

WWW DESIGN

Web Pages from Around the World

Daniel Donnelly

CD-ROM included



BOOK

Designer/Author: Daniel Donnelly
Cover Design: Cathy Kelley
Design Associate: Christian Memmott
Production Assistant: Shanti Parsons

CD-ROM

Design: Interactivist Designs/Daniel Donnelly
Programming: William Donnelly
Production: William Donnelly, Jerry Garcia,
Shanti Parsons, Christian Memmott

WEBSITE

<http://www.inyourface.com>

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WWW

DESIGN

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DOMINION

ScheduleBot

FOREVER KNIGHT - MY BOYFRIEND IS A VAMPIRE

PULP

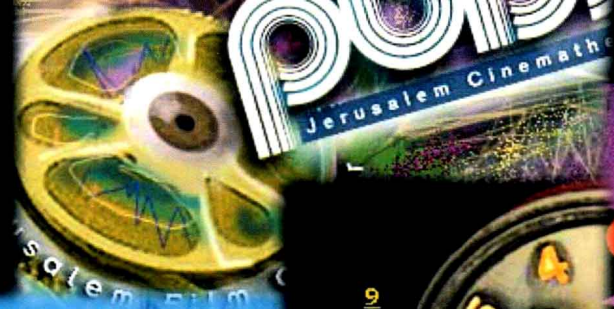
Free ZONE

Trade

B BOARD

Orbi

WHAT'S NEW



contact
hype
us



Music

GUNSTON 500

INTERNATIONAL SURFING CHAMPION

clubs

north beach
urban south africa
12-16 july 1995



EVER

chi Meki
olchi Meki

Voice Magazine ALLES
net Voice Magazine ALLES

Totsuzen-Danboru
Totsuzen-Danboru

Une pierre
deux maisons

What's New!

Inducted Solutions

the guide



PAPERMAG



PAPER
magazine




sign in digital media

YOUNG

WWW

DESIGN

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Introduction

Revolution at 72 dpi

One site out of a hundred. It takes visiting that many sites to find one that is memorable. Producing this book required going through thousands of sites to find the seventy or so featured here that were more than just a beautiful home page.

The World Wide Web is an exciting medium for designers, with its promise of a potentially enormous global audience and freedom from the financial constraints of conventional color printing (although other technological cost constraints come into play), as well as its promise of a way to engage viewers in ways impossible via the printed page or the passive television screen. The Web draws designers and would-be artists like moths to a flame, but many fail. As in other creative media, many elements must work together to create a successful site. The individual elements can be so numerous that it is difficult to pinpoint exactly which quality makes a site appealing. The Web is such a strongly visual medium that text is often secondary to the graphics of a site. Visitors subconsciously assess a site by its graphics.

What I tried to do in this book is pinpoint as many of the discrete or obvious elements as I could and described how they pull the site together. Sometimes elements are easy to identify, as in the IUMA site (p. 134) where it is easy to point to the graphically pleasing button bar as a fine element, but even here, determining what makes the individual button bars so attractive is difficult—is it the bars themselves, the white space around them, or the way they are used in the overall design of the site? In the case of The Dominion, for the cable Sci-Fi Channel (p. 150), there are so many different elements that it is difficult to determine which element has the most appeal. When a site is broken down into individual pieces, it's hard to say whether an individual element can make or break a site on its own. Often a grouping of mediocre or unremarkable elements assumes an unexpectedly high creative stature. When visiting sites around the world, we encounter design sensibilities from different cultural backgrounds, and it can become even more difficult to discern specific elements or themes that are graphically complete and pleasing.

The Web revolution bears some interesting parallels to the desktop-publishing revolution in that it lowered the threshold for high-end production and publishing—72-dpi (dots-per-inch) design does not require color separation, large amounts of RAM, or mega-hard-drive space. As a means of personal expression, the Web is much more egalitarian than print, though there are serious cultural and economic issues pertaining to Web access. Someone living in Nairobi will probably have a more difficult time getting on the Web than a fourth-grade student growing up in Silicon Valley. When the Web is used as a means of corporate and commercial expression, big budgets will ensure a faster server, quicker download times, and better marketing, but there will be nothing qualitatively different in the appearance of the site, particularly in visual terms. In other words, an independent designer in Malaysia can afford to produce as nice a project as a London, Paris, or Manhattan firm could. Print or video quality, paper choice, and packaging all become irrelevant—the skill of the designer is what determines the difference. The limitations of the Web—small color palette and browser shortcomings in terms of handling plug-ins such as Java, Shockwave, or RealAudio, to name a few—apply to all Web publishers. Quality problems in the print or video world that might be solved by using more expensive equipment really are not solvable this way in Web design—technique is all-important.

The Web is in the process of defining itself as a medium, and until this process is much further along, the Web will continue to be discussed in terms of other media, mostly using publishing concepts like “page” and “sidebar.” Someday, when online delivery of





video becomes viable, perhaps the terms “scene” or “close-up” will be used. The terms “link,” “hotlink,” and “hypertext” are unique to digital content, evoking non-linear experiences, as does the term “Web” itself. It is exciting to know that there are cadres of talented individuals, young and old, who are earning a living designing and shaping the Web of the future. Surely that Web will be significantly different from today’s Web.

Today’s Web designers derive their tools from print publishing applications such as Adobe PageMaker or QuarkXPress, which have components to add HTML (HyperText Markup Language) tags for Web publishing, or even to add multimedia sound and user interactivity capability. Multimedia programs such as Macromedia Director have created applications that will strip files down to Web-playable size; Macromedia’s version of this is the Shockwave/Afterburner combination. Even basic word-processing programs have export options to add HTML tags to plain vanilla documents. Photoshop offers the option to save an image as a GIF (Graphic Interchange Format). In essence, the same suite of tools that fueled the desktop revolution is also driving the 72-dpi revolution.

The Web is a dynamic design environment. While the basic Web design tools are those used in print publishing and multimedia, the underlying technology is in constant flux—always being improved, new features always being added. The basic HTML tag language is always being updated, as are browsers. Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer are the browsers of choice, and both now feature the availability of stable frame language to break up a single window page. New processes have been developed to transfer image-mapping programming from the server to the client to speed up download times considerably. Hardware requirements are being shifted to the viewer and to the server company. If the server is brought in-house, then the design firm can incur a considerable expense in hardware, software, and maintenance personnel, depending on the number of hits they expect to handle and how quickly the site loads. Many firms transfer this responsibility to service providers and pass the costs on to the client.

Rapid changes in Web tools, constant browser updates, new plug-ins (Java, Shockwave, RealAudio, Virtual Reality Modeling Language, etc.) present a challenge for designers and content developers. Whereas print and video professionals produce a static product—changeable only with the intent of creating a new, “revised” edition—Web professionals create shifting sand dunes where content and links form and flow to incorporate and embrace change. Sites become obsolete and tired easily, a tendency that a skilled design team can anticipate and work around. This book tries to highlight sites that bring freshness and innovation to the great wide Web.

What do the sites featured here have in common? They all pay attention to detail, not just on the home page, but on the subsequent pages as well. They feature innovative, well-executed designs characterized by effective use of color and shape as well as intelligently organized content. They make efficient and sensible use of available technology—whether it’s Java scripting, GIF89a animation, Shockwave, or RealAudio—while at the same time keeping the total size of images, sounds, and animations small to ensure quick, reliable downloads without crashing.

Finally, the Web is a place of realization. Art need not be tangible, physical—it requires skill and a desire to communicate. It remains to be seen whether Web design will become accepted as a critical form in its own right.

Daniel Donnelly
Interactivist Designs



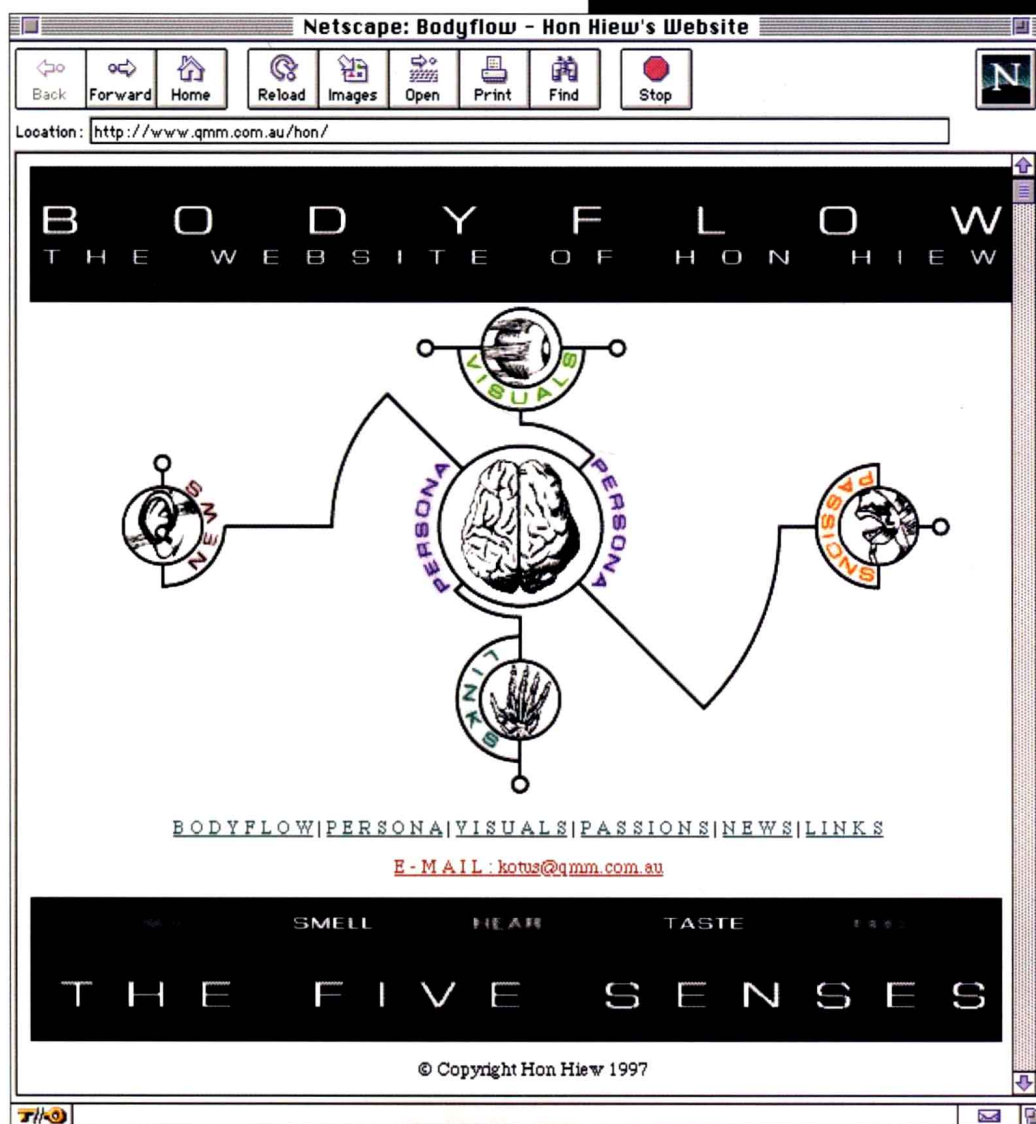
URL: <http://www.qmm.com.au/hon>

SELF-PROMOTIONAL

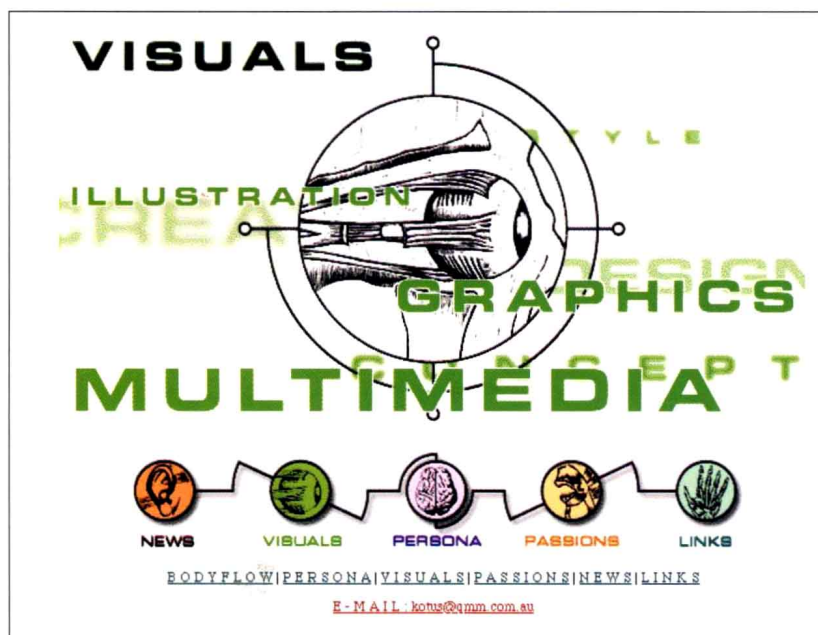
The Bodyflow Website by designer Hon Hiew is characterized by the theme of the five senses, which is used as an organizational metaphor. Each sense maps to an area of Hiew's portfolio—hearing to news, touching to links, sight to his on-line portfolio.

The opening page for each subsection features an anatomical illustration symbolic of each sense. Links to other pages are implemented by image-mapped typography and a navigation bar at the bottom of the page.

Color, simple circular shapes, and unique line treatments are additional elements that combine to unify the design.



Each letter in the "Bodyflow" title (above) rotates along a different axis, either from top to bottom or side-to-side, creating dynamic movement. In the black bar below the home page image each of the senses fades in and out, enlivening an otherwise static area.



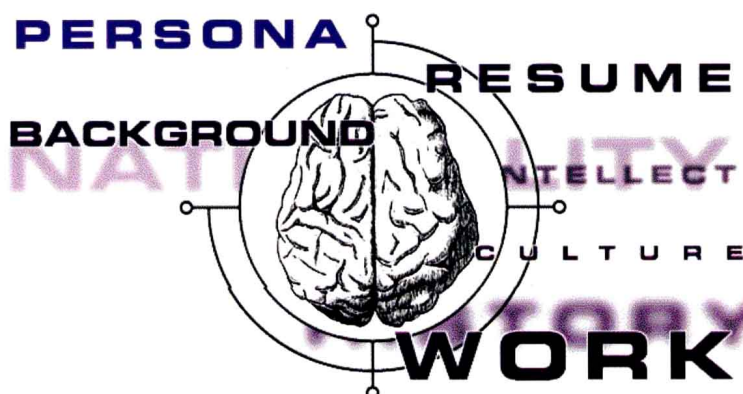
NEWS



[BODYFLOW](#)|[PERSONA](#)|[VISUALS](#)|[PASSIONS](#)|[NEWS](#)|[LINKS](#)

E-MAIL: kotus@qmm.com.au

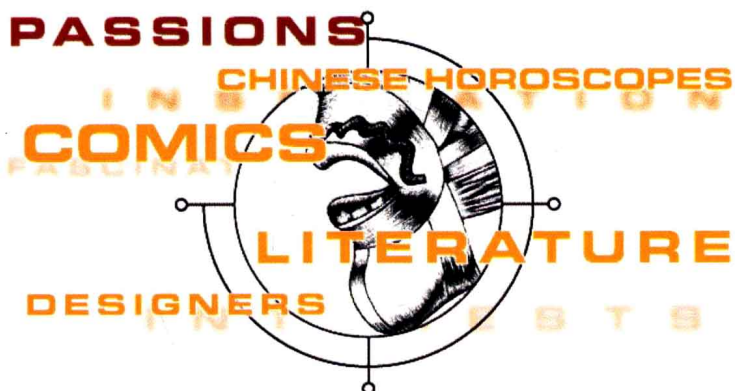
PERSONA



[BODYFLOW](#)|[PERSONA](#)|[VISUALS](#)|[PASSIONS](#)|[NEWS](#)|[LINKS](#)

E-MAIL: kotus@qmm.com.au

PASSIONS



[BODYFLOW](#)|[PERSONA](#)|[VISUALS](#)|[PASSIONS](#)|[NEWS](#)|[LINKS](#)

E-MAIL: kotus@qmm.com.au

As in the home page navigation bar and title, the vertical navigation bar below features moving GIF89a animations. The hand and "Bodyflow" disks spin along a horizontal axis, much like flipping coins.

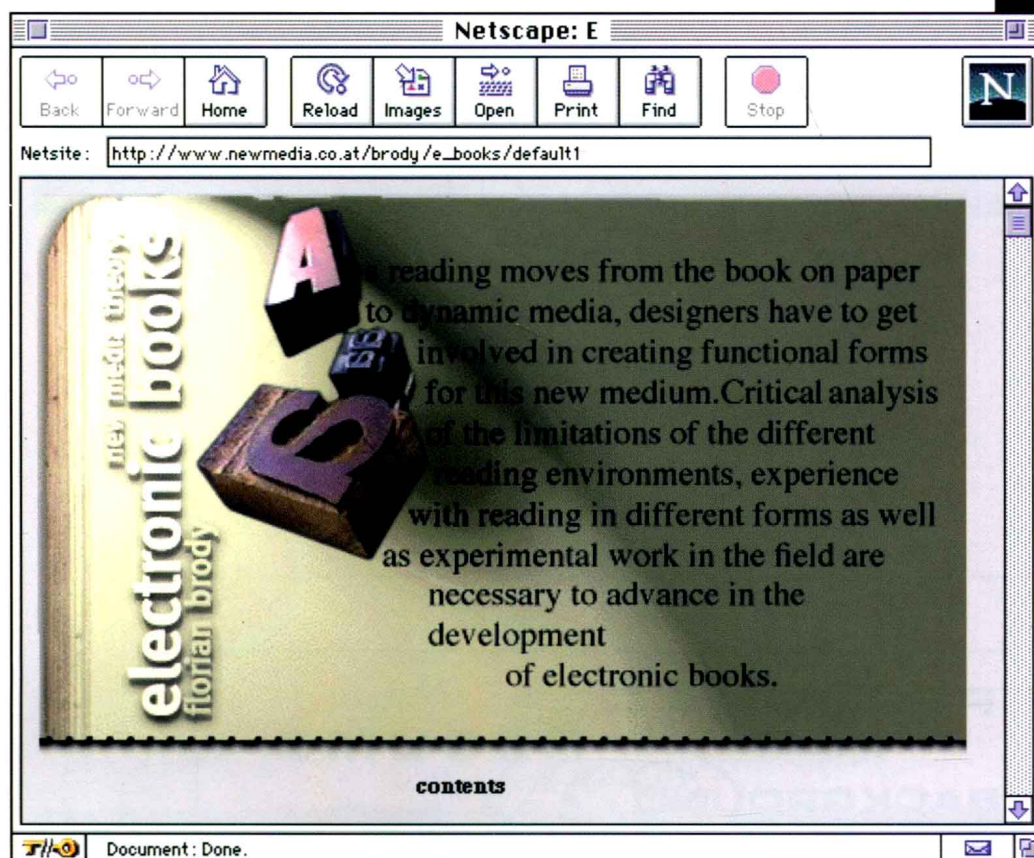


Project: Bodyflow Portfolio

Designer: Hon Hiew

Features: GIF89a animation

URL: http://www.newmedia.co.at/brody/e_books/default1

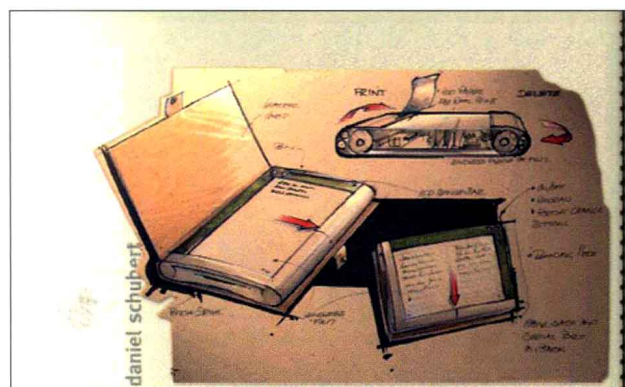
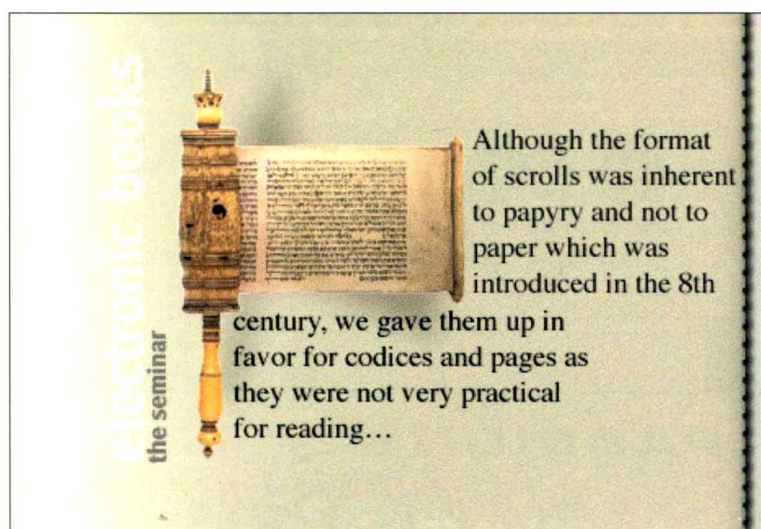


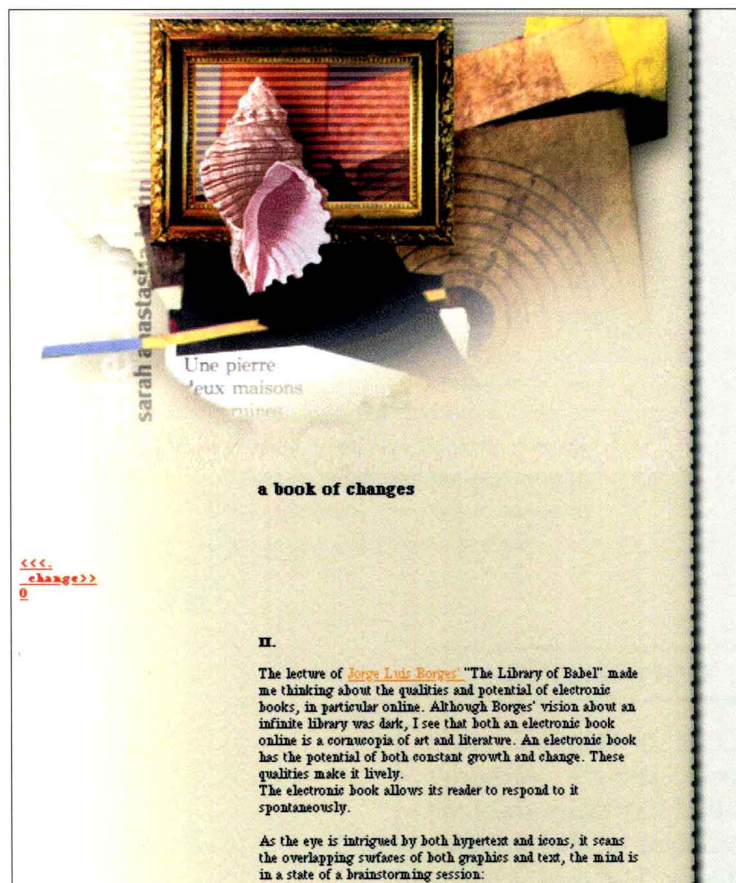
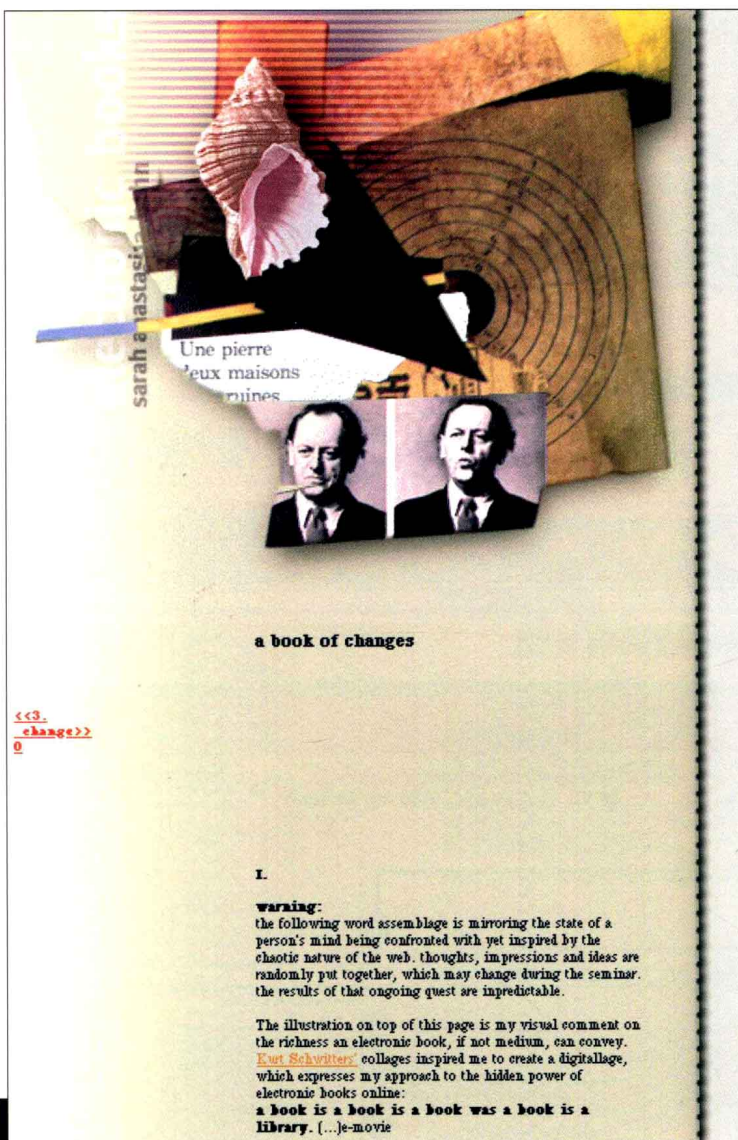
EDUCATIONAL

The BRODYnewmedia site was used as part of a graduate class on new media theory and electronic books taught by designer Florian Brody at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, though the site itself was compiled by BRODY new-media art director Sarah Anastasia Hahn.

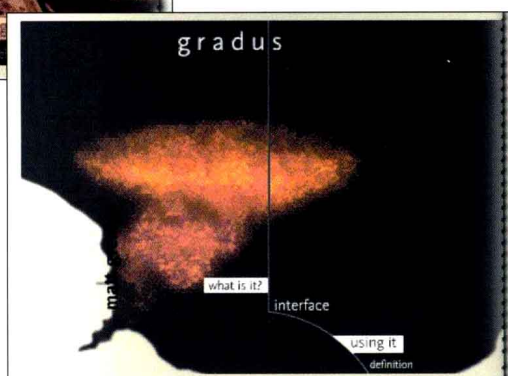
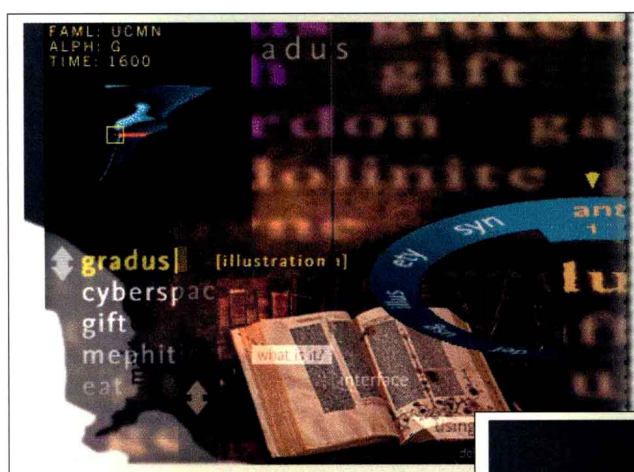
The site primarily displays student work in new media as developing art and communication forms in an attempt not to define new media but to explore their boundaries.

The home page image at the top uses elements that evoke the traditional book experience: a binding edge and stacked pages. Other pages on the site retain the binding edge and paper-like background as elements that give structure to the reading experience; the design also develops a convention of placing navigation links in the "margin" of the page.





The student work above, left and right, is a self-reflective presentation of the experience of examining the concepts of new media. The graphical images are the artist's attempts to portray the chaotic nature of the Web. The student work below, left and right, are collage splash pages for the essay section of the site.



Project: Electronic Books

Design firm: BRODYnewmedia

Designers: Florian Brody,

Sarah Anastasia Hahn

Student Designers:

Matthew Grenby,

Fred Manskow Nymoen,

Tyrin Eduardo Pereida,

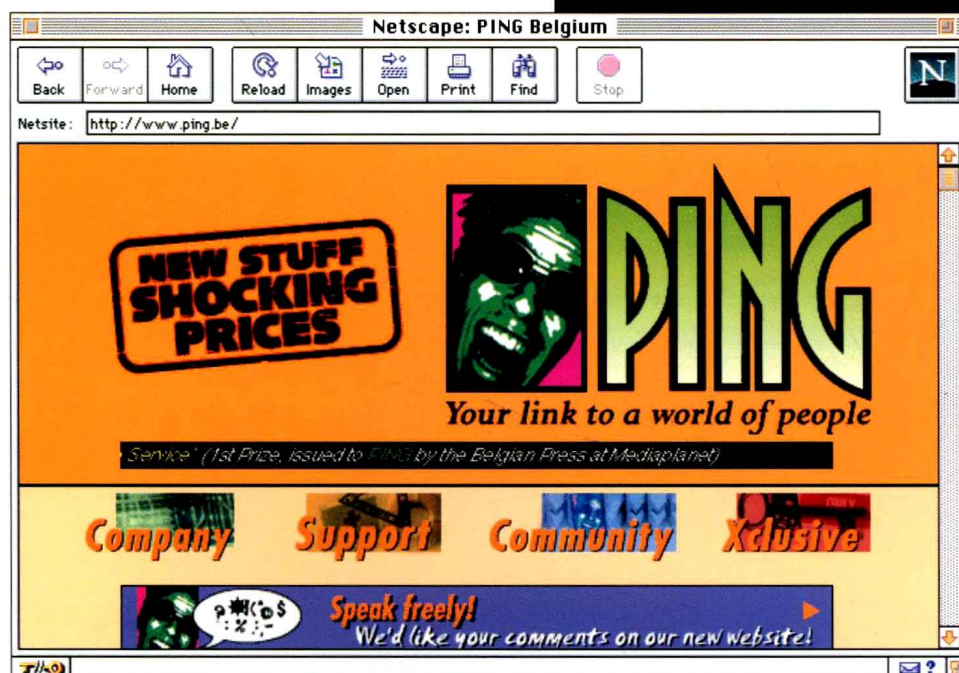
Daniel Schubert,

Muneharu Yoshida,

Matthew Lamson Simons,

Thomas Mueller (TA)

URL: <http://www.ping.be>

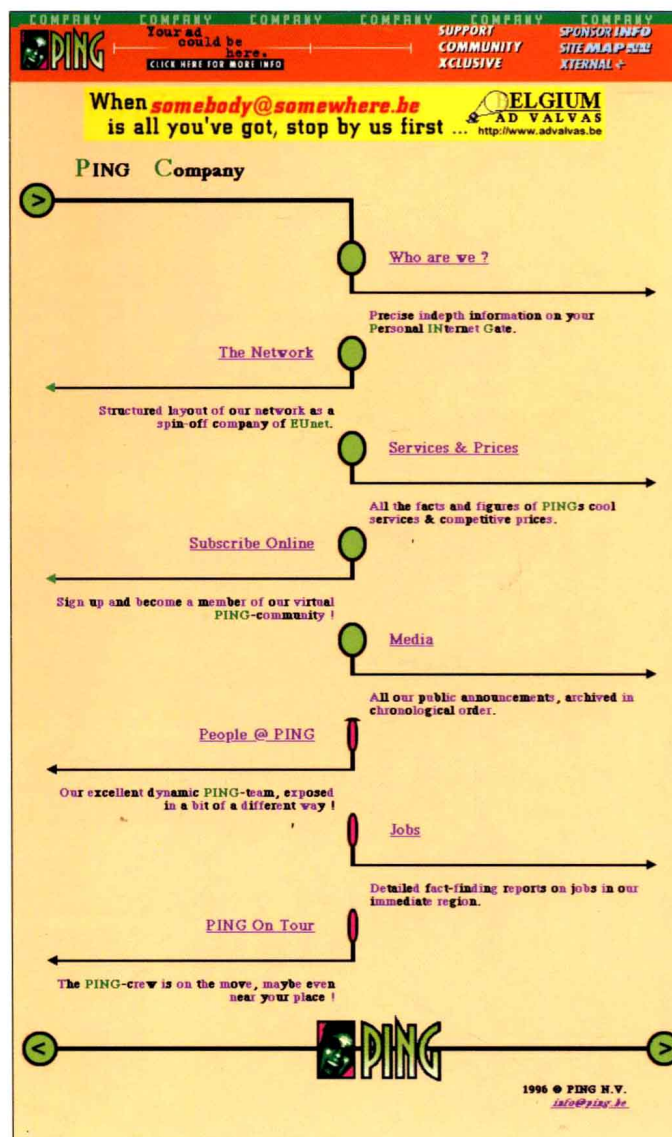


COMMERCIAL

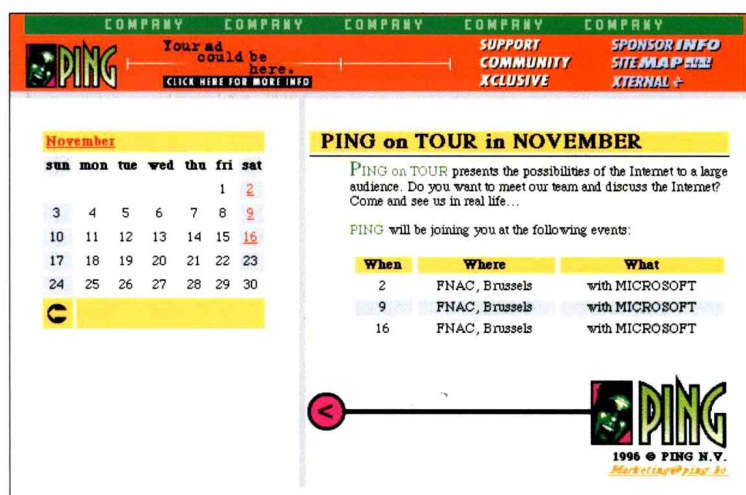
PING is a Belgium-based Internet service provider (ISP) that has taken the time to produce a high-quality, creatively designed Website to promote the company's services.

Bright colors and a limited palette make for a quick download for visitors to the site's home page. Once there, potential users can easily find their way around the site. This site features clearly labeled buttons and presents information in an organized manner.

Frames are used within various areas of the site, as are GIF89a animations.



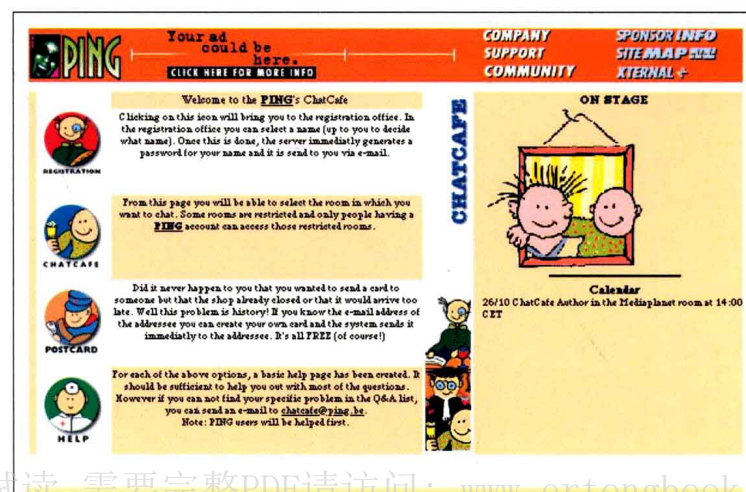
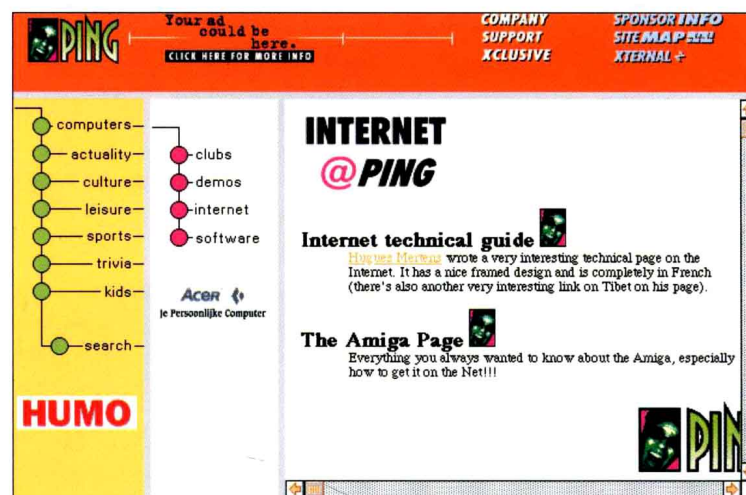
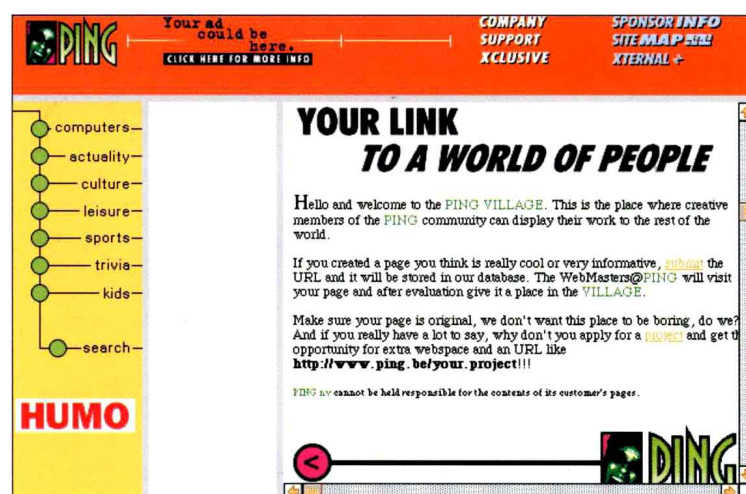
This long company page could have been designed as a short, boring block of HTML text with hyperlinks, but the designers instead chose to break up the copy as an appealing list, itself divided by rotating GIF89a animations that loop until the viewer clicks away to another page.



The first three Web pages shown at left incorporate frames.

The calendar frames make it simple for the viewer to check important and specific dates without having to wait for the images to reload.

The second and third pages show how frames can manage multiple levels of content. Clicking on a green circular button presents the viewer with several other links to choose from (bright pink circles). Clicking on one of the pink circles then presents the main content in the larger third frame at right.



Project: PING Belgium

Design firm: In-house

Designers: Dirk Zurngenter,

Peter Van Hees,

Bernard Gillbrecht

Illustrator: Bart De Neve

Programmers: Mark Van Hamme,

Peter Van Hees,

Marchteet Garrels

Photographer: Peter Van Hees

Features: GIF89a animation