Our Content Guidelines

Content Strategy Appendix

April 2021

Contents

A1 Content planning, scheduling and curation

To ensure cohesion and avoid internal competition, all content outputs at RICS should plan and schedule their content adopting a joined-up approach. Content planning should be collaborative and transparent. The ultimate goal is to have a centralised content calendar, database and planning process. The below best practice is recommended as we move towards this.

A1.1 Updates versus new content projects

Irrespective of whether we are creating content to update or feed our existing key outputs, or whether the content is part of a new project or series of proposed assets, we must ensure that all content:

- aligns to our core mission statement (see Content Strategy Document section 2)
- responds to the needs of our key target audiences and organisational objectives (see Content Strategy Document section 3)
- is consistent with the purpose and objectives of the key outputs it is part of (see Content Strategy Document section 4)
- is measured against consistent performance metrics (see section A3)
- meets our format and accessibility best practices (see section A2)
- is consistent with our brand and writing guidelines (see section A5).

Where new content projects or new series of content assets are proposed, it is imperative that the project goes through the planning, approval, organisation and facilitation stages of our content workflow before any content creation activity is initiated (see Content Strategy Document section 5).

A1.2 Collaborative planning

For existing content outputs, collaborative planning meetings, with a representative from each content output and each content channel, should be conducted on a quarterly basis. The purpose of these meetings is to share insight, coordinate output, identify links and overlaps. These meetings should involve discussions around:

- content performance and insights gained over the previous quarter across the different outputs
- content ideas, planned content and upcoming themes/priorities for the next quarter
- the identification of overlapping or related themes and how they will be tackled by different outputs in different ways to minimise competition
- the identification of already existing related content that can be updated or repurposed
- how the content and themes will connect, cascade and inform the different outputs and channels
- the identification of the appropriate outputs and channels for specific content and themes based on their purposes and primary audiences.

In addition to these meetings, content owners are encouraged to communicate regularly with their peers and check the associated content calendars and plans.

A1.3 Content scheduling and cadence

Content projects and editorial calendars should always be planned in advance. Reactive ad-hoc content production and publishing is only acceptable in situations where it is needed as a response to unpredictable or unplanned immediate events.

- Each content output should have general themes and priorities defined for at least six months in advance.
- Unless reacting to unpredictable events, specific pieces of content should be scheduled at least two months in advance.

When thinking about content cadence, content will be categorised as:
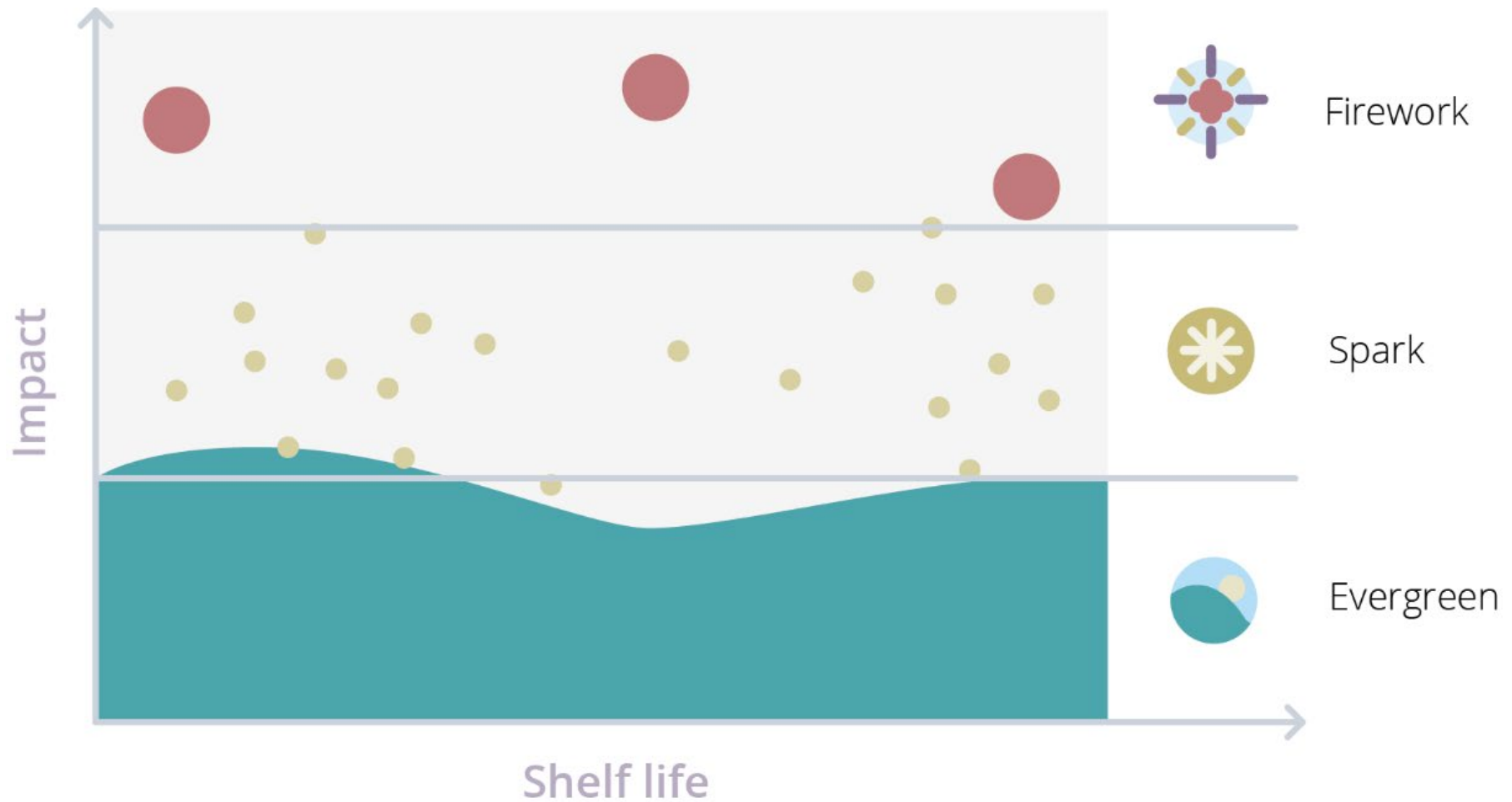
Content Type	Firework Content	Spark Content	Evergreen content
Description	One-off content, relevant for a **punctual purpose** and at a specific point in time, aiming at attracting attention to a particular message or product, engaging audiences, or driving adoption	Content published on a **regular basis** to provide updates, ongoing reports or commentary, up-to-date insights, or fresh perspectives	Content that is **always relevant** to our audiences and/or needs to be referred to beyond its initial period or relevance
Examples	This might include sponsored articles, social media posts, promotional videos, marketing or communication email campaigns, press releases, etc.	This might include articles, opinion and news pieces, subscription products, series of webinars, etc.	This might include professional standards, regulation, reference material, candidate, member and/or user guides, etc.
Shelf-life	**Short shelf-life** – relevant for a specific point in time only	**Medium shelf-life** – relevant for a set period, becomes irrelevant afterwards	**Long shelf-life** – always relevant or needed for reference purposes
Maintenance required	**Deleted or archived** as soon as its desired and punctual purpose has been achieved	**Updated, archived, or deleted** at the end of its set period of relevance	**Re-assessed and updated** at regular intervals. **Archived and clearly tagged** where it needs to remain accessible for reference beyond its period of relevance.

A1.4 Content and editorial calendars

Every RICS content output should have a content/editorial calendar that feeds into the overall RICS content output. These serve both as a schedule for the teams producing the content, and as an information source for others in the business.
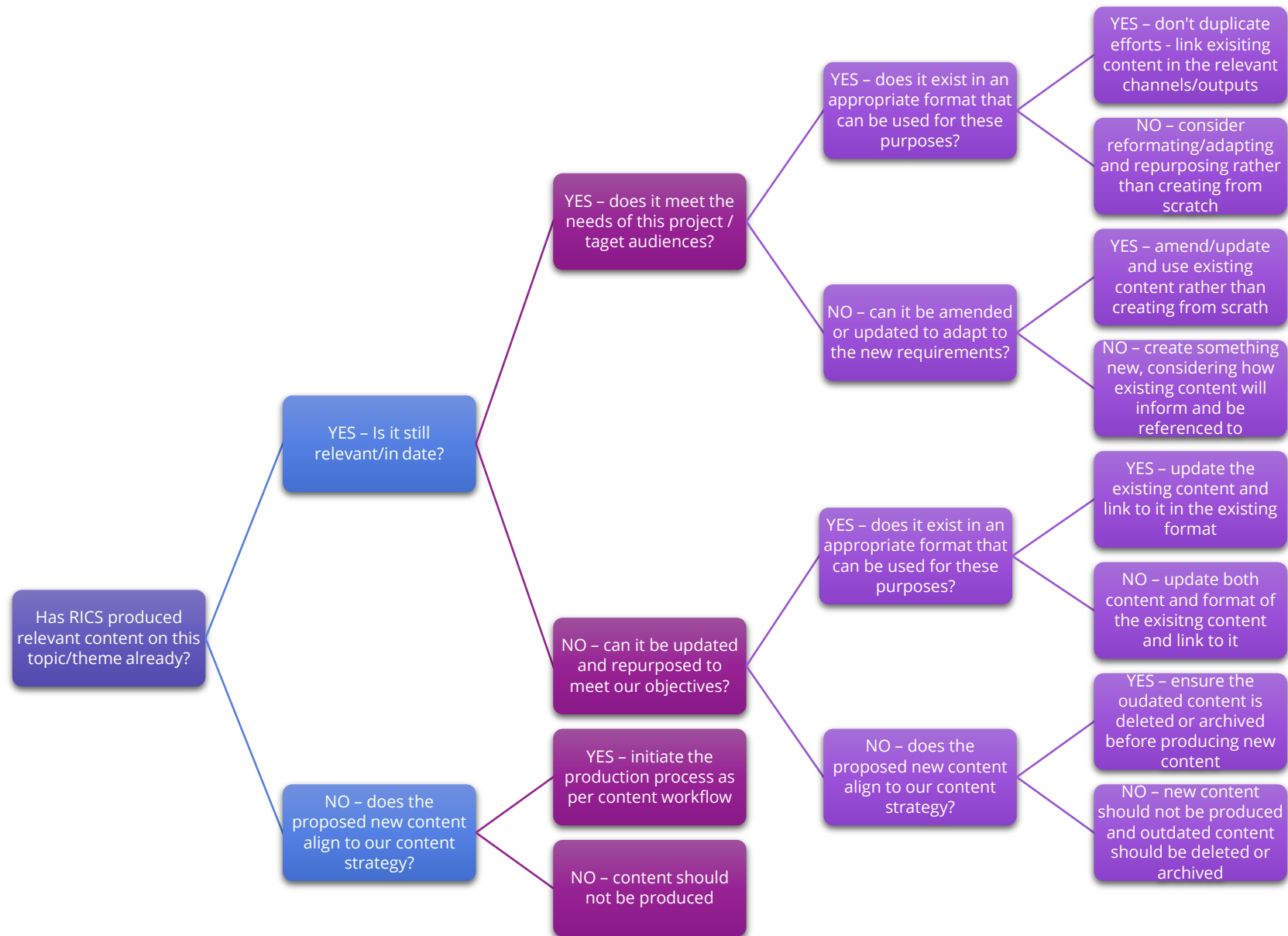
What a content calendar should always include:	Depending on content type, calendars could also include:	Tips and best practice:
- Topic - Themes - Format - Target audience(s) - Target region(s) - Publication channel(s) - Expected publication date - Link to the published piece of content - Shelf-life – date for updating, archiving or deletion	- Author and/or contributor name - Author RICS accreditation - Author company - Appropriate content tags for web - Copyright information - Performance and KPIs	- Use a programme that most people are familiar with (e.g. Excel) - Store it somewhere easily accessible where there is an option to initiate conversation, i.e. a Teams group or channel - Consider locking down some sections for team use only - Encourage people to search the calendar and use filters - Update the calendar on a regular basis – use it as a live document - Use the calendar to seek input and suggestions from colleagues - Appoint a calendar owner in your team that is responsible for updates and maintenance

A1.5 Curating, updating and repurposing existing content

Before new content is created to support a specific project, campaign or purpose, original RICS content should be identified, repurposed, edited, reformatted, compiled and/or converted into or from any medium, and suited for any of our distribution channels. This is an imperative step to ensure:

- we reduce the RICS content noise by only creating what has not already been created
- we cross-promote our different channels, content outputs and their original content
- we optimise resources, time and avoid duplication of efforts.

Before initiating content production, explore the following questions:

YES – don't duplicate efforts - link exisiting content in the relevant channels/outputs

YES – does it exist in an appropriate format that can be used for these purposes?

NO – consider reformating/adapting and repurposing rather than creating from scratch

YES – does it meet the needs of this project / taget audiences?

YES – amend/update and use existing content rather than creating from scrath

NO – can it be amended or updated to adapt to the new requirements?

NO – create something new, considering how existing content will inform and be referenced to

YES – Is it still relevant/in date?

YES – update the existing content and link to it in the existing format

YES – does it exist in an appropriate format that can be used for these purposes?

NO – update both content and format of the exisitng content and link to it

Has RICS produced relevant content on this topic/theme already?

NO – can it be updated and repurposed to meet our objectives?

YES – ensure the oudated content is deleted or archived before producing new content

NO – does the proposed new content align to our content strategy?

NO – new content should not be produced and outdated content should be deleted or archived

YES – initiate the production process as per content workflow

NO – does the proposed new content align to our content strategy?

NO – content should not be produced

The **User Experience team** should be consulted to find out what content is currently live across different channels and outputs. For content that is no longer live on our channels, the following team might be able to advise:

- Standards and Guidance – **Standards Delivery Team**, Standard and Professional Development Directorate.
- Regulation – **Regulation Operations Team**, Regulation Directorate.
- Education and Assessment – **Assessment Operations Team**, Education and Qualification Directorate.
- Thought Leadership – **Thought Leadership and Analysis Team**, Public Affairs and Thought Leadership Directorate.
- Product Content – **Product Content Team**, Product Directorate.
- Journals and Modus – **Journals Team**, Brand and Comms Directorate.
- World Built Environment Forum – **WBEF Team**, Public Affairs and Thought Leadership Directorate.

A2 Formats and accessibility

This section focuses on how we will ensure that content is designed and produced in the most appropriate formats for its purposes, target audiences and relevant distribution channels. It will also focus on how we will increase accessibility of our content to ensure it is inclusive to the needs of our users.

A2.1 Adopting the most appropriate content formats

This section focuses on what content formats we will use. It articulates what formats should be prioritised in what circumstances and for which purposes, and the effort and resource implications for each.
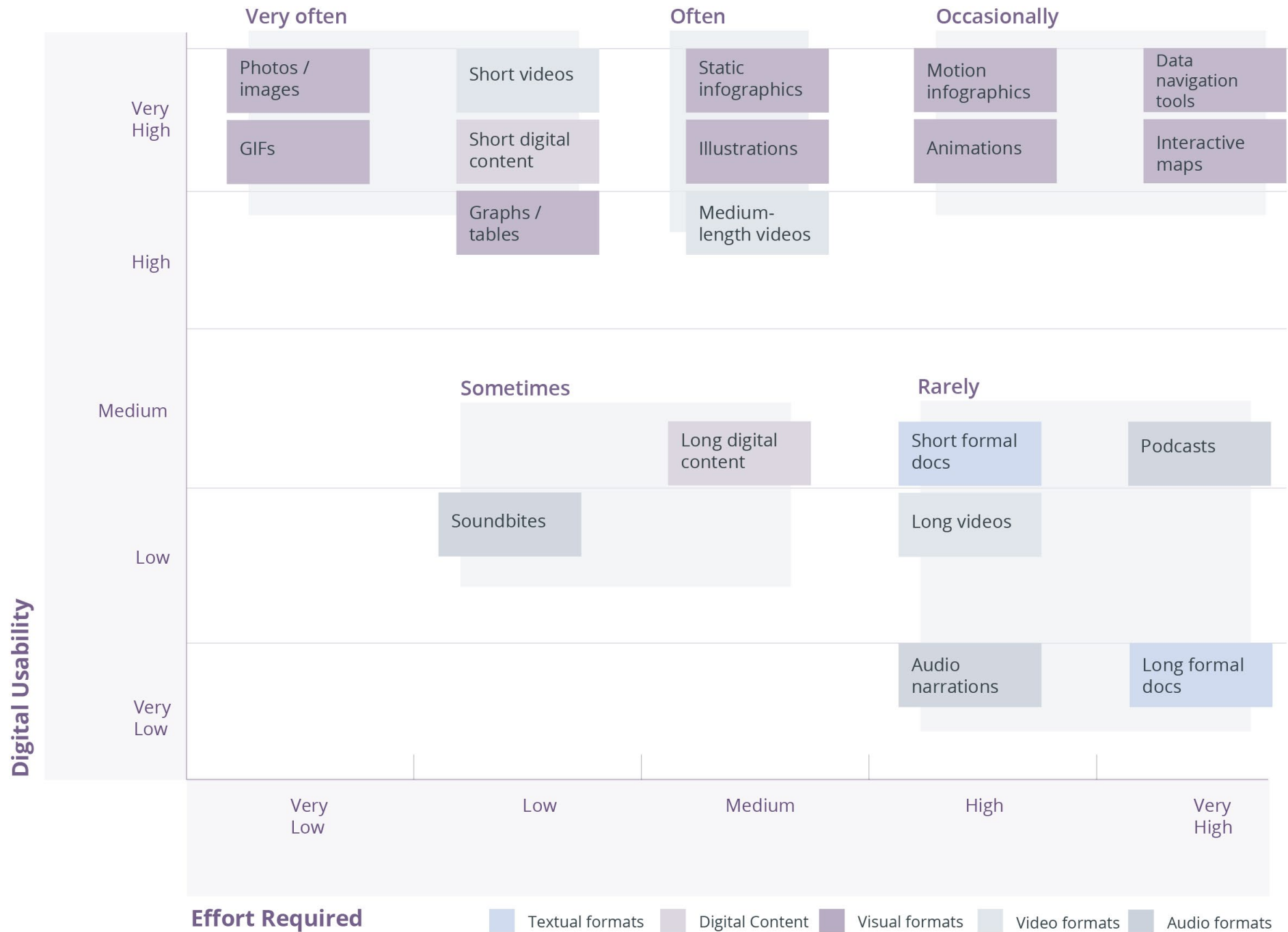
Content formats	Subtypes and descriptions	Examples	Primary purpose	Production effort (indicative only)	Digital usability	When is it appropriate to use
Digital formats	**Long-form digital content.** Long-form content, as a mix of text, visual and/or interactive formats – may include images, tables, graphs, and other accompanying visual elements.	Guidance on Paths into the Profession, Assessment Procedures, isurv articles, long web articles, Survey Pages, etc.	Distribution of complex information, guidance and thought-leadership content.	**Medium –** production times may vary between 1 week and over a month depending on length and complexity of project.	**Medium** – by following the appropriate SEO guides, the content can be searched, broken down and easily consulted digitally, although difficult to keep user attention on page if too long.	**Sometimes** – this format should be used instead of long-form formal documents whenever possible. SEO and Writing for Web guidelines need to be followed to increase usability.
	Short-form digital content. Short-form webpage content as a mix of text, visual and/or interactive formats – may include images, tables, graphs, and other accompanying visual elements.	Short form web copy, email copy, short web articles, news pieces and press releases.	Distribution of non-complex content, messages and information.	**Low -** production times may vary between few hours and a week depending on length and complexity.	**Very high** – short-form digital text is by far the most effective form of text. It can be consulted easily and digitally and shows the highest usability performance.	**Very often –** this format should be the default text format. Whenever possible, text should be condensed and proposed through our digital channel.
Textual formats	**Long formal documents.** Long and complex text-based documents, often including many tables, graphs and charts, typically distributed as downloadable PDFs.	Technical publications and professional guides (e.g. Red Book, New Rules of Measurement, etc.)	Distribution of complex technical content and professional reference material.	**Very high** – production times may vary between 2 and 8 months depending on length and complexity.	**Very low** – content cannot be easily indexed for web searches or easily consulted digitally.	**Rarely** – when complex information and professional guidance is provided that is of technical nature, and that needs to be referred to in formal circumstances.
	Short formal documents. Short text-based documents, sometimes including a few tables, graphs and charts, typically distributed as downloadable PDFs.	Rules of Conduct, Regulations, White Papers, Corporate Reports, Strategy Papers, Survey Reports, etc.	Distribution of formal reports, policies and regulations that need to be referenced in formal circumstances.	**High** – production times may vary between a few weeks and 3 months depending on length and complexity.	**Low** – content cannot be easily searched although it can be more easily consulted digitally.	**Rarely** – where the content is of a formal or regulatory nature and needs to be referred to in formal circumstances (i.e. tribunals, academic settings, board meetings, etc.).

Visual formats	**Static visuals**					
	1) Photos	Imagery (often from stock) accompanying articles, social media posts, webpages and email banners.	Showing something true to life to illustrate or provide a clearer understanding.	**Very low** – licensed stock photos are readily available on the Brand Hub or can be sources quickly. Production is immediate.	**Very high** – adding images often increases engagement of a piece of content.	**Very often** – photos should be used as often as possible to make the content more engaging and appealing.
	2) Illustrations	Designed images accompanying articles, webpages, videos, infographics.	Interpretation or visual explanation of a text, concept or process. They offer a more tailored image to support a content piece and can increase recognition through consistent branding.	**Medium –** Illustrations need to be designed by graphic experts - production times vary from a few hours to a couple of days depending on complexity.	**Very high** – adding illustrations helps better illustrate a concept and often increases engagement of a piece of content.	**Often** – Illustration should be used whenever it is useful to illustrate a concept, process easily and visually.
	3) Graphs and tables	Ordered visual representation of data and stats.	Communicate data and statics in an easily digestible formats.	**Low** – compiling graphs and tables might require variable efforts depending on the amount of data that needs to be displayed. Production might require days or weeks.	**High** – graphs and tables can be optimised for effective digital consultation but are not the easiest to navigate and understand.	**Very often** – graphs and table should be used when a complex data needs to be explained or communicated, if a static infographic is not appropriate.
	4) Static infographics	An image that merges text and graphics to communicate data and processes easily and is compact to digest.	Clearly illustrate complex data, statics and/or processes in an easily digestible formats.	**Medium** – static infographics require multiple stages text organisation and graphic design. Production might require days or weeks.	**Very high** – adding illustrations helps better illustrate a concept and often increases engagement of a piece of content.	**Often** – where content and processes are complex and require a clear visual illustration to enable users to quickly understand.
	Motion Visuals					
	1) Animations	A moving picture, image or illustration.	Tells a story through moving images and can be used to help simplify complex information.	**High** – animations require advanced multi-media design skills and specialist software. Production time may vary from 1 week to a month depending on complexity.	**Very high** – adding illustrations helps better illustrate a concept and often increases engagement of a piece of content.	**Occasionally -** where content and processes are complex and require a clear visual illustration to enable users to quickly understand.
	2) GIFs	Combination of a few images into a single file sequence that complete the loop every 10-12 seconds.	Ideal to encourage a call for action or attract attention to a very simple "how-to" process.	**Very low** – GIFs can be creating very quickly with a combination of stock photos and simple illustrations. Production only requires a few hours.	**Very high** – using GIFs help attract the attention to a specific concept or desired action.	**Very often** – GIFs should be used as often as possible to make the content more engaging and appealing.

	3) Motion infographics	An animation that merges text, illustrations and graphics to communicate complex data and processes in a way that is easy and compact to digest.	Clearly illustrate very complex data, statics and/or processes in an attractive and easily digestible formats.	**High** – static infographics require multiple stages text organisation, illustration, animation and graphic design.	**High** – Motion Infographic can make very complex processes and information easy to understand and navigate in a digital environment.	**Sometimes** - where content and processes are very complex and require a clear visual and moving illustration to enable users to quickly understand and engage.
	Interactive assets					
	1) Data navigation tools	Animated and/or click-through representations of data, processes and information for automatic consultation.	Enable to user to independently navigate data patterns, trends and relationships. Effective to organise data.	**Very high** – data navigation tools require advanced multimedia design skills and multiple sub-tasks – production times might vary from a few weeks to several months depending on complexity.	**High** – digital and user-friendly way to enable users to independently explore and consult data, processes and relations. Data navigation tools are easy to use in a digital environment.	**Occasionally** – for high-profile projects and campaigns only - where complex processes, data and information can be turned into digestible and interactive formats.
	2) Interactive maps	A geographical image where points can be further delved into for more information.	Show a greater breadth of work and reach across and areas or allow users to focus solely on info for an area of interest to them.	**Very high** – interactive maps require advanced multimedia design skills and multiple sub-tasks – production times might vary from a few weeks to several months depending on complexity.	**High** – interactive maps require advanced multimedia design skills and multiple sub-tasks – production times might vary from a few weeks to several months depending on complexity.	**Occasionally** – for high-profile projects and campaigns only - where multiple projects and pieces of content need to be presented according to location.
Video formats	**Long form** (5 minutes or longer)	Video interviews, webinars, lectures, workshops, in-depth explanatory videos, etc.	Useful to communicate complex and technical guidance or information, advanced learning, discussions and Q&As in personable or direct way.	**High** – production may require organisation of participants, trainers, speakers, interviewees along with video recording, production and editing. Video recording and editing time may vary between one and several weeks.	**Low** – requires high commitment and interest by the user who would plan the watching of a long video.	**Occasionally** – for high-profile projects and campaigns only – where information cannot be condensed, and information is vital for the users.
	Medium-length form (between 1 and 5 minutes)	Video announcements, Q&As, short how-to videos, recorded updates, etc.	Useful to announce important projects and campaigns, distribute short explainer guides and promote complex products and services.	**Medium** – production may require organisation of participants, interviewees along with video recording, production and editing. Video recording and editing time may vary between a day and a week.	**Medium** – easy to engage with and watch for insights, guidance or direction.	**Often** – Medium form videos should be used whenever it is useful to explain a complex process, information or for high-profile announcements.

	Short form (Less than 1 minutes)	Social media, promotional and/or teaser videos.	Very useful to attract the user attention on a new product, service or announcement.	**Low** – production is usually conducted with a mix so stick images, animations and pre-recordings. Production times may vary between 1 and 3 days.	**Very high** – easy to engage with and watch across a multitude of devices and platforms.	**Very often** – short videos should be used as often as possible to make the content more engaging and appealing.
Audio formats	**Long form** 1) Podcasts	Episodic series of published audio recordings focusing on a specific theme, exploring different aspects in different episodes, usually featuring the same speaker/s with or without guest participants. Podcasts are series of subscription products.	Podcasts are not a one-off audio recording. They should always come as a cohesive and thematic series of subscription episodes, and with a commitment to deliver new episodes on a weekly or monthly basis, focusing on a cohesive theme, presenters and recurring narrative structures.	**Very High** – podcasts require ongoing commitment, recording equipment, presenters, guests, scripting of episodes and cohesive structures. Recording and professional editing of single episodes require between several days and a week.	**Medium** – requires high commitment and interest by the user who would subscribe and regularly listen to the recordings.	**Rarely** - only where there is a clear case for designing and delivering a series of ongoing and subscription products that do not compete with the rest of our content ecosystem.
	2) Recorded narration (over 5 minutes)	One-off audio recordings of lectures, presentations, discussions and Q&As – presented with a still holding image or animation on the background.	Might be useful as an alternative to a long-form video when the video recording is not available/feasible.	**Medium** – production may require organisation of participants, interviewees along with audio recording, optimisation and editing. Audio recording and editing time may vary between 1 day and 1 week.	**Low** – requires high commitment and interest by the user who would plan the watching of a long audio recording.	**Rarely** – video form should be prioritised instead of recorded narration whenever possible, as it is much more engaging for the users.
	Short form **Soundbites** (less than 5 minutes)	Soundbites are short audio extracts of speeches, interviews and/or presentations.	Might be useful as an accompanying format to an article, or as an attachment to an email.	**Low** – audio recording, extraction and editing may vary between several hours and 1 day.	**Low** – requires high interest by the user who would opt to click to listen, less attractive than a short video.	**Rarely** – short videos should be prioritised instead of soundbites whenever possible, as much more engaging for the users.

Content format prioritisation matrix

Digital Usability (vertical axis)

	Very often	Often	Occasionally
Very High	Photos / images; GIFs; Short videos; Short digital content	Static infographics; Illustrations	Motion infographics; Animations; Data navigation tools; Interactive maps
High	Graphs / tables	Medium-length videos	

	Sometimes	Rarely
Medium	Long digital content	Short formal docs; Podcasts
Low	Soundbites	Long videos
Very Low		Audio narrations; Long formal docs

Effort Required (horizontal axis): Very Low — Low — Medium — High — Very High

Legend:
- Textual formats
- Digital Content
- Visual formats
- Video formats
- Audio formats

A2.2 Maximising content accessibility

We will optimise our digital content by increasing its accessibility to the widest possible number of users – including users who are not fluent English speakers and users who use screen readers. The principles below will make our content more accessible to all types of readers.

NB: A screen reader is a program that takes on-screen content (including text, images, links etc.) and transforms it into formats that can be used by users with visual impairments – such as speech or Braille.

Increasing text readability

To increase content readability for all users (including non-proficient English speakers and those using screen readers) we will:
- use plain and simple language, avoiding colloquialisms where possible
- break down complex sentences whenever possible:
    - sentences of fewer than 15 words are considered easy to read
    - sentences of 15 to 20 words are considered of moderate difficulty
    - sentences of more than 20 words are considered very difficult to read.
- use short paragraphs, and ensure a paragraph only has a single idea
- break up content with headings, lists or images
- use headings to logically group and summarise the information.

Content structure and layout

A web page or email copy should be well structured and follow a meaningful and logical sequence of information and layouts. Screen readers often use headings to navigate pages. We will:
- present content and structure information in a logical order
- use a structured heading system (i.e. use H1, then H2, then H3, then back to H2. Avoid jumping between heading levels, i.e. H1 to H4 to H3).

Colours

Colours should align with the RICS colour palette within our Visual Branding Guidelines (see section A5.1) or the relevant product colour palette, available on the Brand Centre. Many colour-blind users choose to view content in black and white. We will:
- design content that uses colour as a tool but does not rely on it to convey information or distinguish between elements
- ensure the key meaning and important information is not lost if the content is viewed in black and white
- avoid high concentrations of oversaturated colours, high contrasting colours and yellow
- ensure a clear contrast between foreground and background colours
- use dark text on a light background as often as possible.

Fonts

Information about the correct RICS fonts, or product-specific fonts, can be found in the Brand Centre and in our Visual Branding Guidelines (see section A5.1). To optimise the way text is displayed, we will:

- avoid using all upper-case text
- avoid italicising hyperlinked text
- when using hashtags, we will capitalise the first letter of each word.

Audio and video formats

To ensure audio and videos are more accessible, work well with screen readers, and can effectively been consumed by users with hearing or visual impairments, we will:

- avoid auto-playing video or audio embedded within webpages wherever possible
- if auto-playing video or audio must be used, ensure controls to stop, pause or hide them are available
- include transcripts and/or subtitles as often as possible.

Static visual formats (including photos, images, illustrations etc.)

To ensure images can be described by screen readers to visually impaired users, we will:

- include alt text for every image displayed (see SEO Best Practice Highlights in section A5.3.2)
- use a caption or text box if the amount of alt text is excessive.

Motion visual formats (animations, motion infographics etc.)

To ensure motion visual formats are not confusing, distracting and potentially harmful for users with certain conditions, we will:

- avoid flashy animations or effects that might cause seizures
- avoid animations or effects that might cause dizziness or vertigo
- where possible, provide controls or options to stop, pause, hide or change the frequency of animations or effects.

Interactive user interface elements

Interactive user interface (UI) elements enable users to interact with the content (including buttons, links, etc.). To ensure they can be displayed effectively, we will:
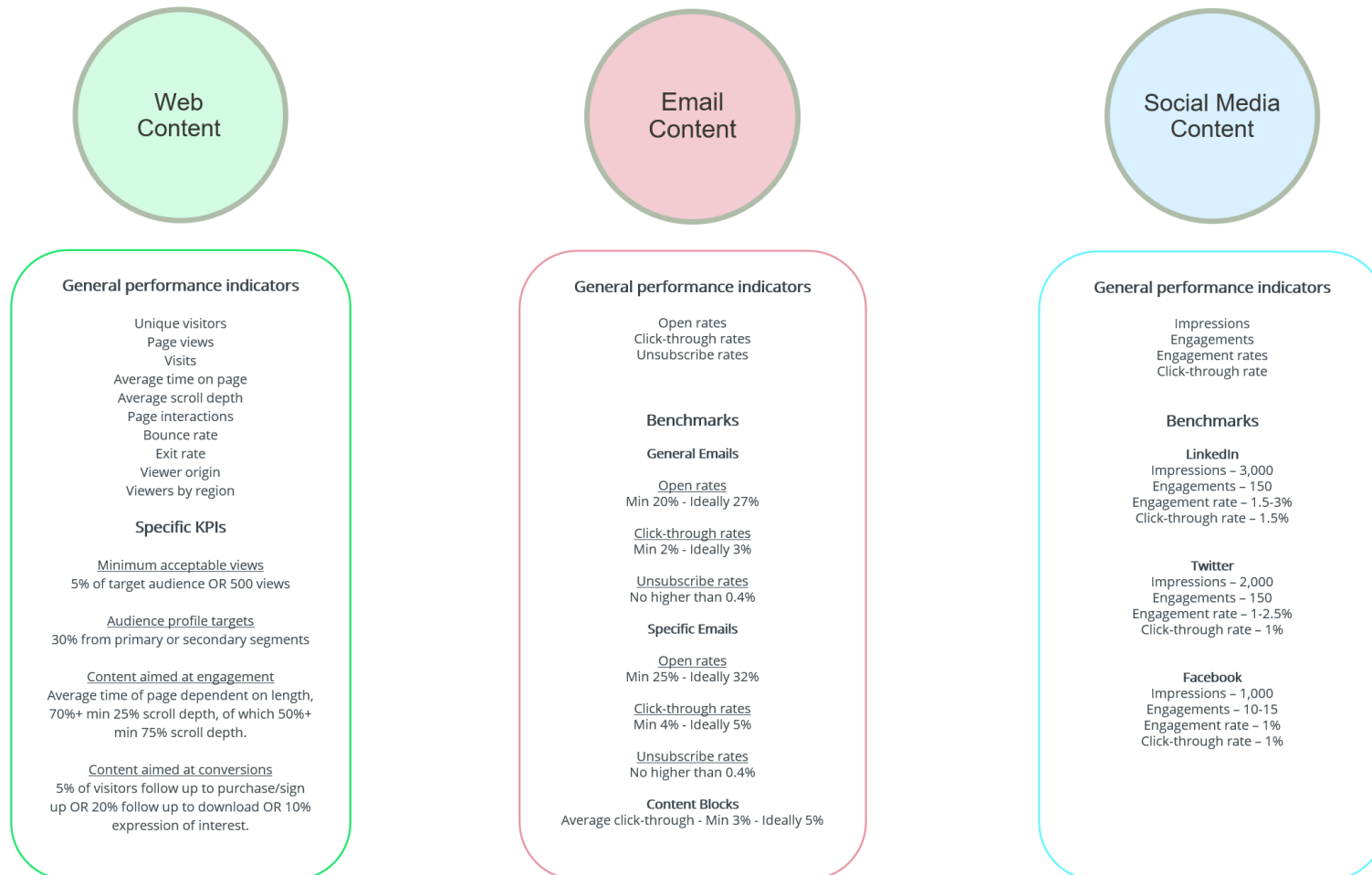
- ensure that UI elements and controls are not placed too close to each other
- ensure that all controls have a visible text label and include alt text on all links and controls to explain the action
- provide clear instruction on how the user can interact with the UI elements.

A3 Measuring content success

The content we publish must be measured against specific key performance indicators (KPIs) based on its purpose, target audiences and the distribution channels in use. This will allow us to judge what has been successful and learn from what has not been impactful – in turn, informing our future efforts.

KPIs should be measured consistently to allow for comparable insights. This section sets out the information we should collect as standard for each distribution channel. Where the minimum KPIs are not met within the relevant timeframes, content should be optimised, if possible, and the experience should inform future content creation decisions.

Our ultimate aim is to get users to engage with our web content – email and social media are drivers to allow this to happen. The below sets out best practice for measuring content success. More specific targets can be set for specific content or campaigns by liaising with the relevant channel owners.

Web Content

General performance indicators

Unique visitors
Page views
Visits
Average time on page
Average scroll depth
Page interactions
Bounce rate
Exit rate
Viewer origin
Viewers by region

Specific KPIs

Minimum acceptable views
5% of target audience OR 500 views

Audience profile targets
30% from primary or secondary segments

Content aimed at engagement
Average time of page dependent on length, 70%+ min 25% scroll depth, of which 50%+ min 75% scroll depth.

Content aimed at conversions
5% of visitors follow up to purchase/sign up OR 20% follow up to download OR 10% expression of interest.

Email Content

General performance indicators

Open rates
Click-through rates
Unsubscribe rates

Benchmarks

General Emails

Open rates
Min 20% - Ideally 27%

Click-through rates
Min 2% - Ideally 3%

Unsubscribe rates
No higher than 0.4%

Specific Emails

Open rates
Min 25% - Ideally 32%

Click-through rates
Min 4% - Ideally 5%

Unsubscribe rates
No higher than 0.4%

Content Blocks
Average click-through - Min 3% - Ideally 5%

Social Media Content

General performance indicators

Impressions
Engagements
Engagement rates
Click-through rate

Benchmarks

LinkedIn
Impressions – 3,000
Engagements – 150
Engagement rate – 1.5-3%
Click-through rate – 1.5%

Twitter
Impressions – 2,000
Engagements – 150
Engagement rate – 1-2.5%
Click-through rate – 1%

Facebook
Impressions – 1,000
Engagements – 10-15
Engagement rate – 1%
Click-through rate – 1%

A3.1 Web content

(i.e. content hosted on our website)

General performance indicators	Specific KPIs

For each piece of web content, the following information should be collected as standard.
 	
• **Unique visitors –** the number of people that visited the webpage containing or displaying the content over the selected period
• **Page views –** the total number of times the webpage was viewed or refreshed within the selected period
• **Visits –** the number of single browsing sessions. If a visitor views another page within 30 minutes of the last pageview it is counted as the same visit.
• **Average time on page –** the average time users spends on the webpage
• **Average scroll depth –** how far someone scrolls down the piece of content – measured in increments of 25%
• **Page interactions –** numbers of clicks on links, interactive media or downloads as applicable
• **Bounce rate –** the percentage of users that have consulted this page only
• **Exit rate –** the percentage of users that have left the website after looking at this page
• **Viewer origin –** how the viewer reached the webpage – e.g. landing page, from email or social media, etc.
• **Viewers by region –** where viewers are located, defined by RICS region
 	
Additionally:
• **Members vs non-members* –** percentage of viewers that are RICS members
• **Viewers by membership specialism*** – member specialisms of viewers
• **Viewers by membership grade* –** percentage of Students, Candidates, AssocRICS, MRICS or FRICS
 	
Measures currently unavailable on our system – will be available after our migration to the new website (expected late 2021)
	Additional KPIs, specific to different types of content, that you might want to set at planning and approval stage (see Content Strategy Document 5.1) to better measure the success of the content.
	
	Minimum acceptable views – web content should specify a minimum acceptable number of page views depending on its nature:
	• where targeted at specific member sectors – **a minimum of 5%** of target members should be achieved (i.e. if we have 30,000 quantity surveyors, a piece aimed at them should be viewed by no fewer than 1,500)
	• where visitors cannot be profiled, or content is targeted at non-members, **a minimum of 500 views** need to be achieved to justify content production efforts.
	
	Audience profile – minimum 30% of visitors should be part of primary or secondary audience segments (see Content Strategy Document section 3.1)
	
	Engagement (where content is aimed at engaging the user, e.g. articles, guidance, information, etc.) – performance should be measured monthly:
	• Average time on page:
	  ○ 600-1000 words – **minimum 2 mins 30 secs**
	  ○ 1000-1400 words – **minimum 3 mins**
	  ○ 1400-1800 words – **minimum 3 mins 30 secs**
	  ○ 1800-2200 words – **minimum 5 mins**
	  ○ 2200+ words – **minimum 6 mins**
	• Average scroll depth:
	  ○ 70%+ viewers should reach **minimum 25% scroll depth**
	  ○ 50%+ viewers past 25% should reach **minimum 75%**
	
	Conversions (where content is aimed at instigating a specific action, e.g. buy, subscribe, download, enrol, enquire, register, etc.) – performance should be measured weekly or monthly, depending on content lifecycle.
	• Page interactions:
	  ○ Follow up to purchase/sign-up – **minimum 5% of visitors**
	  ○ Follow up to download – **minimum 20% of visitors**
	  ○ Follow up to expression of interest – **minimum 10% of visitors**

A3.2 Email content

(i.e. content disseminated via emails)

Emails – depending on if they are one-off sends or newsletter series – can be measured on a monthly or ad-hoc basis and will measure:
- **Open rates** – the number of times the email had been opened
- **Click-through rates** – the number of times a link in the email has been clicked on
- **Unsubscribe rates** – how many receivers unsubscribed following reception of the email from the email – unsubscribe rates should always be **below 0.4%**

Benchmarks (what good looks like):
- General emails, not focused on one specific topic or target to a specific audience segments (e.g. all profession emails, CPD and subscription reminders etc.)
  - Open rate – 27.16% **(minimum acceptable – 20%)**
  - Click-through rate – 3.06% **(minimum acceptable – 2%)**
- Specific emails, focused on one specific topic or target to a specific audience segments (e.g. marketing emails, sector emails, regional newsletters etc.)
  - Open rate – 32% **(minimum acceptable – 25%)**
  - Click-through rate – 5% **(minimum acceptable – 4%)**

Content blocks – where specific content blocks are added to emails, their performance is measured based on the average click-through rate across all emails that include the block. The benchmark for content block click-through rate is 5% **(minimum acceptable – 3%)**

A3.3 Social media content

(i.e. content disseminated via our social media accounts)

We will measure three elements:

- **Impressions** – number of users who see the content posted on our social media accounts
- **Engagements** – number of times someone likes, reacts, comments or shares on a post
- **Engagement rate –** total engagement received versus impressions
- **Click-through rate** – number of users following the call for action within the post (i.e. clicking on the link)

We will benchmark success of social media posts as follows:

LinkedIn	Twitter	Facebook
LinkedIn is our most popular platform and as such, we can generate high rates on engagement and impressions. Media type will impact engagement rates – for example, a social card will achieve around 1% but a video can generate as high as 4-5%. We will benchmark content success based on: **Impressions** – 3,000 **Engagements** – 150 **Engagement rate** – 1.5-3% **Click-through rate** – 1.5%	Due to the fast-moving nature of the platform, it can be difficult to hook people in with flat media – video, GIFs and topical content should be prioritised for this medium. We will benchmark content success based on: **Impressions** – 2,000 **Engagements** – 150 **Engagement rate** – 1-2.5% **Click-through rate** – 1%	Facebook is a 'pay to play' platform and should be mainly used for paid-for advertising. We will benchmark success of free content based on: **Impressions** – 1,000 **Engagements** – 10-15 **Engagement rate** – 1% **Click-through rate** – 1%

Content KPIs Analysis Example

Content description	Article discussing flooding in the UK, initially published in Modus, then shared through the Modus newsletter email, as a content block in three company emails, and on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter posts			
Target audience	Primary and secondary audiences 1) Prospective Members 2) Qualified Professionals		Industry segment/specialism/markets: - Built environment - United Kingdom	
Addressable audience	50,000			
Content purpose	Engage			

Performance	Measure		Target	Actual	Achieved
Webpage Performance	Page views		2,500	4,000	Yes
	Average time on page		3 mins	3 mins 3 secs	Yes
	25% scroll depth		70%	52%	No
	75% scroll depth		50%	52%	Yes
	Bounce rate		40%	60%	No
	Exit rate		50%	30%	Yes
Email Performance	Email open rate		32%	40%	Yes
	Email click rate		5%	7%	Yes
	Content block click rate		5%	3%	No
Social Media Performance	**LinkedIn**	Impressions	3,000	5,000	Yes
		Engagements	150	50	No
		Engagement rate	1.5%	1%	No
		Click-through rate	1.5%	0.5%	No
	Twitter	Impressions	2000	2500	Yes
		Engagements	150	200	Yes
		Engagement rate	1%	1.3%	Yes
		Click-through rate	1%	0.5%	No
	Facebook	Impressions	1000	100	No
		Engagements	10	1	No
		Engagement rate	1%	1%	Yes
		Click-through rate	1%	1.2%	Yes
Insights and Recommendations	**Web** - Low 25% scroll rate and high bounce rate suggests users do not find the intro very enticing and/or that the title doesn't match their initial expectations, could this be amended? **Email** – Consider amending or re-designing content block. **Social Media** – Low engagement and click-through on LinkedIn despite high impressions – consider re-writing posts to make them more attractive. Good engagement but low click-throughs on Twitter – is the call for action clear enough? Very low impressions and engagement on Facebook, consider whether it is the right platform for this content.				

A4 Commissioning, languages and copyright

This section clarifies our policies and best practices for authoring content – including commissioning external authors, ensuring legal compliance and adherence to our language and translation policy.

A4.1 Commissioning and briefing authors

Most pieces of content will have an author associated with them, whether RICS staff or external. External authors can increase or decrease authority and credibility – therefore authors should be carefully selected based on their credentials and expertise. Records should be kept of all external content authors and logged into the relevant content calendars (see section A1.3). Where possible, refer to other team's existing calendars to increase collaboration and avoid overusing the same authors.

Selecting the author

Consider whether the author should be internal, external, or a mixture if appropriate – depending on the message, tone and purpose of your content. For instance:

- content focusing on RICS' technical sectors would be best authored by the RICS sector lead
- content explaining a new RICS standard would be best authored by the author of the standard, with or without input from the sector lead
- a case study experience of standard adoption would be best authored by an external surveyor who used the standard
- a technical article would be best authored by an experienced and well-respected expert on the subject
- a thought-leadership piece would be best authored by the relevant analysts, without or without external contributions
- an opinion article would be best authored by someone who has experienced the topic they are writing about.

Consider diversity and whether the author should be an RICS qualified professional or not – there is value in both. Members can connect well with their colleagues, while non-members can provide different and important perspectives and knowledge.

- Avoid repeatedly using the same author/s unless there is a specific purpose is engaging with regular columnists, for example.
- We should avoid positioning someone external as our voice on a topic but use RICS internal experts whenever possible.
- Ensure diversity of authors – both in terms of protected characteristics and terms of diversity of career, experience, perspective and region.

For creative content, visual and/or video assets:

- the Brand Hub should be used for most creative needs – where not possible, internal resources should be used if possible
- external agencies and creators can be used if appropriate depending on budget, available resources and due approvals
- when using external agencies, Brand and Writing guidelines must be adhered to in all circumstances (see section A5).

Commissioning and briefing external authors

Once the author(s) for a written piece of content have been confirmed, a content brief should be agreed upon, clarifying the scope of the content, deadlines and the responsibilities of both author(s) and commissioners. It is best practice to agree on writing, editing and sign-off process upfront and ensure conversations are documented on emails.

A4.2 Intellectual Property, copyright and plagiarism

To ensure that our content is accurate and trustworthy and avoid legal issues, the intellectual property, copyright and plagiarism guidance below **must always be adhered to** by anyone commissioning and authoring RICS content.

Intellectual property (IP)
External advisors and editorial boards

Intellectual property is intangible property that results from creativity. In the context of RICS, intellectual property is generated through editorial advisory groups, working groups, roundtables and/or any other groups or gatherings that result in the creation of ideas. As these will originate RICS content, external participants should sign an agreement form. Permission does not need to be obtained from RICS staff. Participants should be acknowledged in any resulting content. An agreement should ensure that participants:

- treat discussions and ideas confidentially
- assign all IP rights for their contributions to RICS and waive all moral rights
- acknowledge that their contributions are original and do not infringe other's IP rights
- agree to notify RICS in writing if it discovered that any of their contribution's IP rights is owned by someone else
- agree that the publication of the contribution is at the discretion of RICS
- agree to RICS editing and modifying the contribution, with or without prior approval.

Copyright
RICS Content

Copyright is the exclusive legal right to reproduce, publish, sell, or distribute the matter and form of intellectual property. Copyright applies to all content - including literary works, dramatic works, musical works, artistic works, layouts or typographical arrangements, recordings and broadcasts. Appropriate copyright statement and/or disclaimers must be included in all our published content within the relevant distribution channels. Example [here](#).

Authors agreement

Ahead of publication, written permission must be obtained from all external contributors and authors. Permission does not need to be obtained from RICS staff. External authors and contributors must provide RICS with explicit and written consent to:

- the publication of the content and editorial intervention as appropriate
- the use of the content in perpetuity, with author/contributor acknowledgement if/where appropriate
- use of content for promotional campaigns and/or within any channel as deemed appropriate (e.g. emails, social media etc.)
- written consent can be given via a digitally signed form or via email, if an identifiable email address is included
- where multiple authors or contributors are involved or where they are contributing to multiple pieces of content, joint forms and/or block agreements may be issued
- where authors or contributors request changes, they must be signed off by Heads of and/or legal team as appropriate
- records of agreements should be kept up to date, owned by the content output owner and accessible upon request
- any agreement form must be approved by the RICS legal team before use.

Obtaining permission for third-party content

Images and visual assets used by RICS staff should be sourced through the Brand Hub as their copyright has already been obtained. Where new images are required a request can be made to the Brand Team. Where external assets must be used, permission from the external authors/creators must be requested and granted before use. Permission **must be granted** for:

- usage of substantial amounts of text from non-RICS books, white papers, reports, articles, website content, etc.
- visual assets (including images, photographs, tables, graphs, maps etc) that have not been created by RICS staff
- permission must be sought for figures and images even if they are edited, changed or redrawn.

Permission **does not need to be obtained** if:

- **Use is covered by fair dealing** – fair dealing is an exception in copyright law that allows limited use of copyright works without the permission of the copyright owner, provided it has already been made available to the public and is sufficiently acknowledged. The amount of content that can be used is not defined in law. Normally, we would not need to seek permission when quoting one or two paragraphs or up to 300 words (however, quality and significance of the extract must also be considered).
- **Work is out of copyright –** copyright lengths vary by jurisdiction. Often, work is protected for the life of the author plus 70 years. Please ensure you check with the legal team if in doubt.
- **Permission might already have been granted through open or common licences** (often for non-commercial purposes only) – a piece of content might have been distributed with an Open Access Licence – meaning that it can be freely reused. The source of information must always be quoted.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own. RICS content must quote and acknowledge the relevant sources in all circumstances. Before publishing, any text submitted by external sources will be run through dedicated software to ensure it has not been plagiarised. Any plagiarism concerns and reports must be investigated and resolved before publishing. Where plagiarism concerns cannot be solved, the content must not be published.

A4.3 Languages and translations

RICS operates, regulates and communicates in English (UK). At its sole discretion, when it is deemed essential for increasing dissemination, adoption and/or ease of access, we might make certain content available in languages other than English by using our Global Translation Providers.

Our Translation Policy and Ways of Working clarifies when content should and should not be translated, and the priority and non-priority languages that we should translate in – along with detailing guidance on using our Global Translation Providers when needed.

Please refer to our [Translation Policy and Ways of Working](#).

A5 Brand guidelines and writing manual

This section sets the branding and writing standards to which we will adhere for all our content across different channels and outputs. Following these principles will ensure RICS content speaks consistently with one voice and is recognisable across the different channels. It will also ensure our writing style is clear, and easy to understand and engage with.

A5.1 Respecting our brand – one voice, different tones

Our brand values, narrative and proposition help define the voice and personality of our content. While voice and personality is always consistent, we will adapt our style and tone to different audiences, purposes and distribution channels (see section A5.3). Full insights on our brand narrative, vision and proposition can be found in our [Messaging Toolkit](#)

Our brand values are: **Professional, Influential and Enterprising**

Professional	
What we mean:	We are experts; we are leaders; we set the standards. We work ethically. We're an example.
What that means for our writing style:	We communicate clearly. Issues may be complex, but we aim to make them easier to understand. We don't over-simplify, and we don't over-complicate. Our message can be ambitious and aspirational as long as it is rooted in truth. Our vocabulary is straightforward, and our grammar is excellent.
Influential	
What we mean:	We have earned the right to speak out on industry matters and people listen to what we have to say.
What that means for our writing style:	We're not afraid to say what we think, even if it's controversial. But we're always considered in our opinions and set out the evidence that supports our beliefs. We use data and facts to back up our assertions.
Enterprising	
What we mean:	We are innovative, commercial and forward looking.
What that means for our writing style:	We're not clubby or old-fashioned. We're outward looking and forward thinking. We understand the vital role our sector plays in the world and are comfortable speaking the language of investment and commerce.

Our brand personality is expressed through: **Integrity**, **Proud** and **Championing**

Integrity	
What we mean:	We do what we say we'll do. We're reliable and consistent. We take responsibility and are open to scrutiny and feedback.
What we don't mean:	Overstating claims.
How it sounds on the page:	Honest and straightforward. We don't exaggerate or fudge an issue. We take accountability for our words as well as our actions. We say what we mean and mean what we say.
Proud	
What we mean:	We're confident and bold because we take pride in what we do.
What we don't mean:	Arrogant, self-important, style over substance.
How it sounds on the page:	We showcase our achievements, individually as a profession and as an organisation. This isn't about being boastful but acknowledging our achievements. We tell stories to bring the message to life.
Championing	
What we mean:	We're positive. We advocate, promote and collaborate to uphold the highest standards for our people, organisation and our profession. We're visionary, forward looking and progressive.
How it sounds on the page:	We use active, not passive language. We're inspiring and motivating. We write with passion, energy and conviction to influence others to take action.

Our visual guidelines

To ensure our visual content is recognisably RICS and speaks with one voice across all the different channels, it is essential that it always adheres to our digital-first visual identity guidelines. Detailed guidance can be found [here](#).

A5.2 House style and correct word usage guides

Our house style and correct word usage guides detail the linguistic, stylistic and grammatical rules that should be followed for all published content to ensure editorial consistency.

Correct word usage

Use	Do not use
RICS	Do not use R.I.C.S.
RICS – say the individual letters.	Do not use RICS as one word ('Rics').
RICS – as in 'RICS says …'.	You must not use 'the RICS' – as in 'the RICS says …'.
RICS is singular and should be referred to as 'RICS has' or 'RICS is'.	RICS must not be referred to as 'RICS have' or 'RICS are'.
An RICS – due to the initial 'R'.	Must not be 'a RICS'.
Organisation – as an alternative to RICS.	Must not be referred to as an institution.
RICS-accredited – for degree qualifications and some training schemes.	Must not use 'RICS-approved' – as this can have legal implications.
RICS-regulated firms	RICS member firms

House style guidance

Any internal or external author writing content for any of our outputs should familiarise themselves with our updated house style guide that can be found [here](#).

The house style guide includes detailed guidance on:
- determining the appropriate **style** for a piece of content – considering audience, appropriate tone, repetitions and commercial messages
- **linguistic** conventions – including the use of abbreviations, capitalisations, foreign words and plain English
- appropriate **punctuation** – including the use of colons, semicolons, dashes, quotation marks and citations
- appropriate **numbers** and **measurements** – including the use of currencies, dates, measures, percentages and temperatures
- appropriate **structure** and **formatting** – including the use of headings, paragraphs, bullet points, lists
- appropriate use of **inclusive language** style – including expectations on referring to age, sex, gender, race and disabilities
- appropriate use of **references**, **disclaimers**, and glossaries of **preferred spelling.**

A5.3 Writing for different channels

Different channels require different approaches when creating and writing content to ensure best performance for their intended purposes. This section sets out best practice when writing for web, email and social media.

Writing for all channels

Use simple language, plain English and short sentences

Simple and plain language is more scannable, makes our content more accessible to a wider audience – including non-native English speakers – and helps readers understand our message faster

Irrespective of how technical and specialised the content might be, grammatical, sentence structures, and paragraph structures should be simplified for ease of understanding. A sentence should not exceed 25 words

Use active voice

Active voice should be used consistently for web copy to keep the text direct, clear and concise while connecting with the readers on a personal level. Passive voice should only be used in formal documentation and official guidance.

Writing for web pages

Use a clear structure
Content should follow a logical, linear structure which makes it easier for scanning

Use short paragraphs
A paragraph should not exceed 5 sentences – a good principle to use is keeping to a maximum of one idea per paragraph

Create a content hook
Start with a clear and attractive hook, enticing the reader to read and explore the rest of the content

Important information at the top and summaries
Place the key takeaways at the beginning of the piece rather than waiting until the conclusion

Follow our SEO best practice guide
To ensure the content is optimised for search engines, considering:

On-page elements
Headlines
Links
Subheadings

Metadata
Meta titles
Meta description
Alt text
Keywords
Page URLs

Writing for Emails

Have a clear subject line
Content should follow a logical, linear structure which makes it easier for scanning

Keep it short and focused
A long email, including detailed and complex information, will rarely been read through to the end

Use headings, image blocks and lists
Breaking down the text using devices such as images, headings and lists will help the reader identify the important information

Get to the point as quickly as possible
Email text should be direct, informal and personal. A very short and warm introduction helps engage the reader

Focus on the call to action
Every email should have a call for action, which should be immediately prominent and visible

Think about how the content flows
Consider how different content blocks flow from a narrative point of view. Whether by sector, membership type or product line

Writing for Social Media

Keep it short and simple
Text should be short, simple and to the point - offering enough to entice the user into wanting to find out more

Call to action is essential
Remind users of phrases such as 'Read more' or 'Find out more'

Make it eye-catching
Images, photos, GIFs, short videos and similar visual assets should be included in any social media post

Use Emojis
If it suits, use emojis to illustrate your point instead of explaining it in long sentences

Use hashtags
Incorporate industry-related hashtags into your copy – they will help you reach your target audience

Tag people's profiles
Where possible include the handles of any relevant individuals to encourage them to share the post and increase its reach.

Remember the character limits and preferred lengths for each social platforms

A5.3.1 Best practice on writing for all channels

Following a couple of simple principles will increase the readability of our content across all outputs and channels, ensuring it is more easily understandable and digestible by our global users, irrespective of their background and career stage.

1) **Use simple language, plain English and short sentences**

   Simple and plain language is more scannable, makes our content more accessible to a wider audience – including non-native English speakers – and helps readers understand our message faster. Irrespective of how technical and specialised the content might be, grammatical, sentence structures, and paragraph structures should be simplified for ease of understanding. A sentence should not exceed 25 words.

   > Example 1
   >
   > ✗ *Appropriate management of health and safety is a requirement for all RICS-regulated firms and RICS members, including property-related businesses. The requirement for such management has been put in place in many countries across the globe and across industry sectors and governmental organisations in order to protect individuals from harm.*
   >
   > ✔ *RICS members, regulated firms and property-related businesses are required to appropriately manage health and safety. This requirement applies across countries, industry sectors and government organisations to protect individuals.*

   > Example 2
   >
   > ✗ *The aim of this 2ⁿᵈ edition guidance note is to provide advice to surveyors who are appointed to resolve disputes dealing with possible conflicts of interest. It also aims to assist all those parties involved in a dispute to understand the main principles and considerations, and to be aware of when an involvement may develop into a conflict of interest. Thus 2ⁿᵈ edition guidance is effective from 1 February 2021.*
   >
   > ✔ *Effective from 1 February 2021, this 2nd edition guidance note informs surveyors appointed to resolve disputes that involve possible conflicts of interest. It helps parties understand the principles and when an involvement may develop into a conflict of interest.*

2) **Use active voice**

   Active voice should be used consistently for web copy to keep the text direct, clear and concise while connecting with the readers on a personal level. Passive voice should only be used in formal documentation and official guidance.

   > Example 1
   >
   > ✗ *A voluntary mentor scheme is operated by RICS for APC and Associate Assessment candidates. The main function of the scheme is to provide support for APC and Associate candidates. This includes assisting candidates in their preparation for assessment.*
   >
   > ✔ *RICS operates a voluntary mentor scheme for APC and Associate Assessment candidates. It provides support and assists candidates in the preparation for assessment.*

Example 2
✗ *Training is available from RICS to help you through each stage of the assessment process*

✔ *RICS provides training to help you through each stage of the assessment process*

A5.3.2 Writing for web pages

Online readers look for information, but they do not want to spend a lot of energy to find, understand and digest it. If web copy is long, complex, unstructured, or difficult to quickly scan and digest, the user will move on within seconds. To be effective, ensure users can benefit from our web content, copy needs to follow the below principles.

1) **Use a clear structure**

Content should follow a logical, linear structure which makes it easier for scanning. Most users will not read the full page but will scan it to quickly find the information or section they need. To ensure a good experience and support them to find what they need, structure the content of the page using:
- Headings – descriptive of subsequent section, making it easy for the readers to identify the most relevant sections
- Pull quotes or extracted text – these operate in a similar manner to headings, highlighting the key messages
- Bold – to highlight key facts or important phrases
- White space – to break up the page and organise the content in separate and scannable sections
- Lists and bullet points – to summarise key facts and avoid long sentences when listing things
- Boxes and visuals – to break the text up and make certain elements stand out.

2) **Use short paragraphs**

A paragraph should not exceed 5 sentences – a good principle to use is keeping to a maximum of one idea per paragraph. Paragraphs should be relatively consistent in size.

3) **Create a content hook**

Start with a clear and attractive hook, enticing the reader to read and explore the rest of the content. Get to the point of the content as early as possible. Where appropriate, start with a fact or question which is answered or explored further on the page.

4) **Put the most important information at the top – use summaries for long pieces**

Place the key takeaways at the beginning of the piece rather than waiting until the conclusion. Web copy is not meant to build suspense and anticipation, rather to provide the information as quickly and clearly as possible. A good principle to use is attempting to get as many of the who, what, where, why and how as possible into your first three sentences. Include short summaries, in bullet point format, of key take-aways at the top of long pieces of text.

5) Ensure the content is optimised for search engines (SEO)

Each piece of online web content should be search engine optimised, to make sure the content has the best chance of being found via a search engines. Search engine's algorithms are based on what they deem to be the best experience for the user. Detailed guidance on search engine optimisation (SEO) is available [here](#).

SEO Best Practice Highlights

On-page elements		
Headlines - the top keywords should appear in the headline as they are picked up more easily by engines - the headline should clearly show what the article is about	**Links** - use outbound links within the page where relevant – pages willing to re-direct users to other domains are considered more credible - hyperlinks single or a few words rather than full sentences	**Subheadings** - pages with subheadings are generally favoured by search algorithms - subheadings should be in H2 style
Metadata		
Meta titles - the title that appears in search engine results and in the website tab – must be shorter that 60 characters - make meta title different to headline to guide those considering a visit, for instance: <u>Headline</u>: Heritage heresy - will future policy destroy the past? <u>Meta title</u>: The effect of new planning regulations on England's historic buildings	**Meta descriptions** - search engines will often use meta descriptions as a summary to display on results pages below the meta title - meta descriptions should give a brief insight into the content on the page - length must be less than 150 characters (ideally between 120 and150)	**Alt text (for all images and visuals)** - alt test must be included in all embedded visual elements - this is key for content accessibility (see section A2.2) - it appears when a user hovers over a visual element and is used by search engines for image searches - it should be descriptive and simple, for example, "aerial photograph of the empire state building in New York City, USA" - if the image contains text include this in the description
Page URLs		

URLs are an important SEO element for search engines as well as users. Search engines are more likely to index static, short, clean URLs which:
   • include important keywords
   • have short, case-insensitive words, separated with hyphens
   • are descriptive of page content – URLs get pasted, shared and written down, so the more obvious the content, the better
   • avoid the use of meaningless numbers and extraneous information.		

Note: the "Keywords" column appears in the Metadata row:

Keywords
- keywords are the terms related to the page, which are most likely to be searched by a user
- use relevant and specific keywords, general and irrelevant keywords tend to be penalised by search algorithms

A5.3.3 Writing for emails

The primary purpose of emails is to communicate a message, entice the reader to open it, read the information and execute a specific action. Whatever the desired call of action might be (e.g. renew your subscription, participate in a consultation, buy this product, read this article, click on this link etc), some key principles will increase the probability that the emails are open, read, understood and acted upon.

1) **Have a clear subject line**
   Subject lines help recipients decide whether to read your email. They should therefore be clear, succinct, specific and meaningful. The call for action should be stated. Important information in the subject line should be repeated within the body of the message.

2) **Keep it short and focused**
   On average, readers spend from a few seconds to up to a couple of minutes scanning through the reading the body of an email. A very long email, including detailed and complex information, will rarely been read through the end. When long and complex information has to be communicated, it is advisable to provide a short summary in the body of the email and ask the reader to refer to a webpage to find out more.

3) **Use headings, image blocks, lists, bold and italics**
   In a similar way to web content, readers often scan emails. Breaking down the text using devices such as images, headings and lists, and styles such as bold and italics can help the reader to orient themselves and identify the important information.

4) **Get to the point as quickly as possible**
   Email text should be direct, informal and personal. A very short and warm introduction helps engage the reader, but this should never be longer than a short sentence.

5) **Focus on the call to action**
   Every email should have a call to action, which should be immediately prominent and visible. Give the readers enough to let them know what it is all about, but always leave them wanting to know more through executing the action.

6) **Think about how the content flows**
   Consider how different content blocks flow from a narrative point of view. Whether by sector, membership type or product line.

A5.3.4 Writing for social media

Irrespective of the social media platform, social posts aim at attracting the user's attention to a specific piece of content or information. Posts need to catch the attention of a digital passer-by and, as such, should not aim at disseminating the full extent and detail of the information by themselves. Any social post will always redirect to a web page detailing more information. The Social Media team can provide further suggestions and recommendations that are specific to distinct outputs. To make social media posts effective:

1) **Keep it short and simple**
   The nature of social media means we have split seconds to capture someone's interest. Text should therefore be short, simple and to the point. It offer enough to entice the user to find out more.

2) **Call to action is essential**
   Remind users of phrases such as 'Read more' or 'Find out more'. A successful formula is to start with a thought-provoking question and finish with an invitation to take action, for example: '*Could hotels make the best offices? Find our more here*'.

3) **Make it eye-catching**
   Images, photos, GIFs, short videos and similar visual assets should be included in any social media post as they are proven to be more successful in attracting users' attention. Ensure you consult the Social Media team for the right specs across different platforms and use our Brand Hub for useful images and templates.

4) **Use Emojis ☺**
   If it suits, use emojis to illustrate your point instead of explaining it in long sentences.

5) **Use hashtags**
   Incorporate industry-related hashtags into your copy – they will help you reach your target audience and make it easier for others to find your information.

6) **Tag people's profiles**
   Where possible include the handles of any relevant individuals – often authors or contributors – or businesses. This will encourage them to share the post and increase its reach.

Character limits and optimum lengths for different social media channels:

LinkedIn	Twitter	Facebook
Character limit: 600	Character limit: 280	Character limit: 63,206
Optimum length: 50-100	Optimum length: 71-100	Optimum length: 40-80