

Project 2

Re/Design

Introduction

With Project 1, we established a workflow for interactive projects. Let's dig a bit deeper.

By using a local business as a "client," we'll build or rebuild their web presence, while considering visual and informational requirements imposed by their brand and operations.

Expectations

Qualitative

In addition to a codebase free of critical organizational and engineering issues, a successful project will demonstrate a grasp on the prescribed *Process*, throughout. This means that:

- The design language is compatible with the business's sector and existing brand
- Pages are chosen intelligently, with an emphasis on delivering key information and ideas representative the business's charter and legacy.
- Users can move from page to page fluidly and are given a sense of breadth and depth of the site's content.

Students will also familiarize themselves with more advanced CSS techniques to achieve rich, compelling interfaces.

Quantitative

A total of five pages are required. A homepage is strongly encouraged to organize internal pages and provide context for the experience, but not mandatory. The pages must showcase a variety of layouts and accurately represent the scope of the business's offerings.

Process

While the overall structure for this project will stay the same as Project 1, the expectations for each phase have been adjusted.

1 Research & Strategy

Discovery

Problems can't be addressed without first describing them. As designers, we must be sympathetic to the needs of our client, and our client must trust us to offer perceptive solutions. That relationship hinges on the ability to define project objectives.

- Select a business. Ideally small-to-medium in size, and locally owned and operated, that markets some kind of service or goods to people of the Pacific Northwest. The market doesn't need to exist only in our region, but the selected business should.
- Determine the audience. What is the target demographic? Sometimes this is defined by the product itself, but in others, a business owner will use their unique perspective to make a product or experience available to more people.
- Research their competitors. Look at what similar businesses are doing. Draft a list of successes and failures of their web presence, with an emphasis on potential improvements that can realistically be brought to the business's site.
- Establish goals. Take some notes about what might give the business an edge in the market. What can be done to make the website appeal to a broader audience? Be optimistic about the value and health of the business, and get them ready for growth.

Content Audit

It's time to take inventory of the content the website needs to represent. Start by outlining all the available content, and make a second list of new content needs. Is the site missing imagery? Does the business profile its employees? Do they publish testimonials of happy clientele? What media does the business use to market itself? This is a perfect opportunity to expand the definition of a redesign to a fundamental revitalization of the business's use of the Internet.

User Experience ("UX")

The results of the Content Audit should then be grouped and distilled into a set of pages. The goal is not to fit all the site's content on just five pages, but to create a high-level view of how information is distributed across them.

Determine how the user can and should move from page to page, and what information will be offered on each leg of that journey. Within each page, order content in a way that will make sense for the viewer. Establish hierarchy, and determine how each kind of information needs to be displayed. Use text or diagrams to illustrate this thinking.

Wireframes

For each page that will be designed, prescribe a structure and layout. Some of these pieces, like navigation, can be consistent across pages, but it's important to display each type of information appropriately. Based on the content outline, block out space enough for the various page components, with respect to the established structure.

2 Design

Visual Design

After defining the overall organization and structure of the site, visualize it in detail. Sketch big and small. All the pages defined in the wireframes must be designed, incorporating near-final content. The expectations for the level of detail and refinement are greater than for Project 1, so finding good reference material is crucial. Look at competitors' websites, or

even sites outside that market. Find design patterns that are compelling and relevant to the content. Create a typographic system. Select an appropriate image treatment.

3 Engineering

HTML

Markup must represent the overall hierarchy and sequence of information on each page. It is expected that each page have a somewhat unique layout, so unlike Project 1, pages won't be of the same "template" per se, and may need substantially different markup for their primary content areas. Semantic elements with descriptive classes are required.

CSS

Style the raw HTML, while paying special attention to detail. Use of third-party libraries like Bootstrap or 960-Grid to jump-start or modularize code are encouraged, but not mandatory.

Presentation

Students will be accountable for a small-group presentation, based on the following criteria:

Context

Rationalize the selection of this business, and explain why their site needed to be designed or redesigned to begin with. What is special about this business? Is it relevant to the student's interests?

Goals

Set the precedent for the redesign. What issues exist with the current web presence, and how does the business's mission dictate the priorities of a redesign?

Outcomes

Discuss design and engineering successes and failures. What happened that was unexpected? What was learned during the process? Be prepared to defend choices, and to ask questions about how the site can be further improved through design or code.

Evaluation

The project's design and build will be graded on three categorical criteria.

Design

Most crucially, the site's visual design is beholden to the needs of the chosen business and its voice on the Internet. Its appearance should be striking: fresh, compelling, smart and on-brand.

Architecture

Content is organized meaningfully, and users understand what the business does and how it affects them. The content audit, experience diagrams and wireframes clearly informed the final design by giving the underlying information a coherent structure.

Engineering

The proper HTML and CSS features were used to accomplish the stated design language, layout, typographic and informational hierarchy and use of imagery.

Important Dates

Step	In Phase	Date	Format
Discovery	1		
Experience	1	18 February	PDF (Google Drive)
Wireframes	1	23 February	
Final Design	2	2 March	PDF (Google Drive)
Development Check-in	3	2–11 March	Slack Check-In
Final Due	—	19 March	Small-Group Presentation

All deadlines are assumed 12PM, that day, unless otherwise noted on the class website.