

Content and Editorial Style Guide

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About the PulseZ project

PulseZ is a digital democracy project for young Europeans aged 16-25, focusing on those with interests in politics, journalism, and multimedia. It aims to empower young people to voice their opinions on European issues, engaging in activism through journalism and content creation on their channels — their way, their voice, their channels. PulseZ is a collaborative platform with a central content hub, along with events, training, and entrepreneurial opportunities, allowing young Europeans to contribute to mainstream media and apply these skills in global youth initiatives. We aim to recruit over 3,000 young people from more than 20 EU countries as content contributors, with well over half a million reached through our communications activities.

The PulseZ Project Consortium

The Consortium is a harmonious collaboration of 8 highly diverse yet complementary organisations from 7 different member states, united in our mission to empower young Europeans through innovative media and technology.

| | Partners | Acronym | Country |
|---|--|------------------------|----------|
| 1 | JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT EUROPE | JA Europe | Belgium |
| 2 | MATRIX INTERNET | Matrix | Ireland |
| 3 | EUROPSKY DIALOG | European Dialogue | Slovakia |
| 4 | ALLIANCE EUROPEENNE DES YMCA | YMCA Europe | Belgium |
| 5 | CIAO PEOPLE | Ciao People | Italy |
| 6 | EUROPEJSKIE MEDIA SPOLKA | EMS | Poland |
| 7 | ASOCIATIA DIGITAL BRIDGE | ADB - Euractiv Romania | Romania |
| 8 | EUROPEAN YOUTH PRESS NETWORK OF YOUNG MEDIA MAKERS | Youth Press | Germany |

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1.Introduction

What is a style guide?

This style guide is a resource to ensure clear, consistent, and engaging communication across all PulseZ content. It provides a shared framework for everyone contributing to the platform, offering practical guidance on writing style, tone, grammar, and messaging.

Whether you're crafting news articles, social media posts, or editorial guidelines, this guide helps maintain a unified voice that resonates with PulseZ's audience. It is a living document, evolving as the platform grows and new content challenges arise.

By following these guidelines, all contributors can ensure that PulseZ content remains sharp, accessible, and aligned with its mission to empower young voices in media.

Who can contribute?

Everyone involved in the PulseZ project is encouraged to contribute to the style guide. This includes all stakeholders in collaboration — from members of the Editorial Board, to Consortium Partners and trainee journalists. If you have questions or suggestions for new entries, please email editorial@pulse-z.eu to ensure the guide evolves to meet the team's shared goals and expectations.

Why do we need a style guide?

Focusing on our audience

PulseZ is built for young creators, aspiring journalists, and engaged readers. This style guide helps us communicate in a way that connects with them — clear, relatable, and impactful. Understanding what interests them ensures our content remains engaging, accessible, and relevant.

Ensuring consistency

A unified tone and style strengthen PulseZ's identity and make the platform feel cohesive. Consistency in spelling, grammar, and structure builds trust with our audience and reinforces PulseZ as a credible, go-to space for youth-driven media.

Promoting clarity

Good journalism and digital content rely on clarity, not complexity. This guide ensures that all PulseZ content — whether submitted articles, website content, or project deliverables — is written in a way that's easy to understand while maintaining a sharp, professional edge.

Saving time

With clear guidelines in place, contributors can focus on creating strong content without unnecessary revisions. The style guide streamlines content production, making collaboration smoother and publishing more efficient — whether for news stories, video content, web pages, or formal project documents.

Encouraging collaboration

From young reporters to web editors and project teams, PulseZ thrives on teamwork. This guide provides a shared framework for writing and editing, ensuring that everyone—whether submitting a feature article, drafting website copy, or preparing a formal deliverable — is aligned with the platform's voice and standards.

A well-defined style guide ensures that all PulseZ content, from journalism to project documentation, remains clear, consistent, and engaging, while also making the content creation process smoother for everyone involved.

Using this style guide

Navigate easily

Use the table of contents to find the sections most relevant to your work. The Content Glossary and Checklist offers definitions, examples, and style notes to help maintain a consistent approach across PulseZ content.

Apply the guidelines

Refer to sections and checklists on tone, structure, formatting, grammar to ensure your work aligns with PulseZ's editorial standards. Whether writing an article, producing a video, or creating social media content, these principles help maintain clarity, accessibility, and impact.

Help improve the guide

This document will keep evolving with PulseZ. If you notice something missing or unclear, email editorial@pulse-z.eu with suggestions. Your input helps refine and enhance the guide for everyone.

Quick reference

Bookmark key sections or keep a copy of frequently used guidelines handy. The more familiar you are with PulseZ's style, the more efficiently you can create high-quality, engaging content. By following these guidelines, you contribute to a strong, cohesive, and youth-driven media platform that reflects the authentic voice of young Europeans.



2. Types of content

PulseZ produces a diverse range of content designed to inform, engage, and empower young Europeans. Our platform serves as a space for journalism, activism, and creative expression, ensuring every piece aligns with our mission to foster a digitally active, well-informed youth community. From web content and multimedia storytelling to investigative journalism and opinion pieces, all content must reflect the core values of PulseZ — youth-led, inclusive, and impactful.

This section outlines the distinct characteristics and best practices for each content type, ensuring clarity, consistency, and engagement across all communications. By understanding the purpose and style of each format, contributors can craft compelling, audience-driven content that amplifies young voices and drives meaningful conversations across Europe.

2.1 Editorial content

A full, detailed breakdown of PulseZ's content guidelines can be found in the official European Commission deliverable **Content Strategy & Editorial Guidelines, Section 5**. Below is a high-level summary of key content types.

News articles

News articles provide timely, fact-based coverage of key events and topics. They must be clear, concise, and well-researched, ensuring relevance to PulseZ's audience. Articles should follow strict journalistic ethics, with all claims supported by credible sources. Accessibility and readability are prioritised, using direct language, short paragraphs, and engaging but informative headlines.

Features (long reads)

Feature articles offer in-depth explorations of complex topics, incorporating expert perspectives, data, and investigative techniques. They should be well-structured, beginning with a compelling hook and concluding with key takeaways. A strong narrative approach is encouraged, but content must remain neutral and fact-based, following a structured, research-driven format.

Reportage (audio-visual journalism)

Reportage includes news summaries, interviews, and documentary-style content in video format. These pieces should be visually compelling, professionally edited, and adhere to PulseZ's journalistic standards. Videos must maintain clear structure, professional tone, high-quality visuals and audio, and should be accessible through captions and transcripts when possible.

Portraits

Portraits provide in-depth personal profiles of individuals shaping their fields or communities. They should go beyond basic biography, offering insights into motivations, challenges, and impact. Balanced storytelling is key—avoiding sensationalism while maintaining an engaging, human-focused narrative that connects with the audience.

Interviews

Interviews capture expert insights and diverse perspectives through structured yet conversational dialogue. They should be well-researched, maintaining a balance between pre-planned questions and organic discussion. Whether in written, video, or audio format, clarity, professionalism, and high-quality production are essential.

Analysis

Analysis pieces break down complex issues, offering critical insights and broader context. These articles present multiple perspectives, are rigorously fact-checked, and maintain a structured argument. Unlike opinion pieces, they must remain objective, guiding readers through nuanced discussions with clarity and depth.

Documentary videos

Long-form investigative or thematic video content (5-20 minutes) that provides deep insight into a topic. Documentaries follow structured storytelling techniques, incorporate high production quality, and present multiple perspectives.

Podcasts and webcasts

Audio or video discussions on relevant themes, featuring interviews or storytelling. Podcasts are 10-30 minutes, with clear structure, professional audio quality, and engaging conversation. Webcasts combine visual and audio storytelling for a dynamic multimedia experience.

Infographics and visual content

Data-driven content designed to simplify complex information through visual storytelling. Infographics, photo galleries, and social media graphics should be clear, accessible, and visually engaging.

2.2 Formal writing (deliverables)

PulseZ's formal reports and deliverables must meet high standards of professionalism, clarity, and accuracy. These documents communicate PulseZ's impact to key stakeholders, including funding bodies, consortium partners, and the wider academic and media communities.

Tone and style

- **Formal and structured** – Maintain an academic tone with precise, objective language. Avoid informal expressions and ensure consistency in terminology.
- **Clear and direct** – Present complex ideas in a straightforward manner. Define acronyms and avoid unnecessary jargon.
- **Evidence-based** – Support all claims with data, research findings, or credible sources.

Best practices

- **Collaborate effectively** – Work with contributors and reviewers to ensure accuracy and coherence.
- **Maintain quality** – Use a **rigorous review process** to uphold editorial and formatting standards.
- **Ensure consistency** – Follow the PulseZ style guide for uniform grammar, spelling, and structure across all formal outputs.

Guidelines for effective writing

Why writing style matters at PulseZ

PulseZ content needs to be bold, clear, and easy to connect with. Whether you're crafting a hard-hitting report or a story that spotlights grassroots voices, your writing should inform, engage, and reflect the project's youth-driven values. Clear communication helps us reach more people—across languages, backgrounds, and experience levels.

Keep it sharp. Keep it short.

Long, formal sentences don't impress—they alienate. PulseZ speaks to young people, media makers, and community organisers who value clarity over complexity.

Instead of this:

"Facilitating optimisation of youth participation in transnational democratic structures."

Try this:

"Helping young people get involved in European democracy."

Shorter sentences land better. Break them up. Let your message breathe.

Avoid jargon

We're not here to sound like policy papers. We're here to tell real stories and explain real issues. If you need to use technical terms—like *algorithmic bias* or *media pluralism*—make sure they're explained in plain language.

Too technical:

"PulseZ leverages decentralised publishing and semantic AI pipelines."

Accessible:

"PulseZ uses new tech like AI and decentralised tools to help young creators publish smarter."

Use the active voice

Active voice makes your writing feel immediate and confident. Passive voice slows everything down.

- **Active:** "PulseZ supports young journalists."
- **Passive:** "Young journalists are supported by PulseZ."

Format for fast readers

PulseZ readers are digital natives. They scan. They skim. They scroll. Your content should be scannable at a glance.

Use:

- **Headings** to guide them
- **Bullet points** for key info
- **Short paragraphs** (2–4 lines max)
- **Front-loaded sentences** — put the most important point first

Practical tip

If your sentence sounds clunky when you read it out loud, it probably is. Rewrite it. Aim for a natural, confident tone that feels human — like a message from someone who knows their stuff and cares about what they're saying.

Swap complex for clear

Use this cheat sheet to cut the fluff:

| Complex phrase | Simpler version |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| a majority of | most |
| due to the fact that | because |
| in light of the fact that | because |
| make a contribution to | contribute to |
| during the course of | during |
| exhibit a tendency to | tend to |
| subsequent to | after |

Style glossary and content checklist

This section gives you quick rules and go-to examples to keep your writing consistent and clean — whether you're drafting an article, scripting a podcast, or finalising a deliverable.

What it's for:

- **Glossary** – To confirm spellings, formats, or terms used across PulseZ (e.g. *youth-led*, *social media platform*, or how to reference the *European Commission*).
- **Checklist** – To help you keep things consistent: sentence case for headings, no full stops in acronyms (like EU, not E.U.), and use of the Oxford comma.

Use it across all content types:

These rules apply to everything—stories, reports, reels, documentaries, podcasts, even event invites.

Why it's alphabetical

The alphabetical structure allows for intuitive navigation, making it simple to locate and apply the correct usage of terms. This structure saves time and reduces confusion, ensuring that every writer can quickly reference key information.

Need to check if it's e-learning or elearning? Jump straight to "E".

Why some terms are lowercase

We show terms in the form they should appear in content — for example, *youth participation*, *social impact*, or *e-commerce*. It keeps your formatting correct and avoids overcapitalising everything.

Unsure about a term?

If something's not listed, check similar entries or contact the editorial lead. Have a suggestion? Send it in. The guide grows with the whole team of editors and writers. Following these rules means PulseZ stays sharp, consistent, and credible—no matter the format or platform.

A-Z glossary

A

Acronyms and abbreviations

Spell out most terms on first use, followed by the acronym in brackets, for example, European Youth Press (EYP). The most common acronyms, such as EU, UX, AI, HTML, do not require an explanation.

Avoid full stops or spaces in acronyms, for example JA Europe, LMS (learning management system).

Also note that learning management system is a generic term, so isn't capitalised. Other generic descriptive terms aren't capitalised when written in full, for example artificial intelligence, search engine optimisation.

adviser

Use "adviser" (for example, business adviser), not "advisor." Use "advisory" as the correct adjective.

affect/effect

- Affect: Verb.
Example: "Strategic content planning can positively affect our number of readers."
- Effect: Noun.
Example: "The marketing campaign had a measurable effect on engagement."

all together vs altogether

- All together: United.
Example: “The editorial team was all together for the annual strategy meeting.”
- Altogether: Completely.
Example: “PulseZ decided to overhaul its social media strategy altogether.”

alternative

Use “alternative” for a choice between two options, for example watching a documentary is a great alternative to reading a long report. For more than two choices, use "option" or "choice" instead, for example the platform offers multiple options for content creation, including blogs, videos, and podcasts.

Amount/number

- Amount: For uncountable quantities (for example, “there’s a large amount of interest in PulseZ”).
- Number: For countable quantities (for example, “the number of articles on PulseZ is steadily growing.”)

Ampersand (&)

Only use ampersands in company or brand names (for example, H&M). Use “and” in all other contexts, especially headlines.

any time vs anytime

- Any time: Use for general references (for example, “You can contact customer support at any time”).
- Anytime: Use as an adverb (for example, “Access your account anytime using the app”).

Apostrophes

An apostrophe is used to show possession or indicate missing letters (for example, can’t, we’d).

- Singular noun ending in “s”: Add ’s (for example, “The press’s influence on public opinion is significant”).
- Plural noun ending in “s”: Add just the apostrophe (for example, “The journalists’ feedback was positive”).
- Avoid using apostrophes to form plurals (for example, SMEs, not SME’s, CEOs, not CEO’s).

app

Always write “app” in lowercase.

arguably

Avoid using “arguably” as it implies uncertainty and weakens the statement.

artificial intelligence (AI)

Lowercase, with acronym in capitals

B

billion (bn)

One thousand million. Write “billion” in full, except in monetary contexts, where “bn” is acceptable (for example, €2bn).

biweekly

Avoid using “biweekly,” which can mean either twice a week or every two weeks. Specify instead (for example, “twice a week” or “every two weeks”).

blog post

Refer to individual articles as “blog posts.” The section where blog posts are located is called the “blog”.

British and Irish English usage

British and American English differ in certain spelling conventions. British and Irish English is the official EU translation, so follow this convention in all PulseZ content — editorial and official. Below are key patterns and relevant examples:

- -our (British) vs -or (American)
Examples: behaviour tracking, not behavior tracking, colour palette vs color palette
- -ise/-ize (British) vs -ize only (American)
Examples: customise vs customize, optimise vs optimize
- -yse (British) vs -yze (American)
Examples: analyse vs analyze, paralyse vs paralyze
- Double L in verb conjugation (British) vs single L (American)
Examples: labelled files vs labeled files, cancelled subscription vs canceled subscription
- ae (British) vs e (American)
Examples: leukaemia research grants vs leukemia research grants, paediatrics vs pediatrics
- -ence (British) vs -ense (American)
Examples: licence software vs license software, defence strategy vs defense strategy
- -ogue (British) vs -og (American)
Examples: catalogue products vs catalog products, dialogue interface vs dialog interface
- -re (British) vs -er (American)
Examples: fibre broadband vs fiber broadband, centre hub vs center hub

C

call to action (CTA)

Don’t capitalise call to action.

Plural of call to action is calls to action — not call to actions

content management system (CMS)

Don’t capitalise

Cultural sensitivity

Be mindful of cultural nuances. Avoid stereotypes, and include examples relevant to diverse audiences.

Currency

Write currency names in lowercase (for example, euro, pound sterling). Use symbols (€ or £) where appropriate for clarity.

D

Dashes and hyphens

- Hyphen (-): For connecting phrases or ranges (for example, third-party vendor, Monday-Friday).
Use a hyphen without spaces for compound adjectives before a noun (well-researched article; user-generated content)
- Em Dash (—): Used for emphasis, asides or interruptions

For emphasis

- Digital literacy is vital — misinformation spreads quickly online.
- The project had one key goal — improving media engagement.

For asides or parenthetical thoughts

- The conference — which was attended by over 1,000 journalists — focused on AI ethics.
- He started his career in radio — an experience that shaped his approach to digital media.

For abrupt changes in thought

- She planned to publish the article — but then breaking news changed everything.

E

e-commerce

Always hyphenate

ecosystem

No hyphen

email

Write “email” without a hyphen.

everyday vs every day

- everyday: Ordinary or typical (for example, “Managing the content style guide is an everyday task for the team”).

- every day: Each day (for example, “We post new articles on PulseZ social media channels every day”).

F

foreigners

The term ‘foreigners can feel ‘othering’ or exclusionary depending on tone and use. *Never* use the term “aliens”, as it is dehumanising and outdated.

Alternatives

International students / workers / communities — specific to their role or group

International residents – people living in a country that’s not their birthplace

Non-nationals – formal, but sometimes used in policy or legal contexts

Newcomers – useful when referring to recent arrivals in a country

Migrants – appropriate when related to movement for work, safety, or opportunity

People with migrant backgrounds – when referring to individuals born abroad or with foreign-born parents

G

Gender-neutral language

Avoid gender-specific job titles. Use “they” instead of “he/she” where appropriate.

Examples:

- Chairperson (not chairman).
- Spokesperson (not spokesman).

gigabyte (GB)

H

Hyphens

Avoid using hyphens with common prefixes like re-, pre-, non-, and multi-.

Examples:

- Relaunch, nonprofit, multichannel.

I

internet

Lowercase

internet of things (IoT)

Lowercase in generic mention

it's/its

- it's: Contraction of "it is" or "it has" (for example, "It's vital to optimise your digital strategy").
- its: Possessive form of "it" (for example, "The platform updated its user interface").

K

key performance indicators (KPIs)

Lowercase when spelled

L

led/lead

- Led: Past tense of "lead" (for example, "The team led the project successfully").
- Lead: Present or future tense (for example, "She will lead the next phase of the editorial strategy").

login/log in

- Login: Use as a noun (for example, "I forgot my login details").
- Log in: Use as a verb (for example, "You need to log in to access the dashboard").

Live stream/livestream

- Live stream: Use as a noun (for example, "The conference will feature a live stream").
- Livestream: Use as a verb (for example, "We plan to livestream the keynote presentation").

M

master's

Write "master's" with a lowercase "m" when referring to a degree (for example, "She holds a master's in journalism").

multichannel

Always write as one word (for example, "We use a multichannel approach to engage with readers").

multilingual

Always write as one word (for example, "The website supports a multilingual interface").

N

nonprofit

Write as one word without a hyphen (for example, “The company partnered with a nonprofit organisation”).

O

OK

Always write as “OK,” not “okay” (for example, “The proposal was given the OK to proceed”).

on to vs onto

- On to: Part of a verb phrase (for example, “Log on to the portal for access”).
- Onto: Meaning “upon” or “on top of” (for example, “The file was uploaded onto the server”).

P

part-time/full-time

Use hyphens when modifying nouns (for example, “a part-time role”).

policymaker

Write as one word (for example, “The report is aimed at policymakers”).

programme/program

Use “programme” in British/Irish English, except when referring to software (for example, “She completed a training programme but also learned how to use a video editing program”).

R

real-time/real time

Use a hyphen when modifying a noun (for example, “real-time monitoring tools”).

Write without a hyphen when used as a noun (for example, “They monitored the election results in real time.”).

S

Seasons

Write as lowercase (for example, “spring, summer, autumn, winter”).

Sentence case

Always use sentence case for headings, subheadings, and text. Only capitalise proper nouns and abbreviations:

Correct sentence case examples

How digital platforms support independent journalism (not How Digital Platforms Support Independent Journalism)

The impact of AI on media ethics (not The Impact of AI on Media Ethics)
Lessons from the BBC on trust and credibility (not Lessons From The BBC On Trust And Credibility)

Serial comma (Oxford comma)

Use the serial comma for clarity and professionalism in formal writing.

Example: "The platform supports e-commerce, content management, and SEO optimisation."

setup/set up

- Setup: Use as a noun (for example, "The setup process was seamless").
- Set up: Use as a verb (for example, "You need to set up your account").

screenshot

Write as one word (for example, "The article includes a screenshot of the offensive Facebook post").

T

third party/third-party

- third party: Use as a noun (for example, "Users can share their content with a third party if needed").
- third-party: Use as an adjective (for example, "Third-party plugins can enhance website functionality").

U

up-to-date

Use with hyphens when modifying a noun (for example, "an up-to-date system").

Write without hyphens otherwise (for example, "The story is up to date").

user experience (UX)

Lowercase when spelled

username

Write as one word (for example, "Enter your username and password to log in").

URL

Always capitalise (for example, "Copy the URL and share it with the team").