



BMC Guide to Voice, Tone, and Style

Language



January 2021

Next update planned in June 2021.

LANGUAGE ▾

Diversity and inclusion

Examples

Language

Diversity and inclusion

It's a whole new world out there beyond your screen, and it's more important than ever to be mindful of diversity and inclusiveness when you speak to your audience. Leading IT companies have recognized that historical terms have problematic origins and associations and are working to redefine those terms.

Our current (September 2020) public-facing statement on this, which can be used in customer deliverables, is:

“One of BMC's core values is putting people first. All people. This means that we are supportive of the industry's examination of the terminology of insensitive and non-inclusive terms and an industry-wide movement of adjusting the language that we use in coding and development.

We are staying engaged and monitoring the conversations to best educate the changes that we need to make as a company. We welcome discourse and input from our valued customers to ensure that we are making the right changes to promote inclusivity in the technology industry.”

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Diversity and inclusion

Examples

Here, we've compiled specific examples of representation to keep in mind as you create content—words and visuals. This is by no means exhaustive but addresses some of the easiest, often unconscious, mistakes and biases.

ABLEIST

Speech and colloquialisms that refer to some sort of physical or emotional disability should not be used. Avoid terms such as crazy (“This may sound crazy”), insane (“insane profit margin” or “sanity check”), etc. If you are discussing people with different abilities, don't describe people without disabilities as “normal” or “healthy.” Use “nondisabled” person, sighted person, hearing person, etc., instead. Do not quantify a disability with, “victim of, suffering from, wheelchair-bound,” etc. Use “experiencing, living with, uses a wheelchair,” etc., instead.

AGEIST

Unless it's relevant to your content, do not write about age. If it is relevant to the context of your content, avoid terms such as “elderly, aged, seniors, senior citizens, and X years young” and use “older adults or aging population,” common generational terms (“Millennials” or “Baby Boomers”), or the relativity to another person discussed (parent, sibling, etc.).

GENDER NEUTRAL

When possible and appropriate, avoid using “he” and “she” and instead change to “you,” pluralize the actor (“they”) and the verb (“are, were,” etc.), or reword the sentence to remove the actor altogether. Avoid terms that assign the male gender such as “salesman, manpower, mankind, or man-hours” and instead

use “salesperson, workforce, humankind, and person-hours.” The Chicago Manual of Style has [nine tips](#) for avoiding gendered use. If you are interviewing someone to be quoted, ask what their preferred pronouns are so you can attribute quotes correctly.

GEOPOLITICAL

BMC is a global company, so don't assume that your audience is US-based. Avoid region-specific holidays, sports, cultural practices, and colloquialisms that may alienate some of your audience. Remember that global audience, too, when you select images and video.

RACIAL INSENSITIVITY

Avoid terms that connote racial bias or have negative historical overtones. Instead of “master” and “slave,” use “primary” and “subordinate.” Instead of talking about a system “hanging” up, use “hiccup” or “interruption.” If you are referring to a specific race or ethnicity in your content, it should be capitalized: “Black, Asian, Indigenous, Latino/Latina/Latinx” etc.

For additional information on a spectrum of diversity and inclusion topics, see [The Diversity Style Guide](#) and AP Stylebook [guidance on race](#).