

Portfolio

Selected Work From 2003-2010

From Jim Jeffers

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2009

Encouraged Commentary

Client:

Personal

Project Type:

Experimental
Open Source

Role:

Designer
Developer

Technologies:

Javascript
HTML
CSS

In an experiment to remove friction in the design of web blogs I created a client-side javascript that could detect when a user highlighted content on a given web page. This functionality could be used to quote the article or quote a specific author of a specific comment in the blog.

Utilizing a custom microformat the script can tell whom responded to whom thus enabling us to perform threading of comments. Additionally, I was able to utilize this microformat to provide a contextual navigation system on each comment allowing readers to easily see other responses from the same author or other replies to the specific comment.

Full details and a live demo can be found on my blog:

<http://donttrustthisguy.com/2009/01/04/encouraged-commentary/>

The source code for this project and complete documentation is available on github:

<http://github.com/jimjeffers/encouraged-commentary>

Project Recognition

Shortly after I introduced the encouraged commentary on my blog news spread about it in Wired Magazine:

Can 'Encouraged Commentary' Bring Conversations Back to the Blog?

http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/encouraged-commentary_conversational_comments.php

And Read Write Web:

Encouraged Commentary: Bringing Natural Conversational Dynamics to Commenting

<http://www.wired.com/epicenter/2009/01/can-encouraged/>

And even Hacker News:

Encouraged Commentary (cool use of jQuery to enhance blog commenting)

<http://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=422252>



2009

TTM Exploratory

Client:

Academic Work

Project Type:

Psychology
Research

Role:

Graduate Student
Researcher

During my study at the University of Queensland I participated in a special topics research course on social computing and behavior change. I became very interested in the Trans-Theoretical Model of behavior change, a theory that states behavior change is a linear process that occurs over five different stages while experiencing ten processes. These processes are more or less influential when an individual is in a given stage.

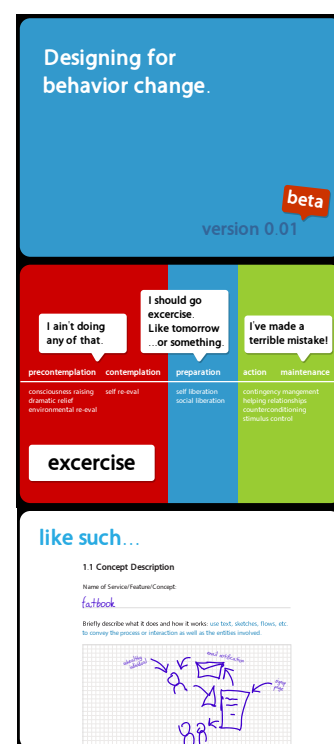
After researching and understanding the theory, I created a proof of concept in the form of a workbook that could serve as an exploratory exercise for designers who aim to incorporate persuasive strategies and influence the change of a user's behavior. In the case of our research group the goal was to develop a social software application which would promote health and exercise.

If you wish you may download a copy of the workbook for your own review:

http://sumocreations.com/designing_for_behavior_change/toolkit_revised.pdf

Additionally you may download the slides which serve as a good foundation for the basis of the tool and my research:

http://sumocreations.com/designing_for_behavior_change/slides.pdf



2009

UQ ITEE Booking System

Client:

Academic Work

Project Type:

Web Application

Role:

Designer

Developer

Graduate Student

Technologies:

Javascript

HTML

CSS

Ruby / Rails

Git

Capistrano

I was part of a four person team assigned with the task of redesigning and rebuilding a web application for UQ's ITEE department. The goal was to enhance the user experience and increase the efficiency of the school's online equipment rental application.

We found several problems with the existing process. For example, users could not search for equipment unless they had registered with the school. Stakeholders explained there was no legitimate reason for this. As a result we found this to be a problem as the school wanted to promote the system but students who went to the existing application had no idea what the school had or how the tool worked. This was a consequence of the fact that no information was provided by the current system without signing in.

Additionally, making a booking was a tedious process as a student would need to find an item before they could check its availability. We revised the process so that users could search and specify availability at the same time. We also enabled users to filter the search results by subcategories and also adjust their rental dates to see live changes to the available items.

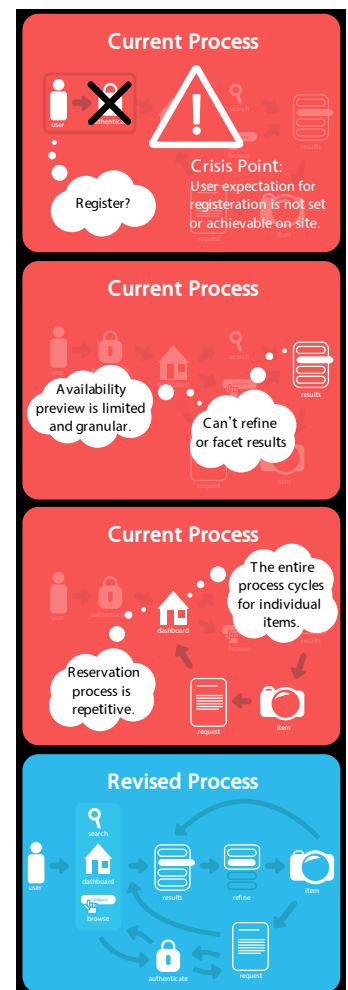
The entire project was done in four weeks with the majority of production design and development occurring in the final two. Our team rebuilt the system from the ground up utilizing the Ruby on Rails web framework on a virtual private server running Ubuntu Hardy.

Screenshots and additional details are available on my online portfolio:

<http://jimjeffers.com/work/equipment-booking-system-1>

A partially working version of the application is currently hosted at:

<http://grabthatapp.com>



2009

Ignite Phoenix

Client:

Ignite Phoenix

Project Type:

Website Design
Community Service

Role:

Designer
Developer

Technologies:

Javascript
HTML
CSS
PHP
Wordpress

In the Spring of 2009, I coordinated with community volunteers who organize the Phoenix chapter of Ignite to redesign the event's web presence. I strived to merge the branding of the Ignite event with that of the city of Phoenix to create something more personal to the community. I spent time to create illustrations of landmarks in the city as well as the actual event venue. These illustrations were incorporated into the design.

The design was implemented as a standards compliant wordpress theme. I created some custom wordpress functions to allow the volunteers to utilize wordpress as a CMS. The theme presented all content on a single page but loaded content from multiple pages in wordpress to enable end users to easily manage content on the site.

I utilized jQuery to dynamically scroll to various sections of the page. More importantly, a javascript listener was implemented to track when the user scrolled to different sections of the web site. This in turn updated the active section of the pages navigation to inform the user where they currently were on the page.

I posted another write up about this design on my blog:

<http://donttrustthisguy.com/2009/05/13/igniting-phoenix/>

More screenshots and descriptions are available at my online portfolio:

<http://jimjeffers.com/work/ignite-phoenix>

Sadly, the community no longer chose to continue utilizing this theme after Ignite Phoenix 5 last summer. You can try it out yourself though - the theme is open source and available for download on github:

<http://github.com/jimjeffers/Ignite-Phoenix-Wordpress-Theme>



2008

JBN & Associates

Client:

JBN & Associates

Project Type:

Web Application

Role:

Designer
Developer
Copywriter

Technologies:

Javascript
HTML
CSS
Ruby / Rails
Git
Capistrano
Humanis

JBN, a small professional staffing firm, approached me in 2008 to redesign their web site. The existing web presence did not integrate properly into their customer relations software which tracked and placed applicants.

I started by understanding the different audience types JBN was targeting and identifying goals for their users. The three types of audiences were traditional staffing applicants, executive applicants, and potential customers (firms wishing to utilize JBN for placement). Initially, the core screens of the site were presented as wireframes that were drafted in illustrator. Further discussion then led to the creation of high fidelity mock-ups and finally semantic HTML/CSS code.

The second challenge was developing an interface to tie into the Humanis placement system. This was solved by repurposing a utility built into Humanis to upload job information to the server as XML data as opposed to HTML web pages. A cron job in ruby runs on the web site server checking for new data and subsequently imports new positions into the database. Job data is served and job applications sent back to Humanis via a simple ruby on rails application I developed to power the site.

Larger screenshots of this project are available at my online portfolio:

<http://jimjeffers.com/work/jbn-amp-associates-1>

You can see the live site online at:

<http://jbnassociates.com/>



2009

Alien Interaction

Client:

Academic Work

Project Type:

Design

Role:

Designer

Our first studio assignment at UQ was to facilitate an “alien interaction” that was required to last at least 45 seconds. We had freedom to choose whatever we wanted to serve as each entity but were forbidden to use any computer technology whatsoever. The project had to be achieved purely with physics or basic mechanical components.

Our team devised a scheme to create two aliens. A cubic canvas served as our interpreter, and a spray paint rack, which we fabricated, served as the communicator. The project proved to be difficult for us. This was partly due to the fact that it was highly conceptual but also because none of our team members had a strong background in physical construction. This made the fabrication process very challenging as it was difficult to gauge the constraints of our abilities and what we could achieve.

More screenshots and descriptions are available at my online portfolio:

<http://jimjeffers.com/work/alien-interaction-1>



2007

Sitewire

Client:

Sitewire

Project Type:

Website Design

Role:

Designer

Technologies:

Javascript

HTML

CSS

Flash

Sitewire is a digital agency located in Tempe, Arizona. I was originally hired to work as a front-end architect handling interfacing between external design agencies, our client's account executives, and our in-house development team. However, after three months of working there the agency formed an in-house creative department.

One of our first projects was to redesign the agencies web presence. I worked in close conjunction with Mike Campbell from Visual Intent studio to incorporate his new brand identity into an aesthetically pleasing and functional web site.

I was responsible for the visual design, photography, and front-end design of the web site.

Larger screenshots of this project are available at my online portfolio:

<http://jimjeffers.com/work/sitewire-1>

You can see the live site online at:

<http://sitewire.dev.sitewire.net/default.aspx>



2003

Crime In Motion (portfolio)

Client:

Personal

Project Type:

Flash Application
Experimental

Role:

Designer
Developer

Technologies:

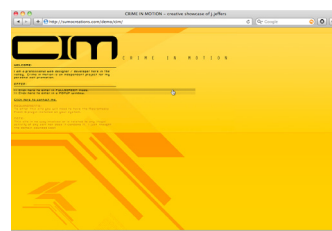
Flash 6
Javascript
HTML
CSS

My first online portfolio. Built in 2003 with Action Script 1.0 – versions 2 and 3 of the language didn't exist yet! The site was deployed in Flash 6 and features commercial projects I did dating back to the start of my commercial career beginning in 1999. Unfortunately, none of those projects are still available online as I did a poor job archiving my work for personal reference.

The flash application utilizes XML files to dynamically load in portfolio content as well as a play list for the MP3 player. Some might notice the small resolution as 800x600 was the most prominent display resolution for the web at this time.

You can view this project online at:

<http://sumocreations.com/demo/cim/>



2010

Sumo Creations

Client:

Personal

Project Type:

Web Design
Experimental

Role:

Designer
Developer
Copywriter

Technologies:

Javascript
HTML
CSS

This year I wanted to promote my business with a more legitimate web presence. But as most of my business is generated by word of mouth, it didn't seem appropriate to spend a great deal of time providing a wealth of information selling our services.

Instead, I put together a simple experiment. I drew a scene in Adobe Illustrator and then converted one of the sumo wrestlers into a CSS sprite. I used css transforms and animations to recreate and animate the scene without javascript or flash!

The text is presented using Cufon a javascript library that works much like SiFR but utilizes the HTML5 canvas element instead of the flash plugin to generate text in a non web standard font.

You can view this site live at:

<http://sumocreations.com/>

The source code is also available on github:

<http://github.com/jimjeffers/Sumo-Creations>



2009 Cactus Sports

Client:

Cactus Sports Inc.

Project Type:

E-commerce Application

Role:

Designer
Developer

Technologies:

Javascript
HTML
CSS
Ruby / Rails
RSpec

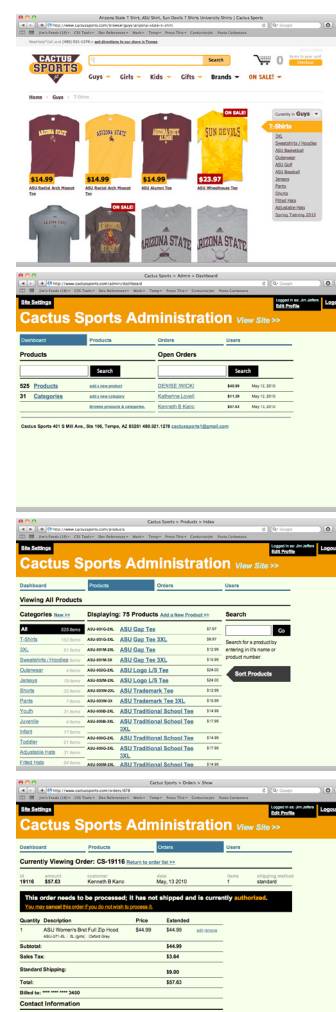
This web application is a fully fledged E-commerce site. Built from the ground up in ruby on rails, I designed and developed a custom shopping cart for the organization to manage their products in a manner that best fit their work process.

The consumer interface is minimal so that product photos have the most emphasis on the page. My intent was to keep the interface minimal so there would be little distractions in the visual design to prevent the user from completing their purchase. Photo, price, and sale information are the most prominent elements on the page.

The interface of the back end tool is streamlined for employees to easily process open orders or look up past orders for reference. Staff can manage all aspects of the site from global collections of colors and sizes to individual product variants and their organization or placement on the page.

You can view this project online at:

<http://cactussports.com>



2010

Centurion Jet

Client:

Centurion Jet

Project Type:

Web Application

Role:

Designer
Developer
Copywriter

Technologies:

Javascript
CoffeeScript
HTML
CSS
Ruby / Rails
Git
Capistrano
RSpec
Cucumber

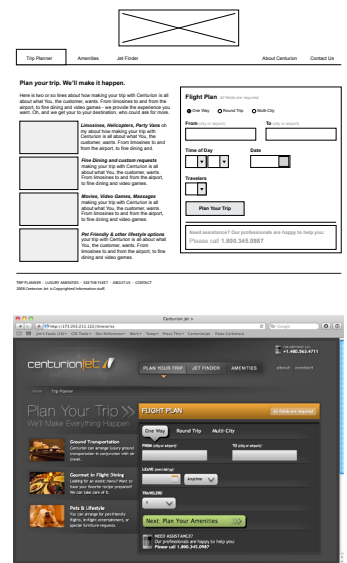
Currently in production, the Centurion Jet web site is a comprehensive web based application for booking travel by private business jets. I teamed up with a fellow interaction designer, Matt Gist, who worked with me and the client's account executive team to create a process that addressed their clients questions when booking travel with their services.

The application is built in Ruby on Rails and many interactive components and controls have been built from scratch to facilitate complex form controls. To build these components I've opted to use a DSL (domain specific language) for javascript called CoffeeScript. This new technology has enabled me to write complex javascript projects in a much more readable, cleaner, and maintainable syntax.

Additionally, extensive acceptance testing and unit testing has been incorporated into the development process by using rSpec and Cucumber testing frameworks for Ruby.

The front-end code is written in HTML5 and renders appropriately in IE 6/7/8 in addition to modern web browsers.

The project is expected to be completed in late June.



2006

Interactive Center Maps

Client:

The Irvine Company

Project Type:

Flash Application

Role:

Designer
Developer

Technologies:

Javascript
HTML
Flash

One of my earliest projects at Sitewire involved building an interactive map for the Irvine Company's flagship shopping centers in Irvine California. The maps were painstakingly reconstructed as flash symbols. Extensive actionscript was used to perform zooming and data handling. Store information is controlled from a CMS which sends an XML feed to the map. To maintain the integrity of the brand identities for each center, color schemes are passed in via a theme parameter to the application.

You can view this project online at:

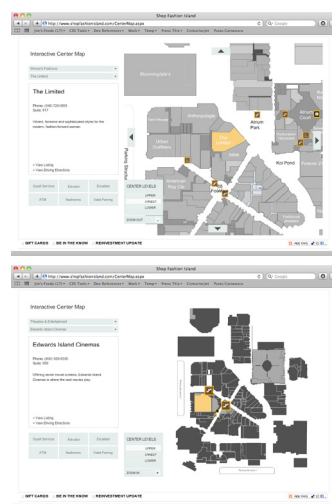
<http://www.shopfashionisland.com/CenterMap.aspx>

For Irvine Spectrum Center:

<http://www.shopirvinespectrumcenter.com/CenterMap.aspx>

And for The Market Place:

<http://www.shophemarketplace.com/CenterMap.aspx>



2007

Marabou Ranch

Client:

DMB Realty

Project Type:

Web site Design
Flash Application

Role:

Designer
Developer

Technologies:

Javascript
HTML
CSS
Flash

Marabou Ranch is a luxury community by land developer DMB. I was tasked in creating a promotional micro site showcasing the sports training offered in the community as one of the perks. The project was designed in photoshop and implemented in standards compliant HTML/CSS.

In addition to the site design I was tasked in developing and designing an interactive site map to locate available lots for purchase by potential prospects. This was built in ActionScript 3.0.

You can view this project online at:

http://sumocreations.com/demo/marabou_landing/



2007

DontTrustThisGuy.com

Client:

Personal

Project Type:

Web Blog

Role:

Designer
Developer

Technologies:

Javascript
HTML
CSS
PHP
Wordpress
Microformats

DontTrustThisGuy is the name of my blog which I have been maintaining since 2005. At the end of 2007 I spent some of my holiday time off to give the blog a complete redesign. This was my first stab at extensively practicing what I had recently learned from Luke Wroblewski's full day workshop on visual hierarchy in web design. Elements are sized appropriately so that emphasis is on the primary content of the page rather than the user interface or secondary meta information.

From a technology perspective this design is built as a wordpress theme. What is significant here though is the reliance on CSS3 modules back in 2007. While designers are becoming more accepting of CSS3 in their design implementations in 2009 and 2010, back in 2007 it was quite unheard of to use multiple backgrounds, rgba, or border-radius in production CSS. Additionally, I made an active effort to incorporate HTML microformats as much as possible into the theme.

A post detailing the project can be found here:

<http://donttrustthisguy.com/2008/01/01/a-refreshed-design-for-2008/>



2008

Phoenix Light Rail Map

Client:

Personal

Project Type:

Infographic

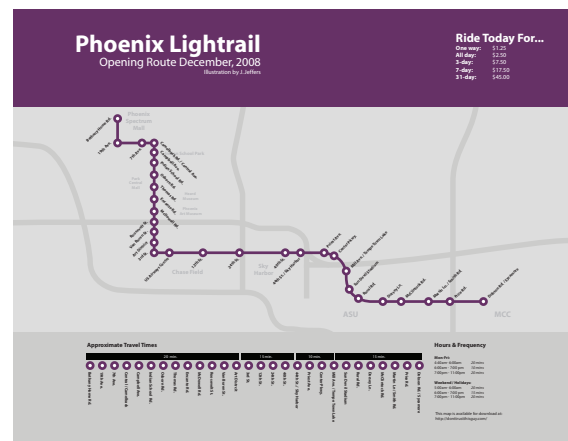
Role:

Designer

When the new light rail system launched in Phoenix I was quite frustrated that a complete map was not available. The official site only offered a map separated PDF sections in far too much detail. The hand-outs available at the launch didn't even include a map. So I went home and drew up my own in illustrator. I supplied major cross streets and included all major stops. I also created a simple visual representation of the trip length data supplied by the department of transportation allowing the commuter to easily guess the timing of their journey.

A post detailing the project can be found here:

<http://donttrustthisguy.com/2008/12/28/the-phoenix-light-rail-is-here/>



Open Source Projects

As a programmer I have made several contributions in the form of open source projects.

Encouraged Commentary

A client side javascript that enables users to easily track and respond to messages on blogs and message forums.

<http://github.com/jimjeffers/encouraged-commentary>

Advanced CSS Textmate Bundles

A simple set of textmate snippets that enable developers to take advantage of proper CSS documentation strategies as well as shortcuts for using proprietary CSS3 attributes such as border-radius and box-shadow.

<http://github.com/jimjeffers/Advanced-CSS-Textmate-Bundles>

AssetBuild

AssetBuild is a simple ruby gem that allows developers to implement CSS or Javascript/Coffeescript build processes for minified production assets.

<http://github.com/jimjeffers/assetbuild>

Acts As Debated

A rails plugin to handle voting systems similar to the behavior seen when users vote questions or answers up and down on StackOverflow. The plugin can also handle simple upward voting such as facebook likes or Digg.

http://github.com/jimjeffers/acts_as_debated

Has GUID

A rails plugin that creates web friendly ID's for URLs based on a models attribute.

http://github.com/jimjeffers/has_guid

Essays

I have been actively maintaining my blog for over five years now. Here are some of my favorite posts:

[The Art and Zen of Writing CSS](#)

[Tips for the Aspiring Web Consultant](#)

[Content is Effective Web Design](#)

[An Effective Web App Design Process](#)

[Blogging is Not Technology](#)

[Write HTML that Means Something](#)

[Advocates Vs. Practitioners Vs. Practicality](#)

[The Phoenix Light rail is Here](#)