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Avoiding the PDF

AIGA Richmond Coffee Talk - 12.16.10

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1.0 Basics

Print is a lecture and web is a conversation.
~Khoi Vinh

Print design is based on letting the eyes walk over the information, selectively looking at information objects and using spatial juxtaposition to make page elements enhance and explain each other.

Web design functions by letting the hands move the information (by scrolling or clicking); information relationships are expressed temporally as part of an interaction and user movement.

Moving around is what the Web is all about.
~Jakob Nielsen

When we're designing pages, we tend to assume that users will scan the page, consider all of the available options, and choose the best one. In reality, though, most of the time we don't choose the best option—we choose the first reasonable option..
~Steve Krug

- Print is inherently sequential. Piece in hand, you read from front to back and in the order that's intended. However, in the web environment, the user moves in and out based on their own specific needs and desires. It's a direct relationship that can yield strong emotional responses.
- Print will never die. There will always be a place for print but now print serves to drive traffic to the web.

1.1 Tools

1. Design in Photoshop
2. Dreamweaver
3. Google Analytics

1.2 Tips

1. Photoshop
 - Work in RGB and 72dpi
 - Pixels not picas
 - Always retain your layers
 - Don't rasterize your type
 - Organize organize organize
 - Design for the content and the users
 - Use a grid
2. Dreamweaver
 - Set up external style sheets (CSS)
 - Start with a CSS file and an HTML file
 - Set up your site in Dreamweaver
 - If you have to move or rename files, do it IN Dreamweaver (Files palette)
 - Don't resize images in the code
3. Web Safe Fonts
 - Arial
 - Arial Black
 - Comic Sans MS
 - Courier New
 - Georgia
 - Impact
 - Lucinda Grande
 - Palatino
 - Tahoma
 - Times New Roman
 - Trebuchet MS
 - Verdana
4. Images
 - JPG = photographs, gradients
 - GIF = solid color such as logos, supports 1 color transparency
 - PNG = supports multiple color transparency



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1.3 Terminology

Ajax

A group of interrelated web development methods used on the client-side to create interactive web applications. With Ajax, web applications can retrieve data from the server asynchronously in the background without interfering with the display and behavior of the existing page. Ajax is not one technology, but a group of technologies. Ajax uses a combination of HTML and CSS to mark up and style information. The DOM is accessed with JavaScript to dynamically display, and to allow the user to interact with, the information presented.

API (Application Programming Interface)

It serves as an interface between different software programs and facilitates their interaction, similar to the way the user interface facilitates interaction between humans and computers.

CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)

A W3C recommended language for defining style (such as font, size, color, spacing, etc.) for web documents.

DHTML (Dynamic HTML)

A term commonly to describe HTML content that can change dynamically.

DOM (Document Object Model)

A programming model for web page objects.

EOT (Embedded Open Type)

JavaScript

The most popular scripting language on the internet, developed by Netscape.

jQuery

A cross-browser JavaScript library designed to simplify the client-side scripting of HTML. jQuery is the most popular JavaScript library in use today.

MashUp

A web page or application that uses and combines data, presentation or functionality from two or more sources (i.e. Twitter, YouTube, etc.) to create new services.

Meta Tags

Tags inserted into documents to describe the document.

XHTML (Extensible Hypertext Markup Language) HTML reformulated as XML. XHTML is the latest version of HTML. Developed by W3C.

2.0 Usability

Usability is a common courtesy. By making your site easily navigable, you're building goodwill

There are two kinds of users:

- 1) those that use the navigation and
 - 2) those that immediately use SEARCH
- Don't make me think
 - Web pages are not read, they are scanned - write and design for scanability
 - Clear visual hierarchy
 - Provide areas for promos and features
 - Stick with standard conventions
 - Break up pages into clearly defines areas
 - Make links obvious
 - Less is more
 - Page titles on every page in the same place
 - Offer a search feature
 - Avoid drop down navigation
 - Trunk Test: imagine being blindfolded and stuffed into the trunk of a car. How and what are required to ascertain where you are? Think of these as navigation components.



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3.0 Project Types

There are numerous opportunities for placing large amount of content online and in a well organized and readable manner.

Such as:

- Catalogs
- Brochures
- Annual Reports
- Magazines
- Directories

Visual examples to follow



4.0 Organizing Content

This goes back to the trunk test. Make sure your content organization makes sense to your audience. When in doubt: ASK.

Grab someone, anyone and ask them. You can have a focus group with anyone at anytime. It's better than not doing one at all. You don't have to spend any money!

Utilize Google Analytics data if it's available. If not, be sure to implement it in this iteration. It's the easiest and best way to see if your ideas are working.

- Say more with less - omit needless words
- Break up large areas of content with related imagery
- Utilize jQuery components
- Everything has it's place



5.0 Presenting Content

Having a well designed interactive web site cannot stand alone. A user will still need to print out information from time to time. This is where your CSS comes in. You typically have at least two separate files, one for screen and one for print.

See: <http://www.alistapart.com/articles/going-toprint/>

The link in your page source will look something like this:

```
<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="/css/print.css" media="print" />
<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="/css/primary.css" media="screen" />
```

You can provide a css that strips away all of the unnecessary noise. You can have a black and white logo and organize the copy, add in page breaks, include or omit images, etc.

By using css for print, no one has to edit content in multiple places.

This is another selling point to the client to help streamline process. It's all about empowerment. How do you empower the client to utilize existing tools to enhance and grow their business? The web can do that as long as it is being used effectively. And of course, Google Analytics can be your ally in building your case.

Also - you notice I'm writing in short bursts. This is the web designer in me. Online, this aids in scanability and readability. On paper - it looks rather icky. If this was a web page, I'd have a css that tightens this up for printing.



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Tabs:

The screenshot shows the website for the University of Richmond Modlin Center for the Arts. The header includes the university name and the center's name. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Artists & Events, Tickets, Getting Here, Opportunities, About Us, Media Center, and Mailing List. The main content area is titled 'Artists & Events' and features a search bar with filters for Artist, Date, and Genre. Below the search bar are three tabs: 'Great Performances Series', 'Theatre and Dance Department', and 'Music Department'. The 'Great Performances Series' tab is active, displaying a list of events with small images and text descriptions.

This site uses tabs (jQuery) as a "Table of Contents"

The screenshot shows the '2010-11 General Fees' page. It features a header with the title and a navigation menu with tabs for Full-Time, Part Time, Excess Hours, and Summer School. The 'Part Time' tab is active, displaying a table of fees for various schools and programs. The table has three columns: School, Hrs., and Cost/Unit or Hour.

School	Hrs.	Cost/Unit or Hour.
Arts & Science/Business/Jepson	3.49 units or less (1 unit rate)	\$7,280
Law School	Fewer than 9	\$1,740
MBA/MACC	8 Hrs or Less	\$1,040
School of Continuing Studies	Per Credit Hr	\$380
School of Continuing Studies - graduate	Per Credit Hr	\$455
Teacher recertification/professional		\$200

Content can be "tabbed out" on a page to organize the information, provide for better scanability and present a more palatable option for large amounts of information.



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Show/Hide:

▶ COLLABORATING CAMPUS-WIDE AND BEYOND

▶ BUILDING DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE COLLECTIONS

▼ CONTRIBUTING TO THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE



["Boatwright Library as Place"](#) continues to fulfill a unique role on campus. Students visit Boatwright for quiet study, group projects, seeking research assistance, completing assignments and to work alongside classmates who are engaged in similar activities. Students often mention that spending time at Boatwright motivates them to study harder.

A recent survey respondent commented that "the library is great and I love studying and socializing here....I will miss it when I leave the university." Users made 596,414 visits to Boatwright in the past year, with an average daily attendance of 1,634.

In addition to supporting the First Year Seminars, librarians offer personal research appointments to students, provide "personal librarian letters" to each freshman student in September, support upper-level courses, and offer a myriad of services and assistance through our service desks in [Boatwright](#), [Media Resource Center](#), [Gottwald Science Center](#), and [Parsons Music Library](#). Nearly 100 student assistants work alongside library staff members in offering services, particularly during late night evening hours and weekend hours.

SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

Instruction
Presentations to Group
Number of Participants

Reference Transactions

Interlibrary Loan
Loaned to Other Libraries
Borrowed for University Libraries

Circulation: 101,472

Attendance in Boatwright

ADDITIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES

Another option is a show/hide feature also using jQuery.

6.0 Maintenance

Here comes the tricky part. There are a number of viable options depending on WHO will be maintaining this.

You're designing a template. A visual framework system to organize, brand and present content. Now, if you have content that is going to change periodically, you can handle this a few ways:

1. A client has a knowledgeable person who will maintain and make edits as needed.
2. You or someone in your organization handles the updates.

3. Utilize a CMS (Content Management System)

There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these.

1. You won't be bogged down with edits / The client will screw something up
2. You maintain the integrity of the work / it can turn into a full time job
3. Locks down the important parts and allows the editor to focus on what they should be focusing on - the content / CMSs cost time and money, learning curves, etc.



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So, now what?

There are other options to reinventing the wheel.

There are open source CMSs such as Drupal as well as inexpensive alternatives like Expression Engine. But if the budget, skill sets and time line aren't working in your favor there's another option.

Blogging platforms.

Wordpress, Blogger, Tumblr are just a few that allow you to use your own domain AND customize the theme to match you or your clients's identity. You can use the blog option or not, it's up to you. They are tested across browsers, offer plug ins, a variety of layout options and you only need to be familiar with CSS. Plus they've been thoroughly tested for browser compatability.

Case in point: Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine

The entire magazine was built and is maintained in Wordpress.

In addition, blogging platforms provide levels of access, WYSIWYG editors so anyone familiar with Word can edit copy and the ability to upload and place photos.

You as the design can retain admin rights and manage who has access and to what extent. It's a win-win.

JOHNS HOPKINS MAGAZINE

Google™ Custom Search

Search



FEATURES EDITOR'S NOTES LETTERS WHOLLY HOPKINS ALUMNI ABOUT BACK ISSUES



The Force Is with Her

Annelise Pruitt, A&S '04, prefers to follow her curiosity wherever it leads. This year, it led her to website design—and an Emmy.

The Force Is with Her

DECEMBER 8, 2010 | BY MARGARET GUROFF | ADD A COMMENT

At a judging of Emmy award nominees last August, Annelise Pruitt, A&S '04, and her collaborator were the youngest people in the room. "Nobody knew who we were," recalls Pruitt, designer of the website Star Wars Uncut (starwarsuncut.com). Their site had been nominated for an Emmy, but its chances were slim. It was just a hobby project, and they were competing against television networks, explains Pruitt, 28.

The nominees in technical categories had been invited to evaluate each other's work, based on their five-minute entry videos. When Pruitt's video was screened, "people began laughing and clapping," she recalls. "We were sitting in front, and the people behind us said,

Winter 2010

See all articles from this issue

Wholly Hopkins

Matters of note from around Johns Hopkins
See all Wholly Hopkins articles [here](#).



When humans stampede

The School of Medicine's Edbert Hsu is studying why crowds get out of control, and what can be done to control the chaos.



Tanzania turns to the Munnets



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7.0 Resources

This is a compilation of tools, tips, tricks and inspiration. I won't vouch for their design aesthetic or usability - but the information is invaluable

7.1 Online

Online magazines examples:

<http://www.fastcompany.com/>
<http://magazine.jhu.edu>

Grids:

<http://www.thegridsystem.org/>
<http://960.gs/>
<http://www.spry-soft.com/grids/>

CSS:

<http://css-tricks.com/>
<http://css3generator.com/>

Jquery:

<http://jquery.com/>
<http://jqueryui.com/demos/>
<http://plugins.jquery.com/>

Browser compatibility & support:

<http://browsershots.org>
<http://findmebyip.com/litmus/>

Google Goodness:

<http://www.google.com/analytics/>
<http://adwords.google.com/>
<http://www.google.com/services/>

Good sound advice and information:

<http://www.alistapart.com/>

Embedding Fonts:

<http://www.fontsquirrel.com/fontface/generator>

7.2 Recommended Reading

"Don't Make me Think"

Steve Krug

"The Inmates are Running the Asylum"

Alan Cooper

"HTML, XHTML and CSS Visual QuickStart Guide"

Elizabeth Castro

"Eric Meyer on CSS"

Eric Meyer

"The CSS Detective Guide"

Denise Jacobs

"Ordering Disorder: Grid Principles for Web Design"

Khoi Vinh
