Writing for Australian Government websites

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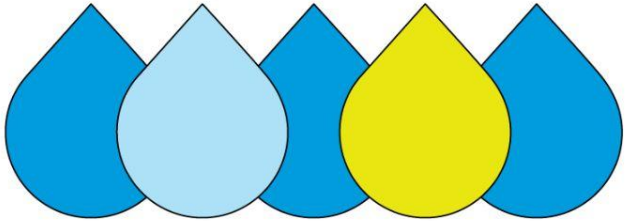

Morpht

Amber Henry

Project Manager, Morpht

Drupal: drupal.org/u/amberhenry
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Web: www.morpht.com

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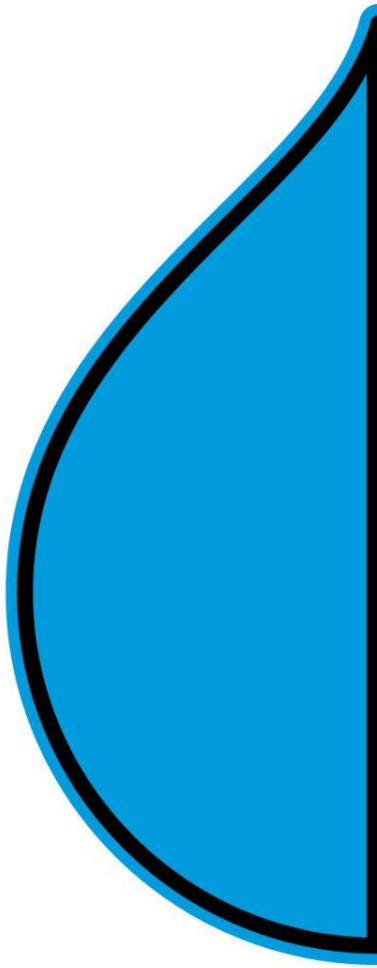
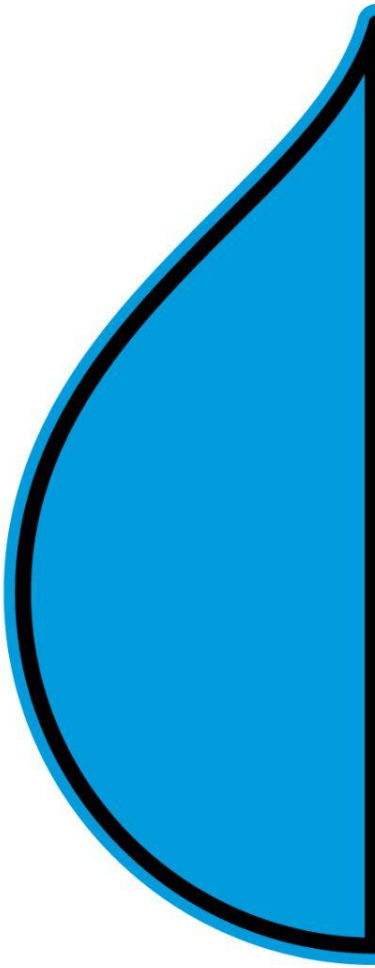
Overview

- Digital inclusive policies
- Australian Government Style Manual
- How the Government is doing
- Case study
- Useful tools



Digital Experience Policy



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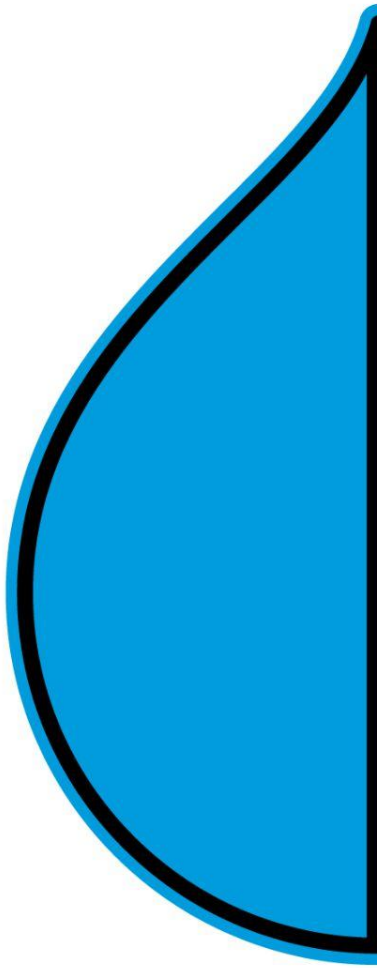
DX Policy Standards

- Digital Service Standard
- Digital Access Standard
- Data Inclusion Standard
- Digital Performance Standard

digital.gov.au

Australian Government Style Manual



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Australian Government Style Manual

- Reading level
- Culturally sensitive/inclusion
- Plain language
- Consistent tone of voice

stylemanual.gov.au

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Reading level scores

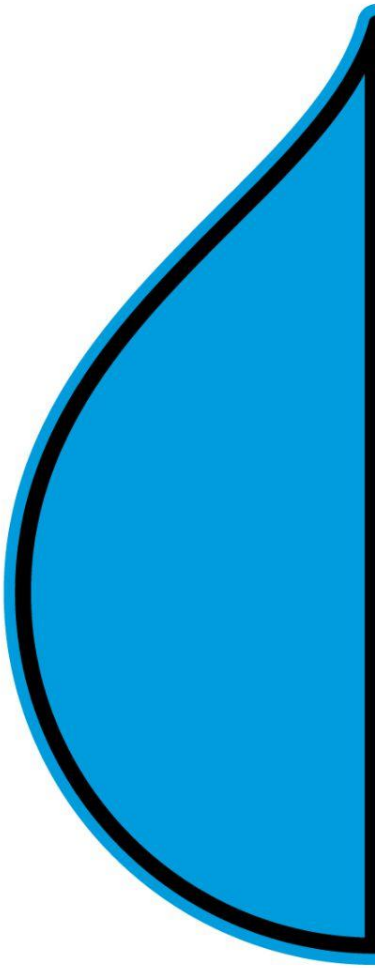
“Regardless of literacy levels, all users want to be able to interact with government easily. Respect their time by writing in plain language. Check that your content is a reading level 2 (Australian year 7 equivalent). This level also helps users with higher literacy. “

Source: Australian Government Style Manual

Flesch Kincaid

Score	School level	Notes
100 - 90	Grade 5	Very easy to read. Easily understood by an average 11 year old student.
90 - 80	Grade 6	Easy to read. Conversational English for consumers.
80 - 70	**Year 7**	**Fairly easy to read.**
70 - 60	Year 8 - 9	Plain English. Easily understood by 13 to 15 year old students.
60 - 50	Year 10 - 12	Fairly difficult to read.
50 - 40	College	Difficult to read.
30 - 10	College graduate	Very difficult to read. Best understood by university graduates.
10 - 0	Professional	Extremely difficult to read. Best understood by university graduates.

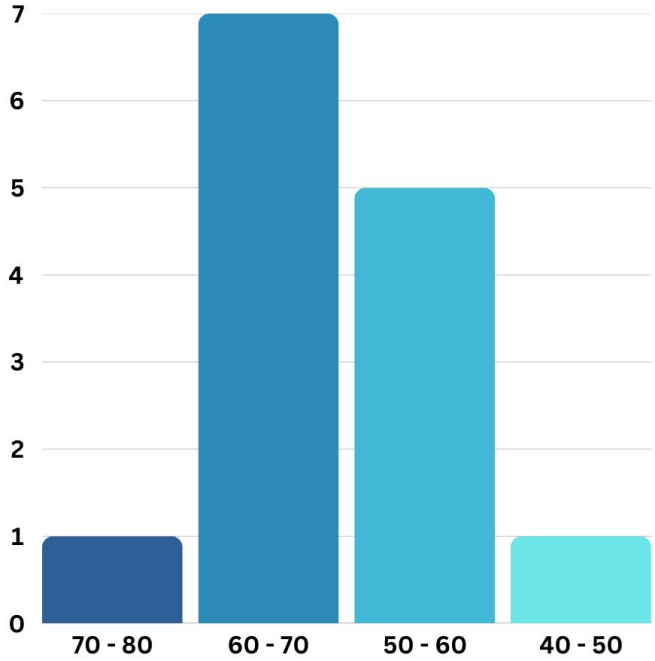
How is the Australian Government doing?



Methodology

- 15 widely used government sites
- Range of sectors
- Tested a consistent range of pages

Results: Reading scores



70 - 80 Year 7 = Fairly easy

60 - 70 Year 8-9 = Plain English

50 - 60 Year 10-12 = Fairly difficult

40 - 50 College = Difficult

“Readability is more than a number”

- A reading score is a mathematical equation
- Avoid over editing your content for a better score
- Stick to the basics
- Structure your content

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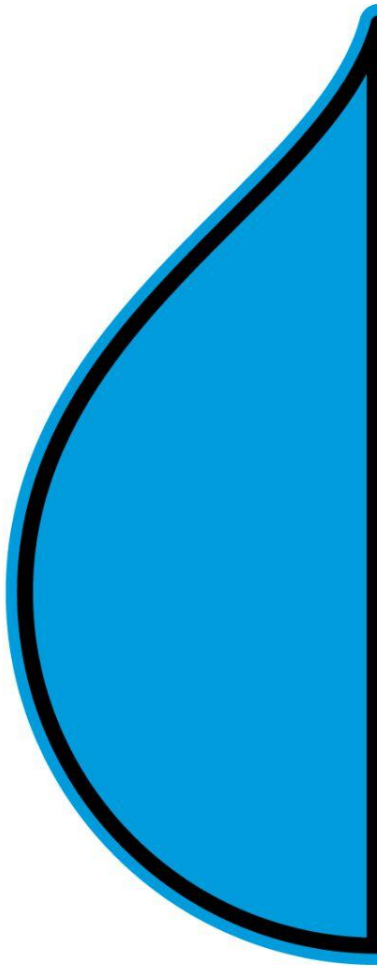
Case study



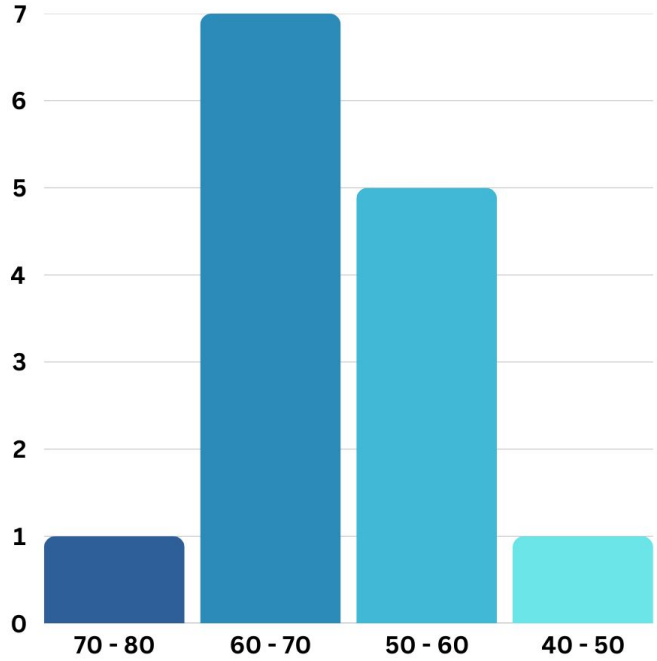
Case study

- Understanding the audiences
- Information had to be accessible
- Aim for Year 7 reading level
- Meaningful and factual

Case study

- Validating the content
- Understanding your audiences
- Keeping content meaningful and factual
- Re-evaluating the content

Gov sites: Reading scores



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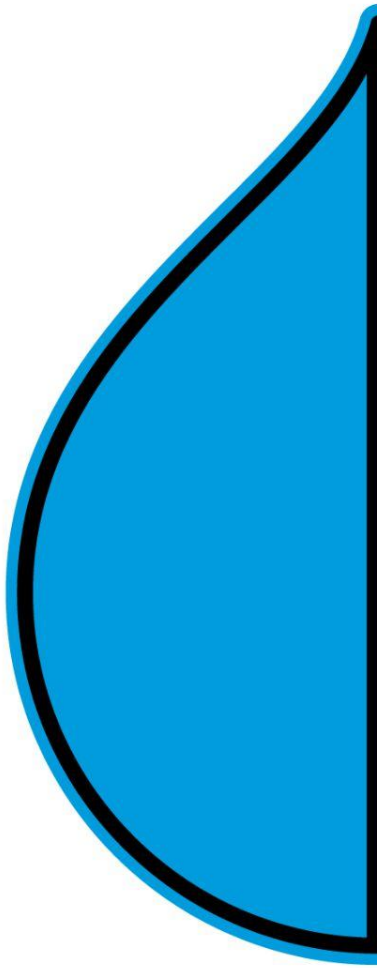
Useful tools



Useful tools

Flesch Kincaid

- Mathematical equation
- Aim for a Year 7 reading level
- Consider that your content is still meaningful

goodcalculators.com

Useful tools

Grammarly & Hemingway

- Correct grammar
- Suggest clear language
- Accessibility checks
- Reading levels

app.grammarly.com

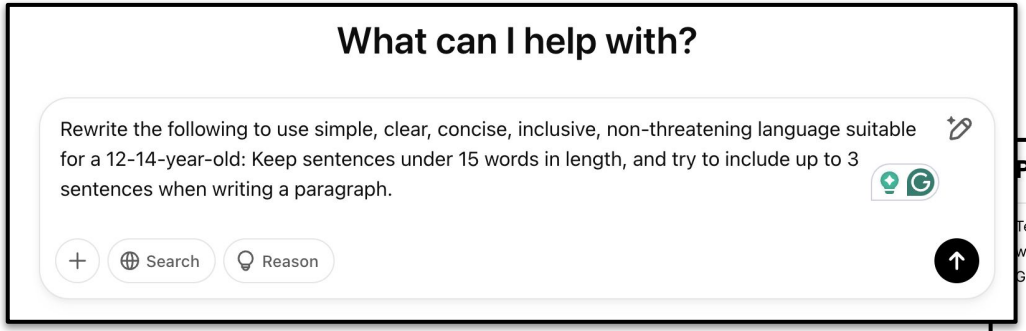
hemingwayapp.com

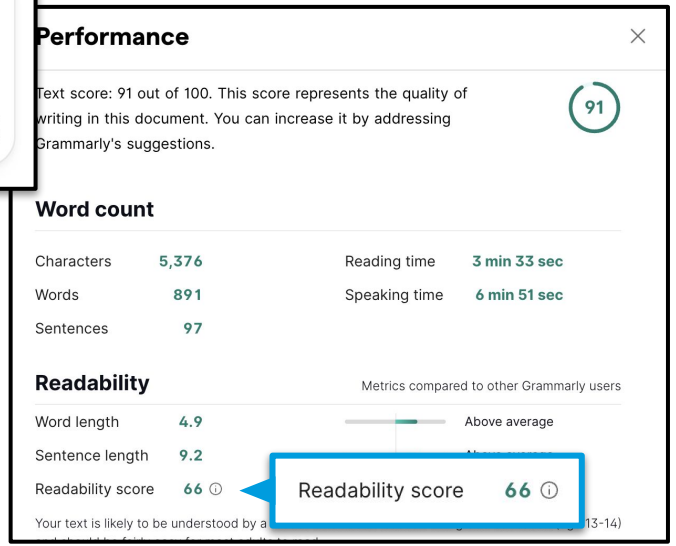
Useful tools

AI: ChatGPT

- Apps: ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity
- Drupal CMS: AI integration
- Prompts

AI: Prompts





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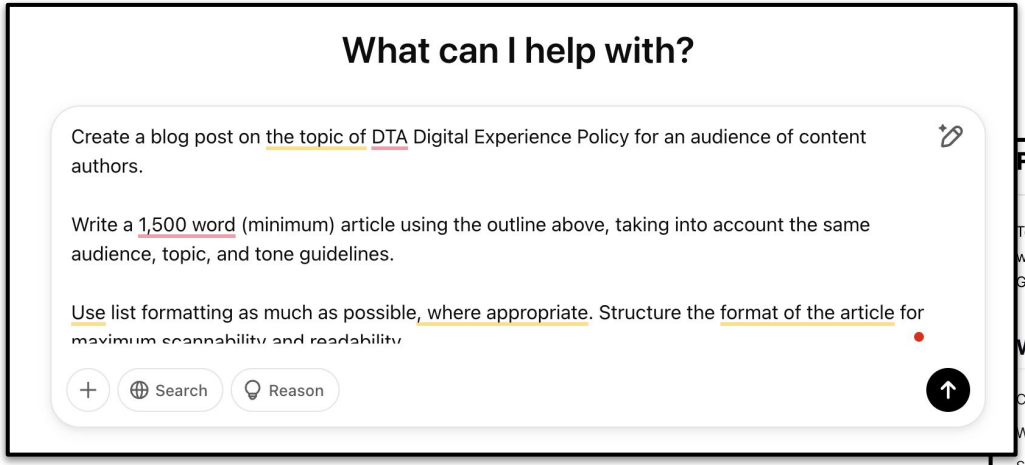
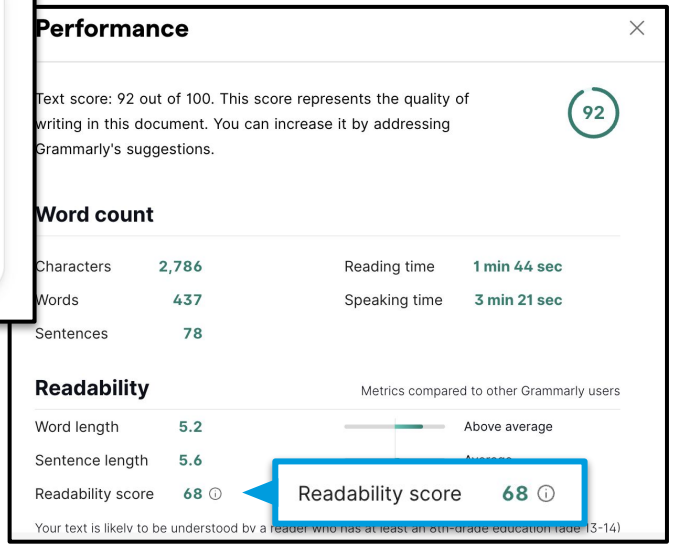
AI: Prompts





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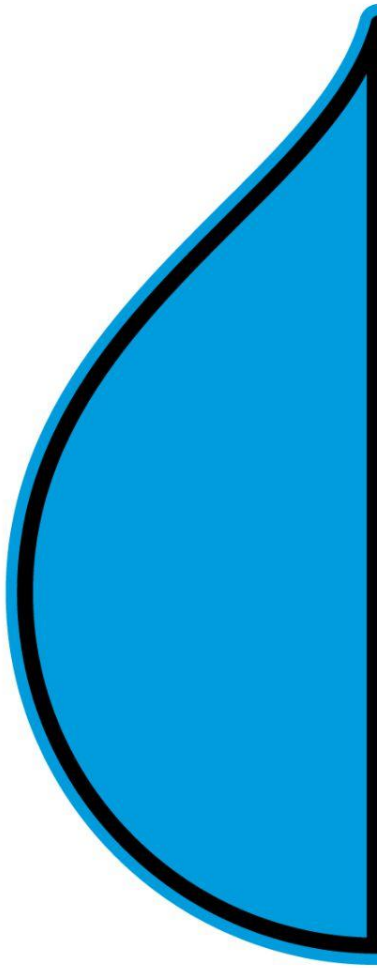
Conclusion:
Authoring better content



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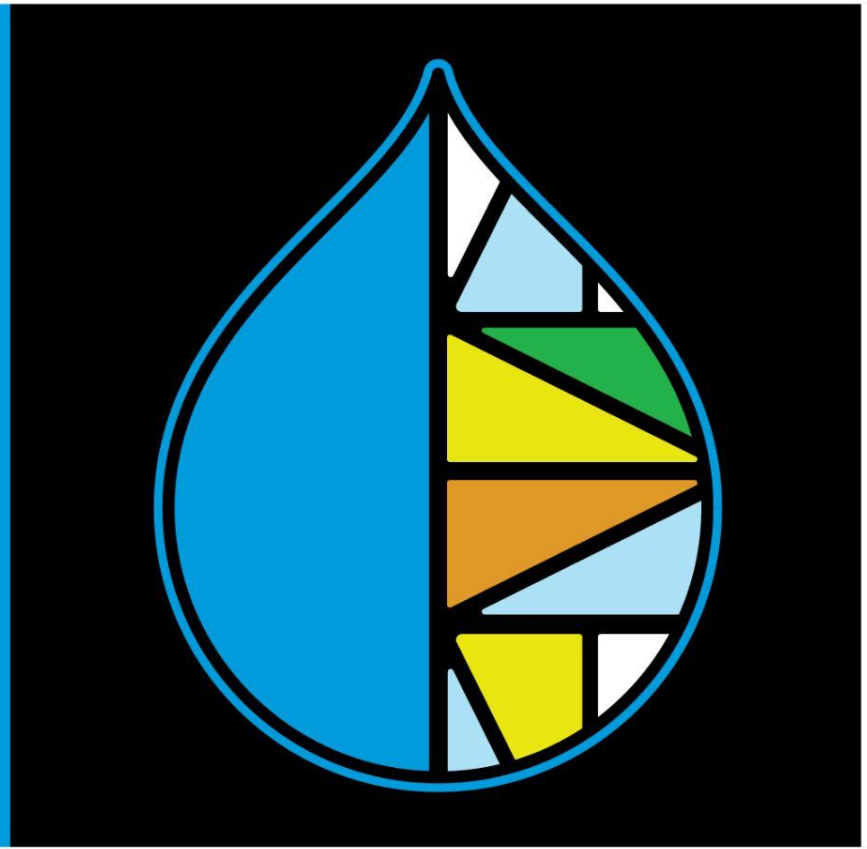
Authoring better content

- Know your audiences
- Plan and structure content
- Plain language
- Maintain consistency
- Validate and test

Thank You!

Any questions?



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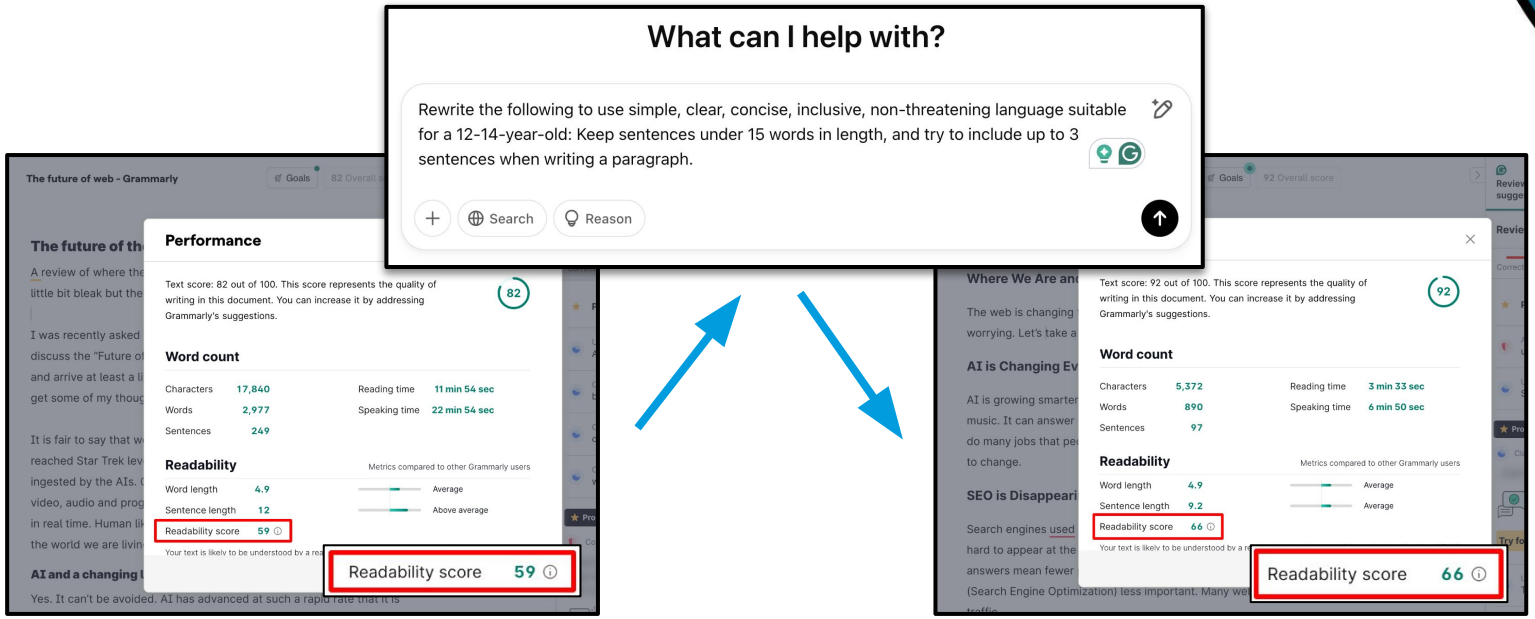

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DX Policy

- Whole-of-Government approach
- Unified approach to improve digital experiences
- Set of standards and guidelines
- Who is the policy for?