

BOOK RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Neal Cox
Phone: 312-988-6058
Fax: 312-988-6030
E-mail: coxn@staff.abanet.org

Preparing Legal Documents Nonlawyers Can Read and Understand

By Wayne Schiess

CHICAGO, Aug. 21, 2008 – Too many legal documents intended for nonlawyers are dense, archaic and unnecessarily complex. In truth, they simply contain traditional legalese: jargon, terms of art, long sentences and complicated syntax.

What's more, these documents sometimes contain mistakes of either English or substantive law, both of which are harder to spot and fix because the text is written in traditional legalese. Ultimately, these documents fail in their essential purpose: to communicate binding legal content to a nonlegal reader.

This new book from ABA Publishing shows lawyers how to adjust their writing to accommodate the nonlegal audience. In this book lawyers will find tips designed to help them write for the lay audience as well as examples of poor legal writing, common errors, why the errors need correcting and how to fix them.

Readers will find advice on sentence structure as well as guidance on organization, tone, format and document design. Using a short, clear and easy-to-read format, this book is ideal for practicing lawyers or law students who want their material understood, not ignored.

The information in the book can improve almost any document that needs to be understood by the reader, including:

- Apartment leases
- Basic contracts
- Consumer regulations
- Credit-card agreements
- Employee manuals and handbooks
- Homeowner's association bylaws
- Insurance policies
- Jury instructions
- Opinion or advice letters

- Public notices
- Releases
- Software licenses and user agreements
- Website disclaimers
- Wills

For nonlawyers, a colloquial tone is not only good, it's necessary. It's also a style that lawyers can learn. This book demonstrates how to invite the reader in, while explaining how to abandon the fear that the writing won't sound legal and why to eliminate writing to impress.

Wayne Schiess, the author, is the Director of Legal Writing at the University of Texas, a writer and popular seminar speaker. He hosts Legalwriting.net and writes his own Blog on the subject. Wayne Schiess resides in Austin, Tex.

With more than 413,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law.

Title:	<i>Preparing Legal Documents Nonlawyers Can Read and Understand</i>
Publisher:	ABA Publishing
Pages:	144
Product Code:	1620321
ISBN:	978-1-59031-964-2
Size:	6 x 9
Binding:	paper
Price:	\$69.95; \$54.95 for ABA members
Orders:	Visit www.abacatalog.org or call 800-285-2221. Request Product Code 1620321.

- 30 -

Editor's note: Review copies are available by sending an e-mail to Neal Cox at coxn@staff.abanet.org. If you publish a review of this book, please send tearsheets or a copy for our files to Neal Cox, c/o ABA Publishing, 321 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60654.