



Content sustainability guidelines

Content sustainability is an essential component of digital sustainability.

Content sustainability provides an alternative to information obesity. In addition to reducing the environmental footprint of content, whether digital or print, it aims to lighten the user's cognitive load and streamline the organization's communication initiatives.

What is content sustainability?

Content sustainability evaluates content in terms of its usefulness to the public and its effectiveness for the organization's overall communication.

This content sustainability methodology can be used to evaluate content across a full range of criteria, including relevance and choice of communication vehicles, use of plain language in texts, and content lifecycle.

It considers strategy, choice of communication channels, delivery formats, frequency of publication, and content lifecycle.

Content	<p>This list of good practices is extracted from the practical guide originally published by Ferréole Lespinasse / Cyclop Éditorial at Publishroom under the title "Sobriété éditoriale, le guide pour écoconcevoir vos contenus" in Mai 2025.</p>
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Document title	content sustainability guidelines
Version	2
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GP Cyclop Éditorial	Stage	Category	Keyword	Good practice	Objectives	Validation rule	Note - Implemented = 1 Not implemented = 0 Not concerned = NC	Ease of implementation - Easy = 3 Standard = 2 Difficult = 1	Ability to reduce cognitive load - High = 3 Medium = 2 Low = 1	Priority of implementation - Priority = between 5 and 6 Recommended = Non Priority = between 3 and 2
User journey										
10	Content structuring	Information	Visit intention	The home page addresses the most common audience intentions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save users time by providing answers to their questions. • Facilitate the user's path through the site. • Initiate user paths that start right from the home page. 	The home page highlights and gives direct access to the most frequently visited information on the site.		2	3	5
11	Content structuring	Navigation	Menu	Navigation menus are clear and easy to understand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide easy access to content. • Guide the user by facilitating navigation through the sections. 	The site menu uses meaningful, concise and precise words.		2	3	5
12	Content structuring	Navigation	Footer	The footer is useful to the user and complements the menu.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support navigation. • Provide users with useful and necessary information, wherever they may be in the site. 	The footer does not repeat the menu, and includes the essentials: legal notice, accessibility statement (if required by law), environmental statement, and data privacy policy.		2	1	3
13	Content structuring	Navigation	Breadcrumb trail	A breadcrumb guides the visitor through the site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate navigation and inform users where they are. • Facilitate access to upper-level pages. • Indicate where the current page is located in the site architecture. • Optimize site referencing. 	A breadcrumb trail reflects the navigation menu.		1	3	4
14	Content structuring	Navigation	Summary	Navigation pages introduce and summarize lower level pages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate navigation between pages. • Provide an overall view of available content to help the user avoid unnecessary clicks. • Promote referencing. 	Pages with lower levels contain a table of contents allowing access to these sub-pages.		2	1	3
37	Content optimization	Navigation	Link	Navigation link labels are self-explanatory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide navigation. • Simplify the transition to action (call-to-action). • Reduce uncertainty. 	Navigation links of the same nature are written identically.		2	3	5
38	Content optimization	HTML tag	SEO	Pages are optimized for SEO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the page is properly indexed. • Enhance the page's findability to best meet search intent. 	All pages include Title and Meta description tags.		2	2	4
39	Content optimization	HTML tag	Title	The Title tag indicates the purpose of the page.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify page content. • Respond to the search intention. • Attract clicks. 	The Title tag contains the page's main keyword.		2	2	4
40	Content optimization	HTML tag	Meta description	The Meta description tag describes the content of the page.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify page content. • Respond to the search intention. • Attract clicks. 	The Meta description tag summarizes the content of the page and encourages the reader to consult it.		2	2	4
41	Content optimization	Navigation	Linking	Links in the content are relevant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access to information for the reader. • Provide a comprehensive overview of a subject. • Prioritize access to information. 	The links in the text are relevant to the subject.		3	2	5

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Uniqueness of the organization										
1	Characterization of the organisation and content	Message	Singularity	The organization is presented in a unique way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring out what makes the organization unique, what sets it apart from other organizations. Limit the possibility of making the organization sound like others. 	Content about the organization is not interchangeable with content from other organizations.		1	3	4
2	Characterization of the organisation and content	Information	Proof	Organizational commitments can be verified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure trust between the user and the organization. Give concrete, tangible form to the organization's commitments, to meet the public's need for transparency. 	Promises, arguments and announcements are backed up by facts: figures, testimonials, social proof, indicators, etc.		2	3	5
3	Characterization of the organisation and content	Message	Consistency	Content and messaging are consistent throughout the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prove the organization's alignment between words and deeds. 	Content is consistent between channels: websites, newsletters, presentation pages on social networks, printed materials.		2	3	5
4	Characterization of the organisation and content	Message	Objectivity	The overall messaging of every piece of content is objective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid cognitive bias. Embody ethical, objective and sincere communication. Reinforce the legitimacy of the organization's statements (public positions). 	Does the information provided in the information piece enable you to construct a concrete, factual and objective representation of the subject?		2	3	5
6	Characterization of the organisation and content	Information	Achievements	The site showcases the organization's achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illustrate the organization's way of doing things. Prove the effectiveness of the method. Allow the public to project themselves. 	The site features the organization's achievements, either in a section or on dedicated pages.		2	2	4
8	Characterization of the organisation and content	Message	Distinctive	Content is not repetitive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid duplicate content. Prioritize content updates over new page creation. 	Check the sitemap and use internal search to ensure that planned content doesn't already exist on the organization's site.		2	3	5
9	Characterization of the organisation and content	Media	Media	All media used in content adds value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support understanding of content. 	Media cannot be replaced by headers or alternative layouts.		2	2	4

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User-centered content										
5	Characterization of the organisation and content	Message	Value proposition	The objectives of the communication piece are immediately understandable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it obvious why the communication piece is valuable. 	As soon as they arrive on the support, users immediately understand what they can expect from it.		2	3	5
7	Characterization of the organisation and content	Information	Usefulness	Content is useful for the user.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid informational overload. Remove content that doesn't serve the purpose of the page. Avoid unnecessary cognitive load. Encourage referencing by search engines on specific subjects. 	Content meets the user's information needs: who, what, why, where, when, how, how much?		2	3	5
15	Content structuring	Information	Findability	The information is easy to find in the overall message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable users to easily absorb content Encourage the reader's intellectual path, helping the user move more easily from one stage to the next. Make it easier for users to find information on the page, and to access content via multiple paths. 	Formatting is used to provide hierarchy in the content.		2	3	5
16	Content structuring	Information	Comprehensive	All content components on the web page are important to the overall message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver all the content users need right where they are. 	The page interface includes information needed to support the user's comprehension. At the very least, it includes the organization's identity and value proposition.		1	3	4
18	Content editing	Information	Comprehension	The message is easy to understand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the user's cognitive load. Respect the user's time. Avoid uncertainty. Reflect the organization's values. 	The message enables users to find what they're looking for, understand what they find and use what they find to meet their needs.		2	3	5
19	Content editing	Information	Usability	Information is easy to use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfy user needs. Enable expected behavior. Meet your organization's communication objectives. 	Information is designed to encourage next-best actions.		2	3	5
30	Content editing	Text	UX writing	UX content is designed with care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it clear what needs to be done, and reduce doubt. Accompany the user's journey. Promote web accessibility. 	UX content is short, informative and explicit.		2	3	5

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Quality of texts										
20	Content editing	Text	Title	Titles and subtitles are clear.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give users precise information about the content of the page or article. 	Reading the titles and subtitles is enough to get the gist of the message.		2	3	5
21	Content editing	Text	Chapô (intro heading)	The intro heading summarizes the content of the page.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Save users time by providing a page summary. Tell users what the page content is about. 	An intro heading is included if the text is longer than 300 words.		2	3	5
22	Content editing	Text	Tagline	The tagline complements the title.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform readers and save them time. Provide a hook that encourages them to dive into the content. On the web, avoid unnecessary clicks. 	A tagline follows the title.		2	3	5
23	Content editing	Text	Concise	Sentences are concise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be understood on first reading. Help text memorization. Encourage action. ☐ 	Longer sentences (20 words or more) are used in no more than 25% of the overall text. Use the Gunning Fog, Lexicoool and Flesh index calculation tools to verify this rule.		2	3	5
24	Content editing	Text	Clarity	Sentence structure is clear.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid ambiguity. Facilitate comprehension from the very first reading. Encourage user engagement. 	Did you understand the text on first reading?		2	3	5
25	Content editing	Text	Precision	Sentences are precise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be understood on first reading. Avoid uncertainty. Reduce the reader's cognitive load. 	Can you construct a mental representation with the sentences you've just read?		2	3	5
26	Content editing	Text	Concrete	Words are clear and unambiguous.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighten the cognitive load. Avoid uncertainty. 	The words used are appropriate to the topic and purpose.		2	3	5
27	Content editing	Text	Rhythm	The text has rhythm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the reader's concentration and interest. Involve them and maintain their attention. 	Sentence structures vary, alternating between long, medium and short sentences; and nominal, affirmative, interrogative, or exclamatory sentences.		2	2	4
28	Content editing	Text	Inclusion	Language is inclusive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure communication doesn't exclude anyone. 	Use gender-neutral language is used wherever possible.		2	1	3
29	Content editing	Text	Spelling	Spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassure the reader about the legitimacy of the message and its sender. Ensure readers are not distracted by issues of form. Be exemplary. 	The writing process includes a revision/correction stage, either by a third party or by a verification tool.		2	3	5

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Readability of content										
17	Content structuring	Structuring	Structure	Pages that are similar share the same structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate content absorption thanks to consistent presentation of information. Facilitate information retrieval. Reduce cognitive load. 	Content types are presented in an identical fashion (all your case studies, product pages, skills pages, etc.).		3	3	6
31	Content optimization	Information	Essential	Information is to the point.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid information overload. Remove unnecessary information that detracts from the substance of the message. 	Texts do not contain unnecessary elements.		2	3	5
32	Content optimization	Reading comfort	Typography	Information is formatted in a way that makes it easy to understand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make reading more fluid. Facilitate the reception of information - visual and textual. 	Content is written using a standard style guide.		2	3	5
33	Content optimization	Reading comfort	Unit	Information is segmented into smaller chunks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage users to read all the content. Make it easier to access information and click on hyperlinks. Use white space to facilitate reading. Support memorization. 	Each paragraph contains a singular idea.		2	3	5
34	Content optimization	Reading comfort	Scan	Page layout promotes information scanning.[]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chunk information so that readers can easily find what they're looking for. Differentiate between primary and secondary information. Facilitate the transition from browsing to page reading.[] 	The visual layout of the page is based on a style sheet.		1	3	4
35	Content optimization	Reading comfort	Legibility	The font is easy to read.[]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make reading easier. Avoid eyestrain.[] 	Color contrasts are respected, using the Color Review tool https://color.review .		1	3	4
36	Content optimization	Reading comfort	Accessibility	Content follows accessibility rules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make reading easier for people with disabilities. Facilitate reading by screen readers. 	The essential rules of accessibility are respected in the texts: contrast of font colors, important information at the beginning, hierarchy of titles, limitation of emojis.		1	3	4

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Content management										
42	Content governance	Content portfolio	Channels	The choice of communication channels is consistent with the organization's audiences and objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select channels used by target audiences. Allocate just the energy and time needed to achieve results. Support the organization's objectives. 	Channel selection is based on examined audience behaviors and expectations.		2	3 (workload reduction)	5
43	Content governance	Content portfolio	Publication	Information is published with oversight.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring added value to audiences. Limit the publishing of information that doesn't meet their needs. Support communication objectives. 	Content is published according to clear guidelines and principles.		2	3 (workload reduction)	5
44	Content governance	Content portfolio	Format	Content is presented in the most lightweight and relevant format for the topic at hand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the most efficient, easiest and lightest format. Facilitate the user experience. Limit the environmental footprint of communications. 	The choice of content format is based on usefulness and environmental impact.		2	3	5
45	Content governance	Content distribution	Frequency	Publishing frequency is appropriate and does not overwhelm readers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain publication quality over time. Keep readers' cognitive load to a minimum. Preserve the teams responsible for content production. On the print side, reduce the number of copies. 	Publishing frequency in each channel takes into account human and environmental impacts.		2	3	5
46	Content governance	Lifecycle	Governance	Each content item has a defined lifecycle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update content over time to guarantee its reliability. Optimize workloads by anticipating actions. Enhance the value of editorial assets and fight against digital graveyards. 	A content management dashboard exists and indicates date of creation, publication, update, deletion or archiving.		2	3 (workload reduction)	5
47	Content governance	Lifecycle	Maintenance	Content is up-to-date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make online information reliable and establish a bond of trust with the user. Maintain control over your content and databases. Promote referencing. 	The date of content update is visible on each piece of content.		2	3	5
48	Content governance	Lifecycle	Performance	Content effectiveness is regularly evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track content performance. Ensure that content is of interest to audiences. Prioritize content for improvement, based on the number of visits. Remove low-audience content. 	Indicators for monitoring content effectiveness are defined.		2	3	5