Plainly speaking, it is better

What is better is to speak and write plainly, a lesson that is being forced on the U.S. Government according to the Federal Diary columnby Joe Davidson in the Washington Post. To make that happen (I could have written: In order to facilitate the transition), there will be a symposium on plain language this afternoon at the National Press Club, held by the Center for Plain Language.

There is no doubt that the government (and many in the legal community) loves to make things complicated. The more obtuse, the better. The more wordy the better. Passive voice? They love it. Big words when smaller words would do, check.

But, more disturbing in my opinion (since I already expect government/legal communications to be convoluted), is that marketing folk are jumping on the complicated bandwagon. This blog post, from the Branding Strategy Insider, claims that "Complex Language Weakens Brands." As the post says:

> *A serious impediment to communications is this constant upgrading of the language. No aspect of life is left untouched by the upgrade police. Not only does a term have to be politically correct, it has to be as long and as complicated as possible.*

A great example from the post is that UPS went from being in the parcel delivery business to being a logistics company. How many people on the street instinctively understand what logistics is???? Not many, my friends. The only people who understand logistics are in logistics.

In any case, if you want to be clear, speak and write plainly. Using big words when small ones would do does NOT make you

look more intelligent (if anything, it makes you look less so). From the Center for Plain Language website:

> *A communication is in plain language if the people who are the audience for that communication can quickly and easily*
>
>   - *find what they need*
>   - *understand what they find*
>   - *act appropriately on that understanding*

I think the bullet points above are the point of ANY communications.

And you thought plain vanilla was the boring choice.