

### 1. Do you agree with the proposed definition of plain language?

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	<b>63.8% (44)</b>	29.0% (20)	7.2% (5)	1.43	69
		Comments or suggestions for substantive changes to the definition			26
			<b>answered question</b>		<b>69</b>
			<b>skipped question</b>		<b>0</b>

### 2. Do you agree with the recommendation to set up a committee to continue the work on developing international standards for plain language?

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	<b>76.2% (48)</b>	17.5% (11)	6.3% (4)	1.30	63
				Comments	16
			<b>answered question</b>		<b>63</b>
			<b>skipped question</b>		<b>6</b>

**3. Do you think that PLAIN should participate in the committee to set international standards for plain language?**

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	<b>89.2% (58)</b>	6.2% (4)	4.6% (3)	1.15	65
				Comments	7
				<b>answered question</b>	<b>65</b>
				<b>skipped question</b>	<b>4</b>

**4. Do you think that PLAIN should support the committee's work financially (if funds are available)?**

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	<b>73.8% (48)</b>	18.5% (12)	7.7% (5)	1.34	65
				Comments	12
				<b>answered question</b>	<b>65</b>
				<b>skipped question</b>	<b>4</b>

**5. Do you agree with recommendation #1 - conducting an international survey of plain language practitioners to gather information about knowledge, skills and competence?**

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please specify below)	Disagree completely	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	82.5% (52)	17.5% (11)	0.0% (0)	1.17	63
				Comments	11
				answered question	63
				skipped question	6

**6. Do you agree with recommendation #2 - using the European Qualifications Framework as a model to define learning outcomes for a plain language training program? If not, do you have other suggestions for a training framework?**

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	59.3% (35)	40.7% (24)	0.0% (0)	1.41	59
				Comments and suggestions	24
				answered question	59
				skipped question	10

**7. Do you agree that plain language practitioners should cooperate with academics to define research issues that support and promote plain language?**

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	78.7% (48)	21.3% (13)	0.0% (0)	1.21	61
				Comments	17
				answered question	61
				skipped question	8

**8. Do you know of examples where plain language practitioners and academics are cooperating to carry out research? Please provide a short description and contact information (if available).**

	Response Count
	19
	answered question 19
	skipped question 50

**9. Do you have suggestions for promoting cooperation between practitioners and academics on research relevant to plain language?**

	Response Count
	25
	answered question 25
	skipped question 44

**10. Do you think that PLAIN should participate in funding research related to plain language (if funds are available)?**

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	<b>70.3% (45)</b>	23.4% (15)	6.3% (4)	1.36	64
			Other (please specify)		16
			<b>answered question</b>		<b>64</b>
			<b>skipped question</b>		<b>5</b>

**11. Do you agree in principle with recommendation #1 - certifying plain language practitioners against a standard for professional knowledge, skills and practice?**

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	<b>49.2% (30)</b>	34.4% (21)	16.4% (10)	1.67	61
			Other (please specify)		25
			<b>answered question</b>		<b>61</b>
			<b>skipped question</b>		<b>8</b>

**12. Do you agree with recommendation #2 - creating a Professional Standards Committee to oversee the research and the practical steps involved in certification?**

	Agree completely	Have reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	<b>62.3% (38)</b>	23.0% (14)	14.8% (9)	1.52	61
			Other (please specify)		19
			<b>answered question</b>		<b>61</b>
			<b>skipped question</b>		<b>8</b>

**13. Do you agree that PLAIN should participate in a Professional Standards Committee to develop standards for certification?**

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	<b>76.6% (49)</b>	10.9% (7)	12.5% (8)	1.36	64
			Other (please specify)		15
			<b>answered question</b>		<b>64</b>
			<b>skipped question</b>		<b>5</b>

#### 14. Do you agree with the recommendation on advocacy shown above?

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	74.2% (46)	17.7% (11)	8.1% (5)	1.34	62
				Comments	18
				answered question	62
				skipped question	7

#### 15. Do you agree with the recommendation called Option 3 - creating a formal federation of existing organisations through a constituted body that has sufficient legal status to apply to relevant bodies for funding?

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	66.7% (42)	23.8% (15)	9.5% (6)	1.43	63
				Comments	17
				answered question	63
				skipped question	6

**16. If you agree with creating a formal international federation, are you in favour of PLAIN participating in this federation?**

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	<b>77.8% (49)</b>	14.3% (9)	7.9% (5)	1.30	63
				Comments	13
				<b>answered question</b>	<b>63</b>
				<b>skipped question</b>	<b>6</b>

**17. If you disagree with creating a formal international federation, are you in favour of maintaining the International Plain Language Working Group as it currently exists?**

	Agree completely	Have some reservations (please comment below)	Disagree completely (please comment below)	Rating Average	Response Count
Choose one	<b>42.4% (14)</b>	39.4% (13)	18.2% (6)	1.76	33
				Comments	17
				<b>answered question</b>	<b>33</b>
				<b>skipped question</b>	<b>36</b>

**Page 2, Q1. Do you agree with the proposed definition of plain language?**

1	Almost there. Doesn't mention content.	Aug 26, 2011 7:15 AM
2	My concern with this type of definition is that it will most likely be applied in a subjective manner. I don't believe many organizations have the resources or opportunities to test documents on readers. In most cases, the writer uses their own "inner" test of clarity . . . which may not have much or anything at all to do with what their audience will experience in reading the document.	Aug 21, 2011 10:31 PM
3	I would add "content" (by using content, language...), as Neil did in a recent	Aug 21, 2011 7:03 PM

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email replying to Bill DB. Other comments: I do believe that's the way we should be going. However, we can expect some resistance--and confusion--as many old-timers are likely to keep saying, and writing, and shouting loud and clear, that plain language is about short words and short sentences.

- |   |  |                       |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| 4 | An aim is a value, and therefore subjective. And a list of techniques for achieving an aim cannot be conclusive: new techniques may be devised, and people may disagree about which techniques should be included. It is not good practice to "stuff" a definition, particularly with two different types of things. Moreover, the only way to avoid an over-simplistic definition is to use the word "plain" and the expression "plain language" in technical senses different from the plain meaning of the words and unknown to anyone outside the movement. This is already causing misunderstandings, as recent academic articles have shown. And even with this degree of detail the "definition" is inevitably vague. Who is the audience? What is "the best possible chance"? What is "readily"? Where do you set the inevitably arbitrary thresholds of need, understanding, and use? Finally, this can be read misleadingly as a statement of fact rather than a definition. Compare "An animal is a mammal if it is a member of the species homo sapiens". The plain language movement will be discredited if it defines "plain" unplainly. | Aug 21, 2011 10:11 AM |
| 5 | I feel this is a loaded question. Of course the outcome and the descriptions are fine and what we all aim for. It's nearly a motherhood statement. What I don't agree with is that, as I understand the options, you propose to ignore the means we need to use to reach that outcome: the actual tools we use to achieve the outcome, that is the elements from the element-focused definition. We must include these essential elements in the definition.   | Aug 21, 2011 9:50 AM  |
| 6 | The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland (RILF) likes the wide scope of this definition, and also that the need to adapt in different communicative situations is clearly expressed.  | Aug 19, 2011 9:47 AM  |
| 7 | I have no real reservations about the definition itself -- although I quite like the suggested edits from Martin Cutts at the Stockholm plenary. My real reservation was with the discussion paper's analysis leading up to the definition. There was an error in thinking. The authors confused readability tools and metrics with readability outcomes, where the definition should properly focus. They did this intentionally in order to rather spuriously discredit some methodologies and promote others. I support debates over methodologies, but the authors abused their position as authors of the "what it is" section to promote what I felt was an extreme position on "how to do it". I am worried that the publication of the discussion paper has entrenched this position.  | Aug 17, 2011 12:58 PM |
| 8 | The proposed definition omit pronouns, smothers verbs, strains brevity and ignores other basic plain language concepts. Two silent assumptions also drive the definition: 1. single sentence definitions are virtuous 2. definitions aren't the proper home for pronouns If we use basic plain language techniques, then one possible option that keeps the original version intact could be: "Your communication is in plain language if it meets the needs of your audience---that your language, structure and design are so clear and effective that your audience has the best possible chance to find what they need, understand and use it." That version uses pronouns, unsmothers the verbs and eliminates the adverbs. Of course, when we change the adverbs to adjectives, it becomes easier to accept the argument that "clear" and "effective" is a doublet we don't need. As a street level plain language worker, I will never show the current form of the definition to anyone because I think it erodes the public trust in plain  | Aug 17, 2011 11:02 AM |

**Page 2, Q1. Do you agree with the proposed definition of plain language?**

language. That's not something I'm willing to do. Bruce Corsino

9	... readily finding the information (not what) they need, understanding it, and using it.	Aug 17, 2011 7:35 AM
10	This single sentence is much too long and complex. A very hard 'sell' when encouraging clients to write shorter sentences as part of a workplace writing workshop. Surely the definition could be up to 3 sentences or use bullet points? A communication is in plain language if it enables intended readers to: * find what they need * understand the information after just one reading (I think this bit is important and missing from the current definition) * use the information for its intended purpose The communication uses language, structure and design to accomplish the goal of plain language.	Aug 16, 2011 10:32 PM
11	I agree with the definition but don't agree with the concept of prescribing how plain language is practised.	Aug 16, 2011 9:34 PM
12	This is the ideal that is rarely met in most communications, even those claiming to be plain language. It is sometimes hard to get clients to work on design and there are systems constraints. I know it is a loophole but there has to be an "under the circumstances" element. This definition is too absolute -- how many documents have your written to this standard? And, when you thought it might this standard three years ago, would it today? For consultants, is it fair to hold them up to this standard when they have no control of the final product?	Aug 16, 2011 5:52 PM
13	I agree with the option 3 direction of the proposed definition. But I'm concerned that the definition itself might not meet the definition of plain language. For example, it's a long sentence with some abstract key words. Will a newcomer to the concept of plain language--such as a person in training or a manager we're trying to convince--latch on to that definition and say, "Yes! I want to learn that" or "Yes! I will implement that!?" And will even supporters and advocates of plain language "readily" use that definition in their formal presentations or even casual discussions? I'm feeling doubt in answer to my questions. I realize in our work, we would not simply give that definition; we'd expand on it. But would that definition be effective and useful all by itself in any mainstream dictionary? I also doubt that. Also, this may be picky, but I think of "audience" as a singular word that needs an "it" pronoun.	Aug 16, 2011 4:58 PM
14	,,,,,	Aug 16, 2011 4:16 AM
15	We need all three categories in our definition.	Aug 12, 2011 10:30 PM
16	my comment is a general one and one i'm sure the board does not want to hear or nor entertain but, everything this organizaiton does within its own community is good, but my concern is the general public - those that have not heard of the organization, does not know what is does or promotes - and hears "plain language" or PLAIN. On the surface it is very narrow, but with a good, comprehensive definition, it works. The problem is getting to the definition point. so i would suggest not only a good definition, but a clearer name. so, i would, in principle, agree with the recommendation with this change: A communication is CLEAR (understandable, substitute another word, etc.) if it meets...	Aug 12, 2011 2:54 PM
17	I like it in principle (outcome). However, it is too long and breaks the rules we tell people about by trying to do too much in one sentence and being repetitious. The dash is also something we tell less able writers to avoid. The 'need, understand, use (or act)' part has worked well for me in training over the past	Aug 12, 2011 1:04 AM

**Page 2, Q1. Do you agree with the proposed definition of plain language?**

few months as a repeatable mantra. My attempt: A plain language communication uses reader-focused language, structure and design. It ensures the intended readers can find what they need, understand it and use (or act on) it. Key words for me are: reader focused; intended reader; language, structure and design; find, understand and use (or act). If I repeat them often in a training, the participants seem to take them on as concepts to drive their writing. I would like the definition to give me that crisp, repeatable base. I agree with then having an elements based list to back up the definition.

18	For me the problem is when you do not know who the audience is, or the audience is widely-ranged and of different educational levels. This is why I am not 100% sure about this definition.	Aug 11, 2011 2:36 PM
19	To my mind the definition mixes up spoken and written language. It refers to "audience" yet excludes spoken language not only by its use of "designed," but because of the reference to "readily finding what they need." If the definition is to refer only to written language it would be better to use the word "readers."	Aug 11, 2011 11:00 AM
20	We can still finesse the wording in line with the plenary discussion at Stockholm, but the principles and approach are sound.	Aug 11, 2011 2:42 AM
21	I think we are doing the right thing.	Aug 9, 2011 11:44 AM
22	I know you ask for substantive changes, my first comment though, is a stylistic one. I feel it is essential that the language of this definition is simplified - so that it is easier to read. I think that this definition might attract public comment if it's not more readable. My second comment is that I feel the definition needs to be prefaced with a statement saying that this definition might attract different localised versions in different countries or situations.	Aug 7, 2011 4:09 AM
23	I would like to see "intended audience," rather than "audience" (the first time "audience" is used.	Aug 6, 2011 2:50 PM
24	Its a bit long. Also, hate the dash. We can't preach that people should use short, clear sentences and then produce a long definition like this. The "language, structure and design" seem like over kill. its inferred "best possible chance of readily finding is very wordy. How about: A communication is in plain language if it meets the needs of its audience by clearly and effectively allowing the audience to find what they need, understand it and use it.	Aug 6, 2011 1:46 PM
25	First of all, the "definitions of plain language" are wrong. I don't know of anyone who proposes a "numerical or formula-based" definition. It is important, however, that the literacy be taken into consideration in meeting the needs of the audience. Formulas are one method among many available for meeting literacy needs. You have set up a biased set of options. Any definition of plain language that leaves out literacy is deficient and not based on empirical evidence. The evidence shows that literacy and the corresponding readability of the text are the major determinants of reading comprehension.	Aug 6, 2011 11:38 AM
26	...by using words, structure, and design so clearly that the reader has the best chance of readily finding what they need, understanding it, and using it.	Aug 6, 2011 3:33 AM

**Page 3, Q1. Do you agree with the recommendation to set up a committee to continue the work on developing international standards for plain language?**

1	Seems like a good idea. My reservations: we heard basically nothing from the	Aug 21, 2011 7:07 PM
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**Page 3, Q1. Do you agree with the recommendation to set up a committee to continue the work on developing international standards for plain language?**

	work the IPLWG was doing. I would hope for more regular updates and communication if a committee is set up.	
2	The project is misconceived, for the reasons I have given in "Professionalizing plain language".	Aug 21, 2011 10:13 AM
3	I am bitterly disappointed with what happened in Australia with IPEd doing an about-face on the original plans of CASE and setting itself up as the authority that it is not (and me being in a situation where I have to finance it). I don't know whether this project will end up the same way.	Aug 21, 2011 9:51 AM
4	Quite a challenge - agree it needs a lot of work	Aug 20, 2011 9:01 PM
5	The RILF thinks it important that the committee include also speakers of other languages than English and other language families than the Indo-European, because we think that the standard should accommodate all languages from the start. The committee could perhaps conduct a survey on linguistic and textual elements that are considered important for plain language in different languages to see which of them are common to all or several languages. Also the impact of writing conditions should be considered in the standard. The RILF would also like to see as open a procedure as possible in setting up of the committee.	Aug 19, 2011 10:07 AM
6	Lots of work to do here!	Aug 17, 2011 1:00 PM
7	Have always felt that setting international standards creates an unnecessary and elitist bureaucracy	Aug 17, 2011 12:53 AM
8	I think it is a waste of people's time. Please present a convincing argument as to why this is necessary or beneficial.	Aug 16, 2011 5:53 PM
9	(I appreciated that "international standardS" is used in the question and not "international standard.")	Aug 16, 2011 5:00 PM
10	I'm sick of having to stop and think or look up things like ISO and IPLWG.	Aug 16, 2011 3:22 PM
11	I agree with the recommendation. But I think there should be a time frame given. Is it reasonable to set a goal? For example, the standards committee will strive to complete this work within the next 2 or 3 or 5 years or whatever time frame is appropriate.	Aug 15, 2011 2:29 PM
12	By all means those who feel such work may lead to fruitful results should go ahead and see what they can find. I'm increasingly feeling that setting, maintaining and developing standards is too elusive to be worth the trouble. Perhaps the best way forward is via shared practice and peer comment. Setting standards immediately introduces the problem of making those standards meaningful. Thousands of hours of research, planning and debate could well lead nowhere and would detract from actual practice. Sorry to be negative, but this comment is the result of months of reflection.	Aug 13, 2011 5:31 AM
13	please consider the general public (i.e., people other than those involved in the profession) at large and do not confine anything we do to professionals.	Aug 12, 2011 2:58 PM
14	This seems the best way forward.	Aug 11, 2011 2:44 AM
15	Any recommendation that does not place readability (reading difficulty and ease)	Aug 6, 2011 11:42 AM

**Page 3, Q1. Do you agree with the recommendation to set up a committee to continue the work on developing international standards for plain language?**

and the literacy of the audience as central to international standards is deficient and in complete denial of what science has told us about reading comprehension.

16 I consider it a waste of time.

Aug 6, 2011 1:09 AM

**Page 3, Q2. Do you think that PLAIN should participate in the committee to set international standards for plain language?**

1 Apart from the reasons given in PPL, it could be argued that the arrangements proposed are not permitted by PLAIN's bylaws, which would mean that board members could be held personally liable. Aug 21, 2011 10:13 AM

2 As I said above, I am bitterly disappointed with what happened in Australia with IPEd doing an about-face on the original plans of CASE, setting itself up as the authority that it is not, and not taking the fundamental steps to validate what it is doing. I don't know whether this project will end up the same way. Aug 21, 2011 9:51 AM

3 Yes - all leaders in plain language need to be represented Aug 20, 2011 9:01 PM

4 It will be difficult work and difficult to arrive at a consensus, which is necessary to have credibility. PLAIN members' volunteer time is better spent promoting plain language, encouraging governments and business to use it, and training practitioners. Aug 16, 2011 5:53 PM

5 If PLAIN members feel standards are achievable and meaningful, then yes, of course. Aug 13, 2011 5:31 AM

6 Yes -- and I would gladly volunteer to help in any way!! Aug 12, 2011 8:12 PM

7 We need to be at the table. Aug 11, 2011 2:44 AM

**Page 3, Q3. Do you think that PLAIN should support the committee's work financially (if funds are available)?**

1 Hard to tell without knowing what the funds would be used for. Aug 21, 2011 7:07 PM

2 As I said above, I have serious reservations. I do support the exploration of plain language definitions and tools required by plain language practitioners. Aug 21, 2011 9:51 AM

3 What would the money be used for? Most groups run on a purely voluntary basis and communicate using e-mail. Aug 20, 2011 9:01 PM

4 As a new member, I am not familiar with PLAIN's business operations. If the question means PLAIN pays the members' expenses to do this work (if funds exist), absolutely that's fair. Aug 20, 2011 10:02 AM

5 Although it might be useful to explore this issue a bit further, I am quite Aug 16, 2011 7:32 PM

**Page 3, Q3. Do you think that PLAIN should support the committee's work financially (if funds are available)?**

	pessimistic as to whether it will ultimately achieve anything that will be of much use, so I would be wary of spending much on it.	
6	Money is better spent on other endeavours.	Aug 16, 2011 5:53 PM
7	If proper credit is given.	Aug 16, 2011 3:22 PM
8	I think all who value plain language should support this effort either by "work in kind" or financially or both, if they can. I'd like to know more about PLAIN's financial state before I agreed to this proposal. I think it should be decided by the membership when they have full knowledge PLAIN's financial state.	Aug 15, 2011 2:29 PM
9	The standards would relate to many organizations, including governments, so funding should be from a broad base.	Aug 13, 2011 8:59 PM
10	If there's a belief in the enterprise.	Aug 13, 2011 5:31 AM
11	Mostly we would commit our time perhaps to begin with.	Aug 11, 2011 2:44 AM
12	Why would funds be needed for committee work? With the use of online technology, face-to-face meetings would not be necessary. I've worked on a PLAIN committee and we didn't require any financial support. Maybe I'm missing something here...(sigh)	Aug 6, 2011 3:41 AM

**Page 4, Q1. Do you agree with recommendation #1 - conducting an international survey of plain language practitioners to gather information about knowledge, skills and competence?**

1	The research would be useful, but how are you going to track down even a representative sample? The Plain Language Advocates LinkedIn group alone now has 700 members, and is growing fast. Who knows how many thousands of practitioners there are around the world (many just defining themselves as "writers" or "editors").	Aug 21, 2011 10:16 AM
2	I have reservations as previously mentioned: IPEd has proved a failure for my profession.	Aug 21, 2011 9:51 AM
3	This is a good idea. In Finland one of the recipients of such a survey should be Tampere University, which has for 15 years offered a training program in this field and has decided to start a Master's program in 2013. <a href="http://www10.uta.fi/opas/opintoKokonaisuus.htm?rid=3089&amp;uiLang=en&amp;lang=en&amp;lvv=2011">http://www10.uta.fi/opas/opintoKokonaisuus.htm?rid=3089&amp;uiLang=en&amp;lang=en&amp;lvv=2011</a>	Aug 19, 2011 10:07 AM
4	Given the lack of agreement as to what plain language is, I am not sure how useful such a survey would be.	Aug 16, 2011 7:36 PM
5	The cardinal rule is only to ask questions when you have a purpose for the answer. I am not sure how the results of an international survey would be used, and how relevant they would be to future actions.	Aug 16, 2011 5:53 PM
6	Huge amount of work. Who has the time? A university project using research students? But perhaps useful to ensure minimum standards and qualifications. There are some shamefully poor plain language practitioners in the UK.	Aug 13, 2011 5:34 AM

**Page 4, Q1. Do you agree with recommendation #1 - conducting an international survey of plain language practitioners to gather information about knowledge, skills and competence?**

7	I'm a new member (British, but living and working in Sweden for over twenty years) and unaware of the history of PLAIN, but I'm surprised by the lack of contact with the British Plain English Campaign, which has quite a lot of clout in the UK. If we truly are an international organisation, it would surely be valuable to include them in any international survey?	Aug 11, 2011 11:10 AM
8	This is a vital and logical first step.	Aug 11, 2011 2:46 AM
9	Surveying people in the field is always a good idea. It increases knowledge about the practice and it builds "buy-in" for any future standards that might be suggested for those practitioners. Today, it can probably also be done at low-cost, through a technology like the one being used for this survey. However, we are likely to find that knowledge, skills, and competence vary widely among people who consider themselves "plain language practitioners." Therefore, the working group must not solely rely on what they find in the survey to define competency as a plain language practitioner.	Aug 7, 2011 9:49 AM
10	Yes we should do a survey. And yes a training framework should rely heavily on the experience of current practitioners. But we need to think about training programs that are not aimed at developing professional plain language practitioners, but at improving the writing skills of anyone who writes, especially for the public. We need a balance between supporting those who are or want to be professionals, and all those others whose writing impacts the public every day. Our practitioners should not have a corner on the market of clear writing.	Aug 6, 2011 10:33 AM
11	Why not? It can't hurt to have more info.	Aug 6, 2011 1:11 AM

**Page 4, Q2. Do you agree with recommendation #2 - using the European Qualifications Framework as a model to define learning outcomes for a plain language training program? If not, do you have other suggestions for a training framework?**

1	It sounds reasonable but I'd have clicked "Don't know" if there was a button.	Aug 21, 2011 10:16 AM
2	The plain language training program should provide guidelines or recommendations for our profession; but neither PLAIN nor the proposed committee should attempt to set themselves up as the unique or ultimate authority: has happened to IPEd, that would increase the risk that it will lose credibility as a result of any error it makes (technical, procedural or by omission).	Aug 21, 2011 9:51 AM
3	Sounds good - don't know a lot about the European Qualifications Framework, but worth exploring	Aug 20, 2011 9:02 PM
4	It is hard to agree completely, when our knowledge of this program are so scant. It sounds sensible, anyway.	Aug 19, 2011 10:07 AM
5	I'm afraid I don't know very much about the European Qualifications Framework. But as long as it is associated with a lifelong learning scheme, I assume that it will use best practices in adult education, such as participatory research and popular education techniques. This is very important to me. I do not think that training will be effective if it takes place in a purely academic environment.	Aug 17, 2011 1:05 PM

**Page 4, Q2. Do you agree with recommendation #2 - using the European Qualifications Framework as a model to define learning outcomes for a plain language training program? If not, do you have other suggestions for a training framework?**

6	Don't have enough background regarding EQF to make a really informed answer here	Aug 17, 2011 12:55 AM
7	I am ignorant of the EQF, so am not really in a position to comment on this.	Aug 16, 2011 7:36 PM
8	What if a client says I want each of my employees to get a one-hour training session in plain language? Do you say "no" because that's not enough time or do you say "yes" to get people thinking. I worry about the bureaucratization of a skill that is part experience, part art, and part luck.	Aug 16, 2011 5:53 PM
9	I agree completely that a model should be used. I'm not very familiar with the European Qualification Framework, but I can accept using it as the model for beginning the discussion. Unless a super-majority of the participants decides that the European framework effectively meets the needs of most plain-language advocates around the planet, all participants in the discussion must understand that the final product could be different from the model.	Aug 16, 2011 5:08 PM
10	I don't know enough about this to agree or disagree.	Aug 16, 2011 4:30 PM
11	Learning outcomes are often specious, partly because they can never be usefully specific.	Aug 13, 2011 5:34 AM
12	I don't know enough about the EQF to answer this.	Aug 12, 2011 10:35 PM
13	I would like to know and have a better understanding of the "European Qualifications Framework", but I believe the working group has been tremendously thorough and the fact that the EC is helping fund things makes it worthwhile, I think, to use the EQF.	Aug 12, 2011 8:14 PM
14	The US should have and shuld be leading this endeavor.	Aug 12, 2011 6:25 PM
15	We need to ensure that it will be transferable to the North American context.	Aug 12, 2011 3:16 PM
16	Britain is in the EU.....See above.	Aug 11, 2011 11:10 AM
17	This is one of the major funding sources available and is a sound framework to use.	Aug 11, 2011 2:46 AM
18	The EQF looks like a good way to compare and equalize curricula in different countries. However, it is focused on academic levels and degrees. We must not assume or require academic study to show competence as a plain language practitioner.	Aug 7, 2011 9:49 AM
19	I feel that I do not know exactly what this involves. If the EU framework is very beurocratic, for instance, it might not suit all situations.	Aug 7, 2011 4:11 AM
20	I don't know enough about the European Qualifications Framework to answer this question. I'm sure it's sound, though.	Aug 6, 2011 2:53 PM
21	The European Framework is deficient and not based on what we know about readability and reading comprehension. It lacks an objective and empirical basis for a framework.	Aug 6, 2011 11:50 AM
22	I don't know about this model - will look it up and come back to provide a	Aug 6, 2011 3:44 AM

**Page 4, Q2. Do you agree with recommendation #2 - using the European Qualifications Framework as a model to define learning outcomes for a plain language training program? If not, do you have other suggestions for a training framework?**

	response.	
23	Start anywhere.	Aug 6, 2011 1:11 AM
24	I don't know what the European Qualifications Framework is.	Aug 6, 2011 1:07 AM

**Page 5, Q1. Do you agree that plain language practitioners should cooperate with academics to define research issues that support and promote plain language?**

1	My reservation is about the wording of the question: "... that support and promote PL." It seems to indicate that we'd only be interested in pro-PL research when, in fact, other types of research (more neutral in its purpose) would also be useful.	Aug 21, 2011 7:18 PM
2	But what academy is referred to in recommendation 3? This isn't reflected in your questions.	Aug 21, 2011 10:18 AM
3	It depends on what academics and research you have in mind. I found the work of Professor J. Gibbons from Sydney very useful. On the other hand, the language that universities tell science and medical students to use to write up their research and theses is not my idea of plain language. I don't want any 'help' from academics who promote such obtuse language and style.	Aug 21, 2011 9:54 AM
4	The impact of multilingualism and the role of translation are necessary topics for research, and also the impact of information technology, e.g. text production systems.	Aug 19, 2011 10:08 AM
5	I am worried that if research takes place purely in academia, it will ask the wrong questions. As long as this is a participatory model that takes its leadership from the people in the field, it is a good way to go. Also, it's important to respect all of the research already done in a variety of disciplines that supports plain language practice. Please let's not go wasting time and money duplicating existing knowledge or challenging well-established knowledge.	Aug 17, 2011 1:20 PM
6	In my opinion, academics usually ruin everything it touches.	Aug 16, 2011 3:25 PM
7	I'm not convinced that plain language is an academic or conceptual subject. Creating research could become a self-perpetuating exercise.	Aug 13, 2011 5:37 AM
8	But what academics? Not all academics are in universities. English professors know nothing about plain language. We need to work with the academic professionals in our field, not pretend that Business or Communications or English departments understand enough of what we do yet.	Aug 12, 2011 10:41 PM
9	I would, however, not like to see it totally in the hands of academics -- I think practitioners should play a key role, not a secondary role	Aug 12, 2011 8:20 PM
10	yes, but include usability testing, information design and research from actual projects that are outside academia.	Aug 12, 2011 3:41 PM

**Page 5, Q1. Do you agree that plain language practitioners should cooperate with academics to define research issues that support and promote plain language?**

11	In my experience, academics do not take plain language seriously and it will be difficult to make them do so.	Aug 11, 2011 2:44 PM
12	We need to establish relationships with the academy, but often those who teach in this area have limited practical experience of real world communications tasks. So they should not be allowed to drive developments.	Aug 11, 2011 2:47 AM
13	Of course, we should have more interaction between academics and practitioners. And I truly wish that more academic studies had relevance to real-world issues and contexts. But the standards for research in academia and the study of ecologically valid examples are often in conflict. Let's not dismiss research from studies such as usability testing of actual documents. Let's not limit our definition of useful research to hypothesis-based studies with single variables.	Aug 7, 2011 9:56 AM
14	I agree, but we need to be careful that we don't fall into the same traps as academia: excessive committees, slowing down the process, a focus on theory rather than practicality, etc.	Aug 6, 2011 2:58 PM
15	The first obligation is to become familiar with the research on reading comprehension and literacy that is already available. It is a vast body of knowledge addressing of the most important issues and the most extensive efforts in reading research. Any further attempts at defining research issues that ignores that corpus is wasteful and blind.	Aug 6, 2011 12:03 PM
16	Yes I generally agree. But much useful research can be done outside the walls of academe. We need to encourage all plain language practitioners to find opportunities to address research issues as they conduct their work, and we need to help give them the tools to do so. That would certainly include identifying issues that need to be addressed by research and suggesting ways that practitioners might contribute to that research.	Aug 6, 2011 10:38 AM
17	Yes, but let's keep in mind the National Commission on Writing study as it relates to the poor job universities are doing when it comes to teaching written communications. How will we select universities to participate? Is there a group already established?	Aug 6, 2011 3:53 AM

**Page 5, Q2. Do you know of examples where plain language practitioners and academics are cooperating to carry out research? Please provide a short description and contact information (if available).**

1	I found the work of Professor J. Gibbons from Sydney very useful, but I don't know about his connections with plain language practitioners.	Aug 21, 2011 9:54 AM
2	no	Aug 20, 2011 9:04 PM
3	In California, I know that many academics still require passive voice in college papers. I present VanWrite programs in the workplace; many graduate and MBA students tell me that at work they embrace and use what I teach, but for their classes they must resort to passive voice.	Aug 20, 2011 5:07 PM
4	The RILF has had a few such projects and will try to have more. We have both	Aug 19, 2011 10:08 AM

**Page 5, Q2. Do you know of examples where plain language practitioners and academics are cooperating to carry out research? Please provide a short description and contact information (if available).**

	research fellows and practitioners in the Institute, and some of us do both practical work and research. One of the ongoing projects has been called Drafting a legislative text ( <a href="http://www.kotus.fi/index.phtml?l=en&amp;s=4305">http://www.kotus.fi/index.phtml?l=en&amp;s=4305</a> ), where we cooperated with the Ministry of Justice. A recent project was Ideal language vs. writing in practice, where the impact of plain language training was examined through a survey ( <a href="http://www.kotus.fi/index.phtml?l=en&amp;s=395">http://www.kotus.fi/index.phtml?l=en&amp;s=395</a> ).	
5	Uppsala University in Sweden is in the process of starting a network for practitioners and academics: <a href="mailto:catharina.hoog@nordiska.uu.se">catharina.hoog@nordiska.uu.se</a> .	Aug 17, 2011 7:47 AM
6	no	Aug 16, 2011 4:35 PM
7	No.	Aug 16, 2011 3:25 PM
8	No formal arrangements. I have an informal network of like-minded associates who share ideas.	Aug 13, 2011 5:37 AM
9	Some universities (e.g. one branch of the Univ of Wisconsin College of Engineering) are requiring that EE lab reports be submitted at least in CORRECT English. I can give criteria.	Aug 12, 2011 6:29 PM
10	No, I do not.	Aug 12, 2011 4:35 PM
11	At the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of London, Dr Helen Xanthaki, <a href="mailto:Helen.Xanthaki@sas.ac.uk">Helen.Xanthaki@sas.ac.uk</a> , was interested and I did pursue the idea of doing an MSc with her on the topic of plain language in tax law, but then life (and finance) caught up with me and I did not follow it up. She had good ideas about how to do a controlled test, so she would be a good person to get in touch with.	Aug 11, 2011 2:44 PM
12	No I don't. In Denmark there is no focus on plain language from academic circles. What we have of theoretical and practical plain language in the company where I work is what we have collected ourselves from sources on the internet.	Aug 11, 2011 4:37 AM
13	University of Twente in The Netherlands (Menno de Jong) University of Washington in the USA (Judy Ramey)	Aug 7, 2011 9:56 AM
14	In South Africa, we are just at the start of this process. I have worked (in small ways so far) with Rhodes University to encourage and comment on plain language research by both undergrad and post-grad researchers. We (a group of practitioners) have set up the plain language group of SA, and academics and practitioners belong to it. Contact <a href="mailto:frances@simplified.co.za">frances@simplified.co.za</a> for more information. (I have been considering doing an MA on training plain language.)	Aug 7, 2011 4:18 AM
15	I do not know of any such examples yet but I have just enrolled in the Master's Program in Education in Literacy at Mount Saint Vincent University, Nova Scotia, Canada and hope to focus on plain language in that program. I am hoping to conduct research in the field as part of the program and would welcome suggestions from others as to where to focus the research.	Aug 6, 2011 7:02 PM
16	I worked with several people from investments and marketing at TIAA-CREF (an American pension fund primarily for teachers, scientists, and doctors) to conduct research on a particular letter they were sending to upcoming retirees. The methodology and results have been submitted in an article to STC's Technical Communication. I currently am beginning another research project of a similar	Aug 6, 2011 4:37 PM

**Page 5, Q2. Do you know of examples where plain language practitioners and academics are cooperating to carry out research? Please provide a short description and contact information (if available).**

	nature with a Fortune 100 bank. Not sure if you mean my contact information, but it's <a href="mailto:deborah@theplainlanguagegroup.com">deborah@theplainlanguagegroup.com</a> or <a href="mailto:dsbosley@uncc.edu">dsbosley@uncc.edu</a> .	
17	The U.S.-based Legal Writing Institute (although not a formal cooperation--just an overlap in some LWI research topics)	Aug 6, 2011 2:58 PM
18	There is research on readability going on in many languages right now. I have often posted those studies Those who are not concerned with the relevance of readability to the plain-language movement do not see the importance of those studies. In the academia and among linguists, plain language means readability	Aug 6, 2011 12:03 PM
19	No.	Aug 6, 2011 3:53 AM

**Page 5, Q3. Do you have suggestions for promoting cooperation between practitioners and academics on research relevant to plain language?**

1	I found the work of Professor J. Gibbons from Sydney very useful.	Aug 21, 2011 9:54 AM
2	Many clients have urged me to take VanWrite to the local universities. I have resisted for two reasons: I am blessed with plenty of business so I have little time, AND, since I come from education, I know that education is quite resistant to change. Perhaps I should get over the second reason and go talk to local academics?	Aug 20, 2011 5:07 PM
3	The RILF has started networks between practitioners and academics and arranged seminars to present research to practitioners. We also publish articles about new research in our journal, which most practitioners order. Through the networks we have been able to find partners for research projects and to participate ourselves in plain language projects.	Aug 19, 2011 10:08 AM
4	I think that our first research priority should be to monitor and measure the impact of plain language reforms in business, government, public sector institutions and the community. The researchers from academia are probably not linguists; the academic researchers we need might best be drawn from schools of business and management.	Aug 17, 2011 1:20 PM
5	No. My experience has always been in commercial publishing, as an in-house and freelance editor. I know little about what academics are doing and am in fact looking for opportunities to improve my plain language knowledge and skills.	Aug 16, 2011 4:35 PM
6	No.	Aug 16, 2011 3:25 PM
7	It's easier to work together when there is an existing relationship or connection. How do we build the connection? Do we set up an on-line plain language research wannabees dating service. If you are interested in meeting an academic or a practitioner so you can help with this research complete a form and we'll make a plain language research connection? I do I raise your hand and say I'm in, tell me what to do?	Aug 15, 2011 2:36 PM
8	No, sorry.	Aug 13, 2011 5:37 AM

**Page 5, Q3. Do you have suggestions for promoting cooperation between practitioners and academics on research relevant to plain language?**

9	I would like to see academics working with practitioners who have corporate or government clients who might be willing to participate in studies -- I think practitioners probably have contacts in industry and the government that could be the studied group.	Aug 12, 2011 8:20 PM
10	Yes. I will discuss with appropriate audiences.	Aug 12, 2011 6:29 PM
11	Promote dialog among practitioners first. They are closest to the grist mill. Ask them to identify elements most needing research. Then promote dialog between practitioners and academics.	Aug 12, 2011 4:35 PM
12	No, but I sure hope this happens. Some of the most obtuse writing I edit comes from academia.	Aug 12, 2011 3:17 PM
13	No	Aug 11, 2011 2:44 PM
14	Among other things I work part-time as a translator (Swedish-English) at the Swedish Information Centre for Rare Diseases. I think the Centre would profit greatly from research into the issue of plain language and the best way to communicate with our readers - both lay people and medical professionals. I see research as including both English and Swedish. (NB This is my own opinion. I haven't mentioned it to my boss yet!)	Aug 11, 2011 11:18 AM
15	If my company was to establish some sort of cooperation I think the way we would do it would be to invite a student to write his/her thesis in the company. But it would require a good deal of effort to convince the vice president or director that there is something in it for the company.	Aug 11, 2011 4:37 AM
16	Health services research is one area that brings together practitioners and academics and that needs help with plain language. Might be some opportunities to carry out plain language research...	Aug 9, 2011 2:35 PM
17	Look for models outside the USA. Ask Patricia Wright, retired from the University of Cardiff in Wales, for advice on this topic.	Aug 7, 2011 9:56 AM
18	Presenting at conferences Acknowledging strongly and publically that most research beneficial to plain language is not 'labelled' as plain language Being open to various fields (eg, LInguistics) even if their approach is not the 'traditional' one to plain language Volunteer various lectures and programmes at universities, especially within programmes that focus on communications issues - sometimes it helps to market these as another title (eg, 'communication practice' - and then introduce plain language as a concept within that.) One of the problems is that 'plain language' has an image problem within many areas of academia, so we need not to be defensive, but to address this constructively.	Aug 7, 2011 4:18 AM
19	See my note above.	Aug 6, 2011 7:02 PM
20	1. Each side has to believe it has something to learn from the other. 2. The outcome has to be beneficial to the practitioner, not just to the academic (and vice versa). 3. Grants would help. 4. Access to corporations and/or government agencies would help. 5. Publishing a list of what we want to know: what research questions are valuable to both practitioners and academics?	Aug 6, 2011 4:37 PM
21	A concerted effort by the plain-language community to reach out, one-on-one, to those in academia. A grassroots effort will probably be most effective.	Aug 6, 2011 2:58 PM

**Page 5, Q3. Do you have suggestions for promoting cooperation between practitioners and academics on research relevant to plain language?**

22	Get an appreciation of the relevance of readability (reading ease) and reading comprehension and where readability research is recorded and where it continues.	Aug 6, 2011 12:03 PM
23	Communication is key. Practitioners and academics don't even know each other. PLAIN can contribute by fostering that communication. Academics need to be made aware of our research issues, which can represent opportunities for them and their students. Practitioners need to be aware of academic research interests and how their work might contribute. Perhaps start with a webpage on the PLAIN site where both sides can post suggestions and questions. Perhaps a social network devoted exclusively to this interaction.	Aug 6, 2011 10:38 AM
24	Will have to give this question more thought before answering. It's almost 4am here - so I'm a bit "brain-dead" but wanted to respond after getting your second email. Will come back to this question and provide a response.	Aug 6, 2011 3:53 AM
25	More support to be sought from Government.	Aug 6, 2011 3:47 AM

**Page 5, Q4. Do you think that PLAIN should participate in funding research related to plain language (if funds are available)?**

1	The members should be consulted for their ideas about the details and for their consent to any particular large expenditure.	Aug 21, 2011 10:18 AM
2	There are enough players and competition in academia without us getting into the fray.	Aug 21, 2011 9:54 AM
3	I think that PLAIN should establish research priorities (in a consultative way) and only endorse projects that fit the framework. The researchers themselves should seek the funding, through either the public or private sector. It is in the interests of our clients in the public and private sectors to know more about the effectiveness of plain language. They should pay to find out. The association should establish the framework and lend its expertise and credibility.	Aug 17, 2011 1:20 PM
4	This area is the lynchpin of the whole structure - until we get more objective evidence of what is effective and what is not in the plain language area I do not see how we can really make useful progress with anything else.	Aug 16, 2011 7:39 PM
5	As there is limited money, there have to be priorities. PLAIN's focus should be increasing awareness and supporting practitioners.	Aug 16, 2011 5:54 PM
6	Again, if proper credit is given.	Aug 16, 2011 3:25 PM
7	Same comments as above. I'd like to know what the state of finances is before I support the idea.	Aug 15, 2011 2:36 PM
8	If PLAIN believes standards are achievable and worthwhile, then it will have to help fund whatever happens.	Aug 13, 2011 5:37 AM
9	I agree -- but I'm not sure how it would work -- I think government and think tank grants would be better resources than PLAIN funding things -- unless you mean	Aug 12, 2011 8:20 PM

**Page 5, Q4. Do you think that PLAIN should participate in funding research related to plain language (if funds are available)?**

	for PLAIN, as an organization, would go after grants and run the research.	
10	I think it would be better if PLAIN could get external funding.	Aug 11, 2011 2:44 PM
11	A project like a thesis would not require special funding, and right now I cannot see any other model of cooperation.	Aug 11, 2011 4:37 AM
12	Would need an international committee that sets out written guidelines for what types of research should be funded.	Aug 7, 2011 9:56 AM
13	Academics often are limited in the type of research they can do because of the lack of funding. Perhaps we could have a grant available for academic research projects. STC and other technical writing organizations provide small amounts of funding.	Aug 6, 2011 4:37 PM
14	As long as that research is based on currently available empirical studies and not arbitrary and subjective views about language (as much of current plain-language efforts currently are).	Aug 6, 2011 12:03 PM
15	Having funding sources been identified yet?	Aug 6, 2011 3:53 AM
16	I do not see PLAIN as a funding organization nor as a fundraiser for research.	Aug 6, 2011 1:15 AM

**Page 6, Q1. Do you agree in principle with recommendation #1 - certifying plain language practitioners against a standard for professional knowledge, skills and practice?**

1	It seems way too early to be thinking about it. Also, I'm not sure just how much value certification adds (for professionals or for clients), looking at what's happening in other professions: editors, translators, etc.	Aug 21, 2011 7:22 PM
2	I gave my reasons in PPL.	Aug 21, 2011 10:19 AM
3	After the dismal (and to me expensive) failure of IPEd for my profession, I don't need another pretend-cop telling me whether or not, and how, I may earn my income. (We are all fallible and I hope you forgive my typos as I do yours.)	Aug 21, 2011 9:55 AM
4	Ideally it a great idea - but achieving a truly objective standard is hard to imagine	Aug 20, 2011 9:05 PM
5	The RILF hopes that if a certification system is built, it will not be rigid, but that it will allow scope for variation. We find that in a small country and in a small language certification has not such an importance as in big languages.	Aug 19, 2011 10:09 AM
6	Such a standard must be evidence-based, preferably on results of soundly designed research studies	Aug 17, 2011 6:34 PM
7	I'm honestly not sure whether this will have any benefit for clients. If they've found a practitioner who is well regarded locally, and who 'makes sense' to them, they'll choose that person. Often, I get told it's refreshing to work with someone who isn't 'bogged down' in the jargon of, for example, learning & development.	Aug 16, 2011 10:41 PM
8	Until more research has been done and we have a better idea of what is	Aug 16, 2011 7:45 PM

**Page 6, Q1. Do you agree in principle with recommendation #1 - certifying plain language practitioners against a standard for professional knowledge, skills and practice?**

effective in the plain language area, I think this area should be put on hold. I also have considerable concerns about who by, and how, the certification is to occur.

9	I do not agree with certification.It suggests that we should and can judge each other. It implies an appeal process which implies law suits and lawyers. It commits resources to a structure that does not pass a costs/benefits analysis.	Aug 16, 2011 5:54 PM
10	I'm fine with certifying practitioners. But I think we need to understand that the certification will mean most to professionals in the plain-language field. Our clients, colleagues, bosses, and so on might not understand it or care. I say that based on my experience with both the Public Relations Society of America and the International Association of Business Communications. Basically, it's great to have the initials for putting after a person's name, but a lot of people will say, "So what"? or "What's that mean?"	Aug 16, 2011 5:13 PM
11	Having worked as a professional editor for more than 30 years, I have recently considered certification with the Editors Association of Canada. But the truth is, I don't think I need it and I get plenty of work without it... On the other hand, if an education process for plain language were to be offered along with certification, I'd consider being certified as a plain language specialist.	Aug 16, 2011 4:39 PM
12	The issues are: to what standards; and what elements do you include in any certification?	Aug 13, 2011 9:03 PM
13	Yes, to cut out the bad eggs.But assessing competence and syllabuses could be a minefield.	Aug 13, 2011 5:40 AM
14	it will involve a lot of work, time and energy and i'm not convinced the end product would justify it. take for example, graphic design - there are numerous degree granting programs at nationally and interationally known institutions of higher learning. but there are many self taught "designers" who seem to survive on their own. when it comes to graphic design, it is generally dependent on experience, expertise and ability, not certification.	Aug 12, 2011 3:46 PM
15	It will take considerable time and money, however.	Aug 12, 2011 3:18 PM
16	Given the level of disagreement on the PLAIN listserv on some topics, it concerns me that one "camp" might get control of what certification means, and that this could affect others' careers if they cannot get certified.	Aug 12, 2011 1:53 PM
17	The field is so wide, with so many permutations and combinations, that I doubt it will be effective or useful. If we arm practitioners with standards and training that are well founded in research and make sure they have good access to it, preferably through PLAIN, then, I believe we will achieve what we are trying to. At the very least, I think this should come off the list of things to do now. We need to focus on research so we are well grounded in what we teach. And we need to access to all the pooled knowledge our fraternity. We need also, to have access to training.	Aug 12, 2011 1:21 AM
18	It will be complex to put into practise, but not impossible. I would recommend following Swedish model.	Aug 11, 2011 2:46 PM
19	I worry that we might end up in a linguistic strait-jacket. However, if we manage to get the right people for the Professional Standards Committee we should	Aug 11, 2011 11:25 AM

**Page 6, Q1. Do you agree in principle with recommendation #1 - certifying plain language practitioners against a standard for professional knowledge, skills and practice?**

	avoid the problem.	
20	This is an essential step for the future.	Aug 11, 2011 2:48 AM
21	I think it's low priority.	Aug 9, 2011 2:36 PM
22	I have been involved over the past 20 years in two other professional groups that thought about certification. Certification is an incredibly divisive issue that does more harm to a group that is trying to coalesce than it does good. Unless we adopt a very narrow view of plain language, getting even as far as what skills to certify will be problematic. Figuring out an internationally-useful way of examining skills will be problematic.	Aug 7, 2011 10:00 AM
23	This would need to be investigated in line with recommendation #2.	Aug 7, 2011 4:20 AM
24	Without a firm basis in the knowledge and research regarding readability and reading comprehension, any efforts establishing certification will be arbitrary and without any objective basis. An emphasis on the skills required for writing for different levels of literacy will go a long way in establishing objective standards for certification.	Aug 6, 2011 12:47 PM
25	Certification is fraught with dangers, made doubly hard by not having recognized and standard university training programs. We are a long way from a viable certification program, with many important steps to go. And I have one philosophical problem. I think we should strive to get all writers who write for the public, especially government writers, to be plain language writers--not people who make their living as plain language professionals, but writers who impact the public. I don't think we should pick between plain language as a profession OR a movement - I think it needs to remain both. We don't want a certification program to squeeze out all those other writers. Plain language professionals should not have a corner on the market for clear writing.	Aug 6, 2011 10:44 AM

**Page 6, Q2. Do you agree with recommendation #2 - creating a Professional Standards Committee to oversee the research and the practical steps involved in certification?**

1	Seems too early.	Aug 21, 2011 7:22 PM
2	I oppose certification: after the dismal failure of IPEd for my profession, I don't need another pretend-cop telling me whether or not, and how, I may earn my income.	Aug 21, 2011 9:55 AM
3	Same as with the Standards committee: an open procedure in setting it and and a committee with wide professional and language expertise.	Aug 19, 2011 10:09 AM
4	Do you mean overseeing the certification process in the future, or overseeing the steps to forming a certification process?	Aug 17, 2011 7:51 AM
5	This is jumping the gun - perhaps revisit this issue in 5 years if significant plain language research has occurred in the meantime (I am assuming that the reference to research in the question is different to the research referred to in the previous section).	Aug 16, 2011 7:45 PM

**Page 6, Q2. Do you agree with recommendation #2 - creating a Professional Standards Committee to oversee the research and the practical steps involved in certification?**

6	I disagree with certification.	Aug 16, 2011 5:54 PM
7	I think we could get bogged down in the research part and never get the practical steps. This has happened to other organizations.	Aug 16, 2011 5:52 PM
8	see previous note	Aug 16, 2011 4:39 PM
9	The committee should consist of people who have actual, hands-on experience in creating certification programs.	Aug 16, 2011 3:26 PM
10	Yes, given belief in the efficacy of standards.	Aug 13, 2011 5:40 AM
11	again -- this is an area I would welcome volunteering to work on	Aug 12, 2011 8:20 PM
12	(see above)	Aug 12, 2011 3:46 PM
13	The Editors' Association of Canada has used this model for its certification program.	Aug 12, 2011 3:18 PM
14	Seems to me an essential part but must not just be English-based, should include other language practitioners.	Aug 11, 2011 2:46 PM
15	Fine, as long as it's truly international. Somehow we need to get the UK and India more involved.	Aug 11, 2011 11:25 AM
16	This is in line with the step of a standards committee. We need to gather our experts to design the system.	Aug 11, 2011 2:48 AM
17	I think it's low priority.	Aug 9, 2011 2:36 PM
18	See answer to the previous question.	Aug 7, 2011 10:00 AM
19	Any committee that does not focus on readability in it oversight misses completely a central issue in plain language and will be a complete waste of time.	Aug 6, 2011 12:47 PM

**Page 6, Q3. Do you agree that PLAIN should participate in a Professional Standards Committee to develop standards for certification?**

1	If there's one then yes, PLAIN should participate.	Aug 21, 2011 7:22 PM
2	I oppose certification: after the dismal failure of IPEd for my profession, I don't need another pretend-cop telling me whether or not, and how, I may earn my income.	Aug 21, 2011 9:55 AM
3	Have reservations because of the reasons stated above. However, if a committee is formed, then I do think PLAIN should participate.	Aug 16, 2011 10:41 PM
4	If such a Committee is formed, I think PLAIN should be involved.	Aug 16, 2011 7:45 PM
5	Not an appropriate use of time and resources. They can be better spent on other	Aug 16, 2011 5:54 PM

**Page 6, Q3. Do you agree that PLAIN should participate in a Professional Standards Committee to develop standards for certification?**

	things that will be of more value to more people.	
6	see previous note	Aug 16, 2011 4:39 PM
7	There should be a broad representation on this committee.	Aug 13, 2011 9:03 PM
8	As immediately above.	Aug 13, 2011 5:40 AM
9	(see above)	Aug 12, 2011 3:46 PM
10	Definitely.	Aug 11, 2011 2:46 PM
11	PLAIN must be at this table and driving the future.	Aug 11, 2011 2:48 AM
12	I think it's low priority.	Aug 9, 2011 2:36 PM
13	See answer to the previous questions.	Aug 7, 2011 10:00 AM
14	I agree only IF such a group is set up.	Aug 6, 2011 1:17 AM
15	I'm not sure it's a good idea, but if we have it, PLAIN should participate.	Aug 6, 2011 1:11 AM

**Page 7, Q1. Do you agree with the recommendation on advocacy shown above?**

1	I'm not sure whether we need another level of international organization. Right now, it seems that we need the opposite, that is, to be more active at the local, regional and national level. These levels (groups) need to be made stronger, more dynamic.	Aug 21, 2011 7:27 PM
2	I agree that plain language should be promoted but not with the hyperbole that it is "vital". And we should "promote" plain language, not "advocate for" it. The new expression breaks our own rules: • It uses 5 syllables instead of 3; and by using an avoidable preposition (a common sign of flabby writing) it doubles the word count. • It has a narrower meaning, excluding useful activity. • It is used because it is fashionable rather than because it expresses the writer's thoughts elegantly. How can we tell other people to follow rules that we break? Traditionally, we have promoted plain language not only by talking (advocacy) but more importantly by doing: teaching, helping each other and the public, showing by example what can be done, and campaigning in general.	Aug 21, 2011 10:29 AM
3	Propose, promote, advocate, encourage (and provide plain language guidelines and tools). I totally support such activities.	Aug 21, 2011 9:55 AM
4	If an institution does not emerge, different options to support national organisations and individual plain language experts should be considered; the now existing organisations give this kind of information on their websites; perhaps a common website would be possible to create and uphold	Aug 19, 2011 10:09 AM
5	In Canada, charitable organizations may not take on an advocacy role. People are more likely to give money to a charity because they get a tax break along with the satisfaction of supporting a cause in which they believe. This may be	Aug 16, 2011 5:54 PM

**Page 7, Q1. Do you agree with the recommendation on advocacy shown above?**

better framed as "education" which is an acceptable charitable activity.

6	Before reading the recommendation, I wanted to respond with a resounding YES! My interest as a past board member of PLAIN was to advocate for a larger advocacy role for PLAIN. Training (especially) and certification are certainly important, but if PLAIN (and other organizations) aren't promoting the cause to others, we'll preaching mostly to the choir. But the reason I didn't mark "Agree completely" is my concern about advocacy being "focused internationally." As a political activist, I believe the most influential, most effective advocacy is done closer to the ground, person to person or local organization to local organization- and building from there to cities/local districts, states/provinces and countries. I think a political phrase applies here: "Think globally. Act locally."	Aug 16, 2011 5:22 PM
7	Disagree with any lobbying activities.	Aug 16, 2011 3:27 PM
8	Yes, spreading the word is always good.	Aug 13, 2011 5:40 AM
9	Please contact me, Laurel Prokop. I am a board-certified developmental English editor and world-respected plain English authority. I have owned my own business, Techstyle Group LLC, since 1986. My phone # is 1-271-586-7100, x114. Cell is 1-713-208-0700. laurel.prokop@techstyle.com. www.techstyle.com.	Aug 12, 2011 6:34 PM
10	agree, but with the same caveats expressed in the answers to topic 1.	Aug 12, 2011 3:47 PM
11	I think the strongest argument governments will listen to is how much money they can save by using plain language and we should be gathering that information in particular.	Aug 11, 2011 2:48 PM
12	Before any lobbying can start it should be plain who is doing it. The relationship between PLAIN and Clarity should be made clear to the general public (and new members.) As a new member I was confused to find at the Stockholm conference that the only printed version of the "Strengthening Plain Language" document was in "Clarity" magazine. Why? PLAIN was barely mentioned.	Aug 11, 2011 11:36 AM
13	I agree with advocacy as an important part of PLAIN's mission. I only caution that some countries (US, perhaps others) have laws about what form "advocacy" can and cannot take for a group that wants to maintain tax status as a not-for-profit organization. A "lobbying" organization is different from an "educational" organization in the US.	Aug 7, 2011 10:02 AM
14	I actually agree with everything stated above but, as I live in Canada -- a federation with 10 provinces and three territories, I think that lobbying also needs to be done on the provincial and territorial level. Many of the services people use on a daily basis stem from provincial or municipal governments, not the federal or national government. I suspect this may be true of states within the USA and other federated nations. In my own case, it is still very difficult to get the provincial government of Nova Scotia to understand the benefits of plain language. I, and other plain language practitioners here, would welcome help from an international body to lobby our provincial government particularly if it is backed up with research.	Aug 6, 2011 7:09 PM
15	As long as advocacy doesn't threaten any non-profit status.	Aug 6, 2011 4:38 PM
16	Any approach that is not centered on literacy, readability, and empirical evidence on readability is thrashing about in fog and a waste of time and money.	Aug 6, 2011 12:47 PM

**Page 7, Q1. Do you agree with the recommendation on advocacy shown above?**

17	What and where are some of the "International Plain Language Institutions"?	Aug 6, 2011 4:00 AM
18	Plain language does not need this any longer.	Aug 6, 2011 1:18 AM

**Page 8, Q1. Do you agree with the recommendation called Option 3 - creating a formal federation of existing organisations through a constituted body that has sufficient legal status to apply to relevant bodies for funding?**

1	There was basically no communication from the IPLWG during the process leading to the publication of the options paper. We wouldn't want the same situation to keep happening with a federation. There would need to be more open channels of communications, and clear roles and expectations, between the federation and existing organizations.	Aug 21, 2011 7:34 PM
2	Apart from the reasons I gave in PPL, a federation might create legal problems to the detriment of the board and perhaps of PLAIN as an organisation. It would be wise to take independent legal advice.	Aug 21, 2011 10:29 AM
3	If the proposed body uses the funds to propose, promote, advocate, encourage (and provide guidelines and tools for) plain language, then fine, I agree. If the proposed body uses the funds to control, 'certify', tell me whether I may pursue my profession or not, and in other respects 'plays cops' with my profession, then I disagree completely. And that disagreement overrides my initial agreement.	Aug 21, 2011 9:58 AM
4	The RILF finds it difficult to take a stand here. If there is to be certification, some actor will be needed to take care of it. If not, other goals, like developing the standard, can also be promoted in informal cooperation. Those organisations that have legal status, can already apply for funds, and seeking legal status is processed in those that do not have it now.	Aug 19, 2011 10:09 AM
5	I am worried about duplicated efforts and a proliferation of organizations. I'm in Canada, and we don't have a national plain language organization yet. Feels like there's an awful lot of organizing to do. I think that at some point in the future there would have to be some merging and melding.	Aug 17, 2011 1:30 PM
6	I think option 2 is preferable. PLAIN already has the requisite legal status, and there is nothing to stop the other organisations from doing the same. If funding is available, one of the organisations with legal status can be the lead agency to obtain the funding, and specific agreements can be entered into as to how the organisations work together on the issue that is being funded.	Aug 16, 2011 7:52 PM
7	I like Option 4 better but maybe Option 3 is a way to get there.	Aug 16, 2011 5:55 PM
8	This kind of organization would be cumbersome, and difficult to manage. Better to create a separate international federation to operate for the benefit of the other organizations, without having to have all the partners approve every decision. That takes too long.	Aug 16, 2011 5:55 PM
9	I support this recommendation if the federation has narrow goals and responsibilities. Its role should be to could be fundraising. But as I wrote about advocacy, I think a national government is more likely to support a national organization financially (or a local government supporting a local organization)-- instead of a request from an obscure international federation. Also, it's tough	Aug 16, 2011 5:31 PM

**Page 8, Q1. Do you agree with the recommendation called Option 3 - creating a formal federation of existing organisations through a constituted body that has sufficient legal status to apply to relevant bodies for funding?**

enough building the membership, recognition, resources and strength of the existing organizations; has PLAIN itself grown much in the past 10 years? Siphoning off too much volunteer energy (and resources) to still another international organization could weaken the existing organizations.

10	I don't know enough to comment.	Aug 16, 2011 4:42 PM
11	Central governance is nearly always a losing proposition.	Aug 16, 2011 3:30 PM
12	Yes - the present trinity would achieve more and carry more weight if made into one body.	Aug 13, 2011 5:44 AM
13	this is one of those questions that's a bit tricky -- I agree wholeheartedly but I don't think it would be realistic to not except membership fees that cover some of the costs.	Aug 12, 2011 8:23 PM
14	This is only one step along from the status quo, but it gives us the ability to access funding, without which none of the future options will be readily possible.	Aug 11, 2011 2:51 AM
15	Yes, but... If the federation has legal status to apply for funding, would local groups be excluded from also applying for funding to any source? Would the articles of federation spell out where the federated group may apply for funding and where local groups may apply for funding? Would the articles of federation spell out how funding that the federated group receives will be divided among the groups within the federation? What else would the federated group do besides be legal and large enough to apply for funding?	Aug 7, 2011 10:09 AM
16	I consider this federation undemocratic and would advocate an international membership group with individual and corporate memberships. Perhaps it could be initiated by the merger of existing organizations.	Aug 6, 2011 1:26 AM
17	I'm concerned about too much control over what I can teach. We could get into formula writing.	Aug 6, 2011 1:16 AM

**Page 8, Q2. If you agree with creating a formal international federation, are you in favour of PLAIN participating in this federation?**

1	If there is one, we should participate.	Aug 21, 2011 7:34 PM
2	SurveyMonkey insisted that I answered this, and there isn't a "not applicable" button.	Aug 21, 2011 10:29 AM
3	I agree on the basis of the reservations I have spelt out above.	Aug 21, 2011 9:58 AM
4	See above. A federation would be an additional layer, and maybe become distant from individual members.	Aug 19, 2011 10:09 AM
5	No matter what happens, PLAIN should play a strong role. I need more information on how and where an institution would be established. This is really not a question that I can answer yet.	Aug 17, 2011 1:30 PM

**Page 8, Q2. If you agree with creating a formal international federation, are you in favour of PLAIN participating in this federation?**

6	Again, if there is such a federation, PLAIN should be involved.	Aug 16, 2011 7:52 PM
7	It sounds good in principle. I don't know enough to comment.	Aug 16, 2011 4:42 PM
8	Not sure at all about this one. I want PLAIN to maintain its identity and principles.	Aug 16, 2011 3:30 PM
9	PLAIN was most responsible for starting this process, so PLAIN should remain one of the major partners.	Aug 11, 2011 2:51 AM
10	PLAIN would be an important part of such a federation.	Aug 7, 2011 10:09 AM
11	Without first defining objective standards for ourselves, we don't have the background and ability to extend our resources and efforts at this time in creating a formal international federation.	Aug 6, 2011 1:00 PM
12	I favour an organization with individual and corporate memberships.	Aug 6, 2011 1:26 AM
13	If it's created, PLAIN should participate.	Aug 6, 2011 1:16 AM

**Page 8, Q3. If you disagree with creating a formal international federation, are you in favour of maintaining the International Plain Language Working Group as it currently exists?**

1	Yes, I think PLAIN and the working group are doing great work. I fully support your promotion of plain language and thank you for the assistance you provide to plain language practitioners. That is why I joined PLAIN.	Aug 21, 2011 9:58 AM
2	If a federation will not be agreed on, the IPLWG should continue.	Aug 19, 2011 10:09 AM
3	I think that the working group has been doing a fantastic job. Thank you so much, each one of you.	Aug 17, 2011 1:30 PM
4	Not sure how to answer this. I agree with creating a formal federation. I don't think, therefore, that the working group would need to continue.	Aug 16, 2011 10:44 PM
5	There may be more productive and beneficial things for these PLAIN volunteers to do with their time.	Aug 16, 2011 5:55 PM
6	Again -- sorry -- I don't know enough to comment.	Aug 16, 2011 4:42 PM
7	Really, really unsure of this one.	Aug 16, 2011 3:30 PM
8	this would be my second choice	Aug 12, 2011 8:23 PM
9	I think we will have more influence by creating an international federation, but must avoid getting bogged down in red tape ourselves!	Aug 11, 2011 2:50 PM
10	I don't disagree....	Aug 11, 2011 11:37 AM
11	This is the status quo and will still be of value if the federation does not go ahead. We need some formal body where various plain language interests can work cooperatively.	Aug 11, 2011 2:51 AM

**Page 8, Q3. If you disagree with creating a formal international federation, are you in favour of maintaining the International Plain Language Working Group as it currently exists?**

12	I agree with the plan to create a formal international federation. However, the PLWG should continue with its activities.	Aug 8, 2011 12:24 PM
13	My support (or not) for the formal international federation would depend on the answers to the questions that I raise above. In the meantime (before a federation is established) or in case the groups can't agree on good answers to my questions, I am in favour of maintaining the currently much looser cooperation -- the working group.	Aug 7, 2011 10:09 AM
14	The IPLWG should remain for quite some time, even if the formal international federation is formed.	Aug 7, 2011 4:22 AM
15	The working group is a good start, but some members have failed to communicate with their organizations on a regular basis. Instead, they've simply brought their own experience and opinions to the table, taking a paternalistic approach to the project. Whether the working group continues or a new group is formed, PLAIN should formalize what it expects from its representatives on that group.	Aug 6, 2011 3:02 PM
16	I am not sure how the international group currently exists or operates.	Aug 6, 2011 1:00 PM
17	Replace it by consolidating existing organizations in an international association with individual and corporate memberships.	Aug 6, 2011 1:26 AM