DESIGNING WITH WORDS

Content Design at The New Yorker

SOPHIE TAHRAN
DESIGN MATTERS

THE
NEW YORKER

invision

lyft

TODAY’S AGENDA

What content design is

Why it matters

Best practices and processes

Breaking the rules

PART 0.5

About The New Yorker

Established in 1925 as a Manhattan-centric print magazine

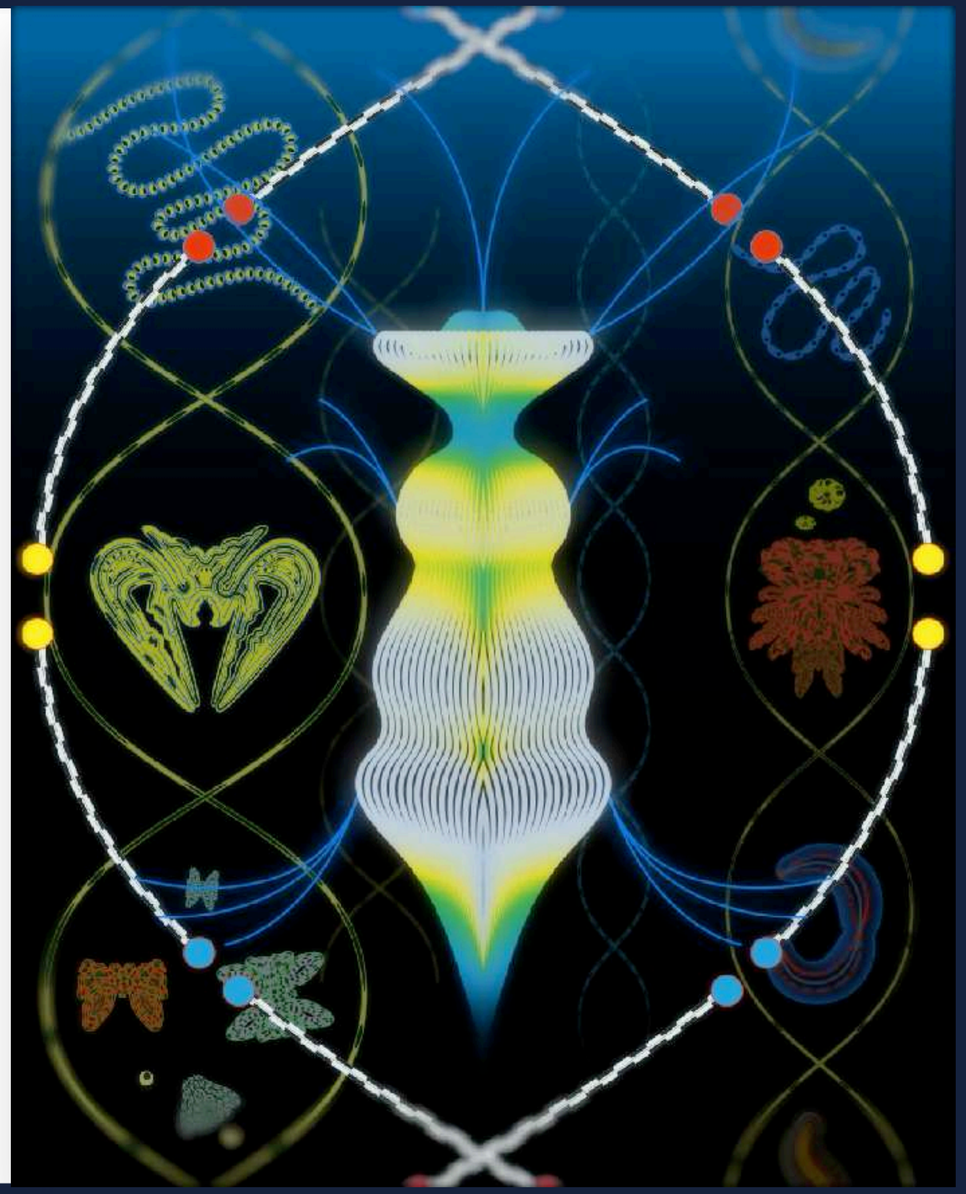
ELEMENTS

THE RACE TO SAVE THE WORLD'S DNA

A scientific rescue mission aims to analyze every plant, animal, and fungus before it's too late.

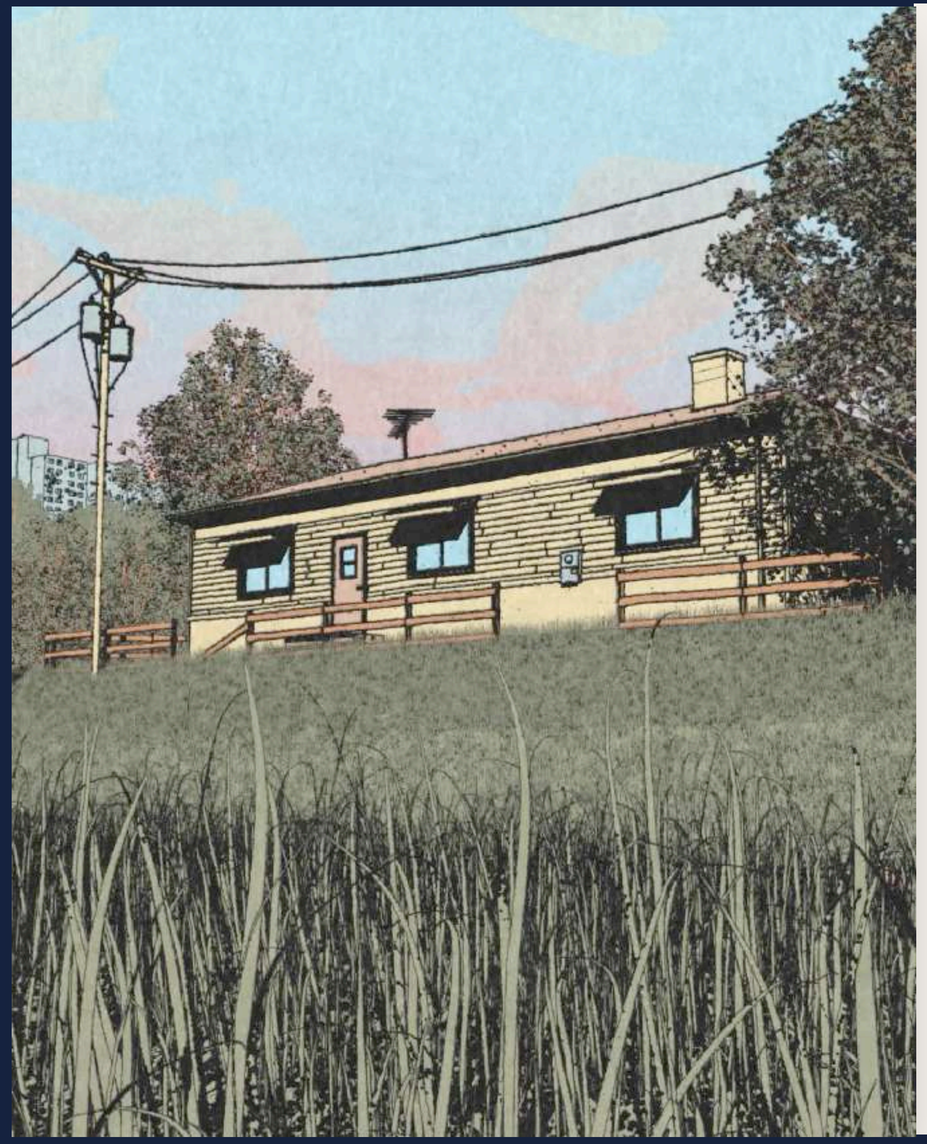
By Matthew Hutson

August 9, 2023



ANNALS OF EDUCATION

VIRTUAL-REALITY SCHOOL IS THE NEXT FRONTIER OF THE SCHOOL-CHOICE MOVEMENT



FLASH FICTION

MY CHEESECAKE-SHAPED POVERTY

BY HARUKI MURAKAMI

September 7, 2023

"It's free, but they sell your information."

Give the gift of *The New Yorker*.

THE NEW YORKER

Newsletter My Account

News Books & Culture Fiction & Poetry Humor & Cartoons Magazine Puzzles & Games Video Podcasts Goings On Festival Sho

LETTER FROM BIDEN'S WASHINGTON

House Republicans Refuse to Host Zelensky Because They're Too Busy Fighting One Another

Reflections on a day of self-parody on Capitol Hill.

By Susan B. Glasser

CULTURAL COMMENT

THE REAL MESSAGE OF "THE REAL HOUSEWIVES"

Since the show's rise during the Great Recession, it has fulfilled a pedagogical role in women's media. The lesson it imparts is: you better work, bitch.

By Jennifer Wilson

News & Cu

ONWARD AND

The Bloomsb
Vogue

By Rebecca M

DAILY COMMEN

Rishi Sunak's
Retreat

By Sam Knight

SCREENING RO

Inner Turmoil
Turbulence in

Film by Thanas
Text by Hannal

AT BAT

Rock Stars Sin

By Louisa Thor

Q & A

Sikh Separatis
Conflict Betw

By Isaac Chotin

AUDIO

From This Week's Issue

BOOKS

How Glossier Made Effortlessness a Billion-Dollar Brand

By Molly Fischer • 22 minutes

Reporting & Essays

Top Stories Magazine Audio Cartoons My Library

Turns 99 this year

Turns 5 this year

How should the magazine's
99-year-old voice sound in an interface?

MUSIC BAND
HOW DO YOU DO, FELLOW KIDS?

PART 1

What is content design?

UX Writing

Content Design

WHAT IS CONTENT DESIGN?

The practice of designing useful content that guides users through digital experiences.

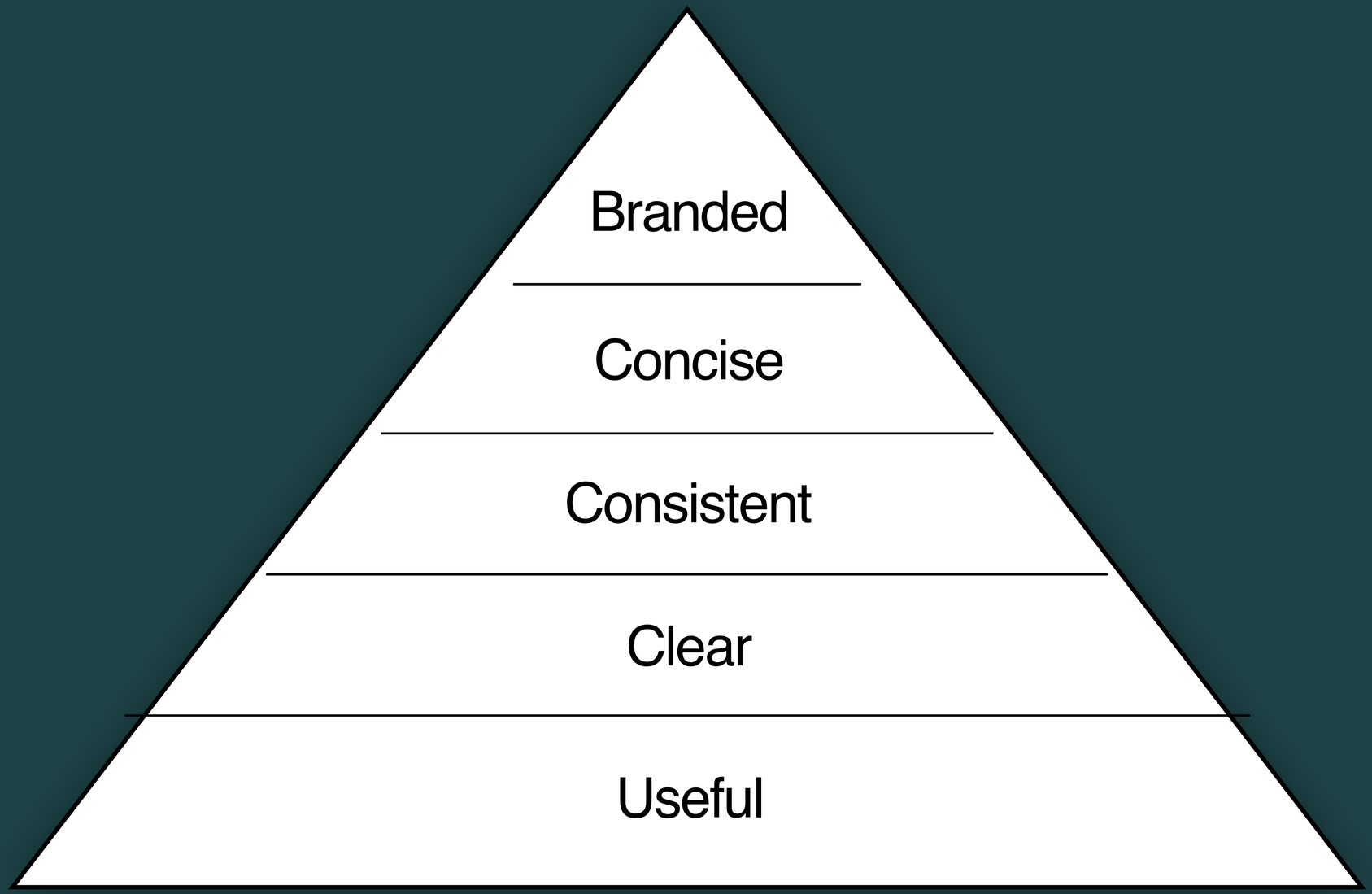
Helping the product and its user understand one another.

Designers who look through a written lens more than a visual one.

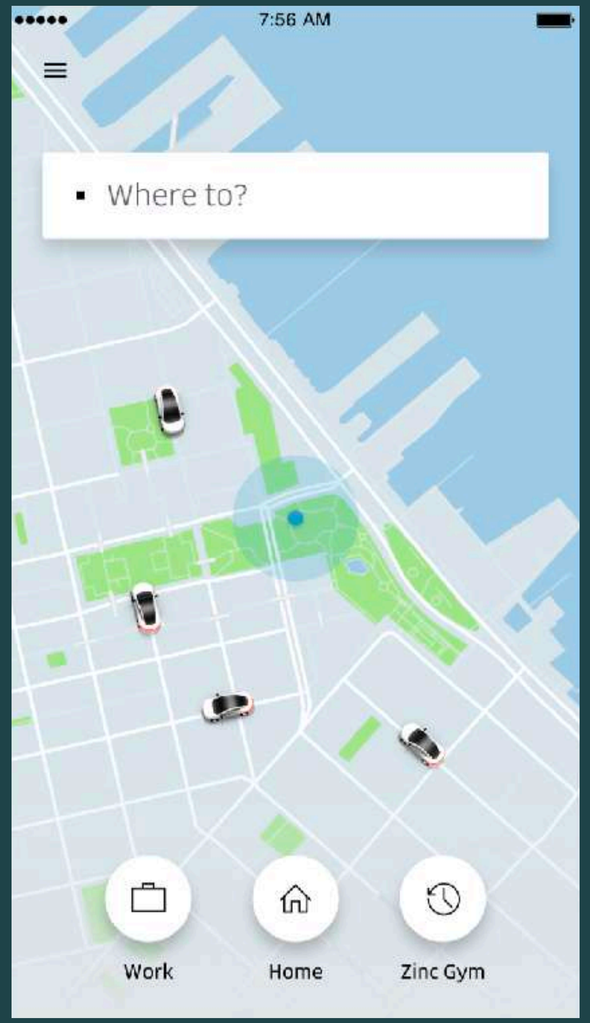
WHAT IS CONTENT DESIGN?

Content Designer	Technical Writer	Copywriter
Product Design	Engineering	Marketing
Figma	Docs	Docs
Designs	Explains	Announces

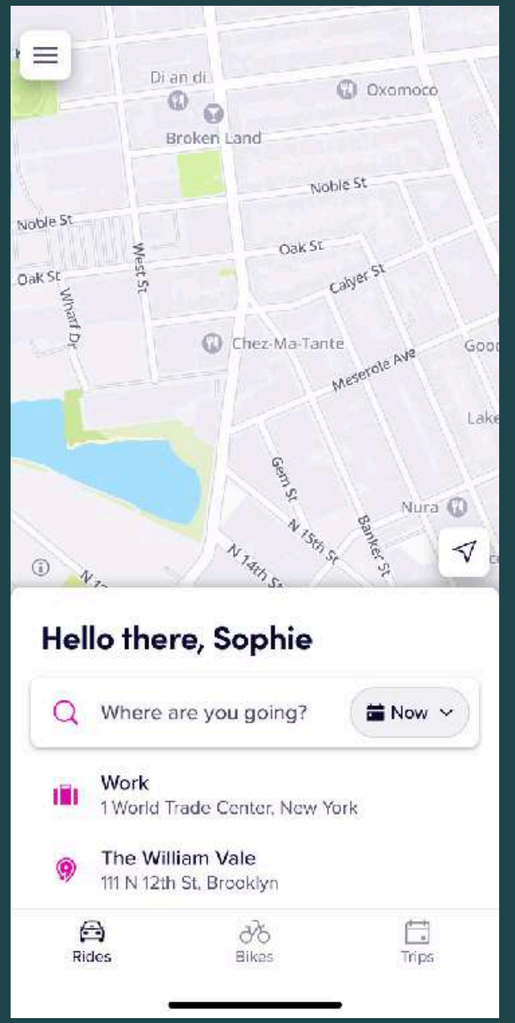
WHAT IS CONTENT DESIGN?



EXAMPLES OF CONTENT DESIGN

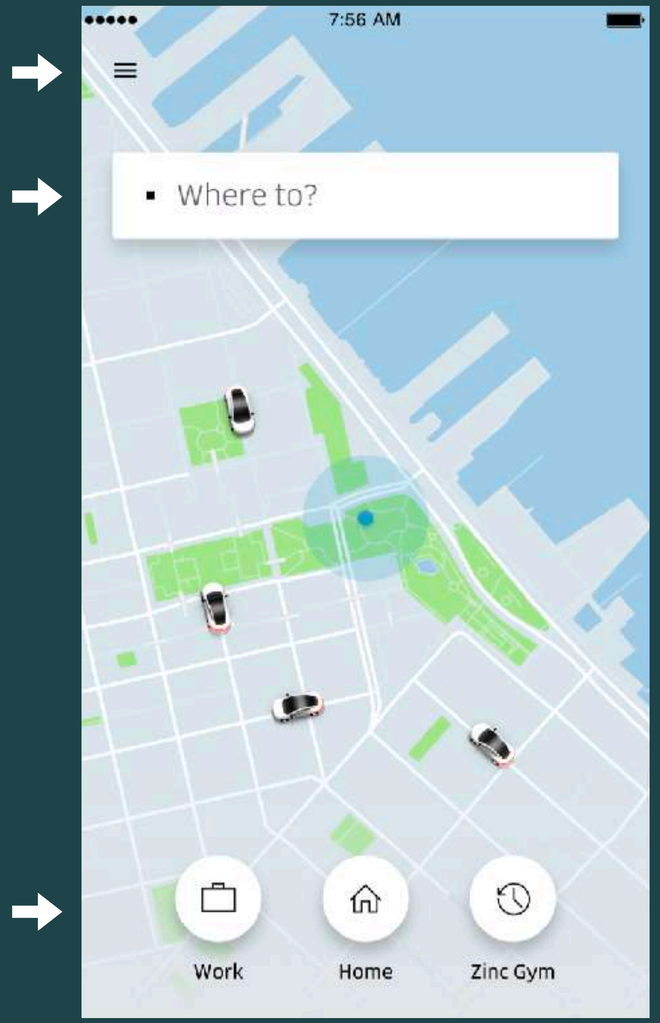


UBER

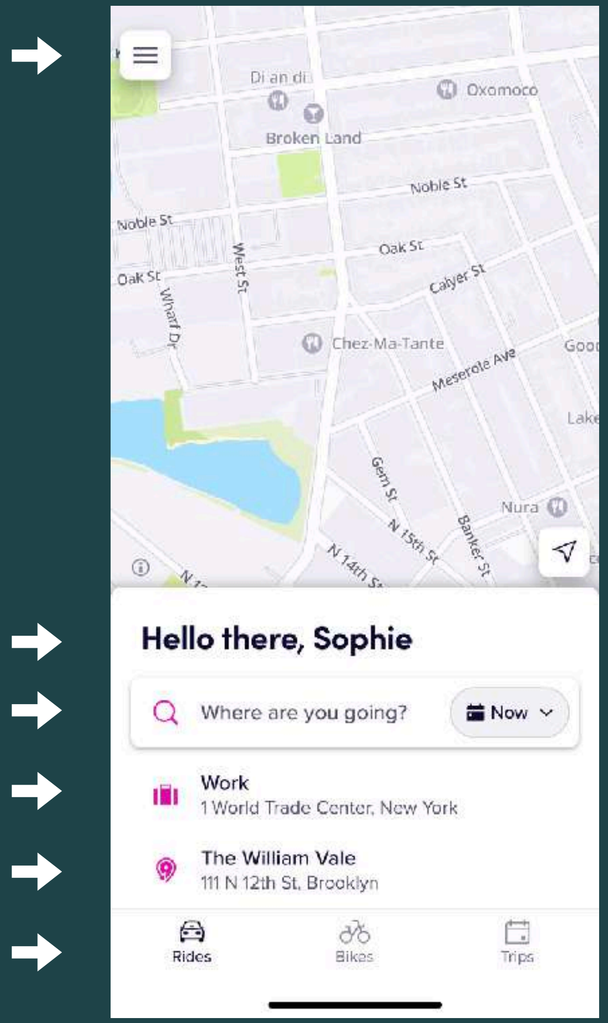


LYFT

EXAMPLES OF CONTENT DESIGN

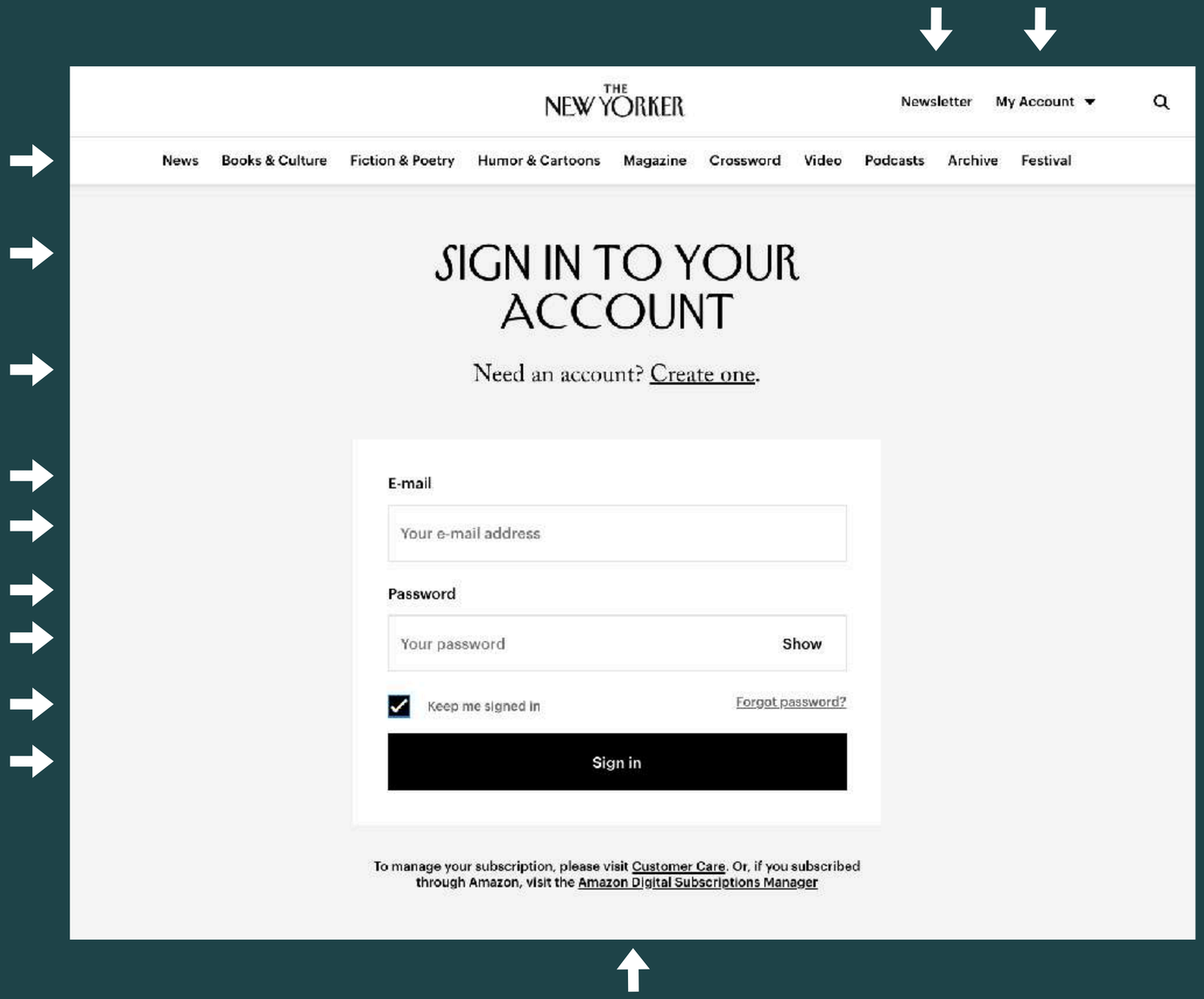


UBER

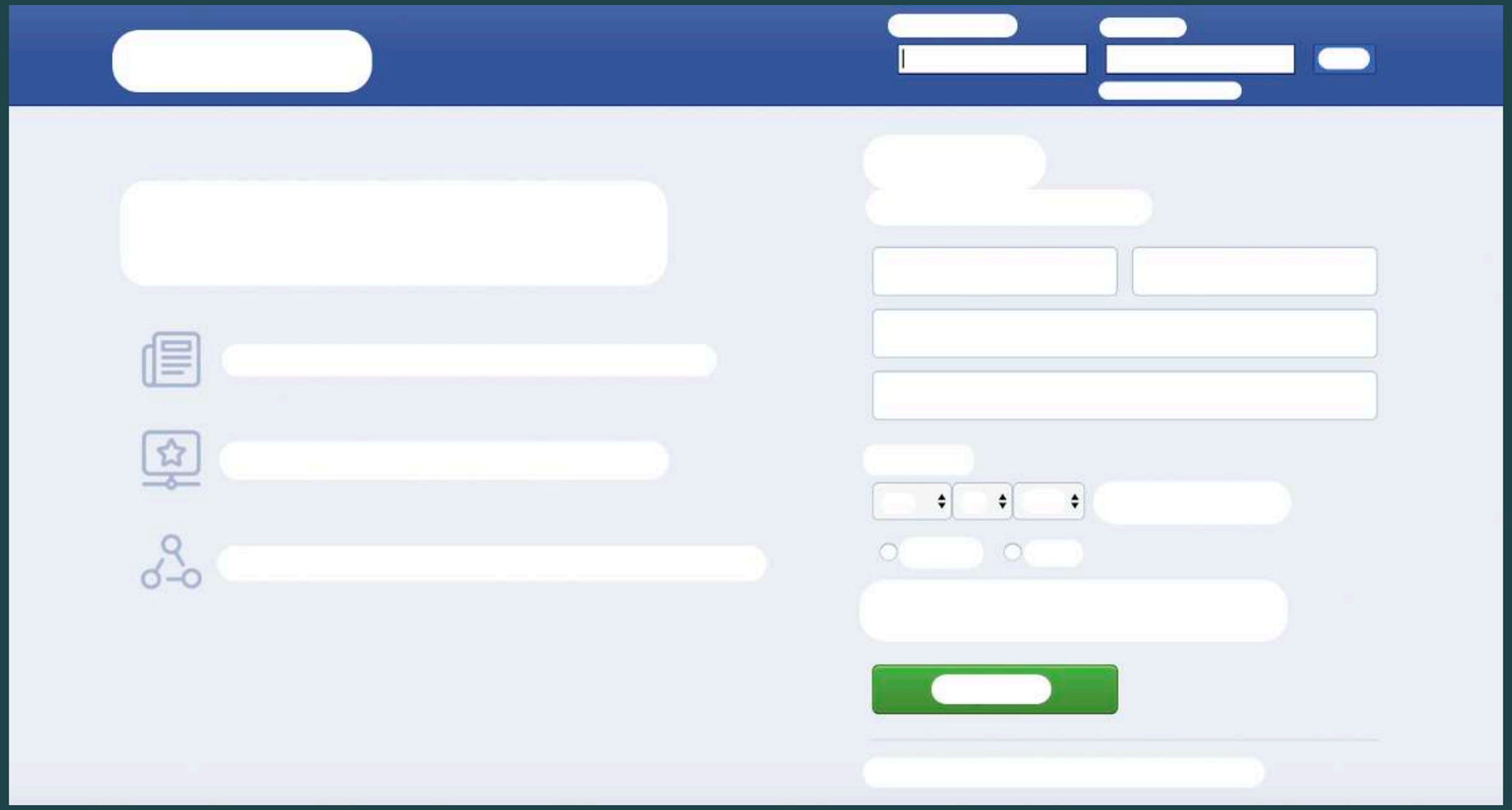


LYFT

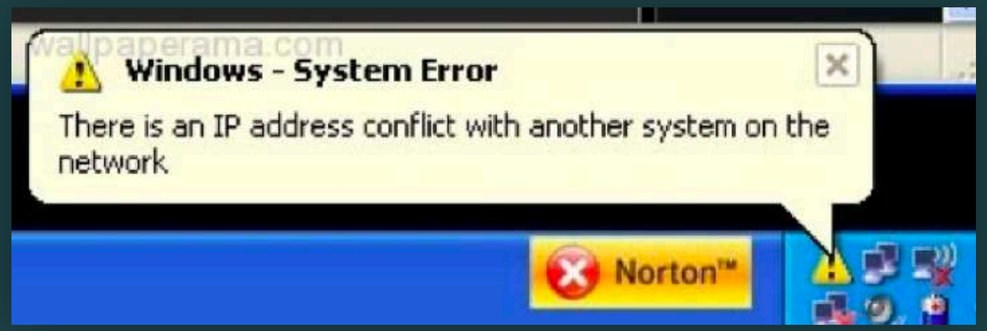
EXAMPLES OF CONTENT DESIGN

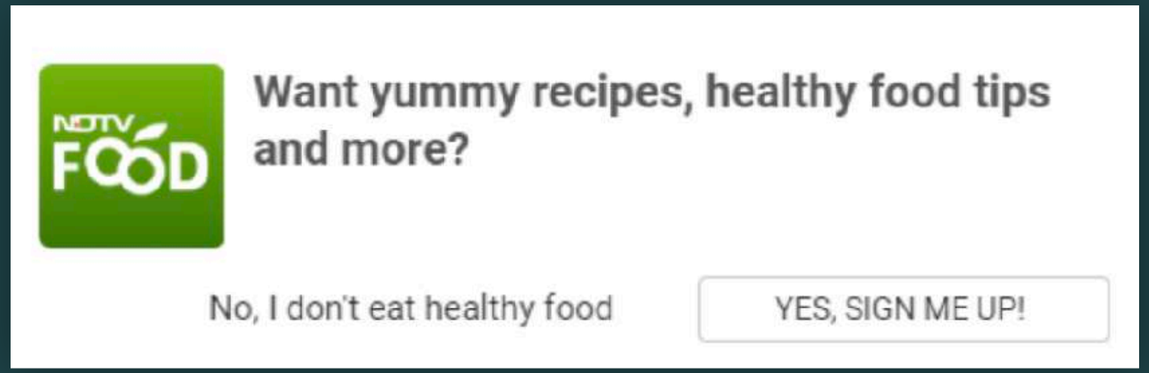


EXAMPLES OF CONTENT DESIGN



NOT-SO-GOOD EXAMPLES





Why this matters

WHY THIS MATTERS

Better products

WHY THIS MATTERS

Better products
Better user experiences

WHY THIS MATTERS

Better products
Better user experiences
Better brands

PART 2

Creating Your Process

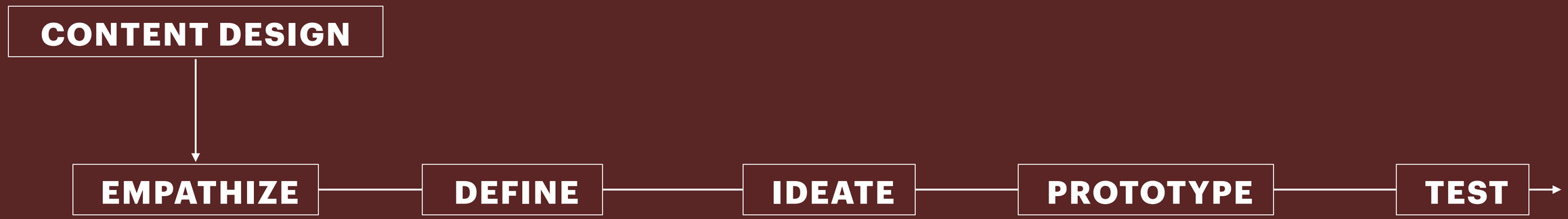
STARTING POINT

Stanford d.school

STARTING POINT

Stanford d.school

THE GOAL



Stanford d.school

Process in Practice

PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Let’s say you’re designing …

A success message for a submission to the Cartoon Caption Contest, with clear next steps.

CARTOON
CAPTION CONTEST

Your Caption

Fifteen years in the bathroom-sign industry is impressive, but crosswalk work is a whole different ballgame.

Submit

Clayton Myers

PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Let’s say you’re designing …

A success message for a submission to the Cartoon Caption Contest, with clear next steps.

PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Which words are
your users using?

EMPATHIZE

idea

favorite

winner

vote

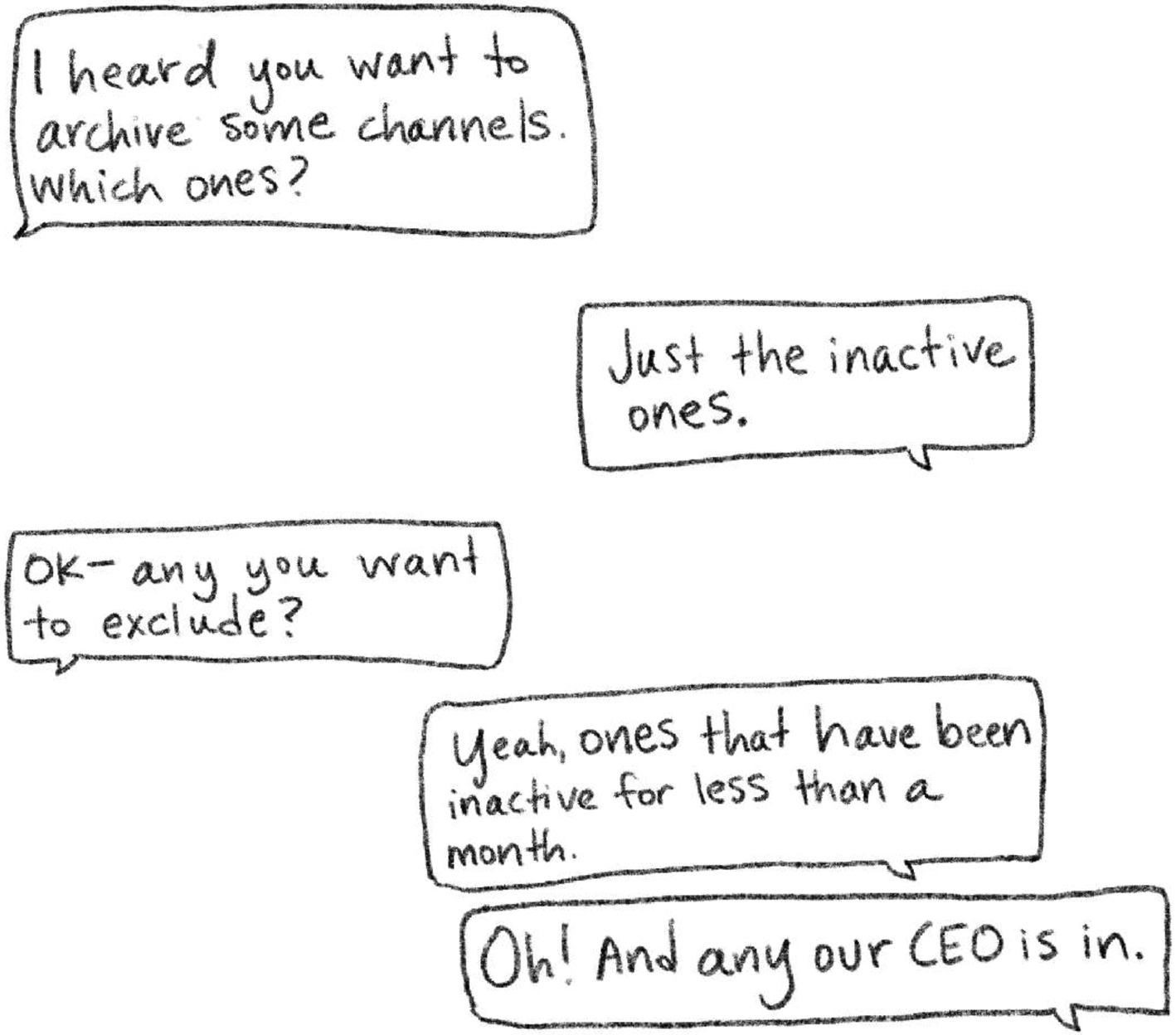
finalist

rating

submission

PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Find your flow.


I heard you want to archive some channels. Which ones?
Just the inactive ones.
OK- any you want to exclude?
Yeah, ones that have been inactive for less than a month.
Oh! And any our CEO is in.

Sara Culver

PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Let’s say you’re designing …

A success message for a submission to the Cartoon Caption Contest, with clear next steps.

DEFINE

We received your submission—thank you!

Cool, what now?

Readers will vote on it, and you'll see the results next week.

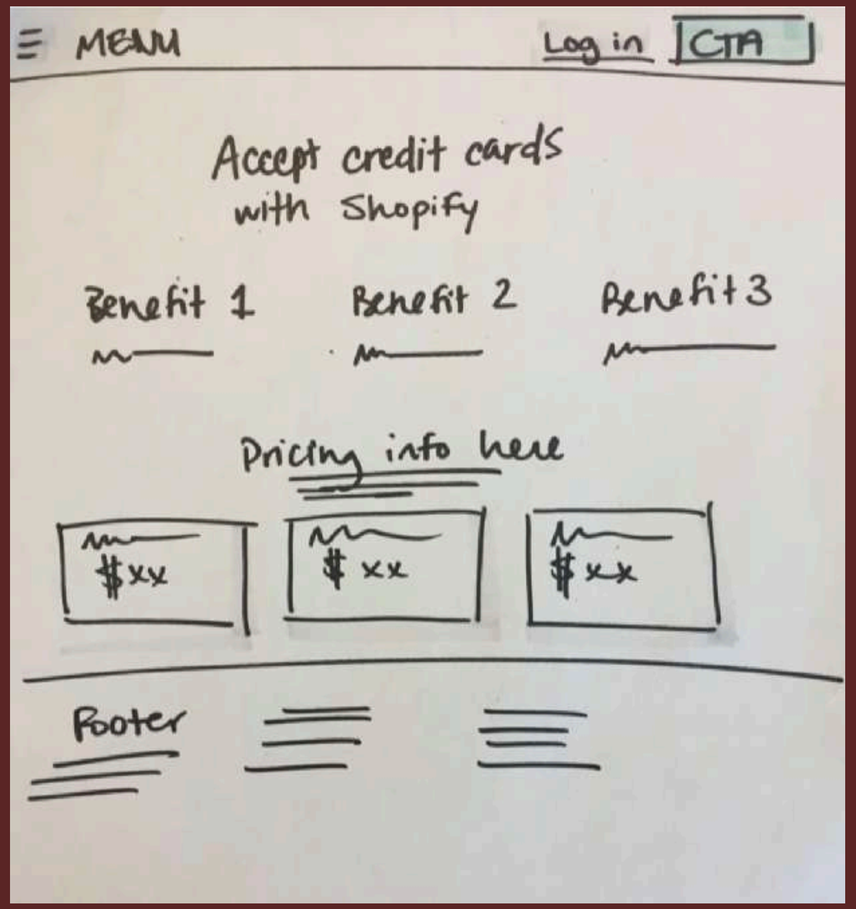
Can I do anything else in the meantime?

Sure thing! You can vote on last week's captions.

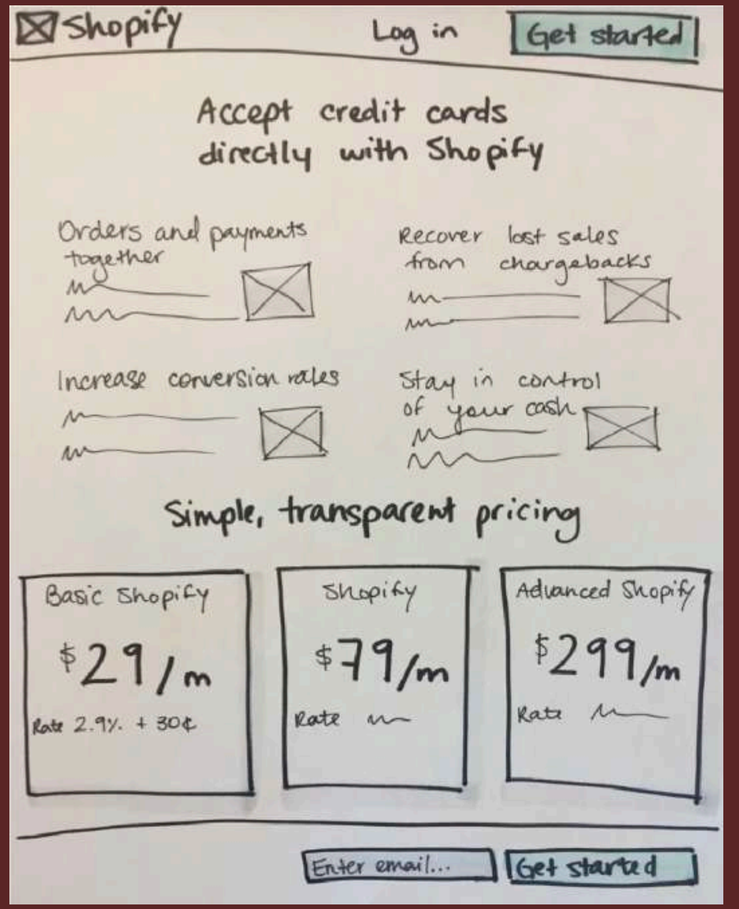
PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Wireframe using
lo-fi copy.

IDEATE



X



✓

Words and the design process, Biz Sanford

PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Let’s say you’re designing …

A success message for a submission to the Cartoon Caption Contest, with clear next steps.

IDEATE

X

CAPTION RECEIVED

Thank you, your submission has been received. The finalists will be revealed next week once the votes are tallied.

Vote on last week

Close

Thanks for your Submission!

Check back next week—you'll see the finalists then.

Vote on last week's captions »

IDEATE

X

CAPTION RECEIVED

Thank you, your submission has been received. The finalists will be revealed next week once the votes are tallied.

Vote on last week

Close

Thanks for your Submission!

Check back next week—you'll see the finalists then.

Vote on last week's captions »

PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Take your lo-fi
copy hi-fi.

Applying best practices

Slide 52

Applying best practices

TRANSLATE JARGON

MAKE ERRORS HELPFUL

X

Sorry, you entered the wrong information.

✓

That password isn’t correct.
Want to reset your password?

BE ACTIVE, NOT PASSIVE

X	Your email address will need to be added to create an account.
✓	Add your email address to create your account.

PUNCTUATE WISELY

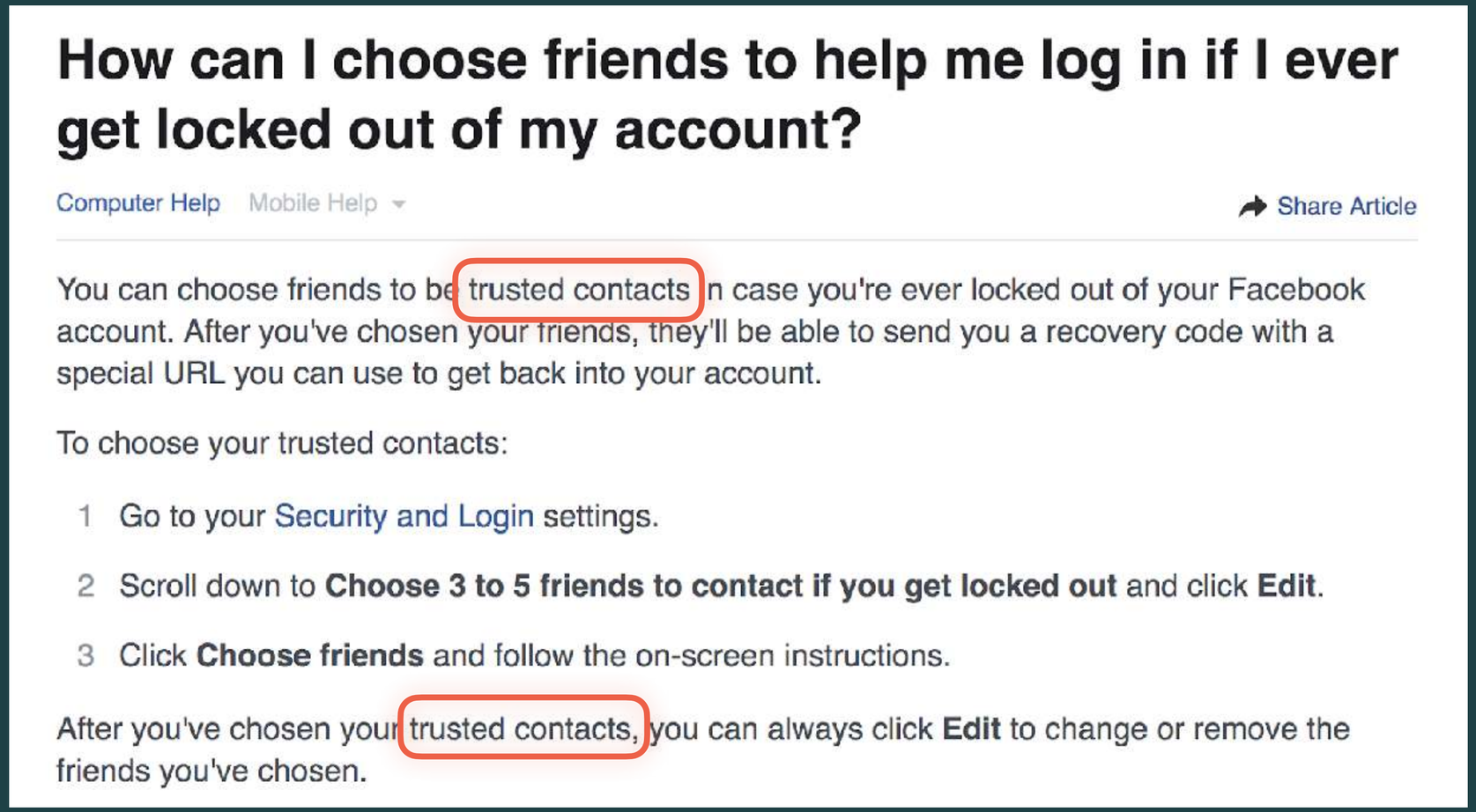
Use & ! ; — sparingly.

CAPITALIZE CONSISTENTLY

This is sentence case	This is Title Case
Best for long phrases	Best for short phrases
Easier to implement	Stands out in context
More approachable	More gravitas

Avoid arbitrary Capitalization.

CAPITALIZE CONSISTENTLY



How can I choose friends to help me log in if I ever get locked out of my account?

Computer Help Mobile Help Share Article

You can choose friends to be trusted contacts in case you're ever locked out of your Facebook account. After you've chosen your friends, they'll be able to send you a recovery code with a special URL you can use to get back into your account.

To choose your trusted contacts:

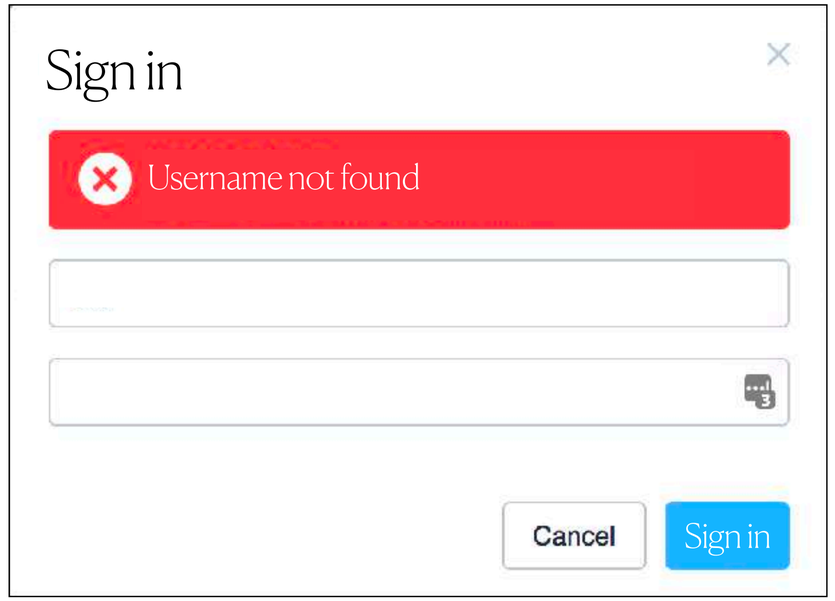
1. Go to your Security and Login settings.
2. Scroll down to **Choose 3 to 5 friends to contact if you get locked out** and click **Edit**.
3. Click **Choose friends** and follow the on-screen instructions.

After you've chosen your trusted contacts, you can always click **Edit** to change or remove the friends you've chosen.

EMBRACE REPETITION

X

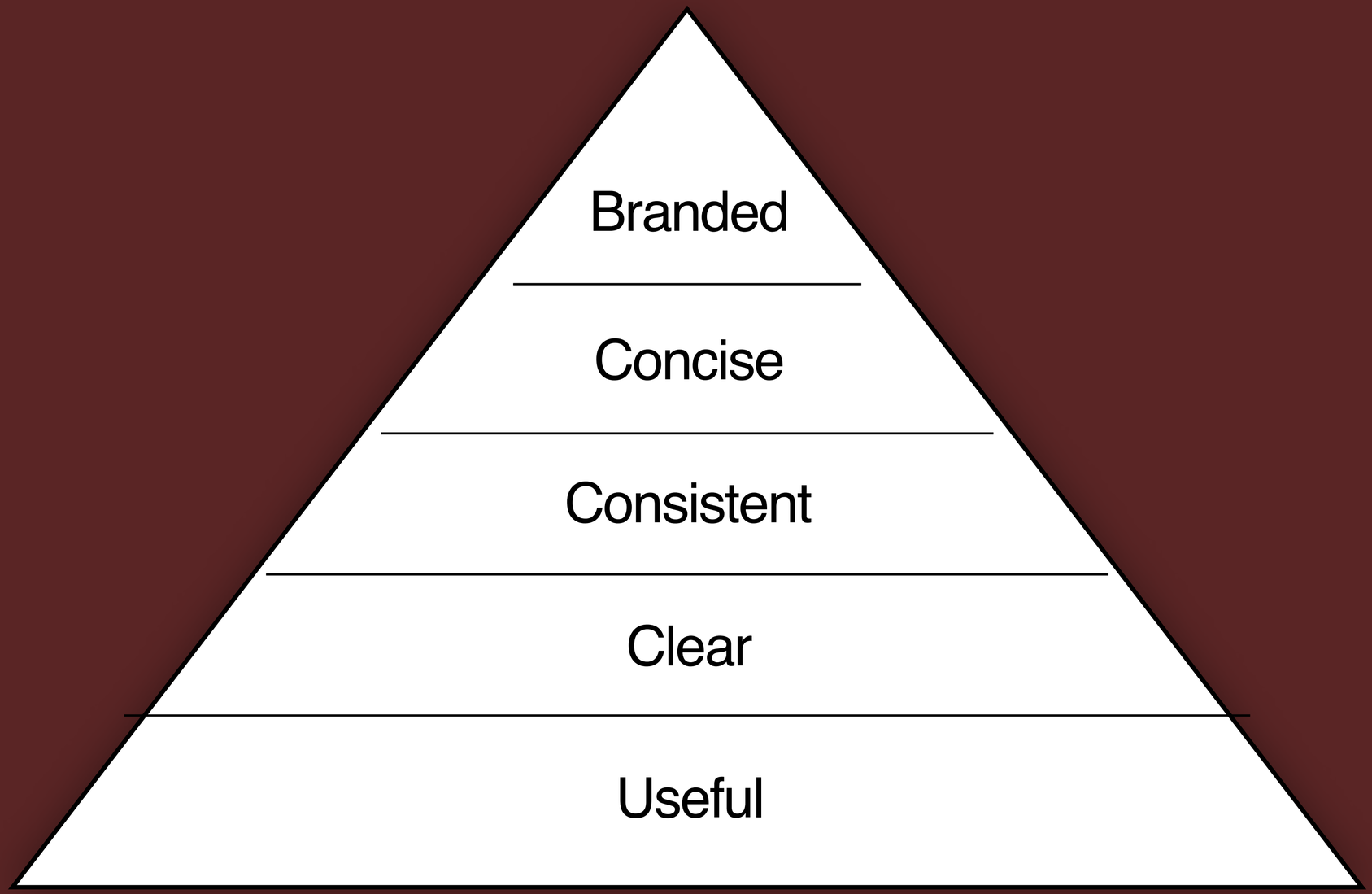
✓



PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Take your lo-fi
copy hi-fi.

GO HI-FI



GO HI-FI

Your content is …

free of jargon
actionable
capitalized intentionally
punctuated simply
helpful, especially in error states

GO HI-FI

Thanks for your Submission!

Check back next week—you'll see the finalists then.

Vote on last week's captions »

Thanks for your submission!

Check back next week to see the finalists.

Vote on last week's captions »

PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Highlight helpful copy.

TEST YOUR CONTENT

Highlight helpful words in green,
confusing words in yellow,
and useless words in red.

TEST YOUR CONTENT

Thanks for your submission!

Check back next week to see the finalists.

Vote on last week's captions »

Thanks for your submission!

Check back on October 6th to see the finalists.

Vote on last week »

TEST YOUR CONTENT

Thanks for your submission!

Check back on October 6th
to see the finalists.

Vote on last week »

PROCESS IN PRACTICE

PROCESS IN PRACTICE

PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Creating a Content Design Style Guide

coöperate

e-mail

Web

off-line

reëntry

Internet

Wi-Fi

O.K.

focussed

Gain access to *The New Yorker's* 99-year-old house style guide.

~~Foster a relationship with Editorial.~~

Gain access to ***The New Yorker's*** 99-year-old house style guide.

~~Foster a relationship with Editorial.~~

~~Gain access to *The New Yorker's*~~
~~99-year-old house style guide.~~

Build from there,
focussing on the digital.

Word List

For words not included here, refer to The New Yorker's *Word List.*

A.R. (short for "augmented reality," or "augmented-reality" when modifying)
Android (apps are available *on* or *with* Android, or built *for* Android, never *in* Android)
App Store (apps are available *on* the App Store or downloaded *from* the App Store, never *at*)
cloud, the (computing)
cookie (in computing, not capitalized)
data (treat as plural noun)
desktop
dot-com
e-mail (verb and noun)
embed
Gmail
Google (verb)
Google Play (get it *on* Google Play, never *in* or *at*)
home page (two words)
hi-fi
in-box
instant message (noun), instant-message (verb)
Internet
iOS (apps are available *on* iOS, not *in* iOS)
link (preferred over "hyperlink")
live: live stream(ing), live blog(ging), live tweet(ing) (verb: live-stream, etc.)
newyorker.com (lowercase, no "www." or italics)

The New Yorker

UX Writing Style Guide

Table of Contents

Names
Newsletters
UX Copy Catalogue
House Rules
Word List
Additional Guides

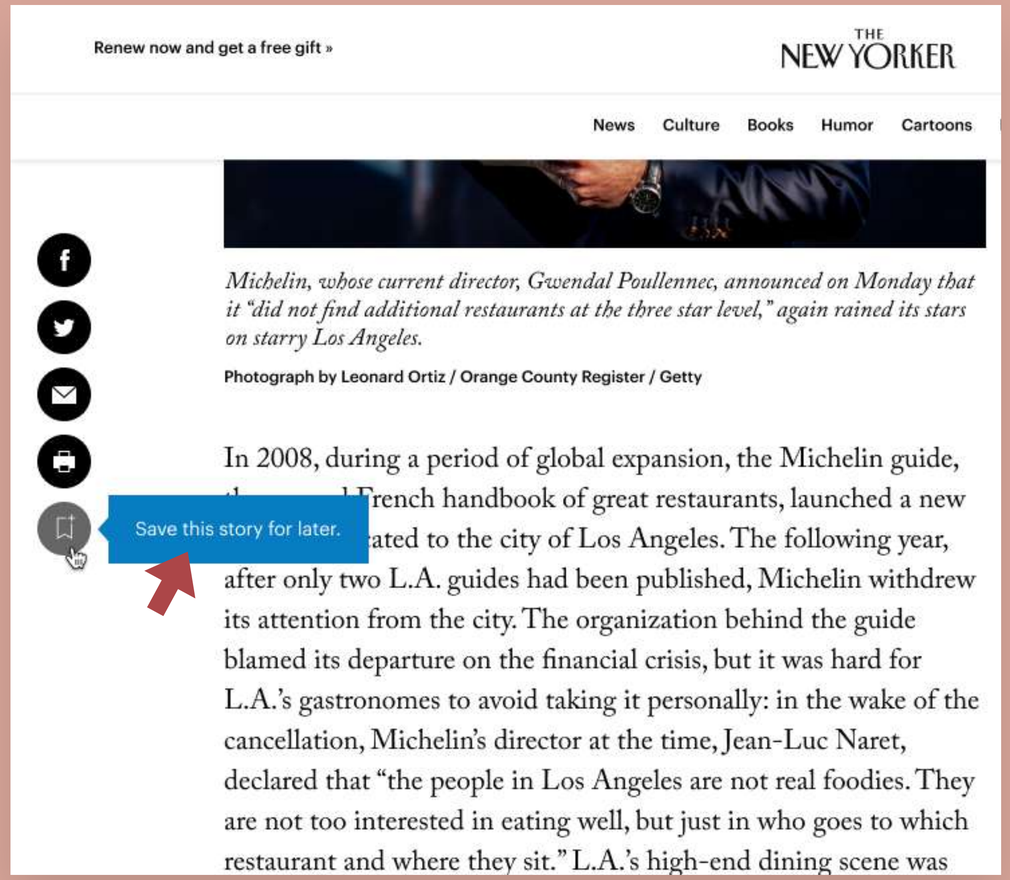
Names

The official names of our products, features, and functions.

Apps
The New Yorker app (see the messaging guide)
The NYer Print Edition app (see the messaging guide)

App Sections
Top Stories
Magazine
Cartoons

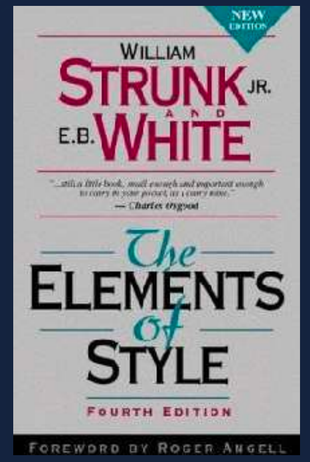
CREATING A STYLE GUIDE



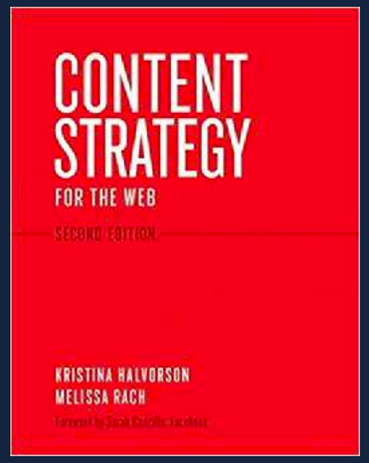
PART 3

Breaking the Rules

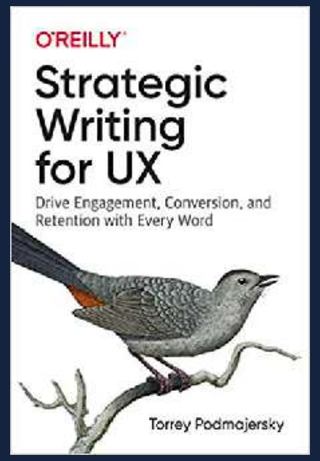
Content Design
"As someone who writes for the web
I want to learn what content
design is, and how to start doing it
So that I can communicate in the
most user-centred and efficient
way for my audience"
Foreword by
Kristina Halvorson
Sarah Richards

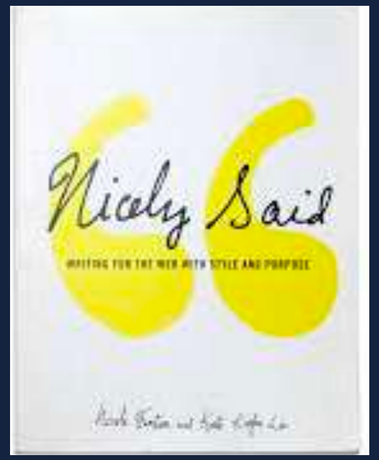

NEW EDITION
WILLIAM
STRUNK JR.
AND
E.B. WHITE
— Charles Osgood
The
ELEMENTS of STYLE
FOURTH EDITION
FOREWORD BY ROGER ANGELL

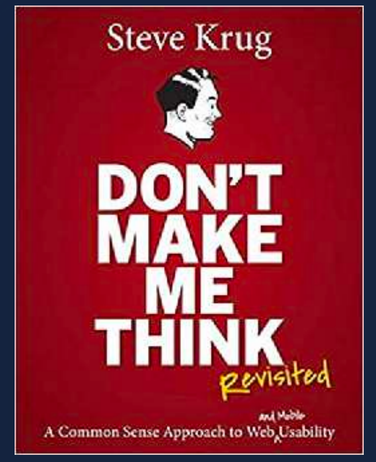
2
WRITING IS DESIGNING


CONTENT
STRATEGY
FOR THE WEB
SECOND EDITION
KRISTINA HALVORSON
MELISSA RACH

9
A BOOK APART
WRITING FOR
DESIGNERS
SCOTT KUBIE


O'REILLY
Strategic
Writing
for UX
Drive Engagement, Conversion, and
Retention with Every Word
Torrey Podmajersky


Nicely Said

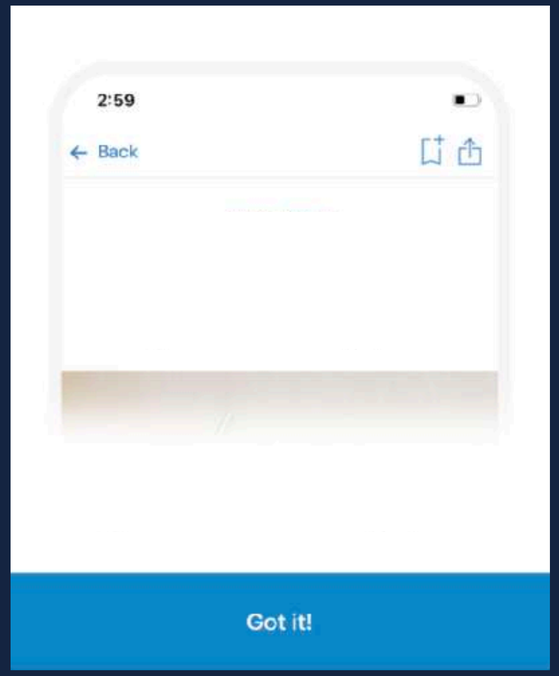

Steve Krug
DON'T
MAKE
ME
THINK
Revisited
A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability

Know best practices.

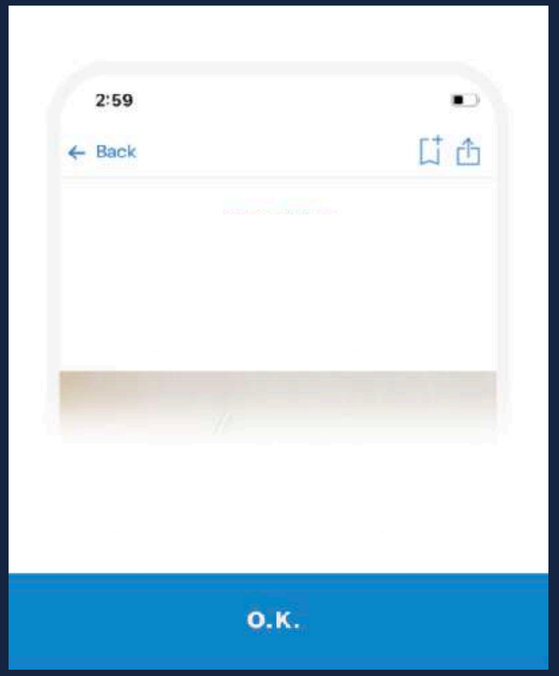
Know ~~best practices.~~
which practices are best for you.

How do you write a confirmation button when your voice would never say “Got it”?

BREAKING THE RULES



X



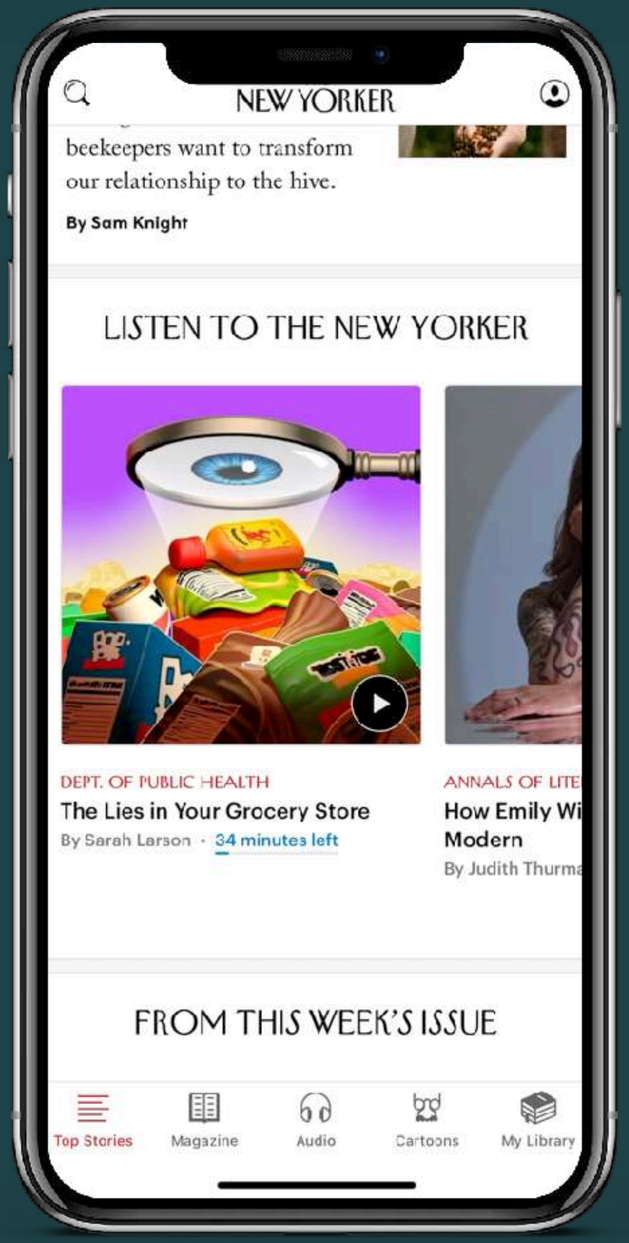
✓

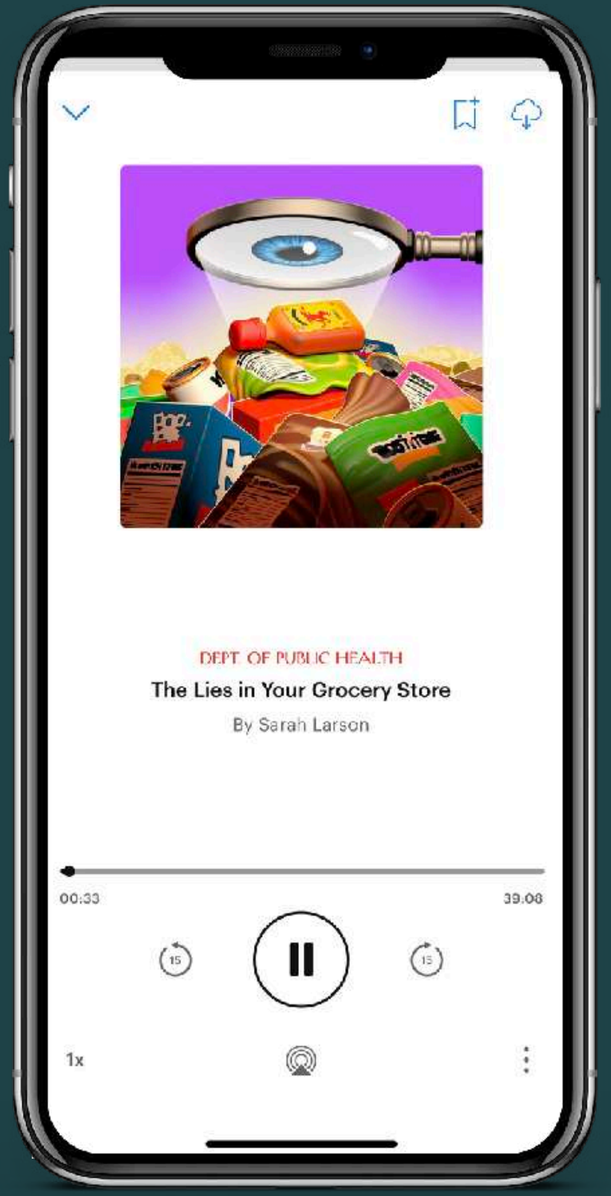
Questioning best practices insures* every choice is consistent with the look, feel, and sound of the magazine.

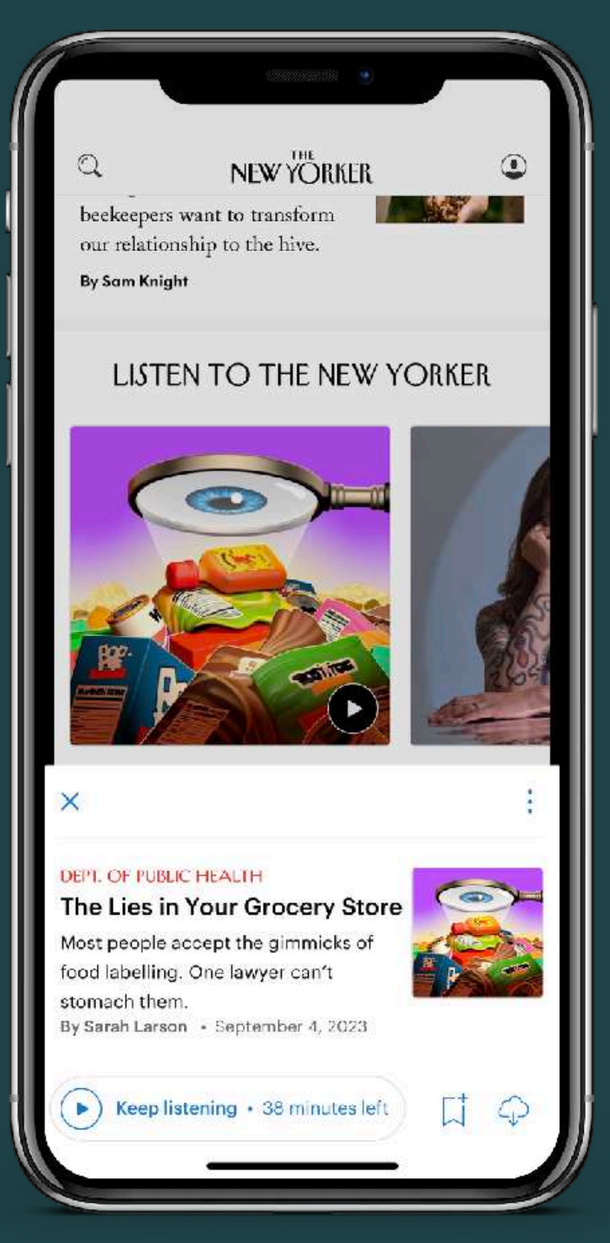
*Including spelling “insure” with an i.

PART 4

A Look at the Results


NEW YORKER
beekeepers want to transform our relationship to the hive.
By Sam Knight
LISTEN TO THE NEW YORKER
DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH
The Lies in Your Grocery Store
By Sarah Larson · 34 minutes left
ANNALS OF LITE
How Emily Wi
Modern
By Judith Thurma
FROM THIS WEEK'S ISSUE
Top Stories
Magazine
Audio
Cartoons
My Library


DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH
The Lies in Your Grocery Store
By Sarah Larson
00:33
39:08
1x


THE NEW YORKER
beekeepers want to transform our relationship to the hive.
By Sam Knight
LISTEN TO THE NEW YORKER
DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH
The Lies in Your Grocery Store
Most people accept the gimmicks of food labelling. One lawyer can't stomach them.
By Sarah Larson • September 4, 2023
Keep listening • 38 minutes left

ALICE MUNRO

Photography by Connor Willumsen.

The Canadian writer Alice Munro, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2013, has published more than sixty stories in The New Yorker, since her first story, "Royal Beatings," ran in 1977. In the astute and masterly stories featured here—she has written more than a dozen collections—Munro, whom James Wood calls "our Chekhov," captures the hopes, betrayals, triumphs, losses, and revelations of life.

Selected Stories

THE BEAR CAME OVER THE MOUNTAIN

"He took her up on it, he shouted yes. He wanted never to be away from her. She had the spark of life."

AMUNDSEN

"The station had been open when the train arrived, but now it was locked."

DIMENSION

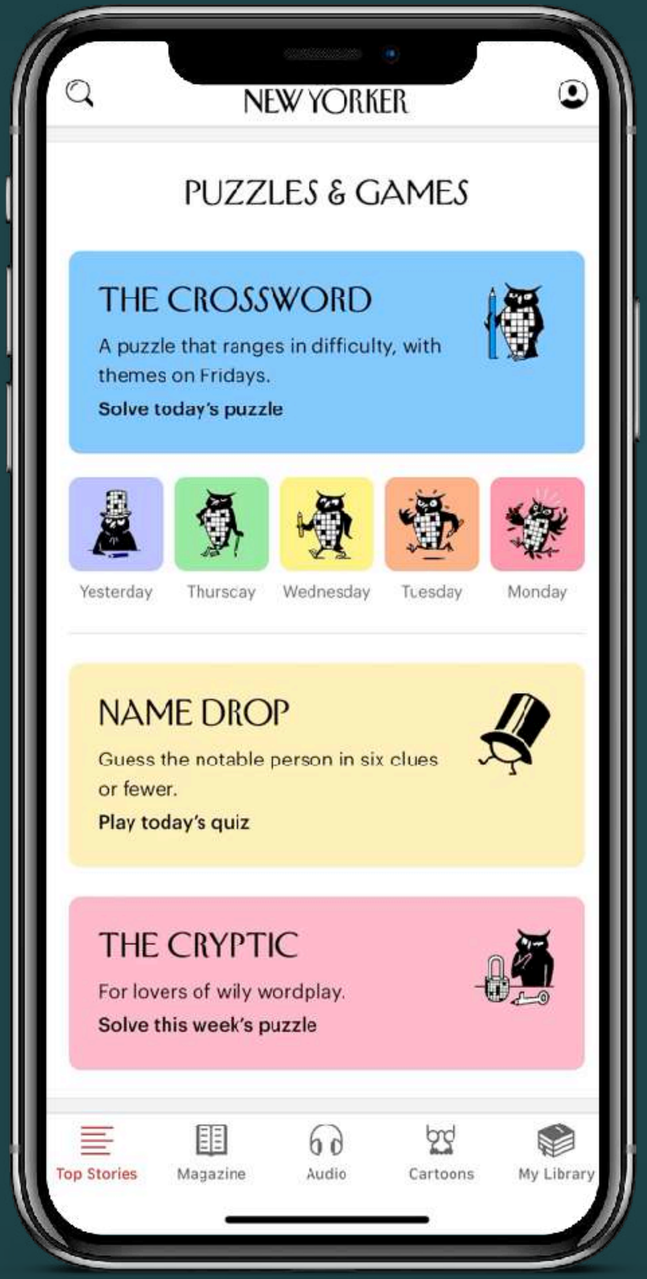
"None of the people she worked with knew what had happened. Or, if they did, they didn't let on."

PODCAST

Margaret Atwood reads the Alice Munro piece "Corrie."

PAGE-TURNER

On "Dear Life": An Interview with Alice Munro



Danielle Vargas

PUZZLES & GAMES DEPT. THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2022

THE NEW YORKER'S

NAME DROP

The fewer clues you need,
the more points you receive.

By Matt Jackson

Play quiz

Learn how to play »

× Close

NAME DROP

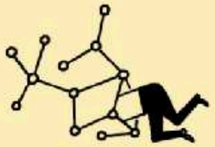
HOW TO PLAY

The goal of each game is to guess a notable name, using as few clues as possible.

- You can request up to six clues to help you guess. The clues become easier as you go along.
- Every time you request another clue (by selecting "Next clue"), your score drops by a point. If you answer correctly on the first clue (labelled "Clue 6"), your score will be six points. If you answer correctly on the next clue ("Clue 5"), your score will be five points, and so on.
- You can review previous clues at any time without losing points.
- When you think you know the answer, select the answer button and type it in. For people with multiple names, go with the most well-known option. Either first and last name, or just last name, is acceptable.
- You only get one guess. Incorrect answers score zero points, so guess carefully.
- The game ends after a hundred seconds. If you run out of time, you also score zero points, so keep an eye on the time!

Play quiz

Get ready . . .



100 seconds

6 clues

1 answer

NAME DROP

CLUE 4

I was raised in the Bahamas for much of my childhood, and I served as the country's Ambassador to Japan from 1997 to 2007.

-1 point

Answer for 4 points

Perfect. You scored 6 out of 6 points.
That puts you in the top 10% of players so far.

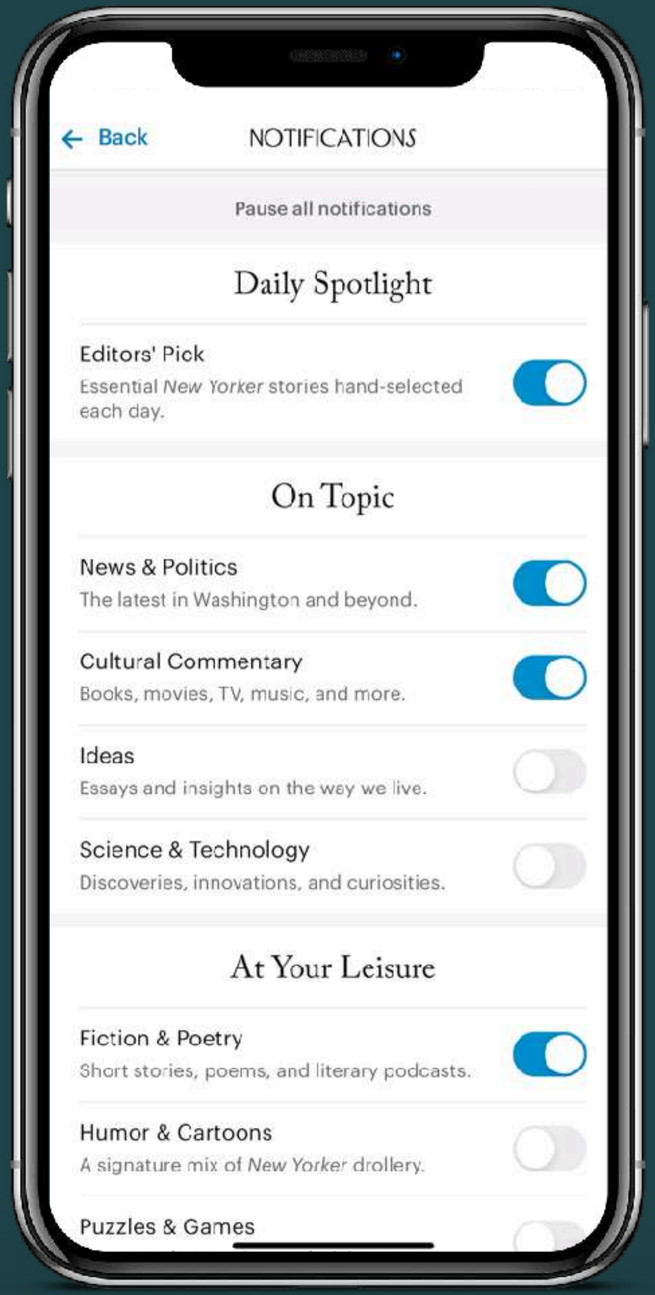
If you could win a MacArthur "genius" grant for trivia, you'd have just won it.

Correct. You scored 2 out of 6 points.
That's higher than 40% of players so far.

Savor this moment. Once you're scoring sixes every time, you'll miss the thrill of the chase.

Incorrect. You scored 0 out of 6 points.

This is even harder than that cursed Cartoon Caption Contest.



Danielle Vargas

THE
NEW YORKER
DECEMBER 14, 2020
Adjusting monocle . . .

Even as we adapt to new technologies,

it's still *The New Yorker* behind the screen.

Thank you!