

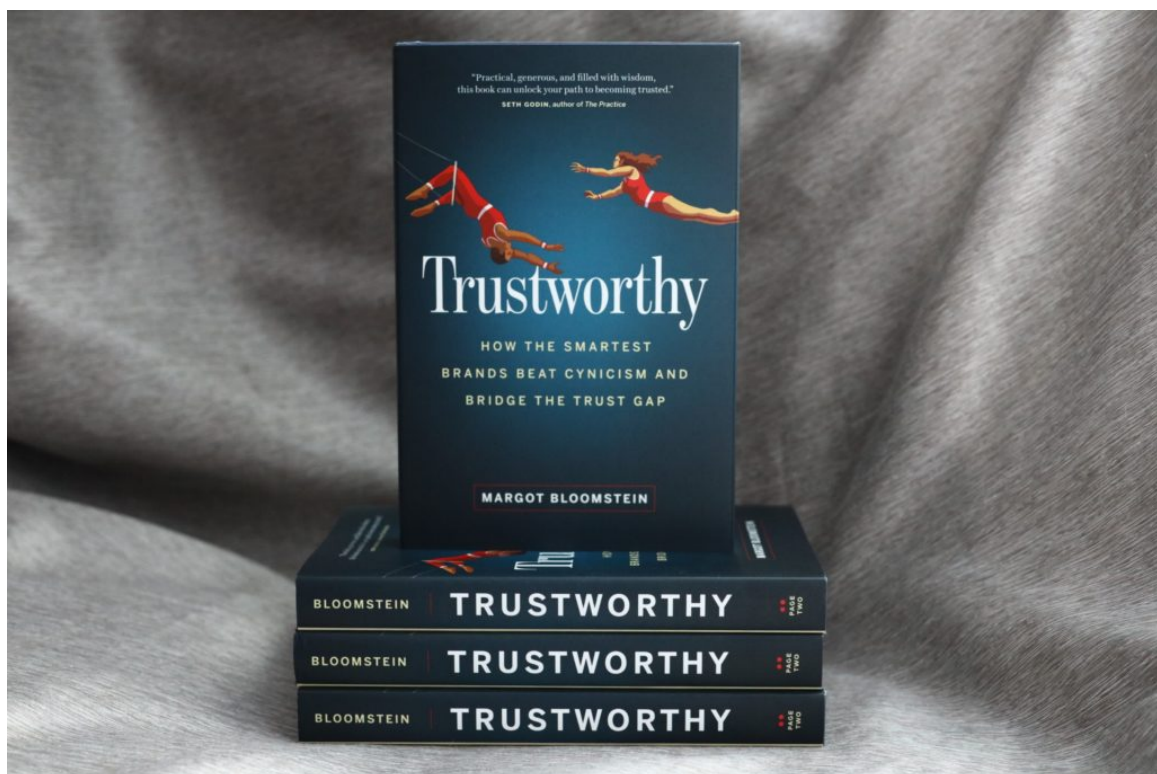
Institutionalising Editorial Quality

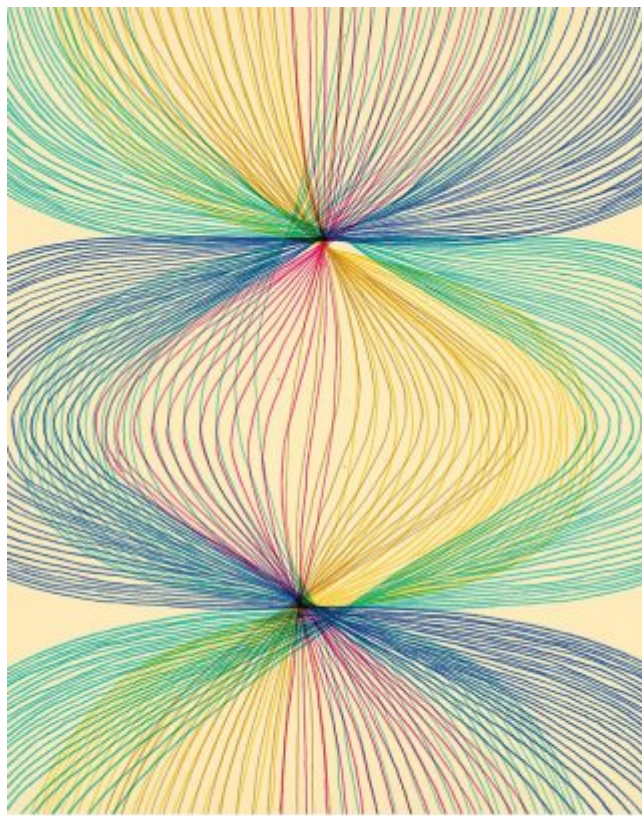
Heinz Wittenbrink

2024-02-02

Assuring Editorial Quality for Brands

Three Books





MANAGING CHAOS

Digital Governance by Design

by LISA WELCHMAN *Foreword by Chris Sinton*

 Rosenfeld



Aspects of Editing

Transforming content into usable products

- User Interests

- Integration of production, design, legal, ...

Assuring Quality

- Complying with standards
- Connecting content and the real world

Example

Making the Most of Salt

Pepper's best mate isn't just for seasoning. This culinary workhorse has a slew of hidden talents—from cleaning cast iron to making a better cup of coffee. BY KEITH DREISER

TYPES OF SALT

Whether mined from underground salt deposits or obtained by evaporating seawater, salt is its most basic form: the same sodium chloride. What distinguishes one salt from another is texture, shape, and mineral content. These qualities can affect how a salt tastes as well as how it interacts with other foods.

Table Salt
Table salt, also known as common salt, consists of tiny, uniformly shaped crystals created during rapid vacuum evaporation. It usually includes anti-caking agents that help it pour smoothly.
 ➤ **How We Use It:** Fine-grain table salt dissolves easily, making it our go-to for most applications, both sweet and savory.
 ➤ **Shopping Tip:** Avoid iodized salt, which can impart a subtle chemical flavor.

Kosher Salt
Coarse-grain kosher salt is raked during the evaporation process to yield flaky crystals originally used for koshering meat. Unlike table salt, kosher salt doesn't contain any additives.
 ➤ **How We Use It:** Kosher salt is our top choice for seasoning meat. The large grains distribute easily and dry well to the meat's surface.
 ➤ **Shopping Tip:** The two major brands of kosher salt—Morton and Diamond Crystal—work equally well; however, their crystal sizes differ considerably (see below), and this makes a difference when measuring by volume.

Sea Salt
Sea salt is the product of seawater evaporation—a time-consuming, expensive process that yields irregularly shaped, mineral-rich flakes that vary in color but only slightly in flavor.
 ➤ **How We Use It:** Don't bother cooking with pricey sea salt; we've found that mixed into food, it doesn't taste any different than table salt. Instead, we use it as a "finishing salt," where its delicate crunch stands out.
 ➤ **Shopping Tip:** Texture—not exotic provenance—is the main consideration. Look for brands boasting large, flaky crystals such as Maldon Sea Salt.

BEYOND SEASONING: OTHER GOOD USES FOR SALT

Though most of the time we use salt for seasoning, it also comes in handy for a wide range of less obvious applications.

Dulling the Bitter Edge
Here's a little-known fact about salt: It masks bitterness. Our taste buds have many more receptors for bitterness than for the other four basic tastes (sweet, sour, salty, and umami), thus, bitterness can often overwhelm other flavors present in food. Salt works to block the taste of bitter compounds, thereby enhancing other, less prominent flavors. We add salt to everything from eggplant to coffee, where we've found that adding ½ teaspoon to the grounds for every full (72-ounce) pot reduced the perceived bitterness.

Making Garlic Paste
Garlic paste adds robust garlic flavor to dishes like stews and pastas. To ensure that the garlic's texture is smooth and unobtrusive, spritz the kosher salt over minced garlic and use the side of a knife to reduce the chopped garlic to a fine paste.

Greener Green Beans
Adding salt to the cooking water not only seasons green beans, but also helps them retain their bright color. When green vegetables cook in unsalted water, some of the chlorophyll molecules lose their color-enhancing magnesium atoms; this causes the vegetables to turn a dull shade of olive green. Salt stabilizes the chlorophyll, helping the vegetables stay greener. To maximize color retention without oversalting, use 1½ teaspoons of salt for every quart of water.

Tender Scrambled Eggs
Salt keeps egg proteins from bonding to each other, thereby producing a weaker protein chain and more tender scrambled eggs. We recommend adding ¼ teaspoon of table salt for every two eggs just prior to cooking.

Deep-Cleaning Cast Iron
The abrasive quality of kosher salt makes it a perfect cleanser for rusty or gummy cast-iron cookware. Our method: Warm ½ cup vegetable oil in a 5-minute microwave from heat and add ¼ cup kosher salt. Scrub salt into pan with paper towels until debris loosens. Rinse well and repeat if necessary.

How Much Salt Is in That Teaspoon?

Given its coarse crystal structure, kosher salt packs a lot less into each teaspoon when compared to table salt. In fact, even the volume measurements between the two major brands of kosher salt—Morton and Diamond Crystal—vary significantly. Here's how they measure up:

1 teaspoon table salt	1½ teaspoons Morton Diamond Crystal kosher salt	2 teaspoons Diamond Crystal kosher salt
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SALTING MEAT

Salting helps proteins retain their own natural juices and is the best choice for meats that are already relatively juicy and/or well-marbled. When salt is applied to raw meat, juices inside the meat are drawn to the surface. The salt then dissolves in the exuded liquid, forming a brine that is eventually reabsorbed by the meat.

➤ **Preferred salt:** Kosher
 ➤ **Benefits:** over brining. More convenient (no need to drain a large container of salt water in the fridge), won't thwart goal of crisp skin on poultry or well-browned crust on steaks, chops, or roasts since no moisture is added to their exterior.
 ➤ **Cons:** Takes longer than brining.

Brining Meat
Brining adds moisture, making it the best choice for lean proteins. Salt in the brine not only seasons the meat, but also promotes a change in its protein structure, reducing its overall toughness and creating gaps that fill up with water and keep the meat juicy and flavorful.
 ➤ **Preferred salt:** Table salt
 ➤ **Benefits:** over salting. Works faster than salting; can mullie lean cuts such as chicken breast or pork tenderloin juicier than salting since a brine, versus merely retaining moisture.
 ➤ **Cons:** Can inhibit browning on skin or meat exterior; requires finding a brining container in fridge.

SEASONING STRATEGIES

➤ **Salt Seasoning**
To avoid contaminating our salt box when seasoning raw meat, poultry, or fish, we mix fresh ground pepper and salt in a ratio of 1 part pepper to 4 parts kosher salt (it's ideal in a small bowl or ramekin). This way we can keep reaching into the bowl without having to constantly wash our hands.

➤ **Avoiding Oversalting**
Why do some recipes include a specific amount of salt and then request that you "season to taste"? It helps prevent oversalting. Because slight variations in ingredients and cooking times affect the saltiness of a dish, it's best to hold back on fully seasoning until the very end.

Salty Soak for Beans

Brining isn't just for meat. When you soak dried beans in salted water, they cook up with softer skins. Why? It has to do with how the sodium ions in salt interact with the cells of the bean skins. As the beans soak, the sodium ions replace some of the calcium and magnesium ions in the skins. Because sodium ions are more weakly charged than calcium and magnesium ions, they allow more water to penetrate into the skins, leading to a softer texture. During soaking, the sodium ions will only filter halfway into the beans, so their greatest effect is on the cells in the outermost part of the beans.

➤ **Brining Formula:** For 1 pound of dried beans, dissolve 3 tablespoons of table salt in 4 quarts of cold water. Soak the beans at room temperature for 8 to 24 hours. Drain and rinse them well before using.

COOK'S ILLUSTRATED 16

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2010 17

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In short, there are no breezy blurbs between these covers. More shiny cooking magazines support superficial scanning, but the editorial process at America's Test Kitchen goes beyond superficial in a test of time, objectivity, and painstaking detail. (Bloomstein 2021, chap. 5)

Staying in tune

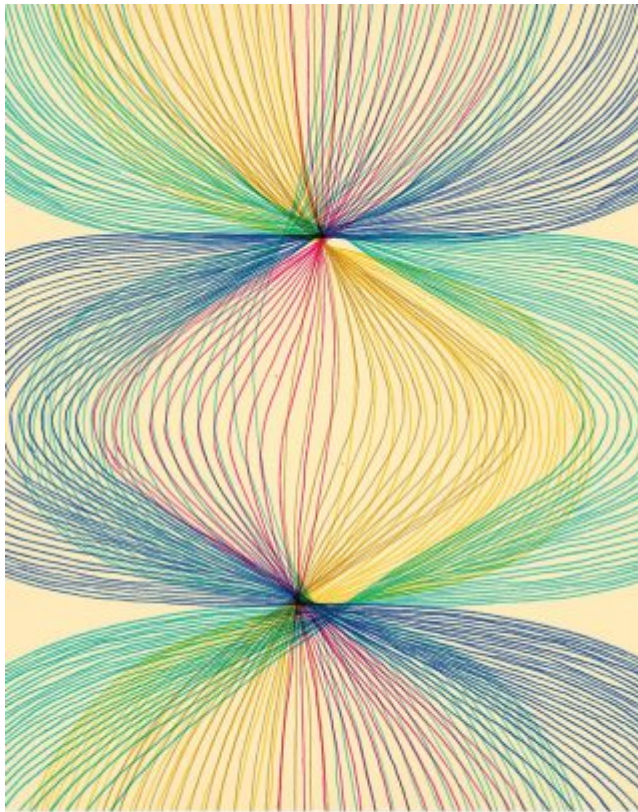
- Defining your identity
- Developing a specific voice
- Make sure that the brand is perceived like a person with specific properties

Example

"There's a difference between Mailchimp's voice and tone: we try to maintain a consistent voice, but we modulate our tone based on the context and customer."

When the context is more positive, content speaks to the user's excitement, curiosity, and relief. When the context is more negative, it's attuned to the user's frustration and stress. (Bloomstein 2021, chap. 2)

Governance



Digital Governance by Design

by LISA WELCHMAN Foreword by Chris Sinton

 Rosenfeld

Team structure and roles

[illegible]

Decision making

TABLE 11.3 EDITORIAL DECISION-MAKING

Stakeholder	Input	Decision
Communications	X	X
Office of the Provost (User Experience)	X	X
Faculties/Admin	X	

Make a distinction between digital production and digital governance. Your digital governance framework is just that—a framework for decision making. It should not be applied to day-to-day production.

For instance, just because your core digital team might be responsible for establishing editorial standards doesn't mean that they have to approve every piece of content that goes on the site. It means that the standards author is responsible for defining the substance of the editorial standard and helping to support an environment where those standards are easy to uphold.

Don't confuse the two. You might develop more tactical levels of governance, like content governance or taxonomy governance, but those are different, more production-focused activities than what have been described in this book. ([Welchman 2015](#), Chapter: At Last: Implementing the Framework)

Editorial standards should be crafted by those with expertise in Web writing and content strategy. Standards related to publishing and development should be written by those who understand Web content management systems technologies *and* how best to author content so that it can be effectively moved around and delivered by those systems. ([Welchman 2015](#), Chapter: Identifying Standards Authors)

Standards and accountancy

Decisions are made in a framework and can be justified and improved by referring to that framework

Implementation of standards

- Documentation of all standards
- CMS
- Guidelines
- Cooperation, employee training and education, continuous improvement

Editorial role of the content strategist

- Defines digital content strategy for all digital channels.
- Acts as a consultant for projects.
- Defines digital editorial standards.
- Oversees digital content strategy.
- Manages information architecture.

- Serves as a member of the decision making team.

([Welchman 2015, chap. 11](#))

Style Guides

A style guide helps writers understand your brand voice and content standards. It's a living, working guide to writing for your ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Function of style guides

Cataloguing and standardizing editorial style ([Bloomstein 2021, chap. 2](#))

A style guide can highlight content goals, terms to avoid, and common language mistakes. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Think of it like a car manual: you might not use it every day, but it's helpful to have around when questions come up. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

It's not a workbook. Treat your style guide as a reference, not a cure-all. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

It's an important tool that can improve your content, but you'll need to refine it over time. And you may need to make exceptions once in a while ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Existing style guides as foundations

For most teams, it makes sense to pick an existing style guide as a foundation and build on it. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Make the principles explicit

Include a few overarching content principles so your team understands the spirit of your style guide. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

If you have brand guidelines, design attributes, or general principles for your communications, you can use those as your content principles. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Dig into your company's personality and include tips for striking the right tone. If you made a This But Not That list (...), include it as a reference.

Style Guide and Content Types

List all of the content types your company publishes. Sort them alphabetically, or try to loosely reflect the order in which people encounter them on your website ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

If you have several guidelines for each of your content types, include a section for each entry. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Help writers see the subtle differences between the content types ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Must haves

include standards for capitalization, abbreviations, acronyms, and other words you want to emphasize. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Alphabetize your list of grammar and usage guidelines so people can skim to the right section. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

- Titles, headers, and subheaders
- Block elements, like block quotes, lists, or code snippets
- Image titles, caption length, alt text, and sizes

-
- Text styles: emphasis, italics, footnotes, and so on
 - Keywords to use, like bookshop, bookstore, and young readers
 - ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Wrap up your style guide with a brief list of resources for people who want to learn more about writing. Include a link to your foundational style guide, along with any other books or links that will help your team on a daily basis ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Communicating style guides

In some organizations, a presentation is a great way to talk about style ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

A lecture-style talk is useful for introducing yourself and your team, ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

A changelog, or list of recent changes, may be useful at the end of your style guide ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

The New York Times does a great job of announcing style changes on their After Deadline blog. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Editorial Culture and Education

Revision Processes

Editing is the single most important thing you can do to prepare your work for the web. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

Collaborative improvement

Call out style choices you made, particularly if there are exceptions to your style guide. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

Levels of editing and improvement

You can also avoid getting into back-and-forth discussions about sentence-level decisions by telling your team what kind of comments you want. We like to think in terms of high-level feedback and low-level feedback. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

High-level feedback: development editor

High-level feedback answers questions like these: • Is it clear? Does it make sense? • Does it flow? Are there places where you get lost? • Does it cover the most important topics? • Does anything insult your intelligence or go over your head? • Are there places where you need a story or an example? These are the questions that a developmental editor would answer when reviewing your work. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

Low-level feedback: copy editor

Low-level feedback is more granular and includes comments on convoluted phrasing, confusing messages, misspellings, and grammatical errors. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

Use the feedback as a reason to have a meaningful discussion about the text. If you're going to ignore several comments from someone, you may want to explain why you're not incorporating those changes. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

Watch out for recurring issues and themes as you edit. If you see a writer making the same mistake repeatedly or notice several people making a similar one, think about how to teach them a better way. Mention your style guide gently when it's appropriate. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

give it one more read-through to make sure your tone flows with your overall communication style ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

Is it clear? Is it friendly? Is it useful ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

writers will be more likely to accept your feedback if they feel like they're part of the editing process. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

if your style guide doesn't cover that recurring issue, it's probably time to update it. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

As an editor, your job is to help the reader understand what's being said, not to be the ultimate style enforcer. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

Continue developing your editorial process as you work through drafts and reviews. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 10](#))

Cultivation of authors with a certain style ([Bloomstein 2021, chap. 2](#))

Example: Facebook's flash meetings

Alicia says flash started early in the team's history: "We wanted to make sure we were all writing in the same voice and the easiest way to do this was to show each other work and talk about it." ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

We also participate in design critiques and collaborate with user experience research to make sure we get a wide range of feedback from people outside our team ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

You can do something similar with your colleagues. Set a time for them to meet with you individually and ask you style questions or work through a draft. You could also host group office hours where you help more than one person at a time. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

You may want to form an official group for people who are interested in editorial decisions. ([Fenton and Kiefer Lee 2014, chap. 11](#))

Literature

Bloomstein, Margot. 2021. *Trustworthy: how the smartest brands beat cynicism and bridge the trust gap*. Page Two Books.

Fenton, Nicole, and Kate Kiefer Lee. 2014. *Nicely Said: Writing for the Web with Style and Purpose*. Indianapolis: New Riders.

Welchman, Lisa. 2015. *Managing Chaos: Digital Governance by Design*. Brooklyn, New York: Rosenfeld Media (O'Reilly).