DIGITAL ABCS

BRAND AND STYLE VOICE

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## **1. Introduction / Overview**

**Purpose of this Document** This guide establishes the formal “brand system” for DigitalABCs: identity, voice, design, and usage rules. It ensures consistency across your online presence, marketing, training materials, software/UI products, social media, workshops, and external communications.

**Scope & Intended Audience** This brand guide is meant for:

* You (the founder) and any future collaborators
* Designers, developers, and UI/UX teams
* Copywriters, content creators, and marketing leads
* Trainers, guest speakers, and partners
* Anyone producing collateral, presentations, or branded assets

It covers visual identity, voice/tone, accessibility, templates, and best practices across platforms.

**How to Use This Guide**

* Use each section as your checklist when starting new content, UI, or design work.
* Always refer back to “brand voice” before writing or approving messaging.
* Use templates provided as a foundation — but adapt them within guidelines, not outside.
* As AI evolves, consider this as a living document — revisit and revise (see version control).

## **2. Brand Identity**

### **Mission, Vision & Values**

**Mission (Why we exist)** To empower everyday people, employees, and small businesses to harness AI, automation, and tech in ways that solve real problems (not just for show). We build tools, training, and systems that restore agency, confidence, and opportunity.

**Vision (What we want to become / enable)** A world where no one is left behind by the AI revolution: where communities, minorities, seniors, and small organisations can confidently adopt, adapt, and benefit from smart tech in their lives and work.

**Core Values**

* **Empowerment over prestige**: We aim to hand tools to users, not just dazzle them.
* **Pragmatism & simplicity**: Solutions should be helpful, not overwhelming.
* **Inclusivity & empathy**: Everyone matters; we meet people where they are.
* **Transparency & trust**: We are open about risks, limitations, and ethics.
* **Resilience & growth**: We lean into change, learn fast, and iterate.

### **Brand Voice & Personality**

Your brand voice is **relatable, confident, guiding, and human-first**. You balance warmth and competence, showing you’ve done the work, yet you’re always there to support—never condescend.

**Brand Personality Traits**

| **Trait** | **Description / How it manifests** |
| --- | --- |
| Coach-like | You talk with, not down to. You offer pathways, not lectures. |
| Grounded | You use real story, real metrics, real problems—not hype. |
| Approachable | You use plain language, analogies, and human tone. |
| Trustworthy | You discuss limitations, ethics, and data sensitivity. |
| Curious & future-forward | You lean into AI changes, test new ideas, and share insights. |

You might think of your voice as a trusted mentor: warm, truthful, and always pushing someone just one step beyond their current comfort zone.

### **Target Audience (Personas)**

1. **Mid-career employees** feeling micromanaged, undervalued, or frustrated; curious about automation but fearful of being exposed or replaced.
2. **Small business owners / solopreneurs** juggling many hats, skeptical of expensive “enterprise tech” but eager for lean tools.
3. **Return-to-work / career-shifters**, especially parents or caregivers — those facing a skills gap and intimidation from “tech speak.”
4. **Community learners, seniors, underrepresented groups** who have been excluded from technology or AI narratives, needing extra patience, trust, and clarity.

For each persona, your messaging should answer: “What’s in it for me? Is it safe? Can I trust this? How much time/learning is needed?”

## **3. Logo Usage**

**Primary & Secondary Logos**

* The **primary logo** is your full-color wordmark + icon (if you have one).
* The **secondary logo** might be a simplified icon or initials for tighter spaces (e.g. app icons, social profile).

(You should supply your vector logos — e.g. SVG, AI — so this guide can reference them exactly.)

**Clear Space & Minimum Size**

* Maintain a **clear space** around any logo equal to at least the height of the “T” in “Trish” (or the “D” in “DigitalABCs”) — no other elements should intrude.
* Minimum size (digital) for primary logo: ~ 120px width (or whatever ensures legibility). For print: ~ 25mm wide.
* For secondary or icon logo: maybe 32px (digital) / 10mm (print).

**Acceptable & Unacceptable Modifications** Acceptable:

* Scaling proportionally
* Using on approved brand colors (monochrome variant where needed)
* Using reversed (white) version on dark backgrounds

Unacceptable:

* Stretching, skewing, warping
* Changing color outside palette
* Adding drop shadows or glow effects not in brand spec
* Overlaying over busy photographic backgrounds without contrast
* Separating logo elements and using arbitrarily

**Logo Placement Guidelines**

* In web headers: top left (or center, where it visually balances)
* In footers: aligned left or centered
* In print: top left/center on cover, bottom right / left in interior
* On social media / profile images: use the secondary or icon version
* Always maintain consistent margining relative to edges or gutters

## **4. Color Palette**

### **Primary & Secondary Colors**

| **Role** | **Color Name** | **HEX** | **RGB** | **CMYK\*** | **Suggested Pantone / Spot** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Primary (Deep) | Navy blue | #1E3A8A | (30, 58, 138) | (78, 58, 0, 46) | PMS 2768 C (approx) |
| Primary (Accent) | Light blue | #60A5FA | (96, 165, 250) | (62, 34, 0, 2) | PMS 7687 C / 2925 C |
| Secondary (Rich) | Purple | #7C3AED | (124, 58, 237) | (48, 76, 0, 7) | PMS 2655 C / 2665 C |
| Neutral Dark | Black / charcoal | #000000 / #1F2937 | (0,0,0) / (31,41,55) | (0,0,0,100) / (44,25,0,78) | — |
| Neutral Light | Grey | #6B7280 | (107,114,128) | (16,11,0,50) | PMS Cool Gray 10 C (approx) |
| White | White | #FFFFFF | (255,255,255) | (0,0,0,0) | — |
| Accent (Sparingly) | Red | #DC2626 | (220,38,38) | (0,83,82,14) | PMS 186 C (approx) |

\*CMYK values are approximate conversions; always proof in print.

### **Color Usage Guidelines & Accessibility**

* Use **Navy Blue** or **Charcoal / Black** for primary text.
* Use **Light Blue** and **Purple** as accent / action colors (buttons, highlights, links).
* Use **Red** only for warnings, critical alerts, or strong emphasis (sparingly).
* Grey is for secondary text, neutral backgrounds, separators.
* White for backgrounds, clean containers, or text on dark backgrounds.

**Contrast & Accessibility**

* Ensure text meets **WCAG AA** contrast (minimum ~4.5:1 for normal text, ~3:1 for large text).
* For “button text on background” use combinations like white text on navy or purple, or navy text on white/light blue, ensuring high contrast.
* Avoid light grey on white, or light blue text on white in small sizes.
* Use color only as a cue; also include shape, icon or label (for colorblind users).

## **5. Typography**

### **Font Families**

* **Headings / Titles**: Inter (or a variant) — bold / semi-bold
* **Body Text / Paragraphs**: Inter (regular, medium)
* **Captions / Microcopy / Mono / Code / Data**: Roboto Mono (or another monospaced/tech-friendly font)

If Inter / Roboto Mono aren’t available (e.g. in print), fallback to system fonts like Helvetica / Arial and Courier New (for monospaced).

### **Font Weights & Sizes**

| **Element** | **Font** | **Weight** | **Size Range (desktop)** | **Line Height** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Main Page Headline | Inter | Semi-Bold / Bold | 48–64px | 1.2 |
| Section / Subhead | Inter | Medium / Semi-Bold | 28–36px | 1.3 |
| Body Text | Inter | Regular or Medium | 16–20px | 1.5 |
| Captions / Footnotes / Microcopy | Inter / Roboto Mono | Regular | 12–14px | 1.4 |

**Letter Spacing / Tracking**

* Body text: default (0 or slight negative in tight cases)
* Headings: slight positive tracking (e.g. +0.5px) for readability
* All caps labels / UI: +1–2px tracking

**Alignment & Rules**

* Paragraphs: left-aligned (ragged right), never fully justified (to avoid awkward spacing)
* Headings: left or center aligned, depending on layout
* Use consistent margins above/below headings (e.g. 1.5× line height)
* Use consistent hierarchy — don’t skip heading levels (H1 → H3)

## **6. Imagery & Photography**

### **Style & Tone of Images**

* Use **authentic, human-centric photography**: people, workplaces, small business settings, everyday interactions.
* Avoid overly staged, slick “tech ad” images with futuristic abstractions (unless you also include a human element).
* Use images that reflect diversity (age, gender, culture, ability).
* Lighting: natural or softly diffused light, warm tone (not cold/sterile).
* Color toning: mild desaturation or slight brand-color overlay (e.g. a tint of light blue) to harmonize with your palette.

### **Photo Composition Guidelines**

* Use leading space/negative space to overlay headings or CTAs.
* Rule of thirds, balancing human subjects with environment.
* Avoid busy backgrounds behind text overlays.
* For hero images, aim for focal point (person, hands at work, device) offset to one side.

### **Iconography & Illustration Style**

* Use **flat / semi-flat icons** with minimal line weight (2px or so), filled with solid brand colors or neutral greys.
* Icons should have consistent corner radius, stroke style, and padding.
* If you use illustrations, prefer simple line + block color style, minimal detail, consistent line widths, subtle shadow or layering, to match your UI aesthetic.
* Use icons/illustrations to support and clarify content (not just decorate).

## **7. Layout & Composition**

### **Grid Systems**

* Use a **12-column grid** for desktop, 8-column / 6-column or simplified layouts for tablets/mobile.
* Gutters: e.g. 24px (desktop), 16px (tablet), 12px (mobile).
* Margins: generous outer margins (e.g. 60px desktop, 32px tablet, 16px mobile) so content breathes.

### **Spacing & Margins**

* Use consistent spacing increments (e.g. base unit = 8px or 10px).
* Vertical rhythm: e.g., section padding top/bottom = 4 units (32px) or 5 units.
* Between texts, images, cards — use multiples of the base unit.
* Maintain minimum touch / click spacing (e.g. buttons at least 44x44px).

### **Responsive Design Considerations (Digital)**

* On mobile, collapse multi-column layouts to single column, with maintained padding.
* Priority content should appear above the fold (headline, call to action).
* Navigation should adapt (hamburger menu or bottom tab).
* Images should be responsive (srcset), scaled appropriately, lazy-loaded.
* Collapsible sections for long content.
* Ensure consistent visual hierarchy: headings shrink proportionally but remain legible on small devices.

## **8. Writing Style & Tone**

### **Grammar & Punctuation Rules**

* Use **Oxford comma** (e.g. “tools, training, and systems”).
* Use sentence case (capitalize first letter only, not all caps) in body copy.
* Use contractions when appropriate (“you’re,” “we’ll”) for conversational tone.
* Avoid ellipses “…” overuse; use em-dash (—) for emphasis.
* For lists: prefer bulleted lists; keep parallel structure.
* Use active voice (“We build tools,” not “Tools are built”).
* Avoid unnecessary jargon; where you must use terms like “algorithm,” “AI,” define them simply.

### **Preferred Terminology & Word Usage**

* Prefer **“tool / automation / assistant / workflow”** over “solution / platform / engine” (less hype).
* Use “you” and “we” rather than “the user / client.”
* Use “learn,” “apply,” “grow,” “optimize,” “simplify” — action words.
* Avoid “cutting edge,” “synergy,” “disrupt,” unless you immediately back it up with concrete example.
* Use “accessible,” “inclusive,” “practical” frequently.
* For negative outcomes or critiques, soften tone: “challenge,” “friction,” “gap,” not harsh words.

### **Voice & Tone Examples**

| **Situation / Format** | **Tone** | **Example** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Blog post introduction | Friendly, curious | “When I first tried using a generative AI assistant in my finance job, I was terrified — but what I found surprised me.” |
| Tutorial / training copy | Supportive, step-by-step | “Let’s walk through this together — start by opening… then click here.” |
| Email / welcome message | Warm, encouraging | “Welcome! You’re about to discover how to reclaim hours of your week. I’m here every step of the way.” |
| Service offering / landing page | Confident but humble | “We don’t promise magic; we promise tools you can use today to free up time and reduce stress.” |
| Error / warning messages | Calm, reassuring | “Oops — something didn’t quite work. Let’s try that again. If it persists, reach out and I’ll help.” |

### **Inclusive Language Guidelines**

* Use gender-neutral pronouns (“they/them,” avoid “he/she” when unclear).
* Avoid “crazy,” “insane,” “dumb,” or any disparaging/slang terms.
* Be mindful of ableist language (e.g. “crazy busy,” “blind spot”).
* Use person-first language (“person with disability” rather than “disabled person”) unless the community prefers otherwise.
* Be sensitive with analogies / metaphors tied to race, culture, religion, identity.
* Use diverse names, situations, and examples in stories and case studies.

## **9. UI Components (for digital products)**

### **Buttons, Forms, Navigation**

**Buttons**

* Primary button: navy background + white text / or purple + white (if contrast allows)
* Secondary button: white background with navy border + navy text
* Tertiary / link button: text only, underlined / colored in light blue
* Padding: e.g. 12px vertical × 24px horizontal (adjust per size)

**Forms / Inputs**

* Input fields: border 1px #6B7280 or #D1D5DB, focus state border in brand blue or purple
* Placeholder text: grey (#9CA3AF)
* Error state: border & text in red (#DC2626) + icon indicator
* Labels above fields (not inside), with consistent spacing

**Navigation**

* Top nav: logo, menu items, call to action (e.g. “Start Here,” “Get Tools”)
* Sticky nav / mobile hamburger menu
* Breadcrumbs (if deep pages)
* Side nav (if needed) for multi-step tools or courses

### **States (Hover, Active, Disabled)**

* Hover: lighten background color or darken border + subtle shadow
* Active / pressed: slight “pressed” visual (inner shadow or move 1–2px)
* Disabled: reduce opacity (e.g. 50 %) and disable pointer interactions
* Error / validation states: red outlines / text + icon + accessible error message

### **Animations & Transitions**

* Use smooth ease transitions (200–300ms) for hover, dropdowns, modals
* Avoid overly flashy or distracting moves — always optional (users can disable)
* Use micro-animations for feedback (e.g. button ripple, input checkmark)
* For longer processes / tools, include progress indicators or skeleton loads

## **10. Accessibility Guidelines**

### **Color Contrast Requirements**

* Maintain **4.5:1** contrast for normal text, **3:1** for large (≥18pt) text or bold (≥14pt)
* Buttons and interactive elements must meet contrast threshold
* Use tools (e.g. WebAIM contrast checker) to validate

### **Alt Text & Semantic Markup**

* All images must have **alt text** that describes function / meaning (not decorative)
* Use semantic HTML tags: <header>, <nav>, <main>, <footer>, <button>, <label> etc.
* Headings in correct order (H1 → H2 → H3)
* Use <aria-\*> attributes where needed (e.g. for dynamic content, live regions)

### **Keyboard Navigation & Screen Reader Compatibility**

* All interactive elements usable via keyboard (Tab, Enter, Esc)
* Visual focus indicators (outline) always visible
* Skip-links (e.g. “Skip to main”) for screen readers
* Ensure forms, modals, dropdowns are screen-reader friendly
* Test with screen readers (NVDA, VoiceOver) and browser dev tools

## **11. Templates & Examples**

### **Email Templates**

* **Welcome / onboarding email**: warm greeting, 2–3 steps, link to resources
* **Newsletter / update**: short intro, featured tip/tool, community spotlight, closing encouragement
* **Workshop / training invite**: outline agenda, who it’s for, what you’ll learn, how to join

*(You may create these in your email marketing tool with header, hero image, body blocks, CTA button, footer with logo and links.)*

### **Social Media Post Formats**

* **Carousel / multi-slide posts**: problem → insight → how-to → call to action
* **Quote / testimonial cards**: bold pull-quote on brand background
* **Mini tips / hacks**: single tip + visual or screenshot
* **Stories / Reels / Shorts**: behind-the-scenes, “a day in my life,” quick demos

Ensure consistent use of logo lockup (small) and brand colors in borders or overlays.

### **Presentation Slide Decks**

* Cover slide: logo + title + subheading
* Section slides: clear heading + brief intro
* Content slides: use bullet points, icons, images; avoid long paragraphs
* Closing slide: call to action, contact, social links
* Use consistent header/footer, margin, typography, color accent

### **Web Page Wireframes / Layout Examples**

* **Homepage (Hero section, problem/solution, features, testimonials, CTA)**
* **About / story page** (photo + narrative + mission + trust logos + CTA)
* **Services / offer page** (each service with icon, short description, “learn more”)
* **Tool / product interface** (sidebar nav, content area, feedback panel)
* **Blog / article layout** (title, hero image, body, author, related)

You can build wireframes in Figma / Sketch / Miro referencing the typography, grid, and spacing rules above.

## **12. Version Control & Updates**

* **Date of Last Revision:** 14 October 2025
* **Change Log:**   • 14 Oct 2025 — Initial version covering brand refresh with AI-era relevance  
     • (future entries — date, change summary, section)
* **Contact / Maintainer:** Trish Eastcott (Founder, DigitalABCs) – [email contact]  
   (If you grow to hire a brand lead or designer, add their contact here.)
* **Review Cycle:** Revisit this document every 6–12 months, especially as AI tools evolve and user feedback comes in.