Designing for Uncertainty

Visual Systems, Drupal & Drawing on Quicksand
About Me

+ Jason Pamental
  principal, co-founder of h+w design
+ Have realized I can’t work where I can’t contribute
+ Can be found @jpamental in most places
+ Post thoughts, work, instigations & pics from Instagr.am @ hwdesignco.com
+ Own Edward Tufte’s books & love them
Why Are We Here?

+ My job is to challenge you & what you know about web design
+ Your job is to make me
+ My challenge is to inspire you to do more
+ Your task is to listen, think & create
+ Rinse & repeat
What’s Our Agenda?

+ To learn we know **nothing**
+ To build a new understanding of **design**
+ Take our Yesterday & **tear it apart**
+ Use this new normal to **build our Tomorrow**
+ **YaleSites** is your **secret weapon**: you actually **don’t have to build it all yourself**
Few Things Are Certain

+ We’ll all die eventually
+ Usually after paying a lot of taxes
+ We have no idea how someone is going to view our design – none
+ Really. Think about that last one
Even Less Is Certain About Users

+ Impossible to know how your design will be consumed
+ On what size screen with what kind of input
+ Or what else they might be doing at the time
+ Desktop/Laptop/Tablet/eReader/Phone/Console/TV/Car
so frankly, we can’t be certain of all that much
It’s Time To Rethink Our Design Thinking

and YaleSites Drupal will be our canvas
We’re Not Designing Pages

+ We’re designing **systems** of **relationships & hierarchy** to infer **meaning & importance**

+ Good **design has structure** — but that **structure must be fluid**

✦ **960 pixels is a copout.** Our work will be viewed on phones, tablets, tv’s more than on computers
We’re Designing Meaning

+ Information & understanding must hold true no matter how it’s conveyed

+ How users understand & learn is as crucial as how they see

+ Start with semantics & adapt your presentation
Psychology & Cognitive Science are The New Black

+ In order to **preserve meaning & reinforce understanding**, you must know how learning works

+ Once you know how **learning works**, you can tailor your **system of design**

+ That system of **visual & information hierarchy** can then survive across platforms & screen sizes
Task-Appropriate Design is the OTHER New Black

+ A place for everything & everything in its place
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+ A place for **everything** & **everything** in its **place**

+ But the **place** might be **different** on a **phone**... or in a **car**
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+ As may be the importance of some tasks versus others
For Example

+ Restaurant site on a phone: What I can eat & how do I get there?
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+ Contexts may coincide with one case or the other – but should never exclude the other behavior
Embrace the New World Order
Design by Sharpie

+ Sketch out your design with a marker to sort out hierarchy
+ Try 3 or 4 sizes & adjust relative scale
+ Don’t forget about BIG (#RWD isn’t just for smartphones)
+ Now interaction: what’s natural to the device & method of use
Research, Research, Research. Repeat.

+ Responsive Design is new
+ UI patterns evolving, but conventions are emerging
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+ Some App UI patterns can be used on the web
It’s not the What but the Why & How

+ Josh Clark: ‘I have some attention to spend’ – but how are they spending it?
+ @LukeW: with one eye & one thumb
+ There is no mobile user – there are only mobile devices
+ Tasks vary by circumstances of use (the Why)
+ How users accomplish those tasks varies by device capability (hover, touch, swipe)
Drupal’s Doing It

+ **Focus** on design led by Dries
+ **Markup machismo** by Morten
+ **Mobile** made first by John Albin
+ Pioneering **UX** led by Kevin Oleary
+ **YaleSites** lets you **focus** on the site, not the technology

*Focus on design, usability & the admin*
Users Are Looking For It

+ The web is growing up (slowly & quickly)
+ Users don’t just want to access – they want to experience
+ Tools like YaleSites Drupal means the next amazing site is one smart student intern away. There’s no excuse for doing it badly

So what will make your site memorable?
Our Process is Begging For It

- The **Decline & Fall** of the Photoshop Empire
- **Tiles** not Comps
- **Prototype**, not promises
- **Never**, ever use Arial again

So why do we still think in *pages*?
The Web Has Left the Building

+ It’s in our **pocket**
+ It’s on the **couch**
+ It’s on our **television**
+ It’s in the **dash**

*So why do we still think 960 matters?*
Power to the People

+ and their Web clients
+ Since we don’t know what that client is, the solution has to live there, not on the server (for now)
+ Drupal can help us deliver
+ Doing so from scratch can be hard (that’s why there’s YaleSites)
So don’t do that.

+ **Use conventions** to build appropriately
+ **Use Drupal** to deliver **one platform** with many experiences
+ **Nothing** we’ve discussed is **impossible** (or in many cases even difficult) in **Drupal**
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+ **Use conventions** to build appropriately
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+ **Nothing** we’ve discussed is **impossible** (or in many cases even difficult) in **Drupal**
+ It just takes... **Thought**
Makes the ‘thinking’ part sound pretty important, huh?
Why Harp on This?

+ Because designing a page in Photoshop is simply fantasy
+ Worse: designing just a page is only 1/400th of the answer (or less)
+ Even prototyping in static HTML only tells part of the story (though doing so responsively is a start)
Be Prepared

+ You know design
+ You know your content (or you should)
+ You know the web & what can be done on it
+ Don’t stop looking, seeing & learning
+ Use YaleSites Drupal to help
+ Design meaning not pages
and now, please...
Get Out & Go Make Something Awesome
Get Out & Go Make Something Awesome

Hello.

I’m a web professional and I make Awesome

Uncertainty FTW
Thank You!

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Mobile UI Patterns: http://mobile-patterns.com/dashboard-navigation


Navicon (blog post) Jeremy Keith (excellent post w/lots of references)

StyleTil.es (website) Samantha Warren (this is your start, then go Google)
Books

+ **Responsive Web Design**
  Ethan Marcotte, A Book Apart

+ **Adaptive Web Design**
  Aaron Gustafson, Easy Readers

+ **Mobile First**
  Luke Wroblewski, A Book Apart

+ **Don’t Make Me Think**
  Steve Krug (really - you still have to read it)

+ **The Design of Everyday Things**
  Don Norman (web usability learned from the design of doors)