

# TARA SPINELLI

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## SUMMARY

Experienced UX writer and designer who has developed strategic copy, content, and user experiences for diverse clients, audiences, and digital channels including websites, desktop and mobile apps, social media, and email. Focus is to meet audience needs, enhance the brand, and achieve measurable results. Skills include:

Digital Strategy • Information Architecture • Interaction Design • Usability Testing • Content Strategy & Development • Writing/Editing • Communications Strategy • Project Management

## EXPERIENCE

Apr '22-  
Present

### **Associate Director, Digital Communications • Columbia Climate School, Columbia University**

Plan and implement strategic digital communications for the nation's first climate school.

- Continue with Lamont webmaster/digital content manager responsibilities (see below).
- Evolve the Climate School website (climate.columbia.edu) to support the development and growth of the institution as a degree-granting professional school.
- Manage the redesign of the Climate School's news site *State of the Planet* (news.climate.columbia.edu), including strategic plan, user experience, branding, visual design, content taxonomy, and development.
- Engage and grow key audiences on Climate School's social media channels, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, with active posting on news, events, research, education, and programming as well as collaborations with Columbia Public Affairs, centers, programs, affiliates, and content creators.
- Create webpages and social media toolkits for all major initiatives such as Earth Month, Climate Week, and COP - UN Climate Change Conference.
- Track and report on website and social media performance metrics.
- Provide strategic and practical consultative and hands-on digital communications support to Lamont and Climate School centers, programs, and affiliates.

Oct '20-  
Mar '22

### **Webmaster / Digital Content Manager • Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Columbia Climate School, Columbia University**

Create and evolve strategic web presences and social media for this leading Earth and climate science research institution.

- Redesign and relaunch Lamont website (lamont.columbia.edu) on Columbia University content management platform, applying UX and digital content best practices, closely collaborating with key stakeholders, and integrating definitive content streams to create a modern, usable, brand-appropriate site that is easier to keep current and maintain.
- Collaborate on new requirements and features of definitive content streams, including Profiles, Projects, News, Media, and Events.
- Contribute to UX and content of evolving Climate School website (climate.columbia.edu).
- Design, build, and annually update special Earth Day (earthday.columbia.edu) and Marie Tharp (marietharp.ideo.columbia.edu) websites to showcase Lamont science and scientists.
- Apply general and channel-specific social media best practices to planning, scheduling, writing copy, and selecting/creating visual content. Since taking over Lamont social media in mid-Aug 2019, have increased followers, Likes/engagement, and spikes in reach.
- Express social media voice and point-of-view for overlapping but distinct Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn audiences.
- Develop social media toolkits for events of broad interest like International Day of Women & Girls in Science, Earth Day, World Oceans Day, Lamont Open House, and Columbia Giving Day.
- Support creation of paid social media campaigns with copy, images, and clear calls-to-action.
- Help create engaging, informative monthly email newsletter and digital annual report.

Jan '17-  
Oct '20

### **Communications Strategist • YWCA Northern New Jersey, Hackensack, NJ**

Developed and implemented strategic communications across channels, digital tools, and live events for this not-for-profit whose mission is to empower women and eliminate racism.

- Contributed to cross-channel promotion of programs and events by developing campaigns and content for email, social media, website, and print marketing.
- Researched policy positions and wrote talking points, presentations, articles, and blogs.
- Designed flow, created content, and oversaw execution of live events and presentations.
- Wrote press releases and engaged the media in event and program coverage.
- Improved usability of website by redesigning information architecture as well as addressing site performance and content issues.
- Designed information architecture, developed content, managed developer relationship, and conceived marketing plan for healingSPACE web and phone apps.
- Streamlined process and created tools to track, manage, and measure success of cross-channel campaigns, event planning/execution, and fundraising initiatives.
- Improved quality and accessibility of communications assets with logical taxonomy, naming conventions with searchable metadata, and cloud-based storage.
- Conceived improvements to member and donor systems, data, and experiences.

May '01-  
Oct '20

### **Freelance UX Writer & Designer**

#### ***Representative work:***

#### **Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, The Earth Institute, Columbia University**

Developed clear social media voice and point-of-view; increased followers, engagement, and reach; supported development of paid social media campaigns resulting in donations and new subscribers; supported creation of engaging email newsletter and annual report; maintained current website with timely content; designed and built special Earth Day ([earthday.columbia.edu](http://earthday.columbia.edu)) and Marie Tharp ([marietharp.ideo.columbia.edu](http://marietharp.ideo.columbia.edu)) websites to showcase Lamont science and scientists; developed redesign recommendations and process to create a modern, usable, brand-appropriate website.

#### **UXL Inc.**

Provided digital strategy, UX design, and editorial services to clients, including a learning/training product vision and roadmap; creation of a comprehensive library of UX guidelines; heuristic evaluation and usability testing of client- and advisor-facing sites; design of client and admin UX for a data-rich trading tool; schematic and illustrated scenarios and experience maps to envision future client experiences; audit and best practices recommendations for application training materials; and development of training and communication materials for various audiences.

#### **Morgan Stanley**

Provided ongoing editorial and UX design services to the Internet Strategy & UX group, including phased evolution of a client-facing account management site and extensive supporting digital/print communication; development of how-to tours and FAQs for a mobile application for financial advisors; and creation of a comprehensive library of UX guidelines and patterns.

#### **Elsevier Business Intelligence**

Provided ongoing UX design services to the eStrategy & Development group, including redesigning the UX for a major relaunch of the company's public-facing and subscriber content delivery site. Also designed the UX for an essential tool used daily by staff writers to author and publish new content; public-facing company profiles and article abstracts to increase conversions from visitor to prospect/customer; and other content templates to improve subscriber experience.

**Educational Testing Service**

Provided ongoing UX design and content development services to Higher Education Division product development initiatives, including: *ReadyEdge* (a web-based college success tool); a new e-commerce and test delivery platform; *Criterion* Teaching Guide (an online writing product); and workshops for college admins and faculty on the effective use of assessment data.

**American Academy of Pediatrics**

Developed a concept treatment and guided tour to depict key content and features of a future consumer health information website (healthychildren.org). Concept treatment was used to secure project approval, and guided tour was essential in conversations with prospective sponsors.

**Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health**

Developed interactive patient cases for *Prevention in Practice*, a CME-accredited research project funded by the American Cancer Society to change behavior of primary care physicians. Also developed content for second program in the series on prostate cancer screening and informed decision-making.

Sep '98-  
Apr '01

**Project Manager/Writer • Viant Corporation, New York, NY**

Managed major e-commerce and marketing initiatives with a UX focus for this leading Internet consulting firm that specialized in building digital businesses.

- Led multi-disciplinary teams from digital strategy through design, production, and launch.
- Designed and facilitated client workshops to define audience needs, vision, and features.
- Structured focus group concept tests and usability studies.
- Developed creative briefs, designed information, and wrote editorial guidelines.
- Formalized creative, UX, and e-commerce standards.
- Wrote and edited copy/content.

Jan '88-  
Oct '97

**Editorial Director • Ehrlich Multimedia/Times Mirror Multimedia, Park Ridge, NJ**

Creative manager who was instrumental in building a pioneering interactive multimedia software company from a start-up to a full-service development shop, creating award-winning educational products for a broad range of audiences.

- Ran editorial and design departments, building and managing teams of producers, writers, designers, illustrators, animators, and developers.
- Oversaw account and project management for major pharmaceutical and publishing clients.
- Established editorial vision for all products in collaboration with consulting editorial boards of leading content experts and educators.
- Researched, scripted, structured, and produced select products.
- Conducted formative evaluations of products in development.
- Represented company to industry through presentations at key conferences.

**EDUCATION**

B.A. English with High Honors, Phi Beta Kappa, Stanton Anthony Scholar with High Honors  
Douglass College/Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

- Sep '08-  
Present **Committee Member • Greenutley**  
Contribute to various initiatives under the direction of our Commissioner of Public Works, including a newspaper column to educate and engage the 28,000+ residents of Nutley, NJ in simple, effective ways to make our community and our planet more sustainable. In 2010, as a result of these efforts, Nutley achieved Sustainable Jersey certification, and re-certified in 2019. On an ongoing basis, responsible for Nutley Farmers Market email and social media marketing.
- Sep '15-  
June '21 **Board Member • Friends of Nutley Singers**  
Managed communications for this community not-for-profit dedicated to supporting our award-winning Nutley, NJ music and performing arts programs. Responsible for: establishing and maintaining social media presence and website; creating promotion and communication materials; engaging community and supporters; running fundraisers and events.
- Apr '16-  
Oct '19 **Coordinator • Nutley Farmers Market Walk & Talk Series**  
Worked with municipal officials to design and implement this weekly walk & learn group to engage Nutley, NJ residents in a healthy activity and give them access to experts from a variety of disciplines while helping them make the Nutley Farmers Market part of their regular routine to shop for fresh, local foods. Responsible for: establishing and maintaining social media presence; creating program promotion and communication materials; engaging leaders.
- Mar '15-  
Mar '19 **Coordinator • Nutley Pace Car & Pedestrian Education Program**  
Designed and worked with municipal/district officials to implement this town-wide initiative to make Nutley, NJ streets safer and more walkable. Participants commit to driving the speed limit, stopping for pedestrians, sharing the road, and eliminating distracted driving, and are designated by the Nutley Pace Car magnet on their cars. Responsible for: writing grant; establishing and maintaining social media presence; creating program promotion and communication materials; coordinating tabling events; facilitating relationships with schools and business community.
- Jan '14-  
Dec '19 **Coordinator • Yantacaw Walks\* / Walker Walks**  
Designed and worked with municipal/district officials and a team of volunteers to implement engaging school-based programs to promote walking to school in Nutley, NJ. Responsible for: writing grant; establishing and maintaining social media presence; creating program promotion and communication materials as well as grantee blogs ([shapingnj.wordpress.com/category/nutley](http://shapingnj.wordpress.com/category/nutley)); coordinating core program and special events. Measurable impact: in Apr 2014, 55% of Yantacaw students pledged to walk to school, and by Sep 2015, the number rose to 63% (from a baseline of 23%). \*Yantacaw Walks transitioned to Yantacaw PTO as of 2015-2016 school year.
- Jun '12-  
Sep '13 **Information Architect • Taproot Foundation**  
Refined content strategy and developed information architecture for Women's Prison Association website redesign project ([wpaonline.org](http://wpaonline.org)).
- Oct '10-  
Oct '12 **Contributor • Nutley Fit Kids: Healthy School Lunch Recipe Contest**  
Designed and worked with municipal/district officials on a contest to challenge Nutley, NJ students grades K-12 to create their own nutritious, delicious recipes for a school lunch. This Nutley Fit Kids initiative—under the direction of our Mayor's Office in partnership with the Nutley Board of Ed—gave kids an opportunity to express their creativity while learning hands-on about the principles of healthy eating consistent with Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.
- Sep '08-  
Jun '15 **Green Committee Chairperson • Yantacaw PTO**  
Facilitated the addition of a Green Committee to bylaws with representation as voting members of the executive board. Helped our elementary school community reduce waste, reuse, and recycle; make socially responsible, environmentally friendly choices; and engage in activities to promote the health of our environment and ourselves. Some initiatives included: school recycling, green after-school class, green/Fair Trade fundraisers, family swap, green game-show event.