Iceclog's WordPress Editor Guidelines: Writing Compelling Posts

These *Iceclog Editor Guidelines* for WordPress are a quick guide for contributors to the [Iceclog blog](#) or "clog" (content log) as we like to call it. First, take care that you understand the WordPress editor that we use. Second, make sure that you post great content worth reading. And finally, look into adding nice footage to make your post attractive.

Your WordPress editor profile

Before you start working on blog posts, take care to upload a profile image, called avatar, and check your name and descriptions, as these are the details that will appear next to your posts.

WordPress editor tips

Regarding the simple blog editor in the WordPress Dashboard, a few things are important:

In Visual-mode you have a simple HTML-editor in WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) mode. In Text-mode, you see the markup codes as included.

If you write a post, use the Visual mode.
If you paste text from somewhere else, use the Text mode or Paste As Text toggle, to make sure that you are not unwittingly copying markup (HTML code) that might disrupt the Iceclog templates.

Use the Toolbar Toggle icon above the body of the editor, to show other common icons. [Read also some basic tips for](#)

[WordPress editor users](#). If you use external links, consider activating the advanced option to open the link in a new tab, in case you think that your reader would like to continue reading afterwards. In case of a link, make sure that you use a public link to an international version of a source site, and thus avoid log in.

We use Paragraph for normal text. And,

We use Heading 2 for the headers in the text.

And Heading 3 for sub-headers in the text.

Don't make the headers bold by hand. Just use the standard style definitions associated with the header. Use featured image (right button) for uploading an image that will be the appetizer for your post (above your post).

Don't start the blog text with a header or a link, as it might disrupt the layout here and there on the website.

Use as little further markup as possible: headers are bold. Italic can be used to stress certain keywords or keywords that come from a foreign language. Don't use underline, as it is commonly understood as a link.

> *TIP: use the Blockquote icon for tips, quotes or messages that need to stick*

If you really need a table, you can insert in Text mode, the standard HTML tags, where <tr> .. </tr> creates a new table row. If you can avoid a table, better do so.

```
<table width="100%" cellspacing="0" cellpadding="0">
<tbody>
```

```
<tr>
<td valign="top" width="30%"><b>First column header</b></td>
<td valign="top"><strong>Second column header</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td valign="top">First line, 1st cell value</td>
<td valign="top">First line, 2nd sell value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

TIP: You can alternatively include a table as an image

Take care that your post is assigned to one or more correct Categories, such as News, Stats, Reviews or other. Don't create new Categories without consulting the Blog Editor, because Categories will show up in the browsing interface.

Choose a few of the most important keywords (as tags), but don't overdo it. If we publish the tags it shouldn't become a crazy list of clickable keywords. For SEO (Search Engine Optimization) it helps to repeat keywords in the text. But, Google typically ignores the metatags for those keywords.

Plugins for readability and SEO

In the WordPress editor, we use the Yoast plugin for readability and SEO analysis. And it's advised to use a spelling and grammar plugin for the language you are writing in. I use Grammarly for English corrections. All such tools generate useful tips, which you have to apply intelligently.

Copywriting Compelling Texts

Your WordPress editor will not teach you how to write compelling posts. Look at how great journalists structure and write their posts in successful magazines. The title gives the compelling message, the summary of the text in a few words,

not a static classification.

The first section, expands on the title and is like a longer summary. The following section is expanding the story in full detail. Some repetition of text between title, summary section and the full text is quite common. But, in every repetition more detail is added. This redundancy helps the reader to quickly navigate through the text and manages the expectation. If you drop headers, make sure the header is not just a passive noun, but something that gives a message, often by adding a meaningful verb, adverb and/or adjective. (For example: not "Image"; better: "Image Size Matters").

Another tip is: a good blog doesn't read like an advertisement. The text is objective, fact-based. If you state "video improves shopper conversion" at least three references to independent sources that support this statement with facts are needed. Trust that a good read is what people love, they will appreciate you for that and might read your next post as well. Finally, don't talk about yourself (your company) all the time. Talk about a client case, the market, users, buyers, technology trends, products, product data, PIM developments.

Finally, make sure that you add something that is *new* to the reader. It can be a new angle (analysis) on the subject. Or, it can be about new facts. It can also be that something is news, which means that you are the first to break it to your audience.

What should be the size of my blog? 500-1000 words is the size of a "column" in a paper. It's a good approximation. A news post can be smaller. A manual will be much longer. In case of manuals, think of how to break them down. For example, by cutting out repeating sections that are shared by other manuals.

O yeah, about the use of abbreviations. Don't assume that your reader knows them. So, unless they are really widely adopted

by kind of everyone, write them out the first time in full, with the abbreviation between brackets or the other way around. In this text, you can find a few examples, where I assumed HTML is so widely used that it is known by the reader.

Readable texts

Writing readable texts is always a challenge. Below, a number of typical "mistakes" and tips:

1. For numbers below ten, use the word. So, write "eight" not 8.
2. Write direct and in present time, it's easier to digest. So, don't say "I would have gone there, but they had insisted that I should stay at home", but say "They keep me home". Just four words instead of 15!
3. Variety: use a "natural mix of shorter and longer sentences.
4. Use speech language, not formalistic language, but keep it decent.
5. Be consistent in the time and style you use. Don't switch from "they" to "you" and from "we" to "I". And keep the time as much as possible the same: not "was" and "is" mixed up randomly.
6. Don't mix up plural and singular. For example, don't use "they" (plural) to refer to a company (singular).
7. Minimize the use of brackets () or [], and avoid the use of ";". It makes it somewhat harder for the reader.
8. Break down unnecessarily long and challenging sentences.
9. Writing is deleting: remove all meaningless words from sentences, and avoid repeating yourself. Concise texts are more to the point and easier to consume.
10. Avoid exaggerations, which is often the case when words like "always", "perfect", "the best", "the most"
11. Don't use the continental numbering system in English texts (1,000.00 not 1.000,00 for one thousand).

Image size matters

Upload of images (media): use Irfanview as it has a great function for saving images for the Web in a strongly reduced size. Using it saves for the Web menu option. Remember: bigger image files slow down the browsing experience of your post and the blog considerably. An image can be shrunk to less than 100KB, and still, be sufficiently detailed.

TIP: if your image size is much larger than 1024 pixels, resize it first. This will reduce the image size (KBs) a lot.

Take care that the file name of the image is meaningful, because the file name will be somewhere in the HTML of the blog, and will be interpreted by Google. F.e., if you show an image of a woman with a hat, call the file "Woman_with_hat.jpg". Also don't forget to enter other details for the image (media) you upload, such as the title. Fill in the Alt field, as it populates the popup explanation per image on mouse-over. Such details improve our SEO.

Last but not least, unique images are better than standard images. If you use standard images, make sure you use a copyright-free image, or secure that you obtain permission from the copyright owner. In case you use a free image, make sure you include a correct credit (see the bottom of this page for an example). Better, is of course to shoot your own footage or make a screen dump or artistic impression.

In case of screen dumps (Prtsc): cut off the sections that are irrelevant for your narrative. For example, a screen dump of the Icecat website shouldn't contain the Icecat logo, as that would then be repeated in the blog itself and that might look a bit ugly.

FInally, when inserting the image take care that you indicate if WP is including the image with its original size or resized to a smaller version.

Embed rich media

You can use the embed code of Icecat to embed certain compelling rich media such as videos. Ask the editor if you have questions about that!

Double Check before you Publish

Re-read your own post many times, use a spellchecker, and ask the Editor to check your post before it's published. Also, always good to have a colleague or friend to read your post before you submit it, as every posts contains mistakes or things that can be clarified or improved.

You can use the status Draft or Pending Review for this. The Editor will take care of publishing your post. If you want to get notified by email, subscribe to the blog on the frontpage.

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Share your own post with your colleagues, clients in newsletters, in relevant groups, with your friends on Facebook, relations in Twitter, LinkedIn, G+ or any social media that you use frequently. Twitter is in general more a PR (public) medium. LinkedIn is more a professional sharing network. But, also Facebook is more and more becoming a mixed private & business media. So, dare to share, it might lead to unexpected responses.

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