

[Music] [Narelle] Good

morning, good afternoon. I'm really - I'm starting to lose

track of time, actually. Welcome to this week's episode of the Digital Access Show. Now, we did miss a week last week, but you

know, things happen. But the reason I also waited is the guest that we have this week. Our theme for the

next month is digital or usable digital communication. What is it? Why is it important? And what can we do? And that's where this

week's guest comes in. So this week's guest is Jackie McCray, from CopyCred. Jackie, thank you

for being on here. [Jackie] Oh, Narelle, thanks

for having me. I love talking anything

communications and content. So, um, I'm very

excited to be here. Thank you. [Narelle] Yeah,

look, it's great. And just to let

you know, you may occasionally hear Jackie's dogs. There's a big storm overhead at Jackie's place. So there's thunder and

lightning and all that stuff. And it is coming my way. So we're going to just ignore storms because they're all good. They bring in rain.

[dog howls] They bring money. And there we go. [Jackie] Right on cue.

[Narelle] So Jackie.. [both laugh] [Narelle] Jackie, tell

us a bit about yourself. Yeah, so, I have

been a communications consultant for 15 years. So, in public relations and now more so in communication

strategies and content. And so for me, I've actually

become a client of yours, Narelle, because I am

personally driven by making sure that

communications is accessible. From, you know, that's the

whole idea of communications. It's one person

gives and one person receives and it's not communication unless there is a receiver on the other end getting that right information. So that's what drives me is to make sure that it's a two-way street. [Narelle] Jackie, can you give us a definition of usable digital communication? [Jackie] Look, to be honest, it's the same as communication. It needs to be accessible. It needs to be understood and it needs to be clear and concise. And whether that's, in this instance, it's in the digital platform, but that should be the same no matter what platform you're using. [Narelle] Yeah, but people really don't understand the accessibility side a bit, do they? Why do you think that? What would be the reasons? [Jackie] I think it's because of the transition in medium. So we're so used to, you know, in childhood, we're used to writing in our notepads. And as we've gotten older, we've had social media come about and then we've had the blogging era. And so we keep getting used to new technologies, but not realizing that new technologies comes with a new way to write as well. So I think traditionally, we are set in our old ways of writing, but need to conform to new ways of actually distributing that. So, yeah, I find a lot of things that I read online probably haven't or definitely haven't been written

for the online reader or as in your world,
obviously around accessibility,
making sure that... Not everybody can read with their eyes and use their
mouse. Everyone's using,
there are people who use different platforms. So, when it comes
to accessibility and digital communications,
there is more, there are more
layers to it than just writing what you want to say and hopefully
somebody picks it up. [Narelle] Can you tell
us a bit more about the layers and what can we do. I mean, what is the,
what are the things that... as a person writing content that we can do
to make it usable? [Jackie] Absolutely. So I've got five
things that I like to look at when I'm
writing copy for websites and blog
sites and so forth. And then obviously
the developers come in and do their work,
their magic beyond that, but these five
things that anybody can do this when they're
writing their content. So I'd like to really
start with the first principle of communications is making it clear and
concise. So, you know,
where you can cut out superfluous words,
where you can tighten sentences and
make sure that things aren't necessarily -
the things that aren't necessary aren't there. That's the first thing.
And getting rid of
jargon and all of those complex words that
might be appropriate in your industry that not
everybody recognizes. And I think I see that a lot. I see a lot of
acronyms

being used, jargon being used, without any explanation of what that means. So that's a number

one tip and for all communications, not

just digital accessibility. [Narelle] Okay. And when you think

about it, you know, the jargon for us right now

would be the dogs barking. [Jackie] The extra

noise and the clutter. [Narelle] The extra noise, yeah. [Jackie] Absolutely. And something I

actually have found and it was actually a tip I got off you when we did our training. I've always written

out the full word of something and then

abbreviated it in brackets. But I did forget at

the time that people come into a website at different ways and through

different channels. So just because the

home page lists it, it means that if I'm

on a service page or an About page, I

need to write that full sentence out or -

full wording out again. And then do it again

because they might not have come in from

a traditional channel. So it's really

important that every page you're on

has the consistency of this accessibility. [Narelle] Yeah. Exactly. So yeah. So tip one, use

concise, clear language, get rid of the jargon

and make sure the abbreviations are there

expanded on every page. [Jackie] Yeah. And to add to that,

bullet points where possible, where you can cut

out the paragraphs in the sentences, get

it to the point, get into a nice concise

bullet points and that's for all readers. Nobody wants to

sit and try and find the message in a bunch of noise. Just make it clear for people. [Narelle] Love it. What's tip two? [Jackie] Tip two is our use of

page titles on a website. So we can really

make sure that this is helping with assistive

readers to help them read and know

what page they're on and what they're

about to read, to make sure that they can

navigate their way through to what

they're looking for. So there's some - instead

of just being home page, it can be your actual organization's home

page in front of it. So, your brand, home page. So somebody always

knows where they are. The next layer to that one is going down to the next step. So, your organization's

service page, products and descriptions

or whatever that is. It could be, if you're

an IT company, computers or devices or support. So getting very specific

at each layer and making sure that

the title reflects that. [Narelle] Actually,

that's a good point. Now I'm thinking about our page. I'll have to go and have a look. What's tip three? [Jackie] Exactly. Tip three is using

headlines and structure. So you've got your

H1 and your H2 and your H3 title tags,

your headlines. And it's really

important to use them. Again, because that

formats the page and tells the reader what's

coming up and how they can read it and it should

definitely be hierarchical. So it definitely

needs to be in order of the most, or the largest - like an umbrella. The biggest thing and then the next thing and then down to the most detail if they still want to keep reading. But if you use those headlines and sub-headings, that's going to really help with people understanding what page they're on and the information that they're looking for as well. [Narelle] How many H1s should you have on the page? Heading ones? [Jackie] It tells you in the H, you only need one. [laughs] [Narelle] Oh, that's true, yeah. Because, I ordered pages and I see pages where there's two or there's three at times and I think, erm. [Jackie] That gets very confusing for not only their readers but for Google in itself and you're going to be doing yourself a disservice. So H1, I always say there's only one of them. So H1 and then H2 you can have two if you need to. A couple of those that I like to do is do one H1 and one H2 and then I usually do the rest in H3s. [Narelle] What about in a document? So if you do a document, you'll have a title, and then you'll have - you might have two or three H1s for different sections. How should you do it? [Narelle] Actually, for a document, I actually do do H1s on different pages because it's a different reader to websites. I'm thinking

websites but you're right. So in a Word document,
HIs do give the, um, hierarchy of what's coming
up underneath each one. [Narelle] Okay,
that's a good point. Yeah, just thought about that. So that's tip three.
What's tip four? [Jackie] It's when you're
linking to other sites or other pages
and making sure it doesn't just say
'read more here'. [Narelle] Ah, yep. [sighs]
[Jackie] [laughs] [Jackie] I you can see you
agreeing with that one. So really get descriptive
in what you're linking. So you might have
'read more about installing your
device here', link that whole line so that
you can actually know exactly
where it's going to. And not just - don't just
click on the, you know, the 'read more here' and
leave the rest there. Every hyperlink
should be descriptive. [Narelle] Yeah, is there a
maximum length you reckon you should be putting for
a descriptive link? [Jackie] I personally like
no more than five words or
so where possible. Otherwise, it looks like you've
got linking right through. But as long as you can get very clear on that
particular piece. And again, if you're
following step one, which is to make
everything clear and concise, it shouldn't be too
verbal or too many words anyway. [Narelle] Okay, so tip five. [Jackie]
The last one
is for your images. So creating alt

text for it and helping people actually understand what images are there. And where possible, make sure that it actually links, it's not decorative and make sure it actually has meaning to the content that's beside it. And again, describing what it is. So, instead of, you know, 'person installing device' is the alt text. It might be 'person plugging in device to start it' or something like that, to help give more clarity or whatever. If it's following an instruction, anything like that, I always think just make sure that that can be read and understood in context with what they're reading. [Narelle] Okay, so those five tips that you've given, how do they work together to make a document more usable? [Jackie] When you've got it all up, then obviously if anyone's using an assistive reader, then obviously that's all going to help them understand. It's all about navigation and simplicity. It's going to take away the overwhelm of somebody and the frustration. And it's going to keep people on your website for longer because they're not going to get frustrated and just jump off and find something else to answer their question. So when it's all together, you're actually helping your reader rather than hindering them. [Narelle] Okay, but

what about the person that would say to you... 'Yeah, Jackie, my clients don't have those problems.'? [Jackie] I would say that obviously they don't know their clients because there's a high chance in it. And disability is more than just vision. It's epilepsy, it's cognitive. It's motor, it's so broad. And I mean, Narelle, you will know the statistics on people living with disability, but it's very high. And it comes down to just simplicity and accessibility and navigation for everybody. And understanding that every audience will have people with disability and you don't see them. You don't know who's sitting online at midnight looking at your work or who's at their workplace struggling to get something that they need. So, I think it's all about inclusion and diversity and actually understanding that there are people that struggle to find information. If you can make that step easier for them, you're going to win a client that you might not have had previously. [Narelle] And that's a good point. But the other thing too is it really does help the so-called normal person, doesn't it? Because they get a much more well-structured document. [Jackie] Oh, 100% and it goes back to point number one is all communications should be clear and concise

and accessible. So, these are just going down to extra layers for those that need to find different avenues to access their information. But essentially, whether you're writing for somebody with disability or without disability, it should be clear and concise and easy to understand and easy to navigate, regardless of who's on the other end. [Narelle] Oh, thanks, Jackie. So what's the takeaway? Was there any more takeaways you can give? After that, because I don't know, that was brilliant. [Jackie] The takeaway is really to sit back, read through the copy on your - whether it's writing for a web page or a document. And asking yourself, can this be clearer? Can I make this more structured? Is this the best and easiest possible - and could a seven-year-old read it? So if you can ask yourself that sort of question, you will no doubt find words to pull out. You'll no doubt find a new way to structure a list of contents. As long as you can get it to that point and then use the specs that come to us around the headings and the title tags and all those back ends to amplify that a little bit more. But the very first thing is just make it clear. [Narelle] Jackie, how can people contact you to find out more about what we've just talked about, about good useful

digital communication? [Jackie] Yes, so
I'm at CopyCred. So my website is
www.copycred.com.au. And it's going
through a rework at the moment, so hopefully that
new one is coming very soon. But they can contact me and
have a look at our work there. We work predominantly with
service-based businesses. So we really help them
with communication strategies, content
and communications. [Narelle] Thanks, Jackie.
Thanks very much for your time. And look, if you
do want to contact Jackie, I'll also
put her contact information on the card
at the end of the podcast. Once it's all edited.
Jackie, I hope the storm ends soon for
your poor dog sakes'. [Jackie] Thank
you, sorry for that. [Narelle] Oh, it's all good. It's life, isn't it?
It's storm season here. And more to that, if you like what we
do, if you like our podcast, please
like, share, subscribe. And yeah, definitely share. Give us a review.
Whatever you can
do because the more people that listen
and understand that accessibility helps everyone,
the better off we'll be. So we'll see you next time. Thanks very much.
[Jackie] Bye.