

Goodwill SF Bay Impact Story

This impact story has the highest engagement time of any non-service page on the website, with users spending an average of over 2 minutes on the page.

Second chances start with one-on-one connections

April 2024

When Quentin Ludwig first met Goodwill career advisor Tavitia Holmes, it was the beginning of a journey neither of them knew would be so impactful.

Quentin was in need of another chance. He was living in transitional housing after many years of dealing with the justice system, addiction, and mental health crises, and was looking for a job to keep his tenuous housing situation. He didn't know Goodwill as anything more than a secondhand store but stopped in anyway with, as he said, "a healthy dose of the 'I've tried everything else' attitude." He was given Tavitia's phone number, a Goodwill Re-Entry Advisor, and they scheduled a time to meet.

Tavitia understands firsthand the roadblocks that many of her clients face. Her introduction to Goodwill was through a job training program she joined when she was coming out of a period of unemployment and relying on county aid. Her administrative skills and valuable ability to connect with people were recognized and she was offered the position of career advisor, focusing on job seekers with a justice-involved background. The empathy she has for her clients is key to both her and their success.

"I see the potential in every client that comes in. I see that everyone can be their best versions of themselves." –Tavitia Holmes, Goodwill Re-entry Career Advisor

When you haven't struggled with housing, food, or employment it can be difficult to understand how even the smallest barrier can feel insurmountable. During their first meeting, Tavitia provided Quentin with a pre-loaded transit card so he could reliably attend training programs and job interviews. As Quentin said, "I have a great skill set but due to my position, I wasn't even able to search for a job, let alone go to interviews because I didn't have bus money." Small but essential resources like this can be the difference between gainful employment and being stuck in a cycle of homelessness.

"The smallest things that we do are the hugest impacts on people's lives, and we don't even realize it because to us it's just a gift card. To them, this is a lifeline to finding sustainable employment and taking care of themselves." –Tavitia Holmes, Goodwill Re-entry Career Advisor

Quentin found the support he needed not only from Tavitia, but also from every Goodwill employee he interacted with. When he started working at the Concord store, he "could not believe the kindness, compassion, and love that emanated from each and every one". They

worked around his schedule, checked that he had enough food to eat, and treated him with respect.

“You know you can feel alone and you feel that there’s no way out. But if you have somebody there showing you that there is a way out, then there are brighter days ahead and there are possibilities for you to succeed.” –Tavitia Holmes, Goodwill Re-entry Career Advisor

Quentin’s time assisting customers and stocking shelves at the Concord Goodwill store was brief, but that’s one of the goals of our job services. Goodwill provided a stable ground from which he could step forward, allowing him to find a career position suited to his skills and experience. Meanwhile, Tavitia will continue making an impact where she can, taking life one day at a time while focusing on growth and the opportunity to help others. As she says, “Putting confidence in the client is what I want. I want them to know that they are amazing. You can do it. You got it. And that’s it for me. It’s just seeing people just thrive.”

Below you can read Quentin’s letter to us in full, as we believe there’s nothing more powerful than hearing a story directly from the person who lived it. We’re very grateful to Quentin for sharing his experience and to Tavitia for allowing us to learn more about the connection they formed. Their story of opportunity and second chances is extraordinary—but also shows what is accomplished at Goodwill every day through our collaborative efforts and the determination of our clients. You can help us continue to create second chances for people like Quentin by shopping at our stores, donating your items, and considering a financial donation. You are an essential part of our ecosystem and every contribution makes a difference.

Microsoft X Acronis

December 2022

I developed and owned the content strategy for this demand generation project aimed at multiple audience sectors.

Preview below, [click here for full document](#).

Acronis January 2023 John McNeil Studio

Microsoft 365 Creative Brief

GET

Both Service providers and SMB and enterprise businesses

TO

Sign up for Acronis M365 backup services

BY

Showing that Acronis protects data that M365 (alone) cannot

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Background — Microsoft 365's major data protection gap

Observation:

M365 (alone) leaves users unprotected and vulnerable.

Many businesses—both SMB and enterprise—employ Microsoft 365 due to convenience and its feature list, and service providers often recommend it to their clients for the same reasons. But Microsoft 365 doesn't provide data protection up to the standard of today's cybersecurity needs, especially in the long term. From a simple accidental deletion to a sophisticated malware attack, Microsoft 365 leaves users unprotected and vulnerable. Though Microsoft 365 states this deficiency in their TOS, many users aren't aware they need a third party vendor to stay protected.

Problem:

Threats are on the rise, but businesses aren't prepared.

A 2022 report found that 25% of the 2,000 IT professionals surveyed either don't know or don't think that Microsoft 365 data can be impacted by a ransomware attack. Additionally, 40% of IT professionals that use Microsoft 365 in their organization admitted they do not have a recovery plan in case their Microsoft 365 data was compromised by a ransomware attack. ([Hornetsecurity](#))

Stonemountain & Daughter Blog Post Samples

Three highly popular blog posts written for high SEO and to drive traffic to top products. These blog posts have collectively received approximately organic 435k page views.

Rayon, viscose, tencel, cupro, modal – what does it all mean?

April 2018

Rayon is one of our favorite fibers because it always has a beautiful drape whether it's a knit or a woven. It's often soft, usually lightweight, and relatively easy to care for—but what is it exactly? And what about those other fibers like viscose, tencel, cupro, and modal? Rayon is one of the most misunderstood fibers, so we want to demystify some of the misconceptions and confusing terms that surround this great fabric.

SO WHAT IS RAYON?

Rayon is the catchall term for fabric made from regenerated cellulose fiber. Rayon is often mistaken for a synthetic fiber, but it is actually made from wood pulp and other plant materials. It was developed in the early 1900s as an alternative to silk and has since been used in all sorts of applications, from commercial to industrial. One of the great properties of rayon is that it is cool to the touch. This and its breathability make it a perfect fabric for warm weather. A swingy rayon dress or blouse will help keep you cool and comfortable when it's the middle of July and the humidity is out of control!

BAMBOO RAYON

The bamboo plant is a sustainable source of the raw materials used in the production of rayon. We love our bamboo rayon knits because they are incredibly soft, breathe wonderfully, and drape beautifully. Our favorite bamboo rayon knits are a perfect match for a quick and easy project like the Briar Tee by Megan Nielsen.

[photo]

RAYON CREPE

Rayon crepe was a very popular choice for dresses and blouses in the 1940s—we love the vintage vibe these textured fabrics bring to dresses like the Eve by Sew Over It. Today, rayon crepes are available in a huge array of colors, prints, and textures.

[photo]

RAYON CHALLIS

Challis is probably the most well-known type of rayon. It's lightweight and fluid, which makes it ideal for drapery blouses, dresses, and skirts. And it comes in so many amazing prints! A rayon challis Charlie Caftan by Closet Case Patterns is the floaty, chic summer dress of your dreams.

[photo]

OTHER RAYONS

Rayon comes in many other variations as well—it can be textured, sandwashed, sueded, and woven in different ways to change how it drapes and feels. This versatility makes it so perfect for all kinds of garment sewing—you could fill your wardrobe with rayon and not have two of the same garment.

VISCOSE

Though viscose originated as an alternative method to producing rayon, it now is considered an interchangeable term. “Viscose” is typically used in European countries, which is why our Italian designer rayons are called viscose. When you're working with a print, it can be best to keep things simple—the Ogden Cami by True Bias is a perfect pattern for that.

[photo]

TENCEL

The word tencel is actually a trademarked term for a fiber called lyocell. The manufacturing process for lyocell is slightly different from other rayons and results in very little waste product. This makes tencel/lyocell more sustainable and eco-friendly.

Though tencel can be made into all sorts of different weaves, the type we see most often is twill. Tencel twill is a great bottomweight for making jackets and pants. One thing to note with tencel is that it tends to get shiny when pressed with a hot iron. We recommend turning down the temp and using a pressing cloth. A Heavy Tencel Twill is the perfect weight for pants and jackets, yet is wonderfully soft and drapery. The Burnside Bibs by Sew House Seven is a great pattern for summer—so stylish and easy to wear.

[photo]

CUPRO

You may know cupro by its trade name, Bemberg, which is a popular fabric for lining dresses, jackets, and more. Cupro (or cupromonium) is the name given to rayon fibers made through a process that uses copper and ammonium. Its slinkiness and slight sheen make it a great alternative to silk. We love using Bemberg as a lining for jackets like the Auburn Blazer by Cashmerette.

[photo]

MODAL

What makes modal different from other rayons is that the fibers are designed to be stronger and more resistant to shrinkage. This makes modal easier to care for because it won't shrink as much as other rayons if it gets tumble dried. Both wovens and knits are made from modal and they're always extremely soft. We love our Cotton/Modal jersey knits for a comfy dress like the Turner by Cashmerette.

[photo]

SEWING WITH RAYON

Many beginning sewists shy away from rayon because it has a reputation for being difficult to work with. Though it's true that the liquid drape of rayon can make it trickier than cotton, it just takes a little more care. Try Flatter (a starch alternative) to make your rayon easier to handle before cutting. Use weights and a rotary cutter to cut out your pattern, rather than pins and scissors. And don't forget to staystitch your curves after cutting to keep them from getting misshapen.

We know that rayon is super easy to wear, but how easy is it to care for? Rayon used to have a reputation for being dry clean-only, but nearly all modern rayon can be machine washed. However, we recommend keeping it away from the dryer. Rayon tends to shrink and you don't want your lovely summer sun dress to become a micro-mini! If you're not sure how your fabric will react to washing, just test a swatch before throwing your full yardage in the washer.

What do you think about rayon and all of its cousins? If you've never sewn with it before, we hope that after reading this you will give rayon a try!

Let's Talk Linen

June 2018

We loved the response to our rayon blog post, so we wanted to make a similar post about one of our absolute favorite fabrics—linen! There are so many reasons to love linen. It's a natural fiber, it drapes beautifully, it has great texture, and it becomes amazingly soft with washing and wearing. And of course, it makes gorgeous garments!

Linen is made from flax plants and may be one of the oldest textiles in the world. Cloth made from wild flax was found in a prehistoric cave in Georgia and determined to be over 30,000 years old, and Egyptian mummies were often wrapped in linen. That we even know these things demonstrates the strength of flax fiber—linen shrouds have been found perfectly preserved after thousands of years!

These days, high-quality flax is grown in Europe and the linen is produced in many countries like Lithuania, Poland, France, China, Austria, and Germany. Some of the highest quality linen is made in Ireland, Italy, and Belgium. Our Nevada Linens are made in Ireland, where there is a long history of linen production. But like many fabrics, the linen chain of production is not centered in one area. The flax may be grown in one country, spun into yarn in another, and woven into fabric in another.

[photo]

Though linen is not as misunderstood as some fabrics (like rayon), there are still some misconceptions about the fabric. Yes, linen can be very wrinkly, but it doesn't have to be! Our friend and local instructor Sandra Betzina has a great tip about how to pretreat linen so that it has lovely soft wrinkles instead of hard creases you need to tackle with your iron.

Before you preshrink, set a wrinkle-less finish by ironing the linen with the hottest dry iron possible. Next, wash (with a little detergent) and dry in the hottest water and highest heat setting you have. Take it out of the dryer when close to bone dry. You will notice that smaller softer wrinkles have replaced the hard crease usually associated with the fabric.

Here's an example from Fabric Lady's blog post about her favorite lightweight jackets. On the left is the linen before washing and on the right is after washing and drying according to Sandra's tip. Creased and somewhat stiff linen becomes soft, lovely, and ready to sew into beautiful garments.

Another misconception is that linen can't be washed because it is too delicate or it will shrink. Though it is true that linen will shrink like most natural fibers, this doesn't mean it can't be washed. Following Sandra Betzina's tip above will also preshrink your fabric so that you can later wash it without worry. After pretreating, we like to follow the general rule of washing linen

garments on cold and line drying. Regularly using less heat will keep your fabric in better condition longer, but regular washing will make linen wonderfully soft over time.

So What Can You Make?

Let's get to the fun part—sewing! Linen can have a bit of a reputation for being a home dec fabric, but it's not just for curtains and napkins anymore. At Stonemountain, we've used linen to make dresses, tops, jackets, pants, overalls, skirts—pretty much every garment you can think of. And because linen comes in so many different weights, you can find a linen to use for any project. Here are some of our favorite garments to sew in linen.

[photo]

Of course, this is just a small taste of the many, many different garments you can make with linen. Linen can be used for any pattern that calls for woven fabric—the trick is just in figuring out the right type and weight for your project. Whether this is your first time working with linen or your hundredth, we're always happy to help you find the perfect fabric.

So what do you think? Is linen on your list for summer sewing?

What GSM Means and How to Use It

July 2018

We recently added a GSM cutter and scale to our tool kit and we couldn't be more excited! If you're not huge fabric nerds like us, you may be wondering what a GSM cutter is and why we would want one.

GSM stands for grams per square meter, and is a standard measurement for fabric weight. The cutter allows us to cut out a perfect circle with an area of 100 cm, and the scale precisely measures the weight of the little fabric circle. We can then multiply that number by 100 to get the GSM of the fabric.

[You can see a video of the GSM cutter in action here.]

GSM can be converted to ounces per square yard, another common fabric weight measurement. As you would imagine, oz/square yd is mostly used by fabric companies in the United States and GSM is used pretty much everywhere else in the world.

But knowing that a fabric has a weight of 210 GSM or 6.19 oz/square yd is not very helpful information if you don't have a reference point. So we have put together a handy guide of fabric weights that will give you a better idea of what those numbers mean and how to use them.

GSM	OZ/SQ YD	TYPE OF FABRIC	WHAT TO MAKE
50–100	1.47–2.95	gauze, lawn, voile, batiste, chiffon, charmeuse	Lined dresses and skirts, floaty blouses
100–170	2.95–5.01	rayon challis, quilting weight cotton, double gauze, ikat, shirtings, chambray, silk noil	Dresses, skirts, blouses, shirts, and more. This is your standard dress-making fabric.
170–230	5.01–6.78	tencel twill, cotton/spandex knit, linen and linen blends, barkcloth, stretch sateen	Pants, lightweight jackets, structured dresses and skirts
230–340	6.78–10.03	stretch denim, canvas, sweatshirt fleece, heavy linen, ponte knit	Pants, stretch jeans, fall jackets, sweaters, bags
340–450	10.03–13.27	rigid denim, canvas, wool coating	Non-stretch jeans, coats, upholstery

Though fabric weights are generally pretty straightforward (a heavy fabric will result in a more structured garment, etc.), there are some caveats to consider.

Rayon is a heavier fiber than cotton, but is also more drapery and fluid. This means that though our bamboo rayon knit is 7.4 oz/sq yd, it actually *acts* more lightweight than a cotton/spandex knit that is 5.16 oz/sq yd. You could easily make leggings out of the cotton/spandex knit, but the bamboo rayon would not be firm enough. The heavy drape of bamboo rayon knit makes it perfect for garments like maxi dresses and flowy tops (like the **Ebony Tee**), but less ideal for garments that need a bit of structure.

[image]

Our **Bamboo Rayon** is 7.4 oz/sq yd or 250 GSM, but it's best suited for garments that have more drape than structure.

[image]

Cotton/spandex knits by Art Gallery Fabrics are 5.16 oz/sq yd or 175 GSM. These fabrics are firm enough for leggings and other garments that require fabric with a bit more heft.

In general, it can be difficult to get an accurate idea of knits even when you know the weight because of how they are made. Knitting uses more fiber or threads than weaving. A knitted piece of cloth will weigh more than a woven piece that is the same size and content.

[diagram]

Additionally, many knit fabrics have some spandex or lycra content, which adds extra weight but doesn't make a knit *feel* or *act* heavier. Therefore, a knit that weighs 4.7 oz/sq yd can feel more lightweight than a woven fabric with the same weight.

For example, our **Cashmeer Sweater Knit** is great for sheer, summer weight sweaters and cardigans, while our **Tencel Twill** is great for pants and unlined skirts or dresses. They're the exact same weight, but feel completely different!

[photo]

Our Cashmeer Sweater knit on the left is great for a lightweight **Cocoon Cardigan**, while the Tencel Twill is a good match for the **Ulysses Trench**. Two very different garments, but made with the same weight of fabric

Knowing the weight is very useful information, especially if you're comparing woven fabrics. If you're looking to make a linen dress for summer, then knowing the weight will help you decide between Nevada or Delave linen. Nevada is a medium-heavy 6.19 oz/sq yd while Delave is 4.4 oz/sq yd—a better weight for a warm weather dress.

[photo]

Both are 100% linen and a great color for a sundress—how do you choose between **Nevada** and **Delave** when you're shopping online?

We know that shopping for fabric online can be difficult. We're really excited to have a new tool that allows us to provide our customers with more helpful information. Though we won't be able to cut and weigh all of the fabric in our shop, we will work on adding this information to the fabrics that are a bit more ambiguous, like our new **Japanese Yarn Dyed Twill**.

And as always, if you have questions about a specific fabric and its weight or whether it will work for a pattern, please ask! We are always happy to answer questions or offer suggestions. Just shoot us an email at info@stonemountainfabric.com or contact us through our **Facebook** or **Instagram**!