

Web Typography

The Web Isn't Print...

It's not obvious *which* traditions of print typography we should attempt to bring to the web, and which we should leave behind. Some differences between the media:

Print

- Static, reflective pages
- Printed at 300–1200 dpi.
- Easy to adjust viewing distance and angle with your hands
- Typesetting benefits from careful consideration of rags, justification, hyphenation, tracking, and kerning
- Variety of fonts to choose from

Web

- Scrolling/dynamic and light-emitting screens
- Displayed at 80–100 dpi, depending on viewer's screen size and resolution settings
- Difficult to adjust viewing distance and angle; adjusting type size with browser leads to inconsistent results (if you know how)
- No hyphenation (yet). Justification is therefore hard to pull off well.
- Limited selection of fonts

... But We Can Learn From It.

Let's look at principles we *can* borrow from print design.

The Measure Matters

- Don't make lines too long or too short: 45-75 characters is the optimal length.
- Longer lines need more leading (line-height).



Website design

Web design is different than traditional print publishing. Every **website** is an information display container, just as a **book** is a container; and every web page is a container, just as a **print page** is a container. The end size and shape of the web page is not known to the web designer, whereas the print designer will know exactly what size paper he will be printing on.

For the typical web sites, the basic aspects of design are:

- The **content**: the substance, and information on the site should be relevant to the site and should target the area of the public that the website is designed for.
- The **usability**: the site should be user-friendly, with the interface and navigation simple and reliable.
- The **appearance**: the graphics and text should include a single style that flows throughout, to show consistency. The style should be professional and consistent.
- The **structure**: of the web site as a whole.

A web site typically consists of text, **images**, animation and /or video. The first page of a web site is known as the **Home page** or Index Page. Some splash pages might include a welcome message, language or region selection, or disclaimer, however search engines, in general, favor these types of pages to fall out of favor. Each web page within a web site is a file which has its own **URL**. After each web page is created, they are typically composed of **hyperlinks**.

Once a web site is completed, it must be published or uploaded in order to be viewable to the public over the **internet**. This may be done using an **FTP** client.

Multidisciplinary requirements

Web site design crosses **multiple disciplines** of multiple **information systems**, **information technology**, **marketing**, and **communication design**. The web design components are sometimes classified as **front-end** and **back-end**. The observable **content** (e.g. **page layout**, **user interface**, **graphics**, **text**, **audio**) is part of the front-end, and the **organization** and efficiency of the source code, invisible scripted functions, and the server-side components that process the output from the web development project, it may be carried out by a multi-skilled individual (sometimes called a **web master**), or a **project manager** may oversee collaboration and specialized skills.

Environment

Layout is a double edged sword: on the one hand, it is the expression of a framework that actively shapes the web designer. On the other hand, as the web designer, layout is the means of **content delivery**. **Publishing** a web engages **communication throughout** the **production** process as well as **within the product** and content standards. Web design incorporates multiple intersections between many layers of technical and social understanding, demanding a high level of **social organization**. Differing goals and methods resolve effectively in successful deployment of education, software and team management. Many competing and evolving **platforms** and **environments** challenge acceptance, completion and continuity of every **design** product.

Collaboration

Early web design was less integrated with companies' **advertising campaigns**, **customer transactions**, **extranets**, **intranets** and **social networking**. Web design is often a database connection points, disconnected from the broader scopes of a business or project. Many web sites are still disconnected from the broader business context, and web sites are needlessly difficult to use, indirect in their way of communicating, and suffer from a 'disconnected' or ineffective bureaucratic **information** system.

The screenshot shows the SEED magazine website. The main headline reads: "EMERGING GLOBAL CHALLENGES DEMAND RAPID RESPONSES FROM THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY. THIS CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH A REFORMATION OF THE CULTURE AND PRACTICE OF SCIENCE—AND ITS RELATION TO THE WIDER WORLD." The article is titled "On Science Transfer" and is part of the "GLOBAL RESET SERIES" by SEED, dated January 27, 2011. The page includes a navigation menu on the left with categories like RESEARCH, POLICY, TECHNOLOGY, THEORY, CLIMATE, SPACE, INNOVATION, POLITICS, GENETICS, NEUROSCIENCE, CREATIVITY, ECOLOGY, COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC PERCEPTION, SCALE, COGNITION, DEVELOPMENT, ENERGY, DATA, TRUTH, DECISION MAKING, MEDICINE, FOOD, DESIGN, COOPERATION, BIOTECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL SCIENCE, GOVERNANCE, DISEASE, COMPLEXITY, ENVIRONMENT, and SYSTEMS. The article text begins with: "“Faster.” Could any other word better capture the reigning paradox of our age? The world today—whether measured in technological or ecological terms—appears to be changing more rapidly than ever before." The page also features a Facebook widget on the right and a "Now on SEED" section at the bottom right.

Be Decisive

- Use a few clear and intentional differences in your typography, especially in type size. Too many size differences makes a page look weak and indecisive.
- Stylesheets make consistency easy to achieve: set up the rules and let them play out rather than adjusting each block of text to fill available space.



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Jan. 30, 2011 Updated: 4:32 PM

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Looking for a good place to warm your hearts around New England on Feb. 14? Here are a few options.

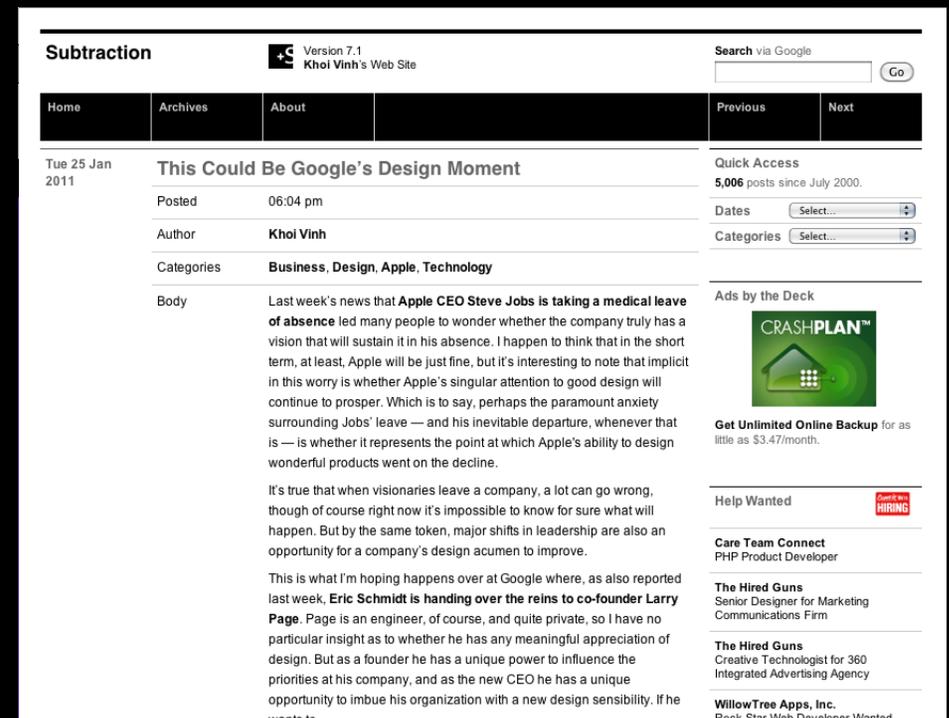
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- SNL: Zuckerberg confronts Eisenberg
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Tue 25 Jan 2011

This Could Be Google's Design Moment

Posted 06:04 pm

Author **Khoi Vinh**

Categories **Business, Design, Apple, Technology**

Body

Last week's news that **Apple CEO Steve Jobs is taking a medical leave of absence** led many people to wonder whether the company truly has a vision that will sustain it in his absence. I happen to think that in the short term, at least, Apple will be just fine, but it's interesting to note that implicit in this worry is whether Apple's singular attention to good design will continue to prosper. Which is to say, perhaps the paramount anxiety surrounding Jobs' leave — and his inevitable departure, whenever that is — is whether it represents the point at which Apple's ability to design wonderful products went on the decline.

It's true that when visionaries leave a company, a lot can go wrong, though of course right now it's impossible to know for sure what will happen. But by the same token, major shifts in leadership are also an opportunity for a company's design acumen to improve.

This is what I'm hoping happens over at Google where, as also reported last week, **Eric Schmidt is handing over the reins to co-founder Larry Page**. Page is an engineer, of course, and quite private, so I have no particular insight as to whether he has any meaningful appreciation of design. But as a founder he has a unique power to influence the priorities at his company, and as the new CEO he has a unique opportunity to imbue his organization with a new design sensibility. If he wants to

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Rock Star Web Developer Wanted

<http://www.subtraction.com/2011/01/25/this-could-be-googles-design-moment>

White Space

- White space can be a better method for visually grouping things than borders, color changes, or subheadings.

So, even though the conclusions are less strong for ads than for apps, the bottom line is the same: parallel design generates better outcomes.

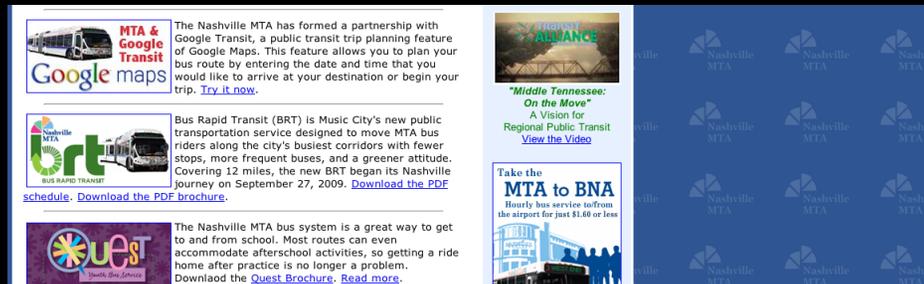
Competitive Testing

In a competitive usability study, you **test your own design and 3-4 other companies' designs**. The process model **looks the same as for parallel design**, except that the original design alternatives are pre-existing sites or apps as opposed to wireframes you create specifically for the study.

The benefit of competitive testing is also the same as for parallel design: you gain insight into user behaviors with a broad range of design options before you commit to a design that you'll refine through iterative design.

Competitive testing is also advantageous in that you don't spend resources creating early design

<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/design-diversity-process.html>



The Nashville MTA has formed a partnership with Google Transit, a public transit trip planning feature of Google Maps. This feature allows you to plan your bus route by entering the date and time that you would like to arrive at your destination or begin your trip. [Try it now.](#)

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is Music City's new public transportation service designed to move MTA bus riders along the city's busiest corridors with fewer stops, more frequent buses, and a greener attitude. Covering 12 miles, the new BRT began its Nashville journey on September 27, 2009. [Download the PDF schedule.](#) [Download the PDF brochure.](#)

The Nashville MTA bus system is a great way to get to and from school. Most routes can even accommodate afterschool activities, so getting a ride home after practice is no longer a problem. Download the [Quest Brochure.](#) [Read more.](#)

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LED-Backlit IPS Display

The high-resolution, 9.7-inch LED-backlit IPS display on iPad is remarkably crisp and vivid. Which makes it perfect for web browsing, watching movies, or viewing photos. With iPad, there is no up or down. It's designed to show off your content in portrait or landscape orientation with every turn. And because it uses a display technology called IPS (in-plane switching), it has a wide, 178° viewing angle. So you can hold it almost any way you want and still get a brilliant picture, with excellent color and contrast.

Multi-Touch

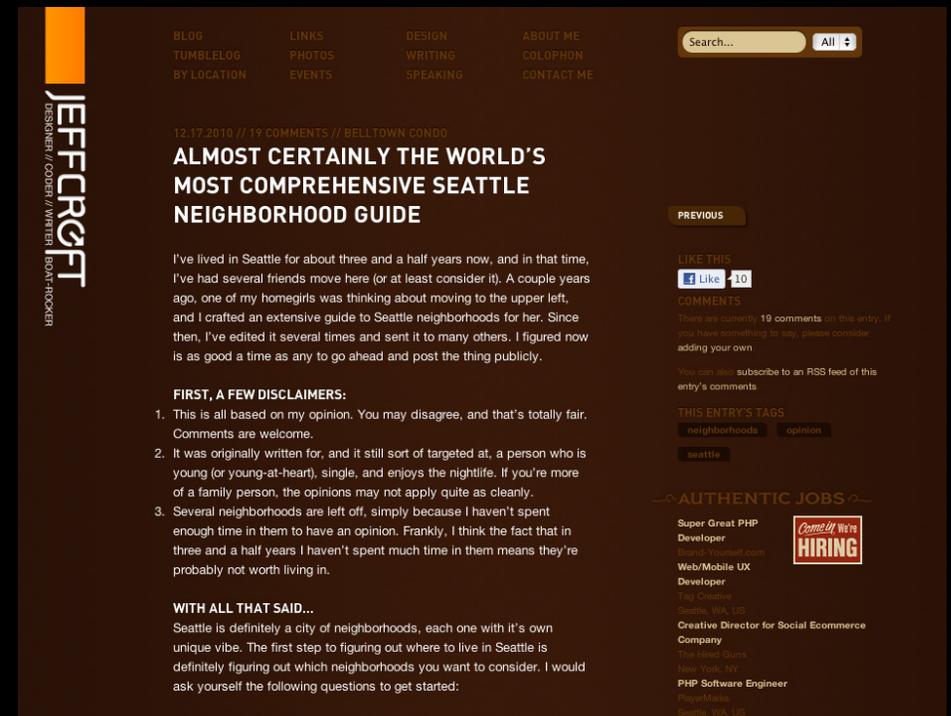
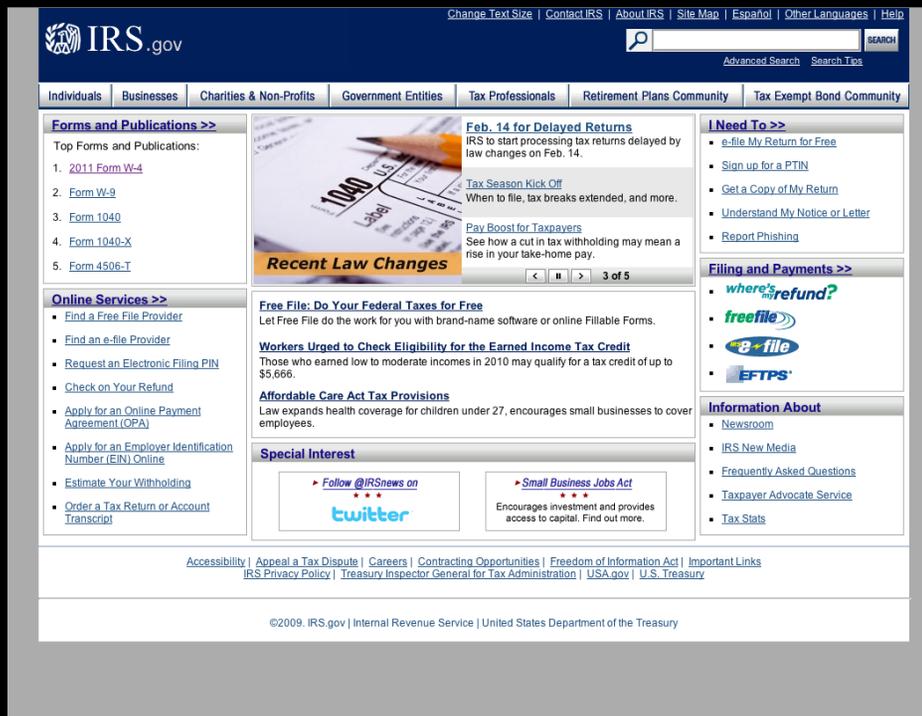
The Multi-Touch screen on iPad is based on the same revolutionary technology on iPhone. But the technology has been completely reengineered for the larger iPad surface, making it extremely precise and responsive. So whether you're zooming in on a map, flicking through your photos, or deleting an email, iPad responds with incredible accuracy. And it does just what you want it to.



<http://www.apple.com/ipad/design/>

Alignments Create Order

- Don't center large blocks of body copy.
- For lists, consider hanging the bullets and numbers in the margin.
- Consider hanging initial quotation marks (use `` and assign a negative margin).



Finer Points

- Use correct HTML entities for straight apostrophes and quotation marks, choose the “best available ampersand,” and – where relevant – use small caps (and letter-space them).
- When indenting paragraphs, don’t indent the first paragraph of a block of type (or a paragraph that follows a left-aligned sub-heading).

HOME / JURISPRUDENCE : THE LAW, LAWYERS, AND THE COURT.

The Get Out of Jail Free Card for Torture

It's called a declination—just ask the CIA.

By John Sifton

Posted Monday, March 29, 2010, at 1:07 PM ET



Gulbuddin Hekmatyar of Hizb-I-Islami

On Sunday, Adam Goldman of the Associated Press broke new [details](#) about a 2002 torture-homicide of an Afghan CIA detainee at the infamous "Salt Pit" near Kabul, one of several that occurred in CIA custody from 2002 to 2004. The new report raises questions about the investigation of the death and about accountability generally for past CIA abuses.

The *Washington Post* first reported on the homicide in 2005, but until now it was only known that the man killed was an Afghan and that he had possibly died of exposure to cold. AP now reveals his name—Gul Rahman—and that he had

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Saturday 13th Nov 2010

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I love architecture. I love buildings — the art, the engineering, the design, the culture and history of them, and how they form *en masse* actually *places* that people recognise and form emotional attachments to; the design of cities, their growth, evolution and (perhaps sadly) eventual decline are all utterly fascinating to me. So I sometimes write about architectural stuff here, as it has a kinship in my mind with the design of type and lettering. I should warn you, this post is a bit of a rant, and because of the subject matter is a tad more political than normal. So, with that out of the way, we can proceed.

I follow a fair few architecture-related sites, one of which (and the most regularly and rewardingly updated) is [Arch Daily](#). It's basically a pretty damn fine site if you're into architecture, featuring thousands of projects, new and old, innovative and traditional, and so on. One important thing I've noticed is that most of the larger projects being planned and built have a lot in common with each other, with innovation and traditional technique alike apparently reserved for the smaller projects. I'd actually go further and say these large projects are not merely *similar* but all subscribe to the same blank, unrelenting anonymity — an utterly uninspiring (if glittering and crystalline) *mediocrity*. Look at the renders below (from this article on [New Chengdu City Center](#) on Arch Daily), they could be anywhere in the world:



Choosing a Text Font

- There are many reasons for choosing a font. Aping a specific historical use is tricky and not always the most interesting choice.

fawny

Every happy Web developer is happy in the same way

I listen to the various good-news podcasts for Web developers produced and co-hosted by Dan Benjamin. The Big Web Show is the most important of those, in part because Zeldman sits in the co-host chair. I also listen to the Marc Maron comedy podcast entitled WTF.

Benjamin's podcasts don't get press. Maron's does, and every article says the same thing: Comedian guests barely bother to crack wise and instead have honest and true discussions about their lives. (The best example is the Dane Cook interview, not the Robin Williams one.) Maron's show reminds us of something the 21st century wants us to forget: Behind each persona is a person. And if that person is halfway creative, nine times out of ten something has gone wrong along the way.

You'd never know this from listening to Benjamin's podcasts. They stay relentlessly upbeat. Now, why? Because Dan Benjamin, whom I haven't met, is a member of that rare and baffling class, the sweetie. (He had to sit there and think about letting me use the word "shitty" in a comment on his blog. Even devout churchgoers say "shit.") Dan Benjamin is a preternaturally nice, optimistic, happy person. His partner Zeldman is a mensch. I've spent a lot of time in his company and I know he doesn't dwell on "negative" things. (Incidentally, if that's the first word that



-- 2x4 is a multidisciplinary studio focusing on design for art, architecture --
-- fashion and cultural clients worldwide. -----

-- NEH 2x4 for Blik -----

-- NEH Design USA: Contemporary Innovation at the National Design Museum -----

+* NEH Prada Libro +*****

--> DESCRIPTION

At once a chronology, documentary and catalogue raisonné, this "Pradapedia" charts a creative endeavor that defies the narrow definition of a fashion house. Edited and designed by 2x4, the 700-page book traces this unique story from inside out. The concept was to look at the entire creative output of the organization and draw connections between the focused work of the design studio and the workshop, the extensive creative partnerships with photographers, designers, architects and film directors, all the way out to the large scale architectural commissions, the art foundation and the development of a new museum.

The book begins with a prelude tracing the company's distinct history and is organized roughly in two halves. The first half considers the company within the walls: its processes, dynamics, design and exhibition strategies. The inside chapters feature a photo-essay by renowned photographer, and regular collaborator Brigitte Lacombe documenting the crude but vital process that goes into producing exquisitely detailed products. It also includes video stills taken from short films documenting the intricate craftsmanship of the factory, images of the fashion show environments, an overview of all the collections designed by Miuccia Prada, thumbnail pictures of 3,885 different "looks", collages of the most influential shoe and bags, and photographs of the final product on the runway. The chapter provides a revealing glimpse into the Prada methodology and the distinctive culture of the design studio.

The "outside" half looks at Prada beyond the walls: the public phenomena that includes architecture, events, parties, exhibitions, films and even an America's Cup challenge. The public section includes detailed accounts of the celebrated "apicenter" store designs in New York and Los Angeles by Rem Koolhaas/HOK and in Tokyo by architects Herzog & de Meuron, a film collaboration with director Ridley Scott, an animated short film project "Trembled Blossoms," Koolhaas's radical "Prada Transformer" pavilion in Seoul, and costume design for a Japanese manga heroine. Additional chapters focus on Prada found on the street and on celebrities photographed on the red carpet, and the almost fanatic devotion of those who love the brand as exhibited in blogs and in descriptions written for eBay.

As advertising is often the form that mediates between a brand and its public, a special section devoted to Prada's campaigns falls between Inside and Outside. The chapter highlights all of Prada's ad campaigns since 1987 and features the work of world's leading photographers and some of the most distinct personalities.

+> IMAGES

-- NEH Nike New York City Marathon -----

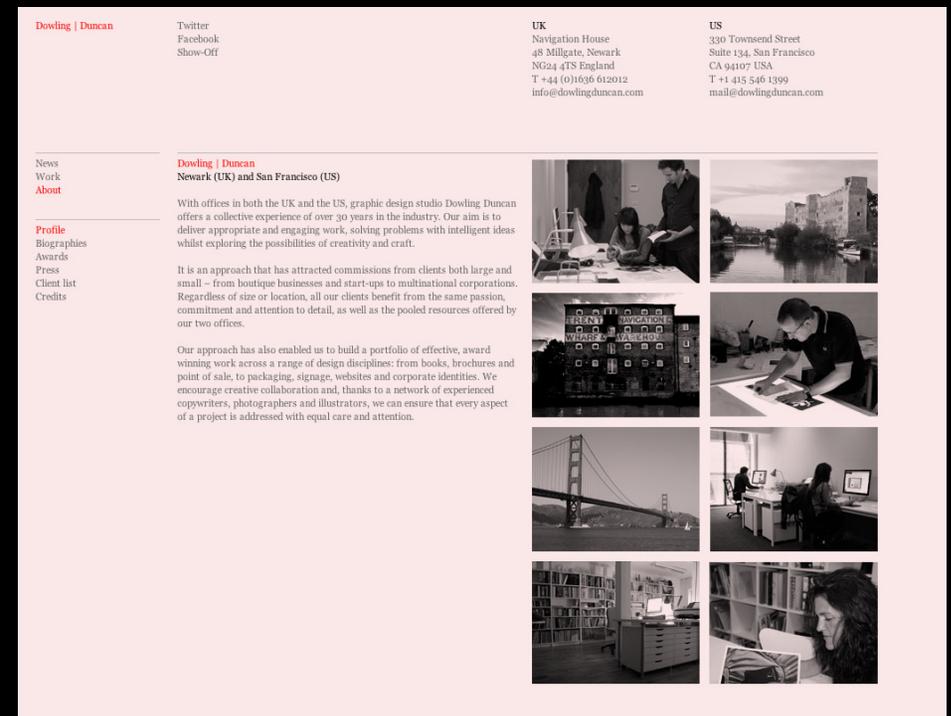
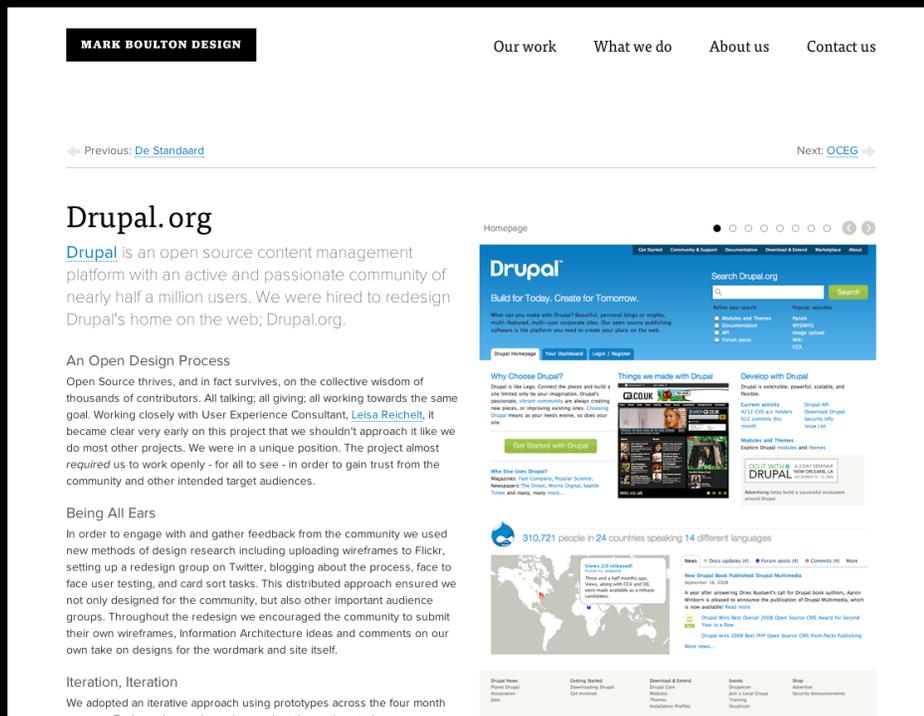
it is what it is
it is what it is
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But Wait, There's More

Let's look at *web-specific* typographic lessons, ones that designers have developed and refined over the past fifteen years of web design.

Not All Fonts are Created Equal

- Use screen-optimized fonts, especially at small sizes. Verdana, Georgia are two of the best. Try Lucida Grande (no italic though) and perhaps Calibri, Candara, and Cambria, which come installed with recent versions of Microsoft Office.
- Thin serif fonts, like Baskerville and Bodoni, don't translate to the low resolution of computer screens.



Paragraph Distinctions

- It's more common to break paragraphs with some vertical space rather than first-line indents on the web, since it helps the reader keep track of their location when scrolling.
- A full line-break is often too much. Start by setting a **margin-bottom** on your paragraphs equal to half their leading.

How the Tournament Works

Each spring we take 16 of the most celebrated novels of the previous calendar year (30 percent off from [Powells.com](#)) and seed them into a competitive bracket—the kind you see in the N.C.A.A. basketball championship. Seventeen judges are enlisted throughout several rounds of competition, with each arbiter considering two books and advancing one. In this way, a pool of 16 books becomes eight, eight becomes four, four becomes two, and two becomes one, The Rooster, Champion Book of the Year.

Well, almost. But we'll get to that in a minute.

Each weekday in March, two books go head to head, with a judge explaining in detail how he or she has chosen one of them to advance to the next round. Unlike other book awards, we ask our judges to come clean about how they made their decision, their literary biases and reading preferences, their personal and professional conflicts and affiliations.

We also give you, the readers and fans, a chance to determine the outcome. (Don't forget, [we already held a contest](#) for one of you to become a judge.) During competition, once the judges have winnowed the field to two books, we enter the *Zombie Round*. This is where the top two most popular books among you readers *that were earlier eliminated in the competition* rise from the dead and get another chance to trip up the semi-finalists on their march to victory.

See instructions below for how you can help determine which of this year's novels will get that second chance.

Finally, one book wins The Rooster, the Champion Book of the Year, and we award/threaten its author with the presentation of a live rooster, the official Tournament of Books mascot, named after our favorite character in contemporary literature, David Sedaris's brother.

If any of this seems confusing to you, [you can listen to an All Things Considered interview here](#), which puts it in language any NPR listener can understand.

What This List of Books Is and What It Is Not

It is not a list of the best novels of 2010. The novel had an incredible year, in our opinion, but this is not even a list of our favorite books from 2010. Because compiling such a list would be absurd. Even collectively we have read only a tiny fraction of the books published last year. We haven't even read all the books on the Rooster list.

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Barack Obama's state of the union address - video

Michael Tomasky: Will it wrongfoot Republicans?

State of the union address: as it happened

Blogosphere ponders Bachmann's oddity

Full text of President Obama's address

Barack Obama walks to board Air Force One en route to Wisconsin to tour several renewable-energy factories, a day after delivering his state of the union address. Photograph: J. Scott Applewhite/AP Photograph: J. Scott Applewhite/AP

Politicians on both sides of America's political divide are questioning how Barack Obama plans to reconcile his commitment to freeze a large part of government spending for five years with his call in his state of the union speech for massive new state investment to stave off the economic threat from China.

Obama said the present American generation faced its "Sputnik moment" — a reference to the shock caused by the Russians launching the first satellite in 1957.

"Half a century ago, when the Soviets beat us into space with the launch of a satellite called Sputnik, we had no idea how we'd beat them to the moon. The science wasn't there yet. Nasa didn't even exist. But after investing in better research and education, we didn't just surpass the Soviets, we unleashed a wave of innovation that created new industries and millions of new jobs. This is our generation's Sputnik moment," Obama said.

The president called for the biggest government spending programme on research, infrastructure and education since the 1960s space race to keep the US as the world's leading economy and maintain its global influence.

But John Boehner, the new speaker of the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, led the charge against what he saw as Obama's

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REAL CLEAR POLITICS

Underlining Text

- Print historically doesn't have much use for underlined text — in the typewriter age it was often used as a substitute for italics (or to indicate italics to a typesetter).
- On the web, underlines are usually reserved for links — consider using **border-bottom** instead of **text-decoration**, and remember that borders can be **dotted** and **dashed** in addition to **solid**.
- Watch out for borders cutting through descenders in an ugly way.

couldn't/wouldn't stop singing along when he played; and finally, the mature Gould, who at age of thirty-two told the concert music establishment in essence to go fuck itself, and happily never performed in public again. His reasons to stop were many and varied, but you can't help but admire this sort of clear-headed defiance toward being forced to create on someone else's terms; like how Artie Shaw — another musician whose talent and hard work earned him the right to lead a bullshit-free career — used to revel in taking unannounced sabbaticals for years at a time at the height of his fame, just to spite those making money off of his work.

It's that last act — the eighteen years leading up to Gould's death — where academics and critics do most of their forensic work, and rightly so: having been set free from ownership by promoters, executives and the really rather bizarre celebrity system of concert music, he dabbled to great result in writing and broadcasting, the very best of the latter is found in three radio documentaries for the CBC which came to be known as *The Solitude Trilogy* (an excerpt from the first, *The Idea of North*, is available here). For the former, look no further than Tim Page's excellent volume *The Glenn Gould Reader*.

Probably the most famous piece in that book is a quick ditty Gould wrote for *High Fidelity* magazine in 1974, 'Glenn Gould Interviews Glenn Gould about Glenn Gould'. While very funny and verbally

The screenshot shows a web page with a blue header bar containing the site logo 'kottke.org' and a navigation menu. The main content area has a white background with a blue border. The article title is 'MoMA acquires digital typefaces; what does that mean?'. The text discusses MoMA's acquisition of 23 typefaces and mentions Jonathan Hoefler and Frere-Jones. There are several sidebars on the right, including one for 'kottke.org, quickly...' and another for 'LOOKING FOR WORK? Taxi Magic is looking for a Software Engineer.' The footer contains a logo for 'Happy Cog Hosted' and the text 'Powered by Happy Cog Hosted'.