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10 miles to Bognor Regis

Signposting your Help content

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I'm here today to talk to you about signposting your help content. Imagine, if you will, driving, riding, or walking around in a world with no signposts. How baffling would that be? How annoying would it be to have to consult a map at every corner, every junction? Even with the wonders of satnav, we'd still be lost without signposts. Imagine you've got satnav, but there are no STOP signs. No deer on the road signs. No people at work signs. No public footpath signs.

Now imagine how noisy your satnav would be if it had to show or speak that extra information. We hardly even notice half the signs we pass. In fact, sometimes you only really notice them when they're not there.

That's what this talk is for. It's a common sense roundup of the signs you're so used to seeing that you might not even notice them. You might be using a template handed down from a previous author, or following a style guide you didn't write. You might be adding some things that you've seen on the web but not really thought about. Think of this as mindfulness for your help content. There's nothing ground breaking, but by the end you'll be conscious of your signposts, and able to deploy them effectively.

Show me a sign!

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A sign that says where you are

A sign that confirms you're in the right place

A sign that tells you about something interesting

A sign with no words on it



What would you like to know?

Select Language

tvONEhelp > SET IT UP > Quick start

CORIOview & CORIOgrapher Help

Quick start

This Quick Start Guide gives you an overview of the steps involved in setting up your CORIOview™ hardware and CORIOgrapher™ software.

[Read about presets and transitions >](#)

If your CORIOmaster contains one or more Streaming media and 4K playback input modules, you can use the following information to help you set up your system.

[Read about setting up Streaming media and 4K playback input modules >](#)

Related articles

- [Streaming media and 4K playback input module - quick start guide](#)
- [Get to know your products](#)
- [Planning a video wall](#)
- [Getting started with CORIOgrapher™](#)

tvONE help 22.3

Do you know?

Page

SET IT UP > Quick start

CORIOview & CORIOgrapher Help

Quick start

This Quick Start Guide gives you an overview of the steps involved in setting up your CORIOview™ hardware and CORIOgrapher™ software.

1. Install your hardware.

a. Connect your displays and sources to your output and input modules. Connect the LAN port of the module to your network.

Video tearing

CORIOview & CORIOgrapher Help

Safety information

-  This is general safety information.
-  This information is about a risk of laser radiation.
-  This information is about a risk of electric shock.
-  Notice. This information is about a risk of damage to your equipment.
-  Caution. This information is about a minor risk to you or your equipment.
-  Warning. This information is about a major risk to you or your equipment.



The question on everyone's lips... what is the porpoise?

The purpose of signposting is to tell our users, quickly and easily, things like:

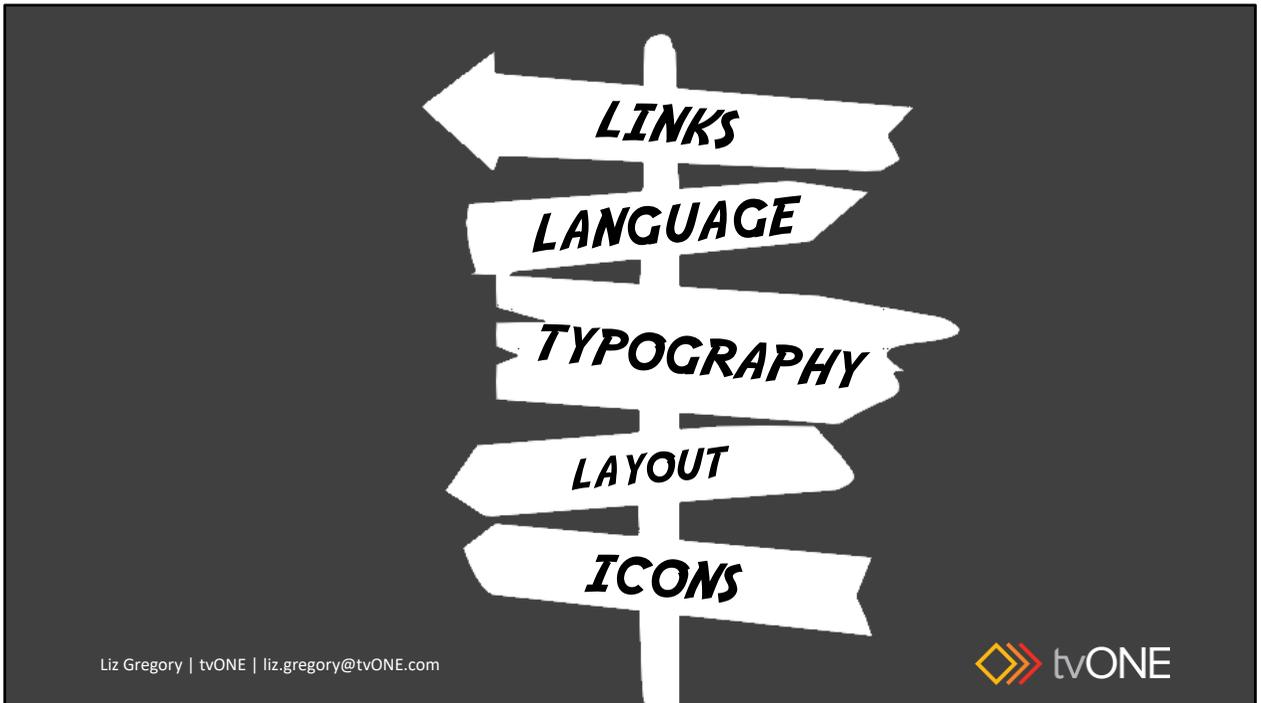
- Where they are
- If they're in the right place
- If they're not in the right place, where to go
- What they're looking at
- What they might want to do next and how to get there
- About something that might be useful but they haven't thought of
- About danger

And to help them find what they need as quickly as possible.



Signposting is the non verbal communication of help content. Just as recognising physical gestures helps us understand context in conversation, signposting helps us understand context in writing.

As content professionals we need to be conscious of all the different types of signposting, why they're important, and when to use them.



What are signposts?

A signpost can be anything, but for the purposes of this talk, let's look at five categories:

- Links – an easy way to navigate to the place you want or need to get to, but also a useful signpost about what you'll find, and if it's the right link for you
- Language – consistent reuse of phrases or styles to help the user identify content
- Typography – text size, font, colour
- Layout – grouping, white space, proximity
- Icons – can be really useful, but be careful!

Let's look at some specific examples.

Liz Recommends:

Information Design Summer School

simplificationcentre.org.uk/events/summer-school

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For more about great typography and layout, the simplification centre runs an annual residential course called the information design summer school. I learned so much about how layout affects readability, especially about the importance of proximity and space. Amongst a lot of other very useful things.

Alison Peck wrote about her experience there last year in Communicator.

You just missed it, it was on last week, but check it out for next year. Definitely worth it.

There > There > **Here**

Creating signposts that tell you where you are

You can create signposts to help your users know where they are.

Overview of signposts

There are ten types of signpost...

Adding breadcrumbs to a topic

1. Select Content Manager > Resources > Skins.
2. Select ...

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Where am I?

Why is this important? Because you don't know how the user arrived at that page, or why they're there.

- Titles – tell you what the article is about
- Subtitles – tell you what a section is about
- Introduction – tell you in a bit more detail what the article is about
- Language – use the tools of your trade to use useful language. For example, you can signpost a task by always using the gerund form of a verb. You could always start your intro saying “this article is about...”
- Menu – online content normally has some kind of side menu, with a visual indicator of which page you're on.
- Breadcrumbs – breadcrumbs and the menu where you are in context. The paper equivalent could be heading numbers, or using a header or footer.

There > There > **Here**

Creating and editing passwords

Administrators can create and edit passwords in Settings.

If you're a user, you can edit your own password from your Home portal.

[Read more about your Home portal >](#)

▼ What's an administrator?

About passwords

If you have more than one user on your network, then you must create passwords for each user. Only one administrator can sign in at one time.

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Should I be here?

For example:

Is this page right for my user profile?

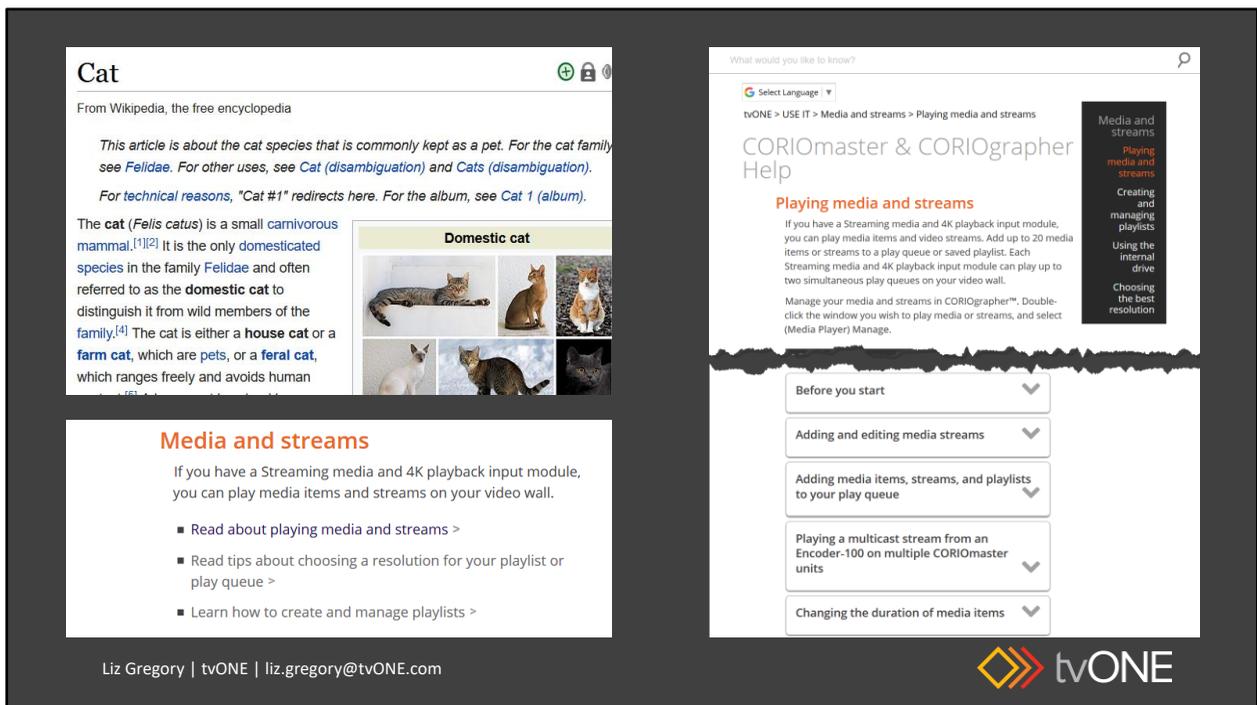
This title looked like it could be useful but I'm not sure the article contains what I need.

Title – at first glance the title looks simple enough.

Intro paragraph – oh but it turns out there are two types of editing passwords depending on my user role. I've only just joined the company, I don't know what privileges I have. What is an administrator anyway? Oh it turns out I'm just user, I'd better go to that other page.

If this then that statements are great signposts for reassuring users they are in the right place, and if there's somewhere else they possibly might need to be instead, include a link.

You could also consider images – for example, a screenshot quickly tells users if this article is related to the software screen they're scratching their heads over.



Where should I be?

There was an example of proving users a link to where they might need to be instead, but here's a couple more examples.

Might need to be on a different page

Might have entered the help at too advanced a level and need to read about the basics first

Might want to be somewhere further down this page.

Providing landing pages can also help signpost users to where they should be if they're not sure and have entered your help system at a higher level.

Doing the thing

To do the thing, you need to know these points.

- This thing
- And this thing

To do the thing

 **WARNING:** To reduce the risk of fire or electric shock, do not expose this apparatus to rain or moisture.

1. First do this
2. Then this
3. **OPTIONAL:** you might want to do this

What is this? What type of information is this?

Techniques we're all familiar with, it's just worth remembering that they're also signposts.

Bullets tell you it's a group of information

Numbered list tells you it's a task to be done in order

Coloured boxes, icons, language to draw your attention to important safety information

Next steps

Congratulations, your video wall is set up! You can now set up and test audio, make your video wall more accurate, configure the best quality settings, and add transitions and effects.

[Read about setting up audio >](#)

[Read about settings >](#)

[Read about presets and transitions >](#)

If your CORIOmaster contains one or more Streaming media and 4K playback input modules, you need to set those up too.

[Read about setting up Streaming media and 4K playback input modules >](#)

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Where do I go next?

The things we get paid to write about tend to be a bit complicated, and more often than not there's another task the user will probably need to do after this one, or there might be a task to do once they've finished reading background information. Sometimes where they do next depends on their setup.

- Use links that describe where the user will be taken IN CONTEXT WITH WHAT THEY'VE JUST READ, not just the title of the topic they're being sent to.
- If possible, link to the right place on the page you're sending the user to.
- Use IF statements

W Game of Thrones - Wikipedia x A Song of Ice and Fire - Wiki... x George R. R. Martin - Wikiped... x NYPD Blue - Wikipedia x Police procedural - Wikipedia x Autopsy - Wikipedia

WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Game of Thrones

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article is about the television series. For the novel in the series A Song of Ice and Fire, see A Game of Thrones. For other uses, see Game of Thrones (disambiguation). "Game of Thrones (franchise)" redirects here. For the series of books, see A Song of Ice and Fire.

Game of Thrones is an American *fantasy drama* television series created by David Benioff and D. B. Weiss for HBO. It is an adaptation of *A Song of Ice and Fire*, George R. R. Martin's series of fantasy novels, the first of which is *A Game of Thrones*. The show was both produced and filmed in Belfast and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Filming locations also included Canada, Croatia, Iceland, Malta, Morocco, and Spain.^[1] The series premiered on HBO in the United States on April 17, 2011, and concluded on May 19, 2019, with 73 episodes broadcast over eight seasons.

Set on the fictional continents of Westeros and Essos, *Game of Thrones* has several plots and a large ensemble cast and follows several story arcs. One arc is about the Iron Throne of the Seven Kingdoms and follows a web of alliances and conflicts among the noble dynasties either vying to claim the throne or fighting for independence from it. Another focuses on the last descendant of the realm's deposed ruling dynasty, who has been exiled and is plotting a return to the throne, while another story arc follows the Night's Watch, a brotherhood defending the realm against the fierce peoples and legendary creatures of the North.

Game of Thrones attracted a record viewership on HBO and has a broad, active, and international fan base. It was acclaimed by critics for its acting, complex characters, story, scope, and production values, although its frequent use of nudity and violence (including sexual violence) was criticized. The series received 47 Primetime Emmy Awards, the most by a drama series, including Outstanding Drama Series in 2015, 2016, and 2018. Its other awards and nominations include three Hugo Awards for Best Dramatic Presentation (2012–2014), a 2011 Peabody Award, and five nominations for the Golden Globe Award for Best Television Series – Drama (2012 and 2015–2018). In 2019, the show's final season established a new record for most Emmy nominations received in the same year by any show with 32, breaking the 25 years long record of 26 nominations established by *NYPD Blue* in 1994; it also established *Game of Thrones* as the drama series with the most overall Emmy nominations, with a total of 161.

Of the ensemble cast, Peter Dinklage has won three Primetime Emmy Awards for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series (2011, 2015 and 2018) and the Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actor – Series, Miniseries or Television Film (2012) for his performance as Tyrion Lannister. Alfie Allen, Gwendoline Christie, Emilia Clarke, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Lena Headey, Kit Harington, Sophie Turner, Diana Rigg, Carice van Houten, Max von Sydow, and Maisie Williams have also received Primetime Emmy Award nominations for their performances.

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- Background
 - Setting
 - Themes
 - Inspirations and derivations
- Cast and characters

Game of Thrones



Genre Fantasy
Serial drama

Created by David Benioff
D. B. Weiss

Based on *A Song of Ice and Fire*
by George R. R. Martin

Starring see List of Game of Thrones characters

Theme music composer Ramin Djawadi

Opening theme "Main Title"

Composer(s) Ramin Djawadi

Country of origin United States

Original language(s) English

No. of seasons 8

No. of episodes 73 (list of episodes)

Production

Executive David Benioff

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That might be interesting!

We're all familiar with Wikipedia's time-stealing blue links of doom. This is one way to signpost users to other content they might be interested in.

Related articles

- Hardware recommendations
- Creating and managing playlists
- I can't hear any audio

CORIOgrapher help V2.3

Help and support

- Get the latest web help for CORIOgrapher
- Get help with other products

Contact us

- Addresses and phone numbers
- Email support team NCSA
- Email support team EMEA
- Email support team Asia

Help guide (PDF) 

That might be interesting!

There are alternatives. You can add carefully curated links at the end of a section, or use related topics at the bottom of the page. You can also use the footer for more general links, such as addresses.

Danger, Will Robinson!



DANGER indicates a hazardous situation which, if not avoided, will result in death or serious injury.



WARNING indicates a hazardous situation which, if not avoided, could result in death or serious injury.



CAUTION indicates a hazardous situation which, if not avoided, could result in minor or moderate injury.



NOTICE is used to address practices not related to physical injury.



Safety instructions (or equivalent) signs indicate specific safety-related instructions or procedures.

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Alerts

Alert signposts we're all familiar with, and there are standards to help us use them consistently, for example,

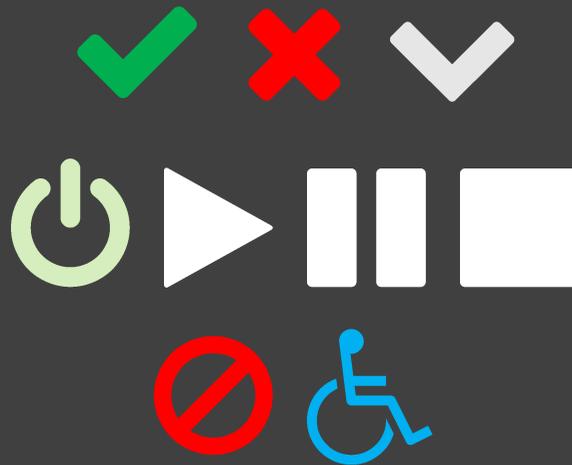
ISO 3864

And

ANSI Z535.6

We can use alert signposting to draw users' attention to situations that are dangerous to themselves, dangerous for their equipment, and also for positive messages like tips and tricks. Generally speaking, alert signposts tend to use consistent colour, layout, including coloured backgrounds and boxes, repeated language, and icons.

Isn't it iconic?



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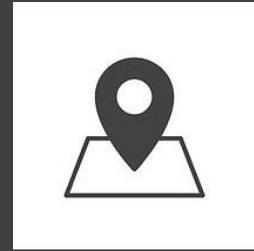


A cautionary note about icons

Before we recap signposting in action, I'd like to take a minute to describe a situation in my own working life.

As the company I work for chooses not to translate any product labelling or assistance, there is a general preference for using icons where we can, to avoid a language barrier. However, icons are in themselves a language, and when you stray from a core group of recognisable icons you can run into trouble.

Isn't it iconic?



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The first layer up from core icons is semantic icons, icons that are likely to be recognised by a specific group, or that require a level of knowledge. For example, a test tube and smoke is more likely to be understood by a chemist.

Beyond that you enter advanced icons specific to a company, and this is where our tale begins.

For a product that can show you up to four video feeds on a single monitor, we wanted to develop a feature where a user presses a button, and on their monitor they can see labels showing which video feed appears in which location on the screen. Six months of arguing went into the name of the feature, with the working title being “the magic button”. Nobody wanted to label the button with a word, so the company decided to use an icon. But how do you describe the magic button in an icon half a centimetre across?

Isn't it iconic?

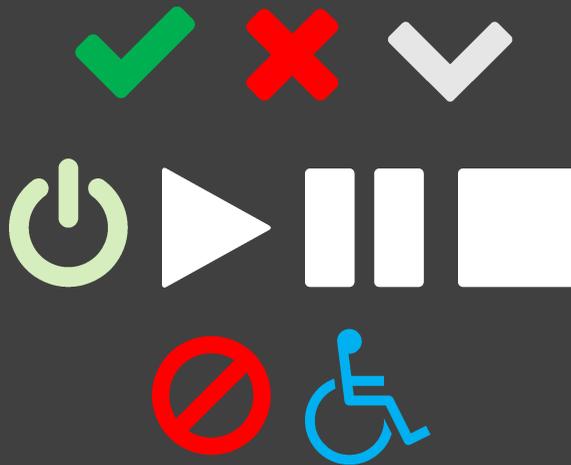


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This is what they ended up deciding on. The button was renamed to the info button. Nowhere on the product does it say the info button. Extra content ended up in the manual because I had to describe the button and what it did in several places, and each time I needed to re-introduce the icon. The icon actually became a barrier to understanding, and this can happen anywhere in our content if we go to heavy or too specific with our icons.

Isn't it iconic?



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Keep them simple, and they'll make great signposts.

A tip from me: I particularly like the symbols and icons from FontAwesome. It's free to download, and the icons on this slide are all from the FontAwesome set.

A **Game of Thrones**

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

B This article is about the television series. For the novel in the series *A Song of Ice and Fire*, see *A Game of Thrones*. For other uses, see *Game of Thrones (disambiguation)*.
*"Game of Thrones (franchise)" redirects here. For the series of books, see *A Song of Ice and Fire*.*

D *Game of Thrones* is an American **fantasy drama** television series created by David Benioff and D. B. Weiss for HBO. It is an adaptation of *A Song of Ice and Fire*, George R. R. Martin's series of fantasy novels, the first of which is *A Game of Thrones*. The show was both produced and filmed in Belfast and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Filming locations also included Canada, Croatia, Iceland, Malta, Morocco, and Spain.^[1] The series premiered on HBO in the United States on April 17, 2011, and concluded on May 19, 2019, with 73 episodes broadcast over eight seasons.

Set on the fictional continents of *Westeros* and *Essos*, *Game of Thrones* has several plots and a large ensemble cast and follows several story arcs. One arc is about the Iron Throne of the Seven Kingdoms and follows a web of alliances and conflicts among the noble dynasties either vying to claim the throne or fighting for independence from it. Another focuses on the last descendant of the realm's deposed ruling dynasty, who has been exiled and is plotting a return to the throne, while another story arc follows the Night's Watch, a brotherhood defending the realm against the fierce peoples and legendary creatures of the North.

Game of Thrones attracted a record viewership on HBO and has a broad, active, and international fan base. It was acclaimed by critics for its acting, complex characters, story, scope, and production values, although its frequent

C

E

| Game of Thrones | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Genre | Fantasy Serial drama |
| Created by | David Benioff D. B. Weiss |
| Based on | <i>A Song of Ice and Fire</i> by George R. R. Martin |
| Starring | see List of <i>Game of Thrones</i> characters |
| Theme music composer | Ramin Djawadi |
| Opening theme | "Main Title" |
| Composer(s) | Ramin Djawadi |
| Country of origin | United States |

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Recap with a look at signposting in action

- A. Where am I?
- B. Am I in the right place?
- C. If not, where should I be?
- D. You might want to look at this!
- E. A box of reference information

for their performances.

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- 2 [Cast and characters](#)
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 - 3.2 [Casting](#)
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 - 3.15 [Effect on location](#)
- 4 [Availability](#)
 - 4.1 [Broadcast](#)
 - 4.2 [Home media](#)
 - 4.3 [Copyright infringement](#)

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Production location(s) | Northern Ireland Croatia Iceland Spain Malta Morocco Canada |
| Running time | 50–82 minutes |
| Production company(s) | Television 360 Grok! Television Generator Entertainment Startling Television Bighead Littlehead |
| Distributor | Warner Bros. Television Distribution |
| Release | |
| Original network | HBO |
| Picture format | HDTV 1080i |
| Audio format | Dolby Digital 5.1 |
| Original release | April 17, 2011 – May 19, 2019 |
| Chronology | |
| Related shows | <i>Thronecast</i> <i>After the Thrones</i> |
| External links | |
| | Website |
| | Production website |

F. Table of contents with links

We've talked about the different types of signpost, what they do, and some techniques to make them easy for users to spot. But before you go about carefully crafting your help content, there's one more important point to bear in mind.



- Life moves fast. You don't always have the time to stop and read things carefully and thoroughly.
- Road signs are bold, eye-catching, and simple. It's called scannability.
- Scannability is the keyword for good signposting.
- Users don't read our material as carefully as we write it.
- read the first line or two, and then just
- scroll downwards looking for a clue that they're in the right place
- scanning for patterns.



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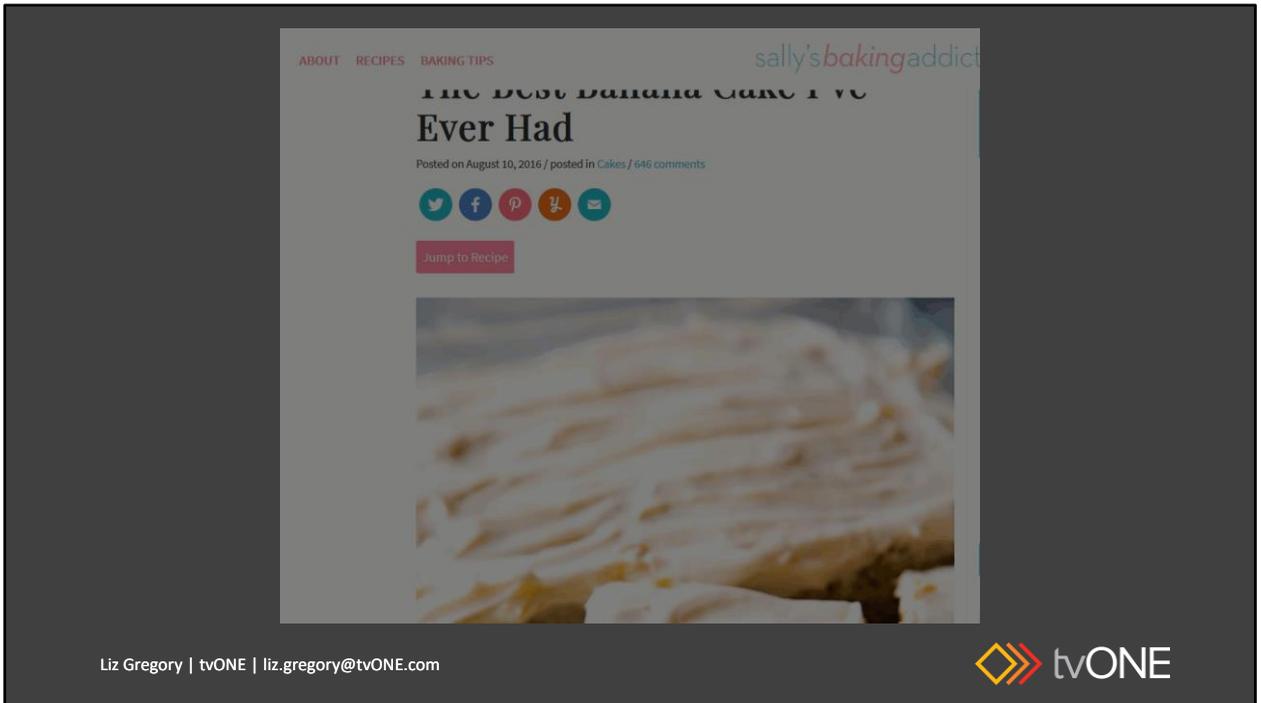


Scannability means using all of your signposting techniques to make your signs super easy to spot.

Don't hide your signs!

That means:

- Use clear and easy to spot signposts – bolder, larger headings, coloured boxes, images and icons
- Allow enough whitespace around your signposts to make them stand out
- Use accurate language on your signposts

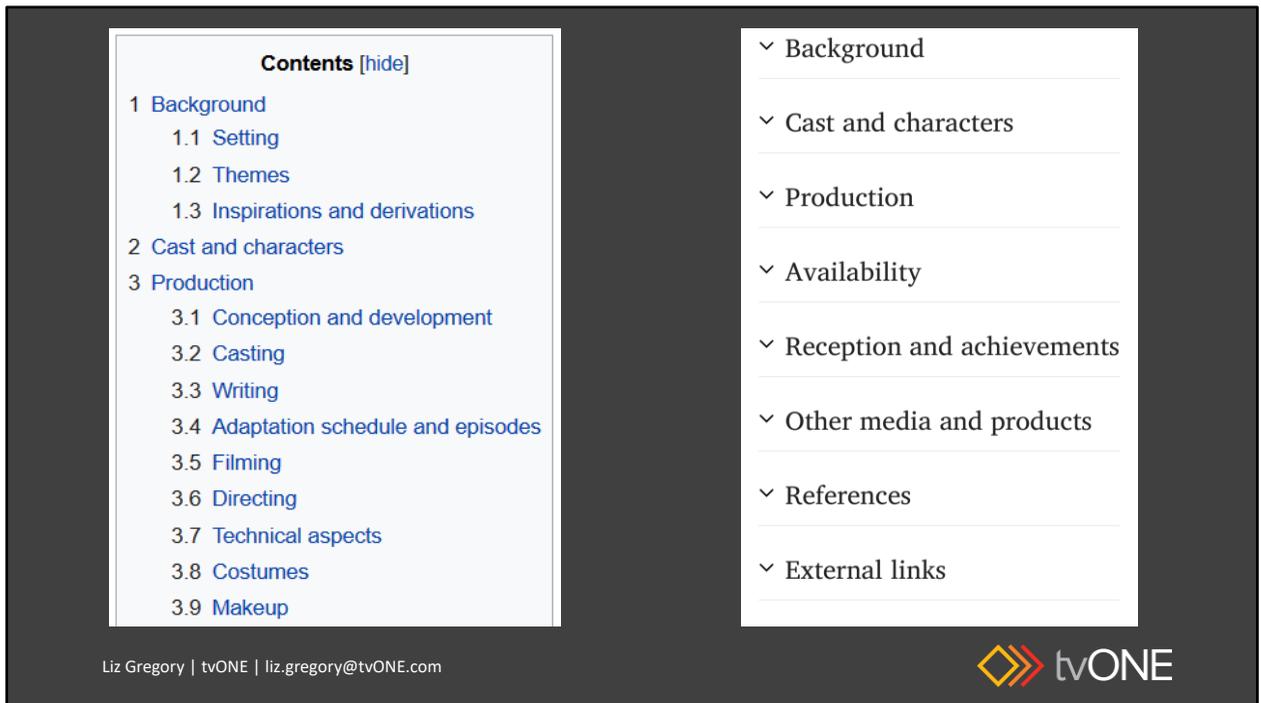


An example of poor signposting

Headings are the best signpost for telling you “you’ve arrived at your destination”.

Good quality headings are really important for scannability. If you look at the video, you can see me stop at a heading to see if I’ve arrived yet, and then move on until I find the one I want. The first heading I stopped at was a really poor signpost, because it said “how to make” but didn’t give me the instructions I was looking for. I had an expectation that the words “how to” would be associated with instructions.

- Use accurate language to describe what a user will find there.
- Don’t bury the lead – if your headings all start “how to...” they suddenly become much harder to scan, especially in a table of contents.



Why not reduce the need for scannability in the first place?

Here are three easy ways to do this.

1. Make your page really short so it fits on one screen. Possible, but irritating because you might have to move through several pages to get all the information you need. See also my talk tomorrow about managing thousands of topics...
2. Add a table of contents at the top of the page. Make sure the links all work.
3. Use progressive disclosure techniques like expanding sections to show all your section headings on one screen.

Here's an example from Wikipedia where they use both techniques. A table of contents for the desktop version, and expanding sections for the mobile version. Personally I prefer expanding sections.

Some other things to consider



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- If it looks like a link, make it a link.
- If it is a link, make it say something useful in context.
- Get it tested. Give people that haven't read your content the goal of finding out ten specific pieces of information and see how they get there. You could forbid them to use search for a better test of your signposts.
- Think about your page opening behaviour. If it's an interesting but non-essential link, maybe it should open in another tab for perusing later.
- Prioritise the more important destinations in lists of links – users scan these too.

Signposting gives us information. Go this way, stop here, expect deer on the road. This is as important in help content as it is on our roads. All users start somewhere, need to know where they are, and have a destination in mind. Are they in the right place? Where else should they be?

If you're a newbie, or more used to printed manuals, this presentation will help you signpost your help content. This paragraph is a navigational aid – it tells you whether you're looking at the right presentation for your needs. Would it have been more useful at the top? Let's find out!

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I posed a question in my talk abstract. In the second paragraph I asked if the signpost would have been more useful at the top. I hope you'll agree that "am I in the right place?" signposts are best at the top.

Liz Gregory presents a talk about signposting, aimed at new authors and authors more used to working in print.

Signposting gives us information. Go this way, stop here, expect deer on the road. This is as important in help content as it is on our roads. All users start somewhere, need to know where they are, and have a destination in mind. Are they in the right place? Where else should they be?

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So here's what I should have written!

Rules for signposting

1. Make it **scannable**, i.e. easy to see on a moving page
2. Make it **accurate**, so users know what they'll find
3. Make it **simple**, so it presents a low cognitive barrier
4. Make it **reproducible**, so users can look in the same place, or for the same thing



My favourite sign!