

copy style guide

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introduction

This document describes the elements of Pinger's writing style and serves as a guide for anyone writing copy in the Pinger voice. Since there are many contexts and audiences for copy, you should understand who you are writing for and why when using this document as a reference. For example, Pinger's voice will bend slightly if the audience is corporate versus consumer.

who we are

Pinger, together with millions of users, is building the planet's first free, global communications network. We make great products that are simple, reliable and a pleasure to use. We believe in dreaming big because sometimes you *can* do what others think is impossible.

personality

At its core the Pinger personality is honest, friendly and smart. We don't take ourselves too seriously, and are quick with a joke. At the same time, Pinger has a healthy *dis*respect for authority and conventional wisdom. We don't always do it like the other guys and love to stand up to the big guy and fight for what is right.

key brand attributes

- casual
- clever
- global
- authentic
- innovative
- nimble
- irreverent
- surprising

voice

The Pinger voice is conversational and never pretentious. It's straightforward and never techie. A clever quip is sometimes thrown in as a surprise or to break up the monotony. Use of interjections sometimes soften an error message or glue two ideas together. The sentence structure is simple, like the products. Extra words are verboten and contractions are just fine. Examples of the Pinger voice include:

conversational - describing Textfree Web

Friendly, helpful appeal - "*Out of battery or can't find your phone? No problem, log in at pinger.com/textfree."* In a conversational, friendly

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way, this sentence sets up the problem with a rhetorical question and offers a Pinger feature as the solution.

clever quip - Doodle Buddy iOS drawing app tagline

“The most fun you can have with your finger.” Doodle Buddy is a drawing app that IS the most fun you can have with your finger, but there’s an innuendo that may shock some. We’re OK with that.

non-techie language - error message if device has no microphone

“Hmm...we can’t find a microphone on your system. Plug one in or check your settings so friends will be able to hear you.” We intentionally start with the soft “Hmm” instead of “error!” or some other interjection that might panic the user. Other systems might use passive voice (e.g., “Microphone not found”) to hide behind the problem and not provide a suggestion. The Pinger message blames ourselves “we can’t find...” so the user doesn’t have to take responsibility for the problem. We also communicate why you need a microphone “so friends will be able to hear you” in a non-technical way. Also, the word “friends” makes it more colloquial versus common references like “callers” or “other parties.”

corporate description

The corporate descriptions should be used to describe who Pinger is and what we do to audiences including industry, press, and the investment community. Appropriate usage contexts include: as a corporate description for a trade show or to describe what Pinger does as a portfolio company of one of our investors.

100 word

Pinger, together with millions of users, is building the planet’s first free, global communications network. We connect traditional telephone networks to social and private ones, so everyone can freely text and talk with the people they care about most. Pinger **simplifies** network complexity with an intuitive, picture-based interface that brings together different types of communication in one place, from any device. At Pinger, we strive to make the costly, completely free—the complex surprisingly simple. Connect with us at www.pinger.com.

50 word

Pinger, together with millions of users, is building the planet’s first free, device and carrier independent global network. We connect traditional telephone networks to social and private ones, so everyone can communicate simply and freely with the people they care about most. Connect with us at www.pinger.com.

Joe Sipher Feb 2, '12, 8:39 PM
This is fine. In your other edits you were completely changing the idea. Will all your CEO friends think we're geniuses now?

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25 word (may also work as mission statement)

Pinger, together with millions of users, is building the planet's first free, device and carrier independent global network. Connect with us at www.pinger.com.

tagline

The Pinger tag line must clearly state what we do and our unique differentiation all in a handful of words. It must be in our voice (light, clever, surprising) and without pretense. The current tagline “text and talk free” is very clear, but doesn't really communicate how we are different from other free communications solutions. It also lacks the cleverness or anything that makes it truly interesting or thought provoking. Current candidates include:

“find free in your network”

“new school communications...free”

random writing rules

1. Use single spaces between sentences.
2. Avoid use of traditional computer error terms. Examples include: “error”, “valid”, “invalid”, “failure”.
3. Use an informal voice as if you are talking to a friend. It's ok to use some slang (though not swearing).
4. Don't use serial commas—the “and” does just fine separating the last item in a series. (e.g., “Pinger customers are young, eager and hot.”)
5. Contractions can be used if required or appropriate to keep the language casual.
6. Please use “please” and “thank you” when appropriate.
7. Use everyday words versus sophisticated words. Example (“Hmm...can't get to the Pinger servers right now. Please try again in a few minutes.” versus “~~Unable to establish an IP connection with the Pinger infrastructure.~~”)
8. Aim for short sentences because they are easy to read. However, varying the sentence length in a paragraph can enhance interest and readability.
9. Avoid the use of most abbreviations. Approved abbreviated terms, such as ‘sync’ or ‘app’ that are consistent with modern usage, are allowed.
10. Don't use semicolons. Two shorter sentences are often more clear and easier to read.

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capitalization

Pinger uses a capitalization style that does not follow grammatical rules in any language. We often opt for lowercase to make the visual feel of content more approachable and friendly.

use lower case in

- titles and bullets
- menu items such as application menu, context menu
- buttons

exceptions

- proper names such as people's names "John or Mary"
- brand names such as "Pinger" or "Facebook"
- weirdly capitalized brand names such as "iPhone", "iPod touch" and "tyntec"
- the term "OK" is always upper case
- If there is a period at the end of the sentence, it's proper to start the sentence with upper case.

customer acquisition flow

Customers can find out about Pinger in three ways: 1) friend tells them or invites them, 2) they see an ad, 3) they stumble across the app in the App Store. Here is the current copy for each of these scenarios.

invite text

The default text a Pinger user sends an invite to a friend not on Pinger either via text or email will make a significant difference to the conversion rate. In future versions of the product we will be testing this. For now it's hardcoded into the client and therefore needs to be in the voice of the user rather than Pinger. We're putting these words into their mouths and they are free to change them.

text version

Text copy is limited to 120-130 characters not including URL.

Current: "Hey, I'm using Pinger. You should join so we can text, talk, and send all the pics we want for free! ##WebLink##"

Proposed: "Hey I'm on Pinger now. Get it so we can text and talk free in HD. ##Weblink##"

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email version

Current: Hey, I'm using Pinger. You should join so we can text, talk, and send all the pics we want for free! [##WebLink##](#)

Proposed:

banner ad copy

Generally the ad copy is limited to 35 characters.

Current:

- Turn your iPod touch into a phone
- Text and Call on your iPod Touch
- FREE iPod Texting – NO Phone Needed
- Text and Call for Free on iPhone
- FREE Calling & Texting with Phone #

Proposed:

Pinger iOS App Store Description

App Store descriptions need to be designed to scan. Most users do not read them carefully. They should be exceedingly clear. They should also sprinkle a little personality without obscuring meaning. This one could use a bit more personality.

TEXT AND TALK FREE

- Unlimited text and talk with anyone on the planet.
- Connect with millions of other Pinger users.
- It's free because it works over WiFi or 3G/4G.

ALL IN ONE PLACE

- You'll love our new, picture-based interface.
- Simplify by centralizing your communications.
- Personalize your contacts with Facebook pics.

MORE GOOD STUFF

- HD-quality calls.
- Free voicemail included.

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- Send hi-res pics.
- Forget the character limits on texts.
- Know the instant your messages are opened.

EVERYTHING YOU EXPECT FROM PINGER

- Fastest, most reliable, easiest to use.
- Always free, anywhere on the planet.
- Customize your voicemail greeting.
- Choose from zillions of ringtones and text tones.
- Connect via Bluetooth if you're on an iPhone.
- Turn your iPod touch into a phone with WiFi.

OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF

- Emergency calls are not supported.
- People you talk to must download Pinger too.

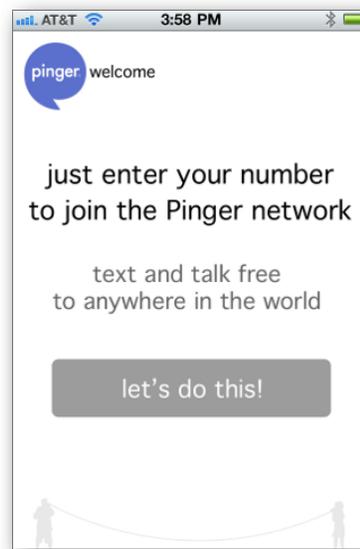
CONNECT WITH US

- facebook.com/pinger
- twitter.com/pinger

initial customer experience

Once a customer signs up to Pinger, they are taken through the registration process and some welcome screens. The first thing a customer must do is enter in their mobile (or landline) number. We are softening this request with the following screen that is benefit-oriented and gets the user to agree in principal to do it.

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After some uneventful form based registration screens, a new user is dropped into the screen below (this is an Android screen). If the user clicks on the search contacts, they will see other people in their contacts on Pinger as well as have the opportunity to invite anyone not on the network.

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