



Monk Development Design Document

v.3 // 10.2012

Contents

03 Design Guide

03	Introduction	10	Usability
04	Web Design Fundamentals	11	Flash and Javascript
04	Layout	12	Recommendations for Dynamic Behavior
04	General Layout Elements	12	A Note About Web Standards
05	Home Page Layout	13	Miscellaneous Tips and Considerations
08	Typography	13	Layout Dimensions
08	1. Web Safe Fonts	17	Designing Outside of the Viewable Area
09	2. Standard Image Replacement	18	Background Transparency
09	3. Web Hosted Fonts		

19 Designing for our System

19	Introduction
20	Template Views
20	List View
20	Detail View
20	Master List View
20	Why is all of this important?
24	The Home Page
25	The Default Sub-Page
26	Other Modules

27 The Design Review

27	Introduction
28	What to Submit
28	What to Expect
28	Bottom line

Design Guide

Introduction

We are thrilled that you have chosen to work with Monk Development and are confident that you will enjoy the freedom and power our system offers as you design your next project. You have important deadlines and limited time, so we are going to jump right in.

The purpose of this document is to provide you with a set of best practices as you design sites for MonkCMS/Ekklesia360. While one of our core values is total Design flexibility, it is wise to learn and abide by proven design principles that are characteristic of successful sites. By following the guidelines contained in this document, you will be on your way toward ensuring that your site will achieve the following:

- Smooth Development Process and Efficient Build Time (resulting in lower overall cost)
- Easy long-term site maintenance for your client
- A site that is easy and enjoyable to use for all potential visitors

The first section, Web Design Fundamentals, is specifically for those who have designed 3 or fewer sites. We recommend that everyone at least peruse the content to see what basic conventions we recommend when designing for our system.

Web Design Fundamentals

Layout

The layout of your site should serve a number of purposes beyond simply making your site attractive.

A good layout will:

- Organize your content visually
- Offer intuitive ways to navigate your site
- Present content in a sensible and obvious hierarchy
- Guide the user's eye through each page

Entire books have been written about the creation of web layouts. We will simply list some proven conventions.

General Layout Elements

Figure 1 (Pg. 06) shows a typical web subpage layout. The layout includes the following commonly-used elements:

1. **Header:** includes site logo, main navigation, any optional “utility items” (search, contact us, other global features)
2. **Site Logo/Home Link:** It has become a common and is an expected convention to have the site logo at the top left. Though this is not a hard and fast rule, the majority of users will expect this functionality.
3. **Main Navigation:** the global navigation is generally found in the header area.
4. **Sidebar:** Ideal for secondary content. Commonly includes:
 - A. Sub Navigation e.g., a list of pages that are “siblings” or “children” to the current page in the navigation hierarchy
 - B. Content Filters for output like blog categories, podcasts by date, articles by author, etc.
 - C. Featured Content e.g., “Latest Podcast,” “Newsletter Signup,” etc.
 - D. Content Related to the current page, article, etc.

Note: the sidebar can be placed on either side, and the “proper” side has been long debated. The left side is more traditional, but not necessarily better. Some would argue that a right sidebar allows the main content area to take priority for left-to-right readers, and others would say that left placement is the accepted convention and what is expected. A suggested rule of thumb is that if your sidebar contains navigational elements, the left side is most appropriate and intuitive; if the content is secondary and peripheral (recent comments, related content, advertisements, etc.), then right placement is best. Keeping sidebars consistent from template to template is important to give a user the most intuitive experience.

5. **Main Content:** This is the most important area of each page, serving as the focal point for content. This area is the reason your user has gone to the page. Emphasis should be on legibility and uncluttered design.
6. (Optional) **Second Sidebar:** Many content-heavy sites use a 3-column layout. Some would argue that this detracts from the visual hierarchy and adds clutter, but in some cases it is necessary. Note that a second sidebar will significantly reduce the width of your main content area, thus forcing the content down and requiring more scrolling on each page. Consider only using a second sidebar if your client needs a large amount of secondary content that, in only one sidebar, would push secondary content. For example, if you have navigation, a search bar or area, and content filters on the left side and need a calendar and recent article list, perhaps utilizing a second sidebar would be appropriate. An alternative to using a second sidebar would be the next item, the “Basement.”
7. (Optional) **“Basement”:** In the last several years a trend has been toward using the area above the footer for globally-displayed secondary content. This can be a good alternative to a second sidebar.
8. **Footer:** Footer content generally includes copyright info, design/development credits and sometimes global links like Contact Us, Privacy Policy, etc.

To see a variety of layout examples of sites built on our CMS, please visit:

<http://www.monkdevelopment.com/clients/portfolio/>

<http://www.ekklesia360.com/#/portfolio>

Home Page Layout

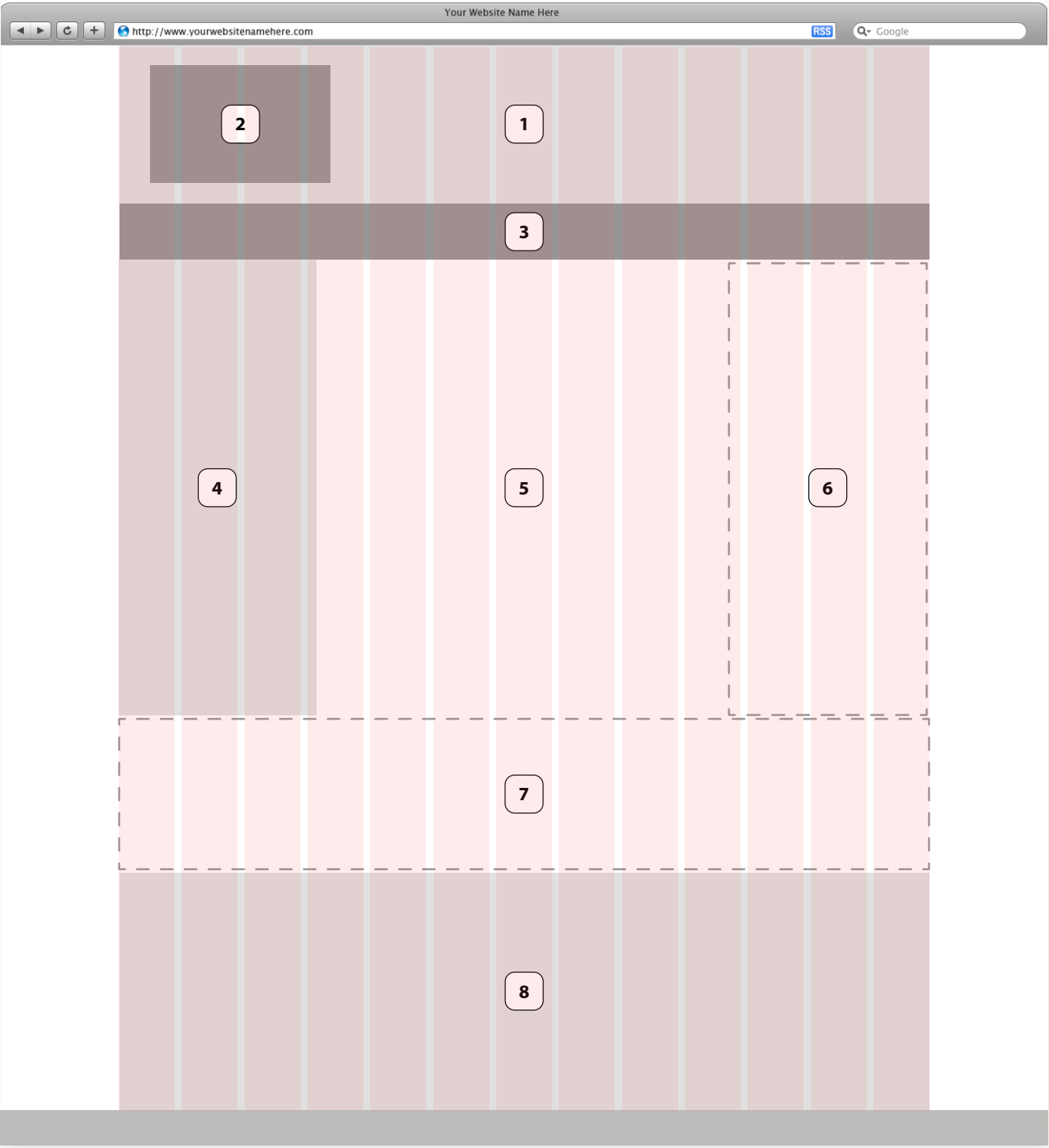
Because your home page serves a unique purpose, it is common to use a different layout for the content area of this page.

Figure 2 (Pg. 07) gives an example of how you could lay out special home-only content areas to include featured content that should be prominent on the first page most of your users will visit.

Common home page elements include but are not limited to:

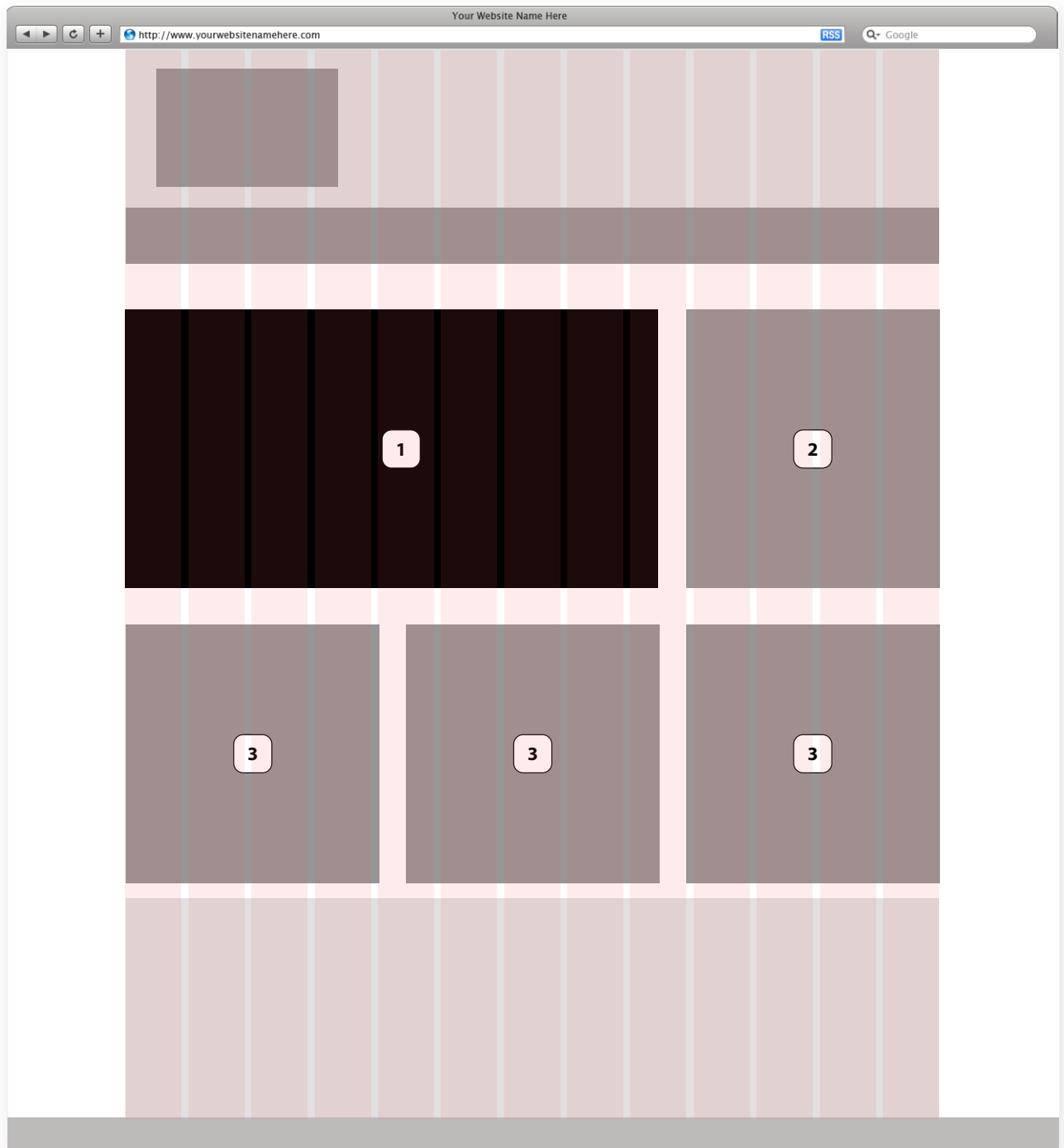
1. **Featured image/slideshow**
2. **Welcome/about us text** (keep succinct)
3. **Recent/featured content** (events, sermons, news, articles, blog posts, podcasts, etc)

Figure 1



Example Sub-Page Layout

Figure 2



Example Home Page Layout

Typography

The most common pitfalls we run into as we review designs created for our CMS relate to web typography. While many important design principles from the print medium also apply to the web, there are unique issues for web design that must be understood to successfully render your type designs to a browser.

There are 3 major methods that we use to translate text from designs to a web template:

1. Web Safe Fonts

- Default and most common way of displaying text
- Brought in via HTML
- Styled with CSS (the language used to specify the visual aspects of your site)

Websafe fonts are the easiest and most efficient way of rendering text on your site. There are limitations to using web safe fonts that can create problems later if the font is not chosen carefully. The major limitation is cross-platform compatibility.

Similar to a word processing document, a web browser utilizes a user's own collection of fonts to display text. If you receive a Word document that has text set in a font that doesn't exist on your machine, the program will replace that font with another (hopefully similar) one. Web browsers work in the same way. Your goal should be to use fonts that exist on as many or all major types of computers in the world. This generally boils down to Windows (XP/Vista), Mac OSX (10.4 and 10.5) and the various flavors of Linux.

Unfortunately, this limitation means that your choices for web text are drastically reduced compared to available print options. One benefit of CSS is that you can specify "backup" fonts to use if the specified font isn't available. We would recommend that you not rely on this method frequently, because designs that rely on specific text dimensions can change dramatically when fonts are replaced, even by similar typefaces. It is also important to note that even the same typeface renders slightly differently on different operating systems, so designs that rely on pixel-precise type treatments should be done with care.

The end of this section includes a list of links to lists of "websafe" fonts, which exist on all major platforms. This should be your core palette of typography choices. The next two methods offer solutions when your design goals call for non-websafe fonts.

Links to Websafe Font Lists:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web-safe_fonts

<http://www.ampsoft.net/webdesign-I/WindowsMacFonts.html>

<http://dustinbrewer.com/fonts-on-the-web-and-a-list-of-web-safe-fonts/>

2. Standard Image Replacement

- Used in place of web text when the design calls for a non-websafe font
- Should only be used for text that will never need to be modified
- Example uses: logo type, permanent (uneditable) main navigation links, image headers

Standard image replacement utilizes text created in an image editor and exported as an image. The image can be embedded directly into the HTML code or brought in using image replacement techniques in CSS. The advantage is that you are able to display text exactly the way it was designed, but the major disadvantage is that the text is no longer editable. There are also important usability and accessibility downsides to consider which we highly recommend that you research. For example, the user's ability to copy and paste text is much more user friendly than having to do the same with images.

If you know that the text may need to be modified later, keep in mind that that this method will necessitate development time in the future, which is not always ideal. This tradeoff has been somewhat solved by the final method:

3. Web Hosted Fonts

- Subscription-based, high quality hosted fonts
- Text is selectable and behaves like web text
- Hundreds of available fonts that are made websafe

Many more fonts are being made available through hosting services. Web hosted fonts can be added to a site in matter of minutes, then CSS is used to style headings, body, and any other text affected. Monk has subscriptions with a number of different web hosted font accounts shown below.

Links to Font Hosting Sites:

<https://typekit.com/>

<http://webfonts.fonts.com/en-US>

<http://www.google.com/webfonts>

Usability

The vast realm of web usability is outside of the scope of this document, but we are including a brief section on it to highlight its significance. The visual aspect of your design is important, but if the site creates frustration for the user, then all is for naught. There are many books and free web resources available that cover the topic of designing for web usability. Investing the time to research and learn solid principles in this area is critical to becoming a competent and successful professional web designer.

The one (admittedly very general) guideline that we recommend here is to keep the user in mind at all times as you are creating your site design. Bring in others to look at and critique the design in its early phases, as it is often difficult to look objectively at your own work. Make it your top priority to create a user experience that is easy and enjoyable. If you prioritize this above even the aesthetics of your design, you are on your way to creating a site that will succeed long-term.

Helpful Resources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_usability

<http://www.uxmag.com/>

<http://semanticstudios.com/publications/semantics/000029.php>

<http://alistapart.com/topics/userscience>

Flash and Javascript

Interactive and dynamic behavior is a common feature of modern websites. The use of Flash and Javascript can add a lot of value, functionality and draw to your site. Using Flash and Javascript must be done with much thought and care. Too much reliance on Flash or Javascript can lead to accessibility issues, high bandwidth costs and backward compatibility issues with older browsers. Fortunately, many mistakes caused by overuse of Flash and poor coding practices in Javascript have given way to wiser conventions when utilizing these assets.

Our general practice is that we do not build in Flash unless specifically requested, and in those cases, we will also suggest adding a non-Flash fallback version to accommodate the growing number of platforms that do not support Flash (iOS as well as other mobile platforms).

We are capable of integrating dynamic behavior via Javascript into your site as well. We rely heavily on the excellent jQuery library to be able to rapidly build the behavior functionality needed by our clients and designers.



Flash or Javascript can be used to add creative motion to things like buttons or rotators.

Recommendations for Dynamic Behavior

Define your intended behavior as specifically as possible. Show the behavior visually and, if necessary, use notes or reference another site that utilizes the behavior.

If you're looking for custom flash or Javascript development, notify your sales engineer to identify development costs.

A Note About Web Standards

If you have been designing for the web for longer than a few months, you most likely are aware of the web standards movement. Monk Development has fully embraced web standards and we strive to code our sites to adhere to these accepted standards as much as possible.

The underlying principles of web standards include the separation of content/structure, presentation and behavior. Content and structure are handled by the HTML code in our templates, Presentation is controlled by CSS and behavior is handled by Javascript. The benefits of web standards are too numerous to mention here, but a simple search on "web standards benefits" is highly recommended if you are new to the concepts.

Our use of web standards in our development should not affect your design in any significant way at all. If anything, it will bring more freedom to your design and allow us not only to more effectively achieve your design goals, but allow for more flexibility and efficient development down the road should a redesign be in order.

Miscellaneous Tips and Considerations

Layout Dimensions

The width of your site should be dependent on the anticipated minimum monitor resolution of your target audience. For many years this meant designing for 800px x 600px monitor sizes, but a recent trend has been to move to a 1024px x 768px minimum monitor resolution. If you want to guarantee that your site will be fully viewable on nearly all conceivable machines, or your target audience primarily uses low-resolution monitors, stick with 800x600px. If that is not a priority, then you have the freedom to design for 1024px wide. We'd also suggest taking a look at the current site analytics to see what the majority of the users of the current site are viewing the site on, and design based on the majority screen size.

Browser Display Statistics

Designing the height of your site is not as critical because of the accepted nature of page scrolling. However, height can be important when laying out the home page. Since this page is generally used for featured content, take the average or lowest-common-denominator screen size into account so that your featured content is viewable.

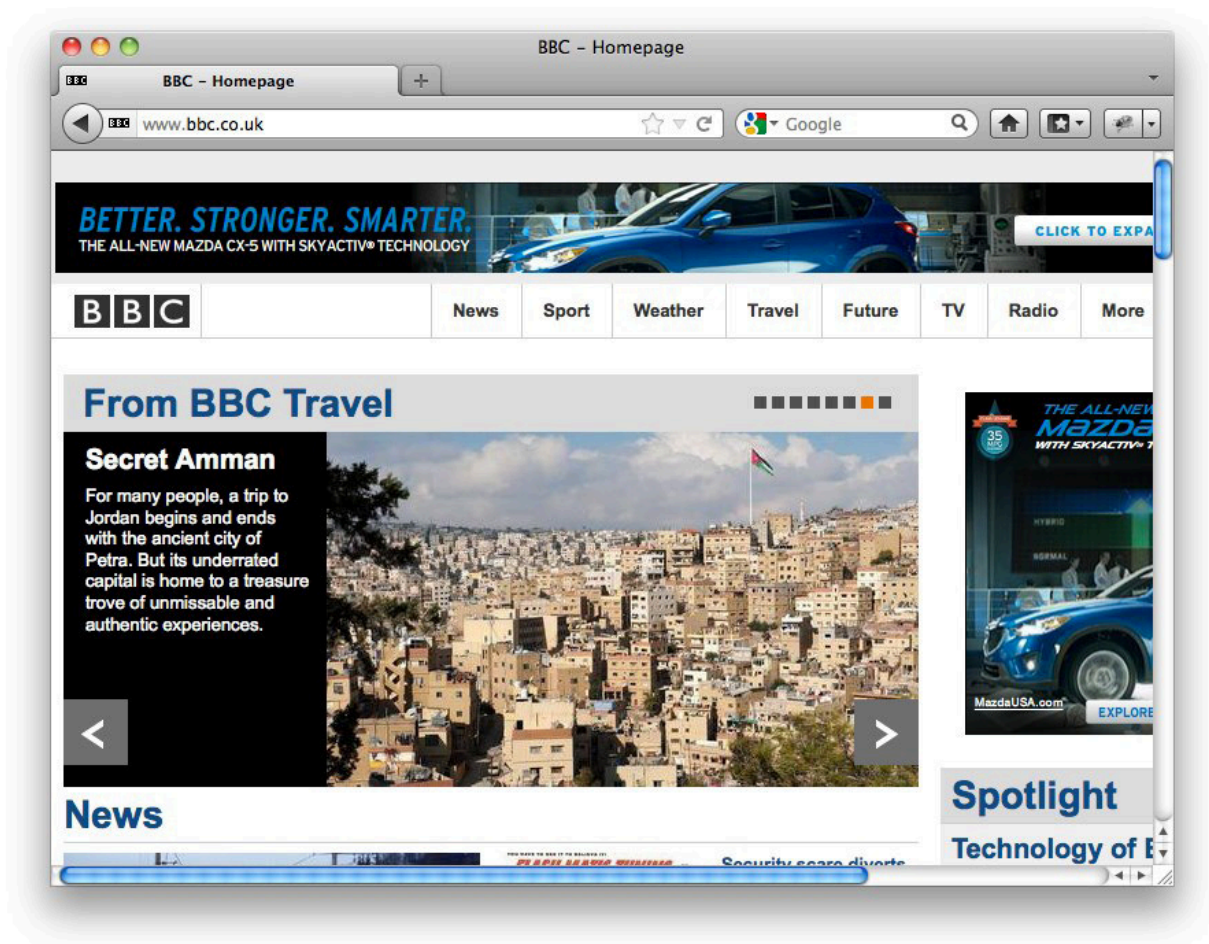
Figure 3 (Pg. 14) shows the [BBC News](#) home page in a browser set at 800px x 600px. Notice the horizontal scrollbar is present and content to the right that is partially hidden.

Figure 4 (Pg. 15) shows the same page at 1024px x 768px resolution. The full page width and another row of featured content is viewable.

Figure 5 (Pg. 16) shows the page at 990px x 1150px. These dimensions reflect a common practice for users of widescreen, higher-resolution monitors: setting browsers to about half the width of the screen.

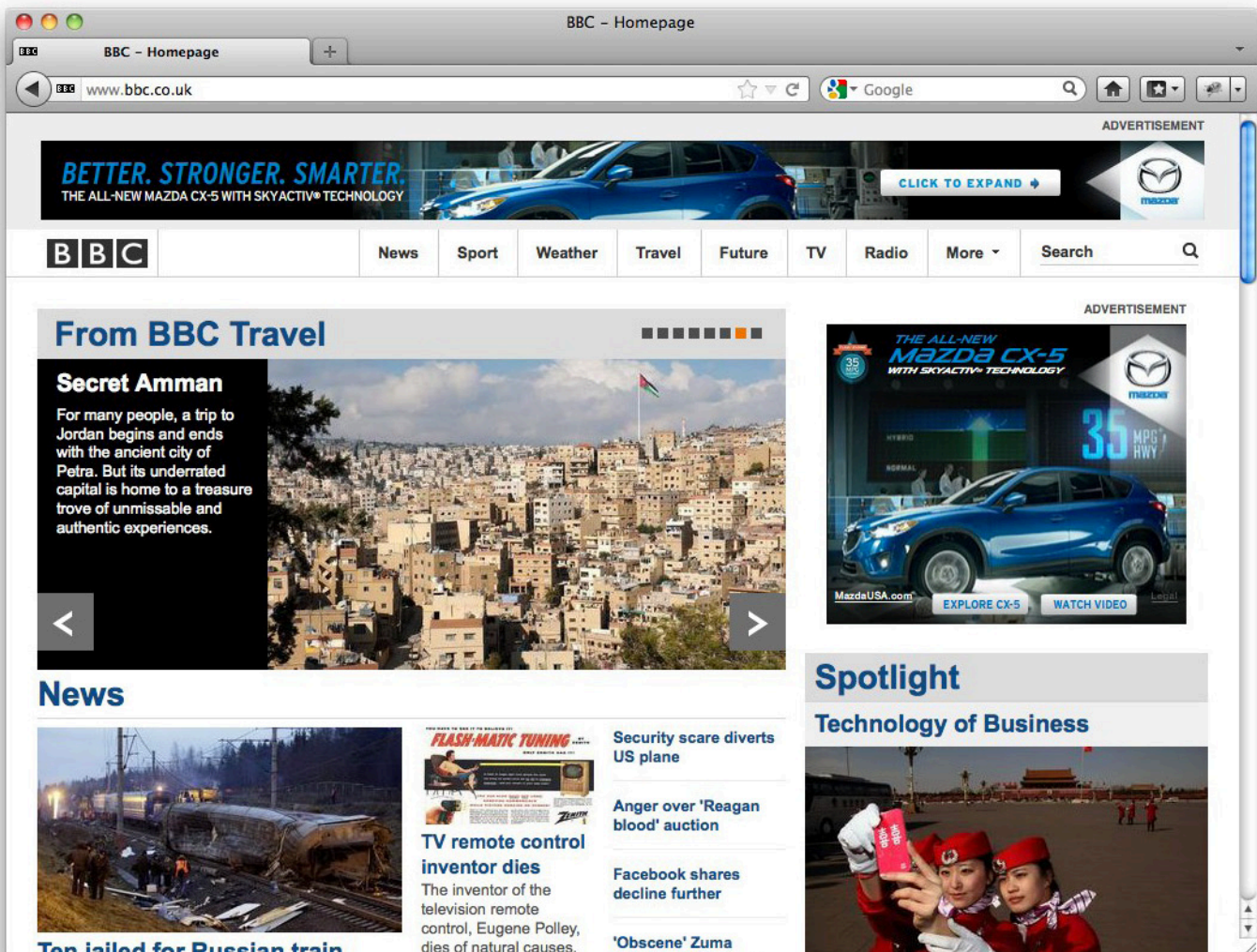
Many designers and developers have settled on 960px as an optimal width for modern layouts.

Figure 3



800x600 px Browser Window

Figure 4



1024x768 px Browser Window

Figure 5

BBC - Homepage

www.bbc.co.uk

Google

ADVERTISEMENT

BETTER. STRONGER. SMARTER.
THE ALL-NEW MAZDA CX-5 WITH SKYACTIV® TECHNOLOGY

CLICK TO EXPAND

MAZDA

BBC News Sport Weather Travel Future TV Radio More Search

From BBC Travel

Secret Amman

For many people, a trip to Jordan begins and ends with the ancient city of Petra. But its underrated capital is home to a treasure trove of unmissable and authentic experiences.

ADVERTISEMENT

THE ALL-NEW Mazda CX-5
WITH SKYACTIV® TECHNOLOGY

35 MPG/HWY

EXPLORE CX-5 WATCH VIDEO

News

Ten jailed for Russian train bomb

A Russian court jails 10 people, four for life, for the November 2009 bombing of a high-speed train in which 27 people died.

TV remote control inventor dies

The inventor of the television remote control, Eugene Polley, dies of natural causes, aged 96, in a Chicago hospital.

Security scare diverts US plane

Anger over 'Reagan blood' auction

Facebook shares decline further

'Obscene' Zuma painting vandalised

Nuclear watchdog eyes Iran deal

Spotlight

Technology of Business

China's app-ortunity

It's a country with a billion mobile phone users, and it's poised to become the world's biggest smartphone market - giving app makers extraordinary possibilities.

Tech powers Philippines call centre success

Why HTML5 is taking the internet by storm

Angola's beats most of Europe to 4G services

Business

Google seals deal with Motorola

IMF tells UK to consider rate cut

Marketwatch (min delay 15 mins) Marketwatch Ticker

Dow Jones	12551.93	▲ 47.45	0.38%
Nasdaq	2851.34	▲ 4.13	0.15%
FTSE 100	5403.28	▲ 98.80	1.86%
Dax	6435.60	▲ 104.56	1.65%
Cac 40	3084.09	▲ 56.94	1.88%

Sport

Mourinho signs new Real Madrid deal

Jose Mourinho signs a new four-year contract to remain as manager of La Liga champions Real Madrid until 2016.

Pietersen praises England bowlers

Best replaces injured Gabriel for West Indies

Hargreaves released by Man City

Di Matteo deserves rolling deal - Nevin

Most Popular in News

Shared Read Watched/Listened

- Man survives fall into Niagara Falls
- Ultra-orthodox Jews rally over web fears
- Greeks 'too poor' to care for children

990x1150 px Browser Window

Designing Outside of the Viewable Area

Much of converting a design into an actual page involves the use of background images. Because of the variable nature of the medium and aforementioned variety of screen resolutions, backgrounds are often repeated, or tiled, to fill available space. This is one area of web design where it is important to think like a developer. What this means is that you need to envision how the elements of your site will be built, and how they should display in different browser dimensions and other circumstances.

If possible, create a 100 pixel “frame” around the outer boundary of your main layout in your image editor. Use this frame to show the coder how backgrounds should repeat (or not repeat!) as the viewable area extends in all directions.

Considering how your backgrounds extend is not only important for the extremities of your layout, but also for containers that will have variable dimensions, like your content area. If you create a complex textured background for your main content column, you are responsible for controlling whether or not it tiles seamlessly, and should specify the repeat points if they are not obvious.

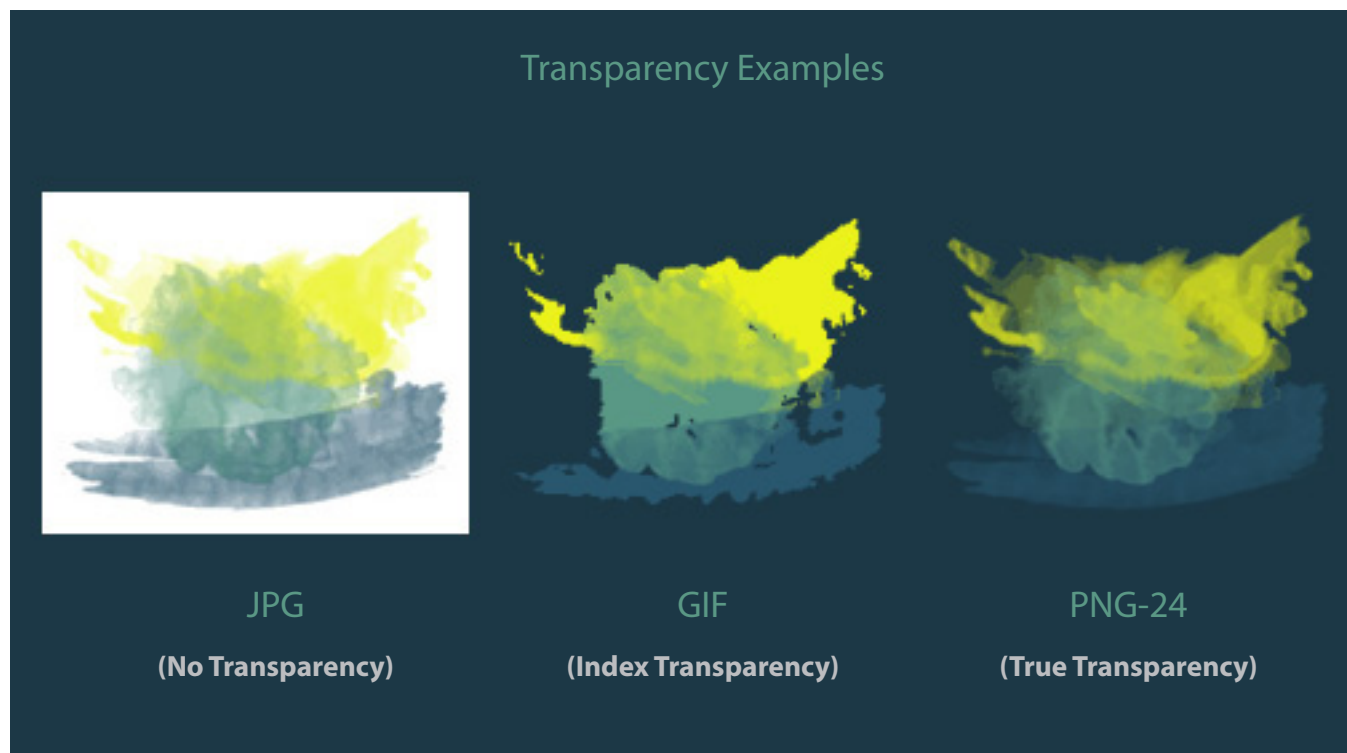
Note that if you do not specify these aspects of the design, the implementer will have to make his or her own best guess about how to build the repeating elements. Changing them at a later point may result in additional billable work.

Background Transparency

Another important consideration is how your design elements are layered on top of one another. Most background graphics can be exported as GIF image with optional index transparency. Index transparency means that each pixel is either 100% solid or 100% transparent. The nature of GIF transparency created a significant limitation to design, because images had to be exported against their background for them to look right. This made achieving complex layering, like a repeating drop shadow against a complex variable background, nearly impossible.

With the advent of wider browser support of transparent PNG files, we can now achieve different degrees of transparency through an alpha channel. This means that each pixel can have a degree of transparency rather than just an on/off state. The element that needs this transparency is first set against a transparent canvas and then exported as a PNG. This format is now supported by all modern browsers. Therefore, PNG use requires extra work to make your site look correct in all browsers, and that extra development time should be considered in the design phase. The use of shadows and other semi-transparent elements should be used wisely, and once again, it is important to think like a developer while creating these elements.

One important note about PNG: though the format does an excellent job at rendering levels of transparency, it cannot accurately render special Photoshop/Fireworks layer blend modes, such as Multiply, Screen and Overlay, without flattening it against a background. It is not possible to reproduce a Multiply effect, for example, against a transparent canvas. PNG transparency works best when changing the opacity alone. One way we have solved this in the past is to adjust the hue and opacity of the image to get close to the intended effect of the blend mode.



Designing for our System

Introduction

Like many Content Management Systems, our system's display of web content is template-driven. This means that content is brought into a page via a template that defines where it will reside on the page and how it looks. Our template system is very flexible and offers the ability for the client to choose templates and even "blocks" of content for sidebars.

What does this mean for you, the designer? The great thing about templates is that they are reusable and therefore can control the look of a vast number of pages. You do not need to design every page. However, you should design every different type of page. Even the most basic blog sites generally have several templates: one for the home page, one for an archived list of blog posts, and one for the blog post itself. Chances are that your site will be using a number of our modules beyond just pages, and so this means that it is important to design templates not only for each of the modules, but for each of the module views.

Note: if you or your client has specified "default output" for some or all of your modules, then the above requirement is not relevant. We will use standardized layout, styles and icons to display your content, and generally all we require is a home and default page design. This should already have been discussed in the sales phase of the project.

Template Views

A “View” refers to the type of display of your content. The basic blog example above actually illustrated several views. The following terms are what we use to refer to the most common available Views:

- 1. List View
- 2. Detail View
- 3. Master List View (select modules)

List View See Figure 6 (Pg. 21)

As expected, shows a list of content from a module. Can be a view of all content or filtered by various parameters.

Examples:

- Event List
- Blog Post List
- Article List
- Podcast List
- Book List

Detail View See Figure 7 (Pg. 22)

The “landing point” for a content item. Analogous to a blog post.

Examples:

- Standard Page
- Event Detail
- Blog Post
- Article Detail
- Podcast Detail

Master List View See Figure 8 (Pg. 23)

Some modules allow multiple instances of its content: for example, the Blog module not only allows you to create categories within a Blog, but allows you to create and publish multiple Blogs. This necessitates a Master List View, which in this case would display a list of all published Blogs.

Examples:

- Blog List > Blog Post List > Blog Post
- Gallery List > Gallery Thumbnail List > Image Detail Page
- BookList List > BookList > Book Detail
- Product Family List > Product List > Product Detail

Why is all of this important?

Understanding the various views available and necessary for each module is critical to providing a complete set of designs to the implementer. Any missing designs will likely be caught and communicated during the Design Review Process, but it is beneficial to your workflow if you have a complete list to work from in the beginning of your design phase.

Figure 6



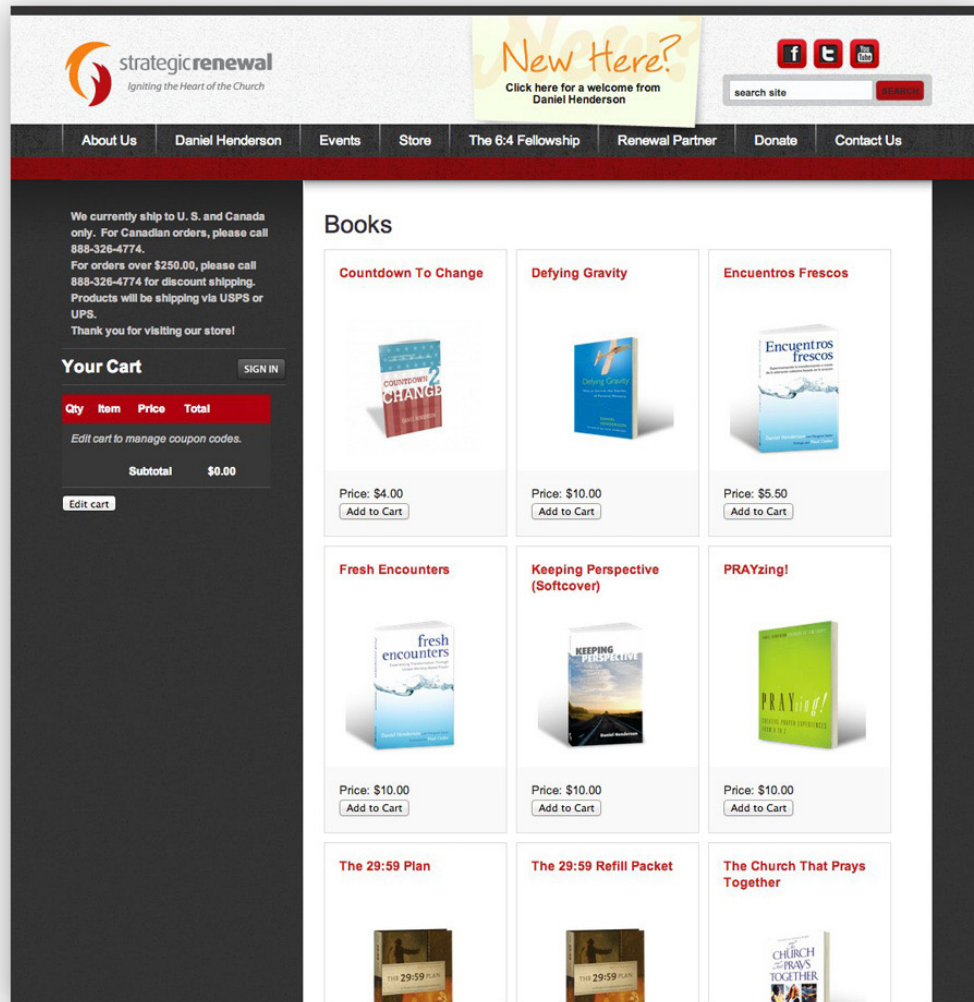
Event List View

Figure 7



Blog Detail View

Figure 8



Product Family List View

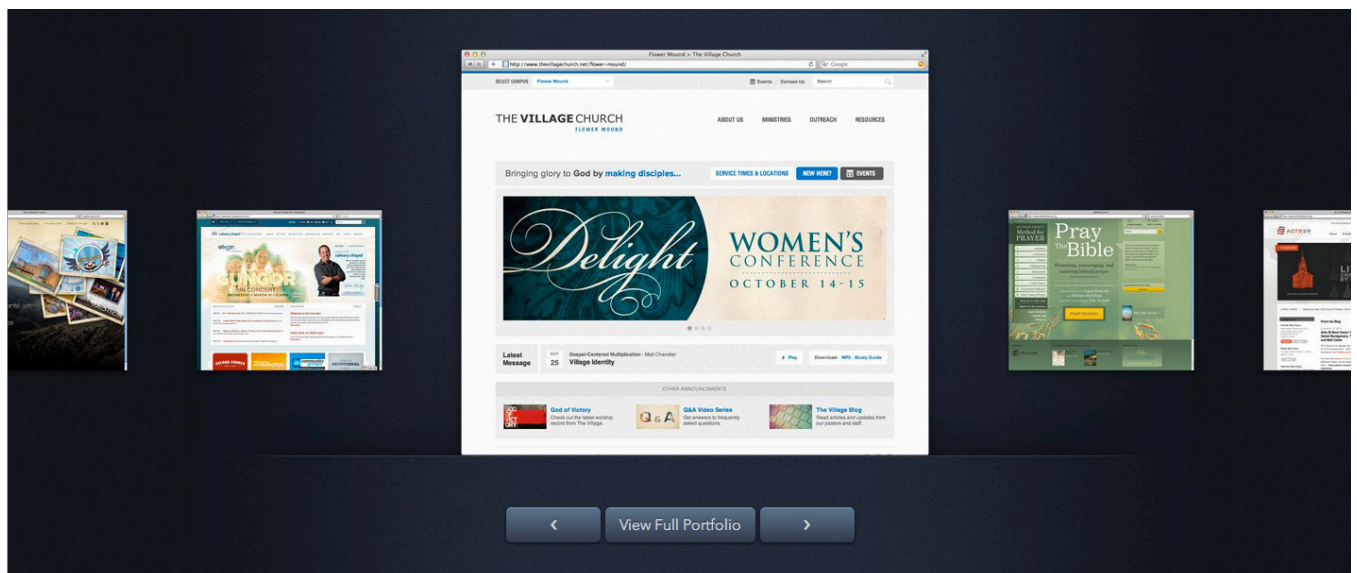
The Home Page

You can display nearly any type of module content on your homepage. Additionally, many modules allow you to “Publish as Featured” so you can manually control what makes it to this most important page.

Suggested content includes:

- Featured image or slideshow
- Latest or Featured News Article(s)
- Latest or Featured Podcast/Sermon
- Latest or Featured Blog Post
- Featured Event
- Mini Calendar
- Brief welcome/about us text
- Featured Product(s)
- Latest or Featured Gallery Thumbnails
- Quick Links to content you most want to drive traffic toward

Our suggestion is that you visit our [Portfolio](#) to see a great list of examples of home pages used by our featured clients for more ideas.



The Default Sub-Page

This is the second required template design for any design review, and likely the most-used template for your site. The Default Page should define how any page from the Pages module should look, and can also be a starting point for the design of all other module content.

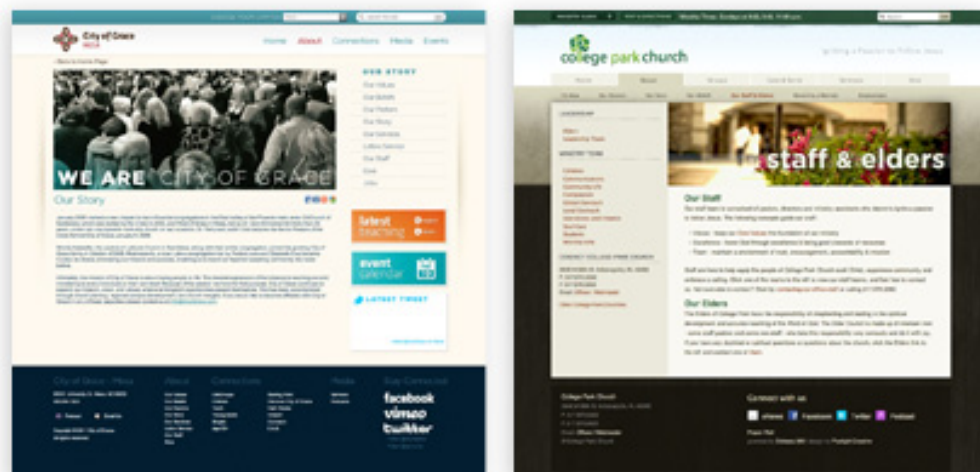
Our Page module features a robust text editor that allows clients to specify content as paragraphs, headings, list items and so on. They are then converted to the html equivalent of each of these items. Because of this, it is important to specify the styling of as many common html elements as possible in your Default Page design.

Note that we conventionally reserve the h1 tag the page title. Therefore when you are specifying headings, it is best to include h2-h6, where h2 would be your topmost heading. Please be as specific as possible when displaying sample content in your Default Page.

Styles to include:

- Headings h2-h6
- Paragraphs
- Links with rollover states
- Unordered (bulleted lists), at least 2 levels deep
- Ordered (numbered lists)
- Blockquotes
- Images and other embeddable media.
- Tables

If your client needs the ability to create custom sidebars, it would be very helpful to create a set of standard styles for this area as well. See Figure 1 ((Pg. 06) for an example of a complete Default Page design.

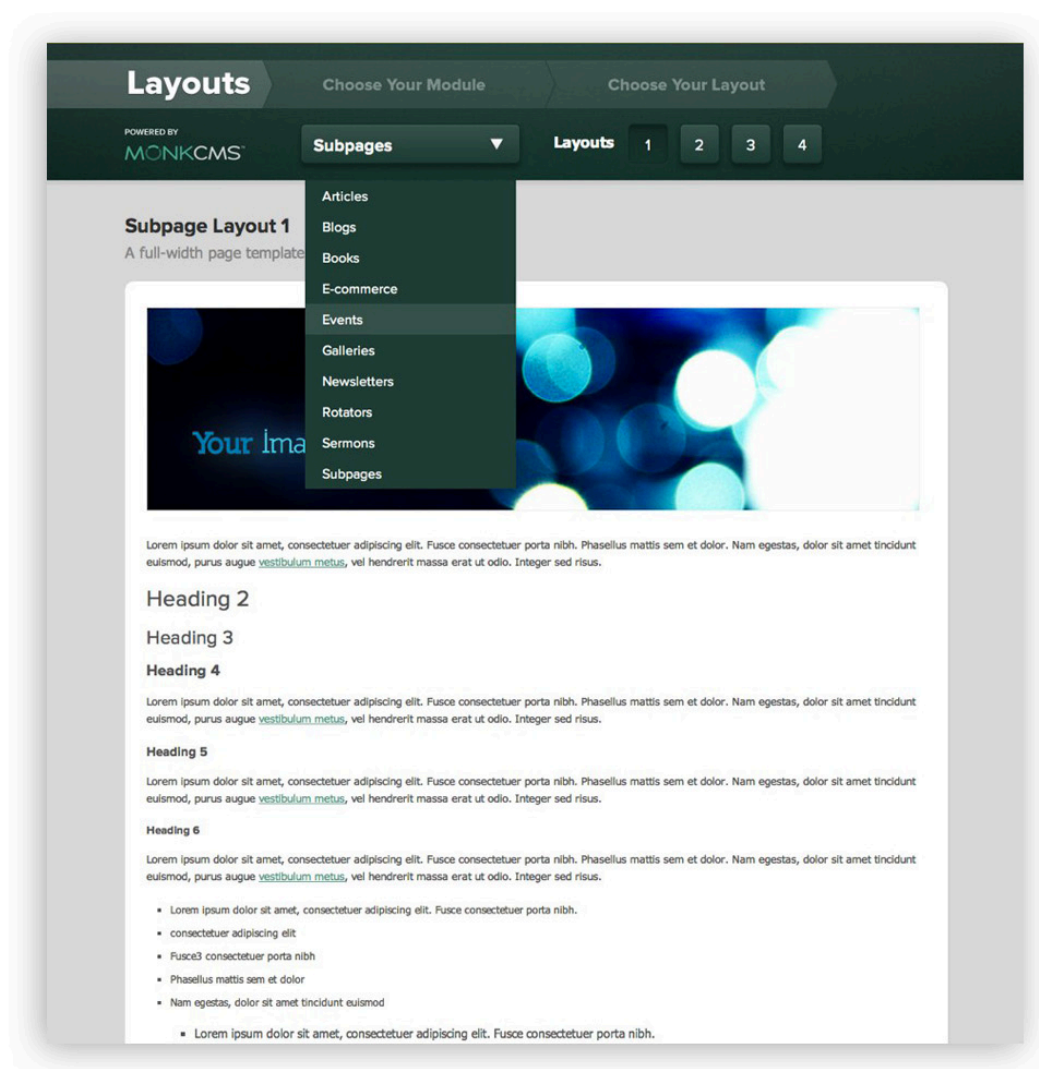


Other Modules

Here on [Monk Development's layout site](#) you can see Default Output layouts for most of our modules.

You can also reference the following for more information:

- Visit sites that have been built on our system. A good starting point is our Portfolio page.
- To see a thorough list of all of the output available to you categorized by module, visit the API Reference at our Developer Resources site.
- As always, feel free to contact with questions about anything related to your design.



The Design Review

Introduction

The Design Review is a critical process that will ensure smooth development of your site. It is not a critique of the aesthetic value of your hard work. One of our implementers will thoroughly inspect your design to address any questions or issues that would hinder an efficient and timely build phase. The majority of issues that arise have been dealt with in this document, so following the guidelines will mean that this process should go very quickly. The remaining issues that were not dealt with in the Design Guide generally relate to clarifying things related to API integration, dynamic behavior, third-party integration, etc.

What to Submit

- Original, editable PSD or Fireworks PNG files. This gives us layer-level access to all of the design elements, which is often needed to answer questions that would otherwise put the burden on you to explain.
- Home Page Design
- Default Page Design
- If not using Default Output, all other Module View Designs.
- Flattened jpg or png files of each of your designs. Uploading flattened copies enables our entire team (including those without Photoshop) to inspect and address issues if necessary.
- Any design- or functionality-related notes that are not obvious by just looking at the PSD. The more thorough and specific, the better.
- Any questions or concerns that you have regarding the site design or functionality

What to Expect

- We generally try to allocate time to do Design Reviews twice a week, so you can expect a full response within 2-5 business days.
- Once all issues have been resolved, we can schedule the implementation phase.

Bottom line

The more we can clarify design, usability and functionality issues at the beginning of the project (and even before the Design Review), the more quickly we'll be on the way to building your new website.

