

How can a developer learn about web design? [closed]

Asked 15 years, 8 months ago Modified 6 years, 10 months ago

Viewed 10k times



41



Closed. This question is [opinion-based](#). It is not currently accepting answers.



Want to improve this question? Update the question so it can be answered with facts and citations by [editing this post](#).

Closed 6 years ago.

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Most of the time I worked as an application developer at backend side. I worked on enterprise web projects but never touched on user interface, design issues. Good looking web sites and user interfaces always impress me.

And nowadays I am trying to develop public web site I know CSS, HTML but stuck with web design / user interface issues. I don't want to use a template or steal someone's web design.

How can a developer / programmer learn to design good web sites / user interfaces, What tools should I use and

learn? or is designing good web user interfaces a god's gift?

language-agnostic

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asked Apr 4, 2009 at 12:50



caltuntas

10.8k ● 7 ● 37 ● 41

2 It's strange this thread is not closed as off-topic by those guys. – CDT Dec 12, 2014 at 4:41

I wrote an article on the topic: augustin-riedinger.fr/en/resources/learning-design-as-developer
– Augustin Riedinger Jul 6, 2015 at 9:39

10 Answers

Sorted by:

Highest score (default)



50

Looks like you hit on a hot topic. As a web/graphic designer myself, I think the best way to improve your ability in that regard is to look at a lot of good designs; meaning, actively seek them out.



As pixeline says, there's not a lot of objective knowledge to be learned (though there is *some*). It's more about improving your aesthetic eye. If you look at high quality designs all the time, then your tastes will become more refined and your web designs will naturally conform to your acclimated aesthetics.

For instance, I work at an indie metal label, so from time to time I'm called upon to work on band sites, album designs, magazine ads, sticker/clothing/merch designs, etc. So I'm always flipping through metal magazines and looking at ads designed by other people, or admiring the merch designs of other bands, or checking out the sites of other labels.

This not only serves as a source of inspiration when I'm stuck, helps me to gauge my own abilities and find areas for improvement, but it also helps me track the ever-changing trends and fashions in my particular sphere of design. As we all know, fashion is fickle, and people's tastes are always changing. A good designer knows how to stay just ahead of the curve all the time. This means that your designs don't deviate too drastically from accepted aesthetics (otherwise your designs will be rejected by audiences), but you also don't want to employ design elements that are overused and played out.

If you can ride the knife's edge and innovate enough to stand out, but not so much that the audience is unable to accept it, then you will have mastered the art of web design. A good designer can identify emerging trends and capitalize on them, while making it their own by adding their own twist to it.

If you're just starting to venture into web/graphic design, don't be afraid to emulate others and steal good ideas. Don't plagiarize, and give credit where credit is due, but just as making copies of famous drawings/paintings is an

essential training technique in figure drawing & painting, so too is emulating quality designs an effective tool in learning graphic design.

Sites like [Best Web Gallery](#) and [Screenalicious](#) are excellent places to immerse oneself in quality designs and layouts. I would highly recommend scanning through these sites in your free time to flood your mind with examples of good aesthetics.

EDIT: I also want to emphasize that talent is not as much of a factor as most people would think. More often, **interest** is what people confuse as "talent." If you truly have an interest in something, you will be motivated to immerse yourself in it and practice it. This in turn leads to better ability, and if started at a young age builds confidence, which leads to an ability gap, which leads to more confidence and more interest, which in turn leads to more practice...

I consider myself a decent graphic designer (you can check out my portfolio via my profile link) and an alright artist. And people often comment on how talented I am, but they don't realize that I have literally spent thousands of hours honing my craft. While other kids were out playing with their friends, I was in my room drawing. That's the only reason I excelled in drawing. And when I first started building websites, they looked just as hideous as most teenagers' Myspace pages. So don't get discouraged when you see the work of "talented"

designers. They all started from humble beginnings as well.

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edited Apr 5, 2009 at 14:45

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answered Apr 4, 2009 at 14:26



Calvin

4,619 ● 1 ● 26 ● 23

7 would like to give you +2 for the useful site, and the encouragement, makes mere mortal like me some ray of hope :) – [melaos](#) Dec 18, 2009 at 1:38

I love the comment regarding "talent" versus "interest"! I always find it insulting when someone says "You're talented.", because it implies that I have some divine gift and didn't have to work for my skills. – [Homr Zodyessey](#) Feb 13, 2017 at 13:52

I will definitely start looking at the design of other websites during my coffee breaks in the morning. Great advice thank you.... – [Grim](#) May 23, 2017 at 2:27



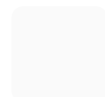
Please read [Don't make me think](#)

5

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answered Apr 4, 2009 at 13:03

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blank

18.2k ● 21 ● 108 ● 159





There is not much to be learned as "objective" content, except for : use a grid !

2



<http://dev.opera.com/articles/view/grid-design-basics-grids-for-web-page-l/>



See the human eye recognize as "beauty" things like balance, symmetry, contrast, color tones. Work on these fundamentals, and then... practice, experiments, iterate.

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answered Apr 4, 2009 at 13:02

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[pixeline](#)

18k ● 12 ● 86 ● 109



Seth Godin recently posted [a page of resoures](#) for people who want to improve their design skills.

1



The [Smashing Magazine website](#) also has a lot of relevant articles.



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answered Apr 4, 2009 at 12:58

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[Dan Dyer](#)

54.4k ● 19 ● 135 ● 166



The best way to learn is to start doing and soliciting feedback. The key is making sure that your site is as simple, intuitive and easy to use, yet providing a very rich content and feature set.

1





This post makes a very powerful demonstration of what good UI design means.

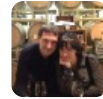


<http://stuffthathappens.com/blog/2008/03/05/simplicity/>

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answered Apr 4, 2009 at 13:03

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Kozyarchuk

21.8k ● 14 ● 43 ● 46



1



[A List Apart](#) is a great web-based magazine on design and development of web content. It publishes twice a month, usually with two new articles, and is a magazine type format; it's a good complement to some of the books that others here have mentioned.



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answered Apr 4, 2009 at 14:47



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Brian Campbell

332k ● 58 ● 366 ● 342



0



You can learn principles of good web design, you can know all the tools, but really it's like graphics design, you need some talent. Unless you have it, you'll end up with very correct, but dull design.

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answered Apr 4, 2009 at 13:03



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vartec

134k ● 37 ● 225 ● 248



these sites offer good content :

0

<http://css-tricks.com/> <http://net.tutsplus.com/>
<http://blog.themeforest.net/>



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answered Apr 4, 2009 at 13:06



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Hannoun Yassir

21.2k ● 23 ● 79 ● 113



See [Why is good UI design so hard for some Developers?](#)

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It's got tons of great info about this



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edited May 23, 2017 at 12:26

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Community Bot

1 ● 1



answered Apr 4, 2009 at 14:17



NoName



I found this site a while back and bookmarked it in hopes that my wife might be interested in web design some day...

0



66 Links To Learn The Webdesign Basics

<http://www.divitodesign.com/2008/08/66-links-to-learn-the-webdesign-basics/>



Its broken down into these categories:

General
Programs

HTML
CSS
Design
Site Structure
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Inspiration
Fonts / Typography
Usability and Accessibility
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answered Apr 5, 2009 at 15:30

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[MikeNereson](#)

3,900 ● 6 ● 25 ● 29
