PRODUCT CONTENT STRATEGY

Building a practice at Shopify

Just for you by Alaine Mackenzie
at the Design & Content Conference, July 2016

OH HI

I’m Alaine (ah-LEN) Mackenzie
Content strategy lead at Shopify

@alainemack

TODAY

ONCE UPON A TIME

WHAT IF

OTTAWA

Photo: Pete Hogan, Flickr

OTTAWA

OTTAWA

CHAOS ENSUES

WEB CONTENT VS. PRODUCT CONTENT

- Strategy presentations
- Reports, so many reports
- Governance plans
- CMS workflows
- Content templates

- Interface content
- User flows
- Wireframes
- Github?
- Deployment?!

CONTENT STRATEGY

CONTENT STRATEGY?

OH GREAT, A COPYWRITER!

BLARG!

SO THEN

WHAT WE DID

Get to know people (and what they want)

Focus on quick wins (for other people)

Do things, tell people (all the time)

Educate and empower (don’t take over)

1. GET TO KNOW PEOPLE

(and what they want)

LISTEN, DON'T TALK

AUDIT ALL THE THINGS

FIND ALL THE PROBLEMS

2. FOCUS ON QUICK WINS

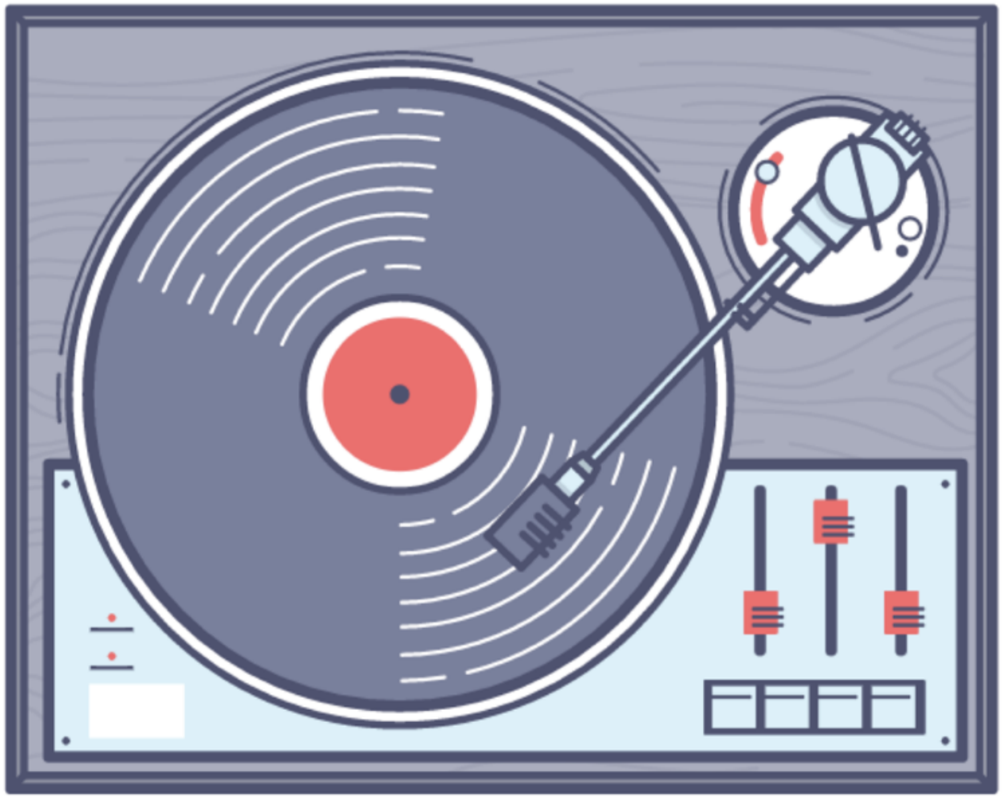
(for other people)

SUCCESS! KIND OF.

3. DO THINGS, TELL PEOPLE

(all the time. Seriously. All. The time.)

BE A BROKEN RECORD



SUCCESS!

. . . KIND OF.

DANGNABBIT.

4. EDUCATE AND EMPOWER

(don’t take over)

EDUCATE AND EMPOWER

Training

Self-serve resources

TRAINING

Never stop training

Never ever

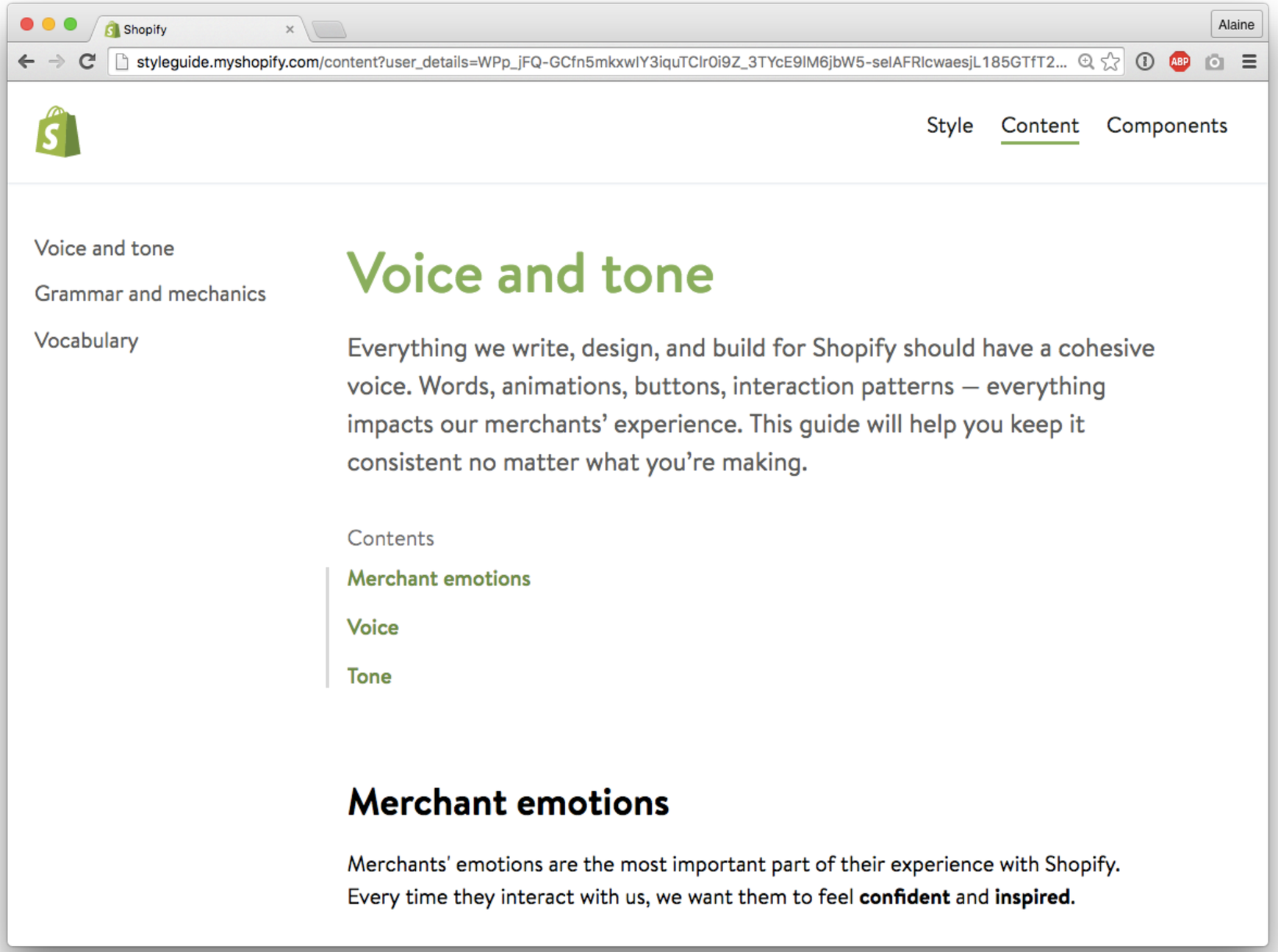
You’re never done

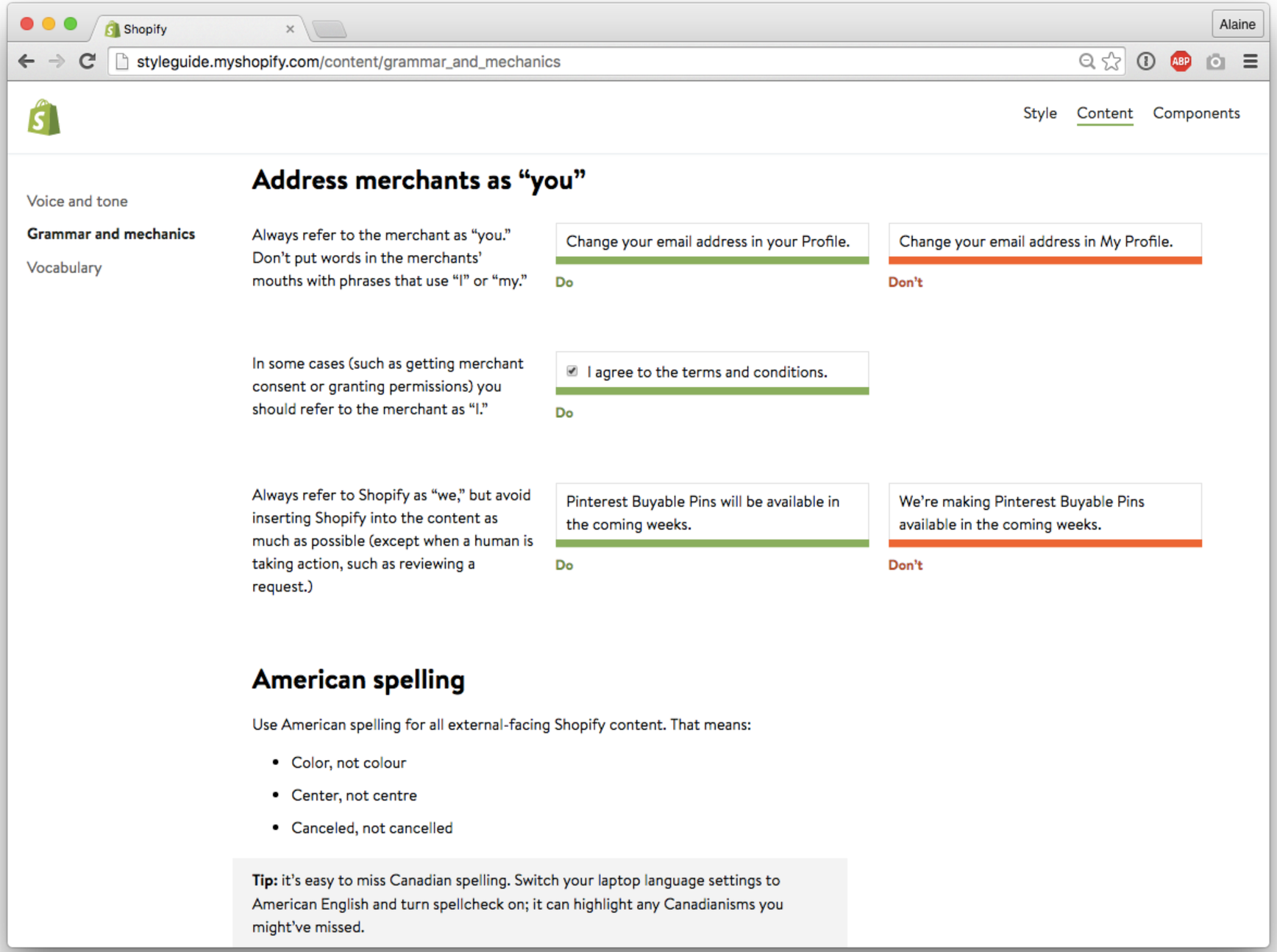
SELF-SERVE RESOURCES

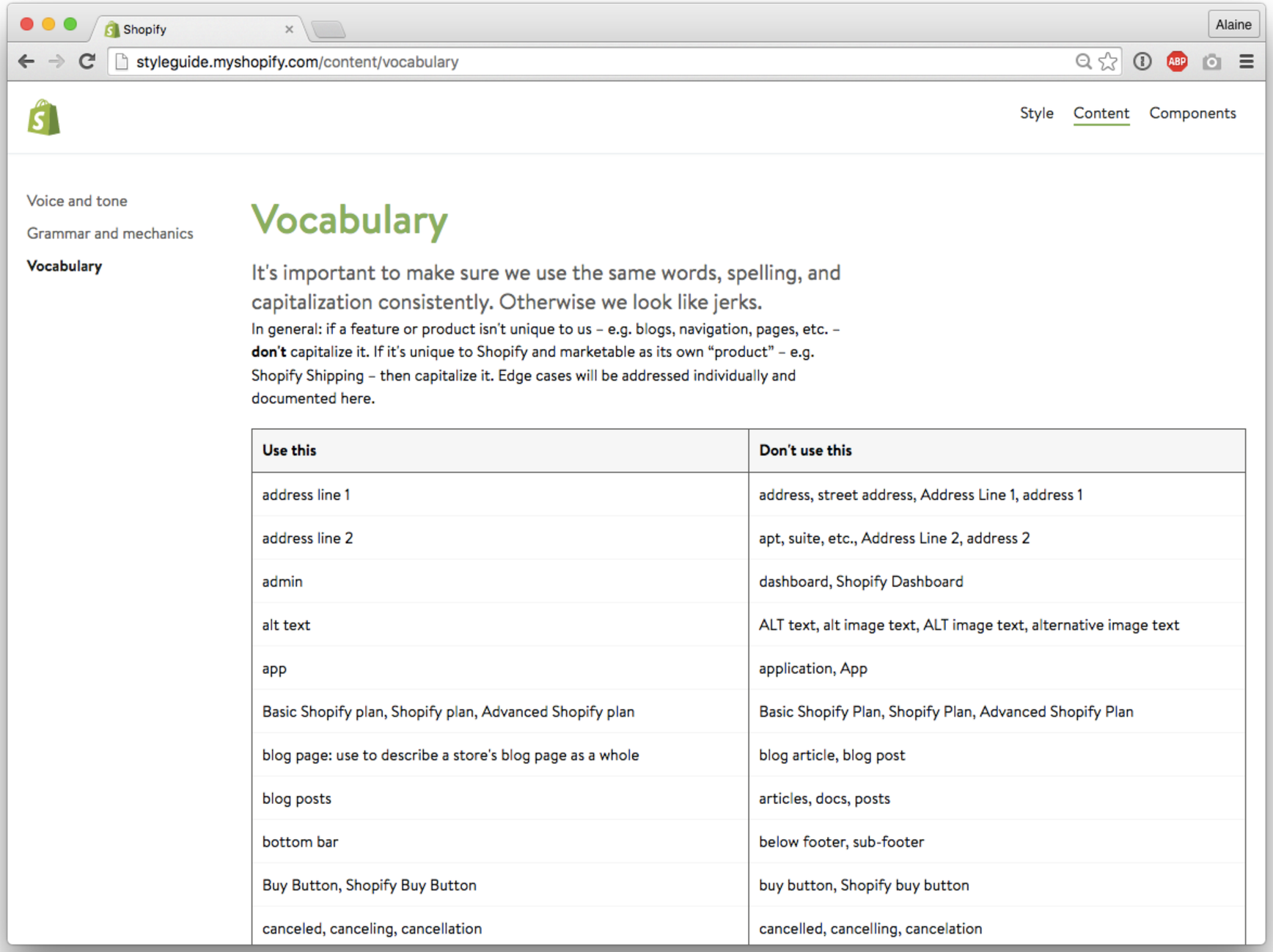
- Voice and tone guide
- Editorial style guide
- Vocabulary list
- Automated testing of style guide standards
- Content templates for common UI elements
- Content playbook with processes and tools

VOICE AND TONE GUIDE

- **Confident**, not boastful:
  We use our expertise to help our merchants succeed, not to talk down to them. Don't make merchants feel dumb: tell them what new things can be possible, not why their old things were bad.
- **Empowering**, not absent:
  We help merchants complete tasks themselves instead of doing it for them. But we would never leave them hanging when they need our help. Always give access to help: "Not sure where to start? See our ultimate guide to SEO."
- **Inspirational**, not unachievable:
  We tell success stories that any Shopify merchant can achieve with the right product and enough hard work.


Shopify
Alaine
styleguide.myshopify.com/content?user_details=WPp_jFQ-GCfn5mkxwIY3iquTCIr0i9Z_3TYcE9IM6jbW5-selAFRIcwaesjL185GTfT2...
Style
Content
Components
Voice and tone
Grammar and mechanics
Vocabulary
Voice and tone
Everything we write, design, and build for Shopify should have a cohesive voice. Words, animations, buttons, interaction patterns — everything impacts our merchants' experience. This guide will help you keep it consistent no matter what you're making.
Contents
Merchant emotions
Voice
Tone
Merchant emotions
Merchants' emotions are the most important part of their experience with Shopify. Every time they interact with us, we want them to feel confident and inspired.


Shopify
Alaine
styleguide.myshopify.com/content/grammar_and_mechanics
Style
Content
Components
Voice and tone
Grammar and mechanics
Vocabulary
Address merchants as “you”
Always refer to the merchant as “you.” Don’t put words in the merchants’ mouths with phrases that use “I” or “my.”
Change your email address in your Profile.
Do
Change your email address in My Profile.
Don’t
In some cases (such as getting merchant consent or granting permissions) you should refer to the merchant as “I.”
I agree to the terms and conditions.
Do
Always refer to Shopify as “we,” but avoid inserting Shopify into the content as much as possible (except when a human is taking action, such as reviewing a request.)
Pinterest Buyable Pins will be available in the coming weeks.
Do
We’re making Pinterest Buyable Pins available in the coming weeks.
Don’t
American spelling
Use American spelling for all external-facing Shopify content. That means:
Color, not colour
Center, not centre
Canceled, not cancelled
Tip: it’s easy to miss Canadian spelling. Switch your laptop language settings to American English and turn spellcheck on; it can highlight any Canadianisms you might’ve missed.


Shopify
Alaine
styleguide.myshopify.com/content/vocabulary
Style
Content
Components
Voice and tone
Grammar and mechanics
Vocabulary
Vocabulary
It's important to make sure we use the same words, spelling, and capitalization consistently. Otherwise we look like jerks.
In general: if a feature or product isn't unique to us – e.g. blogs, navigation, pages, etc. – don't capitalize it. If it's unique to Shopify and marketable as its own "product" – e.g. Shopify Shipping – then capitalize it. Edge cases will be addressed individually and documented here.
Use this
Don't use this
address line 1
address, street address, Address Line 1, address 1
address line 2
apt, suite, etc., Address Line 2, address 2
admin
dashboard, Shopify Dashboard
alt text
ALT text, alt image text, ALT image text, alternative image text
app
application, App
Basic Shopify plan, Shopify plan, Advanced Shopify plan
Basic Shopify Plan, Shopify Plan, Advanced Shopify Plan
blog page: use to describe a store's blog page as a whole
blog article, blog post
blog posts
articles, docs, posts
bottom bar
below footer, sub-footer
Buy Button, Shopify Buy Button
buy button, Shopify buy button
canceled, canceling, cancellation
cancelled, cancelling, cancelation

AUTOMATED TESTING!

```
jeremyhanson-finger@Jeremys-MBP Desktop $ rorybot test.rb
test.rb
    1:1-1:9     warning  “Login to” is not Shopify style. Use “log into” instead. (Login is a noun, not a verb.)                 login to
  1:14-1:28     warning  “Shopify Manual” is not Shopify style. Use “Shopify Help Center” instead. (Incorrect branded name.)     shopify manual
  1:30-1:34     warning  “i.e.” is not Shopify style. Use “that is” instead. (Avoid Latin abbreviations.)                       i.e.
  1:30-1:34     warning  Replace “i.e.” with “as in”                                                                            i.e.
  1:36-1:48     warning  “Support Docs” is not Shopify style. Use “Shopify Help Center” instead. (Incorrect branded name.)      support docs
  1:54-1:61     warning  “open up” is not Shopify style. Use “open” instead. (Avoid unncessary prepositions.)                   open up
  1:78-1:87     warning  “customise” is not Shopify style. Use “customize” instead. (Use American spelling.)                    customise
  1:95-1:101    warning  “off of” is not Shopify style. Use “off” instead. (Avoid unncessary prepositions.)                     off of
 1:106-1:127    warning  “Shopify point of sale” is not Shopify style. Use “Shopify POS” instead. (Incorrect branded name.)    shopify point of sale
 1:150-1:162    warning  Replace “comprised of” with “composed of”                                                              comprised of
 1:176-1:196    warning  “due to the fact that” is not Shopify style. Use “because” instead. (Avoid unnecessarily wordy phrases.)  due to the fact that
 1:176-1:196    warning  Replace “due to the fact that” with “because”, “due to”, “since”                                       due to the fact that
 1:221-1:230    warning  “cancelled” is not Shopify style. Use “canceled” instead. (Use American spelling.)                     cancelled

⚠ 13 warnings
```

The rule set is a list of simple phrase matches written in JSON with the following format:

```
"[incorrect phrase]": {
  "note": "[reason for the warning]",
  "replace": "[replacement phrase(s)]"
},
```

For example:

```
"customise": {
  "replace": "customize",
  "note": "Use American spelling."
},
```

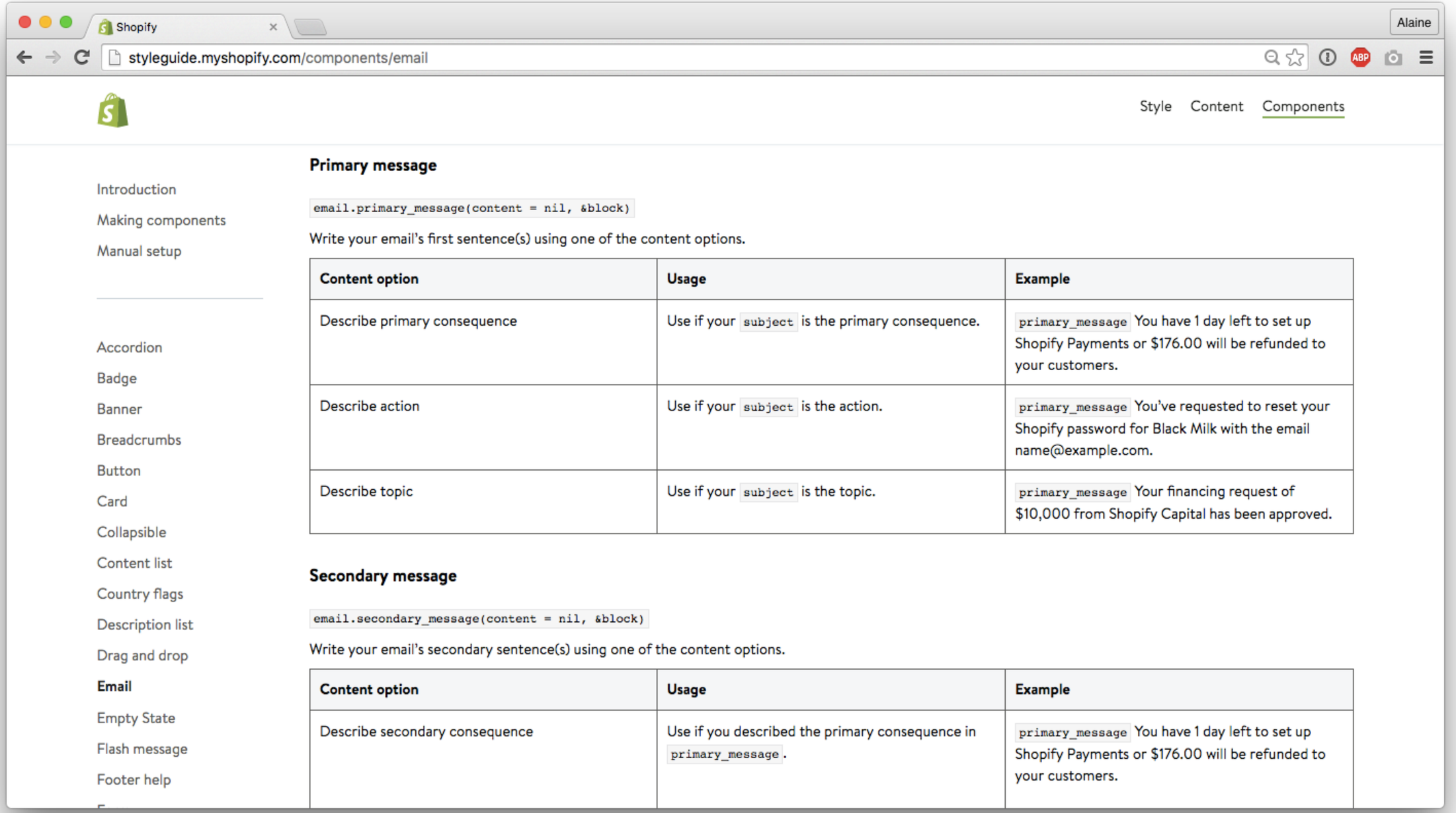
This rule would flag the phrase `Customise` with the following message:

```
<stdin>
  9:17-9:26  warning  “Customise” is not Shopify style.
    Use “customize” instead. (Use American spelling.)
```

```
  "oops": {
  "replace": [],
  "note": "Just don't."
},
```

AUTOMATED TESTING!

- Based on Titus Wormer's retext natural language processor
- Our version: Rorybot, based on rules in retext Shopify


Shopify
Alaine
styleguide.myshopify.com/components/email
Style
Content
Components
Introduction
Making components
Manual setup
Accordion
Badge
Banner
Breadcrumbs
Button
Card
Collapsible
Content list
Country flags
Description list
Drag and drop
Email
Empty State
Flash message
Footer help
Primary message
email.primary_message(content = nil, &block)
Write your email's first sentence(s) using one of the content options.
Content option
Usage
Example
Describe primary consequence
Use if your subject is the primary consequence.
primary_message You have 1 day left to set up Shopify Payments or $176.00 will be refunded to your customers.
Describe action
Use if your subject is the action.
primary_message You've requested to reset your Shopify password for Black Milk with the email name@example.com.
Describe topic
Use if your subject is the topic.
primary_message Your financing request of $10,000 from Shopify Capital has been approved.
Secondary message
email.secondary_message(content = nil, &block)
Write your email's secondary sentence(s) using one of the content options.
Content option
Usage
Example
Describe secondary consequence
Use if you described the primary consequence in primary_message.
primary_message You have 1 day left to set up Shopify Payments or $176.00 will be refunded to your customers.

CONTENT PLAYBOOK
(UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

SUCCESS!!

. . . KIND OF.

But slightly more so?

CONTENT STRATEGY?

CONTENT STRATEGY!

THE END. KIND OF.

WHAT WE DID

Get to know people (and what they want)

Focus on quick wins (for other people)

Do things, tell people (all the time)

Educate and empower (don’t take over)

THE END.
I MEAN IT THIS TIME.

medium.com/shopify-ux
@alainemack

Also we're hiring! Come and chat.
shopify.com/careers