card sort you made have 30 different index cards and on the cards are different pieces of content that you have on your website and put them on a table and you might ask a user to say, group these into as many groups as you want. That is the traditional use of a card sort. In addition to grouping you have folks rank the content. Give them the cards and tell me what are your top three most useful cards? what are the three -- three based most used cards?

>> That might help you figure out what you want to feature on your homepage because you will get patterns of what your users are looking for. You can do a paper prototype, easily and have folks point out what pieces of information or content they are most interest in. The contest comprehensive using paper type.

>> Those are simple method that you can use to think about not only what you are including as content but how you are prayer or testing it on your site and what reading level will be for your key users.

>> I will posit for a moment to see if anyone has any questions on plain language for the audience or content pieces that we talked about so far.

>> who do have one question. This person asked our personas generated from [ Inaudible ] scenarios , [ Inaudible ] That is a good question. There is a not a clear-cut. You can generate them differently. The most effective persona do come from and based on real data and real people they talk to. It is almost a hybrid. A use case scenario think about, the strongest personas are once that are informed from real people. You might actually write down quotes or things from folks in a in-depth interview or focus group. Use some of those quotes that you hear to create your persona. Oftentimes your persona may be like a mash of four different people from different focus groups. They become one [ Inaudible ] persona . Is a different -- it is different than a use case but you create your persona you want to think about what, how they are using your site and their task and pathway through your site would be.

>> We have another persona question. Is there a persona bank somewhere?

>> That would be really cool.

>> I do not know the answer to that.

>> If there is I have not found it yet. I think that could be useful especially for folks that don't have the budget to do a lot of user testing. I would caution the strongest persona would be ones that are specific to the content on your website and obviously that is universal. But there are a lot of spots that you can look at to do more general audience analysis and research. CDC does great information that you can look for different segments of the population. You can get interesting aggregator from searching around. I have not encountered a persona bank.

>> If we hear of any we will in no.

>> There are no additional questions I might be partial to content because that is a lot of will we do here. You can have really stellar content and if you do not display or organize it well on your website then nobody will see it. Display is pretty critical. Folks are familiar with this, often called a pattern of how people scan a webpage. It is called that because it makes the shape of an off -- F. Folk start off strong and read the header at the top of the page and maybe the first sentence or two and as they progress down the page they are dropping off and barely hitting any of the content further down on the page. It makes an F shape. One of the things that were interesting when we did want to research with especially with users that had limited literacy skills is that we were not seeing the F pattern. They were not doing a typical scanning behavior they were actually skipping. They would skip over an entire chunk of text and instead of standing and looking at hundreds and moving down the page, they had a much more spread at pattern where they would start to read text and what we found was if there were more than three lines of text, three lines, it would trigger skipping. Other things that triggered skipping were numbers and percentages. Any sort of complex technical terms, that would trigger skipping. And instead of going straight to the next section, sometimes they would skip and land totally in the middle of the page. Or oftentimes if they hit something that triggered skipping, they would start clicking on links. Instead of reading the context they would start clicking. That is different behavior than you

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with a from web savvy folks.

>> Whenever possible you want to use bulleted lists. Short sentences. Limit your text to three lines. I say that because it might sound challenging and might not always be realistic. You will have much more success that people especially folks with limited literacy skills to get through the content if you're using these bulleted lists and short sentences. And not have dense paragraphs and text. Would think about going back to the difference between print text and reading text on this green, even if I think of myself I don't want to get to a website and the paragraphs of dense [ Inaudible ] . Bullets and limiting the process on your site is going to help folks, even everyone but even people with limited literacy skills.

>> Another thing we found from user testing, they focus on the center of the screen. They have a pretty narrow field of vision. They also do not scroll very much. That is actually common for a lot of these users. We found some of the folks in limited literacy skills do not scroll at all. Also thinking about what is -- does this mean Tiki text in the middle of the screen, there is a big challenge when they put contacts in the right-hand margin because folks are really looking over their. They are used to seeing advertisements. Deductively do not want to put any key content in the right-hand margin because it is not in people's field of view. Keeping it in the center of the screen and above the fold and keeping the navigation, either on the left or center and not on the right. That will make a big difference.

>> For those who may not know what I mean above the fold, it is the bottom portion of your screen without having to scroll down. Would call that the fold. That comes from the newspaper concept. The newspaper is folded in half, the story folded on the top will be read more. It means what you can see on a single string without scrolling.

>> Another thing that is common, with users is that they are easily overwhelmed. This applies across the board to all users. The idea that if you write your content in plain language it can still be overwhelming if you are using too much text together. Dense paragraphs or if you do not use put on a white space on your page. It is the idea of using planning which and it is a really important strategy and key first step. We do not want to stop there because if we do not present our plain language prose, and it digestible way than we are overwhelming the user. I am a big fan of bullets. Because they minimize the text so you do not have long paragraphs and they also add whitespace. There is two birds with one stone, bullets and as much white space to be patting your text and image is helpful. If you step back, you want the content on your website to be easy to read. Take the time to use plain language strategies and put the context first. But the most important information first and use familiar language. The also want to step back and make sure that the content looks like it's easy to read. Even without reading it, just glance at the screen and ask does it look readable and approachable or overwhelming?

>> Thinking a little bit about layout. This is a screenshot of MEDLINEplus. They are using a lot of bullets and list. Use white space on this site and I get the question, whitespace does not have to be white. Whitespace is a negative space where the empty space on the site. For example, the blue box I would still say you are negative or background space, I would call that the whitespace even though it is blue. You do not have to be totally liberal. -- Liberal liberal.

>> Using the rule of thumb with older adults you have information on your website that is prevalent for older adults. Think about using 14 point font.

>> A lot of folks can increase their font size they using their toolbar but starting off using 12 point or four point -- 14 point -- 14.5 will make a difference on your site.

>> Images are important on websites. Images are important across any type of health material or information. We all like to look at pictures. Especially on the web images are helpful to folks to understand more technical concepts that he might be trying to explain. It is a lot easier if you can show a picture. Different trends that have come from user testing is the idea that if you're trying to illustrate a more complex medical concept, you want to think about using a simple realistic line drawing. Not a lot of detail. Lily labeled and think about using photos of real people versus model looking. Photos or realistic illustrations. We heard that a lot from users. They do not want to look at websites full of bottles. -- Models. To relay some of you are thinking that this is challenging it is when we are using, and limited to photography everyone looks like a model. I acknowledge that. It is a challenge particularly if you are limited to stock photography. Always use the

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caption, it is key. For people who have limited literacy skills. They might be looking at the picture and reading the caption. If the caption can give them the key piece of information that that is a great way to get that to them without or sing them to read all of your text.

>> Another important thing when we are talking about display, is links. We are getting a lot better with how we label links. These are four rules to follow if you're thinking about links. One is that you want to make them obvious. Underline them. Make them long enough to grab and this comes into play if you have older adults or users with less experience online. Sometimes they have trouble with navigating the mouse and clicking exactly on the link. The longer the link for easier it is to grab. Be descriptive and tell the user where they are going to go if they click on it. Limit the number of links on a page. Unless you have a peer portal site, group your links together at the bottom of the page, but if you want folks to get through the core information and make sure the links are not linking off the ticket if or redundant information but taking folks to relevant information that is not on your page. Think carefully how you use links.

>> This is a quick example, on the left the links are not only a little bit longer but descriptive. They will tell the reader exactly where you are taking them. If I click on this I will see the message -- Massachusetts state standards. As opposed to the example on the right where they might have one link that says get started. Is not underlined and also pretty short and I'm not exactly sure where I would go if I click get started.

>> That is an example of what we are talking about in terms of links.

>> As much as I began emphasize the importance of content and say that content is the most important thing on your website. I stand by that statement. This is a quote that we sometimes kicked around in our office from Donald Norman. Attractive things work better. Attractive web design leads to a more usable experience.

>> I will pause again to see if there are any new questions before I move on to thinking about how to organize all the great content on your website.

>> Going back to the persona, [ Inaudible ] does not have a specific or South Bank specifically for Mac Senna --. Could you provide the citation for nine in 10 American adults but struggle with health letters he? Spent -- literacy?

>> That comes from the national assessment of adult literacy. Called the gall -- NALL. A measure of literacy levels in the population every five years and for the first time, they looked at health letters he and -- literacy and finding , they break folks literacy liberals -- levels into four categories. Below basic, basic, intermediate and proficient. Essentially the way it will Don was about 12% of adults fell into the persistent -- proficient category for Mac --.

>> Of the scoring and of the NALL and when they took a look at the data and look at the different tasks that fell in the different categories, what is a basic task and are in immediate task, the intermediate tasks like reading a drug label on the over-the-counter medication or using a BMI chart. If that doesn't send we expect folks to be able to do this. To maintain their health and prevent disease. This is critical so therefore we actually need people to be in this proficient level. If you follow that logic it means only about 12% of adults can do all the things that they need. To be able to promote their health. That is how we got to nine and 10 and the actual study andare from the [ Inaudible ] . Became evil -- you can't even Google that. We get nine and 10 from looking at that 12% of adults who have proficient health service he -- literacy.

>> What are your thoughts on writing original content versus rewriting content?

>> That depends on your audience and the purpose of your specific website for Mac I think --.

>> I think this is a trend that we are saying, trying to reduce redundancy and eliminate dog up and things like that. -- EliminateGovernor .

>> It is something to think about but at the same time if you have a slightly different audience or different spin I would argue to writing some original content and a short summary that is revellant and including the links so people can go and see the original source and hopefully drill down a little bit deeper. Think about doing a tailored high-level summary of that content. It depends again on the audience and the purpose of the site.

>> Do you have a rule of thumb for the number of links that should be on a page?

>> I have not seen the rule of some, in the literature for example. We try to limit it unless it is a full length less. That is made to be a list of links. We try and

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limit it to three that show up in that under of your screen. If I am looking at the spring, if I was reading text -- screen, if I was reading the text I would think about the most user-friendly way to do that. As you go through your text in summary you may have more information and five or six great descriptive links. It can be distracting as people are trying to read the content on the site and folks who have limited literacy skills.

>> They heard that hurts readers can be set up to read links and the words start here does not give them a lot of context. Can you leverage on that?

>> That is exactly right. One of the main reasons you want to have descriptive links is that not only does it help over those of us reading and using the site so we know where we are going if we click, but critical for screen reader. Get started, or more, or click here, it's not descriptive at all. That is a huge argument and support of using descriptive links but I also think again having a descriptive link is definitely leads to a more satisfying user experience because they will not end up on a page where they did not expect to be. Screen readers are absolutely a consideration as you are doing images and links on your website.

>> Is any guide it's about focusing vision of earth on the index page versus other specific ages within the site?

>> That is an interesting question. I do not know of specific items. -- Specific guidance. That will probably be site specific. I think index pages, while it depends on the ways that people are searching and navigating your site. And index page is an interesting page to start if you want to do a bigger content reorganization. I'm not familiar with starting in one place over another.

>> Let's move on and we can take more questions at the end. Folks again if you have questions we stick them in the chat box.

>> Several trying make sure I'm deeply of time at the end to take -- I will try and make time at the end so I can take everyone's questions.

>> Organization. The basics of organization is we all know this site that have great information architecture and organization of content and sites that do not know -- do not do so great. Had we become one of the sites intuited we organize. In the biggest thing here would be user research. Just in terms of throwing out the term information architecture is a jargon term for how you categorize the information on your website see what you think about how you are grouping things together and categorize but how you are laboring -- labeling those categories. I would say one of the biggest tips out there is to use labels that reflect the language of your users. Especially in government this tendency would be to use labels that as health or government professionals and in fact you want to use labels that are intuitive and reflect the language of your users. In fact if I was doing, a healthy homes website, I'm not going to create a category called environmental hazards on that website because I have not encountered users who use the term environmental hazards. To use different terms or split apart some of the information that falls under a category of environmental hazards. I would urge a slight touchback on just putting up and using the same labels that are used everywhere else. I would urge for some user testing. Card sorting, I think it is a low-cost easy method to help you get to have both grouping and labeling. Whenever you do a cursor with a user, we always have folks information but have them actually come up with their own label for that group and that is helpful. I will not spend a lot of time on organization but think through how you are grouping information and how you are labeling the information. It can reduce a lot of fresh -- frustration on all users not just users with literacy -- limited literacy skills.

>> Another piece, navigation go hand-in-hand with organization. Central part of navigation is the homepage. This is not a government example but the basics homepage is the most important page on your website. Want to think about your homepage fitting into the center of your screen. You don't want key information on the homepage or any information on the homepage falling below the fold. You want it to be clear. Not a lot of text. Basic links and who the site is for and this is how you get there, a clean attractive design. Start with looking at the homepage and another big piece of the homepage is picking sure that folks can get back to the homepage. A lot of people start their answer to over to the homepage. They might look for something and decide they want to do a different task and instead of navigating from that page they will intuitively start back over again at the homepage. This is especially true with limited literacy skills. How can you get people back to the homepage, think about that. A lot of us are used to clicking on the logo in the top



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left of this green and knowing intuitively that will be a hyperlink. It's a good practice but not always intuitive for users especially users who have less experience on the web. Having a home button is she. -- Key. This is a fundamental one but it happens a lot with making sure the back button works. That can be a frustrating experience for users. Some less savvy users will try and click the back button to get back to the homepage instead of using a link. Making sure that is an option, for people who navigate that way. It is important.

>> A couple things that we found from doing testing with web users who have limited literacy skills, they struggled with search. A lot of people avoided it completely. If the pressure of having to spell something correctly or type out a word in the search box.

>> Even if it is long they will browse through the list until they see what they are looking for. To take away from this is you want to have a bunch of different ways to search. Have a search function. But also give people other ways to get through your context. Whether it is a topic, A-Z, make sure there is other ways to search. In your actual search Roxy went to be able to compensate for misspelling. The other piece of search that I think is key, and also challenging because it takes a lot of resources and time to manage those search results. I think it pays off. What happens if I type diabetes into the search box, what do will I get? Rather descriptive labels? Am I getting 27 pages of results? Or 10 pages of results, or five results that have been called out to me as ones that are most relevant and get the other 50? Folks who have challenges navigating and using the navigation and understanding the text, their first instinct might be to type something in a search and were they going and difficult on the third result of the going to be taken off site. There is different considerations to think about when you are organizing your search.

>> This is also from [ Inaudible ] they have a search box and an alphabetical search and a topic category. This is a nice way to give users a bunch of options and easy to use. Again there is also a search box for people who use to navigate the site that we.

>> This is a screenshot of one way we do search, we also included pictures which we got from user testing that people liked this display. This is another way to give people options to search by category.

>> Thinking about navigation on your website and what that means for folks with limited others see skills -- literacy skills. Limited working memory. They reach the point of overload quickly and were all familiar with that feeling, the information overload feeling. It is not a good one so we hopefully, don't want folks to be hitting that point to sound. For the reasons that they reach the information overload is because they are already using a lot of concentration and a lot of effort to read the text. There using the effort to read the text and get through the text. And make other features of your site and content organization, it can make it challenging. They are also less likely to remember content from previous pages and part of this goes to the in memory overload issue. They are not always looking ahead or back on a page. They are focused on where they landed in the content. Would you do about this?

>> There are a couple tips. Used standalone sections, thinking that people may not be looking ahead or back and may not -- may that have that orientation on a page or a section. How can we make them stand alone as much as possible. What visual cues can we give so they know where they are in the website.

>> This is an interesting example. When we did early user testing with health finder, search box, we found that users were entering the information so they enter their age and and -- sex and taken to the screen with their kid results but not have connected that with the action they just talk on the previous page. They would not have connected it to the fact that they enter the information into a search box. That was an easy fix we added the text at the top of the page, you said you were a woman at the age of 49 and here are ways you can stay healthy.

>> So they made the connection that is the information they entered and here is the result. It may seem a bit much but actually it is a great queue for users that this is tailored content. If you're going to the extent of personalizing and tailoring the user experience on your site, give them a bunch of cues and let them know it is content just for you because you told us this piece of information and now we have given you these custom results.

>> Thinking about how to design simple navigation that might be usable for folks with limited literacy skills. The common elements like breadcrumbs are totally

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unfamiliar for a lot of users. Drop-down menus are unfamiliar and can be challenging for folks to use. We also know that users have trouble getting back to the homepage. One idea for this is to think that using the idea of a step-by-step navigation. It is called the linear navigation. The back button with clearly numbered pages. Let users know where they are on your site by using tabs or and or a strong left hand navigation. That is part a visual cues.

>> Again from health finder, you can see that we used a head -- page navigation structure. The content stays in the center of the screen and they function as stand-alone sections of text and users can navigate by paging stored and indexed by using those numbered links at the top. They are also shown that the basic section from the tab structure of the top. We tried a different -- a bunch of different navigations and we found this one works the best with those who had limited literacy skills or limited use on a website.

>> I did not put, a screenshot of what-based wrong left-hand navigation would be but one of the things to think about, if you have a left-hand navigation, are you showing your user where they are within the larger site structure? Maybe that section is highlighted in a different color in the navigation, or cues that you can give the user to help oriented them. This is a page that you are on in a section that falls in, and how they all function. You can do that through simple text and color design pages. That is another way to do it.

>> Also this linear navigation is not going to work for everyone's website. It can work really well but obviously it's not going to be a practical solution for others.

>> I will pause for a moment to see if there are any questions about some of the navigation things that we talked about before I move on to the last wrapup section about testing your site.

>> We have several questions and a couple comments.

>> A person has a suggestion, when selecting terms reliables, do a Google search that are most comely used.

>> That is a great tip and it's sure we have to, it takes an extra step to do that pushback sometimes but definitely worth it.

>> Could you list a couple of well-known fonts that work well on websites.

>> I am not a super great font person because we have web designers who are about both. In general using something like a -- an aerial font. There is lots of debate. The [ Inaudible ] font is the one that does not have the little feet on it.

>> Ariel is one that folks use a lot.

>> The font I am using on this PowerPoint is buttercup-- [ Inaudible ] . They work better on the web and there are good Google fonts that you can use that work well and clearly on a website. I urge you to poke around with Google web fonts.

>> Where you getting the data with users with limited literacy skills. -- works

>> --?

>> Step that I am sharing today are from the health literacy online guide which is basically a compilation of finding that were collected over several years with hundred of users as we did and developed a quick guide to healthy living which is part of health finder.gov. Most of them are not published in the Mr. but summarizes studies and findings and that health literacy online guide. A lot of the key themes in skipping instead of scanning, troubles searching, that is in the health letter see online guide -- health literacy online guide.

>> What are your thoughts of navigation labels?

>> Sentence case first titles -- versus title case?

>> I am not sure if there is a best practice around that. That would be something that I would test and tweak. I think in general I find sentence case to be easier to read and use but I'm not sure I can do that with any authority behind it.

>> What content would you place on the right side of the page?

>> I do not put a lot of content on the right hand margin if I can help it. It does happen, some of the websites that we work with, we have content in the right-hand margin and allies have that on my long-term list of changes to make. Definitely not your navigation and not any of your core content. If you have related links or resources, sometimes that goes in the right-hand margin. Part of it is how you package it. Anything that you can make it to do to make it less like an advertisement the better. Avoid using the content and their right-hand margin is late your page at. would call it magazine Soucy have your left-hand bank --

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navigation and a strong set of 10 margin in content spans the rest of the screen that you may integrate different text boxes or images within the content as folks are moving through the page. That is one way to do it. The challenge is if it is not on the right, does it get lumped on the bottom and do people ever scrolled down far enough to see it. I think that is why folks put things in the right-hand margin or Mac one way is to --.

>> One way is to in bed text boxes in your center margin of content.

>> Would you like to take one more question or move on and take the remaining questions at the end?

>> When Morris find.

>> -- One more is fine.

>> If something is edited to the seventh grade reading level the assumption is that we have excited -- succeeded. Are there pitfalls with this?

>> Yes there are and it is a challenge because one of the easiest more would say quantifiable objective way to a value HX for folks is to think about one of their readability formulas. For people who do not use them readability formula is a strict regulation of syllables and sentences. Is not taking into account other factors that can make text easy to read or hard to read. I would put a big caution sign next to using readability formulas. They are easy and some that you can get in Microsoft word. The use the version of flash Kincade. I don't think it is necessarily a good indication of if your text will be understood. I realize that it does have value because something concrete that you can point to but only use it as an indication to tell you if you are warm or cool. Not as an end-all be-all. Reading grade level is very a lot because of dependent -- formula to use and does a lot of consistency. You're really looking for the most familiar words not necessarily the word with the least number of syllables. If you get too caught up in syllables in some blanks you can end up with choppy unfamiliar sounding text. Then you have not achieved what you want to achieve at all.

>> Go go through the last section and we can take more questions.

>> The readability question is probably a good lead-in to the last section because the only way to know if your content is truly easy to use and understand is to test it with your end-user. Going back to diagram of the user centered design, there are spots of the process that we can do, testing with users and encourage you to do it at different points but evidently the idea, when you get to the end and have a launched website and maintaining it, it's never done. There are places to build in with users as you continue to maintain the content of their site.

>> This is an example of a prototype of a new site and it is where we incorporate different user testing into the site design. Looking in the top left we use card sorting to figure out what health topics will be. In the bottom left we create a checklist will on the site because we knew users wanted the idea of personalized information to to try and come up with information and help tailor peoples experience on the site. Focus groups told us that we want local resources and to find a way to incorporate that. Again the way to look at how the different user testing pieces can come together in your website. And user testing is to think of as co-creation. It's not testing its co-creation. Working with users to help improve your website. Sometimes we think it s. quality insurance but the whole idea you're not testing users your testing yourself. You're testing your website. It is really critical because going back to main message that I was talking about is the idea that most users challenge on our website comes from problems that can be easily fixed on the site not because users lack of literacy skills. That comes from a symptom of the website.

>> I can't stress enough the importance of testing your site. Great resource on usability-- [ Inaudible ] has a great approach to testing. He talks about problems may not be an issue to you but put users on your website and they will find them right away. Is a great way of eye-opening way of using your website.

>> Again I will put out this model of doing user testing and find ways to improve your site. There are different approaches and obviously depending on your client, and the number of users and budget, and things like that, there are different things you want to consider. If you are just doing periodic tests with two 23 or four users you can do that at any time. For this we want them to be as representative as possible, don't let that stop you. If you do not find the perfect user don't worry, find someone who is similar with the graphics, knowledge, and culture.

>> Do not use someone next to you in your office that is not a good choice. Use

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friends and family especially if they do not work in the same field that you do.  
>> There is no great answer to this question of how many people doing it to test with? I get it a lot and the answer actually depends. If you are doing a large website and get good user data that you can stand behind you will want to use a large sample. If you want to make some tweaks to do continual improvements on your site, turning three and a people can give you great starting points.  
>> The idea of narrative -- in trade of design. Testing revising testing revising. Do not wait until you have our lunch or website or your website redesign to test it with your target. You can test the prototype, paper prototype, and due also to things before you launch your site or redesigns. If you have already launched your site, and the horses out of the gate is good because you want to think about how are you building in some of your period attesting to some of your existing pages and sections. The ADA is to continual improvement and I think we get overwhelmed the resources and the process of doing a full-scale usability test. Or encourage you to think about how you can be doing it on an ongoing rolling basis with a small number of users.  
>> Sometimes people wonder, what a prototype looks like. It can be something simple, a printed screenshot of a prototype, it could be a bunch of post it notes, tabs or index cards. There is different ways to do it without costing a lot of money. A usability testing, one example of how it is done and observed it through a two-way mere and you will have one-on-one sessions and you can learn a ton from doing usability testing. Form or we do it remotely because we are actually using go to meetings like we are doing today and using a screen capture and software and test users anywhere in the country. with minimal effort and minimal budget. Remote testing is also cool and fun way to test your website.  
>> We talked about a lot of things and so to wrap up in case you are feeling overwhelmed. Start by watching people you sure website. It is enlightening. Cleaning up and organizing your content. Rethinking your homepage. Looking at your search options are there multiple ways to search and browse? And in the big picture be strategic about how to you get this into your budget? So you can make a case for doing more of these user testing and good usability strategies. You can make a strong case by looking at some of the staff that we started out and talking about by limited literacy skills of adults and who is going online and as we put more and more information online, we have an obligation to make sure that people can understand and use it. I would try to make that case and get good resources to do good things on your website.  
>> I will take as many questions as we can fit into the remaining time and this is my e-mail address for folks who want to contact me after the webinar. Feel free.  
>> Thank you Stacy. Fails when to mention that you mentioned [ Inaudible ] and we do offer twice monthly a session based on his book. Government employees are invited to attend and percent and often do remote participation.  
>> We have two more questions. [ Inaudible ] is notorious for not testing and believing that the wisdom of the crowd provided and not believing the wisdom of the crowd provided [ Inaudible ] information .  
>> It -- it is hard to touch Steve jobs right now.  
>> I think it is a great question. In terms of wandering down, it would not use that language. I think that you are getting at a good point and you want to strike a balance. Is a lot that we note and if you are a professional web designer, professional content strategist for web manager. Or are things that we know about the site and aesthetics of the site and functionality and good visual design. I do not think we need to throw that to the wayside because the user tells us that they want the homepage to be purple and yellow. It does not mean that we do that. There are things that we learn from users especially in terms of where site functionality breaks down and when information is hard to fight. In terms of some of the things in terms of design and preference, I would agree in a sense with Steve jobs, we do not need to ask users are looked to those answers. Went to look for them to get expertise and see how the site is usable and user-friendly. Also falling back on our own knowledge and professional training in terms of visual design and site design. That is a good question.  
>> We have a couple questions, would you be willing to answer those kids in the military and share with the rest of the attendees? If your Mac thank you so much --  
>> Thank you so much for your presentation in you provided a wealth of information and as a reminder think you two are one who joined us. we will be sending out the

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survey evaluations. You will receive it not to shortly after the webinar and in a follow-up e-mail please take the time to fill out the survey because your feedback does help. Thank you Stacy and we will include all those in the e-mail as well.  
>> Thank you for inviting me and thank you for participating with your questions.  
>> Thank you.  
>> [ Event Concluded ]  
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