

## INDEPENDENT PROJECT

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SMAD 408: Converged Media Lab

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Recently I was hired by JMU Bizlab to be part of their web design team. JMU Bizlab meets the digital services needs of small businesses and facilitates student-community engagement. JMU students bring the story of small businesses in the Harrisonburg area to online branding through website development, design of marketing materials, and graphic design. My first client project was to schedule a consultation with, my client Gary Flory. G.A. Flory consulting, a global consulting firm, helps clients with a range of services including animal disease and natural disaster response, agricultural emergency planning, and emergency response. He would like his website content transferred within his WordPress site to a more professional consulting Wix themed website with a whole new platform for branding. Working on a design strategy role for Gary's site, I had to keep design decisions in mind regarding aesthetics, hierarchy, and Gary's priorities for navigation and layout. Each content section on the homepage was broken up, making it look simple, organized, easily navigable, and interactive. Users can click on each section "the buttons" for what page they want to go to. I chose this Wix theme because it is helpful for users to get a visual, effectively directing where the user should go for information-making a great example of information hierarchy and addresses effective user experience design. This is why themes for web domain platforms are beneficial in organizing one's content. There are a lot of functions and ways one can display content within a theme.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the G.A. Flory Consulting website. At the top, there is a dark header bar with the company name "G.A. Flory Consulting" on the left and navigation links for "Home", "Services", "Projects", "Meet the Owner", and "Contact" on the right. Below the header is a large photograph of a diverse group of approximately 20 people, mostly women, dressed in professional attire, standing together indoors. Underneath the photo is a section titled "Mission Statement" with the following text:  
When animal diseases and natural disasters strike, G.A. Flory Consulting will be there to provide our clients with the highest quality emergency response services. Until then, our professional training programs will enable them to minimize the impact of those disasters.  
At the bottom of the page, there is a light blue footer section containing the company name "Gary Flory Consulting" in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below this, a smaller paragraph of text provides a brief history of the company: "Since 2003 G.A. Flory Consulting has helped our clients plan, train, and respond to agricultural emergencies like disease outbreaks, acts of agroterrorism, and natural disasters across the country and around the globe. Our clients include international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), state and federal government agencies, individual farmers, and meat and poultry production companies. G.A. Flory Consulting has access to a vast network of subject matter experts and can expand our team to respond to any size response." A dark blue button labeled "Meet the Owner" is located at the bottom of this section.

<https://garyaflory.wixsite.com/home>

I decided to use a theme-based website, because I wanted the ability to organize and gather all my professional and academic portfolio artifacts to showcase my work in a platform that is not only professional but creative for future employers to explore. I felt that Wix had the most effective and representational template I could display my portfolio pieces, in a way that is navigable and easily identifiable. The simple format allowed the user to not only have access to each section of information on the homepage but as well in the header bar. The limited data sections and format separation on the homepage grants one to focus on which is being displayed instead of each section, which the user will not pay attention to.

In regards to my e-portfolio, I felt that this Wix theme template was the perfect example to address good user experience design. This theme provides customization options, a nice picture at the top of the screen that is not too massive, and an easily readable headline and navigation bar. In addition to my outcome and goals for this project I intend for these Wix sites will be presented to future employees all in one place see my achievements, skills, languages, and portfolio works I have created over the years during my undergrad SMAD and professional career. I also have obtained Clients working for JMU BIZLab and would like to show my future clientele what kinds of projects I have worked with and if I can similarly assist them. Every time I get a new portfolio piece or a project I can just add it to my e-portfolio, to encase my interactive media artifacts. For a designer to be inclusive and understanding of all aspects of society, it is necessary to be adaptable in creating a product for all types of people.

The screenshot shows the homepage of Joe Devine's Wix e-portfolio. At the top left is a logo consisting of a red circle with the letters 'JD' in white. To its right, the name 'Joe Devine' is displayed in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with 'B.S. Interactive Media & Designer' in a smaller, regular black font below it. To the right of the name is a horizontal navigation bar with links for 'HOME', 'RESUME', 'PROJECTS', and 'CONTACT'. Below the navigation bar is a large circular portrait of a young man with dark hair, smiling, wearing a blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red patterned tie. To the right of the portrait, the text 'Hello,' is written in a large, bold, black font, followed by 'a bit about me:' in a smaller, regular black font. Below this text are three circular buttons: yellow for 'MY RESUME', teal for 'MY PROJECTS', and red for 'MY SKILLS'. At the bottom of the page, there is a purple footer bar containing icons for LinkedIn and HandShake, along with contact information: 'Call: 215-913-2146', 'Contact: DevineJA@dukes.jmu.edu', and 'References & Work Files Upon Request'.

<https://joeydhockey.wixsite.com/jdportfolio>

Every time I would work on this project within the “Wix editor” (the website builder page). I would discover new widgets and a feature I can add to my sites to better one's users' interactive experience. However, with the amount of accessibility and usability a designer can go overboard. I learned from my SMAD lectures, and a recent book written by Sara Wachter-Boettche called, *Technically Wrong*. Consumers are wrapped into this digital world where they are being exposed to cultural and social misconceptions. Technology is being used daily, and to have a device that is heavily used and heavily biased and sexist is wrong. It is up to the user to recognize what is technically wrong, but up to the interactive designers to fix it accordingly. Meaning in order to convey any message and to really grip one's visual attention, the key aspects to design is to focus on the main topics and points, plan/sketch layout of the beginning process of one's project, and be concerned about breaking up each content displacement, allowing it not to be cluttered and overcrowded with information.

My interviewing process for this project started with the consultation with Gary Flory to work out a design strategy role for Gary's site, to get me into a position to define the design strategy to start working on the site. Our company has multiple consultation forms that employees have to fill out talking to their clients, in order to get a better understanding of what they need.

The only interviewing process, I did regarding my e-portfolio was asking other interactive design undergrad students what platform they used as their portfolio.

In terms of personas, I had to put myself in the eyes of a corporate company recruiter, making sure that the users going through my e-portfolio is not lost and can see my progress as an interactive media and designer. Not having any experience making an e-portfolio I researched professional portfolio themes and other interactive design-type e-portfolios. This gave me a sense of how I should break each page up, and what content I should include.

During Gary Flory's consultations, I gather and researched 10 of the best & most popular consultation Wix themes they had and presented them to Gary. He seemed to like the one which was my personal favorite and was best for how he wanted to lay out his site. While creating his site, I also had to keep in mind who viewers and audience members were, because this group of people is going to be visiting his site. Gary Flory's Clients include government agencies such as the United States Department of Agriculture and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, international organizations such as the food and Agriculture Agencies of the United Nations and the World Organization for Animal Health, and commercial swine and poultry companies.

To conclude my independent project, I will be turning in my portfolio, and my clients professional consulting WordPress website, creating both of them into freelance Wix websites to promote my skills, portfolio pieces, and a way to market my abilities as a designer for interactive media and design. I am going to use WIX, because the company I work for, JMU BIZLAB supports this website building software being an efficient start-up website builder for customers and clients. I will be transferring all the context from Gary Flory's content to a WIX platform, adding different navigations (buttons, links, PDF documents, and resources).

My e-portfolio WIX site I will be transferring my resume, portfolio pieces & project, links to the created website, and other organic material I have made in my SMAD and professional career as a designer.

One of my main reason and deciding factor I am using WIX is not just because my client asked for it, but because this website builder is based on the ability to customize and design my website easily with the most control and options. I want the ease of being able to design something and to manipulate content without having to manually code.

***Look at the screen-casting video that I attached video to visualized and take an interactive journey through the different widgets that I added within my sites to make it interactive.***

Here are some of my notes from Gary Floy's consultation:

### **Agenda for 10.9.20**

- Questions - going over the navigation and layout to best reflect what is important to him.
- Feedback Logo items

### **Questions**

- Is Navigation look good to you?
  - Consolidating past projects and publications and presentations under "Portfolio"?
  - Services page – your content now is good, we car re-design.
- What are the top 3-5 publications to showcase?
- What info could we get about the presentations that go beyond what's written out?
- Do you want the top projects mentioned? Or is it important to have a comprehensive list of all past project work?

...  
Form Submission - Consultation Form

Squarespace <no-reply@squarespace.info> Sun 8/9, 3:38 PM Reply all | v  
Bizlab v

Consultation Forms

Name: Gary Flory  
Email: garyafloy@gmail.com  
Phone: (540) 820-0934  
Business Name: G.A. Flory Consulting

Describe your business (who are you, what you do, your company mission): G.A. Flory Consulting, a global consulting firm helps clients with a range of services including animal disease and natural disaster response, agricultural emergency planning, and emergency response training.

What services are you interested in?: Website (New or remodel), Graphic Design (Logos and design edits), Print Marketing (Business cards, fliers, post cards, brochures, etc)

Do you have an existing website?: Yes  
<https://gafloryconsulting.com/>

What features do you wish to adjust, add, improve, expand, etc. on your current website?: Improve visual appeal, branding, add a section for projects, and improve ease of updating.

Please provide links to websites, graphics or digital materials that you like, and tell us what elements draw your attention.: Open to suggestions. I like clean simple designs.

Project Details - any other relevant details for us to better understand your project needs.: I would also be interested in updating other elements like my logo, letterhead, etc.

Target Audience - what demographic(s) distinguish your primary client base?: My clients include government agencies such as the United States Department of Agriculture and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Agencies of the United Nations and the World Organization for Animal Health, and commercial swine and poultry companies.

Not married [ ]  
Wordpress needs menu help [ ]

### **Questions**

- May need paragraphs/text or editing...
- What pictures would you like on the homepage?
  - Under "Services" on Services page
  -

### **HW for Client**

- Visuals for the Presentation page
- Google pics folder or link with picture
- Images & content needed
- Mission statement

## Agenda

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### **Questions - 10.23.20**

Questions for Gary:

- Should we prioritize top presentations and top publications or present them all by date?
- Do you have any testimonials from Clients for the home page?
- Links for clients, aside from their agency page? (includes the four icons...)
- I think we asked once, but to doublecheck, do you have any video you'd like add? Links to youtube could also be helpful
- Publication: Is this "Select List" still list that you want? (any changes?)

Questions for Team:

- Hero images to use?

### **HW for Client - 10.23.20**

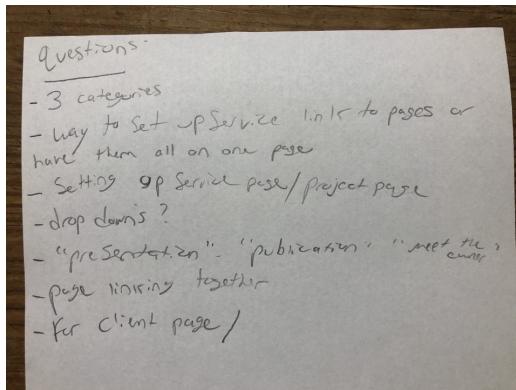
HW for Gary:

- For the About information on the home page, we want a short paragraph, perhaps 2-3 sentences that would give enough information for people to
  - Recognize you from a referral or past work experience (i.e. we'd may use your photo)
  - Get essential highlights of skills and experiences that would confirm whether you are someone who can address their situation.
  - Get the "this is the guy!" reaction

### **Tasks as of 10.23.20**

Abigail's notes (not comprehensive)

- Clients
  - move the clients PAGE content to a Home page section, to serve the function of "testimonials"
- Project page:
  - "Keystone" Projects (at top)
  - Additional project work (below – as opposed to a button to a pdf or hidden page)
- Publications - see Questions above
  - Confirm that this is still the Select list that you want to present on your site?
- Presentation - see Questions above
  - Do you have a short video?
  - (Or links for youtube?)
- Picture Boxes with Project Focuses – internal team notes:
  - Sequenced pictures of a project that you can view, enlarged, from a hover box
  - Only one event per "box"
    - Different stages of event included - perhaps 3-5 photos, could be more
    - Captions preferable, if only locative.
      - for example, "Cambodia, Swine Flu, 2019"
    - Will these only be on the Project page? Or elsewhere, like the homepage?



Gary Flory wanted:

- Remodeled website
- Right tone and Message
- An improved visual appeal/branding
- Menu Bar Help
- Clean Simple Design
- add a menu section for his projects
- improve ease of updating

# JMU BIZLAB CONSULTATION FORMS

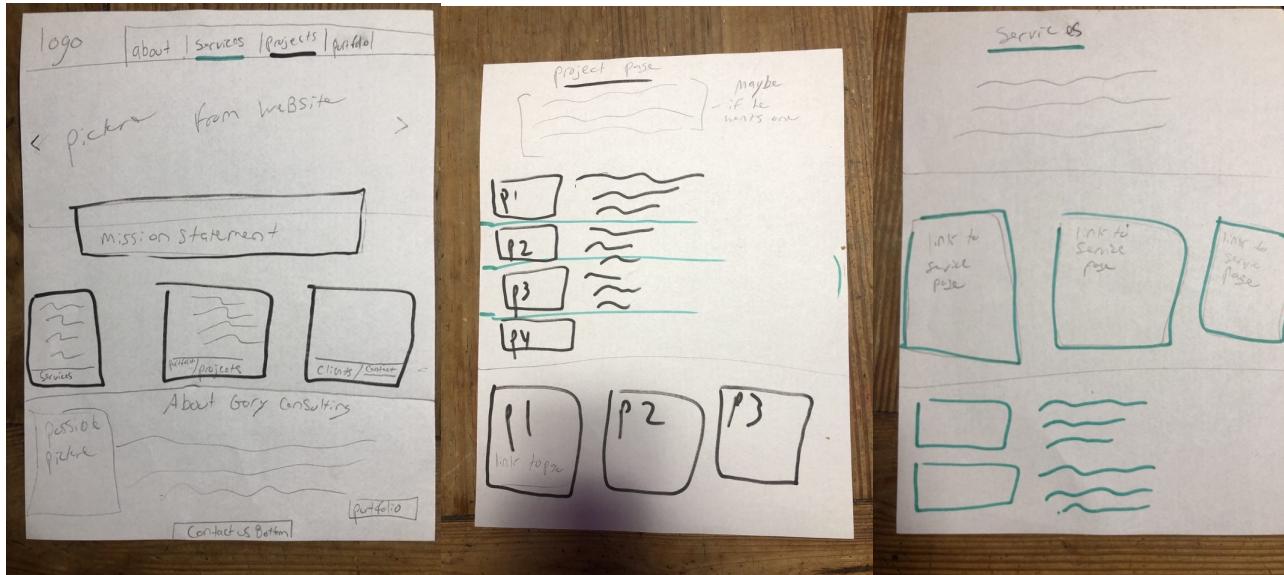
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>01 Overview</b></p> <p><b>G.A. Flory Consulting (Gary Flory)</b></p> <p>Project started: <u>Wednesday, 9th</u></p> <p><i>Please type answers in bold or red</i></p>	
<p><b>1. Client Contact Details</b></p> <p>Primary Contact Full Name &amp; preferred name: Gary Flory Primary Contact Position: <u>(email)</u> Email: garyflory@gmail.com Phone: <u>(540) 820-0934</u> Best Way to Correspond with Client: Email (Phone call for clarification)</p> <p>Is <u>client</u> able to review work quickly and respond quickly during the production of the website? <b>YES</b> or <b>NO</b></p> <p>Client's "Tech literacy" level? (<i>for meetings, image transfers, ability to maintain site, etc</i>)</p> <p>Customer Service Begin and End Dates: <u>(begins once website is completed)</u> <b>BEGIN:</b>      <b>END:</b></p>	
<p><b>2. Platforms (do they have them yet, or need them still? – what are they?)</b></p> <p>Domain <b>Already</b> have or need to get? <b>Wordpress</b>, --&gt; <b>Wix</b> <a href="https://gafloryconsulting.com">https://gafloryconsulting.com</a></p> <p>Hosting: Gary <b>Already</b> have or need to get? Login info: he was the host of WordPress: Gary</p> <p>Site Builder: <b>Already</b> have or need to get? Login info: <b>WIX</b></p>	
<p><b>3. Client Project High-Level Profile</b></p> <p>Desired Services: <b>Logo, Website, Business card, etc</b> What Kind of <b>Print Advertising</b> <b>Website Content</b></p> <p>Description of <u>client</u> (include what is unique or important about who they are) - <b>A global consulting firms, help clients with a range of services including animal disease and natural disaster</b></p> <p>Target Audience - what demographic(s) distinguish your primary client base? : My clients include government agencies such as the United States Department of Agriculture and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Agencies of the United Nations and the World Organization for Animal Health, and commercial swine and poultry companies.</p> <p>Date: 10/30/2020</p> <p>High Level objectives &amp; expectations (purposes) of website. <i>What does the client need the site to do or be for them? (i.e. do they need to draw more clients, do they need to sell products, etc.)</i></p> <p><b>Rebrand: change in location</b> <b>Mission</b> <b>No child like</b> <b>Improve visual appeal, branding, add a section for projects and improve ease of updating information</b> <b>Letterhead and logo</b></p> <p>What are some other sites that do work well? Why does the client admire these sites? <b>I like simple website designs, <u>improve</u> visual appeal, branding,</b></p>	
<p><b>4. Corrections and Fixes</b></p> <p>What is it about their current site that they feel isn't working for them? <b>Child like theme, logo</b></p> <p><b>Better layout for a more professional, layout of information, more pieces</b></p> <p>What information is included on the site now that can stay the same?</p> <p>What information needs to be added? <b>Portfolio, service projects, new logo, stories and service, mission statement, international, our insight, contact us, (look on Website for menu items)</b></p>	

# DESGIN ASPECTS & SKETCHES:

## Concept 1 for My Client's Gary Flory Website:

### WEB PAGES:

- **Nav bar**
  - color block across top
  - Sometimes 2 colors - especially for larger organizations
  - Narrow - takes up minimal space
- **Large picture on home page – Hero Image**
  - Creates primary visual above the fold
  - Must convey "messaging" and "tone" of business.
  - Usually extends below screen, except perhaps on full screen of large monitors
  - Content "below the fold"
  - hierarchy is easy – accessible, intuitive
  - easily directed to task
  - Drop down menu no more than 7,
- **Hero image**
  - Logo up in left
  - Home should say home
  - Priority content... on home page
    - Text
    - Unnecessary to highlight headings – don't need bold
    - Photo placement
    - A range of content plus photos to... avoid "predictability of layout/pattern"



## Concept 2: My Portfolio layout:

Key Aspects to a Good Portfolio site:

- hierarchy is easy – accessible, intuitive
- easily directed to task – CTA
- Drop down menu no more than 7,
- Hero image
- Logo up in left
- Home should say home
- Priority content... on home page
- Text
- Unnecessary to highlight headings – don't need bold
- Photo placement
- A range of content plus photos to... avoid "predictability of layout/pattern"

