

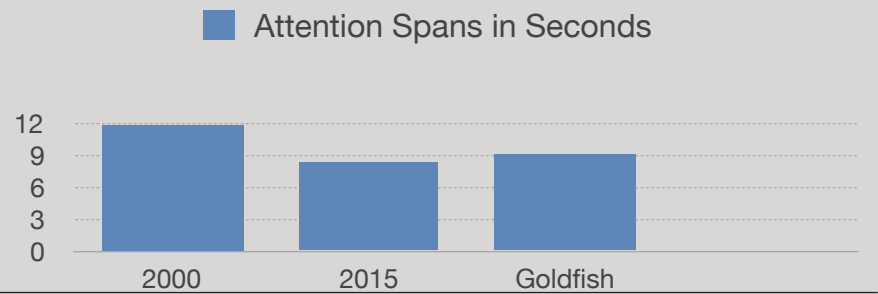
# Content Writing for Online Reading Styles

## Writers have about 10-15 seconds to capture a reader's attention:

In the race to capture the attention of an increasingly distracted online readership, content producers feel pressure to produce shorter messages. But at what point does simplicity risk reducing the meaning of a message? How do marketers balance the need for short and long-form content?

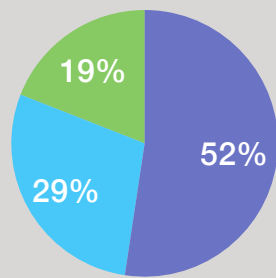
## Attention Spans are Dwindling

- The average attention span in 2015: 8.25 seconds
- The average attention span in 2000: 12 seconds
- The average attention span of a gold fish: 9 seconds



## Reading Online: From Reading to Skimming:

Studies suggest reading online more closely resembles skimming:



- 55% of all page views get less than 15 seconds of attention.
- It takes people approximately 20-30% longer to read online than it takes to read on paper.
- 10-20% of readers were actually making it to the bottom of their posts.

## Content for Online Reading Styles:

### The Need for Verbal Economy:

Distracted online reading styles require writers adopt a newly economic style:

- Bite-sized bits of dense, meaningful prose.
- Bullet points
- Listicles
- Short, subtitled sub-sections, for easy navigation of information

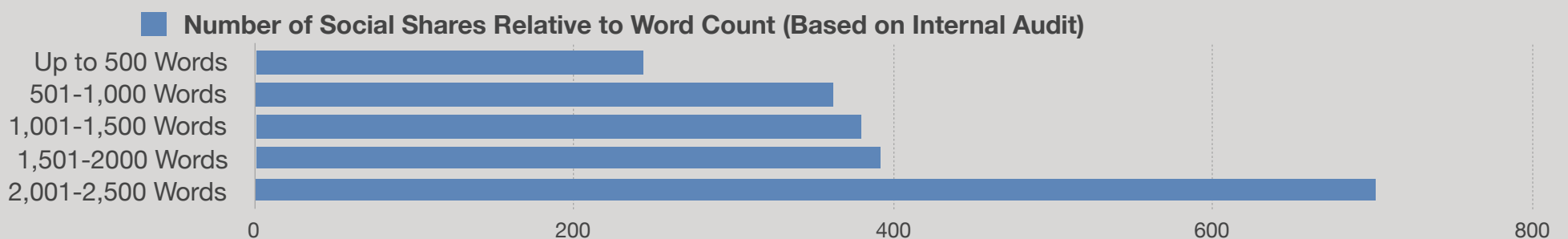
**DriverContent:** Designed for online reading styles, Driver Content or “Drivers” refer to short-form posts that drive traffic to long-form material with powerful and entertaining content:

- Infographics
- Short animations
- 15 second video clips
- Quizlets
- Photo-real Images
- Games, apps and calculators
- Animated GIFs

## Long-Form Content Remains Essential

Despite the demands for brevity, long-form content plays a vital role in effective content strategy. Here's why:

- **Authority:** Demonstrating expertise in long-form content establishes industry authority.
- **Audiences Actually Do Read Longer Content:** Niche, expert audiences in target markets will invest more time in long-form content.
- **Long-Form Content Enhances SEO:** Google's search favors of articles of 2500+ words, about 5 pages, rank higher in search results.
- **Deeper Reader Experience:** Long-form content provides the depth and detail necessary for a more fully immersive reader experience.
- **Increased Time on Site:** Long-form content keeps readers on your site for longer periods of time. Kissmetrics found that readers spent up to 40% longer on long-form posts than on the average page, and they looked at 25% more pages than the average visitor.
- **More Social Shares:** On average, longer-form content generates more social shares (see the chart below).



## The Long and Short of It All:

Digital marketing in an “age of distraction” demands a creative regime of efficient messaging strategies designed to capture and maintain reader attention. Yet, to remain effective, these strategies will require a carefully executed balance of scannable simplicity and authoritative depth. Final Thoughts: Instead of Mere Simplicity, Aspire to Engagingly Condensed Language: Concise writing does not simply mean “short and easy”; rather, concise writing condenses the meaning of a message without reducing its scope and significance.