

UX Writing Worldwide Report

Research about the
maturity of the UX
Writing





Agenda

1. About the research
2. What is UX Writing?
3. The origins
4. UX Writers profile
5. The Maturity of UX Writing in the world
6. A look into the future
7. References

About the research

Methodology



Desk research

[View references](#)



Quantitative research

110 online surveys



Qualitative research

6 in depth interviews with UX Writing experts

Methodology

Survey

Only in 72 hours during May 2020, we reached out **110 writing professionals** around the world (as show in graph in the next slide).

Among all respondents, **86 are currently working in UX Writing field**. The remaining 24, have knowledge or interest about the field, but they are currently working in product design and marketing.

The data shown in this report takes into account the people that today are working as UX Writers.

Methodology

Survey responses

28%

North America

USA &
Canada



29%

Europe

France, Holland, Italy, Spain,
Sweden, Switzerland & UK



17%

Asia

India, Israel, Singapore &
Thailand



22%

Latin America

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico & Perú



4%

Oceania

Australia



Methodology

In depth interviews

During May 2020 we ran **6 in-depth interviews** with top **UX Writing experts**.

Our goal was to validate the data in the survey, and better understand the role of the UX Writer in the companies around the world.



Jane Ruffino

- Content Design Lead and co-founder at *Character*
- Doktorand at Södertörn University
- Course Director of UX Writing (Berghs School of Communication)

Based in Stockholm, SWEDEN



Kinneret Yifrah

- Microcopy Expert & Voice and Tone Designer at *Nemala*
- Author of “Microcopy: The complete Guide”
- Founder and manager of the Israeli microcopy community

Based in Haifa, ISRAEL



Torrey Podmajersky

- UX Writer at *Google*
- Author of “Strategic Writing for UX”
- Co-founder and Product Designer at *Pilda Pill Sorter*
- Instructor at the *School of Visual Concepts*

Based in Seattle, USA

Methodology

Deep interviews

During May 2020 we ran **6 in-depth interviews** with top **UX Writing experts**.

Our goal was to validate the data in the survey and better understand the role of the UX Writer in the companies around the world.



Michael J. Metts

- Senior UX Architect and Manager (Conversation Design) at *Allstate*
- Co-Author of “Writing is Designing”
- Photographer

Based in Berwyn, USA



Kathryn Strauss

- Founding Partner at *Progressive Disclosure*
- Senior UX Writer at *Square*
- *San Francisco UX Writers Meetup* Founder
- *UX Writing Leadership Guild* Founder and administrator

Based in San Francisco, USA



Mario Ferrer

- Senior UX Writer at *Skyscanner*
- *UX Writers Spain* Community Founder
- UX Writing Lecturer at SHIFTA by ELSAVA and LCI (Barcelona)

Based in Barcelona, SPAIN

What is UX Writing?



A growing interest

Companies and designers start to see words as a critical part of making any experience successful.

Since 2015, organisations started paying more and more attention to the words in the design process of digital products and services.

Before, there was a struggle to deliver the interface as clearer as possible with just a few words. The result, created by visual designers, was a mix between copywriting and technical writing without tone.

In the last 5 years, the importance of writing has been an epiphany, because organizations and designers realized that content helps to design clear and meaningful experiences.

– Expert says

“ Language grounds humans in their common bonds. We are social creatures, and we use words, signs, and symbols to communicate. It is a very ancient practice.

Kathryn Strauss

“ Words are half of the design that people use.

Torrey Podmajersky

“ My superpower is Hebrew: is to take the language, play with it, choose exactly the few right words and make a sentence that says everything.

Kinneret Yifrah

The importance of the job title

There are many different job titles for quite a same role.

62% of respondents call themselves UX Writer, followed by Content Strategist, Content Designer and UX Copywriter.

This title is so versatile that depending on the country, Company or team it may have one name or another(e.g. in Israel it is called Microcopy, and professionals not only write but also do strategy, research and testing).

The importance of the job title

The difference between Content Design and UX Writing

From a semantic point of view, **Content Design and UX Writing stay under the umbrella of Content Strategy**, a term that became particularly common in web development since the late 1990s which could be described as “planning for the creation, publication, and governance of useful, usable content”.

On the other hand, content strategy is not only about writing, text and voice, but all kind of content, including images, animations, video, sound etc.

– Expert says

“ We need to sort of “ux writer”
our own field.

Jane Ruffino

“ I don’t really care what somebody
calls me, but having lots of names
for the same role makes people
understand it in different ways.

Marrio Ferrer

The importance of the job title

The parallelism with UX, it is what gives value to the naming

The experts consider that despite **the job title**, **a common name could help to define what professionals are doing**, and their added value to the teams.

The use of the acronym “UX” is a sort of manifesto: like UX, **UX Writing focuses on users, creating experiences that are relevant to the people needs. Content helps them to walk through products and services, and reach their goal in a simple, intuitive and usable way.**

– Expert says

“ I think UX Writing is a pretty great description, is kind of a parallel to UX designer, it’s like what do you do if you’re focused on the words.

Micheal J. Metts

“ I prefer the term UX Writer to other (also valid) terms to describe what I do, because I try to keep the focus on the user and their unique voyage across our product and services.

Kathryn Strauss

An agreed definition

Through the deep interviews we run, we tried to define this role based on different points of view:

UX Writing is writing for the user

Through words, UX Writers make things more simple, so that users don't have to effort a lot when they use a digital product.

UX Writing is design

UX Writers design experiences through words. UX Writing is a vision that brings more value to solve problems in a design process.

UX Writing is the way the product talks to users

UX Writers communicate from the design itself, from the entity of the product.

Our Definition

As a conclusion, incorporating the three different naming, a good definition of UX Writing may look like this:

Through words design, UX Writing engages a dialogue between the product and the user, to create a fluent and useful experience.

– Expert says

“ By giving things a name, we declare their function, their purpose, their meaning and we reinforce it every time we use it.

Jane Ruffino

“ A UX writer is a designer that uses words to design an interaction. We use UX design tools and processes and we apply them to words, to generate a better experience.

Mario Ferrer



The Origins of UX Writing

From technical writing to UX writing

It has been a shift, from using the words to write instructions to using them to thrill

UX Writing was born as companies need to use words to fix product problems.

Early UX writers are people who can explain abstract concepts with very simple words, so the framework of technical writers (**the practice of documenting processes, such as software manuals or instructional materials**) could be inspiring to define this new job profile.

The first companies that started hiring this kind of professionals were the big tech ones (like Microsoft, Apple, Google) and banks that, at a given time, understood the **product was failing due to the wrong use of words**, and of course companies that could financially afford the recruitment of a new job profile, finding the value in it.

UX Writers profile



The Experience as UX Writers

UX Writing is still a new field

Despite their great previous career, the 46% of participants in the survey have only worked for 1 to 3 years as UX writers, and 13% for less than a year.

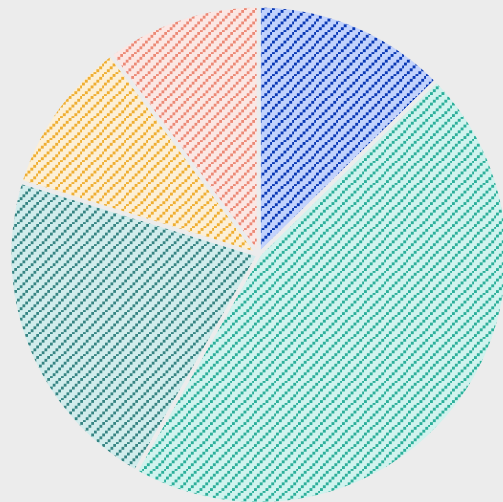
This is a sign that it is still a new field and companies are starting to hire these professionals. But it is also a sign that there is a very **clear distinction between years of junior and senior experience.**

The Experience as UX Writers

UX Writing is still a new field

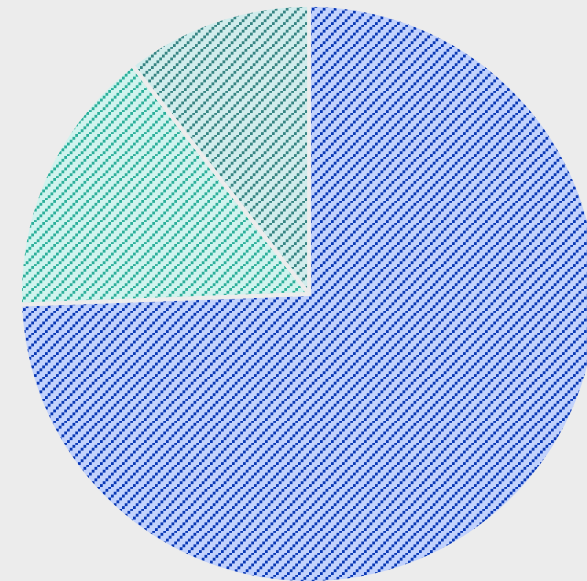
EXPERIENCE AS UX WRITERS

- ✦ Less than 1 year
- ✦ 1 to 3 years
- ✦ 3 to 5 years
- ✦ 6 to 10 years
- ✦ more than 10 year



LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE

- ✦ Juniors and middles
- ✦ Seniors
- ✦ Managers and Directors

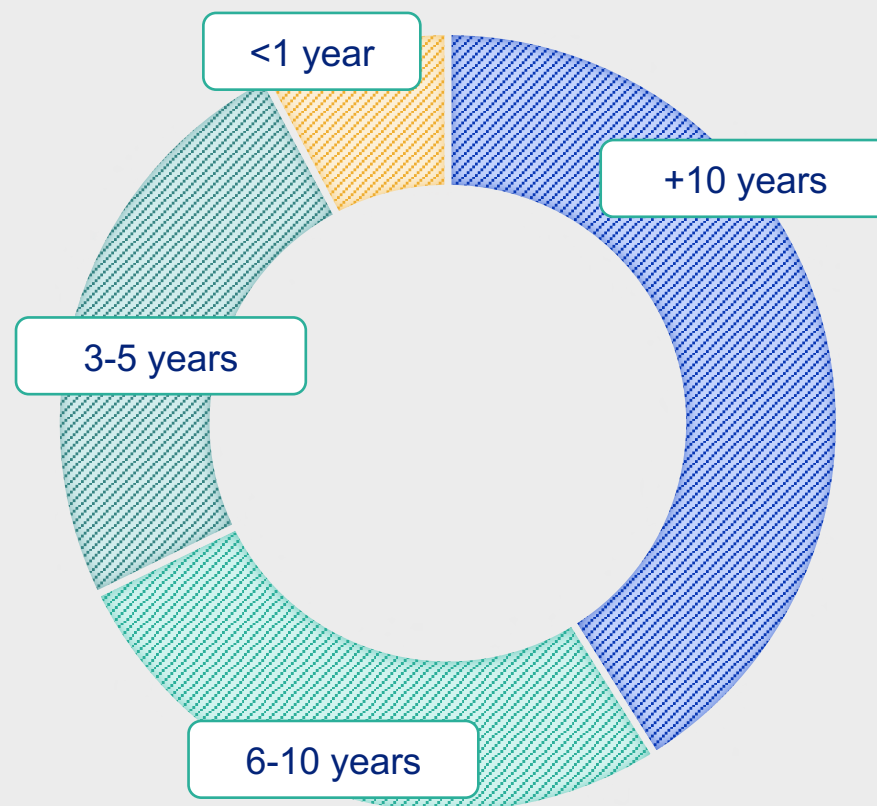


Experience in the job market

Most of professionals that start working as UX Writers, have already a long previous career path behind them

Among the professionals that are currently working as UX Writers, **37% have more than 10 years of overall work experience, 24% between 3 to 5 years, 22% 6 to 10.**

On the other hand **7% have less than 1 year of job experience**, which could confirm that the interest for this new job role is increasing.



The background

Most of UX Writers have a background in Communication, Advertising or Journalism

49% of participants that are currently working as UX Writers have a degree in Communication, Advertising or Journalism.

This means that due to the rise of the digital transformation in many industries, the disciplines related to communication have gradually found more space in this environment and have increasingly getting closer to products and services.

Product companies have started to hire experts in communication in order to explain complex technical concepts in an easy way, making the role have more weight in design processes of digital products and services.

– Expert says

“ When I first learned about UX, I thought this is cool, because you’re connected to people and that’s what I liked about journalism.

Michael J.Metts

“ "UX writing is the process of creating the language that gets people through [the UX].

Torrey Podmajersky

The background

There is no ideal background to be an UX Writer. The value stays in diversity.

- However, just as it happened in UK, people who start this professional career come from many **different academic backgrounds**:

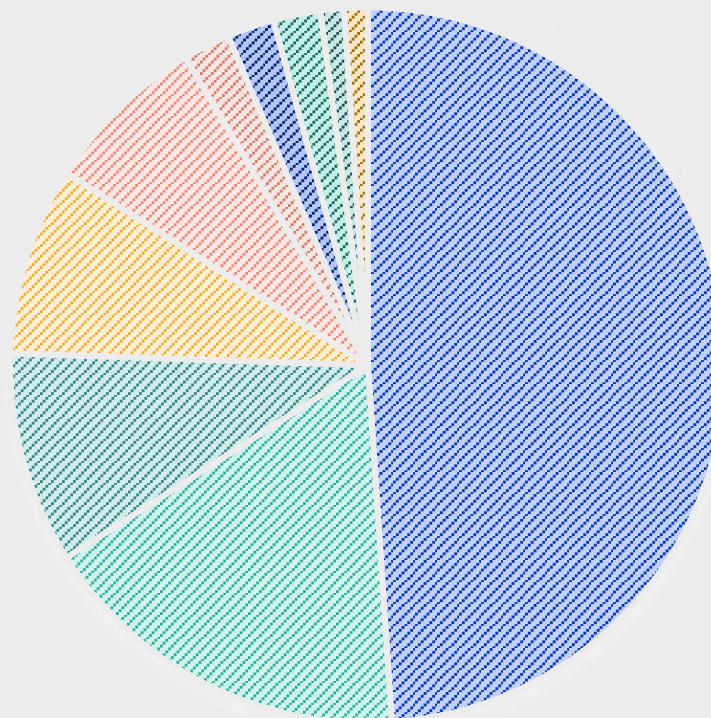
17% Languages, Linguistic, Translation, Literature / 10% Design / 9% Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy / 7% Science / 8% Other (History, Politics, Music, Theatre, MBA, Economics, Law)

Embracing diversity and promoting inclusion in teams, gives more richness of ideas, variety of point of view and value that helps the product to be usable by a higher amount of people.

The background

There is no ideal background to be a UX Writer. The value stays in diversity.

- ✦ communications, advertising, journalism
- ✦ Languages, linguistics, translation, literature
- ✦ Design
- ✦ Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy
- ✦ Science
- ✦ History, Politics
- ✦ Music & Theatre
- ✦ MBA
- ✦ Economics
- ✦ Law



– Expert says



I'm always amazed at how many different profiles and how many different places UX Writers come from.

Torrey Podmajersky

Juniors & Seniors

The strategic vision of the design process is what differentiates seniors from juniors

Juniors are hired mostly due to their writing skills, but it is crucial for them to gain knowledge in interaction and design processes.

To grow as professionals, they should have in mind how could they benefit the company, the team and last but not least, the users they're handling.

Juniors & Seniors

Senior UX Writers also act as a leaders in the experience design lifecycle

Seniors have the ability to align teams around the best strategy to satisfy business requirement and leverage the research to get to valuable solutions.

They have the capabilities to influence the product management and impact leaders at all levels of the company, making them think differently about product problems. The next step for them should be the design manager or director.

– Expert says

“

I see the career path for UX writers is to get into design leadership, in a big organization's design team and not be thought of as just the writer.

Michael J. Metts

The background

There's a lack of academic offering in UX

Writing

Among the minority that did some specific training, attend the most famous courses organized by the “UX Writing Collective”, with students from all over the world.

Likewise there are few universities that offer some complementary, specialized studies, also there are more online courses available, and international conferences that guide new students towards this profession.

The background

The large majority of UX Writers are self-taught

71% of professionals that answered our survey became UX Writers with personal research and studies (mostly books, articles and communities).

However, homologated training that helps a student's complementary degree (such as a postgraduate or master's degree) would add value to junior user experience writers as companies would more easily identify, trust, and accept this new role.

What UX Writers need?

The basics of interaction design, what kind of process will people go through, what is end journey of completing any task or goal and what are the interactions that gets in there. Those interaction principles are fundamental to design conversations.

Torrey Podmajersky

Online communities and conferences

Sharing is caring... and learning

Online communities and conferences about content play a crucial role for learning: blogs, social media, discussions and events are some of the best ways to stay ahead with UX Writing.

There is a lot of disclosure of UX Writing related to content: people are happy to connect with each other, share and exchange ideas, discuss and get resolutions to their problems.

Sharing knowledge is also useful for organizations. They have the opportunity to see great work done and get aware of the words in products and services.

The power of communities

Our Facebook group is a main tool for us to get into every company, at least in their conscious. At least they know about it, they know what it means.

Kinneret Yifrah

Online communities and events

MeetUp Communities

What	Where	Members
Content Strategy Seattle (MeetUp)	Seattle, USA	2718
UX Content Design NYC (MeetUp)	New York, USA	1496
UX Writers BCN (MeetUp)	Barcelona, Spain	1372
Stockholm UX Writing and Content Design	Stockholm (Sweden)	848
{ida workshop (MeetUp)	Santiago, Chile	844
UX Writers Mexico (MeetUp)	Ciudad de Mexico (Mexico)	706
UX Writing – Rio de Janeiro (MeetUp)	Rio de Janeiro (Brasil)	577
Content Strategy Lausanne (MeetUp)	Lausanne (Switzerland)	441
Microcopy and UX Writing Amsterdam (MeetUp)	Amsterdam (Holland)	432
UX Writers Paris (MeetUp)	Paris	319
UX Writing and Content Design (Bern & Zurich)	Zurich (Switzerland)	282
UX Content Strategy MTL	Montreal (Canada)	239

Online communities and events

Online Communities

What	Members	Link
UX Content Slack	8093	
Microcopy Israel (Facebook Group)	13000	www.facebook.com/groups/UXMicrocopy
Microcopy & UX Writing (Facebook Group)	11.289	https://www.facebook.com/groups/microcopy/

Online communities and events

Events

What	Where	When	Link
Se habla español	online	April 23, 2020	https://bit.ly/2BDJ92s
UX Writer Conference	online	June 9-10, 2020	https://bit.ly/3gYn0fs
Sofaconf (Content Strategy)	online	June 25, 2020	https://bit.ly/2BKdgp6
Design & Content	online	July 15-16, 2020	https://bit.ly/2AKLIVw
UX Salon	Tel-Aviv (Israel)	November 3-4, 2020	https://bit.ly/38rcYz1
UX Writing + Content Design Summit	San Francisco (USA)	August 28, 2020	https://bit.ly/3byiDoV
Confab	Minneapolis (USA)	May 2-6, 2021	https://bit.ly/3h4DJOa

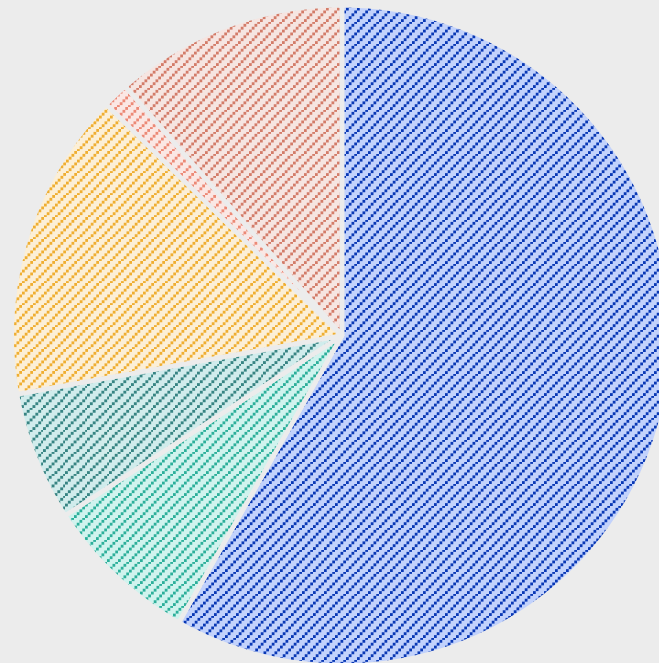
Languages

English is the most common language UX Writers use in their jobs. But not everybody is native

English writers:

45% NON natives

55% natives



English French Portuguese Spanish German Otras

Languages

English is the most common language UX

Writers use in their jobs

Ethnologue, a database covering a majority of the world's population, says **English is the most spoken language in the world** with more than 1 billion speakers, **700 million of which are not native**.

According to our survey **it is also the most common language UX Writers use in their jobs (58%)**, but the remarkable data is that almost half of English writers respondents are not natives.

Languages

Plain English helps UX Writers to write in a clear and concise way

People use English in digital products and services all over the world. And most of UX Writers also use it. It helps to simplify the vocabulary and let users interact with products and use services in a very easy and intuitive way. That is exactly the main goal of UX Writing.

Furthermore, this is also good for companies, when people from different countries and cultures work on a product, these helps to remove biases and achieve more inclusion, thus more people will use that product or service.

– Expert says

“

If you write for a global audience, you might want someone that is not English native speaker to be involved, because you want the English to be simple.

Kinneret Yifrah

Sectors

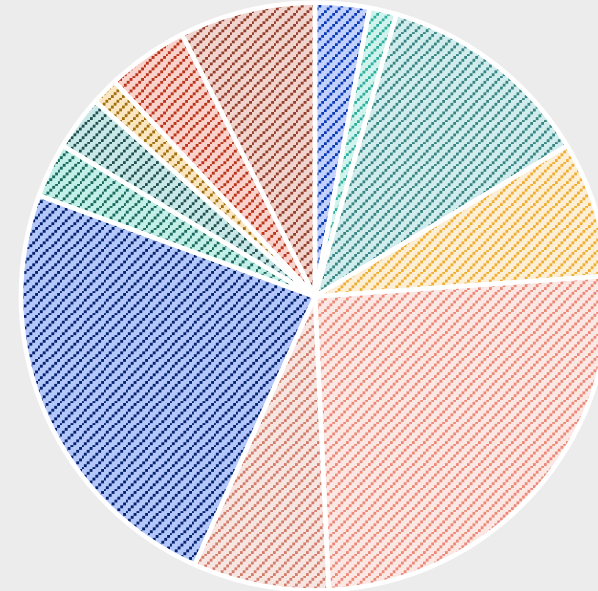
UX writers are hired especially where the messaging is closely affecting the company's reliability.

The sectors that are embracing UX Writing are mostly Fintech (25%), IT(24%) and E-commerce (12%) according to our survey.

It has also relevance in health insurance, education and travel sectors (including airlines).

Most of respondents work for a company, 14% are freelancers.

14% freelance
86% for a company



- Content
- Delivery
- E-commerce
- Education
- Fintech
- Healthcare
- IT
- Telecommunications
- Mobility
- Music
- Government
- Travel

– Expert says



No company staffs any role really without a business need for it. It's not because it is fashionable. It is because we make money for the company and we save money for the company. We increase usage and users' positive sentiment. These are all outcomes that businesses are interested in.

Torrey Podmajersky

Salary

There is a huge discrepancy between countries when it comes to salaries

According to [Invision App blog](#), the top 5 countries with the highest average salaries are:

United States: \$110,652.80

Switzerland: \$85,527.00

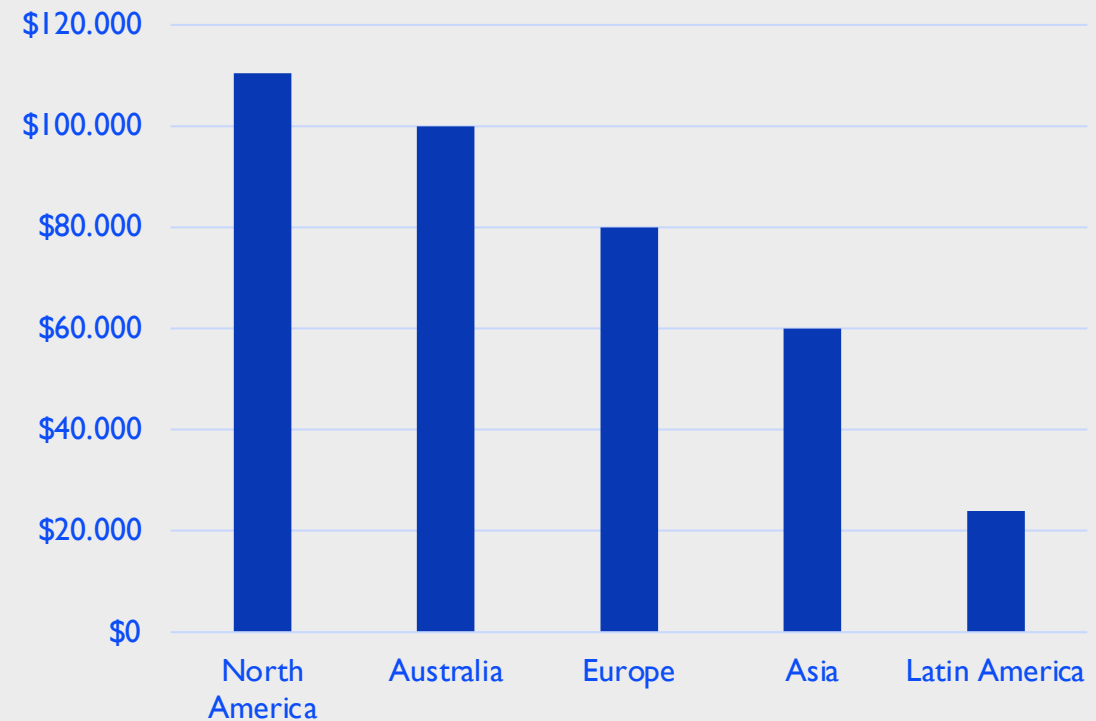
Canada: \$69,569.70

Australia: \$62,859.33

Norway: \$62,516.67

The survey shows (not surprisingly) USA, Switzerland and Canada as the countries with higher salaries for non experts (average more than \$100.000), while Latin America's professionals gain on average less than \$25.000.

Average Salaries



Salary

The country wealth and experience is critical to fix the UX

Writing salaries

Seniors respondents (25% of them are freelancers), who are currently working in Northern Europe (UK, Swiss, Sweden), Canada, and especially USA, can gain more than 110.000\$.

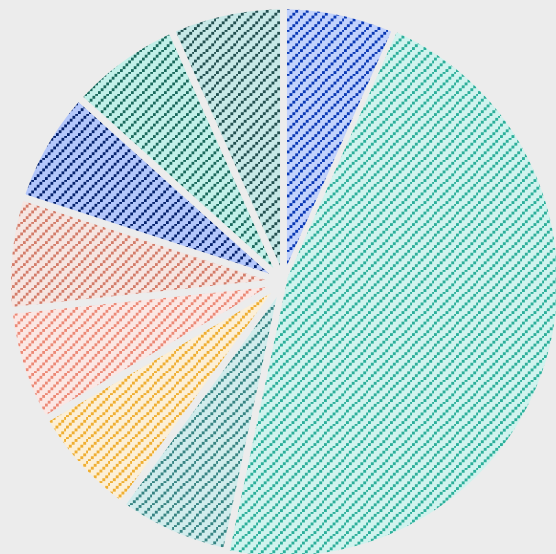
Design manager and directors mostly work for companies in UK and Israel, earning as an average more than \$80.000, while the same role in USA or Canada can reach more than \$120.000.

Salary

The money a UX Writing can be notably earn depending on the country wealth, but also on experience

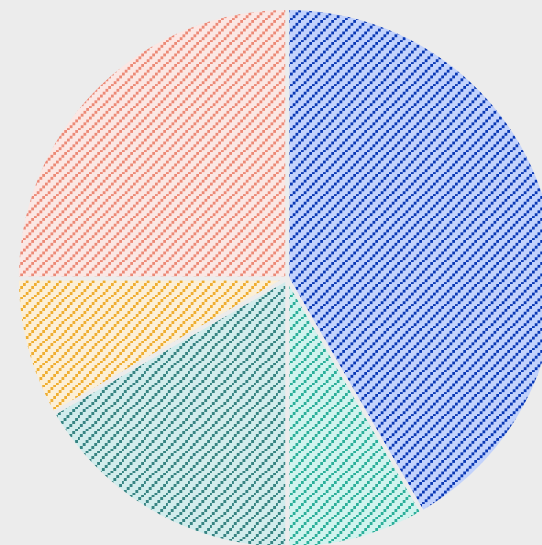
SENIORS

✦ UK ✦ USA ✦ Swiss ✦ Sweden ✦ europe ✦ canada ✦ australia ✦ Israel ✦ Thailand



MANAGERS & DIRECTORS

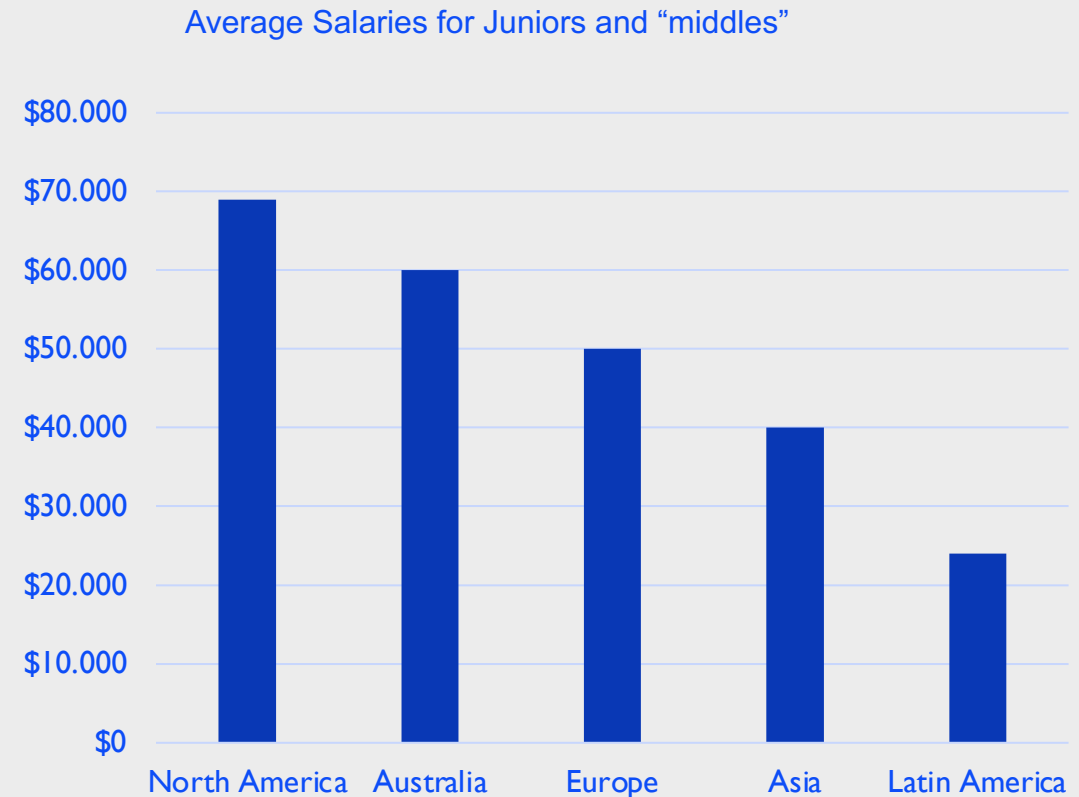
✦ UK ✦ spain ✦ USA ✦ Canada ✦ israel



Salary

The money a UX Writing can be notably earn depending on the country wealth, but also on experience

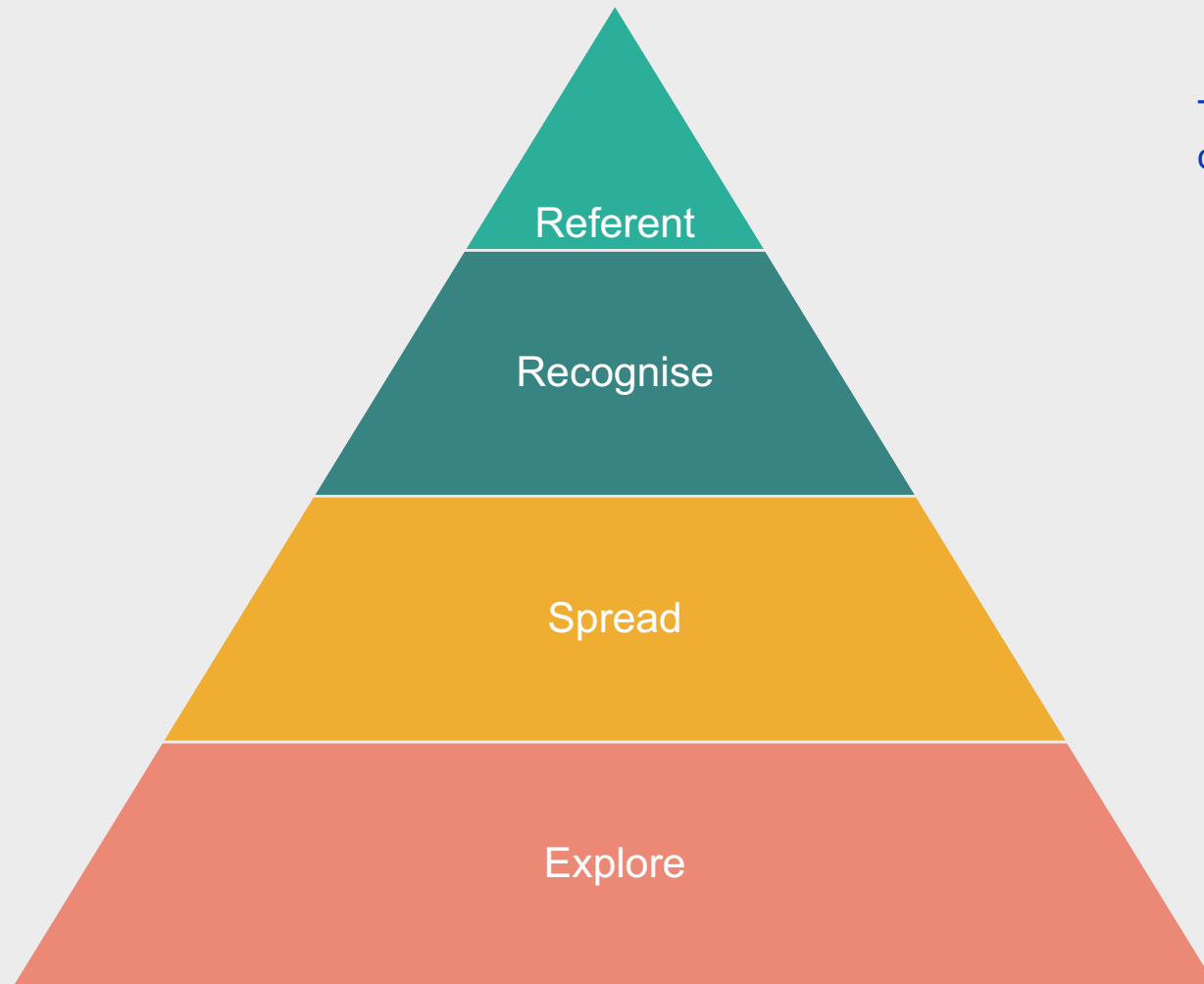
Juniors and “middles” salaries also reflect the differences between countries. Again, North America is where UX Writers’ salary is higher (69.000\$ on average), followed by Australia (60.000\$), Northern Europe (50.000\$), Asia (40.000\$), and Latin America (less than 25.000\$).





The maturity of UX Writing in the world

The maturity of UX Writing



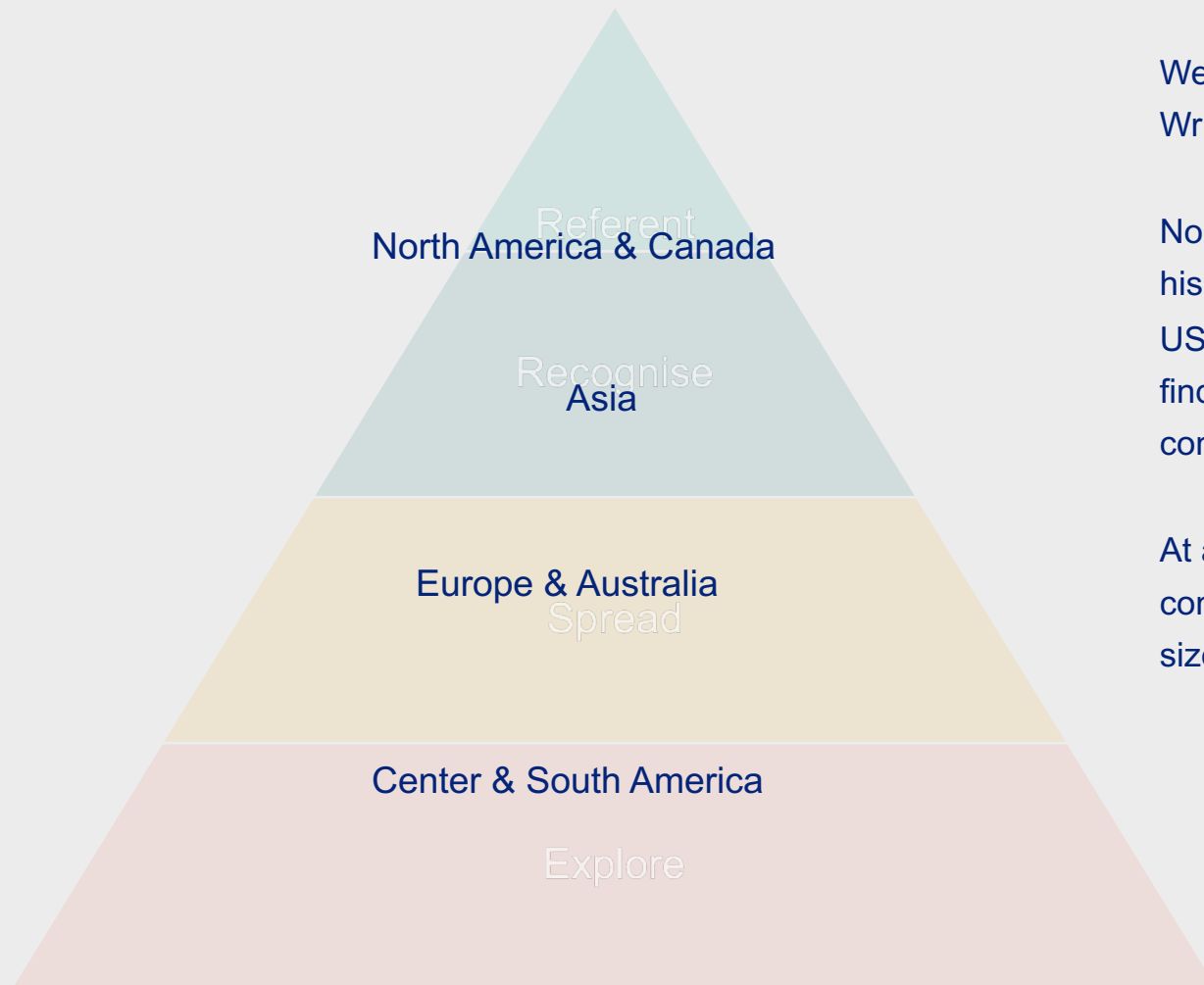
The current framework is a reference for other countries

Companies are boosting UX Writing rules and adopting UX Writers in their design processes

There is a huge offer of professionals, but few demand from companies. There is still a looking and learning from other countries.

Both companies and professionals have few knowledge about the field.

The maturity of UX Writing



We asked respondents about their perception of the state of UX Writing in their country and we got discordant visions.

Nobody has defined UX Writing as an established discipline in his own country but the perception of foreigners is that mostly US and Northern Europe is where content professionals could find their place easier. For example, UK has a very mature content Design culture.

At a global level, it is still evolving but not widely accepted by companies yet, especially when it comes to small and medium-sized ones.

– Expert says

“ American companies are bigger and hire UX writers earlier. Outside of the USA we sort of feel like we're trying to orbit around that and position ourselves in relation to it. It's really dominated by American needs, processes and workplace structures.”

Jane Ruffino

“ The maturity of the profession is quite settled, but the implementation of organizations isn't settled yet.”

Kinneret Yfrah

A look into the future



A look into the future

These are the 3 challenges for the companies:

Recognize the importance of UX Writing

What are you building is a conversation between humans and technology: **humanize it!**

Integrate UX Writers in teams from the very first beginning of the process and respect them as a critical part of any digital product and service.

Conversation is the next interface

Voice assistants are an emerging technology that is here to stay, but its evolution is faster than users' adoption.

In conversational design there are no visuals at all, words are the interface and UX writers are there to help you to do it well: as they can connect with users, their role is absolutely crucial.

Engage your users through an inclusive approach

Expand the scope of your product, generate innovation and help to assume a position of social responsibility

Reflect local and cultural diversity and get bigger impact to conversion, loyalty and satisfaction.

A look at the future

These are the 3 challenges for the UX Writers:

Don't be afraid to show your value

Stand up for your knowledge and your contributions, you are worth! Portray yourself more clearly as part of all the design process: it's really important for everyone in the team to understand how critical you are.

Take advantage of the communities and stay up-to-date

Join online groups, inspire users by posting your best works and be also inspired by their works.

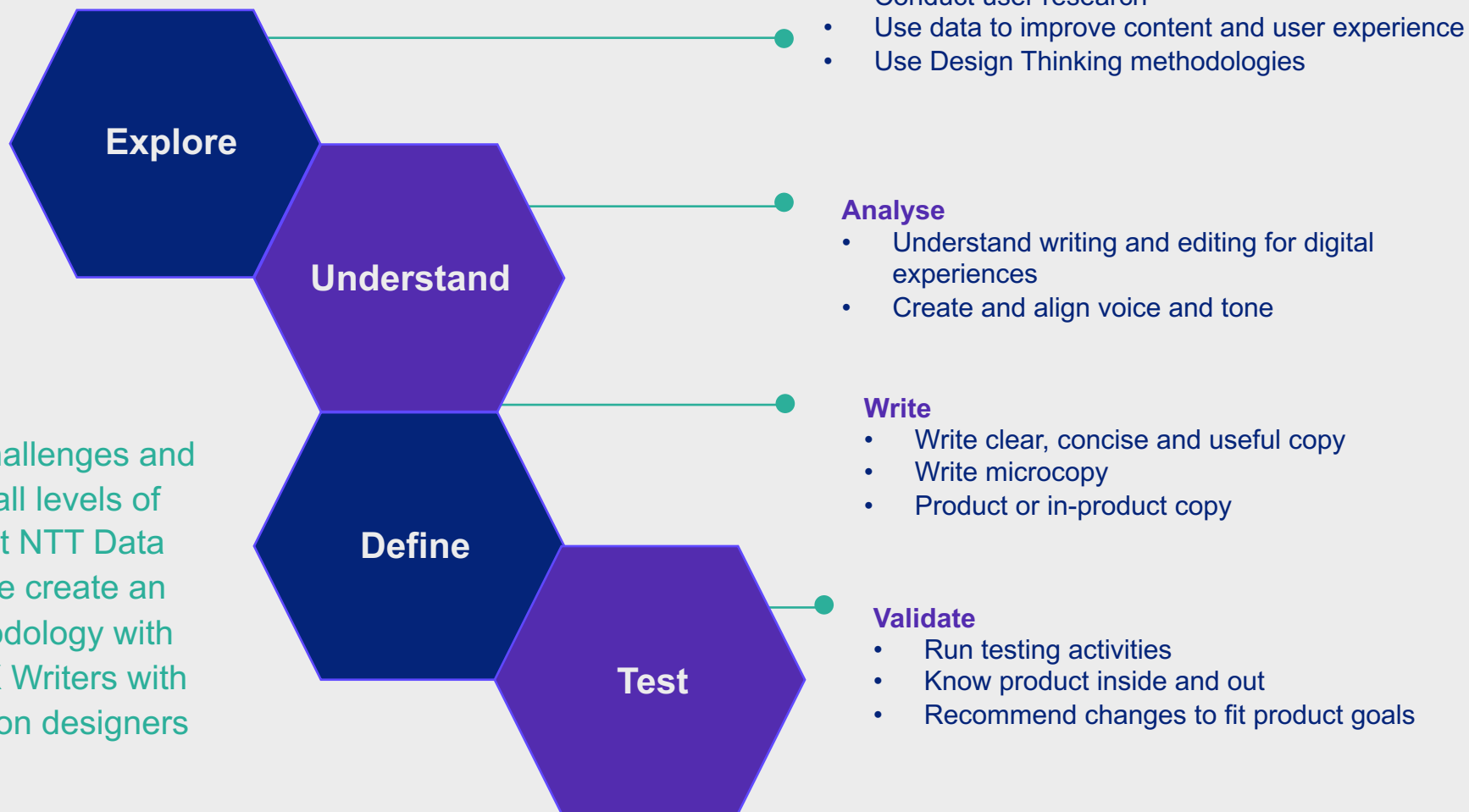
Writing is basic, but you also need to know the principles of User Experience and interaction design, this will help you to understand design needs and integrate better in the design team.

Try to be unbiased

You're not designing for yourself, you're doing it for users! Your mindset matters: know your users and help to create non bias products that are accessible for anyone. It's your ethical duty to reflect human values in products you're helping to create.

Our approach to UX Writing at NTT Data Experience Design

To face UX Writing challenges and boost the practice at all levels of the design process, at NTT Data Experience Design we create an iterative robust methodology with the intersection of UX Writers with researchers, interaction designers and visual designers.



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