Comp 388/424 - Client-side Web Design

Fall Semester 2015 - Week 5

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Contents

- JS core
 - this keyword
- JS extras
 - best practices
 - performance
 - JSON
- HTML5, CSS, & JS
 - example
 - final thoughts
- jQuery
 - basics
- Design and Interface ideas

JS core - this

- this keyword correct and appropriate usage
 - commonly misunderstood feature of JS
- value of this is not inherently linked with the function itself
- value of this determined in response to how the function is called
- value itself can be dynamic, simply based upon how the function is called
- if a function contains this, its reference will usually point to an **object**
- manipulate and update the underlying context using .apply(),.bind(), and .call()

JS core - this default - part I

global, window object

- when we call a function, we can bind the this value to the window object
- resultant object refers to the root, in essence the global scope

```
function test1() {
  console.log(this);
}
test1();
```

- **NB:** the above will return a value of undefined in strict mode.
- also check for the value of this relative to the global object,

```
var a = 49;
function test1() {
   console.log(this.a);
}
test1();
```

- JSFiddle this window
- JSFiddle this global

JS core - this default - part 2

object literals

 within an object literal, the value of this, thankfully, will always refer to its own object

```
var object1 = {
    method: test1
};

function test1() {
    console.log(this);
}

object1.method();
```

- return value for this will be the object itself
- we get the returned object with a property and value for the defined method
- other object properties and values will be returned and available as well
- JSFiddle this literal
- JSFiddle this literal 2

JS core - this default - part 3

events

for events, value of this points to the owner of the bound event

```
<div id="test">click to test...</div>
```

```
var testDiv = document.getElementById('test');
function output() {
  console.log(this);
};
testDiv.addEventListener('click', output, false);
```

- element is clicked, value of this becomes the clicked element
- also change the context of this using built-in JS functions
 - such as .apply(), .bind(), and .call()
- JSFiddle this events

JS extras - best practices - part I

a few best practices...

variables

- limit use of global variables in JavaScript
 - easy to override
 - can lead to unexpected errors and issues
 - should be replaced with appropriate local variables, closures
- local variables should always be declared with keyword var
 - avoids automatic global variable issue

declarations

- add all required declarations at the top of the appropriate script or file
 - provides cleaner, more legible code
 - helps to avoid unnecessary global variables
 - avoid unwanted re-declarations

types and objects

- avoid declaring numbers, strings, or booleans as objects
- treat more correctly as primitive values
 - helps increase the performance of our code
 - decrease the possibility for issues and bugs

JS extras - best practices - part 2

type conversions and coercion

- weakly typed nature of JS
 - important to avoid accidentally converting one type to another
 - converting a number to a string or mixing types to create a NaN (Not a Number)
- often get a returned value set to NaN instead of generating an error
 - try to subtract one string from another may result in NaN

comparison

- better to try and work with === instead of ==
 - == trys to coerce a matching type before comparison
 - === forces comparison of values and type

defaults

- when parameters are required by a function
 - function call with a missing argument can lead to it being set as **undefined**
 - good coding practice to assign default values to arguments
 - helps prevent issues and bugs

switches

- consider a default for the switch conditional statement
- ensure you always set a default to end a switch statement

JS extras - performance - part I

loops

- try to limit the number of calculations, executions, statements performed per loop iteration
- check loop statements for assignments and statements
 - those checked or executed once
 - rather than each time a loop iterates
- for loop is a standard example of this type of quick optimisation

```
// bad
for (i = 0; i < arr.length; i++) {
...
}
// good
l = arr.length;
for (i = 0; i < 1; i++) {
...
}</pre>
```

source - W3

JS extras - performance - part 2

DOM access

- repetitive DOM access can be slow, and resource intensive
- try to limit the number of times code needs to access the DOM
- simply access once and then use as a local variable

```
var testDiv = document.getElementById('test');
testDiv.innerHTML = "test...";
```

JavaScript loading

- not always necessary to place JS files in the <head> element
- adding JS scripts to end of the page's body
 - allows browser to load the page first
- HTTP specification defines browsers should not download more than two components in parallel

JS extras - JSON - part I

- JSON is a lightweight format and wrapper for storing and transporting data
- inherently language agnostic, easy to read and understand
- growing rapidly in popularity
 - many online APIs have updated XML to JSON for data exchange
- syntax of JSON is itself derived from JS object notation
 - text-only format
- allows us to easily write, describe, and manipulate JSON in practically any programming language
- JSON syntax follows a few basic rules,
 - data is recorded as name/value pairs
 - data is separated by commas
 - objects are defined by a start and end curly brace
 - {}
 - arrays are defined by a start and end square bracket
 - []

JS extras - JSON - part 2

underlying construct for JSON is a pairing of name and value

```
"city": "Marseille"
```

JSON Objects

- contained within curly braces
- objects can contain multiple name/value pairs

```
{
   "country":"France",
   "city":"Marseille"
}
```

JS extras - JSON - part 3

JSON Arrays

- contained within square brackets
 - arrays can also contain objects.

- use this with JavaScript, and parse the JSON object.
 - JSFiddle Parse JSON

Structure

- combine HTML5, CSS, and JavaScript, to create an example application
- outline of our project's basic directory structure

```
- assets
| - images //logos, site/app banners - useful images for site's design
| - scripts //js files
| - styles //css files
| - docs
| - json //any .json files
| - txt //any .txt files
| - xml //any .xml files
| - media
| - audio //local audio files for embedding & streaming
| - images //site images, photos
| - video //local video files for embedding & streaming
| - index.html
```

- each of the above directories can, of course, contain many additional subdirectories
 - | images may contain sub-directories for albums, galleries...
 - | xml may contain sub-directories for further categorisation..
 - and so on...

index.html

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
 <head>
   <meta charset="UTF-8">
   <title>travel notes - v0.1</title>
   <meta name="description" content="information on travel destinations">
   <meta name="author" content="ancientlives">
   <!-- css styles... -->
   <link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="assets/styles/style.css">
 </head>
 <body>
   . . .
   <!-- js scripts... -->
   <script type="text/javascript" src="https://code.jquery.com/jquery-2.1.4.min.js">
   <script type="text/javascript" src="assets/scripts/travel.js"></script>
</html>
```

JS files at foot of body

- hierarchical rendering of page by browser top to bottom
- JS will now be one of the last things to load
- JS files often large, slow to load
- helps page load faster...

index.html - body

```
<body>
 <!-- document header -->
 <header>
   <h3>travel notes</h3>
   record notes from various cities and placed visited...
 <!-- document main -->
 <main>
   <!-- note input -->
   <section class="note-input">
   </section>
   <!-- note output -->
   <section class="note-output">
   </section>
 </main>
 <!-- document footer -->
 <footer>
   app's copyright information, additional links...
 </footer>
 <!-- js scripts... -->
 <script type="text/javascript" src="https://code.jquery.com/jquery-2.1.4.min.js"></scrip</pre>
 <script type="text/javascript" src="assets/scripts/travel.js"></script>
</body>
```

style.css

```
body {
 width: 850px;
 margin: auto;
background: #fff;
 font-size: 16px;
 font-family: "Times New Roman", Georgia, Serif;
}
h3 {
 font-size: 1.75em;
header {
 border-bottom: 1px solid #dedede;
header p {
 font-size: 1.25em;
 font-style: italic;
footer p {
 font-size: 0.8em;
}
```

travel.js

```
//overall app logic and loader...
function travelNotes() {
    "use strict";

    $(".note-output").html("first travel note for Marseille...");
};

$(document).ready(travelNotes);
```

- a simple JS function to hold the basic logic for our app
- call this function any reasonable, logical name
- in initial function, we set the strict pragma
- add an example call to the jQuery function, html()
 - sets some initial note content
- function travelNotes() loaded using the jQuery function ready()
 - many different ways to achieve this basic loading of app logic
- DEMO I travel notes v0.1

add a note

- app's structure includes three clear semantic divisions of content
 - <header>, <main>, and <footer>
- <main> content category create and add our notes for our application
- allow a user to create a new note
 - enter some brief text, and then set it as a note
- output will simply resemble a heading or brief description for our note
- add HTML element <input> to allow a user to enter note text
 - new attributes in HTML5 such as autocomplete, autofocus, required, width...
 - set accompanying

<h5>add note</h5>
<input>

tidy up styling

- additional styles to create correct, logical separation of visual elements and content
- add a border to the top of our footer
 - perhaps matching the header in style
- update the box model for the <main> element
- add some styling for <h5> heading

```
h5 {
  font-size: 1.25em;
  margin: 10px 0 10px 0;
}
main {
  overflow: auto;
  padding: 15px 0 15px 0;
}
footer {
  margin-top: 5px;
  border-top: 1px solid #dedede;
}
```

input update

```
<input><button>add</button>
```

```
.note-input input {
  width: 40%;
}
.note-input button {
  padding: 2px;
  margin-left: 5px;
  border-radius: 0;
  border: 1px solid #dedede;
  cursor: pointer;
}
```

- also update css for input and button
- remove button's rounded borders to match style of input
- match border for button to basic design aesthetics
- set cursor appropriate for a link style...
- DEMO 2 travel notes v0.2

interaction - add a note

- added and styled our input and button for adding a note
- use jQuery to handle click event on button
- update travel.js file for event handler

```
//handle user event for `add` button click
$(".note-input button").on("click", function(e) {
  console.log("add button clicked...");
});
```

interaction - add a note - output

- update this jQuery code to better handle and output the text from the input field
- what is this handler actually doing?
 - jQuery code has attached an event listener to an element in the DOM
 - · referenced in the selector option at the start of the function
 - uses standard CSS selectors to find the required element
- jQuery can select and target DOM elements using standard CSS selectors
 - then manipulate them, as required, using JavaScript

```
//handle user event for `add` button click
$(".note-input button").on("click", function(e) {
   $(".note-output").append("sample note text...");
});
```

- output some static text to note-output
- DEMO 3 travel notes v0.3

interaction - add a note - output

```
//overall app logic and loader...
function travelNotes() {
    "use strict";
  //handle user event for `add` button click
  $(".note-input button").on("click", function(e) {
    //object for wrapper html for note
    var $note = $("");
    //get value from input field
    var note_text = $(".note-input input").val();
    //set content for note
    $note.html(note_text);
    //append note text to note-output
    $(".note-output").append($note);
 });
};
$(document).ready(travelNotes);
```

■ DEMO 4 - travel notes - v0.4

interaction - add a note - clear input

```
//overall app logic and loader...
function travelNotes() {
    "use strict";
  //handle user event for `add` button click
  $(".note-input button").on("click", function(e) {
    //object for wrapper html for note
   var $note = $("");
   //define input field
   var $note text = $(".note-input input");
    //conditional check for input field
   if ($note_text.val() !== "") {
    //set content for note
    $note.html($note_text.val());
    //append note text to note-output
    $(".note-output").append($note);
    $note_text.val("");
  });
};
$(document).ready(travelNotes);
```

DEMO 5 - travel notes - v0.5

interaction - add a note - keyboard listener

- need to consider how to handle keyboard events
- listening and responding to a user hitting the return key in the input field
- similar pattern to user click on button

```
$(".note-input input").on("keypress", function (e) {
  if (e.keyCode === 13) {
    ...do something...
  }
});
```

- need to abstract handling both button click and keyboard press
- need to be selective with regard to keys pressed
- add a conditional check to our listener for a specific key
- use local variable from the event itself, eg: e, to get value of key pressed
- compare value of e against key value required
- example recording keypresses Demo Editor

interaction - add a note - abstract code

- need to create a new function to abstract
 - creation and output of a new note
 - manage the input field for our note app
- moving logic from button click function to separate, abstracted function
- then call this function as needed
 - for a button click or keyboard press
 - then create and render the new note

```
//manage input field and new note output
function createNote() {
    //object for wrapper html for note
    var $note = $("");
    //define input field
    var $note_text = $(".note-input input");
    //conditional check for input field
    if ($note_text.val() !== "") {
        //set content for note
        $note.html($note_text.val());
        //append note text to note-output
    $(".note-output").append($note);
        $note_text.val("");
    }
}
```

interaction - add a note - travel.js

```
//overall app logic and loader...
function travelNotes() {
 "use strict";
  //manage input field and new note output
  function createNote() {
   //object for wrapper html for note
   var $note = $("");
   //define input field
   var $note text = $(".note-input input");
    //conditional check for input field
   if ($note text.val() !== "") {
   //set content for note
   $note.html($note_text.val());
    //append note text to note-output
   $(".note-output").append($note);
   $note text.val("");
 }
  //handle user event for `add` button click
  $(".note-input button").on("click", function(e) {
   createNote();
 });
  //handle user event for keyboard press
 $(".note-input input").on("keypress", function(e){
   if (e.keyCode === 13) {
      createNote();
    }
 });
$(document).ready(travelNotes);
```

DEMO 6 - travel notes - v0.6

interaction - add a note - animate

- jQuery well-known for is its simple ability to animate elements
- many built-in effects available in jQuery
 - build our own as well
- to fadeIn an element, effectively it needs to be hidden first
- we hide our newly created note
- then we can set it to fadeIn when ready
- many additional parameters for jQuery's fadeIn function
 - customise a callback
 - change the speed of the animation
 - and so on...
- jQuery API fadeln

interaction - add a note - animate js

```
//manage input field and new note output
function createNote() {
 //object for wrapper html for note
 var $note = $("");
 //define input field
 var $note_text = $(".note-input input");
 //conditional check for input field
 if ($note_text.val() !== "") {
 //set content for note
 $note.html($note text.val());
 //hide new note to setup fadeIn...
 $note.hide();
 //append note text to note-output
 $(".note-output").append($note);
 //fadeIn hidden new note
 $note.fadeIn("slow");
 $note_text.val("");
```

■ DEMO 7 - travel notes - v0.7

style and render notes

- we have some new notes in our app
- add some styling to help improve the look and feel of a note
- can set background colours, borders font styles...
- set differentiating colours for each alternate note
- allows us to try some pseudoclasses in the CSS
 - specified paragraphs in the note-output section

```
.note-output p:nth-child(even) {
  background-color: #ccc;
}
.note-output p:nth-child(odd) {
  background-color: #eee;
}
```

DEMO 8 - travel notes - v0.8

HTML5, CSS, & JS - final thoughts

- a basic app that records simple notes
- many additional options we can add
- some basic functionality is needed to make it useful
 - autosave otherwise we lose our data each time we refresh the browser
 - edit a note
 - delete a note
 - add author information

additional functionality might include

- save persistent data to DB, name/value pairs...
- organise and view collections of notes
- add images and other media
- local and APIs
- add contextual information
- again, local and APIs
- structure notes, media, into collection
- define related information
- · search, sort...
- export options and sharing...
- security, testing, design patterns

jQuery - basics - part I

intro

- jQuery offers us a number of useful tools and options for building web apps
- packaged, prepared JavaScript library
 - a lot easier to work with, and develop for, than standard JavaScript
- features simpler syntax and a concise set of options for manipulating the DOM
 - often simply quicker and easier to write our apps with jQuery than JavaScript
- jQuery is an inherently expressive approach to working with JavaScript
 - in particular, manipulating the DOM
- consistent approach to handling events in the DOM
- includes useful, simplified approach to adding AJAX functionality

jQuery - basics - part 2

selectors

- jQuery works with selectors using a similar concept as CSS
- we can use CSS selectors as a jQuery selector

```
$("div")
$("p")
$(".note-input")
$(".note-input button")
$("p:nth-child(even)")
...
```

- jQuery may share many selectors with CSS
 - some cases where jQuery will slightly differ
- adds useful set of pseudoclasses and pseudoelements not in CSS

```
$("p:parent")
```

- use the above to find all paragraphs with children, including text
- a jQuery extension, and not part of the CSS specification

jQuery - basics - part 3

manipulate the DOM

```
<body>
 <!-- document header -->
 <header>
   <h3></h3>
   </header>
 <!-- document main -->
   <!-- note input -->
   <section class="note-input">
     <h5>add note</h5>
     <input><button></button>
   </section>
   <!-- note output -->
   <section class="note-output">
   </section>
 </main>
 <!-- document footer -->
 <footer>
   </footer>
</body>
```

- benefits of using jQuery is the ease it offers for manipulating the DOM
- add elements, delete them, move them around...

jQuery - basics - part 4

add elements

- add a new element to our app
 - simply append or prepend to a given positon in the DOM

```
//append note text to note-output
$(".note-output").append($note);
```

- adds our new element, and content to the DOM
 - end of the selected element in document

```
//append note text to note-output
$(".note-output").prepend($note);
```

- prepend to the document
 - adds to the end of the selected element
- additional options in JQuery, such as prependTo()
- differ slightly on the target for the content
- useful to select an element, then add to another elsewhere in DOM

jQuery - basics - part 5

remove elements

- also remove elements from the DOM
- easiest option is to use the remove() function on a given selector

```
$("p:nth-child(even)").remove();
```

- also empty an element, remove all child elements from selected element
 - remove all of the notes, those we added in paragraph elements

```
$(".note-output p").empty();
```

also temporarily remove elements from the window

```
$note.fadeOut("slow");
```

elements are not removed from the DOM, their style is updated

```
display: none;
```

jQuery - basics - part 6

events and async

jQuery uses a standard pattern for events and handling

```
//handle user event for `add` button click
$(".note-input button").on("click", function(e) {
    ...
});
```

- allows us to set up listeners for many user triggered events
- commonly known as event-driven or asynchronous programming
- main difference with more traditional procedural patterns, is the way we use callbacks
 - allow us to set functions for later execution
- functions are set as parameters, then executed at the appropriate, required time
- callbacks are not only appropriate for interaction or user events
- use them throughout our programming to schedule functions and execution

```
setTimeout(function() {
    ...
}, 2000);
```

- an issue with asynchronous programming
 - · often simply being aware of the execution order or sequence of events

Design and interface - intro

- consider some of the concepts, challenges, and options for interface design on the client-side
- important to remember the very nature of these applications
- these apps are inherently
 - highly interactive
 - display content from myriad sources, including databases and streaming APIs
 - communicate with other systems
 - now more dynamic than ever
- often designed and implemented with more than one activity in mind
- often represent actions such as finding results and records
 - whilst also managing that data
- access to and awarenesss of real-time data and streams
 - strongly influencing our design and development
 - from news to banking

Design and interface - goals

- an issue with app design is often focusing on both functionality, and complementary aesthetics
- look at client-side design trends in general
 - ubiquity of digital applications has led to a reduction for many early design conventions
 - rare to see a site still use browser defaults for links
 - actual design or aesthetic choice
 - a lack of design for design's sake, to leave them set to a blue with underline
- breadth and diversity of devices and network connected applications
 - also see a dizzying number of evolving patterns and standards
- consider Apple's or Google's design guidelines, then compare to Microsoft's
- no single pattern for use, no unified visual language outside of prescribed ecosystems
- want applications we design and use to be more than simply utilitarian

Design and interface - design as a guide

- interfaces simply allow us to mediate communication options and associated interaction
 - through screens and available networks
- definite need for a clear visual language
 - contains signs and symbols to help inform our users
 - provide complementary direction and feedback
- not as simple as just presenting the data as various forms of information

...primary technique to achieve improved visual communication is to use clear, distinct, consistent visible language...

Marcus, Aaron. Graphic Design for Electronic Documents and User Interfaces

- consider detailed, complex visual interfaces
 - can observe the many messages conveyed on a single screen
- challenge for design is to create some semblance of direction, order, and pattern
 - help users simply make sense of what they see

Design and interface - communication

- can be considered as involving
 - a sender
 - a message
 - a conveying signal or carrier for the message
 - a receiver or viewer who needs to interpret the message
- readily observe as designers and developers
 - we are not able to control the entire process
- interface design
 - the very act of selecting elements with user expectations in mind
 - · then the combination of these elements
 - with appropriate and useful visual signals that users actually understand
 - makes it more likely a target audience of users will successfully understand and interpret our message
- need interfaces to help us successfully manage increasingly complex nature of data

Design and interface - direction and principles

- a basic framework, a set of underlying principles we can follow or use
 - a basic template for how we think and act as designers
- start designing our applications with a more informed decision-making process
 - helps us bridge form and function
 - provide a sense of the beautiful with the useful
 - such considerations are not mutually exclusive
- underlying principles we can consider, and apply, to our designs
 - inherently help inform good practice and design choices for our development work
- principles will focus upon
 - consistency, hierarchy, and basic design personality
- consider these underlying principles in a similar vein to syntax or language
- Consistency and hierarchy are often seen as analagous to a language's grammar
 - a user learns whilst using an application.
- visual personality of our design
 - visual characteristics, notable traits in effect, of our design become the words we use to convey our message
- such principles can hold true even as technology continues to evolve
- design aesthetics and principles can remain as a footprint of our work

Design and interface - tools of the trade

- consider visual tools of our trade
 - the nuts and bolts of visual design
- tools that help us layout and construct our interfaces for users
- need to define and outline the various visual tools of application design
 - affordances
 - colour
 - controls
 - imagery
 - layout
 - type

Design and interface - common mistakes

consider some of the common mistakes

- affect our ability to design
- implement consistency within our interfaces

consider interfaces that achieve consistency

- colours appropriate for the criteria or usage environment
- consistent use of colours
- consistent standards for typography
- consistent implementation and styling of controls
- elements correctly organised and aligned
- elements placed in a logical position for users
- ie: where users expect to find them
- fonts used appropriate to a given situation, event...
- grouping of similar, contiguous elements

Design and interface - consistency, consistency...

- we need to establish rules for placement and usage of interface elements
- need to consistently adhere to these prescribed rules
- mix and match visual interface characteristics without confusing, and annoying, our users
- designer's visual language, like natural language
 - requires a set of rules to be applied consistently
 - these rules can then be recognised and interpreted
- consistency in design is rarely exciting or necessarily interesting
- it will help our users gain an innate sense of familiarity with an application
- hopefully helps drive further adoption and usage
- design consistency is simply about giving users what they can understand
 - in essence, rely on throughout an application

Image - design consistency example

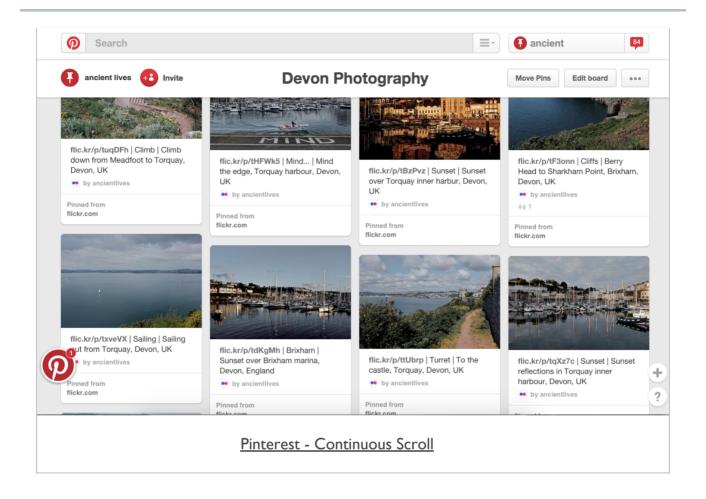


Source - Arngren.net

Design and interface - considering consistency

- start to design our interfaces for applications and web sites
- then update them in response to feedback or feature changes
 - smallest changes can cause a ripple effect throughout our application
- applications may change and evolve, implementing new or updated technologies, options...
- still need to establish consistency in usage
 - eg: Pinterest interface
 - uses an interface mechanism of continuous scrolling to display a rich variety of images
 - now an accepted option for an interface pattern
- continuous scroll pattern is attempting to solve a given problem
 - user needs to view a subset of data that is not easily displayed on a single page
 - application's content presented to users as focused subset
 - larger, seemingly endless dataset to focused view
 - user needs to be aware of the ongoing content
 - without excessive effort or hindrance to the usage experience

Image - Pinterest continuous scroll

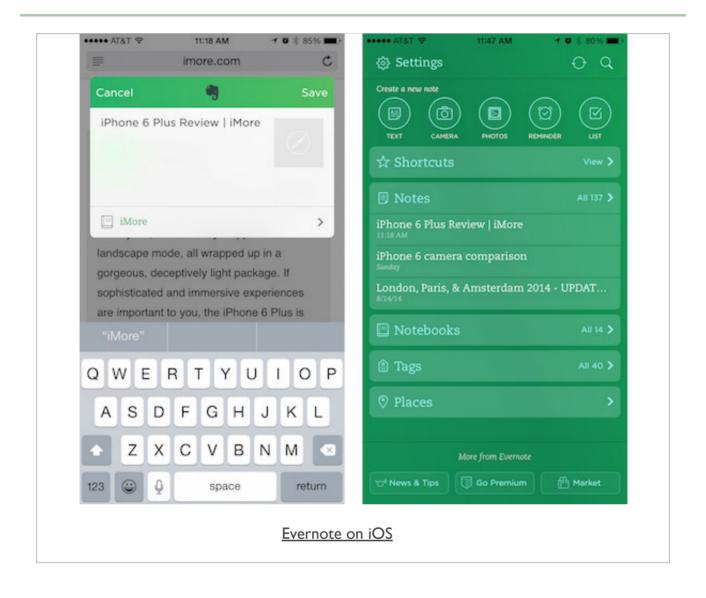


Source - Pinterest

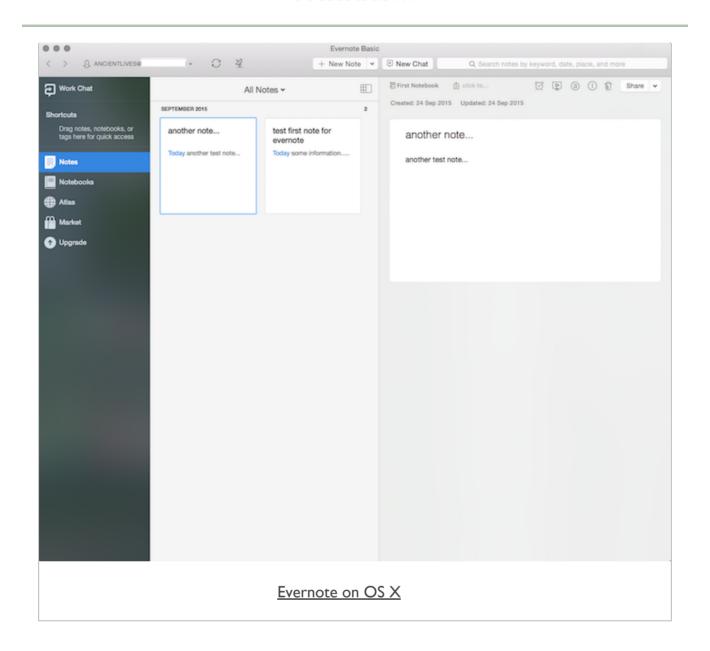
Design and interface - establishing consistency

- help our users by starting with familiar elements and designs
 - elements and designs people are familiar with from other examples and applications
- users' expectations can simply be influenced by what they see onscreen
 - naturally what they've seen in the past
- a good reason that to review and consider many different types and examples of websites
- forms can be a good example of this type of conditioning and expectation in users
- a user sees a form for payment or credit card information
 - they have normally seen and used other examples
 - examples will often follow a similar pattern
- we can modify slightly to match specific requirements
 - such as text, specific event or purchase details...
- a user will normally look for familiar interface elements
 - such as a **submit** button, input field...
- as users, we become conditioned to use patterns on a regular basis
- consistency relies on an inherent awareness of user expectations

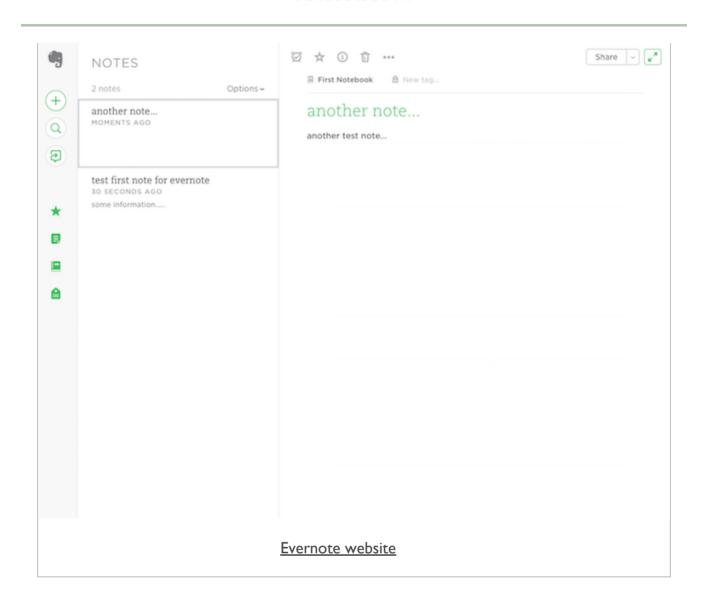
Design and interface - examples of consistency to consider...



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Design and interface - examples of consistency to consider...



Demos

- JSFiddle this events
- JSFiddle this global
- JSFiddle this literal
- JSFiddle this literal 2
- JSFiddle this window
- JSFiddle Parse JSON
- Travel Notes app
 - DEMO I travel notes v0.1
 - DEMO 2 travel notes v0.2
 - DEMO 3 travel notes v0.3
 - DEMO 4 travel notes v0.4
 - DEMO 5 travel notes v0.5
 - DEMO 6 travel notes v0.6
 - DEMO 7 travel notes v0.7
 - DEMO 8 travel notes v0.8

References

- jQuery API
- jQuery :parent selector
- JSLint JavaScript Validator
- JSONLint JSON Validator
- W3 JS Object
- W3 JS Performance