

Writing for Radio and the Internet by: Chris Maddock & Jeff Sexton

Writing for Radio and the Internet

Wizard Academy

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What is this course all about?

The course title says it all (except that it's a two-day course in Austin, TX).

The sole purpose of this course is to teach you to write better radio copy and write more persuasive web copy.

Who wrote the course?

This course was written by two people, one partnered with the Wizard of Ads Roy H. Williams, and the other is an employee of Future Now. What I write about them is from my first-person knowledge of them...

Chris Maddock: Chris was the first assistant to the Wizard of Ads and had been working alongside him for 12 years. He has recently moved out of the Wizard of Ads home office though and gone on to take on his own clientele.

Chris formerly taught a class at the Wizard Academy called Advanced Wordsmithing (which I took in 2004); he essentially merged his teachings from *that* into this...his Writing for Radio portion of the course.

Maddock's background is significant. Aside from contributing eight one page chapters to the 2001 book *Accidental Magic* (sold at Wizard Academy Press) Chris spent all his daylight hours writing radio ads...

Now independent of "office hours" and a "day job," from his Austin apartment Chris still communicates with clients about their message, and I'm pretty sure Chris now spends his *nighttime* hours writing their radio spots.

Jeff Sexton: Jeff formerly taught an online writing course called *How to Write Powerfully and Clearly*; it was a 12 lesson course about writing fundamentals taught with examples from the best writing in history (I'm not sure if Sexton would approve of my semicolon usage at the beginning of this paragraph...I know author Kurt Vonnegut wouldn't have).

Therefore it shouldn't surprise you that Jeff was once a high school English teacher in Florida before using his writing skills in the private sector.

Now Sexton works for Future Now Inc. He spends all his time planning, editing, and writing better messaging/web copy to convert traffic...which means he writes the words that get a website's visitor to take the action the site wants them to take.

How does this course teach you?

This course requires a commitment from you that others do not. You will have to buy a plane ticket and fly to Austin, TX for one of the few designated dates during the year. Once the course is posted at WizardAcademy.org, if you're one of the first 13 to registered then you'll sleep and eat for free in the Engelbrecht House on the Wizard Academy Campus.

Chris Maddock will spend the first day of the course teaching you about radio copywriting. One really good thing is that you're welcome to bring real radio spots that you're working on and Chris will help you refine them.

He also gives you a small workbook and together you'll be able to go over five writing assignments through the day. Because this class size is typically small (usually less than 20 people) you'll receive plenty of personal coaching.

The second day is devoted to Sexton's discussions of web copy. Again, as he teaches his material throughout the day attendees may provide websites they'd like help with.

The amount of material these two *could* cover is massive, but they stick to radio and internet. And aside from the big thinking concepts that come from this course, probably the best part is the opportunity to work on your real life copywriting projects with the teachers and as an added benefit...the rest of the class too.

Main Points:

Let me first say that what follows here is not an exhaustive list of the teachings during this class...

I took 3 broad teachings from Maddock's class:

- 1) How to control the rhythm of your writing (especially important in radio copy).
- 2) Reaching who you want with your radio copy.
- 3) 8 value judgments about good advertising (with exceptions).

Jeff Sexton covers 3 main points:

- 1) Examining web pages and hyperlinks within context of visitor's search terms/task-at-hand.
 - a. Web pages the copy can never be analyzed in isolation; rather a page must be viewed within the context of a scenario or "Scent Trail."
- 2) Modeling visitor scenarios/scent trails requires modeling the customer's buying process and motivations. Modeling is most effectively through temperament-based personas; and regardless of personality typing system used, there are four basic categories.
 - a. Building your personas based on these categories gives you a level of psychological insight and empathy that only the very top copywriters can come by through talent alone.
- 3) Spotting unsubstantiated copy and transforming it into highly credible – and persuasive - copy

Class Contents (example articles/worksheets:

1. Look for the Loophole!
2. The Hidden Key to Cosmo Headlines: Sex and the City?
3. Targeting through Ad Copy
4. Do Your Ads Actually Have Something to Say?
5. Good Ads
6. Being a Better Writer
7. Writing For The Ear

Some Requirements before you take the course:

This class is intended for business owners. So the ideal prospect of this course would be the business owner who has a radio campaign as well as a website. Obviously you must have a business background, and additionally I think the one who has writing experience will fare even better in this class.

Some of what you'll learn specifically:

Chris Maddock says two things during the course that I've kept with me. But they mean even more in the context of his teaching. He says *"Don't just paint pictures, give rides."* And another thing he says I think he picked up in writing classes at the University of Texas is *"Show don't tell."* The specifics to these broad-minded statements will be clarified with his examples in class.

Maddock is a big believer in reading, and he teaches the principles about reading to write better. Chris also teaches, almost without intention, grammatical and syntactical uses of the English language for holding a listener's attention.

And probably most important, he teaches you what's working in radio *now* (whenever that is for you).

Jeff Sexton talks about the four temperaments, and how to write to temperament. Examples are given of how these four archetypal temperaments show up repeatedly within popular culture and the four women of "Sex and the City" are analyzed for their temperaments. This also holds for the 4 main characters in Star Trek too. The backbone of his web copy teaching is personality types and how properly planning your page layout, hyperlink structure, and content can allow each temperament to get the messaging they'll need to convert.

How much does the course cost?

\$2,500 (as always with a 50% discount to a past Wizard Academy graduate)

My conclusion:

I have a direct business relationship with the Wizard of Ads office in Austin, but only indirectly with Maddock and Sexton by means of the Austin home office. In other words *nobody* here is in my pocket for what I write in this ebook about any Wizard Academy classes.

This course is not for everybody. It's for someone who has owned a business for years and has experience writing ads and doing his own advertising (radio and web).

For that person there are no worries, because Chris Maddock is over-sensitive to the mass response of radio; so I can say that since his 2004 Advanced Wordsmithing class his writing and teaching of radio copywriting has evolved as dramatically as our society. For more clarity let me say it this way: his teachings haven't changed. Rather one of his teachings *shifted* place, in order to better accommodate today's fragmented listener.

Because he has written thousands of successful radio spots which have grown client business many times over, Chris knows better than anyone how to say more in less time. Maddock is really the antithesis of long form copy. This is not a course about buying radio, or even strategy development necessarily...it's about powerful radio copywriting and he's the best.

Personally I've known Chris since 2004 and I've learned a lot about compacting info. tightly. I've crystallized 66 books in 20 min. (or tried to), I've given a 10 min talk with 11 points, and stunned radio listeners in 30 sec. (Chris would have never sanctioned some of this). Actually one of Maddock's teachings is that *"Good ads are like rhinos. They make one point very powerfully."* The point I'm making is not that compacting lots of info. into a tight space is *always* good, but just that I've learned *how* to do it from Maddock and his mentor Roy Williams primarily. Even in his online video Maddock says, *"Most people try to stuff too many things in their writing and it weighs it down and makes it heavy."*

Maddock says that his class is for project-to-project writers too (like a home-based copywriter). Instant response copywriting usually is what drives that work and you won't spend time specifically on that, but here and in addition to the class you could bring your problem to Maddock for personal coaching (because he's already dealt with it).

If you listen closely enough Chris teaches you to write better, whether it's a radio spot or not. For me even recognizing really good writing is still growing in me...with time.

The teaching you'll receive from Jeff Sexton is profound and distinctive. If you're not alert to personality types already then get ready...and there's a common sense approach for applying the personality sciences (if you will) to your web copy that's clear and obvious.

My experience with Jeff's talent goes back to his online writing course mentioned above. Fresh out of teaching public school he was grading online assignments in a little different way. We didn't get 'red marks' because we wrote wrong, but we received feedback from him..."Why not try this...?" That course really took my head off.

Since then Jeff has also edited my introduction to an audio poetry book I've been writing (but I'm not sending him my poetry). I found his conciseness of pen so powerful that I asked him to edit my introduction to *this* ebook. He graciously did so before I ever sent it to Bob Bly. Then Bly, being more aware than I of *his* typical reader, edited even further.

Sexton's course is really about getting something to say on your website that's important to your visitor. So it goes without saying that that if you don't have anything to say, don't waste your money. And my synopsis about Jeff is that he's the most powerful and *clear* writer I know. And he brings those skills to websites for Future Now personas.

For me this is a grandiose kind of course. It's principled as long as they are practiced.

It's not a morning rain producing a mushroom...(only to have it burn out by evening).