

Design Comps

With the website wireframes due today, we've made it through the planning process for the final project and are starting into the design and building phase. At this point you should have a good feel for the mood of your website (based on the moodboard) as well as the site structure (sitemap) and page structure (wireframes). Now we move on to the design comps which is a melding of your page structure in the wireframes with the look-and-feel of your moodboard. Two interesting articles you should read are:

Design Process Revisited

Avoid Edge Cases by Designing Up Front <http://alistapart.com/articles/avoidedgecases>

Page Description Diagram: Replacing the wireframe or in addition to the wireframe?

Where the Wireframes Are: Special Deliverable #3

http://www.boxesandarrows.com/view/where_the_wireframes_are_special_deliverable_3

The first one is a good recap of the design process, working through the planning stage. The second one is an interesting article about the usefulness of wireframes. You should also check out the following webpage where someone has created a fun summary of the website development process.

The Website Development Process

<http://pingmag.jp/2005/12/09/the-website-development-process/>

Website Design

Now it is time to work on the actual visual for your webpages. When I do this I start by sketching ideas on paper, which may be a lot like your wireframe process (and may be the sketches you were not supposed to be doing until now, but couldn't resist doing while you worked on your moodboard and wireframes).

These start out similar to a wireframe sketch consisting of:

- overall page structure and element regions (thinking about appropriate proportions)
- top-level navigation
- other global navigation (login, site map, help, footer nav)
- main areas of content
- any key graphical elements (photos, etc.)

As you see, these sketches can now include graphical elements...so they've moved beyond the wireframe to designing. This is much faster than doing anything in Photoshop.

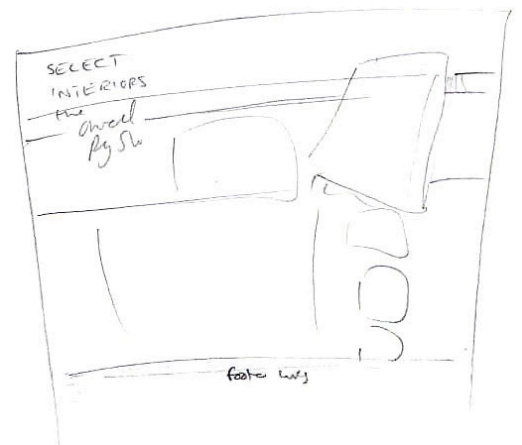
Make sure that you are placing your most important elements on the page where your visitor will notice them. Things that increase noticeability are (but make sure you don't overuse any one of these!):

- larger size, strong colors, high contrast, movement (*careful!*), items with sufficient whitespace around them

Remember that everything on the page should be there for a purpose:

- help your users achieve their goals
- support the site's goals without obstructing the user's goals

The transition from sketches to comps might look like the two images to the right.



If you're feeling uninspired, a good approach is to look through some creative inspiration until something sparks your creativity. Let the materials trigger ideas of your own. Determine what piece of a viewed design inspires you. Think about how you can reinterpret an idea or look that you see. Ask what it makes you think of...what can you imagine.

Since class started we've looked at quite a few sites that are well designed. You can randomly find good ones, but here are some that highlight really good design:

CSS Bloom	http://www.cssbloom.net/
CSS Import	http://www.cssimport.com/
CSS Mania	http://cssmania.com/
CSS Remix	http://cssremix.com/
CSS Vault	http://cssvault.com/
Daily Slurp	http://www.dailyslurp.com/
Design Flavr	http://www.designflavr.com/
Design Shack	http://designshack.co.uk/gallery/
Most Inspired	http://www.mostinspired.com/
One Page Love	http://onepage.com/
StyleBoost	http://styleboost.com/
W3C Sites	http://www.w3csites.com/
Web Creme	http://www.webcreme.com/

*"What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; **there is nothing new under the sun.**"*

— Ecclesiastes 1:9

"Good artists borrow, great artists steal."

— Pablo Picasso

"All my best thoughts were stolen by the ancients."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Gathering your own reference materials, sketches and using your own imagination is going to help you grow as an artist far more than stealing someone else's work."

— Bonnie Hamlin

"Ideas cannot be copyrighted; images can."

— Mary Klotz

"We all, as artists, appropriate images, consciously or not, from the world around us – including the work of other artists. Shall we be sued by God for painting a river or mountain?"

— Mary Shaw

"Plagiarism brings on bad karma and may lead to reincarnation as a bad piece of art or, worse, a bad politician."

— Jacques Vesery

Homework/Reading Assignment

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Originality in Graphic Design

Pursuit of the Original

http://www.webdesignfromscratch.com/pursuit_of_the_original.cfm