ISM 320 – Final Project

Personal Portfolio

Eric Burger – 3 June 2014

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Design Brief – Personal Portfolio

Design Problem: Designing a clean, professional, and responsive web page that showcases my featured projects and successfully highlights my past accomplishments.

Objectives: Focus on presentation & visuals, design must emphasize ease of navigation, maintaining the user's interest and attention

Assumptions: It is an assumption that targeted users want to see a site with a professional feel and responsive design. Since the site could be shown to employers or colleagues, it has to properly apply design principles and techniques.

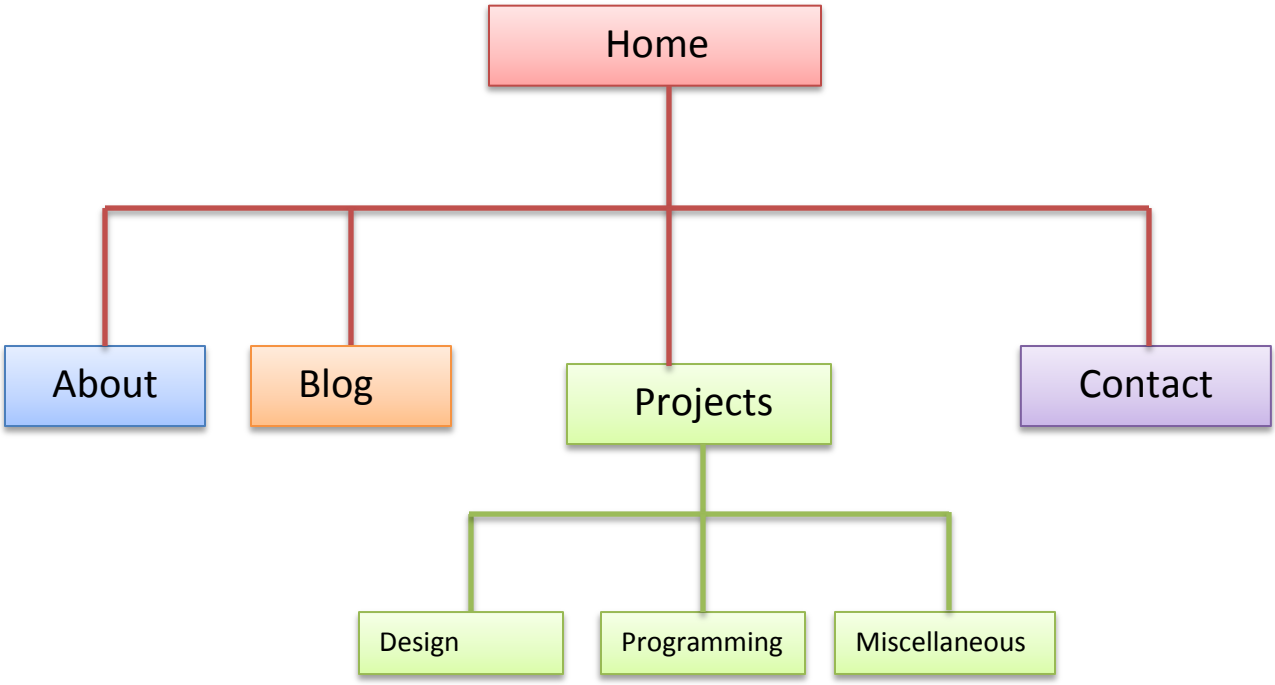
Target Users: Potential employers, clients, fellow students, instructors, professional colleagues

User Needs & Motivations: Visual works and working solutions in the project sections could help address user needs/motivations of looking for exemplary work. A detailed 'About' section would help satisfy the user's need to understand my background.

User Tasks: Users will be able to browse through a projects section, selecting/viewing project content, read through an about page for more info on my background

The four crucial sections of the site are **Home**, **About**, **Blog**, **Projects**, and **Contact**. As is, the order of the sections is intended to reflect, and potentially reinforce, a possible desired path that the user might take throughout the site.

Site Map

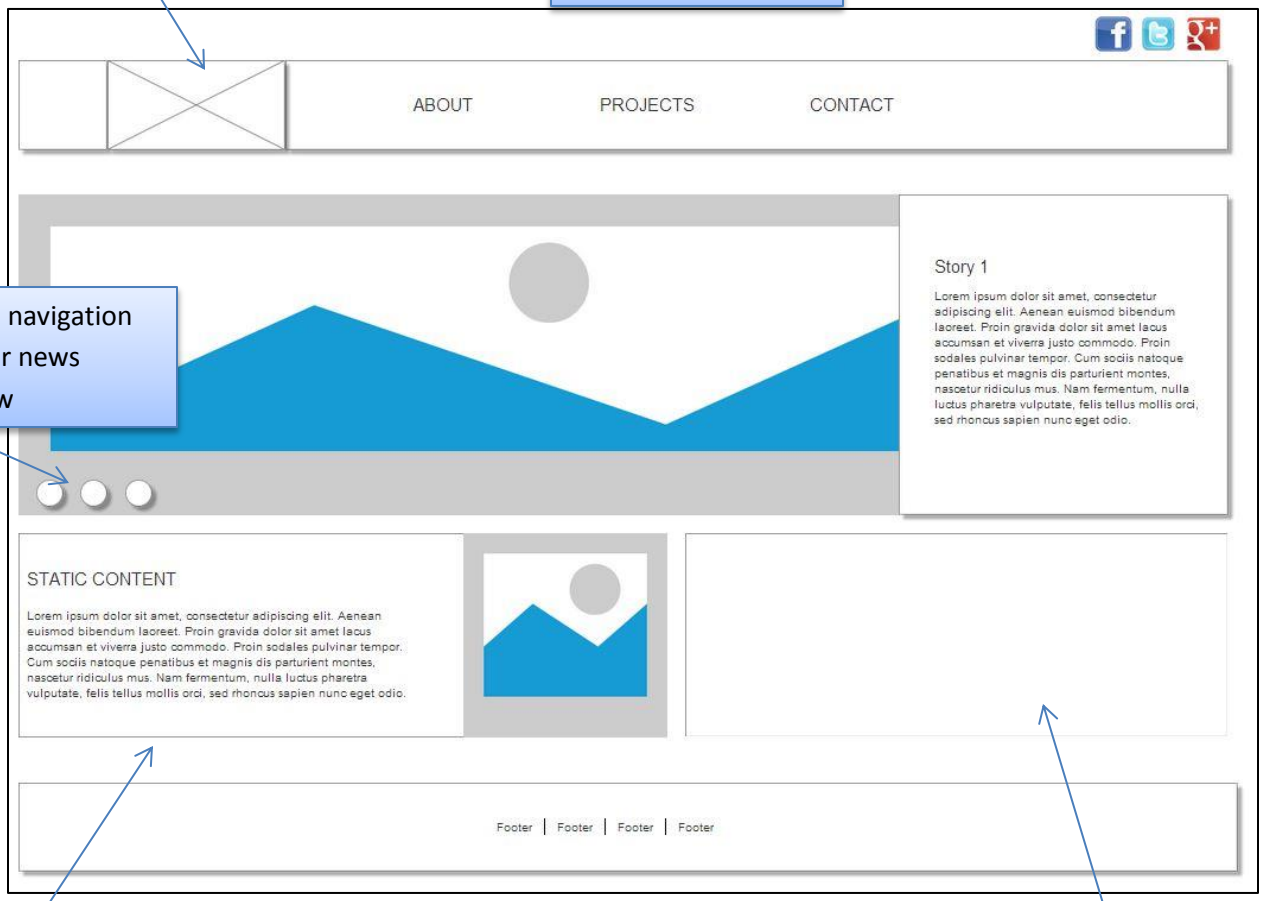


The organization of the links in the nav section is meant to enforce the desired path that the user takes through the web site (About, Projects, and finally Contact). The home page is intended to function as a landing page that highlights any current projects I am working on or other pertinent news.

Final Design Update: A 'Blog' page has been added to the sitemap as a place to feature news stories, personal reflections, etc. Otherwise, the sitemap design in the final product has remained unchanged.

The final site was created using Foundation HTML/CSS framework.

Home Page Wireframe



Placeholder for home page logo

Horizontal nav bar

Social Media links

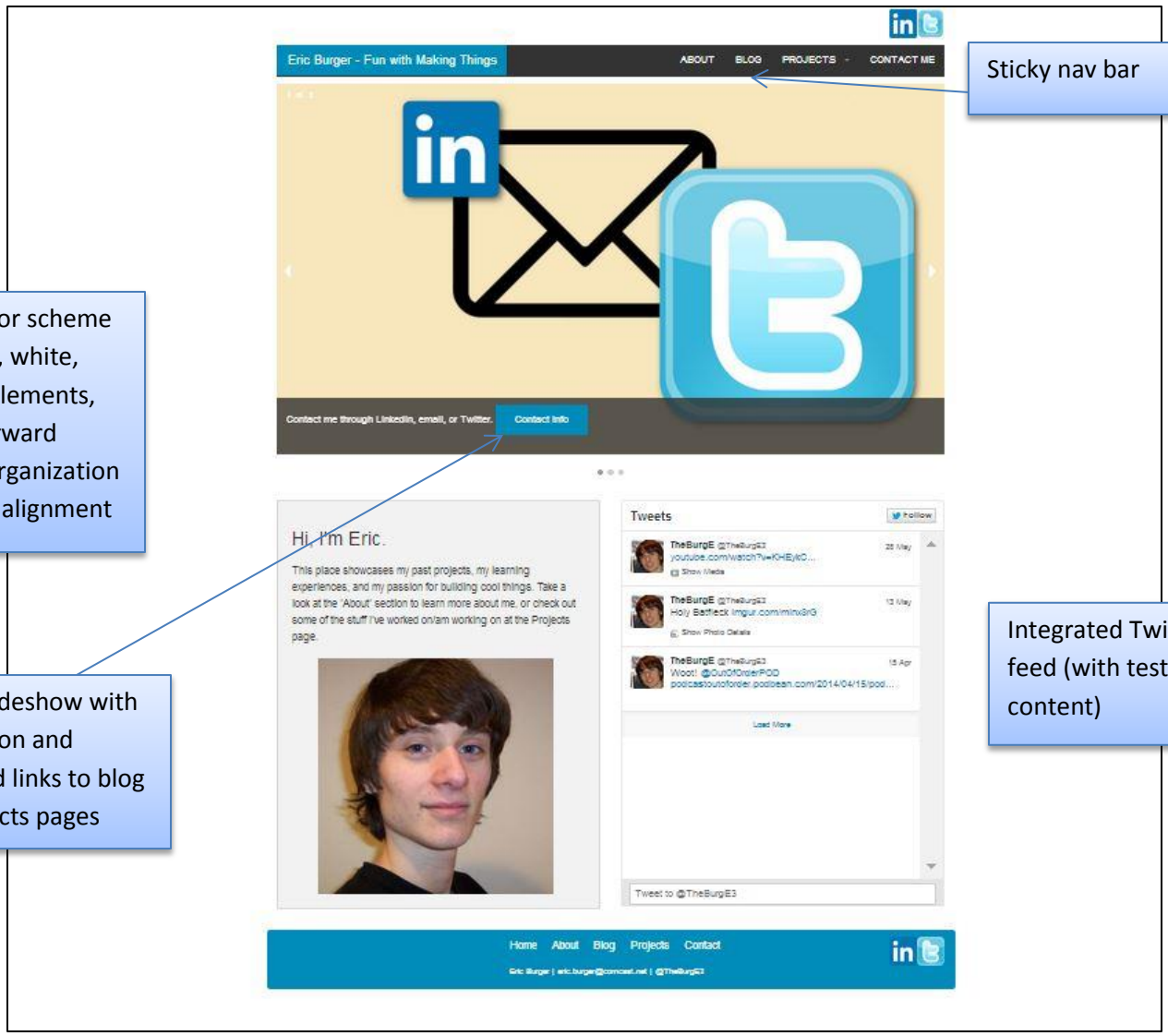
Clickable navigation circles for news slideshow

Static content, a small introductory blurb about me and the purpose of the site

Footer with sitemap links

Social media integration window, featuring tweets or Facebook updates

Home Page – Final Product (full view)



Sticky nav bar

Simple color scheme with black, white, and blue elements, straightforward element organization with basic alignment

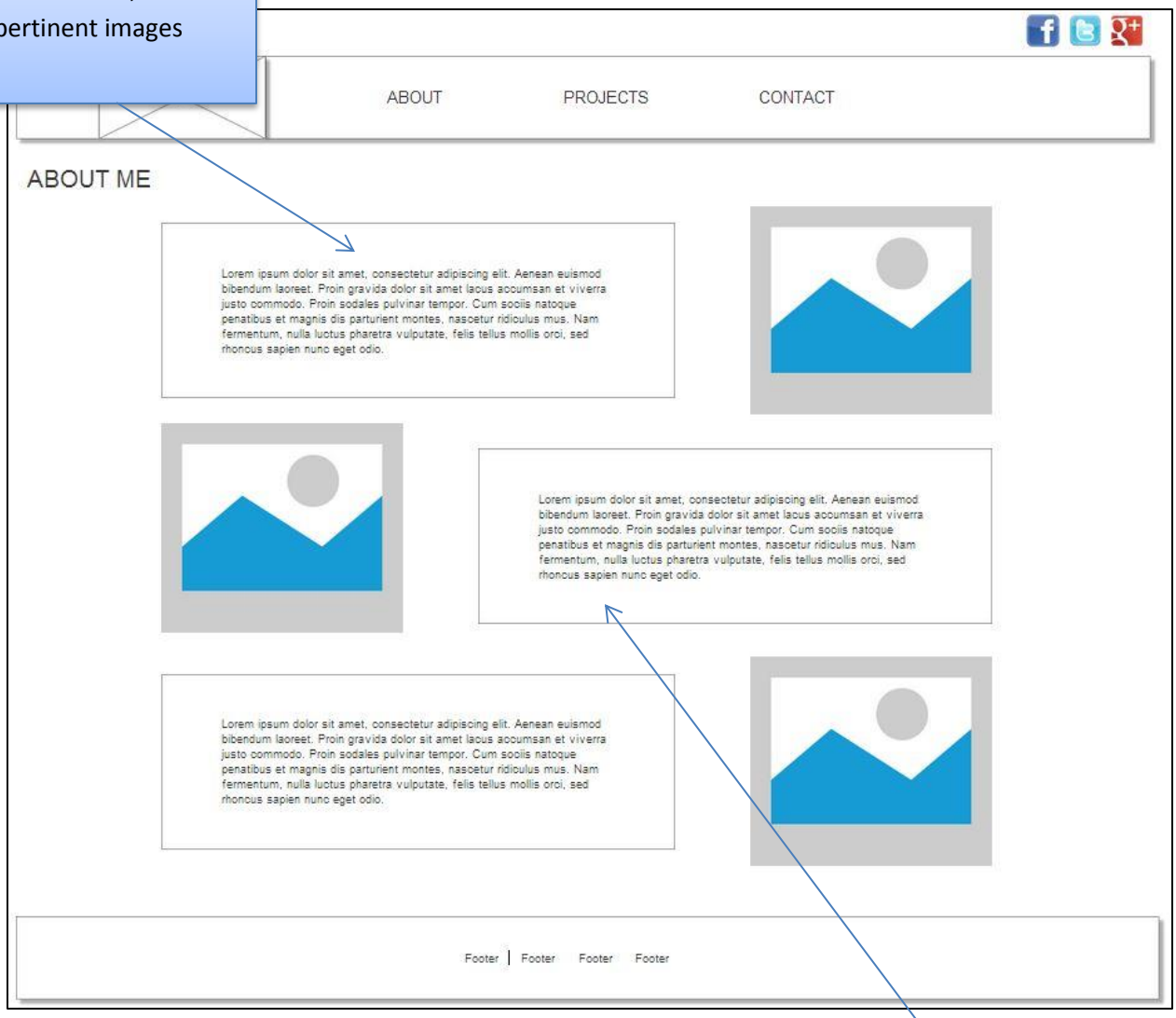
Orbit slideshow with navigation and featured links to blog or projects pages

Integrated Twitter feed (with test content)

Footer with sitemap links, contact info, and social network links

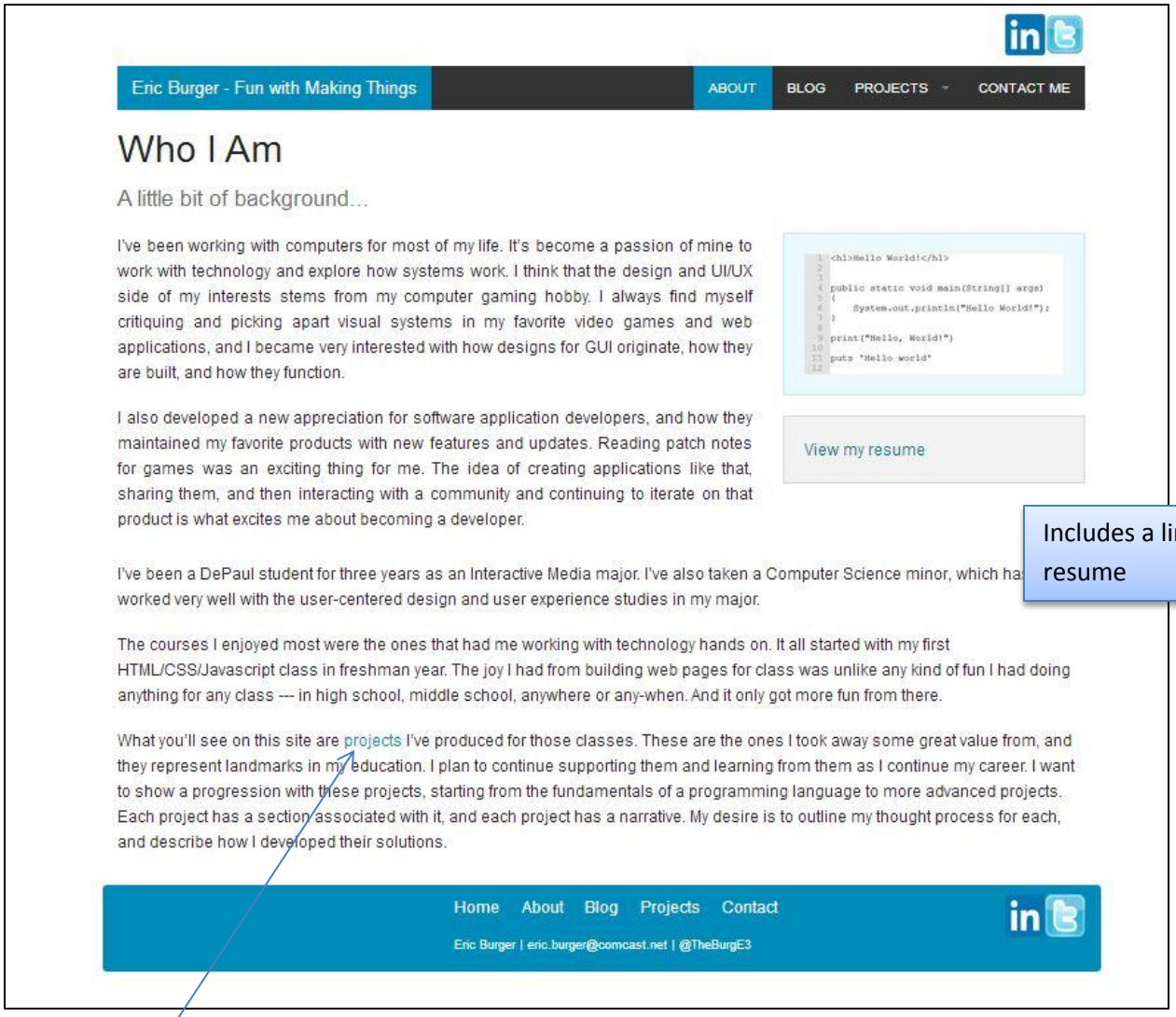
Alternating text content with intermittent, pertinent images

About Page Wireframe



Any content that brings up past or current projects is hyperlinked to the relevant project page

About Page – Final Product

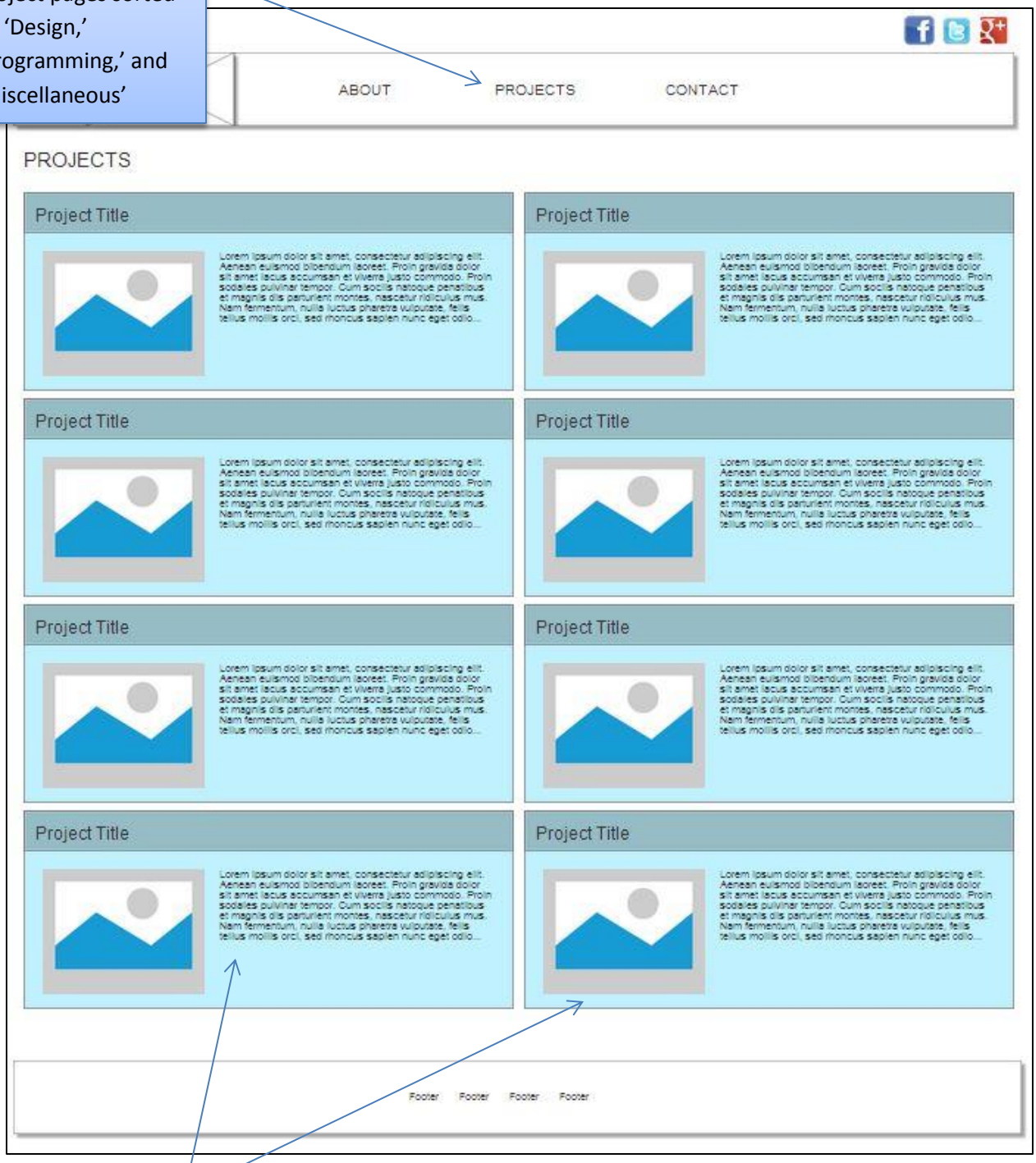


Includes a link to my resume

Hyperlink to projects page

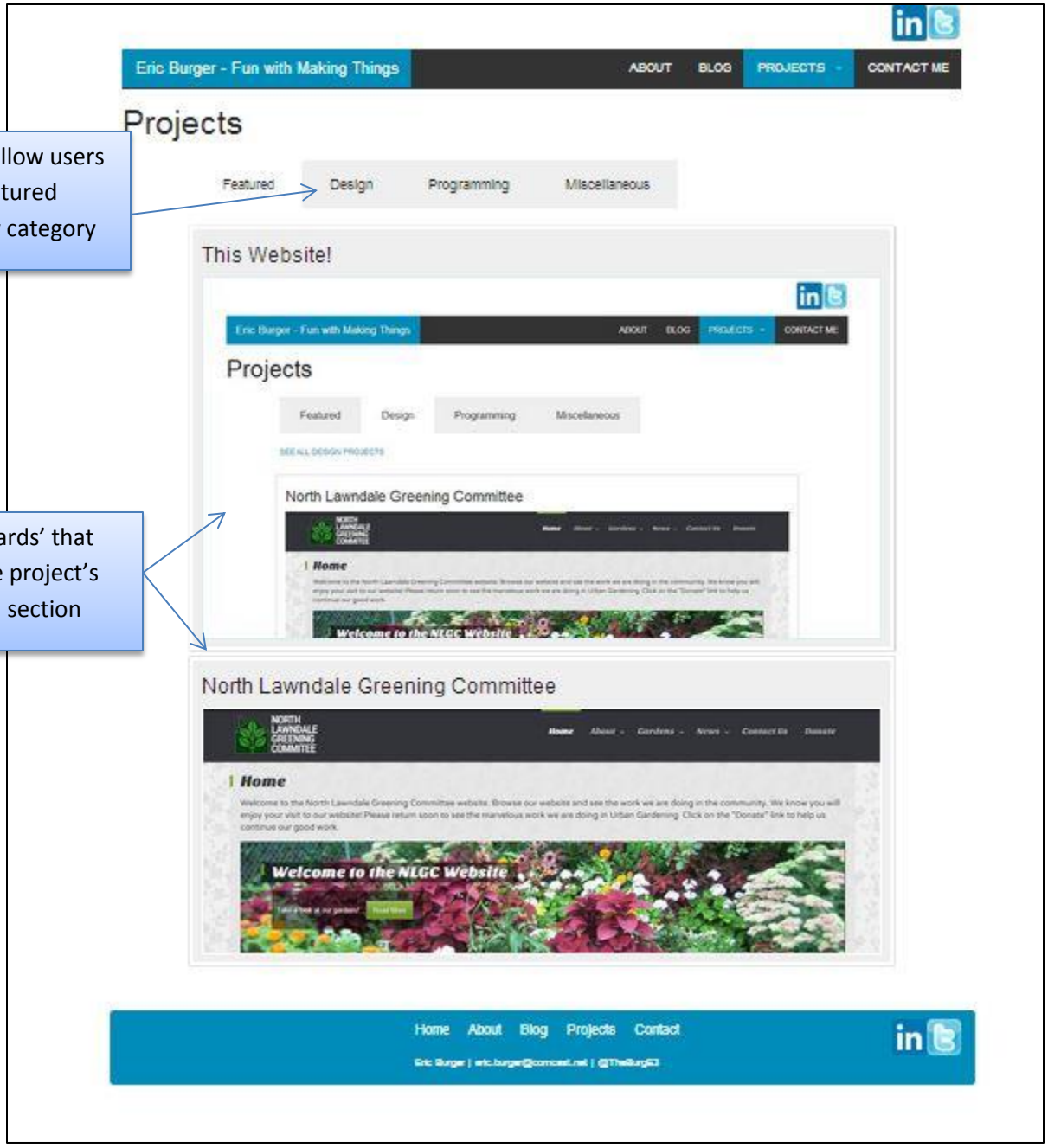
Hovering over ‘Projects’ in the nav menu drops down a submenu that links to project pages sorted by ‘Design,’ ‘Programming,’ and ‘Miscellaneous’

Projects Page Wireframe

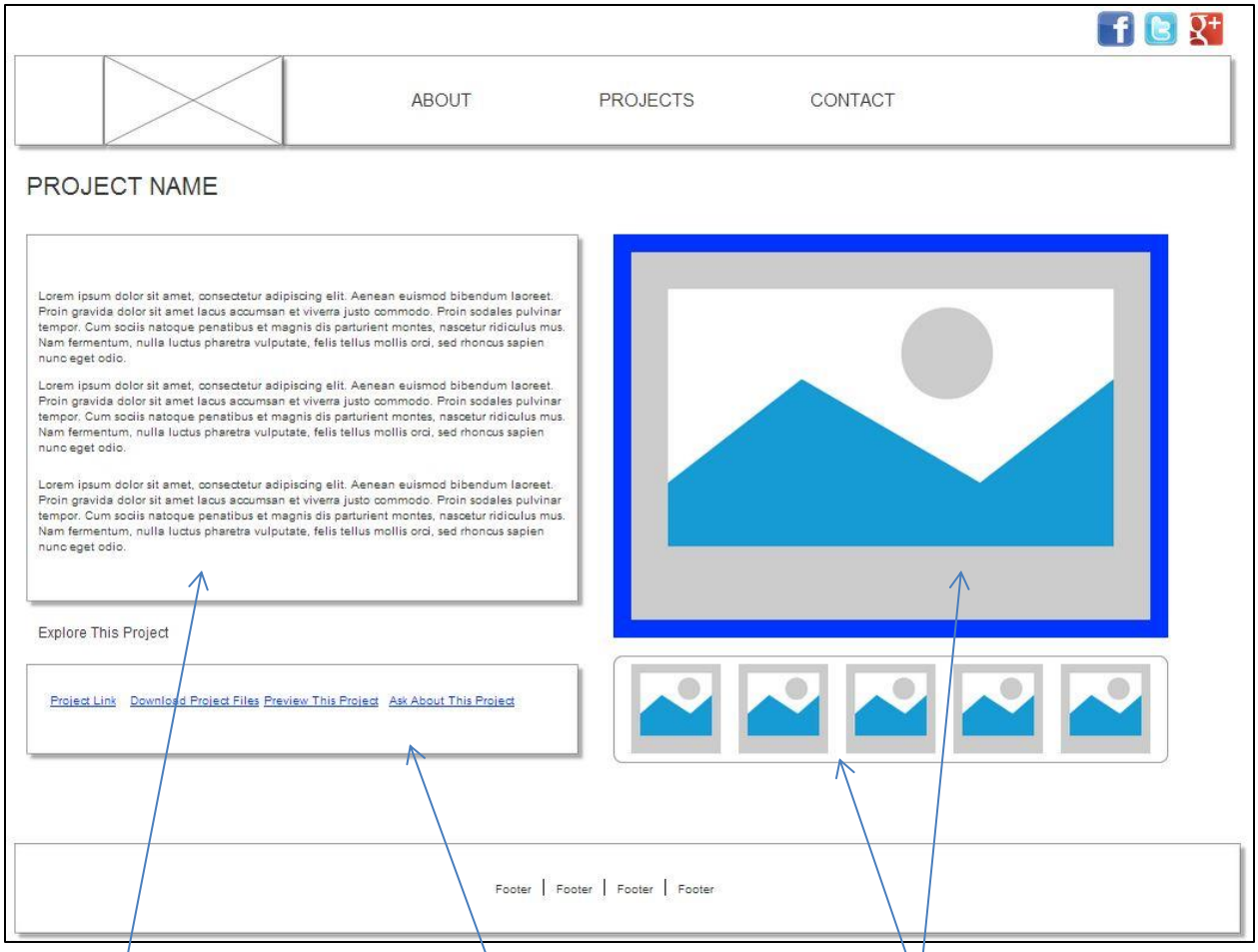


Clickable project cards of featured projects, link to project pages with more details (see next wireframe)

Projects Page – Final Product



Individual Project Page Wireframe

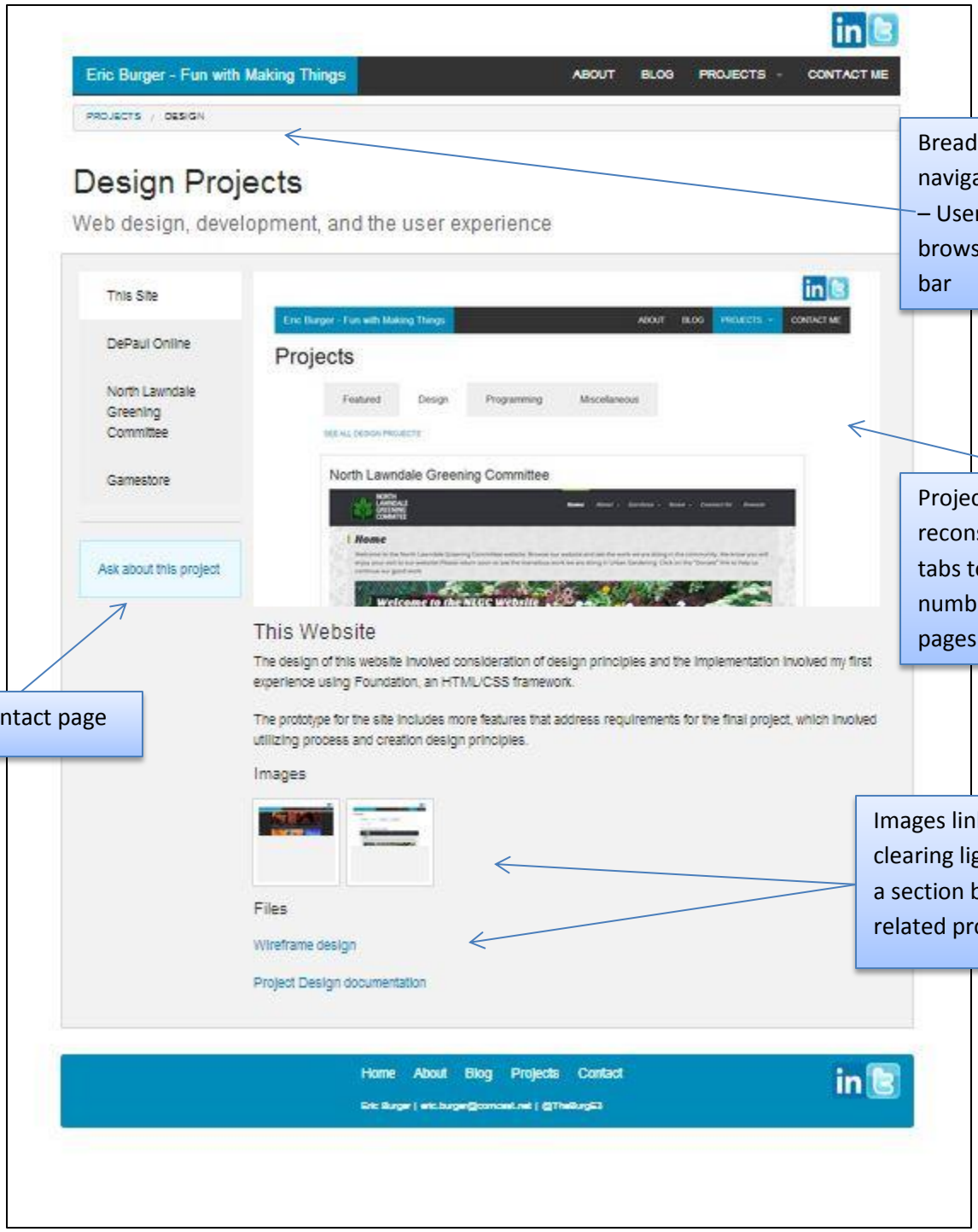


Description of the history of the project, software/tools involved, narrative about development, etc.

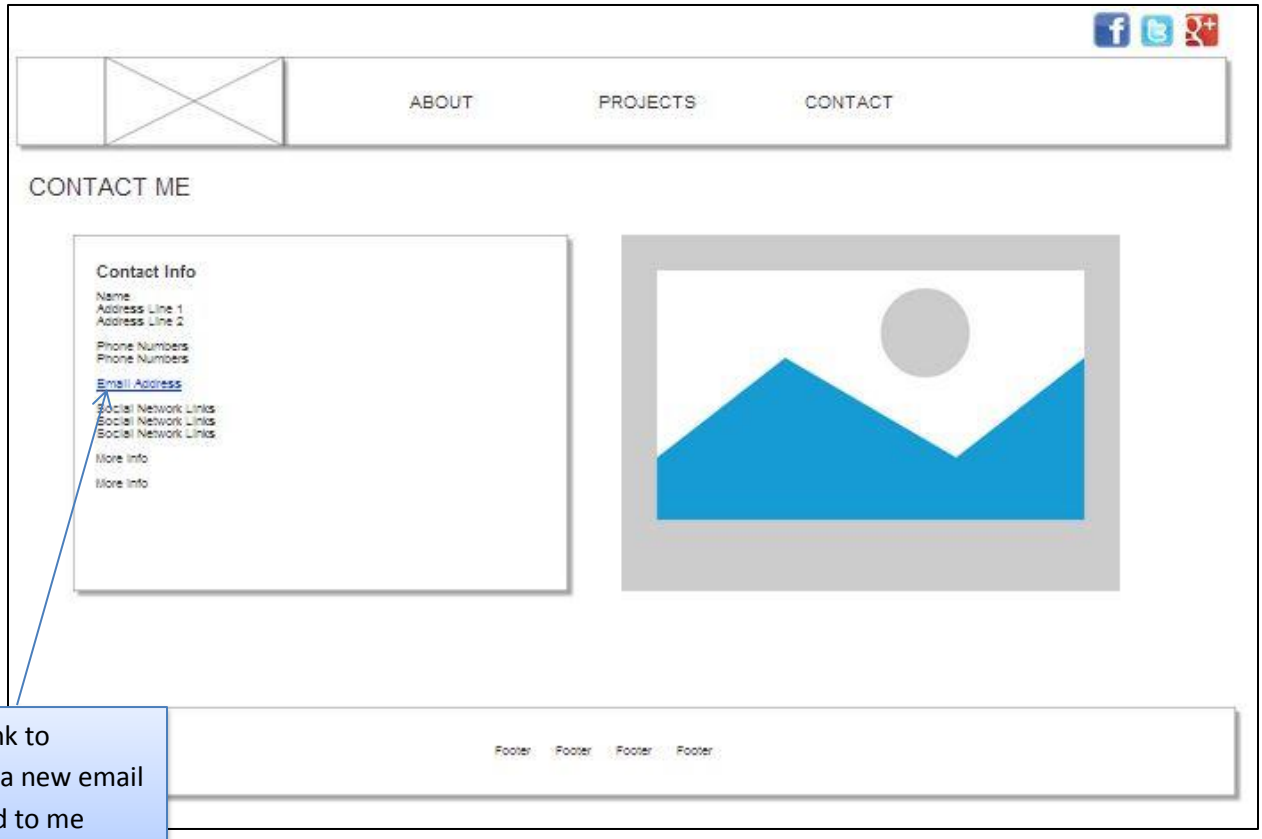
Explore This Project box contains: Link to Project(if on the web), Link to Download Project Files, Preview the Project in a new window, Link to Contact page labelled 'Ask About This Project'

Image links. Clicking each thumbnail changes the main image

Individual Project Page – Final Product

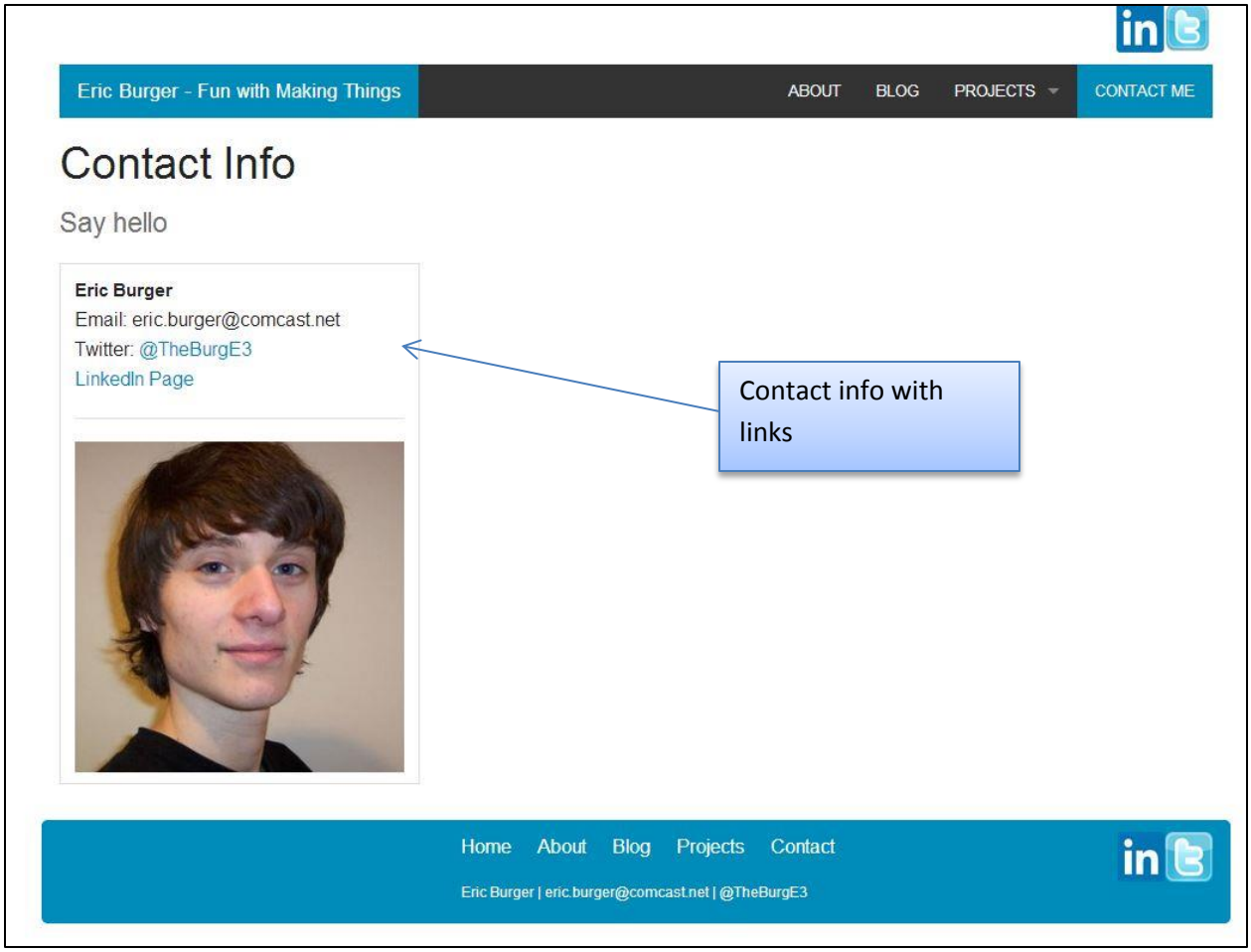


Contact Page Wireframe

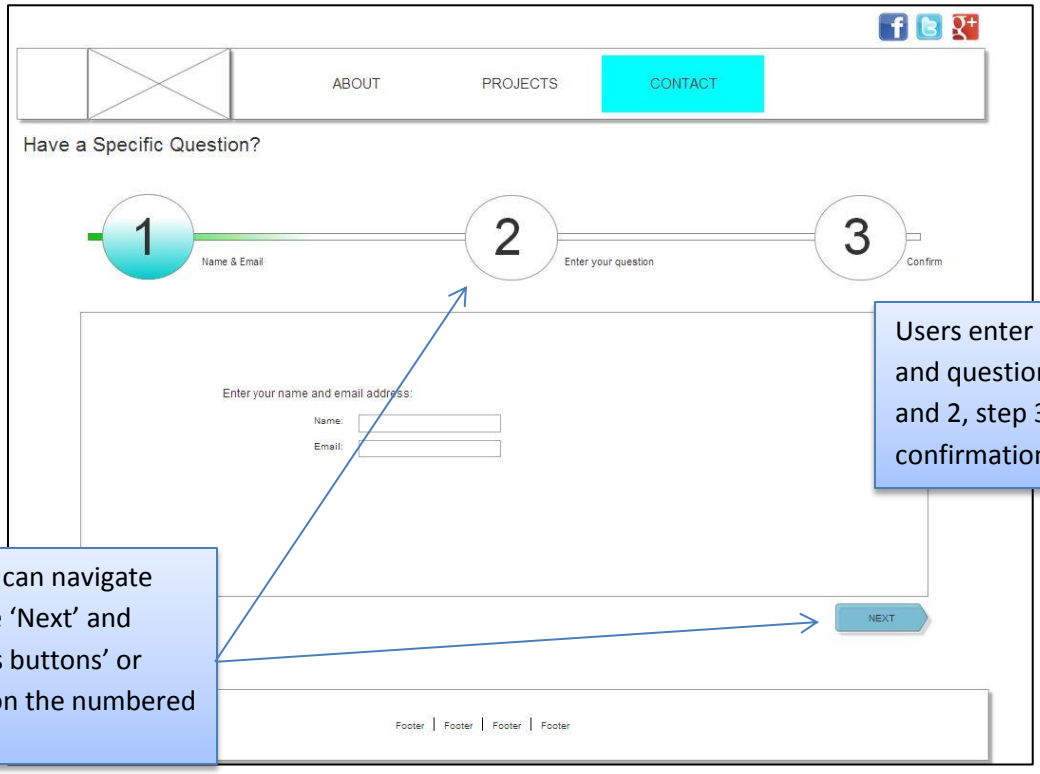


:mailto link to compose a new email addressed to me

Final Product – Contact Page

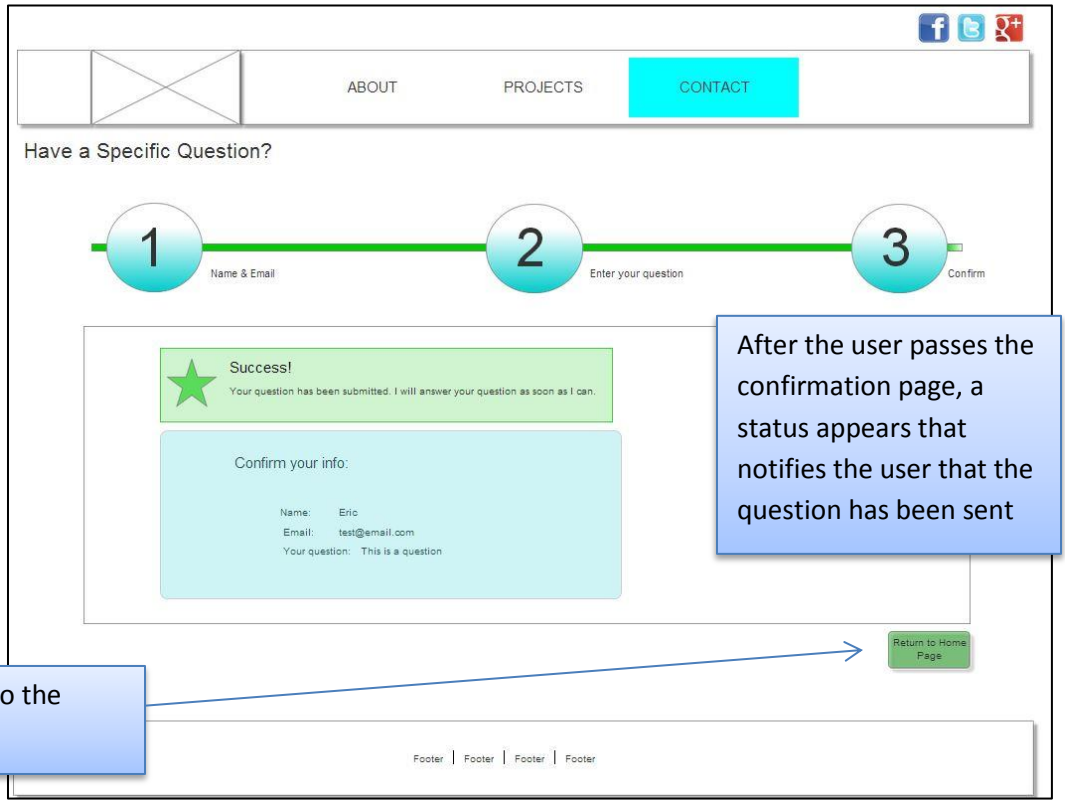


Specific Question Process (located on Contact page) - Wireframe



Users enter name, email, and question in steps 1 and 2, step 3 is a confirmation step

The user can navigate using the 'Next' and 'Previous buttons' or clicking on the numbered circles



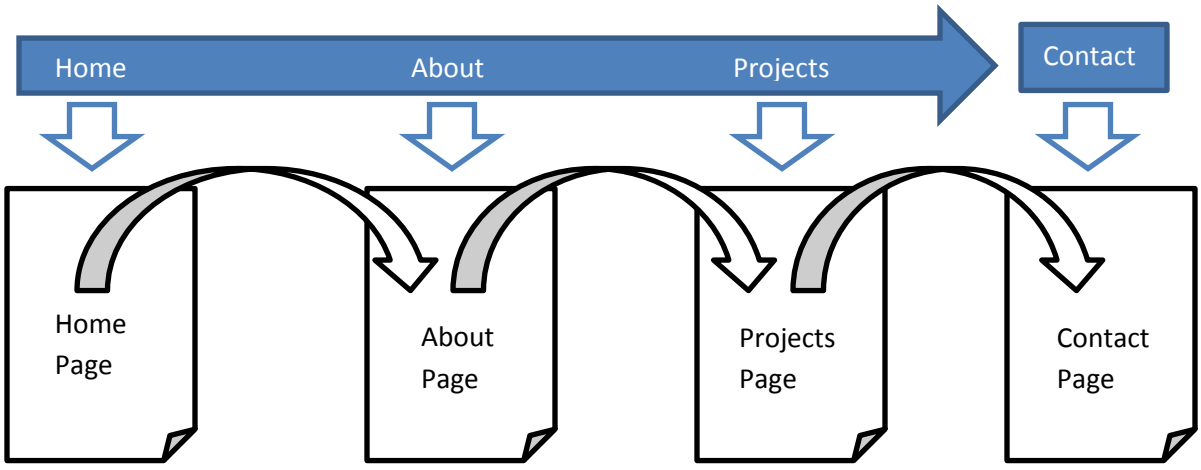
After the user passes the confirmation page, a status appears that notifies the user that the question has been sent

Link to return to the home page

A Reflection on the Project's Design

For the design of this project I explored a combination of different design principles. For instance, I wanted to make sure that I was paying attention to the idea of alignment at all times. I focused on the relationships between elements and how they related to each other on the space of the page. I think that a notable example of this principle is in how I organized the content in the 'About' page. I wanted to avoid the page simply being a large block of text, so I played with the design to break the content into sections with images (images which would either consist of me, the technology I have worked with, or the projects I have produced, depending on the text content). I also utilized the principle of similarity to create uniformity in elements that I want the user to implicitly group together (such as the 'cards' for each on project on the 'Project' parent page). This resulted in a simple and somewhat repetitive visual design, but I chose to take that design direction to generate consistency and hopefully improve the ease of navigation for users.

Wayfinding was another principle I wanted to incorporate into this design. It is especially pertinent to the site's purpose to hold the user's attention for long enough to read about me or view my projects before they navigate away from the site, so I wanted the design to facilitate a certain navigation flow. I organized the links on the nav bar from left to right in a specific sequence, and certain content links to other pages that lead up to the contact section, as outlined below.



A demonstration that outlines a few possible user navigation pathways. All roads lead to the Contact page.

I wanted to adhere to a consistent aesthetic with the site, so I chose to stick with using a few different shades of light blue to maintain a simple visual design. The goal of keeping

the colors at a minimum was to make sure that I could establish a solid foundation for each page's skeletal structure before deciding on visuals. There is a trade-off here in some respects: As a result of focusing on showcasing projects and content, it is not the most visually sophisticated design. Instead, I chose to focus on simplicity, similarity, and consistency in favor of a (hopefully) streamlined and straightforward browsing experience for the user.

A Reflection on the Final Product

Now with a final product produced, I believe I was successful in reaching my initial design goals and meeting those design challenges. A large part of the implementation was making sure that I integrated and fulfilled the design principles I chose in the early stages. I placed a large emphasis on navigation and maintaining a simple layout. The site has a simple aesthetic and that was crucial to integrate so that the site is as approachable as possible (an effort to utilize the Aesthetic-usability effect principle). I also valued the experience of experimenting with Foundation and using its capabilities to develop the final product.

A few other principles I incorporated in this design:

-Picture superiority effect – Orbit slider on home page, prominent images on projects pages

-Layering – content organization using tabs, links to dedicated project pages

-Confirmation, Visibility – Specific question process

-Consistency, Alignment, Aesthetic-usability effect – overall wireframe/final product design

I believe I was successful in featuring my content and creating a streamlined, professional, and responsive design. I was able to code the HTML and CSS in a way that is easy for me to manage and update. The site is responsive and the layout is simple. There were a few tradeoffs to the design, such as having to ensure that the use of tabs or linking to tabs does not disorient the user. To address this, I've added a breadcrumbs menu to the Project pages to keep the user's location visible.

For further improvement, I want to continue to work on the functionality of certain areas, such as linking to the main project page's tabs. Based on feedback, I will revise the appearance and use of images to improve visibility and strengthen aesthetic appeal.

I enjoyed putting this project together and I will definitely continue to update it as I prepare to host it online. I hope that I can strengthen the final product with continued

iteration and management. I had a lot of fun building the site, and I definitely see myself working on it and continuing to improve it in the future.