

Building an Academic Web Presence

Job Market Edition

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Game Plan

1. Basic Planning: Goals and Capacities
2. Locating Your Site
3. Builders and Software
4. Content Architecture, Navigation, Design
5. Best Practices, Analytics

Communication Goals

- Why do you want a web presence?
 - To market yourself during the job search
- Who will be visiting your website?
 - Search committee members, faculty and graduate students at interview site
- What do you hope to communicate to these visitors?
 - That you're a smart, professional candidate with excellent qualifications
- What kinds of content do you imagine present?
 - Brief bio, picture, CV, contact info, research and teaching portfolios

Capabilities

- What is your budget?
- How much time are you willing to devote?
- What is your coding / design / development skill level?

Would your department
profile suffice?

Rule of thumb:

Occupy your department profile, make a
separate site

Locating your site

- Where will your site live (**hosting**)
- How will people get to your site
(**domain**)

Options for Hosts + Domains

1. Separately (Custom domain, custom hosting)

Many companies offer free domain with a hosting account

2. Bundled, Free (Subdomain, e.g. rochelle.wordpress.com)

Since their free, often restricted in a number of ways

3. Bundled, Paid (Full service, e.g. Sparespace)

Must use their builder / content management system

The 3 best solutions

	Google Sites + custom domain	Wordpress.org + hosting service (e.g. Dreamhost) + custom domain	Square Space
Pluses +	Cheap, Easy	Cheap, Flexible	Easy, Pretty
Minuses -	Ugly, Inflexible	Difficult	Expensive, Inflexible, Hipser-ish
In a nutshell	Biggest Value	Greatest Flexibility	Most Stylish (Maybe too stylish)

Other (fine) solutions: Github, wix, weebly, etc.

Other (blah) solutions: Straight HTML / CSS

Content Architecture

Requires

- Biography + Photo
- Research activities
- Teaching activities
- CV
- Contact info

Optional

- Data
- Working Papers
- Teaching
Materials / syllabi /
evaluations

Frowned Upon

- Travel photos
- Hobbies**
- Non-academic
links

Navigation

- Refers to how visitors move around the site
- Primary menu (usually horizontal but sometimes vertical) that organizes the site's content
- Expect that people will spend on average about 30 seconds on your site – make your menus simple and intuitive

Navigation

- ❑ Limited depth: 3 clicks rule
- ❑ Less than 5-6 menu items
- ❑ Content split into big blocks (About Me, Research, Teaching, Resources)
- ❑ Items Brief and Standard
- ❑ Use headings for more specific information (Current Publications, Past Courses).
- ❑ Simple and easy to read – stands out

Design



Guest Lecture

February 02, 2009

I really, *really* enjoyed seeing Web design education take the spotlight in *Issue No. 276* of *A List Apart*. It's a topic that I feel strongly about and one that doesn't get nearly enough attention from those of us working in the industry. While I've had the pleasure of meeting the authors of both articles, I was particularly moved by Leslie Inman's grass roots call to action in "*Elevate Web Design at the University Level*".

When you drive, bike, or scooter to work each morning, do you pass a university? If so, contact the web educator at the university and see what you can do to help connect the school to you, your company, and your

WELCOME TO M



Recent Artwork

Choose a flavor:

Select Style



Submit

Jason Beard is a digital media artist specializing in both print & website design. Jason currently resides in Columbia, SC with his beautiful wife, Amy
-read more

Design

- Be consistent
- Use simple typography:
 - No more than 2 different fonts
 - Use readable, web-safe fonts such as Verdana or Helvetica
 - 12 or 14 pt sizes
 - use italics or bold sparingly and consistently.
- Limit use of color:
 - white or neutral background
 - a black or charcoal font color
 - limited (1-2) accent colors for your menus and links.
- Design like it's a billboard, not a newspaper
- Limit the amount of details such as lines, graphics, and frames

Best Practices

- ❑ Don't link to a download without warning
- ❑ Make sure images are not stretched
- ❑ Open links in a new window
- ❑ Don't paste from word into a WYSIWYG

Analytics

- Track visits to your site
- User location, network, page views
- Beware of robots (bounces)
- Beware of psychological impact