



On October 6, 2011, New York State Governor, Andrew M. Cuomo, issued Executive Order No 26. The Governor stated, “*Approximately two and a half million New Yorkers do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. This presents potential barriers when trying to access important government benefits or services.*”

SMART Communications Inc., New York City, has developed linguistic software that assists the Department of Motor Vehicles to rewrite forms and materials into **Plain English** (PE). The examples show how the software checks for compliance to Plain English. The PE texts are clear, concise, easy-to-read, easy-to-translate and meet the objectives of the Executive Order.

① **The Original DMV Document about Organ Donation** (See footnotes for explanations)

HOW TO ENROLL IN THE NYS ¹DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH’S DONATE LIFE REGISTRY

If you are 18 years or older, you ²may enroll in the Registry through either DMV or DOH.

You can enroll through DMV with an MV-44 application form. ³Simply read the Organ Donation statement and sign and ⁴date the Donor Consent Signature line. You can ⁵also enroll at renewal time ⁶by signing the Donor Consent line on your MV-2 renewal form. ⁷As of July 22, 2008, your signature on an MV-44 or MV-2 ⁸constitutes legal consent for donation. ⁹Be sure to tell your family that you have legally ¹⁰consented to be a donor ¹¹upon your death. If you enroll through DMV, the words “ORGAN DONOR” ¹²will automatically be printed on the front of your ¹³DMV-issued photo document.

Footnotes: (The **SMART MAXit Checker** marked all these points with color-coded messages and suggestions.)

1. Because other languages do not use the possessive form, the PE style avoids contractions and possessives.
2. The use of *may* as an auxiliary verb is a problem. The PE style uses either *will*, *can* or *must*.
3. The adverb *simply* does not add any value to a sentence.
4. Do not use nouns as verbs because they cause confusion. Example, *date* is noun of time, not a verb in PE.
5. This adverb does not translate easily and can be deleted without loss of meaning.
6. Other languages do not use the gerunds. The *-ing* words do not show who does what to whom, how or when.
7. Because readers can use other country date formats, PE avoids dates or uses an easy-to-understand date format.
8. The verb *constitute* is a legal verb and difficult to understand by most readers. See PE rewrite on page 2.
9. The phrase, *Be sure*, is simplified to *Make sure*, which is easier to translate into other languages.
10. The verb *consent* is a legal verb. In PE you can use common legal phrases like *to give consent* for legal precedents. When the intent and meaning is retained, most New York State courts will approve these phrases.
11. The text can not avoid the word *death*, but a gentler expression in PE is *after your death*.
12. This adverb adds no meaning and can cause a translation problem in Mandarin Chinese.
13. The fused adjective makes the original text difficult to understand. The PE word order makes the text easier to read.

The **SMART MAXit Checker** is an *add-in* to Microsoft WORD. The text is written and checked for compliance to a **DMV Plain English dictionary**, stored on a central server. After the simplification, the revised Plain English text is copied to a Web site. The format is controlled by Drupal/Dreamweaver or other Web content and design tools. Other tools translate the PE text more accurately and faster.

PLAIN ENGLISH - continued on page 2

- ② **DMV Text - Rewritten in Plain English with assistance of the SMART MAXit Checker.**
(The SMART Web Design Team added a graphic to show how a picture can enhance Plain English.)

2) HOW TO ENROLL IN THE “DONATE LIFE REGISTRY” MANAGED BY THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



You must be 18 or older to enroll in the **Donate Life Registry** at either the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or the Department of Health (DOH).

Use the **DMV form MV-44** to enroll in the **Donate Life Registry**. Read the organ donation information, then add the date and sign your name on the line marked Donor Consent. Another time to enroll is during the renewal of your driver license. Use the

DMV form MV-2 to sign your name on the line marked Donor Consent. Understand that your signature on these forms gives your legal consent for an organ donation after your death. Make sure that you tell your family that you gave consent for an organ donation.

IMPORTANT: When you enroll, the English words “ORGAN DONOR” are shown on the front of your driver license.

- ③ **DMV Text - Plain English translated into a simplified French to help Francophones.**

COMMENT S’INSCRIRE AU «DONATE LIFE REGISTRY» GÉRÉ PAR LE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Vous devez être âgé(e) d'au moins 18 ans pour vous inscrire au **Donate Life Registry** soit au Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) soit au Department of Health (DOH).

Utilisez le formulaire **MV-44 de DMV** pour vous inscrire au «Donate Life Registry». Lisez les informations relatives aux dons d’organes, puis inscrivez la date et signez de votre nom sur la ligne Donor Consent. Vous pouvez vous inscrire à un autre moment, lors du renouvellement de votre permis de conduire. Utilisez alors le formulaire **MV-2 de DMV** pour inscrire votre nom sur la ligne Donor Consent. Comprenez bien que votre signature sur ces formulaires pour un don d’organes après votre décès est un consentement légal. Assurez-vous d'avertir votre famille de l'accord que vous avez donné.

Important : lors de votre inscription, l'expression anglaise « ORGAN DONOR » figure sur le recto de votre permis de conduire.

Smart Communications, Inc. has 22 years of experience with **Plain English**. We offer linguistic consulting services, **MAXit Checker** software, Writer Workshops, PE rewrite services, Text Mining, PE Dictionaries, Taxonomies, Web content (Drupal/Dreamweaver) and language translation services.

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