



scroll

SEE THE WAY FORWARD

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SCROLL



See the way forward

the
RESPOND
edition

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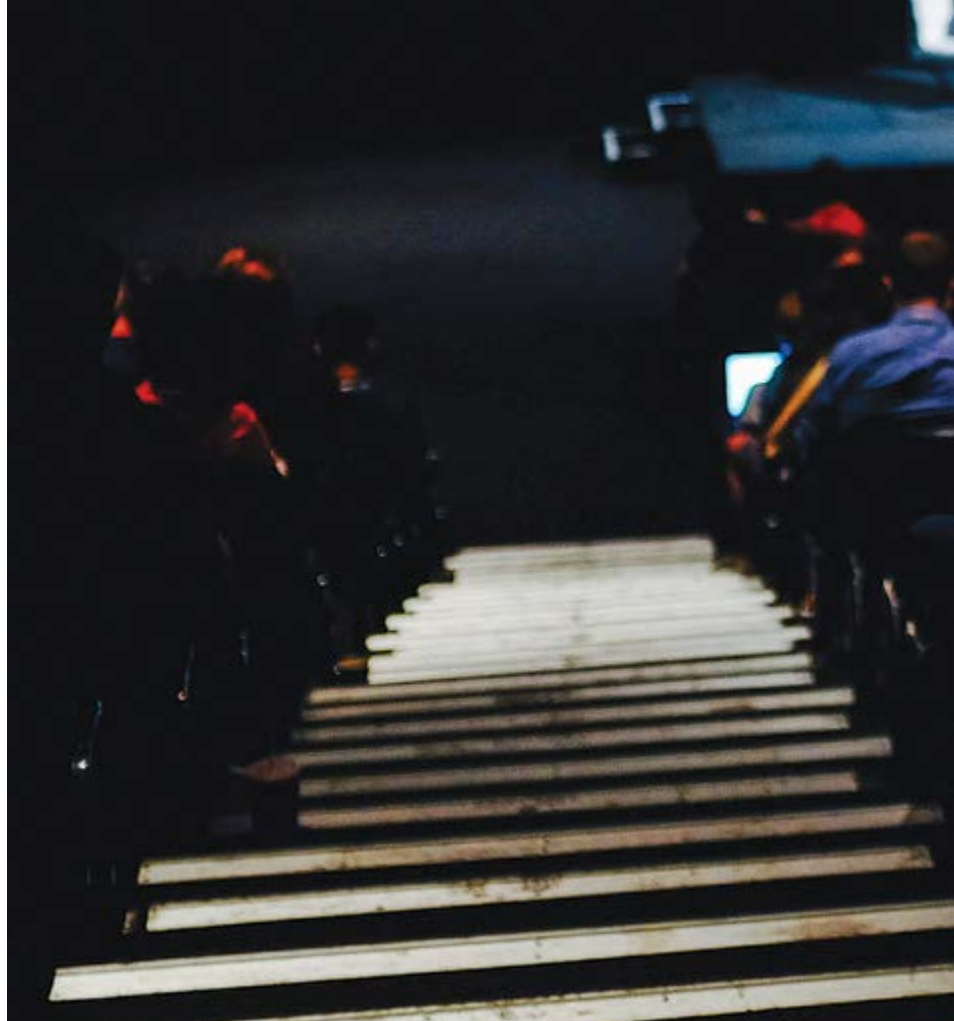
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FOREWORD



I remember.

I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS TRYING TO MAKE MY FIRST WEBSITE. I WAS LIVING IN GERMANY AND PLAYING IN A BAND. WE DECIDED THE BAND SHOULD HAVE ITS OWN LITTLE CORNER OF THE WORLD WIDE WEB.



Jeremy Keith

—

@adactio

I said I'd give it a go.

I remember finding everything I needed. It was all on the web. Designers, developers, webmasters ... whatever you want to call them, they were selflessly sharing everything that they had learned. I lapped it up. I learned the lovely little language of HTML.

I learned about using tables for layout and using 1 pixel by 1 pixel blank .gifs for fine-grained control. I even learned some Perl just so that people could fill in a form to contact us. Before long, our band had its own website.

I remember showing the web to the singer in my band. I showed him fan sites dedicated to his favourite musicians, sites filled with discographies and lyrics. I remember how impressed he was, but I also remember him asking "Why? Why are these people sharing all of this?"

I suppose it was a good question but it was one I had never stopped to ask. I had just accepted the open flow of ideas and information as being part and parcel of the World Wide Web. When I decided to make a personal website for myself, I knew that it would be a place for sharing. I use my website to share things that I've learned myself, but I also use it to point to wonderful things that other people are sharing. It feels like the hyperlink was invented for just that purpose.

One section of my site is simply called "links". I add to it every day. The web is a constant source of bounty. There seems to be no end to the people who want to share what they've learned. "Here", they say, "I made something. You can use it if you like."



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$fullPath .= $edit.  
(($n < $nCategories ? '<a href="'  
(!empty($highlight) ? str_irepla  
($n < $nCategories ? '</a>' : ''  
(($n++ != $nCategories OR !empty  
}  
  
return $fullPath.$path;  
}  
}  
elseif ($categoryType == 'cms')  
{  
    $category = new CMSCategory($id_cate  
    if (!$category->id)  
        return $path;  
  
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I try to remember just how remarkable that is.

This spirit of generosity has even spilled over into the world beyond the web. I remember when Web Essentials was the first conference outside the US dedicated to sharing the knowledge and skills of the web's practitioners. Later it became Web Directions. It served as a template and an inspiration for people all over the world.

It's hard to imagine now in this age of wall-to-wall conferences, but there was a time when the idea of a web conference was untested. Without the pioneering—and risky—work of the Web Directions crew, who knows where we would be today?

A good event reflects the best qualities of the web itself. Designers, developers, UXers ... whatever you want to call them, they conquer their fears to get up in front of their peers and share what they've learned. "Here", they say, "you can use this if you like." I remember how intimidating that can be.

I remember how honoured I was to be asked to speak at Web Directions in 2006. A decade can feel like a century on the web, but my memories of that event are still fresh in my mind. Not only was it my first trip to the Southern hemisphere, it was the furthest from home I had ever travelled in my life. I remember how warmly I was welcomed. I remember the wonderful spirit of sharing that infused my time in Australia. It reminded me of the web.

And now that same spirit of the web is spilling over into these pages. Designers, developers, baristas ... whatever you want to call them, they've written down words for you. "Here", they say, "you can read this if you like."

→ webdirections.org/respond16

I try to remember—but sometimes I forget—to say “thank you.”

I try to remember to say “thank you” to those early pioneers on the web who shared their experience with me: Steve Champeon, Jeffrey Zeldman, Molly Holzschlag, Jeff Veen, Eric Meyer, and of course, John Allsopp. I try to remember to say “thank you” to anyone who has ever put on an event—it's hard work (just ask John). I try to remember to say “thank you” to the people who are making the web a better place for all of us through their incredible work: Ethan Marcotte, Sara Soueidan, Karen McGrane, and so many more.

And when I'm filling up the “links” section of my website on a daily basis, I try to remember to say “thank you” to everyone who has ever shared anything on the web.

I never did come up with an answer to that question my bandmate asked. “Why? Why are these people sharing all of this?” After all these years, I don't think the answer matters.

What matters is that I don't forget how remarkable this spirit of the web is.

I remember.

EDITORIAL

John Allsopp
Founder

—
@johnallsopp
#SCROLLMAG



I CAME TO THE WEB IN ITS EARLY DAYS, SOMEWHAT BY ACCIDENT.

I was developing a hypertext system, Palimpsest (yes, ironically, a competitor of the Web, in a sense), and the Web it seemed, for all its shortcomings as hypertext, represented a new way for software publishers to distribute their applications, compared to the traditional model of packaged software sold in stores.

So we built a site, with screen shots and feature lists, provided our software for download, and then wondered how on earth we could get people to find it. We hit on an approach which is now known as content marketing, providing great resources to help people find and work with what was excitingly called 'etext' back in the early 90s.

Of course, to build our site we needed to learn HTML, and later CSS, and along that journey we realised that there weren't particularly good tools for working with CSS, then still in its earliest days, nor much to help you learn, deal with browser quirks, and otherwise master Web development.

And so I built one of the earliest CSS editors, Style Master, and in keeping with our marketing strategy, a whole raft of online courses and resources, which led to my involvement in the early Web Standards Project "CSS Samurai", and to the original css-discuss mailing list, which we helped start with Eric Meyer, among other initiatives to help people become better web designers.





A few years later, again largely without a lot of long term thinking, we founded what became Web Directions, an event that predates - and provided a blueprint for - almost all the conferences for Web designers and developers around the world.

At Web Directions, we've often featured speakers right at the beginning of their careers who have gone on to become among our industry's most highly respected experts, and have seen the launch of incredibly influential ideas like OOCSS (Web Directions North 2009) and "The New Aesthetic" (Web Directions South 2012).

I don't list these in many ways happy accidents to blow our trumpet here at Web Directions but, among other things, to point out there is no master plan; rather, a series of inspirations that, to be honest, we often didn't realise the value of and on more than one occasion abandoned before the idea had the opportunity to really come to fruition.

One of the ideas we abandoned that perhaps we should have stuck with a little longer at is (either literally or figuratively) in your hands right now: Scroll.

The thinking behind Scroll was, and is, akin to how we think about everything we do at Web Directions. How can we do what we do differently, better? What are we doing ritualistically, simply because we've always done it like this, or because it's always been done this way?

Scroll started by us asking ourselves, "What is the point of a program at an event?" The bios you read are all online (and in an age of ubiquitous mobile much more readily accessible there than on paper).

The session descriptions are, as well. All the relevant information about the event is on the attendee's lanyard, or just a link away on their phone.

So why are we going to the effort and expense of designing something essentially useless? Something that wastes trees?

But what if we could create something of real and lasting value? That captured the ideas that are at the heart of our event, and let people learn more about the speakers they've seen and their thinking? Something that can be shared with colleagues and peers, and which would also take some of the value of an event out far beyond the audience in the room?

That's our ambition with Scroll. We've interviewed some of our amazing speakers and tried to get behind their thinking, to their motivations and inspirations. And we've tapped some of the speakers to share some of their ideas and techniques more deeply in print, just for this magazine.

As I write this, Ricky Onsman, who has literally been to more of our events than anyone, and who has recently - to our great good fortune - come on board as editor for Scroll and all of the content at Web Directions, is ridiculously hard at work racing to complete this first (or third) edition, and so I'm waiting, excited, though a little anxiously, to see how it turns out.

But we're definitely going to stick the course this time, and there'll be editions of Scroll associated with all our major upcoming events.

I hope you enjoy it. Let us know what you think!

INTERVIEW

Karen McGrane



In Person

the
RESPOND
edition



KAREN MCGRANE IN PERSON

Karen McGrane

—

@karenmcgrane

IN ONE SENSE I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF FAMILY. I AM AN ONLY CHILD, I AM NOT MARRIED, I HAVE NO CHILDREN. (I DO HAVE PARENTS.)

In another sense, to describe “family” as only blood relations strikes me as too limiting, as we don’t live in a 1950s children’s book. I have dog godparents and blood sisters and foster brothers and friends who I’d die for. Your family should include people you choose.

**Q What formal qualifications do you have?
How did you end up doing web work?**

A I am one of the few 20+ year veterans in this industry with formal training. I studied human-computer interaction and technical communication in a masters program in the mid-90s.

If I were studying today, I’d be tempted to rename those programs Interaction Design and Content Strategy. I knew, back in 1995, that I wanted to work on the web, and I went to engineering school to understand it better. In retrospect, it feels like a great privilege to have learned the foundations of the field in graduate school, since so many people have had to pick up bits and pieces along the way.

**Q Describe what you do. What’s your job?
Is presenting at web conferences part of that job?**

A I answer emails and make spreadsheets and take screenshots of web pages. Somewhere in there I try to make the web a better place, for the people who use it and for the people who create and maintain it.

Because I am an independent consultant working with clients, speaking at web conferences is part of my job. The best client relationships are the ones that start with someone saying they heard me speak. →



If a client can see themselves and their problems in the talks that I give, then they know I understand what they're going through and I can help them. You have to market your business somehow, and for me, speaking is an enjoyable way to find new work.

Q Do you give much thought to the title you apply to yourself? Does it matter?

A My title is “Managing Partner” even though I have neither employees or partners. I have business cards left over from a time when I did have employees and partners, so that’s what I call myself.

Titles can be important in certain contexts, but mine isn’t so important to me that it’s worth reprinting my business cards.

Q Describe the first time you gave a presentation on a web topic.

A I spoke at the very first Information Architecture Summit in 2000. I emailed Lou Rosenfeld and talked my way onto the program, believing that was an event I should be a part of. I gave a talk on modular content and design, based on a case study of a project from Encyclopedia Britannica.

Recently, a friend pointed out that I’m still presenting on essentially the same topic, more than 15 years later. He asked if I’d become bored with the subject matter — the truth is I find it more interesting and rewarding than ever.

If I spend my life’s work exploring that very same topic, I’ll feel it was time well spent.

Q In The Graduate, Mr McGuire has just one word to say to aimless college graduate Benjamin Braddock: “Plastics”. What one word would you give to today’s prospective web professional?

A Stylesheets.

That’s probably two words. I don’t mean that strictly in the CSS sense, but in the sense that people need to be able to encode semantics separate from styling.

Whether you’re a writer, or a designer, or a developer, working with stylesheets is a skill that pays off. I wish we taught it in schools.

PHOTO: EIRIK HELLAND URKE



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A Web Directions event

Respond 2016

Sydney

April 7-8

Melbourne

April 11-12

**Australia's Responsive Web Design Conference,
now taking place over 2 days in
Sydney and Melbourne.**

webdirections.org/respond16

ARTICLE

Craig Sharkie



Searching for the Truth

the
RESPOND
edition



SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

Craig Sharkie

—
@twalve

YOU CAN GOOGLE IT. YOU CAN BING IT. YOU CAN EVEN LET ME GOOGLE THAT FOR YOU. GOOGLE THEMSELVES WOULD PREFER THAT YOU DIDN'T GOOGLE IT.

And Yahoo would love anyone to have yahooped it. "It", of course, is using a search engine, and we've all done it. In all likelihood, everyone you know has done it, although you probably see a handful of people each week that haven't, and wouldn't.

Figures show that 86.9% of Australians are computer literate, which is well above the global computer literacy rate of 39.0%, and safely under the Australian literacy rate of 96%. I know all those figures because I googled them. And Google happily gave me 2,870,000 results, in a breathtaking 0.51 seconds.

And we don't question that. Although perhaps you're starting to, now. We're comfortable receiving our search results in batches of 10, and if we make it 10 pages deep in a search, there's something awry.

When Jerry Yang and David Filo launched Yahoo last century, it was a search directory and not a search engine. That just meant that human beings made recommendations about what would be the best results for your search, and not a Web bot with a flashy algorithm.

And somewhere along the line we traded human input for a spider's index.

If you're familiar with the genre you're searching, and can recognise key personalities in your results, you actually start to apply some directory filtering back over the bot's results. Interested in Web Development? If you see Mozilla Developer Network or the W3C in your results you'll be confident you're heading in the right direction. Interested in Semantic Web Development and you'll likely skip past W3Schools, but you'll often take a look at Stack Overflow, just to be sure. Names like Paul Irish, Chris Coyier, Remy Sharp, Eric Meyer, and Peter-Paul Koch will make you more comfortable again. Although for two of those, CSS-Tricks and Quirksmode might be more familiar.

Search for "search?q=most+popular+search" and you'll get 415,000,000 results in a quarter of a second, and there's frankly no way for you to comprehend that much data in that small an amount of time. We've long ago traded quantity and speed for quality and fidelity. Voracity for veracity. →



And if you take brands out of the mix - think Kardashians, Kanye, Kleenex, or My Kitchen Rules - and pornography from the mix - think ... well you know what to think - the most searched for term in 2015 was “weather”. 45.5 million people per month searched for weather, and the smart money says folks wanted to know the forecast, and not the science behind the weather.

In our hunger for information we often overlook quality. We opt for common usage, over uncommon precision.

And we’re happy to do it for searches as we’ve become used to doing it for so many other parts of our shared experience. We have precedent for it and we’re familiar with it, and it’s almost an expectation. Great minds think alike, after all.

And even the saying “Great minds think alike” has fallen victim to the race for more results. It’s become a contextomy - the selective excerpting of words from their original linguistic context in a way that distorts the source’s intended meaning. Ask Wikipedia what a contextomy is.

“Great minds think alike, small minds rarely differ” or “Great minds think alike, and fools seldom differ” are the directory versions, and the more idiomatic “Great minds think alike” is the search engine version. Millions of people misquote this saying and in that misquotation change the meaning we take from the quote.

When we find answers that fit the shape of our question, and in the face of potentially millions of answers, we excuse ourselves from the need to investigate the answers too thoroughly. Often, there is little harm in our

expedience; occasionally, though that expedience is the root of our lament. Were we to take the time to investigate, the answer would be closer than we think, and more useful than we expect.

Allow yourself to only need an image search for “Great minds think alike” and you’d be told the saying originated in Ancient Greece. Don’t settle for the picture-telling-a-thousand-words option, and Google can lead you to a Stack Overflow result where you’d learn that the idiom wasn’t quite that old and likely comes from the 17th Century.

We don’t always need to go back to the source or specification to get the truth behind the answers we need, but we do need to be sure that someone has done the hard yards there for us. The answer that we desperately need might be the 11th result on Google and can save us hours of work.

Had Jesse James Garrett not been going back to the specification, he might not have been among the drive that saw Asynchronous JavaScript + XML push the use of the Internet in new directions.

Arguably, you don’t need to know that Garrett coined the term Ajax in the shower, but then that might be the information that’s your tipping point.

And, as they say, “the rest is science”. Or do they? Maybe we should google that.



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ARTICLE

Ricky Onsman



Speaker Training Workshop

the
RESPOND
edition



WEB DIRECTIONS SPEAKER TRAINING WORKSHOP

Ricky Onsman

—

@onsman
#speaking

WEB DIRECTIONS IS KNOWN FOR BEING COMMITTED TO HELPING WEB PROFESSIONALS ACQUIRE AND HONE SKILLS, IDEAS AND ATTITUDES THAT CAN HELP THEM IN THEIR WORKING LIVES.

This is most obvious in the major events we organise: conferences and workshops in Australia that bring acknowledged experts from around the world here to share their knowledge, as well as provide a platform for locals to show their insights into their chosen fields.

Less well known are the smaller events that Web Directions organises such as “What Do You Know?“, an evening of short, sharp presentations that let speakers test out their ideas and topics on a willing and supportive audience.

Many WDYK speakers graduate to longer presentations they may give not just Web Directions conferences but all sorts of public industry events.

What this whole process demands, though, is some level of adequacy in two areas that are not necessarily strengths of web professionals: writing and speaking. If you want to give a presentation at a conference – of any sort – you will almost certainly have to prepare a written submission that summarises what you want to talk about and why an audience would be interested.

Once your submission is accepted, you will then face the challenge of actually delivering the presentation, perhaps on the stage of a large auditorium, under lights, in front of several hundred colleagues and professional peers.



This kind of writing and speaking rarely comes naturally to anyone, let alone people who spend much of their working lives staring at a screen. Code? Yes. Markup? Sure. Shoutouts via social media? No worries. Explain your idea to a room of 500 people? Live? On stage? Oh-oh.

They are, however, skills that are actually valuable beyond the task of submitting and delivering conference presentations. You may need to prepare written reports for your team leaders and project managers. You may need to front up to team meetings and explain what went right or wrong on a given project. You may need to write formal letters of proposal to prospective clients. You may be asked by a client to speak to a board to convince them to invest in a project.

In the last couple of years, Web Directions has held group sessions meant for, and limited to, prospective WDYK speakers where they can focus on and practise their speaking skills. These sessions proved so popular and effective – feedback from participants and what they were eventually able to achieve with their presentations proved the truth of that – that it seemed a good idea to provide this kind of training to anyone in the industry who might be interested.

So it was that I turned up to Web Directions HQ just near Central Station in downtown Sydney at 10am on a late February Saturday morning for a Speaker Training Workshop. Along with me were 23 other people who also worked on the web in some way and wanted to test and improve their public speaking.

It was a very eclectic bunch, a pretty even male/female split, ages ranging from early 20s to mid-50s (OK, the latter was just me, but there were some people there in their early 40s, at least).

The workshop was run by a mob called Public Speaking For Life in the form of tag team trainers Sarah Ewen and Tarek Said. I say “tag team” because that’s how they ran the day, and a very effective method it was. Sarah would talk to us about voice and how to use it, for example, then Tarek might talk to us about posture, then Sarah on breathing, then Tarek on what to do with your hands. All of that was interspersed by exercises for the participants.

The first involved Tarek suggesting a topic – web-related or otherwise – and asking for someone to talk to that topic for 90 seconds. If no-one volunteered, he would call on someone but, although there was sometimes a lengthy pause, everyone volunteered to talk on something.

After everyone had spoken – some with confidence, some less so – Sarah then gave us each notes on how we had done. This is a hallmark of their approach – give immediate feedback, make it personal and provide suggestions for improvement.

I won’t go into more detail about how Sarah and Tarek ran the rest of the day – they have their professional secrets, after all – but I can say that by the end of the day every single person was more self-aware, more confident, more informed and more positive about themselves as public speakers. Personally, I enjoyed the day immensely. I spent a few years as an actor so probably had a bit of a head start on most of my fellow participants, but then my acting days were also 25 years ago and I really didn’t know how I’d go without having learned a script first.

All 24 of us gave a 2-minute presentation at the end of the day and I think every single one of us was as amazed at our own evident progress as that of our fellows. There is something about seeing someone who starts as a shy wallflower and ends up speaking boldly and passionately that is both empowering and reassuring.

I would heartily recommend this kind of training to anyone who wonders if they have what it takes to get up and address a group of people. If you have trainers of the quality of Sarah and Tarek, I reckon you’ll find that you do – you just need some guidance on what to do and how to handle the situation.

Keep your eyes open for more Web Directions Speaker Training Workshops. It won’t surprise you to know we also have plans to offer Writing Workshops in the future.

Public Speaking For Life
www.publicspeakingforlife.com.au

INTERVIEW

Ethan Marcotte

Q

In Person

the
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ETHAN MARCOTTE IN PERSON

Ethan Marcotte

—

@beep

I'M IN MY LATE THIRTIES, AND I'M THE OLDEST OF FIVE CHILDREN. MY FAMILY'S FROM NORTHERN VERMONT, A FAIRLY RURAL CORNER OF THE UNITED STATES.

I'm married to an incredible person who works for a large software company, but who has more interests than I can keep track of – knitting, writing, reading, cooking, and running– and generally keeps me inspired. No family to speak of, save for our impossibly surly murdercat.

Q What book has changed your life in some way?

A Stewart Brand's **How Buildings Learn** was once described to me as "a book that has nothing to do with web design, yet has everything to do with web design." And I think that's true. (What's more, it's just a lovely read.)

Q What formal qualifications do you have? How did you end up doing web work?

A I studied English literature in college, and spent most of my last undergraduate year writing a stultifyingly dull essay about Milton's use of allegory in three of his major poems. (I wrote that sentence and I fell asleep halfway through: my apologies.) I nearly cobbled together enough credits for a dual major in music, but figured I was unemployable enough with my literature degree, so. →



I kid! But: I got into web design almost as a lark, getting my hands on a copy of Photoshop at college. From there, I eventually stumbled into learning HTML by view source, and started copying/pasting my way through my first tiny web projects. When it came time to leave school, I was feeling a bit burned out on my studies, and didn't exactly relish the idea of committing to advanced degrees. An advisor suggested I find another job for a year or two – “put the books away until you miss them,” she said – so I decided to try my hand at working as a web designer. So I suppose I'm more than a decade into “taking some time off before graduate school.”

**Q Describe what you do. What's your job?
Is presenting at web conferences part of that job?**

A I'm an independent designer, based just outside of Boston, Massachusetts. I coined the term **responsive design** a few years ago, which has really shaped my practice of late: I'm asked to speak about the topic at conferences, work on responsive redesigns, and consult with clients on their responsive projects. I also co-host a **podcast** with **Karen McGrane** about responsive redesigns, and we also offer **workshops** to help companies prepare for the ways responsive might change their organization.

**Q Do you give much thought to the title you apply to yourself?
Does it matter?**

A I don't think I've ever had a title that fits what I do. Titles are, I think, primarily for the people you work with (or for). Which doesn't mean they're not valuable! But at least for me, they're rarely a part of the conversation with clients.

Q Describe the first time you gave a presentation on a web topic.

A The very first talk I gave was for a small gathering of designers and developers at Harvard, where I was working at the time. I was terrified! Also, I'm pretty sure most of my talk was incoherent, if not plain wrong.

Q In The Graduate, Mr McGuire has just one word to say to aimless college graduate Benjamin Braddock: “Plastics”. What one word would you give to today's prospective web professional?

A Empathy.

The word's probably in danger of being overused, but it's one of the more useful parts of my design practice. At every turn of a design process, I try to remind myself to consider how a website should change if, say, someone's using older hardware, or if they're on a slower connection. We web designers and developers need to step out of their own contexts, biases, and assumptions, and empathy's one of the best ways to design universal, inclusive experiences for a properly World Wide Web.

Oh, and sometimes I write **books**, too.



**SCAN IT
READ IT
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A Web Directions event

Transform

2016

Canberra

Conference May 19th 2016

Workshop May 18th 2016

**A new conference for user-centred digital
government, from the team who created
GovHack**

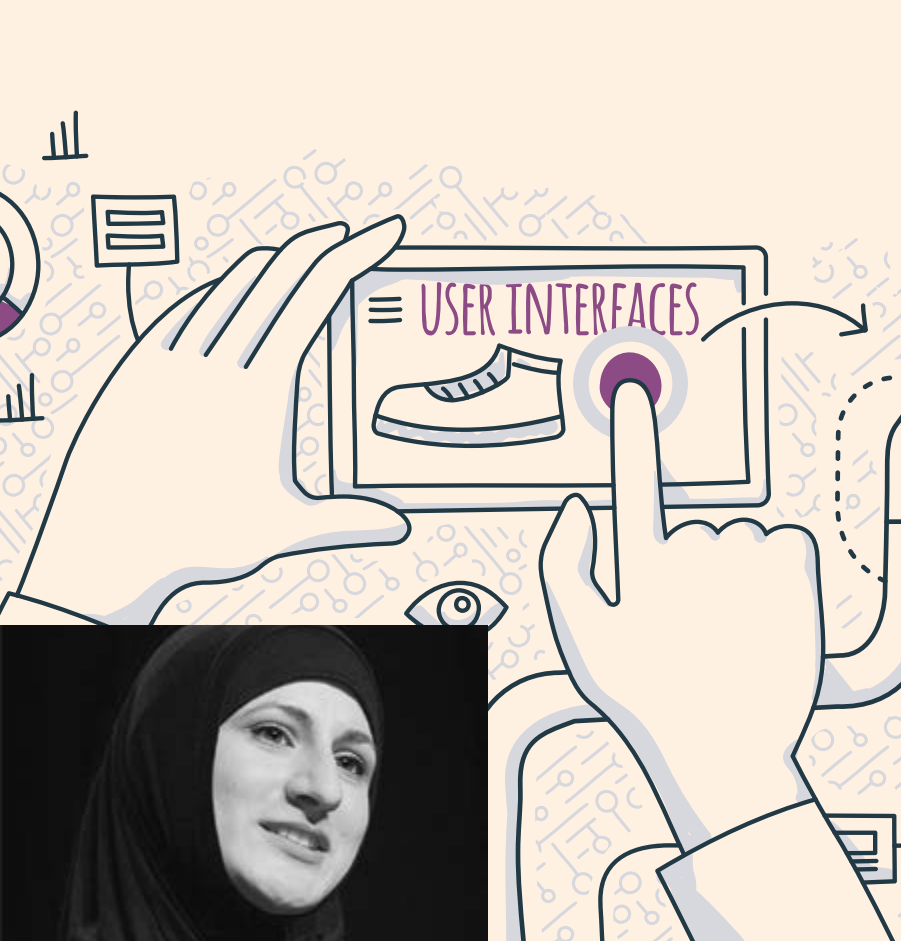
webdirections.org/transform16

INTERVIEW

Sara Soueidan

In Person

the
RESPOND
edition



SARA SOUEIDAN IN PERSON

Sara Soueidan

@SaraSoueidan

I'M 29 YEARS OLD AND THE FOURTH IN A FAMILY OF FIVE CHILDREN. MY FAMILY CURRENTLY LIVES IN LEBANON AND HAS FOR THE PAST 21 YEARS.

Before that, my parents moved a lot from one country to another, until they finally settled down for eight years in Dortmund, Germany, a short while after I was born. I was born in Lebanon but spent the first eight years of my life in Germany. My sister has three kids and she lives in a house close to my parents' house.

I have a brother who works in Africa, and the rest of the family lives in Lebanon. I work freelance from my home office there.

Q What book has changed your life in some way?

A The **Quran** has the biggest influence on my life. It's the light of my heart and is what gives me peace and keeps me in good balance whenever I feel lost. Apart from that, I'm not much of a book reader since I am more of a visual learner and prefer watching things instead of reading them. That said, I did get more into the book reading world in the last few months, and one book that has changed the way I think about user interfaces in general, and web interfaces in particular, is **Seductive Interaction Design** by Stephen Anderson.

Even though I'm not a designer, that book has changed the way I perceive interfaces as a user, and has changed the way I approach "designing" my own pages, making sure I always think from a user's perspective. This, in turn, has led me to focus more on all aspects of accessibility, from tone to color and everything in between.

Removing yourself from the position of a developer or designer and changing perspective has an immense result when it comes to designing successful user interfaces and experiences.

Q What formal qualifications do you have? How did you end up doing web work?

A Web-wise: I have a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Sciences. Though I can confidently say that I am self-taught, because I never attended any front-end development classes in college. Almost everything I know today I learned online. →



Outside the web, I'm quite good at drawing — drawing people, to be more specific. Whenever I draw someone using charcoal, I almost always get a comment from someone saying “you didn't draw that—you printed it off the computer”. So I suppose that kinda counts as a qualification, right?

The first time I ever saw HTML markup was in eighth grade. I loved it so much that it felt like a second language I never knew I could speak. I took one class in school and that was it. Years later, I reluctantly chose Computer Sciences as my major, and that's how I got introduced to programming concepts and a bit of back-end development using PHP and MySQL.

After graduation, I wasn't sure which path to take and what to do for a living. A year and a half after that, my best friend—who at the time also worked as a web designer and developer—gave me the push I never knew would change my entire life.

He suggested I get into web development, knowing how much I loved it when I was younger. I gave it a shot, started learning CSS from Point Zero, and in 2013, I was approached by an American client to build the front-end of a web application they were working on at the time. I started writing on my blog right around that time as well, and my writing is what encouraged people to approach me and invite me to give talks at conferences.



So you could say I never planned it, but am more than thankful to God for choosing the best path for me I could ever have wished for.

Q Describe what you do. What's your job? Is presenting at web conferences part of that job?

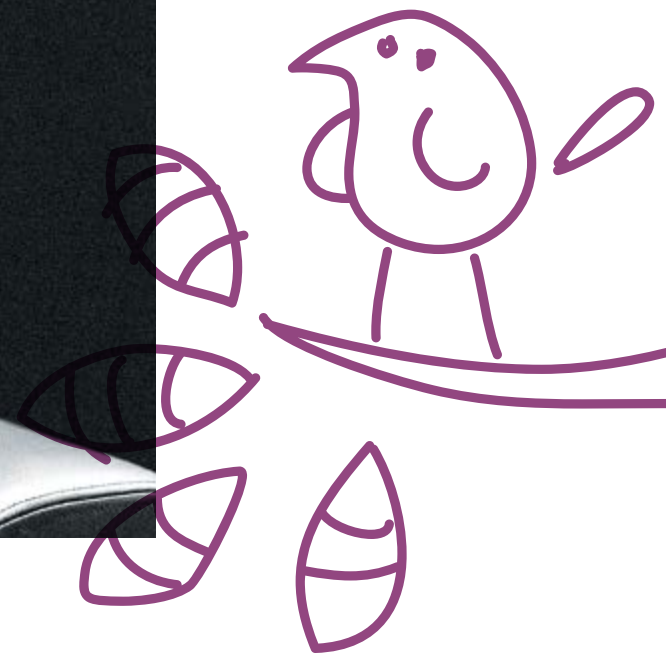
A I'm a freelance front-end web developer. I work with design and development agencies around the globe, building websites and applications, focusing on HTML5, SVG, CSS and JavaScript. I don't do any back-end coding. I also write articles and speak at conferences, and like to consider both as facets of my work that I very much enjoy.

Q Do you give much thought to the title you apply to yourself? Does it matter?

A Not so much, no. I like a lot of titles that I hear here and there, and find myself in quite a few of them. “Front-End Developer” conveys my skills quite well to my clients, so I stick to that, along with some extra elaboration on my website to make sure my clients don't have any incorrect expectations.

I definitely avoid the word “Designer” though, even though I know that many people with my skills would call themselves “front-end designers”—which I like, but would definitely confuse my clients, some of whom already mistake me for a designer and send me design requests that I don't normally do.

I do think titles matter, but it's too controversial and usually both sides of the controversy have quite valid points, so personally, frankly I don't bother giving this too much thought.



Q Describe the first time you gave a presentation on a web topic.

A Oh that was a fantastically scary time!! It was so exciting but also so intimidating that I had a moment on stage where I forgot the word that I wanted to say and ended up with a thought in my head that said “What are you doing here?! Just get off the stage and go sit back at the table”. Ha ha. It was the first time I ever spoke in English continuously for more than 30 minutes, so it wasn’t easy and I forgot quite a lot of words on stage, but one of them was the worst, so that idea did cross my mind.

But then I remembered the a tip my friend Bruce Lawson told me via Twitter right before I went on stage: “Just breathe. And keep going.” So I literally did that: I took a deep breath, rephrased what I was going to say and just kept going. By the time I reached the last section I couldn’t believe it, so I ended up saying “I can’t believe I’m at the last section”... out loud ... to the audience!

After the talk, I felt absolutely nothing. It was like I hadn’t even give a talk. You know how you feel numb after a dentist’s visit and only start feeling the pain after the pain-killer effect goes away? That’s exactly how I felt. For about an hour, I felt like I hadn’t even been on stage at all. It was the fantastic feedback from the super nice attendees after the talk that sort of “woke me up” from my trance, and that’s when I realized I must of done a fairly good job.

I hated watching myself speak and said I’d never speak again after watching the video because I was too embarrassed. But, well you get over it after a while, and the excitement of being on stage sucked me back in just 4 months after the first talk, and I’ve kept going since.

Q In The Graduate, Mr McGuire has just one word to say to aimless college graduate Benjamin Braddock: “Plastics”. What word would you give to today’s prospective web professional?

A ‘Intempathy’. OK, that’s not a word. But I had to choose only one when I would actually say two: Integrity & Empathy.

I believe anyone can master (almost) any skill they want, but the truth is that what makes a good web community is the people behind it, not those people’s skills; and the only way it can grow positively is if people understand each other and feel for each other and are nice and kind to each other.

It’s very common for people to forget that there is another person sitting on the other side of the screen. We’re not robots. It’s our behavior that defines who we are, and that eventually defines our community. Having strong moral values and empathising with people goes a long way in pushing the Web forward in the right direction.



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INTERVIEW

Russ Weakley



In Person

the
RESPOND
edition



RUSS WEAKLEY IN PERSON

Russ Weakley

—

@russexdesign

I LIVE WITH MY LONG TERM PARTNER, OUR TWO CHILDREN AND TWO DOGS. BOTH MY PARTNER AND I WERE BORN AND RAISED IN SYDNEY.

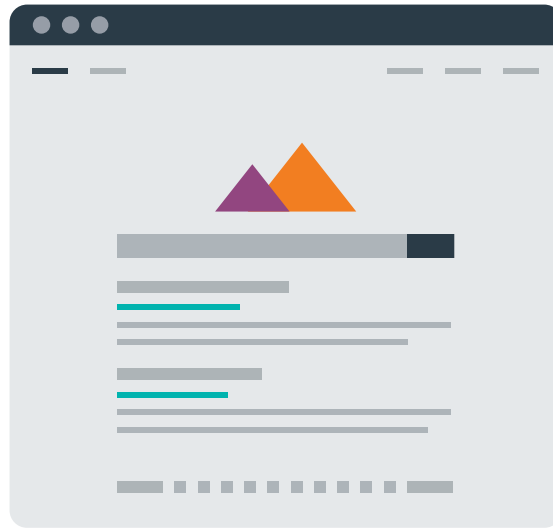
Our oldest son is obsessed with video games of all varieties, to the point where we have to set time limits. He is also a passionate musician - playing the trombone. Our younger son is interested in a range of activities including competition swimming and dance.

Q What book has changed your life in some way?

A At different times of my life, different books have inspired me, or caused me to change how I thought about a specific topic.

When I was around 20 years old a book called **Zen in the Martial Arts** by Joe Hyams was a big influence. As a print designer, many typography books helped me change the way I saw type in design. I cannot remember a lot of the earlier books, but one that comes to mind is **The Elements of Typographic Style** by Robert Bringhurst. When I moved into web design, a lot of books were influential but one stood out as it approached HTML and CSS in a very different way: **Pro CSS and HTML Design Patterns** by Michael Bowers.

These days, I often get more inspiration from other media rather than books. I listen to a lot of podcasts and I watch a fair amount of YouTube movies on all sorts of topics from comedy to secularism and rationalism. →



**Q What formal qualifications do you have?
How did you end up doing web work?**

A When I left school, I decided that I wanted to go to Art college as I was very interested in drawing and cartooning. Sadly, I did very little painting at the Art School so they decided to fob me off to a new “Design School” which was just about to start at the College.

It was there that I learned about design. I learned from a grumpy typographer who constantly berated us about kerning and letter spacing. I still have nightmares about incorrectly spaced letters to this day.

As part of the program, students had to do work experience. I refused to find my own, so the College found me a place with the Australian Museum design team. I worked there for two weeks and thought “Well, luckily I will never have to come back here”.

Soon afterwards, I was employed by the Museum and worked there for 29 years.

**Q Describe what you do. What's your job?
Is presenting at web conferences part of that job?**

A My work falls into four different areas:

- 1 I am a UX/UI professional. I work mainly on web applications - sketching, wireframing, prototyping, user testing etc.
- 2 I am a front end developer - specialising in HTML/CSS/SCSS pattern libraries.
- 3 I also work in Accessibility - often working with other developers to advise them on how to make applications more accessible.
- 4 I do a fair amount of on-site training - where I work with team members to build up their skills in aspects of HTML, CSS, SCSS, Responsive Web Design and Accessibility.

Q Do you give much thought to the title you apply to yourself? Does it matter?

A It's very hard to work out a title across these four disciplines. The closest I have seen is “UI developer” - which theoretically covers aspects of UX/UI, design and front end.

The problem is that individual teams use different titles, and they use them in different ways. There is no canonical reference point for titles.

Q Describe the first time you gave a presentation on a web topic.

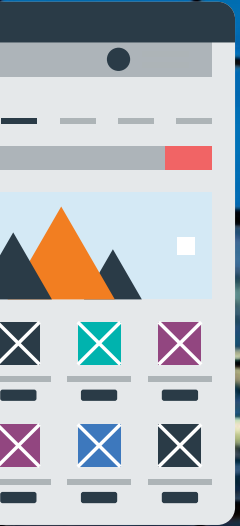
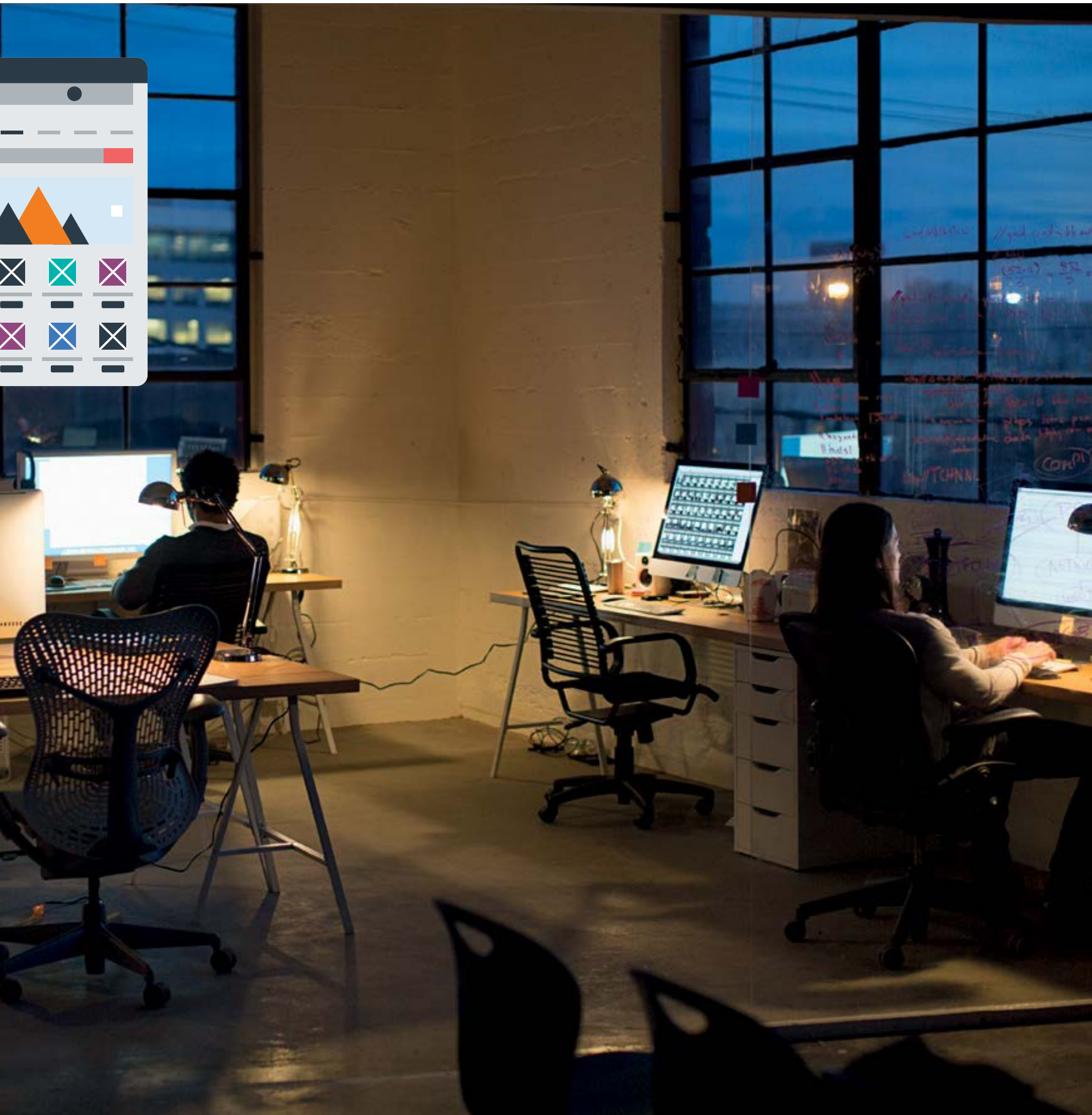
A I began presenting around 2003. I think my first presentation was to a Web Standards Group meeting in Sydney on some aspect of CSS. I felt very little nerves as I had presented a lot before becoming a web designer/developer. I really enjoyed the idea that I could help people understand an topic.

Q In The Graduate, Mr McGuire has just one word to say to aimless college graduate Benjamin Braddock: “Plastics”. What one word would you give to today's prospective web professional?

A Basics.

I see many front end developers who have fast-tracked their knowledge. They can use Bootstrap and multiple different JavaScript frameworks but many lack even basic knowledge of HTML and CSS - or concepts like Progressive Enhancement.





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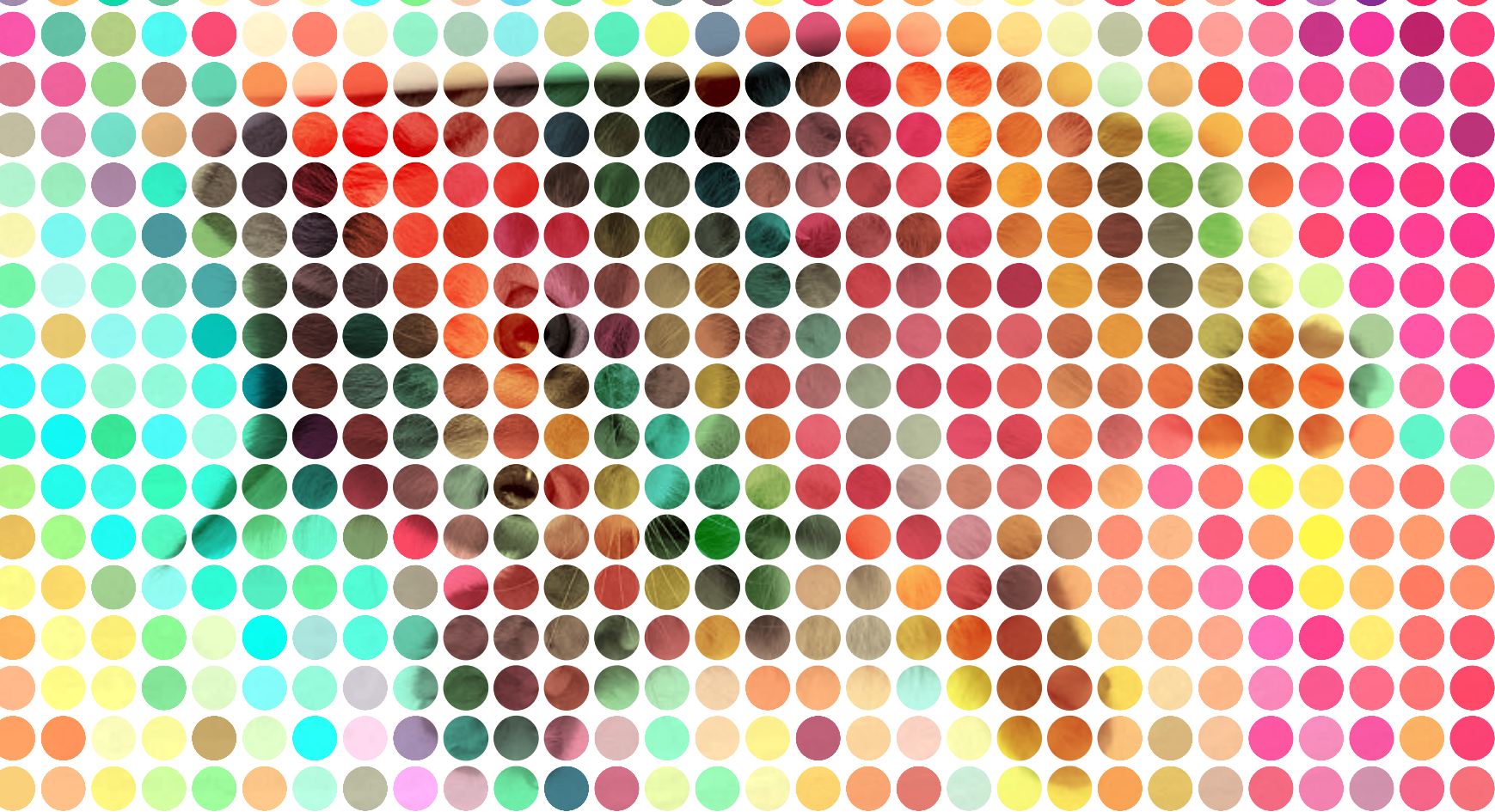
ARTICLE

Jessica Edwards

</>

Blend Modes in CSS

the
RESPOND
edition



BLEND MODES IN CSS

Jessica Edwards

—
@jsscclr

What is blending?

Generally, when two or more pixels overlap, our screen just shows us the pixel that's on top. If our topmost pixel has a luminosity value of 1 (white), and a pixel below it has a luminosity of 0 (black), we generally only care about the information we can get from the topmost pixel.

Rather than let perfectly good pixels go to waste, we can opt to blend our topmost pixel with those below it. The information from the black pixel suddenly becomes useful. If you want the darkest pixel to show, you can compare the pixel's luminosity values and return the lowest value.

Alternatively, you could multiply these values together, and get an entirely different pixel. Scale this to dozens, hundreds, or thousands of pixels, and the result is an entirely different image!

<blend-mode>

Rather than getting our hands dirty and performing these calculations ourselves, CSS has been kind enough to give us 16 keywords, each representing a <blend-mode>. Each <blend-mode> is defined in the W3C Compositing and Blending Specification, but if you've ever used Adobe Photoshop, they will be very familiar.

While each blend mode carries out unique operations, they can be broadly categorised by their resulting effect:

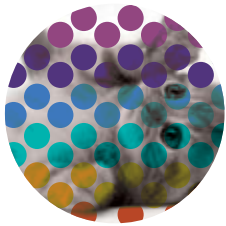
Each blend mode works in the same way as Photoshop, too. This isn't an accident: Adobe played a very active role in shaping the Compositing and Blending Specification, and subsequently bringing blend modes to the web. Remember to thank Adobe when you cancel your Adobe Creative Cloud subscription! →

Normal group

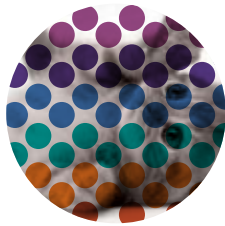


normal

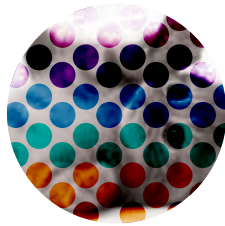
Darken group



darken

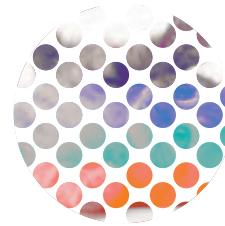


multiply

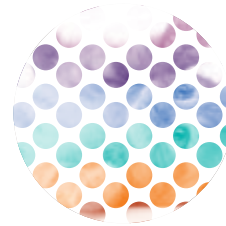


color-burn

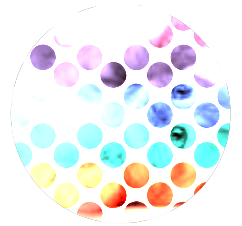
Lighten group



lighten

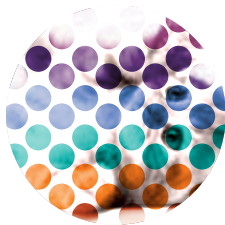


screen

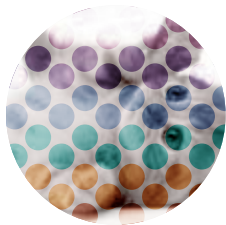


color-dodge

Contrast group



overlay

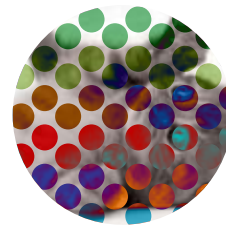


soft-light

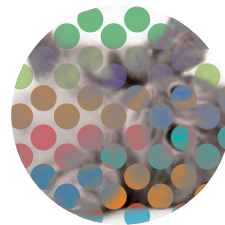


hard-light

Inversion group

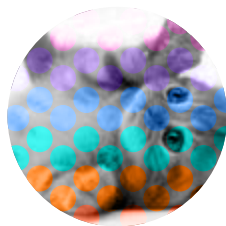


difference



exclusion

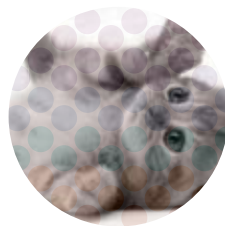
Darken group



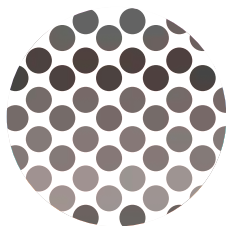
color



hue



saturation



luminosity

background-blend-mode: <blend-mode>

The **background-blend-mode** property can be used on all HTML elements. This property allows us to blend the layers of an element's background. To get started, you will need an element with at least one **<image>** provided via the **background** or **background-image** properties. With just one **background-image**, you will only notice an effect if you have provided a **<color>** to the **background-color** property (because otherwise it has nothing to blend with).

```
background: url('image.jpg'),
           orange;
background-blend-mode: exclusion;
```



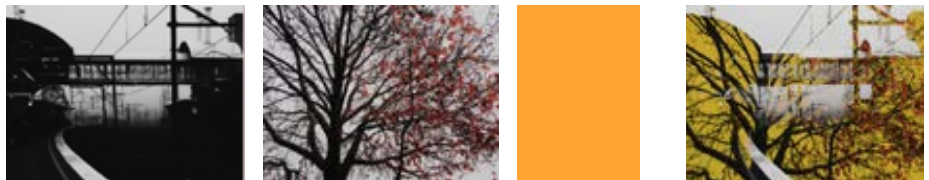
Rather than blend with a block of colour, we can blend images as well, by specifying multiple images in our background.

```
background: url('top-image.jpg'),
           url('bottom-image.jpg');
background-blend-mode: lighten;
```



Just as you can provide a series of comma separated **<image>** values to a **background-image**, you can specify different **<blend-mode>** values to **background-blend-mode**. This applies **lighten** to the first image, and **darken** to the second image. While we have three layers, the bottom most layer does not have anything to blend with, so there is no need to provide a third **<blend-mode>**.

```
background: url('top-image.jpg'),
           url('bottom-image.jpg'),
           orange;
background-blend-mode: lighten, darken;
```



mix-blend-mode: <blend-mode>

You can use this property on any element, which means it can be used with SVG elements in addition to HTML elements. While **background-blend-mode** restricts blending to within the element, **mix-blend-mode** blends different elements together.

```
img {
  mix-blend-mode: multiply;
}
```



What can you achieve with blend modes?

Replicating Prototype Functionality

Perhaps the most obvious use case for blending is directly replicating a prototype given to you that uses blends. If you or a team member are comfortable with Photoshop, there is a large chance you will come across a prototype with blending between layers. Every nine out of ten prototypes I come across are Photoshop files.

If you export an asset with a blend mode, it will not look the same in the browser. If the visual result is not drastically different, you can tell yourself that no-one will notice-but sooner or later, you won't be so lucky. I had a fairly good run, up until a certain airline logo.

In the provided prototype, the logo casts a shadow behind it. Once exported, the result is considerably different:

Previously, if you had come across this issue, you had a few options:

- 1 You, or whoever built the prototype, could go back and change the original design. Compromising on a design (especially when you don't have to!) is frustrating in and of itself; slowing down the build time and waiting on a resolution is more so. In this situation, the prototype was provided by another company entirely.
- 2 Rather than compromising the initial design, you can export both the initial asset, as well as any affected layers. The design remains intact, but potentially at the expense of the end user: more layers = larger size, more colours = higher file size. Using images of entire scenes also means that even trivial changes such as layout require a trip to an image-editing program.

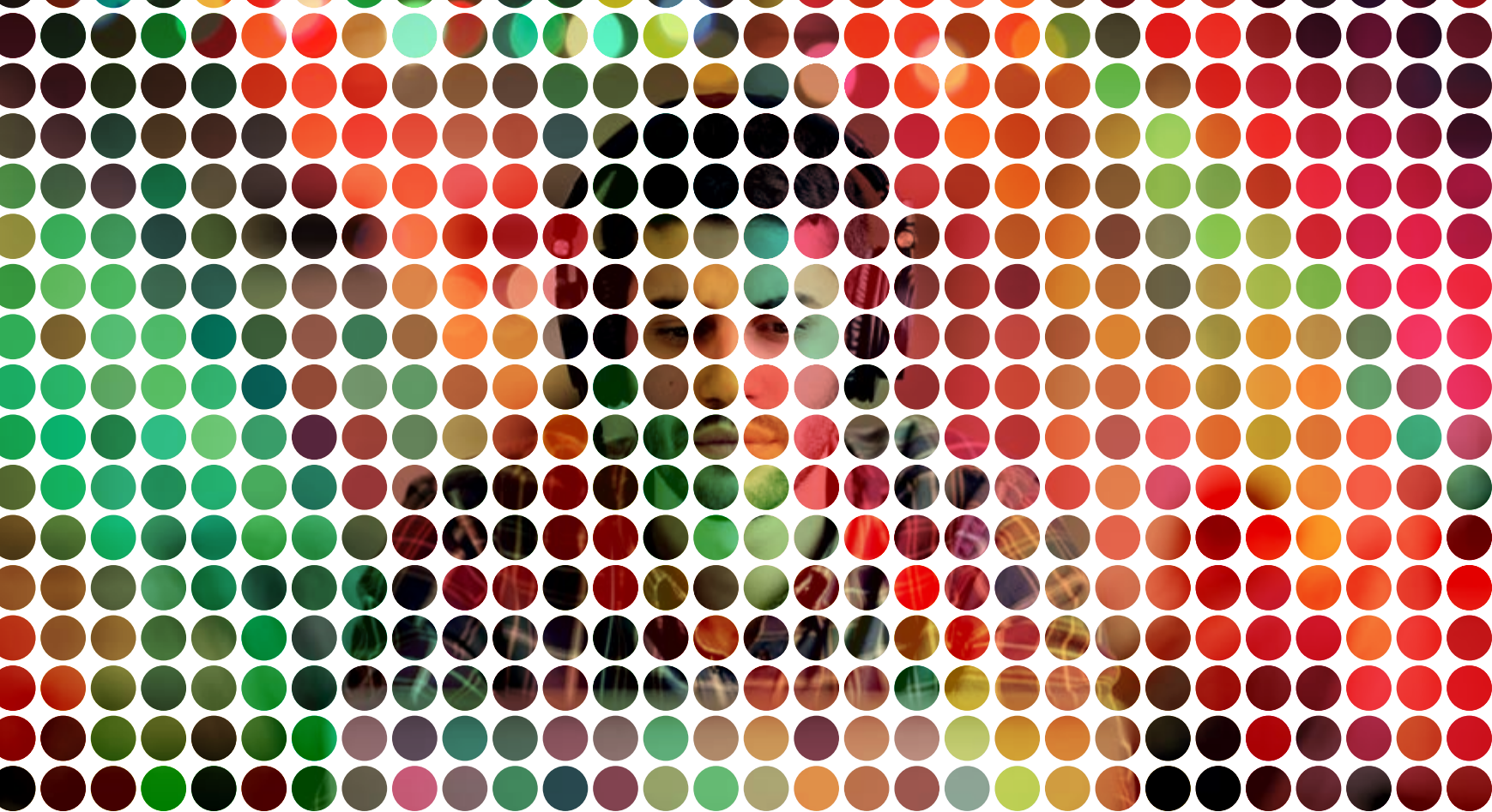
But, now we have blend modes! If your prototype uses one of 16 blend modes, you're in luck- you don't have to make this choice anymore. You can simply export your asset and apply the appropriate `<blend-mode>`, rather than interrupt the development process.

Better Backgrounds

When I first started working in front-end development, backgrounds were a major pain point for me. A background takes up a huge part of your page, and while those beautiful, high resolution backgrounds with ~343898 colours can help set the tone of the page, I would just see hundreds of kilobytes. You could lower the file size by repeating the background image, but getting one to tile perfectly can be difficult to achieve. If the user instantly recognises a poorly executed pattern, their focus has been taken away from your content. It felt like a lose-lose situation.

Nowadays, I'm much more excited by backgrounds! A very popular technique for textured backgrounds is through overlaying noise. Tiled noise by itself can be boring and as mentioned, when it is obviously repeated, it can be distracting. If we blend a small, tiled data-uri with a gradient, even when our image repeats, no tile is identical. We can have a rich, interesting, background, without even making a network request! →





What problems will you encounter?

Stacking Context

When working with `mix-blend-mode`, the effects you will obtain depend on the order of the elements on your page. The order of elements, at least to me, is not always intuitive. There are a number of properties that can affect the order of your elements, some more obvious than others:

`mix-blend-mode`, `position`, `transform`, `opacity`,
`-webkit-overflow-scrolling`, `will-change`...

When dealing with your own code, you can learn and make adjustments to the order to best suit your needs. But maybe you're using the Latest and Greatest Framework™, which has its own ideas about what order your elements should be in. Or thinks that a `z-index` of 10,000 is appropriate. It may come down to choosing between the library or using `mix-blend-mode`, unfortunately.

Furthermore, you may run into issues if you don't have complete control over the environment in which your code will run in. I work in mobile web advertising, and I very rarely know where my work will be displayed, let alone have the ability to test it. Subsequently, for many of my projects it has been better to err on the side of safety, where I prefer to use `background-blend-mode` as its results are predictable.

Browser Support

`background-blend-mode` and `mix-blend-mode` is supported by all major browsers, with the exception of Internet Explorer and Edge (with both properties under consideration for development in Edge). With OSX Safari and iOS Safari, the Component group blends (i.e. hue, saturation, color, and luminosity) are not yet supported. This is useful to know in advance, lest you toggle blend mode values while squinting and telling yourself that you totally see a subtle difference- no, no you don't. These ones are unfortunately super fun, but so are the rest! In the meantime, you'll get a lot of mileage out of `darken`, `lighten`, `screen` and `multiply`.



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GALLERY

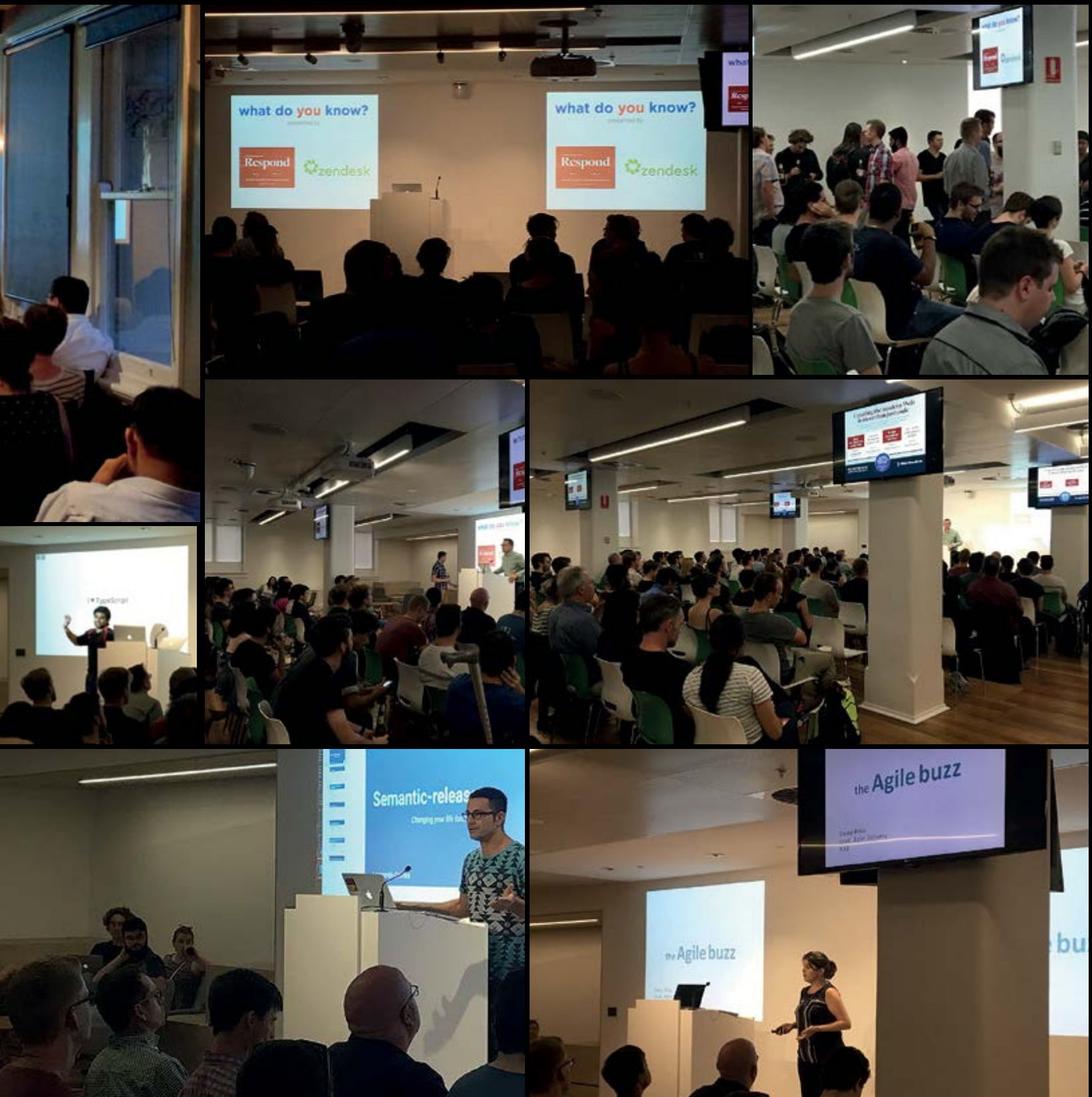
What Do You Know?



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FEATURE

Simon Wright



Coffee is a Ritual

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COFFEE IS A RITUAL

Simon Wright

—

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SURE, IT'S PLENTY OF OTHER THINGS TOO – A CAFFEINATED SHORTCUT TO ALERTNESS; AN ESCAPE FROM THE OFFICE; AN ACCEPTABLE SOCIAL LUBRICANT FOR THE MORNING HOURS – BUT AT HEART FOR MOST OF US THE ACT OF DRINKING COFFEE IS A HUGE PART OF OUR DAILY ROUTINES.

Maybe even a multiple-times-a-day habit (I'm not going to judge).

The simplest way to witness the role of coffee in our day is to watch a cafe between 8 and 10 in the morning.

At Sample's coffee bar in Surry Hills, you'll see a wave of people stopping on the way to the train, then another as people arrive in Surry Hills on their way to work, and a third as teams leave the office on the ritual "coffee run" that's as much team bonding as it is sneaking a few extra minutes away from the desk and email.

For some, the morning coffee is a chance to catch up with mates, for others it's one last moment of solitude before heading into a buzzy open plan office. →



CROPS

But behind all that ritual and the showmanship of cafes is the thing that still amazes me: the coffee we drink every day comes from a bean that grows inside a fruit on the other side of the planet, and it's still almost universally harvested by hand. At least, it amazes me once I've had my first coffee and woken up.

The coffee plant originated in Ethiopia, which remains home to the most diverse range of coffee plants in the world. From there, we think it was transported to Yemen, where the first plantations and roasting of beans likely took place around the 15th and 16th century. The drink then spread through the Ottoman empire to Italy and on through Europe: England's first coffee house opened in 1650 and Boston's in 1676 (you'll notice the speed of expansion picked up significantly courtesy of Starbucks).

But coffee plants themselves were more difficult: they grow best in tropical regions, so it took trade to bring the plant to Indonesia and on to Central and South America. Brazil now produces 40% of the world's coffee, and 5 million people are employed in the coffee trade there. They're followed by Indonesia (which produces a lot of the robusta variety used for instant coffee) and one of my favourites at the moment: Colombia.

There are some coffee plantations in Australia, but the combination of high labour cost and low altitudes make it rare to see locally grown beans in cafes.

FOLLOW THE SEASONS

Like all farmed crops, coffee plants are affected by seasons and most countries have specific harvest periods where workers will travel through coffee regions picking coffee by hand. This seasonality means you'll see different countries come and go from cafes through the year, and it's also the reason coffee blends change through the year as fresh crops arrive.

At the moment we're drinking lots of Colombian coffees, and Ethiopian and Kenyan crops should hit our shores in a couple of months.

The best coffee grows on hillside farms at relatively high altitude, usually 1,500m and above. While there's been some progress on machinery, picking and sorting coffee is still an almost totally manual process.

For the best taste, coffee beans have to be picked at a particular stage of ripeness, and coffee cherries on the same tree ripen differently so the fruit is still picked and sorted manually. It's then soaked in water and the flesh of the fruit removed, leaving the beans we're all familiar with. They're then dried on raised beds (which further improves flavour) or on large paved patios in the sun before being shipped around the world to be roasted.

Coffee farming is the main income for many farmers and their families, sometimes supported by crops from other trees planted to provide shade for the coffee.



What I find really inspiring is that the coffee we're drinking at Sample comes from small, family-owned farms where we have traceability to the farmer: and as farms improve the quality of their crops, they earn a premium price.

FLAVOURS

Until recently, it was common to say each country had a particular flavour profile that was typical of their coffee. Colombian coffees were rich, Ethiopian coffees light and floral, and Kenyans had full-bodied flavours and acidity.

But farmers around the world are now adopting growing, washing and drying techniques from other regions as they search for better quality and prices. This is challenging our assumptions about how coffee from each country should taste. Now we see some farmers in Colombia taking drying techniques from Africa and producing coffee with unusually bright fruity flavours.

Tasting each new coffee is a bit of an exciting surprise: you're never quite sure what's in store.



ROAST

From there it's a surprisingly fast process: beans are roasted in a rotating drum for around ten minutes, as the sugars in the bean caramelize and trapped water is released as steam.

Coffee that's roasted for shorter times is called "light roast" – it has more variety in flavour and is usually best for black coffee. Lighter roasts are an attempt for a true representation of the natural flavours of the bean, so it needs higher quality beans as there's little room to mask undesirable flavours.

Remember that coffee comes from a fruit, so in lighter roasts you'll find flavours closer to that origin: it's not uncommon to get hints of guava, passionfruit, and grapefruit.

Longer roast times (often called "espresso roast") produce darker-coloured beans and as the oils in the bean are released it will look more oily. Think Starbucks. In these darker roasts, a more rich roasty flavour starts to replace the unique flavours of the bean itself.

It's this roasted flavour that allows espresso roast to be served with milk: the stronger roast flavour can cut through the rich, slightly fatty mouth feel of milk.

BREW

As more people discover quality coffee, there are ever more ways to make coffee at home. Let's take two of the most simple: cold brew and Aeropress. They're both easy to try at home (or work, if you really like your officemates) and don't need hundreds of dollars of gear to get started. →

COLD BREW

Cold brew coffee is hands-down the easiest way to make cold coffee: and you don't need any fancy gear. Plus it's a crowd-pleaser: just ask anyone at the Web Directions conference in Sydney.

Lighter roasted 'filter' beans, like most of the coffee we roast at Sample, are perfect for making cold brew. Because the beans never touch hot water, you'll get a more mild flavour than most ways of making coffee, so even if you drink hot coffee with milk, give this a go: I know plenty of flat white drinkers who are also cold brew fans.

But if you prefer your iced coffee with milk, that's cool too. It tastes best if you follow the same recipe and use espresso blend beans, and add a little milk at the end when serving.

All you'll need is a large jar, jug or container that's easy to pour your cold brew out of once it's finished brewing. (If you're using Toddy Cold Brew gear, you can skip the manual filtering in step four, and follow the instructions Toddy provides.)

1 Get your gear ready.

You'll need a container for brewing that's a bit larger than the amount of coffee you want to end up with, and a way to filter the liquid once you're done. If you're only making a small amount, a plunger or french press will be perfect: just don't plunge until you're ready to filter, and then pour it into another bottle if there's any left to store.

2 Grind 80 grams (2.8oz) of coffee per litre of water.

The grind should be similar to grinding for pour-over or filter, about the same as coarse sand. Combine coffee and 1 litre water, and mix.

Use room-temperature or cold water, and give it a good stir so all the coffee is wet. Keep in mind the coffee will absorb some of the water so you'll get less cold brew out than water you put in.

3 Wait.

We leave our cold brew for 8–11 hours at room temperature. Experiment and find the duration you prefer.

4 Filter out the coffee grounds.

If you've got a Chemex or Hario V60 filter, pour the liquid through that to filter out the grounds. Pour slowly, and replace the filter paper if it gets too full. If you're using a french press, plunge as normal at this point.

5 Add ice, and enjoy!

Store your cold brew in a bottle in the fridge. It'll keep for 5–10 days depending on the freshness of the beans.



Sidebar panels:

Scale it up or down.

This cold brew coffee recipe scales up and down easily, as long as you stick with the ratio of 8:100 of coffee to water. But no matter how much you're brewing, the wait time is the same, around 8–12 hours.

Want milk in your cold brew?

That works too! Top up your brew with a little milk.

Adding milk changes the body of the drink and dulls a lot of the lighter flavours in filter-roasted beans, so we recommend using an espresso blend (like Pacemaker) if you're adding milk.

Undiluted joy.

Do you like sipping your cold brew till the ice melts, but don't like diluted cold brew? Make a tray of ice blocks using cold brew, and you're all set.

Start experimenting!

Cold brew is also perfect for combining to make other drinks and cocktails. Try it with tonic water or cocktails—though you should adjust the ratio of coffee:water to be closer to 25:100 to make a concentrate if you're diluting with mixers.

Of course, as Australia settles into autumn and winter, the cooler days might call for something a little more warming. The Aeropress is my go-to piece of brewing gear: it's small, light, virtually indestructible and has more recipe variations than there are days of the year.



AEROPRESS

This is how I make my coffee at home and on the road. This technique literally inverts the AeroPress, so no water drips through the filter until you're ready.

You'll get a slightly different flavour because this leaves more water during the immersion stage of the brew, before pressure forces the water through the coffee grounds and filter.



1 Put the paper filter into the cap, rinse well then put aside.

Rinsing gets rid of the paper taste. You can also pre-warm your cup with some hot water at this stage – but don't forget to throw out the rinse water from your cup before brewing.



2 Put the plunger inside the main chamber of the AeroPress, so it forms a seal.

It should now balance on the plunger, leaving the other side open and facing up.



3 Grind 14g of coffee and place in the AeroPress.

Freshly ground is always best, and for AeroPress it should be similar in size to rough beach sand.



4 Pour 50ml of water, just off the boil, straight into the aeropress.

You're aiming for around 92-94° celsius. If you don't have a temperature controlled kettle, leave the water for a minute or two after it's boiled and you'll be close.



5 Stir twice, in a circular motion.

This helps ensure all the grounds are wet.



6 Wait 30 seconds.

This is the 'bloom' – when gasses trapped in the coffee are released. The mixture (called the slurry) will bubble slightly.



7 Add another 170ml of water, stir again.



8 Wait a little longer.

The next step should begin around 2 minutes after you first added water for the bloom.



9 Attach the cap with the filter paper, and screw it into place.



10 Invert the AeroPress so it's sitting on top of your cup.

Don't worry too much about spilling – the top of the AeroPress forms a seal so there's not much chance of it leaking.



11 Press down on the plunger until you hear air hiss.

It takes a little bit of pressure to push the water through the paper. You're aiming for this step to take around 30 seconds.



12 Enjoy!

ARTICLE

Peter Wilson



Performance:
HTTP2 in a 1.5 World

the
RESPOND
edition



PETER WILSON PERFORMANCE

Peter Wilson

—
@pwcc



FOR MOST OF US, THE YEAR 1969 IS INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT. IN SOME WAYS, IT COULD BE SEEN AS THE MOST IMPORTANT YEAR OF OUR WORKING LIVES, EVEN THOUGH – FOR MANY OF US, ANYWAY – IT HAPPENED SOME TIME BEFORE WE WERE BORN.

At around 9:30 on the night of 29 October 1969, a group of researchers from UCLA sent the first message on the ARPANET, predecessor to the internet, to the University of Stanford in San Francisco.

That message, sent about half the length of California, was simple: “login”.

With the sending of that five letter message the path to the internet and, eventually, the World Wide Web, had begun. It was an inauspicious beginning, because the message that actually made it to Stanford was: “lo”.

Yes. Performance issues have been with us from the start. →

Performance is a two part issue

I started developing sites in the 1990s. Back then, we had a maximum download speed of 56 kilobits per second. Very much a theoretical maximum, at best. When this old man talks about caring about every byte on a page back in the day, it's because we had no choice.

I still think about bytes on the page in my role as WordPress engineer at [Human Made](#), making high-end WordPress sites, often using it as a headless CMS and delivering content via an API.

As far as performance goes, we're now in a transitional period. With the release of the spec for HTTP version 2 and increasing but not universal browser support, we need to consider how server configuration influences the performance of our front-end code.

Because we're in transition, code for one circumstance may cause problems for another. We find ourselves in dire straits. However, as professional web designers and developers we don't get our money for nothing, or - in terms of conversions - our clicks for free. We need to accept that front-end code and HTTP protocols have become the brothers in arms of performance. (Thank you, thank you, I'll be here til Thursday.)

The internet is slow

Since late 2011, the HTTP Archive - run by the Internet Archive - has collected statistics on the Alexa top one million sites. Dozens of data points are collected visiting the one million sites both on a desktop using broadband and on a mobile phone simulating a mobile connection.

The stated aim is to record not just the content in the Internet Archive, but how this content is delivered and served in the HTTP Archive. It focuses our attention on the state of front end web development, including how we as designers and developers are changing the web.

With this focus on the front end, let's take a look at what has happened to bytes on the page in recent years.

In April last year, we passed an average of 2 megabytes per page and we have not looked back. We currently sit at a little under 2.3 Mb per page and we will pass an average of 2.5 Mb by the end of this year. That's for every page.

Mobile users fare slightly better with the current average weight of a page accessed via a mobile device sitting at 1.2 Mb.

The average weight of each web page is 250% of what it was in 2011. There are any number of statistics I could show you to demonstrate what we as web designers and developers have done to damage the

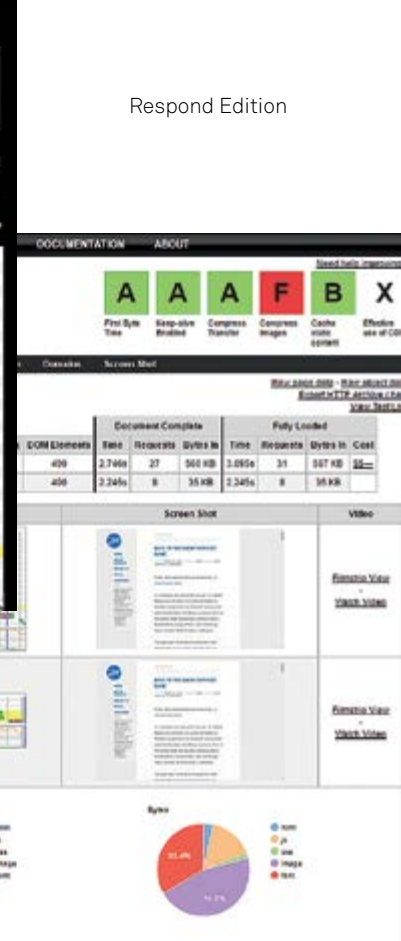
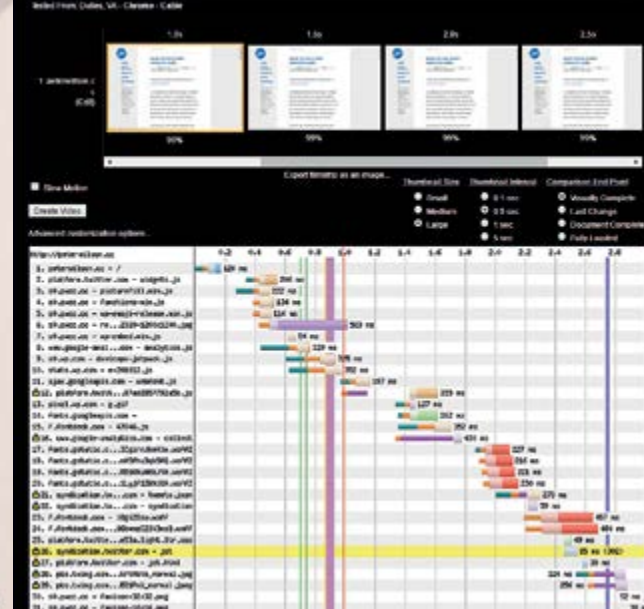


web. I could show you the increasing number of assets we're using (around 100 per page), the tenfold increase in the use of web fonts, or any number of the 44 data points made available by the HTTP Archive. However, while factual, they're all abstract.

Try waiting out the typical web page loading in awkward silence. To demonstrate what that feels like, without the payoff of a web page at the end, I've created a video at <http://pwcc.cc/respond/wait>.

When you visit this, you'll see it's 4.2 seconds before the page starts rendering, 12.7 seconds before the page is visually complete and 15.2 seconds before the page has fully loaded.

It's worth remembering this is the average load time on a desktop using a fast, wired connection. On mobile connections, surrounded by EMF interference on a train or a tram, or when connecting to a server overseas, it will be slower.



Respond Edition

Why speed matters

As a user, the internet being slow is an inconvenience. We sit on public transport looking at a screen with a blue progress bar apparently going backwards and, after a few moments, we give up and jump over to a competing site.

It's at this point that performance starts costing you – yes, you the internet professional reading this – money. Without meaning to get all neoliberal trickle-down economics on you, even for the employed reading this, an effect on your company's bottom line affects how much they can pay you.

Case study after case study has revealed the effect of performance on revenue through declining conversions.

A few years ago, Walmart acknowledged internally that their site had performance issues. These performance issues became particularly apparent on high traffic days - when the opportunity for turnover is at its greatest - such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Walmart found their conversion rate declined exponentially as their users waited for the page to load, with the first four seconds being a real killer.

Amazon discovered it would cost them an inhumane amount of money - \$1.6 billion in sales annually - were their site to slow down for a mere second. To put that into perspective, in 2013 Jeff Bezos purchased the Washington Post company for 250 million dollars. The one second slowdown would cost them that amount every 55 days.

In percentage terms, Amazon's drop in sales is 1% for every additional 100 milliseconds of load time. Shopzilla increased revenue by 12% by improving their load time by just a few seconds. Yahoo increased page views by 9% with an improvement of 400ms. And they're Yahoo!

It doesn't take a great deal of imagination to see why improving your site's performance could lead to a tidy little bonus come Christmas time, which is a nice side effect of helping to make the web a better place.

How we measure speed

The facts about performance are all very interesting but, without knowing where your site stands, largely useless. Once you decide to improve performance, you need to check what is slowing down your site to discover where the easier wins are. Why refactor code to save 100 ms if removing a blocking request will save 300?

While you'll hear people talking about page-speed score as a convenient shorthand (me included), it's a single number that provides minimal insights.

For more meaningful metrics, [WebPageTest](#) is the most convenient tool for measuring the effect of a change. It's pretty much enter the URL and go. There are a bunch of locations and other settings you can change, but when measuring the effect of a change, consistency is key.

When choosing a browser to test in, I tend to take my lead from Google Analytics. For my own site that means Chrome on iPads and iPhones. For a client site not visited exclusively by middle-class internet professionals, the browser selection may vary. →

```
~$ nslookup example.com
Non-authoritative answer:
Name:example.com
Address: 117.53.163.91

~$
```

FIG.1



```
~$ telnet 117.53.163.91 80
Connected to 117.53.163.91.
```

FIG.2



```
~$ telnet 117.53.163.91 80
Connected to 117.53.163.91.

GET / HTTP/1.1
Host: example.com
```

FIG.3



When you first run WebPageTest, you are presented with some key metrics. The three I consider most important, all related to the user's experience, are: time to render starting, render completing and the document loading. These are the three I highlighted earlier while we were waiting for the average web page to load.

On WebPageTest, I tend to spend most time looking at the filmstrip view. My biggest concern is how visitors experience the site loading, often referred to as perceived performance. As long as text is readable and calls to action are working within the user's viewport, it doesn't really matter what is happening elsewhere on the page.

What causes the delays?

At the time of writing, over 90% of web servers use HTTP 1.1 [w3tech.com](#). If you work in client services, or on a product installed on client servers, the chances are your work will ultimately be delivered from a server running HTTP 1.1.

The first step is for the browser to look up the IP address of the server, and for the name server to respond. [See Figure 1.](#)

The browser then makes the first of two round trips to the web server by connecting and waiting for the web server to respond with the open connection: [See Figure 2.](#)

Once connected, the browser requests the web page in a protocol it understands, in this case HTTP 1.1. The browser includes the name of the site as there can be multiple sites on any one server, and the server responds with the web page. [See Figure 3.](#)

When requesting the web page, the browser includes a bunch of other details we don't need to worry about when simulating the connection from the command line.

For HTTP 1.1, the browser needs to initiate every connection. It can make multiple parallel connections and reuse them when needs be, but for each connection it needs to go through the original round trip when connecting.

As the browser needs to initiate every connection over HTTP 1.1, the number of assets on a page affects how quickly it can load. The browser needs to download and begin processing the HTML before it knows to download the CSS. Once the browser downloads and starts processing the CSS, it discovers images and other assets it needs to download.

By downloading the images, etc, the browser blocks itself from downloading some JavaScript. While processing the JavaScript, the browser discovers an iframe it needs to load. The browser downloads the iframe (assuming it's not blocked by other assets) only to discover CSS, images and other assets.

Something had to be done. That something is HTTP 2.

As you research HTTP 2, you'll come across articles and podcasts telling you it's time to forget everything you know about performance. I think it's too early for such grand declarations, when over 90% of web-servers are running HTTP 1.

And if you're lucky enough to have a site running on an HTTP 2 server, a little under 40% of your visitors will still be stuck using HTTP 1, according to [caniuse.com](#).

Networking protocol for low-latency transport of content over the web. Originally started out from the SPDY protocol, now standardized as HTTP version 2.

IE	Edge	Firefox	Chrome	Safari	Opera	iOS Safari	Opera Mini	Android Browser	Chrome for Android
8			45					4.3	
9			46					4.4	
10		43	47			8.4		4.4.4	
11	13	44	48	9	34	9.2	8	4.7	4.7
	14	45	49	9.1	35	9.3			
		46	50		36				
		47	51						

Notes Known issues (0) Resources (5) Feedback

See also support for the SPDY protocol, precursor of HTTP2.

- 1 Partial support in IE11 refers to being limited to Windows 10.
- 2 Only supports HTTP2 over TLS (https)
- 3 Partial support in Safari refers to being limited to OSX 10.11+



HTTP 2 is a binary protocol so, unlike HTTP 1.1, we can't run the commands in the browser to emulate a connection, we're limited to describing it. Although it's not part of the protocol, all browsers currently offering support require a secure connection for HTTP 2. The process is as follows:

1. The first round trip to the server is for the browser to open the connection, and for the web server to respond. As happens in HTTP 1.1
2. On the second round trip, the browser requests details about the server's SSL certificate, and the server responds with those details. If the server supports HTTP 2, it includes this as additional information in the reply.
3. On the third round trip, the browser calculates an encryption key and sends it to the server. Without waiting for a reply, it starts using the encryption key to request the first asset from the server, the web page the user requested. As the web server has indicated HTTP 2 support, the browser requests it in this protocol.

So far, no real difference from the earlier protocol. It's once the browser starts processing the page and discovers the other assets, that it finds it can request these over the same connection without waiting for the connection to clear. Instead of three round trips to the server to request the CSS, it takes one. As the browser requests assets, it can continue to request others without other assets blocking the connection.

If downloading a web page was a conversation, HTTP 1.1 would be over a CB radio allowing only one person to talk at a time; whereas HTTP 2 would be a crowded room with multiple conversations happening in one place at any one time.

Where HTTP 2 really provides a performance boost is with HTTP 2 server push. This is a technique in which both the browser and the server can initiate sending a resource across the wire. This allows the server to include the CSS and other files when a browser requests the web page.

Including an asset via server push is incredibly easy. The convention is to trigger the browser to send the additional resource using a link in the HTTP header. In PHP (the language I usually use), this becomes:

```
if ( is_http2() ) {
// Set HTTP Push headers, do not replace
header( 'link:</style.css>; rel=preload', false );
header( 'link:</functions.js>; rel=preload', false );
}
```

However, this presents a problem. It instructs the server to push the two additional files on every load, without considering the state of the browser cache. If the files are in the browser's cache, our efforts to speed up our website's load time have resulted in unnecessary data being transmitted. →

Server push is unsophisticated; it lacks the smarts to determine if a file is in the browser's cache. Browsers can cancel the transmission but by the time they do, the server has already started sending data down the line.

The solution is to check if the file is cached in the browser and only push the file if it is not:

```
if (! is_cached( '/style.css' )) {
  header( 'link:</style.css>;rel=preload', false);
}
```

Regrettably, there is no `is_cached` function in any programming language to check if the browser is caching a file. It's not something the browsers report, and for security reasons nor will they.

```
if (! is_cached( '/style.css' )) {
  header( 'link:</style.css>;rel=preload', false);
  setcookie( '/style.css', 'cached', 0, '/' );
}
```

To fake the cache detection, we need to set a cookie indicating the file is likely to be in the browser cache. In this example I'm setting the word `cached` to test against, if the file version changes regularly, then you may want to use the version number.

```
function is_cached( $filename ) {
  if ( 'cached' === $_COOKIE[ $filename ] ) {
    return true;
  }
  else {
    return false;
  }
}
```

Our function `is_cached` becomes a check for the existence of a cookie against the file name. I'd write some additional code for a production version, and as a first step I'd hash the file name, but exactly what the code would look like depends on the site specifics.

What the transition to HTTP 2 means

Over the next two or three years, to keep our sites performant, we're all going to have to consider the impact of every byte we put on the page.

Once we have an HTTP 2 enabled server - and we should all argue for this to happen sooner rather than later - we have to think how bytes on the page impact visitors to a site on a fast or slow connection, and to think about the impact under both HTTP versions 1 and 2.

At times it will be annoying, at times frustrating, but it will keep our jobs interesting.

And that's why I love working in the industry we do.



Respond 2016
Performance: HTTP2 in a 1.5 world

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INTERVIEW

Jen Simmons

In Person

the
RESPOND
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JEN SIMMONS IN PERSON

Jen Simmons

—

@jensimmons

I COME FROM A LONG LINE OF ENGLISH FOLKS, SOME OF WHOM IMMIGRATED TO MASSACHUSETTS IN THE DAYS OF THE MAYFLOW, OTHERS WHO MOVED TO WASHINGTON D.C. IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY, WITH A BUNCH IN BETWEEN.

While there's a bit of Scottish and a bit of German in my ancestry, it's mostly English, English and English. There must be something to the sense of where you are from, way back, as the U.K. is now one of my favourite places to be. It does seem familiar somehow. Comfortable.

Q What book has changed your life in some way?

A There have been several books that have changed my life:

A Separate Peace; Designing with Web Standards; Bulletproof Web Design; anything by Judy Blume. But if I were to pick one, I'd say **There is Nothing Wrong with You: Going Beyond Self Hate** by Cheri Huber. It's a funny little book. Big hand-written-style text. Lots of drawings. It walks you through one particular idea – there's a voice in your head that's telling you crappy stuff all the time. And that voice is lying to you.

Cheri Huber is a meditation teacher in the tradition of Zen Buddhism. She's written a pile of books, including **The Fear Book** and **The Depression Book**. The Fear Book is another that changed me. And The Depression Book is the best book on depression I've ever seen. I think I've bought There is Nothing Wrong with You a half dozen times. I keep giving away my copy and buying it again. Really all of Cheri Huber's many books teach the same simple truth about life and who we are. But it's a truth that's both the hardest thing to learn and the most helpful. →



**Q What formal qualifications do you have?
How did you end up doing web work?**

A I have a BA in Sociology with minors in Mathematics and Theatre from Gordon College. And an MFA in Film and Media Arts from Temple University. In neither did I set out to study web design or computer science. I did computer science in junior high and high school (and did very well), but dropped out because of the culture of harassment.

I got into the web years later as a natural progression of living a career as an artist. I was designing lighting, sets and sound for theatre, producing events, teaching high school (and later college) students, and doing freelance graphic design. When the web came along, it was only natural that I also make the websites, so I taught myself HTML. Eventually, I stopped doing print because I was bored with it. After I moved to New York in 2008, I focused on a full-time career as a designer and front-end developer, shifting to larger budget projects with teams. And I eventually evolved my role as a teacher into what I do today. I love being both creative and technical. I find being on the forefront of a medium very exciting.

**Q Describe what you do. What's your job?
Is presenting at web conferences part of that job?**

A I am a Designer Advocate for Mozilla – as a member of their Developer Relations team. So yes, it is part of my job to travel around and present at conferences. I was doing so long before I got this job at Mozilla. But it's great now to have the backing of an institution to help make it possible.

It's also my job to collect ideas and feedback from the web industry and take those requests back to Mozilla.

The folks who make browsers usually don't also make websites. It's my job to research the field and bring my findings back, to advocate for designers and developers within Mozilla.

I'm also the host and executive producer of "The Web Ahead", a podcast about new technology and the future of the web. I started the show in 2011, and have been thrilled to reach such a large audience, bringing many of the ideas and guests we see at web conferences to folks around the world.

**Q Do you give much thought to the title you apply to yourself?
Does it matter?**

A I do think titles can matter. They carry power. At Mozilla we can choose our own titles, and I put a lot of thought into mine. The job opening for my position was titled "Technical Evangelist", but I don't believe this is really about the technology. It's about people, and what people can do with technology—not the technology for its own sake.

Our department is called "Developer Relations" but I believe designers are just as important as developers—perhaps more so, since their work impacts the humans who use our sites and products more directly. Advocate is a great word, and more accurately reflects the responsibilities I have. So Designer Advocate it is. Or Designer and Developer Advocate on more wordy days.

Q Describe the first time you gave a presentation on a web topic.

A I think the first presentation I gave at a tech industry event was in 2006 at Vloggercon. I showed people how to customise their Blogger blog using CSS. I'd been on panels at conferences a few times before, but that was the first time I prepared a talk with slides, and gave it on my own. The conference was a gathering of the folks who invented the techniques for putting video on the web. It was a great community that I was honoured to be part of.

Of course I was incredibly nervous. I didn't feel prepared. I'd taught college courses for three years by then, so I was used to lecturing, but somehow a conference presentation seems much higher stakes. I think it went well. I likely left wanting to have done a much better job. I've been striving to get better and better ever since.



Q In *The Graduate*, Mr McGuire has just one word to say to aimless college graduate Benjamin Braddock: “Plastics”. What one word would you give to today’s prospective web professional?

A Layout.

If an aimless college grad wanted to break into the web industry today, and wanted to know what they should focus on to get ahead – I’d tell them “layout!”

There’s incredible opportunity coming to invent some truly new design patterns. Once CSS Grid Layout hits browsers, everything about layout will change. Anyone who knows what’s coming will have lots of work.



**SCAN IT
READ IT
KEEP IT**

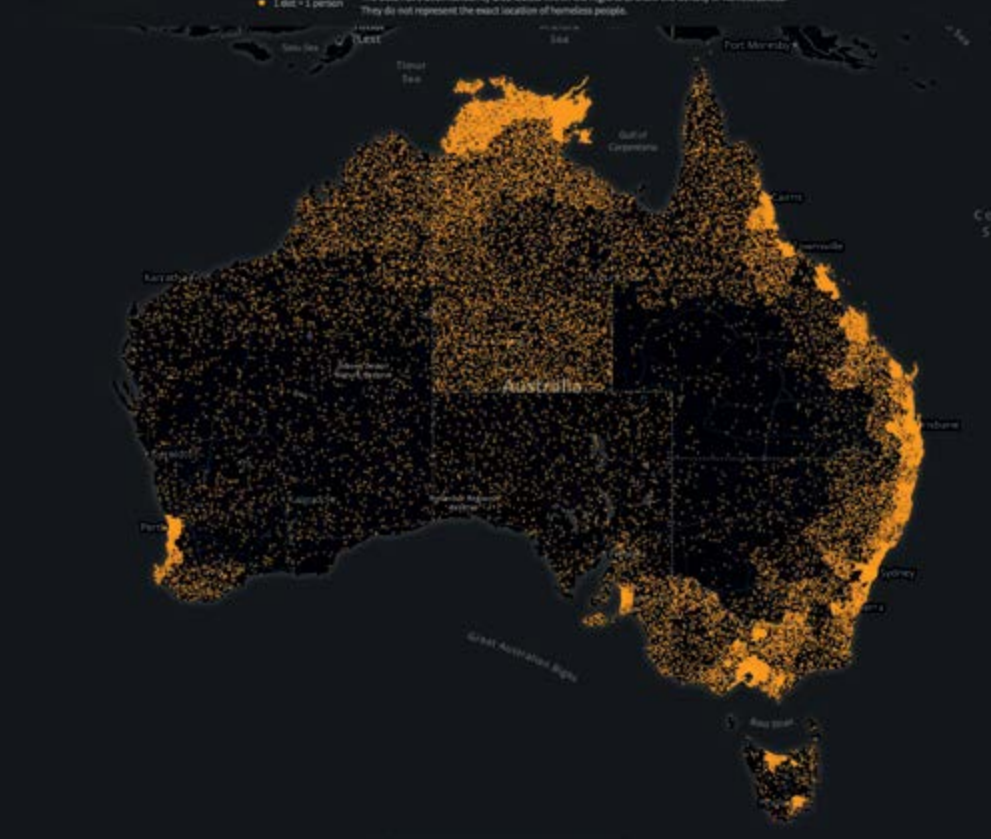
FEATURE

Agencies We Like



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Q What does small multiples mean?

A For us, being Small Multiples means simultaneously looking at the bigger picture and the smaller parts.

The term “small multiples” comes from information design guru Edward Tufte. Small multiples is the ordering of many similar things together to allow for comparison of both similarities and differences. Just take a look at the cover of Tufte’s **Envisioning Information, 1990** for an example. Small multiples means highlighting trends in data. It means celebrating diversity. It means connecting individuals with the whole. It means applying patterns and reducing redundancy in projects. →



Q Tell us a little of the history of Small Multiples

A Small Multiples was established in 2011 as one of the first data visualisation studios in Australia. It has its roots in the Design Lab at Sydney Uni: multidisciplinary and creative people who like to make things. Growing from two founders to a team of specialists, technologists and designers, it focuses on data-driven products, services, and communication for business and media.

Q What are some projects you're particularly proud of?

A ABC Promise Tracker because it demonstrates how so many different things – exploration tools, widgets, and shareable images – can be created modularly from a single point of truth to help provide information that is contextual and most relevant.

Nature Collaboration: Connected World because of the complexity of the underlying data that was a challenge to visualise. The final result shows how interactivity in data visualisation is an important part of engagement and learning.

SBS Census Explorer because Australia is diverse and this tool helps people learn more about themselves and each other.

Q Any awards?

A Winner, Best of Websites & Online Services - Cultural or Lifestyle for Cronulla Riots - The Day that Shocked the Nation (as technical developers)

Honourable Mention, 2013 Australian Web Awards, NSW Innovation for Financial Review Data

Finalist, 2013 PANPA Newspaper of the Year Awards Digital News Destination of the Year Innovation in Digital Publishing for Financial Review Data

Honoree, 2014 Webby Awards, Mobile & Apps, Entertainment (Handheld Devices) for Australia Plus App (concept and design)

Finalist, 2014 Walkley Awards, Multimedia Storytelling: ABC Fact Check Team, Promise Tracker

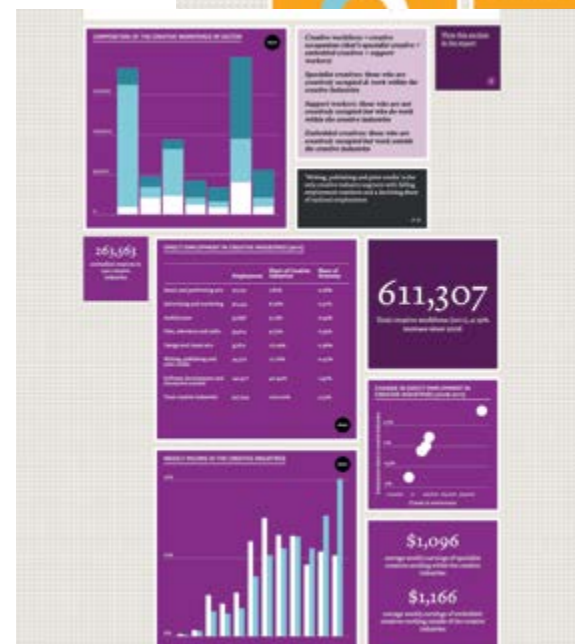
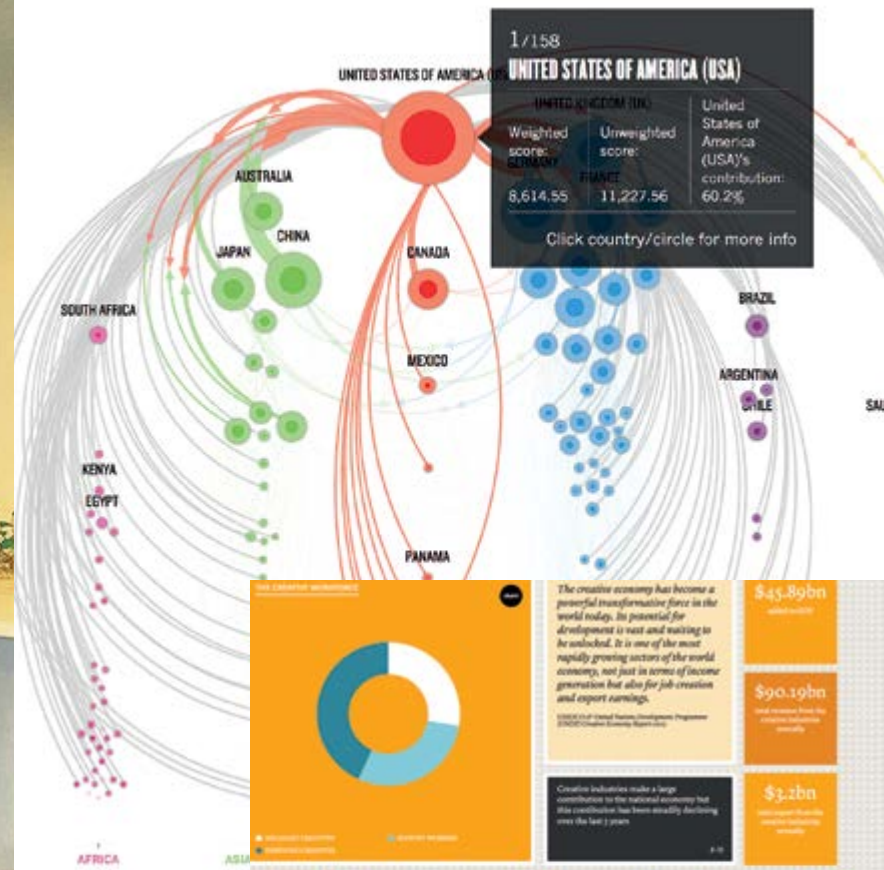
Q What's your ideal project? Client?

A Our ideal project would be one where there is the opportunity to learn about a new topic and be immersed. To date, we've learnt about such diverse things as transport planning, clinical coding, patenting genome sequences and sustainability frameworks. Australian politics and federal electorates are our current dive-deep topic!

Our ideal client is passionate about what they do and they know their data like the back of their hand. They would also want to be transparent, accessible, and understand the important roles data can play.

Q Anything else you'd like to tell us?

A We should all be advocates for data transparency, accessibility and visual literacy. Personal data and organisational data are very powerful when they are put to use. Visualisation is one of the most important mediums that can unlock the potential of data.



ARTICLE

Ricky Onsman



W3C Working Groups
& the Future Web

the
RESPOND
edition



RICKY ONSMAN W3C WORKING GROUPS & THE FUTURE WEB

Ricky Onsman

—

@onsman

#w3c

The invitation came to me by email from Web Directions.

**DO YOU KNOW WHERE CSS AND SVG COME FROM,
AND HOW THEY END UP AS THEY ARE?**

**A BUNCH OF FOLKS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD
PARTICIPATE IN W3C WORKING GROUPS,
TO HELP MOVE THESE (AND MANY OTHER WEB)
TECHNOLOGIES FORWARD.**

And it so happens that two of these working groups, those responsible for CSS and SVG, are meeting in Sydney this week, and would love to connect with the Sydney Web design and development community.

So taking place tomorrow night, at Google's HQ in Pyrmont hear a number of working group members talking about where these technologies are going, including the intriguingly named "Houdini" feature of CSS, that you'll be hearing a lot more about in months to come."

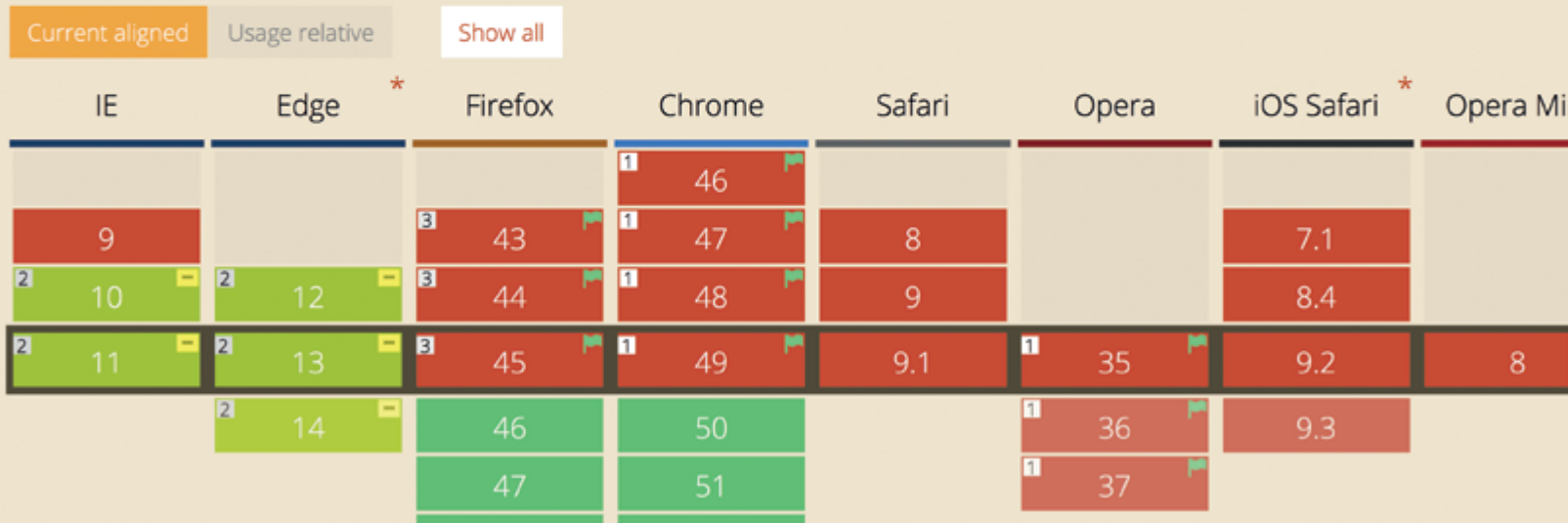
Tomorrow night? That's short notice, especially when you live a couple of hours train ride away.

But.

W3C is the abbreviation of choice for the World Wide Web Consortium, "an international community where Member organizations, a full-time staff, and the public work together to develop Web standards. Led by Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee and CEO Jeffrey Jaffe, W3C's mission is to lead the Web to its full potential". →

Method of using a grid concept to lay out content, providing a mechanism for authors to divide available space for lay out into columns and rows using a set of predictable sizing behaviors

Australia
unprefixed:
Global
unprefixed:



Part of the “full potential” is pinned on establishing a set of specifications for how web pages are rendered by browsers. Sounds simple, except the browser vendors are essentially in competition with each other and they don't always agree on what should be implemented, how or even when. This is why some (many) of the bells and whistles that work in one browser don't work in another. W3C aims to develop specifications according to standards that everyone agrees on, ensuring consistency in how the web is experienced.

To do this, W3C established Working Groups to sort out what should become a standard in 40 different areas, including how Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) and Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) are understood, implemented and rendered by browsers. Each Working Group has participants from around the world, and they meet in various global locations several times a year to work on the specifications.

I hadn't been aware that W3C Working Groups were in the habit of holding public discussions about their work - not because they're secretive but because their work is almost always a long way ahead of what can currently be used. It takes ages to develop a spec, and then even more ages until even some - let alone all - of the browsers acknowledge them and provide support for them. Only then can designers and developers use them in their daily work, assured that all web users will get the benefit.

In this case, having two Working Groups that focus on such closely related topics as CSS and SVG meeting in the same city was apparently too good an opportunity to pass up. They called on Web Directions, long term supporters of Web standards and the W3C, to get word out to local webheads.

The registration page called it a **Web Developers Meetup (CSS, SVG, Houdini)** and listed the lineup of speakers as:

Fantasai: CSS Best Practices from the CSSWG

Rossen Atanasov & Shane Stephens:

Houdini - the most exciting development in CSS you've never heard of

Tavmjong Bah: Future directions for SVG

Jihye Hong: Introducing CSS Round Display

Greg Whitworth: Introducing CSS Grid

The little I'd heard of Houdini made it seem very interesting, and I'd just been reading about how CSS Grid layouts would change design. It was also pretty clear that SVG was going to be important in the hunt for lighter page weights (among other things).

It was certainly short notice but free entry, free food, free drinks and a peek into the Google sanctum made it pretty easy to click the Register button.

I rocked up to Google's offices in the inner city Sydney harbourside suburb of Pyrmont, a nice shiny building near the even shinier Star Casino, found the right floor, got my name tag and looked around to see who I knew.

0.09% + 11.96% = 12.05%

0.09%

0.13% + 8.63% = 8.77%

0.13%

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	4.4	
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I was early, and that gave me the opportunity to recognise some of the Working Group members, and have a quick chat with the ones I knew. Call me a web groupie, but I find it pretty special to shake hands with Tantek Çelik, Bert Bos and Doug Schepers right here in Sydney.

The room was spacious, with chairs facing two large wall-mounted screens. I don't know how many people they expected but it wasn't long before extra chairs were being brought in to accommodate the gathering throng.

In the end, I'd say there were over 300 people there – a great turnout at such short notice in a city where the average web meetup is lucky to get 100 attendees.

The presentations were great. It really did feel special to be told about imminent developments that would affect my daily work (if not immediately - browser support being the dominant uncontrollable factor - then certainly over time) by the very people who were engaged in making them a reality.

To go into detail about what was shared would take a lot more room than I have here but I can say that while Houdini was the star of the show (it gives developers access to more points in the browser rendering pipeline than just the current DOM and CSS Object Model, including parsing, layout, painting and composition - powerful stuff, indeed), I was also pretty excited by CSS Round, which will allow designers to create round windows to display content - a step beyond the traditional rectangular display. Grid is going to be with us very soon and give us greater control over page layout, and SVG will be a game changer for

how images are used on the web. And it was good to get an overview of how all this works to not only set but constantly improve best practice.

All the talks were interesting, and the Q&A that followed each raised some equally interesting points.

What I found most compelling was that this was happening at all. It is incredibly empowering for web professionals - not just designers and developers, but content strategists, information architects, UX specialists and coders of all sorts to know what is coming, and what tools will be able for us to shape web users' experiences online. Some colleagues are already using features that are not fully supported, on the basis that they will be supported soon and their websites will shine as the browsers start to implement them.

Yes, it's annoying having to use browser-specific prefixes in your code AND having to create fallback options for browsers that are slow to implement newer specs. And it's time-consuming to have to check with caniuse.com as to which browsers currently support which features. And yes, we have to keep our feet on the ground and make sure the focus stays on what works for the user, rather than what excites the developer or impresses the client.

But it's both reassuring and exciting to have W3C Working Groups explain and demonstrate their work in shaping the future web, our workplace.

I suspect the W3C might have been pleasantly surprised at the enthusiasm for this event. I sincerely hope it inspires them to stage more of them, all over the world.

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You can contact us via our website at <https://www.webdirections.org/contact>, on Facebook or on Twitter.

You can also subscribe to our weekly email newsletter for advance notice of events as well as access to our archives.

CO-FOUNDED AND NOW RUN BY JOHN ALLSOPP, WEB DIRECTIONS HAS FOR OVER A DECADE BROUGHT TOGETHER LEADING DEVELOPERS, ENGINEERS, VISUAL, IXD, UX AND PRODUCT DESIGNERS, ART AND CREATIVE DIRECTORS.

Indeed, everyone involved in producing web and digital products to learn from one another and from world leading experts across this vast field.

At Web Directions, we spend our lives thinking about what comes next, keeping up with trends in technology, practices and processes, and filtering the hype to make sure you don't miss trends that matter, and don't waste time on hype that doesn't.

As important as the content is, conferences are also about connecting with your peers, making new connections and strengthening existing ones, sharing know-how and expertise, finding an expert, or new clients.

At Web Directions events we pay careful attention to this side of things with social events, and innovative use of social software to help build and strengthen those relationships.

We promise attending one of our events will leave you significantly better versed in the challenges you face day to day, and in solutions for addressing them.

We're very approachable and we welcome all kinds of enquiries relating to our activities.



WEB DIRECTIONS 2015 CONFERENCE

THE 10TH ANNUAL WEB DIRECTIONS CONFERENCE, HELD IN SYDNEY FROM 29-30 OCTOBER 2015, WAS ALSO THE LAST IN THAT FORMAT.

What a way to go out.

There can hardly be a better setting for a defining web conference moment than in an operating amusement park perched under the arch of the Sydney Harbour Bridge: a next generation parade of international web thought leaders on stage inside; carnival rides, food stalls and family groups immediately outside; and yachts and ferries slipping by in the Spring harbourside background.

Luckily for us, our attendees like to record their impressions of the conference in words and / or pictures. Here are some of the ones we know about:

<https://slate.adobe.com/cp/6hLGT>

<http://weblog.200ok.com.au/2015/11/wd15-big-stonking-post.html>

<https://github.com/jesstelford/wd15>

<http://www.onsman.com/web-directions-2015>

<https://www.bam.com.au/blog/behind-the-scenes/a-recap-on-web-directions-2015>

<http://humaan.com/web-directions-2015>

<http://mandymichael.com/articles/people-creativity-and-the-web.html>

<https://bilue.com.au/takeaways-web-directions-2015>

<http://blog.corsamore.com/2015/11/04/web-directions-2015-day-1-likes-takeaways>

<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/wd15>

<https://www.flickr.com/search/?text=WD15>









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WEB DIRECTIONS 2016 CALENDAR

Web Directions is making some changes.

Each of our practitioner focused events, Respond for web designers and Code for front end engineers and developers, will be taking place in both Sydney and Melbourne.

As Australia's Federal Government adopts a user centric design driven approach, we're headed to Canberra for a government focused

event, Transform, featuring speakers from such transformative agencies as the US Digital Service, Code for America and our own Digital Transformation Office.

Our annual end of year conference is also getting a major overhaul, becoming a single track design and big ideas focused event called Direction.

There's a lot to look forward to, so mark these dates in your diary, and start planning now.

Respond	Sydney	Workshop APR 06	Conference APR 7- 8
Respond	Melbourne	Workshop APR 13	Conference APR 11-12
Transform	Canberra	Workshop MAY 18	Conference MAY 19
Code	Sydney	Workshop JUL 27	Conference JUL 28 -29
Code	Melbourne	Workshop AUG 03	Conference AUG 1 - 2
Direction	Sydney	—	Conference NOV 10 -11

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*“Out of any conference,
Web Directions is far
and away our favourite
in terms of results
and enjoyment”*

Dave Greiner,
Campaign Monitor Co-founder

