Making sense of chaos
An evaluation of the current state of information architecture for the Web

Anne de Ridder
UW 521 Winter Seminar Series, February 3, 2012
What you’ll hear about today

- A bit about me
- What brought me to this topic
- Scrolling Pages
- Designing for the senses
- Thoughts for moving forward
About me

- **Who I am**
  - UW Grad! (MS in Technical Communication in 1999)
  - User Experience professional
    - Work I’ve done: product design, Web design, marketing and technical communications— for companies big and small
    - Primary focus on designing for the Web since late 2008
  - Director of User Experience at a digital marketing agency
    - Responsible for being a lead UX architect as well as overseeing the work of my team members

- **The type of work I do**
  - A digital marketing agency supports companies marketing needs in the digital space (web, mobile, tablet)
    - Web site design, digital advertising, interactive design
    - B2B, Financial Services, Healthcare, Government, Consumer and Retail
What brought me to this topic?

It all started with long scrolling pages, but evolved into:
- How/Is Web design changing?
- What are our clients seeing and what are they expecting?
- What do I need to know/learn to make sure my/our designs are current and innovative?

Discovery happening here
- Cast a broad wide net and will touch lightly on many parallel topics

What you’ll see/hear today
- Examples
- My thoughts, opinions, insights
Explore Further

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Expect everything. From a notebook that weighs almost nothing.

With the latest-generation Intel Core i5 and i7 processors, high-speed Thunderbolt I/O technology, and all-flash storage, MacBook Air isn't thin on features.

Intel Core i5 and i7 processors.
Performance that shouldn't be taken lightly.

Both the 11- and 13-inch MacBook Air now feature the latest generation of Intel processors, the Core i5 and i7. With speeds up to 1.86GHz and faster memory, the new MacBook Air gains up to 3.5x the processing performance over the previous generation. MacBook Air also features the Intel HD Graphics 5000 processor, which includes an on-chip engine for video encoding and decoding. That means you experience video playback and Final Cut Pro that are smoother, more responsive, and more true to life.

Thunderbolt I/O.
Lightning-fast data transfer.

With one port, MacBook Air gives you access to a world of high-speed peripherals capable of transferring data up to 12 times faster than FireWire 800 and up to 20 times faster than USB 2.0. Or use the Thunderbolt port to connect the new Apple Thunderbolt Display and transform your ultraportable MacBook Air into a complete desktop workstation. Power over 4 million eye-popping pixels while enjoying some major benefits. Gigabit Ethernet, FireWire.

All-flash storage.
Instant-on gratification.

Devices like iPhone and iPad have already demonstrated the advantages of flash storage: reliability, speed, and efficiency. So the decision to use flash storage is an ultra-high-speed notebook like MacBook Air makes perfect sense. With flash, your computer starts up almost as quick and accesses data quickly. Flash also gives MacBook Air the astonishing ability to remain in standby mode for up to 30 days. Which means your MacBook Air runs longer, whether you open it tomorrow, next week, or next month.

Backlit keyboard.
What you see is what you type.

As incredibly compact as MacBook Air is, it still manages to fit a full-size keyboard that makes typing as natural as it is comfortable. And even the keyboard's backlit, so you can type with ease in the dark.

Multi-Touch trackpad.

And the 13-inch MacBook Air's trackpad is now 23 percent larger for more precision and ease of use. Tap, swipe, pinch, and zoom for a whole new way to navigate the web.
Is there really something new going on?

Changes in technology and expectations

- Mass consumer adoption of daily use touch-screen devices that are navigated with multi-touch gestures
  - iPhone: Released June 2007
  - iPad: Released April 2010
- Users have a new set of known experiences and expectations
  - “[on touch devices]…content is driving the experience. You are interacting with the content not the controller.”
  - Movement in multiple directions, an amount of invited discovery, and “delighters” are all part of the experience.
Remind me again

- Go back to the “foundations”
  - Approaches and research of industry experts
  - Best practices for the Web that we’ve learned, tested and accepted

- Read what are others seeing and finding

- Step back and survey what else has been going on with technology
To scroll or not to scroll?

- It’s a design decision
  - Who is your audience?
  - What are you trying to communicate?
  - What is your objective?

  “The decision will be based on considerations of the primary users and the types of tasks being performed”

- Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines
  http://www.usability.gov/guidelines/

  http://www.uie.com/articles/page_scrolling
**Features**

Expect everything. From a notebook that weighs almost nothing.

With the latest-generation Intel Core i5 and i7 processors, high-speed Thunderbolt I/O technology, and all-flash storage, MacBook Air isn’t thin on features.

- Thunderbolt I/O
- Multi-Touch Trackpad
- Display, Camera, and Speakers
- Backlit Keyboard
- Long-Lasting Battery
- Connectors and Ports

**Intel Core i5 and i7 processors.**

Performance that shouldn’t be taken lightly.

Both the 11-inch and 13-inch MacBook Air now feature the latest generation of Intel processors, the Core i5 and i7. With speeds up to 1.7GHz and faster memory, the new MacBook Air goes up to 2x the processing power than the previous generation. MacBook Air also features the Intel HD Graphics 4000 processor, which includes an on-die engine for video encoding and decoding. That means you experience video playback and FaceTime calls that are smoother, more responsive, and more true to life.

**Thunderbolt I/O.**

Lightning-fast data transfer.

With one port, MacBook Air gives you access to a world of high-speed peripheral capable of transferring data up to 32 times faster than FireWire 800 and up to 20 times faster than USB 2.0. Or use the Thunderbolt ports to connect the new Apple Thunderbolt Display and transform your ultraportable MacBook Air into a complete desktop workstation. Power over 4 million eye-popping pixels while enjoying some major benefits. Gigabit Ethernet, Finder, and more.

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**Tech Specs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MacBook Air</th>
<th>11-inch MacBook Air</th>
<th>13-inch MacBook Air</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Display</strong></td>
<td>High-resolution LED-backlit glossy widescreen display with support for millions of colors.</td>
<td>11.6-inch (diagonal) high-resolution LED-backlit glossy widescreen display with support for millions of colors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Price</strong></td>
<td>$999</td>
<td>$1199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size and Weight</strong></td>
<td>Weight: 1.14-4.63 lbs (0.52-2.09 kg) Width: 11.9 inches (30.2 cm) Depth: 0.7 inches (1.8 cm)</td>
<td>Weight: 0.91-3.6 lbs (0.41-1.63 kg) Width: 12.4 inches (31.5 cm) Depth: 0.9 inches (2.2 cm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Storage</strong></td>
<td>8GB</td>
<td>128GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Processor and Memory</strong></td>
<td>1.4GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 or i7 processor and 4GB RAM</td>
<td>1.4GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 or i7 processor and 128GB SSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating System</strong></td>
<td>Mac OS X Mountain Lion</td>
<td>Mac OS X Mountain Lion</td>
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We believe that smart thinking thrives with a methodical approach.

If you haven’t read it:

About Face: The essentials of Interaction Design

Alan Cooper, Robert Reimann, and David Cronin
Other changes in technology

- Faster internet connections
- Advancements in coding: CSS, Ajax, JavaScript, HTML 5
- Better image optimization; smarter image loading methods
- Font replacement technology
- More frequent browser updates
Trends in Web Design

2009
Font treatments
White space and padding
PNG transparency
Background images
Huge typography
Magazine look
   Arrangement of page, typography, illustrations, grid-based designs
   Blogs, portfolios, product pages
Modals
Carousels
Rich user interfaces

2010
Design for delight and memorable design
Strong aesthetic appeal
Single page design
Print-design influence (layout; rich, versatile typography)
Art-directed designs
Horizontalism
Single page layouts
Real-life metaphors
Subtle Interaction
Context-sensitive Navigation
Rapid CSS3 Adoption

2011
Mobile
Typography
Print inspired: magazines, fliers, posters
Desktop app influence
Grid-driven layouts
Massive images
Immersive script integration
CSS3
Texture
Infographics
Single page site
3D environments

2012
Responsive design
Grid
Typography
Leaps in terms of browser capabilities
Scrolling vertical narratives
Modular interfaces
“Minimal” design

Smashing Magazine: Current State of Web Design Trends
Designing for the senses

From *In Defense of Eye Candy*

- Aesthetics is not just about the artistic merit of web buttons or other visual effects, but about how people respond to these elements.

- If we believe that style somehow exists independent of functionality, that we can treat aesthetics and function as two separate pieces, then we ignore the evidence that beauty is much more than decoration.


4 thoughts about moving Forward

- Before you start, take inventory and get perspective
  - What message are you trying to convey?
  - What experience do you want to create?
  - Who are your users and what are their experiences/expectations?

- Re-read the research and refresh your memory about what it really says; add to what you already think you know
4 thoughts about moving Forward

- If a site doesn’t follow the guidelines, what will happen?
  - Novelty carries usability baggage—is it worth it?

- Convention vs Innovation? Convention and Innovation working together?
  - Design Principles stay the same
  - Design with purpose, but don’t be afraid to try new things
    - Where am I
    - What’s here
    - Where can I go now
    - Where have I been

- Work Collaboratively

Your thoughts and questions?

Thank You