Bay Area Video Coalition

From Print to Web

Course Outline

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I. Print-Web comparison
  A Interface **Slides 2-5**
    1. print landing
      a. Encyclopedia Britannica
    2. web landing
      a. Google
    3. print interface elements
      a. physical cues to context and location within overall structure
      b. table of contents
      c. text structures: parts, chapters, sections, paragraphs, sentences
      d. page headers and footers
      e. page numbers
    4. web interface elements
      a. interactive navigation
      b. pages accessed one at a time
      c. the page may not display in its entirety—"below the fold"
      d. pages may be seen in isolation
      e. no natural sense of context for any given page
      f. the over-all structure of the information may be obscured
    5. Web examples
      a. the more interaction with the content, the better suited to the Web
      b. Schau-Ins-Land
      c. LOC
      d. JavaScript Guide
    6. where print may excel
      a. complex content which requires continuous or repeated reference
  B Interface—isolated pages **Slide 6**
    1. provide context for every page
      a. clear and meaningful titles
      b. identity and authorship
      c. copyright and other boilerplate
      d. last updated
      e. navigation links to main page and other major sections
      f. contact information
    2. example: **CNN**
  C Interface—basic design **Slides 7-13**
    1. design for the user
    2. example: **Apple Computer**
II. Information architecture
  A Structures **Slides 14-16**
    1. linear
    2. example: **Wikipedia**
    3. hierarchical
    4. examples: **Gecko DOM Reference, Nonarticular Rheumatism**
    5. web
    6. example: **Wikipedia**
  B Design Goals **Slides 17-19**
    1. Web graphic design

2. visual style
3. example: **Louvre**
4. using the conventions—inventing the wheel
5. example: **Facebook, Amazon**

C Screen Display **Slides 20-21**

1. computer screens
2. Web client owns the display
3. example: **turn off styles and see what happens**

III. Photoshop tutorial

A Issues

1. Web pages may be displayed at font sizes larger or smaller or even with a different font than specified. Keep text flow in mind.
2. If the text layout in a comp can't be reproduced in HTML page, e.g. it won't fit, the problem may be:
   a. font used is not common to the Web
   b. font metrics were used in comp to cheat (good for print, bad for Web)
3. Web pages are displayed at between 72 and 96 px/inch, not 300+ dots per inch as in printing—the pixels are visible and therefore matter.
4. Importing elements which do not land on a pixel boundary will result in blurring, e.g. one-pixel lines will become two pixels wide.

B Suggestions for laying out HTML text in Photoshop

1. Use widely available fonts.
2. Do not anti-alias fonts.
3. Turn off fractional widths.
4. Turn on system layout.
5. Use pixels for units.
6. Use default settings for all other font attributes, e.g. tracking 0; kerning off.
7. Turn off hyphenation.

C Pixel drawing in Photoshop

1. Always use the rectangular marquee tool to set guides on pixel boundaries (feather 0px, style normal).
2. Use these guides to align all elements by pixel boundary (not sub-pixel).
3. Copy and paste from other applications—don't drag and drop.
   a. Do not use 'Smart Objects'.
   b. Rasterize or convert to paths or a shape layer.
   c. Take care with anti-aliasing when pasting as pixels.

D Generally, for comps ...

1. Set up a master layout with guides and use it for all pages. Elements common to multiple pages should generally be the same size and be in the same place.
2. Draw in Photoshop as much as possible: use layer masks and paths instead of Illustrator.
3. Plan ahead for page interactivity: elements may change size or color.
4. Use layer composites to show page and event states.
5. Keep your file organized:
   a. use meaningful layer titles
   b. delete unused layers.

E Generally, for Web graphics ...

1. Use 'Save for Web'.
2. Use GIF or PNG for text graphics, JPEG for images or image-like graphics.
3. Be aware that older IE browsers have problems rendering PNGs.

F Finally ...

1. Always keep in mind that HTML was designed primarily as semantic markup, i.e. information layout; page layout is a secondary function. This will help insure ADA compliance and device compatibility.
2. You have no control over the devices on which your design will be displayed. Color management can be especially frustrating.

IV. Interactivity

A Interaction

1. takes place in a system or context
2. is relational
3. is iterative

B Key concepts

1. directed choice
2. user control

3. amplification of input
4. system-state representation
5. direct, visible feedback—action > outcome

C Modes of interaction
1. cognitive—interpretive
2. functional—how fast, legible, etc.
3. designed—choices and procedures
4. cultural

D Interactivity inhabits a space of possibilities to be explored—structured, designed, meaningful, systematic.

E Outcomes (i.e. system responses to user action) must be discernable and integrated in the overall meaning of the site.

F Flow of choices:
1. What is happening before choice is offered?
2. How is choice offered?
3. How is the result of the choice presented to the user?
4. How does it affect future choices?

G False states:
1. Actions have meaningless outcomes.
2. User doesn't know what's next.
3. Outcomes of actions are insufficiently visible.

H Navigation path could be linear or not—with only one screen visible at a time, how do we know.

I Navigation should present hierarchical and non-hierarchical paths.

J The problem is more acute on computers than in print where context is apparent, skipping around is easy.

K Example paths
1. hierarchical: table of contents
2. linear: index

L Benefits and perils of granting the user agency through interactivity.

M Actions in which the user can participate

N Is there a macro-level of interactivity, e.g. a leader board or social dimension?