

Editorial Meeting Minutes/Resolutions - January 9, 2024

Prolivity, Wordiness, Verbosity, Longwindedness, Circumbendibus

Bad writers are nearly always haunted by the notion that Latin or Greek words are grander than Saxon ones. - George Orwell, Politics and the English Language

This is a newspaper. It's 90 per cent b*llsh*t, but it's entertaining. That's why I read it, because it entertains me. You won't let me read it, so you entertain me with your b*llsh*t. Alonzo (Denzell Washington), Training Day

1. **The Slow Adoption of AI Is Consistent With Previous Failures**

AI's Slow Adoption Jibes With Former Failures

The slow adoption of AI is depressingly consistent with previous failures

Sluggish AI adoption is depressingly reminiscent of past flops

2. Many words have been devoted to the art and craft of writing, and many of those many words give the same advice:

Strunk and White: "Omit needless words."

George Orwell: "Never use a long word where a short one will do... If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out."

Elmore Leonard: "Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip. Think of what you skip reading a novel: thick paragraphs of prose you can see have too many words in them."

Esther Freud: "Cut until you can cut no more."

V. S. Naipaul: "Do not write long sentences. A sentence should not have more than ten or twelve words."

Laura Miller: "Cut the scenery."

<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/words-words-words>

3. **An annual survey of artificial intelligence (AI) usage among organizations was recently announced by O'Reilly Media, the largest provider of AI surveys in the world. The survey found that the percentage of respondents saying that their organizations had AI projects in production was just 26 percent, the same as the previous year. Equally disappointing, the percentage of respondents saying that they were not currently using AI increased from 13 percent to 31 percent - implying a reduction of the percentage in the middle - i.e., those who are still evaluating and considering AI - to 43 percent from 61 percent. Furthermore, if one goes back another year, the 2021 results were themselves surprisingly similar to 2020. Has there really been this little change in the application of AI to solve enterprise problems?**

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If one goes back another year, the 2021 results were themselves surprisingly similar to 2020, per the recent annual survey of AI usage among organizations by California-based O'Reilly Media, the world's largest AI survey provider. Has there really been this little change in the application of AI to solve enterprise problems?

One of the good outcomes of this is that EU regulations mandate the prementioned prime directives. Before December 9th, 2023, companies were mostly self-guided.

One month later, according to early reviews on the challenges of AI law making, any lawmaker in this moment cannot govern where there is no precedent or scientific evidence based on the best ways of working. With such limited reference, the world must therefore discover and mirror its progress with sentience and clarity. Such learning should also be guided by evidence-based experience to come, keeping systematic risks - i.e., those which could threaten pillars of society like financial institutions and healthcare systems - in mind. EU lawmakers have acknowledged such risks in AI governance, as has Dr Janet Yellen - United States Secretary of the Treasury and former chair of the Federal Reserve, and someone I had the honor of meeting during a Q&A session hosted by a leading strategy initiative during the pandemic in 2021 - in a recent report given by the Financial Stability Oversight Council.⁵

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One month later, according to early reviews of the challenges posed by AI legislation, no lawmaker can govern at this juncture in the absence of any precedent or scientific evidence based on best practices. With such a limited reference, the world must therefore discover and mirror its progress with sentience and clarity. Such learning should also be guided by evidence-based experience to come, keeping systemic risks - those which could threaten such pillars of society as financial institutions and healthcare systems - in mind. EU lawmakers have acknowledged such perils in AI governance, as did United States Secretary of the Treasury and former chair of the Federal Reserve Dr Janet Yellen in a recent report by her current agency's Financial Stability Oversight Council.⁵

4. Increase - rise, grow, swell, climb, mount, balloon, mushroom, expand...
Decrease - fall, drop, sink, cut, shrink, lower, deflate...
Usage - use
Develop - foster, devise, cultivate, shape, create, craft, come up with, form...
Establish - set, set up, form, found, fix, set forth/out, lay down, enshrine...
Restrict - cut, curtail, limit, throttle, stifle, ban, bar...
Regulations - rules, standards, norms, playbook, code, regime, criteria...
Aforementioned - cited, noted, already noted...
Contain no, have no - lack
Previous - earlier, before, former, ex-...
Disrupt - upend, restructure, shake up, reconfigure, recontour, recast, reshape, revolutionize...
Currently - now, presently, at this time, nowadays, today...

Cutting-edge - groundbreaking, trailblazing, pioneering, nascent, pathfinding, latest, leading...

Challenges - difficulties, obstacles, hindrances, hurdles, roadblocks, hardships, tests, trials, ordeals...

Evaluate, assess - gauge, weigh, balance, ponder, consider...

Process (verb) - scan, crunch, parse...

Outcome - result, upshot, fruit, consequence, product, conclusion...

Utilize - use, wield, apply...

Moreover, Nevertheless, Meanwhile, Furthermore, (at start of sentence) - however, nonetheless, further, moreover, meanwhile (middle/end of sentence)

Digitize - digitalize

Systematic - systemic

Orwell's Six Rules:

1. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figures of speech that you are used to seeing in print

In other words, don't use clichés. They're boring, and they tempt the reader to switch off. Often, they are completely meaningless, as in the case of phrases like "it is what it is". Come up with a different way of explaining your point that will capture the reader's imagination.

2. Never use a long word where a short one will do

Sometimes in government and business, long words and [technical jargon](#) are unavoidable. But where it's possible to avoid it, you should. Too often, technology is described as 'nascent' when the word new would be more clear. We 'utilize' instead of 'use'. Words like 'synergy' and 'innovation' are overused when there is often a shorter, simpler word that would work better. [Shorter sentences](#) are also easier to understand than long ones.

3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out

People have short attention spans. If you have a habit of writing long-winded, meandering sentences that are full of superfluous words – like this one – readers lose track of your point. Be direct. There's no need to add in big words to try and sound fancy.

4. Never use the passive where you can use the active

The [passive voice](#) is obscure. It's wordy, lacks clarity, and you don't know who the subject of the sentence is. When you're using the active voice, it's always clear who's taking action: "Our compliance team will review your application" or "You must submit by August 23." By contrast, a government official might say "mistakes were made" instead of "we made a mistake" to avoid taking responsibility. A fun test to see if you're writing in the passive or active voice is to check if the sentence still makes sense if you add the words "by zombies." In the example: "Mistakes were made," you can easily and reasonably tack on "by zombies" to say, "Mistakes were made by zombies." That sentence is written in the passive voice.

5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent

Do you start meetings by suggesting a *tour de table* instead of simply asking everyone to share their views? Have you described things that are finished as a *fait accompli*? Do you use Latin phrases like *modus operandi* or *ipso facto*, and expect that everyone will understand?

While English borrows frequently from other languages like Latin and French, using phrases like that can alienate readers, especially English Second Language or those who don't have a college education. As always, the rule is to keep it simple.

6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous

<https://www.visiblethread.com/blog/george-orwells-six-rules-for-business-writing-in-2021/>