



E

**Accessible Media Literacy and
Easy-to-Read Text Adaptation**

Manual



EASYNEWS

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Introduction

The right of access to information is recognized by the United Nations as a fundamental right for the full development of people as individuals and also as a collective, necessary to achieve a fully democratic society.

This right must be guaranteed for all people, especially those with cognitive difficulties, and who, therefore, are more vulnerable to misinformation.

This manual, developed under the EASYNEWS Project, arises from the need to bring information closer to people with intellectual disabilities. To do this, it includes two different content sections, but equally important:

1

The first of them aims to tackle media illiteracy, especially in the group of people with intellectual disabilities. The use of new technologies and non-formal and digital information channels such as social networks is widespread throughout the population, including the group of people with I.D. and it is necessary to equip them with the necessary tools to be able to identify reliable sources of information, which contrast the data and create quality information. All these tools are collected in this first section.

2

With this objective, the second section aims to enhance the ability of Easy-to-Read as a means to get written information to all people, whatever their reading-writing ability. This part of the manual includes the most important requirements and conditions for the adaptation of texts and, therefore, written information, to Easy-to-Read format.

The combination of learning to identify truthful information on the internet and having the necessary tools to adapt it to Easy-to-Read will allow the EASYNEWS project to be fulfilled: to get the information to people with intellectual disabilities.

We hope this manual is useful for this objective.

E

Section A

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**Media
Education**



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A.1. Overview of digital information sources

A.1.1. First of all: what is information?

Information is a set of ordered and processed data that aims to transmit a message between different people.

For a message to be really information, it must include the following principles:

- **Meaning.** To be information, the content must have meaning, it must convey a coherent and understandable message.
- **Importance.** A message that has the ability to change the attitude or perception of individuals on a particular topic can be called information.
- **Active.** A message in force is one that is updated, and that provides information that is still current.
- **Validity.** This is in relation to the publisher of the information, it must be a reliable source and that we know that it provides valid information, not false.
- **Value.** It is important that the message is useful for the receiver so that it is information.

A.1.2. Second: what is an information source?

The information source is the channel through which information is accessed. Information sources gather a set of information and make it available to anyone who wants it.

A source of information can be a digital newspaper, a web page, a written publication, a book, or a person who declares facts that they have observed.

We call sources of information to the various types of documents that contain useful data to satisfy a demand for information or knowledge.

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Nowadays, the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has conducted societies to a process of big expansion of capacity of processing, sharing and storage of information through communications and computing. The availability of digital information sources has been multiplied and therefore the information society in which we live nowadays is born.

Therefore **digital information sources** are sources of information that are characterized by being available through the network. With the expansion of the Internet, sources of digital information have proliferated.

Among them we find, for example, digital newspapers, which are adaptations of the written press to the new era of Internet.

But, we also find other less conventional sources of information, such as **social networks**, which today have become one of the main sources of information. According to the Reuters Digital News Report, **more than 60% of those under 35 years of age use a social network as a second source of information.**

A.1.3. Three kinds of digital information sources

There are three types of information sources: primary, secondary and tertiary, depending on the proximity to the events that occurred and the degree of treatment they have received. Therefore, there is information that is collected directly from the events that occurred (primary information), information that has been prepared using information already collected by other people (secondary information); and information that combines both situations (tertiary information).

We explain it with an example:



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Let's imagine that the council develops a Strategic Plan on a specific issue. An interview in which the mayor explains the Strategic Plan is not the same as a newspaper article that summarizes that interview.

It must be taken into account that all types of information sources can be found in digital information sources, such as social networks and digital newspapers. This sounds complex, but we will explain it with another example:

On the news board of your favourite social network, you can find a newspaper article (secondary source of information) and also a video showing an event that occurred (primary source of information).

In any case, if the information is truthful and verified, you will be able to find its source - that is, where it comes from. In the case that the information is from a secondary source, it will refer to the primary source.

Below, we explain in detail the three types of information sources:

- **Primary:** primary information sources are those closest to the event that is being investigated. It is the source of information that tells first-hand what has happened. In the primary information sources there are no intermediaries who can modify the narrative of the events to a greater or lesser extent.

Below are different examples of primary information sources:

- Interviews. Whether on the phone, on television, in an audio recording, etc.
- Video recordings.
- Photographs. A photograph of a specific event showing “what happened”.
- Original official documents, such as an official communication from an organization, company, etc.

The primary information sources are the most reliable when it comes to knowing the reality of the fact that is being investigated.



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In spite of everything, the sources of primary information can also be falsified, altering the facts or the statements that it collects. It is very important to know how to verify that the information is true, but we will talk about that later.

- **Secondary:** These sources of information are based on the primary ones, treating them in some way, either with the aim of analyzing the information, interpreting, evaluating or summarizing it. A good way to identify that a source of information is secondary is to see that the author is not directly involved in the events.

A good example of a secondary source of information is a summary of a police report published by a newspaper. In this case, the primary information would be the report itself, and the secondary information is the summary prepared by the journalist.

Another source of secondary information may be a video montage made to explain a fact. The person who made the video is not involved in the events and has also collected the information from primary sources to later translate it into the video.

- **Tertiary:** finally, tertiary information sources are those that collect both primary and secondary information. It is the set of elements collected and elaborated to explain a phenomenon or fact. A clear example of a tertiary information source would be a mixed reading of testimonies (primary information) and interpretations (secondary information).

A.2. How to stay informed, how you search for truthful information.

Global access to the Internet has enabled people to create, disseminate and connect to information like never before. It placed us in front of points of view and experiences that were previously unattainable. It has provided everyone with greater access to knowledge.

This easy and massive spread, however, has amplified exponentially the problem of "misinformation", "disinformation" and "fake news". These concepts have a different meaning and can take on a considerable political and social weight, from which we must prevent ourselves.

In particular, these following two terms describe false information. The difference is in the underlying intent.

- **Misinformation** comes from people sharing information while believing that it's true.
- **Disinformation** is the deliberate spread of fake news aimed to deceive and mislead.

There is objectively a problem and a danger for users when malicious individuals try to deceive them. It is one thing to be wrong about a certain topic but, another thing is to knowingly disseminate incorrect information in the hope that it will be believed to be true or with the aim of creating disagreement in society.

By "misinformation" we refer to these deliberate attempts to deceive or mislead through the speed, reach and technologies of the Web.

Those who spread disinformation have different goals. Some have financial motives and spread false information in order to generate profit. Others are politically motivated

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and use disinformation to provoke certain opinions among the population, to influence a political process or for the sole purpose of polarizing and dividing society. Still others make use of disinformation for their own amusement: this is the case with the "trolls".

Due to this complex situation, it is difficult to have a complete picture of the actions of attackers or to assess the impact of such actions. Furthermore, since it can be difficult to determine whether those who spread falsehoods online are acting in good faith, interventions against disinformation run the risk of inadvertently damaging legitimate expression.

Nonetheless, it can be quite simple to stay constantly updated and informed, avoiding falling into the trap of both misinformation and disinformation if you follow some simple tips, both in online information and in print.

About online information there are some tips to finding information that you can trust:

A.2.1. Is the source of information respected and credible?

Look at the web address (also called URL) to see what type of organization is sponsoring the website.

Websites sponsored by government, educational institutions, or credible professional organizations are more likely to provide unbiased information than commercial websites.

.gov = government

.edu = educational institution

.org = professional or non-profit organization

.com = commercial website such as a website for a private company of the market

If there is an 'About Us' link, review the purpose of the organization. If the purpose is to promote commercial products or services, the information provided may not be free from partial influence.

Is there contact information for the organization such as an email or phone number so you can contact them to learn more about their organization or website information?

Be careful with links. If a link on a trusted website directs you to an entirely new website, do not assume that this new website also has trustworthy information. You will need to evaluate the new website to ensure it is trustworthy.

A.2.2. Is the information up-to-date?

Look for the phrase 'last updated' on the webpages to see if the pages are current. If there is no indication of when the information was last updated then do not assume it is current.

Look for other indications that the website is not up to date such as an outdated events page or outdated news under 'Latest news' feed.

If links on the website do not work, the website may be outdated.

It is also very important to rely on various sources of information including:

- Articles, Online and in Print,
- Newspaper Articles, editorials
- Books, e-Books, Dissertations, Theses
- Websites
- Images
- Videos and Audios
- Social media

Here are some **useful tips**:

Watch the TV news.

It sounds easy, but it often isn't. News is receiving increasing influence from various bodies and is far from impartial. The surest way to make sure they tell you true facts is to tune into different channels. Don't limit yourself to the news, follow TV stations that broadcast news around the clock as often as possible.

Buy a newspaper.

Reading the local one is ideal to inform yourself about the current events that touch you first-hand. Also try to get a newspaper from the nearest metropolitan area, as this will give you more news about your region or the neighbouring one. Finally, subscribe to a national newspaper. This way, you can get all the necessary updates on what's happening in your country and globally.

Subscribe to magazines dealing with current events, offering news and opinions.

Once you have an idea of what's going on, it's ideal to broaden your knowledge. A great way to do this is by reading magazines that allow you to do this by presenting many opinion articles and pieces that dig deep into the topics.

Check out websites that post news as often as possible.

They are updated constantly and usually feature more information than on TV or a newspaper. Again, try to find a good balance. You can also subscribe to services that allow you to have a news viewer on your computer screen and learn more about the main stories. E-mail communications are just as useful.

Download an app that allows you to read news or an RSS reader (News360, Pulse, Flipboard, etc.).

Personalize it with current and historical events regarding the topics you think are relevant. Each morning take 15 minutes to scroll through the main headings of all the themes in each category, and to try to read the articles that have a higher priority or interest of you.

Keep a good balance, critically analyse the news.

Try not to close your mind to other sources. While you feel that the information you receive is distorted, pay attention to the manipulation of the news in order to better understand how the world of journalism works and what is happening.

Read books written by experts, critics and commentators.

Today there are many who try their hand at writing, especially political figures and journalists. The versions of the stories and the opinions offered by different professionals allow you to understand the various facets of the news. They won't always be glamorous, but they are great for keeping you informed.

Talk to other informed people.

Debate is an excellent tool for making your views known and confronting each other. A good dialogue always allows you to learn something, even if the opponent's point of view is completely different from yours. If you can't find anyone interested in arguing, use the internet to do so. Most news sites offer forums or blogs that you can subscribe to to exchange views with other users. Reading blogs written by other citizens is ideal for getting to know people's opinions.



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A.2.3. Further Advice

If you can't afford to subscribe to newspapers or magazines, you'll find the latest releases in the library, otherwise you can browse them at the bar or other places where you find them.

Make sure you have good internet service. Reading the news can be quite frustrating if the connection is slow, unless you use RSS.

Choose a good channel and if you can, pay for a package of channels. Follow channels that offer news throughout the day.

A.2.4. Warnings

Don't act as if you know everything after acquiring information.

Make sure you are actually interested in informing you. If it bores you, you will waste time, and it probably won't benefit you much.

Always take what the media tell you with a grain of salt. Remember that most TV stations and newspapers are not impartial, and what they are talking about does not necessarily correspond to reality.

A.3. Social Media: is there truth on social media?

A.3.1. What is social media?

Social media is technology that makes it easy to share ideas, thoughts, and information through virtual networks and communities. Social media is internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content. This content includes personal information, documents, videos, and photos. Users engage with social media via computer, tablet or smartphone via web-based software or web application, often using it for messaging.

Social media started as a way to interact with friends and family but later businesses took advantage of the popular new communication method to reach out to customers.

A.3.2. The Good and the Bad

The power of social media is the ability to connect and share information with anyone on Earth, or with many people at the same time. Some positive things about social media:

- They make it easy to stay connected with family and friends worldwide via email, text, video call, etc.
- You can quickly access information and research.
- There are opportunities to learn new things online.
- They encourage involvement in civic engagement (fundraising, social awareness, provides a voice)
- They provide opportunities for remote employment

While social media has its positive side, many point to the platform and call out negative features, likening its overuse to an addiction. Some contests contribute to inattentiveness, stress, and jealousy.

Social media blurs the line between opinion and fact and opens up an opportunity for misinformation. And the ability to share posts can amplify the effects of the malicious

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spread of false information. So, many times, social media may be a way to spread misleading and false information.

As a rule of thumb, verified accounts of organisations tend to provide more reliable facts in comparison to verified accounts of bloggers and celebrities who prominently share their opinions.

There are different types of social media platforms, separated according to their function.

Social networks

These have the function of connecting people online, they help people to stay in contact with family, friends and acquaintances.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

Media sharing networks

People use them to find and share photos, videos, live video, and other types of media online.

- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Youtube
- TikTok

Discussion Forums

People discuss different topics and share news, information, and exchange opinions.

- Reddit
- Yahoo! Answers

Blogs

A blog is a regularly updated website or web page, most of the times it is managed by one person or a small group. A blog is written in an informal or conversational style.

| A.4. Digital media

A.4.1. Definition of Digital Media

Digital media are those formats through which information can be created, observed, transformed, and preserved on a wide variety of digital electronic devices. For example: digital images, digital videos; video games, web pages and websites.

Digital media are spaces in which communication and information exchange is generated between users and producers of digital content. Digital media are already the most used among the world population, people dedicate more hours to digital media than to television per week. A good example is found in social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, You Tube, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., where we can find content in text, image or video format.

A.4.2. Can we trust all digital media information?

But how do you know if a photo, video or text is real?

Sometimes we can be very clear about it, since due to our knowledge of reality we know in which world we live and we acquire knowledge through information.

In the following example, we will quickly discriminate which current photo is real and which is fake.

But before we must be clear that all text, image or video can be manipulated, adding elements that are not real.

In the case of texts, we must check what information source or author it comes from, in order to find information about it and know what type of publications it usually makes.

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In the case of photos, as a first option we can use the reverse search. It is the process of looking for a photo on the web and knowing if it has been published before. It is the easiest way to find out if an image has been misused.

A very useful tool is TinEye. This platform allows anyone to upload a photo or insert a URL link and see the areas of the photo that have been modified. Also, you can find all the websites that use this photo and possibly compare it to the initial source.

Access to TinEye: <https://tineye.com/>

An example can be these images, using this platform, we have been able to verify that the original image is the one at the left side, that is found first, and the same image, but manipulated, second place, at the right side.



A.5. How to find hidden advertisement

Are you aware that a considerable part of digital content is generated solely for marketing purposes? Every day we consume a large amount of content: articles, videos, social networking posts, images, etc. – and don't seem to care how it influences our way of life. You may not believe it, but information shapes how you interact with people, what you watch and read, what you eat and drink, etc.

A.5.1. Advertisement Definition

An advertisement (often shortened to advert or ad) is the promotion of a product, brand or service to a viewership in order to attract interest, engagement and sales. Advertisements come in many forms, from copy to interactive video, and have evolved to become a crucial feature of the app marketplace.

A.5.2. Online Advertising

Online advertising, also known as online marketing, Internet advertising, digital advertising or web advertising, is a form of marketing and advertising which uses the Internet to deliver promotional marketing messages to consumers.



A.5.3. Different types of online advertisements

- **Web banners** or banner ads typically are graphical ads displayed within a web page. Many banner ads are delivered by a central ad server.
- **Banner** ads can use rich media to incorporate video, audio, animations, buttons, forms, or other interactive elements.
- **Pop-ups.** A pop-up ad is displayed in a new web browser window that opens above a website visitor's initial browser window. A pop-under ad opens a new browser window under a website visitor's initial browser window.

A.5.4. Adblocking

Many consumers find online advertising disruptive and have increasingly turned to ad blocking for a variety of reasons.

A.5.5. Hidden Advertisement

Are you aware that a considerable part of digital content is generated solely for marketing purposes? Every day we consume a large amount of content: articles, videos, social networking posts, images, etc. – and don't seem to care how it influences our way of life. You may not believe it, but information shapes how you interact with people, what you watch and read, what you eat and drink, etc.

Ads and hidden messages are all around us, but often we are too busy to notice and decipher them. We do what advertisers and content creators want, being part of a devilishly smart strategy to influence our buying behaviour. This is called hidden advertising.

People don't like to think. That is why your website needs to be intuitive and easy to use; your blog posts – well-structured, with white space, images and bullet points; your marketing message – clear and concise. Hidden instructions on how to use and buy your product or service, if properly integrated into articles.

A.6. Fake News

A.6.1. What is Fake News?

Misinformation, fraudulent news articles, half-truths and deceit has existed for a very long time but social media have created an environment where everyone with an agenda can publish lies and deceit as if they were truth with ease from their own homes.

In general, fake news is a fake story that is published and marketed as a truth.

Historically, fake news tended to be propaganda from people in power to form opinions or to support a certain standpoint, even if it was completely fake.

People can get paid for spreading and publishing fake news as commissions or through automated “bot” programs that can publish fake news automatically. Reasons why people have the motivation to create and publish fake news are as many as there are differing opinions.

A.6.2. How does Fake News work?

Social media can help shape our minds and thoughts so we get harder to discern what is fake or true. Our brains are designed to find patterns to figure out how things are connected. It's easier to accept arguments, statements and claims that we somewhat agree with instead of questioning the validity of the statement. Fake news is not designed to sway a certain opinion even if that also happens sometimes. It's primary purpose is to strengthen your beliefs that already with you.

The purpose is for you the reader to be empowered and share the news with friends that feel the same. That's how fake news work.



A.6.3. Three examples of Fake News

First example:

An article appears in your social media flow and it's shared with the headline, "Allergies now contagious" and it looks like the source is a renowned science magazine. The article shows an Austrian ski team that was infected with pollen allergies after sharing a dorm at a ski camp.

Doctors in the article are very joyous that their suspicions have been confirmed and they recommend using the non-prescription drug called: Allergen Stop which can be bought online.

This is fake news with the clear intention of selling a scam product.

Second example:

Another common example of fake news is to elicit an emotional response coming from feeling unsafe or that something is unjust.

Made up crimes will often be used in fake news to increase the feeling of being unsafe or news showing how other people get social benefits that you don't receive.

The intention of these kinds of fake news is a bit more muddled but they are often destabilizing and can repaint the political landscape where you live.

Third example:

The most common kind of Fake News that even reputable news outlets publish is the Clickbait.

A clickbait is a very enticing headline or picture linking to a page with an article. The article in itself might not always be fake, but the article is always share worthy.

It can be about a new previously unknown creature with a scary picture. It can be an emotional story about something. It can be a photoshopped image of something.

These kinds of fake news are fairly harmless but the one publishing them earns money from your clicks often through ads on the webpage or by selling your user data if you need to fill in some personal information data to see the content.

A.6.4. Why is Fake News so dangerous?

Some Fake News can seem harmless or even fun bordering on satire but others are premeditated, dangerous and malevolent. Fake news are created to sway and change people's opinions, attitudes and beliefs which if you are a person that's attracted to read, believe and share Fake News you are being controlled by someone else. In some parts of the world the spreading of fake news can even lead to a punishment by the law.



A.6.5. How to discover Fake News and check facts?

With an avalanche of information coming from all news media, critical thinking is an essential skill that allows you to hand-pick truthful information.

Think about the source:

- Is it written and published by the website where you read it?
- Do they cite other publications that you can check?
- Can you find a similar article published somewhere else?

Think about the content:

- Is it meant to be satire?
- Is it too fantastic to believe, then it probably is or someone else would have written about it.
- Try to stay objective, if you mix in your own beliefs you can miss clues that it's fake.



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Think about the webpage:

- Is it a news outlet you have heard about before?
- Does the web address look legit or is it spoofed?
- Does it look like sponsored content?

And in order to save time searching for initial sources and reading the studies on which an article was based, fact checking websites are doing this work for you.

Depending on where you are in the world, there will be fact checking organizations whose job is to find evidence for or disproof of claims that circulate in society and on the Internet. For Europe, two of such websites are EU Fact Check (<https://eufactcheck.eu/about-us/>) and Full Fact (<https://fullfact.org/>). They form a conclusion as to whether a claim is true based on the supporting evidence that they find.



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A large, light brown, stylized letter 'E' is positioned in the background, partially obscured by the text. It has a hand-drawn, textured appearance.

Section B

Easy-to-Read
Text adaptation



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Content

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| B.1. What is Easy-to-Read

Easy-to-read is a method to adapt content, language, presentation and pictures for a target group who has difficulties in reading and understanding information, with the purpose of making it accessible.

To produce information in easy-to-read, you must have knowledge about your reader's disabilities or difficulties. Intellectual disability is characterized by its heterogeneity. People with this condition do not have an equal degree in any of their capacities (memory, abstraction, language, reasoning and learning). It will only be valid for people who have literacy skills.

Due to this heterogeneity, it is difficult to find standardized solutions, so easy reading is a partial solution.

IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Libraries) establishes three levels in the form of easy-to-read writing, equivalent for both original and adapted works.

- **Level I** would be the simplest, with an abundance of illustrations and little text of low syntactic and linguistic complexity.
- **Level II** would include vocabulary and expressions from everyday life, easy-to-follow actions, and illustrations.
- **Level III** would be the most complex with a longer text, with some unusual words and sometimes with a figurative sense, with space-time jumps and very few illustrations.



Easy-to-Read Text Adaptation

Components of an easy-to-read information:

- Short text
- Focus on the most important
- Logical flow/structure
- Simple and concrete words and sentences structure
- Inviting layout
- Readable type face
- Pictures that support the text

B.1.1. Accessible information - a Human Right

It is a human right to have access to information. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states equality and non-discrimination regardless if you have a disability or not. Everyone has the right to participate in society and in order to be able participate you need information.

Find – Read – Understand

Accessible information is information that is easy to find, to read and to understand. The first obstacle for a person with reading difficulties is to find the information. Often the reader does not know the information exists and is not searching for it. Let the reader know what information there is to find. And, guide the reader how to find the information.

When the information has been found, it must be easy to read. It means that the presentation, layout and structure must be clear and easy to understand. The reader must easily understand where the text starts and ends. The type face, font must be easy to de-code.

And finally, the content must be easy to understand, written in an easy-to-read language.

Easy-to-Read Text Adaptation

B.1.2. Difficulties for reader - challenges for writer

People with intellectual disabilities often face big difficulties with written information. Many of them are not readers at all and can only understand spoken information. Or, can only read printed information with pictures or symbols.

Many of the readers have these difficulties:

- read very slowly, get tired quickly
- can only concentrate for a short time
- can not get the overall picture of a text
- can't see what is important in a text
- may not be interested in reading
- unsure about reading conventions – where to start
- limited knowledge about vocabulary and society
- difficulties to understand

- ✓ **Content**
- ✓ **Language**
- ✓ **Layout/form**
- ✓ **Pictures/illustrations**
- ➔ **Person with intellectual disability**

You must bear this in mind when you produce information in easy-to-read. You must consider all these difficulties when you work with content, language, layout and pictures in order to develop information that is easy-to-read.

| B.2. Content

For the content, you should keep in mind:

- Who is your reader?
- What do you want to inform your reader about? Why do you want to say this to your reader?
- What does your reader already know about this subject? Is your reader interested in knowing this?
- When will your reader get this information? How will your reader get this information?

These questions are important to answer before you start producing your easy-to-read information. The answers will guide you what you should include or not include in your text.

B.2.1. Difficulties for reader - challenges for writer

The text often needs to offer background information the reader might lack, as well as explanations of the context and specific words.

A useful approach to the text is:

**The reader should get all the information
that he or she needs to understand the text
from the text itself.**

Sometimes it is enough to just add an explaining word.



Easy-to-Read Text Adaptation

Example

“In the African country Burkina Faso...”

When and how?

Timing and the channel for the information also has an impact on the content. If it is information about a castle and you are standing next to the castle when reading about it, the content can be different compared to if you read about the castle at home.

Your frames of references will be different.

If the information is new to your reader you have to help the reader to see the context. If the information summarizes or gives more detailed information about something you already have had a meeting about, the content will be different.

B.2.2. Prioritize the information

If you have low reading skills, it might take a long time to read even a short paragraph, and it is an intellectual as well as a physical effort. Therefore, the easy-to-read text should be as short as possible, without losing the content.

Help your reader to understand what is important by choosing the content carefully, structure the information well and start with the most important information.

Following you can find an example of how to prioritize the information:



Example

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities says:

FAMILY LIFE AND PERSONAL INTEGRITY

The states should promote full participation of the functionally disabled in family life. Countries should encourage their right to personal integrity and make sure that laws do not discriminate against people having functional disabilities with regard to sexual relations, marriage and parenthood.

What is the key information in this article for your reader?

Persons with disabilities have the right to live a family life.

or

Persons with disabilities have the right to a private life.

or

Laws shall not treat persons with disabilities different from others in matters of sex, marriage or parenthood.

or

The State should give persons with disabilities support so they can live a family life.

or

Do you want to do an easy-to-read version of the entire content of the article?

These are the kind of decisions the writer must take.



| B.3. Language

An easy-to-read text should have a concrete content as well as a concrete language.

Characteristics for easy-to-read language:

- Common words.
- Use same word, do not add synonyms.
- Avoid words with double meanings.
- Avoid expressions.
- Be careful with abbreviations.
- Make it concrete.
- Active voice.
- Clear sender – receiver (we – you).
- Informative headlines.
- Numbers.
- The dot as a fundamental spelling sign for the separation of content.
- Short simple sentences, with the structure: subject + verb + complements.
- If the writer wants to add a sentence with a comma sign (,) it is better to start a new sentence, and try to avoid the comma sign (,).

Easy-to-Read Text Adaptation

B.3.1. Common words - words you see everyday

An easy-to-read word does not have to be a short word, nor a word that is easily spelled. The words we are unused to, do not see often in text, are difficult words. In easy-to-read texts you should always use the common words.



The sign above is being used for an accessible toilet at an airport in Sweden

They should have used the more common sign to the right instead.

Sometimes you have to use a difficult and uncommon word.

You have two different options to explain the word:

- 1 If you explain the word when you introduce it, you can then use it in the text:

Example

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities way that everyone shall have the same rights.

A convention is an agreement that the member countries of the United Nations have written together.

Sometimes you need to add a sentence or two with an explanation.

Sometimes you can explain the unusual word using the technique already presented to you in the previous chapter.

- Sheep can get the disease bluetongue.
- In the country Burkina Faso...
- In the African country Burkina Faso...

Easy-to-Read Text Adaptation

- 2 You can write the new word in bold type and add the description of the word in a box next to the text.

Example

The UN **Convention** on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities way that everyone shall have the same rights.

A convention is an agreement that the member countries of the United Nations have written together

B.3.2. Synonyms

In school you have probably learned that you should not repeat the same word several times in a text. You should use synonyms instead. In easy-to-read texts it is the opposite. You should repeat the same word in order to help the reader to interpret the text.

Difficult	Easier
Frequently	Often
Fabricate	Invent, make up
Forsake	Give up
Impeccable	Perfect
Meal	Breakfast, lunch or dinner
Novice	Beginner
Obvious	Clear

Easy-to-Read Text Adaptation

Here you have an example of use of easier words:

Example

John has a dog. The furry friend follows him wherever he goes. Waffles loves to be scratched on the belly and to eat sweets. The four-legged rascal is 10 years old now but still acts like a puppy.

The reader might interpret that there are four different animals or friends in the text. The version below is easier to understand:

Example

John has a dog. The dog's name is Waffles. Waffles follows John wherever he goes. Waffles loves to be scratched on the belly and to eat sweets. Waffles is 10 years old now but still acts like a puppy.

Writer's checklist:

- ✓ Have I used common words in my text?
- ✓ Are there words that I need to explain?
- ✓ Have I used synonyms instead of repeating the same word?

B.3.3. Synonyms

There are several words in the English language that have a double meaning. In easy-to-read texts you should try to avoid words with several meanings.

Here you have some examples:

Word	Meanings
Bat	Animal or wooden stick
Can	Able to or container
Kind	Nice or type
Light	Lamp or not heavy
Play	Have fun or a drama

B.3.4. Avoid expressions

Expressions, metaphors should be avoided in easy-to-read texts. Many readers might interpret a metaphor literally. The expression “I’m just pulling your leg” doesn’t have anything to do with your legs. It means that I am teasing you.

With metaphors there is also the risk that the reader and the writer might not share the same frame of reference. The frames of references depend on the reader’s age, gender, cultural background etc. The risk of misunderstanding is high.

Example

- Make a long story short!
= Come to the point - leave out details.
- Piece of cake!
= A job or other activity that is easy or simple.
- Can’t judge a book by its cover!
= Cannot judge something on how it looks.

B.3.5. Abbreviations

“PM meets MP to discuss EU”

In order to understand the sentence above you need lots of knowledge. You need to understand that PM, MP and EU are abbreviations of other words and you need to know which words.

In easy-to-read texts you should only use an abbreviation if it is more common than the full-length word. EU might be more common and known to the reader than European Union.

Example

PM meets MP to discuss EU =

- Prime Minister meets with members of parliament to discuss EU.
- Prime Minister David Cameron discuss with members of the British Parliament if Britain should stay or leave EU.

Easy-to-Read Text Adaptation

B.3.6. Make it concrete – be specific

We often use abstract and general concepts that include many different specific meanings. Words like culture, environment, communication, and health are all common but abstract words. The word “communication” for example can be interpreted as the way we talk to each other, as well as the transportation system, as well as the e-mail.

In easy-to-read texts we avoid these kinds of general words. If you want to use the word communication, make sure to help the reader understand what kind of communication you are talking about.

Example

The communication in Athens is bad. The city buses are often running late.

B.3.7. Active voice

Writing a text using an active voice means that it is clear who is doing something or did something. In passive voice you write what is being done or has been done. The passive voice does not include who. A sentence written in passive voice does not include an agent, a person.

To write with an active voice helps the reader to understand the text.

Example

Passive: The ticket is being stamped on the bus.

Active: The bus driver will stamp your ticket.

or

You should stamp your ticket in the machine on the bus.

As you can see, you must know the details of the information to be able to write with an active voice!

B.3.8. Clear sender – receiver (we-you)

If you besides using the active voice also include a direct approach, your text will be much easier to understand.

Example

We invite you to a party on Saturday
or
 We want you to come to our party on Saturday.

Instead of:
 Invitation to party Saturday!

B.3.9. Numbers

There are several difficulties with numbers in texts. A large number with many digits is difficult to read. The meaning of the numbers are often difficult to interpret.

Therefore, you must ask yourself:

- What do I want to say with the numbers?
- Is the exact number important, or is the important information the increase/decrease of something? Has something become better or worse

This is how you can write numbers in easy-to-read texts:

Number	Writing
1 - 12	With words (one...) or digits, depending what the reader is more used to
13 - 99	With digits
100, 200	One hundred, two hundred
1.000, 2.000	One thousand, two thousand
20.000	20 thousand
20.000.000	20 millions

Example

- ✗ Our budget has increased this year.
- ✓ We have more money to spend this year
- ✗ The dinosaur T Rex was 20 meters long
- ✓ The dinosaur T Rex was big as a bus.
- ✗ The bus ticket cost 4 euro
- ✓ The bus ticket costs the same as two ice-creams.

Easy-to-Read Text Adaptation

B.3.10. Sentences – simple and correct

Make the structure of your sentences simple. Avoid long sentences. It is better to make two shorter sentences instead of one long.

One thought or one information per sentence.

Make sure you have spelled all the words correct. A person with low reading skills might not understand the misspelled word.

B.3.11. Informative headlines help the reader

Headlines help the reader to understand the structure of the text. An informative headline helps the reader to understand what the text in the paragraph is about. It helps the reader to interpret the text correctly.

Therefore, it is very important to use informative headlines in easy-to-read texts. In newspapers the headlines often use metaphors and play with words. That kind of headline is not at all helpful for a person with low reading skills

Example

- ✗ Tsisipas meets the king of dirt Nadal.
- ✓ Tennis player Tsisipas will play against Nadal.
Nadal is the best player in the tournament.

- ✗ The Eagle has landed.
- ✓ The rocket has landed on the moon.

- ✗ Tiger puts balls in wrong place again.
- ✓ Golf player Tiger Woods cheats on his wife again.

Writer's checklist:

- Have I used an active voice in my text?
- Is it clear who is the sender and receiver?
- Have I included numbers in my text? Are they important?
- Have I kept the sentences clear and short?
- Is there one information per sentence?



| B.4. Layout

Easy-to-Read layout is:

- Clear and simple.
- Space between the lines
- Manual line breaks
- Visual boxes and vertical lines between columns

B.4.1. Clear and simple

It is important that form and layout are well thought through. It is easier for the reader to appreciate information if text and pictures are presented as clearly and with as much space as possible. Don't be afraid of empty areas on the page. The mind enjoys concentrating on one thing at a time.

B.4.2. Space between the lines

Make sure your text has good space between the lines. We recommend line spacing of 1,5. A single line mode, which we are using in this text, is too narrow in easy-to-read texts.

B.4.3. Manual line breaks

Many readers have difficulty in noticing full-stops and reading long lines. Therefore, an easy-to-read text is often written with line-feeds at the end of each phrase. A new line starts at a natural point in the sentence and always after a full stop. The reader can then make a pause at the proper place. To test if the line-

Easy-to-Read Text Adaptation

feed is correct, read the text out loud. If it is natural to pause when changing the line, then it is correct.

This is how the paragraph on the previous side looks like when presented with easy-to-read line feeds:

Example

Many readers have difficulty in noticing full-stops and reading long lines.

Therefore, an easy-to-read text is often written with line-feeds at the end of each phrase.

A new line starts

at a natural point in the sentence and always after a full stop.

The reader can then make a pause

at the proper place.

The line-feeds give the text a light and spacious impression. To the reader the text does not look difficult nor massive. The text signals that it is easy and possible to be read.

We recommend you give your easy-to-read texts a maximum length of 50-60 characters per line. It is convenient that you tend to make sentences with a similar length. Characters include each letter and the space between the words. To read very long lines are just as difficult as reading long sentences.

If the content occupies more than one page, use textual guides such as "continues on the next page" or similar.

B.4.4. Manual line breaks

An easy-to-read text should preferably be presented in just one text field on the page. But sometimes you have to present your text in columns. If so, make sure there is lots of space between the two columns. A line between the columns will also help the reader to see the structure of the text.

If there are different texts being presented at the same page, you can also use visual boxes.



B.4.5. Manual line breaks

Studies show that there is no ultimate easy-to-read font. The fonts we are most used to are the ones we find easiest to read. So, don't try to be original and creative when choosing the typography or you will end up with a difficult text.

Don't be original and creative when choosing the typography or you will end up with a difficult text

Don't be original and creative when choosing the typography or you will end up with a difficult text

DON'T BE ORIGINAL AND CREATIVE WHEN CHOOSING THE TYPOGRAPHY OR YOU WILL END UP WITH A DIFFICULT TEXT

The size of the font also matters. This text is Times New Roman in size 13. Depending on the font, do not use smaller sizes than 12-14.

- ❖ We suggest using Times New Roman font, but you can also use Arial, Calibri, Candara, Corbel, Gill Sans, Helvetica, Myriad, Segoe, Tahoma, Tiresias and Verdana.

Running text written with CAPITAL LETTERS or in italics is difficult to read.

The presentation has a great impact on if we find a text easy-to-read or not. If the text looks difficult, you might not even try to read it.

| B.5. Pictures

Pictures and illustrations in easy-to-read information should:

- Help reader to understand.
- Support the text.
- Easy to interpret.

It helps the reader to understand the content of your text if you combine it with informative illustrations. Avoid illustrations that are metaphors, just as you should avoid them in your text.

A text about housing should not be illustrated by a birdhouse. It should be illustrated by a house.



Don't put text on the picture. Text should always be presented on a clear background.

Our recommendations for using the pictures are:

- Place the image and underneath the text.
- Do not intersperse images with the text.
- It is very useful to use photographs of (real) people.

B.6. About Easy-to-Read on the Internet

The questions you always should ask when writing easy-to-read is even more important for information presented on the internet:

- Is the information possible to find?
- Is the information possible to read?
- Is the information possible to understand?

These three questions are often forgotten when websites are being developed. The user in focus is the skilled reader with no special needs, or the skilled reader with special technical needs.

Some readers need to be able to listen to the information, others need pictures, video presentations or a version in sign language. And, many readers with low reading skills need information in easy-to-read language.

B.6.1. Internet and reading skills

The internet as a media requires higher reading skills than information on paper. The average reader reads a text presented on screen 25 per cent slower than text printed on paper.

The whole idea of the internet is that there is no limit in cyberspace to how much information you can present. The information is there for the reader to find, read and share.

The information presented on the website is not linear. There is not a defined direction of how to read the webpage – where to start and where to go.

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The skilled reader masters the search for information, including using the website's search-function. And, once finding the right information, the skilled reader will be able to read and understand the text. But very often this is not the case for a person with intellectual disabilities.

A text is not accessible just because you can reach it via the internet.

B.6.2. To find information on Internet

An easy-to-read text on the internet needs to be easy to find. Therefore, it is important that the website is organized in a logical way. Very often readers must be informed about what easy-to-read material that can be found on the web. The readers can't find it themselves.

B.6.3. Structure and navigation equally important

It is important that you can find the easy-to-read information. But it is also important to minimize the risk of getting lost while navigating on the website.

Therefore, the websites must be easy to navigate and have a structure that is easy to grasp. The structure must clearly communicate to the reader where to go, where to read.

A good structure is to begin web information with a short summary and then offer different alternatives for more information.

Example

What is Easy-to-read?

Easy-to-read is information that is easy to find, easy to read and easy to understand for persons who have reading difficulties.

An easy-to-read information has a clear and logical structure. The text is written with common words. The sentences are short and simple to read and understand. The text is presented with an airy layout and with pictures that help the reader to understand the content.

Do you want to know more about easy-to-read?

Click here to read more //link to new page//

Click here to see a film about easy-to-read //link to video//

Do you have questions about easy-to-read?

Call us, phone number 01-23 456 789

Easy-to-Read Text Adaptation

B.6.4. Text on web

The same recommendations apply for easy-to-read text on web as for a printed text. It must be written in a simple and understandable way.

The reader should get all the information that he or she needs in order to understand the text from the text itself. But, since it is more difficult to read on a screen than on paper, the text needs to be even easier and shorter than a printed version.

Ideally you should not have to scroll. Ideally, the entire text should fit on the screen.

B.6.5. Layout and Illustrations on web

For a person with low reading skills it is difficult to find the line/sentence where the information continues after having to scroll down the text. It might take a long time to find the right place. Often it takes too long and the reader gives up. Or by mistake, he or she skips one or several sentences and consequently misunderstands the information.

Layout is also pictures. The recommendations for pictures in printed material are also recommendations for the internet. Use informative illustrations together with the easy-to-read text to help the reader to understand the content of the text.

Be careful about how to place the pictures or illustrations on the internet. You can start with the picture or put the picture after the text. Or, you can put the picture beside the text. But never let the picture interrupt the text by being placed in the middle of the text. Never let the text run around a picture. That is difficult for all readers!

Example

Be careful about how to place the pictures or illustrations on the internet. You can start with the picture or put the picture after the text. Or, you can put the picture beside the text. But never let the picture interrupt the text by being placed in the middle of the text.

Never let the text run around a picture. That is difficult for all readers!





| B.7. Summary

This learning material is produced within the Erasmus project Puzzle – developing easy to read formats for people with intellectual disabilities. It is part of the project’s intellectual output Learning material and focuses on how to implement the easy to read method to write texts that people with intellectual disabilities can read and understand.

This learning material is based on the project consortium experience in the field of Easy-to-Read, as well as, the reviews from the focus groups of the specialized partners.

Easy-to-read information is easy to find, easy to read and easy to understand for people who have reading difficulties.

It is information that has a clear and logical structure. The text is written with common words. The sentences are short and simple to read and understand. The text is presented with an airy layout, short lines and with pictures that help the reader to understand the content.

To make information easy-to-read you must know your reader, his/her knowledge and interest about the topic. You also must know your subject. In easy-to-read texts you can never hide behind general concepts and a passive voice. Easy-to-read texts are concrete telling who is doing something and not what is being done.

As the writer you are responsible for guiding your reader through the text. You are responsible for leaving out less important information and focus on what is key to know.

It is a human right to have access to information. And, if I have reading difficulties, I have the right to get information in an easy-to-read version!





EASYNEWS



APADIS

Asociación para la atención
de las personas con discapacidad
intelectual de Villena y Comarca



Austrian Association of
Inclusive Society



Technological Institute
for children's products & leisure



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