

PR 488: INTRO TO VISUAL COMMUNICATION

WEB DESIGN BASICS

CONSUMPTION IS EVERYWHERE

Designers realize they always have to adapt to a rapidly changing landscape to get information out to the masses.

First it was the printing press. Then radio. Then television. Then came the internet.

WAIT...I CAN'T DO THAT ON THE INTERNET?

There are a few major things to remember when designing for digital space, particularly if you decide to design a website:

- ▶ The web is fluid.
- ▶ The web is fast.
- ▶ You'd better have good content for the web.

FLUIDITY VS. RIGIDITY

- ▶ Print design (and to a degree, ad design) is generally pretty rigid. You're given specs, you design to those specs, you send it off to a printer and you know what size item you're going to get back.
- ▶ Web design is inherently fluid. You can design a single page template, but you often have to account for different content types, length of copy, and the classic case of "hey, why did my photo move all of this other crap in a direction I didn't expect?"

REMEMBER, THE WEB IS EVERYWHERE!

Often complicating web design is that there are a myriad number of devices and various situations that your design could be viewed in. Consider:

- ▶ A person waiting in line at the DMV and browsing the web on their phone.
- ▶ A smart home with an internet screen on the refrigerator.
- ▶ An office worker with a fast internet connection but some ridiculous corporate firewall setup that restricts certain sites and content (like ads).

HE'S GOTTA BE FAST, HE'S GOTTA BE SMART

The next major consideration for the web is speed.

- ▶ 20 years ago, people used modems and it often took hours to download a single song. Now, people expect fast Wi-Fi and even fast cellphone data connections.
- ▶ Most people will wait at least 4 seconds for a site to load before abandoning it, though nearly half of web users expect a site to load in 2 seconds or less.

HOW DOES THE NEED FOR SPEED AFFECT DESIGN?

You need to put even more careful thought into what you put on a web page. Ask yourself:

- ▶ Do you **really** need that carousel at the top that no one will ever get past the first slide of?
- ▶ Do you **really** need to have a 5-minute video at the top of your page that people are only going to watch 30 seconds of?
- ▶ Do you **really** need 18 photos of cats when maybe 3 will do?

CONTENT NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE

When you consider the fluidity of the web, and the need for speed, you not only have to consider what design elements you'll have on the page, but also your content.

In an age of SEO (search engine optimization) and buzzwords and trying to get your content in front of as many eyeballs as possible, remember one thing:

Well-written, thoughtful, and appropriate content is king.

WHY CAN'T I JUST SLAP A FLYER ON THERE?

Another consideration you should have about content is that it should be searchable. Are you lazy and just want to put a screenshot of your flyer or a PDF of your brochure on a page? Sure, you can, but who's going to find it?

Search engines rely on text on a web page to serve up results. They can't scan words on images or words in a PDF. If you're going to serve up images, you need metadata!

GET TO THE POINT

What does having good content mean? First off, it means getting to the point quickly in language your audience can understand. There's no need to write a novel or be flowery.

If you're providing a service, tell your audience what you do and who you serve.

If you're selling product, tell me what you sell.

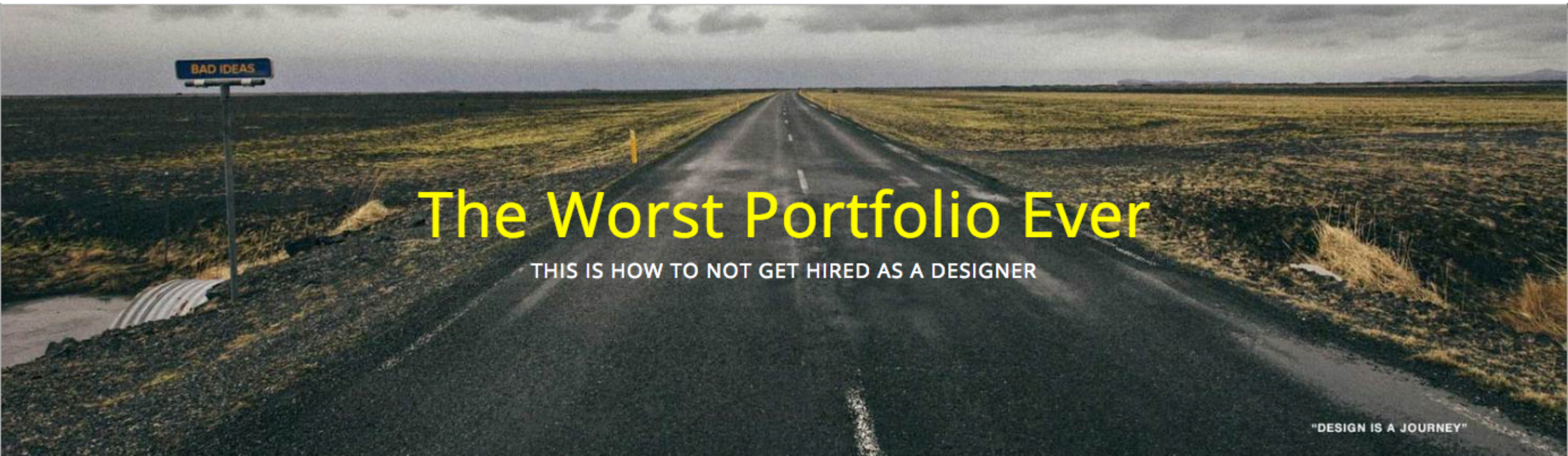
Don't hold out on your audience and assume they'll keep scrolling.



USC University of
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Power outage on UPC Campus. Multiple buildings impacted. More information will be provided as it becomes available. Report any emergencies to the Department of Public Safety at 213-740-4321 (UPC) or 323-442-1000 (HSC). Do not attempt to use elevators. Check elevators in your area to determine if anyone may be trapped inside. If so, do not force open the doors; report it to DPS. Shutdown any equipment that could be hazardous if power suddenly returns. Unplug computers and equipment, especially if not connected to a surge protector.

Labs: Check your refrigerators and ultra-low freezers. Keep the doors closed. Many university buildings have generators that provide emergency power to critical equipment such as fire alarms and emergency lighting, not for normal electrical outlets.



I am a 23 year old designer/thinker living and making in sunny San Francisco. A penetrating storyteller, I like to massage my hand-crafted, beautiful pixels. I'm obsessed with kitesurfing, minimalism and making things easier and more delightful. I make stuff, I ship stuff, and I like creating engaging visual experiences for real people. I also like craft beers and whales.



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