Introduction

Tone of voice matters – because people will judge what we say by the way we say it. This guide is to help those writing copy for the IET brand.

Welcome to our tone of voice.
Please note:

These guidelines cover Tone of voice only.
For more detail on our writing principles please refer to our Branding and corporate marketing page.

For IET masterbrand communications, or any of our other endorsed brands or sub-brands (such as IET Inspec, IET Venues, etc), please contact our marketing team for their separate guidelines.

For further detail on how to use our brand on the iet.org website please see the 'IET Website style guide'. by contacting the brand team - see p26.
Who we are

04 Our institution
05 Core narrative
06 Our brand personality
Our institution

Our vision and mission inform what we do, how we do it, and who we partner with.

They’re the starting point for how we express ourselves through our identity.

Who we are

Our vision

Working to engineer a better world

Our mission

To inspire, inform and influence the global engineering community, supporting technology innovation to meet the needs of society.

Our values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrity</th>
<th>Operate professionally and ethically to gain trust.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be open and honest with each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect everyone and value each other’s contribution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excellence

| Work towards the highest level of service and satisfaction. |
| Use agile methods and seek innovative solutions to add value. |
| Continually improve and adopt best practices. |

Teamwork

| Encourage staff and volunteers to work together. |
| Recognise the value of talented individuals working in teams. |
| Be collaborative and partner with other organisations. |
"We are the IET and we inspire, inform and influence the global engineering community to engineer a better world. With change as the new constant, there’s never been a more important time to create a greater impact.

We are a diverse home for engineering and technology throughout the world, from those developing skills in new engineering capabilities to those perfecting established skills.

This breadth and depth means we are uniquely placed to help the sector progress society. Whether generating new knowledge, sharing academic thinking, making connections that inspire, or turning theory into practice, we lead our profession to make better sense of the world in order to solve the challenges that matter.

It also gives us a particular view of how the profession is changing and ensures we grow our members professionally and intellectually. It informs the standards we set so society has the confidence it needs. It provides the evidence to keep engineering at the top of the political agenda, and the insight to preserve the teaching of essential STEM subjects.

It’s how we inspire tomorrow’s generation with the advancements of today.

It’s why we are the IET and why we champion engineering."
Our narrative can be expressed in different ways depending on who you’re communicating with or how much of their attention you’ll realistically be able to get.

For example, when being more authoritative and credible, we may speak in a slightly more formal and appropriate manner. When challenging stereotypes or outdated perceptions of engineers and technology professionals, we might dial up the inspirational approach a little more.

**Sentence**

We are the IET and we inspire, inform and influence the global engineering community to engineer a better world.

**Elevator pitch**

We are the IET and we inspire, inform and influence the global engineering community to engineer a better world. As a diverse home across engineering and technology, we share knowledge that helps make better sense of the world in order to solve the challenges that matter. It’s why we are uniquely placed to champion engineering.

**Medium length**

We are the IET and we inspire, inform and influence the global engineering community to engineer a better world. As a diverse home across engineering and technology, we have extensive knowledge and a particular view of the profession to share. It means we help make better sense of the world in order to solve the challenges that matter. It also ensures we grow our members professionally and intellectually. It informs how we set the standards for society. It provides the evidence to keep engineering at the top of the political agenda, and the insight to preserve the teaching of STEM subjects. It’s why we are uniquely placed to champion engineering.
When people come into contact with our brand we want them to have the same impression of who we are and what we are like.

Our four personality traits work together in balance. Each one can be dialled up or down depending on who you are talking to and what you are communicating.

For example, when being more authoritative and credible, we may speak in a slightly more formal and appropriate manner. When challenging stereotypes or outdated perceptions of engineers and technology professionals, we might dial up the inspirational approach a little more.
How we talk
Tone of voice matters – because people will judge what we say by the way we say it.

We can only start to inspire, inform and influence if we have something relevant or interesting to share.

How we share this will determine how our audiences feel about us. Our tonal values are therefore essential in how our audiences access what we have to say, and with the support of our brand values, will help shift how people feel about us.

We will inspire, inform and influence by being:

- Straightforward and precise
- Refreshing and insightful
- Personable and relevant
We will inspire, inform and influence by being:

### Straightforward and precise
As the voice of engineering and technology, we make the complex simple so that it is easy to understand and relate to, without trivialising or undermining the content. We’ve earned our respect through talking with precision and clarity.

**This means:**
- talking in plain, simple English
- telling our audiences only what they want to know
- being concise and getting to the point quickly
- being confident and accurate about what we say
- making sentences less complex or vague by stripping out unnecessary padding and language
- avoiding jargon, acronyms, and technical language when it’s not needed

### Refreshing and insightful
People engage with us because we have a unique perspective. Our breadth and depth of experience means we have something interesting to say and are relied upon as a source of knowledge. When we talk, people listen, regardless of age or experience.

**This means:**
- engaging by talking about the value we add, rather than the process to get there
- using active language to inject pace and energy into what we say
- being eloquent and convincing, not pushy or flippant
- supporting what we say with fact and evidence
- being positive and forward looking

### Personable and relevant
We are a diverse home for engineering and technology throughout the world, and have broad appeal from current professionals, to young people, government and society. We adapt what we say so that we are welcoming and connect at a personal level wherever possible.

**This means:**
- being friendly and warm, whilst remaining polite and professional
- putting ourselves in our audiences’ shoes so we understand them and their needs
- being empathetic and adapting our language accordingly, without sounding patronising
- engaging in conversation, asking questions, and using the first person without sounding too familiar
- putting our mission into context so that it has meaning rather than repeating it for the sake of it
Techniques

12 Straightforward and precise
14 Refreshing and insightful
15 Personable and relevant
1. Speak plainly
Avoid unnecessary jargon, spell out abbreviations and choose the shorter word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim for this:</th>
<th>...rather than this:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start</td>
<td>Commence, initiate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Utilise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>Assist</td>
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<td>Ask</td>
<td>Request</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need</td>
<td>Require</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tell</td>
<td>Advise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get</td>
<td>Obtain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep</td>
<td>Retain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try</td>
<td>Endeavour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End</td>
<td>Terminate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Straightforward and precise

2. Be concise
Less is more. Break text up into short paragraphs and sentences, and if in doubt, cut it out.

3. Make measured statements
Don't be too emphatic and take care using words such as exceptional or unique. At the same time, limit the use of tentative words such as possibly, hopefully or maybe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim for less of this:</th>
<th>...rather than this:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At this moment in time;</td>
<td>first of all;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as the leading membership organisation;</td>
<td>please do not hesitate to;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>going forward;</td>
<td>to be perfectly honest;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ongoing;</td>
<td>please take time to;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to take this opportunity to;</td>
<td>at the end of the day;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am writing with regard to;</td>
<td>etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim for this:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We can show you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We represent the profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are well placed to connect people across our profession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These guidelines refer to tone of voice used in marketing collateral. Personal correspondence is at the discretion of the individual.
# Refreshing and insightful

1. **Give evidence**
   Rather than telling readers what to think, show them with concrete facts, examples and other evidence that gives the proof.

   **Aim for this:**
   
   Our research information is vetted by our scientists so you can be sure of its authenticity and quality.

   **...to support or replace this:**
   
   Inspec contains over 16 million abstracts and specialised indexing to quality research literature in physics and engineering.

2. **Talk about the future**
   Use future-focused words and phrases to talk about what will be.

   **Aim for this:**
   
   We begin; we want; we will see; we look ahead to; we will become; our plans; our ambitions; etc

   **...to support or replace this:**
   
   We began; we wanted; we have seen; we look back on; we have become; our experience; our heritage; etc

3. **Use more verbs**
   Inject energy by choosing the verb rather than the noun.

   **Aim for this:**
   
   I think that
   We talked it through
   Please help

   **...to support or replace this:**
   
   My thinking is
   A meeting was held
   Your assistance is required
Personable and relevant

1. In the reader’s shoes
What’s their interest? What will it help them to know? What’s the best way to tell them? What do they already know or not know? Let these insights guide what you say.

- **Aim for this:**
  - Become a volunteer and help inspire the next phase of our profession.

- **…rather than this:**
  - Volunteering at the IET is as rewarding as it is interesting and vital to supporting professionalism in the fields of engineering and technology.

2. Choose active language
Use the active voice wherever possible, to give the reader a clear sense of involvement; people working directly with them and for them.

- **Aim for this:**
  - We solved the problem
  - We developed the programme

- **…rather than this:**
  - A solution was achieved
  - The programme has been developed by

3. Talk about you and yours
Involve your audience by talking in the first and second person where appropriate – you, your, yours, we, our, ours, us, I, my and mine.

- **Aim for this:**
  - We
  - You

- **…rather than this:**
  - The Institution of Engineering and Technology; IET functions or IET Sectors;
  - the organisation;
  - the department;
  - the team; etc
  - Members; colleagues; applicants; employees; those individuals; etc
Our tone of voice in action

17 Example one - Faraday
18 Example two - Volunteering
19 Example three - Publishing
20 Example four - Professional registration
21 Example five - Policy
Here are some examples of our tone of voice principles in action, in comparison with previous examples.

### Before:

**About IET Faraday Secondary**

The IET Faraday programme has been developed by the Institution of Engineering and Technology, Europe’s largest professional organisation in the field.

Our aim is to introduce a new generation to the sheer excitement of science, technology and engineering.

### After:

**Discover the wonder of engineering and technology**

We have developed the IET Faraday programme to introduce a new generation to the sheer excitement of science, technology and engineering.
Here are some examples of our tone of voice principles in action, in comparison with previous examples.

### Before:

Volunteering at the IET

For over 140 years the IET has been inspiring, informing and influencing the global engineering community.

Volunteering at the IET is as rewarding as it is interesting and vital to supporting professionalism in the fields of engineering and technology.

Over 4,400 volunteers commit their time to helping the IET achieve its aims and objectives around the world – bringing their skills and experience to inform other professionals, delivering vital services such as qualifications.

### After:

Volunteer and inspire the next phase of engineering

Become a volunteer and help progress our profession.

As one of 4,400 volunteers, you could use your experience to inspire others. Whether it’s talking to young people in school, influencing stakeholders, or sharing your experiences with other members, volunteering with the IET is a rewarding and important way to help our profession grow.
Our tone of voice
Example three - Publishing

Here are some examples of our tone of voice principles in action, in comparison with previous examples.

Before:

Information for authors
Welcome to our Information For Authors hub. In these pages we’ve gathered together all the information and advice you’ll need as an author, editor or contributor from the start of the process – submitting a proposal – through to publication and beyond.

Not just another publisher
When you publish with the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) you will become more than an author. You will join a leading global engineering and technology community dedicated to advancing engineering and learning.

Open Access
As a society publisher and a not-for-profit organisation committed to serving the engineering community, the IET supports Open Access publishing across all of our journals.

Improved Discoverability
As part of our mission to disseminate knowledge and understanding across engineering, we provide a range of tools that help our authors to share their work and make it easier to find online.

After:

Hello!
We’ve put together this useful guide to help you publish what you’ve written. It will help you throughout the process from submitting your proposal through to publication and beyond.

More than a publisher
Publishing with us means becoming part of a community dedicated to advancing engineering and learning.

Open Access
As society publisher and not-for-profit organisation, we are committed to Open Access publishing.

Easier to find
We’ve got some smart tools that will help you share your work whilst making it easier for others to find online.
Here are some examples of our tone of voice principles in action, in comparison with previous examples.

**Before:**

**About professional registration**
Be recognised for your skills and achievements by becoming professionally registered.

**What is professional registration?**
Professional registration is awarded by licensed bodies who represent the Engineering Council and is based on knowledge, competence and commitment to professionalism.

Achieving registration status is an important milestone for any engineer or technician. It establishes your proven knowledge, understanding and competence.

In particular, professional registration shows your peers and employers that you have demonstrated a commitment to professional standards, and to developing and enhancing competence.

**Benefits of registration**
- Recognition as a professional in your field
- Improved self motivation, career opportunities and salary prospects
- Greater influence within your organisation and industry
- Confirmation that you are a competent engineer and/or IT professional
- Connecting you with innovative, influential people
- International recognition of your qualifications

**After:**

**Professional registration**
Be recognised for your skills and achievements.

**What is professional registration?**
Professional registration is a status awarded by licensed bodies who represent the Engineering Council, that acknowledges your proven knowledge, understanding and competence.

**Why will it help me?**
- Recognition as a professional in your field
- Improved self motivation, career opportunities and salary prospects
- Greater influence within your organisation and industry
- Confirmation of your competence
- Connecting you with innovative, influential people
- International recognition of your qualifications
Here are some examples of our tone of voice principles in action, in comparison with previous examples.

Before:

**IET Expertise**
Offering unbiased, independent, evidence-based policy advice.

By definition, the implementation of government policy has direct and indirect effects on society both immediately and into the future. Many aspects of government policy rely upon the successful application of engineering technologies and systems. Examples include the provision and development of energy and transport infrastructures. However, there are many less obvious instances where the provision of services such as health, rely upon complex ICT-based systems. It is therefore important that government seeks engineering input early to help them plan and implement efficient, effective public policy. Failure to do so can result in unnecessary expense, delays and perhaps even the cancellation of key policies.

The IET has a wealth of engineering expertise within its membership, covering a broad range of technologies and sectors. The Policy Department seeks to tap into this and offer it to policymakers in the UK. Unlike many organisations, the IET can offer unbiased, independent, evidence-based policy advice, free from commercial or political influence.

After:

**Unbiased, independent, evidence-based policy advice**

Engineers play an important role in developing successful governmental policies.

We can inform government throughout the planning and implementation of their policy as it will often rely on engineering technologies and systems to work.

Through our membership, we offer policymakers in the UK a broad range of independent and evidence-based engineering and technology expertise.

Find out more about where we’ve made a difference to government policy.
A few top tips
Writing checklist

We need to make it easy for web users to find information, so readers value their time with us, and trust and respect our online presence.

Here are a few top tips for writing great copy.

**Note:** it may be more appropriate to speak or write more formally depending on the circumstance, i.e., people who speak English as a second language may be less familiar with colloquial terms, and some cultures may have specific expectations of politeness and deference. Defer to known cultural norms or discuss with the International team if you have any queries.

1. **Think about the outcome**

   We communicate many things across many online channels, however, there are typically six outcomes that we want from people engaging with us:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Purchase something</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Become a member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Network with other professionals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Find knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Get involved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Enquire about something</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

   Think about the outcome you want and ensure there is a call to action to help direct the reader accordingly.

2. **Keep it snappy**

   Try and summarise your story in the first two or three paragraphs that provide all the information a reader would need if they didn’t know anything about it in advance. **Try to answer all the five W’s – who, what, why, when and where.**

3. **Sell your story**

   A good headline should ‘tell and sell’ what you have to say. **Think about what would make you click on a story,** and about how to get the most interesting elements of your story across. Good headlines help to attract readers. Avoid headlines which are unclear, assume too much knowledge or promise something that the content doesn’t provide. Remember, headlines can be different from your navigation titles.
Writing checklist (continued)

4. Structure and subheadings
Structure your information so it’s arranged into logical chunks. Use subheadings to break it up into clearly defined themes.

5. Keywords
Readers online tend to scan a page looking for keywords – words that relate to what they’re looking for. They want to find the specific information, without browsing the entire website – or even the whole page.
Think about the keywords your reader will be looking for – these may not be the same as the words you’re used to using. Your web analytic package will help you to choose the right words.

6. Less is more, but provide access to more
Don’t assume the reader understands the context to what you’re communicating. Use hyperlinks to more information about the context, and avoid cluttering pages with background information. Is it relevant to your readers? If not, leave it out.

Ready to write? First, ask yourself:

1. **Who is my reader** and what do they want to know?

2. **What do I want to happen** as a result of this communication?
   What do I want my reader to do, think and feel?

3. **What do I need to say**, what’s the best order to say it in, and is there anything I can cut out?

4. **How should I say it**? Now you’re ready to choose and apply the tone of voice techniques in our toolkit.
Contact information
Who to contact for further help

For any questions or queries about our brand, please get in touch using the following details.

Using our brand enquiries email address, please direct your questions and queries to one of the following people.

Please email 
brandenquiries@theiet.org

The Institution of Engineering and Technology
Michael Faraday House
Six Hills Way
Stevenage
SG1 2AY
United Kingdom

Chris Hird
Graphic Designer
T  +44 (0) 1438 765 628

Design, layout, colour, imagery and related graphical enquires.

Simon Timmis
Brand, Digital and Impact Marketing Lead
T  +44 (0) 1438 767 417
M  +44 (0) 7710 320 764

High-level brand implementation, strategy and decisions, products, and services.

Natalie Boon
Marketing Campaign Manager
T  +44 (0) 1438 767 277
M  +44 (0) 7710 724 454

Corporate marketing, products and services, awards, advertising, and other queries.
List of updates

This page highlights the main updates from the previous version of the guide:

**Tone of voice guidelines**
October 2018 Version One.

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**What’s new**

03   Our foundations renamed to Who we are

07   More detail added on our brand personality

13   Additional footnote

23   Additional note added

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*Note: Minor tweaks not listed may have been made to other pages in these guidelines.*

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We update our guidelines periodically to keep you up-to-date with our brand evolution, please ensure you are working to the most current version of our guidelines. Please contact the team at brandenquiries@theiet.org if you have any queries. See p26 for more information.