

Transcript from the #FreelanceFriday #EFAChat, March 25, 2016

Topic: Identifying and Surviving Problem Projects

EFA @EFAFreelancers

Welcome to the Freelance Friday tweet chat! Use hashtag #EFAchat to be included in today's transcript.

EFA @EFAFreelancers

This #EFAchat will discuss the things that make projects tough to handle--scope issues, style problems, schedule constraints, etc. (1/2)

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(2/2) Note that today's discussion won't focus on problem clients. Even the best clients can have a problem project. #EFAChat

EFA @EFAFreelancers

Today's #EFAchat is being moderated by development editor Victoria Sandbrook Flynn, this month's EFA Twitter team host. (*waves*)

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#EFAchat We'll use Q1, Q2, etc. for questions; please use A1, A2, etc. for your answers to each question.

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#EFAchat Let's introduce ourselves. Where are you from, and what do you do?

EFA @EFAFreelancers

Alright let's get some questions going. Don't forget to use #EFAChat with your answers!

EFA @EFAFreelancers

#EFAChat Q1: How have you addressed gaps in instruction after taking a project? Is querying your only option? <https://t.co/sit071Hz5r>

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat Hullo, Victoria! I'm Vanessa, a developmental editor & instructional designer. I'm from the land of corn, but I escaped.

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A1: Research. That's where my history degree comes in handy: knowledge of credibility & how to search for information efficiently.

EFA @EFAFreelancers

@wordfey Welcome, Vanessa! Glad to have you and looking forward to chatting! #EFAChat

EFA @EFAFreelancers

RT @wordfey: #EFAchat A1: Research. That's where my history degree comes in handy: knowledge of credibility & how to search for information...

EFA @EFAFreelancers

I love seeing/sharing those! Sometimes they're a great laugh--a rare delight with problem projects. #EFAChat <https://t.co/W70RqK8SPe>

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#EFAChat Q2: How have you handled gaps in house and established style guides? <https://t.co/tHrI7Zys3H>

EFA @EFAFreelancers

.@wordfey No problem! For posterity (please correct if I'm wrong): you'd said that you share your Unexpected Research of the Day. #EFAChat

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A2: Kept a record and added to the house guide. Queried if it was a project in which someone else had to verify.

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#EFAChat A2: Personally, I have a client I know well & I've taken style issues back with my best possible suggestion ready for review. (VSF)

Meilani MacDonald @1Meilani

RT @EFAFreelancers: #EFAChat Q2: How have you handled gaps in house and established style guides? <https://t.co/tHrI7Zys3H>

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

@EFAFreelancers Nice visual addition to the #EFAchat format, btw. :D

EFA @EFAFreelancers

#EFAChat Q3: How much scope creep in are you willing to handle before renegotiating terms? <https://t.co/lM1VPVt56e>

Estie Ross @erossin48

#EFAchat Hi Veronica & Vanessa! I enjoy these chats and the chance to learn from other editors. I mostly lurk, since I'm new to freelancing.

EFA @EFAFreelancers

@erossin48 Welcome to #EFAChat! Lurk away, but also ask questions if you have them! You can DM this account or reply directly.

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A3: HAHAHAAAAAAAA. The creep will happen, and sometimes I cause it.

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A3: I seldom re-negotiate, though. I don't take contracts unless they can handle scope creep.

EFA @EFAFreelancers

.@wordfey What kind of creep seems to be most common in your projects? #EFAChat

EFA @EFAFreelancers

If you're just joining us, welcome to Freelance Friday! Jump in at any time with hashtag #EFAChat.

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#EFAChat Q3a: Do you respond differently to scope creep and schedule creep? Is one harder to handle than the other?

The Wordsmith @callwordsmith

@EFAFreelancers @wordfey I don't know about common, but someone once asked me to write a sales pitch for used women's panties. #EFAChat

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A3a: I consider them the same. Projects should be flexible. New goals, new tasks, new deadlines--healthy if you have new ideas.

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A3a: Within reason, of course.

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.@callwordsmith Eek! That's a potentially problematic project for sure! Let me jump in with a question building from that... #EFAChat

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat That's a hard one. I guess guideline shifts based on new pedagogical research or team decisions. Goal shifts with plot in novels.

Kristen Tate @KristenTateSF

#EFAchat A3: I try to build in extra time so that I can easily accommodate some scope/schedule creep. This is why I dislike rush projects

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#EFAChat Q3b: How do you handle projects that put you on edge? That may not match your personal values or beliefs? Do you avoid them?

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A3b: I've taken them on anyway, though I haven't had anything *deeply* challenging. I treat all MSS w/ the same respect. (VSF) #EFAChat

Kristen Tate @KristenTateSF

#EFAChat Q3b: Some mismatch is fine, but if a project runs counter to a strongly-held belief then I will not be able to do it justice

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#EFAChat Q4: Is there a particular red flag of a problem project that worries you more than others? <https://t.co/WBqSiGY6Z6>

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.@KristenTateSF A3b: Understandable! We editorial freelancers get very close to the projects you take on. #EFAChat

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAChat A3b: I confront them. In terms of representation, this usually results in acknowledgment by the author and a better end product.

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAChat A3b: After all, editing is, in part, about offering perspective. Not many authors have dealt with a genderqueer person before.

EFA @EFAFreelancers

#EFAChat A4: Yes! Volume is definitely an issue! <https://t.co/tfOIIu6do>

Kristen Tate @KristenTateSF

#EFAChat A4: When a client keeps sending me a new drafts after I've already started work

EFA @EFAFreelancers

#EFAChat A3b: Not an easy path, but a valuable one! <https://t.co/R8iqVwaCkR>

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A4: I generally weed those out before a contract begins. It's easy to spot authors who can't take feedback nicely, for instance.

EFA @EFAFreelancers

RT @wordfey: #EFAChat A3b: After all, editing is, in part, about offering perspective. Not many authors have dealt with a genderqueer perso...

The Wordsmith @callwordsmith

@EFAFreelancers Exactly! It's nice to have a steady stream of work, but I'm just one person! I don't think they realize that. #EFAChat

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#EFAChat A4: Yes! There's only so much Word's compare function can do to help that!
<https://t.co/xUi1iUwjhC>

EFA @EFAFreelancers

#EFAChat Q5b: What red flags have you overlooked to gain experience where you had none?
<https://t.co/oE6fnLfYBo>

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A5b: A client once offered me a contract, I cleared my schedule, and they didn't contact me again for two months.

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A5b: I was livid. But I'd negotiated a good salary, & it was in a field I'd really wanted to break into.

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#EFAChat A5b: years ago I ghostwrote a very personal memoir with a very picky author for little money. Rewarding but challenging! (VSF, 1/2)

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A5b: When they finally reappeared, I ranted to the family lawyer about it, but signed anyway. I found out—

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A5b: --that the person responsible for signing me was horribly overworked. Ended up with a good friendship and experience to boot.

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#EFAChat A5b: (2/2) It was a great way to get to know the genre and I've used the experience on editing memoirs since. (VSF)

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.@wordfey #EFAChat A5b: Oh that's crushing! Did it end up okay?

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A5b: That said, it was still a bad business practice, and those two months were very stressful--

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A5b: Moral of the story to potential clients of freelancers: we have to balance schedules. Be clear & prompt about your timeframe.

EFA @EFAFreelancers

#EFAChat, I can't believe it's already been an hour! I'll ask one more question and discussion can continue (no Q6)

EFA @EFAFreelancers

RT @wordfey: #EFAchat A5b: Moral of the story to potential clients of freelancers: we have to balance schedules. Be clear & prompt about yo...

EFA @EFAFreelancers

#EFAChat Q6: Are there any project-related challenges that you enjoy tackling? (Forget that "no Q6" comment before) <https://t.co/3YTEoNrNao>

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A6: It's hard for me to answer that. Editing is all about troubleshooting, so it's always a challenge somehow.

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A6: I do like multi-tasking. So, multiple projects. Productivity studies have shown that if you have two projects rather than one--

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A6: --then you end up being more productive in both, because you can switch when you're stuck and come back refreshed.

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A6: On the same day I might galley an interview, edit lesson objectives for a textbook, and edit a sci-fi chapter.

EFA @EFAFreelancers

#EFAChat A6: I really love the tough structural issues. (Go figure.) I'd rather take a good MS puzzle than a rush project any day! (VSF)

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A6: Never bored. :D

EFA @EFAFreelancers

The ideal among #editorproblems! #EFAChat <https://t.co/suJLyQJiXD>

Vanessa Rose Phin @wordfey

#EFAchat A6: I also really like tackling deep issues with character development. And editing textbooks on subjects I haven't studied yet.

EFA @EFAFreelancers

Well that's a wrap for my questions! I'll close the #EFAChat transcript at 4:30 pm EST to catch any more discussion.

Estie Ross @erossin48

.@EFAFreelancers Thank you for hosting the #EFAchat! Thanks to all who participated. I learn something every time!

EFA @EFAFreelancers

.@erossin48, thanks for joining #EFAChat! I enjoyed it, too!

EFA @EFAFreelancers

It's time to end today's #EFAChat. The written transcript will end here. Thanks for a great discussion! See you next time.

EFA @EFAFreelancers

#EFAchat is on the 4th Friday of every month at 3pm ET. Find topics and transcripts here:
<https://t.co/nFc0q9bPQr> #amediting #amwriting

EFA @EFAFreelancers

Stay tuned for a link to this month's #EFAChat transcript, next month's chat topic, and our usual updates! Happy Friday, freelancers!