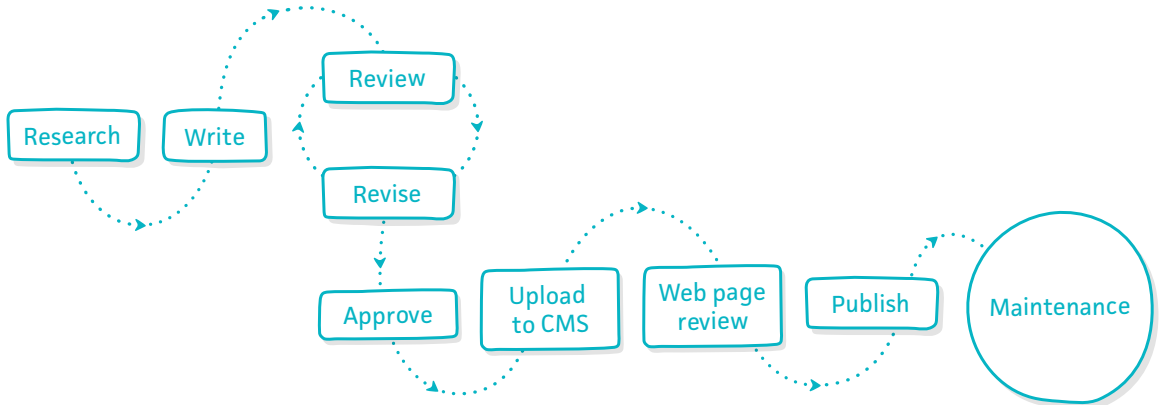


8 stages of a typical content production process



After you have agreed on the website's goals, and established what content is required (IA), it's time to start producing the content.

Bear in mind, this process may vary from project to project or client to client.

Some sites will need a legal review. Others may require the CEO's sign-off on every page. Don't forget translation for multi-lingual websites too - be prepared to adapt the stages in your process.

It can often feel like a factory assembly line, as each piece moves its way through the many stages towards eventual publication.

We've gone through a likely content production process to give you a better idea of what stages to expect.

1. Research

Writer (usually!)

Amount of effort: 2 hours

Get briefed by the Senior Editor or Content Strategist on the page's communication goals. Then review existing content, third party sources and consult the Subject Experts to pull together the info, facts, quotes, and materials to write the page.

2. Write

Writer

Amount of effort: 2 - 4 hours

The Writer now has what they need to produce the actual content. But remember: it takes time to develop the structure and apply the body copy, headings, descriptions, snippets, captions, call to action labels, and links.

The content team may also need to produce images and other media at this stage.

Do you have a style guide yet?

A good content style guide will cover the tone of voice for your digital content, house style rules, and writing for the web best practice. Don't start content production without one.

3. Review

Subject Expert / Senior Editor

Amount of effort: 1 - 2 hours

Content reviews are an important and often difficult stage in the process. Depending on the project you may want to break this stage up into multiple steps.

Typically Subject Experts will be asked to check the content is factually accurate, on message, and complete. The Senior Editor (role) then checks the content is well written, consistent with other content, and applies the style guide and house rules.

4. Revise

Writer

Amount of effort: 0 - 2 hours

The Writer interprets the Reviewer's feedback, updates the copy, and reissues a new version.

The Writer may need to speak with the Reviewer for clarification to avoid the risk of the content getting stuck in a loop.

Be clear about what to review

Content stalls at the review stages when stakeholders are unclear on their role and the remit of other reviewers.

5. Approve

Subject Expert

Amount of effort: 0 - 1 hours

The reissued content is reviewed for approval / sign-off. It's then ready to be uploaded to the CMS.

6. Upload to CMS

CMS Editor

Amount of effort: 1 - 2 hours

Populate the CMS page with the approved content, adding links, images, files, feature content, and meta data (taxonomy labels and descriptions).

Only at this stage can you see how well the content works in its website template. A good Digital Producer or Site Editor will adjust and format the content to work best.

7. Web page review / sign-off

Subject Expert / Senior Editor

Amount of effort: 1 hour

Time for quality assurance: Is the formatting suitable? Is the page consistent with other pages? Do the links work? Did any typos creep in during the upload?

The page may also need to be signed-off by the Subject Expert or Project Owner who will want to be satisfied the content achieves its brief.

The content is then ready to be published.

8. Publish

CMS Editor

Amount of effort: n/a

Web pages in a project are usually published when the entire site is deployed (launched).

Publishing is just day one

Ensure there is a plan for maintaining the site's content after the project finishes. In the hurry to publish content for a new site, this critical planning is often overlooked and the site soon deteriorates.

“One of the most important things you can do for your content producers is to help them understand your strategy, from what business goals you’re trying to achieve to what your users want and expect from you to why you decided to create the content you’re asking them to produce. Then, give them tools to help them create the kind of content you’re looking for. For example, a simple editorial checklist of desired content characteristics helps to keep your strategy top-of-mind.”

MEGHAN CASEY

Author and Content Strategist



How long does it take to produce a single web page?

Well that depends! A reasonably detailed info page on a university or council site could easily take 10+ hours of total effort to produce and publish. A short product blurb page should take less, but an important, much-discussed, landing page could blow out to more.

Things do speed up with practice and there are efficiencies of scale on larger sites. Never underestimate the effort needed to produce quality content. [🐦](#)

“Include templates for each content type in your style guide so writers produce content consistently and to ensure no elements are missed.”

SALLY BAGSHAW

Content Strategist

