

# Hello!



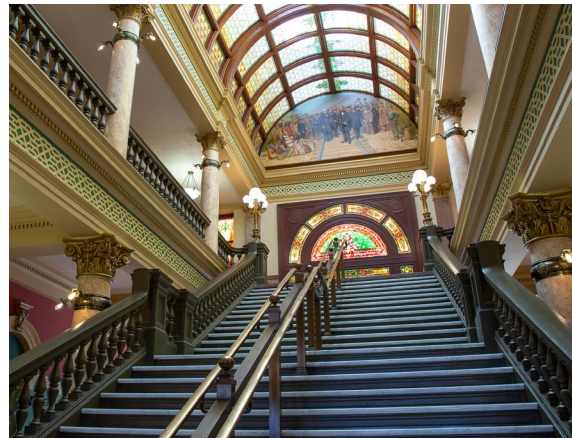
## **ERIC SEIDLE – CONTENT EDITOR**

I've been the content editor with the audit division for over a year and a half. Prior to audit, I was the digital editor for Lee Enterprises' suite of newspapers in Montana.

TODAY WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

# UPDATES IN EDITORIAL FUCTIONS AND REPORT FORMATS

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The background of the slide is a photograph of a grand, ornate interior space. In the foreground, a wide staircase with dark wooden steps and a polished brass handrail leads upwards. The balustrade features decorative turned wooden balusters. In the background, a large, arched stained glass dome with intricate geometric patterns in yellow, green, and white allows natural light to filter into the space. The architecture includes classical columns and decorative moldings, suggesting a historic or institutional setting.

# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

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# ABOUT US

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The publication and editorial functions consist of a content editor (me) and a publication assistant (Denise) and are responsible for all divisional publications and products, also known as assets.

## **Assets come in many forms:**

- Print
- Digital
- Visual
- Audio

# OTHER FUNCTIONS

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The content editor is responsible for many functions that are outside the scope of working directly on the assets. Some of these include:

- Meets with LAD's Next50 communication team
- Offers editorial guidance via the report review process
- Consults the legislative auditor and deputy auditors on report format options
- Works with legal council to help fulfil information requests
- Directs publication deadlines to audit teams

# HOW ROLES HAVE CHANGED

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Previously, these roles focused almost entirely on print publications. The scope of that rarely expanded outside of printed products. If needed, expansion was largely left to audit teams.

**Real world example:** Copy editing



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# IN REPORT WRITING

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# ASKING FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

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What really needs to be communicated?

Are we doing it effectively?

Who is our audience?

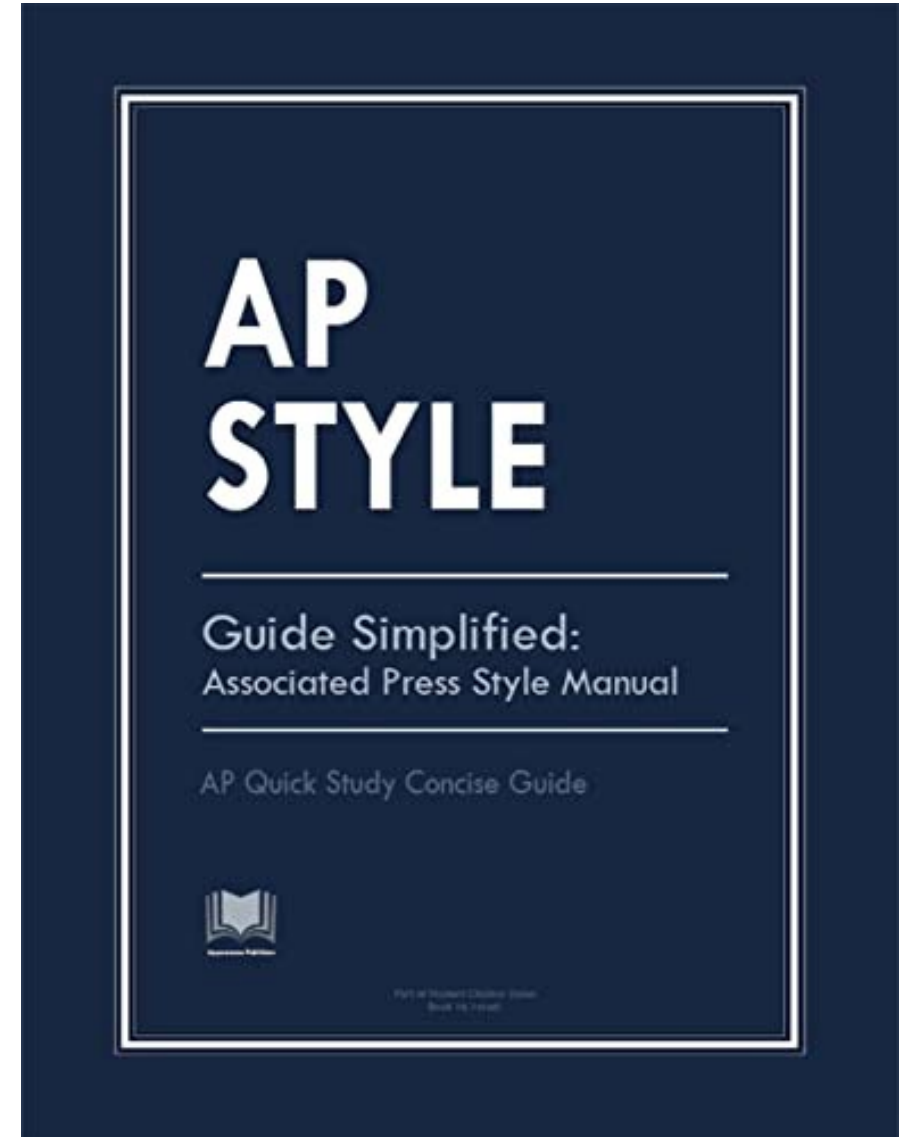
We pondered these questions and adopted some changes.



# AP STYLE

LAD has adopted the AP writing style guidelines, switching from our past usage of the Gregg Style Manual.

AP style is the most widely used and accepted style of writing and the current standard in journalism.



# GOOD WRITING HYGIENE

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We've begun practicing good literary hygiene. We did this by focusing on **clear, concise** writing.

## **Key areas include:**

- Writing in an active voice
- Being more cautious of prepositions and prepositional phrases
- Not diluting words
- Avoiding audit/industry jargon

# PASSIVE VS ACTIVE

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**P:** Report writing has always been loved by auditors.

**A:** Auditors love report writing.

**P:** All fees shall be deposited by the secretary into the state treasury.

**A:** The secretary deposits all fees into the state treasury.

# PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

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This bill establishes a fee for processing the payments in an amount that is equal to the cost incurred by the tax collector in processing the payment.

This bill establishes payment processing fees equal to the tax collector's payment processing costs.

# DILUTED WORDS AND JARGON

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Make a statement

**State**

Offer testimony

**Testify**

Take into consideration

**Consider**

A portion of

**Some**

Provides guidance

**Guides**

On a monthly basis

**Monthly**

In accordance with

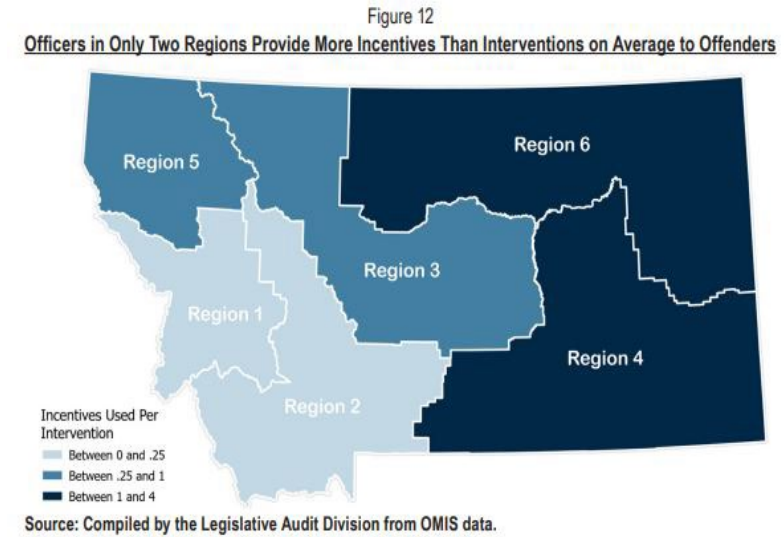
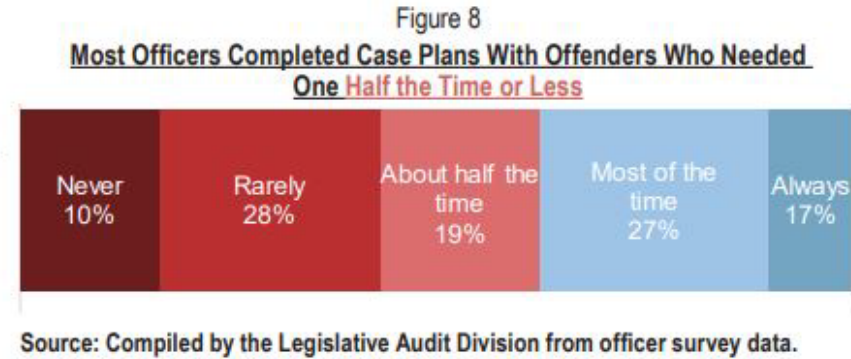
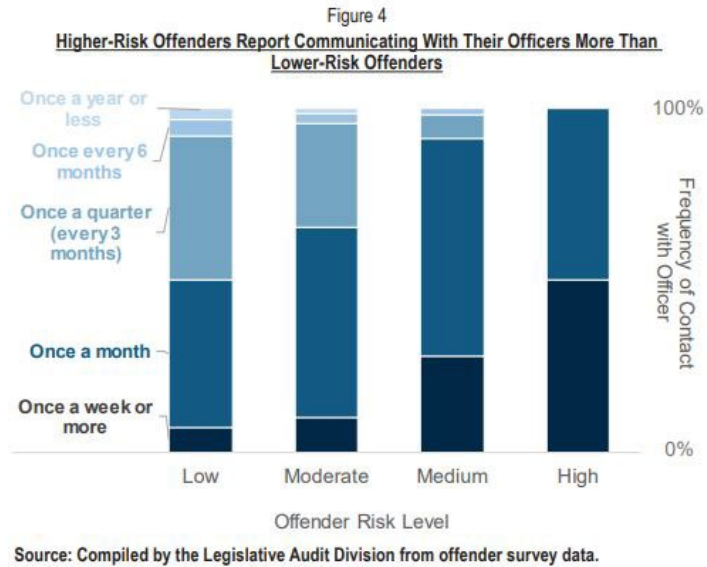
**Per**

The background image shows a grand, ornate staircase with dark wood steps and a polished brass handrail. The staircase is flanked by decorative balustrades with turned balusters. In the background, a large, arched stained glass dome with intricate patterns in yellow, green, and white is visible, set within a classical architectural frame with columns and decorative moldings. The lighting is warm, highlighting the textures of the wood and the vibrant colors of the stained glass.

**IN GRAPHICS**

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# ADOPT COLOR SCHEMES

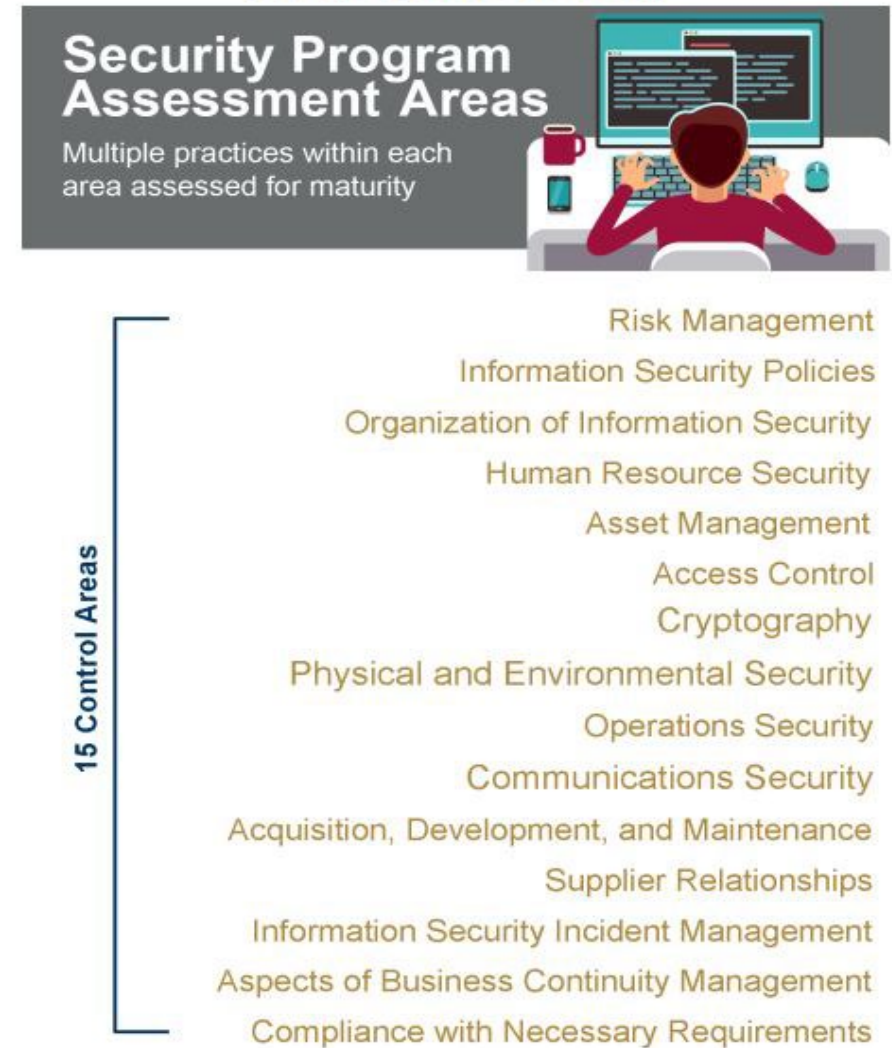
By embracing a more consistent color palate and intentional use of color, reports remain unique yet share look, texture, tone, and feel.

# MORE ORIGINAL GRAPHICS

Reports that were limited to charts and figures now have found increasing success communicating with original graphics.

The publication team works with auditors to create visual elements outside the scope of traditional charts and figures.

Figure 1  
Security Program Assessment Areas



Source: Compiled by the Legislative Audit Division.

### Assessed Control Areas Related to Testing Findings

#### Montana State Univ.

Assessed Control Areas

High Concern Test Results	Findings related to: systems acquisition, devolpment and maintenance
	Findings related to: operations security
Low Concern Results	Findings related to: cryptography
	Findings related to: access control
	Findings related to: systems acquisition, devolpment and maintenance

#### Univ. of Montana

Assessed Control Areas

High Concern Test Results	Findings related to: systems acquisition, devolpment and maintenance
	Findings related to: operations security
	Phishing related to: human resource security
Low Concern Results	Findings related to: cryptography
	Findings related to: access control
	Findings related to: systems acquisition, devolpment and maintenance



## Water Right Owners Have Varying Levels of Knowledge About Their Water Right

Since DRNC relies on owners to verify their water right information, we examined water right owners' capabilities to verify water right information through our survey. We asked owners to verify information on one of their water rights and answer questions on how frequently they verify their information. As stated earlier, over 20 percent of survey respondents did not know if their water right's priority date, geocode, point of diversion, or place of use was correct. These owners indicated they did not understand the notation or were too far removed from the original owner to know. Also, based on survey responses, we estimate between 36 and 46 percent of all water right owners never verify their water right information. Though owner input is valuable for estimating the accuracy of water right information, relying exclusively on owners to independently verify their information undermines data quality in the WRIS.

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The background image shows a grand, ornate interior space, likely a library or a government building. In the foreground, a wide staircase with dark wooden steps and a polished brass handrail leads upwards. The balustrade features decorative turned balusters. In the background, a large, arched stained glass dome with intricate geometric patterns in yellow, green, and white allows natural light to filter into the space. The walls are adorned with classical architectural details, including columns and decorative moldings. The overall atmosphere is one of historical grandeur and elegance.

IN REPORT FORMAT

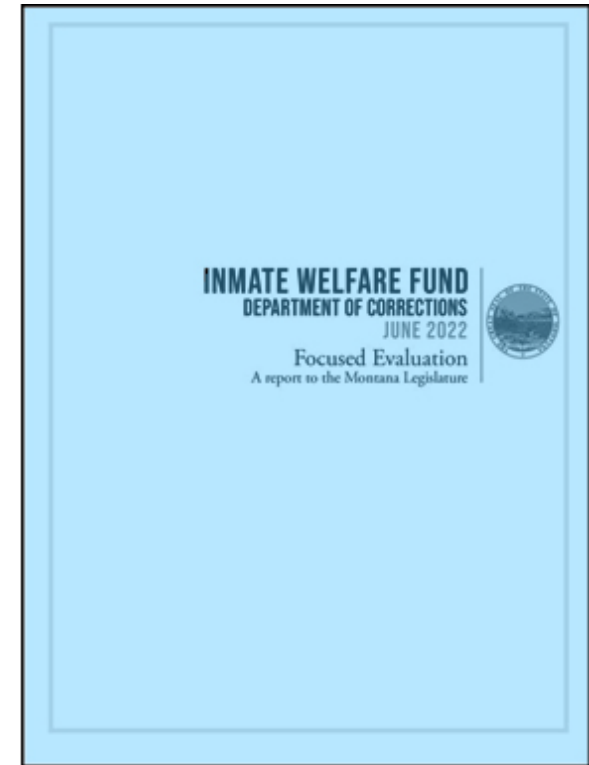
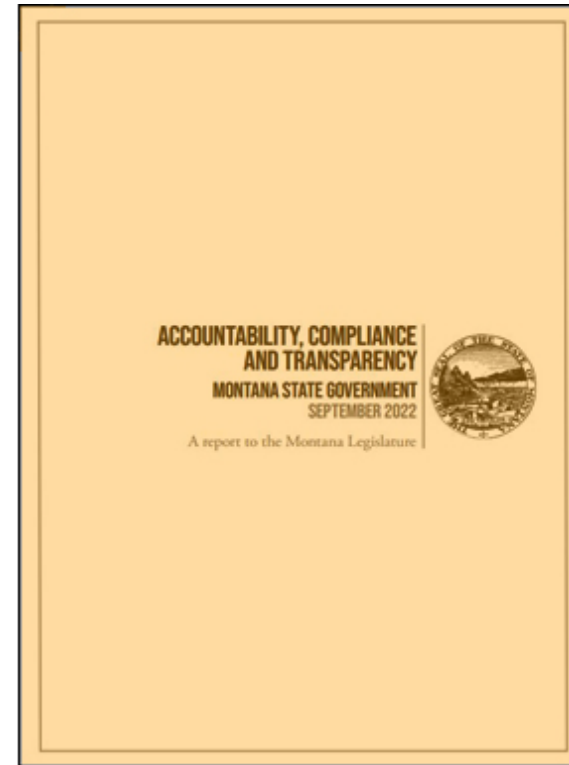
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# GOING FURTHER WITH NEW FORMATS

Our new report designs have led to more opportunities to improve readability and take our ethos one step further.

The “focused” report format offers a clean and more readable design.

Reports build off our writing improvements and are scoped narrower.





# FOCUSED FORMAT

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**Design improvements on the focus format include:**

- Saddle staple binding
- Larger line leading and kerning  
for readability
- No table of contents
- More readable Sans Serif font
- No chapters
- Improved use of gutter area

The background image shows a grand, ornate interior space, likely a library or a museum. In the foreground, a wide staircase with dark wooden steps and a polished brass handrail leads upwards. The balustrade features decorative turned balusters. In the background, a large, arched stained glass dome with intricate geometric patterns in yellow, green, and white allows natural light to filter into the space. The architecture includes classical columns and decorative moldings, with a red wall visible on the left side.

IN THE FUTURE



# YOU GUIDE OUR DIRECTION

Over the last year, we've exposed you to some of our division's changes, our wider reach for an audience, and increased transparency.

## **Some questions we have for you:**

Have you found reports reading differently—smoother?  
Do you prefer reading the smaller formatted reports?  
Could we head that direction in more reports?  
What might we lose, what might we gain?

# QUESTIONS

