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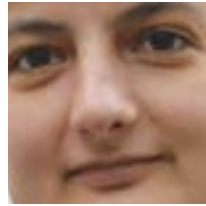
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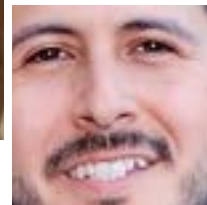
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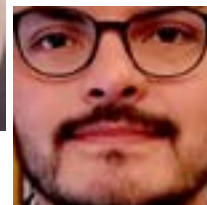
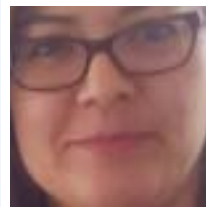
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eJOURNAL

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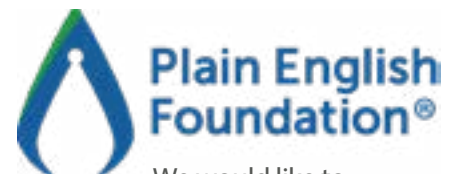
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Submissions

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Margrethe Kvarenes is a manager at the Language Council of Norway, the Norwegian Government's consultative body on language issues. As plain language advocate, lecturer, and author she has played a major part in establishing plain language in Norway's civil service – a ten-year initiative which has set a new standard for public communication in Norway. Her resume includes positions in international organizations and extensive Board experience from both non-governmental organizations and public sector. She has a great faith in PLAIN's strategic plan, and her main goals for her term as president are to make more value for PLAIN's members and to professionalize the organization and the field of plain language further.

I am proud to be introducing PLAIN's first e-journal to you. And, as PLAIN's first non-native English speaking president, I am particularly happy to introduce a truly international journal. This journal, written in 4 languages as well as English, is an accurate mirror of PLAIN today. Our organization, which has strong roots in the English-speaking plain language world, is pleased to now reflect the plain language movement at a global level.

Our e-journal is available to all PLAIN's members and gives exclusive insight on plain language today. I would like to thank PLAIN's two immediate past presidents, Dr. Neil James and Joanna Richardson, for putting it together. While this is the first e-journal, PLAIN is confident that we will continue to publish on a regular basis and bring our members plain language insights, knowledge, and developments from around the world. We welcome suggestions for future contributions and look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

PLAIN President



New networks for the next generation

Dr. Neil James Plain English Foundation

In 1993, when 2 Canadians founded the professional network that became PLAIN, its first members were mostly from English speaking North America. Twenty five years later, PLAIN now has members from over 30 countries working in some 15 languages.

Much has progressed in those 25 years. Plain language has become increasingly mainstream in many countries, and new countries and languages embrace clearer communication every year. And by learning from the previous generation, some have achieved in just a few years what took decades elsewhere.

For example, the September 2019 PLAIN conference in Oslo will highlight how Norway has gone from a plain language newcomer to a world leader in less than a decade.

This first issue of PLAIN's e-journal highlights the next generation to join our growing network: 6 more countries setting out on the plain language journey. So sit back, buckle up, and get ready for a flight right around the plain language globe.

Simple and complex

Our journey starts in Hungary, where in 2014 Vera Gergely started a one-woman band at a time when "nobody had heard of plain language". Exactly how does one person reform the communications of an entire language and country? You start a blog, of course, and publicly share your journey as you learn.

Still in Europe, we find the situation is more complex in Germany, where Beate Wiegard surveys current efforts to improve clarity. She outlines exciting developments in the government, health, and legal sectors, and how the university sector is getting involved.

Of particular interest in Beate's article is the debate over the differences between "einfache Sprache" (plain language) and "Leichte Sprache" (easy-to-read) German, which in some respects are competing for focus.

Hopping back on our plane, we travel east to Japan, where the concept of plain language is largely unknown. But in a shrinking economy and a globalized environment, it is the push for clearer English rather than plain Japanese that is creating the first "ripple effect" towards plain language.

Machiko Asai and Sarah Ingmanson Battaglia outline how a new consortium is about to launch in Japan and raise awareness of the benefits of clearer communication.

The new networks

The final leg of our journey takes us to South America, where some of the most exciting developments have been happening in the plain

language world. These center around some powerful new networks.

Chile has been the leader. Christian Anker and Maximiliano Nuñez of the Transparency Council outline the plain language network of 7 major public institutions in that country, and how they have hosted events, provided training, and promoted plain language. PLAIN was pleased to support the Chilean network's first international seminar in Santiago in July 2018.

Based on the Chilean model, Argentina has set up its own network in quick time, with a wonderful model for guiding institutions through the plain language process. Mariana Bozetti is the coordinator of its technical committee and takes us through how they will work.

Our journey ends in Colombia, where Betsy Perafán Liévano and Germán Jair Arenas Arias discuss the new plain language bill and manual that are helping institutions communicate more effectively with their citizens. The university sector is getting involved, and a Colombian network was launched in October 2018 to create a plain language culture that "puts citizens at the center".

Our international impact

These stories suggest plain language is poised to reach a critical mass of countries globally in the decades ahead. Each country that sets out on that journey draws on the work of previous generations, but is adapting that experience to its own language and institutions.

Despite this diversity, the plain language message is as clear in South America as it is in Central Europe or East Asia.

So it seems fitting that PLAIN is launching its new journal at this time – and in our 25th year – with a multilingual issue in 5 languages: English, Hungarian, German, Japanese, and Spanish. Our thanks go to all those who helped the authors with translations to and from English: Janine Schaller-Boyum, Torunn Reksten, Masumi Kitsukawa, Joanna Richardson, and Emilia Ghelfi.

The journal will continue to provide short, informative articles about plain language around the world to inspire and inform our members. In this way, PLAIN continues to fulfill its own vision as a network of practitioners supporting each other and promoting plain language.

If there is one thing our history has taught us, it is that a handful of individuals can have a significant impact in changing the way their institutions, their countries, and even their languages communicate. But that impact is even greater when we connect through networks such as PLAIN and those now being established by the next generation.



Dr. Neil James

Dr. Neil James is Executive Director of the Plain English Foundation in Australia, which combines plain English training, editing, and evaluation with a campaign for more ethical public language. Neil has published 3 books and over 90 articles and essays on language and literature. From 2008 to 2015 he served as chair of the International Plain Language Working Group, and from 2015 to 2017 as President of PLAIN. In 2018, Neil won the Nancy Keesing Fellowship at the State Library of New South Wales to complete the research for his next book.





Vera Gergely

With a Master's in Economics, Vera worked as a software tester for years, during which she recognized the importance of clear, unequivocal writing.

In 2014 she embarked on the ambitious task of introducing plain language in Hungary. Since then, she has worked as a freelancer, offering plain language editing, training, and coaching to banks, insurance companies, utility companies, and also human rights NGOs. With the help of a colleague she developed a train-the-trainers program for the biggest utility company in Hungary.

In 2015 she partnered up with a news portal and launched a plain language award. Vera also wrote a comprehensive guide on how to write clearly in Hungarian.

Vera has served on the Communications Committee of Plain's Language Association International's (PLAIN) Board since 2016.

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Plain language in Hungary

Vera Gergely

Back in 2014, nobody in Hungary had heard of PLAIN language.

We just accepted that letters from the government, banks, and other providers were mostly incomprehensible. While there is a long way to go, customers and citizens have started to expect clear communications. What's more, several large companies have embraced plain language. But how did we end up here?

This article outlines my efforts to promote plain language in Hungary as the first in the field here. My aim is not to boast, but to give an account of events and perhaps inspire others in countries where plain language is unheard of.

Starting the conversation

In the beginning, I faced a three-fold problem. I had to:

- 1. learn plain language myself**
- 2. educate other people that there is a problem that plain language could solve**
- 3. make a living by persuading people to hire me to solve the problem.**

So how do you learn, practice what you've learned, and educate others all at the same time? You write a blog, obviously.

I started a [blog](#) called *Világos beszéd* ("clear speech"), where I shared what I learned from my studies, some tips and tricks, as well as before-and-after examples that I practiced with.

In 2015, I partnered with the news portal [444.hu](#), which found the topic interesting. They wrote a couple of articles about plain language and we launched a plain language award. This wasn't a professional

award (we didn't have written criteria or such), but we designed it get people's attention and raise awareness.

We asked readers to send us the worst and best texts they have encountered, and they sent us a lot – most of which were bad examples. Together, the articles and awards helped start a conversation about plain language. I was asked to give interviews to other media outlets, thus spreading the word further.

Working with clients

Soon after, my first client approached me. I had used one of their texts on my blog as a before-and-after example, and they wanted my help to rewrite their letters. This was my first real-world lesson in navigating corporate departments, adhering to regulations, and so on.

I also started teaching web writing as part of a recurring "Introduction to User Experience" course, which helped me in two ways. First, I developed ties with the usability community in Budapest. Second, I got more prospective customers. Most of the participants were sent there by their company, and several of them approached me later saying that their company could use my services.

In 2016, I started to work with more and more companies – mostly banks and insurance companies. These were the ones who:

- 1. understood how much it costs when they are not clear**
- 2. wanted to fix it**
- 3. had the budget to fix it.**

Most notable among them is OTP Bank, the largest bank in Hungary. OTP is redesigning its website completely to make it user-friendly, accessible, and (last but not least) comprehensible.

Achieving some firsts

In the meantime, I wrote the first [guide](#) to plain language in Hungarian, and published it on the web. My reasoning was that I wanted to spread plain language in Hungary, and the only available resources were in other languages. Hungarian resources meant that those who want to learn more could do so.

2017 brought some further firsts:

- **I had my first clients from the public sector.**
- **I started doing training.**
- **I presented at [TEDx Danubia](#).**

The most notable public sector client was the National Office for the Judiciary, which organized a conference on plain language in public administration. It dedicated 2017 to plain language in its work.

Moving into training

I had been thinking of doing training for a while, because it's a much better way of spreading the use of plain language than rewriting documents alone. I practiced my first training plan with a human rights NGO. This was a win for both of us, as I got to try out my ideas, and they got plain language training for free.

Since then, I have delivered over 30 training events at different companies – always tailored to their needs and using their own materials (letters, brochures, web pages, and so on) for hands-on practice.

I've also worked on several projects with the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, another human rights NGO. In one of them, we've rewritten the Letter of Rights to make it more comprehensible. This is the document that people receive before they are questioned by the police.

Continuing the work

A former client of mine got so enthusiastic about plain language that she joined me, so we work together now on different projects. We developed and delivered a train-the-trainers program for a state-owned utility company, which trained over 800 of their customer service people in plain language.

Of course, there is a long way to go. But now that it has started, the move to plain language seems unstoppable.



A közérthető fogalmazás Magyarországon

Vera közgazdászként végzett, és évekig szoftvertesztelőként dolgozott. Ez idő alatt ébredt rá arra, mennyire fontos az egyértelmű, világos megfogalmazás.

2014-ben vágott bele abba, hogy meghonosítsa Magyarországon a közérthető fogalmazást. Azóta szabadúszóként dolgozik, szövegeket ír át, oktatja a közérthető fogalmazást és tanácsokat ad bankoknak, biztosítóknak, közműcégeknek és civil jogvédő szervezeteknek. Egy kollégájával együtt egy „képzők képzése” programot is kidolgozott a legnagyobb magyar közműszolgáltató részére.

2015-ben a 444.hu oldallal együtt megalapította a „Világos!?!” díjat. Megírta továbbá az első magyar nyelvű útmutatót a közérthető fogalmazásról.

Vera 2016 óta tagja a Plain Language Association International vezetőségének.

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2014-ben gyakorlatilag senki sem hallott még a közérthető fogalmazásról Magyarországon. Teljesen magától értetődő volt, hogy nagyjából az érthetetlenek a hivatalos levelek, valamint a bankok és egyéb szolgáltatók levelei. Az biztos, hogy még hosszú út áll előttünk, de ma már egyre több fogyasztó és állampolgár várja el, hogy világosan kommunikáljanak vele. Sőt, néhány nagyvállalat is felismerte, mennyire fontos a közérthető fogalmazás. De hogyan jutottunk idáig?

Ebben a cikkben arról írok, hogy én mit tettem a közérthető fogalmazás elterjedéséért Magyarországon, de így jár az, aki elsőként vág bele valamibe egy országban. Kérem, tartsák észben, hogy nem nagyozolni akartam, hanem összefoglalni a történeteket és talán inspirációul szolgálni azoknak, akik olyan országban élnek, ahol még ismeretlen a közérthető fogalmazás.

Beszéljünk az érthetetlen szövegekről

A kezdetekben három kihívással találtam magam szemben:

- 1. Először is, nekem is meg kellett tanulnom közérthetően fogalmazni.**
- 2. Másodsorban rá kellett ébresztenem másokat, hogy igenis gond van ezekkel a szövegekkel, és erre a gondra a közérthető fogalmazás jelent megoldást.**
- 3. Végül pedig meg kellett győzzem őket arról, hogy hozzám forduljanak, ha érthető szövegeket szeretnének.**

De hogyan tudsz egyszerre tanulni; gyakorolni, amit megtanultál; és terjeszteni az ígét? Nyilvánvalóan írsz egy blogot. Elkezdtem a [Világos beszéd](#) blogot,

ahol megosztottam, amiket tanultam, valamint olyan szövegek eredeti és átirított változatait, amiken gyakoroltam.

A következő évben összefogtam a [444.hu](#) oldallal, akik érdekesnek találták a témát. Írtak egy pár cikket a közérthető fogalmazásról, és meghirdettük a Világos!?! díjat. Ez nem volt egy nagyon szakmai díj, nem volt szabályrendszere – elsősorban az volt a cél, hogy felkeltsük az emberek figyelmét és tudatosítsuk bennük, hogy van más lehetőség is.

Arra kértük az olvasókat, hogy küldjék be a legérthetőbb és a legérthetlenebb szövegeket, amikkel találkoztak. Rengeteg szöveget kaptunk, természetesen a túlnyomó többségük az érthetetlen kategóriába tartozott. A cikksorozat és a díjak együtt segítettek elindítani egy párbeszédet a közérthető fogalmazásról. Más sajtótermékek is megkerestek a témával kapcsolatban, így még tovább terjedt a híre.

Az első ügyfelek

Nem sokkal később megkeresett az első ügyfelem. Tőlük származott az egyik szöveg, amit átirítottam a blogon, és arra kértek, hogy segítsék átfogalmazni a leveleiket. Itt találkoztam először azzal, milyen kihívást jelent egy nagyvállalatnál szöveget írni, pl. hogy hogyan kell lavírozni a különféle osztályok (marketing, jog, termék stb.) között, vagy hogy mennyiféle rendeletnek kell megfelelni.

Elkezdtem webes szövegírást tanítani egy „Bevezetés a User Experience-be” című, rendszeresen ismétlődő tanfolyamon. Ebből két előnyöm is származott. Egyrészt megerősítette a kapcsolatomat budapesti UX közösséggel, másrészt további ügyfelekre is szert tettem.

A legtöbb résztvevőt a munkaadója küldte a tanfolyamra, és később többen is megkerestek azzal, hogy a cégüknél szükség lenne a szolgáltatásaimra.

2016-ban már egyre több vállalatnak dolgoztam, főleg a pénzügyi szektorból. Ők voltak azok, akik

- 1. megértették, mennyibe kerül nekik, ha érthetetlenül fogalmaznak;**
- 2. változtatni akartak ezen; és**
- 3. rá is szánták a szükséges pénzt és időt.**

A legismertebb közülük az OTP Bank, ami elhatározta, hogy teljesen megújítja a weboldalát úgy, hogy az felhasználóbarát, akadálymentes és nem utolsósorban érthető is legyen.

Néhány mérföldkő

Időközben megírtam az első magyar nyelvű részletes útmutatót a közérthető fogalmazásról, amit közzé is tettem a [weben kozerthetofogalmazas.hu](#). Az elképzelés emögött az volt, hogy szerettem volna, ha elterjed a közérthető fogalmazás Magyarországon, de nem voltak magyar nyelvű anyagok erről a témáról. Ezért első lépésként írtam egy útmutatót, hogy aki szeretne erről többet tudni, annak legyen hova fordulnia.

2017 tovább újdonságokat is hozott:

- **először voltak ügyfeleim az állami szektorból,**
- **elkezdtem tréningeket tartani, és**
- **előadtam a [TEDxDanubián](#).**

Az állami szervezetek közül a legfontosabb az Országos Bíróvási Hivatal volt, akik szerveztek is egy „Közintézmények közérthetősége” c. konferenciát, valamint 2017-et a közérthető bíróság évének szentelték.

Elmozdulás a tréningek felé

Akkoriban már gondolkodtam egy ideje azon, hogy tréningeket kellene tartani, mert sokkal hatékonyabban lehet vele a közérthető fogalmazást elterjeszteni, mint ha „csak” egyes dokumentumokat írok át érthetőre. Kidolgoztam egy képzési tervet, majd felajánlottam egy jogvédő civil szervezetnek, hogy szívesen tartok nekik egy ilyen tréninget. Ezzel mindketten jól jártunk: ők ingyen jutottak hasznos tudáshoz, én pedig kipróbálhattam, mi működik és mi nem.

Azóta több mint 30 tréninget tartottam különböző vállalatoknál, mindig az ő igényeikre szabva, az ő saját anyagaikat (levelek, tájékoztatók, weboldal-szövegek stb.) felhasználva gyakorló példákra.

Több közös projektünk volt a Magyar Helsinki Bizottsággal. Az egyikben a terhelti tájékoztatót fogalmaztuk át érthetőbbre – ha meggyanúsítanak valamivel, a kihallgatás előtt ezt a tájékoztatót kapod arról, hogy milyen jogaid vannak.

Folytatódik a munka

Egy korábbi ügyfelemet annyira fellelkesítette a közérthető fogalmazás, hogy csatlakozott hozzám, és azóta együtt dolgozunk. Kifejlesztettünk és megtartottunk egy „képzők képzése” programot a Nemzeti Közűvek Zrt.-ben, melynek eredményeképp több mint 800 ügyfélszolgálati munkatársuk vett részt közérthető fogalmazásról szóló tréningben.

Amint említettem, hosszú út áll előttünk. De biztos vagyok benne, hogy most, hogy már elindult, a közérthető fogalmazás elterjedése megállíthatatlan.



Beate Wiegard, M.A.

Beate studied English linguistics, literature, and economics at the RWTH Aachen University (Germany) and the University of Wales, Cardiff (United Kingdom). She graduated with a thesis on the language of economic journalism from the perspective of critical linguistics and has been interested in language and power ever since.

After finishing her studies, she worked in various areas of health communication, for example in public relations consulting, publishing, and press relations. She turned to editing evidence-based health information in 2009, focusing on plain language and hard-to-reach target groups.

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Plain language in Germany: A complex matter

Beate Wiegard

How does Germany compare internationally when it comes to plain language? At one level, there are no laws such as the Plain Writing Act in the United States, nor dedicated national institutions such as the Language Council of Sweden to enforce them. Yet a growing range of initiatives is helping to make public information clearer. At the same time, there is some uncertainty about the difference between easy-to-read German and plain German.

Laws and public administration

In the legal sector, Germany has a tradition of reviewing draft laws to enhance their comprehensibility. Since 1966, the Association for the German Language has run an editorial office at the German parliament to make laws clear, and it offers advice on language and comprehensibility. The Federal Ministry of Justice established an editorial office in 2009 to work towards more comprehensible laws.

A number of stakeholders also promote plain language in public administration. The German Statutory Pension Insurance Scheme, for example, is working with the University of Speyer on its old age pension information. The aim is to make it shorter, more personal, and easier to understand. This will be challenging: the information comes with up to 21 attachments, sometimes amounting to nearly 150 pages in total.

In another example, finance ministers of the federal states dedicated their last annual meeting to citizen-friendly language in financial administration. North Rhine–Westphalia has already revised 600 forms

in 2018. The ministers want to improve services and increase citizen satisfaction with public institutions.

The health sector

Plain language is also vital in healthcare. The Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG) has published evidence-based health information in plain language for more than 10 years as part of its mandate to educate the public in health. The institute designs health information to help people live with a condition and understand the pros and cons of different treatments and services. It also offers decision aids on both treatment and screening options.

In 2017, the Federal Ministry of Health commissioned the institute to develop a concept for a national health portal. The aim is to pool evidence-based information that is reliable and easy to understand. One focus is on improving access to healthcare for people with low health literacy.

Current research

There is little research on plain language as such in Germany. Some linguists are working in the field of intelligibility research, such as the universities of Halle-Wittenberg and Hohenheim. The University of Hohenheim has also launched an initiative to advocate plain language in its own work and has set down rules for doing so.

Apart from that, the focus is once again on public administration. The Institute for Administrative Communication at the University of Speyer, for example, supports the German Statutory Pension Insurance Scheme and other public institutions to improve communication. This is also

the main focus at IDEMA Society for Comprehensible Language, an affiliated institute of the University of Bochum.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was another important impetus for the accessibility of information. This requires that all people must be able to take part in all activities, regardless of (dis-)abilities.

The German barrier-free information technology ordinance states that every website run by a public institution must use the clearest and plainest language appropriate. The following information must be available in both easy-to-read German and German sign language:

- information about the content and navigation
- information about parts of the website that offer easy-to-read text or German sign language.

The University Hildesheim focuses on barrier-free communication and has set up a research center for easy-to-read language. And the University of Leipzig has initiated a study on using easy-to-read German in a working environment. This explores how this kind of language can improve the involvement of people with learning disabilities.

“Plain” or “easy-to-read” language?

The German barrier-free information technology ordinance requires easy-to-read German only for a few parts

of a website, and plain language for the rest. But there is some confusion about what “leichte” (easy-to-read) and “einfache Sprache” (plain language) mean.

In 2012, for example, some Social Democratic Party (SPD) members of the German Parliament asked the federal government about the advancement of plain language in Germany. Among other things, they wanted to know which definitions of “einfache Sprache” (plain language) and “Leichte Sprache” (easy-to-read) the government follows.

The answer was that a “clear distinction between the two is not possible; they are often used as synonyms”. This answer is quite surprising, as there are numerous differences.

The rules for easy-to-read German are clear-cut: they can deviate from standard German and advocate the omission of many details. For example, easy-to-read German starts every sentence on a new line, uses a minimum 14 point font size, avoids dates, large numbers and percentages, and tests texts with people with learning disabilities.

Plain German, on the other hand, uses standard language and is less regulated. And while there are many textbooks and tips on plain writing, there is no fixed set of rules everybody agrees on. Some of the common rules include avoiding foreign words and complex sentences, reducing passive voice

and nominalization, and using subheadings and lists to structure texts.

While the two approaches overlap, not every weak reader needs easy-to-read texts and even good readers can struggle with wordy texts and complex forms. That is the great strength of plain German: it makes texts easier to understand for everybody without omitting important content.

A glass half empty or half full?

It may sometimes be tempting to prioritize easy-to-read German with its strict rules, certification, and easy-to-read logo, and leave plain German aside because it is not as clear-cut. Anyone who advocates plain language also concedes that current practice is not always perfect. There is a lot of work to do and time and money to be spent: on revision, user testing, and research. But there are still far too many texts baffling far too many people – not just people with learning difficulties, but just about anybody. This fact calls loudly for plain language, be it in Germany or beyond.

Sources

All websites linked to in this article were accessed on June 16, 2018.



Einfache Sprache: Wo steht Deutschland im internationalen Vergleich? Es gibt weder ein Gesetz wie den American Plain Writing Act noch eine staatliche Institution wie das Language Council of Sweden, um einfacher Sprache Geltung zu verschaffen. Immer mehr Initiativen tragen jedoch dazu bei, öffentliche Information verständlicher zu machen. Gleichzeitig herrscht manchmal eine gewisse Unsicherheit hinsichtlich des Unterschiedes zwischen „Leichter Sprache“ und „einfacher Sprache“.

Rechtssprache und Verwaltung

Im rechtlichen Bereich hat es in Deutschland Tradition, die Entwürfe von Gesetzestexten redaktionell begutachten zu lassen, um ihre Verständlichkeit zu erhöhen. Die Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache e. V. unterhält zu diesem Zweck bereits seit 1966 einen Redaktionsstab am Deutschen Bundestag. Der Redaktionsstab berät auch bei anderen Fragen zu Sprache und Verständlichkeit. 2009 hat das Bundesministerium für Justiz zudem ein eigenes Redaktionsbüro eröffnet, das auf verständlichere Gesetze hinwirken soll.

In der Verwaltung setzen sich ebenfalls verschiedene Akteure für einfache Sprache ein. Die Deutsche Rentenversicherung überarbeitet zum Beispiel zurzeit mit Unterstützung der Universität Speyer ihre Rentenbescheide. Ziel ist, die Bescheide kürzer, persönlicher und leichter

Einfache Sprache in Deutschland – eine recht komplizierte Angelegenheit

verständlich zu machen. Die Aufgabe ist herausfordernd: Ein Rentenbescheid kann derzeit bis zu 21 Anlagen und insgesamt 150 Seiten umfassen.

Ein anderes Beispiel: Die Finanzminister der Länder haben ihre letzte Jahrestagung der bürgerfreundlichen Sprache in der Finanzverwaltung gewidmet. Nordrhein-Westfalen hatte bis zur Mitte des Jahres 2018 bereits 600 Formulare überarbeitet. Die Minister wollen die Service-Orientierung verbessern und so die Zufriedenheit der Bürgerinnen und Bürger mit öffentlichen Institutionen erhöhen.

Das Gesundheitswesen

Einfache Sprache spielt auch im Gesundheitswesen eine zentrale Rolle. Das Institut für Qualität und Wirtschaftlichkeit im Gesundheitswesen (IQWiG) veröffentlicht zum Beispiel seit mehr als zehn Jahren evidenzbasierte Gesundheitsinformationen in einfacher Sprache. Es erfüllt damit einen Teil seines gesetzlichen Auftrags, für alle Bürgerinnen und Bürger verständliche Gesundheitsinformationen bereitzustellen. Die vom IQWiG entwickelten Gesundheitsinformationen sollen Menschen helfen, mit einer Erkrankung zu leben und die Vor- und Nachteile verschiedener Untersuchungen und Behandlungen zu verstehen. Das Institut bietet außerdem Entscheidungshilfen zu Behandlungs- und Früherkennungsmöglichkeiten an.

2017 hat das Bundesministerium für Gesundheit das Institut beauftragt, ein Konzept für ein nationales Gesundheitsportal zu entwickeln. Ziel ist vor allem, evidenzbasierte Informationen zu bündeln, die sowohl verlässlich als auch leicht verständlich sind. Ein Schwerpunkt liegt darauf, Menschen mit geringer Gesundheitskompetenz zu erreichen und ihren Zugang zum Gesundheitswesen zu

verbessern.

Aktuelle Forschung

Es gibt in Deutschland nicht allzu viel Forschung zu einfacher Sprache als solcher. Linguistinnen und Linguisten im Bereich Verständlichkeitsforschung beschäftigen sich unter anderem damit, zum Beispiel an den Universitäten Halle-Wittenberg und Hohenheim. Die Universität Hohenheim hat außerdem eine Initiative auf den Weg gebracht, um bei der eigenen Arbeit den Gebrauch einfacher Sprache zu fördern. Im Rahmen der Initiative hat sie Regeln für einfache Sprache formuliert.

Davon abgesehen liegt auch bei der Forschung der Schwerpunkt im Bereich öffentliche Verwaltung: Das Institut für Verwaltungskommunikation an der Universität Speyer zum Beispiel unterstützt nicht nur die Deutsche Rentenversicherung, sondern auch andere öffentliche Institutionen bei ihren Bemühungen, ihre Kommunikation zu verbessern. Dies ist auch das Hauptarbeitsgebiet der IDEMA Gesellschaft für verständliche Sprache, einem An-Institut der Ruhr-Universität Bochum.

Einfluss der UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention

Das Übereinkommen über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen (UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention) war ein anderer wichtiger Impulsgeber für die barrierefreie Kommunikation. Es verlangt, dass es allen Menschen möglich sein muss, an allen Aktivitäten teilzunehmen – unabhängig von ihren Fähigkeiten bzw. Beeinträchtigungen.

Die deutsche Verordnung zur Schaffung barrierefreier Informationstechnik nach dem Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz legt zum Beispiel fest, dass alle Websites, die von öffentlichen Institutionen unter-

halten werden, für alle Inhalte die klarste und einfachste Sprache verwenden müssen, die angemessen ist. Zusätzlich dazu müssen folgende Informationen in Leichter Sprache und in Zeichensprache verfügbar sein:

- Informationen über den Inhalt und die Navigation und
- Informationen über Teile der Website, die Inhalte in Leichter Sprache oder Zeichensprache enthalten.

Die Universität Hildesheim hat einen Schwerpunkt im Bereich barrierefreie Kommunikation. Dort gibt es außerdem eine eigene Forschungsstelle zu Leichter Sprache. Die Universität Leipzig hat zudem eine Studie initiiert, die sich mit Leichter Sprache im Arbeitsleben beschäftigt. Sie soll zeigen, wie diese Art von Sprache die Teilhabemöglichkeiten von Menschen mit Lernschwierigkeiten verbessern kann.

„Einfache“ oder „Leichte“ Sprache?

Die deutsche Barrierefreie-Informationstechnik-Verordnung verlangt nur für wenige Teile einer Website Leichte Sprache und für den Rest einfache Sprache. Aber manchmal gerät durcheinander, was mit „Leichter“ Sprache und was mit „einfacher“ Sprache gemeint ist.

2012 richtete zum Beispiel eine Gruppe von Bundestagsabgeordneten aus der SPD-Fraktion eine kleine Anfrage an die Bundesregierung. Sie fragte nach dem „Sachstand zur Förderung der Einfachen Sprache in Deutschland“. Die Gruppe wollte unter anderem wissen, welcher Definition von einfacher Sprache im Vergleich zur Leichten Sprache die Bundesregierung folgt.

Die Antwort: „Eine eindeutige Unterscheidung zwischen „Einfacher Sprache“ und „Leichter Sprache“ ist nicht möglich;

oftmals werden beide Begriffe synonym verwendet.“ Diese Antwort ist erstaunlich, da es zahlreiche Unterschiede gibt.

Die Regeln für Leichte Sprache sind fest umrissen: Sie weichen manchmal von der Standardsprache ab und sprechen sich für das Auslassen vieler Details aus. Zum Beispiel soll man jeden neuen Satz in eine neue Zeile schreiben, Schriftgröße 14 oder größer verwenden, hohe Zahlen und Prozentzahlen vermeiden und den Text immer von Menschen mit Lernschwierigkeiten prüfen lassen.

Einfache Sprache ist immer noch Standardsprache und weniger stark reguliert. Es gibt Bücher und Tipps zum einfachen und verständlichen Schreiben, aber kein festes Regelwerk, das allgemeiner Konsens ist. Wer Texte in einfachem Deutsch schreiben will, kann sich zum Beispiel an folgenden Regeln orientieren: Fremdwörter und komplizierte Sätze vermeiden, aktive Verbformen statt Passivierungen und Nominalisierungen benutzen, Zwischenüberschriften und Aufzählungszeichen benutzen, um den Text zu strukturieren.

Dass die Regeln für einfache und Leichte Sprache überlappen, heißt nicht, dass alle schwachen Leser Leichte Sprache benötigen. Und selbst guten Leserinnen und Lesern können wortreiche Erklärungen und komplexe Formulare zu schaffen machen. Genau das ist die große Stärke der einfachen Sprache: Sie macht Texte für alle verständlicher, ohne auf wichtige Inhalte zu verzichten.

Ist das Glas halbleer oder halbvoll?

Es ist vielleicht manchmal verlockend, sich für Leichte Sprache zu entscheiden – für ihr festes Regelwerk, die Zertifizierung und das Leichte-Sprache-Logo – und die

einfache Sprache links liegen zu lassen, die weniger klar definiert ist. Wer sich für einfache Sprache einsetzt, gesteht damit zugleich ein, dass Vieles nicht perfekt ist. Dass es Einiges zu tun gibt, dass Zeit und Geld investiert werden müssen – für Überarbeitungen, Nutzertestungen und Forschung. Denn es gibt immer noch viel zu viele Texte, die viel zu viele Menschen fast in den Wahnsinn treiben. Ein lauter Ruf nach einfacher Sprache – sei es in Deutschland oder sonst wo auf der Welt.

Quellen

Zugriff auf alle in diesem Artikel verlinkten Websites: 16.06.2018

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Beate hat an der RWTH Aachen (D) und der University of Wales, Cardiff (GB) Anglistische Linguistik, Literaturwissenschaften und Volkswirtschaftslehre studiert. Sie machte ihren Abschluss mit einer Arbeit über die Sprache des Wirtschaftsjournalismus aus der Perspektive von Critical Linguistics und interessiert sich seitdem für Sprache und Macht. Nach ihrem Studium arbeitete sie in verschiedenen Bereichen der Gesundheitskommunikation, zum Beispiel in der PR-Beratung, im Verlagswesen und in der Pressearbeit. Seit 2009 beschäftigt sie sich mit der Redaktion evidenzbasierter Gesundheitsinformationen mit den Schwerpunkten einfache Sprache und schwer erreichbare Zielgruppen.

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The ripple effect: Plain English in Japan

Machiko Asai and Sarah Ingmanson Battaglia, A&People

Typically, when someone thinks of plain English, it is the English-speaking countries that come to mind. Yet Japan is experiencing a ripple effect from the influence of plain English in western countries.

In a globalized world, the flow of everything – people, goods, money, and information – is gathering speed. With the ability to connect with any number of people at any point in time, we all face the issue of communicating in a way that can keep up. Plain English is the obvious commercial solution to this issue.

This article surveys how these “plain English ripples” are arriving in Japan, and how a new consortium is attempting to promote it.

Investing in clearer communication

With a rapidly aging society and declining birth rate, the economy in Japan has been shrinking. This is increasing the need for foreign investment in a broad sense – including foreign workers and tourists – to compensate for a shortage of local workers. Simplifying our visa process and making tourist areas more friendly for foreigners are 2 areas where plain English can support this demographic shift.

By contrast, when the Japanese economy grew significantly in the 1980s, the focus was mostly on growth. Little thought was paid to

investing in the infrastructure needed for overseas communication because the status quo didn't seem to have negative economic consequences.

Today, however, overseas involvement has become critical. To welcome international investment flows, we must be able to communicate effectively. As a result, plain English has a push-pull feel in Japan.

As an example, when Sarah arrived at Morgan Stanley Japan for her summer internship in 2002, she was asked to come up with an equity research sales strategy. Since the final presentation would be in English, she started searching through the English annual reports of the Japanese companies in her chosen industry. Her background in Japanese language made it apparent that the rather odd English she was finding came from literal translations.

Like many of her foreign colleagues with Japanese language proficiency, Sarah discarded the translated reports and favored the native Japanese ones. This also explained why foreign language skills were deemed more critical in Tokyo than in any other office of Morgan Stanley around the globe. There was a real struggle to communicate and conduct analysis for anyone who couldn't read or speak Japanese.

The value of plain English

This experience explains why plain English communication is becoming a necessity for Japanese companies and society more broadly.

At present, the English published by Japanese companies and government agencies tends to include difficult vocabulary and sentence structures that reflect their Japanese origins. The result is an unnatural English with a high propensity for euphemism and redundancy.

The promotion of plain English in Japan is an obvious remedy to this problem and forms the basis of a new mission.

We are looking to change the “good enough” mindset in English communication in Japan to one that sees English as a strategic tool to genuinely communicate with overseas partners, constituents, and stakeholders.

A new consortium

At A&People (particularly in our capacity as a translation and interpretation company in Japan) we thought of plain English as a solution for the clients who were struggling to communicate effectively with overseas investors.

The main challenge we experience stems from the lack of awareness, trust, and buy-in for plain English. Aside from the communication directors and investor relations officers at a handful of listed Japanese companies, people in Japan are simply unfamiliar with the term, “plain English”.

So in April this year, we are launching Japan Plain English and Language Consortium (JPELC), the first such organization in Japan.

By compiling resources and offering training and certification programs, we seek to improve the knowledge and skills of those in Japan who create and transmit information in English. We plan to host plain English experts from other parts of the world at our seminars, and we will recognize Japanese companies that are promoting plain English and excelling in clear English communication at an annual awards ceremony.

Our international participation in plain English forums such as PLAIN will help us influence the key decision-makers in the private and public sectors of Japan. It will also give Japan a voice in the international discussions about plain English and international standards.

The wider benefits

Beyond boosting Japanese companies on the world stage, there are many other benefits to consider in the face of the nation's low birthrate and rapidly aging population. For Japan to become an inviting destination for tourists and foreign workers (as taxpayers), plain English will help them to get around the country and live locally. Looking ahead to the global exposure from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the expected surge in foreign labor in the years beyond, an English language policy that inspires clear communication and deeper exchanges can only benefit us all.



Machiko Asai



Machiko graduated from Aoyama Gakuin University with a Bachelor's in Business Administration. In 2002, she received her MBA from the Graduate School of International Politics and Economics, Aoyama Gakuin University. In 2015, she was appointed as an executive mentor to Women's Innovation School of Japan.

In 1998, Machiko founded A&People Corporation to provide high-quality and trustworthy translations. In particular, she sought to create Investor Relations solutions that would appeal and “speak” to foreign investors. From 2010, A&People began co-hosting Plain English seminars with Japan Investor Relations Association (JIRA) for Investor Relations Officers representing corporate members of JIRA.



Sarah Ingmanson Battaglia



Sarah graduated Summa Cum Laude in International Relations and Quantitative Economics from Tufts University. She received a Fulbright in 1999 to conduct research on Japan's Pension Crisis at Osaka University. In 2004, Sarah earned an MBA in Finance from the Wharton School and an MA in International Affairs (Japan/East Asia) from the Lauder Institute of the University of Pennsylvania. She won the Thesis Prize for her master's dissertation, “Corporate Pension Reform in Japan: Big Bang or Big Bust?”

After graduation, Sarah joined Morgan Stanley as a point person for Japan on global projects in Equity Research and years later, in Investment Banking. She worked from both sides of the Pacific for the duration of her 11-year tenure.

欧米からの波及効果： 日本におけるプレイン・イングリッシュ

欧米からの波及効果：日本におけるプレイン・イングリッシュ
一般にプレイン・イングリッシュという言葉が聞けば英語圏の話と想像すると思いますが、日本でもプレイン・イングリッシュの影響を波及的に受けています。世界のグローバル化、ネットワーク化、ボーダレス化が進むなかで、ヒト、モノ、資金、情報が活発に行きかう現在、コミュニケーションにおいて、より多くの不特定多数の人とのコミュニケーションが可能になりました。そうした中で、プレインなランゲージが常用化していくことは言うまでもありません。

このエッセイではプレイン・イングリッシュの波及効果の例、またプレイン・イングリッシュを推進する新たなコンソーシアムについてご紹介します。

真のコミュニケーションへの投資

日本では少子高齢化社会が急速に進んでおり、マーケットの縮小に伴い、海外への投資が今まで以上に必要とされてきています。さらに、労働者不足を補うために、外国人労働者のビザの緩和策、観光客誘致など広い意味での投資が必要です。

また、これまで日本国内の市場規模が大きく、ビジネスが国内で成立していたこともあり、海外とのコミュニケーションに投

資をしなくとも経済が成り立っていたため、真のコミュニケーションの投資よりも、それ以外に時間とエネルギーが費やされてきました。

しかしながら、先に述べたグローバル化と少子高齢化により、待ったなしで、海外との門戸を開ける必要性に迫られている昨今、コミュニケーションにおいても、スピーディーに誤解なく、双方の理解や訴求ができ、円滑なコミュニケーションのニーズが高まっています。

ここで弊社のアメリカ出身の顧問であるサラの体験を紹介しましょう。彼女は日本のモルガンスタンレーで2002年夏のインターシップの際に株式調査の営業戦略を準備することになりました。最終のプレゼン資料は英語であるため、彼女は日本企業の英語版の年次報告書（アニュアルレポート）をリサーチしはじめたところ、その英語がプレイン・イングリッシュではなく不自然であり、それは日本語の直訳が原因であったことに気づきました。

日本語が得意な他の外国人の同僚のように、彼女も英語に翻訳されたレポートではなく日本語版を使いました。プレイン・イングリッシュに慣れている彼女にとっては英語版ではなく、日本語版のほうが使いやすかったのです。世界中のモルガンスタンレーのなかで日本オフィスが一番語学のスキルが重要視されるのにはそうした理由からで

す。日本語ができなければコミュニケーションや分析の実施が大変でした。

プレイン・イングリッシュの価値

こうした例もあり、プレイン・イングリッシュでのコミュニケーションは日本の企業や社会において広く必要になってきています。

現在、日本の企業や官公庁の作成する英文は単語が難しく、文章の構成が日本語の影響で、婉曲、冗長になりがちです。

日本でのプレイン・イングリッシュの推進はこうした問題への解決策であり新たなミツションでもあります。単に英語になっていけばよいというスタンスから、真にコミュニケーションを図るための戦略的ツールとして、冗長的な英語のコミュニケーションを変える必要に迫られています。

新たなコンソーシアム

翻訳・通訳サービスを提供するエイアンドピープルは、海外投資家への効率的なコミュニケーションという課題を抱えるクライアントにとって、プレイン・イングリッシュがその解決策であると考えています。しかしその認知度がまだ低く、一部の市場企業の広報IR担当者を除き、プレイン・イングリッシュという言葉さえ、知らない日本人が大多数です。

そこで今年4月に日本でプレイン・イングリッシュを推

進する初の団体であるJapan Plain English and Language Consortium (JPELC) を発足いたします。

英文情報を作成し、発信する人に対して知識とスキルの向上のための諸施策（知識編纂、研修、検定など）を提供します。また海外からプレイン・イングリッシュの専門家を招聘するセミナーやプレイン・イングリッシュを推進する企業や明快な英文コミュニケーションを行っている企業へのアワードの授与なども行う予定です。

PLAINはじめ国際的なプレイン・イングリッシュの団体にも所属しているため、日本の国民における主要な意思決定者への働きかけにもつながるでしょう。またプレイン・イングリッシュやISO化についての国際的なディスカッションへの発言も予定しています。

広がるメリット

プレイン・イングリッシュは日本企業のグローバルな躍進の後押しだけでなく、直面している少子高齢化対策を考えるうえでも貢献します。また日本が訪日観光客や外国人労働者（納税者）に対して、安心と尊厳を守り、情報を配信する側の責任と公正さを全うする意味でプレイン・イングリッシュがその一助になると考えます。

2020年の東京オリンピックや今後

の外国人労働者の急増に対しても、明快なコミュニケーション方法であるプレイン・イングリッシュを導入することで、多くの国民と外国の方々との交流と理解を深め、さらに魅力ある日本の国づくりにつながると信じます。

サラ・イングマンソン・バツダグリア



タフツ大学国際関係学および数量経済学修士課程を最優等で卒業。1999年にフルブライト奨学金を得て大阪大学で日本の年金危機に関する研究を行う。2004年ペンシルベニア大学ウォートンスクールにてMBA（ファイナンス）およびローダー・インスティテュートにて国際関係学（日本/東アジア）のMAを取得。修士論文「Corporate Pension Reform in Japan: Big Bang or Big Bust?」で論文賞を受賞。

卒業後、モルガンスタンレーで株式調査、その後投資銀行業務のグローバルプロジェクトにおける日本のコンタクト・パーソンとして11年にわたり日米を往復する生活を送る。

2015年、エイアンドピープルのプレイン・イングリッシュセミナー講師およびIRシニアアドバイザー就任。





Strengthening citizen trust through plain language

Christian Anker and Maximiliano Nuñez Council for Transparency, Chile

Several surveys have pointed out that Chile is going through a deep crisis of confidence, both in people and institutions. A 2017 [Transparency Study](#) found that in Chile:

- **86% of people believe “you cannot trust most people” (people-to-people trust)**
- **23% of people trust public institutions and 25% trust the private sector (institutional trust).**

The survey also highlighted that many citizens “have difficulty in understanding the information” delivered by a public office (VI Encuesta Nacional de Derechos Ciudadanos, 2016), and that citizens perceive this to be the state “treating them badly” ([United Nations Development Program, 2017](#)).

This article outlines current efforts in Chile to improve public trust through access to information – and the vital role that plain language plays in doing so.

The Council for Transparency

2018 was the tenth anniversary of the Law of Transparency and Access to Public Information in Chile. This created the [Council for Transparency \(CPLT\)](#) as an independent public agency that guarantees, audits, and promotes access to information.

To boost citizen trust, CPLT developed several initiatives to position plain

language as a tool for access to, and understanding of, public information. In particular, we have aligned these initiatives with the [open government initiative](#) that calls for public policies based on:

- **transparency**
- **accountability**
- **citizen participation**
- **innovation**
- **use of technology.**

Open Government Action Plans commit to a “work model and plain language resources in public administration”. Using this as a reference point, Chile has developed four initiatives.

1. Plain language network

Our [plain language network](#) brings together 7 of Chile’s public institutions:

- **Supreme Court**
- **Auditors Office**
- **House of Representatives**
- **Congress Library**
- **Transparency Council**
- **Catholic University of Valparaíso**
- **General Secretariat of the Presidency Ministry.**

The network generates initiatives, projects, and measures that promote, advertise, and facilitate the use of plain language within the member institutions and other state agencies.

To date, the network has held over 40 meetings and various educational and promotional events. Our achievements include:

- **2 colloquiums**
- **an institutional accountability day (March 2018)**
- **a website**
- **Teaching resources.**

2. Online plain language courses

An [e-learning course](#) provides the basics on public communication and highlights focusing on citizen needs by using plain language. It also emphasizes the importance of plain language in promoting democracy.

The online training also illustrates the most common errors in public documents, showing how they can be improved with a [self-correcting form](#) covering plain language best practices.

3. Promotion of plain language

The network also developed and sent to all agencies a [Recommendation to use Plain Language](#). This focuses on applying the principles of plain language to offices that provide information and receive requests from the public.

The “Recommendation” document emphasizes clarity as part of a citizen’s right to access information, and the need to avoid barriers in accessing services. In addition, the Transparency Law 2.0 is also proposing a principle of plain language.

4. First international seminar

The network’s largest event to date was held with the support of the

[Plain Language Association International](#) and the [Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso](#). Our aim was to highlight the importance of plain language in state–citizen communication, by sharing national and international experiences and initiatives that provide access to public information for citizens.

Several outstanding international speakers took part, including a keynote from Dr. Neil James of Australia, who spoke about the state of plain language internationally. Other major speakers included Cristina Carretero from Spain, Germán Jair from Colombia, and Gloria de la Fuente, a member of the CPLT.

The right to understand

These initiatives help us to engage citizens so that public employees better understand the importance of their role in communicating information effectively. The language that institutions use can marginalize citizens and create distrust. Plain language initiatives can foster relationships based on trust between citizens and institutions and boost democracy.

As a result, it is crucial that we emphasize the right of access to public information, but also make sure that everyone can understand that information. This will be the cross-cutting result of installing plain language best practices in Chilean state institutions.



Maximiliano Nuñez

With a degree in Public Policy & Political Sciences, Maximiliano also earned a master’s in Government and Public Policy from the Universidad de Chile. He has worked in the field of transparency and access to information, open government, and public sector innovation. Maximiliano currently works in dissemination at the Council for Transparency, Chile.

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Actualmente trabaja en el Consejo para la Transparencia de Chile, promoviendo el derecho de acceso a la información y desarrollando actividades de formación tanto a funcionarios públicos y la sociedad civil. Además es docente de Psicología Social y Jurídica en la Universidad Católica de Chile.

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Fortaleciendo la confianza ciudadana a través del lenguaje claro

Christian Anker y Maximiliano Nuñez Consejo para la Transparencia, Chile

Diversos estudios han señalado que Chile atraviesa por una profunda crisis de confianza, tanto a nivel interpersonal como institucional. El Estudio Nacional de Transparencia 2017 evidencia que en Chile:

- un 86 % cree que “no se puede confiar en la mayoría de las personas” (confianza interpersonal),
- un 23 % señala confiar en las instituciones públicas y un 25 % en el sector privado (confianza institucional).

También se ha resaltado (VI Encuesta Nacional de Derechos Ciudadanos del año 2016) que a muchos ciudadanos “les cuesta comprender la información” que le entrega un servicio público, y que esto es percibido como una forma de “maltrato” por parte del Estado hacia ellos (PNUD 2017).

Este artículo traza a grandes rasgos los esfuerzos actuales en Chile para mejorar la confianza pública a través del acceso a la información y el papel esencial que juega el lenguaje claro en estos esfuerzos.

El Consejo para la Transparencia

En el año 2018, se cumplieron 10 años de la promulgación de la Ley de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública en Chile, mediante la cual se crea el Consejo para la Transparencia (CPLT) como el organismo público autónomo que garantiza, fiscaliza y promueve el acceso a la información.

Como una estrategia para fortalecer la confianza ciudadana y promocionar el

derecho de acceso, el CPLT ha desarrollado e implementado diversas iniciativas que buscan posicionar el lenguaje claro como herramienta para garantizar el acceso y la comprensión de la información pública. En particular, estas iniciativas han estado alineadas con la implementación de Planes de Acción de Gobierno Abierto fundamentados en:

- transparencia
- rendición de cuentas
- participación de la ciudadanía
- innovación
- uso de tecnología.

Los planes de acción del Gobierno Abierto se comprometen con un “Modelo de trabajo y recursos de Lenguaje Claro en la Administración Pública”, según el cual se desarrollaron las siguientes cuatro iniciativas:

1. Red de Lenguaje Claro

Esta red agrupa a 7 instituciones públicas y privadas chilenas:

- Poder Judicial,
- Cámara de Diputados,
- Contraloría General de la República,
- Consejo para la Transparencia,
- Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso,
- Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional y
- Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia.

Esta red genera iniciativas, proyectos y medidas que promuevan, difundan y faciliten el uso del lenguaje claro dentro de sus respectivas instituciones y en otros organismos del Estado.



A la fecha se han realizado más de 40 reuniones y varios eventos de difusión, incluyendo:

- 2 coloquios,
- un día de rendición de cuentas en marzo de 2018,
- una página web,
- recursos para el aprendizaje.

2. Curso virtual de Lenguaje Claro

Este curso de e-learning da a conocer los aspectos fundamentales de la Comunicación Pública, incorporando el enfoque ciudadano en el lenguaje claro, así como también la importancia del lenguaje claro como un instrumento democratizador.

El curso virtual identifica los errores más comunes en la redacción de documentos públicos, señalando aspectos para mejorar, a través de un formulario de autoevaluación de utilización de prácticas de lenguaje claro.

3. Recomendación de Lenguaje Claro

La red también envió una recomendación de lenguaje claro a todos los organismos públicos. Se centra en la aplicación de los principios del lenguaje claro en las oficinas de información, que son las instancias que reciben las solicitudes de información.

El documento hace hincapié en favorecer la claridad en el uso que hacen los ciudadanos del derecho de acceso a la información, y evitar las barreras de entrada por parte de los servicios. Cabe mencionar que se está proponiendo establecer un principio de lenguaje claro a través de la Ley de Transparencia 2.0.

4. Primer Seminario Internacional de Lenguaje Claro

Esta actividad se realizó con la

colaboración de PLAIN y la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, y su propósito fue resaltar la importancia de la utilización del lenguaje claro en la comunicación Estado-ciudadano, compartiendo experiencias e iniciativas que busquen otorgar acceso a la información pública con lenguaje ciudadano.

Contó con destacados expositores, y resaltó la exposición magistral sobre el estado del lenguaje claro en el ámbito internacional, dictada por el Dr. Neil James, la participación de Cristina Carretero de España, Germán Arenas de Colombia y Gloria de la Fuente, consejera del CPLT, entre otros participantes.

El derecho a comprender

Mediante estas iniciativas, se busca que los servicios públicos actúen de manera conectada con la ciudadanía logrando que el funcionario público comprenda su importante rol en la comunicación y entrega de información a los usuarios.

Creemos que, si el lenguaje que usan las Instituciones es un elemento que margina y genera desconfianzas, entonces, iniciativas en favor de un lenguaje claro en la comunicación pueden servir para volver a tejer confianzas entre ciudadanos e instituciones para el fortalecimiento de nuestra cultura democrática y una sana convivencia.

Por esa razón, no solo es importante resaltar la importancia del derecho de acceso a la información pública, sino que, además, tenemos que lograr que este derecho sea también comprensible para todos. De ahí la importancia trascendental de instaurar prácticas de lenguaje claro y promover su uso entre las instituciones del Estado.



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The Plain Language Network in Argentina



Mariana Bozetti
Coordinator, Technical Committee, Plain Language Network Argentina

Plain language is a cornerstone of a democratic and inclusive society. Citizens who understand the norms and documents that govern their lives are better equipped to ensure that these are fair and correct – and that they make for a fairer society.

The right to understand is also inseparable from the obligation to explain, particularly in communications with the public sector, justice sector, or the government. All these entities must have an ethical commitment in carrying out their tasks.

These are the beliefs that in 2017 led 3 institutions in Argentina – the Ministry of Justice, the Senate, and the Legal and Technical Presidential Secretariat – to set up a plain language network, following the model in Chile.

Throughout 2018, the network sought to establish a base so that other institutions interested in plain language in public communications could join.

This article sets out the network's objectives and working methods.

Objectives of the Plain Language Network Argentina

The 3 founding institutions set out 5 objectives to capture the collaborative intention of the network.

- 1. To promote reflection in the agencies involved about the value of plain language to improve connections between the state and citizens in a democratic society.**
- 2. To instill a plain language perspective in the daily work of those working in those agencies.**
- 3. To establish efficient standards when implementing plain language.**
- 4. To promote evaluation of plain language use in the agencies' best practices.**
- 5. To establish an annual public recognition (award) for the agency that has stood out in applying plain language.**

How the network works

To maximize efficiency, the network established 3 work teams with specific tasks so that each team can specialize and work to the best of its capacity.

Committee	Role
1. Board	With representatives from each founding agency, decides on the general strategy and any action involving all committees.
2. Executive Board	Carries out general strategy and assesses how it is carried out in member agencies, as well as evaluates the efficiency of those strategies.
3. Technical Committee	Designs plain language programs for agencies in the network and develops training materials.

Mariana Bozetti

Mariana Bozetti is a linguistic adviser at the Public Prosecutor's Office in Argentina.

With a degree in Humanities from the Universidad Católica Argentina, Mariana also has a postgraduate degree in Forensic Linguistics (legal and judicial language) from the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona.

She is the coordinator for Academic Writing at the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, where she also teaches writing and oral expression skills. From 1998-2014 she taught plain Spanish to lawyers at Marval, O'Farrell & Mairal, Argentina's leading law firm. Mariana is a Clarity representative in Argentina.

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The Technical Committee is an interdisciplinary committee with linguists, graphic designers, communications experts, and specialists in the fields of each agency – such as lawyers, political scientists, and sociologists. Its action plan aims to reproduce its work in each new agency that joins the network.

As a first step, the committee will diagnose the discourse of each community to establish:

- who is the writer or speaker
- who is the audience
- what is their purpose
- what formats they will use.

Following that, the different types of standardized communication need to be identified, including whether they are spoken or written, and how frequently they are used. Then a representative number of each one has to be analyzed to describe its purpose, content, and style characteristics.

The next step is to identify the elaboration chain of these types, to see if there are templates, and to identify the main areas of conflict. This is a vital part of the process of introducing plain language in any institution.

For this part of the process, the opinion of all the parties involved is vital, so meetings and interviews are set up. It is only then that a training plan can be set up for each institution.

Collaboration for change

Creating a network implies joining in, teaming up, and meeting up. The Argentine network intends to bring together institutions and agencies of their own free will. The best incentive is action, so we propose to act as a group and change things for the better.





Mariana Bozetti

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La Red de Lenguaje Claro de la Argentina



Mariana Bozetti

Coordinadora, Comité Técnico, Red de Lenguaje Claro de la Argentina

El lenguaje claro es indispensable en una sociedad inclusiva y democrática. Una ciudadanía que comprende las normas y documentos que determinan su vida está en mejores condiciones para controlar que estos sean justos y adecuados, y que beneficien la vida en común.

Por otra parte, el derecho a comprender es inseparable de la obligación de explicarse, exigencia que se acentúa en el caso de la comunicación de la Administración Pública, la Justicia o el Gobierno, funciones que exigen un compromiso ético en el desempeño de sus tareas.

Este convencimiento llevó a que en 2017 se unieran tres instituciones de la Argentina –el Ministerio de Justicia, el Senado y la Secretaría Legal y Técnica de la Presidencia de la Nación– para desarrollar una red de lenguaje claro, inspirada en la que ya se había establecido en Chile.

La red trabajó durante todo el 2018 para establecer las bases que posibilitarán sumar a otras instituciones del país que se identifiquen con la necesidad del lenguaje claro como política pública de comunicación.

En esta breve colaboración se expondrán los objetivos de la red, y su organización y forma de trabajo.

Objetivos de la Red de Lenguaje Claro de la Argentina

Las tres instituciones mencionadas elaboraron cinco objetivos que vertebran el trabajo y que resumen el espíritu de la colaboración en red:

- 1. Promover la reflexión de los organismos integrantes acerca del valor del lenguaje claro en la mejora de los vínculos entre Estado y ciudadanía en una sociedad democrática.**
- 2. Incorporar la perspectiva del lenguaje claro al trabajo diario de quienes integran los organismos.**

Organización de la red

Para su mejor funcionamiento, la red estableció tres equipos de trabajo con tareas específicas para que desplieguen su máxima potencial. Estos son:

Comité	Tarea
1. Consejo Directivo	Integrado por representantes de cada organismo fundador, elabora las líneas de trabajo y las acciones comunes.
2. Comité Ejecutivo	Implementa las líneas de trabajo y controla su desarrollo en los distintos organismos integrantes. También tiene a su cargo la evaluación de la eficacia de las acciones implementadas.
3 Comité Técnico	Diseña los programas de lenguaje claro para los distintos organismos que integran la red y elabora los materiales de referencia y de capacitación.

- 3. Establecer estándares de eficacia en la implementación de la perspectiva del lenguaje claro.**
- 4. Promover la evaluación de la incidencia del lenguaje claro en el incremento de buenas prácticas en las instituciones.**
- 5. Establecer un reconocimiento público anual (Premio) a los organismos que se hayan destacado en su aplicación del lenguaje claro.**

El Comité Técnico

El Comité Técnico consiste en un comité interdisciplinario en el que participan lingüistas, diseñadores gráficos, comunicadores y especialistas en el campo específico de cada organismo tales como abogados, politólogos, sociólogos, entre otros. Su plan de acción favorece que se replique el trabajo en cada organismo que se sume.

En primer lugar, se debe realizar el diagnóstico de la comunidad discursiva de cada uno de estos organismos para establecer:

- **quiénes hablan o escriben,**
- **a quiénes,**
- **con qué propósito.**
- **y en qué formatos.**

Luego, se deben identificar los tipos de comunicación estandarizada, tanto orales como escritos (géneros), de uso más frecuente y reunir un número representativo de cada uno para poder analizarlos. Una vez obtenidos estos corpus de documentos de uso frecuente, se analizarán y describirán sus principales características de estilo y de tratamiento del contenido específico en función de la interacción que cada género propone.

El paso siguiente consiste en la identificación de la cadena de elaboración

de esos géneros, si existen modelos a los que se recurre, si hay instancias, pasos en la elaboración, cuáles son los principales puntos de conflicto, etc. Este trabajo previo va a hacer visible el camino más adecuado para la implementación de los programas de lenguaje claro en cada institución.

En esta parte del trabajo es clave contar con la opinión de quienes interactúan, por medio de encuestas o de entrevistas. Una vez cumplidos los pasos anteriores, se podrá elaborar el plan de capacitación e implementación para cada organismo.

Colaboración para el cambio

Formar una red implica unir, agrupar, reunir, y esa es la intención que persigue la red argentina: sumar instituciones y organismos de manera voluntaria. El mejor incentivo es la acción y esa es la propuesta: actuar en grupo para cambiar las cosas que no están tan bien.





Dr. Betsy Perafán Liévano

Betsy Perafán has a degree in Mathematics from the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, and a Law degree and a master's and Doctorate in Education from the Universidad de los Andes. She is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Legal Education at the Law Faculty of the Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá.

She heads up the research team into plain language and is one of the co-founders of the Plain Language Network, Colombia. Betsy is particularly interested in civic education and communications.

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Plain language in Colombia



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Universidad de los Andes

Germán Jair Arenas Arias

House of Representatives

Over the last 10 years, within a broader framework to renew the public sector, the Colombian Government has been working to improve the communications and relationship with its citizens. Its efforts have formed part of a growing list of programs and policies related to transparency and governance. This is also linking with the university sector and a new network that will increase the influence of this work.

A policy platform

Over the last decade, 2 particular policies demonstrate the government's interest in being closer to its citizens:

- **policy of accountability in the Executive Branch (2010)**
- **national policy of administrative efficiency at the service of the citizen (2013).**

As part of the "certainty and plain language" principle that started in these documents was the idea to simplify the form and mechanisms through which citizens interacted with the state.

At the same time, the 2018 Survey of Citizen Perception carried out by the Program of National Service to the Citizen found that 9 out of 10 Colombian citizens think the government does not communicate clearly and comprehensibly.

The information that state employees usually provide does not:

- **guarantee citizen participation**
- **provide the conditions for citizens to realize their rights**
- **make it easy to control the state's activities.**

Stronger measures

Faced with these results, on August 1, 2018, a bill on plain language was presented to the House of Representatives in Colombia. This considers the right to understand as a basic democratic right – especially in public communications, laws, and some judicial rulings.

The new law sets out that all of the country's entities – both federal and local – should make a genuine effort to transform the information they produce into plain language that citizens can understand.

Along the same lines, the Colombian Department of Planning (DNP after its Spanish acronym) designed a plain language manual, presenting the main guidelines that help to make texts plainer. It also launched an online plain language course, which to date has been taken by 28,676 public employees from 615 entities throughout Colombia.

Further, "simplicity workshops" have transformed 50 texts that citizens commonly use. And we have verified the effectiveness of the transformed texts by developing a simplicity index.



The academy

For its part, the academic world has also showed interest in fulfilling citizen rights and constitutional duties through plain language. The Universidad de los Andes set up a research project called "The right to understand: set-up and development of a Plain Language Network in Colombia to facilitate access to justice and strengthen democracy". This project, working with the Universidad Eafit and the Instituto Caro y Cuervo, has been key to consolidating the Plain Language Network Colombia, which is inspired by the experiences of Argentina and Chile.

The Colombian network

The Plain Language Network Colombia is the sum of all these efforts, and its members are working in tandem to generate initiatives and projects that will promote plain language – both within their own institutions and within other state entities. The overall aim is to increase efficiency in the use of state resources and promote transparency and access to public information.

The network came into being officially on October 18, 2018 in Bogotá. Its objective is to create a new "plain language culture" so the state will put citizens at the center of the democratic and legal spheres through its services to the public.

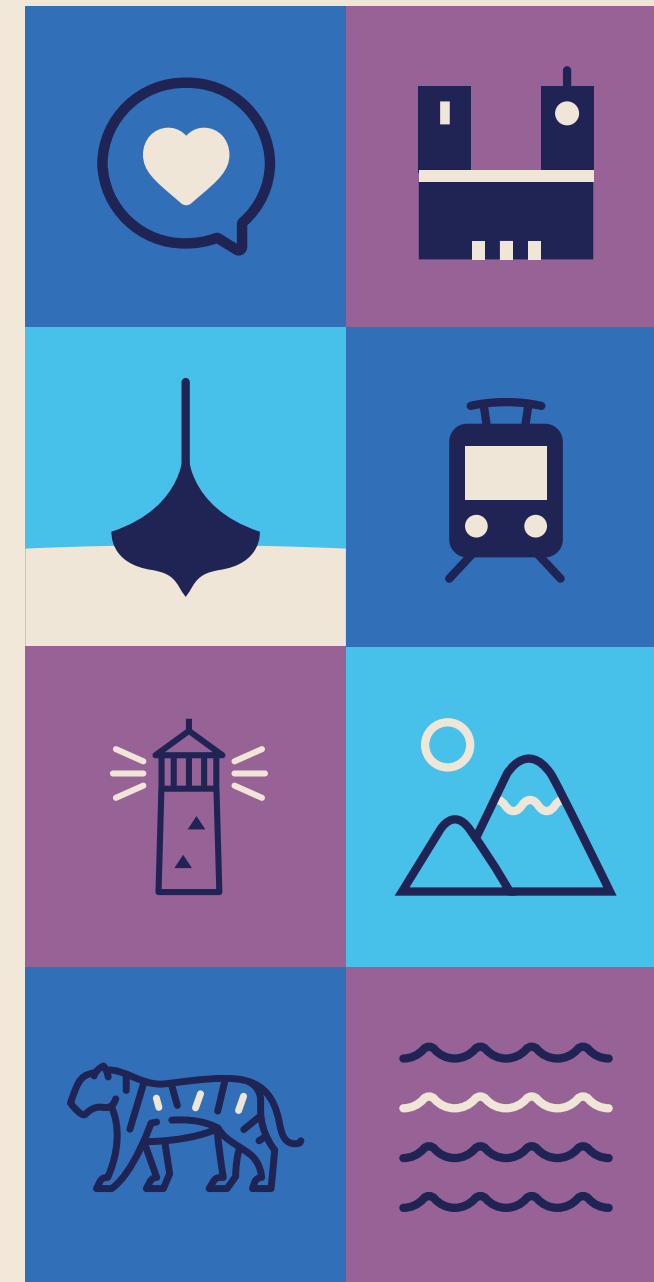
Germán Jair Arenas Arias

Germán Arenas has a degree in International Relations and Political Science from the Universidad Militar Nueva Granada de Bogotá. He then went on to specialize in Public Policy and Development and earned a Master's in Constitutional Law from the Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales in Madrid, Spain.

Germán is a Legislative Adviser in the House of Representatives, Colombia. He is Clarity country representative for Colombia and a member of the Plain Language Network, Colombia and the Universidad de los Andes Research Project "the right to understand."

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Dra Betsy Perafán Liévano

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Movimiento colombiano de lenguaje claro



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Cámara de Diputados

Durante los últimos diez años, en el marco de diversos esfuerzos y arreglos institucionales orientados hacia la renovación de la Administración Pública, el Estado colombiano se ha preocupado por introducir una estrategia de claridad y comprensión que mejore sus comunicaciones y la relación con los ciudadanos. El esfuerzo se ha hecho de manera accesoria dentro de ciertos programas y políticas públicas relacionadas con la transparencia y el buen gobierno.

Políticas de Estado

Dos ejemplos del interés en alcanzar una administración más cercana al ciudadano son las siguientes:

- **la política de rendición de cuentas de la rama ejecutiva (2010),**
- **la política nacional de eficiencia administrativa al servicio del ciudadano (2013).**

El componente de “certidumbre y lenguaje claro” que estaba concebido allí se proponía simplificar la forma y los mecanismos de interacción con la Administración Pública.

Sin embargo, en 2018 La Encuesta de Participación Ciudadana encontró que 9 de cada 10 colombianos consideran que la Administración no se comunica de manera clara y comprensible.

Los funcionarios públicos suelen brindar información que:

- **no garantiza la participación ciudadana,**
- **no favorece el conocimiento de las condiciones necesarias para la realización de otros derechos,**
- **no facilita el control de la actividad estatal.**

Medidas con impacto

Ante semejante escenario, el 1 de agosto de 2018 se presentó en la Cámara de Representantes un proyecto de ley sobre lenguaje claro. La iniciativa entiende que existe un derecho a comprender las reglas del juego democrático, principalmente contenidas en las comunicaciones públicas, las leyes y algunas decisiones judiciales.

El objetivo de la ley es que todas las entidades del país (nacionales y locales) hagan un esfuerzo genuino por transformar la información que producen a un lenguaje sencillo y comprensible para los ciudadanos.

En el mismo sentido, el Departamento Nacional de Planeación (DNP) diseñó una Guía de Lenguaje Claro que presenta las principales pautas para construir textos más sencillos, y lanzó el Curso Virtual de Lenguaje Claro que, a la fecha, ha sido realizado por 28.676 servidores públicos de 615 entidades del orden nacional y territorial.

A través de los “laboratorios de simplicidad”, se han transformado 50 piezas comunicativas de alta demanda

ciudadana y, con el desarrollo del “índice de simplicidad”, se miden los resultados de las traducciones y es posible verificar la efectividad del uso de lenguaje claro en documentos estatales.

La academia

Por su parte, la academia también ha demostrado su interés en la necesidad de lograr el cumplimiento de los derechos y los deberes constitucionales a través de su comprensión plena. El proyecto de investigación denominado “El derecho a comprender: creación y desarrollo de una Red de Lenguaje Claro en Colombia para facilitar el acceso a la justicia y fortalecer la democracia” es un producto de la Universidad de los Andes que ha permitido diseñar nuevos enfoques en materia de formación ciudadana y educación jurídica.

Es este proyecto el que permite en definitiva, junto a la Universidad Eafit y el Instituto Caro y Cuervo, la consolidación de una Red en Colombia, inspirada, desde luego, en las experiencias chilena y argentina.

La Red Colombiana de Lenguaje Claro

La Red Colombiana de Lenguaje Claro significa la sumatoria de todos estos esfuerzos, personas e instituciones que, involucrados en un acuerdo de voluntades, desean trabajar unidos y

en la misma dirección para generar iniciativas, proyectos y medidas que promuevan, difundan y faciliten el uso del lenguaje claro, tanto dentro de sus respectivas instituciones, como en otras entidades del

Estado. El objetivo clave es incrementar la eficiencia en el uso de los recursos estatales, y promover la transparencia y el acceso a la información pública.

La Red se hizo oficial el día 18 de octubre de 2018 en Bogotá y con ella se espera crear una nueva “cultura del lenguaje claro” que recupere el valor del ciudadano como el protagonista principal de la escena democrática y de la Justicia, como centro de la labor estatal y del ejercicio de lo público.



Germán Jair Arenas Arias

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Call for nominations for PLAIN's 2 awards: The Christine Mowat Award and the Cheryl Stephens Innovation Award



Nominations are open for PLAIN's 2 international awards:

- **the Christine Mowat Plain Language Achievement Award**
- **the Cheryl Stephens Innovation Award.**

Please submit your nomination to awards@plainlanguagenetwork.org by June 1, 2019. The awards will be presented at PLAIN's conference in Oslo in September 2019. The winners will receive:

- **an engraved presentation award**
- **a certificate**
- **public acknowledgement of their achievements on the PLAIN website and other PLAIN communication channels**

How to nominate

To make a nomination for an award, you must be a PLAIN member. Your nomination must:

- **be in writing (maximum of 5 pages total for nominating and supporting documents)**
- **document the nominee's achievements, referring to the award criteria**
- **be supported by another PLAIN member and at least one other individual active in the plain language profession but not necessarily a member of PLAIN.**

Judging

Winning nominations will be decided by the PLAIN Board.

About the awards

The Christine Mowat Award

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

This award honors the outstanding contribution of Christine Mowat, past president and former winner of the PLAIN International Award.

The award will be presented to a person or organization who has significantly advanced plain language as a professional through their work and represented the profession of plain language with the highest integrity and skill.

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.**

To be eligible for the award, a recipient will generally be a PLAIN member but need not be. Serving PLAIN Board members are not eligible for the award.

The Cheryl Stephens Innovation Award

The Cheryl Stephens Innovation Award recognizes innovation in plain language. The purpose of the award is to recognize the significant contribution of a PLAIN member.

This award honors Cheryl Stephens, one of PLAIN's co-founders, and her outstanding achievements in innovation for plain language on behalf of the community.

The award will be presented to a person or organization whose plain language activities have brought significant benefit to the community through one of more of the following areas:

- **technology – adapting emerging technology to develop new services and systems**
- **advocacy – extending the scope and influence of plain language internationally**
- **research – strengthening the knowledge base for plain language**
- **professional development – helping to develop the skills of plain language practitioners and the institutions supporting them.**

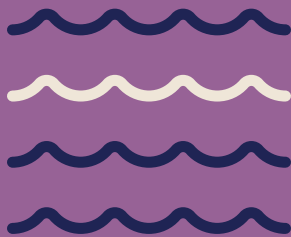
The award will especially seek to recognize individuals who have contributed to plain language and the community through voluntary activities. To be eligible for the award, a recipient must be a PLAIN member. Serving PLAIN Board members are not eligible for the award.

The Cheryl Stephens Innovation Award is sponsored by [skritswap](https://skritswap.com).



Skritswap is a technology company providing an AI solution to making information easy to understand. On February 16, skritswap hosted 'Innovation Day'. Read more about Innovation Day and skritswap's sponsorship of the Cheryl Stephens Award [here](#).

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