



## Peninsula College Continuing Education Website Design Basics

**Term: Winter 2009**

**Day: Thurs**

**Dates: 02/19/09 to 02/26/09**

**Time: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Location: Port Hadlock Lab**

**Instructor: Renne Brock-Richmond**

**Contact: [renne@uniqueasyou.com](mailto:renne@uniqueasyou.com) or 360.460.3023**

**Catalog Description:** An introduction to website design for the do-it-yourself individuals. Learn the basics of site building, navigation, optimizing images for the web, creating links, and basic HTML code. Explore how to create a website that focuses on simplicity while delivering your ideas with excellent design. Several website design applications will be compared and basic computer knowledge is required.

### **Objectives and Student Outcomes:**

- Implement site mission
- Develop the information architecture and site map
- Design a distinct presence
- Enhance and optimize images for the web
- Build content
- Focus on Interface design usability
- Create new pages, edit pages, add links, images, and content
- Cultivate audience connectivity
- Compare website design applications and shareware
- Maintain website with up-to-date content

### **Session One - Development, Define, Design, and Details of Websites**

### **Session Two - Creating Web Graphics, Content, Change, and Connect**

### **Handouts:**

[http://www.uniqueasyou.com/courses\\_website\\_design\\_basics.htm](http://www.uniqueasyou.com/courses_website_design_basics.htm)

**Then click on the smile face icon to reveal the PDF and links page.**

**Instructor Qualifications:** I earned a Bachelors of Science in Art at Lewis and Clark College and a Masters of Fine Art in Visual Art at Norwich University. Although my degrees have focused on art, my theories, techniques, and practices have been communicated via the computer sciences. I have worked with both PC and Macintosh computers since 1980, and worked as an instructor at Monterey Peninsula College, Peninsula College, and taught digital media through my own independent courses and workshops. As part of my personal business, unique as you, I design marking packages and websites, and train individuals and small businesses on software foundations and Internet skills.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** Peninsula College is committed to providing accessibility to all students. Any student with special needs must complete a self-identification form available in the counseling office. This information will remain strictly confidential.

**Do your homework. It is better to work smart than to work hard.**

## **Introduction to Website Design**

- Working in the Web Cloud or Designing Websites you have full control of
- Develop and Define your Website's mission
- Branding Brainstorm

## **Welcome to the new Web (2.0)!**

Now you are working in the Web Cloud and designing websites you have full control of and not the other way around. It is easier, faster, cheaper, and sometimes free!

## **Development, Define, and Design**

Before you start making a website, you have to have a plan of action. Here is my process to achieve website design and utilization for clients:

- Implement site mission based on the organization's objectives of site functionality and usability.
- Develop the information architecture and site map.
- Design a distinct and unique presence to create interest through a visual experience.
- Produce a custom interface design and interactive navigation mechanism with an individual look and feel.
- Construct designs that articulate your aspired image or established branding appearance.
- Enhance images and photography specifically composed for the site.
- Encourage harmony with your content and visual context.
- Integrate interactivity to generate

connectivity and familiarity with the organization to develop loyalty and curiosity.

- Build and program a technical infrastructure and test the completed site.
- Administrate site with updates and additional pages.
- Instruct organization site manager in the method to modify the site with essential software, if you want to maintain your site personally.

## **Enthusiasm is better than Perfectionism.**

Get excited by what you are about to share with the whole world. Your enthusiasm must show through the design and content of your site. Excitement and passion is your mission.

## **Brainstorm!**

Develop a design plan that is firm, but flexible. Everything will fall into place once you create your information architecture. To do that, you need to define your site's mission. Let's go through the hard questions first so that it will be easier in the end.

Regardless if your site is for a business, personal hobby, or family memories, you still have to consider these questions. They are fundamental and the foundation to your design.

## **What is the Mission of your website?**

## **Who is your Audience and how will you interface with them?**

## **On the web, your business is always open. What is your Brand?**

## What is Branding?

A brand is defined as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of business and to differentiate them from those of another.

A successful brand will achieve these objectives:

- Articulate your message distinctly
- Demonstrate your credibility
- Emotionally connect to your target
- Inspire the buyer
- Solidify loyalty

## Define Your Brand

You will create a foundation for defining your brand by answering these questions:

1. What are your products and/or services? Describe the elements of these products and/or services.
2. What are the essential principles of your products and services? Vocalize the value of your company's actions.
3. What does your company specialize in?
4. What is the mission of your company? How do you accomplish this mission?
5. Who is your target market?
6. Who do your products and services attract?
7. Do you have a slogan or motto for your company?
8. What kind of message does your catchphrase send to your clients or customers?
9. Can you describe your company's character or personality?
10. What kinds of words represent your

products or services?

11. How do you get the attention with those characteristics?
12. Do they attract your target market?
13. Who is your direct competition?
14. How are you different than them?
15. How do you connect with your customer now?
16. What is the significance of your company to you?

## Build Your Brand's Game Plan

A strong and nimble brand can influence, motivate, impress, and build credibility. What are the goals you imagine your brand will accomplish?

Do some Market Analysis to answer these question, your branding efforts will be influenced by the answers. Branding isn't just about your company; it is about how an audience reacts to your company.

- A. How does your target audience interact with your brand?
- B. How does an audience react to your company right now?
- C. How would you like them to think about your company?
- D. What will attract your target audience to your products or services?
- E. How will you compete for your consumer loyalty and product devotion?

## Just do it!

Brainstorm colors, themes, senses, textures, words, quotes, and quick first impressions you hope people have about your company.

- Implement your Branding
- Stay consistence
- Listen to your audience
- Tweak with small changes, not a big makeover
- Smile and wave, you are on!

## What about Marketing?

Marketing is the vital activity of presenting products or services to potential and current customers to encourage them to consume more.

Marketing is very different now than even 5 years ago. Current modes of marketing operation:

- Image is everything.
- Novel is out, relentless and consistent interactivity is in
- Use of all media is required
- Work and play well with others and share marketing opportunities
- Accessibility, your business is always open
- Free is a very good price

## Stay on Target

Once you have defined your target audience, focus on target marketing and stay on target. It is a waste of your energy and money to wane from them; only a small proportion of the population is interested in purchasing your products or service. Romance the right audience and you will be rewarded. It isn't worth pushing and pursuing someone who "just not that into you".

## What will be your three Cs of Marketing?

### Clarity

### Consistence

### Connection

## Domain, Hosting, and Software

- Domain Registration
- Site Hosting
- Connecting
- Content Management System (CMS) and other software

## Important!

Do a great deal of research before paying for any service. Know what you need from your site, even your way future plans. The server or services you are paying for may not have all the features you want in the long run. It is easier to do the research ahead of time than to switch providers. Look for hidden costs and set up fees.

## Domain Registration

A domain name registrar is a company accredited by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers and/or by a national ccTLD authority to register domain names. Do your homework about the cost, ease to move your domain from one server to another, and if they are not scam artists. You might ask your server whom they use. Do a WHOIS search to find out if a domain is available or who owns it.

The cheapest in domain registration doesn't mean the best.

## Site Hosting

With site hosting, you have many options and pay scales to choose from. I suggest that you do your research and look at local servers for hosting. Some hosting companies that I have worked with in the past:

Olypen.com  
support@olypen.com  
360-683-1456

InsideOut Solutions  
insideout.com  
360-683-5774

My students have been happy with  
BlueHost.com

## Connecting

You need to obtain a FTP to maintain your site. File Transfer Protocol (FTP) is a network protocol that is used to transfer your data from your computer to the server that is hosting your site. The application you are using to manage your site might have one built in, like Dreamweaver, or you have to buy one. Though, there are some shareware ones that are free or have trial versions. CuteFTP and FireFTP are often used by new webmasters. FileZilla is popular too.  
<http://filezilla-project.org>

You will need the ftp address from the server, your username, and password to log on.

FTP takes two different forms of information, ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange - 128 characters) and binary (codes made up of only zeros and ones).

When working with a FTP, your files on your computer are in the "local site" and the files on the server are in the "remote site".

## Managing

Content Management System (CMS) is software that assists in the organization and presentation of content on a website. Some are easy, some are complex, some are expensive, and some are free.

It is best to research what will work for you. Some CMS are Joomla!, WordPress, and Adobe Contribute.

This authoring software is designed to allow its users with little or no knowledge of programming to create and manage content. In comparison, website building software like Dreamweaver. If you are using a CMS, to add more features someone who understands code could add them or you can buy extra widgets. A CMS is perfect for website maintenance. There are hundreds of CMS out there, some are proprietary and some are free and open source software. Find something that has plenty of instruction and help files.

## Starting with Templates – Interface Design

A great way to learn website design basics is to try out a template and then taking it apart like reverse technology of alien spacecraft.

Sometimes a Template is called a Theme.

Each CMS has several templates, prefab website layouts, that you can use. You can also pay for a custom one.

They are not always totally what you want, if you want that then you need to learn how to use Dreamweaver, GoLive, or a good amount of html code.

The template will have to be uploaded to your server.

Most give you options for customizing the look of the template. Before fooling around with the design too much, you might save the html code in a Word document (or any text program) so that you can always go back to a previous version. There will be a panel that you can view the html code, select all, copy, and paste in to Word file. Save! Any time you want to experiment with the template, it is a good idea to you save the html first.

## Pages

Because you developed your information Architecture, this will be easier. The main pages of a website are called “Parents” and the pages within that section are called “Children”. You produce the Parent pages first, then add the Children marking that they belong under a certain parent. Sometimes this way of organizing involves numbering the pages, which you don’t see on the website itself. I tend to give a wide amount of space to allow for growth by going in between the thousands.

Pages and Posts are two different things. Pages most likely are static and not time based. Posts are flexible, timely, and Blog like. Both can be changed at anytime.

When adding to a page, I build my text content in a word processor to catch my spelling and grammar errors. Then I copy and paste this text. I save the files as well, you never know when you website content will be lost, so keep a backup.

## Adding Links

A vital aspect of a website is links. This is how your viewer moves around your website to discover all of its content. Links happen within your website and you can make links that go to other websites. You will have a higher ranking in search engines if you have more links.

It is best to have at least two ways for people to navigate around your site. This may take the form of buttons at the top of your site and a side bar of links. I like to put links at the bottom of a page as well, if I can.

Be sure that you have the correct URL for a link. Everyone hates an error message that a page cannot be found. Check often to see if the links you have added still exist.

## Adding images

Images make a huge difference. Make sure they are optimized for the web so the download is fast. Some CMS will resize your images to fit on the page. If you can, try to start with the right size in the first place.

Remember, you can always change your mind. Isn’t that nice?

## Adding Content

Do this often. Even if you just change one word, that is enough. Swap photos once and awhile. Add event dates. Take something away.

Make changes. This makes your website a living thing. Users love that!

A personal touch is great marketing. Have a page that is just fun stuff that you add to like a blog.

You can always add and take away at anytime. The web is open 24-7.

Have fun with it!

## Practice on a Blog

**Blog** - short for **Web log**. They are Web pages that function as publicly accessible personal diaries, chronicles, and other written forms of personal musings with images for an individual, group, or company. A blogger is a person who blogs.

A blog is a great place to test the waters, and who knows – you may just use it to connect with people on another level.

Free Blogs

<http://wordpress.com>

<http://www.blogger.com>

## Interface Foundation

- Develop the information architecture
- Color! Color! Color!
- Focus on Interface design usability

## Develop the information architecture and User Interface

Information architecture is the term used to describe the structure of a system commonly associated with websites and intranets. It is the way information (content) is grouped and the navigation method to facilitate people to move logically through a system.

Make a layout that you and others can understand.

You have created this and it is your guide to your visual user interface. Each parent page is a link / button to a section of your website. Try not to have more than 7 parent pages, and odd numbers appear better than even.

Depending on how you build your site, either with a template that is basic or an elaborate graphic design, you may have visual clues as to which section you are in. Some sites are color-coded or have special graphics for each section. Regardless, it is most important to be clear. Sites that do not have a clear user interface are sometimes called “mystery meat”.

You may have limitations to how your buttons appear, but you have control over the navigation through your site. Even a simple text link works.

Often navigational elements are shown three times on a page.

## User Interface – looking good and making it easy on the viewer

### Typography

The whole point of creating a website is to communicate. If your user can't read your writing, why bother?

Your font choice is vital – stick to your branding schemes. Pick a font that is appropriate for your content and can be view by most browsers. There are serif and sans-serif fonts, your style may dictate your choice. Serif (a cool Matrix character too) is better for print as it leads your eye across the pages, sans-serif looks better onscreen.

Standard fonts are Pick your color wisely because you need enough contrast between the text and the background.

One of the worst color choices is a black background with white text.

Alignment – Left and Jusitfy are the easiest to read.

Bold – only use it if you really need to get our attention and don't over use.

ALL CAPS – this is yelling and is rude.

**Be consistent with fonts! Stick to one!**

### Breadcrumbs

Leave a trail of link “breadcrumbs” for your viewer to guild them back home or so they know how they ended up on that page. Sometimes the software does this for you; sometimes you have to make them yourself.

Home > Gallery > Photos > Sunsets

## **Being extremely clever can trip people up**

Try to use basic user interface design for navigation and use your creativity and cleverness for the content.

## **Color! Color! Color!**

The fastest means to create an impression, with the emphasis on personal motivation, is with color.

What colors will you use?

## **Web Safe Colors**

Web Safe, or Browser Safe Color Palettes consist of 216 colors that display solid, non-dithered, and consistent on any computer monitor, or web browser, capable of displaying at least 8-bit color. Use these colors for backgrounds and text.

There are several sites that list these colors, just do a search for web safe colors and find a site you like.

I tend to make a file that has the colors I am using for a site and include the 6-digit code with them for easy reference.

## **Color Schemes**

A harmonious set of colors, will make or break your website. The best choices are analogous, complimentary, and monochromatic. I use split complimentary with a wide analogous often.

Analogous colors are those that are adjacent to each other on the color wheel.

Complementary color schemes consist of colors that are located opposite each other on the color wheel. They have a high contrast.

Monochromatic means one color and its tints (add white) and shades (add black). Tones can work as well; tones are complementary colors mixed together in different percentages.

## **Creative Context**

What visuals will you use to express your website mission?

What is your theme?

What is your dream site look like?

## **Your Header – the most important Graphic you make**

You only have 5 to 20 seconds to get and keep a user's attention. Your header or banner, which is at the top of your website, is the main way to keep them interested. Make it awesome and clear!

Your banner / header graphic also should be a link to your home or index page. It helps people when they get lost.

## **File Types, Resolution, and Color Modes**

JPEG and GIF are currently the primary file types for graphics on the Internet. PNG is coming in strong.

A computer screen is only 72 to 92 pixels per inch (ppi) compared to printed work is 300 to 1200 dots per inch (dpi). To reduce load times, there is no reason your web graphics should have a resolution over 72 ppi. If you want to give the viewers something that is print quality, give them a PDF instead of having huge files to wait to download.

Work in RGB Color Mode. That is what your screen is. GIF will save as Index Color Mode, but you will start in RGB.

## Image Enhancement and Editing Software and Shareware

I use Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator to create all my images for websites. They are not the cheapest applications, but the industry standard. You can start with software that isn't that intensive, but still powerful.

**Photoshop Elements**  
[Adobe.com](http://Adobe.com)

**Photoshop Express**  
[Photoshop.com](http://Photoshop.com)

**Picasa**  
[picasa.google.com](http://picasa.google.com)

**GNU Image Manipulation Program**  
[gimp.org](http://gimp.org)

## Optimizing for the Web

Several programs will have a Save for Web feature. Use it! You want to create images that download quickly. Optimization can drop colors and information that is not needed. Choosing a GIF or JPEG makes a difference in download time as well.

## Be Exact

If you know what size your table or cell is, make the file size exactly that. You don't want to have your amazing graphics resized; they don't always come out right.

It is a good idea to change your preferences in your graphics program to measure pixels instead of inches. Use your rules, guides and grids – they are a big help!

## Basic Website Design Terms

**Anti-alias** - the process of smoothing the edges of an object or text to blend with the background.

**CMYK model (subtractive colors)** - The CMYK model is based on the light-absorbing quality of ink printed on paper. As white light strikes translucent inks, part of the spectrum is absorbed and part is reflected back to your eyes.

**Desaturate command** - converts a color image to a grayscale image in the same color mode.

**Graphics Interchange Format (GIF)** - a file format that uses 8-bit color and efficiently compresses solid areas of color while preserving sharp detail, such as that in line art, logos, or illustrations with type.

**HSB model** - describes three fundamental characteristics of color: **Hue**, **Saturation** and **Brightness**.

**Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG)** - a file format that supports 24-bit color and preserves the broad range and subtle variations in brightness and hue found in photographs and other continuous-toned images.

**Lossless compression** - the techniques compress image data without removing detail.

**Metadata** - Electronic information about electronic information. (data about data) It is used to facilitate the understanding, characteristics, purpose, and management usage of data.

**Optimization** - process of fine-tuning the display quality and file size of an image for use on the Web or other online media.

**Portable Document Format (PDF)** - a flexible, cross-platform, cross-application file format. Based on the PostScript imaging model, PDF files accurately display and preserve fonts, page layouts, and both vector and bitmap graphics.

**PNG (Portable Network Graphics)** Used for lossless compression and for displaying images on the web. Unlike GIF, PNG supports 24-bit images and produces background transparency without jagged edges; however, some web browsers do not support PNG images. PNG preserves transparency in grayscale and RGB images.

**Raster images (bitmap)** - use a grid of colors known as pixels to represent images. Each pixel is assigned a specific location and color value.

**RGB model (additive colors)** - A large percentage of the visible spectrum can be represented by mixing red, green, and blue (RGB) colored light in various proportions and intensities. Where the colors overlap, they create cyan, magenta, yellow, and white.

**Tag** - an appropriate keyword or term associated with or designated to a piece of information, like a picture, to describe the item and facilitating keyword-based classification and searching.

**Vector graphics** - Vectors describe an image according to its geometric characteristics. They are made up of lines and curves defined by mathematical objects called vectors.

**Wabi-sabi** - a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. It is a beauty of things modest and humble. It is a beauty of things unconventional.

**Homework –  
Please work on these  
the week between  
classes to amplify the  
value of the class.**

**Define your Creative  
Context**

**Iron out your  
Branding**

**Bring your images to  
class; we will be  
working on them.**

**Write your Site  
Content**

**Establish and Practice  
on your Blog**



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