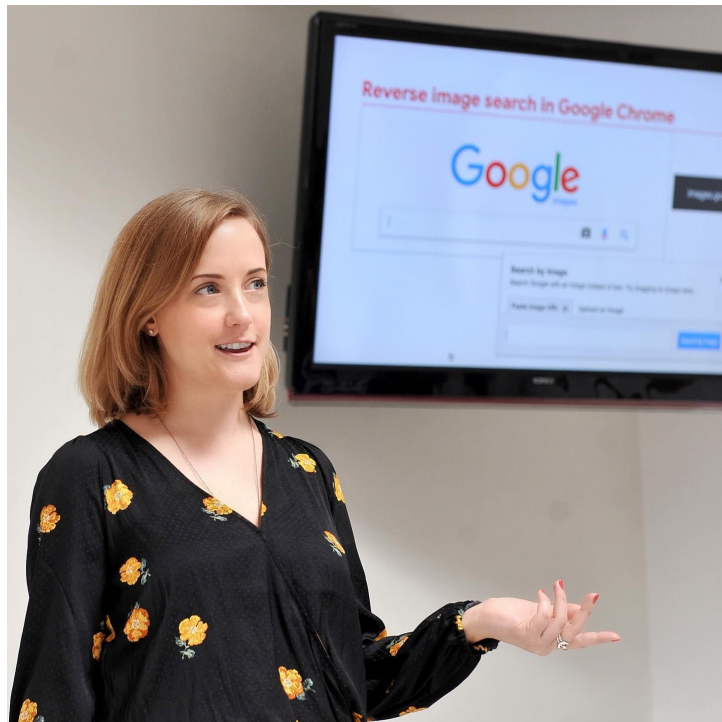


Personal Branding for Freelance Journalists

Abigail Edge
@abigailede

Hello! I'm Abigail



- Full-time freelance journalist and trainer
- Bylines at Guardian, Vice, The Week, etc.
- Visiting lecturer, City University, London
- Previously BBC News, Google News Lab
- @abigaileedge across social media
- Website – abigaileedge.com

What is a personal brand?



Credit: ITV



"There is power in introducing yourself on your own terms. Your story is yours to tell."

Jennifer Mizgata

Director of Programs, Online News Association

Source: [Fortune Magazine](#)

What is a personal brand?

- Establishes you as a professional and an expert in the areas you want to cover as a journalist.
- Helps you to build the reputation you want in the industry.
- Helps potential employers to understand your 'voice' and expertise.
- By hiring freelancers who already have a personal following, publishers reach a wider audience.

Personal branding in the age of Zoom



Bookcase Credibility
@BCredibility

Faiza Shaheen. An astute decision to shift the bookcase to an angled side wall. The blank space and the lighting soften the look and emphasise the red area of the shelves. It looks like the 'In case of emergency read these' section. Bringing them close suggests we are in one.



BBC NEWS

Faiza Shaheen

Director, Centre for Labour & Social studies

THE PAPERS

bbc.co.uk/news

Credit: Bookcase Credibility ([@BCredibility](https://twitter.com/BCredibility)) on Twitter

Why is your personal brand important?



Why is your personal brand important?

Abigail Edge  @abigaileedge · Jun 16

Some thoughts on the term 'personal brand,' which I wish we could find another name for because it gives so many journalists the ick

Abigail Edge  @abigaileedge · Jun 16

Replying to @thedyora

As journalists, we all have a personal brand, whether we realise it or not. It's your social media, your website, the companies you choose to work for and the stories you choose to cover.

Most journos already manage that without thinking about branding per se.

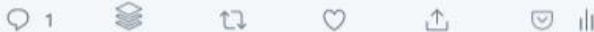


Abigail Edge  @abigaileedge · Jun 16

Replying to @abigaileedge and @thedyora

I dislike the term 'personal brand.' Yeah, it sounds icky.

But showing who you are, what you're interested in, building an audience etc. is a powerful way to take charge of your career so you're less at the mercy of bad bosses and terrible pay rates inflicted on this industry



Abigail Edge  @abigaileedge · Jun 16

If you think of a personal brand as inauthentic, hard work, or set in stone, the bottom line is you're doing it wrong.

If you want to learn how to do it better, you can join [@LauraOliver](#) and I for these free workshops courtesy of [@ejcnet](#)



Online Training

The Assembly is a free-of-charge programme that offers online training, mentorship, unconferences and an in-person event in 2021.

journalismassembly.com



Exercise: Identifying your niche

Brainstorm a list of 10 topics related to your interests and passions.

For example, if you like cooking then topics related to that might be nutrition, sustainable farming or food technology.

Think about how you like to spend your free time...

What kind of journalism do you like to read?



Exercise: Identifying your niche

Once you have your list of 10 topics, see if you can narrow it down to just three key areas. They don't necessarily have to be related.

For example, my top three niches would be emerging technology, culture, and gender.

Once you've found your niche(s), consider how you can apply them to how you present yourself online.



Social media

OK, IT'S SATIRE

Cre8ive 4ce, a new text-message-only digital zine, is looking for contributors! Open to essays, poetry, fiction, photography and funny bumper sticker sayings. Pay is commensurate with Twitter followers. DM to pitch.

Set your social media goals

Decide three main objectives to focus on:

- Promote your journalism work.
- Promote other professional services you offer.
- Drive traffic to your website or blog.
- Demonstrate your expertise.
- Network with other journalists.
- Network with other editors.
- Build a community / audience.
- ...or something else?

Which social media will help you achieve your goals?

What's in a name?



Source: [Giphy](#)

What's in a name?

- Your social media handles are branding tools. Be consistent with your digital name across accounts, from Twitter to your website and anywhere else you might be found online.
- Better for SEO - make yourself searchable.
- Grab your domain and social media handles – even if you're not ready to start using them yet.

What's in a name?

- Use your middle initial
e.g. @sarahksilverman
- Say what you do
e.g. @webjournalist
- Use your location
e.g. @mattcooke_uk
- Make it "real"
e.g. @realdonaldtrump
- Add "I am"
e.g. @iamwill



Social media tips

- Be clear and consistent about what you're sharing online.
- Create or curate content that is in-line with your niches/brand.
- Be purposeful in what you share.
- Consider the publications you want to write for and the type of people you want to work with.
- Engage with other influential accounts.

Social media: Follow the 80/20 rule



Posts should be 80 per cent professional and 20 per cent personal.

Social media bios

- Your real name
- What you do and where you work
- The topics that interest you
- Search keywords
- Your website
- How people can get in touch with you

Good Twitter bios



Otegha K. Uwagba
@OteghaUwagba

Writer. Speaker. Consultant. [@WomenWho](#). 🎙️ In Good Company. 📖 We Need To Talk About Money [@4thEstateBooks](#) (2021).

📍 London [otegha.com](#) 📅 Joined September 2012

1,874 Following 12.6K Followers



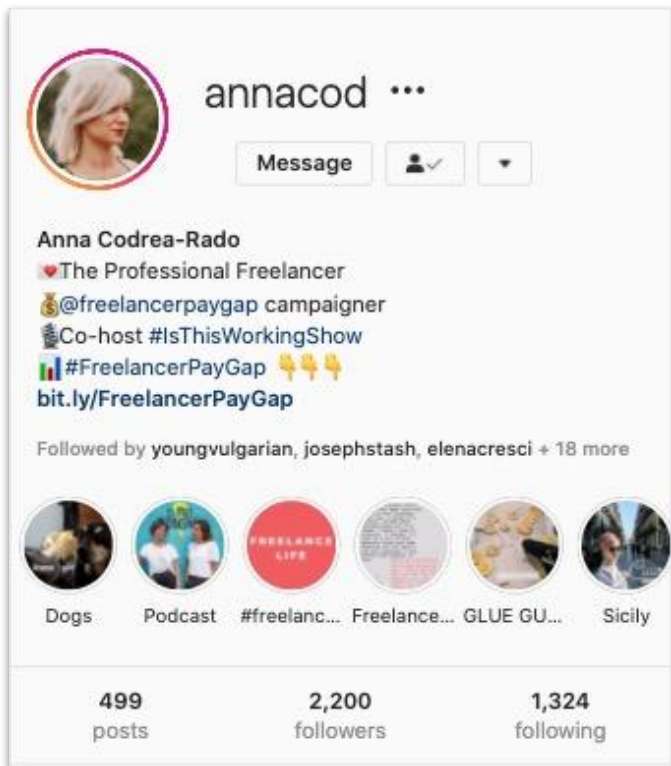
Pablo Pérez
@PabloPerezA

Strategic & political comms.
Previously, Head of Social Media Sector [@EU_Commission](#). Before journalist [@ondacero_es](#) [@tve_tve..](#)
EU.
Need a freelancer? DMs open.



📍 Brussels and Spain [twitter.com/reuwind_](#) 📅 Joined July 2010

3,059 Following 16.4K Followers

Good Instagram bios









annacod ...

Message  

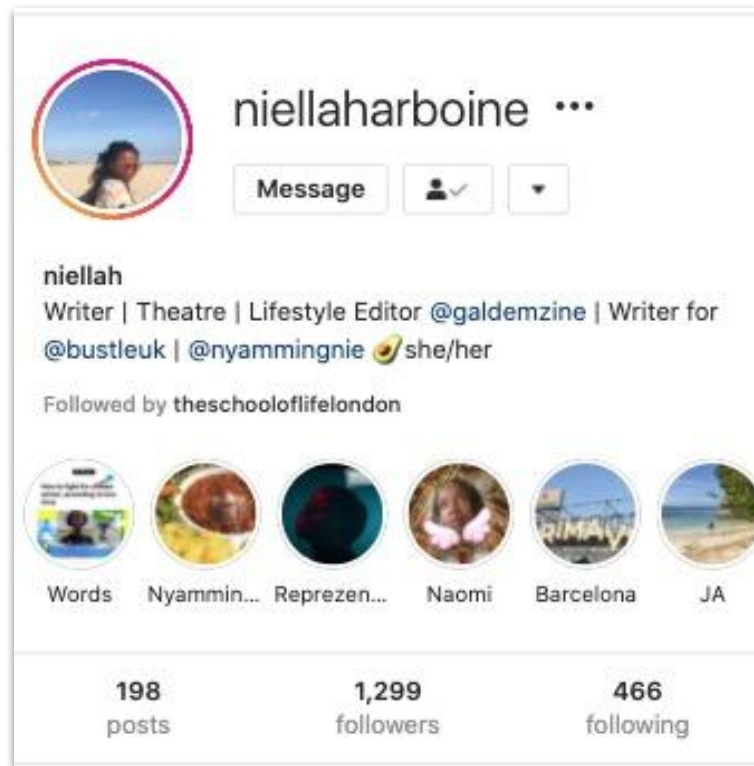
Anna Codrea-Rado
♥ The Professional Freelancer
💰 @freelancerpaygap campaigner
🎙️ Co-host #IsThisWorkingShow
📊 #FreelancerPayGap 🙌🙌🙌
bit.ly/FreelancerPayGap

Followed by [youngvulgarian](#), [josephstash](#), [elenacresci](#) + 18 more



     

Dogs Podcast #freelanc... Freelance... GLUE GU... Sicity

499 posts 2,200 followers 1,324 following









niellaharboine ...

Message  

niellah
Writer | Theatre | Lifestyle Editor @galdemzine | Writer for @bustleuk | @nyammingnie 🗣️ she/her

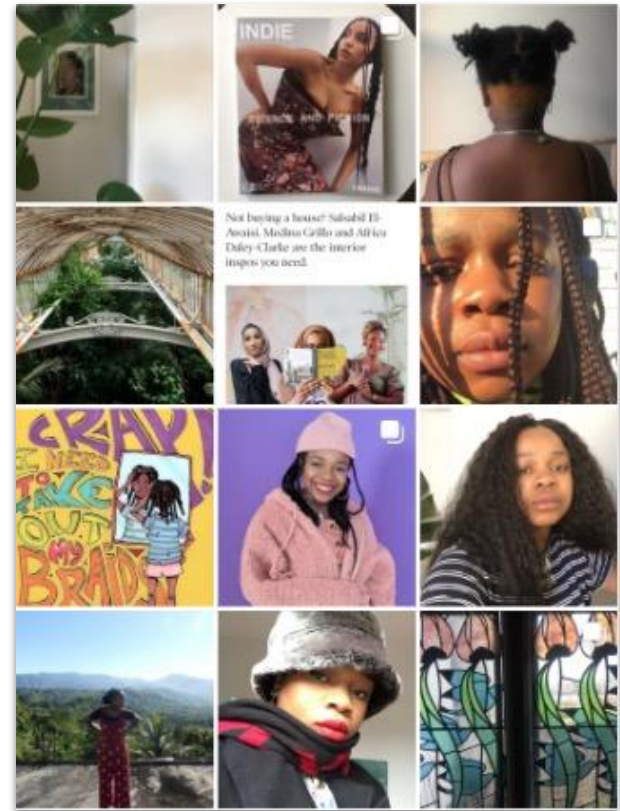
Followed by [theschooloflifelondon](#)

Words Nyammin... Reprezen... Naomi Barcelona JA

198 posts 1,299 followers 466 following

Good Instagram content



Social media: Useful (mostly free) tools

Scheduling

[Buffer](#)

[Tweetdeck](#)

[Later](#)

Automation

[IFTTT](#)

[Nuzzel](#)

Images & videos

[Unsplash](#)

[Pexels](#)

[Canva](#)

[Pablo](#)

[Adobe Spark](#)

[Pixlr X](#)



Social media: Pitfalls and how to avoid them

- Spell check before you post (try the [LanguageTool Chrome extension](#)).
- Use two-factor authentication to help protect accounts from hackers.
- Pause scheduled posts that might conflict with BIG breaking news.
- Think twice before posting.
- Don't drink and tweet!



Your online presence

Audit your online presence

"If I get a cold pitch that I like, the first thing I'm going to do is Google that writer to see what else they've written so I can get a better sense of their style and their abilities."

– Tim Herrera, Smarter Living Editor, The New York Times



Audit your online presence

- Google yourself and see what comes up.
- Update or delete any old profiles or accounts.
- Use Google's [outdated content tool](#) to update or remove cached pages.
- Set up [Google Alerts](#) for your name.
- Use your full name for your website and social media handles, if possible.
- Tag yourself in images on social posts.



Alerts

Monitor the web for interesting new content

🔍 Create an alert about...

Me on the web



"Abigail Edge"

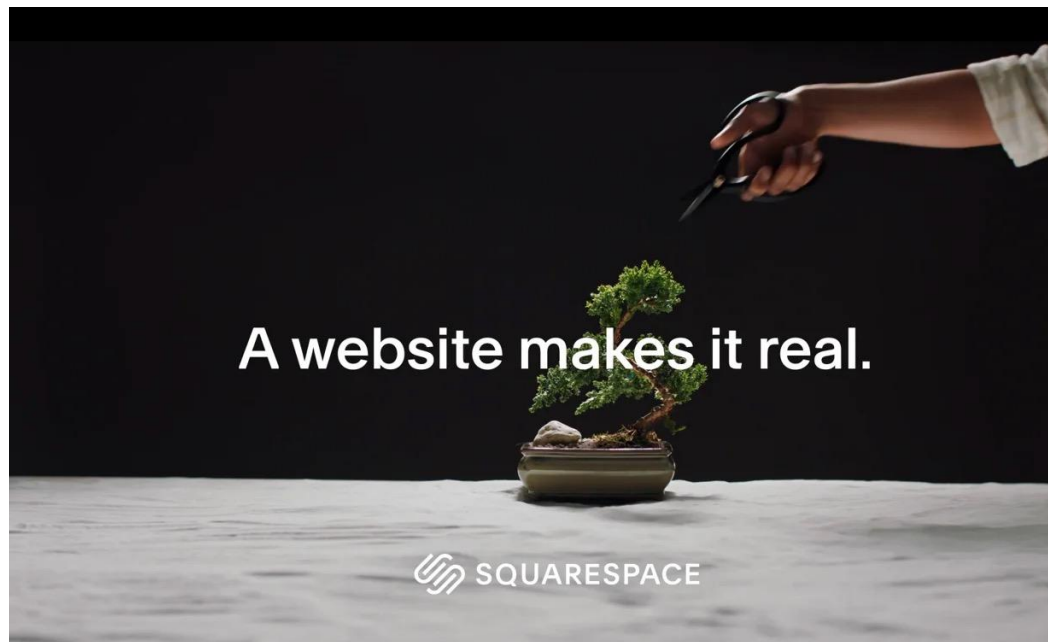


abigail@abigailede.c...



Get a website

- [Squarespace](#)
- [Wordpress](#)
- [Carrd.co](#)
- [JournoPortfolio](#)
- [Clippings.me](#)
- [About.me](#)



Domain names

- A personal domain name looks professional and is good for SEO.
- To register your domain, use a service such as [Google Domains](#) (costs about €10 a year).
- Keep domains short and easy to remember.
- If .com isn't available, try .press or your country code TLD (such as .fr).
- Avoid numbers or dashes, which are harder to type and remember.

Search engine optimisation (SEO)

How Keyword Planner works

Get help with keyword research and selecting the right terms.

Discover new keywords

Search for words or phrases related to your products or services. Our keyword research tool will help you find the keywords that are most relevant for your business.

Suggested keywords

Clothing store

Add

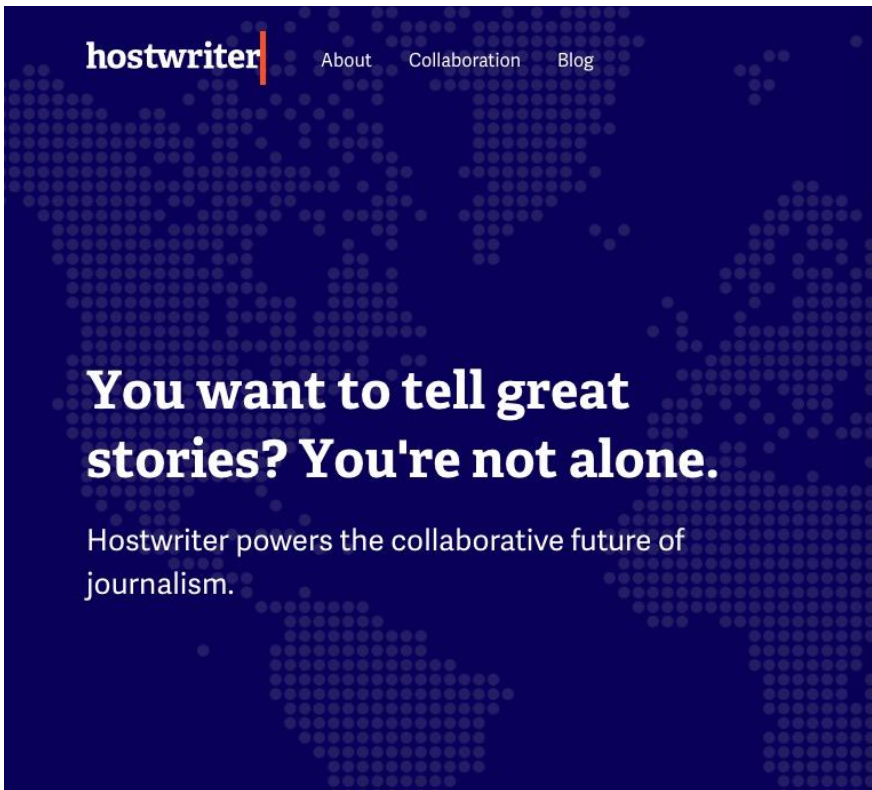
Fashion retailer

Add

Networking

Collaborative journalism

- Hostwriter.org
- Use your existing network
- Instagram / newsletter takeovers
- Joint bylines on articles
- Start a podcast

The image shows a dark blue background with a faint, dotted world map. At the top left, the word "hostwriter" is written in white lowercase letters, with a vertical orange bar to its right. To the right of the logo are three white links: "About", "Collaboration", and "Blog". In the center, the text "You want to tell great stories? You're not alone." is displayed in a large, bold, white sans-serif font. Below this, in a smaller white font, is the text "Hostwriter powers the collaborative future of journalism."

hostwriter | About Collaboration Blog

You want to tell great stories? You're not alone.

Hostwriter powers the collaborative future of journalism.

How to network when you WFH ☕

"Draw up two lists – the first is people you already know, the people in your existing network. The second is your dream list – clients, companies and people you would love to work with. Then think strategically – how can you leverage the network you already have, which could even include friends and family, to get in front of the network you dream of, and in the smallest number of steps.

"Use LinkedIn and social media to do your research and then reach out. Stick to short emails and phone calls. Many industries are quiet right now, so people might well have more time than usual to talk to you."

– Alison Grady, author of The Freelance Bible

Join industry associations

[Freelance Journalism Assembly](#)

[Society of Freelance Journalists](#)

[Association of European Journalists](#)

[European Federation of Journalists](#)

[European Data Journalism Network](#)

[National Union of Journalists](#)

[Black Collective of Media in Sport](#)

[Hacks/Hackers](#)

[Online News Association](#)

Business cards... do you still need them?



Credit: American Psycho / Lions Gate Films

MOO



Happy Alphabet



More Vintage Typewriters



Monogram



John Baskerville



Workin' here!



Draw A Line



I Love Spreadsheets



Greetings



Your personal brand can change over time



Continue the conversation...



SEJ

Society of Freelance Journalists

A support group for freelance journalists.

[Join us on Slack](#)

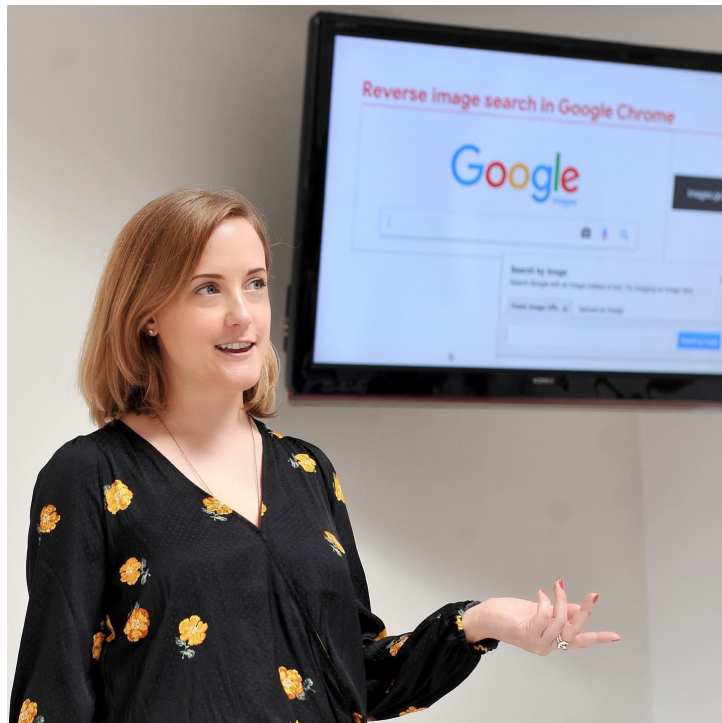
[Twitter](#) [Medium](#) [Email](#)

In partnership with the European Journalism Centre

 Freelance Journalism Assembly

freelancesoc.org

Thank you!



- Twitter – @abigaileedge
- Instagram – @abigaileedge
- Website – abigaileedge.com
- PDF handout from today's session – abigaileedge.com/branding

Questions?