‘Yeah, this is an exercise I would skip’: What makes an academic writing online resource usable and relevant?

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Presentation outline

• Background to write@uni
• Usability testing
• Usability testing in action
• Key findings
• Implications
• Questions
Background to write@uni

• Purpose: To increase understanding of concepts underpinning academic writing
• Target Population: 1st year students
• Format: 5 modules
Usability testing

User Experience

Clear objectives → Elicit feedback → Select tasks & contexts → Collect data → Recommendations
Usability testing in action

Technical usability (interface design)

Pedagogical usability (instructional design)
Testing

Set-up
- Pilot
- Objectives and task selection
- BB flashback to record
- Sample size
- Resources

Debrief and summary
- Participant, observer and interviewer
- Think aloud
- Interview

Design

Modifications
- Discussion
- Using recordings and summary to identify changes needed

- Address barriers to use by implementing changes

- Application of test results in design of subsequent modules
# Key findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators to use of write@uni</th>
<th>Barriers to use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Quality and relevance of content</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sequencing of content</td>
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<td>• Navigability (platform)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Layout and presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Amount of content on a page</td>
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<td>• Length (media)</td>
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<td>• Accessibility</td>
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[www.auckland.ac.nz/writeatuni](http://www.auckland.ac.nz/writeatuni)
1. Numbering

0.1 Introduction

Learning outcome: Know why writing is important at university and what you can learn from this resource.

Welcome!

What is write@uni about?

Write@uni is a self-paced online resource created to assist you in understanding what writing at university involves and what expectations you will most likely encounter as you progress through your studies. To embark on your writing journey with confidence, we encourage you to explore and complete the following interconnected modules:

- Module 1: Expectations for writing at university
- Module 2: Writing starts with thinking
- Module 3: Reading informs writing
- Module 4: Writing with purpose
- Module 5: Becoming a proficient writer

Working through this resource early on in your degree will help you to make sense of new learning demands and become aware of the skills you may need to develop to become a more skilled writer.

The story

Meet your fellow students

Writing matters

Write@uni is a series of five online modules created to assist you in understanding what writing at university involves and what expectations you will most likely encounter as you progress through your studies. You'll have the opportunity to learn about the university writing culture and how critical thinking and reading inform the process of writing.

You can also follow the story of our three comic characters, Hua, Markus and Mele, as they face the challenge of writing their first university assignment.

Working through this resource early on will help you make sense of new learning demands and become aware of the skills you need to become a more skilled writer. Although each module can be completed independently, we recommend that you explore write@uni sequentially, from Module 1 through to Module 5.

Before you get started, learn more about why writing matters.

2. Removed links to other modules

3. Removed comic box
Chunking information – separate pages
5. Transcript and access to all comics
6. Self-assessment
   • simplified
   • included pdf of resources
Implications

• Many changes after first round
  • Simplification
  • Avoiding cognitive overload
  • Accessibility
  • Easy navigation

• Letting go

• Revisions can be painful – but worth it
Questions & get in touch

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www.auckland.ac.nz/writeatuni