

Making Content Work on the Web: A Web Page Makeover

The American Water Works Association (www.awwa.org) is a professional organization for water utility employees. Among its offerings is “E-Mainstream,” an online and print newsletter that provides news and features about the association. As you can see in the Web page excerpt below, one of the content areas is Events, a collection of notices about upcoming conferences and workshops. This kind of content is ideal for the Web because:

- **It’s timely**, so it benefits from the speedy publishing that the Web allows.
- **Users would like to act** on this information (not simply read it), so it’s suited to the “doing” environment of the Web.
- It’s the kind of information that would be **enhanced by the interactivity** that the Web provides.

As presented here, however, this content does not work as well as it could for the Web.

- **It’s not scannable.** Web users are scanners. That means information has to be presented so users get what they want at a glance. Web copy should be short and bite-sized, headlines and other display copy should be as informative as possible, and text should be formatted to attract the user’s eye.
- **It doesn’t take advantage of the Web.** A link at the end of this text (not visible in the screen shot) takes users to more information. But many more links and tools could be offered: A way to register, for example, or to sign up for continuing education credits.
- **Users don’t know what’s “below the fold.”** Looking at this screen, users have no way of knowing there are eight other events listed farther down this page. Unless they have been monitoring the Events section every day or realize they have to scroll down, they may miss a notice about a conference or workshop they wanted to attend.

The screenshot shows the E-MainStream newsletter website. The header features the title "E-MainStream" in a large, stylized font, with "Archives" in the top right corner. Below the header, it says "Vol. 2, No. 5" and "Published by the American Water Works Association". A "Print Story" button is visible in the top right of the main content area.

Departments

- [President's Comment](#)
- [Standards](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Career Center](#)
- [Event Calendar](#)

AWWA Governance

- [New ad hoc committee focuses on future](#)
- [Committee members represent diverse views](#)
- [Ad hoc committee progress update](#)

Elections

- [Rolan joins presidential line as next president-elect](#)
- [Jordan to fill director at-](#)

Posted Mar. 1, 2005

Events

Management institute covers supervisory leadership

AWWA's Management Institute covering supervisory leadership skills will take place March 7-9 in Minnesota and March 10-11 in Florida.

Management institutes provide advanced-level skills for proven leaders of the utility industry and related fields. The supervisory leadership course has been developed for superintendents, directors and assistant directors, engineers and project managers.

Respected leaders in water utility management offer useful methods, techniques, skills, and concepts that participants can use immediately on the job, whether



[see next page]

AWWA Makeover, Part One

As a first step in re-working the AWWA's Events listings, we created a scannable, navigable "table of contents" of all the conferences and workshops, which you can see in the screen shot below. We organized the titles and dates of the events by month (note the use of bold-face type) so users can quickly find what they're interested in. And we made each event's title a link that takes the user to the appropriate part of the document.

We recommend this kind of simple document navigation for any content that extends more than three or so screen-fulls. Divide your text into small sections with subheads (and make sure those subheads provide solid, specific information). Then copy the subheads onto the top of the document and turn them into links: Voilà, document navigation. Now your users know what's ahead and can skip directly to the content that most interests them.



The screenshot shows the header of the "E-MainStream" website. The title "E-MainStream" is in a large, stylized font. To the right of the title is a link for "Archives". Below the title, it says "Vol. 2, No. 5" and "Published by the American Water Works Association".

On the left side, there is a navigation menu with the following items:

- Departments**
 - [President's Comment](#)
 - [Standards](#)
 - [Events](#)
 - [Career Center](#)
 - [Event Calendar](#)
- AWWA Governance**
 - [New ad hoc committee focuses on future](#)
 - [Committee members represent diverse views](#)
 - [Ad hoc committee progress update](#)
- Elections**
 - [Rolan joins presidential line as next president-elect](#)
 - [Jordan to fill director-at-](#)

On the right side, there is a list of events organized by month:

- March 2005**
 - [Membrane Technology Conference](#), March 6-9
 - [Leadership skills for supervisors](#), March 7-9
 - [Leadership skills for supervisors](#), March 10-11
 - [Excellence in Water Quality Distribution](#), March 10
 - [Customer Service Conference and Exposition](#), March 13-16
- April 2005**
 - [Water Security Congress](#), April 10-12
 - [Information Management & Technology Conference](#), April 17-20
- May 2005**
 - [Drinking Water Week](#), May 1-7: [Resources available now](#)
- June 2005**
 - [Conference name here](#), date
- July 2005**
 - [Conference name here](#), date

[see next page]

AWWA Makeover: Which Works Better for Your User?

The original conference listing is on the left below; the re-worked listing is on the right. Even if you can't read the text at this size, you can tell by the overall look which one is more useful and user-friendly. And *that's* what you're aiming for in writing and editing for the Web.

Management institute covers supervisory leadership

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Management institutes provide advanced-level skills for proven leaders of the utility industry and related fields. The supervisory leadership course has been developed for superintendents, directors and assistant directors, engineers and project managers.



Respected leaders in water utility management offer useful methods, techniques, skills, and concepts that participants can use immediately on the job, whether they represent municipal or privately owned water utilities.

The three-day program in Minnesota covers leadership, organizational behavior, delivering great service, and practical survival tips for supervisors and managers. Case studies and group work will be included following each topic's presentation.

Topics to be addressed at the course in Florida include leadership, team building, the budget process, water supply development, environmental management systems, cross-connection control management, water system security, performance management, internal communications, public relations, and legal issues for utility managers.

For details on the University of Minnesota course, [click here](#) or contact Katie Kjeseth at conferences5@cc.umn.edu, or (612) 624-3708. For more information on the course at the University of Florida's TREEO Center, [click here](#) or contact Dawn Jenkins at djenkin@treeo.dcc.ufl.edu or (352) 392-9570 ext. 127.

Posted Mar. 1, 2005

Management Institute Presents Leadership Skills for Supervisors

When: 8 am to 4:30 pm, Mon, March 7 through Wed, March 9, 2005

Where: [University of Minnesota's](#) Continuing Education and Conference [Center](#), 1890 Buford Ave, St. Paul

Cost: \$675. [Scholarships](#) available.

Who should attend:

- superintendents
- project managers
- engineers
- directors and assistant directors

Topics:

- leadership
- organizational behavior
- delivering service
- survival tips

Highlights: Case studies and group work follow each presentation.

Register: Deadline Feb 18. Register [online](#) or fax or mail [this form](#).

For details: See the [course listing](#), e-mail [Katie Kjeseth](mailto:Katie.Kjeseth) or call her at (612) 624-3708.

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