RAPID PORTFOLIO.COM

System Evaluation

Msc Design & Digital Media
P00178: **Digital Marketplace**
Submission #1

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1. Introduction

This evaluation if focused on **rapidportfolio.com**, a platform that is designed and developed by myself, based on my ideas.

Necessity is considered to be the best motive for the creation of a product.

As an illustrator I wanted to create a brief portfolio of my selected sketches and illustrations, but due to heavy load of work and studies I always had to push it back.
Since I posses all the technical knowledge of a system designer, programmer and graphic designer, and because of the coming project submission for my class "Dynamic Web Design" I am in the lucky position to have the, much needed, available time to develop the system that is described and analyzed in the following pages.

Note: *The Beta version of the system should be available at* http://rapidportfolio.com *by the end of March 2010. Currently is in production.*

2. Executive Summary

Rapidportfolio.com is an online platform that helps users build a print friendly image-based portfolio of their selected work, very fast and elegantly and without any technical or design knowledge. The emphasis of the system is on simplicity and usability. The structure and design of the final camera ready portfolio will be simple and suitable for common cheap printers. The graphic layout of the system is easily rendered in basic internet browsers.

3. Mission and Purpose

A simple and easily usable online platform to generate image based portfolios, that features fast image upload and tagging and sorting
It can also serve as an art forum that indexes artists whose work is represented by images. This is something that already exists in the world wide web, nonetheless it can be useful to the already registered users of the system.
Again the emphasis of the system is: **simplicity**, **usability** and **"rapid"** loads for web browsers.

4. System Overview

The potential users of the system, after a very quick registration process, are immediately able to upload their personal information (name, description, profile image) and the images that will compose the portfolio. For each image they are allowed to add a small description and also rearrange their order.

Afterwards they are asked to choose form a limited number of templates, the look and feel of their portfolio. These templates have a very simple design, to emphasize the work of the artist.

The system will then generate the portfolio automatically in portable document format (pdf), which they can save and print

The users portfolios will also be available as an online gallery on the website, under a specific URL. One that they could pass around to reference their work, for instance **rapidportfolio.com/username/.** Moreover they can select if they want their portfolios to be public and accessible to the visitors of the website, making their work indexed in a specific section of the system.

If this tool generates a large user base, and the need arises to print and send the portfolio directly to the users, the company can expand to facilitate these possible requests. A subsystem can then be developed, where the uses can select the paper quality and binding of the printed portfolio.

Another possible expansion can be a subsystem that helps the user design the template of his portfolio.

5. Target Market

The potential user base of this platform are:
- Artists without any technical or design knowledge to produce a camera ready, print friendly, portfolio of their work.
- People that want a space in the internet to reference their work.
- Users that are interested in a non-social network website to serve as their online portfolio.
- People who are just looking for artists.
- Businesses that need artists.

The artists who could find rapidportfolio.com useful could be:
- Illustrators
- Sketch artists
- Graffiti artists
- Comic book artists
- Cartoonists
- Sculptors
- Graphic designers
- Digital designers
- Photographers
- Architects
- Make-up artists
- Fashion designers

6. User needs and Requirements

Rapidportfolio.com categorizes its registered users into two levels: regular and premium. All system actions are available to both user types. Visitors to the website can browse all users portfolios that are public, without any charge.

Regular membership is available for free where users can upload just a limited number of images of their work, roughly **40** images, and can select from **3** different templates for their portfolios. These images are resized to a smaller dimension, roughly **640** pixels x **480** pixels, avoid heavy server use. It should be noted that images with small dimensions can not be printed in high quality. That is translated to very simple templates that the user can select for his portfolio.

Premium membership is available in month to month basis. These members can upload as many

images of their work as they want, can select from more than 3 different templates for their portfolios and their images are not resized to a smaller dimension, so that they can be printed in high quality. Once the subscription of the month is over and the user has uploaded more than 40 images (the default number for free users), then they can not add more images, until they have less than 40. Also the template of their portfolio is saved for future use, is available with the other default templates but no other premium templates are available. Moreover, any new images that they upload, are resized to the default smaller dimension.

6. Design

The website has a very simple and elegant design, without any unnecessary information. It should be noted that the general design is connected with its usability.

The layout of the system promotes the perception that it is a useable tool that doesn't require any technical knowledge or aesthetics from the users. It features carefully designed text and images that load very fast, utilizes the aesthetics of traditional designs of print media, meaning designs with fonts, carefully selected color palettes, and scarce images in strategic positions.

The layout promotes the pseudo-feeling of "depth". Each time a user clicks on a link, the content is loaded on a transparent layer, the transparency of which, as well as the color palette of the text on it, are carefully selected to be pleasing to the users eye in relation to all the information that is visible underneath it.

Layers that contain the users profile section and image gallery, feature a different color palette than those that contain the basic system sections, such as general information about the website, the "contact us" form, and so on.

Different design templates are also available by default, when a user tries to print the web-based portfolio from their browser.

7. Usability

The website does not require any page reloads at all, in order to keep the transitions from one section to another as seamless as possible, giving the it a more "natural" usability. It does so by utilizing sophisticated algorithms and modern technologies. Moreover, it does not require any technologies that are not available by default on all common browsers, such as java applets and flash animations.

The code algorithms are sophisticated enough to ensure, up to a certain point, that the system will not crush under heavy strain and use, since it implements error handlers for numerous different system errors.

It should be mentioned that the algorithms behind the system are highly complex and provide the registered users, and the whole system in general, the benefits of a highly safe, robust system, by conforming to the guidelines of the OWASP (Open Web Application Security Project) organization, as well as explicit code designed by the author.

Some aspects of the system usability should be mentioned:
- The user registration form requires only three fields for the user to fill, keeping the procedure very simple and fast.
- Functions to reset the users password in an easy way, are also available.

- The registered user profile is only one page, with a very simple aesthetic.
- Registered users can select multiple files that are uploaded, resized and categorized simultaneously, without any page reloads. And the used algorithms ensure error handling
- Visitors to the website can browse the registered user profiles very fast. All registered users are categorized, regarding what type of artist they are. Search functions could also be available.

The design of the system in terms of usability, is based on the authors use of multiple websites that provide image galleries, such as:

- flickr.com
- photobucket.com
- sheezyart.com
- deviantart.com
- myartplot.com
- conceptart.org
- amateurillustrator.com
- facebook.com

Although a more careful re-examination of the functions that the above systems provide, is always in order.

After the beta version of the website is completed, a trial period is of paramount importance, for thorough testing and grading of the systems usability, as well as possible additions or omissions to the system functionalities. The system should be easy to access and used even by users that possess little to none experience in web based systems.

8. Marketability of the System

The system could be promoted to online art forums, illustration studios, independent professional artists, as well as amateur aspiring artists. It could start by existing as a forum for underground artists such as graffiti and stencil artists since all the functionalities that are available to premium members are also available to the free members.

9. Benefits to the users

Registered users can put together a portfolio of their image based selected work, without any previous knowledge of design and without any technical experience to design tools such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign or QuarkXPress. These users will also have an online space to showcase their gallery work as well as a unique URL address that they can pass around and add to their curriculum vitae.

Unregistered users, or common visitors, can browse to all the available galleries and network with artists from all over the world.

10. Potential for Profitability

No advertisements.

NONE

The layout of the website is structured in a deliberate way, not to feature any advertisements. Advertisements, in relation to the layout, will most certainly be displeasing to the eye, and act more as visual noise to the user when combined with the design of this site . This is another way for the system to keep in tune with its philosophy of simplicity.

The philosophy of the venture is to provide a free online tool for the artists galleries. Although for a more sophisticated use of the systems functionalities, a subscription is needed, but it is going to be kept very low cost. The income of the system, should be enough to market it, sustain its existence in the internet, and finance the costs of server use and possibly buy more bandwidth if the need arises.

Registered users of the system are categorized in regular and premium members. All system functions are available to both member types, but with different quality of service. Free users can upload a limited number of images, can select only from a few templates for their portfolio and their images are resized to smaller default dimensions. Registered users have no such restrictions.

Possible expansion to venture can be the printing, binding and shipping of the tangible user portfolios by charge. However the author is not interested in having a publishing house for those portfolios, a partnership could be made with a publisher to commission that work.

11. Financing

The financing of the system should include funds for:

- The developer of they system, for all the development stages, as well as supporting the website, as well as supporting the system
- Desktop computers with large, high resolution screens.
- Wacom Tablets.
- Software such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign to design the templates for the website generated portfolios as well as the different sections of the website
- Software for the development of the website, such as Adobe Dreamweaver.
- Acquisition of a dedicated server which can provide high bandwidth and large disk space for the users files.

Moreover, the design and functions of the website should be available to all the different devices that can browse the internet, and are available to the market. From desktop computers and laptops, to netbooks and smart phones, each with different screen sizes and resolutions. Possible finance should include funds for smart phones, such as iphone, blackberry, in order to utilize their functionalities to serve the website in the highest possible way.

Appendix

A. System Screenshots

A.1 Home Page
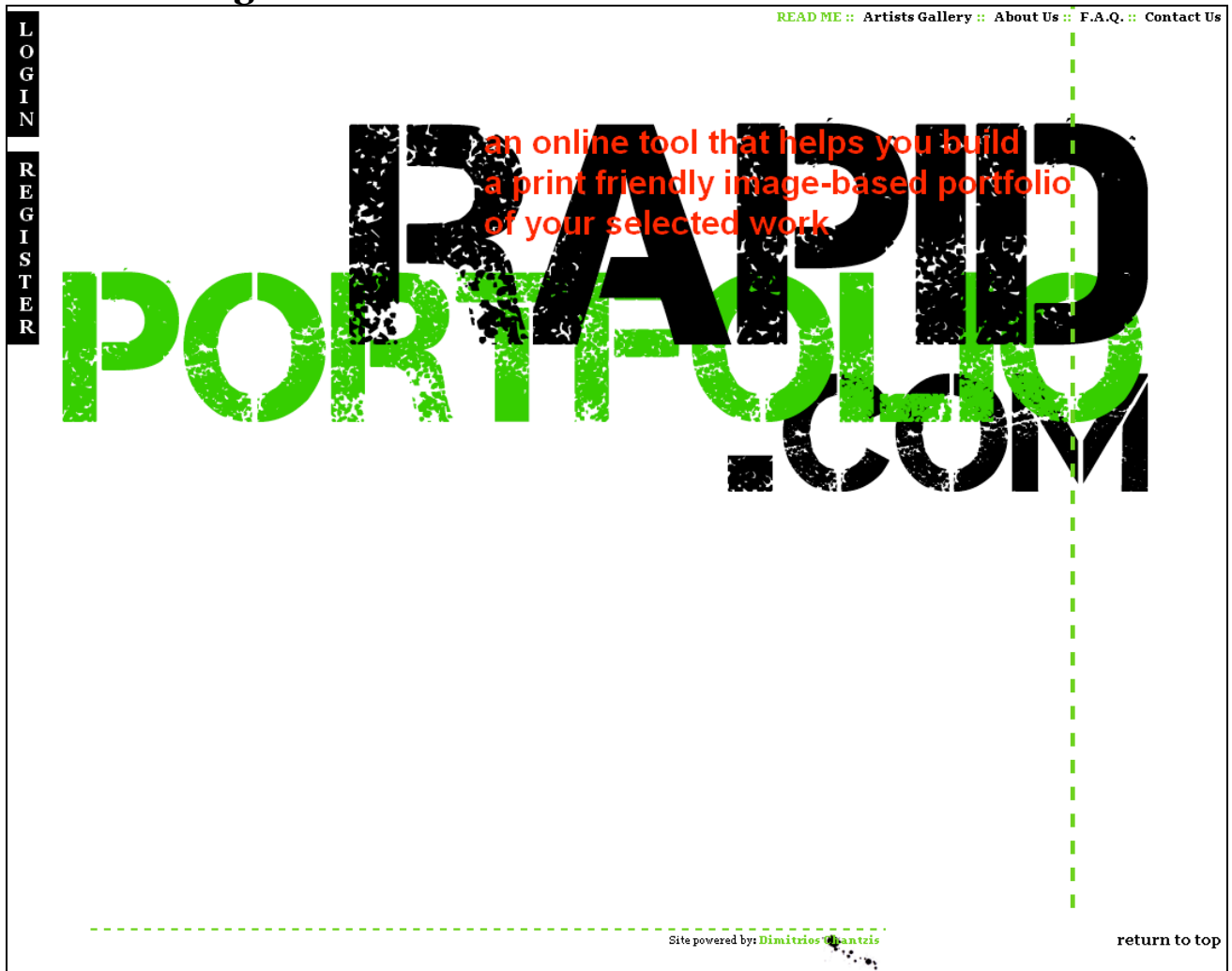
A.2. Registration Form

LOGIN

REGISTER

(type your username)

(type your e-mail)

(type your password)

☐ I agree with the terms of agreement   save & submit

an online tool that helps you build
a print friendly image-based portfolio
of your selected work

RAPID PORTFOLIO.COM

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A.3. User Profile

jamesdoe LOGOUT

READ ME :: Artists Gallery :: About Us :: F.A.Q. :: Contact Us

NOTE: The contents of this page are just a mock-up for clarification purposes. Please note that the design of this page is not final.

1 PERSONAL INFORMATION

The user is able to select each of the types below. Each time he selects one, the database is updated via AJAX.

What type of artist are you? (select one or more)

graphic designer   digital designer   illustrator   sketch artist   graffiti artist

architect   comics artist   photographer   hair styling   make-up artist

animator   cartoonist   fashion designer

From the file browser on the left, the user selects an image for his profile. Once he selects it, it appears on the right.

Select profile image to upload:

Browse..

submit

(type your name)

submit

(type your description)

4000 remaining characters

submit

2 UPLOAD IMAGES

NOTE: Here is going to be the multi-file upload for the images. The files will be selected individually. Once an image is selected, the user can select the next one, while the first image is being uploaded to the server. Everytime an image is uploaded, the thumbnail of that image appears in the next section.

3 YOUR PORTFOLIO

NOTE: When a user clicks on an image, a layer with the fullsized image appears and the user can add a very brief description about it.
The user will also be able to organize the order of the images.

4 PRINT OPTIONS

NOTE: In this section the user can select a print option for his portfolio

Option 1: The user can just select "Print" from the browser, or from a custom made button of the system. There would be used a specific css file for the printed page.

Optiona 2: A custom made button which, when clicked, creates and start to download the users portfolio in pdf format.

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A.4. Contact Us Section

B. Bibliographic References

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- Thorpe, S., "How to Think Like Einstein: Simple Ways to Break the Rules and Discover Your Hidden Genius" (Sourcebooks, Inc. , 2000)