Content and design: How are they related?

Janice (Ginny) Redish, Ph.D.
ginny@redish.net
www.redish.net

@GinnyRedish

Ginny Redish

March 4, 2020
Ginny Redish

STC member >30 years
STC Fellow
Conference speaker

Awards:
- President’s award
- Best paper award
- Ken Rainey award for excellence in research

Editorial board of *Technical Communication*

Linguist
Technical communicator
Plain language specialist
Content strategist
Usability specialist

[https://redish.net/about-ginny](https://redish.net/about-ginny)
What happens this month?

**Week 1**
Today's webinar

[Content and design: How are they related?](https://www.stc.org/roundtabletopics/forums/forum/roundtable)

**Week 2**
Discuss a paper

**Resources**

**Week 3**
Panel discussion
Wed. 3/18
1PM Eastern

[Suzanne Boyd](#)
Emma Rose
Karen Schriver

**Week 4**
Discuss a case study

[Resources](#)

Send your questions for the panel to me:
[ginny@redish.net](mailto:ginny@redish.net) or [ginny.redish@gmail.com](mailto:ginny.redish@gmail.com)
What is content?
Content is everything we write (or say or draw) in all the ways we touch people

- information
- answers to questions
- procedures
- help
- messages
- microcopy

- blogs
- letters
- emails
- social media
- forms
- charts
- graphs
- tables

- illustrations
- podcasts
- videos
- online or paper

Picture from istock.com, licensed to Ginny Redish
What is design?
Two levels of meaning for “design”

D
The whole process

d
nitty-gritty

Picture from istock.com, licensed to Ginny Redish
Design Thinking

The whole process

User-Centered Design
Human-Centered Design
Designing User Experiences
Iterative Design
Ambiguous phrases

Document design

Forms design

Web design

information design

interaction design
Research-based guidelines

- Organizing
- Writing
- Information design
- Graphics

Big and little apply in other areas, too

- Plain language
- The whole process

- Usability
- The whole process

- ?
- The whole process
Our content is intimately intertwined with both Big D and little d

- Big D: The whole process
- Little d: Nitty-gritty
Design Thinking

Thinking
Understand the problem

Design
Create a good solution

The whole process
“Design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer’s toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success.”

Tim Brown
Executive Chair of IDEO
https://designthinking.ideo.com
A design thinking model in 5 steps

Hasso Plattner Institute of Design
Stanford University
https://dschool.stanford.edu

Hasso Plattner was one of the founders of SAP.
A design thinking model in 3 phases and 7 steps

- Identify problem
- Discover
- Ideate
- Iterate
- Refine
- Validate
- Implement

Austin Center for Design, [http://www.ac4d.com](http://www.ac4d.com)
The British Design Council’s double diamond for design thinking

Challenge
Discover
Define
Develop
Deliver
Outcome


(c) Design Council 2019
Is this user-centered design repackaged?

This is also one of the 10 models of design thinking in an article by Libby Hoffman:

She attributes it to SAP.

I don't find anything like it on the SAP design thinking website.

And it has a spelling error.

But it is intriguing that she considers it a relevant model.

https://medium.com/@elizabeth7hoffman/10-models-for-design-thinking-f6943e4ee068
What’s your Big D process?

Plan = Purposes
Personas
Contexts of use
Messages

Draft = Select content
Organize
Write
Design

Review, Edit
Revise
Publish

Ginny Redish’s current model adapted from work by Suzanne Boyd
My original – much more detailed – process model, with graphics by Kai Tomboc.

Redish, 2000

Kai Tomboc, 2019
https://www.easel.ly/blog/what-is-information-design

© 2020, Janice (Ginny) Redish
What’s different from what we do?

Principles of design thinking:

- Question all assumptions.
- Put the people you are designing for at the center of the process.
- Communicate visually. Clarify everything.
- Collaborate. Co-create.
- Iterate. Keep getting feedback.

Marion Baylé
Design Thinking: an enabler for social innovation?
https://uxdesign.cc/design-thinking-an-enabler-for-social-innovation-a94ada5aa432
Content and design: How are they related in Big D?

What does Big D mean to you? for you?

The whole process

D

Content
“Information design is the art and science of integrating writing and design so that people can use content in ways that suit their personal goals.”

Karen Schriver

What Do Technical Communicators Need to Know about Information Design?
A user manual from the time before technical communicators did them

Let’s think about how this information design does NOT help people use the content in ways that suit their personal goals.
How to Print

How to Print (Mac)

You can learn how to print from a USB or wirelessly-connected HP printer by following the steps below:

1. Select the file you want to print and open the file so it appears on your computer screen.

2. Press the Command (⌘) and P on your keyboard at the same time.

3. Once the printing pop-up menu appears on your computer screen, select the printer you intend to send the job to.
   - If the printer is not connected, get help setting it up through the USB Printer Setup for HP Printers (Mac)
   - For wireless printer setup and connection, get help connecting the printer wirelessly

3. If needed, modify your print settings. This step is optional.

4. Click the Print button on screen to send the job into the printer print queue and wait for the job to complete.

Learn more about How to Print and Troubleshooting

7 elements of good information design

- Contrast
- Legibility
- Alignment
- Chunking
- Grouping
- Spacing
- Signaling (headings)

+ of course, useful and usable visual and verbal content
White-naped Cranes *Grus vipio*

White-naped Cranes breed in northeastern Mongolia, northeastern China, and adjacent areas of southeastern Russia.

Breeding habitat includes shallow wetlands and wet meadows in broad river valleys, along lake edges, and in lowland steppes or mixed forest-steppe areas. White-naped Cranes nest, roost, and feed in shallow wetlands and along wetland edges, foraging in adjacent grasslands or farmlands. During migration and on their wintering grounds, they use rice paddies, mudflats, other wetlands and agricultural fields. White-naped Cranes are excellent diggers. The White-naped Crane is often found in the company of other crane species, including Red-crowned, Hooded, Demoiselle, and Eurasian Cranes.

Mated pairs of cranes, including White-naped Cranes, engage in unison calling, which is a complex and extended series of coordinated calls. The birds stand in a specific posture, usually with their heads thrown back and beaks skyward during the display. In White-naped Cranes, the female initiates the display and utters two calls for each male call. The male always lifts up his wings over his back during the unison call while the female keeps her wings folded at her sides. All cranes engage in dancing, which includes various behaviors such as bowing, jumping, running, stick or grass tossing, and wing flapping. Dancing can occur at any age and is commonly associated with courtship, however, it is generally believed to be a normal part of motor development for cranes and can serve to thwart aggression, relieve tension, and strengthen the pair bond. Nests are mounds of dried sedges and grasses in open wetlands. Females usually lay two eggs and incubation (by both sexes) lasts 28-32 days. The male takes the primary role in defending the nest against possible danger. Chicks fledge (first flight) at 70-75 days.

Original from a site about birds that no longer has separate pages on specific birds.
Only changing the contrast

White-naped Cranes *Grus vipio*

White-naped Cranes breed in northeastern Mongolia, northeastern China, and adjacent areas of southeastern Russia.

Breeding habitat includes shallow wetlands and wet meadows in broad river valleys, along lake edges, and in lowland steppes or mixed forest-steppe areas. White-naped Cranes nest, roost, and feed in shallow wetlands and along wetland edges, foraging in adjacent grasslands or farmlands. During migration and on their wintering grounds, they use rice paddies, mudflats, other wetlands and agricultural fields. White-naped Cranes are excellent diggers. The White-naped Crane is often found in the company of other crane species, including Red-crowned, Hooded, Demoiselle, and Eurasian Cranes.

Mated pairs of cranes, including White-naped Cranes, engage in unison calling, which is a complex and extended series of coordinated calls. The birds stand in a specific posture, usually with their heads thrown back and beaks skyward during the display. In White-naped Cranes, the female initiates the display and utters two calls for each male call. The male always lifts up his wings over his back during the unison call while the female keeps her wings folded at her sides. All cranes engage in dancing, which includes various behaviors such as bowing, jumping, running, stick or grass tossing, and wing flapping. Dancing can occur at any age and is commonly associated with courtship, however, it is generally believed to be a normal part of motor development for cranes and can serve to thwart aggression, relieve tension, and strengthen the pair bond. Nests are mounds of dried sedges and grasses in open wetlands. Females usually lay two eggs and incubation (by both sexes) lasts 28-32 days. The male takes the primary role in defending the nest against possible danger. Chicks fledge (first flight) at 70-75 days.
White-naped Cranes *Grus vipio*

White-naped Cranes breed in northeastern Mongolia, northeastern China, and adjacent areas of southeastern Russia.

Breeding habitat includes shallow wetlands and wet meadows in broad river valleys, along lake edges, and in lowland steppes or mixed forest steppe areas. White-naped Cranes nest, roost, and feed in shallow wetlands and along wetland edges, foraging in adjacent grasslands or farmlands. During migration and on their wintering grounds, they use rice paddies, mudflats, other wetlands and agricultural fields. White-naped Cranes are excellent diggers.

The White-naped Crane is often found in the company of other crane species, including Red-crowned, Hooded, Demoiselle, and Eurasian Cranes.

Mated pairs of cranes, including White-naped Cranes, engage in unison calling, which is a complex and extended series of coordinated calls. The birds stand in a specific posture, usually with their heads thrown back and beaks skyward during the display.

In White-naped Cranes, the female initiates the display and utters two calls for each male call. The male always lifts up his wings over his back during the unison call while the female keeps her wings folded at her sides.

All cranes engage in dancing, which includes various behaviors such as bowing, jumping, running, stick or grass tossing, and wing flapping. Dancing can occur at any age and is commonly associated with courtship; however, it is generally believed to be a normal part of motor development for cranes and can serve to thwart aggression, relieve tension, and strength the pair bond.

Nests are mounds of dried sedges and grasses in open wetlands. Females usually lay two eggs and incubation (by both sexes) lasts 28-32 days. The male takes the primary role in defending the nest against possible danger. Chicks fledge (first flight) at 70-75 days.
Signaling the chunks

Using spacing to make headings stand out

Adding a relevant picture

---

**White-naped Cranes – *Grus vipio***

**Breeding area**
Northeastern Mongolia
Northeastern China
Adjacent areas of southeastern Russia

**Habitat**
Shallow wetlands and along wetland edges, foraging in adjacent grasslands or farmlands

During migration and on their wintering grounds, white-naped cranes use rice paddies, mudflats, other wetlands and agricultural fields.

Breeding habitat includes shallow wetlands and wet meadows in broad river valleys, along lake edges, and in lowland steppes or mixed forest steppe areas.

**Nests**
Mounds of dried sedges and grasses in open wetlands

**Eggs**
Usually two

**Nesting behavior**
Both sexes incubate the eggs, which hatch in 28-32 days. The male takes the primary role in defending the nest against possible danger. Chicks fledge (first flight) at 70-75 days.

**White-naped Cranes are often found with other crane species**
The White-naped Crane is often found in the company of other crane species, including Red-crowned, Hooded, Demoiselle, and Eurasian Cranes.

**White-naped Cranes dance, as do other cranes**
All cranes engage in dancing, which includes various behaviors such as bowing, jumping, running, stick or grass tossing, and wing flapping. Dancing is commonly associated with courtship, but it can occur at any age. Dancing is generally believed to be a normal part of motor development for cranes and can serve to thwart aggression, relieve...
Good example from a different site – not the one the old green page came from.

We could still improve it:
- No all caps
- More plain language
- Download free... isn’t actually a link

https://www.savingcranes.org/species-field-guide/white-naped-crane

2/20/2020
Help SMEs see good information design

Before my input

**Investor FAQs**

This page is your central resource for answers to frequently asked questions about Treasury securities and the auction process. If you have a question about Treasury products and services, check these pages:

- Frequently Asked Questions About the Elimination of Paper Payroll Savings Bonds
- Frequently Asked Questions about Using Your Income Tax Refund to Save by Buying U.S. Savings Bonds
- Frequently Asked Questions about the Change in the Annual Purchase Limit for Savings Bonds
- Frequently Asked Questions about Masking of Social Security Numbers on Paper Treasury Securities
- Frequently Asked Questions about Marketable Securities in TreasuryDirect
- Frequently Asked Questions about EE Bonds Fixed Rate
- Frequently Asked Questions about SmartExchange®
- Frequently Asked Questions about Treasury Bills
- Frequently Asked Questions about Treasury Notes
- Frequently Asked Questions about Treasury Bonds
- Frequently Asked Questions about Floating Rate Notes (FRNs)
- Frequently Asked Questions about Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS)
- Frequently Asked Questions about Treasury Auctions
- Frequently Asked Questions about Treasury I Bonds
- Frequently Asked Questions about Treasury EE Bonds
- Frequently Asked Questions about Electronic Payroll Savings
- Frequently Asked Questions about Treasury HH Bonds
- Frequently Asked Questions about Signature Certification on Forms: Who can certify my signature?
My recommendation
(after also finding that we can remove several of the old links)

- Frequently asked questions about Treasury Bonds
  - EE bonds
  - HH bonds
  - I bonds
  - General questions about all Treasury bonds
  - Turning paper bonds into electronic bonds (SmartExchange)
  - Using your income tax refund to buy paper I bonds

- Other Treasury Securities
  - TBills
  - TNotes
  - Floating Rate Notes (FRNs)
  - Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS)

- More Topics
  - Treasury Auctions
Think through all user scenarios

The flight number in white on dark blue is fine on the screen, but...
That information design doesn’t work in print.
What do you think now about both Big D and little d?

D
The whole process

Content

d
nitty-gritty

Content
What’s next?

**Week 2**
Discuss a paper

[Resources](https://www.stc.org/roundtabletopics/forums/forum/roundtable)

**Week 3**
Panel discussion
Wed. 3/18
1PM Eastern

Suzanne Boyd
Emma Rose
Karen Schriver

**Week 4**
Discuss a case study

[Resources](https://www.stc.org/roundtabletopics/forums/forum/roundtable)

Send your questions for the panel to me:
[ginny@redish.net](mailto:ginny@redish.net) or [ginny.redish@gmail.com](mailto:ginny.redish@gmail.com)
Thank you!

Janice (Ginny) Redish, Ph.D.

ginny@redish.net
www.redish.net

@GinnyRedish

Ginny Redish

Your turn: Q & A