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CTRL+CLICK CAST #77

Copywriting and the User Experience with Stephanie Morillo

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[Music]

Lea Alcantara: From [Bright Umbrella](#), this is CTRL+CLICK CAST! We inspect the web for you! Today, Stephanie Morillo joins the show to talk about the importance of copywriting in user experience design. I'm your host, Lea Alcantara, and I'm joined by my fab co-host:

Emily Lewis: Emily Lewis!

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Now, to today's topic! We are excited to have Stephanie Morillo on the show. Stephanie is a Dominican American writer, musician and technologist from New York City. She currently serves as the Chief 10x English Syntax Engineer at DigitalOcean (*read*: copywriter) and is passionate about educating the next generation of technologists and writing professionally for tech-minded audiences. Welcome to the show, Stephanie!

Stephanie Morillo: Thanks for having me!

Lea Alcantara: So Stephanie, can you tell our listeners a bit more about yourself?

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, absolutely. I have been a professional writer for close to eight years, but I kind of happened in tech accidentally. A good friend of mine started teaching me Ruby on his couch about four years ago.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Stephanie Morillo: And from there, I was like, "Okay, coding is really cool." I really like technology. I started working at startups and for a while I thought that I would be a developer, but I kind of realized that what I enjoyed most about development was messing things up and writing about how I manage to make it work.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: So I realized, "You know what, communication is kind of a thing and tech really needs writers." So I'm lucky in that I found the job that was perfect for me. I'm at DigitalOcean



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-serving as the sole copywriter in the company. I mean, I touch both product and marketing copy, but on the fun side of things, I am a musician. I've been singing for somewhere upward of 16 to 17 years.

Emily Lewis: Wow.

Stephanie Morillo: I had ten years of private lessons, and lately you'll probably find me complaining about Muay Thai and how difficult it is.

Emily Lewis: Wow!

Lea Alcantara: Wow!

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, yeah. It's legit. It is the real deal. I'm not there yet, but one day hopefully, and yeah, just reading and writing and just trying to figure out how to get better with writing. I'm a huge writing geek.

Emily Lewis: That's cool, and when you sent us your bio, you're also the co-founder of #WOCinTech Chat. It's a community of women of color and non-binary people of color. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, absolutely. It started around a year and three months ago, I had an idea, which I brought up to a friend of mine, her name is Christina Morillo. We have the same last name, but we're not related. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: And I told her how great it would be to have a community for women of color. I felt that it was a particular audience that tech had not really talked to specifically, and I found very, very few examples where women of color in particular were called out, whether in scholarships or just



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in terms of talking about particular underrepresented groups, and I came up with the idea, along with Christina, to create a Twitter chat just to see who was out there. We didn't really know many people and she and I found each other through Twitter so we thought it would be a great medium, and we had one Twitter chat and ended up having about 40 to 50 participants.

Emily Lewis: Wow!

Stephanie Morillo: A week later, we were approached by the folks at Fund Club, which is an organization run by Ashe Dryden and Shanley Kane. They said, "Hey, do you want funding so you can kind of make this into a thing?" Mind you we didn't even know if we were going to have another Twitter chat, and then it became something else, it became a grassroots initiative. And the thing that we're probably the most well-known for are our free Women of Color in Tech stock photos.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Oh, yes.

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah. It's a collection of photos that feature actual technologists who volunteered to be models for us and they're in actual startup and work spaces in New York City. We had one at Trello, a photo shoot at Trello, one at Microsoft New York and one at DigitalOcean, and they're there doing their thing, so we have UX designers there doing their thing. We have founders or entrepreneurs doing their things. Similarly, we have developers and software engineers, people all along the tech spectrum participate, and so yeah, it's actually been really amazing to see because this was something that was started by two people who had access to internet and a computer and it became something completely above and beyond our wildest expectations.



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Emily Lewis: Yeah, Lea and I have seen those photos. I think we have tweeted a link to them a while ago, but I also love on your site that you've been able to sponsor tickets for women to attend different tech events.

Stephanie Morillo: Yes, that was something that came about from my own personal experience. On Twitter at about 2014, I found this small conference that I had never heard of called Madison + Ruby that was giving away scholarships to go to one of their conferences. I applied and I was a recipient. It was the first ever tech conference that I ever attended, and for about a period of maybe nine months, I was fortunate enough to apply for tickets with Diversity scholarships to go to different events, and I was able to meet a lot of technologists that I admired, that I had known through the internet, and I remember thinking, "Wow, this is such a great opportunity because all of the conversations that I was having on Twitter with technologists were coming to life." I was having the opportunity to learn, get exposed to different things, and I really wanted that opportunity to be available to other women of color, especially since women of color, in particular, were such a small audience.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: And there was one conference in particular. It was conference for women engineers, and it's called Right/Speak/Code, and they actually had a scholarship for women of color and I applied and I was a recipient of that. So I was like, "You know what, it would be great to just pay it forward and to give people the chance to travel and to meet new people."

Lea Alcantara: Right.



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Stephanie Morillo: It's something that the cost of travel alone can be prohibitive for many people.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So we really just wanted to lower the barrier to entry as much as we could.

Emily Lewis: Oh, I love it. I really do. That's the kind of stuff that warms my heart, and it's the kind of things that really do change someone's life. I know I will never forget my first tech conference and how meeting people and kind of building that network got to where I am today running my own business, and it's getting those opportunities that are so important.

Stephanie Morillo: Absolutely, it really just takes that one small opportunity to be the seed that then someone can build a career, a foundation off of.

Emily Lewis: Absolutely.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I would have to say just being invited.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: It's not like it's one of those things where you're necessarily being rejected, but having the extended invite explicitly towards you. I'm Filipino, so having that type of representation is really important to me because I don't remember who said this quote, but it was someone who said, "You can't be what you can't see."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: Oh, yes.

Lea Alcantara: So it's so, so important to just understand that you are welcomed in this community.



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Stephanie Morillo: Absolutely.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Absolutely.

Emily Lewis: Needed, not just welcomed, but needed.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, yes, absolutely.

Stephanie Morillo: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: All right, so let's shift to today's topic. I think a great question to start with is to define what copy is and how it's different from content.

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, absolutely. It was funny, I've been struggling with how to describe copywriting to people, but I actually found a great definition on the copyblogger.com, which is a really, really great resource. The definition is "copywriting is the art and science of strategically delivering words, whether written through print or online media or spoken that get people to take some form of action."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So really, it's about crafting information into messaging that can be used for whatever purpose, whether we want people to engage with us and our brand, whether we want to present them with information like instructions on how to use a specific form of software or how to use our site, all the way down to information that can be used on marketing website.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Stephanie Morillo: And content, I firmly believe that a content strategist would have a more nuanced definition than me, but copy can be content in the sense that content I see it as assets, as objects that are there to inform.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Oh, right.

Stephanie Morillo: They're there to inform the audience or again, engagement, right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So we can have things. We can have things that are bundled into a content object like you can have an Instagram post, a video, along with the caption. The way that's bundled together, that's both content.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: A blog post, which is primarily written text, that's content, and similarly, a video, images, things that have nothing to do with written text can also be content if they're delivered in a specific way and if the purpose of it is for people to engage, for people to be informed. So not all forms of content are copy, i.e., again, multimedia, right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: A podcast is considered content — audio visual. And then not all, as I said, not all forms of content are copy; and then not all forms of copy, interestingly, are content.

Lea Alcantara: Oh.



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Stephanie Morillo: So if we think about a signup flow, if you're signing up for a service or website, the form fields, "Choose your username. Choose your passwords, submit." Right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: Those forms of copy that are so small that we don't really consider them copy, we just consider them part of the page, that's not really content. We wouldn't really call a signup flow content, even from a design perspective.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: Like would we call the way a signup page is designed content? Not necessarily, but nonetheless, it is an object or an asset that we interact with. It's just that the purpose is really, in that particular instance, to guide a user to be able to take a certain action.

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Emily Lewis: And so the copy in that scenario would be like the form field labels or the label on the submit button.

Stephanie Morillo: Correct.

Emily Lewis: Cool. So are copywriters content strategists or copywriting is just getting the text stuff right and it's kind of separate from the multimedia element of content?

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, that's actually a great question. I'm sure a lot of content strategists will agree with me when I say that, no, copywriters are not content strategist per se. Content strategists, they have like a lot of higher level concerns, so for one is what kind of content needs to be created, so they'll come up with a strategy, not just that delivery mechanism. Let's say we're creating a



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marketing website. A content strategist will be concerned with the architecture, so information architecture of that particular site. One of the things they might be interested in is also how we build this site, so are we using a particular content management system.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: Are we using a static site generator? All of that stuff, so they're interested in both the editorial, but also the more technical aspects that bring content to life.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: Whereas a copywriter, in this particular instance, might work with a content strategist or an art director, somebody that is managing the campaign, and they will work with that person to kind of create and craft the messaging.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So some content strategists do copywriting as a part of what they do, but they are not necessarily copywriters first and foremost.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: People come to content strategy through different avenues. Some people come through like a hard marketing background, and sometimes product designers go into it, and copywriters could go there, but their skill set is a lot broader and writing is really just one particular part or just one aspect of things that they need to know about. I mean, a content strategist will



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probably also be versed in other forms of deliveries, things like video and working with videographers and photographers.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: They would probably know about social media. So there is a lot more that they think about broadly.

Emily Lewis: And does it go the same way, you say sometimes a content strategist may do copywriting, could a copywriter somehow be involved in content strategy?

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, that's actually a great question, and the short answer is yes. One of the things that I do want to say though is that copywriters, especially in the tech industry, is not as well defined a term as it is in like ad agencies.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: When we think of a copywriter in ad, we know exactly who we're talking about, but in tech, I'm called a copywriter, but I could have a peer that does something similar to me and they would probably be working on product copy. They might be a UI writer. We might have people with titles like content marketing strategist or content specialist or whatever, and we have similar roles, but we all report to different departments and the organization structure is different. The short answer is yes. In my particular role, I am able to offer more strategic recommendations or even ask questions that are specific to a platform.



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So one of the things that I do is I work closely with the product designers, so definitely, delivery, how we're displaying information, these are things that I have to know about. I have to understand modals. I have to understand push notifications. I have to understand certain elements that perhaps somebody working on the marketing side won't, and similarly, like I want to know on the marketing side like, what analytics are we collecting from our blog, is there a reason why we have a blog posted on Medium versus a self-hosted blog, or whatever. So yeah, as time has gone on through my particular role, I have kind of had to wear that strategy hat more and more with time.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So I'm a little bit curious regarding that because I feel like that is a common thread in the web industry. Regardless of whether you're the copywriter or the strategist or the designer or the developer, you're kind of tasked to kind of, even though you've got your specialty, you're expected to do kind of like overlapping tasks, and in comparison, you kind of mentioned in an ad agency, it's super clear what the copywriter does and that's what they only do. How do you feel in regards to the overlap versus like specialization? Do you think that's actually helping or harming copywriting in the web industry?

Stephanie Morillo: That's a really good question. I have strong feelings about it. I really think that when it comes to copywriting, in particular, if we could get closer to specialization, I think that's the best way to go.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Stephanie Morillo: For one, not all UX designers, product designers or developers are interested in the writing aspect. Sometimes it's treated as an afterthought, and there are things about writing that these particular folks, like people in these particular roles might not consider, like our audience, our target audience. Like what about brand, voice and tone, how does that change depending on the product or whatever? Do we do any form of internationalization with our copy? Like are we being crass or cheeky? Like is this very, very clear?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: Are we being clear and concise? So when it comes to questions of style, I think that having someone who understands copywriting or just copy in general, someone who comes from a writing background, could probably answer those questions much better than someone who does not have that background, and furthermore, I think that having someone who is responsible for writing that copy means that that copy ends up better, stronger, and we have somebody championing the experience.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: Like a company that I think does copy really well is Slack. All of their notifications, the tone, the personality, we can say that Slack has a personality on social media. Slack has a personality in app, the kinds of notifications that you'll get from your Slackbot, and all of those things are crafted by writers, people who understand the importance of written language and how people digest what they're reading.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Stephanie Morillo: So I really do believe that, especially as companies start to scale, that special consideration should be given to building out a team or a team of one, but certainly someone or some folks who own copywriting.

Emily Lewis: And I feel like what you were just describing now segues nicely into the next question I have. How does the user experience fit into what the copywriter does? Because what I'm hearing from you is that a gifted writer, someone who understands language also has to understand who's reading it.

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah. It matters a lot and I think one of the frustrations that I'm feeling is that it does feel like there's a divide. I really think that copy and user experience design are two sides of the same coin. We cannot have a beautiful design without it. We could have the most beautiful design in the world, but without any words on it, the user will not know what the hell is going on. Similarly, if I were to just present a whole bunch of text on a site, the user might not necessarily know what's going on or how anything relates to each other.

So both of these things are equally important, and I think what I struggle to see is I think like it's more about thinking about copy as a separate but equally important part of the design. So one of the things that I recommend to designers is, for example, when you're going to create placeholder copy for your designs, actually write out what you think it should say. Don't put *Lorem Ipsum* or any kind of dummy text in it because that will, for one, show you whether or not your design complements the copy, vice versa, and two, it will help you see how much space the copy is going to need to be able to actually convey whatever information needs to be conveyed, and then you'll get a feeling for what kind of tone you want it to be or how the tone of the copy and the tone of the design, how these two interplay off of one another.



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So it's really something that I like to see more of like, and a question that I have and that hasn't been answered for me because I don't have an extensive amount of time working with product designers is, how many product designers and UX testers incorporate messaging in their user testing? Like do we talk about how clear? Like are we testing against our assumptions? Does signup mean to us what it means to someone else? Similarly, does submit mean all of those things? Like are we creating any obstacles for our users with language? Maybe the design is great, but there's something we have to tweak about the copy. So I think really thinking about it as a part of the design process will help especially UX designers and product designers that are not writers, but they have to write the copy that accompanies their designs.

Emily Lewis: So does that mean that like best case scenario, copy content should be ready before design, or do you think it's okay that you might just have placeholder but with context?

Stephanie Morillo: I like the placeholder with context personally, especially in my role because the product designers are working with the stakeholders much more closely than I am. Some people might have varying opinions. Like in some projects, I'd like to be looped in right away, and in others I'm okay with it coming down the pipeline. Chances are the more stakeholders and the bigger the project, the earlier in I'd like to be brought on.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: But I think it's good, I think it's totally fine for a UX designer to have a design ready before copy. I think it's just what it does for the designer, and I think it's really helpful. It really helps them see like how their design would look like in the wild, to a user.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Stephanie Morillo: And then, of course, it gives the copywriter added context. There's nothing worse I think than someone coming up to me and saying, "Hey, can you write this thing?" And I have no information, "What thing do you want me to write?" [Laughs]

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Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: That's true.

Stephanie Morillo: "What thing do you want me to write?" With copy, I think this one thing that's important, and I think even visual designers will understand this like, "Can you create this logo for me?" "Okay, that's nice. What's the color palette? What company are you?" Like all of these other questions that I think people don't foresee or understand all of the actual questions that need to be answered before someone can sit down to write the copy that they want them to produce.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: This is really interesting because I feel like you're the first person we've ever set this same question with saying very clearly that the design helps you write.

Stephanie Morillo: Oh, yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. So because we have a lot of colleagues of ours who are like content-first, content-first, content-first, and I feel like as a small business, sometimes that isn't always available to us for our clients. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Like never. [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: [Agrees] [Laughs]



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Lea Alcantara: So Emily and I do do fake copy, like we do try to make it in context of the client, but we're kind of tasked with trying to put that content in there, and I think you're right, it makes sense, like how do you write in a black box? Right?

Stephanie Morillo: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: But if you've got the context of the design all ready, you've got the idea over like, "Oh, okay, so there needs to be emphasis on this area. Should we have more impactful copy there because clearly they're trying to guide the eye there?" Right?

Stephanie Morillo: Yes, absolutely, absolutely. I feel like I have better conversations with the designers that way.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So the way the designers at DigitalOcean and I work together varies from designer to designer, but they might send me a Google Doc with the screens of what the particular flow is, and then underneath, they'll indicate that all of the information there is placeholder copy, but then underneath, they'll provide more context. They'll say, "What we're trying to do here is we're trying to tell the user if they sign up for this, it's going to cost this much money." And in the tool tip, we want to indicate that in a tool tip or whatever, which is great, because that means that I then see the flow the way the user does.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Stephanie Morillo: And I can ask questions, like I can ask things like space, like that's something the designers think about, how many lines of space do we need or should we need in order for the design to work.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: And for a designer writing placeholder copy helps them visualize it, right?

Emily Lewis: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: Like if you write *Lorem Ipsum* texts and you give me just three or four or five words of *Lorem Ipsum* texts, but the reality is that I actually need more like two lines, there's a dissonance there, right?

Emily Lewis: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: Like there's a gap, but I think that it helps the designers. It helps them inform their designs. It helps them create and manage their expectations better.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: And it also gives me context because I actually want to see what the user sees. I find that my conversations are much more productive with designers when we have something designed first with placeholder copy, and the understanding is, "I know this isn't real copy. I know the tone and all of that isn't what it's supposed to be. They're not trying to impress me with their writing skills. They're just trying to show me, 'Hey, this is kind of what we needed to say,' and this what I have to play with."



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Emily Lewis: So that actually makes me wonder where this sort of fits in. So a model that we often follow with our clients is typically we never have content-first. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees] [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: And then we design something with some copy and then we give them comps to review and we tweak and then we begin development. So with your process, is it you and the designer kind of finalizing those comps together with copy and then you send it as a whole to the client, or are visual comps and copy handed over to a client for review as separate items?

Stephanie Morillo: They're usually sent to the stakeholder as one item, so the product designer will reach out to me and say, "Hey, I'm working on this particular project." They'll tell me. I'll usually get all of the tasks and stuff, and it's just because that's the way we work at DigitalOcean. It's not because this is a particular process that we think is the best. It's just how it is. The product designer will come to me and say, "Hey, I'm working on this particular thing, this particular feature. These are the copy needs." And sometimes they won't send me screens. Sometimes they'll just say, "It's going to be a modal. We have to have an <h1> header. We need to have two lines of sub-copy and a CTA in a button."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: And I can work that way. It's usually when the projects are much bigger and the user flow is much more complicated or we're like introducing a new feature, in those instances, I'll need screens to see exactly what the user is saying.



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Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: But if it's something like a modal or notification, which answers that question, it usually all goes through the designer.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Interesting. Interesting.

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: So why don't we take a little bit of a step back. So if you're approached with a new project, like you have to do some research in the beginning, so our listener, Luke Rees, asks, what is your research process when creating copy for a new project or client?

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, that's great. It's one thing that I've been thinking about, so I do freelance on the side.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: And with one particular client, what I do is, first, I send them a creative brief, and the creative brief is like a template, and the creative brief will have information like what is this project, who is the primary audience, who is the secondary audience, what is the value proposition, why are we doing this, what are you hoping the outcome of this particular project is, and there's basically a lot of questions, and the client will then send me those answers back. I'll schedule a call with the client, and then, well, kind of based on the answers they give me, that usually determines what the conversation is going to be.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Stephanie Morillo: So I had a client that has like that application performance tool. I'm not very well versed on application performance, but when I sat down with the client, I figured out with them one thing they noticed that they had too much information on their landing page. They were trying to figure out how to differentiate themselves from competitors, so I asked them about their customers. I asked them about their current customers, what their current customers like about the product, what potential customers don't know about the product that they think people should know about their product, and talk to them about really like what the purpose of this landing page was, and then I thought about their product. They actually were great, they gave me a list of competitors, people that were in that particular space.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: And I looked at the different pages, and then I was like, "Well, you know, we haven't been talking about the fact that this is an application performance tool for PHP applications. Like a lot of these other application performance tools work with a variety of languages and stuff, but it might be awesome if you really tell people that this is about PHP." And one of the things that the client does is when you sign up for a free trial, they will send you three test applications in different PHP frameworks, so Magento, WordPress, and ... I forget what the other one is.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: But that's actually really cool. It lets a customer know who has a PHP application that this particular tool was built with their needs in mind.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Stephanie Morillo: So at this point, I had no idea what the design was going to be. This was actually something that was content-first, so they actually asked me for recommendations of what the sections could be and what the actual architecture of this landing page was.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So I came up with recommendations based on our conversations, and then I saw what other competitors were doing just to understand. It's not really because I wanted to copy anything, but just because I really wanted to understand how people presented their key differentiators.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: So I was the one who created the sections. I created the headers for them, the CTAs and then I went back and forth with the client until we made sure that the messaging was correct. So I did do research on what application performance was, all of the particular features, and then I read a lot of from what their competitors were doing, and then I always made sure to go back to the client to ensure that everything I said was accurate. Technical accuracy is huge for me.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So there's only so much that I could be expected to know about application performance.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: But I definitely wanted to make sure that what I said made sense and that it didn't seem like I was just pulling it out of thin air. So yes, I did do quite a bit of research for that. The client



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was great and that they front loaded all of the information through a creative brief. They gave me a list of competitors. They were very clear about what their needs were, and yeah, I was able to create the copy and also the architecture that kind of informed what the final design of the landing page would look like.

Emily Lewis: And so this creative brief, you mentioned it's a template. Do you utilize any other templates or resources for your process, something to — I don't know — maybe keep you on message, keep you on point of what the goals of the project are?

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, one of the things that I'm building out now, and it's funny that it has taken me so long to do this, but it's more than halfway done, is comprehensive style guide, so I've done it now because I own both marketing and product copy that I understand what the tone is, I understand like how to take someone telling me, "Yeah, we want this sound friendly and how to actually make that into copy." I know like what our header should look like, what our CTA should look like. I know all of these things, but yes, I do have a sense of style, and right now I'm building out a style guide that will be used internally, so if someone else was writing an email or whatever, they too could write a DigitalOcean email with copy that is on brand, that uses our particular style when it comes to things like punctuation and grammar and mechanics and all of that stuff.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So yeah, that is something that's really important to me, and the resources that I use are the *Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition*, the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, and we also have an internal word list, like how we spell out particular industry-related terms.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Stephanie Morillo: And I always refer to that.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, you're speaking my language.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: My first job is out of college with writing and editing jobs.

Stephanie Morillo: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: And my favorite is the *AP Stylebook*.

Stephanie Morillo: Oh, mine too.

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Emily Lewis: Half of it is like permanently in my head. [Laughs] And I even created a style guide for Bright Umbrella so that we know what our "rules" are for grammar, our rules are for word choice and active voice and things like that. And we talk so much ... it's like become a trend in this industry to talk about style guides, but almost in terms of like how you apply markup or how you apply different objects to a page.

Stephanie Morillo: Yes.

Emily Lewis: And I feel like this kind of style guide that you're talking about, like an editorial style guide, is also really critical. I feel like every organization, regardless of who you are, should have something that everyone in the organization understands how you convey information through words.

Stephanie Morillo: Absolutely, and two that I can think of that I think are great starting points, especially for some of the smaller companies that don't have many writers and maybe even a particular writer on staff, MailChimp has a style guide. I think it's called Voice & Tone, and their



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content style guide is fantastic and the awesome thing too is that it's open source, so anyone can use it as long as they attribute it to MailChimp and adopt it as needed.

Emily Lewis: Yes.

Stephanie Morillo: And 18F, the digital arm of the US Government is really awesome in that they've also created an open source content guide, and it breaks things down like writing and style, but also with different forms of writing and how to write for them, and I think that's really great, especially for people who don't have an understanding of all of the different aspects or like things that are considered copy, like all of the different — I don't really know — like fields or whatever. So I think that's also a really good starting point.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So that actually leads to the specific question, what are these examples of copy that you can commonly see on a website?

Stephanie Morillo: For sure, and it's funny like now I have an eye for it so I see it everywhere, things like headers, right? So like things like casing, right? Like you some headers that are title case and title cases, every word is capitalized with the exception of like articles and prepositions, right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: And that conveys a very, very different tone to the user than something that's in sentence casing, which is just the first word is capitalized and then proper nouns.

Emily Lewis: Absolutely, right.



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Stephanie Morillo: And one of the trends that I've been noticing is how more tech and tech-enabled companies are actually going to the sentence casing versus the title casing because sentence casing actually reads as friendlier.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: And so the product designers that I work with didn't believe me until we sat down and had a 2-hour meeting talking about all of the inconsistencies in copy that existed in our application because different people touch copy at different times before I came in. So we were sitting down to write guidelines specifically for our product, and one of the product designers said, "You know, when I was working with you, you gave me all of the headers in sentence casing and I wasn't really sure what that was about, but when I put it into the design, it actually looked much nicer, it looked friendlier and it looked like something that I as a user would want to engage with," and I thought, "That's really interesting. This is something that people probably think does not matter. Who the hell cares whether the word 'the' is title-cased or not?"

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: But it really does send a message to the user, and the way words appear on a page are affected by trends in every way that things like parallax scrolling or whatever are trends in visual design.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Lea Alcantara: Yeah, it's interesting that you mentioned the different capitalizations and the camel casing. I think I read this article on Medium explaining that sometimes you can choose to do the title casing or camel casing and stuff on purpose to slow down the reader if you want them to read something important.

Stephanie Morillo: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Like so if it's an alert screen, you don't want it to actually be friendly, you want it to be...

Emily Lewis: Jarring...

Lea Alcantara: Jarring and just so they're like, "Okay, it's in capital letters now, it's important."

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: "I better read this."

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, yeah. It's awesome, and again, these are things that I don't think writers or designers, I don't think many people are really taught to consider when they are producing messaging. So starting to think about it from like a very analytical POV I think would be helpful to anyone who's responsible for writing.

Emily Lewis: I think the same is true for how you use punctuation. There are rules that you learn in grammar school and everything like that, but also an effective use of punctuation can really create emphasis where someone might not realize how effective setting things off between an em dash is, like...

Stephanie Morillo: Yes. [Laughs]



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Emily Lewis: Or putting something in parenthesis where they'll be like, "Well, that breaks the rules that I learned when I was in 5th grade." But it's like, "Yeah, but this actually works, like look at it, doesn't it stand out?" You know, kind of thing like that. [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: As long as it's used consistently, that's all that matters.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, right.

Stephanie Morillo: So that's something else that I'll see on websites, so things like casing, right? Even some of the sites, and it's really no one's fault. Sometimes you'll see different, like different pages have different...

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: They treat their CTAs and their headers with different casing or the tone changes a bit, and the same thing with punctuations, so really, the idea is that it doesn't really matter how you choose to use something as long as you just stick with it. So in DigitalOcean blogs, for example, our headlines are all in title casing, our tutorials are in title casing, and that serves its purpose in that particular form of writing. In the marketing website and in product copy, we want to come across differently, so that wouldn't be as effective there. It doesn't mean that it has to be consistent across all properties, but if you're going to have the marketing website, utilize something, make sure that all of the pages there utilize that something and they treat punctuation, grammar, et cetera, the same way, and similarly, on in all of your properties, and that's actually easier said than done.

Again, I had a 2-hour meeting with product designers just talking about how we treated our <h1>, <h2>, <h3> headers across the entire product. And that can be a boring conversation, but the truth is



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it's really, really important because you want the consistency so that people take you seriously so they understand that you're a professional, they understand that you know what you're doing, so if I'm not around, we know exactly without a doubt how copy is treated across the board.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. It just underscores the importance of having a style guide, especially for clients who like we hand over a content management system and they have a staff of five people and they all are doing their own thing and you end up with a site that no longer reflects that. It's subtle, but it does hit you that, "Oh, this doesn't feel quite as professional because it's not consistent."

Stephanie Morillo: Totally.

Emily Lewis: And so having a style guide and really forcing people to refer to it. One of the things I do for us internally is when like I assign a blog post to Lea or I assign one to myself, there's a to-do to specifically look at the style guide. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Did you follow all of our rules? Just as reminder that that's as important to our brand as the look and feel of the website itself.

Stephanie Morillo: Absolutely, I totally agree.

Lea Alcantara: And I definitely think it's really important, especially in tech because different agencies and different products want to speak about technology in different ways. So like if I was talking to my peers, I could use much more technical language to explain how a content management



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system works, while if I was talking about a content management system to a client or an end user, I'd be using terms like, "You can update it yourself or you can select and press bold."

Stephanie Morillo: Right.

Lea Alcantara: While to a tech person where you're like, "view source." Right?

Stephanie Morillo: Yes.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: So even if you're talking with the exact same subject, the audience really makes a difference in regards to like how you're going to deal with it, so having a style guide explicitly saying, "Do not use these particular phrases because it's confusing to a layman," versus like, "You should use this because you are talking to a highly-technical person and they'll be weirded out or actually confused if you're using layman's terms conversely."

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, I'm really sensitive to that because at my last job, I was an email marketing writer.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: And this particular company had about 16 markets globally, so we were responsible for writing the emails.

Emily Lewis: Wow.

Stephanie Morillo: Not just in the US markets, but in our international markets and all of those markets utilize British spelling.

Emily Lewis: Right.



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Stephanie Morillo: But it went beyond that, it also went to like, you know. Part of the style of the company is to write really clever, pithy emails.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: And some of the idiomatic expressions we were using, our counterparts in Australia were like, “Yo, you’ve got to revisit that because that means absolutely nada here.”

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: And we were like, “Oh, that, we didn’t even think about that.” So I’m really sensitive to audiences, especially international audiences because I know that that’s something that we might not consider, but maybe if your company is scaling to a point where most of your users might be not native English speakers, well, we have to account for that in how we write so that everyone understands.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: So that the baseline is that it’s very clear to just about anyone when they come on the site, that what we have is what they’re looking for, and we can provide it without adding all of this unnecessary fluff for the sake of coming across as really cool or really whatever.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So yeah, thinking about audiences is a huge thing.

Emily Lewis: So just stepping back again to the consistency thing, so if there’s a style guide in place, and hopefully, people are using it, but is there ever a situation or should there be a person who



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is like the overseer, the editor, who is just ensuring that whatever is going out is up to snuff or do you feel like it's one of those things that a style guide can kind of cover that?

Stephanie Morillo: That's actually funny because right now I fulfill that role in my job. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

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Stephanie Morillo: I'm both copywriter and copy editor, and usually folks will send things to me for quality checks. What I'm hoping to achieve at DigitalOcean specifically is I want to empower employees, so if they have a particular copy question that might seem trivial to some, they can refer to it and they, at least, feel empowered enough to take a first stab at it, especially if it's a particular form of copy that's outside of my scope like sales, right, the sales team.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: I don't touch sales copy, but I want the sales team to understand how we present things so that when they write it, they should still pass it to me, and they typically do, so that I can review and we can send it off. Like there's going to be things like maybe an email from a C-level executive or from an account executive to a prospect. That's prospecting, looking for new clients, and that's not really something that I need to touch, but I want them to feel like they have a general understanding of who we are as a company and how we communicate, because the style guide that I'm producing at least is doing more than just providing tips on like style and the mechanics of language. I'm saying, "Hey, this is our audience. This is who DigitalOcean is. This is our voice. This is our tone. This is our personality. When you're writing whatever it is that you're writing, just keep those things in mind."



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Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So that whatever messaging you have, you're like, "Okay, I'm writing as DigitalOcean, which is this." But yeah, a QA process is really, really important. Frequently, I'll get things like emails, sales emails or even press releases or blog post that I did not write, but that will get passed to me because that QA is really important. So sometimes the person who's writing has the ability to edit, not always, but the short answer is yeah, if we have like a review process, having an editor who goes in and who could be the person that champions the company style and could be the one to educate people on why certain decisions are what they are, I think that's probably better for everyone.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So that leads me to ask about the particular team collaboration, so a lot of people just pass things on to you, but who do you actually interact with on a regular basis, like who on the team, what is their role?

Stephanie Morillo: That really depends on the project. So I work with product designers, community managers, product managers, and the marketing team. It's really interesting, I sit on the brand design team, and the brand design team is made up of the visual designers in the company.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: But I'm kind of the one that, because my role is very different from theirs, my process is very different, and essentially, anyone from the company can reach out to me.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Stephanie Morillo: I mean, recently, I did a project for the people team that had to do with job descriptions. So I interact with just about anyone who knows that I'm here at DO.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: Like as they have copy that falls within my scope, I can write it, and if they don't, then I can edit it.

Emily Lewis: What about in your freelance situations, who are you interacting with typically there?

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, I'm interacting with authors. I'm interacting with web development agencies. I'm working with like a one-man shop, a consultancy occasionally. I usually work with like much smaller groups of people, so they're usually entrepreneurs or they're consultants, independent business owners, authors, and also like conference organizers.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So these are folks who have built or created something, maybe the writing may or may not be strong. For the editing jobs, yes, those are typically people, that they are writers and they just come to me for editing, but when I'm meeting with a client that is like a software developer and they created something and they want copy, that's generally someone who doesn't really know copywriting and is coming to me to both educate them as well as produce something.

Emily Lewis: And is that a comfortable process for them that you've noticed or is it uncomfortable? I would feel really uncomfortable handing over our copy to a copywriter. I might recognize a need for it, but it might make me uncomfortable because it's like my baby, we worked on it, we felt it was good.



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Stephanie Morillo: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: So have you encountered those situations where it's – I don't even know the word to describe it, but...

Lea Alcantara: Resistance.

Stephanie Morillo: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Yeah, it's something like that.

Stephanie Morillo: You know what, thankfully, no. The people that have come to me had actually been the ones that are like, "You know what, I recognize that my writing is not the best or whatever."

Emily Lewis: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: Some of my clients are software developers in Germany and English is not their first language.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So they're like, "You know what, like we thought we could do it ourselves, but we actually realized that we need help with this. Let me know..." They come to me and they're like, "We are really..." They're really eager to have this done because they understand the power of it.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: And my role there is to let them know, "Yes, absolutely, we can get this done. This is how I work. Let's work together on that." I like to be very collaborative about it, like I just don't want somebody to be like, "Hey, you write this," and then I give them the final deliverable and that's it.



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I will say, “Hey, I did version one of this. Why don’t you go in and take a look at it.” I usually leave them comments and queries.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: I query them so that it’s a very interactive process, and I find that a lot of people like that and it squashes some of their fears.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: Because I feel like what some people are afraid of is they’ll give you the information or they’ll give you their writing. They throw it into the ether and they may not hear from you for a while. So I want people to know that, no, the point of copywriting as with any other form of communication is that it’s communicative.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So I want you to be as much in the process as me. So the people who generally seek out my help are the ones who are like, “You know what, I think that someone else could probably do this better, like I’m good at this. Let me give this to the subject matter at first.”

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I found a very similar thing for myself when I was working as an editor for Web Standard Sherpa, and even editing our own stuff is that I take an approach where I don’t want to tell someone what to do. I want to give them some ideas and feedback and see what they do with it for like the first round or so, and then maybe once they’ve gone in and applied their ideas, then I’ll fine tune. So the first stage of my editing is really more like suggestions, “Have you thought about this? This could be stronger. What about this?” And to see where they go with it versus me going in and being like chop-chop-chop; making it the way X, Y, Z the style guide says it should be. And then later



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rounds, once they've really taken into account my suggestions and put forward their own ideas, then we get into the nitty-gritty of the editing to really tighten things up. Because I feel like writing can be a very personal experience and an effective editor, at least, from my perspective is not one who wants to make someone feel bad about what they wrote, but more like tell them what was great about it and how they can make it better.

Stephanie Morillo: Yeah, absolutely. I also take on a similar approach when it comes to my editing. I always try to remind people that the point of the editor is to champion both the author and the reader.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: So I'm there to make your writing even clearer and more badass for the reader for whatever purpose that we want them to read it.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So even when I query people, I'll say, "How about we try this. Is it okay to change it?" Or like if they use a word and I realize that it wasn't used properly in context, I'll say, "Hey, like what did you mean by this word here? How about we use something like X, Y, Z?" Like I'll give them different words depending on the context and okay to change, and as long as it sounds like I never want to sound, like I am an authoritarian figure who's here to tell you, "This is exactly how things are going to go."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: Because the author is the one who knows what they're writing more than I do.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Stephanie Morillo: And I'm just there to use some editing know-how to just make that stronger, and writers and authors respond better that way. You want to champion the writer and you want to champion the reader.

Emily Lewis: Absolutely.

Lea Alcantara: So you...

Emily Lewis: Oh, my gosh, I love this episode. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: So I mean, you've had a lot of experience working on all types of copies, like you mentioned, product copies as well as marketing copy, and then even just regular emails and on and on and on. You must see patterns for common mistakes. What kind of common mistakes do you normally see?

Stephanie Morillo: Well, yeah, that's kind of hard.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: I mean, like we could say like the usual like common spelling mistakes. It really, really depends on a project. I hate to say that, but I mean, like with one project, for example, I was



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recently working with an author, and his book is really conversational and it's written in the second person, so everything is a scenario, and it's like, "You are a software developer and this is who you're talking to, and this is your colleague." And because of that, he would put a lot of "so" or "that" or like specific words in there that come up when you have a conversation, but in writing they read very awkwardly.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: So I would go in there and remove phrases that we use that are superfluous in conversation, but that really don't add anything to the sentence, and like I would remove those like "would be," "could be," and certain things like, "Okay, what can we do to kind of condense this sentence and make it more straight to the point?" And the reason of that was because he wrote it in the second person, and second person is naturally very conversational style, so just translating the conversational style while keeping it lighthearted, but also like making sure that it was easy to read so the reader wasn't stumbling over like really cumbersome phrases and such.

Emily Lewis: I'm curious, with all the writing that you do, are you ever tasked to get that copy into a content management system or into templates or the email templates? Is that part of your role, or you would just provide text document and someone else takes it from there?

Stephanie Morillo: Currently, it's the latter. I provide a text document and the person who owns that particular project will import it into the CMS or whatever. So if I'm writing something for the website, I will usually, if it already exist, like on the existing website, if there's something that I want to get updated, I talk to the engineer who manages that because that's in a static site generator, so it's not like I could just go into WordPress and edit it. That does need or that does require an engineer who has the credentials to be able to access that, and similarly, with like product copy, I give that to the



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product designers because they're the ones that are responsible for owning that. With email, I work with the email marketing manager and he's the one who puts in those templates. In a previous job when I was doing email marketing, initially for the first four or five months, I was the one who was actually writing, editing, and building the emails out in our email service provider system.

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Lea Alcantara: Wow!

Stephanie Morillo: And then we moved into a different rhythm where I was just responsible for writing and editing copy and we had somebody else building the emails. So it really depends on the size and the needs of the organization. In that particular instance, it's just because it was a quality control issue and it became too much. Like if you're writing, editing and building the emails, there might be things that you're missing, that someone who's just responsible for building the email won't miss.

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: I feel like we can talk about this subject, and yeah, well, I feel like I say this all the time with all our shows. [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: But it's so true, there are just so much to talk about. But before we wrap up, what resources can you share to our listeners that will help people write better copy for the web?



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Stephanie Morillo: Absolutely. There is the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Pick that up. It's great. If you are overwhelmed by it, check out *The Copywriter's Handbook 3rd Edition*, which I particularly love. Check out 18f.gov and look for their content guides. They're really great, a really great resource. And also look up MailChimp's Content Style Guide, which is open source, and it will give you an indication for the different things that you might want to consider when you're building your style guide and also just managing your website, your email and all the various properties that you have.

Emily Lewis: Awesome.

Lea Alcantara: Perfect. So now, we've reached the end of our show, but we've got our Rapid Fire Ten Questions, so our listeners can get to know you a bit better. Are you ready, Stephanie?

Stephanie Morillo: I am.

Lea Alcantara: First question, morning person or night owl?

Stephanie Morillo: Morning person.

Emily Lewis: What is one of your guilty pleasures?

Stephanie Morillo: One of my guilty pleasures is popcorn.

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: I'll buy a whole bag of popcorn and it will be done by the end of the day.

[Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yes.



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Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: What software could you not live without?

Stephanie Morillo: Interestingly, Apple Notes.

Emily Lewis: Aha!

Stephanie Morillo: Because I can use it from my phone, it's great.

Emily Lewis: What profession other than your own would you like to try?

Stephanie Morillo: Oh, this is really random, but I'd like to be an Olympic race walker. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Oh, oh, I've seen videos of those!

Stephanie Morillo: It's so weird.

Lea Alcantara: It's fascinating. [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: It is so weird, but it is actually hard.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: I've been like walking four to five miles a day, and they can do, like they can walk a mile in like seven minutes.

Emily Lewis: Wow!

Stephanie Morillo: And I'm like...

Lea Alcantara: Wow!



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Stephanie Morillo: I'm not good enough to be a gymnast, but I could definitely train to just walk for 20 kilometers. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: What profession would you not like to try?

Stephanie Morillo: Oh, my gosh, that's hard. I wouldn't like to work in a call center.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: I don't like talking on the phone. I don't like talking on the phone, and if people were mean to me like 200 times a day, that would absolutely like crush my self-esteem.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: So no.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: If you could take us to one restaurant in your town, where would we go?

Stephanie Morillo: Oh, there's this place called Mamasushi in Uptown Manhattan.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: And it's a Dominican and Japanese fusion spot.

Emily Lewis: Aha!



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Stephanie Morillo: So there's sushi. It has things like fried sausage, fried cheese, and fried plantain like in a roll, and it's the best. I'm Dominican, so I grew up with that food and seeing it like – I don't know – in that way was just absolutely fantastic, and I love sushi, so it was great.

Lea Alcantara: If you can meet someone famous, living or dead, who would it be?

Stephanie Morillo: I would meet Lady Gaga.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: First of all, her name is Stephanie, I'm Stephanie. She was born in 1986, so was I. She's from New York, so am I, and I love her personality. I love that she has like a level of musicianship that she doesn't get credited for.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Stephanie Morillo: And I'm classically trained, so I really appreciate when you can have pop stars and entertainers that actually have knowledge of musicianship and musicality.

Emily Lewis: If you could have a super power, what it would be?

Stephanie Morillo: If I could have a super power, it would be teleporting because it would eliminate transport.

Lea Alcantara: Nice.

Stephanie Morillo: It would eliminate commuting.

Emily Lewis: Yeah.



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Stephanie Morillo: So that's hands down.

Lea Alcantara: What is your favorite band or musician?

Stephanie Morillo: Oh, my gosh, that's hard.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: My favorite band or musician, I would say one that I always love listening to, and that I've been listening to quite a lot recently, is Ibeyi. They are a duo. They're twin sisters from France. They're Afro-Cuban, and their music is like a very minimalist Afro-Cuban type of music, like they're both santeras so they practice Santeria, which is a religion that is practiced in Cuba, and it's wonderful because they sing in Yoruba and in English and their music is just so soothing. They're both 19 and they just have like a wisdom beyond their years.

Lea Alcantara: Wow!

Emily Lewis: All right, last question, pancakes or waffles?

Stephanie Morillo: Waffles! Always. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: I can sing I can sing waffles praises all day with no hate for pancakes, but the waffles are my jam. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]



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Emily Lewis: Don't you have in New York has that Waffles & Dinges truck?

Stephanie Morillo: Yes, we do, we do, but you see, I'm not high class when it comes to waffles.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Stephanie Morillo: Like I'll go to a diner and get waffles, like I don't really care as long as it's waffles. Leggo My Eggo, if it's a waffle, I will eat it. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: I love it.

Lea Alcantara: So that's all the time we have for today. Thanks for joining the show, Stephanie!

Stephanie Morillo: Thank you for having me! It was great.

Emily Lewis: In case our listeners want to follow up with you, where can they find you online?

Stephanie Morillo: They can find me on Twitter [@radiomorillo](https://twitter.com/radiomorillo) or you can find me on my website, stephaniemorillo.com.

Emily Lewis: This was awesome. Thanks again, Stephanie!

Stephanie Morillo: Thank you.

[Music starts]

Lea Alcantara: CTRL+CLICK is produced by Bright Umbrella, a web services agency obsessed with happy clients. Today's podcast would not be possible without the support of this episode's sponsor! Thank you, Foster Made!

Emily Lewis: We'd also like to thank our partners: Arcustech and Devot:ee.



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Lea Alcantara: And thanks to our listeners for tuning in! If you want to know more about CTRL+CLICK, make sure you follow us on Twitter [@ctrlclickcast](https://twitter.com/ctrlclickcast) or visit our website, ctrlclickcast.com. And if you liked this episode, please give us a review on [iTunes](#), [Stitcher](#) or both! And if you really like this episode, consider [donating to the show](#). Links are in our show notes and on our site.

Emily Lewis: Don't forget to tune in to our next episode when we talk to Eric Gillin about overhauling Epicurious. Be sure to check out our schedule on ctrlclickcast.com/schedule for more upcoming topics.

Lea Alcantara: This is Lea Alcantara ...

Emily Lewis: And Emily Lewis ...

Lea Alcantara: Signing off for CTRL+CLICK CAST. See you next time!

Emily Lewis: Cheers!

[Music stops]

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