

rewrite

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A monthly publication of readytext, inc.
Dedicated to the techniques and technologies of effective written communication.
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Thank you

It seems a good idea to acknowledge from the outset that, for most of us, reading even vaguely educational materials can be a chore. So in launching a newsletter dedicated to the art, science and technology of written communication it is only fair to thank the reader for spending the time to take a look.

Good writing can reduce the effort involved in gathering information, in whatever form the information is published. This newsletter is intended to promote good writing by providing short, useful and hopefully very readable articles relating to obtaining, organizing, transforming, and producing written information.

What is good writing? Usually, it is effective writing. That is, it successfully conveys useful information without taxing the reader. Readers don't want to struggle to benefit from their efforts.

This publication's readers are themselves writers, and they already know how hard it can be to make reading easy. In the issues that follow, articles will tackle the techniques and the technologies that make the task easier and more satisfying for reader and writer alike.

Our view is that good writing makes for good reading. Writing is a skill that can be developed, and that depends upon good information as its starting point. To write well, whoever your readers may be, you need to be able to read well; you must gather and organize information so that it is useful and accessible. In this way you serve your readers and you transform the text itself from battleground to meeting place.

So once again, thank you for looking through this newsletter. If you are involved in writing, in managing writing, or just interested in ideas that may improve your writing, we hope you find information here and in subsequent issues that is immediately useful.

This month we take a rhetorical view of text and slides, and consider how to work well with subject matter experts. Regular features find an example of what can go wrong, and provide bad advice from Ed, our resident would-be expert.

And we are always interested in our readers' feedback so please let us know if there are topics you feel we should cover, or simply tell us how we're doing by e-mailing us at rewrite@readytext.com.

Quick Tip: reversing noun-jams

Noun jams are surprisingly common. Here's a short one:

Unnecessary expensive sports equipment purchases should be avoided.

Often, the most important noun is at the end of the jam — in this case 'purchases'. So if you reverse the jam, and add a little prepositional glue you get an im-

mediate improvement:

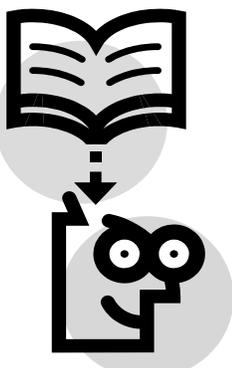
Avoid purchasing sports equipment that is expensive and unnecessary.

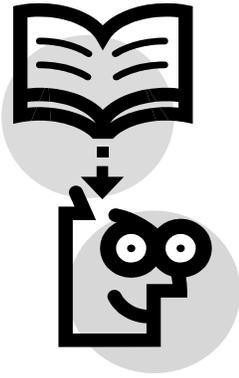
We also spotted something that often happens with runaway noun jams — unnecessary nominalization ('nouncing' a verb). So we re-verbbed 'purchase'.

Try this today!

Regular Features:

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Finally..

Phew. You made it to the end of the first issue of *rewrite*.

Or maybe you read the front page, scanned a few articles, then flipped it over and ended up here.

When readers skip through the text, it's a sign that the writer broke a cardinal rule: to be engaging and entertaining. In this and in subsequent editions I hope you'll find *rewrite* entertaining enough to keep you reading. Because no matter how useful the information

might be, it won't be used unless it's read.

In future editions we'll be looking further at how rhetorical language is at the heart of effective communication. "Single Sourcing" is another hot topic today, so we'll examine the technologies around that while attempting to extract the facts from the hype. Another related issue is content management, something collaborative and group-based writers often wrestle with on a daily basis. These and more

topics, including our regular features *For Example* and *Ask Ed* next month. (Don't forget to send in any nagging questions to Ed — particularly those for which you're not looking for an authoritative answer.)

In the meantime if you have any suggestions for topics you'd like to see in future editions, or you have comments on how we're doing or how we can improve things, please let us know at rewrite@readytext.com.

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Our monthly *rewrite* newsletter offers indispensable articles, interviews, tips and advice on techniques and technologies for effective written communication! Use *rewrite* to improve internal and external, personal and business written communications of all kinds.



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