The SUSE writing style has a profound effect on the way customers, partners and analysts perceive SUSE. Success depends not only on delivering the best products and services, but also on consistently communicating clear messages. These writing guidelines should help you do so.
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Best Practices

SUSE Writing Style
At SUSE we are friendly, confident and positive, and your writing should reflect that. Use a conversational yet professional tone. Be confident, but not cocky, and be positive.

At SUSE we like to get things done, so we always use an active voice. Avoid passive constructions. For example, instead of writing, “The report was completed by the team,” write, “The team completed the report.”

Don’t hide your strongest verbs in other parts of speech. For example, rather than write, “We will make sure the report is generated,” write, “We will generate the report.”

Use the second-person voice to address the customer.

Use plural pronouns (we, our) when talking about SUSE.

When possible, present facts to back up claims and include citations. This can help instill an air of confidence.

Use positive expressions to state ideas. Explain what customers can do rather than what they cannot do.

If possible don’t use there are or it is, start with the subject.

An inanimate object is not a they, it is an it! A company is not a they, it is an it. Be specific when writing. “The company’s team wanted help so they contacted SUSE.”

SUSE writing should be clear, concise and complete. You should:

- Know your target audience. Make content compelling, relevant and valuable to your audience.
- Focus on benefits first.
- Write to express, not to impress.
- Avoid buzzwords, jargon or clichés.
- Avoid too many descriptive words, specifically in one sentence.

Writing for the Web
Reading content online takes 25 percent longer than reading print, for this reason, web content should be 50 percent shorter than print content. Readers generally spend 30 seconds reading a 200-word web page. This time increases by only 10 seconds for each additional 200 words.

Below are some best practices for writing for the web.

Structure Content in an Inverted Pyramid. Begin with the most important information first—usually the call to action or conclusion in print content—then build background and supporting information in descending order of importance. This format accommodates readers who stop before they reach the end.

Layer Information on Pages. Layer web pages with minimal, skimmable information on the landing page and more information on linked pages.

Make Content Easy to Skim

- Divide information into blocks and make it easy to skim by using bulleted lists, short text and clear, to-the-point headings and titles.
- Logically organize information.
- Layer information by placing summaries on the search page and include links for access to more information or downloadable documents.
- Make the writing clear.
Writing for Email
Follow the below best practices when writing emails.

- Send emails that are from a person, rather than from SUSE, as much as possible.
- Know your target audience. Make content compelling, relevant and valuable to your audience.
- Focus messaging on the customers’ or audiences’ pain points and the solution benefits.
- Put offers in the subject line; introduce the value of the offers in the body of the message.
- Make headlines short, approximately five words.
- Deliver the value proposition in the first 35 characters of body content.
- Write landing pages in conjunction with emails that introduce the landing pages. This will ensure that both emails and the landing pages to which the email is referring to delivers the same message.
- If the subject line is a complete sentence, or question, with a verb, use sentence case. For example, Are you cloud enabling mainframe apps? Get the new eSeries now.
- If the subject line is more like a title than a sentence, use title case. For example, New eSeries on Cloud Enabling Mainframe Apps.

Writing for Presentations
The below practices will help you create powerful presentations.

- Limit the presentation to three main points. The audience will likely remember no more than that.
- Use the content of each slide to express one idea.
- Don’t try to tell the whole story in the slides. Generally use no more than four or five bullets per slide, with two or three sub-bullets per bullet and no more than six words per bullet.
- Write the notes section in narrative so someone not familiar with the subject can understand the slide content.
- Always use approved presentation templates. Do not alter a template’s design or boilerplate text.
- Capitalization: Use upstyle capitalization (title case) for headings, graphics titles, table titles and headings within tables. Use downstyle capitalization (sentence case) for bulleted lists, graphics captions and table captions. Also, use downstyle capitalization for labeling components within graphics and for table content other than headings.
- Sources: Cite sources at the bottom of each slide (if applicable) using a smaller font size. Obtain permission to use research data that is not publicly available, such as data from a purchased research report.

Writing for a Global Audience
Remember that every document is a potential candidate for localization (translation). Make sure the document’s original English content is correct and clear. Simplicity, clarity and direct prose are essential.

Producing a high-quality translation from a source document that is confusing, illogical or missing pertinent information will cause delays in translation.

| Avoid using culturally specific slang, jargon, humor, political or religious references, seasons or geographic language. | • Different cultures often do not understand one another’s idiosyncrasies.  
• Other regions may not be familiar with location names.  
• Summer in the northern hemisphere is winter in the southern hemisphere.  
• Vernacular language, technical jargon or humor may cause offense or misunderstandings. Correcting these problems in translation adds time and increases costs. |
### Be consistent.

- Using two words interchangeably, even if the words are synonyms, can confuse translators, who will likely assume that the two words have different meanings.
- Incorrectly capitalizing product names confuses translators.
- Inconsistently using trademark symbols may lead to incorrect translations.

### Avoid idiomatic expressions.

Avoid using local or U.S.-centric expressions. For example, avoid references to American football such as, "It's time to drop back and punt, or armchair quarterbacking."

### Avoid symbols and terms that are not globally understood.

Instead of using #, use the word *number* in text or the abbreviation *no.* in slides and tables.
Instead of using &, use *and*. Exception: R&D is correct.

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### Style

SUSE uses the Associated Press (AP) style. This guide covers topics that are not covered in the AP Stylebook or that we have chosen to treat in a different way. The guide also includes important rules that are not followed by SUSE writers. Guidelines in this guide take precedence.

- Primary: SUSE Writing Guidelines (this document)
- Secondary: *The AP Stylebook*
- Tertiary: *The Chicago Manual of Style*

For issues that are not covered in any of these sources, contact Scott Corfield.

All SUSE writing should incorporate American English and not British English.

### Attribution and Citation

Provide as much information as possible. For customer or analyst quotes, provide the quoted person’s name, his or her title and his or her company. When quoting printed information, include the publication name, the author’s name (if applicable), the article’s title (if applicable), the publication date and a link to the source.

### Bullets

Use periods or other appropriate punctuation to end entries in bulleted lists that are complete sentences. Do not use periods for items that are not complete sentences.

Do not mix complete and incomplete sentences in the same bulleted list. However, you may mix complete-sentence and incomplete-sentence bulleted lists in the same document.

### Calls to Action

Include a call to action in all your pieces. The call to action should invite readers to take the next step by clicking a link or picking up the phone. For example: “*Download a whitepaper on (topic) or Contact a representative*” are more effective calls to action than “*For more information.*”

### Capitalization

Never use all caps for emphasis; use italics instead.

Use upstyle (title case) for headings and proper nouns. Conjunctions, prepositions and articles are not capitalized in upstyle.
Use downstyle for body text, graphics captions, job titles and spelled-out acronyms that are not proper names.

Use an initial capital letter for all words in compound adjectives that you would normally capitalize in upstyle constructions (such as headings). Example: Right-handed People Are Just as Smart as Left-handed People.

Captions
Use downstyle (or sentence case) for captions. Captions do not need to be complete sentences, but all captions within a single document should follow the same convention. Captions should all be either full sentences or incomplete sentences.

Commas
As part of the AP style, SUSE does not use the serial or oxford comma. For example, “I like to pet kittens, puppies and bunnies.” In this example, the serial comma would come after puppies.

Currency
Always lowercase euro unless it is at the beginning of a sentence. When you must use the euro symbol (as you would when quoting prices and costs), do not include a space between the € symbol and the numeral.

Use the US dollar sign ($) prior to the price with no spaces between the S, the dollar symbol ($) and the numerals, as shown here US$. Do not use periods in US.

Exception: In tables and graphs, use $ and insert the following note below the table or graph: *All dollar amounts in this table represent U.S. currency.

Dashes
Don’t overuse em dashes (—), which indicate an abrupt change or introduce a series within a phrase. Try to use commas instead.

Use en dashes (–) only when you could replace the dash with the words at, from, to or through. En dashes indicate continuing or inclusive dates, times or reference numbers: 1968–72, May–June 1990 or 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Do not use spaces on either side of an em or en dash.

Headings and Titles
Write active and informative headings. Create compelling headings that convey as much information as possible. Include verbs and benefits that deliver the message and motivate the audience to read on.

- Do not introduce new terms in headings.
- Avoid beginning headings with articles (a, an, the).
- Use upstyle capitalization (or title case) for headings and titles.
- Use parallel construction for all headings of the same level within a document—begin with a noun or verb, use a complete sentence or a sentence fragment and so forth. Headings that are complete sentences do not require punctuation.

Instructions, Commands and Menu Items
Use a pipe symbol ( | ) between menu items that readers should select in succession. Example: File|Save As.

Use italics when specifying options in a dialog box. Example: Select the Read-only check box.

When specifying command-line commands, use the Courier monospaced font. Place lengthy commands on their own lines with a blank line before and after.
Numbers and Numerals
In web pages, emails and presentations use numerals only to improve readability where space is limited. In tables, or other at-a-glance formats such as charts and lists, use all numerals. In documents, spell out numbers one through nine and use numerals for numbers 10 and higher (except when the higher number starts a sentence, in which case spell it out).

Include commas in numbers above 999.

Phone Numbers
Use hyphens to separate the country code, area code, city code, phone number and so on, for all phone numbers.

In the United States use this format: 800-555-1234. Do not include the long-distance country code 1.

For international numbers, use the country code, city code and phone number. Example: 011-44-20-7535-1515.

Trademarking
Trademarks and registered trademarks should be included on its first occurrence in each deck.

Spaces
Follow each sentence with one space, not two. (Double spacing is a carryover from typewriter days, when all characters occupied the same space regardless of the width.)

Units of Measure
Use numerals for all measurements, even if the numbers are smaller than 10.

Spell out units of measure. Example: 42 inches, not 42”. An exception is for bits and bytes, such as Kb, KB, Mbps, MB and so on. Use a space between the numeral and the acronym. For example, 64 GB.

URLs
If URLs end a sentence, punctuate appropriately.

When URLs include www, do not use a preceding http:// or https://.

If the final element in the URL is a folder name, include the trailing forward slash (/). If the final element is a file, do not include the trailing slash. Examples: http://support.suse.com/guide/, http://suse.com/docs/Editing/1list.htm.

SUSE Product Names and Capitalization
SUSE should always be all caps except when writing out the company’s URL, www.suse.com.

Following is the proper spelling of all product names as well as their approved acronyms. Generally, SUSE product names should always be spelled out completely. However, there are a few instances where product name acronyms can be used. They are limited to the following places:

- Social media including hashtags (not blogs)
- Tables with limited real estate
- Vanity URLs
- Event descriptions with limited word counts

Note: For social media hashtags, please use an underscore instead of a dash. For example SUSE_CAP, SUMA_Retail, etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Name</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Server</td>
<td>SLES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for z Systems and LinuxONE</td>
<td>SLES-Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for POWER</td>
<td>SLES-POWER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for ARM</td>
<td>SLES-Arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications</td>
<td>SLES-SAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise High Performance Computing</td>
<td>SLE-HPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Real Time</td>
<td>SLE-RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Server with Expanded Support</td>
<td>SLES-ES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Point of Service</td>
<td>SLEPOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop</td>
<td>SLED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise High Availability Extension</td>
<td>SLE-HA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Workstation Extension</td>
<td>SLE-WE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Virtual Machine Driver Pack</td>
<td>SLE-VMDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term Service Pack Support</td>
<td>LTSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Linux Enterprise Live Patching</td>
<td>SLE-LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Cloud Application Platform</td>
<td>SUSE-CAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE CaaS Platform</td>
<td>SUSE-CaaS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE OpenStack Cloud</td>
<td>SOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Enterprise Storage</td>
<td>SES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Manager</td>
<td>SUMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSE Manager for Retail</td>
<td>SUMA-Retail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Product Version Numbers**

Omit version numbers unless they are in pricing information or are necessary for clarity.

Place version numbers after product names. Example: *SUSE Linux Enterprise Server 10*. Place service pack version numbers (*service pack 3* or *SP3*, for example) after product names and product version numbers. Example: *SUSE Linux Enterprise Server 10 SP3*.

**Usage**

This list contains words that are often misused or SUSE uses differently than AP style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>affect</td>
<td>Do not confuse with <em>effect</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.m., p.m.</td>
<td>Use lowercase letters with periods and no spaces for these qualifiers (even in headings).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>among, between</td>
<td>Use <em>among</em> to introduce more than two items; use <em>between</em> to introduce two. Exception: Use <em>between</em> when there are more than two, but you want to focus on the individuals. Example: <em>The agreement was between the six members</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMD64</td>
<td>Write <em>AMD64</em> as a single word and do not trademark it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ampersand (&amp;)</strong></td>
<td>Do not use except in headings on web pages or slides when it saves space or improves readability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>and/or</strong></td>
<td>Do not use this construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AutoYaST</strong></td>
<td>Write as one word; capitalize as shown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bandwidth</strong></td>
<td>Spell as shown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>billion</strong></td>
<td>Spell out. Do not use capital letters B. Example: US$4 billion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>choose, click, select</strong></td>
<td>Use choose only for personal choices that might vary from reader to reader. Use click for commands, buttons and mouse strokes. Use select to pick a certain option from a list or menu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>click, double-click</strong></td>
<td>Use click a button and click in a window. Don’t use click on a button or click a window. Hyphenate double-click, as in double-click this icon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>compared to vs. compared with</strong></td>
<td>To compare with is mainly to point out differences between objects regarded as essentially of the same order. Thus, life has been compared to a pilgrimage, to a drama, to a battle; Congress may be compared with the British Parliament. Paris has been compared to ancient Athens; it may be compared with modern London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>container-as-a-service</strong></td>
<td>Hyphenate container-as-a-service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>data center</strong></td>
<td>Always use as two words and never hyphenate, even when it is used as an adjective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dialog, dialogue</strong></td>
<td>Use dialog to refer to a dialog box. Use dialogue to refer to a discussion between two or more people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>eBook</strong></td>
<td>eBook not E-book or ebook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>effect</strong></td>
<td>See affect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **ellipsis** | Use an ellipsis (...) to note omitted text.  
**Do not use an ellipsis to indicate a pause for dramatic effect.**  
When the ellipsis is in the middle of a sentence, insert a space, the ellipsis and another space, and then continue the quote. When the ellipsis follows a complete sentence, insert a period at end the sentence. Then insert a space, the ellipsis and another space, and then begin the new sentence. Example: “We’ll never choose anything but ... SUSE for our solutions.” (Ellipsis midsentence.) “SUSE was a great choice for us. ... We’ve not looked back on our decision.” (Ellipsis following a complete sentence.) |
| **email** | Email not e-mail. |
| **EMEA** | Do not use this acronym with external audiences. It stands for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. |
| **enter, fill in, complete** | Use the following contexts to determine when each of these word choices is appropriate:  
Enter information. Don’t key it in or fill it in.  
Fill in an object so it is not transparent.  
Complete a survey. |
| **fiscal year, FYXX** | Use FY and the last two digits of the year when abbreviating a fiscal year. Examples: FY18, FY19. |
| **Intel 64** | Use two words. |
| **internet** | Never capitalize Internet unless it begins a sentence. |
| **it vs. they** | Use it rather than they when referring to organizations. Example: Microsoft will launch its next server in January.  
If you must use they, them or their in reference to an organization (singular), include a plural human element. Example: IBM executives announced they will discount the program. |
| **like vs. such as** | Use like to compare items that are similar. Use such as to introduce examples of representative items. Examples: Oil is a liquid like water. Fill the cup with any liquid, such as water or oil. |
| **Linux** | Capitalize as shown. Linux does not need to be trademarked. |
| **million** | Spell out. Do not use capital letters M. Example: US$4 million. |
| **more than, over** | Use *more than* to refer to multiple objects. Use *over* when referring to spatial relationships and age. |

| **Nuremberg** | Use this spelling instead of the spelling Nürnberg when referring to the SUSE office in Germany. Be careful not to spell it Nuremburg. |
| **online** | Always spell as one word as shown. Do not hyphenate. |
| **on-premises** | Never use on premise or on-prem |
| **open source** | Use lowercase letters in body text and never hyphenate, even when using this term as a compound modifier. |
| **over, more than** | Use *more than* when referring to multiple objects. Use *over* when referring to spatial relationships and age. |
| **percent** | Spell out. Do not use the symbol (%) except in headings, charts, graphic or other places where space is limited. |
| **p.m.** | See *a.m.*, *p.m.* |
| **possessives** | Avoid the possessive form of trademarks. Never make SUSE possessive when possible. |

| **road map vs. roadmap** | Road map: noun. A map showing roads especially for automobile travel. A detailed plan to guide progress towards a goal, a detailed explanation. Roadmap: verb. A schedule as a part of a lengthy or complex program. |
| **run time, runtime** | Use *run time* as a noun. Use *runtime* as a modifier. |
| **Service Pack** | Use this term. Do not use *Support Pack*. When referencing specific service packs (*SUSE Linux Enterprise Server Service Pack 1*, for example), use initial capital letters: Service Pack. Follow *Service Pack* with a space and the version number. Spell out *Service Pack* on the first instance. Use *SPx* for subsequent instances. |
| **single sign-on** | Hyphenate as shown. |
| **symbols** | Avoid symbols except currency symbols. You may use the percent symbol (%) and ampersand (&) in headings, charts or other places where space is limited. |
| **UNIX** | Capitalize as shown. |
| **website** | Spell as one word. Use lowercase letters as shown except at the beginning of a sentence or when using upstyle text such as headings. |
| **whitepaper** | Spell as one word. |
| **YaST** | Capitalize as shown. |
| **YES Certified** | Capitalize as shown. |

If you do not have access to [apstylebook.com](http://apstylebook.com) (the official AP style site), you can find additional summaries of AP style and usage rules at various locations online, including:

- [coschedule.com/blog/ap-style-cheat-sheet/](http://coschedule.com/blog/ap-style-cheat-sheet/)

**Trademarks and Proper Naming**

**Trademarks**

You can find a list of SUSE trademarks here: [suse.com/company/legal/#trademarks](http://suse.com/company/legal/#trademarks).
Trademark symbols should follow the SUSE brand on first body-copy appearance in each document, web page, email and presentation where it occurs. Our registered trademark is baseline. Our trademarks are superscript. Web and email templates usually do this automatically, but should be checked.

- Never use a trademark in the possessive.
- Never use a trademark in the plural.
- Never use a trademark as a verb.
- Never include a trademarked term in a hyphenated phrase.
- You do not need to use the trademark symbol in headings or titles.
- Do not abbreviate a trademarked term unless the abbreviation is also a trademarked term.

Do not place trademark symbols in direct quotations unless the trademarked entity is not properly noted elsewhere in the document.

**Acronyms**

Spell out acronyms the first time you use them in a document. You do not need to spell out the common acronyms listed in the *Common Acronyms* section that follows.

If the spelled-out term is plural, make the acronym plural. Example: *service level agreements (SLAs).*

Use lowercase letters for spelled-out acronyms that are not proper names. Example: *security information and event management (SIEM)*.

**Common Acronyms**

The following acronyms do not need to be expanded on first reference if the content owner and marketing communications manager agree that the intended audience is familiar with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>API</td>
<td>GHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCII</td>
<td>GIF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOS</td>
<td>GUI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD (when it means compact disc)</td>
<td>HTML, HTTP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD-ROM</td>
<td>HTTPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Hz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIO</td>
<td>IBM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPU</td>
<td>ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>I/O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOS</td>
<td>IP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVD</td>
<td>IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAQ</td>
<td>JPEG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTP</td>
<td>JPG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Company Information
SUSE provides and supports enterprise-grade Linux and open source solutions with exceptional service, value and flexibility. With partners and communities, we innovate, adapt and deliver secure Linux, cloud infrastructure and storage software to create solutions for mixed enterprise IT environments.

Additional information on SUSE, as well as SUSE boilerplate copy and company descriptions can be found, at suse.com/brandcentral/suse/.