

2017

TOP 200 ADVERTISERS

WEBSITE CLARITY INDEX



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The VisibleThread Clarity Index: Top US National Advertisers - 2017

Executive Summary

Advertising is the communication vehicle that connects consumers to products and services. It is as old as commerce and has taken many forms over the ages. One of the most common – and enduring -- forms is through the written word. Well-written, memorable copy separates one company from the rest of the pack in the competitive world of business. Plain, understandable written communication is one of easiest ways to maintain and grow a customer base and brand loyalty.

Each year, *Advertising Age* publishes a list of the Top 200 National Advertisers, based on levels of measured media and unmeasured spending on advertising. In the 2016 report, an estimated \$142.5 billion was spent by this group on advertising. Consider the following points and how they relate to your business:

1. For context, this is more than the Gross Product of several American states. A lot of marketing budgets are predominantly committed to advertising.
2. Advertising is an investment. Companies do not make these levels of investment without an expectation of return. Unmeasured spending encompasses the digital world, where targeted messaging is used to draw consumers to products. An estimated 54.7% of all advertising was in this unmeasured space.
3. A large percentage of advertising spend is designed to drive traffic to company websites that are poorly written. Increasingly, the point-of-sale is through the company’s website. Failure to use clear language that is readable will reduce potential lead capture, conversion and sales. Unlike the Federal government, where there is a legal benchmark standard for plain language usage, company’s choices in communications are independent and personal. Marketing teams should recognize that using clear, plain language translates into the return on investment of advertising.

For the purposes of this report, VisibleThread measured 162 of the Top 200 National Advertisers on the annual Ad Age list. We excluded websites that contained fewer than 1000 words and those that could not be surveyed. The listed companies share one commonality: they spend a lot of money on advertising. We measured websites across these four dimensions:

- [Readability](#) – How readable is the content?
- [Passive Language](#) – Active Language communicates clearly. What proportion of sentences is passive?
- [Long Sentences](#) – What proportion of all sentences are too long?
- [Word Complexity Density](#) – Complex words make web pages hard to understand. Density rating is the percentage of complex words relative to total word count.

These are internationally accepted norms relating to clear language.

What did we find?

Analysis suggests that many of these top companies are likely missing out on revenue due to a lack of plain language on their websites. Confusing language is a common complaint among consumers. (4) Long, complicated sentences are a large part of the problem. While there are some very high performing websites, most have areas in which they can significantly improve. Companies that sell services – rather than tangible goods – would do well to focus on the readability of their websites. A more detailed analysis appears below in this report.

Key Findings

Clear Language:

The following guideline definitions will help you understand the information we present in the Key Findings section:

- Readability – a score of 60 or above is ideal.
- Passive language – 4% or less is ideal.
- Long Sentences – 5% or less across all content is ideal.
- Complex language density – complex words/total words*100 – lower is better.

Top Performers

There are 19 websites out of 162 that are ranked as Top Performers. Top performers come from a diverse number of industries. Websites with a Clear Writing score below 40 made this list. These websites average 58 in Readability. All but one score below 5% in Passive Sentence Use.

- Eight of the Top 10 have Readability scores of 60 or greater.
- Dish Network ranks #1 for Clear Writing with a score of 9.75.
- Mattel ranks #1 in avoiding both Passive Language and Long Sentence Use.
- Expedia.com has a Readability Score of 71, the highest in this group and #2 overall.
 - <http://www.dish.com> (1)
 - <http://www.mattel.com> (2)
 - <http://www.expedia.com> (4)

VisibleThread Clarity Index		Top US Advertisers			Clear Writing		Readability		Passive		Long		Complex		Num Words
			Num Pages	Index	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	
1	Dish Network Corp	http://www.dish.com	300	9.75	68	5	1%	8	8%	16	0.87	10			410238
2	Clorox	http://www.clorox.com	300	12	68	5	3%	20	8%	17	0.71	6			388230
2	Mattel	http://www.mattel.com	300	12	56	23	0%	1	1%	1	1.19	23			8479
4	Expedia	http://www.expedia.com	269	15.5	71	2	3%	21	13%	34	0.70	5			232493
5	Home Depot	http://www.homedepot.com	302	20.75	61	16	3%	17	5%	9	1.40	41			168101
5	Softbank Group Sprint	http://www.softbank.jp	300	20.75	62	14	0%	3	1%	2	1.63	64			6400
5	Under Armour	http://www.underarmour.com	300	20.75	67	8	1%	6	2%	6	1.59	63			32235
5	SC Johnson	http://www.sjohnson.com	300	20.75	68	5	3%	23	14%	41	0.98	14			118431
9	JC Penney	http://www.jcpenney.com	301	21.25	69	3	2%	12	15%	53	1.06	17			104133
10	Sony Corp	http://www.sony.com	301	23.5	52	35	3%	22	8%	13	1.20	24			106273

Notable Mentions

There are 53 companies ranked in this category. The ranking is based on scores from 41 to 77.75 on the Clear Writing Index. Complexity and Long Sentences are the main contributors to these scores. Toys R' Us ranks #1 in Readability, but is dead last in Complexity. Staples ranks #159 in Complexity. A company that is based on selling consumer goods should make its web content easier to understand.

- <http://www.toysrus.com> (21)
- <http://www.staples.com> (51)

VisibleThread Clarity Index		Top US Advertisers		Num Pages	Clear Writing		Readability		Passive		Long		Complex		Num Words
Rank	Company	URL	Index		Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	
21	Toys R Us	http://www.toysrus.com	300	43	87	1	1%	5	2%	4	6.58	162	77962		
23	Apple	http://www.apple.com	300	43.75	57	21	5%	48	16%	61	1.45	45	270615		
26	Samsung Electronics	http://www.samsung.com	300	46	39	103	3%	14	16%	56	0.87	11	176514		
31	Allstate	http://www.allstate.com	300	51	54	30	7%	79	13%	37	1.57	58	164505		
34	Walmart Stores	http://www.walmart.com	301	51.75	64	11	8%	109	6%	10	1.73	77	325367		
38	Fiat Chrysler	http://www.fiat.com	300	56.5	28	148	2%	9	17%	66	0.64	3	130174		
47	Citibank	http://www.online.citi.com	89	60.25	24	156	3%	18	17%	63	0.65	4	139657		
48	Kohls	http://www.kohls.com	302	61	69	3	14%	156	2%	3	1.82	82	55313		
51	Staples	http://www.staples.com	304	63.25	46	62	3%	14	9%	18	4.15	159	157649		
53	Amazon	http://www.amazon.com	301	63.75	60	18	5%	52	15%	47	2.63	138	178379		

Room for Improvement:

This is the largest group on our list. Of the 162 companies we surveyed, 71 qualify as having Room for Improvement. These companies have Clear Writing Index scores between 80.25 to 119.75. Only 7 members of this group have Readability scores of 50 or above.

VisibleThread Clarity Index		Top US Advertisers		Num Pages	Clear Writing		Readability		Passive		Long		Complex		Num Words
Rank	Company	URL	Index		Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	
73	US Government	http://www.usa.gov	301	80.25	51	40	7%	90	19%	72	2.33	119	138238		
77	Lions Gate Entertainment	http://www.lionsgate.com	300	84.25	37	113	6%	60	29%	130	1.31	34	149341		
81	General Mills	http://www.generalmills.com	300	86.25	34	131	5%	59	17%	62	1.97	93	59238		
86	IBM	http://www.ibm.com	300	87	39	103	4%	35	19%	74	2.61	136	143636		
102	Bank of America	http://www.bankofamerica.com	300	94.25	42	87	8%	105	22%	93	1.95	92	407459		
118	Coca Cola	http://www.coca-cola.com	300	102.25	13	160	7%	76	42%	161	0.89	12	224713		
129	Honda	http://www.honda.com	31	107.25	42	87	7%	89	24%	102	3.27	151	20475		
130	PepsiCo	http://www.pepsico.com	300	108.5	39	103	10%	140	29%	129	1.59	62	153870		
141	Pfizer	http://www.pfizer.com	300	117.75	30	142	8%	102	19%	70	3.61	157	189604		
142	DraftKings	http://www.draftkings.com	38	118.25	50	45	19%	160	30%	137	2.51	131	41757		

Worst Performers

Worst Performers were ranked based on Clear Writing Index scores of greater than 120. There are 19 companies that received this rating. We have highlighted a section of this group as examples of poor performance.

VisibleThread Clarity Index		Top US Advertisers			Clear Writing		Readability		Passive		Long		Complex		Num Words
		Num Pages	Index	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank		
144	JP Morgan Chase	http://www.jpmorganchase.com	302	120	37	113	7%	97	38%	158	2.23	112	213406		
147	Viacom	http://www.viacom.com	47	122.25	31	139	7%	96	36%	153	2.11	101	19298		
148	Canon	http://www.canon.com	300	126	32	138	11%	149	29%	133	1.84	84	163349		
148	DeVry Education Group	http://www.devryeducationgroup.com	40	126	21	158	11%	147	32%	142	1.55	57	8531		
151	News Corp	http://www.newscorp.com	212	129.5	36	119	12%	154	39%	160	1.87	85	119234		
153	General Motors	http://www.gm.com	301	132.25	38	108	10%	142	37%	155	2.41	124	182930		
154	Time Warner	http://www.timewarner.com	300	133.25	35	124	9%	126	34%	143	2.65	140	97281		
160	Sanofi	http://www.sanofi.us	227	144	26	153	12%	153	28%	125	2.80	145	36777		
161	Charter Communications	http://www.charter.com	49	146.75	31	139	11%	148	35%	147	3.39	153	197459		
162	Merck	http://www.merck.com	288	151.5	26	153	13%	155	34%	144	3.42	154	295743		

Factors making these the worst performers were:

- **Poor Readability:** Companies in this category have an average Readability score of 33. This is 17 points lower than the minimum, college-level baseline of 50. Two education groups – DeVry Education Group and Apollo Education Group / University of Phoenix – have Readability scores of 21 and 28.
- **High proportion of long sentences:** Companies ranked as Worst Performers used Long Sentences on an average of 33%. This is nearly six times higher than the recommended level of 5%. An example from Merck illustrates this point:

“Moderna Therapeutics today announced a license and collaboration agreement with Merck, known as MSD outside the United States and Canada, through a subsidiary, for the discovery and development of vaccines and passive immunity treatments against viral diseases using modified messenger RNA (mRNA).”

- **High level of complexity:** Complexity can also be inferred from the above example. Companies in this category have an average Complexity score of 2.55. This is well above a range that is considered acceptable for the average reader.

Takeaways:

1. Wide disparities between the best and worst performers

Websites in this survey range from 9.75 to 151.5 on the Clear Writing Index. This is an incredible disparity in overall performance. Of interest are some of the disparities between companies in the same sector.

- Television Service Providers: Dish Network ranks #1 overall while Charter Communications ranks second to last. Websites are the main contact point between the company and consumer in this industry – particularly for subscriber conquest efforts, which employ a lot of advertising. Using plain, readable language can only increase customer satisfaction.
- Household Products: SC Johnson (maker of Pledge) ranks joint 5th while Reckitt Benkiser (maker of Finish) ranks #138. Companies that produce consumer packaged goods are among the advertising industry's largest spenders. Clear writing is even more critical for companies like Reckitt Benkiser because of the average reading level of their customer base tracks with the general public.
- Toy Companies: Mattel ranks #2 while Hasbro ranks #96. Long sentence use is the main differentiator. Mattel uses long sentences in 1% of its text. Hasbro uses long sentences in 27%. Children influence purchasing decisions in the toy industry. And children, by their age alone, have lower reading levels.

2. Long sentence use is the strongest measure of ranking

The use of long sentences is a true differentiator between the top and bottom performers. This applies to even broader sample sizes than those we used in our previous evaluation.

- Only 5 of the top 40 companies in our rankings use long sentences outside of the acceptable level.
- Only 3 of the bottom 60 companies in our rankings use long sentences within the acceptable level.

3. Complexity is an issue

Of the 162 company websites that we surveyed, only 12 have a Complexity score below 1. Of this 12, only one has a Complexity score that falls within an acceptable range. Reducing the use of complex language will increase a reader's ability to access and understand information. While there are some industries that are more complex than others, it doesn't mean that reducing complex language use cannot be a goal.

But limiting complexity doesn't always translate into greater readability. Adidas is the only company that has a Complexity score within an acceptable level (0.02). But they have a Readability score of 36, which is 14 points below the recommended score of 60 or greater.

4. Improvements can be made to reach all audiences

Nearly all of our surveyed websites have significant room for improvement in adopting clear language. Making this transition in written copy can only help broaden a customer base. No one has ever been turned off by a website because it is far too easy to read. Industries such as pharmaceuticals would do well to adopt clear written language to increase their return on investment in advertising. Consider the benefits that both doctors and consumers would find in a clear, understandable pharmaceutical website. Writing in one clear manner will appeal across both these constituencies. It will increase satisfaction and potentially increase sales against a comparable product.

Detailed Results Tables

We show the full detailed tables below.

We color-code, green to red, each score in the Index. Green indicates best, red indicates worst. Color-coding helps us to understand sites where one or two specific scores may be dragging down the overall ranking. Flagging specific areas (for instance, passive language) pinpoints areas for improvement.

VisibleThread Clarity Index		Top US Advertisers			Clear Writing		Readability		Passive		Long		Complex		Num Words
Rank	Advertiser	URL	Num Pages	Index	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	
1	Dish Network Corp	http://www.dish.com	300	9.75	68	5	1%	8	8%	16	0.87	10	410238		
2	Clorox	http://www.clorox.com	300	12	68	5	3%	20	8%	17	0.71	6	388230		
2	Mattel	http://www.mattel.com	300	12	56	23	0%	1	1%	1	1.19	23	8479		
4	Expedia	http://www.expedia.com	269	15.5	71	2	3%	21	13%	34	0.70	5	232493		
5	Home Depot	http://www.homedepot.com	302	20.75	61	16	3%	17	5%	9	1.40	41	168101		
5	Soffbank Group Sprint	http://www.soffbank.jp	300	20.75	62	14	0%	3	1%	2	1.63	64	6400		
5	Under Armour	http://www.underarmour.com	300	20.75	67	8	1%	6	2%	6	1.59	63	32235		
5	SC Johnson	http://www.scjohnson.com	300	20.75	68	5	3%	23	14%	41	0.98	14	118431		
9	JC Penney	http://www.jcpenney.com	301	21.25	69	3	2%	12	15%	53	1.06	17	104133		
10	Sony Corp	http://www.sony.com	301	23.5	52	35	3%	22	8%	13	1.20	24	106273		
11	Mazda	http://www.mazda.com	303	27.75	41	94	1%	7	4%	8	0.53	2	340810		
12	AARP	http://www.aarp.org	301	31.25	46	62	3%	16	10%	27	1.09	20	177336		
13	Addidas Group	http://www.addidas.com	301	31.75	36	119	0%	2	2%	5	0.02	1	97313		
14	Priceline	http://www.priceline.com	300	33.5	56	23	4%	25	9%	19	1.66	67	269437		
15	Matress Firm Holding Corp	http://www.matressfirm.com	301	34.25	58	20	5%	55	10%	25	1.33	37	117122		
16	Macy's	http://www.macys.com	302	35.5	62	14	1%	4	7%	11	2.23	113	94064		
17	Redon	http://www.redon.com	301	38.5	65	10	2%	13	17%	65	1.64	66	52984		
18	Ate T	http://www.ate.com	300	39.25	48	53	4%	39	10%	26	1.36	39	249783		
19	Dell	http://www.dell.com	300	39.5	46	62	5%	48	12%	32	1.03	16	281855		
20	Rooms to Go	http://www.rooms-to-go.com	301	41	55	26	2%	10	14%	38	1.92	90	93399		
21	Toys R Us	http://www.toysrus.com	300	43	87	1	1%	5	2%	4	6.58	162	77962		
21	Fibit	http://www.fibit.com	158	43	59	19	5%	42	20%	81	1.26	30	187700		
23	Alphabet Google	https://abc.xyz/	2	43.75	61	16	7%	91	16%	60	0.81	8	1115		
23	Apple	http://www.apple.com	300	43.75	57	21	5%	48	16%	61	1.45	45	270615		
25	Campbell soup	http://www.campbellsoupcompany.com	301	44.25	47	58	4%	29	19%	75	1.00	15	115392		
26	Samsung Electronics	http://www.samsung.com	300	46	39	103	3%	14	16%	56	0.87	11	176514		
26	Mars Inc	http://www.mars.com	300	46	49	50	5%	50	19%	77	0.78	7	192764		
28	Volkswagen	http://www.vw.com	301	48	50	45	5%	46	9%	22	1.78	79	701830		
29	Deutsche Telecom mobile	http://www.telekom.com	301	48.5	39	103	4%	31	13%	35	1.22	25	218763		
30	Way Fair	http://www.wayfair.com	28	50.25	66	9	4%	30	25%	108	1.54	54	9424		
31	LG Electronics	http://www.lg.com	300	51	64	11	4%	33	15%	50	2.19	110	369355		
31	Allstate	http://www.allstate.com	300	51	54	30	7%	79	13%	37	1.57	58	164505		
33	Yum Brands	http://www.yum.com	300	51.25	55	26	5%	44	19%	76	1.58	59	101579		
34	Walmart Stores	http://www.walmart.com	301	51.75	64	11	8%	109	6%	10	1.73	77	325367		
35	American Family Insurance Co	http://www.amfam.com	300	53.25	57	21	4%	38	11%	29	2.46	125	134669		
36	Lowe's	http://www.lowes.com	301	54.5	52	35	8%	111	9%	21	1.50	51	112541		
37	Comcast	http://www.comcast.com	279	56	52	35	5%	43	10%	24	2.37	122	166418		
38	Chanel	http://www.chanel.com	300	56.5	43	81	2%	11	9%	20	2.26	114	22421		
38	Fiat Chrysler	http://www.fiat.com	300	56.5	28	148	2%	9	17%	66	0.64	3	130174		
40	eBay	http://www.ebay.com	300	57.25	63	13	5%	45	11%	28	2.76	143	143049		
40	BMW group	http://www.bmwgroup.com	300	57.25	41	94	4%	31	16%	55	1.49	49	291990		

The VisibleThread Clarity Index:
Top US National Advertisers - 2017



VisibleThread Clarity Index		Top US Advertisers		Num Pages	Clear Writing		Readability		Passive		Long		Complex		Num Words
					Index	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	
42	Kering	http://www.kering.com	301	58	44	73	4%	36	27%	114	0.82	9	113748		
42	Albertsons Cos	http://www.albertsons.com	300	58	53	31	7%	84	20%	82	1.32	35	105550		
44	L Brands	http://www.lb.com	302	58.25	40	101	4%	26	7%	12	1.99	94	168170		
44	Doctors Associates Subway	http://www.subway.com	300	58.25	51	40	6%	70	14%	40	1.83	83	98562		
46	Progressive Corp	http://www.progressive.com	300	59.5	49	50	6%	71	16%	69	1.49	48	128889		
47	Citibank	http://www.online.citi.com	89	60.25	24	156	3%	18	17%	63	0.65	4	139657		
48	Kohls	http://www.kohls.com	302	61	69	3	14%	156	2%	3	1.82	82	55313		
49	Signet Jewelers	http://www.signetjewelers.com	301	62.75	41	94	5%	51	12%	31	1.72	75	46425		
50	Kia Motors	http://www.kia.com	300	63	50	45	5%	40	19%	71	2.00	96	123454		
51	Staples	http://www.staples.com	304	63.25	46	62	3%	14	9%	18	4.15	159	157649		
51	Verizon Communications	http://www.verizon.com	303	63.25	43	81	4%	28	15%	46	2.02	98	126123		
53	Amazon	http://www.amazon.com	301	63.75	60	18	5%	52	15%	47	2.63	138	178379		
54	Fuji Heavy Industries Subaru	http://www.fhi.co.jp	300	64.5	43	81	4%	37	14%	43	2.01	97	20133		
54	Microsoft	http://www.microsoft.com	300	64.5	46	62	3%	24	18%	68	2.16	104	128296		
56	GlaxoSmithKline	http://www.gsk.com	300	66	45	69	5%	56	21%	87	1.53	52	179996		
57	Diageo	http://www.diageo.com	300	66.5	46	62	5%	54	15%	45	2.17	105	85028		
58	Hyundai	http://www.hyundaiusa.com	300	66.75	45	69	4%	34	11%	30	2.55	134	294038		
59	Heinold	http://www.theheinoldcompany.com	8	67.75	52	35	6%	61	8%	15	4.40	160	1774		
60	HP	http://www.hp.com	9	68.75	46	62	7%	78	13%	36	2.03	99	3505		
61	Select Comfort Group 2	http://www.sleepnumber.com	101	69	0	162	5%	41	15%	44	1.26	29	78845		
62	Toronto Dominion Bank TD Ban	http://www.tdbank.com	300	70.5	53	31	6%	64	20%	84	2.14	103	203173		
63	Discover	http://www.discover.com	301	71.25	55	26	7%	80	17%	64	2.26	115	237483		
64	Domino's Pizzas	http://www.dominos.com	300	71.75	14	159	3%	19	21%	88	1.10	21	187871		
65	Colgate Palmolive	http://www.colgatepalmolive.com	259	74.5	53	31	9%	128	21%	89	1.50	50	160058		
66	PetSmart	http://www.petsmart.com	304	74.75	51	40	7%	95	8%	14	3.21	150	193964		
67	Permed Ricard	https://www.permed-ricard.com/en	300	75.25	35	124	6%	73	22%	91	0.94	13	235782		
68	Centurylink	http://www.centurylink.com	300	75.75	52	35	8%	112	10%	23	2.53	133	322541		
69	Eli-Lilly	http://www.lilly.com	300	76.5	50	45	9%	134	25%	105	1.18	22	98397		
69	Luxottica	http://www.luxottica.com	300	76.5	36	119	5%	53	27%	115	1.09	19	128588		
71	Capital one	http://www.capitalone.com	300	77	53	31	6%	72	16%	57	2.90	148	126940		
72	McDonalds 2	http://www.mcdonalds.com	100	77.75	9	161	4%	27	14%	42	1.82	81	85767		
73	US Government	http://www.usa.gov	301	80.25	51	40	7%	90	19%	72	2.33	119	138238		
74	Zurich Insurance Group	http://www.zurich.com	300	80.5	42	87	6%	73	23%	97	1.63	65	132293		
75	Johnson and Johnson	http://www.jnj.com	301	81.5	49	50	9%	121	23%	99	1.54	56	230404		
76	Hershey	http://www.thehersheycompany.com	301	81.75	51	40	10%	137	12%	32	2.31	118	95702		
77	Lions Gate Entertainment	http://www.lionsgate.com	300	84.25	37	113	6%	60	29%	130	1.31	34	149341		
78	US Bancorp	http://www.usbank.com	300	84.5	50	45	8%	105	16%	59	2.49	129	159281		
79	Fedex	http://www.fedex.com	300	84.75	46	62	6%	69	15%	52	3.54	156	93084		
80	Kroger	http://www.kroger.com	36	85.25	56	23	10%	159	4%	7	3.31	152	9210		
81	General Mills	http://www.generalmills.com	300	86.25	34	131	5%	59	17%	62	1.97	93	59238		
82	Dr Pepper Snapple Group	http://www.drpeppersnapplegroup.com	111	86.5	47	58	10%	143	25%	109	1.33	36	38837		
82	Fanduel	http://www.fanduel.com	52	86.5	55	26	8%	108	24%	103	2.19	109	41474		
82	Nationwide Mutual Insurance	http://www.nationwide.com	300	86.5	42	87	9%	122	15%	51	1.89	86	157353		
82	PNC Financial Services Group	http://www.pnc.com	300	86.5	45	69	8%	110	18%	67	2.08	100	279963		
86	IBM	http://www.ibm.com	300	87	39	103	4%	35	19%	74	2.61	136	143636		
86	Tailored Brands	http://www.tailoredbrands.com	300	87	43	81	6%	62	25%	110	2.00	95	213059		
88	Charles Schwab	http://www.schwab.com	300	87.5	48	53	8%	103	14%	39	3.53	155	401924		
89	Mondelz International	http://www.mondelzinternational.com	273	87.75	41	94	7%	98	29%	132	1.22	27	116494		
90	Gap	http://www.gapinc.com	300	89.25	44	73	7%	87	28%	124	1.69	73	141142		
90	Reard Capital Group	http://www.reardcapital.com	24	89.25	33	135	5%	47	25%	104	1.69	71	13656		
92	Activision Blizzard	http://www.activisionblizzard.com	23	89.75	42	87	9%	119	27%	113	1.39	40	26038		

The VisibleThread Clarity Index:
Top US National Advertisers - 2017



VisibleThread Clarity Index		Top US Advertisers			Clear Writing		Readability		Passive		Long		Complex		Num Words
		Num Pages	Index	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank		
93	Allergan	http://www.allergan.com	300	90.25	34	131	6%	65	15%	48	2.29	117	137550		
94	Wells Fargo	http://www.wellsfargo.com	300	90.5	51	40	8%	116	20%	78	2.48	128	262835		
95	Abbott Labs	http://www.abbott.com	301	91.25	44	73	8%	101	27%	117	1.70	74	165946		
96	Hasbro	http://corporate.hasbro.com/en-us	36	91.5	45	69	12%	151	27%	118	1.23	28	9556		
97	Kellogg	http://www.kelloggcompany.com	74	92.25	44	73	7%	98	28%	122	1.73	76	18748		
97	TD Ameritrade	http://www.tdameritrade.com	178	92.25	44	73	9%	122	16%	58	2.29	116	172590		
99	Novo Nordisk	http://www.novonordisk-us.com	167	92.75	37	113	7%	94	23%	96	1.67	68	77671		
100	ConAgra Foods	http://www.conagrabrands.com	300	93.25	37	113	7%	88	28%	126	1.45	46	146726		
101	Liberty Media Corp Sirius XM	http://www.libertymedia.com	19	94	35	124	7%	85	25%	106	1.58	61	5049		
102	Bank of America	http://www.bankofamerica.com	300	94.25	42	87	8%	105	22%	93	1.95	92	407459		
103	CBS Corp	http://www.cbscorporation.com	300	95.25	39	103	7%	91	37%	156	1.76	31	91506		
104	Cox Enterprises	http://www.coxenterprises.com	204	96	29	145	5%	57	28%	122	1.58	60	52858		
104	Wendys Co	http://www.wendys.com	301	96	38	108	6%	67	26%	120	1.90	89	128848		
106	UnitedHealth Group	http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com	300	96.25	23	157	6%	68	28%	127	1.30	33	99553		
107	LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton	http://www.lvmh.com	300	97	43	81	7%	83	22%	92	2.51	132	105343		
108	Ford Motor Group	http://www.corporate.ford.com	300	97.5	33	135	7%	100	20%	85	1.67	70	118465		
109	Berkshire Hathaway	http://www.berkshirehathaway.com	300	97.75	41	94	6%	66	39%	159	1.69	72	578340		
110	Daimler	http://www.daimler.com	303	98.75	44	73	9%	125	15%	53	2.76	144	150471		
110	HeR Block	http://www.herbblock.com	301	98.75	48	53	12%	152	15%	49	2.70	141	1137097		
112	AstraZeneca	http://www.astrazeneca.com	300	99	30	142	8%	115	22%	95	1.43	44	313153		
113	CVS Healthcare	http://www.cvshealth.com	300	99.5	40	101	7%	77	32%	140	1.80	80	171638		
113	Constellation Brands	http://www.cbrands.com	300	99.5	36	119	7%	93	32%	139	1.48	47	127510		
113	Intel Inuit	http://www.intel.com	300	99.5	42	87	7%	80	24%	101	2.50	130	164672		
116	IAC Interactiv Corp	http://www.iac.com	300	101.5	35	124	7%	86	32%	141	1.54	55	156797		
117	Amgen	http://www.amgen.com	300	102	29	145	6%	62	22%	94	2.18	107	203774		
118	Coca Cola	http://www.coca-cola.com	300	102.25	13	160	7%	76	42%	161	0.89	12	224713		
118	Restaurant Brand International Burger King	http://www.rbi.com	116	102.25	44	73	7%	82	29%	131	2.37	123	148751		
120	VF Corp	http://www.vfc.com	301	102.75	37	113	8%	107	31%	138	1.53	53	196731		
121	State Farm Mutual	http://www.statefarm.com	300	103.5	48	53	10%	144	20%	80	2.62	137	226277		
122	Barden restaurants	http://www.barden.com	129	103.75	48	53	9%	120	30%	136	2.17	106	39047		
123	Boehringer Ingelheim	http://www.boehringer-ingelheim.com	300	104.25	28	148	8%	114	26%	112	1.41	43	110396		
124	L Oreal	http://www.loreal.com	300	104.75	47	58	9%	124	22%	90	2.86	147	132978		
125	Abbvie	http://www.abbvie.com	300	105.25	27	152	6%	75	27%	116	1.76	78	171884		
126	Blackrock	http://www.blackrock.com	300	105.75	38	108	8%	113	24%	100	2.14	102	159954		
127	Carnival Corp	http://www.carnivalcorp.com	300	106	35	124	9%	130	36%	152	1.07	18	366067		
128	FMR Corp Fidelity Investments	http://www.fidelity.com	299	107	44	73	9%	136	19%	73	2.85	146	319290		
129	Honda	http://www.honda.com	31	107.25	42	87	7%	89	24%	102	3.27	151	20475		
130	PepsiCo	http://www.pepsico.com	300	108.5	39	103	10%	140	29%	129	1.59	62	153870		
131	Brown-Forman Corp	http://www.brown-forman.com	301	110	33	135	9%	128	35%	145	1.29	32	128823		
132	Church e Dwight	http://www.churchdewight.com	66	110.25	42	87	8%	117	23%	98	2.65	139	44961		
133	Dunkin Brands	http://www.dunkinbrands.com	300	110.75	38	108	11%	146	35%	151	1.35	38	137137		
133	Realegy Holdings Corp	http://www.realegy.com	292	110.75	31	139	9%	132	35%	146	1.22	26	140191		
133	Coty	http://www.coty.com	300	110.75	35	124	9%	127	35%	150	1.41	42	123463		
136	Bayer	http://www.bayer.com	300	112	41	94	9%	133	20%	79	2.71	142	172098		
136	Valeant Pharmaceuticals	http://www.valeant.com	126	112	25	155	5%	58	21%	86	2.93	149	25526		
138	BB Reduit Benciser Group	http://www.rbb.com	102	113.5	41	94	10%	138	26%	111	2.20	111	53991		
139	Novartis	http://www.novartis.com	301	114.75	35	124	9%	131	30%	135	1.67	69	135826		
140	TXJ	http://www.txj.com	103	116.5	38	108	8%	118	35%	149	1.93	91	44292		
141	Pfizer	http://www.pfizer.com	300	117.75	30	142	8%	102	19%	70	3.61	157	189604		
142	DraftKings	http://www.draftkings.com	38	118.25	50	45	13%	160	30%	137	2.51	131	41757		
143	Liberty TripAdvisor Holdings	http://www.libertytripadvisorholdings.com	10	119.75	30	142	8%	104	25%	107	2.47	126	2228		

VisibleThread Clarity Index		Top US Advertisers			Clear Writing		Readability		Passive		Long		Complex		Num Words
		Num Pages	Index	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank		
144	JP Morgan Chase	http://www.jpmorganchase.com	302	120	37	113	7%	97	36%	158	2.23	112	213406		
145	Gilead Sciences	http://www.gilead.com	300	121	29	145	9%	135	20%	83	2.34	121	250118		
146	Compagne Financiere Richemont	http://www.richemont.com	300	121.25	36	119	15%	157	28%	121	1.90	88	85158		
147	Viacom	http://www.viacom.com	47	122.25	31	139	7%	96	36%	153	2.11	101	19298		
148	Canon	http://www.canon.com	300	126	32	138	11%	149	29%	133	1.84	84	163349		
148	DeVry Education Group	http://www.devryeducationgroup.com	40	126	21	158	11%	147	32%	142	1.55	57	8531		
150	SABMiller Miller Coors	http://www.sabmiller.com	300	126.25	47	58	19%	161	29%	128	4.06	158	227503		
151	News Corp	http://www.news-corp.com	212	129.5	36	119	12%	154	39%	160	1.87	85	119234		
152	PVH Corp	http://www.pvh.com	267	130.75	28	148	10%	140	35%	148	1.90	87	129878		
153	General Motors	http://www.gm.com	301	132.25	38	108	10%	142	37%	155	2.41	124	182930		
154	Time Warner	http://www.timewarner.com	300	133.25	35	124	9%	126	34%	143	2.65	140	97281		
155	Apollo Education Group Uni of Phoenix	https://www.apollo.edu/	30	134.25	28	148	11%	150	27%	119	2.34	120	11377		
156	Anheuser-Busch InBev	http://www.ab-inbev.com/	190	134.5	43	81	21%	162	30%	134	4.46	161	214336		
157	DineEquity	http://www.dineequity.com	17	135	34	131	10%	139	42%	162	2.18	108	9709		
158	Kraft Heinz	http://www.kraftheinzcompany.com	26	137.5	37	113	11%	145	38%	157	2.59	135	12522		
159	Bristol Myers Squibb	http://www.bms.com	300	142.5	34	131	16%	158	37%	154	2.47	127	133749		
160	Sanofi	http://www.sanofi.us	227	144	26	153	12%	153	28%	125	2.80	145	36777		
161	Charter Communications	http://www.charter.com	49	146.75	31	139	11%	148	35%	147	3.39	153	197459		
162	Merck	http://www.merck.com	288	151.5	26	153	13%	155	34%	144	3.42	154	295743		

Methodology – what are the metrics?

- We analyzed the sites in April, 2017
- We scanned a minimum of 1,000 words of content using automated crawling techniques. We included the page count and word count for each company.
- We crawled starting from the publicly available URL.

We calculated the index based on 4 metrics. Each metric contributes equally to the final score. The metrics are:

Metric	Formula
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1. Readability

Readability ranges from 1 to 100. 100 is the top mark. If communicating with citizens, aim for at least 60.

This is based on the [Flesch Reading Ease](#) index.

$(206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{Average Sentence Length}) - (84.6 \times \text{Average Syllables per Word}))$

2. Passive Language

The % rating is the proportion of sentences with a passive construction. Passive language is where the subject acted upon appears before the verb. For example: "Quality is monitored" vs. "We monitor quality"
If you use active voice, you will increase clarity & strength. You will also flush out the 'actor', i.e. who did the action?

(Passive Sentences / Total Sentences * 100)

3. Long Sentences

The % rating is the proportion of sentences that are longer than 25 words. Long sentences mask multiple concepts. Splitting up these sentences will result in a clearer message.

(Long Sentences / Total Sentences * 100)

4. Complex Word Density

The density rating is the proportion of complex words relative to the total word count. This scan looks for complex words/phrases based on Federal Guidelines. See <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/simplewords.cfm> for the list scanned. Replacing complex words with simpler words helps your readers concentrate on your content.

(Complex Words/Total Words * 100)

About VisibleThread

VisibleThread helps executives in large organizations govern content quality with less cost and risk. Sales and marketing teams in diverse industries use our technology to improve many functions, including proposal development, contract review and brand audits. Our software finds brand compliance, poor readability and other issues in websites and documents. Unlike consumer-grade analysis tools, VisibleThread processes hundreds of documents and web pages in minutes. Fuelled with greater organizational intelligence, customers drive efficiency and reduce cost across their organizations. For more information, visit www.visiblethread.com

For questions or if you want a specific sector index:

- For a specific agency or bureau index, email: sales@visiblethread.com
- For questions on the metrics or methodology, email: support@visiblethread.com
- For inquiries from members of the press or media, email: charles.farrell@visiblethread.com

- (1) <http://www.kantarmedia.com/us/newsroom/km-inthenews/200-leading-national-advertisers>
- (2) http://www.usgovernmentpending.com/gdp_by_state
- (3) <http://www.kantarmedia.com/us/newsroom/km-inthenews/200-leading-national-advertisers>
- (4) <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/consumer-complaints/>
<https://www.usa.gov/phone-tv-complaints>