What is creativity in web portfolio design?

Jesenka Pibernik [a] , Jurica Dolic [a] & Bojan Kanizaj [a]

[a] Faculty of Graphic Arts , University of Zagreb E-mail:
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Jesenka Pibernik, Jurica Dolic and Bojan Kanizaj

Faculty of Graphic Arts, University of Zagreb

jpiberni@grf.hr; jurica.dolic@grf.hr; bojan.kanizaj@grf.hr

Abstract

The article analyses the creativity in a particular category of interactive products—personal portfolio websites. Most of the designers embraced the advantages of a digital portfolio which include the ability to make an unlimited number of copies at a very low price, availability through email and presence on the global job market. In trying to impress possible employers, designers often got more concerned with following advices offered by web design agencies on the web today rather than focusing on the quality of user experience. The question is can the rules of good web portfolio design be defined and/or can they be perceived as a process of creating new choices out of a prevailing set of options? The goal of this article is to provide an overview of work in this area and analyses it to speculate on what makes web portfolio creative as a narrative interactive product.

Keywords: creativity, portfolio web site, user experience, interactive narrative

1 Introduction

The portfolio is an important part of the identity of the designer as a creative professional, as well as an accepted tool for self-promotion and marketing towards potential employers and clients. The word 'portfolio' stems from the Latin *portare* (to carry) and *folium* (sheet of writing paper) and can have multiple meanings, but in the creative industry it usually denotes an orderly collection of authorial visual work consisting of separate works and projects which represent the scope and depth of operation in a given creative area. Common portfolio strategies and the ways these strategies are implemented in website design suggest that most web portfolios are focused on getting the owner a job, enhancing business, building the owner's name and reputation in the professional sphere and serving as a communication medium between the owner and the audience (blog, chat, message). In this light, the portfolio can be analysed as a display of the designer's experience, knowledge, skills, creativity, innovation and aesthetic and technical abilities.

If we analyse the web portfolio as an advertising product, one of its most desired outcomes is building the identity of the owner through the intrinsic 'believability' that their work evokes—in other words, branding. 'Personal branding' treats individuals and their careers as brands. The concept suggests that success comes from self-packaging (Lair, Sullivan, and Cheney 2005). Portfolio in its traditional form usually means some type of ready-made container, such as a

folder, a box or even a bag or briefcase, which can contain different types of work, mostly in printed form. The format of the container should be large enough to fit the designer's works of different size, and, naturally, the container should be easy to carry. The contents of such a container can include, for instance, brochures, posters, catalogues, cut-outs from magazine or other publications, photographs, etc. A step away from selecting a ready-made container is designing and paging one's own brochure or book, selecting the type of paper, printing technique and binding. The advantage of this type of presentation is complete freedom of choice with regard to format, paper type, printing and binding type, not to mention that the book or brochure itself, with its visual and tactile form, represents a creative statement. As far as experience is concerned, modelling white space on paper is often as important as choosing pictures and text.

With the advent of the internet, the traditional form of 'paper' portfolio was replaced by the web portfolio. Some of the advantages of a digital portfolio include the ability to make an unlimited number of copies at a very low price, availability through email and the web, presence on the global job market and easy updating (Clazie 2010). The concept is related also to online identity management (OIM), also known as online image management or online personal branding, a set of methods for generating a distinguished web presence of a person on the internet (Marcus, Machilek, and Schutz 2006). Given their multiple goals and the different talents that they want to present separately in order to get specific jobs, designers often have more than one portfolio. It is possible to view them through online creative portfolio community sites like Carbonmade (http://carbonmade.com), DeviantART Portfolio (http://portfolio.deviantart.com), Cargo Collective (http://cargocollective.com), Behance Network (http://behance.net), Coroflot (http://coroflot.com) and others. The internet also offers many articles giving advice on how to design a web portfolio, some of which were written by renowned designers, web design experts and employers. There are, additionally, web places

specialised in publishing articles on web design, which offer a lot of useful information, templates and services from various web design and design areas. Advice is given on several blogs such as Vandelay Design (n.d.) and others in the form of several dozen tips and examples of how to make a "beautiful", "creative", "perfect", "stunning", "professionally designed", "awesome", "excellent", "inspirational" web portfolio. In the plethora of advice and different solutions, it is very difficult to move away from the average and achieve innovation.

2 Web portfolio creativity as a media-driven professional activity

There are often different kinds and levels of design talents that employers are looking for, but a portfolio should always be a showcase of designer's creativity. In terms of the profession, creativity is skill- and media-driven. Even though many graphic designers are also web developers, website design and graphic design are two different disciplines and require different sets of skills. While some skills might be common, there still are others that are exclusive to each profession. According to AIGA's definition, graphic design is a creative process that combines art and technology to communicate ideas. The designer works with a variety of communication tools in order to convey a message from a client to a particular audience. The main tools are image and typography, the main technology is the printing process, the medium is in most cases paper. On the other hand, 'information architect' is an often misunderstood job title. Richard Saul Wurman had coined the expression in 1975, but it was not before 2002 that the profession was widely recognised. It has since become *de rigueur* to use the web when looking for information. The Information Architecture Institute defines information architecture as the art and science of organising and labelling web sites, intranets, online communities and software to support usability and findability. The idea is to create a flow of content that essentially controls the experience and message to the user. Sites have evolved into tools that users use to

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perform tasks rather than static sources of reference material. As a result of this shift, professionals who once called themselves information architects are now more likely using 'interaction designer' or 'User experience [UX] designer' to accurately describe their role and stay competitive in the job market.

If we sketch a Venn diagram of the two professions, effective communication is in the overlapping area. The definition of effective communication, as given by the reception theory-based model coined by design educators Michel and Katherine McCoy, states:

> *Design for interpretation involves the audience in the creative process … graphic communication does not truly exist until each receiver decodes or interprets the message. Interpretive design challenges the viewer to participate and affect the outcome.* (Rock 2005)

It can be achieved using the most from the potential the particular media determines by using different set of skills. For graphic designers the act of creation is understood as viewing the profession as a craft. Craft is a type of knowledge designers gain through experience or know-how. The tacit knowledge required to make something work is hard to describe—it has to be experienced, it is individual and very personal; it makes up a designer's style. Practical work generates a special kind of tacit knowledge which is untranslatable by words because it involves the physical handling of the medium (paper) and technology (printing process).

On the other hand, information architects are helping people find and use content available in the information space. Digital technology made it possible that the information can also find users, which opens up a space for all kinds of creativity to flourish. It also altered the process of conveying meaning. While digital signs are in many ways similar to traditional signs, they have many properties that differ from their paper counterparts and offer a number of novel possibilities, especially regarding context adaptivity, indexicality and interaction. Digital signs, as Müller (n.d.) suggests, offer broad possibilities for interaction:

touch interfaces; gestures; web interfaces; and interaction via mobile phones. Interaction could also harness the power of hypertext and provide unlimited content depth in-place.

Based on the difference between the two professions, we can conclude that the aim of communication happening in the context of the web portfolio is meaningful and creative communication of graphic designer's personality, craft, skills and professional experience in solving clients' problems. The question is: how can designers shape the experience of those messages into something that feels authentic and natural? The first step is to recognise that the digital world has its own internal conventions. Conventions are given by characteristics of the media. Compared to the analogue media, mainly paper, in which printed products are made, the digital world is clean and sterile—it looks and feels artificial. Because of the limiting bond with data reception, users are missing the warmth and saturation of the analogue world. One of the possible ways to overcome the lack of tactile and olfactory stimuli which are important to elicit users' memory and emotions is adding distortion to the digital elements. For that reason, the creators of digital media invented new conventions. By adding dynamics, motion and interaction to this artificial world they have engaged users' imagination in a powerful manner. The degree of delight (pleasures) of the user is such that an interactive product will depend on several factors:

- essential factors influencing development of solutions: scope; structure; interface design; sensory design; technology used;
- internal conventions of physical interaction and manipulation: responsiveness; naturalness of interaction; communication efficiency; conversation effectiveness;
- the symbolic and narrative quality of the story;
- cultural quality, e.g. social networking.

In the next sections we will look at some of the elements of context, content and structure of web portfolios which create a basis for analysing creativity as user experience quality in the process of communication.

3 Web portfolio creativity as a quality of user experience

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (n.d.) defines 'creative' as 'inventive, imaginative, exhibiting imagination as well as intellect, and thus differentiated from the merely critical, "academic", journalistic, professional, mechanical, etc.' All art is the product of some creative act. Even art that attacks old aesthetics and revels in the readymade creates intellectual space for new aesthetics to arise. The Chicago School of Media Theory (n.d.) claims creativity is what brings the imaginary or interior into the world of reality, changing something originally private into something public. Creativity in design occurs through a process by which an agent uses its ability to generate ideas, products or solutions that are novel and valuable (Sarkar and Chakrabarti 2007). Since creativity is an essential element in designing, the products of creative thought are usually considered to have both originality and appropriateness. The solution must be appropriate because otherwise it's not truly solving the problem. It has to be able to accomplish what it was designed to do and in doing so be resource-effective. If, according to Gero (2010), creativity occurs in the process of meaningful interaction of an user (employer, graphic designer) with web portfolio content, then the effects of appropriateness, usefulness, surprise and novelty are what makes creative component of user experience. The quality of creation is an outcome of a comparison and judgment process, which includes perception, reflection about perception and the description of the outcome (Martens and Martens 2001).

In order to illustrate how the effects of creativity in web portfolio design can be achieved, we will give some examples in the following subsections.

3.1 Originality and appropriateness

Although many web pages, especially personal portfolio pages, appear completely unique at first sight, they possess an inner structure that can be very traditional. For instance, Wing Cheng's portfolio presents a simple linear structure in the form of 'folded paper' (see Figure 1). Since the stimulation
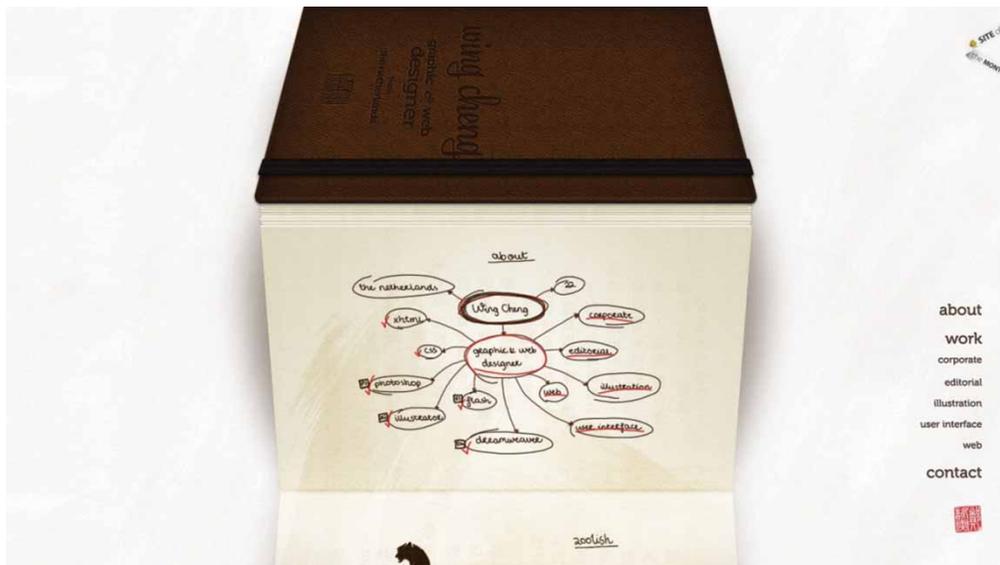

Figure 1. Wing Cheng's web portfolio homepage shows its linear structure in form of the folded paper.
Source: http://www.wingcheng.com/

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that a product provides depends on the individual user's experience with similar products (Lee and Koubek 2010), using known structures might increase the likelihood that users will intuitively connect with Cheng's web page. More precisely, many of the best UI elements have tried to imitate physical or mechanical elements of devices and gadgets—from pushing a button, the use of tabs on a site or the use of folders in operating systems, to turning a dial, folding maps or turning the pages of a book, taking pictures, etc. For the target audience, the use of graphic design idioms and technology represents a familiar environment. When virtual objects and actions in the web portfolio are idioms and metaphors for objects in the real world, users get the impression of effortless usage. *Co.Design*'s author, Hobbs (n.d.), explains the philosophy that drives this approach to UI design, called skeuomorphism. Aware of the rule 'the more established the interaction design icons and patterns being used the greater the level of surface meaning', designers can ask themselves, 'how to conceive new iconography and new ways of instantiating interactions while keeping the user's attention'.

3.2 Usefulness

For usability to be properly evaluated, effectiveness (whether users are able to perform tasks/goals) and efficiency (how long the user takes to perform a task/goal) need to be taken into account (Finstad 2010). Finding meaning in data can be challenging. Communicating that meaning to an audience can be even more challenging, since users will actively look to avoid or abandon boring or meaningless experience. If designers rely too heavily on data, they will lose their audience quickly to information overload or boredom. On the other hand, emphasising story or visual tools without enough data design will lose credibility. The key is to find the right balance of data, story and visual thinking in order to create meaning. The designer has to decide what experience they would like to offer people and which meaning to provoke within the context (Hassenzahl and Tractinsky 2006). The meaning is constructed based on when and how

users use the props, icons and buttons that serve as a story's cues. In such a process, story is shaped to a large degree on how the user navigates and interacts with data. As far as navigation is concerned, the best web design creates an interactive context in which users feel control enough that they can affect the experience and the final outcome, but again not so much as to feel crowded by possibilities. In other words, the most important things to consider in design of inter-portfolio navigation is to prolong the time the user stays on the site in order to have a pleasurable experience and deeper understanding of the work. A good example of that is Thibaud's web portfolio (see Figure 2).

3.3 Surprise and novelty

One of the strategies designers use to create surprising products is incorporating visual-interaction incongruities (Ludden, Schifferstein, and Hekkert 2008). Surprising features offer new experiences to users and stimulate further exploration of the product, as can be seen in W. Brett Wilson's portfolio (http://www.wbrettwilson.ca). Given that different media technologies depend on each other for meaning, as claimed by Bolter and Grusin (2000), incongruities in the ways of digital representation of designer work originally created in an analogue medium are of key importance for the construction of new meanings. Most importantly, occurrence of unexpected events during the interaction may influence construction of new meaning, even meaning the designer did not expect to occur. Dramatic tension (challenge) is increased by introducing element of uncertainty: which route through the graphics will take you to the destination? Those types of choices should be arranged as branching structures that can range from quite restrictive in terms of choice to extremely free-ranging.

4 Web portfolio creativity in the context of user needs

Since the experience of an event is an individual stream of perception and interpretation, you can get a range of answers depending on to whom
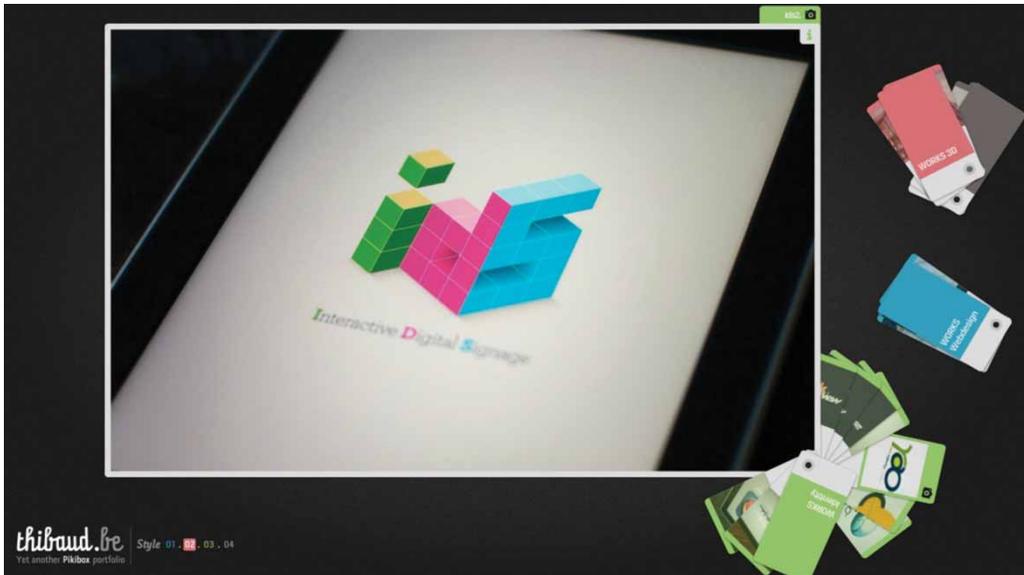
Figure 2. Thibaud's web portfolio interface reveals several navigational styles, which the user selects by choosing the colour-coded squares.
Source: http://www.thibaud.be/

you ask the question 'what is the most important factor of creativity in web portfolio experience?'. Getting to know one's target audience, i.e. its requirements, expectations and the sort of language it prefers, is a step that in many ways defines the aspect and technologies used in creating a web site (McCourt 2011). Krippendorff and Butter (1993) stated:

> *In the language of product semantics, meanings are said to arise when we see something in the context of its possible uses, when we place our sensations (of what designers may call form) into the context of the cognitive models we have constructed to cope with similar situations. Meanings inform us of what we could do and whether we can do what we are disposed to do.*

This suggests that for a given application in a given usage context, the quality will vary for different users or user groups. Some UX designers will push technology, some content, some visual design or aesthetics, and some usability and acces-

sibility as the factors that are the most significant. Whatever the actual quality formation process, the experience of the web site is users' awareness of the psychological effects elicited by the interaction with a product. This includes the degree to which users' senses are stimulated, the meanings and values users attach to the product, and the feelings and emotions that are elicited (Schiferstein and Hekkert 2008). In order to estimate the user's psychological effects e.g. perception, emotions and behaviour, so-called user scenarios can be developed. These are scenarios which describe the user's interaction with the system from the user's perspective. This includes personal and character elements, as well as detailed conditions under which the user visits the web site. In order to predict personal characteristics of the targeted audience, designers often develop personas. A persona is a sketch of a real person which represents one segment of the web site's users, and this is the reason why Fredheim (2011) claims that 'real' user experience cannot be designed. The development of personas is usually preceded

by the collection of data on users, either via interview or via survey. In the context of web portfolios for graphic designers, the target audience, e.g. users, are most often other graphic designers, students of graphic design, art directors at marketing agencies and design studios, and any other employers in need of design. Each of those groups needs a different kind of persona with some common characteristics. For example, when an employer, in many cases an art director, has to make a decision on whom to employ, they will be doing their review in isolation. In needing to review a hundred portfolios, they will come up with some shortcuts to make fast decisions about their potential employee. Taking into account the fact that the employer will spend only a short amount of time browsing the website and doesn't want to dwell on its deeper characteristics, the designer will reduce all tasks to the maximum of three mouse clicks. As Nielsen's research confirmed, performance and satisfaction scores are strongly correlated, so users will prefer a design that's easier to use.

Secondly, it is very important for the designer to be aware of the technological capabilities of the target audience—which web browsers, operating systems and internet access modes they use, web access devices, screen types and resolutions, users' experience in handling computers—and position their web site development accordingly (Granić, Mitrović, and Marangunić 2011). We can conclude that the primary characteristic of this target audience is a relatively good grasp of computers and that they are mostly the group of people who appreciate visual art and have personal attitudes and aesthetic preferences towards it. They are expert users who own relatively new hardware and software, fast internet connections, and who are meant to be impressed by the product.

Since traditional UCD process and research cannot be applied, it is advisable for a designer to be aware that the potential employer is looking for someone to work within their existing team, culture and practices. The design process should address users' aspirations, economy, culture and environment accordingly. We can say that employers look for the most compelling narra-

tive from their personal library of possible solutions to design problems, comparing each to their current professional situation. Through the symbolic and structural quality of the interface, as well as navigation and interactive activities, users recognise that the content of graphic design was created within the dynamics of social power and ideology. A graphic designer should be lucid about discovering and producing the picture that other people are trying to express with other means. In other words, web portfolio design can indirectly communicate social relations, values and meanings (Struken and Cartwright 2001). An important asset to a graphic design artist is their ability to take something that is deficient or incomplete and turn it into something remarkable. Goal-directed design is therefore a method that appropriately directs the definition of the product. The portfolio should represent and communicate the owner's ability to turn tasks into ideas, and then create deliverables that meet clients' and employers' needs. The answer to the question, 'What projects can I show that best illustrate how I would help that company with their business?' leads to a detailed design specification. This type of information is useful for defining the basic framework of what a web portfolio is, what it does and how it should meet the broad needs of the employer (Cooper, Reimann, and Cronin 2007).

5 Web portfolio creativity and content specifications

Content specification is a creative process which starts after the designer defines the reasons why users would want to visit the site. Since there is no client to dictate strategies, no committee to change the design and no approval process to drag things out, depending on the designer's goals the quantity, type and structure of content included in the web portfolio can vary greatly.

After selecting the works to be included in the web portfolio, it is necessary to define other content. Some of the regularly employed information, apart from the works themselves, are information on the works, the services offered by the designer, testimonials, contact

information, FAQs or How This Works, terms and conditions, resumé, biography, blog links, social media links and such like. The possibility of sharing opinions and information through a contact form or blog opens up the way for more user participation. A firm understanding of the value of social media applications, such as Dribble, Pinterest, DevianART, Google + , LinkedIN, Behance.net, Forrst, Facebook and Twitter, and how to properly use them to build relationships with an audience, as well as brand recognition,, is a skill essential to any individual needing to promote themselves.

The popularity of a social network can rapidly increase (Pinterest) or decline (Digg, Myspace) over time, and there is a constant stream of new social networks entering the market. Certain social networks provide their users with tools such as web analytics, which allow the designer an insight into his/her website's popularity by post in order for him/her to see which posts gained more popularity. No two social networks are the same in terms of sharing the users'

content and the way in which that content reaches the viewers. A designer's presence at multiple social networks greatly increases his/her chances of finding employment, whether long term or as a freelancer. Posting tutorials on the process of creating their work alongside their portfolio not only helps the community, but also promotes the designer's work and increases his/her popularity. Recently, films in which the designer himself presents his work and professional goals have been used, as can be seen on Casper Faassen's web portfolio (http://www.casperfaassen.com/).

Design operates in context, so the employer will be looking to see the quality of the designer's work, the characteristics of his personality, but also what involvement he had in each project, who the client was and his testimonial, what was the brief, what problem was it solving, his grasp of current networking culture. A summary of the project plan or creative brief with each design should be included, so potential employers see the designer's ability to follow directions in an

Figure 3. Nick Joore's web portfolio homepage reveals its narrative structure.
Source: http://www.njoore.com/

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innovative way. It is useful to validate the project by linking to the live site or archive.

According to instructions given by the most authoritative website dealing with these issues—*Smashingmagazine*—the contents of a web portfolio can be organised according to at least six project-organising methods: chronologically; by item; by client/project; by skill; best first and last; by media. The method chosen also talks about the designer and their organising capabilities. The decision is influenced by the designer's aesthetic taste and is the mirror of their personality. Putting one sample before or after another is also creating a story. The aim is to make this story interesting for the potential employer or customer, so the best pieces will be found at the beginning and at the end of the portfolio. Accordingly, the creative field of action is an invention of new ways of categorising and new ways of presenting work, as evidenced by Nick Joore's example (see Figure 3).

6   Web portfolio creativity and navigation through the story structure

In order to achieve a quality user experience with the aim of branding, it is extremely important to compose the visual, interactive and compositional values of the web site into a functional whole. Since people's brains still respond to content by looking for the story to make sense out of the experience, such a whole, created by combining multimedia content, can be called a story. Building blocks or stand out elements of such a story can be images or sequences of images. The content may also include hypertext, video, kinetic media such as motion graphics, kinetic typography, animations and stop-motions. These techniques are useful in presenting the design process from idea to realisation, presenting alternatives, as well as manifestations of cause and consequence in making designer decisions. Especially useful is the compression of space and time in the representation of the case studies process, as evidenced by Hello (http://www.hellomonday.com/).

The need to use narration in creating a web site has already been noted by Daniel Szuco: 'One of the things that holds us back is the way we frame our presentations as "research reports." This influences their structure. Really, we should not be trying to just report on data, but to tell a story' (Quesenbery and Brooks 2010)

A narrative website is a website that itself is a story if graphics, behaviours and events within this universe are consistent and logical and make sense within the story. Narratives are tools for inferring causality and relationships between projects and solutions, organising design process events into sequences, showing transitions or even metamorphoses from one stage to another, assigning actions to specific kind of data in order to reveal knowledge, excite emotions or to entertain the user. A good example is Piet Dewijngaert's portfolio (see Figure 4). The steps and techniques which can help the designer organise the contents and structure of the information to be presented through the web portfolio include content inventory, web map design, wireframe creation, usability diagrams and prototypes. Flow charts include a list of all screens on the webpage and a definition of routes the user will use in order to insure easy and logical navigation. Possible flow charts are defined via user scenarios. Stories have always been part of user experience design as scenarios, storyboards, flow charts, personas, and every other technique that we use to communicate how (and why) a new design will work. All this input serves as a mock-up of contemporary context and forms the basis for the creation of a concept for the web page, with the aim of communicating thedesigner's professional expertise in a creative way.

The question is which are the characteristics of the web page as an interactive narrative medium as opposed to other narrative media, such as film? It is about a cross-media approach to making a story in the true-life documentary sense rather than the fictional sense. Elliot Jay Stocks (n.d.) translated Freytag's analysis of literary plot structure into a narrative theory of web design. For him, the basic elements of story structure, like exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and
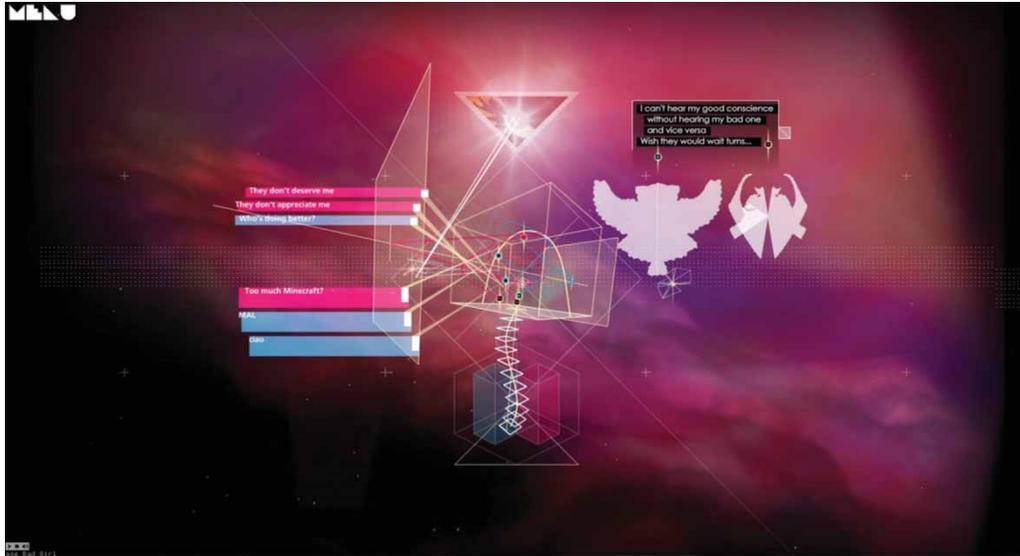
Figure 4. Piet Dewijngaert's web portfolio as an interactive game-like narrative.
Source: http://www.insidepiet.com/v2/

denouncement, are translated into web structure (the grid), tension (unusual layout), stand out elements, balance and the overall aesthetic. For J. J. Garrett (2011), user experience of a web site is built from dependent layers: strategy; scope; structure; skeleton; and surface. In this case, too, we can describe the layers as categories of story-making. Each earlier layer defines and describes the next, so that the point of the story is defined on the level of strategy and the contents of the story on the level of scope. Navigation (emotions) depends on the structure layer, while tasks (actions) depend on the skeleton layer. Surface layer describes finished visual design aspects of the story.

7 Web portfolio originality as a product of interaction

The first step in creating an interactive narrative medium is to clearly define the basic message, contents and emotions of the story, which is also the basic element in the often neglected category of narrative aspect. If the goal of a web portfolio is to find a job, then the primary goal that the designer wants to achieve (point of the story) is personal branding and communicating pro-fessional skills through a presentation of their work (story contents). Navigating the contents (menus) will provide the primary emotional tone and drama, while the accents and tensions will be reached by interacting with the icons on the interface. In the process of designing for the purpose of motivating for interaction—that is, getting the user more involved with the interactive content—the author needs to consider which phases will give their user goal achievement and precisely define the level of their engagement. Interaction can be broken down into four steps: observation; research; adaptation; and reciprocal change. The first step is observation, where the user assesses the system. Before taking any action, it is necessary to be aware of all the options. These basic options can be identifying elements such as icons, buttons or levels. The user poses the question: am I moving, or are

the things around me moving? Are the images or the text interactive? What can be done in this world? Unfortunately, designers are still forcing users to abandon websites because the investment in the interface level, and more importantly the understanding of what is meaningful to the user at this level, has not received appropriate investment in time and effort. If aesthetic experience is used as a mechanism for design, then user behaviour will follow the designer's expectations (Ross and Wensveen 2010). In the second step, research, the user finds out what they can and can't do, and as a result they realise they can make changes. In this phase the user develops a mental model about what the interactive content can offer and develops emotions and expectations, as well as accesses memories related to the same subject. But on this level, it is still a process of unintentional discovery, not intentional change. Adaptation refers to the user's understanding of how to behave and how to adjust expectations. Only in the last step does the user change the system.

In order to induce the user to interact, it is necessary to bring them to a certain level of consciousness. Observing any media, any pho-

tography, film or web page requires a smaller or larger closure of the mind toward extraneous stimuli (McCloud 1994). Such closure serves to mentally construct a continued reality based on the presented contents. The level of user involvement and reaction depends on their strength of will, or rather, the degree to which they identify with the contents as well as the aesthetic characteristics of the story. This identification first takes place on the level of observing kinetic content and images, and then reading the text. The designer must therefore assume what kinds of emotional and cognitive reactions the interface design will trigger in the user and whether these will stimulate him to further the interaction. The stimulus for interaction can also be a direct call to action at every natural 'end point' which directs and guides the user where to go next. Donald Norman (2003) describes a hierarchy in which activities are composed of tasks, which are in turn composed of actions, which are then themselves composed of operations. Using this scheme, Norman advocates activity-centred design (ACD), which focuses first and foremost on understanding activities. He also tried to propose what kind of meaning each activity pro-

Figure 5. magneticNorth Interactive Limited web site presents activity-centred design strategies.
Source: http://mnatwork.com/

vokes. Some of the solution we can find in work published by Mn agency (see Figure 5).

8 Conclusion

The new information revolution brought about by the development of the internet and computers has significantly changed the definitions of professions related to graphic communication. The development of media technology through history always resulted in new creative patterns and changes in the way traditional media were used. This study looked at the basic characteristics of professionally made portfolio websites as the basis of a designer's successful career.

Althought it is difficult to set the rules for the 'creative web portofolio', since the design and goals are dependent on authors' work, personality and style, some guideliness of good portfolio design can be offered:

- easy and logical navigation using inventive mechanisms of interaction;
- right balance of data, story and novel visual thinking;
- the portfolio design should address target user's aspiration, economy, culture and environment accordingly;
- creation of story-driven interaction;
- integration of social networking.

As stated above, creativity in the design of interactive media can be defined as user experience quality in activities done to achieve communication goals. If creativity is the product of some creative act, then, in the context of the web porfolio the act of navigation and interaction is a new way to bring a message into the world of reality, changing something originally private into something public. The way in which the recipient of the message interprets the signs and codes of the visual message depends on their cultural values and beliefs, as well as the technical and technological qualities of the medium. The aim of transmitting messages with the purpose of persuading the audience is particularly feasible in the form of a story, but also through social networks. The web portfolio can

therefore be considered a non-linear narrative form. In order to tell a story successfully, it is necessary to elicit and keep the user's attention in a creative way. It is therefore vital that the user identify as much as possible with the story, so that it would trigger expectations in them and induce them to interaction. Identification is first established on the basis of user interface design. The designer's creativity can thus be described as the art of communicating with symbols, metaphors and idioms which carry messages on a professional level. Further interaction can be connected to activities that result in pleasure, challenge, surprise, frustration, anger—all of which will affect the final perception of quality in the user's experience. The following indicators can be named as measures of creativity: number of daily web page visits; number of repeated visits; number of users who logged in; user feedback; number of downloaded images and/or characters per image; number of awards, contacts and contracts.

This study can be considered limited in its generality and qualitative approach, since the conclusions are not based on quantitative data. Possible implications stemming from the conclusions are the improvement of the communication process between designers and employers through creative work on user experience quality. Given that the orchestration of the interactive experience is authorial work, further research should establish possible copyright protection over creative work.

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Jesenka Pibernik is an associate professor for graphic design and web design at the Faculty of Graphic Art, University of Zagreb. She has received her B.E. degree in architecture from the Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb in 1985. Prior to joining the Charles Moore Post-Professional Program in design at the University of Texas, Austin, she worked for several years as registered architect. She holds a PhD in architecture from the Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb. Her research interests include graphic design and technology, quality of user experience and ICT for augmentative and alternative communication.

Jurica Dolic is an teaching assistant, working on graphic, web and motion design subjects at the Faculty of Graphic Arts, University of Zagreb. He has received his BSc degree in graphic technology and design from the Faculty of Graphic Arts, University of Zagreb in 2006. In 2007 he has enrolled in the PhD program at the same Faculty. His research interests include graphic design and technology, human-computer interaction, user experience and ICT for augmentative and alternative communication. He is a member of the Graphical symbols technical committee of the Croatian Standards Institute.

Bojan Kanizaj is pursuing a PhD at the Faculty of Graphic arts in Croatia, University of Zagreb. He received a MSc in Graphics technology in 2011 from the Faculty of Graphic arts. His research interests include interaction and experience design with user-centered approach.

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