

# KENNEDY LIBRARY WEB COMMUNICATIONS

A simple guide to good web content

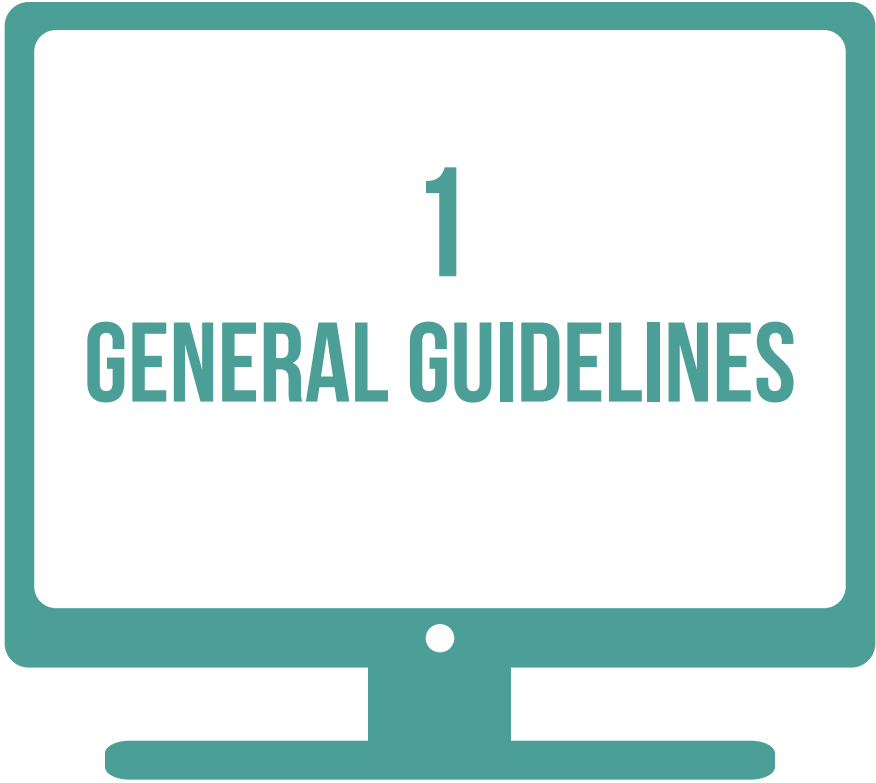
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**GENERAL GUIDELINES**



# 1.1. IDENTITY

We are Robert E. Kennedy Library or Kennedy Library.

The preferred uses of the university name are:

- California Polytechnic State University
- Cal Poly

Other name derivations that may be used are:

- Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo
- Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

The full address of the university must appear as follows:

- California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

We are not REKL or Cal Poly Library or other variations.

Cal Poly may not be shortened to CP.





# 1.2. KEY MESSAGES

Key messages the library should convey through the website are:

- It's all about you [the student/visitor].
- We empower you, we inspire you, we put you in control.
- You are virtuous, your research is valuable.
- We welcome your participation in shaping the library.
- The library is a swiss-army knife that offers a set of tools for your research needs: we spark/provoke your ideas.

Messages we do NOT want to communicate:

- We are everything to everybody, we help all users with the same information.
- We'll give you a generic answer, whatever your problem might be.



# 1.3. CONTENT

All content should be simple, clear, brief and scannable.

**Remember:**

- Get to the point. Then stop.
- Use plain English.
- Express one thought at a time.
- Let the facts speak for themselves.
- Use short words and phrases.
- Never use a long word when a short one will do.
- If it's possible to cut out a word, cut it out.<sup>1</sup>



The resources in the Data Studio give students access to a wide variety of data and allow them to use that data in novel ways. Students can tailor the Data Studio furniture and hardware to their liking to best promote effective teamwork. Through instruction, collaboration and hands-on experience, students are able to direct their own learning and explore familiar topics in new ways.



Use the fast computers and GIS software in the Data Studio for your data projects. Arrange furniture and monitors for group meetings and team tasks. We will provide help, seminars and tutorials to promote and strengthen your research skills.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.kerryr.net/webwriting/content\\_clarity-brevity.htm](http://www.kerryr.net/webwriting/content_clarity-brevity.htm)



# 1.4. LISTS AND BULLET POINTS

Lists help to split up information and make it easier to scan content.



We offer mentoring and training in a collaborative environment where you can acquire excellent customer service and team skills as well as technology and information skills that can help you succeed in your courses and future careers.



What it's like to work at Kennedy Library:

- Collaborative
- Active mentoring and training
- Provide excellent customer service
- Build team, technology and information skills



# 1.5. TONE OF VOICE

Be direct, but friendly to our visitors.

Talk the language of students, our primary audience. Talk to them.

Always look for the simplest way to say what you want, avoid tech and library speak. Students are stressed from their research, the website content should support them and make them feel motivated and inspired.

Don't Use	Use
ILL	Document Delivery
Patron	Visitor
Check out resource	Borrow Materials
Circulation Desk	Checkout desk
PolyConnect Lab	Tech desk
LearningCommons	2nd Floor
Periodical	Magazine
A/V	Multi(media), tech
Unique holdings	Unique Items



Most of our computers are in our six labs on the first and second floors. There are also open computer stations throughout the library, available to any of our patrons.



Find computers in the six labs on the first and second floor. Computers in open areas on floors one through five can be used by any visitor.





# 1.6. ACTION WORDS

Use action words to actively involve users in the content.



There are eight Collaboration Rooms available in the Learning Commons. Each is equipped with white board and a flat screen monitor (VGA connection with supported resolutions: 1920x1080, 1280x720), and each room seats up to eight people.



Use “fishbowls” for your group meetings.

Perks of each room

- Seats up to eight people
- Large white board
- Flat screen monitor

Find the glass-walled collaboration rooms on the 2nd floor, between Julian’s and the exhibit area.

➔ Book now!



# 1.7. ICONS AND EMOTICONS

## 1.7.1. Icons

Icons allow for a more intuitive navigation of the website. They draw attention to action words and hyperlinks, but used wrong they can distract from the content.

Never use more than one icon per paragraph.

Never use more than two different icons per page.

Only use them in approved colors.



- Book now! ←
- ✓ Up to eight people
- ✗ Not more than three hours
- Book here



- Book now!
- Up to eight people
- Not more than three hours
- Book here

## 1.7.2. Emoticons

Do not use emoticons on the website. It has a more official tone than our social media sites, so smileys are not appropriate.



# 1.8. GRAMMAR

Use proper grammar, punctuation and spelling. Avoid abbreviations, slang and questionable language.

If you use library in a sentence it's lowercase unless preceded by Kennedy. Do not shorten to REKL or REK library.

*The library...*

*Kennedy Library*

*Robert E. Kennedy Library*

## 1.8.1. Numbers in text

When writing figures please use the following:

For the numbers one to nine, always use words (except in dates). For 10 upwards, use figures.

*Kennedy Library has eight fishbowls, and 20 study rooms total.*

## 1.8.2. Dates and times

For events, always write the date in full, with commas:

*Thursday, March 25, 2013*

Express the time using the 12 hour clock, separate the numbers with a colon, add am or pm without periods and without spaces behind the number:

*We are open from 10:00am to 5:00pm today.*



# 1.9. LINKS

All content of the website is connected through links. For users to have an enjoyable experience, links have to be named right.

Do not name your links “learn more”, “click here”, “here”. It’s not a good user experience, and causes accessibility problems. Include all relevant words for the link.

Don’t overdo it: no more than two links per sentence, new words only linked once when first mentioned.

Please do not link to unreliable sources or questionable web pages.



Fifth Annual student video competition: [Read more](#)

Our research guides ([click here](#)) are made by our college [librarians](#).

New service: [VAST: Academic Video Online](#). [VAST](#) is cross-disciplinary. [VAST](#) is free.



Fifth Annual student video competition: [How to enter?](#)

Our [research guides](#) are made by our [college librarians](#).

New service: [VAST: Academic Video Online](#). [VAST](#) is cross-disciplinary. [VAST](#) is free.

The look of links is determined by our templates, and standard formatting should not be changed.

Links to library-wide pages are opened in the same window or tab.

```
<a href="http://lib.calpoly.edu/exhibits">
```

Links to pages outside Kennedy Library (including Cal Poly and other institutions) open in a new window or tab.

```
<a href="http://google.com" target="_blank">
```





# 1.10. HIGHLIGHTING

## 1.10.1. Typography

For highlighting, use **bold** for single words or sentences in paragraphs.

Never use *italics* or underlined words on web pages. Italics are hard to read, and underlined words will be mistaken for clickable links.

## 1.10.2. Colors

The template defines colors of paragraphs, headlines and other elements. Please do not highlight words/sentences with any additional colors.



# 1.11. IMAGES

Use images sparingly. Best is to use images only for better explanations of the topic, not as “decoration”. No more than two images on a website, except for photo galleries.

WordPress templates will adjust image sizes automatically. Large images will open in a lightbox, only revealing a thumbnail size on the actual page, as to not distract users from the content.

Never use animated images on a website, unless approved.



Generic résumé picture



Impersonal "empty building", people hidden behind computers



Employee IN work environment



Open, friendly, "we are here for you"



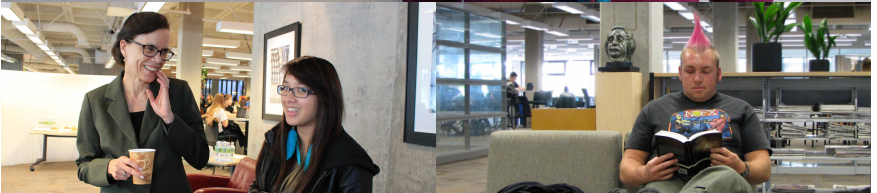
Students working by themselves, outdated equipment, off-colors



Generic, "empty" building, dull, depressing



Active help from employees, state-of-the-art equipment, bright colors



Personal, friendly, open, building filled with life





# 1.12. VIDEO AND AUDIO

We encourage embedding of videos from Vimeo, YouTube, or similar. The video player width should not exceed 560 pixels.

You can specify the size in the embed code of the video source website itself.

Our templates also support embedding of podcasts and other audio files.

Please always ensure that the linked files are working correctly.

Please do not embed content from unreliable sources or questionable web pages. Ask for help if you are unsure.



# 1.13. NAMING FILES

We are trying to establish a consistent naming scheme for any files you upload to the WordPress content management system.

Files names should be specific and descriptive rather than random or generic.

A standard way of naming folders and files reduces the time it takes to review/check updates to the website. Also, file names will help us to create titles that are needed for accessibility of the website.

For images and videos, please make sure you rename the file after you download it from the camera. File names created by the camera are usually generic and non-descriptive, like CP0123-567.

For PDF files or similar, we need to make sure we can tell different versions and iterations apart.

Don't Use	Use
CP0123-567.jpg	staff-conny-liegl.jpg
David.jpg	librarian-david-beales.jpg
sciencecafe.mp4	20130525_science-cafe-guayaki.mp4
report.pdf	20130806_report.pdf



A stylized teal computer monitor icon with a white screen. The screen contains the number 3 and the text CONTACT INFORMATION.

**3**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**



# 2.1. LIBRARY WEB TEAM

Get help with:

- Maintenance and updates of web pages
- Creation of new web pages

Members:

- Glen Beebe (Student Assistant)
- Collin Fredrick (Student Assistant)
- Carl Hunt (LIT Programmer)
- Patrick Kammermeyer (Digital Media)
- Karen Lauritsen (Communications)
- Conny Liegl (Web Designer)
- Mike Price (Library Applications Specialist)

E-Mail: [lib-web@calpoly.edu](mailto:lib-web@calpoly.edu)

Please submit all requests through the Technical Service Request Form in the portal.





## 2.2. LIBRARY DESIGN TEAM

Get help with:

- Graphic work (posters, flyers)
- Slider requests for homepage, blog or Facebook

Members:

- Glen Beebe (Student Assistant)
- Collin Fredrick (Student Assistant)
- Fiona Fung (Student Assistant)
- Kate Johnson (Student Assistant)
- Conny Liegl (Web Designer)
- Matt Rice (Student Assistant)

E-Mail: [lib-design@calpoly.edu](mailto:lib-design@calpoly.edu)



# 2.3. MEDIA PRODUCTION TEAM

Get help with:

- Video Production
- Podcast Production

Members:

- Patrick Kammermeyer (Digital Media)
- Karen Lauritsen (Communications)
- Victoria Billings (Student Assistant)

E-Mail: [lib-media@calpoly.edu](mailto:lib-media@calpoly.edu)



# 2.4. WEB STEERING COMMITTEE

Get help with:

- Organizational issues and questions regarding the website
- General information, feedback and concerns about the redesign process

Members:

- David Beales (Project Advisor)
- Glen Beebe (LIT student)
- Sarah Cohen (X-Team representative)
- Carl Hunt (LIT Programmer)
- Patrick Kammermeyer (Digital Media)
- Karen Lauritsen (Communications)
- Conny Liegl (Web Designer)

E-Mail: [lib-web-steer@calpoly.edu](mailto:lib-web-steer@calpoly.edu)



A stylized teal outline of a computer monitor with a stand. The screen area is white and contains the text '3' and 'WRITING FOR THE WEB'.

**3**

**WRITING FOR THE WEB**





# 3.1. ORDER OF CONTENT

## 3.1.1. Print

Readers of print materials read in a sequential order. Rarely users “skip” a chapter from a book, or a paragraph from an interesting article, allowing the writer to build up arguments in successive order from introduction to conclusion.

We know what they have read previously, and we know exactly what information they are going to read next, allowing us to **present information in a logical and chronological order.**

## 3.1.2. Web

On the web, we are confronted with impatient users browsing web content, skipping paragraphs and whole pages, following links in a random order. Details will often be ignored, along with long headlines and multi-line paragraphs.

A majority of the users scans the page instead of reading word for word, focusing on headlines, summaries and captions.

**Web readers are active, not passive.** They will not spend time searching for the right information; a quick glance at the page should present them with all valuable options already.

**Reasons for the passive reading behavior include:**

- Reading from a computer monitor is 25% slower than reading from print.
- Reading from a computer monitor increases eye strain and fatigue.
- Web users often scan center-left-right, instead of left-right.

**The goal is to keep users engaged and reading through our web pages by presenting the conclusion first, then explaining the issue roughly, consequently giving more details in the last paragraphs (for the truly interested).**

**Here are a few basic rules for web writing:**

- Create a scannable website:
  - Keep headlines short, create meaningful sub-headings
  - Highlight keywords
  - Use bulleted lists: but never more than nine items at once, maximum of two levels
  - Present one idea per paragraph, which are no longer than 40 - 70 words, and ideally have no more than 5 lines.

**Everybody needs to understand the content – the audience is everyone!**

It is essential that the written text on a website is understood by a multitude of users, since we do not have a known target audience.

It is important to write content for readers, not oneself, using an inclusive, positive and non-offensive tone.

- Use bold text and italics sparingly. Never underline words or headlines (might be mistaken for a link).
- Never SHOUT at the users.

**All content should be simple, clear, brief and scannable.**

Web readers are impatient, overloaded with information and options, and not interested in complicated language or dismissive tone.

- Get to the point. Then stop.
- Use plain English.
- Express one thought at a time.
- Let the facts speak for themselves.
- Use short words and phrases.
- Never use a long word when a short one will do.
- If it's possible to cut out a word, cut it out.<sup>2</sup>

**Web content should have 50% of the word count of its paper equivalent.**

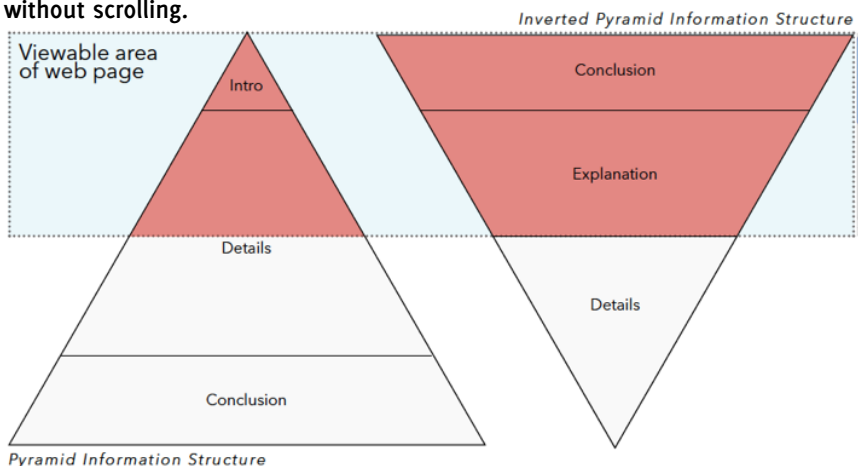
To ensure that the content is clear to the users, TEST your content. Have two people read it, a student and a staff member or friend. They have to understand all (or at least most) information.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.kerryr.net/webwriting/content\\_clarity-brevity.htm](http://www.kerryr.net/webwriting/content_clarity-brevity.htm)

# 3.2. SCROLLING

Unique to web design, we have to take into consideration the scrolling behavior of users browsing the Internet with different devices.

A mobile phone has a much smaller screen than a wide screen monitor, forcing the user to scroll more. **Only a small part of the content area can be seen without scrolling.**



compare: Kerry Redshaw: [http://www.kerry.net/webwriting/structure\\_content.htm](http://www.kerry.net/webwriting/structure_content.htm)

Time	Explanation	Call to Action
1 second	In 1 second the user should understand...	Kennedy Library empowers students and helps with their research.
10 seconds	In 10 seconds the user should understand... (primary message)	Kennedy Library houses exciting study spaces, and provides research help to students. Visitors can borrow books, articles as well as tech materials.
2 minutes	In 2 minutes the user should understand... (secondary message)	Kennedy Library supports student & faculty research and collaborates with several partners at Cal Poly. There is a digital repository, and materials not available on-site can be ordered from across the country.

Most important information should be above the “fold”, in the visible are of the website.





4

**DESIGNING FOR THE WEB**



# 4.1. AUDIENCE

In both print and web design, it is essential to draw the attention of the audience to your product.

You want them to sit on a page of a magazine long enough to get the main concept and message across, and you will try to involve your visitors in your website, in order to make them stay longer.

**Your audience is key – always!**

## 4.1.1. Print

In print, you know your audience pretty well.

For example, you know that the magazine Vogue is primarily read by women in their early 30s in their leisure time after work. 70% of those who buy Vogue read no other fashion magazine - they are exclusive readers! Designers have an idea of the readers' background and personal living conditions, therefore **allows them to target this audience very specifically.**

Since the audience usually chooses to read or buy a certain magazine, newspaper or other print product, it is therefore **more involved and interested in the content.** Readers know what to expect and understand how the product “works”, since the content is presented in a certain way. The interaction is more focused.

## 4.1.2. Web

In web design, it is much harder to specify your user base. It is much harder to cater to individual needs when you have a less clear image. Analytic tools like Google Analytics allow for a **basic** characterization of the visitors.

So here is what we know about the Kennedy Library Website Audience:

- Almost 70% percent are visiting the pages from computers in San Luis Obispo, only a few percent of which visit the page from mobile devices.
- We assume that a significant part of our local users are students at Cal Poly, probably staff, faculty and alumni make up a large part of our visitors as well.
- We know when they access the website on which device, but we cannot tell what exactly they are doing while checking out the online pages.

**It's more challenging to keep users interested and focused throughout.**

**Websites need a consistent , intuitive and usable layout to engage all users.**





# 4.2. LAYOUT

The layout process is completely different for print and web.

## 4.2.1. Print

In print design, you have very specific space limitations that you can measure in inches and that will not change during the production process. All users will see the exact same product, with the intended measurements, colors, shapes and textures you chose for this specific design: **What you design is what you get.**

## 4.2.2. Web

In web design, elements are measured in pixels instead of inches.

Displays present information in a pixel raster, an exemplary display size is 1280 pixel by 1024 pixel.

Since we don't know what kind of display (PC monitor, laptop, television, mobile phone, tablet), what resolution (number of pixels that display can display), orientation (landscape, portrait) or size the user utilizes to visit the website, **we have to design a site layout that is responsive to all display technologies, and adaptable to any resolution.**

Ultimately, the content must rule over the design. Websites have to be accessible and usable for all visitors.

**Web designers give up control: websites NEVER look the same for everybody!**



# 4.3. COLOR

## 4.3.1. Print

Print designers use CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black) for their layout, since these are the colors that printers use.

In order to match the design with the actual print, you start working with CMYK in graphic design software already, identifying all used colors with a unique code that you provide to the printer. You can proof a print, and make sure colors turn out exactly they way intended.

## 4.3.2. Web

In web design, the color model used is RGB (Red, Green, Blue), matching the colors that are used in monitors. Display brightness and contrast can be individually set and depend on display make and model. Therefore colors differ from user to user, and influence the look of the website drastically.

Colors on websites are represented by hexadecimal values, which are in a 6-digit format.

**Since colors are displayed differently on different devices, we cannot rely on colors transporting the message online.**

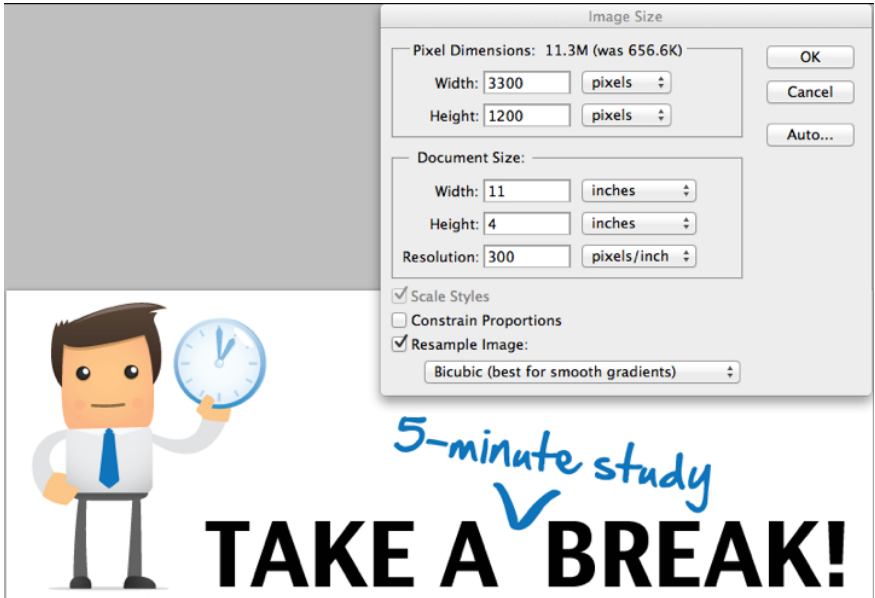


# 4.4. IMAGE QUALITY

## 4.4.1. Print

In order to get the best quality for a print design, you need to set an image to a resolution of 300dpi (digital pixels per inch), as well as a size that is appropriate for the print ad (in inches), which will ensure a clear, crisp print of an image.

Since the user will hold the printed product in his hands, designers do not have to worry about file size of an image, artwork or the whole file.

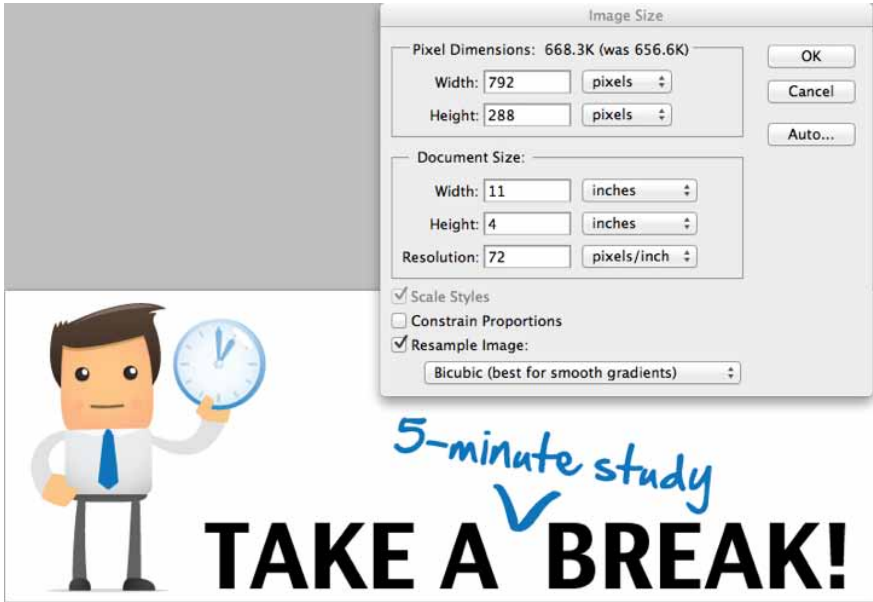


#### 4.4.2. Web

Since users need to download images from a web server in order to see them in their browser, it is essential to use lower resolution images with 72dpi or 96dpi.

Web images are rarely larger than 1000px across, since most displays cannot “fit” them anyway.

Even though many internet connections are high-speed these days, we cannot rely on the speed of the user’s connection and have to ensure that images download fast and be displayed properly.



In general, if graphics are used, make sure they support the written text. Web users generally ignore irrelevant images, especially when they are animated (so-called “banner-blindness”).

**Web content needs to load quickly. Images should be low resolution compared to print.**

# 4.5. SUMMARY

## Web Design

Interactive

Look of design depends on user's preferences & setup

Inverted pyramid information structure

Writing for active readers

Targeted at broad audience

Browsing allows for random order of information

Single elements of information must have stand alone value

Images at low resolution (Download time)

RBC color mode!

Elements of design (Line, color, shape, texture, space, form)

Principles of design: unity, PLP, balance, hierarchy, scale, dominance, similarity and contrast

Elements of art: texture, form, space, shape, color, time, line

Principles of art: unity, harmony, variety, balance, contrast, proportion, pattern, rhythm

## Print Design

Static

What you design is what you get. Prints will look the same everywhere

Pyramid information structure

Writing for passive readers

Audience specific

Logical and chronological order of information

Information perceived as a whole, read in context

Images at high resolution (To print)

CMYK color model







