This Writing Style Guide is a resource for anyone who generates content for meditech.com or the Intranet. It establishes crucial standards for both general writing and product-based writing, as well as protocols for posting screen shots. Take the time to familiarize yourself with it, and put it to work for you!

It's important to note that this guide encompasses MEDITECH's company-specific standards, and is not meant to serve as a comprehensive guide to web and product-based writing.
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General Writing Standards

It’s important that our writing reflects MEDITECH’s cohesive image. While every writer has the potential to develop their own style and tone, certain elements of writing should never vary here at MEDITECH. These general writing standards are divided into sections and covered in the succeeding pages.

Please note that the following standards are company-specific, and are not meant to be comprehensive. For more information on general grammar standards, please consult the AP Style Guide.
General Writing Standards

CAPITALIZATION

General rule - Do not unnecessarily capitalize

- When referring to the official names of
dictionaries, routines, menus, screens, and reports,
use the exact spelling and capitalization as used in
our software
- If referring to a generic concept, such as ordering
or nursing routines, keep these lowercase
- Please use lowercase for customer-defined
screens.

acute - only capitalize if it’s the actual name of a product
ambulatory - only capitalize if it’s the actual name of a product
Client/Server - With a capital C and capital S; forward slash
Critical Access Hospital - Capital C, A, and H. As an abbreviation, it would be CAH.
Departments, such as Admissions department - always capitalized
Dev ID - two words, capital D for Dev and ID should be in all caps
eChart - “e” is lowercase, C is capital, no hyphen
e-Learning - Lowercase e, hyphen, capital L
e-Sign - Lowercase e, hyphen, capital S
  - If used in a title, it would be E-Sign
PDoc - Capital P and D
job titles - Not capitalized, unless they are being used before the name
  - Ex. Vice President John Doe vs. John Doe, the vice president
  - Job title mnemonics (such as CIO, CEO, COO, etc.)

are always capitalized.

LIVE - Always all-capitalized
MAGIC - Always all-capitalized
MEDITECH - Always all-capitalized
non-medications - Lowercase n and m
prepositions (titles) - In titles, prepositions should be capitalized
  - Ex. “Hospital Earns High Score In Regional Survey”
pronouns (titles) - In titles, pronouns should be capitalized
  - Ex. “Meet the Physician Who Is Driving CPOE Adoption”

HYPHENATED? ONE WORD OR TWO?

barcode - One word
cybersecurity - One word
e-mail - One word, no hyphen; lowercase
e-Prescribing - With a capital P; not e-prescribing
follow-up (as a noun) follow up (as a verb)
Go-LIVE vs. go LIVE - It depends whether it’s being used as a noun or verb:
  - Verb: a lower-case g and unhyphenated (“Let’s go LIVE”)
  - Noun: an upper-case G with a hyphen (“The Go-LIVE went smoothly”)
healthcare - One word; lower-case when used generally
hyphenated words in titles - in a title, capitalize the second word in a hyphenated phrase
  - Ex. “Non-Formulary Medications Are Topic of
General Writing Standards

**PUNCTUATION**

**6.0, 6.1, 6.x platform** - 6.0 and 6.1 refer to specific releases, while 6.x may be used to reference the platform in general

**bullet points**
- Above all, be consistent in structure; make all bullets sentences, or fragments, or questions.
- Make punctuation consistent as well; if one bullet is a complete sentence, then end that bullet and all other bullets with periods. However, if the content are phrases or individual words, you only put a period at the end of the last bullet.
- Avoid lengthy, paragraph-like bullets. Individual bullets should include no more than two lines; three is the maximum length.
- The first word in the bullet should be capitalized.
- Use parallel structure - decide if your bullets should start with a verb or noun, and keep them all consistent.
- Number bullets only when defining a sequence.
- Avoid using transitional phrases, such as “Second of all” or “Another point is” — they slow down readers.

**comma usage** - Use the *Oxford (serial) comma* for lists containing three or more items
- Correct: For breakfast I had tea, toast, and jam
- Incorrect: For breakfast I had tea, toast and jam

**credentials** - Do not use periods in credentials
- Ex. MD, MPP

**credentials with numeric suffix** - Place the comma between the suffix and the credential
- Ex. William Sewell III, MD

**dashes** - Use the em dash ( — ) and not a double dash ( -- )
- Hold down the Alt key, and press 0151 on your numeric keyboard
- Make sure there are *spaces on both sides* of the em dash

**no periods** - The following words do not take periods:
- IT, IS, USA, US, UK

**punctuation and quotes** - Place periods and commas *within* quotation marks
- Correct: “This is always the case,” she said.
- Incorrect: “This is always the case”, she said.

**quotation marks** - Only responses to fields/parameters need to be placed in quotation marks, not field names, dictionary names, etc. For example: In order to have the order auto-populate, define “Y” in Auto-Populate parameter.

**e.g., i.e.**
- Use periods after each letter, followed with a comma, and enclose all in parentheses (e.g., blue, green, purple)
  - Use e.g. to represent “for example”
  - Use i.e. to represent “in other words.”
General Writing Standards

GENERAL

Best Practice(s) - “Best Practices” is the singular form. “Best Practice” may be used as an adjective.

- Ex. “Our hospital adhered to Best Practices to reach Stage 7” vs. “Our hospital referred to Best Practice documentation for Stage 7”

care provider - not caregiver. Two separate words.

dates - Use the AP Style version:

  - Abbreviate August through February if you’re following with a numbered date (ex. Feb. 17). Do not abbreviate March through July.
  - Do not use “st,” “th,” “nd,” etc.
  - If you are referring to an entire month rather than a specific date, always spell out the month
  - Decades (such as 1970s, 1980s, etc.) do not contain apostrophes

hyperlinking - See Standards for how Best Practices handles hyperlinking

module vs. application - refrain from using the term module, and use the term application instead

mnemonics - Spell them out at all times if possible, or at least, on the first mention

- Ex. Today we discussed Operating Room Management (ORM). The ORM product garnered lots of praise.

numbers - Spell out numbers one through nine

- Ex. My daughter is six years old. There are 52 cards in a deck.

page numbering - See Standards for how Best Practices handles numbering

paragraph spacing - Make sure that the spacing is 0 pt before and after

phone numbers - Use dashes instead of dots in phone numbers (781-774-3000, not 781.774.3000)

platforms vs. releases - These words are not interchangeable

  - MAGIC, Client/Server, and 6.x are platforms
  - 6.1, 5.66 are releases

referring to healthcare professionals - Use their exact title (e.g., doctor, nurse, pharmacist, pharmacy technician, etc.), except in the case of regulatory documentation. In this case, refer to the individual by whatever grouping they are a part of — for example, a physician and NP would both be referred to as clinicians.

regional - There is no need to appeal to other regions’ spelling variations

  - Ex. If you are writing an article about a Canadian site, do not write “centre” instead of “center,” unless it’s part of a title (Ex. “Toronto Healthcare Centre”)

role-based vs. roles-based - If referring to one role, use the actual name (e.g., Physician Status Board). If referring to multiple roles, use “roles-based.”

spacing - One space between sentences, never two

time - Separate hours from minutes with a colon

  - If the time is on the hour, just write the hour (i.e., 9 a.m., not 9:00 a.m.)
  - Use lowercase for a.m. and p.m.

Zoom vs. webinar - The vendor MEDITECH uses is called Zoom, but the sessions themselves should be referred to as a “webinar” or “online seminar.”
Mastery of MEDITECH’s product-based writing standards is critical. A thorough understanding of these standards ensures the protection of patient information and the adherence to HIPAA laws. Since most product-based writing is meant to instruct end users of our systems, it is important that the writing is succinct and direct. Avoid writing in the passive voice; be specific, and keep your audience in mind. Clarity is of the utmost importance in product-based writing.
Product-Based Writing Standards

GENERAL DOS AND DON’TS

• Make sure you include a thesis statement in your first paragraph. (Why would customers want to know about this feature? How does it make using the system easier/better/more efficient? This is most likely your thesis statement.)
• Ask yourself who your audience is. Your article should be tailored to a particular reader or readers—whether it is a clinician, administrator, or another role entirely.
• Don’t write in the third person* (e.g., the end user can click on the “Submit” button). Address the reader as “you.” *When creating an e-Learning script or an integrated document, writing in the third person can be appropriate when describing workflow (e.g., the nurse documents the medication administration on the MAR, which is then available for the provider on the patient’s chart).
• Don’t switch back and forth between two audiences in your article. Write a section for each audience, and be sure to indicate who the audience is in the subheading (e.g., “Setup Instructions for I.S. Staff”) or the opening sentence (e.g., “As a dietitian, you...”).
• Don’t use the passive tense. Make the content as active and direct as possible. Look for passive warning signs such as “to be,” “of the,” “by the,” etc.

Passive
There is also the ability for the menu to be edited to include meals under different diagnoses.

Active
You can edit the menu to include meals under different diagnoses.

Or...
Edit the menu to include meals under different diagnoses.

• Omit extraneous words and phrases for more concise sentences.
Wordy
It is also important to confirm the floor that is being used on each line of the dietary sheet.

Concise
Confirm the floor code on each line of the dietary sheet.

• Don’t be vague.
Vague
Did you know we’ve enhanced the Dietary Dictionary to provide more flexibility?

Clearer
Did you know we’ve enhanced the Dietary Dictionary to provide more flexibility for ordering vegan meals?

• Make sure the screen caps appropriately reflect your text. For example, if you’re describing a lookup that lists vegetarian, vegan, and kosher, make sure those reasons are listed on the screen cap.

• Add subheadings to longer articles for easier reading.

• Put the article aside for a day or two, then reread it. Can you clarify sentences/paragraphs even more?

• Ask someone else to review your article, before you publish. A second set of eyes will help to catch any errors you may have missed.

• Please consult our Screen Capture Style Guide for standards on incorporating screen captures into customer-facing documents.
While we’ve covered the essential standards for MEDITECH’s product-based writing in the previous section, there’s plenty more information on product-based writing available. We’ve gathered some alternative resources that address specific issues and listed them below:

- HCIS ring info and etiquette guidelines: [HCIS Ring Info and Etiquette Guidelines](https://staff.meditech.com/en/d/clientserv/pages/copyapplicationmnemonicslist.htm)
Thank you!

Contact Tracy Gavel with any Style Guide questions.