Workshop:

Designers who write

@yaili

UXBristol, July 2019

“Forget Coding: Writing is Design’s ‘Unicorn Skill’”

—Katharine Schwab, Fast Company

“We only hire good writers.”

—Jason Fried, Basecamp

“If you can’t write,
can you design?”

—Me, on my blog

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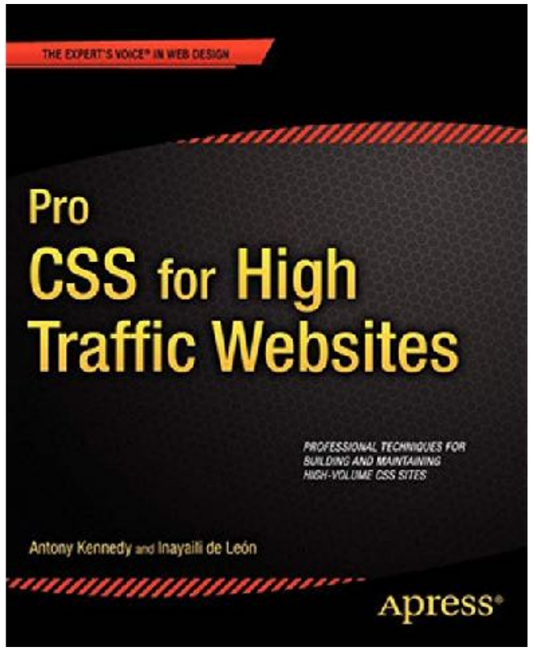
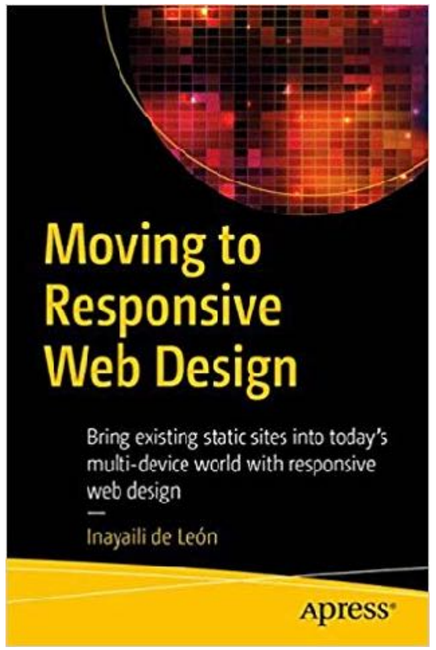




Content

1. Why we write
2. Writing tips
3. Exercises!

“I think fast, I talk fast, and I need you to act fast if you want to get out of this.”

Why write?

Why write?

- **Core design component**
- **Problem-solving technique**
- **Share and preserve knowledge**
- **Recognise accomplishments**
- **Celebrate work**
- **Good portfolio piece**

Some writing tips and techniques

It’s OK if someone has written about it before!

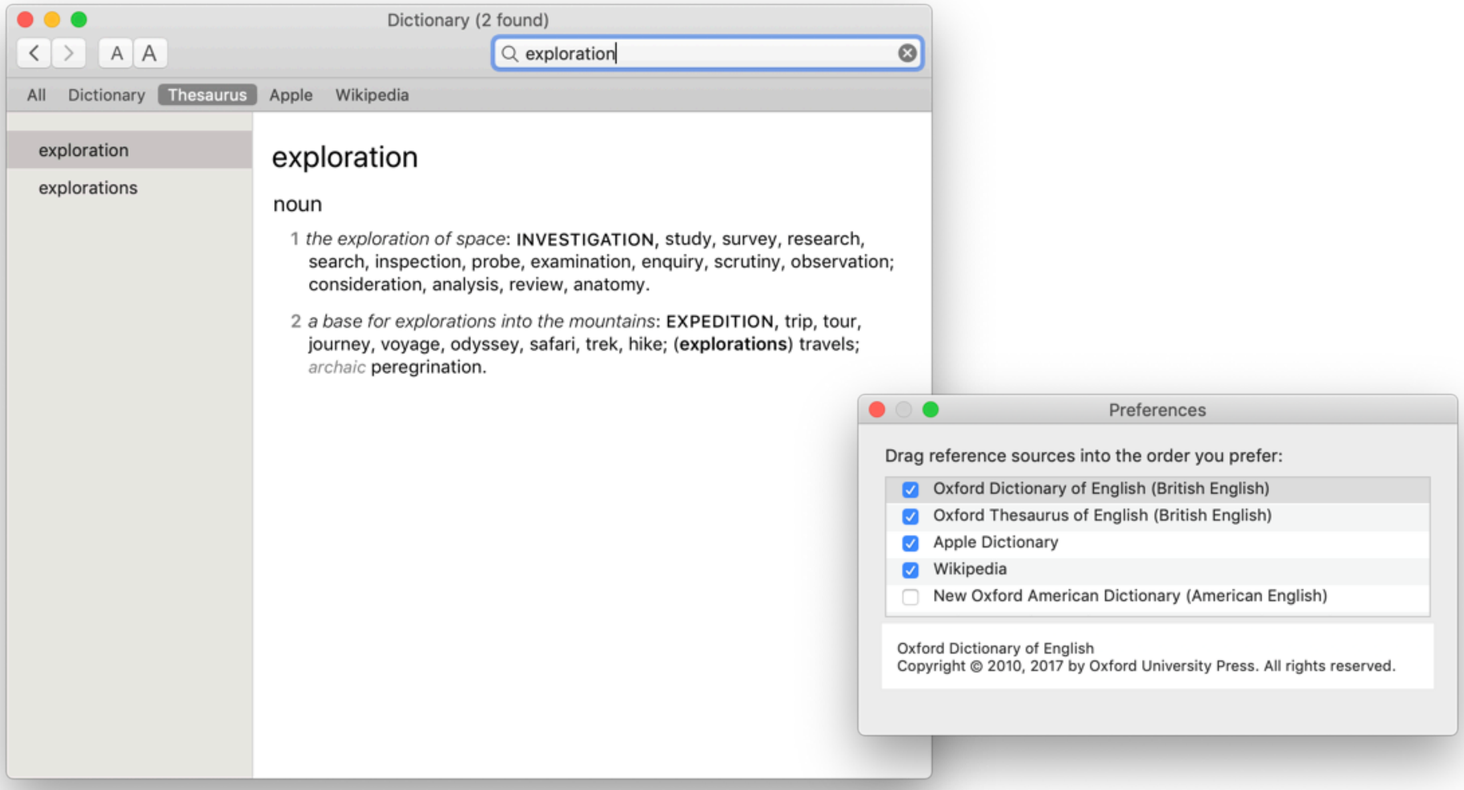
Write quickly, as you speak, then tidy things up a bit

Tips and techniques

Headings&
Images&
Lists&
Paragraphs

Ask someone else to proof-read and sense-check

Tips and techniques



Dictionary / Thesaurus

Let’s do some writing!

Structure

1. Intro
2. Problem (the brief)
3. Trials and tribulations (the journey)
4. Resolution
5. Conclusion (next steps)

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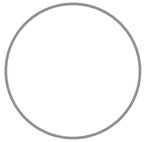
Step 1:
The topic and the headline



Limit the scope

✅ **Good:**
“3 things I do to manage a remote design team”

❌ **Not good:**
“How to manage a remote design team”

Picking a topic

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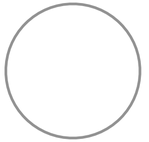

- Findings from research
- Small UI or UX change
- Small copy change
- New (or improved) feature
- Problem you solved (or are trying to solve)
- New release (major, minor, patch)
- Detail about work process (something new you tried, code, design, etc.)
- More ideas, for another time: event/ workshop/talk follow-up, team off-site, book review, interesting resources, tools, etc.

Pink card

Step 2:
The intro

Intro (15–30 words)

Pink card

“We’re super excited to announce/share/release/etc our new/updated/revamped [X].”

“Last month, some of our team got together to work on [X].”

“We’re soon going to release v2 of [X]. In the meantime, here’s a sneak peek at one of the new features that’s coming.”

“For the past year, we’ve been trying to follow [X] practice / use [Y] tool. We’ve learned a few things along the way.”

Blue card

Step 3:
The problem /
The brief

The problem / the brief (50–100 words)

Blue card

“Some of our landing pages were very slow to load, especially on mobile phones on 3G.”

“Our team became too big to communicate effectively with just tools [X] and [Y].”

“We had several complaints from customers that were trying to check out on their phones.”

“The [X] screen was too busy and confusing for new users” or “The empty states of our product don’t help or encourage the user to take action.”

Yellow card

Step 4:
Trials and tribulations

Yellow card

“Initially we tried using only primary colours.”

“We knew our customers were complaining about the visibility of [X], so we tried making it bigger first.”

“One of the first things we did was [Y].”

“Some of our users complained that [Z], so we tried [X].”

Green card

Step 5:
The resolution

Resolution

Green card

“In the end, we chose to do [X], because [Y].”

“After several iterations, we ended up with [Z], because [X].”

Or:

“We haven’t made a final decision yet, because we are going to do more testing.”

White card

Step 6:
The conclusion /
The end

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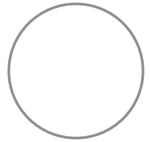

“This is how we solved [X]. We’d love to know if you’ve faced similar problems with [Y]. Get in touch on [Z].”

“[X] is a work in progress, there is still a lot of work to do. If you have suggestions on how we can do [Z], leave a message in the comments.”

“We’re happy that [X] has now been released. / We’re not quite ready to release [X]. Remember you can follow us on [Y] to get more updates.”

“This was a fun project and we can’t wait to do it again!”

We’re (almost) done!

Thank you!

@yaili, references bit.ly/uxbristol