



# Writing Content In A Web 2.0 World

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Writing Content in a Web 2.0 World - [OnlineMarketerBlog.com](http://OnlineMarketerBlog.com)

# What do you mean, writing in a Web 2.0 world?

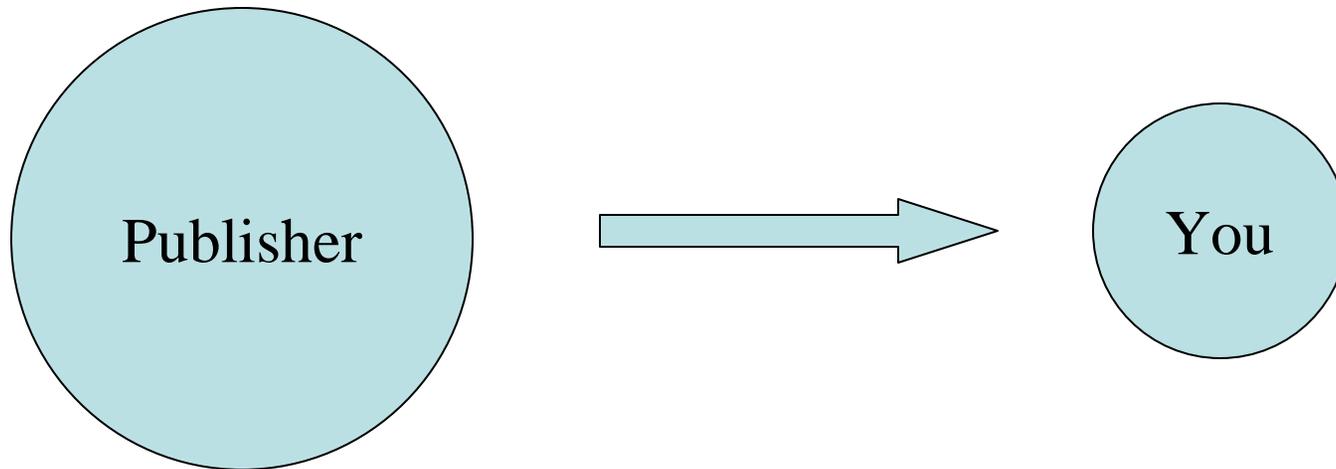
Good question! There is a lot of confusion around these terms. This white paper will answer these questions:

- What is Web 2.0?
- How should your writing style change?
- How has online interaction changed and what will this mean for the future of business?
- What is the secret new currency in this market?

That's a lot to cover. Let's get started!

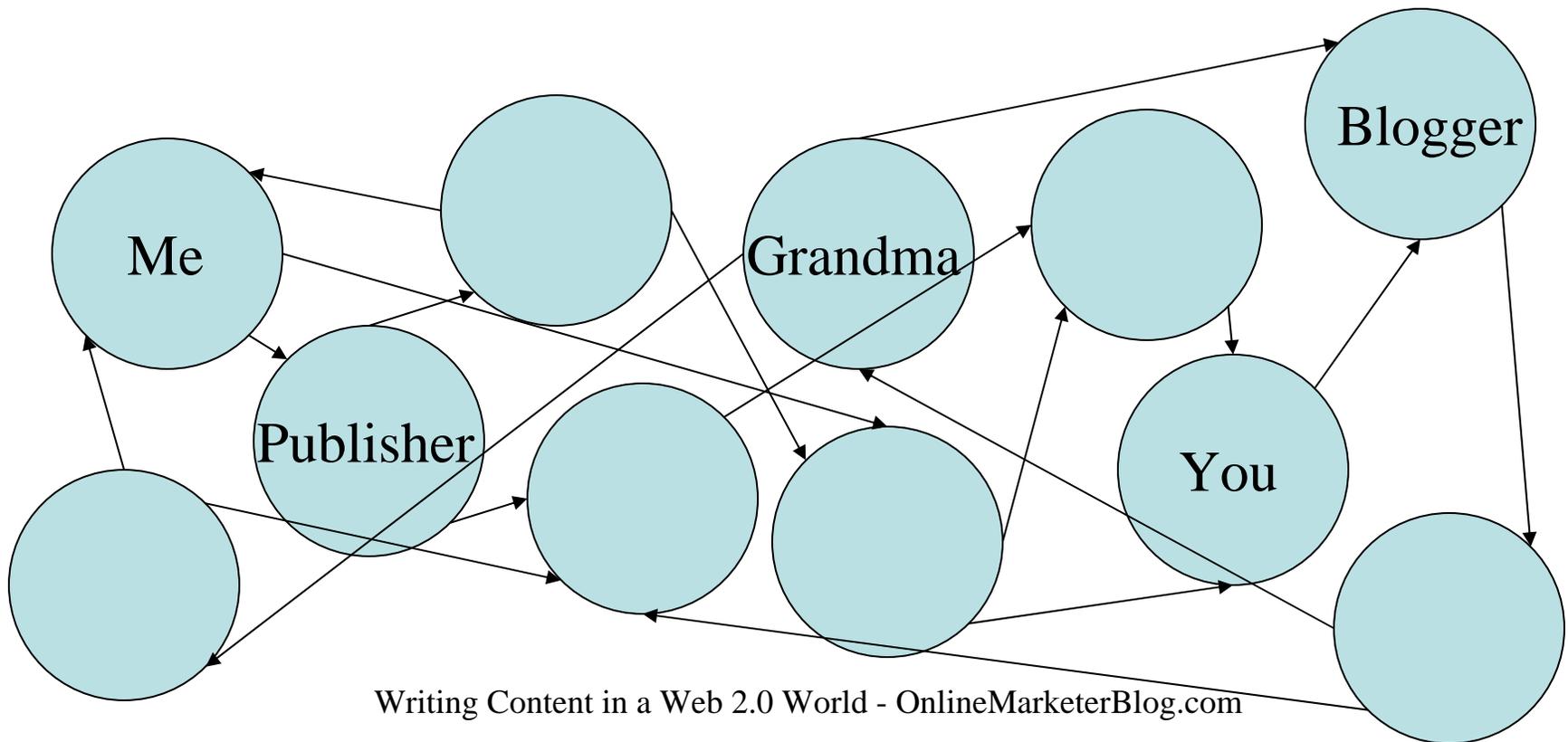
# Web 1.0

In a Web 1.0 world, the publisher produces content and you, the consumer, consumes that content. In this model, the publisher has all the power.



# Web 2.0

In a Web 2.0 world, everyone is a publisher. Blogs, social networks, product reviews, and aggregators allow us all to connect and then create/distribute content.



# So What?

So why does this matter?

The invention of the [Gutenberg printing press](#) shaped culture and religion and made possible wide-spread literacy and the scientific revolution.

While Web 2.0 may not have such a profound effect, it does significantly change the playing field. Powers rest with the people, rather than publishers. Due to the massive influx of content, search engines have grown in importance. Businesses must change their strategy to succeed in this changing world.

# How Business Is Changing

- Customer service and customer reviews are driving business, rather than existing as after-thoughts.
- Customers expect more relating, less selling.
- Instead of creating one-time customers, businesses must foster brand advocates.
- The job of marketers is changing from interrupting customers to providing valuable content.
- Instead of pushing a message onto consumers, businesses must allow consumers to pull in their friends and family.
- **Businesses are no longer in control of their message.**

# This Web 2.0 Stuff Is For Real, Huh?

Um, yeah.

The rest of this white paper will explain how writing content has changed in this Web 2.0 world. I will detail specific aspects you should keep in mind as you write for the web and interact with your customers.

I finish by revealing the secret currency of the Web 2.0 world. It doesn't go by a cool acronym or have 12 steps. But it is the simple way your business can stand out, develop relationships, and succeed in the Web 2.0 world.

# Be Authentic

Face it, with the omnipresence of Google and blogs, you cannot hide anything. Don't even try - it will only bring pain.

This is a *relationship*. Your date will eventually recognize your embellishment as flat-out lying. When Wal-Mart set up a blog and hid the fact that it was bogus, they were taken to task by the media and the public.

Like your Mom said, be yourself and people will like you. Emphasize your positives and confront negatives honestly, with candor. Be Real + Be Good = Be Successful.

“Consumers are getting better and better at judging authenticity, and taking more and more pleasure catching companies trying to trick them.”

- Dave Morgan,

[Branding In An Age Of Authenticity](#)

# Omit Marketese

Marketese is the language you use after studying your subject all day, everyday, and drinking all the Kool-Aid hype you can. You know it backwards and forwards and hence become unintelligible to the common person.

Part of being authentic is omitting marketese from your lexicon. Avoid qualifiers like “best,” “unique,” and “world-class.” If you have to say that your product or service is remarkable, it probably isn't.

Remember, potential customers are skeptical of anything you say. Using marketese just proves them right.

“Marketese requires work on the part of your visitor. It saps their energy and attention, and forces them to spend time mentally separating content from fluff.”

- Tim Ash,

[Copywriting For Conversions](#)

# Be Entertaining

Corporate blogging. B2B emails. Internal communications. Landing page content.

Despite *where* your content will appear, *who* is reading it will always be the same: Humans. So write with that in mind.

Entertaining doesn't always mean funny (see next slide), but it does mean thinking about why your subject is important and going for the gusto.

You and I get really jazzed about online marketing. Some folks would look at us like we're crazy. Who cares? You're not writing for them. Be entertaining to people who are psyched about your topic.

“So give your content some personality... It's surprising how many great pieces of content are spoiled by a monotone style. It's okay to entertain while being informative.”

- James Chartrand,  
[\*How To Make Sure Your Content Never Goes Naked\*](#)

# Be Funny (If You Can)

If you know you're not funny, skip this page. If you *think* you're funny, get independent verification.

Humor is universal and a perfect way to relate to your audience. Here are some tips:

- Make it relevant (not funny for funny's sake)
- Don't be too edgy (your edge is another person's way-over-the-edge)
- Would it make your in-laws laugh? Omit anything you have doubts about.

Humor in moderation is a great way to show off your human-ness. It's funny, but people seem to prefer business with humans. Go figure.

“Consider, for instance, a direct mail postcard from Presbyterian [hospital] that references a bustling New Mexico state highway: ‘Making sure 528 is the only congested artery in town.’”

- Linda Formichelli,  
[\*The Best Medicine\*](#)

# Be Passionate

If you don't care, they won't care. It's as simple as that.

In a Web 2.0 world, where personality is paramount, only true believers need apply. There is a drama inherent in every product and widget - it's your job as a marketer to illustrate it.

If you've lost your passion, try looking at your subject from a fresh perspective. Study how your customers interact with it. Was this different from your assumptions? A healthy step back can usually delay burnout and flame your passion again.

“When you write with passion, you'll grab your reader's attention and persuade her that you've got something worth getting excited about... The key to enthusiastic writing is to be an unabashed dork about what you're promoting.”

- Sonia Simone,  
[\*Unleash Your Inner Dork To Become A Better Copywriter\*](#)

# Be Terse

A wise man once said that there is no sound an individual loves more than his/her own voice. Marketers must resist this temptation.

Your audience is granting you access to their attention. To show respect, give your pitch quickly and efficiently.

Get rid of unnecessary words and anything in the passive voice. Don't be redundant or overly specific. State the action you want up front.

Be good and be gone. If you show respect for your audience's attention, they will reward you in return.

“No matter how lean your writing, do anything you can to keep specific examples, vivid details, and powerful stories. (Ideally, all three of these will come together in one sleek, sculpted paragraph of steel.)”  
- Sonia Simone, [\*How To Lose 30 Pounds Of Word Flab Overnight\*](#)

# Be Informative

Most of us are selling expertise, strategy, ideas - all non-tangibles. What's the best way to prove you can solve someone's problems with a non-tangible? Answer: to prove yourself with another problem. Being informative is a useful way to build a reputation for greatness.

Don't give away the farm. Keep your best stuff for the paying customers, but give the others a peek.

You do not have a lot of time to convince a potential customer. Give them something of use and let them come to you.

“Since [customers filter out any message that does not benefit them], organizations must first build a solid relationship with customers through the use of valuable, relevant information.”

- Joe Pulizzi, [\*Like It Or Not, Information Must Be Your Product\*](#)

# The New Currency

Writing has changed in a Web 2.0 world. We need to omit marketese and be authentic, entertaining, funny, passionate, terse, and informative.

The end to all of this is to build trust. **Trust is the secret currency in a Web 2.0 world and relationships are the path there.**

As LeVar Burton used to say: “You don’t have to take my word for it.”

“This isn’t ‘trust so you can make a sale.’ Rather, build trust and establish a relationship, period - for the sake of that trust and relationship alone. The sale is neither here nor there until the relationship is established.”

- Chris Brogan and Julien Smith, [\*Trust Economics\*](#)

# With A Little Help From My Friends

Jeremiah Owyang [describes three studies](#) - by Forrester Research, Edelman, and Pollara Research - which prove that clout comes from our friends rather than top-down from businesses.

For instance, 83% of people trust the opinion of a friend or acquaintance - the highest level of trust measured in the Forrester study.

Closer proximity to the individual increases the likelihood of influence. Good marketers will become trusted sources of good content for this reason.

“So who do people trust? Three research studies indicate it’s peers, or people they know...Trust is by far a more important metric, one that clearly rules when it comes to influence.”

- Jeremiah Owyang,  
[\*Who Do People Trust? \(It Ain't Bloggers\)\*](#)

# Good Luck!

I hope this white paper proves useful in guiding your path in the Web 2.0 world of business. Many things have changed - especially the mediums - but universal truths of communication tend to survive.

Please feel free to contact me at OnlineMarketerBlog [at] gmail [dot] com if you have additional questions about writing content in the Web 2.0 world or would like information regarding my freelance rates.

Finally, please visit my blog at: [OnlineMarketerBlog.com](http://OnlineMarketerBlog.com).

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# Contact

I can be reached in a variety of ways and I encourage marketers, bloggers, and marketing bloggers especially to “friend” me. I’m smart enough to know that there’s a lot I don’t know and I’d love to share with you.

-Email: OnlineMarketerBlog [at] gmail [dot] com

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# Thank You

Many were instrumental in my writing of this white paper and I'd like to publicly thank them for their inspiration and support.

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