

Meet Lea

Posted on February 11, 2014 by [Whitney Quesenbery \(http://rosenfeldmedia.com/author/whitneyq/\)](http://rosenfeldmedia.com/author/whitneyq/) | [Leave a comment](#)

Lea is one of the personas from our book, *A Web for Everyone* (<http://rosenfeldmedia.com/books/a-web-for-everyone/>). Personas are used as stand-ins for all of the real users during the design process so that we remember to put people first, considering how we can make their experience an excellent one.

You can download all eight personas from our Resources page. The personas images, created by Tom Biby, twofinechaps.com (<http://twofinechaps.com/>), are available on Flickr.

Lea: Editor, living with fatigue and pain



No one gets that this really is a disability.

Lea was on track to become the editor of the magazine she worked for when she started having numbness in her hands and feeling completely fatigued by the middle of the afternoon. She tried medications and exercise and getting enough sleep, but finally she had to make a change in her life.

She found a job where she could work from home, on her own schedule. When she has good days, it's like nothing is wrong. But on bad days, she measures every action so she can make it through the day. Sometimes that important editorial meeting is all she can manage.

She had to adjust her computer: a new keyboard and trackball make it easier to type, and a good chair helps her avoid tender muscles. The biggest change was learning to write and edit using speech recognition software, Dragon Naturally Speaking.

She's lucky: the company understands that it's a real disability. With an invisible disability like fibromyalgia, some people just don't get it.

Don't make me work so hard

A mouse may look simple, but Lea prefers to interact through the keyboard, as she explains in Chapter 5. "I love my keyboard. I tried dozens until I found one that fits my hands perfectly, so I hardly have to move to type. Maybe you think I'm a bit over the top, but it makes a difference for me by the end of the day. Using a mouse takes more energy than you think, and I have to conserve mine if I'm going to make it through the day. So do me a favor and let me use my keyboard for everything. OK?"

Links at the top of the page make navigation easier for me

Little things can make a difference. Good navigation (Chapter 6) can make using the web easier for Lea. "I like pages with links at the top of the page. It's really helpful on long pages with a lot of sections. I can figure out what's on the page without a lot of work. When I first saw a link to jump to the content, I didn't know what it was for, but it sure made navigating with a keyboard easier."

Snapshot of Lea

- 35 years old
- Masters degree
- Writes for a trade publication; works from home

The A's: Ability, Aptitude, Attitude

- **Ability:** Fatigue from fibromyalgia, trackball, and special keyboard
- **Aptitude:** Average user
- **Attitude:** Wishes people would understand how hard it can be for her to make it through the day

Assistive Technology

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Split keyboard for less strain on her wrists

- Keyboard controls to minimize arm movement
- Dragon Naturally Speaking

The Bigger Picture

Source: *National Institutes of Health* (http://www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/fibromyalgia/fibromyalgia_ff.asp)

- 5 million people in the U.S. have fibromyalgia, 80–90% of them are women.
- People with fibromyalgia and related diseases like lupus, ankylosing spondylitis, and rheumatoid arthritis have increased sensitivity to pain.

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