Rachel Smith

Front-End Developer

Building and designing websites with motion

Motion designer and developer

a. Currently she builds all of Active Theory’s websites, which is a Creative Digital Production company in California. Their clients include Coca-Cola, Chevy, Google, Fox and Under Armor.

b. She holds three Bachelor degrees – The first two are from The University of Queensland, Australia in Business Management and Information Technology.

She went on to receive her most recent and relevant degree in Creative/Interactive Media from the SAE Creative Media Institute, in Sydney.

According to her LinkedIn profile, her professional experience as a developer started in 2010.

c. She is an avid Twitter user (11k tweets), and posts articles on her blog every week. She also frequently shares demos and tips for interactive design on a site called codepen.io.

d. Programming languages and software Rachel knows: SVG, HTML/5, PHP, Wordpress, Flash, CSS, jQuery, ActionScript, MySQL, Javascript, CMS, AJAX, Apache.

e. She is highly self-driven, but often looks to fellow designers for inspiration in Podcasts and articles. She is a strong advocate for communities in which women are encouraged to learn and explore code and tech. She also mentions her “love affair with the web began when her dad first brought home a dial-up modem in '97”.

Floaty Flutter Rainbow Stars

<http://codepen.io/rachsmith/pen/JdYemy>

Hairy rainbow text

<http://codepen.io/rachsmith/pen/VLBQbe>

These are two of the many demos that she has shared on her CodePen profile.

Going into this research, I assumed that the lines were quite blurry between the different kinds of web designers. My background is primarily in graphic design, and Rachel is definitely not a graphic designer. From a purely aesthetic sense, Rachel is not concerned with making consistently refined-looking work. When it comes to color and typography, she really couldn’t care less. What she enjoys exploring is the functions and features – the moving parts and the purposes they serve. Based on these two rainbow themed demos, she is clearly a master at making incredibly smooth interactive work. Their functions are to appear both fun and informal for the purpose of teaching others.

Active Theory

<http://activetheory.net/>

Her most recent commercial work is a stark contrast to her demos, and rightfully so. Here she is showcasing the skills that she demonstrates informally on CodePen. In this sense she is a highly practical designer. She applies code to situations by how she sees them, whether they are commercial or semi-academic. The user’s interaction with the website is polished, but not visually interesting. It feels up-to-date, and by corporate standards, that’s all that truly matters. I appreciate the subtlety of this work.