

**Mowat  
Award**

# PLAIN Matters

**March 2017**

**Guest editor blog:  
Robert Linskey**

## ***Clear Communication: More than Words***

Robert Linsky, Information Design Doc, is the Director of Information Design at NEPS, a leading communications management consulting firm. He's on the PLAIN board and Chair of the Conference Committee.

[Read his blog below](#)

## **Nominations open until June 30 for Mowat Award**

Know a plain language star? Honor their work by nominating them for PLAIN's Christine Mowat Plain Language Achievement Award, an international award recognizing an outstanding contribution to advancing plain language.

The Christine Mowat Plain Language Achievement Award recognizes a significant contribution to advancing plain language at the local, regional, national, or international levels.

In 2011, PLAIN recognized the outstanding contribution of past President (pictured above) and former winner of the PLAIN International Award by renaming our award the Christine Mowat Plain Language Achievement Award.

It most often recognizes the long-term achievement of an individual. But it can also recognize an organization or group.

Award winners have:

- significantly advanced plain language as a profession through their work
- represented the profession of plain language with the highest integrity and skill

PLAIN generally presents the award every two years, at the international conference. This year, we meet Sept. 21-23 in Graz, Austria.

The winner receives:

- an engraved presentation award
- a framed photo of the presentation

To select a winner, the PLAIN Board does one or more of the following:

- calls for nominations from members
- establishes a selection committee chaired by a PLAIN Board member
- discusses it at a Board meeting

To be considered, a person must be nominated by a PLAIN member. Their nomination must:

- be in writing
- document the nominee's achievements
- be supported by another PLAIN member and at least one other person who is active in the plain language profession but not necessarily a member of PLAIN

The Board does not have to present an award at every conference, and may present more than one award.

A person's plain language work can be in any language and take a variety of forms:

- significant research in the field of plain language
- extensive experience in developing and presenting plain language training
- extensive experience in writing or editing documents using plain language
- a body of publications about plain language
- successful leadership in public plain language projects
- significant volunteer contribution to a plain language organization

A nomination for the award should refer to these criteria and the PLAIN Board applies these criteria when deciding on a winner.

Nominations can be sent to [info@plainlanguagenetwork.org](mailto:info@plainlanguagenetwork.org) Deadline is June 30.

Nominations must include the name and email of both the nominee and the nominator.

## IIID joins the PLAIN 2017 Conference as a major partner

PLAIN and the [International Institute for Information Design](#) (IIID) will work together on the program and promotion of the PLAIN 2017 Conference in Graz, Austria.

An agreement signed by both organizations outlines how PLAIN and IIID will promote:

- intellectual exchange and understanding between the professional communities of plain language and information design, and
- best practice methods in clear communication for all conference participants and the wider community.

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## - Conference News -

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### Mark your 2017 calendar

#### Here are some important dates for PLAIN's conference in Graz:

March 31	Deadline for submission of proposals
April 15	Notification of acceptance
June 30	End of early bird registration
August 31	End of regular registration
September 20	Late registration accepted

### Join PLAIN in Graz

Have you registered yet for PLAIN's conference in Graz in September 2017? The conference website is up [here](#)

Do you tweet? Look for and use our conference hashtag [#PLAIN2017](#)

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## - Guest Editor Blog: Robert Linsky -

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Dear PLAIN members,

I've got a confession to make: I'm not a plain language expert. So, why am I on the PLAIN board and a speaker at PLAIN conferences? It is because I think I have something to offer others who spend their professional careers creating clear communications.

Yes, that is what we do no matter what our core expertise is. You might be a plain language expert (I am not!) but in the end, your goal should be (and I assume is) clear communications.

What is clear communications? Clear communications uses different areas of

### About Robert

Robert Linsky, Information Design Doc, is the Director of Information Design at [NEPS](#), a leading communications management consulting firm.

His expertise is in information design and document processes and he has been creating solutions for a wide range of nationally and internationally recognized financial, insurance, healthcare and telecommunications companies.

expertise to ensure that the audience can locate, understand, and act (LUNA) on the information provided. The LUNA philosophy ensures that for any communications to be successful, audiences must be able to Locate, UNderstand, and Act on the information they need. Failure of any of the three and the communications will fail. So, it could include plain language, information design, psychology, graphic design, usability, images, or a combination of some or all.

For many years, I've called myself an information designer, but that has evolved into clear communications. My expertise is with variable data, transactional documents such as bank statements, billing invoices, and the like, in addition to forms and other types of communications.

In addition to language, clear communications includes information design – use of typography, grouping of like information, hierarchy of information, white space management and more! And, don't forget one of the most important tasks – usability! How can you know that your communications is working without usability testing?

As a PLAIN board member and participant in the PLAIN conference, i encourage you to attend the upcoming 2017 PLAIN Conference in Graz, Austria, September 21-23. This year PLAIN has partnered with [IIID](#) (International Institute for Information Design) and World Usability Day to present a wide range of topics all under the theme of Improving Customer Relationships. Our local host is Klarsprache.at-Gesellschaft für lesbare Texte/Clear [language.at](#) – Society for readable texts.

Come meet and hear your plain language colleagues and experts in information design and usability all under one roof. Find out why information design and usability play an equal role to plain language in creating clear communications.

This and a lot more will be found at the [2017 PLAIN Conference](#).

Robert is the creator of the LUNA™ (Locate/UNderstand/Act) philosophy, the design of information for clear communications, and served on the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts College of Art & Design for 12 years including two terms as its Chair.

Robert's passion is photography and travel and he recently traveled the Silk Road in China.

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## Talk to us!

Let us know what you think about our newsletter. Do you have a suggestion for a guest editor? Have you won an award? Have you seen an example of good - and bad - plain language you want other PLAIN members to see? Is there some other news you want to share?

Please contact us at:  
[info@plainlanguagenetwork.org](mailto:info@plainlanguagenetwork.org)