
Writer's Statement about "Evolution of Cyber UCF: The Development of an Academic Institution's Website Through Time"

JACOB VOGELBACHER

As an adolescent playing video games and surfing the web, I never realized how much went into interactive design. As I progressed through school, I became increasingly interested in digital art and digital interactivity. There is a lot of effort that goes into making an interaction enjoyable to a user. Interactive design is so subtle that when it performs flawlessly we don't even notice it. And when it fails, its defects become obvious. My interest in web design and interactivity made me want to look deeper into the process of fostering positive user experiences and creating successful websites.

I originally intended to research the relationship between clients and designers in the context of web development. Earlier on my composition class, I had studied and analyzed a document used in the field of graphic and web design called a design brief. This document is used by designers to gain a better understanding of the client and what they want. Having become familiarized with this document, I thought it would be interesting to look deeper into the interactions which take place between a web designer and a client. After doing some initial research, I found few scholarly articles offering any information or insights on this topic. I did, however, find a plethora of sources which discussed the communication that takes place in the web design community in general. Many commented on the components of websites and how they have an effect on users, as well as stating how designers should approach web design in order to better satisfy the end user. After seeing all of these conversations taking place about web communication, I decided to focus my attention on what factored into the effectiveness of websites in accomplishing their goal of communicating information.

At this point I needed to find out how to conduct research on this topic, so I met with my professor, Dr. Galbreath, to discuss possible research methods. Dr. Galbreath then introduced me to the Internet Archive's "Wayback Machine." Using this tool, I was able to look at the way websites appeared in the past and observe how they changed over time. This is when the idea for my research argument struck me. I could study how a website used to look and note any changes that were made to its appearance. I could then draw back on the sources I studied earlier and use my observations of the websites to see if their assertions on effective communication were implemented and if they held true.

In order to determine the style of my writing, I looked to the topic of my writing for inspiration. In web development, the importance of universal design and accessibility are paramount. Designs should be usable by all people, to the greatest extent, without the need for adaptation; and content should be perceivable, observable, and understandable to all. These principles guided my writing. Technical jargon and ambiguous terminology would not be suitable. I had to be as clear and concise as possible so that just as someone with little knowledge of web development could understand a website, someone with that same level of knowledge could understand my writing. My research argument focuses on effectively communicating information through a website, so it only makes sense that I effectively communicate that information myself through my research paper.