

# Research Report

October 6

# 2012

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Research report and brief for the development of a website for Cybernet Computer Systems Ltd. This report forms the basis of a web thesis project which is part of an "MA in Web Design & Content Management".

Cybernet  
Computer  
Systems  
Website  
Report

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# 1. Background

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Cybernet Computer Systems, began trading in 1997, and is a single person limited company<sup>1</sup> offering IT consultancy and software development services.

The company works primarily within the social housing and charity sectors, but its' customers have also included software houses, consultancies, and other small businesses.

Cybernet specialises in software development within UNIX, Linux and Microsoft environments<sup>2</sup>, and has extensive housing management systems experience particularly with Civica<sup>3</sup> housing products.

Traditionally the majority of its work has been based around the support and development of software for housing customers, primarily housing associations using Civica housing management systems.

Recently it has been involved in website design and development for a number of small businesses and charities. This website development work is something the company is keen to grow<sup>4</sup>.

The majority of Cybernet's work has been obtained through customer recommendation. As a company it prides itself on the quality of its work, its ethos is based around delivering "*quality solutions that meet, or exceed, customer requirements*".

The company currently has 3 registered domain names [cybernet-computing.com](http://cybernet-computing.com), [cybernet-computing.co.uk](http://cybernet-computing.co.uk), and [cybernetcomputing.co.uk](http://cybernetcomputing.co.uk); the intention is to map all URLs to the ".com" domain<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Although essentially a single person company, Cybernet often works on collaborative projects with associates in a broad range of fields. For the purposes of this report the collective terms "we" and "our" will refer to both Gary Pigott and the company.

<sup>2</sup> Our traditional skill set includes: Informix, 4GL, Genero, UNIX scripting, SQL Server (development and administration), ASP.

<sup>3</sup> Civica PLC is an international software house which specializes in public sector and housing management software and service provision.

<sup>4</sup> Our "bread and butter" work is based around a particular niche market, namely support and development of Civica's housing management products, primarily Inhouse and CTX; because our expertise is associated primarily with housing systems, there is a danger of being stereotyped as (solely) a housing systems solution provider.

<sup>5</sup> Additional domains [cybernet-web-design.co.uk](http://cybernet-web-design.co.uk)/.com have since been acquired to support the web design part of the business.

## 2. Elevator Pitch

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Cybernet has not used any form of advertising to promote itself, with the majority of our work having been obtained through customer recommendation.

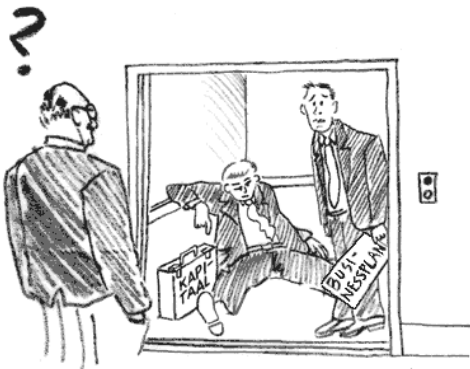
However, the impact of the recession coupled with a shrinking customer base<sup>6</sup> means that *word of mouth just doesn't cut it* anymore. The company now needs to grow its' housing services customer base, to attract non-housing customers, and also diversify into alternative forms of service provision (e.g. web development).

What is needed is some form of advertising that will help us achieve our aims for the business, namely:

- grow our existing housing customer base
- attract non-housing customers
- re-establish a relationship with previous customers
- diversify (by advertising other services we can provide)

We feel that development of a good website is one of the best options to promote the business and help achieve our goals. It will provide an inexpensive solution to advertising the business, can grow with the business, and can be used to highlight areas that we may want to develop.

Finally, it is an expectation that most companies have their own website, and this is even more the case for an IT solutions provider and development of our own site will help fulfil this expectation.



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<sup>6</sup> Over the past 5 years there has been a trend for customers to move away from Civica's housing management systems to other HMS or managed services. This trend has slowed recently but has resulted in a much smaller customer base for existing HMS services.

### 3. Initial Brief

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The initial brief is to develop a website that will promote the company to existing, and new customers, and assist in the company's plans to grow its web development work.

#### **Existing Markets**

To re-establish the company in the eyes of current and previous customers, and attract new housing customers thereby increasing the customer base. The launch of the site will be accompanied by an email marketing campaign introducing the site to potential customers.

Cybernet don't currently have a brand identity, so part of this project will be to include the development of an appropriate brand that encompasses the mood of the company which is *professional, reliable, and approachable*<sup>7</sup>.

#### **New Markets**

To attract non-housing customers who need consultancy, support, or development services – essentially the same services we provide to our existing housing clients, but in a different business sector.

New markets will also include non-Civica based housing associations, customers who need data migration or any of the other services we can provide.

#### **Diversify**

Cybernet is looking to develop its business outside the traditional consultancy and support work it has done in the past.

A good website will help us to achieve this by showcasing non-housing related work (or just non-Civica related work), will provide a means of showcasing web related products (sites we have developed), and will itself be a *good example* of the sort of web development work we can produce.

If we are to market ourselves as a web development company then it is essential that we have a quality website of our own.

#### **Attract Visitors**

The aim of the website is to promote the products and services offered by our company; however, having a great website is no good if no one visits the site.

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<sup>7</sup> Cybernet is a single person company, and whilst aspects like "the personal touch" may have positive benefits, the image of the "one man band" may also have a negative effect on potential customers.

As well as advertising the business, the site needs to include content that will attract both visitors and repeat visitors.

### **Value Proposition**

The aim of the website is to help *grow the business*, expand the customer base, and help the business to move into other areas. The company needs to do some form of advertising to pull in new business and a good website would be an ideal way of doing this.

Customers have certain expectations of an IT consultancy and one of them is that they should have a web presence. By failing to have a website, Cybernet are not only missing a good advertising opportunity but are also giving a poor impression to potential customers.

As well as advertising the business, the website can showcase work the company has done, and as such provide a possible avenue for expansion into other areas or business sectors; reinforcing the message that *"we don't just do housing"*.

The evolution of a well designed, accessible, engaging website will provide an effective, inexpensive way for the company to advertise and will provide an opportunity for a targeted email marketing campaign ("visit our new website...").

### **Unique Selling Point**

As well as answering the key customer questions "who we are", "what we do", "how we can help", it will also showcase work the company is doing, and highlight the things that make Cybernet different to its competitors.

The website is an extension of the company brand and needs to demonstrate our ability to provide quality solutions and reinforce the overall message of *"we are professional, reliable, and approachable"*<sup>8</sup>, whilst at the same time avoiding overselling itself<sup>9</sup>.



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<sup>8</sup> Potential customers need to feel comfortable that they can "work with us".

<sup>9</sup> It's not just about selling, the feel of the site needs to be fairly informal and avoid pushing the "buy" message down the visitor's throat. The idea of including a blog and useful resources is aimed at toning down the "selling" message, whilst at the same time providing a reason for repeat visits.

## 4. Comparable Websites

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For the purpose of comparable websites I will be focusing on competitors that operate within the niche social housing market which Cybernet currently works in, and will include both direct and indirect competitors<sup>10</sup>.

When looking at the competitor websites I will attempt to identify good and bad points, with the intention of incorporating the good points within the proposed design whilst avoiding any of the problems/issues.

The “other sites” section will look at other websites, in different but related markets, which offer ideas and inspirations for the development of the Cybernet site.

In looking at the comparable web sites, as well as providing some company background, I will break down my comments into 4 main areas, namely:

- **Business**  
The aims and potential revenue stream(s) for the site
- **Commodity**  
Content, information architecture and site navigation
- **Firmness**  
The technology used to produce the site
- **Delight**  
The aesthetics and site graphics (visual delight)

Details of website server technology is courtesy of BuiltWith [www.builtwith.com](http://www.builtwith.com)

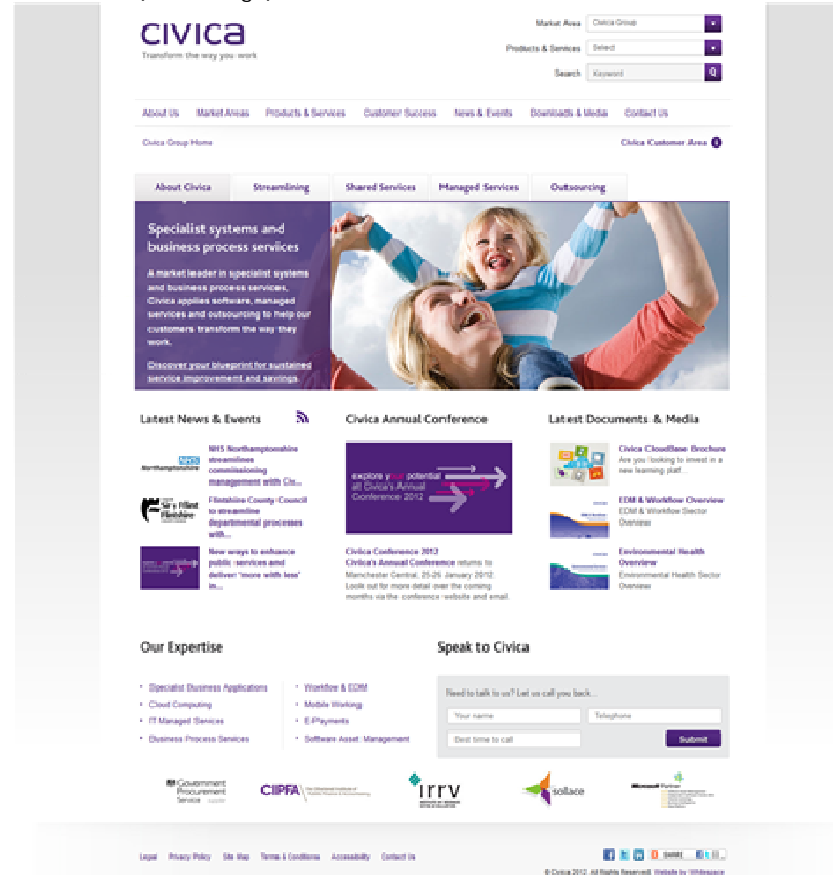
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<sup>10</sup> The social housing sector really is a “small world” and many of the competitors have also been past colleagues, and in many cases customers, of Cybernet.



## 4.1 Civica PLC ([www.civica.co.uk](http://www.civica.co.uk))

Screenshot (Home Page):



### Background

Civica are an international software house employing over 1500 staff in various locations around the world; and they provide the housing management products which Cybernet currently specialises in supporting. In addition to selling software products they also provide similar consultancy services to Cybernet.

As well as being a competitor they are a client of ours, we have sub-contracted for them (working with their CTX and Inhouse clients) and more recently have provided software development services.

### Business

Their website provides details of the products and services provided by the company, along with customer success stories which evidence the “benefits of doing business” with Civica.

The aim of the site is to promote Civica and advertise the company, products, and services it provides. There are no 3<sup>rd</sup> party (sponsored) adverts on the site; the revenue stream is solely in terms of any business the website attracts.

### **Commodity**

The site exists primarily to advertise the products and services offered by Civica, and this is reflected in the site content.

There is a customer area, albeit hidden as a sub link from the Downloads and Contact Us pages, which offers a customer forum and support area which is essentially a call logging portal; access to these pages is via customer login and a sign up link is provided.

There are no working social media links on the site. The website page footers include icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, but these simply link back to the current page.

### **Firmness**

The site is constructed from server technology Ruby on Rails; client-side technologies employed include jQuery and jQuery UI.

In terms of content management system (CMS), specific information is unavailable, however due to the size of the site and the need to manage frequently changing content (e.g. News & Articles, Customer forum etc) I would imagine that the website includes some form of CMS.

Navigation is implemented as a combination of page level links and drop down<sup>11</sup> menus. The site structure is fairly clear (and logical) and usability is enhanced by the use of site level search functionality.

There were some minor CSS issues which were flagged by my test browser (Firefox 8.0.1 with Web Developer toolbar) with web validation enabled, but this is consistent with the superfluous mark-up that many CMS produce.

When tested in IE6 the drop down menus failed to work.

### **Delight**

The website has a very corporate look and feel which, whilst appropriate for Civica, would not necessarily be appropriate to Cybernet.

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<sup>11</sup> There is a number of potential accessibility issues associated with drop down menus in terms of: the technology used (e.g. if implemented with JavaScript), their ability to be used easily by users with poor motor skills, and ease of use on mobile devices.

Visual interest is maintained by the use of appropriate images and the inclusion of rollover image replacement effects (and use of banner sized graphics).

## 4.2 Octavia Software Solutions ([www.octavia.uk.com](http://www.octavia.uk.com))

Screenshot (Home Page):

The screenshot shows the home page of Octavia Software Solutions. The header features the Octavia logo and navigation links: Home, Software, Services, News, and About Us. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- OSKA Software:** A large section with a 3D box graphic and text describing OSKA as a comprehensive and flexible solution for organizations of any size. It lists benefits such as: "Recent Client case notes and sent to a central store", "Improve retrieval of information", "Reduce time spent on administration tasks and data collation", "Implement a single way of working across the business", and "Standardize back house based contracts enabling enhanced service delivery to clients". A "Click here" link is provided.
- Call us on:** 01733 332628. **Or email us:** [info@octavia.uk.com](mailto:info@octavia.uk.com).
- Welcome to Octavia Software Solutions Ltd:** A paragraph describing the company's focus on providing software solutions for housing associations and local authorities. It mentions that the company is an established supplier of specialist IT systems and services with over 10 years experience in the local housing sector. It also states that the company originally formed to provide consultancy and business services to housing associations, but then expanded to develop and provide software to local authorities and housing associations. The company works with both large and small organizations and has a customer list that includes a number of major housing associations such as: Affinity Sutton, East Thames Housing, and YMCA. The company is a company that prides itself on its personal touch and offers friendly, customer focused support and implementation services. Our staff care about the systems and the services they provide so you can care about the people who support. To find out more [octavia.uk](http://octavia.uk).
- Savings Calculator:** A table showing the benefits of using OSKA. The table has two columns: "How much more OSKA save you?" and "OSKA". The rows are: "Reduce admin time (estimated support time)", "Reduce travel time", and "Reduce printing/copying". The values are: "£12,000 £36,000", "£10,000 £30,000", and "£1,200 £3,600". A "Click here for a breakdown of the calculation" link is provided.
- Latest Product Digital Pads:** A section describing the digital pads. It states that the digital pads are simple to use, secure, and can be used by anyone in the field and on the move. It also mentions that the digital pads can be used to capture data from the field to your computer, mobile phone, or tablet, saving up your information flow and streamlining your administration.
- Latest News:** A section with a headline "National Housing Association's supporting people software OSKA and Digital Pads solution". The text describes the solution as a new way of working for housing associations, allowing them to manage and support the activities of their supporting people service delivery teams. The implementation is expected to deliver significant savings in time and cost. A "Read More" link is provided.
- Case Studies / Comments:** A section with a headline "John Potts - Southdown Housing Association". The text describes the solution as a new way of working for housing associations, allowing them to manage and support the activities of their supporting people service delivery teams. The implementation is expected to deliver significant savings in time and cost. A "Read More" link is provided.

The footer includes a "Our Clients" section with logos for Moat, Affinity Sutton, Amicus Housing, YMCA, and Start Up. It also includes a "Contact Us" section with a form for Name, Email, and Message, and a "Subscribe" button. The footer text reads: "Octavia Software Solutions Ltd. All rights reserved."

### Background

Another, albeit much smaller, software house that also provides professional services to the same client group that we currently work with. They are a direct competitor of Cybernet in terms of consultancy, although they tend to have a more management (and less technical) focus.

### Business

The site provides details of the products and services provided by the company, along with customer testimonials for use of their OSKA product.

The site seems to be focussed on the sale of the OSKA product (although it fails to adequately describe what the product is); there is a Services page but again this is geared around services related to their software product.

There are no sponsored adverts on the site.

## **Commodity**

The site exists primarily to advertise the products and services offered by Octavia, the site content seems to be focussed on the OSKA product, with very little evidence of the other services they provide.

There is a no customer area or blog; there is a login link in the page footer but this a link back to the home page.

The site does include a "Subscribe to our newsletter" option.

There are no social media links on the site.

## **Firmness**

The site is constructed from the server technology PHP; client-side technologies employed include JavaScript and jQuery (jQuery carousel).

In terms of content management, specific information is unavailable, however due to the relatively small size of the site I would imagine that the website does not incorporate a CMS and is simply a collection of PHP pages.

Navigation is implemented using a combination of a page level (top right) navigation bar and, on some pages, a left hand side page/sub topic navigation box. There is no site search functionality.

The site content is generally organised logically. The banner header is too large resulting in most of the content being "below the fold".

The body text appears quite small which could affect accessibility for the visually impaired user.

There were some CSS/HTML issues which included invalid and poorly formed CSS, unclosed tags, empty tags, multiple H1 tags, invalid links, etc.

## **Delight**

Page content, with the exception of the News page, is quite limited and there is a distinct lack of visual interest on the site, with very few graphics.

Each page has the same banner heading selling the OSKA product and it is often difficult to identify that you are on a different page.

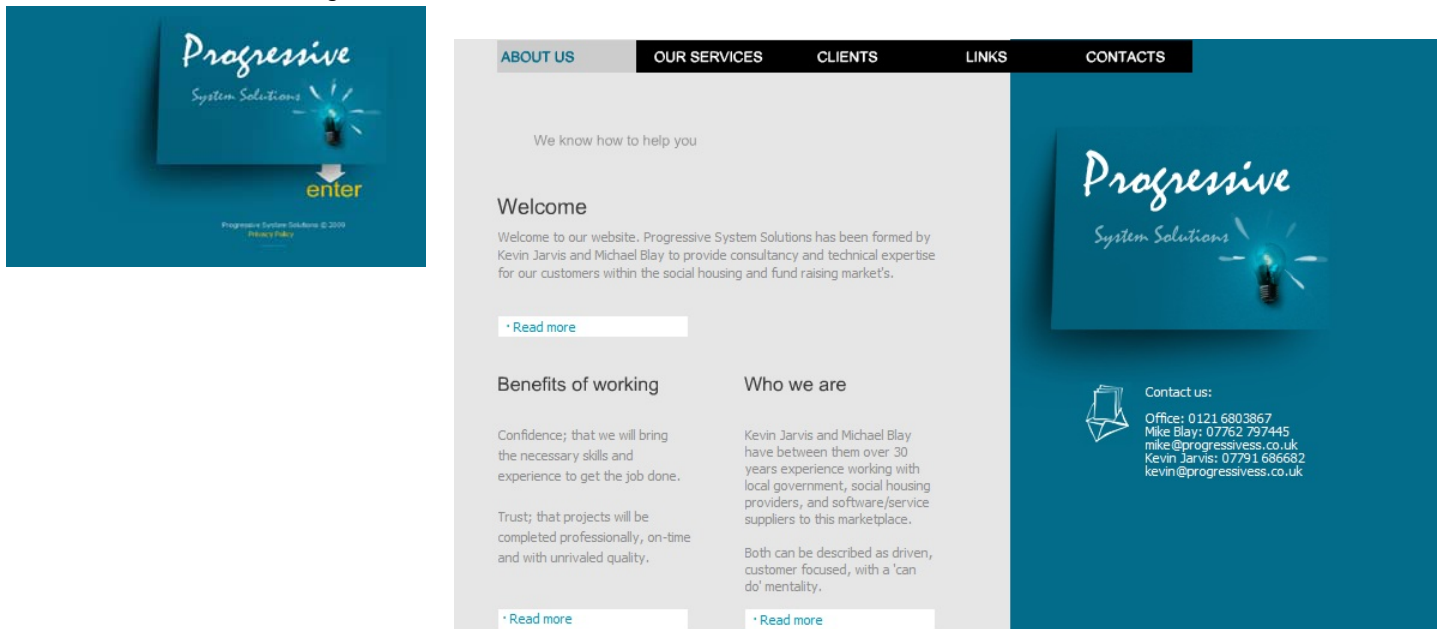
Many of the pages (and sub-pages) have very little content, such that the auto-scroller becomes the primary aspect of the page.

The use of the same scrolling content on all pages becomes a distraction to the actual page content, a better solution would be to limit the scrolling content to just the Home page and consolidate the smaller pages (perhaps using JQuery to hide/show sub sections).

The overall effect is a feeling of blandness and a lack of visual stimulation.

## 4.3 Progressive System Solutions ([www.progressivess.co.uk](http://www.progressivess.co.uk))

Screenshot (Enter & Home Pages):



### Background

A consultancy formed between Kevin Jarvis and Mike Blay (former colleagues of ours). They offer the same type of services as Cybernet and are the closest in terms of direct competitors.

### Business

The purpose of the website is to advertise the company by answering the key customer questions: "Who" (we are), "What" (we do), "Why" (work with us), and these are the same questions that a proposed site for Cybernet would seek to answer.

The objective of the site is essentially to attract business (via customer enquiries) and this is achieved by the prominent "Contact us" information section and a site contact form. (via "Contacts" main nav link).

## **Commodity**

The site exists solely to advertise the services offered by the company, with the overall aim being to get customer enquiries. Site content is solely geared to the Who/What/Why questions discussed earlier.

There is a no customer area or blog, and there are no social media links on the site.

## **Firmness**

The site is constructed from client-side Adobe Flash technology; whilst this offers the potential for interesting visual effects it is not compatible with Apple devices such as the iPad, iPhone, or iPod (without additional applications) and isn't supported on current BlackBerry handsets.

Navigation was fairly intuitive but not always what was expected; the browser back button takes you out of the site which is effectively just a single page. Some of the controls for the site effects (e.g. volume control) weren't immediately obvious.

There seemed to be little point to the initial "Enter" home page seemed (other than perhaps for some visual interest). The body text appears quite small which could affect accessibility for the visually impaired user.

The biggest issue with the site resides in its use of Flash, and the subsequent lack of accessibility on mobile devices; the use of this technology may also have negative effects on SEO<sup>12</sup>.

## **Delight**

The layout of the site is simple yet attractive with, initially, interesting animation and sound effects (e.g. animated light bulb, looping music). However after a short while the novelty wears off, and the assorted effects just became an annoying distraction.

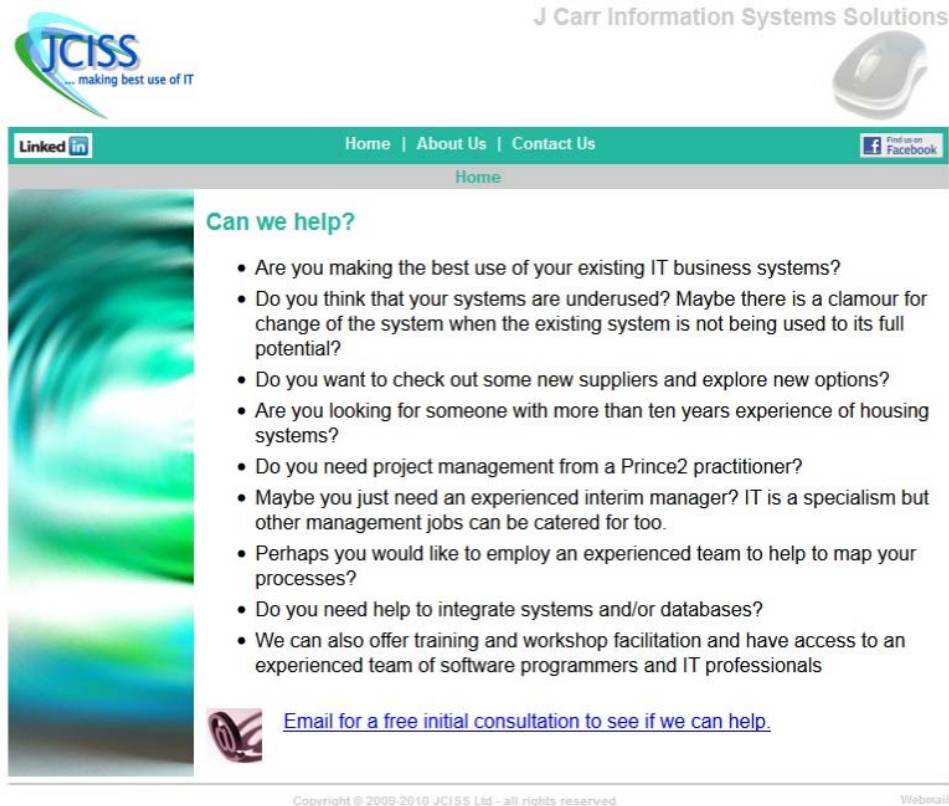
The sound effects were particularly grating and these may irritate visitors, and whilst the sounds can be turned this functionality is not immediately obvious.

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<sup>12</sup> Flash is currently unsupported on all latest Blackberry handsets and all iOS devices; also Flash based websites may encounter some site crawling issues that lead to decreased text content being indexed.

## 4.4 JCISS ([www.jciss.co.uk](http://www.jciss.co.uk))

Screenshot (Home Page):



### Background

June Carr Information System Solutions (JCISS) is another single person company offering consultancy services to the social housing sector.

Although a competitor, the services offered are more in terms of management consultancy, and Cybernet have worked with them on a number of projects (our business relationship is more *collaborative* than competitive).

### Business

The purpose of their website is to advertise their company, this is achieved by answering the customer questions: who we are, and how can we help.

The objective of the site is to attract business via customer enquiries, and this is achieved by the prominent "Email for a free initial consultation" (*mailto* link), and the Contact Us page.

### Commodity

The site exists solely to advertise the services offered by the company, with the overall aim being to get customer enquiries. The site has very little content.

There is a no customer area or blog, the site does include social media links to both Facebook and LinkedIn – although the Facebook Group page link no longer appears to work.

### **Firmness**

The site is implemented as a collection of static HTML (XHTML Transitional) web pages.

Navigation is implemented using a simple page level navigation bar; because of the size of the site secondary level navigation is not required. Page structure is implemented using the table layout technique.

The biggest issue with the site is a lack of content.

### **Delight**

Site layout is quite old fashioned, visually unexciting, with limited content; the site looks tired and in need of a revamp.



## 4.5 Dawn Russell Consulting ([www.dawnrussell.org.uk](http://www.dawnrussell.org.uk))

Screenshot (Home Page):



### Background

Dawn Russell Consulting is a small company working in the housing sector; the company started as a single person consultancy, but now includes a small team of people. Like JCISS, the services offered are generally non-technical, although the site now advertises web design services.

### Business

The purpose of the website is to promote the services of the company by attempting to answer the questions Who/What/Why (see earlier).

The objective of the site is to attract business via customer enquiries, and this is achieved by the prominent "Call today for a free no obligation consultation" on the front page.

The site includes a photograph of the owner which helps to give the site (and company) an approachable feel.

## Commodity

The site exists solely to advertise the services offered by the company, with the overall aim being to get customer enquiries.

There is a reasonable amount of content which serves to promote the services offered by the business.

Links to an external blog site (Google Blogger) are included, as are Twitter, Facebook and Google+ links.

The site includes a Twitter RSS feed, and the twitter profile is linked back to the company website.

## Firmness

The site is built with Xara Web Designer, a WYSIWYG template based package.

Navigation is implemented using a navigation bar combined with drop down menus.

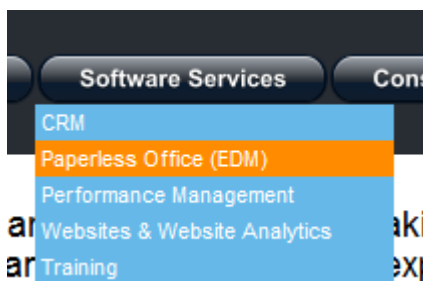
The organization of the content appears slightly confused, page layouts are not always consistent throughout and this added to give a disjointed feel to the site – the overall feeling is of a poorly thought out site structure.

The resultant HTML code structure is consistent with that produced from an off the shelf template package (minified, poorly structured, embedded JavaScript etc).

## Delight

The site page banner image seems to have little connection to the business, and may have been added to give visual interest.

The use of rounded main nav buttons combined with a differently coloured square drop down menu felt a little strange (see below).



The “box out” sections and page structure were not consistent on all pages and this gave a disjointed feel to the site.

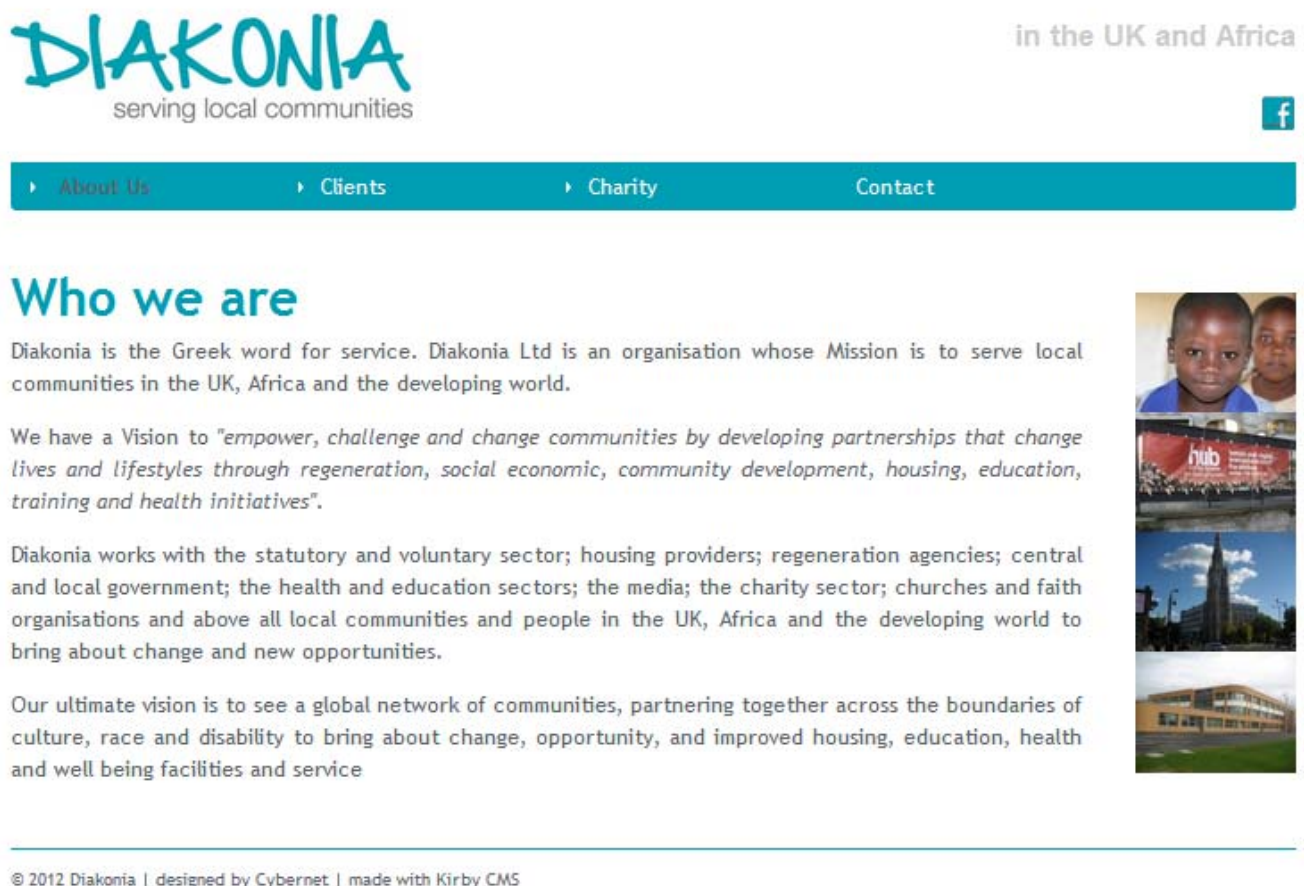
The use of a variety of different colours added to the lack of coherence between the pages, and gave some of the pages a slightly garish feel.

The content was difficult to scan, the text felt cramped and difficult to read, and on many pages there was too much going on (visual confusion).

The site had several good aspects, like the use of a blog and twitter, but overall felt poorly designed/disorganised.

#### 4.6 Diakonia ([www.diakonialtd.co.uk](http://www.diakonialtd.co.uk))

Screenshot (Home Page):



#### Background

Another single person company offering consultancy services to both the housing and charity sectors. Their consultancy services are typically of a non-technical nature and they are a company with which we have collaborated on several occasions.

## **Business**

The purpose of the website is to both advertise the services the company provides and promote the charity work they do.

The About Us/Nigel Poole page includes a photograph of the owner, which helps to give the site and company an approachable feel (a human face to the business).

## **Commodity**

There is perhaps some conflict between the content of the site, possibly leading to a confused message as to its purpose. What is the purpose of the site, is it to promote the business, or to promote the charitable activities of its owner?

There is a no customer area or blog, although the site does include social media links in the form of a Facebook link.

## **Firmness**

The site is implemented using the Kirby<sup>13</sup> content management system, supplemented with JQuery and PHP code "snippets".

Navigation is implemented using a drop down menu approach. Page layout is consistent throughout and the site content is organised logically and is relatively easy to navigate.

## **Delight**

The colour schemes used are in keeping with the company logo; the use of imagery is appropriate and provides some visual interest.

Site layout is logical, the gallery mouse-over effect (background shadow opacity) works well, and the use of colorbox<sup>14</sup> image popup makes the gallery more interactive.

Overall I felt the site design worked quite well; to me the biggest issue with the website is its lack of focus and the *mixed message* it portrays about the company (is it a consultancy or a charity?).

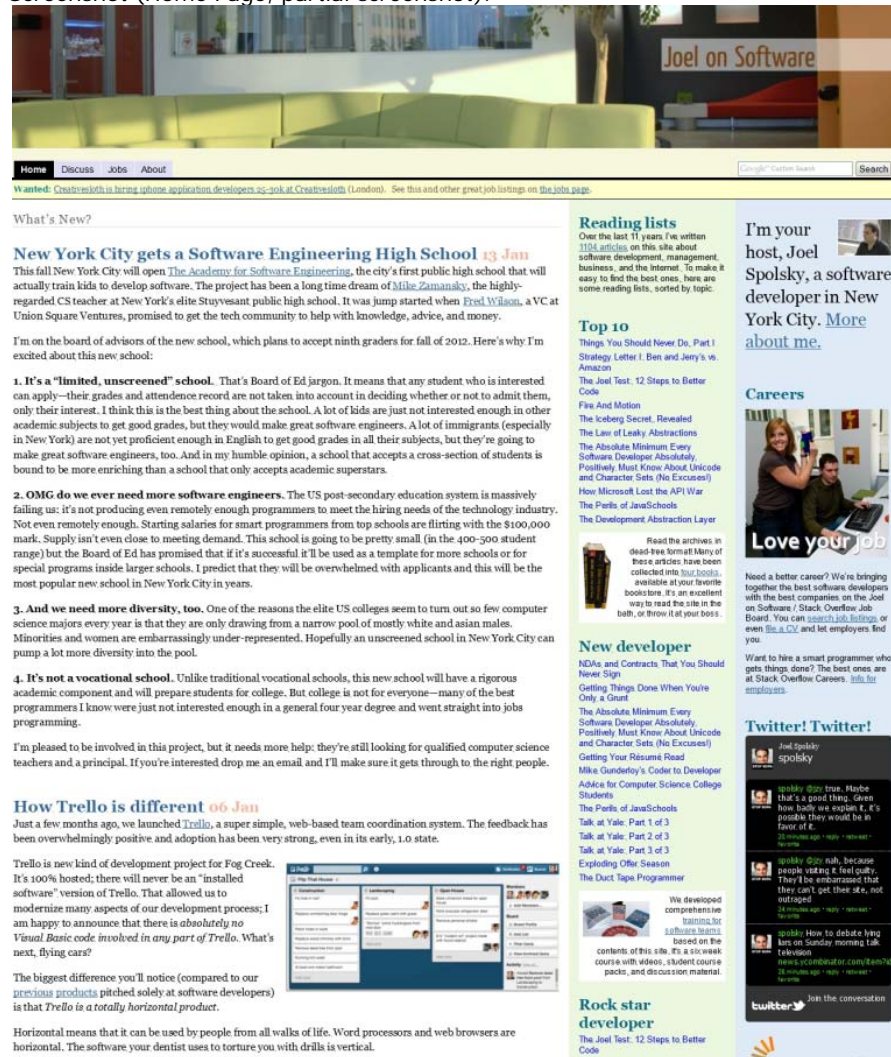
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<sup>13</sup> Kirby (<http://getkirby.com>) is a text "No SQL" file based CMS, which has the advantage of being lightweight, easy to learn and extremely flexible.

<sup>14</sup> Colorbox (<http://www.jacklmoore.com/colorbox>) is a customizable JQuery lightbox plugin, supports photos, photo groups and slideshows.

## 4.7 Joel on Software ([www.joelonsoftware.com](http://www.joelonsoftware.com))

Screenshot (Home Page, partial screenshot):



## Background

Joel Spolsky is a New York based developer and co-owner of the software development company Fog Creek. Joel is not a competitor of Cybernet, but I have included his site because he provides similar development services and his site (potentially) offers some lessons in the development of our own website.

## Business

The website appears to be a blogging platform for Joel to discuss programming and other topics. The Jobs Page potentially provides a revenue stream.



## **Commodity**

This site is an example of the useful “free” information that is available on the internet. The site contains loads of interesting content the only problem is that it is very difficult to find what you are looking for.

## **Firmness**

No information as to CMS is available; however, due to the size of the site it would be extremely difficult to manage without some form of content management system.

The home page structure initially appears to be very much of a blog format, with an “[Old News](#)>>” link at the bottom of the page.

The content on the home page is extensive and it is quite difficult to find anything; it’s a bit like the designer has just put everything on the first page with no attempt to organize the content. There is simply far too much content on this page, and the inclusion of literally hundreds of page level links (on the right hand side) makes matters worse.

There is a navigation bar at the top, which could have been used to help organize the copious content. The use of the site search functionality doesn’t really help either, because you don’t have any idea of what site content there is.

Page layouts are not consistent throughout the site, this adds to the disorganized style of the site.

The biggest issue with the site is the lack of a clear site structure making it very difficult to find anything.

## **Delight**

The website has an amateurish feel, the page structure is all over the place, and whilst it’s not boring it is very tiring and difficult to scan.

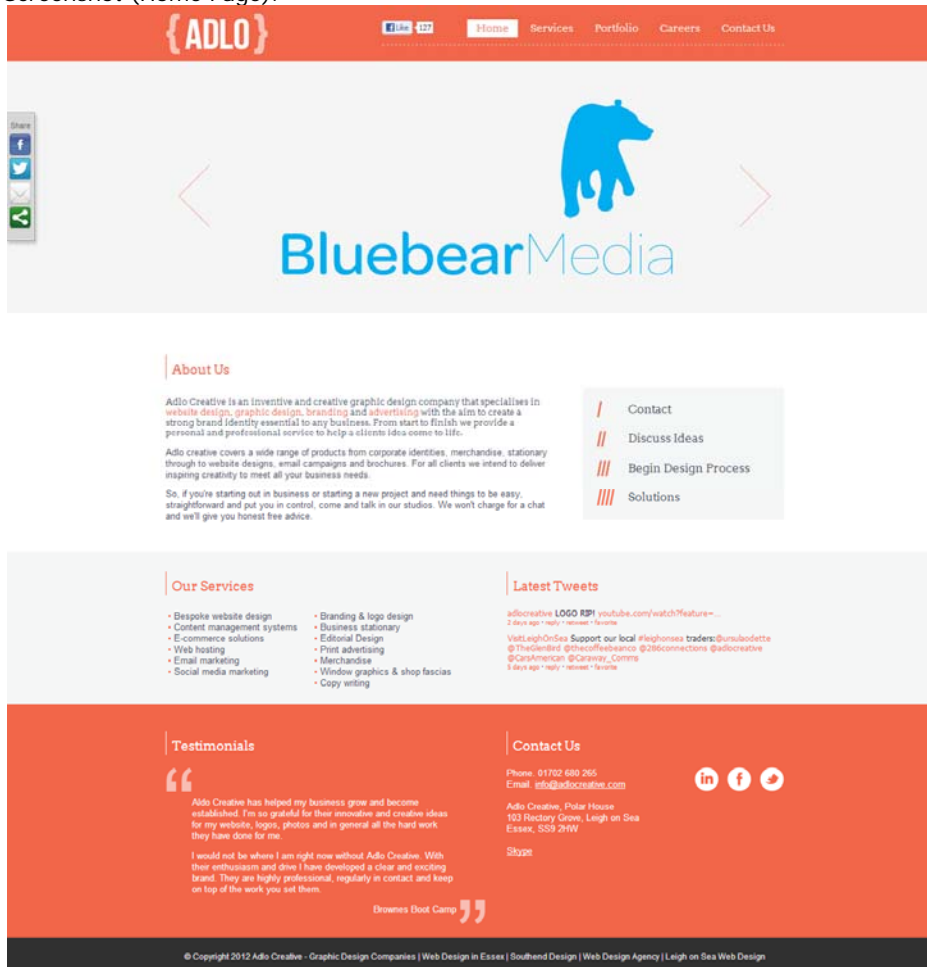
The site has been online since 2000 which probably demonstrates that users will put up with a poorly designed site if the content is good enough.

## 4.8 Other Sites

This section will look at non-competitor websites which offer design ideas for the future development of the Cybernet site. This part of the report will focus on the “Delight” aspects of the site design and as such will **not** look at underlying technologies involved.

### 4.8.1 ADLO Creative ([www.adlocreative.com](http://www.adlocreative.com))

Screenshot (Home Page):



## Background

ADLO Creative is a small, Essex based, graphic design company specialising in website design, graphic design, and branding.

## Commodity

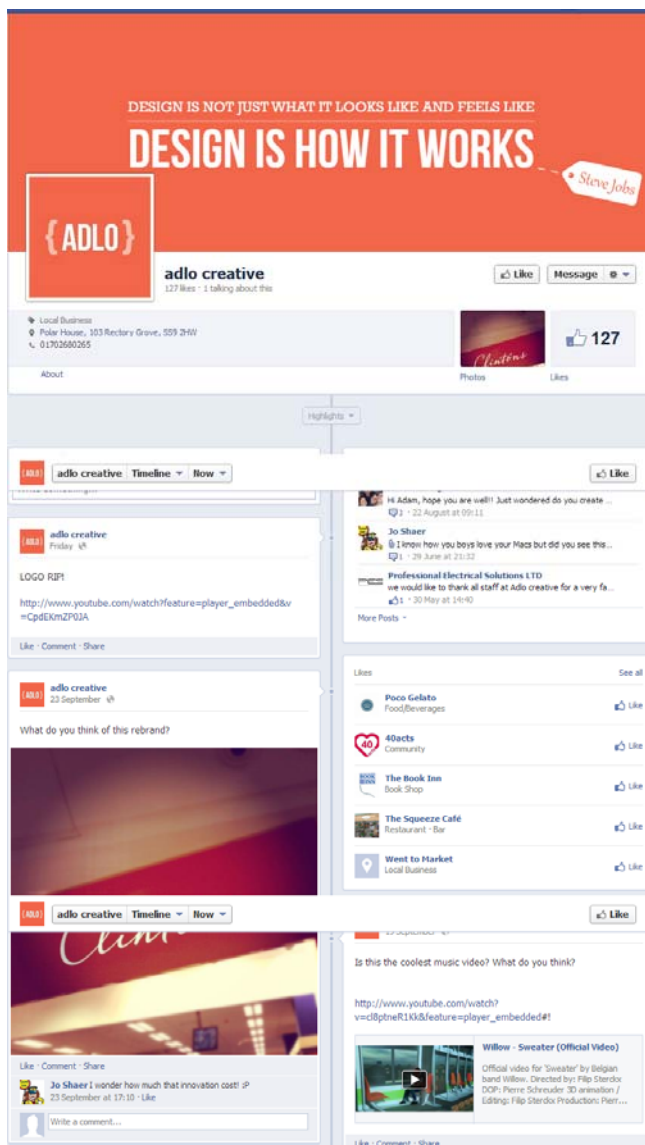
The site exists to advertise the services offered by the company, with the overall aim being to get customer enquiries.

Their home page offers free, no obligation, advice - "We won't charge for a chat and we'll give you honest free advice".

The content serves to promote the services offered by the business and this is most evident in the site's Portfolio page.

Links to social media sites Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are included on the site, as are share buttons. The site includes a latest tweets feed and the Twitter profile is linked back to the company website, as are the Facebook and LinkedIn pages.

There is no obvious blog, although the company Facebook site does have a blog feel (screenshot below).





Brand identity is repeated across Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

## **Firmness**

n/a

## **Delight**

The site has a strong visual identity – strong logo, branding colours repeated across the site's header and footer (and external social media "pages").

The use of curly brackets in the branding "{ADLO}" is interesting, perhaps echoing a connection with CSS declarations thereby emphasising the link to web design.

The site has a contemporary look and feel, with simplistic navigation (with background hover colour), strong main colours, and the use of contemporary icons for social media links (flat/round).



Page links are undecorated, as appears to be the norm on many contemporary sites, but interestingly are not highlighted on hover; the exception appears to be on the Services page where the services change between white (on grey) and red on mouse over.

The Services page includes a navigational distinction between the company's web design and graphic design services.

Interactivity effects include:

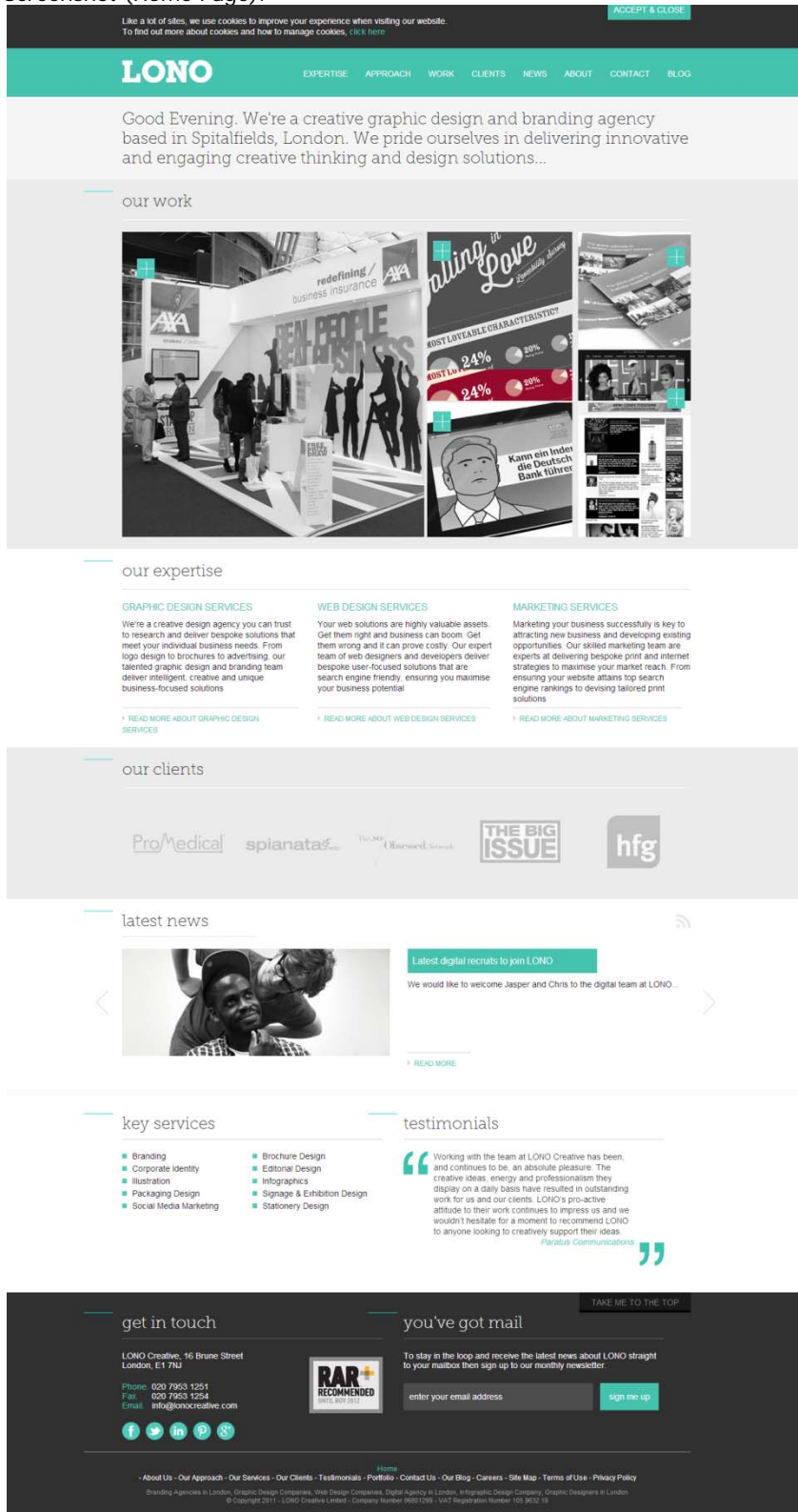
- Use of a Home page image scroller
- Use of hover effects on the Portfolio page images - black & white portfolio images change to colour on mouse over

I particularly liked the image "colouration" effect and would be keen to explore the use of a similar idea on the Cybernet site.

The home page scroller images were large and visually interesting, but I felt they needed some form of explanation ("Some of our recent work") and perhaps link to an article about the work.

## 4.8.2 LONO Creative ([www.lonocreative.com](http://www.lonocreative.com))

Screenshot (Home Page):



## Background

LONO Creative is a London based design company specialising in web design graphic design, branding and marketing services.

## Commodity

The site exists to advertise the services offered by the company and this is reflected in the site content.

Links to social media sites Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Google+ are included on the site.

The site includes a latest tweets feed and the Twitter profile is linked back to the company website, as are the other social media pages. Brand identity is repeated across all social media pages.

The site includes its' own blog, with content categorised across various design related topics (and blog archives back to 2010).

## Firmness

n/a

## Delight

The site has a strong visual identity, and in many ways has a similar feel to the ADLO site (in terms of colour scheme use, icons etc).

Again contemporary social media icons are used, with a colour change on hover.



icon "hover" effect

The colour schemes are consistent across the site and help give a strong identity.

Visual, and interactive, effects include:

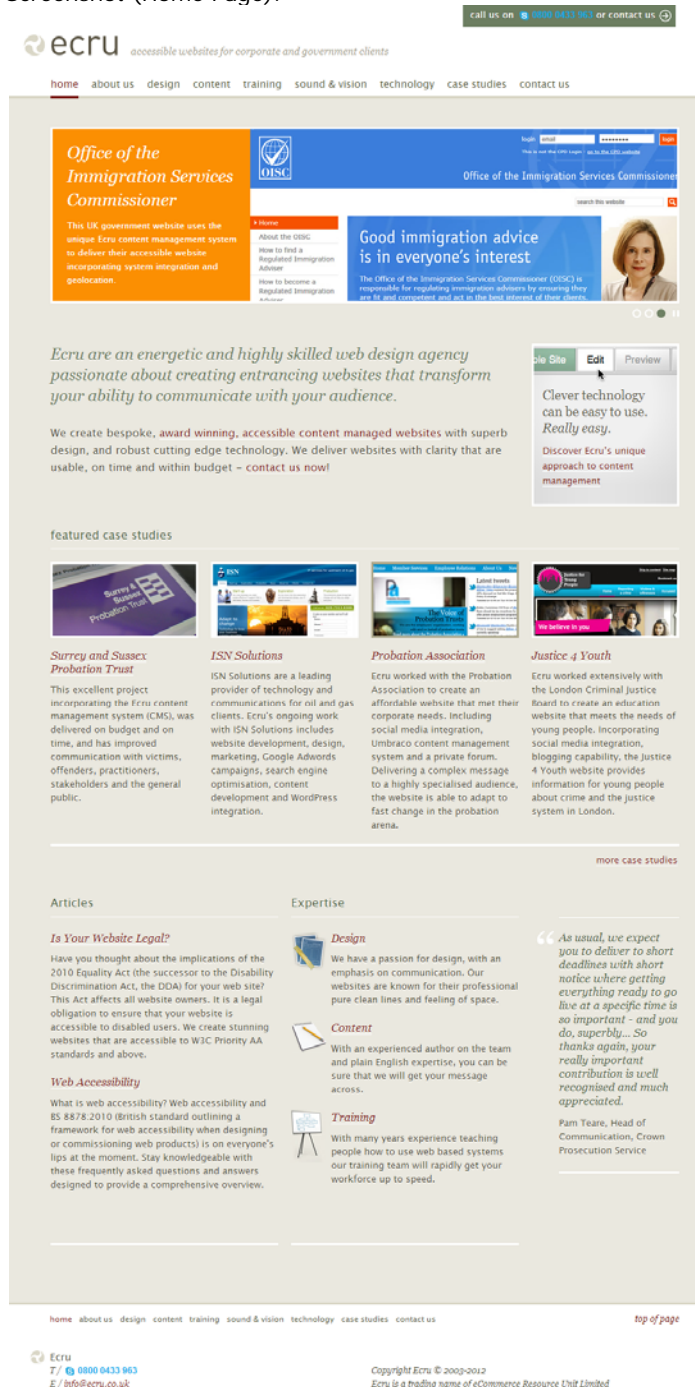
- Multi-pane Home page image pane (vertical scrolling mouse over effects)
- Use of hover effects on Work page images (opacity text effect)
- Use of large image scroller on associated project page

Overall I found the site very visually appealing; the only thing I didn't really like was the multi-pane image scroller, which I found to be more of a distraction than

anything else, and felt that a simpler transition between black/white and colour image would be more effective (and less jarring).

### 4.8.3 ECRU Web Design ([www.ecru.co.uk](http://www.ecru.co.uk))

Screenshot (Home Page):



## **Background**

ECRU is a web design agency that specialises in creating accessible websites.

## **Commodity**

The site exists to advertise the services offered by the company and this is reflected in the site content which places an emphasis on things like disability legislation ("Is your website legal?").

## **Firmness**

n/a

## **Delight**

The site has a corporate look and feel; in fact it felt very "local government" in its design, use of colour schemes, branding and visual effects.

Site navigation is simplistic page level navigation supported by sidebar sub-nav where necessary (no drop down menus here).

Page content, which is often large text blocks, is broken into scan-able sections by the use highlighted words and phrases. Page level links are emphasised by a different colour.

On a personal level I found the text quite small and felt that the light grey background with dark grey text lacked visual contrast.

## **4.9 Summary**

### **Business**

In general the sites we looked at were designed for the purpose of promoting the company, with the overall aim of getting customer enquiries and ultimately selling additional products and services.

The majority of these sites promoted themselves by answering the customer questions:

- who are we
- what do we do
- why use us

Very few of the sites included any subsidiary income streams; the notable exception to this was Joel's site which was more of a blog/information portal than a company promotion platform; this site did include additional advertising streams (primarily Job Ads).

Some of the single person company websites often included a photograph of the owner, thereby giving an approachable feel to the company.

### **Commodity**

The majority of the sites we saw existed primarily to advertise the products and services offered by the company, and this was reflected in the site content.

The overall aim of most of the sites was to get a customer enquiry (be it by phone/email).

With the exception of the Joel website, the sites made little attempt to give anything back to the user; so unless you were looking for a specific product or service there would be little reason to revisit the site.

Some of the sites included links to a blog or customer area, links to the various social media sites, and some included RSS feeds to Twitter etc – interestingly, however was the lack of such links on some of the bigger sites.

### **Firmness**

The sites looked at all use various technologies, some use server technologies (PHP, Ruby on Rails, CMS) offering dynamic content, others were just static web pages (either HTML or Flash).

The client technologies employed were also different, most to some extent include some form of JavaScript to enhance the user experience, be it via jQuery for some form of enhanced UI experience or just a simple gallery page.

Different navigation techniques were employed with many of the larger sites offering additional site level search functionality.

A variety of site structures were seen, some were well thought out and logical, others less so; we have seen how the use of a coherent, consistent site layout gives a professional feel to the site, and how an inconsistent layout can give an unprofessional feel.

The coding of the sites based on server technologies is invisible to the end user, as such we can only comment on the “coding quality” of the final rendered pages, and this was to some extent a bit of a mixed bag – some good some not so good. With the static HTML websites we can inspect the code used and again the quality of these was a mixed bag, often the design and coding was resilient but adopted techniques which are now frowned upon (use of table layout technique to control the structure of a web page, use of inline styles etc).

We also saw an Adobe Flash based site, and whilst this is an established technology (has been around for years, was particularly in vogue a few years ago) its lack of support on mobile devices makes it the least accessible of the sites looked at.

## **Delight**

On the whole the larger sites had a very corporate look and feel, they were quite formal. The smaller sites had a more personal, sometimes even quirky feel – although not always in a good way.

We have also seen sites which have overdone visual and audio effects to the detriment of the content, and serves to prove that (often) less is more.

The most visually interesting sites were those identified in the other sites section; this is to be expected<sup>15</sup> due to the “visually creative” nature of these businesses (web and graphic design).

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<sup>15</sup> An important aspect of site design is meeting user expectation, not just in terms of “web conventions” but also in terms of content and visual design. A site promoting graphic design would be expected to deliver strong visual identity, have a strong brand identity, and contain visually interesting content (large dynamic imagery etc).

## 5. Project Plan

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In terms of planning the web site development for Cybernet, the main aspects considered will be the same as those looked at for our competitor sites, namely: Business, Commodity, Firmness and Delight.

### 5.1 Business

Essentially the aim of the website is to advertise the services offered by Cybernet, like many of our competitors we achieve this by answering the following key customer questions:

- Who we are (about us)
- What we do (services)
- Why use us (how we can help)

The website's primary purpose is to build up customer awareness to services that we provide with the ultimate goal being to get new work (the site CTA will be "contact us").

Initially it is envisaged that the site will not provide any additional revenue streams; no sponsored adverts will be included as these could detract from the main objective of the site which is to market Cybernet - although this may be something that is reconsidered if the site attracts lots of visitors.

Cybernet is keen to diversify its work, to move out of the niche housing systems development and support into different business sectors and different service provision. By showcasing new projects (e.g. website development projects) it is hoped that the site will increase customer awareness of the other services we provide and help to reinforce the message that "we don't just do housing" (see 7.5).

The launch of a well designed, engaging website should provide an effective and inexpensive means for the company to advertise itself. It also provides the opportunity for targeted marketing campaigns, initially via a "visit our new website" email campaign, but perhaps later via "subscribe to our newsletter" or similar technique.

Development of the site offers the possibility of including links to "our friends" (e.g. JCISS, Diakonia), perhaps a network of friendly sites could be established. It also offers us the opportunity to offer web development services to some of our competitors.



Finally, the development of our own website also helps fulfil the customer expectation that we should have a web presence - by failing to have a site we are potentially giving a negative impression to potential customers.

## 5.2 Commodity

The site exists primarily to advertise the services offered by Cybernet and this will be reflected in the site content.

When developing the site content strategy it is important that the site purpose is clearly identified such that visitors know what the website is all about, users can then more easily decide whether they want to stay on the site or not.

“Content is king” - a key aspect of site development is a good content strategy, having content that both reflects the message of the site and helps achieve the goals of the site; in fact many of the aspects of site design (site structure, architecture, navigation etc) follow from the site content <sup>16</sup>.

To answer the Who/What/Why customer questions, the site will provide the following content:

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| ▪ About us     | intro/company background                              |
| ▪ Services     | services provided, including skills and experience    |
| ▪ Customers    | some of our existing customers                        |
| ▪ Testimonials | website equivalent of customer referral               |
| ▪ Projects     | this is the kind of work we do                        |
| ▪ Contact us   | the aim of the site is to generate a customer enquiry |

The “About Us” section will include a brief introduction to the company, some background on Gary Pigott, and what makes us different to our competitors.

The rationale behind the Testimonials section is to provide some form of online customer referral (“don’t take our word for it, see what other people think about us”).

The Projects section is intended to demonstrate both our “bread and butter” work and also showcase projects in work areas we are keen to develop.

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<sup>16</sup> When designing for a CMS the content is generally the starting point; developing a theme for your site is extremely difficult without site content (Drupal even includes a developer module to generate dummy content).

Other sections of the site content will include:

- Blog or resources section
- Useful links

As part of the content and site development we will establish an identity which encompasses the mood of the company – characteristics we want to promote (“professional, reliable, approachable<sup>17</sup>”).

### **5.2.1 User Forum**

The initial plans were to include some form of user generated content. This idea has been scrapped, at least initially, due to the effort and time commitment required to build up a reasonable user audience.

Instead the inclusion of a Blog and Resources pages will (it is hoped) be used to drive traffic and encourage repeat visitors. The Resources section will include problem solving techniques, useful scripts, useful documentation etc.

Both the Blog and Resources will include articles which encompass our traditional work environment and also web based articles (web design and development tips, JQuery snippets etc) to help promote our web development work.

Future site development may include subscriber only resources and perhaps the ability for “members” to comment on/add resources and blog posts (see 7.7).

### **5.2.2 Social Media**

The plans for full use of social media, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube (e.g. video CV), have been put on hold.

Initially the site will include Facebook and Twitter<sup>18</sup> links and perhaps the others will come later.

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<sup>17</sup> There is some question as to whether to promote the single person aspect of the company (personal approach) or whether to avoid presenting the company as “a one man band”.

<sup>18</sup> At the time of site launch there are no suitable Facebook or Twitter pages set up. I plan to either build on my existing Twitter profile with the inclusion of suitable branding and relevant tweets, or to set up a new profile for Cybernet; a company Facebook page is planned but not yet developed. Social media links will be included in the site but will initially indicate that these links are “not yet available”.

## 5.3 Firmness

The website will be designed with consistency, usability and accessibility<sup>19</sup> in mind.

### Structure and Navigation

The site needs to have a clear, logical, structure; the architecture needs to make sense. Once on the site visitors need to be able to find what they are looking for as easily as possible.

Techniques to structure the content includes the use of content grouping, for instance the Work section of the site includes sub-pages such as Customers, Recent Projects and Testimonials. Putting them all together under the "Work" section (nav section) helps provide a sensible structure for the site. Similarly content like Services, Meet the Team, What Makes Us Different could all sensibly be grouped under an "About Us" section.

The site structure is in turn echoed in the site navigation, the "sensible structure" easily lends itself to either drop down or accordion style menus and sub menus, or even page and sub-page links (e.g. combining a horizontal and side bar nav approach).

Other ways of helping to guide visitors around the site include use of a site map, a site search facility, breadcrumb trails, and the use of tagged content and inclusion of a "tag cloud". Whatever approaches are adopted, the site navigation and search functionality needs to be as intuitive as possible and work!

The site is a showcase for the web development services offered by Cybernet and as such everything must be done well, and this also includes the coding standards employed (the use of valid CSS, well formed and semantic HTML etc; subject to the constraints of the CMS used).

### Consistency

The look and feel of the site should be consistent across all pages on the site; this is all part of producing a professional looking web site. Websites with inconsistent page layouts look unprofessional and can lead to user uncertainty (am I still on the same site?).

One of the keys to a well designed site is one which makes life easy for users, which it achieves by incorporating standard ("don't make me think") conventions in the site design. Examples include standardised menu structures, clearly labelled

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<sup>19</sup> A key constraint in the site design would be its ability to work across all versions of internet explorer (from IE6 onwards), as many of our existing corporate customers still use older versions of this browser.

search functionality, the use of accepted conventions like clicking on the site logo to return to the home page<sup>20</sup> etc.

## Technology

In terms of the technology employed to develop the site, various options have been considered.

Due to the potential size and complexity of the final site, developing a hand coded HTML site was quickly rejected; some form of CMS to help manage the site content was needed, the question was which one?

When considering a CMS, the choice was limited to 4 main contenders: Kirby, WordPress, Joomla and Drupal.

**Kirby** was considered because (a) it is extremely flexible and (b) I had previously developed a small website using the text file based CMS so would have a head start over the other choices.

Kirby was discounted primarily because I wanted to use this website development process to gain exposure to a CMS that I could continue to work with throughout our web development career. It was felt that Kirby didn't really fit into this category, it worked well for the smaller website but would it scale up for a much larger site? A more robust (and proven) scalable solution was required.

**WordPress** was an unknown quantity; it was included in the list of contenders because of its (a) popularity and (b) widely reported ease of use<sup>21</sup>.

I had no real experience of WP but had the perception that it was primarily a blogging platform and whilst the proposed site would contain a blog this was not its main purpose. Before rejecting WP, I did some further investigation and it appeared that it was indeed capable of building complex sites.

Whilst WP would be more than capable of building the proposed site, I still felt that it wasn't the best choice for a single CMS to specialise in.

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<sup>20</sup> Results of user feedback (see 7.2) suggested that the convention of "clicking the logo to return to the home" wasn't as widely accepted as initially assumed.

<sup>21</sup> WordPress is one of the most widely used CMS, is claimed to be the best blogging platform and one of the easiest CMS's to use.

Ultimately the factors that influenced this decision were:

- Perception: WP seen as primarily a blogging platform
- Security: the number of forum posts expressing concern over the security of WP sites
- Scalability: general opinion suggested that Joomla and Drupal were better suited to more complex sites<sup>22</sup>
- Future projects: we had a potential customer project that involved developing either a Joomla or Drupal site<sup>23</sup>

In the end, the key reason for rejecting WP was the potential customer project.

**Joomla or Drupal?** The choice between the remaining CMS's was then effectively made for me, with the customer deciding that his would be a Drupal site.

The use of the Drupal CMS (Drupal core modules) would be enhanced by inclusion of variety of community authorised 3<sup>rd</sup> party modules (e.g. Cookie Consent, Google Analytics) as well as our own PHP functionality incorporated in the theme templates.

Additional client side Javascript and JQuery functionality would be included to add interactive elements to the site (e.g. colorbox.js, curvycorners.js).

Details of additional non-core modules and included Javascript/JQuery functionality can be found in the Appendices.

### **Error trapping**

The overall site "firmness" will be further improved by the use of 404 and 403 error trapping pages.

In terms of monitoring invalid links, use of the Drupal status reports (Page Not Found and Access Denied Pages reports) will enable us to identify and correct these site issues.

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<sup>22</sup> "I would tell a beginner to use WordPress, no question... I would recommend Joomla for sites that are a bit more complex and are going to be managed by someone with stronger technical skills... If I were building a much more complex site, though, I might turn to Drupal first. Though it's harder to learn, it has much more flexibility to scale a site in terms of complexity". (Site builder shootout: Drupal vs. Joomla vs. WordPress)

<sup>23</sup> The customer in question planned to implement CiviCRM, an open source relationship management solution, and this was only available for Joomla or Drupal.

### **Form submissions**

Similarly contact form submissions will be met with a page confirming that the message was successfully sent.

All these are aspects about producing a finished product.

## **5.4 Delight**

The look and feel of the site will reflect the company image which is “professional, reliable, and approachable”.

### **Professional**

The professional aspect of the site will derive from both the site content, the language used, and the site structure (does it all hang together and make sense – is it well thought out). However there are visual aspects that reinforce this idea of professionalism, things like choice of imagery, choice of typography<sup>24</sup>, colour schemes, etc all go towards creating a professional looking project.

The choice of a simple colour scheme, used consistently, can give a “well thought out” appearance to the site.

### **Reliability and Consistency**

The reliability aspect of the site will mainly be achieved by the technology working properly (see 5.3). But there are also aspects of the site “look and feel” that lend an air of reliability to the finished site – for instance ensuring that page layouts are consistent throughout the site, colours and text effects are used consistently (e.g. anchor text decoration), are hover effects are used consistently.

### **Imagery**

The nature of the business means that the site will be very text heavy with (possibly) limited opportunity for sensible relevant images.

Where possible imagery will be used for “visual interest”, but the images must be relevant. Other aspects of visual interest will be achieved by the use of type and colour combinations.

Text blocks will be designed to be functional and easily scan-able, and combined with a “less is more” page content strategy (avoiding overlong pages) should result in a pleasant viewing experience.

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<sup>24</sup> It is intended to make use of at most 2 fonts on the proposed website, one for headings (including the site logo) and one for the remainder of the body text.

## Content Scroller

A central image/content scroller is included on the site Home page, both to provide visual interest and to “pull” visitors into other areas of the site.

## Tag Cloud

A “tag cloud” has been developed and included on the Site Map and News pages - the intention being to provide additional visual interest and a means of enhancing site navigation.

## Logo

Initially a text only logo is planned, perhaps incorporating some visual imagery like an overlaid shape etc.

The original site design incorporated a jigsaw piece which was meant to reinforce a now abandoned tagline “...the missing piece of the jigsaw” – providing the benefit of some visual interest and providing an opportunity for development of a site favicon. The final site logo (normal and hover state) is shown below.






## Colour Scheme and Typography

The mood of the site will reflect the image of the company namely “professional, reliable, approachable” whilst still maintaining a modern feel.

A key aspect to the site design is simplicity and this has been echoed in the choice of colour scheme and typography.

The site design uses 3 main colours:

-  Dark grey for body text (#5D6269) – pure black was felt to be too harsh
-  Blue for headings, navigation background, and links (#416CDE) – it was felt this gave the site a technology feel and, although a different shade of blue, to align ourselves with the Drupal<sup>25</sup> colour scheme
-  Orange for link hover (#FF8200)

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<sup>25</sup> See colour scheme used on [drupal.org](http://drupal.org)

Initially border shadow effects were originally included in the site design (around the logo, content scroller block, navigation, footer and sidebar elements); these were later removed, as they seemed unnecessary and fussy.

Typography is equally simple, with 2 font choices:

- Ubuntu - font for body text (Google Web font)
- Gnuolane – font for heading text (from Font Squirrel<sup>26</sup>)

### **Page Background**

To add a bit more visual interest, a tiling background image (lightwool.png) has been added to the page<sup>27</sup>.



This was later changed to an alternative background image (cream\_dust.png).



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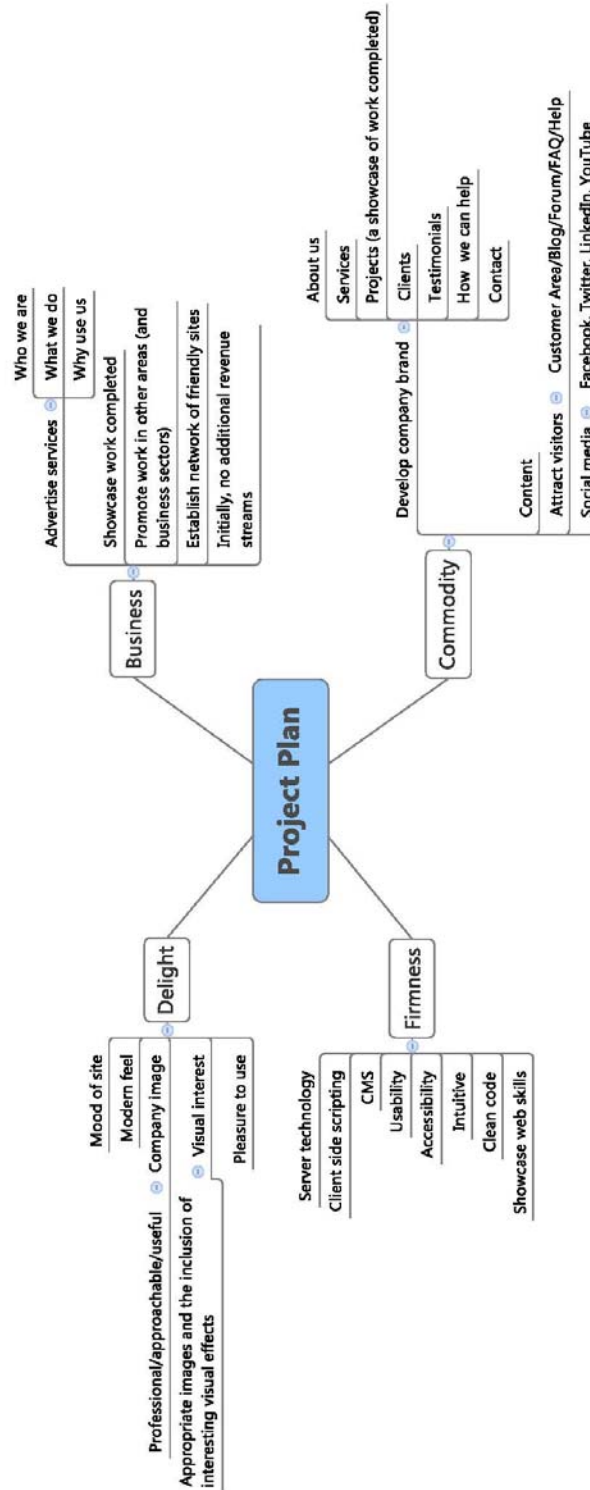
<sup>26</sup> Download link available at [www.fontsquirrel.com/fonts/Gnuolane](http://www.fontsquirrel.com/fonts/Gnuolane)

<sup>27</sup> Image courtesy of [subtlepatterns.com](http://subtlepatterns.com)



## 5.5 Mind Map

### Project Plan Summary



Jan 2012

## 5.6 Marketing the site

Once the site is fully live, that is all aspects of the site are live including social media links for Facebook and Twitter, the intention is that an email marketing campaign is used to market the site.

This initial marketing will be targeted to customers in our primary business market (social housing providers) particularly those companies that use the Civica suite of housing products.

The intention is to set up a separate domain and website for our web services as "Cybernet Web Design" (see 7.5).

Currently the web design aspects of the business are incorporated within the existing site and will remain so until the new website is set up.

### **Adwords**

Initially there are no plans to use any paid marketing services like Google Adwords. This may change, but initially I will be monitoring site traffic/analytics and revising site content/SEO to better suit my target audience<sup>28</sup>.

### **Future marketing**

Subsequent marketing will focus on other aspects of the services that Cybernet provide, essentially the Web Design services, the timing of which is dependent on the launch of the new website.

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<sup>28</sup> With the development of a specific "Web Design" site the content of the main site will be more specifically targeted to our traditional housing customers. The planned new site will include content that is specifically targeted to web design services, in particular our web portfolio and web services.

## 6. Design Development

### Initial Design

The initial visual design was based on a website I was developing for a local building surveyor's business<sup>29</sup>, and this design was presented for the "Delight Crit" (screenshots below).

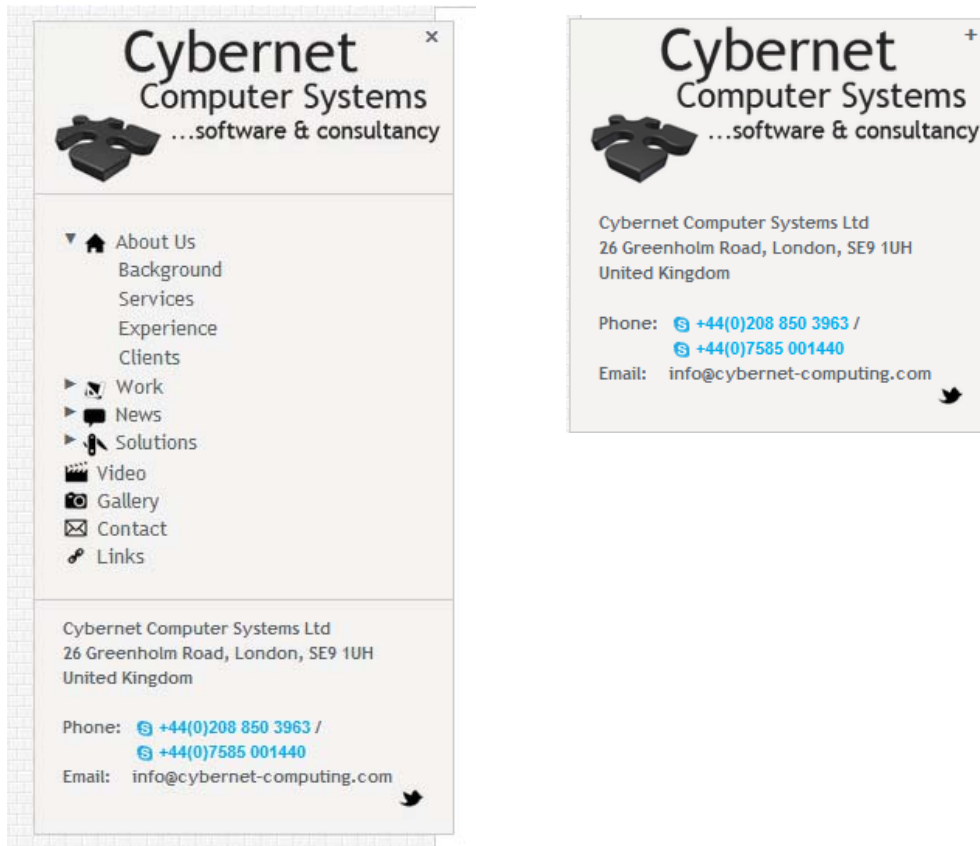


This initial design, which was hand built HTML, incorporated assorted JQuery functionality, which was intended to provide visual interest and also reflect my technical background. Rather than being a real design for the final website this was (almost) me playing with design ideas and seeing if I could use and develop JQuery effects<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Surveyors website RTCBS Ltd ([www.rtcbs.co.uk](http://www.rtcbs.co.uk)), incorporated features like accordion style navigation, image scroller, and lightbox gallery

<sup>30</sup> The initial design provided a means for me to try out JQuery, and also to try out visual design/interactivity techniques. The effects included re-sizeable/moveable navigation, vertical page title, image scroller, scrolling text effects, and a lightbox gallery. The lightbox was developed courtesy of Sitepoint's "JQuery Novice to Ninja" book, and the image scroller was an amended version of "jqFancyTransitions" plug-in ([www.workshop.rs/projects/jqfancytransitions/](http://www.workshop.rs/projects/jqfancytransitions/))

The design also included an unconventional accordion style navigation section on the left of the page, which was intended to replicate “a business card overlaid on a piece of stationery” when minimised (see below).



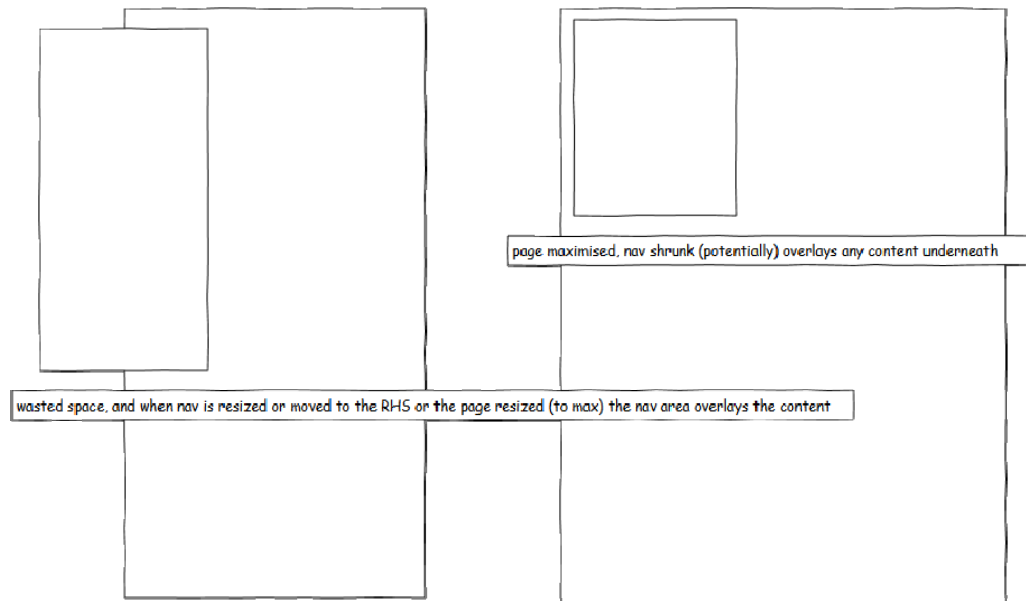
The rationale behind the unconventional navigation design was:

- I wanted to avoid drop down menus if possible because of the accessibility issues they pose
- Accordion effect provides interactivity and visual interest (as well as highlighting a technical background); with appropriate icons to add extra visual interest
- Resizable to fit the “business card idea”
- Contact details always visible, footer is essentially an integral part of the navigation
- Navigation degrades gracefully when JQuery not available.

## Issues with Navigation Design

There were several issues with the initial design, which included:

- A reliance on Javascript for resizing/moving the navigation area
- “Trapped space” to the left or right of the scroller image when navigation resized (see below)
- Navigation position limits the design of subsequent pages (those without image scrollers) as you have the “wasted” space under the navigation box



## Issues with Vertical Page Title

The implementation of the vertical page title proved problematic with the surveyor's website, particularly with IE6<sup>31</sup>, coupled with potential readability issues (vertical text is harder to read than horizontal text), and the “wasted” vertical space required for the title has meant that this feature will be removed from the subsequent site design.

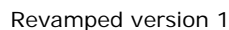
## Gallery and Image Scroller

The nature of our business (software development) doesn't easily lend itself to imagery; consequently the initial plans for a gallery won't be included in the final design.

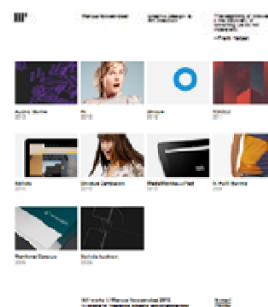
By nature the site will be “text heavy”, however where possible I aim to include imagery and other visual interest elements.

<sup>31</sup> The use of negative margins combined with the “has layout” feature of IE6 meant that the vertical text was very difficult to get working in that version of internet explorer.

The initial choice of images will be replaced by more appropriate images, including a “Wordle image”<sup>32</sup> representing the services we provide (and this will replace the previous JQuery text “what we do” text effects).



## More Inspiration

[illegible]

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UP Architects' draft proposal document<sup>33</sup>. I liked the use of the large central image overlaid by the navbar; the sidebar/footer approach would fit in well with an accordion style navigation bar; the "Our Work" section could easily become a scrolling content pane.

Diakonia website ([www.diakonialtd.co.uk](http://www.diakonialtd.co.uk)), the main thing I liked about this site was its simple almost minimalist design which I felt could work on the proposed site.

Marius Roosendaal ([www.mariusroosendaal.com](http://www.mariusroosendaal.com)) - a portfolio website for a Netherlands based graphic designer. I liked the way that images were used as navigation on the home page.

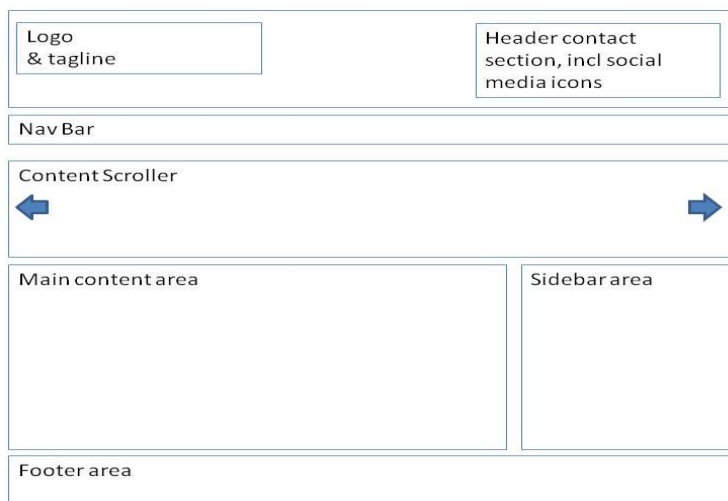
Jason Reed ([www.jasonreedwebdesign.com](http://www.jasonreedwebdesign.com)) - a portfolio website for a San Francisco based web designer. I really liked the informal feel of the site and felt the design would be great for a personal (web design) portfolio site.

I also liked the navigation sections for Projects/Services etc and although this uses a "sliding tabs" JQuery plug-in for the navigation this could approach could easily be changed to be Ajax based (or even to gracefully degrade to click through navigation).

## Next Draft Design

The next step was to put the new "layout" onto paper.

Initial wireframe:

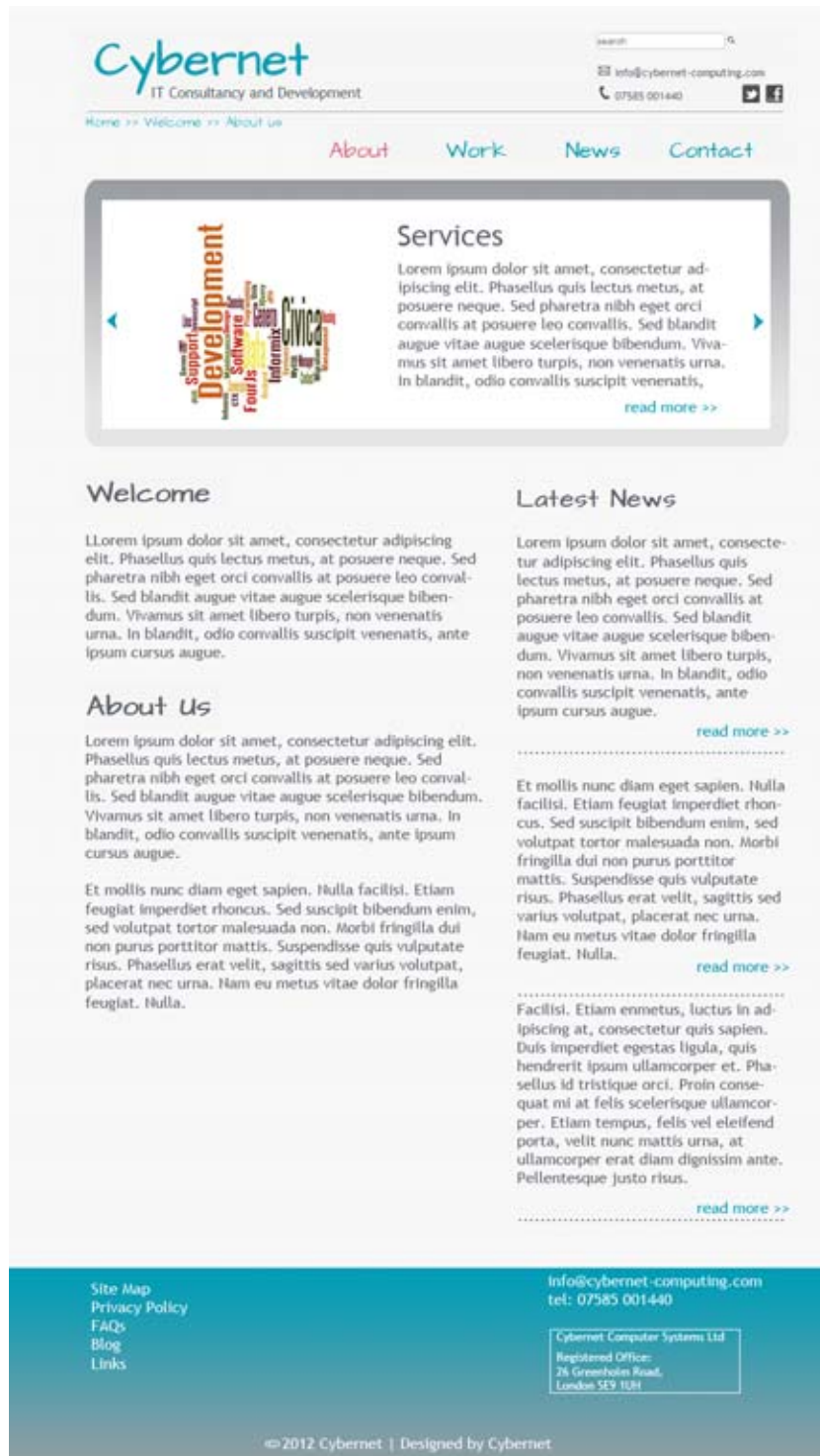


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<sup>33</sup> Laura Hampson's draft design proposal for the "Untitled Practice" website design project.



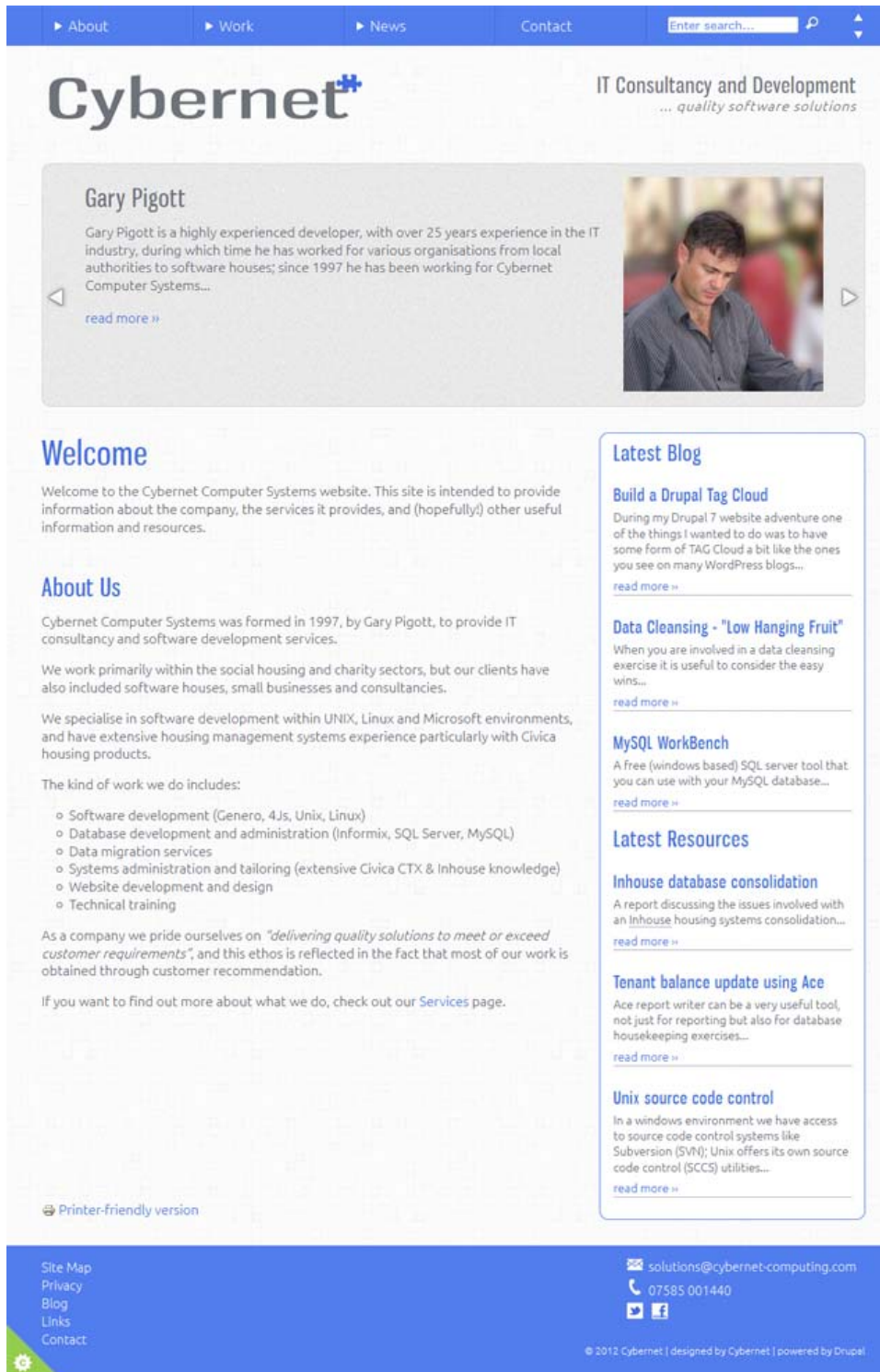
The wireframe design was then converted into a Photoshop mock up.





## Design Implemented

This design was then implemented and subjected to various amendments ranging from navigation bar layout, colour scheme changes, logo changes, font changes, etc - until the current layout was decided on (see below).



## 7. Site Analysis

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The first version of the site ([cybernet-computing.com](http://cybernet-computing.com)) went online on the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2012, since then it has been subjected to various changes resulting from issues arising out of browser testing and user feedback comments.

Since going online the site has been subjected to numerous changes including revamped layout, revised colour schemes, amended content, and installation of additional Drupal modules including XML Site Map and Google Analytics.

### 7.1 Testing

Initial testing was done locally on a Windows 7 PC (WAMPSEVER windows server) in the latest versions of multiple browsers:

- Chrome (version 21.0.1180.89)
- Firefox (version 15.0.1)
- Internet Explorer (version 9.0.8112.16421)
- Opera (version 11.5.1)
- Safari (version 5.1.1)

One of the key constraints of the design was that the site should work on older versions of Internet Explorer, so it was essential that the site be tested on all versions back from IE6+

Testing of IE7 and IE8 was done using Internet Explorer with the F12 Developer Tools<sup>34</sup>. Testing of IE6 was done using IETester<sup>35</sup>.

The site worked well across all the current browsers tested, there were issues with the older versions of IE which included:

- IE8 fading PNG images bug<sup>36</sup> (caused issues with JQuery image scroller)

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<sup>34</sup> Microsoft F12 Developer Tools work in a similar way to Chrome and Firefox's developer tools, enabling you to debug web pages; the MS tools are specifically aimed at IE and also support browser rendering in IE 7 and 8, allowing cross browser testing in older versions of Internet Explorer.

<sup>35</sup> IETester (<http://www.my-debugbar.com/wiki/IETester>) supports browser rendering for versions of Internet Explorer from IE5.5 to IE9, allowing cross browser testing on a single machine.

<sup>36</sup> Details of this issue can be found at [www.sitepoint.com/forums/showthread.php?590295-jQuery-fadein-fadeout-of-transparent-png-in-IE7-and-Chrome](http://www.sitepoint.com/forums/showthread.php?590295-jQuery-fadein-fadeout-of-transparent-png-in-IE7-and-Chrome)

- IE8 lack of support for curved borders
- IE8 lack of support for border shadow
- IE “box model” bug
- IE6 “has layout” bug
- IE6 lack of support for “position fixed”
- IE6 lack of support for transparent PNG’s
- IE6 lack of support for CSS3 selectors (parent/child selectors, “:hover” etc)

These issues were resolved using IE specific CSS hacks (via conditional CSS<sup>37</sup>) and some JQuery effects including the plugin **curvycorners.js**<sup>38</sup> which adds rounded border support to IE, and use of additional classes (added via JQuery) to resolve the CSS3 issues.

The border shadow and PNG issues were resolved using additional IE6 specific images (use of border shadows was removed from later versions of the site).

## 7.2 User Feedback

Getting user feedback was a key part of the testing strategy for the site. As the site developer there is a danger of being “blinded” to the flaws in the site, looking for ways to make it work rather than “ways to break it” (which is after all the true definition of good testing).

As the developer (and content author) things like typos, grammar errors, and annoying interactive effects are often missed – after all you’ve always spelt “organization” the American way for instance.

At the time of site launch, user feedback requests were sent to former/current clients, friends and former colleagues, asking them to look at the site and feedback any comments; a similar request was also posted on the Greenwich Web Design forum<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Using the Drupal module Conditional Stylesheets ([drupal.org/project/conditional\\_styles](http://drupal.org/project/conditional_styles)) combined with specific CSS added to the theme “.info” file.

<sup>38</sup> curvycorners.js ([www.curvycorners.net/](http://www.curvycorners.net/)) is a Javascript plugin that adds rounded corner support to browsers that don’t support CSS3.

<sup>39</sup> Interestingly the **client** feedback was the least useful of all the user feedback - with the majority of comments being “the site looks good”. The nature of our customer/client relationships may have meant that the people asked felt less able to be honest about their view of the site or they may simply have devoted less time (and effort) to critiquing the site than some of the other visitors.

Most of the feedback received was positive, which then required no changes; however there were several identified issues which needed to be addressed.

### **Typos, grammar, use of language**

- My surname needs a capital "C" (testimonials)
- Various typos and grammar issues
- Use of some American spellings
- Use of too informal language "There are loads of ways to contact us..."

These were all easy to fix, the site search functionality proved useful to help find the offending words/phrases.

### **Look & feel**

- Site looks too "grey" and the border shadows look out of place  
This comment confirmed my own thoughts and led to 2 site colour changes before the final site colour scheme was decided on. The colour scheme change is made more difficult by IE6's lack of support for transparent PNG's (requiring suitable images to be produced with suitable background colour).
- Assorted comments on some of the imagery  
A content review is currently ongoing and will address some of the image concerns. Recent changes include some amended imagery, additional scroller content (for visual interest and to pull visitors into other areas of the site).
- Home page needs more dynamic content  
The suggestion was made that the home page scroller should also include details of recent web projects as (a) it's something I am keen to progress and (b) it will add more visual interest to the page content. Now done.
- Site is very text heavy  
The nature of our work doesn't easily lend itself to use of sensible relevant imagery; images have been included where deemed appropriate and many of the blog posts include associated images. Possible changes to imagery will be included in the content review.
- Some layout comments (essentially the use of contact icon on the header and footers)  
The header contact icons were removed and the site slogan and tagline moved to the right hand side of the header section
- Sidebar needs clearer separation between Blog and Resources  
As a initial measure I have changed the font-size and colour of the sidebar H2 tags to add some differentiation between the "sidebar sections". I will consider whether it is necessary to split the sidebar using borders around each section; this change requires a bit of work as some elements of the sidebar are implemented using a combined Drupal view/mini-panel so that might need to be split up as well.

- **Favourites icon (favicon) doesn't work in IE**

This is a common problem with Internet Explorer, which is very fussy about the format of images it allows for favicon; the original ".ico" file wasn't saved in the right format, it was recreated<sup>40</sup> and this resolved the IE issue.

## Functionality

- **Mouse over menus don't work well on mobile touch screen devices**

**Not yet addressed:** this is a general problem with hover action based menus and is something that will need to be addressed but involves a bit of a rethink on the nav design and has been included in the site issues (see 6.4)

- **Cookie consent popup is intrusive**

This was implemented via the Drupal Cookie Consent module and simply required changing the popup settings (and flushing the cache)

- **Home page content scroller is too slow**

Several people commented that this was too slow, so the "Slideshow Transition" settings were changed to refresh every 10 seconds

- **When you click on the Skills link you get an error**

Identified invalid links corrected

- **Twitter and Facebook links don't work**

**Not yet addressed:** I am currently working on setting up a Twitter profile and creating a Facebook page. I want to include these icons in the site design so may resolve in the short term by use of a Javascript error message ("Sorry this is not yet available").

- **Where is the Home button?**

The home functionality was already implemented via the standard "site logo" link; however, a number of users commented on this so the "About" menu title was changed to "Home".

## Other

- **The strap line doesn't mention you are a web designer**

The site's tagline was changed from "...*quality software solutions*" to "...*software solutions & web design*"

- **Lack of clarity on who actually does the work**

This was intentional and derived from the decision to play down the "single person" aspects of the company. This has been changed to add clarity on who does the work and further content changes are planned (see 7.3 and 7.6).

- **Email address would be better as "solutions@" rather than "info@"**

The email address was changed to "solutions@cybernet-computing.com" rather than the original "info@" address. The email address now becomes a sub-conscious advert (we solve problems).

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<sup>40</sup> Icon originally created at [favicon.co.uk/](http://favicon.co.uk/) failed to display in IE; this was re-created at [www.tools.dynamicdrive.com/favicon](http://www.tools.dynamicdrive.com/favicon) which worked across all tested browsers, including IE.

## 7.3 Professional Feedback

This section focuses on some of the comments received from professionals working in the creative and design community. I have included this separately as their comments discuss specific aspects of the site content and design (full comments are shown in the appendices).

### The Copywriter

The general comments were very positive – “reads well”, “clear and easy to navigate” but there were several specific points that may need to be addressed:

#### Use shorter sentences

“I would try to use shorter sentences wherever possible. When I'm writing for websites, the general rule is, keep things short and snappy. Try to separate out different ideas wherever you can. A couple of commas in a sentence is cool, but I'd avoid semi-colons if I were you. I would also make a bit less use of dashes and brackets”.

#### Is Cybernet Computer Systems just you?

“It sounds a bit like you're trying to make the company sound bigger than it is. I would suggest that everyone gets personal services from company founder Gary Pigott, but hint that you also use other specialist / freelance resource where necessary. Then phrases like “we work primarily” and “we specialise in” would sound more believable.”

#### Create a mission statement

“I would think about creating a mission statement to go on the first page. It could just be a short quote from you, about why you set the company up and what you want to achieve for clients”.

#### Use of italics

“I would avoid using italics, but that's just a personal stylistic thing. Standard practice is to just use italics for quotes. Also, I would limit use of speech marks to direct quotes, rather than just to make stuff stand out”.

The first 2 points were singled out as the most important ones:

- Use shorter sentences  
A content review is currently ongoing and it is hoped that this will address this point.

- Is Cybernet just you?

This issue is something that I had considered at the outset. I had initially decided to go away from the “one man band” approach (see 3.0), but in hindsight agree that this was probably not the right decision.

This is something that I need to look at as it potentially affects site credibility and **trust**.

### **The Web Designer**

Again the comments were very positive – “excellent update to your previous design”, “friendly and appealing”, but there were some points to be addressed:

#### **Use of image hover effects**

“The hover effects on some of your panels is a bit misleading sometimes, in places it could be fully active – in other places it seems superfluous and misleading”.

#### **Logo**

“I think the little puzzle piece is set a little too close to the letters”

I agree with both of these comments and have made the following changes to address these issues:

- Logo has been amended to move the puzzle piece away from the text; consequently the logo is slightly larger so the header height has been increased accordingly.
- The “colorbox” image functionality has been removed from the scroller panel.
- The site JQuery has been amended to include the function “addClickToExpand” which appends the annotation ‘click to expand’ to the title attribute of any image within a colorbox anchor.

## **7.4 Google (and other) Analytics**

Google Analytics was installed on the website ([cybernet-computing.com](http://cybernet-computing.com)) on the 9<sup>th</sup> September, and at the time of writing<sup>41</sup> has been running against the domain for 25 days during which time the site has been subjected to on-going testing and user feedback testing.

Consequently the analytics are limited and (possibly) unrepresentative of future live site statistics, but have been included for the sake of completeness.

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<sup>41</sup> Report updated on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2012.





## Google Analytics


The following data is courtesy of Google Analytics for the period 09 – 05/10/2012.

Visitor numbers:

 **Visits: 305**

 **Unique Visitors: 190**

 **Pageviews: 1,643**

 **Pages / Visit: 5.39**

 **Avg. Visit Duration: 00:07:00**

 **Bounce Rate: 36.72%**

 **% New Visits: 62.30%**



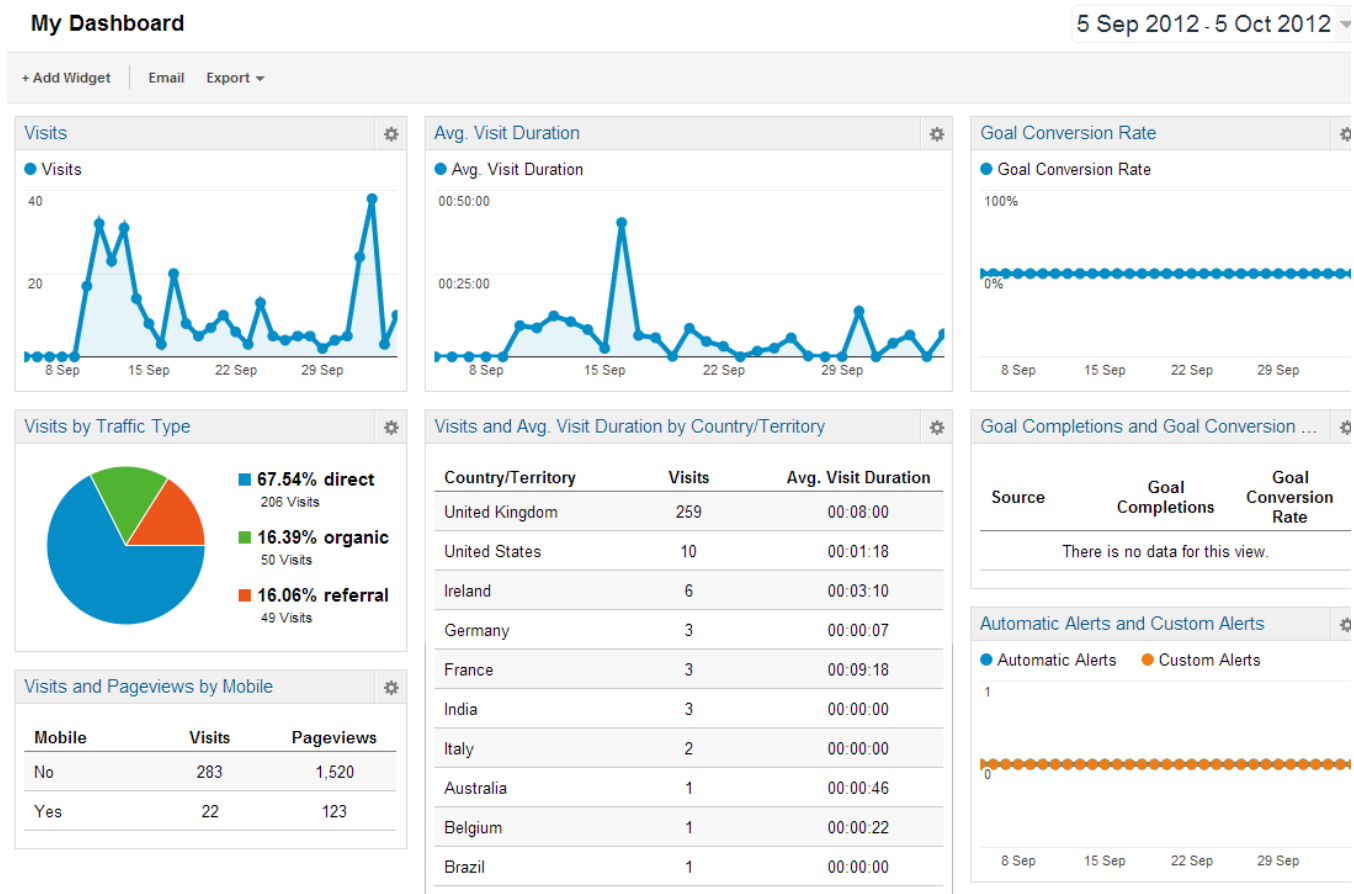
■ **62.62% New Visitor**

191 Visits

■ **37.38% Returning Visitor**

114 Visits

Overall picture (Dashboard):





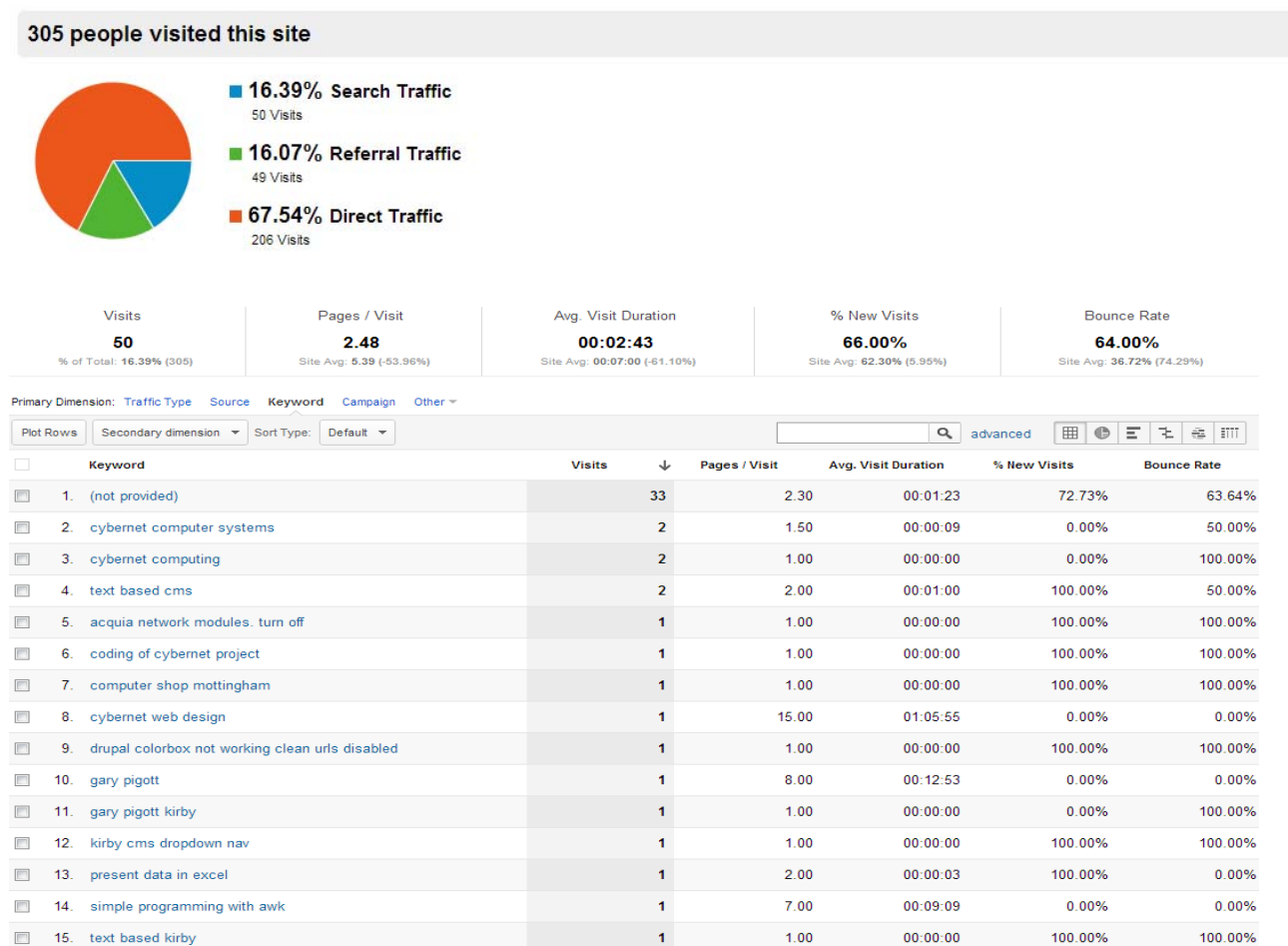
The initial stats shows high visitor levels around the time of site launch, which is probably due to initial testing/feedback requests. No goals or alerts have yet been defined.

Visitor location is primarily the UK which is the target market for the site.

Country/Territory	Visits	↓	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1. United Kingdom	259		6.01	00:08:00	57.92%	31.66%
2. United States	10		1.70	00:01:18	100.00%	80.00%
3. Ireland	6		2.33	00:03:10	66.67%	16.67%
4. Germany	3		1.67	00:00:07	100.00%	66.67%
5. France	3		6.67	00:09:18	33.33%	0.00%
6. India	3		1.00	00:00:00	100.00%	100.00%
7. Italy	2		1.00	00:00:00	100.00%	100.00%
8. Australia	1		1.00	00:00:46	100.00%	0.00%
9. Belgium	1		3.00	00:00:22	100.00%	0.00%
10. Brazil	1		1.00	00:00:00	100.00%	100.00%

Show rows: 10 Go to: 1 1 - 10 of 26

Search terms and breakdown summary:

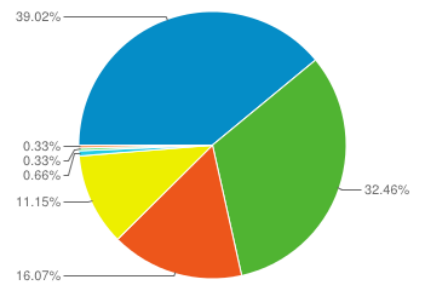


## Search engines used:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Source	Visits	↓	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. google	49		2.51	00:02:47	67.35%	63.27%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. yahoo	1		1.00	00:00:00	0.00%	100.00%

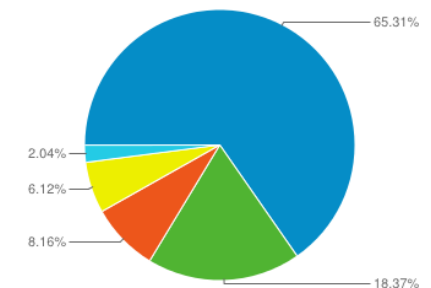
## Browser stats:

1. Chrome	119	39.02%
2. Firefox	99	32.46%
3. Internet Explorer	49	16.07%
4. Safari	34	11.15%
5. Android Browser	2	0.66%
6. http:	1	0.33%
7. Opera	1	0.33%



## Internet Explorer browser breakdown:

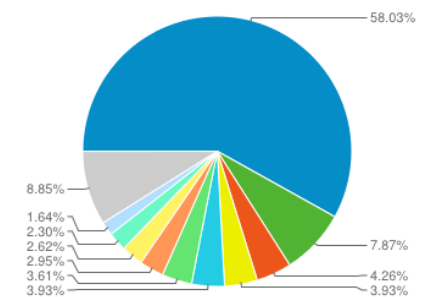
1. 9.0	32	65.31%
2. 8.0	9	18.37%
3. 6.0	4	8.16%
4. 7.0	3	6.12%
5. 10.0	1	2.04%



Nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of visitors are using older versions of IE (with 8% using IE6).

## Screen resolutions:

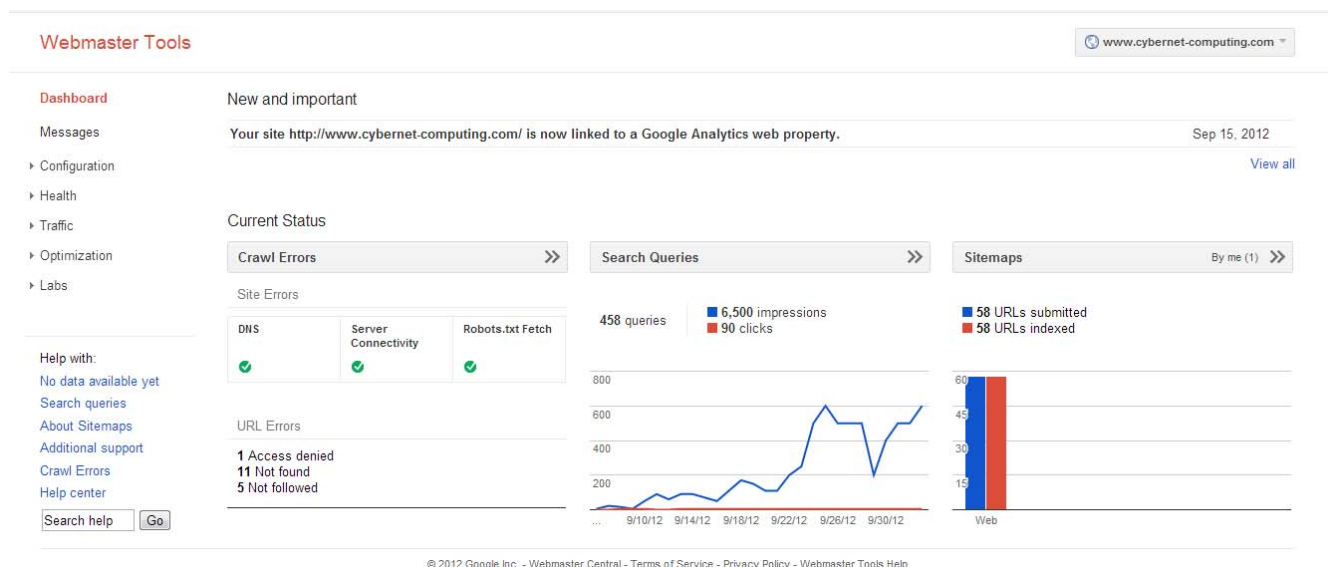
1. 1366x768	177	58.03%
2. 1280x800	24	7.87%
3. 768x1024	13	4.26%
4. 1600x900	12	3.93%
5. 1680x1050	12	3.93%
6. 1280x1024	11	3.61%
7. 1440x900	9	2.95%
8. 1024x768	8	2.62%
9. 1920x1080	7	2.30%
10. 1920x1200	5	1.64%



Although the results are limited, < 6% of visitors viewed the site with a browser width of less than 1024px. Perhaps mobile audience is not an issue.

## Google Webmaster Tools

The following stats were provided courtesy of Google Webmaster Tools.



Previous reporting identified a site crawl error on 13/09/2012 – but I could find no reason for this.

### DNS

Googlebot did not crawl your URL because we couldn't communicate with the DNS server, or because your server had no entry for your site. This could be because the server is down, or because there's an issue with the DNS routing to your domain. Please check back later. If this problem persists, check with your DNS provider (often, but not always, your web hoster).

You can use [Fetch as Google](#) to check if Googlebot can currently crawl your site. If Fetch as Googlebot returns the content of your homepage without problems, you can assume that Googlebot is generally able to access your site properly.

While most DNS warnings or errors don't affect Googlebot's ability to access your site, they may be a symptom of high latency, which can negatively impact your users.

I ran the "Fetch as Google" successfully and subsequent crawls have been successful, so the DNS issue appears to be resolved.

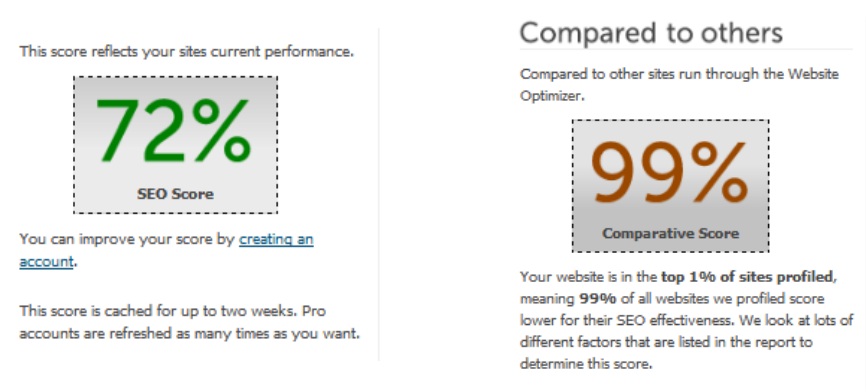
There are a few 404 errors but these are as a result of the site reorganisation that is taking place and the "tidying" or Drupal redirect links; subsequent XML site map resubmission should resolve those.

Alexa

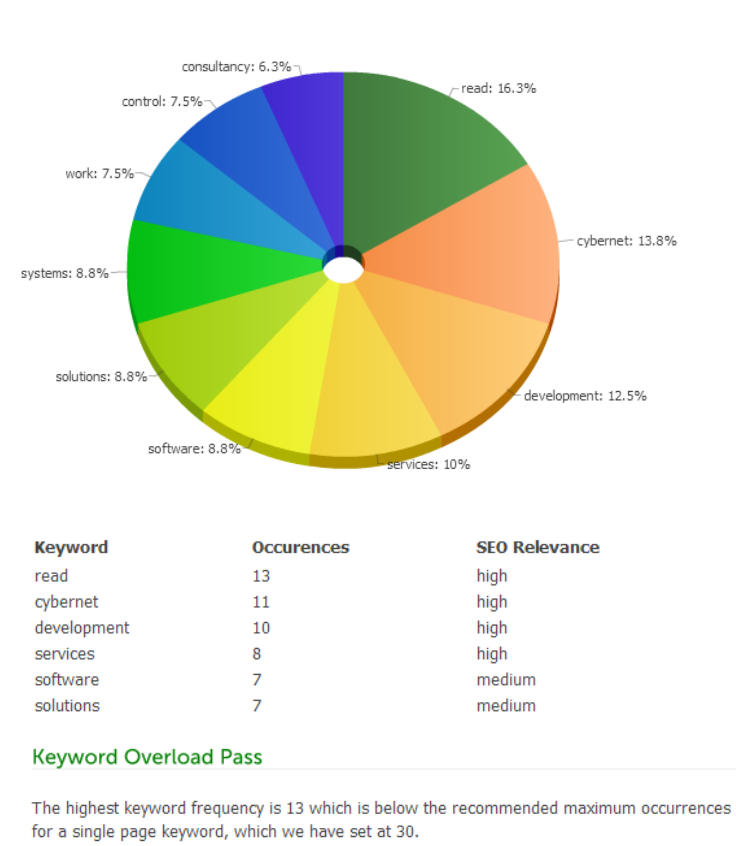
Very little data was available on [alexa.com](#), however it did show 5 sites linking in which includes a blog post I did on a Drupal training forum<sup>42</sup>.

Built With

Analysis of site SEO at [builtwith.com](#) provided the following information:



Keyword analysis suggested:



The site keyword strategy is something that I will be looking at as part of the ongoing content review.

<sup>42</sup> Making external blog posts, or post comments, is potentially a good strategy for building incoming links.

The site was reported as generally performing well, with domain redirection working properly. The only real identified issue was the Page Load performance which was above their recommended speed of 200ms.

### Pingdom Speed Test

Analysis of the site at [tools.pingdom.com](https://tools.pingdom.com) suggested an acceptable 2.22 second (home) page load speed.



### Website Grader

Running the site through website grader at <http://marketing.grader.com/?s=wsg>, suggested correcting the following issues:

#### Top 3 Action Items

1. [Get more inbound links to your website.](#)
2. [Create a Twitter account and start sharing.](#)
3. [Make sure your blog article titles are unique and under 75 characters.](#)

Adding a Twitter account is currently in progress and the site content review should resolve any long blog titles.

It suggested adding share functionality to the site<sup>43</sup>.

It identified a Facebook for Cybernet Computing (not actually mine!), but the inclusion on social media is high on my list for future site development.

## 7.5 SEO and Target Audience Issues

SEO is a key aspect to the eventual success of the site.

The aim of the site is as a marketing vehicle for the company, essentially advertising the services we provide and helping us to attract more business (site call to action is "contact us").

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<sup>43</sup> The addition of social media share buttons is planned for the Blog and Resources articles on my site, and I have recently been investigating the Drupal "AddToAnyModule" plugin as an easy means of providing this functionality.

The site will only succeed in generating more business enquiries if our target audience can actually find the site.

There is still significant work to do in generating a suitable keyword strategy for the site; and to some degree this has been hampered by issues about identifying the target audience.

### **Who is the target audience?**

Is the site to appeal to existing housing clients, or is it to attract new types of business like web design, or is it for both.

The initial intention was that the site be used for both target audiences, but the problem is that they are distinctly different market places and the as such the targeted keywords and the "look & feel" required is different for both.

The housing market requires a website that discusses that sector, has a very business look & feel, and works across legacy browsers (IE6+). Targeted keyword phrases would include "housing software development specialist", "Genero development specialist", "housing systems specialist" etc. Web design aspects would be played down and the blog and resources section of the site linked specifically to the target audience.

The web design market requires a site that has a more dynamic, visually exciting look & feel, possibly including interesting interactive (jQuery) effects; the problem of legacy browsers is less of an issue. Targeted keyword phrases may include "London based freelance web designer", "build visually exciting sites", "local web design service" etc. The blog and resources section of the site would be highly web oriented.

Currently the site attempts to meet the needs of both of these different market sectors and will continue to do so for the short term. However, in the long term there is a need to have a separate site for the web design services and to this effect I have purchased the domain names [cybernet-web-design.co.uk](http://cybernet-web-design.co.uk) and [cybernet-web-design.com](http://cybernet-web-design.com) (currently mapped to [cybernet-computing.com](http://cybernet-computing.com)).

### **SEO**

As discussed earlier, site SEO keywords need to be reviewed.

Areas that need to be addressed include the use of specialised/niche services keywords (e.g. "Inhouse housing specialist", "CTX housing specialist", "Genero developer" etc). This is planned as part of the ongoing content review<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Initial content review will include SEO which targets our web design services; but is only required until such time as the new "web design" site is launched.

Initial search engine test results (Google only) resulted in the following:

Search Phrase	Results page	Page position (excl. paid ads)
Cybernet	20	-
Cybernet Computer Systems	1	2
Cybernet Computing	1	2
Gary Pigott	1	6
Cybernet Web Design	1	7 Taxonomy results page
Data cleansing inhouse housing system	2	3
Genero housing specialist	2	6
Genero housing developer	3	5
Tenant balance update	1	1 Resources
Automating tenant postings	1	1 General Projects
Data cleansing easy wins	1	7 Blog article: Data cleansing "low hanging fruit"
Dump CSV use XML	1	6 General Projects
Build a Drupal tag cloud	1	3 Blog article: same name
Reducing HB overheads	1	1 General Projects
Orchard migration testing	1	1 General Projects
Inhouse database consolidation	1	1 Resources
Inhouse database	2	5 Resources
Inhouse housing database	2	5 Taxonomy results page
CTX rents archive	1	1 Taxonomy results page
Kirby text based CMS	1	1 Blog article: same name

The best performing results were obtained Resources and Blog articles for specific niches searches.

More work needs to be done on targeting specific search phrases like “Genero housing developer” “4Js developer” as the site was often behind competitor LinkedIn results.

## 7.6 Issues

There are 3 main issues identified by visitor feedback which are still outstanding, namely:

### **Is Cybernet just you?**

This is a content issue, and relates specifically to the Home, Services and Gary Pigott pages of the website (see 7.3). This and other content related issues will be addressed as part of the ongoing content review.

### **Twitter and Facebook links not currently working**

Currently developing a Twitter profile page, the intention is that this will be available shortly. Facebook will be resolved in the short term by the use of a “Sorry option not yet available” alert message.

### **Drop down (hover) menus don’t work on some touch screen devices**

This is the biggest issue with the current site design and is a general problem with hover action based menus.

When tested on an iPad, the drop down could be accessed by single clicking the menu header<sup>45</sup>. Reported user feedback suggests that this is not the case on other mobile devices (specifically Android devices).

The choice of drop down navigation was chosen because it simplified the overall site design but there were always going to be accessibility issues with this type of navigation<sup>46</sup>.

Whilst I don’t fore-see many site visitors using mobile devices, this is still an issue that will need to be resolved, but it requires a rethink on the navigation design and will be something for future developments.


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<sup>45</sup> Although the menus work on an iPad, the “behaviour” is not intuitive (defies user expectations) and needs to be addressed.

<sup>46</sup> The blog post [www.webmasterymadesimple.com/blog/why-99-of-all-drop-down-navigation-menus-must-die.html](http://www.webmasterymadesimple.com/blog/why-99-of-all-drop-down-navigation-menus-must-die.html) illustrates many of the issues with the use of drop down menus; and whilst I don’t agree “they must die” do accept that they need to be implemented in an accessible way.



Options currently being considered include:

- Make parent menu icons  a clickable JQuery event which opens (and leaves open) the sub menu; hover action would still be available if supported, but would require additional JQuery code to “close” any currently open submenu.
- Toggle button to switch menu to sidebar accordion style menu.
- Media query based CSS to display different menu configuration for all mobile devices.
- Replace drop downs with sidebar sub menus, or perhaps adopt a folder tab/sub menu approach.

As an aside, to fully support mobile device use it may be necessary to increase the size of clickable elements like the search icon, page up/down, and parent menu icons:



Search sprite



Page up/down sprite



Menu hover icons

## 7.7 Future Developments

In terms of site development the items currently planned for future development include:

### **Imminent**

Issues that will be addressed in the short term, include:

- Resolve content issues (see 7.3 and 7.6)
- Menu issue (see 7.6)  
Initial visitor statistics suggest that the mobile audience is currently low (see 7.4); as this is potentially quite an involved change I will be monitoring analytics to see if mobile use increases before making any decision regarding this.

If mobile visitors increase then perhaps a responsive version of the site will be required (and this might be more relevant to the Web Design side of the business).

- Setup sensible Twitter business profile (see 7.4)  
In progress, I am hoping that a suitable Twitter page will be set up by the end of October 2012.
- Setup Facebook business page (see 7.4)  
In progress, this is at a much earlier stage than the Twitter page and I don't foresee this being available until mid November 2012.

### **On-going**

- Review existing content  
This is ongoing and will continue to be so for the immediate future.
- Review site SEO
- Add new content (blog and resources)
- Review site stats and amend site as necessary  
The review will include most popular pages, search term targeting (also part of keyword SEO reviews), browser and device monitoring.
- Rationalize non-core Drupal modules<sup>47</sup>

### **Longer term**

- Develop website for "Web Design" part of the business, and relocate appropriate content to the new site
- Explore user signup and email subscription options<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> There are several non-core Drupal modules which have been installed and are either not used or no longer required. To ease future site administration (module updates) an exercise to remove unnecessary Drupal modules should be undertaken (e.g. parts of the "Devel" module which are no longer required now the site is live).

<sup>48</sup> User signup is often a key aspect of building relationships with your visitors; providing a means of informing your subscribers of new content, marketing new services/offers etc.

## 8. Summary

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The aim of the site is to generate business for Cybernet, so in essence the overall success of the website will be measured by just how busy we are. The site only went live a few weeks ago so hasn't yet had any impact on the business.

The intention is to send a marketing email to old and potential new housing customers promoting the launch of the new site. This is now planned for mid-November to take advantage of ongoing feedback<sup>49</sup>, content reviews, and to coincide with the launch of the Facebook and Twitter pages.

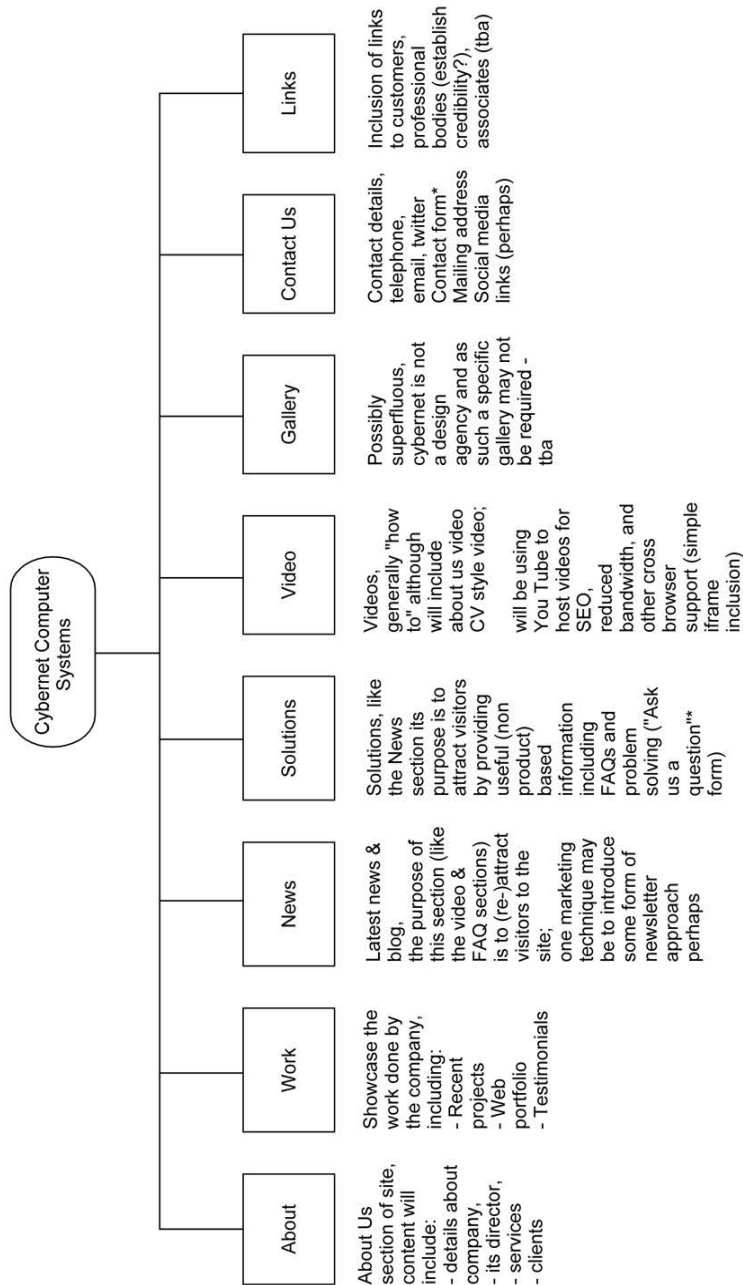
The development of the site has been challenging – particularly the use of Drupal which has been a steep learning curve. Overall I am very impressed with Drupal as a CMS, it is extremely flexible, highly extendable (with a module for most things) and it is supported by a fantastic community website at [drupal.org](http://drupal.org).

On a personal level I am happy with the resultant website which gives the professional/reliable image that was originally planned, and I believe that when combined with a separate site for the "Web Design" business will be an effective marketing vehicle for the company.

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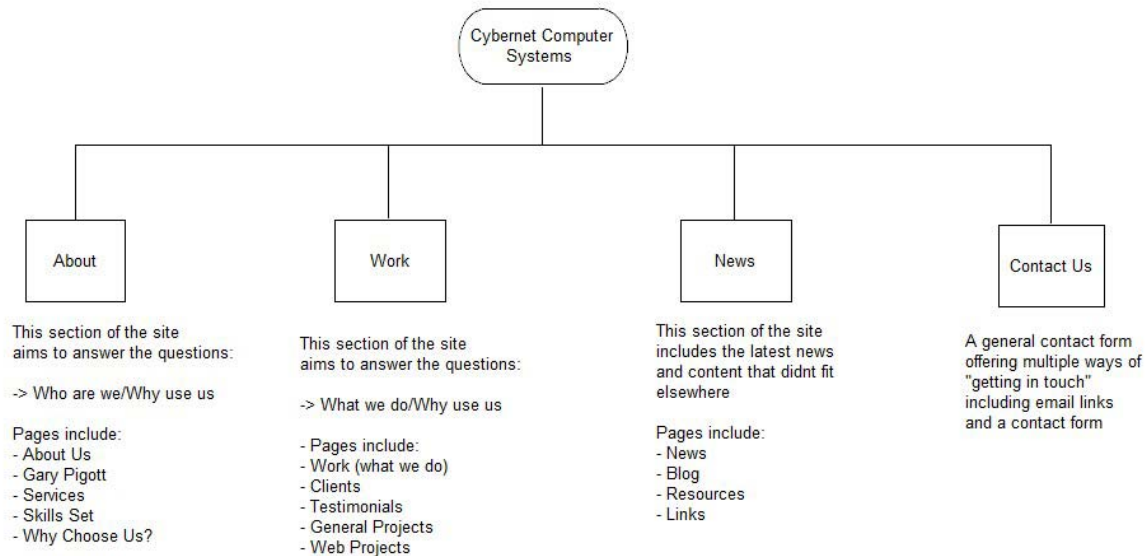
<sup>49</sup> Initial site feedback is now in (including lecturer feedback and feedback from the recent thesis presentation), but the content review is ongoing and the plan is to get more user feedback before the email marketing campaign.

## A1. Initial Site Structure



## A2. Final Site Structure

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The initial site structure has been simplified to produce the final site structure; the videos and gallery sections have been removed (primarily due to a lack of suitable content), and the solutions section incorporated into the blog and resources.

In addition to the pages shown in the site structure, there are several other pages that are either sub-pages or sit outside the general site structure.

These include:

- Individual projects pages (via General projects page)
- Individual web projects (via Web Projects page)
- Individual blog posts (via Blog page)
- Individual resources (via Resources page)
- Site Map
- Privacy Policy
- 403 & 404 page (Oops page)
- Contact submission confirmation (Thanks page)

## A3. Live Install

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Having completed local testing it was time to upload the site to my remote web host (Eco Web Hosts).

Getting the site live was fairly straightforward and consisted of the following steps:

### Local host

- Apply all Drupal updates to local machine
- Backup local Drupal database (using Backup & Migrate module)

### Remote host

- Install Drupal
- Remove unwanted files<sup>50</sup>
- Install "Backup & Migrate" module
- Apply all Drupal updates to remote machine
- Check Drupal status report for errors/issues
- FTP local sites/all folder to remote host
- FTP local sites/default folder to remote host (except "settings.php")
- Check folder permissions on remote host
- Restore local backup on remote host using "Backup & Migrate" module
- Disable developer modules
- Enable performance tweaks (CSS compression, JS aggregation, caching)
- Check Drupal status report for errors/issues
- Amend ".htaccess" and "settings.php" to deal with site install in non-web root folder<sup>51</sup>
- Clear all caches
- Load website in your browser of choice, to ensure that the Rewrite Rules<sup>52</sup> are working as expected

## Post Install/Resolve Security Holes

The site has only been live for just over a week and already has been subjected to 2 potential hacking attempts - done via the User Register process, which is (luckily) set by default to "Visitors, but administrator approval is required".

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<sup>50</sup> See Drupal community article "Finalize the upgrade" for details of post install actions, including which install files to delete (<http://drupal.org/upgrade/finished>)

<sup>51</sup> The article "How to serve Drupal from sub directory to web root" provides full details about setting up the appropriate htaccess Rewrite Rules and amending the Drupal settings to resolve the install in a sub directory ([kahthong.com/2011/05/how-serve-drupal-sub-directory-web-root-0](http://kahthong.com/2011/05/how-serve-drupal-sub-directory-web-root-0)).

<sup>52</sup> Ensure Drupal's "clean URLs" feature is working **before** uploading the new site otherwise none of the page links (beyond "<front>") will work.

<input type="checkbox"/>	USERNAME	STATUS	ROLES	MEMBER FOR	LAST ACCESS	OPERATIONS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MannyGlamy	blocked		1 hour 1 min	never	<a href="#">edit</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	emanuelcorish4	blocked		12 hours 56 min	never	<a href="#">edit</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	[REDACTED]	active	• administrator	1 month 2 weeks	26 sec ago	<a href="#">edit</a>

The user login option is hidden from most users and is only accessible via the standard Drupal “?q=user” URL string ([www.cybernet-computing.com?q=user](http://www.cybernet-computing.com?q=user)). The resultant login form is then displayed as:

Problem identification was thanks to Drupal’s auto email mechanism:

Subject: Account details for MannyGlamy at Cybernet (pending admin approval)

MannyGlamy has applied for an account.

<http://cybernet-computing.com/user/149/edit>

Then it was necessary to close the door, by changing Configuration / People / Account Settings to set the “Who can register accounts” flag to administrators only, and then refresh the cache. Resultant login form is now:

## A4. Drupal Modules

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The final site implementation required installation of a number of additional (non-core) Drupal modules, including:

### **@Font**

@font-your face	required by Google Fonts
Google Fonts API	

### **Access Control**

Content Access	required by Content Access Rules
Content Access Rules	

### **Administration**

Administration Menu	
Administration Menu Toolbar	

### **Chaos Tools Suite**

Chaos Tools	required by various modules
Custom Content Panes	
Page Manager	required by CTools
Views Content Panes	

### **Custom Search**

### **Development**

Theme Developer	only enabled on local site
Zenophile	create ZEN subthemes
Zenophile Sidebars	

### **Display Suite**

various modules

### **Fields**

various modules

### **Input Filters**

Image Resize Filter	
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### **Media**

various modules

### **Nodequeue**



**Other**

various modules including:

Advanced help  
Backup and Migrate  
Block Class  
Colorbox  
Conditional Stylesheets  
Cookie Control  
DHTML Menu  
Nice Menus  
Pathauto  
Redirect  
Site Map  
Site Verification

**Panels**

various modules

**Printer-friendly Pages****Search**

Porter Stemmer  
Search API  
Search Views

**Spam Control**

CAPTCHA

**Statistics**

Google Analytics

**User Interface**

CKEditor  
Gallery Formatter  
jCarousel  
Superfish

**Views**

various modules including:

Views Nivo Slider  
Views Slideshow

**Webform****XML Sitemap**

various modules

## A5. Professional Feedback (complete)

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Full and unabridged professional feedback as received.

### **Anthony Dewson, Copywriter**

Generally I think the website reads very well. It's clear and easy to navigate, which is what you want from a business website. People are looking for specific information; you're not trying to entertain them.

There are bits I don't really understand but that's just the technical stuff and I'm not really target market.

A few things strike me.

1. I would try to use shorter sentences wherever possible. When I'm writing for websites, the general rule is, keep things short and snappy. Try to separate out different ideas wherever you can. A couple of commas in a sentence is cool, but I'd avoid semi-colons if I were you. I would also make a bit less use of dashes and brackets.
2. Is Cybernet Computer Systems just you? It sounds a bit like you're trying to make the company sound bigger than it is. I would suggest that everyone gets personal services from company founder Gary Pigott, but hint that you also use other specialist / freelance resource where necessary. Then phrases like "we work primarily" and "we specialise in" would sound more believable.
3. On the Gary Pigott page, I think you need an apostrophe in the phrase "25 years' experience". However, a lot of writers would argue with me on that one, so you may decide to just leave it alone.
4. I would think about creating a mission statement to go on the first page. It could just be a short quote from you, about why you set the company up and what you want to achieve for clients.
5. I would avoid using italics, but that's just a personal stylistic thing. Standard practice is to just use italics for quotes. Also, I would limit use of speech marks to direct quotes, rather than just to make stuff stand out.

The first two points are, I think, the most important ones. But as I said, the site reads well and it's easy to navigate around so you don't really need to do much if you don't want to.

## **Prisca Schmarsow, Web Designer**

Great to see you site in its new design, wonderful :)

A few notes:

- excellent update to your previous design, nice and light, very friendly and appealing
- great work on the typography and layout
- like your structure of content
- the hover effects on some of your panels is a bit misleading sometimes, in places it could be fully active - in other places it seems superfluous and misleading
- the logo - I think the little puzzle piece is set a little too close to the letters

## A6. Development Diary

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The following notes represent assorted tasks completed in the final stages of the site development (up to 06/10/2012):

*6/10*

- *Remove italic styling from breadcrumbs*
- *Simplify WORDLE image*
- *More content amendments*

*5/10*

- *Purchase Web design domains and forward to existing site*
- *Amend site JQuery to append "Click to expand" to colorbox images*
- *More content amendments*

*4/10*

- *Amend strapline to include "web design"*
- *Amend logo to separate jigsaw piece from text*
- *Remove lightbox effect on scroller images*
- *More content review/amendments*

*2/10*

- *Add images to existing blog post summaries (visual interest)*
- *Amend "latest blog" view block to exclude HTML tags (strip images)*
- *Ditto "latest resources"*
- *Correct invalid (old) resource links -> pointing to now non-existent "articles"*
- *Add new IMCE thumbnail sizes (web images essentially)*
- *Change layout of web projects page, resize images accordingly, and add lightbox effect to images*
- *Reduce pager size for Web projects*
- *Add new web projects (Cybernet & Ubuntu)*
- *Add new blog posts*
- *Partial content review*

31/09

- Change WORDLE image to make more dynamic (more colour)
- Change "Why Us" image (various negative feedback)
- Add Web Projects to scroller & montage image (this required a new content type to hide image)
- Add Testimonials to scroller (and add suitable image)
- Menu icons recreated (previous versions were of poor quality/too small)
- Hover colour changed for quotes and list items (confusion with link colour)
- Sidebar H2 colour and font size changed to "differentiate sections"
- Background (pattern) image changed to "cream dust"
- Apply Drupal updates (token module)

14 to 30/09

- No development, just applying various theme and module updates

13/09

- Content tweaks (feedback)
- Apply Drupal module updates
- Header changes

12/09

- Respond to feedback (various mods)
- Highlight admin bar (main site) when live logged in

11/09

- Revamp (again), remove all shadow go for flatter more contemporary look
- Various images (revisited) etc
- Sort out padding
- More IE stuff again!!!
- Building a tag cloud
- Performance (ALREADY DONE, see below)
- When live: enable CSS compression/JS aggregation + performance tools & disable all developer modules etc

9 & 10/09

- More IE hacks
- More testing
- Review some content
- Revisit some content (blog has loads of errors)
- Revamped CV review (content)
- Colour scheme revisit
- Apply Drupal module updates
- Turn on performance settings (caching, aggregate etc) & turn off dev modules
- Install xml site map
- Install site verify module & configure
- Update site maps
- Install Google analytics module & configure
- Minor styling tweaks
- Email assorted people for feedback
- Remove registered office & change footer links

8/09

- Put various mod "on live"
- IE6 nav full width
- IE6 nav fixed pos
- IE6 up/down
- IE6 CCWR
- IE6 sprites
- Add nav b/g to PNG Gifs
- Fixed position "fix" IE6
- ISSUES: using old version of JQuery (1.4.4) by default
- Nav background override
- Add hover and "pseudo class" etc classes via jquery
- IE6 styling mods
- Tidy up existing content
- Rationalize styling

- Test
- IE6 Blockquote

7/09

- All IE based:
- Nav box fix model
- Why choose use image re-upload via i/f
- Scroller & IE CSS fixes (PNG images on fade)
- Info file (for conditional CSS)
- Header b/g GIF
- Curvy corners IE8/7/6
- Contact form clash with curvy corners
- Give up on cookie control border
- Resolve tag cloud issue (sort of)
- Shadow border on scroller (sort of)
- Outline on anchors - yuk!
- General & web projects first paragraph
- Blog, resources, news, sidebar hover style
- Search icon
- Search results remove text head & sort spacing
- IE styling: 8, 7 done!

6/09

- Colour scheme tweaks
- Favicon & Logo revamp
- IE 9 styling
- Some IE 8 styling
- Give up on favicons in IE
- Home page title
- JQuery hide unwanted links (no longer reqd!)

5/09

- Try update.php on other D7 sites

- More work with contact form
- Style contact form confirmation
- Remove unwanted modules (N/A)
- Investigate update.php issue
- Change settings.php to remove error superfluous error message
- Styling: Office footer IE not white, rounded corners, search heading, print overrides, sitemap spacing
- Mods to contact sprite
- Change contact sprite (email first)

4/09

- 404 & 403 page
- Style contact text block (mini panel)
- Contact form (web form)
- Style contact form
- Add JQuery for descriptions
- Minor mod Work content
- FAQ (not reqd!)
- Rationalize modules (FAQ removed)
- Sort out rewrite stuff & base URL (thanks <http://kahthong.com/2011/05/how-serve-drupal-sub-directory-web-root-0>)
- Turn off dev modules
- Turn on JS & CSS compression
- Remove install.php & other files (<http://drupal.org/upgrade/finished>)
- Upload site to live server!!!!

2/09

- Links too far apart
- Backup
- Rationalize templates
- Rationalize modules (I seem to be using everything that's installed & not core, except FAQ perhaps)
- Style Sitemap



- Tag cloud
- Backup
- STyle tag results
- RSS feeds ???

1/09

- Chase up testimonials\*\*
- Style search results
- Search results bug

31/08

- Backup
- Web projects content
- Revise News content
- Latest projects view + mini panel, + add to blocks
- Style latest news
- Spacing on page title
- Chase up testimonials
- Style blog, links & resources
- Set up content type display for search results

30/08

- More content revamp
- General projects menu
- Skillset summary
- Menu web
- Setup web projects content type
- Revise redirect rules
- Setup new nodequeues
- Move projects to content type
- Revamp views
- Backup database
- Links redirects

- Printer friendly on every page
- Comments off on blog etc
- Printer friendly at end of page\*
- General projects content
- Apply latest updates
- Projects headings & "Latest blog"
- Link colours
- Web projects styling
- Content minor mods: General projects, Why Us, Services, etc

29/08

- Remove unwanted fonts
- Logo
- Styling on header
- Footer spacing etc
- header & other spacing on Work page
- Services minor content revamp
- Ditto skills set
- Ditto why us
- Ditto Work page
- Style dl/dt/dd
- Styling

28/08

- Loads more playing with fonts!!
- Style scroller
- Style blog/latest news sidebar
- Style breadcrumbs
- Some content tidying

27/08

- Install conditional stylesheets module
- Remove whatsapp function and replace with "one-sidebar" class check

- Change read more characters (blog, scroller, resources)
- Play around with font choices\*

25/08

- Rationalize LESS files
- Tidy up footer CSS

24/08

- Nav underline
- Footer
- Initial blog & other page styling
- Links ??

23/08

- Finally sort breadcrumbs - HOORAH!!
- Breadcrumbs PHP
- Content again: Products (not reqd!), Project case studies, Recent work, Links, Web portfolio

22/08

- Another backup
- Delete Projects content type; Setup node queues instead (Projects, Web, Other, Case Studies)
- Reinstate Projects
- Add some projects
- Sort out breadcrumbs

21/08

- Style Blockquote + JQuery
- Revamp client logos with titles
- Chase up testimonials
- More work with blockquotes
- Add more resources

- Apply Drupal module updates
- Resolve breadcrumbs issue (custom breadcrumbs)
- Backup
- Set up Projects content type

20/08

- Sort out scroller image alignment
- Revise font
- Testimonials

19/08

- Random sort on scroller
- News page (articles should be blog?)
- Rename blog, links, resources
- Tidy up Drupal notes content
- Backup
- Local Server notes
- Correct case resource/awk
- News page
- Antix blog entry
- Acquia Drupal blog entry
- Content: sort out vi post, sort out 4gl post
- Blog post on LESS
- Privacy policy
- Extra blog posts
- Clients

18/08

- More content changes: Gary Pigott, Services
- Content: Welcome page (again), What we do, What makes us different, Skills Page, Services Page, Skills image, tidy up services image
- Add other content

17/08

- Get welcome & search results to be consistent
- Backup
- Sort out about & work sub-pages URLs
- Move scroller/header
- Sort out editor
- Uninstall WYSIWYG
- Apply Drupal module updates
- Add sitemap
- Blog, Articles, Resources views
- Bit of styling...

16/08

- Resolve search breadcrumbs
- Play with attachments
- Experiment with mini panels
- Welcome
- About US

15/08

- Set up various content types
- Set up new node queues
- Move Gary & Services to new content type
- Set up some sample news/blog (will need to be redone)

14/08

- Remove old Cybernet
- Ask NP, RT, SB, GH & LH for testimonials
- Install new version of SVN
- Add scroller to CSS
- Tidy up search box & icon
- Ditto breadcrumbs
- Top/Bottom of page

- Move header on logged in
- Secondary menu

13/08

- Install CRUNCH and convert site CSS to "LESS" format

Prior to 13/08 actions included installing local testing server (WAMPSERVER), testing email server (Antix SMTP Imposter), install Drupal 7, set up initial design, setup initial test content, learn Drupal (steep learning curve), etc

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## **Web Tools**

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BuiltWith ([www.builtwith.com](https://www.builtwith.com))

Domain Tools (<http://www.domaintools.com>)

WebSiteGrader (<http://marketing.grader.com/?s=wsg>)

## **Other Web Sites**

Drupal community and forum ([www.drupal.org](https://www.drupal.org))

Drupal Dojo ([www.drupaldojo.com](https://www.drupaldojo.com))

NodeOne Drupal learning library ([nodeone.se/en/learning-library](https://nodeone.se/en/learning-library))

Acquia ([www.acquia.com](https://www.acquia.com))