User Interface Design (UI)
GRA617

For your UI project you will be choosing a non-profit organization and designing a single page mockup in Photoshop. You may use existing non-profit website text and any images you find released under a Creative Commons license (creativecommons.org), or any image with permission of the visual artist.

You will start by creating a one-page communication/creative brief that answers the question of who your target audience is. You will then take that knowledge and create a skeletal representation (wireframe) of your site to help you understand the information architecture (narrative) of your site. From there you will create the polished mockup using the 1140 grid template as a base to design inside.

Tell a Story: Combine User Experience and Narrative

We would like you to think of the webpage as a story. It could be a story of how clean water is delivered to remote areas and why we should care, or the narrative of the dangersOfFracking.com. Consider the classic story arc when designing your site: Exposition/Opening > Crisis/Tension > Climax > Resolution.

Create Empathy: Know Your User, A Fellow Human

- Encourage empathy
- Create empathy

Remember, you’re trying to connect with another human at the end of this series of tubes. They may come from a specific culture, part of the world, or economic status. How should your story be created to pull that specific group in, what makes them interested, what are their hot cultural buttons? Make them care. Keep it simple.

Learning Outcomes

- Information architecture
- User interface and experience design
- Use of storytelling and creating empathy in website design
- Use of grids in design

Grading Criteria

- Compelling use of images and type to address the target user (human)
- Appropriate use of the 1140 grid template
- Concise and professional creative/communication brief, rationale and self-evaluation
- Well labeled and organized .PSD files
- Simple and well organized wireframe
- Turned in properly on the blog and class server
The Assignment Breakdown

- You will be designing a one-page website for a non-profit organization of your choice.
- You can select a non-profit organization that has a poorly designed web site.
- You can not copy an existing site design, but feel free to be inspired!
- Try going to idealist.org, click “Organizations” and put in keywords for the type of non-profit of interest.
- Research that non-profit, figure out what the web site needs to accomplish.
- See if the non-profit has any images/graphics they will send to you, or create your own to use in your design.
- You will decide how many sections of the one-page design are needed to accommodate the needs of the non-profit’s web site, and you will decide how best to accommodate those pages in the navigational system that will take you down the single page design.
- Preliminary design in any program you choose, but final design will be in Adobe Photoshop.
- Your first consideration should be the format; your design will be on a recent industry standard 1140px wide.
- The height of your design will be determined by your content.

Deadlines

- Thurs, 7/24 Lab – Creative/Communication Brief
- Friday, 7/25 10AM – Rough Wireframe
- Friday, 7/25 5PM – Final Project Due on server
- Friday, 7/25 5PM – Final Due on blog

Advice

- Look at the content of that non-profit, keep the pertinent information, but do not have so much content that it overwhelms the user.
- Develop a grid/column structure for your website to assist you in designing and laying out the structure of the web site.
- Use a typeface created for the screen, Google Fonts; look at the pairings tab for good combinations.
- Think about how you have been trained to view information. Print design presents linear information while interface design presents non linear information. Experiment with that while designing your site.
- Choose your colors to set the appropriate tone.
- Choose your typefaces carefully. Small serif type does not work well in web design.
- Usability is a necessary condition for survival. If a web site is difficult to use, people leave. If users get lost on a web site, they leave. If a web site’s information is hard to read, or doesn’t answer user’s key questions, they leave. Note a pattern here? There’s no such thing as a user reading a web site manual or otherwise spending much time trying to figure out an interface. There are plenty of other web sites available. Generally speaking, leaving is the first line of defense when users encounter any difficulty.
On your class server
1. Place all your files inside a folder labeled “LastName - FirstName - User Interface Project”
2. Name files with your last name, the project, and a version number, no spaces and cap every word:
   “Sanefski-Darren-Interface-Final.psd” is acceptable — but not “Darren’s Website Thingy.psd”
3. Create individual folders for the following items
   a. .psd version of your final Photoshop file
   b. .jpg file of your final mockup.
   c. .jpg wireframes for entire page.
   d. Five thumbnail sketches of different layouts: cell phone images or scans of sketches.
   e. Rationale, see requirements below
   f. Creative/Communication Brief
   g. Self-evaluation

On the blog
1. Screenshot of page
2. Short description of your project
3. List of links you used for inspiration, at least 3
4. Wireframes for each page designed
5. Categorize your blog post appropriately

Rationale Sections
1. Design strategy: you MUST explain the reasoning behind the design you chose.
2. Choices of typefaces (Including some you tried but didn’t use)
3. Choices of colors
4. Explain why you think the original site (if there was one) is ugly or has a poor design.

THE CREATIVE/COMMUNICATION BRIEF
The creative brief (communication brief) is the bases for most future decisions in your project. Think of it as your touchstone for the next phases of your project, if they do not make sense in the context of your creative brief then readjust and rethink your decisions. Creative briefs can include more polished mockups and site details. The scope of the brief should be dictated by budget and complexity of the project.
SEVEN STEPS TO AN EFFECTIVE CREATIVE BRIEF

The seven steps to an effective creative brief are pretty simple and quite universal. However, completing the steps takes time and a great deal of thought and research. A brief that is completed in a haphazard, or thoughtless manner will most often lead to a completed project that misses the target, message, or budgetary objectives.

When reading or creating a creative brief ask yourself these questions:

The Objective
Is the purpose of this piece of communication clearly stated? Does it tell the reader/viewer what action to take? Does it tell them what to think, to feel, or to do?

What is the single most important message to convey?
Is there one simple message for the communication to focus on?

What is the rationale behind the message?
Is there a rationale and/or an emotional reason to believe?

Who are we talking to?
Does this brief go beyond age and sex to include demographics and psychographics?

Perception/Tone/Guidelines
How should your target audience respond to your new online presence? If your site was a person, how might you describe them?

What is the background or overview?
Who else has done a site like this? How are you going to add to the conversation, not just repeat it? Is there any information about the market or are there any client concerns or insight that will make the communication more informative or relevant?

Are there any other important details?
Is there any other information that may be useful? Are there any examples of brand personality? Is a logo provided/required? Is there any contact information?

What are the business requirements for this web application?
What specific tasks and business functions will this web application perform?
General Resources

- awwwards.com
- smashingmagazine.com
- wireframes.tumblr.com
- fastcompany.com/tag/empathy
- http://tinyurl.com/why-one-page
- http://tinyurl.com/smashing-mag-storytelling
- http://tinyurl.com/webdesign-choose-typeface
- http://google.com/fonts

One Page Website Inspiration – Think Storytelling

- onepagelove.com
- dangersoffracking.com
- jessandru.us
- graydenpoper.com

Creative Commons Image Resources

- http://usa.gov/Topics/Graphics.shtml
- http://www.loc.gov/pictures
- http://flickr.com/commons