

Simple Language - Plain Language

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Agenda

- Simple Language
 - Easy-to-read
 - BITV 2.0
 - Initiative Leichte Sprache
 - Initiative LeichtesWeb
- Comparison of rules
- Limitations
- Plain language
- Beyond Language

Simple Language

Simple Language - History

- People first initiative
- People concerned
 - Social workers
 - Family & friends
 - Disabled people
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Simple Language - History

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 9

1. To **enable persons with disabilities to live independently** and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to **ensure to persons with disabilities access**, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, **to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems**, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and **elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility**, shall apply to, inter alia:

- a) Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;
- b) **Information, communications and other services**, including electronic services and emergency services.

Easy-to-read

ILSMH - Target Groups

“Anyone who has difficulty in reading and writing the language of the country in which they live”

- a learning disability
- another kind of disability affecting the ability to read or understand
- limited formal education
- social problems
- mother tongue differs from the official language of their community

ILSMH - Document Types

“Provide access to everyday information which any citizen uses in his or her daily life”

- Daily news
- Consumer information
- Rights and obligations
- How to access services
- Leisure information
- Transport



Verordnung zur Schaffung
barrierefreier Informationstechnik
nach dem
Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz
(BITV 2.0)

BITV 2.0 - Target Groups

“People with disabilities, who are unable to use certain types of information technology without further adjustments”

BITV 2.0 - Document types

- Websites
- Intranet
- GUIs
- (mobile) Apps

Netzwerk Leichte Sprache

(engl. *Network Simple Language*)

Netzwerk Leichte Sprache - Target Groups

*“Write the language we understand,
speak the language we speak”*

- People with learning disabilities
- People with the illness dementia
- People, who can not speak german very well
- People, who can not read very well

Netzwerk Leichte Sprache - Documents

- Any form of written text
- Conferences



Initiative

LeichtesWeb

(engl. *Initiative SimpleWeb*)

Netzwerk Leichte Sprache - Target Groups

“Accessibility and usability are part of the concept Design for all”

- People with learning disabilities

Netzwerk Leichte Sprache - Document types

- Websites
- Web 2.0
- (mobile) Apps

Comparison of rules

Rules - Overview

	Easy-to-read	BITV 2.0	Leichte Sprache	LeichtesWeb
Terminology	+	+	+	+
Complex language constructs	+	+	+	+
Complex content	+	-	+	+
Negation, positive language	+	+	+	+
Address the reader	+	+	+	+
Punctuation	+	-	-	+
Hyphenation	+	+	+	-
Special characters	-	+	+	-
Numbers	+	-	+	+

Rules - Terminology

	Easy-to-read	BITV 2.0	Leichte Sprache	LeichtesWeb
Consistency	+	+	+	+
Avoid abstract words	+	+	Simple words, descriptions	+
Avoid foreign words / jargon	+	+	+	+
Avoid abbreviations	+	+	+	+
Use short words	+	+	+	-
Use hyphenation in compounds	-	+	+	-

Rules - Complex language constructs

	Easy-to-read	BITV 2.0	Leichte Sprache	LeichtesWeb
Short sentences	One thought per sentence	Avoid parenthesis, listings	-	-
Avoid subjunctive	+	+	+	+
Avoid passive	+	+	+	-
Avoid genitiv	-	+	+	+
Use verbs instead of nominalisation	-	-	+	+
Avoid binominals	-	-	-	+

Rules - Complex content

	Easy-to-read	BITV 2.0	Leichte Sprache	LeichtesWeb
Avoid metaphors	+	-	+	+
Avoid cross referencing	+	-	+	+
Avoid previous knowledge	+	-	-	-
Avoid questions	-	-	+	-
Text changes	-	-	+	-

Rules - Numbers

	Easy-to-read	BITV 2.0	Leichte Sprache	LeichtesWeb
Use numbers (0-9)	+	-	+	+
Avoid big numbers	+	-	+	-
Avoid roman numerals	-	-	+	-
Avoid old dates (e.g. 1904 / many years ago)	-	-	+	-
Avoid percentages	-	-	+	-
Use spaces in phone numbers	-	-	+	-
Ordinal numbers	-	-	Ask examiner	-
Date / Time	-	-	Ask examiner	-

Limitations

Limitation of rule sets

- Existing rule sets for simple language are problematic
- Subjective
 - Style
 - Common sense
 - Experience
- Empirical, but not scientifically proven
 - Tests

Limitation of rules - Negations

“Use positive language

Avoid negative language and negations, they can be confusing”

- How to warn / prohibit / ... ?
- Negations are part of our language

Limitation of rules - Short sentences

“Use mostly short sentences”

- What exactly does mostly and short mean?
- How many words are in a short sentence?
- Does document type or reader category change this number?

Limitation of rules - Accessibility

“Simple language is appropriate for people with slight learning/mental disabilities”

- How do we know that?

“Simple language is easier to read”

- Is it though?

Plain language

Plain Language - Target Groups

- Not just mentally disabled people
 - Other disabilities which impede reading skills
 - Limited education
 - Social issues
 - Different mother tongue

Plain Language - Rules

- ?

Simple Language

- Open
- Negative lists
 - No nominalisation
- Primary target: non-fiction

Standardisierte Einfache Sprache (Deutsch)

- Closed
- Positive lists
 - word list
 - Named entity word lists with descriptions and/or pictures
 - Supplement word list
 - Grammar and communication rules
- Primary target: anything

Standardised Languages

- Basic English (ca. 1930)
 - British American Scientific International Commercial (BASIC) English
 - Worldwide usable English
 - 850 words and a few grammatical rules
- ASD-STE 100 (1986)
 - AeroSpace and Defense Industries Association of Europe: Simplified Technical English
 - Artificial English
 - 65 Rules
 - 1373 forbidden and 878 allowed words
 - Supplemental technical names and technical verbs

Beyond language

Beyond language

- Written language is more than words
 - Font size, spacing, kerning
 - Color, contrast
 - Text alignment, structure, tables
 - Pictures / Video
 - ...

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