

# Paint a Product Picture \*

Christopher Murphy, @fehler

Workshop Components · 2019

\* The Art of Product Storytelling

“Please Note: This is a preview slidedeck that I’m still working on as I build out my component slidedecks. As such, it’s a work in progress, but it still contains information that I hope others will find useful.”

—Christopher Murphy, @fehler

Selling is telling a story... \*

\* Sometimes you're giving not selling, but you're still telling a story.

“Whether they’re physical or digital, how you describe your products matters. Crafting stories, **to paint a picture of your products in potential customers’ minds**, builds deeper and richer connections.”

—Christopher Murphy, @fehler



Storytelling, especially online, is essential. \*

\* In online commerce, storytelling is critical. Without a persuasive salesperson your stories do the talking.

“In a world saturated with mass market products, often created in conditions that aren’t ethical, customers are crying out for authentic stories. **There is a hunger for brands with stories and a deeply held conviction.**”

—Christopher Murphy, @fehler

# Share your products' backstory...

- Customers are hungry for meaning, provenance and backstory.
- They're eager to look behind the curtain and see process.
- They want to see the story behind your products.

# The Often-Hidden Details Matter

- Tell your customers:
  - who made the product;
  - how it's made;
  - what it's manufactured from; and
  - **why** it was made.

Dictionary

provenance | 'prɒv(ə)nəns |

**P** noun [mass noun]

the place of origin or earliest known history of something:  
*an orange rug of Iranian provenance.*

- the beginning of something's existence; something's origin: *they try to understand the whole universe, its provenance and fate.*
- [count noun] a record of ownership of a work of art or an antique, used as a guide to authenticity or quality: *the manuscript has a distinguished provenance.*

ORIGIN

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late 18th century: from French, from the verb *provenir* 'come or stem from', from Latin *provenire*, from *pro-* 'forth' + *venire* 'come'.

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In an era of cheaply manufactured goods, customers are eager to know the provenance of your product.

# Case Studies

# Hiut Denim



### Selvedge Denim

*Selvedge is an investment. Ours is from Kuroki, the artisanal Japanese denim mill. Woven on a 1959 loom. 100% indigo dyed. Unwashed 14.5oz.*



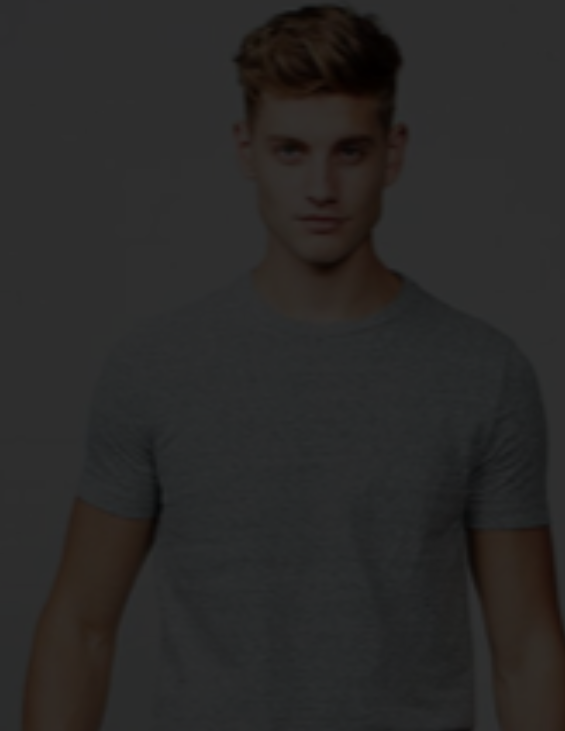
At the simplest level, Hiut Denim make jeans, but there's much more to their story than that...





## Selvedge Denim

*Selvedge is an investment. Ours is from Kuroki, the artisanal Japanese denim mill. Woven on a 1959 loom. 100% indigo dyed. Unwashed 14.5oz.*



The language they use to describe these jeans is very carefully considered.

The words paint a vivid picture.

**“Selvedge is an investment.** Ours is from **Kuroki**, the artisanal Japanese denim mill. **Woven on a 1959 loom. 100% indigo dyed. Unwashed 14.5 oz.”**  
—Hiut Denim

\* Before reading this, I had no idea that jeans would weigh anything, let alone 14.5oz.

£240 \*

\* You might think £240 is expensive, but Hiut's denim is robust and designed to last. **It's an investment.**

From: Hiut Denim <[hi@hiutdenim.co.uk](mailto:hi@hiutdenim.co.uk)>

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Shipping confirmation for order #11260

Date: Tue, 21 Jul 2015 14:33:22 +0000

Dear Christopher Murphy,

Your jeans are on the way to you.

But their real journey starts when you put them on.

Where you go in them, what your best ideas will be in them, are all yet to be decided.

We made the jean, but you will create their history.

This language – in an email letting me know my jeans were on their way to me – is lovely, it builds a connection with the brand.

“Your jeans are on the way to you. **But their real journey starts when you put them on.** We made the jeans, but you will decide their history.”

—Hiut Denim

“This idea – **that your jeans are on a journey** – changes how we perceive Hiut’s jeans. It positions the jeans as **the vehicle for a story that is individual to you.**”

—Christopher Murphy, @fehler





Three years and eight months later, my jeans are still in perfect condition. They **were** an investment.

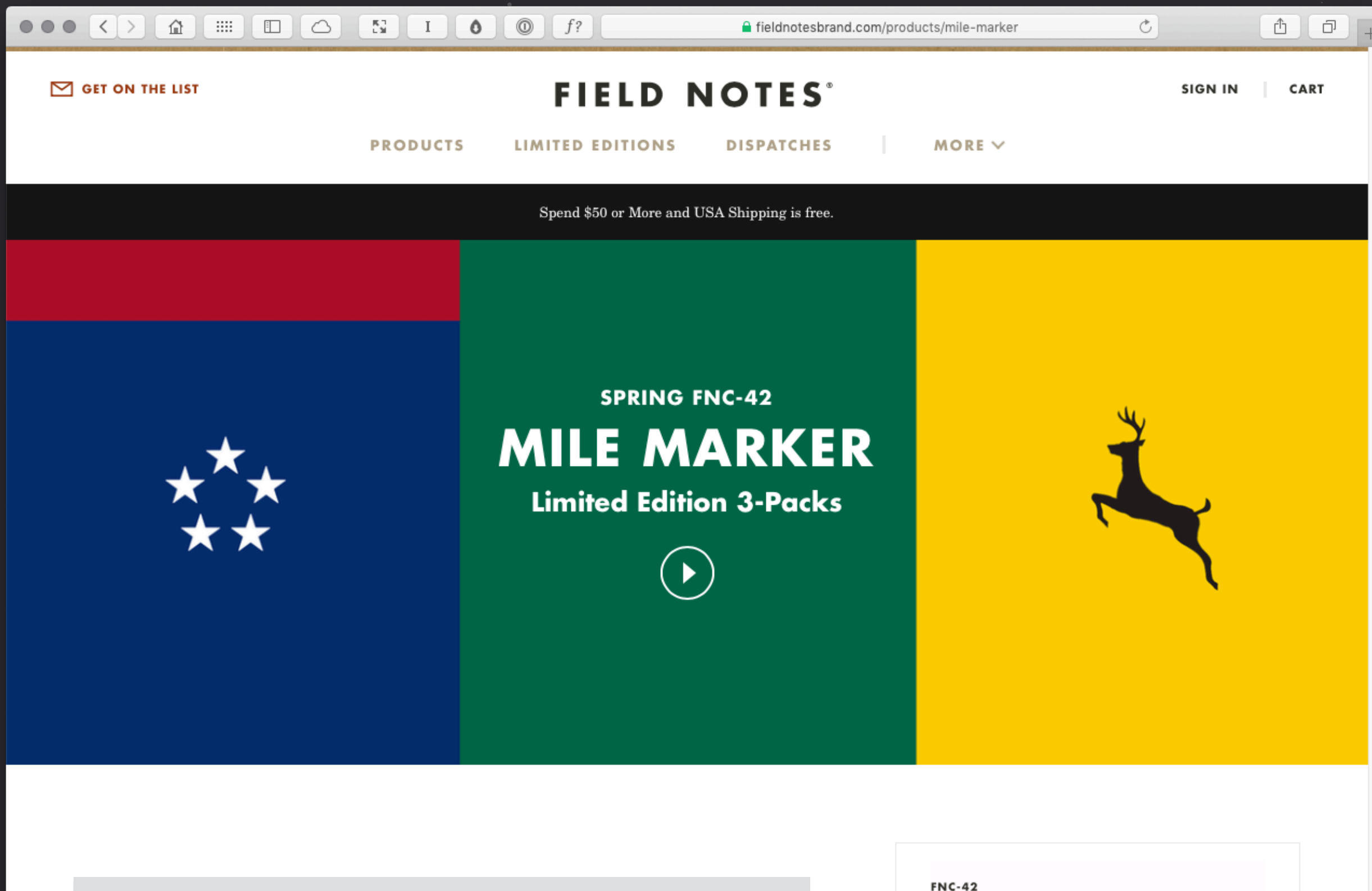


# The language you use matters...

- Jeans vs. An Investment
- Denim vs. 100% Indigo Dyed, Unwashed 14.5oz.
- Tailors vs. Grandmasters \*

\* Hiut's jeans aren't created by tailors, they're created by 'grandmasters'. (That's a story, too.)

# Field Notes



Field Notes Mile Marker Edition notebooks are more than notebooks, they're a beautifully designed product with a backstory.

“Our 42nd seasonal release for Spring is the **‘Mile Marker’ Edition**, which celebrates the span and history of America’s Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways.”

—Field Notes

These are notebooks, yes, but they’re also a celebration of history that is filled with stories that Field Notes are sharing.

\$12.95

\* Three notebooks cost \$12.95. These aren't cheap notebooks, so the story matters.

## GO THE WHOLE WAY

Considering a [Year-Long Subscription](#)? Start one with “Mile Marker” and we’ll send you a map free with your initial shipment.

### SPECIFICATIONS:

01. Proudly printed by the good people of eDOC Communications, Mount Prospect, Ill.
02. Cover: WestRock Tango C1S 12pt “White,” with a thick, brute force application of Pantone soy-based Toyo inks specified by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, stamped with Crown foil by Nu Wave Die Cutting & Finishing, Chicago, Ill.
03. Innards: Domtar Lynx Opaque Smooth 60#T “White,” with a fine, 1-color application of “Horizon Mist Gray” soy-based Saphira ink.
04. Cover and innards printed on a Heidelberg Speedmaster XL 105 40" 6-color press.
05. Bound with a Heidelberg Stitchmaster ST 270 5-pocket saddle stitcher with cover feeder/scorer & Rima RS 10S in-line stacker, with appreciation to Samuel Slocum, George W. McGill, and William J. Brown, the “Founding Fathers of the Staple.”
06. Corners precisely rounded to a 3/8" (9.5mm) radius with a Challenge DCM double round-corner machine.
07. Dot-Graph grid: 3/16" x 3/16" (4.7mm x 4.7mm).
08. Memo book dimensions are 3-1/2" x 5-1/2" (89mm x 140mm).
09. FIELD NOTES uses only the Futura typeface family (Paul Renner, 1927) in its materials.
10. All FIELD NOTES memo books are printed and manufactured in the U.S.A.
11. FNC-42 UPC: 858493003776

FNC-42



SPRING 2019 QUARTERLY EDITION  
**MILE MARKER**  
AMERICA'S HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Dot-Graph Paper • 3½" x 5½" • 48 Pages

**\$12.95**

Choose an Option... ▾

QTY  
1 ADD TO CART

[MORE INFO ON YEAR-LONG SUBSCRIPTIONS](#)

Field Notes list the edition’s specifications prominently. This information is telling and selling the story of the product.

## SPECIFICATIONS:

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07. Dot-Graph grid: 3/16" x 3/16" (4.7mm x 4.7mm).

Provenance matters. Here, the printers who proudly printed this edition. (The 'founding fathers of the staple' also get a mention.)

# Specifications – backstory – matters...

- These aren't inexpensive notebooks. They are, however, lovingly designed and created and Field Notes are sharing the backstory of their production.



“The bright, beefy covers are made from **Westrock Tango 12pt C1S** and covered with **Pantone Toyo** inks as specified by the awesome US DOT *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.”

—Field Notes

“They’ve also been stamped with **holographic Crown Foil** so they’re easy to spot in the beams of your headlights.”

—Field Notes

“They’re **bound with black and white staples**, with innards featuring a ‘**Horizon Mist Gray**’ **Dot-Graph** pattern on **60#T Domtar Lynx**.”

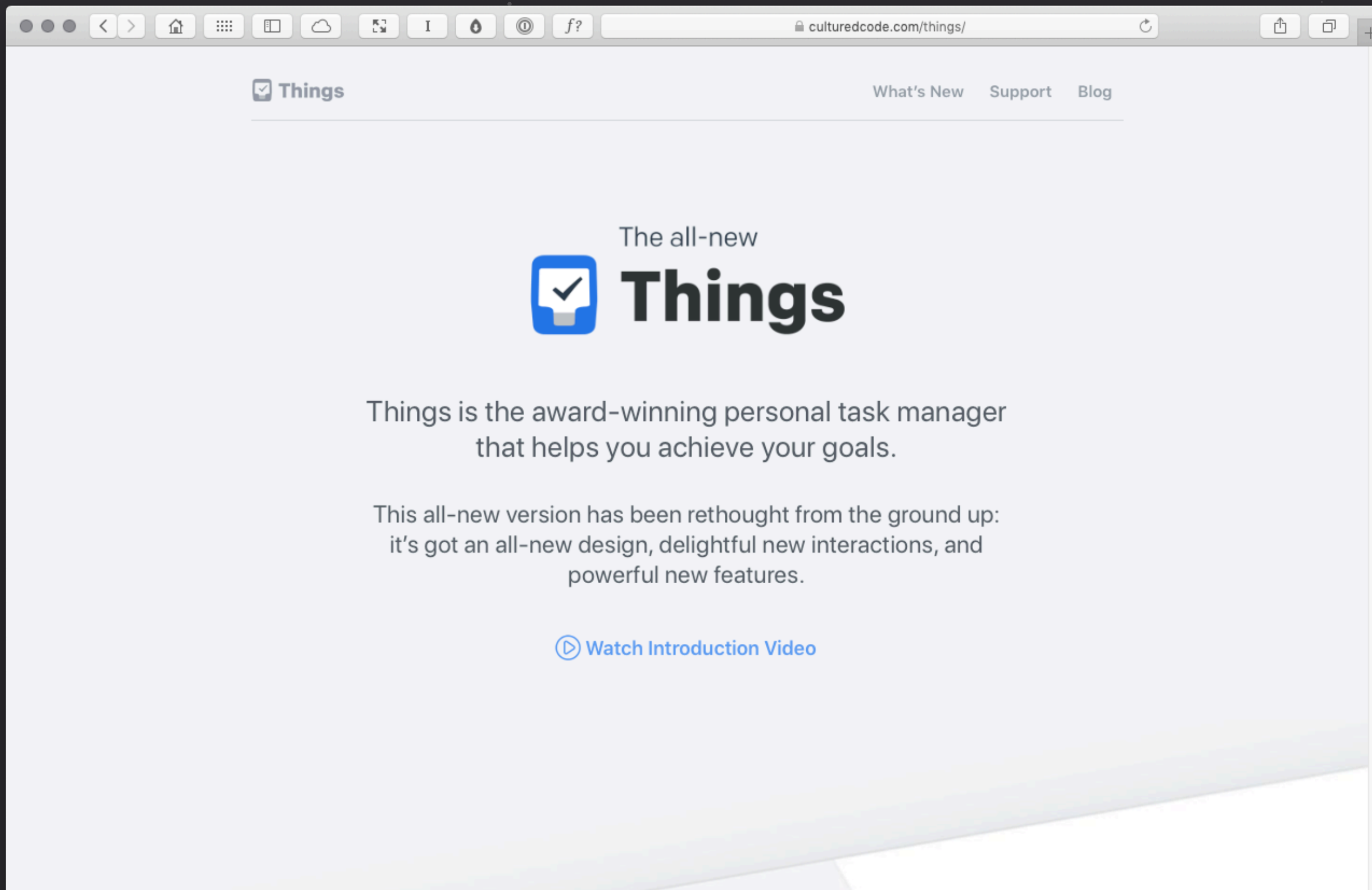
—Field Notes

# The language you use matters...

- Ink vs. Pantone Toyo Inks
- Cardboard vs. Westrock Tango 12pt C1S
- Paper vs. 60#T Domtar Lynx

\* 60#T Domtar Lynx printed using Pantone Toyo inks with a Westrock Tango 12pt C1S cover.

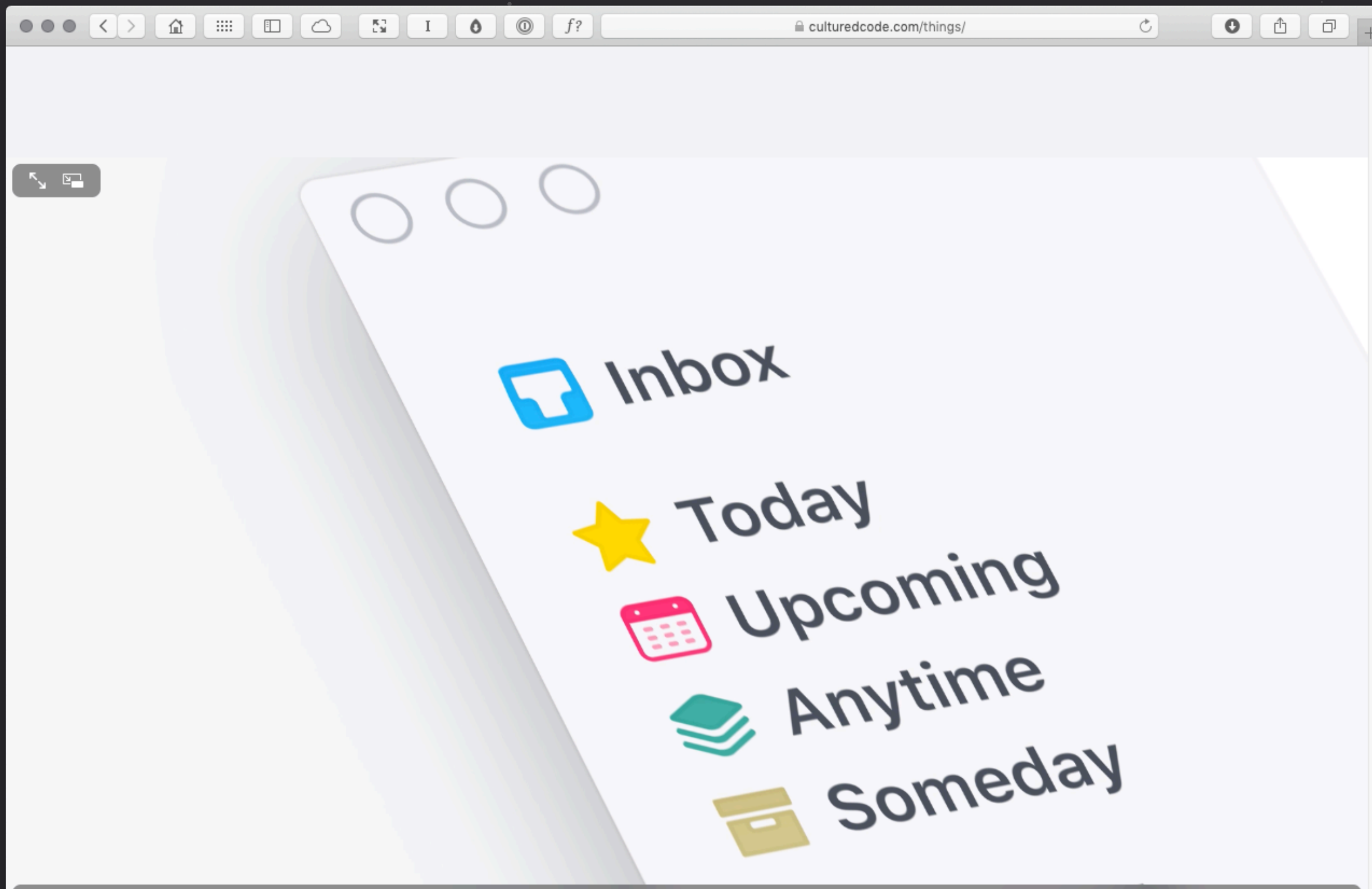
# Things 3



This use of carefully considered language can be applied to digital products, too.

“This all-new version has been rethought from the ground up: **it’s got an all-new design, delightful new interactions, and powerful new features.**”

—Cultured Code



Cultured Code use video – a powerful medium in an attention atrophied world – to share the product’s new features.



**all-new feel**

Software often focuses on what an interface **looks** like, but Cultured Code focus on what the interface **feels** like.

# Stories Are Memorable \*

\* And it's the memorable stories that are often the most shared via word of mouth.

“The story you tell shapes how your customers perceive your **product**. Put some thought into it and the return on investment can be considerable.”

—Christopher Murphy, @fehler

uniteditions.com/products/universal-everything?utm\_source=Unit+Ed

What is Universal Everything? (available for pre-order now)

£75.00

**ADD TO CART**

Available for pre-order now.

Title: What is Universal Everything?  
Editors: Adrian Shaughnessy, Tony Brook  
Essays: Adrian Shaughnessy, Antonia Lee  
Design: Spin

Edition of 2000 – unique ‘tipped-in’ image on each cover

**Book**

Matt Pyke, founder and creative director of Universal Everything, calls his studio a “digital art and design collective”. And after 15 years of revolutionary work in the digital realm, UE has its first book – *What is Universal Everything?*

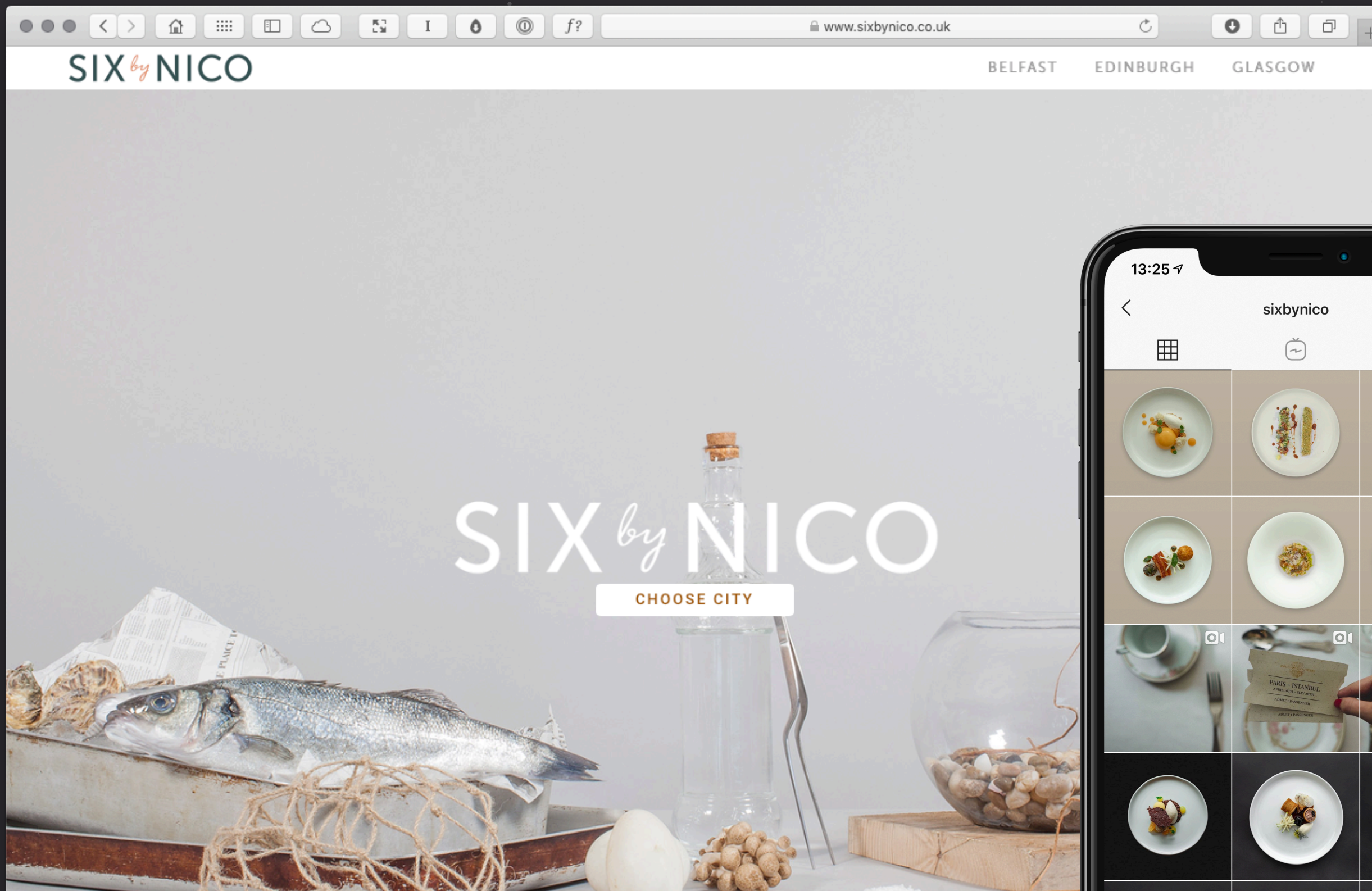
Working closely with Pyke, the Spin design team of Tony Brook and

Unit Editions sells books, but they describe their book *What is Universal Everything?* as a **design publishing event**.

*“What is Universal Everything? is a **design publishing event**.  
**Every cover is unique**: a different tipped-in image graces the  
cover of each edition.”*

—Unit Editions

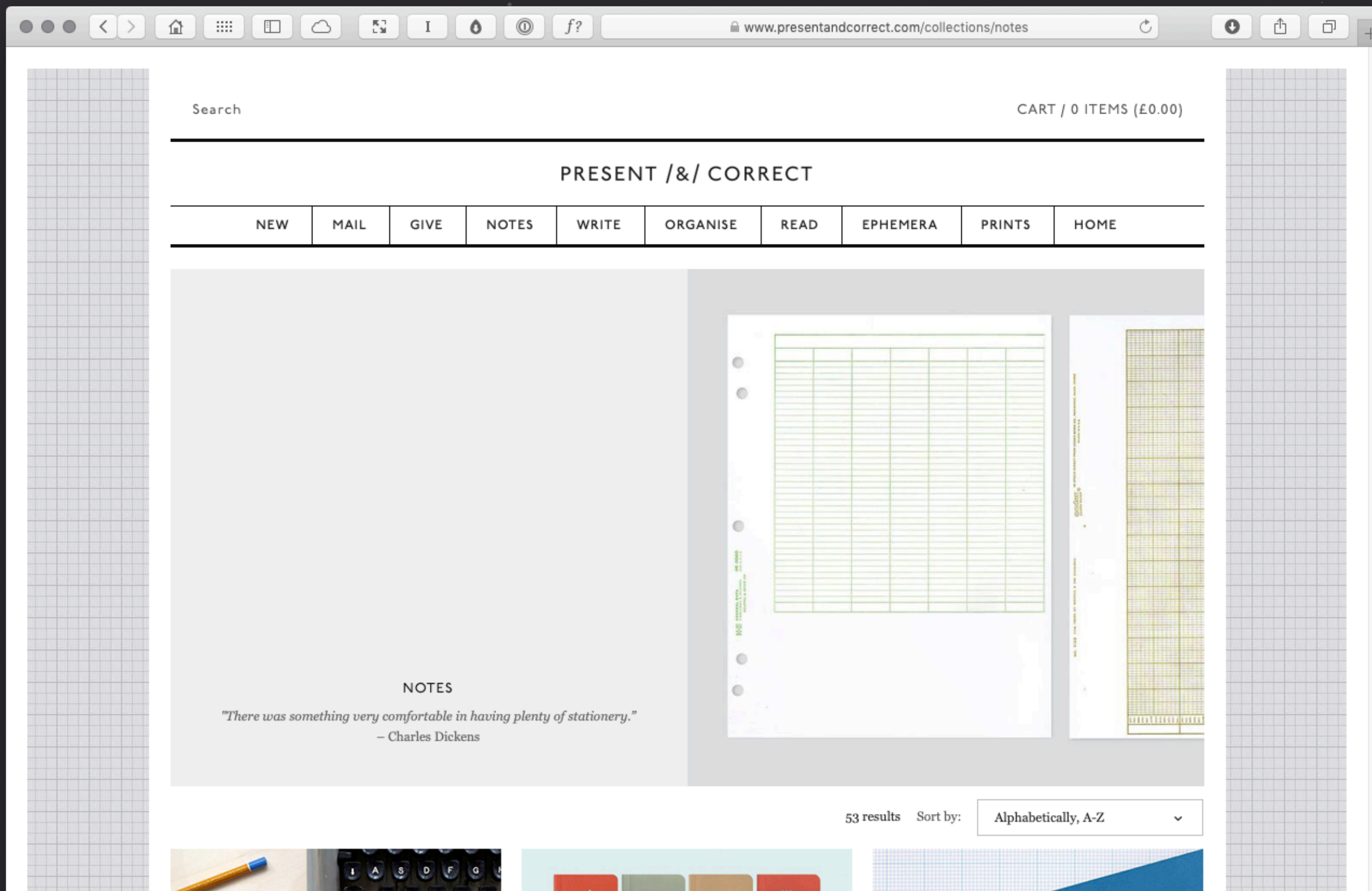




Six by Nico – an elegant restaurant – builds its six course tasting menu around 'A Story Every Six Weeks' shared via Instagram.

“Six by Nico is home to **a series of carefully curated and constantly evolving restaurant concepts**. Every six weeks, Nico and his team serve a brand new six-course tasting menu, each one **themed upon a different place or memory.**”

—Six by Nico



Present & Correct sells stationery, but by sharing stories around that stationery they elevate it and make the mundane special.



“Present & Correct is a place for our own designs, things we love by other designers from around the world and **vintage items which we discover on trips and foraging expeditions.**”

—Present & Correct

Other helpful resources...



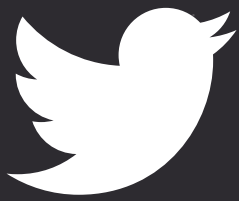
I co-wrote these two books for Five Simple Steps on the topic of words as a critical design component.

[gumroad.com/standardistas](https://gumroad.com/standardistas)

\* Get both books for the price of one with discount code 'onefree', for less than the price of a coffee.

“If you found this deck useful, follow me on Twitter: **@fehler**. I’m in the process of breaking down 15+ years of workshop content into small, easily consumable components. I’ll be tweeting as I’ve finished and shared these components. Cheers!”

—Christopher Murphy, [@fehler](#)



@fehler