

## Role of the Online Editor

- Helps writer identify readers & purpose
- Helps define document structure & links
- Assists designer with screen design
- Helps devise online writing guidelines
- Edits: comprehensive and copyediting
- Assists with usability testing
- Helps with document maintenance

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## Online Editing: Unique Skills and Strategies

Good online editors understand:

- Differences between print and online
  - What constitutes effective online writing
  - Principles of effective visual design
  - How to construct useful links
- Basics of HTML coding
- Basics of working with non-text content

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## Task 1: Help Identify Readers and Purpose

- Think about readers' needs and why they would access the content
- Consider the implications of reaching multilevel audiences
- Ensure that the writer understands the behavior and preferences of online readers, and your organization's online writing guidelines

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## Task 2: Help Define Document Structure and Links

- Make the structure obvious and easy to navigate
- Clearly identify main structural divisions and topics
- Anticipate the reader's likely paths
- Define a link strategy

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## Task 3: Assist Others With Screen Design

- Work with a designer (and possibly others) to design the screens
- Evaluate screens that others have designed
- Ensure that the design works on all browsers
- Help devise templates that can save time and reduce inconsistencies

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## Task 4: Help Devise Online Writing Guidelines

- Depending on your work environment, you can work on a team, with the writer, or by yourself
- Research online writing, discuss your findings, and adopt the guidelines that make sense for your organization
- Write a style guide that demonstrates its own guidelines

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### **Task 5: Do Comprehensive Editing at Least Once**

Beyond the usual tasks for this type of editing, also review and edit for:

- Nonsequential content
- Structure and navigation
- Wording and placement of links
- Online writing style
- Visual design

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### **Task 6: Do Copyediting**

Beyond the usual copyediting tasks, also:

- Check for consistency in text formatting
- Check for arbitrary shifts in color
- Help the writer verify that links go where they promise
- Ensure that text is readable
- Check identifying information

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### **Task 7: Assist Others With Usability Testing**

- Test the tasks that readers are likely to perform with the document
- Check that navigation is easy and intuitive
- Evaluate reading comprehension
- Test alternative ways to format content

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## Task 8: Help With Document Maintenance

- Edit new and updated content
- Help the writer evaluate feedback on the document
- Help the writer apply accessibility guidelines (such as writing alt text for graphics displayed online)

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## Online Writing Resources

- **My personal web site:** <http://homepage.mac.com/alysson/webfolio.html>
- **Writing for the Web and Creating Effective Online Content: An Interview With Online Writing Expert, Amy Gahrn.**  
<http://webword.com/interviews/gahrn.html>
- **The Seven Qualities of Highly Successful Web Writing, Kathy Henning.**  
[http://www.clickz.com/design/onl\\_edit/article.php/833861](http://www.clickz.com/design/onl_edit/article.php/833861)
- **Effective Web Writing, Crawford Kilian.**  
<http://www.newarchitectmag.com/documents/s=4579/new1013637064>
- **Web Writing Sites, Janice Gelb.** [http://www.geocities.com/j\\_gelb/web-writing.html](http://www.geocities.com/j_gelb/web-writing.html)

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## Q&A

Thanks for your attention!

If you have any suggestions for editing online documents, please email me:  
[alysson.troffer@sun.com](mailto:alysson.troffer@sun.com)

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