INFORMAT DESIGN

AN INFORMATION DESIGN HANDBOOK:
CREATING CLEAR FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE DOCUMENTS
We live in a visual culture, where information is increasingly communicated through messages in which the verbal and visual are joined together seamlessly. This is the world of information design. The world of business—in its documents, forms, and other materials—will be communicating less and less until it joins the information revolution.”
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Plain language now includes information design, the visual and the verbal working together to create documents that communicate clearly and effectively.

In 1998, the Securities and Exchange Commission published *A Plain English Handbook: How to create clear SEC disclosure documents*. Since its publication, this handbook has affected financial disclosures, not just in the U.S., but in Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Africa and other countries where securities regulators have incorporated the *Handbook* into their regulations for financial disclosure. Yet as sound as the *Handbook* is, it is showing its age.

While almost one-third of the *Handbook* is devoted to design in the plain language document, in terms of what we practice today, the discussion of design is limited. When the SEC prepared the *Handbook*, information design as a profession was relatively unknown in this country. Today, plain language and information design have joined to become one: plain language means joining the verbal and the visual to communicate clearly.

Information Design

Information design uses a variety of tools to create a document that transforms data into information and provides that information to readers simply and efficiently. With information design, the document designer and the writer work together to create a document that uses the best devices to communicate. This team must rethink the document and determine which information is best presented verbally and which visually.

This booklet is designed as an addendum to the SEC *Handbook* with a discussion of information design. It doesn’t tell you what to do, it shows you. As in the *Handbook*, there are a number of “before” and “after” documents to show you how information design creates a document that communicates more clearly.

Information design incorporates the general and the specific. It rethinks the entire document, and uses short sentences with concrete words. Information design does not change the meaning of a document; it makes that meaning clearer for the intended audience.

Information Design Can Save Money

Clear communication is good business. While it creates a positive image for the company, it also produces cost savings. Numerous studies have demonstrated very real and significant cost savings in using plain language and information design. These savings go directly to the bottom line.

XBRL and Information Design

Today, information design will include XBRL, eXtensible Business Reporting Language. As SEC Chairman Christopher Cox has said, XBRL will “bring the data to life.” Information design, combined with XBRL, will transform the very nature of financial disclosure.

The main goal of any financial disclosure document is to create trust. Dense, complicated disclosure documents do not build trust. Your goal should be to earn your investors’ trust with financial disclosure documents that communicate clearly. By using XBRL, companies will create documents that allow investors to access the information they want in the way they want it.

"The SEC has instructed companies that they must tell investors the good, the bad, and the ugly about what’s happening in their business.”
– *Business Week*, September 26, 2005
Which would you rather read—a standard Form 10-K or any issue of USA Today? For most people, this isn’t a choice. Of course, they would choose USA Today, because it’s visually appealing and easier to read. USA Today uses information design, while the 10-K doesn’t. USA Today is designed for contemporary readers, while the 10-K is designed for readers with a 15th century mind-set.

Clear thinking made visible
Information design is clear thinking made visible. It isn’t simply adding some visual devices, such as white space and a serif typeface, to text. With information design you examine the entire text, asking: What is the purpose of this text? Who is the audience? What does the audience need to know? How will the audience use this information? What information can be best presented verbally, and what information visually?

You want to create a document that is visually compelling, one that your readers want to read. You eliminate long, dense blocks of text in hard-to-read type and use white space, short blocks of text, a good serif typeface, and visual devices such as charts, graphs, maps and diagrams to present complex information visually. You use a hierarchy of type so readers would know what information is more important, and where they are in the document. And you write the entire document in prose that is simple and direct, and free of jargon and legalese.

A new style of writing and thinking
Information design is the “new style of thinking and writing” that is required when writing financial disclosure documents in plain language. It is the basic form of communication in the visual age. Want to see information design? In addition to USA Today, look at Wired, Business Week, Fortune and any number of other magazines. Publishers have learned this valuable lesson: if your publication isn’t visually appealing, no one will pick it off the magazine rack.

And there’s one other place to look for information design: the front section of many annual reports. It isn’t just visually inviting, it’s visually stunning, presenting information by combining the visual and the verbal to communicate clearly and effectively. Why can’t the back of the annual report, whether it is a 10-K or typeset financial section, be written and presented using the same techniques? Shouldn’t all investor communication, whether it is a proxy statement, 10-K or other financial disclosure document be reader friendly? If it were, it might meet SEC Chairman Christopher Cox’s standard that “it could pass muster with the editors of the Money section of USA Today.”

For more information on Information Design, go to http://www.iiid.net/local.htm, the web site for the International Institute for Information Design.
“The first principle of information design is to always remember that there is a reader looking over your shoulder. You must constantly ask yourself, ‘Have I communicated my message as clearly as I can?’ Always think of what your reader wants or needs to know, and design your document to meet your reader’s needs, not yours.”
These real examples show, don’t tell, how plain language and information design can transform financial disclosure documents.

Annual reports, 10-Ks, proxy statements and other investor communications can all benefit from this process.

The following examples demonstrate how information design can transform dense text into forms and documents that are open, accessible, readable and, most important, that communicate clearly. By examining the “before” and “after” examples in this section, you will see how the principles and techniques of information design can transform a complex document into one that is reader-friendly.

As you examine these examples, note how much information is communicated visually, thus eliminating lengthy, belabored text. The visual and the verbal work together to communicate effectively, clearly and economically.

The challenge of creating truly useful disclosure in the 21st century goes well beyond exhorting the use of everyday language, active voice, personal pronouns and shorter sentences. It extends to the question of what is disclosed, and why. We’ve got to continue to ask investors what they need—in order for them to decide whether to purchase an investment in the first place and to decide whether to hold or sell.”

– Christopher Cox, Chairman, SEC, August 4, 2005
CHALLENGE: Pfizer was among the 40 companies that had their CD&A tested for readability based on an objective third-party testing using standard readability indices. The average score of their compensation sections was nearly 17 (the goal for text readability for a wide audience is 12).

PFIZER: Before
We believed that enhancing our CD&A was the right thing to do. The Board wants to communicate well with its investors. If the CD&A is not understandable and clear to the average investor – then it’s not serving its purpose in adding value to our investors.”

– Peggy Foran, Senior Vice President – Corporate Governance, Associate General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, Pfizer, Inc.
CHALLENGE: Pfizer’s challenge was to answer the questions on investors’ minds, namely: why did the company choose to pay what was paid, what was the compensation policy, how does the policy work, what are the targets, were they met and what are the matrices for these targets?

PFIZER: Concept Model

1. A clear hierarchy: headlines, subheads and body text.
3. CD&A was rewritten and reorganized from the reader’s perspective.
4. Graphic elements are used to break up long, complicated text. This makes the information easy-to-read and understand.
Disclose ‘the one number’ that sums up the named executives compensation from all sources.”
– SEC Chairman Christopher Cox, MSNBC, September 5, 2007

**PFIZER: Concept Model**

1. Complex data from different tables is presented visually.
2. The chart is tailored to Pfizer’s compensation program, making it useful and meaningful.
3. Data for each column is explained and cross-referenced.
4. The “one number” that sums up the named executives compensation from all sources is disclosed.
**CHALLENGE:** Pfizer invested considerable time and effort creating this new CD&A. Investors tested said they were able to find the information they were looking for quicker, the information was much clearer and what they got was information they could understand.

www.pfizer.com

**PFIZER: After**

1. Simple visuals replace long paragraphs of dense text.
3. Graphical information is organized in a way that helps the reader understand Pfizer’s disclosure.
4. Type hierarchies help the reader follow the organization of the information.
Pfizer believes in transparency and taking this step was appropriate and essential to us in fulfilling our commitment to exercise good governance practices.”

– Peggy Foran, Senior Vice President – Corporate Governance, Associate General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, Pfizer, Inc.

**PFIZER: After**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Required tables are gathered at the end of the document so they do not interrupt the flow of the text.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Required tables and footnotes are presented as clearly as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Table allows us to translate complex data into meaningful information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Terms and definitions are integrated into text.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**CHALLENGE:** Millipore’s long, scientifically complex sentences do not convey their strategic advantages as a life science leader. Content was not organized in a reader-friendly format.

**MILLIPORE: Before**

1. Boilerplate language and scientific terms do not present a clear picture of business strategy.
2. A hard-to-read, one-column format is not visually appealing to the reader.
3. Typographic hierarchy is not clear and segment information is buried in several different sections.
4. Content organization is needed as customer information is not presented in the context of sales and marketing strategy.
Using plain language and information design, we created a new 10-K using color, charts and graphics to help readers understand the transformative change occurring at the company and Millipore’s new brand identity.”

**MILLIPORE: After**

1. Colorful charts and graphics illustrate business and strategy at-a-glance.
2. Utilizing the company’s proprietary typeface and logo supports brand identity.
3. Global geographic revenues are clearly depicted and communicate business strategy.
4. Plain language in a two-column format, flush left, ragged right, with callouts to highlight key points is much easier to read.
CHALLENGE: Describing Xerox’s business in words alone leads to long, complicated sentences. Segment results are buried in the text and the reader has to search for important information.

www.xerox.com

XEROX: Before

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of business segments is not prominent. Moreover, it is complicated and difficult to understand. Segment information is not highlighted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Text is dense, with long, complicated sentences and paragraphs, in a hard-to-read, one-column format.

Description of business segments is not prominent. Moreover, it is complicated and difficult to understand. Segment information is not highlighted.

Typographic hierarchy is not clear, with little indication of relative importance of each section.

A clearer picture of Xerox’s products and services mix, and its organizational structure is needed.
“Whether you work at a company, law firm or the SEC, the shift to plain English requires a new style of thinking and writing.”

– Arthur Levitt, former Chairman, SEC
**CHALLENGE:** Long lines of type crowded on the page fail to highlight any message. The Comcast report tells readers about the company’s results, it doesn’t show them.

www.cmcsk.com

**COMCAST:** Before

Single columns are harder to read, and can increase word-per-page count. A single-column format can result in a document that is up to 25% longer. With large print runs, this can significantly add to the cost of paper, printing and shipping.

Hierarchies are not clear when only one typeface is used; two different typefaces improve readability. Large blocks of text are wordy and written in complicated structures.

Gray type is not always legible when copying or faxing.

Important data is buried in text. Numbers are included in the text, creating sentences that are redundant, dense and difficult to read.
Information is that which reduces uncertainty. Information design is clear thinking made visible.”
– Bill Lutz, Addison Plain Language Consultant

COMCAST: After

1. Clear folios and hierarchies of section information. Black type ensures legibility when copying or faxing.

2. Section headers on every page help the reader navigate the document with ease. Each header should refer to the Table of Contents.

3. Two-column, side-by-side, grid breaks up lines of copy into readable segments.

4. The current year is clearly highlighted in charts and tables. Two or more data sets can be combined and charted together to give the reader an in-depth view.
**CHALLENGE:** For Wilmington Trust, which has a complex message to communicate, words alone are not enough. Thinking visually would help identify and convey that message clearly, and not bury it in the text.

**WILMINGTON TRUST: Before**

1. Complex sentences are filled with redundant data, making them difficult and tedious to read.
2. Important information and data are buried in dense text, with no prioritization.
3. No clear hierarchy is used to guide the reader and structure the information.
4. Long paragraphs are difficult to read. Pages are not visually appealing to the reader.
“Out of all the companies I follow, you...are the best as far as disclosure details go.”
– S&P Credit Analyst
Plain language can save you money, as these examples illustrate.

Using plain language can help the bottom line. This is the conclusion of the study by Professor Joseph Kimble of the Thomas Cooley Law School. In his study, Professor Kimble documents many cases where companies, from General Electric to Federal Express, have seen significant savings by using plain language.

General Electric and Federal Express
By rewriting a technical support manual in plain language, General Electric reduced the number of support calls it received each month so much that GE estimates savings between $22,000 and $375,000 a year for each business. FedEx rewrote its ground operations manuals in plain language. Because workers could find the information they needed faster and they understood it better, Federal Express conservatively estimates that it saved $400,000 in the first year that workers used the rewritten manuals.

Government and plain language
Governments also are using plain language to save money: by rewriting just one letter in plain language, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs saved $400,000 in one year. The Federal Communications Commission rewrote one of its regulations in plain language. As a result, the number of questions about the regulation declined so much that the FCC reassigned the five staff members whose full-time job had been to answer the questions. In England, the Royal Mail rewrote one form and saved £500,000 ($875,000) in just nine months.

Shareholder documents
Writing shareholder documents in plain language can also have good results. The Rand Merchant Bank, a South African investment bank, wrote prospectuses and other shareholder documents in plain language. When they interviewed shareholders, analysts, stockbrokers and lawyers, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. While respondents thought traditional documents were “very difficult,” “not user-friendly,” and “just too complicated” to even bother to read, they had the opposite view of the new documents. They found plain language “much easier to understand,” “just what I like,” and “the way to do it.” The bottom line? “If [the document] is in plain language, [shareholders] will probably read through even a thick prospectus.”

Communicate clearly and save money
When you use information design in all your documents, you create documents that not only communicate clearly and gain your readers’ trust, but you may also save money, perhaps a lot of money. And these savings can have a direct impact on the bottom line.

For a copy of Professor Kimble’s study, go to http://plainlanguagenetwork.org/kimble/Writing1.pdf
DISCLOSURE CHECKLIST

17 Ways to Create Clear Financial Disclosure Documents, using the fundamentals of information design

1. Use clear, well-designed graphs and charts to present quantitative information visually.

2. Create a clear hierarchy of information in the text. Not everything is of the same level of importance.

3. Use lots of white space.

4. Use adequate leading in the text.

5. Design your columns of text with no fewer than 32 or more than 64 characters per line.

6. Don’t use a sans serif typeface, except for heads and subheads. When in small type, serif faces are more readable.

7. Avoid justification of text. Remember these words: Flush Left, Rag Right!

8. Avoid long paragraphs.

9. Give an executive overview of key factors to provide a context for the disclosure.

10. Don’t provide an executive overview that is too long and contains extraneous information, or information that belongs elsewhere in the document.

11. Don’t repeat information such as accounting practices and risk disclosure.

12. Don’t use year 1 versus year 2 and year 2 versus year 3 comparisons. (Use instead year 1 versus year 2 versus year 3, to avoid repetition.)

13. Don’t repeat numbers from tables in the text. (Tables are for numbers; text is for explaining the numbers.)

14. Avoid repeated use of the words: “certain,” “respectively,” “and/or,” “pursuant to,” “with regard to,” “related to.”

15. Don’t have non-GAAP financial measures that are not clearly, meaning visually, presented as distinct from GAAP measures.

16. Present clearly the differences between the non-GAAP measures and the most directly comparable financial measures calculated according to GAAP.

17. Avoid an inadequate or unclear discussion of the non-GAAP measures and say why management believes that the non-GAAP measures provide useful information to investors.
ABOUT CHART DESIGN

Charts and diagrams represent a synthesis of art and science. The designer’s opportunity is to endow them with elegance. Elegance is a measure of the grace and simplicity of the designed product relative to the complexity of its functions. Given two charts, or tables, or maps, of equal simplicity, we know that one conveying more information is the more elegant. Conversely, of two charts conveying the same information, the simpler is the more elegant. Even as non-physicists, we recognize the superlative elegance of the formula $E=mc^2$, expressing the physical nature of the universe in hardly more space than it requires to write a four-letter word.

In Annual Report Design, where charts are almost a mandatory element, there is a notorious lack of creative effort in chart design. One reason may be that in financial circles the very use of charts and graphs seems to be considered sufficient virtue in itself: never mind the specific content, or the fact that ten charts on a page may discourage the reading of any one of them. In certain minds, nondesign means “no nonsense,” and a lot of charts mean disclosure.

In art as in science, a deceptively elegant statement may have value as a technical exercise; but as a communication it is worse than no statement at all.

Leslie A. Segal
*Graphis Diagrams*, 1974, Hasting House Press

Leslie is a renowned expert in chart design, and was the founder of Addison more than 40 years ago. He is its President.

In the pages which follow, you will find recent chart work done at Addison, with an index that allows you to compare chart designs, by type of chart.
Results From Continuing Operations

(Dollars in millions except per share amounts)

- **Revenues**
  - Q1 06: $75,000
  - Q2 06: $70,000
  - Q3 06: $65,000
  - Q4 06: $60,000

- **Segment Operating Income**
  - Q1 06: $10,000
  - Q2 06: $20,000
  - Q3 06: $30,000
  - Q4 06: $40,000

- **Cash Flows from Operations**
  - Q1 06: $5,000
  - Q2 06: $10,000
  - Q3 06: $15,000
  - Q4 06: $20,000

- **Earnings Per Share**
  - Q1 06: $1.00
  - Q2 06: $2.00
  - Q3 06: $3.00
  - Q4 06: $4.00

ITT AR 07
Revenue Composition

Revenue is derived primarily from four sources: investment management fees, transactional fee, and investment income. As our evolution into an alternative asset manager continues, we expect more of our revenues and equity income will be from investment management fees.

Investment management fees include fees for service and income from operations. Investment management fees are based on the amount of our commercial real estate holdings. Transactional fees include fees from real estate transactions and fees from management activities, such as management of our commercial real estate holdings. Investment income also includes interest income from investments in our commercial real estate funds.

2007 Revenue Composition

Investment Management 47%
Investment Income 41%
Investment Management 47%
Investment Income 41%
Investment Management 47%
Investment Income 41%
Investment Management 47%
Competitive Strengths

Centerline’s competitive strengths can be summarized as: action, leadership, longevity, vision, perseverance, market savvy, adaptability, stability and superior products and service. Our leaders have survived many market cycles and know how to guide through tough times. We have confidence in our strategic vision, the dedicated people at every level of our company and our operational platforms.

1 Qualitative Change

Our move to acquire Freddie Mac, at the end of the year, was a major milestone in our transformation and will better enable us to be more responsive to our clients and meet their needs more effectively. Our leadership team has the experience and the expertise to guide this transition and to ensure that our clients and our shareholders benefit from our focus on service and excellence.

2 Progressive Strategies

The tender-option bond market in which we finance tax-exempt bonds is a stand-alone, highly specialized and highly competitive market. We have established a strong track record of success in this market, and we have the expertise and the resources to continue to be a leader in this field.

3 Credible Progress

Real estate investors and lenders require assurance — and proof — that their assets are in capable hands. Our reputation as a trusted and reliable partner is critical to this assurance. Our leadership team has the experience and the expertise to guide this transition and to continue to deliver the highest level of service to our clients and our shareholders.

4 Diversified Platform

Affordable Housing: Centerline has been a market leader since the inception of the low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) in 1986. We continue to set the benchmark for the affordable housing industry in the U.S., where we finance properties in a variety of locations.

Commercial Real Estate: We offer financing at every level of the property’s capital structure. Our broad spectrum of financing and investment products are tailored to meet specific project and client requirements for multifamily, office, retail, industrial and mixed-use.

Portfolio Management: We monitor every loan we originate or acquire. Our specialized servicing team identifies loan problems early and develops solutions to preserve investments throughout the life cycle of the loan. Our special servicing platform has earned our industry's highest ratings.

Credit Risk Products: Centerline Financial, a subsidiary of Centerline, provides solutions for managing credit risk in a variety of markets. Our credit risk products are designed to help our clients manage their credit risk more effectively.

5 Pragmatic Results

At December 31, 2017, we had $10.9 billion of assets under management.
A new standard for financial disclosure documents.

"Think how much better life will be when you can not only rely on the accuracy of the numbers, but you can instantly slice 'em and dice 'em exactly as you please. The objective is to make it easier for ordinary investors, consumers, to make better financial decisions," said SEC Chairman Christopher Cox.

In 2008, the Securities and Exchange Commission proposed a new rule mandating the use of extensible business reporting language (XBRL) in public company financial statement reporting. Using XBRL (a royalty-free software that uses data tags to describe financial and business information) a company tags each financial data point such as revenue, net income, and profit margins so investors are able to compare companies against each other and across industry groups. Ultimately, the goal is to develop software that will let anybody type in various stock symbols and parse data any way they want.

The Power of XBRL
Today, if investors want to compare financial data in two or more companies, they have to download the financial statement filings on the Internet and then do their own comparison. However, if companies use XBRL tagging for their annual reports, 10Ks and other financial statements, investors could easily compare the companies’ financial results.

With XBRL, companies will adhere to a common set of reporting elements but will have the ability to add company-specific reporting elements (called extensions) to describe their own financial position and will be able to change the labels on elements without changing the underlying definitions. "As-reported" data will be substantially more comparable than it is today, making it easier for the investment community to analyze company financial data. When your own corporate information becomes machine-readable, your ability to display it, create reports and distribute it to shareholders, analysts and even senior management will be enhanced.

Prepare for the Future of XBRL
What can you do now to prepare for XBRL? Clearly you should become familiar with XBRL and the related issues in using this language to report your financial results. You should consider the effect XBRL will have on your annual report, 10-K and other financial statements.

There will be challenges in writing and designing the financial section of these reports. More than ever you will need to explain the numbers and present them clearly and effectively using information design. Simply tagging your data using the XBRL language will not present the company “through the eyes of management.”

How Will You Create Your Company’s Financial Statements?
The merging of XBRL and information design offers the opportunity to create a dynamic and completely new annual report, 10K or other financial statement. What that report will look like no one knows, but it’s not too soon to start thinking about what it should look like.

For more information on XBRL go to the SEC site on interactive data http://www.sec.gov/spotlight/xbrl.shtml or the websites www.xbrl.us and/or www.xbrl.org.
A study conducted by the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business has found firms with hard-to-read annual reports have lower earnings.

ANN ARBOR, Mich.–There’s a reason why some annual reports are difficult to read—they’re hiding something, says a University of Michigan business professor.

A new study by Feng Li, assistant professor of accounting at the U-M’s Ross School of Business, shows that annual reports of firms with lower earnings are harder to read.

“Consistent with the motivation behind the plain English disclosure regulation of the Securities and Exchange Commission, managers may be opportunistically choosing the readability of annual reports to hide adverse information from investors,” Li said. “Firms with lower earnings not only tend to file annual reports that are more difficult to read, but a decrease in earnings from the previous year also results in annual reports that are harder to read, compared with the previous year’s reports.”

Using a sample of more than 55,000 firm-years since 1994, Li measured annual report readability by examining syllables per word and words per sentence in companies’ 10-K filings. He used two statistical readability measures: the Fog Index, which indicates the number of years of formal education a reader of average intelligence would need to read and understand the text; and the Kincaid Index, which rates text on a U.S. grade-school level.

According to the study, profits of firms with annual reports that are more difficult to read are less persistent in the next one-to-four years. In fact, companies use more complex language in their annual reports even when presenting good news—if it is only fleeting.

On the other hand, Li found no significant evidence that firms make their annual reports harder to read to hide more persistent bad news.

Li’s research also found that larger companies and growth firms (those with higher market-to-book ratios) tend to have annual reports that are more difficult to read. In addition, annual reports with more negative special items are harder to read.

Industries with annual reports most difficult to read include insurance, health services and electric, gas and sanitary services. Those that are easier to read belong to the airlines and the stone, clay, glass and concrete products industry.

Although the study found a correlation between earnings and annual report readability, Li says none exists between readability and future stock returns.

“Contrary to the SEC’s concerns, small investors may not be affected by the lack of readability, since the stock market seems to impound the implication of annual report readability into prices,” he said.

Overall, annual reports of public companies, in general, are difficult to read, Li says. The average Fog Index for all annual reports is 19.4 (a score of 12–14 is ideal and higher than 18 is unreadable). Likewise, the annual report readability score on the Kincaid Index is 15.2 – about twice as high as the optimal score of 7–8.

“Interestingly, there is an obvious drop in the indices in the years immediately after 1999, suggesting that the SEC’s plain English disclosure regulation of 1998 did make companies take efforts to make their annual reports more readable,” Li said. “However, this trend reversed dramatically after 2002 and the annual reports filed by public firms seem to have become even more difficult to read, compared with the pre-1998 years.”

For more on the business school, visit: http://www.bus.umich.edu/
RESOURCES

The following list of web sites and books is only a sample of the many works dealing with information design, plain language, and extensible business reporting language (XBRL).

www.edwardtufte.com
Edward Tufte's web site offers not only resources on information design, but a place where you can ask Tufte questions about information design and read his answers and the comments of other information designers.

www.understandingusa.com
A dazzling display of how information design can communicate complex data clearly.

http://www.iiid.net
The web site for the International Institute for Information Design.

http://loop.aiga.org/content.cfm?Alias=clear
The web site for CLEAR, the AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts) Journal of Information Design.

www.clarity-international.net
The web site for Clarity, the worldwide lawyers’ group dedicated to plain language.

www.juicystudio.com/services/readability.php
This site includes the standard tests and formulas to gauge a document or web site's readability.

www.plainlanguage.gov
The site of the federal government's Plain Action Network. An excellent site with many resources, including publications and links to many other sites.

www.plainlanguagenetwork.org
The web site of PLAIN, the Plain Language Association International organization. Many resources, including links to many other sites.

http://www.xbrl.org/us/
The U.S. web site for extensible business reporting language (XBRL), the language for the electronic communication of business and financial data.

The basic book on how to (and how not to) present information visually by “the man who makes sense of numbers,” as *Fortune* magazine has said.

In this sequel to his best-seller on information anxiety, Wurman shows ways to navigate the ever growing flood of information in a digitally connected world.

A solid introduction to how you can translate numbers into charts, tables and graphs that communicate visually and effectively.

The classic and indispensable book on creating texts for readers. Especially good is Chapter 6, “The Interplay of Words and Pictures.”

A brief but thorough guide to designing and writing documents in plain English. The section on the process of creating a plain English document is especially good.

Written by the cofounder of Britain’s Plain English Campaign, this practical guide is based on his years of work with governments and businesses.

A complete guide to writing everything from the IPO to the mutual fund prospectus in clear language and how to present the text in a readable format.
Since the purpose here is to improve communications, the proposed rules require that all of this disclosure be in plain English—the new official language of the SEC. That will be true, whether the information is in a proxy statement, an information statement, or an annual report...so that ultimately every communication aimed at retail investors is so free of jargon and legalese that it could pass muster with the editors of the Money section of *USA Today*.”

– Christopher Cox, Chairman, SEC, April 25, 2006
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