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Technical • Creative • UX • Policies • Proposals • Educational • Editing & Proofreading

Table of Contents

This portfolio begins with a range of recent work authored while studying Technical Communication at Seneca Polytechnic. Then, it branches into grant proposals, internal policies, educational theatre scripts, cultural blog content, and other artifacts from my career as a writer.

About me

With a process that blends **exactitude, empathy**, and **adaptability**, my approach to technical communication has been shaped by:

- 10+ years as a "Top Rated" freelance writer and editor, working with over 120 clients globally
- Studying and teaching Philosophy while earning an MA in an elite graduate department
- Creative engagements as a writer, actor, musician, and teacher in the arts

Now, rigorous study of **Technical Communication at Seneca Polytechnic** has fine-tuned the skills gained from this range of experience. Whether I'm building a help center, designing educational experiences, or perfecting microcopy, my dedication to translating complexity into understanding shows throughout my portfolio.

Hypernomicon: User Guide

Using **Adobe FrameMaker**, I developed a user guide for Hypernomicon, an open-source academic research tool. Hypernomicon's UI draws heavily on terms and ideas from academic philosophy, so my background in the field was especially valuable.

Skills

- Adobe FrameMaker production
- Technical writing for academic software
- Information architecture & indexing
- Document design

Challenges

- Balancing terminology & plain language
- Consistency across long-form guide
- Mastering complex software on a deadline
- Resisting perfectionism

A selection from the 66-page Hypernomicon User Guide, which I wrote and designed myself. The full guide is available on my personal portfolio website: **dustinjallenwriter.com**

Creating a debate record

Debate records form the base all other Hypernomicon record types branch off from. All records connect back to debate records and their tab. When creating your debate records, write accurate descriptions that remain general enough to connect to all the positions grounded in that debate.

To create a debate record

1. Navigate to the **Problems/Debates** tab.
2. Click **New** in the **Sub-Debates** panel.

   A new debate record displays with its own ID number.
3. Enter a name for the debate in the **Name** field.
4. Click **Go:**.
5. Add a detailed description explaining the core question or issue in the description field.
6. Use the **Notes** section for additional context or personal observations.

Tip: In the record description, frame debates as questions rather than statements.

Collecting perspectives with Positions

Positions are the answers given and stances taken within debates and about problems. Your position records will capture a range of views about your topics of interest. Each position record contributes to your database's catalog of perspectives.

Creating a position record from the Positions tab

Debate records don't need to be created before entering a position, but every position belongs to a specific debate and should eventually link to it. The Problems/Debates tab includes a panel for entering positions, but you can also create a position record from the Positions tab.

To create a position record from the Positions tab

1. Navigate to the Positions tab.
2. Click **Create New**.
3. Enter a name for the position in the Name field.
4. Fill in the record description with the position's core claims.

Documenting discourse with Problems/Debates

The Problems/Debates tab centers your database at the heart of philosophy: its core problems and debates. This tab and its records form the foundation for your Hypernomicon database. Create records for the central debates in your research area.

Note: Records in the Problems/Debates tab are called "debate records."

Getting to know the Problems/Debates tab layout

The Problems/Debates tab starts with the All Debates record. From here, you'll add debate records related to your research. See *Figure 2.1* for the tab's layout and *Table 2.2* for available user interactions.
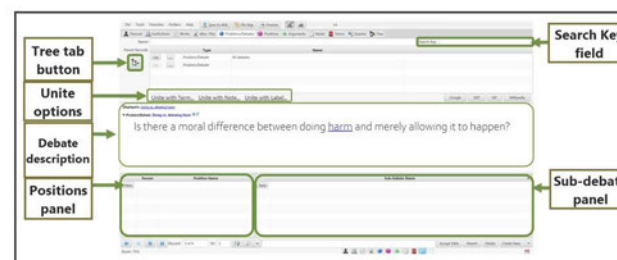

Figure 2.1: Components of the Problems/Debates tab

Some actions you can take in the Problems/Debate tab include:

UI Element	Actions
Name field	Add or change the name of the debate record.
Tree tab button	Navigate to the Tree view to see the debate in context of other records.
Unite options	Unite this record with a Term, Note, or Label.
Record description	Describe the philosophical problem/debate.
Positions panel	Click New to create a new position, Click Go to navigate to a related position.
Search Key field	Enter key terms from the record description as search keys.
Sub-debate panel	Click New to add a debate record, click Go to navigate to a related sub-debate,

Table 2.2: UI elements and their actions in the Problems/Debates tab

Jimmy's Coffee: Help Center

To develop a functional help center for Jimmy's Coffee, my colleagues and I set out on a four-stage iterative process involving user-testing, Figma prototyping, and translating our most popular prototype features into a real website using **HTML, CSS, and JS**. It was a collaborative effort, but I took the lead on authoring the code, writing button microcopy, and designing the interactive navigational elements for the site.

Skills

- UX Research
- Web design and coding
- Microcopy and interaction design
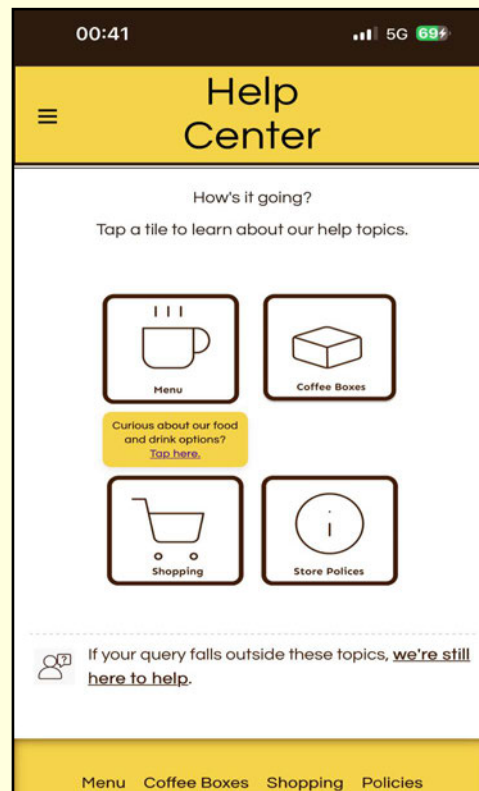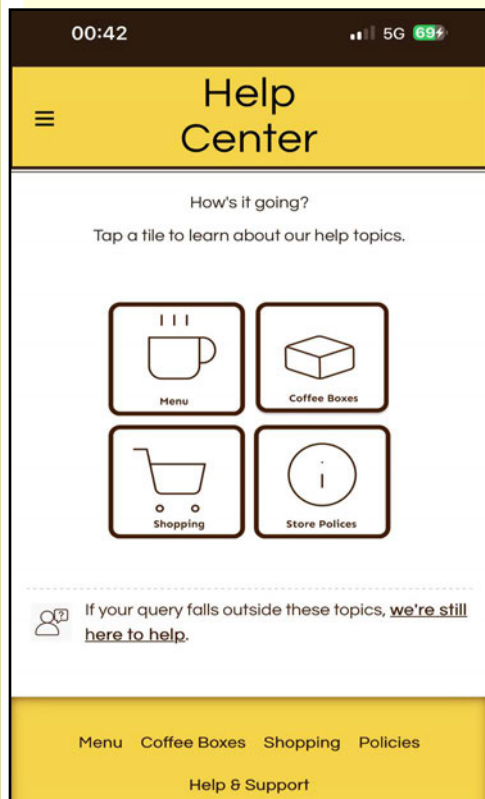- Mobile-first responsive design

Challenges

- Translating ambitious prototypes into code
- Improving research methods on the fly
- Conflicting results
- Balancing flexibility and rigidity

Here's a three-tap journey through the site, ending at the menu page.

Multiple phases of user testing led to this *mobile-first, responsive, and button-based* UI.

Access and interact with the help center through **my portfolio website**.

Menu

| Drink Menu | Baked Goods | Bean Options | Promotions and Offers | Allergen Info |

Drinks

Choose from our always available menu of tasty beverages!

Hot Drinks	8oz	12oz	16oz
Brewed Coffee	2.50	2.75	3.00
Latte	4.10	4.50	4.75
Cappuccino	4.10	4.50	4.75
Flat White	4.10	4.50	4.75
Jimmy's Very Own Mocha	2.50	2.75	3.00
Hot Chocolate	2.50	2.75	3.00
Tea	2.50	2.75	3.00
Tea Latte	2.50	2.75	3.00
Chai Matcha Latte	2.50	2.75	3.00

Espresso	Single	Double	Triple
Americano	2.50	3.25	4.00
Macchiato	3.00	3.50	4.10
Cortado	3.25	3.75	4.15

Check out our rotating seasonal menu.

Hot Seasonal Drinks	8oz	12oz	16oz
Lavender Mocha	5.75	6.00	6.25
Lavender Hot Chocolate	5.25	5.50	5.75
Honey Cinnamon Latte	5.75	6.00	6.25

Cold Seasonal Drinks	12oz	20oz
Cold Brew	4.05	4.65
Iced Tea	3.65	4.00

Modifiers

Help Center (screen 1)

00:42   5G 69

Help Center

How's it going?

Tap a tile to learn about our help topics.

Menu   Coffee Boxes

Shopping   Store Polices

If your query falls outside these topics, **we're still here to help.**

Menu   Coffee Boxes   Shopping   Policies

Help & Support

Help Center (screen 2)

00:41   5G 69

Help Center

How's it going?

Tap a tile to learn about our help topics.

Menu   Coffee Boxes

Curious about our food and drink options? Tap here.

Shopping   Store Polices

If your query falls outside these topics, **we're still here to help.**

Menu   Coffee Boxes   Shopping   Policies

Notion Knowledge Bases:

DICE.fm's Style Guide

I've learned to use Notion as a living documentation platform for building and hosting internal knowledge bases. I currently provide this service for a local immersive escape game company, Secret City Adventures, but those are confidential internal docs. But I also showcased the approach on a collaborative project with a colleague: creating an internal style guide for writers at DICE.fm.

Skills

- Database architecture
- Content inventory and audit
- Style guide development
- Collaborative documentation systems

Challenges

- Reverse-engineering a style guide
- Balancing best practices & brand voice
- Teaching a platform to unfamiliar staff
- Version control in collaborative context

To navigate the DICE.fm Style Guide, head to my portfolio website.

If you're curious about these internal knowledge bases (they're pretty cool), reach out to me at **dustinjallen.writer@gmail.com**.

DICE

Appendix B: Converting business language to fan-first style

This *Corporate to DICE Voice Transformation guide* shows some examples of conversions from formal business language to DICE's energetic, fan-first communication style.

Corporate Language	DICE Fan-First Style
Your transaction has been processed successfully.	You're all set! Tickets secured.
We regret to inform you that the event has been cancelled.	Sorry, this show's been cancelled. Here's what happens next.
Additional information can be found in our FAQ section.	Got questions? We've got answers in our Help Centre.
Please allow 5-7 business days for refund processing.	Your money's on its way back to you. Should take 5-7 days.
Due to high demand, tickets are currently unavailable.	Wow, that was fast! This show's sold out. Join the Waiting List?
You will receive an email notification when your ticket has been successfully purchased by another customer.	If your ticket is snapped up by another fan, we'll send you an email to let you know.
Funds will be credited to your account within 5 to 10 business days.	The money should hit your account in 5–10 working days.
If you require any further assistance prior to account deletion, please contact our customer service team.	If there's anything we can do to help before you take the plunge and delete your account, please send us a message.
Refund Processing Timeline	How long till your refund lands

💡 **Next topic:** Appendix C: Date abbreviations

DICE

1. Editorial standards

💡 Any content you write for DICE should strike a casual and fan-first tone. Follow these basic principles to make sure you're contributing to consistency across DICE's user-facing documentation, internal reference documents, and system text.

Grammar and punctuation rules

Proper grammar and correct punctuation absolutely matter, but sometimes the lines blur and subjective calls need to be made. At DICE, we standardise a few of these by staying consistent with active voice phrasing and passing on the Oxford Comma.

Commas

The Oxford Comma is the (optional) comma that sometimes comes before the final "and" or "or" in lists. At DICE, we use the Oxford comma. It's a hot debate, but we know we're on the right side of it.

- Use the Oxford comma.

  ✅ DO: ... artists, bands and venues.

  ❌ DON'T: ... artists, bands, and venues.

Barkerville Historic Site

Being part of Western North America's largest historic site for almost 10 years provided opportunties. I began as a street performer, writing my own monologues. In 2015, I was tasked with replacing the most popular educational-theatrical program on the site. My script went on to receive the "Visitor's Choice" designation, awarded by the CEO of after tabulating audience feedback cards. In 2017, I wrote another show. In 2020, I began writing grant proposals and internal policies for the company (still in effect to this day). One grant proposal secured $630,000 in funding for a foundation for the historic theatre. Funny story about that grant. Ask me some time.

Skills

- Educational content development
- Creative writing
- Adding value to a company over time
- Research (archival, bureaucratic)

Challenges

- Writing policies with few reference points
- Applying for big money, competitive grants
- Adapting to new responsibilities
- Never knowing what need I'd fill next

My **portfolio website** contains four full documents from my time at Barkerville:

- An occupational work safety policy

- Two proposals that turned into successful grants that brought in over $630,000 for the site

- The full script for the award-winning courthouse program

**Meeting WorkSafeBC Requirements:
Occupational Road Safety**

When used for work purposes, a vehicle is a workplace. The Workers Compensation Act (WCA) and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) set out obligations that apply to work-related driving. Items below list applicable sections, state pertinent portions of each one, and provide examples of work practices and processes that employers, supervisors, and workers are responsible for following.

Employer Responsibilities - Drivers

The OHSR identifies employer responsibilities to ensure that only qualified, competent workers operate vehicles for work, and to make sure they operate vehicles in accordance with applicable laws.

Competency of operators

OHSR 16.4

Regulation:

(1) A person must not operate mobile equipment unless the person has:

a. Received adequate instruction in the safe use of the equipment, in accordance with Barkerville's workplace driver and passenger orientation & training materials and safe work procedures.

b. Demonstrated to a qualified supervisor or instructor competency in operating the equipment.

Therefore:

Before allowing a worker to drive for work, they must:

- Hold valid and class-appropriate driver's licence for the vehicle(s) they are assigned to drive.
- Receive a briefing on safe use of the vehicle qualified supervisor or instructor.
- Complete an initial assessment to confirm the worker has the necessary driving skills to safely operate the vehicle.

It is management's responsibility to keep records of workers who have demonstrated competency and are authorized to drive for work.

Brief Project Description

Barkerville's Theatre Royal has been hosting seasons of live theatre for over 150 years. As the building in which cultural and heritage presentations are centralized at Barkerville Historic Town & Park- the largest heritage site in western North America- the theatre is the most well-used building in Barkerville; every year, the structure is home to special events, presentations, travelling delegations, big-ticket performers, and a full season of entertaining, educational, and accessible live theatre created and performed by Barkerville's own team of museum theatre professionals and cultural storytellers.

Maintaining and revitalizing the building is of utmost importance for delivering on Barkerville's mandate to strengthen cultural heritage in its traditional and globally-renowned methods of combining stage arts and history in a way that visitors of all ages and cultural backgrounds can appreciate, enjoy, and learn from.

Although the first Theatre Royal was built in 1868, the newest iteration has been standing since 1937. As of right now, there are five major areas of improvement that will be required for Barkerville's Theatre Royal to continue to optimally fulfill its purpose and grow in utility and functionality; improvements are needed with the foundation, lighting, concession area, and seating, as well as accessibility upgrades required of the entrance-way and its public washroom.

Detailed List of Project Works

Lighting System Assessment and Implementation:

The current lighting is energy inefficient and hazardous. A proper engineering assessment of roof-structure is required to determine how a lighting system can best and most safely be managed. Then, a state of the art lighting system that protects the building from fire and protects workers from other potential safety hazards must be installed.

Foundation:

Requires improvement. Eventually, structural heritage assets such as the Theatre Royal require serious foundation work to ensure the long-term viability and protection of the asset. The Theatre Royal is due for this, and moving forward on this immediately is in the best interest of the site, province, and building in terms of both financial priority and maintaining structural and historical integrity.

Seating Area:

Current benches for seating are outdated, poorly designed for safety, and most importantly, they are not easily moved or reconfigured. Due to the need for unpredictable seating-plan re-arrangement in a COVID-afflicted reality, seating that is more flexible and contemporary will be required.

Concession area:

Substandard in terms of safety, practicality, and aesthetics: generally, outdated and in need of improvement.

Entrance & Washroom Accessibility:

Re-design must be done to ensure modern standards of accessibility and inclusivity, which allow for people with mobility issues to safely and conveniently access the building and its amenities.

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*The Trial of James Barry for the Murder
of Charles Morgan Blessing*

*Written by Dustin J Allen
Dramaturgy by Dave Brown
Adapted from the Cariboo Sentinel's court reporting*

*The spectators have arrived in the courthouse. A court*

Personal writing projects
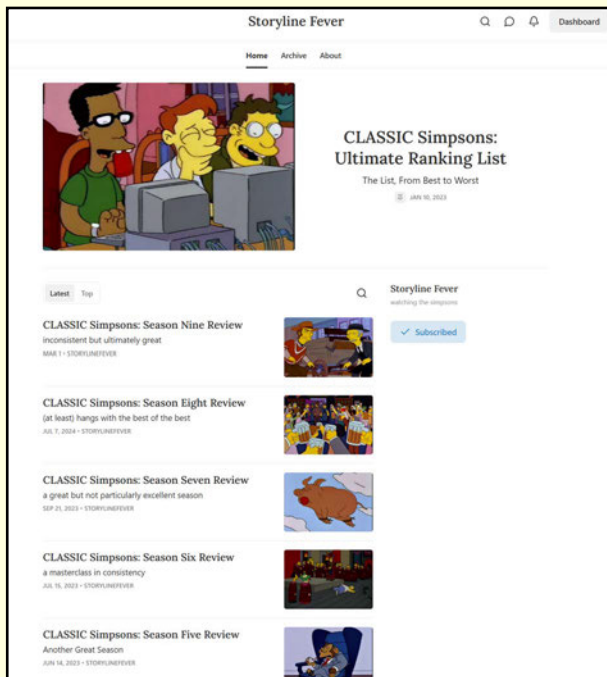
On Substack, I am ~10 seasons into my season-by-season, episode-by-episode analysis of The Simpsons. This all started because someone asked me what my favourite episode was and I couldn't answer.
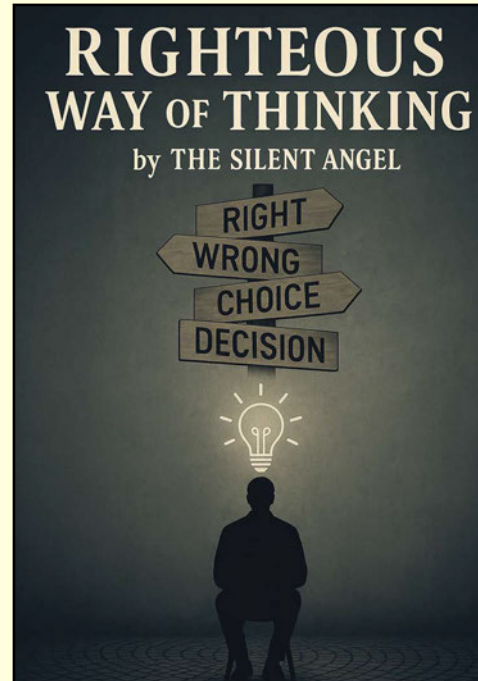
As an Adult Literacy volunteer at West Neighbourhood house, I work with adults learners to help them achieve their reading and writing goals. This is a religious memoir I typed out while he dictated, and then I provided the technical skills to design the document.
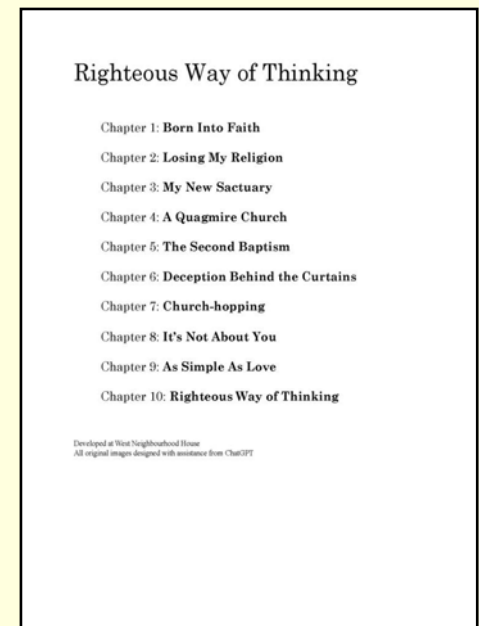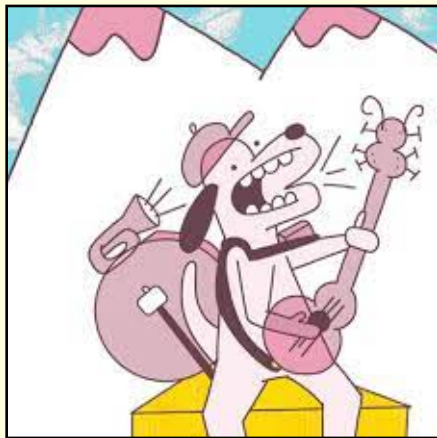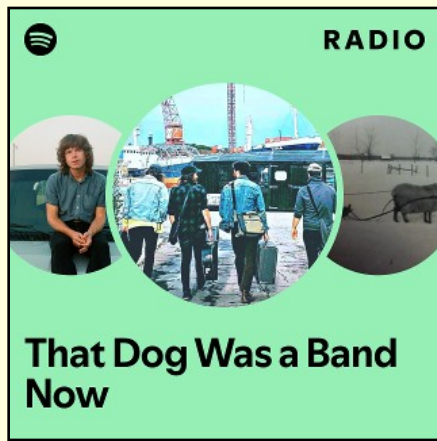
I've been the songwriter, guitarist, and lead singer for That Dog Was A Band Now, a Swedish-Canadian alt-folk band, for over a decade. We're not as active as we once were but you can check us out wherever you stream music.
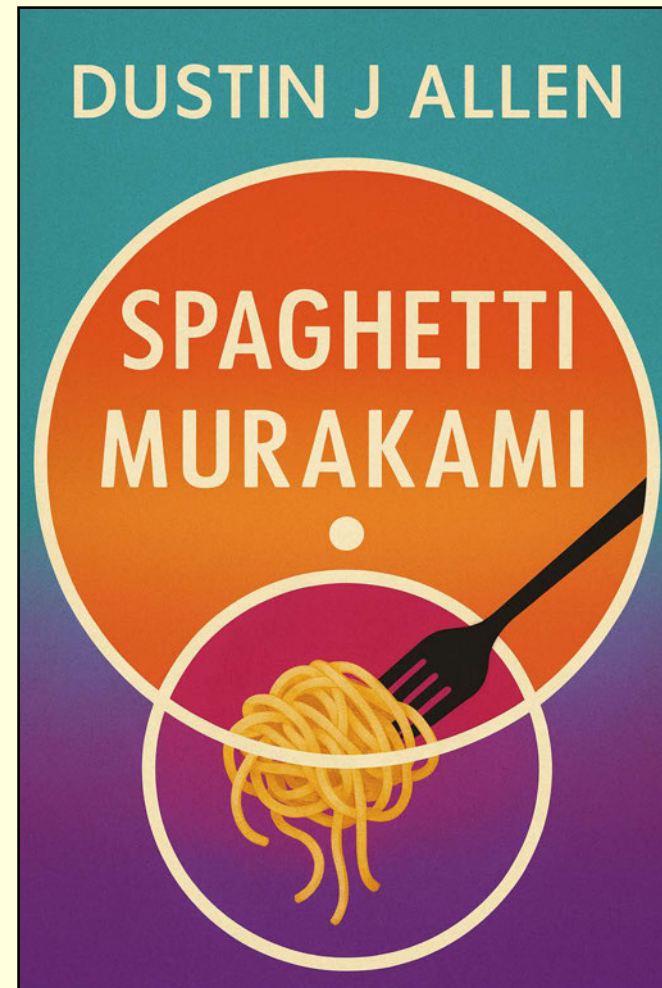
I'm deep in the thick of writing and designing a literary cookbook. It's based on the works of the Japanese metaphysical fiction writer Haruki Murakami, featuring some of the dishes that appear in his works. *Spaghetti Murakami* coming soon.

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