

Beck Laxton · CV

July 2014

Available for freelance, permanent or part-time work

SUMMARY Expert in reshaping complex information to reflect user needs, online and in print:

- improving the usability of websites – structure, navigation, naming, functionality, accessibility
- increasing web pages' usability, accessibility and SEO by developing content strategies, verbal identities and house styles, and writing and editing copy.

SAMPLES OF WORK See becklaxton.com

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EXPERIENCE

March–August 2013: Freelance consultant

I helped the Family and Childcare Trust with their social media tactics, and to define their own and their users' needs to build a functional specification for a new website.

March 2011–March 2013: Freelance web editor for the Energy Saving Trust

energysavingtrust.org.uk

I learned a new CMS to build and edit pages, liaising with technical support to fix problems and improve usability; revamped the site's structure and naming, developed a house style, and trained staff in writing for the web. As well as working on two site rebuilds, I developed copy and functionality for an interactive microsite.

Voluntary work 2006–present

From 2006 to 2009 I typeset Cambridge's National Childbirth Trust magazine. Since April 2010 I've been editor of my village magazine. Managing ten volunteers, I've built up a team of local writers and photographers, made the design lively and the tone positive, and restructured random information into a useful local directory. As well as writing articles, I edit and lay out all the pages and manage the print production. I've built and maintain a website for the magazine, sawstonscene.org, as well as a Facebook page and several mailing lists.

2009–2011: Web editor and project manager for the Fatherhood Institute

As well as managing both the front and back ends of this charity's website, I project-managed a rebuild of the site and the development of a new online forum, an integrated database, and a mailing list for 10,000 subscribers.

dadsincluded.org (*no longer live*)

Helped write brief and RFP and appoint agency; project-managed build; revised functionality and all copy; moderated forums.

fatherhoodinstitute.org

Managed content migration and technical integration; designed database; wrote, edited and maintained pages and site structure.

1999–2009: UX for MRM Worldwide

MRM is a digital agency that builds websites for huge global clients such as Intel, Microsoft and Unilever.

Working as a user experience architect (UX), I wrote proposals, did site audits, researched and analysed user needs, produced content strategies, created user journeys, designed site maps, wrote functional specifications, built wireframes, and ran user tests for clients as diverse as George Wimpey, Birds Eye, NatWest, Flora Pro.Active, Intel, Roche healthcare, Microsoft and Clearasil; I worked with a team at the Home Office to revamp a huge site called Respect for anti-social behaviour practitioners.

Unusually for a UX, I also wrote and edited copy. This was often useful on smaller projects, as I could develop a whole site from site map to final page copy, and write style and tone guidelines. Financial services was a speciality, as I enjoy explaining the complexities of products such as offset mortgages in plain language. But I also worked closely with creative teams on design-dominated projects such as a site for Magnum ice-creams, writing briefs and editorial strategies and designing the functionality.

1997–1999: Freelance information designer, writer and sub-editor for Siegel & Gale, Sound on Sound magazine, Emap, and others

My favourite project involved rewriting all the letters that Freemans catalogue sends out to its customers; I also wrote all the documentation for Standard Life Bank's Freestyle mortgage, one of the first offset mortgages, in collaboration with its legal team. At Emap, I worked as a sub-editor and a production editor on various trade titles and *Internet* magazine; I also subbed for *Sound on Sound*.

1994–1996: Deputy editor of Keyboard Review magazine, Music Maker Publishing, Ely

As well as writing reviews and articles, and interviewing musicians such as Tori Amos, Gillian Weir, and Chas and Dave, I acted as production editor, liaising with contributors and copyright holders, sub-editing pages, and managing a music supplement.

1992–1994: Writing and designing software manuals for Datapaq Ltd, Cambridge

Early information design experience.

1989–1992: Publisher's assistant, postman, etc

DEGREE St John's College, University of Cambridge: BA and MA in English

INTERESTS Singing consort music; running music workshops; bargain-hunting; books, books, books. ■